London School of Economics and Political Science

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Everyday practices in public places: embodied understandings of post-dictatorship Chile

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To my father, who raised me to be free.

DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

The thesis explores Chilean people's ways of making sense of their contemporary world in the post-dictatorship period at the level of the everyday. Drawing on the study of practices in two public places in Santiago, Chile, I unravel users' understandings of political, economic and cultural topics. Place is a central element in my approach to practices. My exploration of practices is rooted in a spatial analysis of my study sites, Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal. I show how the way in which we make sense of the world is not an abstract construct but is based in ordinary experience situated in place.

I affirm there is a sense of strangeness and marginality regarding present-day Chile because there is little common ground amongst the increasing diversity of understandings. The group of Chileans under study may have been linked in the past by the common reference of institutions, but now they are more distant from institutional frameworks and more involved with their personal lives in the present. In this light, social segregation is increasing and imagination appears as a constituent feature of Chilean subjectivity in the new times.

On the one hand, regarding social segregation, I argue that a new form of social segregation has emerged in post-dictatorship Chile. It is a form that is linked not merely with material inequality, family origins, ethnicity and location within the city, but also with the impossibility of dialogue regarding people's different understandings of Chile's new times. On the other hand, I describe and analyse how individuals' deep, practical engagement with the material and social form of their world allows them to imagine in a way that is rooted within their everyday life. Their material imagination opens a door for new ways of belonging to their world.

I argue that people's practices should be taken into account in order to understand the way they make sense of present-day Chile. Individuals' expectations and values are involved in their practices, together with their biographies and everyday social interactions. Hence, I disagree with theoretical reflections on Chile's new times or macrostructure analyses that miss the link between socially constructed understandings of Chile and people's everyday living.

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INTRODUCTION

"From the outset, the world of things in no way confronts the mind, as it might appear, as a sum total of problems whose solution it has to gradually master. Rather, we must first extract them as problems from out of the indifference, the absence of inner connection and the uniform nature with which things first of all present themselves to us".

Georg Simmel, "Über Massenverbrechen"

There is a consensus among Chileans that the country has changed dramatically since 1990. The main political change was the return to democracy after seventeen years of dictatorship. A democratic government was restored after citizens voted to end the military regime of Augusto Pinochet. This generated a feeling of achievement and optimism, not only in public discourse but also in many Chileans' perception of the future. However, despite the peaceful nature of this transition —a referendum in 1988 in which the majority of Chilean citizens voted to end Pinochet's regime— the memory of the violent years in which torture, repression and social injustice were the rule is very much alive for many people. They now feel that changes in the political, economic and cultural spheres are too slow and timorous.

Chile is still governed by a Constitution and set of laws that were created by the military regime. This means that the exercise of democracy is limited. For example, the law governing the distribution of seats in Congress means that minorities are effectively prevented from participation, even if they can secure popular support in elections. Regarding social inequality, the extreme poverty of many Chileans contrasts with the upper classes' tremendous wealth and social relations built on consumerism. Chile started to experience steady economic growth at the end of the eighties and, macro-economically speaking, it represents a model for other Latin American countries -yet social inequalities remain. The leaders of the most left-wing parties in the government coalition argue that the measures taken to change Pinochet's neo-liberal economic system have not been powerful enough. Regarding culture and values, Chilean people are now awake to the multitude of voices that were suppressed in the past: Chileans are producing new kinds of representations, establishing more links with the external world and discussing topics that were taboo during the period of dictatorship. Globalisation,

on the one hand, has opened a door to diversity and, on the other, challenges Chileans' traditional values, ways of belonging and social practices.

Against this backdrop, people struggle to make sense of post-1990 Chile in different ways: moving away from a difficult past or relying on the past to reinforce their leadership in the present, enjoying Chile's economic success or trying to survive in its unequal environment, celebrating openness or fighting for more freedom. People make sense of post-1990 Chile, post-dictatorship Chile, "Chile's new times" —as I will refer to the period beginning in 1990— not only as times of difference but of tension, fragmentation and exclusion:

> "Although the anger is not spelled out, the sense of exclusion from national development of many Chileans is obvious. Either because of confusion or anger, they experience Chile as something remote from their everyday lives" (2002, UNDP report, author's translation: 32).

Economists, political scientists, philosophers and artists, among others, have reflected much upon the consequences and projections of the political, economic and cultural changes that occurred in Chile —the burden the dictatorship years represent today— and the possibilities of recovering a national sense of unity. Such reflections have focused largely upon the country's institutions and upon desirable changes in its economic structure but have paid little, if any, attention to how these elements are linked to Chileans' everyday experiences (Brunner 2001, Castells 2005, amongst many others). With regard to cultural trends, the discussion has mainly revolved around market surveys and quality-of-life indices.[1]

This work aims to tread a different path. I argue that in order to grasp Chileans' ways of making sense of their world we must explore people's experiences. As Georg Simmel

[1] The 2002 UNDP report on Chilean culture, directed by Norbet Lechner, constitutes an outstanding exception to this statement and has been a powerful inspiration for this work:

> "I propose to situate everyday life in the intersection of macro and micro social processes. Instead of reducing the latter to the level of the individual (in opposition to that of society), we should understand everyday life as the crystallization of social contradictions that allows us to explore constitutive elements of the macro social processes in the cellular texture of society." (Lechner 2006 [1984]: 377, author's translation).

affirms: "The real life of society, provided in experience, could certainly not be constructed from those large objectivized structures that constitute the traditional objects of social science" (Simmel 1997 [1907]: 110). By the same token, Siegfried Kracauer's reflection on unemployment is based on his observation of employment agencies: "Neither the diverse commentaries on unemployment statistics nor the relevant parliamentary debates give any information of this [the position the unemployed actually occupy in the system of our society]". (Kracauer 1997 [1930]). Simmel and Kracauer, both pioneers in spatial analysis, grasped everyday life at the level of the street.

In that vein, I believe that approaches based on the macro level have failed to capture the experiences of ordinary Chileans. Market surveys and quality-of-life indices have three main problems: firstly, they impose external categories on individuals' experiences; secondly, they oversimplify ongoing cultural trends and generalise social processes, without giving an account of the diversity of Chilean population; and, thirdly, they do not acknowledge the inherent limitations of quantitative methodologies when it comes to defining indicators to measure complex perceptions, understandings and opinions.

I propose to delve into Chilean people's ways of making sense of their contemporary world at the level of the everyday. The everyday is the terrain where we experience, on a day-to-day basis, our condition in the world. It is the landscape of what is close to us, of our immediate world. On the one hand, it is that which is familiar and recognizable to us, on the other, it is where we experience disruption by the unfamiliar. The everyday becomes the setting for a dynamic process: "for making the unfamiliar familiar" (Highmore 2003: 2). People struggle to incorporate the new and have to adjust to different ways of living at the level of the everyday. Hence, the everyday is, in itself, a contradictory sphere. What appears trivial, superficial or even exotic is crucial to understanding the everyday world[2].

[2] Henri Lefebvre understands the everyday as the place for the non-alienated (1996 [1958]). His radical distinction between alienated and non-alienated practices leaves out of everyday practices those of work within a modern capitalist society. Unlike Lefebvre's, my understanding of the everyday includes all ordinary practices, including experiences that may be confusing and alienating. I argue that the struggle we live in such experiences may also lead us to understand.

I wish to study Chilean people's everyday practices in public places[3] in order to shed light on their ways of making sense of their world. I choose to explore practices in public places following Arendt's argument on action (1998): action is only possible in interaction with others. In that vein, public places are crucial to an exploration of diversity in Chile's new times. Social struggle is likely to occur in the public place because diverse positions of power are played out within it.[4]

Through people's practices, I want to delve into their understandings of political, economic and cultural topics. For instance, I want to explore how Chileans make sense of the country's contemporary democracy in terms of their opportunities for developing as free individuals and sharing with others. Concerning the economic dimension, I propose to explore people's understandings of their opportunities to consume and their access to social services such as education, health and pensions. Finally, in cultural terms, I look at people's ways of making sense of massive external influences in these times of globalisation, on the one hand, and traditional forms of understanding and representing the world, on the other.

There is not a single narrative of the present-day Chile. What I will argue is that the impossibility of dialogue regarding different understandings of the new times is at the heart of people's sense of strangeness about each other and what Chile means for them. I do not propose to build people's different approaches into a merged world view. My aim is much more modest: to explore, describe and analyse the different ways of making sense of the world of a particular group of Chileans. I will explore people's understandings as embodied in everyday practices in two public places in Santiago, Chile.

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[3] I use the term "place", because I want to clarify that my approach to public spaces in Santiago, Chile, is that of place. "The distinction between space and place is a basic one in urban form. It turns on more than emotional attachment to where one lives, for it involves as well the experience of time." (Sennett 1994: 188). As Sennett establishes, place becomes space when it is defined by functional and opportunistic uses of time. Space becomes the territory in which, rather than for which, a person works. By the same token, for Casey the central point of the difference is that while the term place relates to a site which has been lived in and means something for its inhabitants, the term space remains an abstraction (Casey 1997).

[4] This ability of public place to host variety is deeply anchored in Arendt's definition of the public sphere. However, it is not my aim to discuss her argument but to explore practices in public places as embodied diversity. It is beyond the purpose of my study to explore practices as communication and, moreover, as arguments. Nevertheless, I recognise the potential of social practices as forms of dialogue. In that vein, social practice as embodied meaning, which is not the product only of a subject's rational action but of a much more complex interweaving of elements, stands as counterpoint to Habermas´s rational argument as the only possibility for communication.

I selected Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal as my study sites because together they provide a general picture of Santiago's people within the limited scope of my study, which will grasp the experience of the users of only those sites. Santiago is an extremely segregated city. People from different social classes do not usually mingle in their everyday practices within the urban space. Social segregation is a characteristic of Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal too. They draw together particular groups of Santiago's inhabitants who almost never meet in one place, thus showing some of the city's diversity. Taking the two sites together, I was able to study everyday practices of people from different social classes and areas of Santiago and thus delve into different understandings. As I have already argued, social inequalities and political and cultural differences are at the heart of different people's understandings of present-day Chile. That being so, a guiding criterion for the selection of my study sites was to include as much of this diversity as possible.

In Plaza de Armas I explored the everyday practices of lower and lower-middle class who work, shop or spend their leisure time in Santiago's city centre in and around Plaza de Armas. In Parque Forestal I studied middle and upper-middle class practices of living and spending free time in the Park and its gentrified neighbourhood. I was also able to delve into the relationships amongst middle-class neighbours and lower middle class visitors to the site. Additionally, the absence of upper classes from both places was relevant to my reflection on Santiago's social segregation and different understandings of their being-in-the-world. The upper classes do not usually live in or visit Santiago's inner city, but spend most of their time in their homes located on the north-east edge of the city or in new suburbs around the metropolitan area. Their places of work and children's schools also tend either to be close to their places of residence or to involve a direct car journey to the office car park, not requiring interaction with inner city people.

In a similar vein, looking at both places allowed me to introduce the topics of difference, tension, fragmentation and exclusion enshrined in people's understanding of present-day Chile. The Plaza and the Park are contested places, products of a tension that is contingent upon their central location within the city, their physical characteristics and the everyday practices taking place within them. Also, both places are tied up with people's construction of history and memories, which, I argue, is

intimately related to their understandings of Chile's new times: Plaza de Armas is linked to the civic history of Chile and the city of Santiago, whilst Parque Forestal is related to the development of different cultural forms as a mixture of high and traditional popular culture. Struggles in political, cultural, economic and social fields have occurred in these places and their surroundings.

With the understanding that places are never 'finished' but always 'becoming'[5] I explore how Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal both shape social interaction and are at the same time shaped by it. I argue that just as we can search for meaning in social practices we can also do so in places. Moreover, I believe we cannot separate the two purposes since practice *exists* in place.

Place is a central element in my approach to practices. Social segregation is embodied in the city of Santiago as spatial segregation. Focusing on place opens the door to the concrete realm of the everyday. Drawing on a spatial analysis of my study sites, Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal, I want to examine the everyday practices of a group of people in order to show that the way we make sense of the world is not an abstract construct but based in ordinary experience. In this connection, theoretical reflections on Chile's new times miss the link between socially constructed understandings of Chile and people's everyday living.

Drawing on practices

I explore issues embodied in practice by focusing on discourse, place and the representations involved in them. By spending time with people at the observation sites, sharing, observing and recording their practices, as well as through in-depth interviews and spontaneous conversations, I access practices and, in them, meaning.

By delving into people's practices I am not aiming to learn how Chileans represent their understanding of the world, but to learn about understanding itself. In other words, I understand practices not as representations of meaning but as meaning themselves. This

[5] Alan Pred (1984), along with many others such as Nigel Thrift and Michel de Certeau, argues that place is made and remade on a daily basis through reiterative social practices. There is no place without social interaction, thus, the history of a place goes together with the history of social practices in it.

difference is crucial to the argument that practices embody meanings. When we observe, analyse and reflect on a practice; a way of doing that develops alongside others, within a framework of rules, in a certain place, we are reflecting on a way of understanding the world. We do not represent what we think about our spatial and historical being —position— in practice; rather, we practise our being. Our practice embodies the way in which we make sense of others, the materiality of the world, time and memory. Starting with our biography, we build our social interactions as continuity or change in practice and, by so doing, we make sense.

I used ethnographic methods to explore practices in the sites. The fieldwork was done during a six month stay in Santiago, Chile and included participant observation and in-depth interviews in the sites, as well as mapping, taking pictures and making diagrams of both places and the practices occurring in them.

Thesis structure

After explaining my methodology in the first chapter, I set the context of my thesis in space and time in the second chapter: "Place Settings". Drawing on a spatial analysis of my study sites, Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal, I introduce the topics of difference, tension, fragmentation and exclusion in people's understandings of present-day Chile. It was not an arbitrary choice to present Chile's new times through a spatial analysis of the sites, but had a twofold purpose. First, it presented my study sites as contested places, as a product of the tensions related to their location within the city, their physical characteristics and the social interactions happening in them. Second, it established the argument central to my exploration, which is that people's way of making sense of their world is embodied not only in their practices, but also in the places where these practices occur.

The current Chilean context —the political, economic and cultural trends of the last fifteen years— is strongly associated with a new way of experiencing time and space. Ideas of change and rupture are at the heart of Chileans' understandings of their world. However, Chileans make sense of them in very different ways which are linked with their everyday experiences. Broadly, on the one hand, some people look from above,

following the official line, and on the other hand, some look from below, drawing on their everyday life. By presenting the Plaza and the Park from both above and below, I introduce the theme of difference present in Chile now. Both ways of seeing follow their own logic and feed two different ways of understanding the world. Tension, fragmentation and exclusion emerge when these opposite perspectives meet at the level of the everyday.

I continue the exploration of the everyday in the Plaza and the Park by looking at the practices of walking, playing and sitting in these places in chapter three. By analysing these practices as embodied meanings, I aim to ground the dimensions through which people make sense of present-day Chile. Issues such as health, education, work and sexuality are intertwined with the practices of walking, playing and sitting in the sites. I base my analysis on the clashes of people's rhythms in order to show how the rhythm of these practices is deeply connected with the way of making sense of Chile's new times. For instance, I describe how walkers in Plaza de Armas are immersed in a slow rhythm and relate it to their ambitions in life. Their rhythm sheds light on their experience of disappointment and exclusion in post-1990 Chile. At the same time, they are surrounded by a mass of passers-by rushing to their duties. The Plaza walkers' rhythm clashes with the rhythm around it: that aimed at economic success and the need to move on from political struggle. In the Park, people are apparently engaged in the same activity: enjoying a pleasant public place. However, tensions among generations and social classes appear embodied in different rhythms which, I argue, relate to different understandings of present-day Chile.

By the same token, I explore people's understandings of both sites. In the case of the Plaza, people have contradictory feelings: the Plaza of the new Chile —its practices and physical characteristics— embodies Chilean inequalities and new values and is different from the former one, which was experienced as a place for civic participation and social encounter. In the case of the Park, on the one hand, traditional upper-class people (and also some others) experience nostalgia for the old times when the Park was a site for the upper classes. On the other, people from all over Santiago come and use the Park, but face regulations and social pressures that limit or inhibit their activities.

Chapters four and five explore practices, tracing how the different understandings of post-1990 Chile they embody are interlinked with struggles for survival, on the one hand, and for justifying comfort and Chile's socioeconomic current conditions, on the other. I delve into people's understandings of Chile's new times and their sense of belonging to them by exploring their survival practices, in chapter four. I explain how the embodied sense of exclusion pushes the limits of practice and how new dispositions, such as creativity and sociability are acquired or reinforced: practices are re-invented and their intentionality is re-defined or amplified through the experience of need.

In chapter five, I explore the Chilean cultural new class (Ley 1994) and their confident existence. I look at how the Parque Forestal's newcomers deal with their privileged position within Chilean society. Two groups of newcomers —those who did not belong to the upper classes in the past, but to the group that was silenced and oppressed during the dictatorship, and the younger generations of traditional upper-class groups— seek to balance their membership of this privileged group with their discourse on social equity and democracy by moving downtown to the Park's neighbourhood. There they develop a particular lifestyle, which is neither traditional upper class nor working class.

Chapters four and five explore different ways of re-defining identity in practice: young jugglers in Parque Forestal and other groups involved in creative practices in both sites try to build their identity based on their social networks and productions (crafts, theatre, music, dance, etc.). By the same token, Santiago's left-wing, educated and wealthy young people shape their living practices in a gentrified neighbourhood by encouraging symbols of tolerance, social equity and cultural acceptance —homeless people, gays, punks and lower-class youths juggling, doing hip-hop, dancing capoeira or getting drunk— alongside symptoms of globalisation such as designer clothing, furniture shops, trendy cafes and restaurants, funky discotheques and rehabilitated loft buildings. By so doing, they re-define their identity in practice.

The last chapter traces Chile's new values, focusing on people's memories. I explore memory as an action of the present and analyse how today's places and practices are connected to people's memories. The diversity of memory emerges out of one's position in the present and, conversely, one's position in the present shapes your memory.

On the one hand, memory —as an act of the present that brings in the past— emphasises people's sense of tension and fragmentation. On the other hand, the absence of memory in the younger generation appears in two ways; as an idealisation of past times or as impatience with them. Chileans' present understandings have been shaped in the shade of memories. The absence of a common narrative emphasises tensions among different groups and reinforces individual and collective senses of fragmentation.

Within that context, tension between new and traditional values, ways of doing things and interaction are embodied in people's practices. Many of these tensions emerge between generations and different educational and income groups. Diverse ways of dealing with topics such as neoliberalism, political ideologies, secularisation, meritocracy, technology and new modes of family inform different understandings of present-day Chile.

Returning to the reflection on place, I argue that places contain traces of the past and they have the ability to embody common memories. Place can be either a means of building a common narrative of the past, binding elements of people's memories, or else a source of increasing divergence between different understandings.

The exploration of everyday practices in Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal shows us how the new Chilean times could open a door to different forms of imagination and agency. As Chileans relate to others in their individual lives, what is at stake for them is the means to succeed with their own personal projects. I argue that in some cases they build ways of coordination and action in their everyday practices whilst in others their practices are ways to deal with their disappointment at the lack of opportunities that the institutional framework gives them for developing their aims. In terms of identity, I argue that Chileans have developed or strengthened their values and beliefs by drawing on their everyday practices and memories, and looking at these therefore sheds light on the substratum of their preferences and expectations today.

CHAPTER ONE: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

"[I]t is not these things, techniques and received procedures, that define the enterprise. What defines it is the kind of intellectual effort it is: an elaborate venture in, to borrow a notion from Gilbert Ryle, 'thick description'".

Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward and Interpretative Theory of Culture"

My research is rooted in the concept of practice as embodied meaning. Against this backdrop, the ideas of place, body and objects are essential because they define our practice. The notion of practice is at the centre of my reflections on meaning as the fruit of the interweaving of places –always becoming, never finished, defined and re-defined by the interactions taking place within them– with bodies –open-ended beings with histories, memories, abilities and ways of acknowledging the world– and with objects – crafts in progress in practice.

Understanding practice as a process enables us to go beyond the subject-object dualism and explore people's ways of making sense of their world as a product of their engagement with the material world, including their bodies, and their practical intentionality. Our humanity is not "defined by its opposition to materiality as pure subject or social relations" (Miller 2005: 41) but *in* the material world. Exploring practices opens a door to the way people construct meaning *with* the physicality of their bodies and objects. On the one hand, people make materiality; they shape their bodies and construct objects, on the other, materiality is at the heart of people's habitus. Looking at practices helps "to show how the things that people make, make people" (Miller 2005: 38).

In this context, my aim is to explore how place, the body and objects are involved in people's ways of grasping the world in practice. In particular, the purpose of this research is to explore Chileans' ways of making sense of their world in post-dictatorship times (1990 – the present). Taking materiality as a central element of practice, I am interested in integrating social interaction —which includes body interaction— and place. I seek to study the relations between place and social interaction, stressing neither place over culture, its converse. I resist the tendency to

situate place at the pole of the material world, as opposed to the subject's agency at the other pole, instead bringing in the physicality of place —that is, its materiality, built form and objects, spatial and historical context— and people's interactions in it. I believe that place is involved in shaping the structure of practice; it becomes one with the practice and, therefore, contains meaning and is a constituent part of social interaction.

I draw on different attempts to link practices and place in order to propose my own way of analysis. Among others, Marshall Berman's description of New York City as a characterisation of modern culture, in which he describes the idea of speed contained in the modern spirit through the uses of the Bronx highway (Berman 1995), is an interesting reflection on social interaction. Still, his argument does not deal with some very significant implications of material form such as size, scale, shape and direction and how those features could be producing and/or be products of practices. Something similar may be said of the work of Nestor Garcia Canclini. For instance, in "Hybrid Cultures" (1997), he focuses on how museum space is managed in relation to function and to the objects that are being displayed in it. Canclini's perspective construes place as a container, but he does not describe visitors' practices in the museum. Rather, he draws on the way the museum's administrators set the space. The works of Richard Sennett (1990, 1994) offer very reflective insight about how place is related to practices. He explores the thoughts and representations that form the basis for people's construction of places and gives very specific examples of places and practices in them. Nevertheless, his study of practices is historical, rather than empirical.

The field of architecture has generated further attempts to explore everyday practices through forms in everyday urban landscape. For example, the work of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown on Las Vegas offers a methodology for describing and classifying elements in space (1996). Still, their emphasis is on the typology of buildings rather than what people do with them. On another note, Aldo Rossi (1982) takes a more cultural approach, even though he does not deal with practices. His concept of locus as the group of outlines that trace the relation of architecture to its location is very useful in integrating social and physical elements present in urban artefacts, in order to relate them to practices that happen in them.

Another work that has been read as a reflection of places and practices is that of Kevin Lynch (1973). However, his work is more related to people's imaginaries than to their practices. Within that context, Lynch's aim is to offer signifiers linked to a definitive signified. For instance, a "landmark" is a form within the city linked to certain meanings. Roland Barthes discusses this approach, though not referring to the work of Lynch directly, arguing that we cannot develop a lexicon of the significations of the city "not only because of the weight and the pressure exercised by history but because, precisely, the signifieds are like mythical creatures, extremely imprecise, and at a certain point they always become the signifiers of something else" (1997: 169).

Pierre Bourdieu's attempt to show how the space of social positions and the space of lifestyle, both derived from habitus, are embodied in practices in space seems an appropriate reference for my work. However, Bourdieu's most cited work on practice and space, the Kabyle House study (1990), is a structuralist reading of the habitus, although it offers some interesting clues to how place is shaped in practice and practice is shaped in place.

I conducted my study in two public places because public places may assemble different kinds of people and one of the aims of my research is to grasp the diversity of understandings of Chile's new times by groups of Chileans. Second, practices in public places develop in the realm of public interaction (Goffman 1971), which is deeply rooted in the collective understanding of the mainstream culture. This implies, on the one hand, that the rules of the practices are likely to be connected with collective agreements about what is going on in the world, and on the other, that we can see more than one single set of rules coordinating practices while public place hosts differences amongst groups. Third, public places are not only free access places but (almost always) free practice ones. This means that a diverse range of practices may be observed in them as well as diverse ways in which people mediate in practice in order to share place with others and adapt or deny regulations. In other words, a diverse range of meanings linked with the understanding of different dimensions of the Chilean world may be grasped.

Finally, public places are places where people display their understanding of the world to others. People are on display in public places and they interact with others. In so doing they make their individual construct of meaning public and, in some cases,

contribute to building a collective sense of meaning (this happens especially in group practices).

Taking an ethnographic approach to studying practices in public places helps to shed light on cultural processes at a deep level of understanding. We obtain three different types of data through an ethnographic exploration of practices in public places: first, we learn about what people do by participating in and observing their practices; second, we learn about what they say about what they do by talking to them and analysing their narratives; and third, we learn about how they make place by analysing their perception and use of place together with the physical features of the sites.

For instance, as I describe in Chapter Three, the observation and analysis of the practice of walking in my two sites leads me to the ways in which the practice –as a way of being in the world- is shaped along with the materiality of the site, with its paths and pavements, points of attraction and meeting, and embodies a fundamental "orientation" to the world (Merleau-Ponty 1962). By talking with walkers and passers-by about their walks in the sites I learnt about their separate understandings of work and leisure time, other people present in the sites, the physicality of the sites, their history and relation to other parts of the city, and so forth. In this vein, a walk in the Park seemed to be related to nostalgia and past times that were perceived as more tranquil, whereas rushing across the Plaza was part of the run in pursuit of the apparent Chilean success story.

Accordingly, the initial guiding questions of this research are:

-What meaning do people attribute to their practices in public places?
-How are people's understandings of their world manifested in the two sites studied: Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal?
-How do people's practices —and hence their ways of making sense of their world— relate to public places and their urban design?

Applying ethnographic methods helped me to approach these questions from within rather than from an outsider's perspective. Spending time with my informants in the sites, sharing their everyday practices and talking about them was one way of delving into meaning. I covered a list of topics in my informal conversations and in-depth interviews with them (see Annex 2). Also, my almost daily observation in the sites

helped me to put together people's narratives and the social interactions taking place in the sites. Finally, paying attention to the materiality of the sites and the way in which people develop their practices in them, through their bodies, sheds light on how meaning is embedded in the physicality of the two study sites.

The themes I explored during my fieldwork -although following the initial research questions- were dynamic and changed along with the progress of my ethnography. New topics related to the initial ones appeared. Entering into my informants' enquiries and points of view about Chile's new times and their place in them required me to move from my research agenda to theirs. In this process, I slowly built a relationship both with them and the sites and with a group of issues which I delve into within the framework of my research interests. I want to highlight the topic of memory which appear very strongly into both my observation of the sites and people's practices in them, as well as to people's narratives about what they do and how they make sense of it. In other words, ethnographic methods allowed me to engage in a dialogue with people's own questions about Chile's new times.

By the same token, I do not construct a general theory about Chile's new times, but I present and analyse a group of multiple voices as an account of how users of two public places in Santiago make sense of post-1990 Chile. In Clifford Geertz's words: "The essential task of theory building here is not to codify abstract regularities but to make thick description possible, not to generalize across cases but to generalise within them" (2000: 26).

How did this process develop in concrete terms? At first, the usual users did not notice my presence on the sites. After some weeks, however, I became a known face for them. I was hanging out in the sites with a note book and a camera, sometimes sitting on a bench for hours writing and looking; at other times, walking slowly amongst the crowd.

I was a noticeable figure because although many different people use the sites every day my rhythm and practice did not conform with that of any of the usual users. In the case of Plaza de Armas, people who do not remain in the Plaza doing something, belong to the urban crowd rushing somewhere, whereas I was slow. Those who remain in the Plaza are usually involved in art, theatre and vending practices, as I will describe in the following chapters, but they do not hang around taking notes and pictures. In the case of

the Park, my observing rhythm was less obvious than in the Plaza. No one looked at me repeatedly and enquiringly as some people did in the Plaza; in the Park I could blend into the anonymous slow walk of passers-by.

After a month of walking and observing the sites, I started talking to people. I introduced myself and my —already noticed— presence helped me to gain credibility. It made sense that I was carrying out research if I had been going to the sites almost every day. I started having informal conversations with people as I explained to them how I was interested in the physicality of the sites. Commencing conversations about material things such as street furniture, trees, buildings, streets and cars helped the initial conversation flow. From there it was quite a smooth transition from those dialogues focused on things: i.e., Do you like these benches or the old ones? Is there a lot of traffic? Do many people come to the Cathedral to mass on Sundays?— to others focused on practices involving those things. Talks about past events and personal experiences in the sites helped to introduce present experiences and their everyday lives in the sites. As my fieldwork progressed I started to introduce more specific topics such as politics, economics, work and family. In this way, I got to know my informants in a more relaxed manner and I asked a group of them if they would agree for in-depth interviews (see Annex 3 for the list of interviewees). I will explain how I selected my interviewees later in this chapter, together with the description of other research methods.

1. The sites

The selection of my study sites, Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal, as I explained in the Introduction, resulted, initially, from the need to observe different kinds of people, especially in terms of social class. The sites do not hold a wide variety of social classes

individually, but the two together do. Plaza de Armas holds mainly lower and lower-middle classes and Parque Forestal, middle and upper-middle ones. Second, Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal are both located in Santiago's inner city, in historical sites, and are part of people's memories. Exploring the practices of their users enabled me to delve into their understandings of the present in relation to the past underlying the role of place in their practices. Again, the two of them hold different kind of memories: the

Plaza is linked to civic and economic events and the Park to cultural ones. Taking them together allowed me to explore different dimensions of people's everyday practices. Third, Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal are close in location which made it possible to search for connections between people's practices in both sites and explore issues such as the place's limits, borders and boundaries.

The reasons for selecting my sites given above serve also to explain why I chose those two Santiago sites in particular and not others. Plaza de Armas, as a place of political and civic everyday life is unique in the city, so it was an obvious option. However, there are many cultural sites other than Parque Forestal. One very important alternative is Quinta Normal Park, located in a neighbourhood where some new cultural venues are developing in the heart of an old industrial zone. Nevertheless, on the one hand, with regard to income and educational levels, I would have met very similar people there to those in Plaza de Armas: mainly lower-middle class and lower class Santiago. On the other hand, Quinta Normal is too far from Plaza de Armas so I would have lost the opportunity to establish links between two places in the inner city and delve into how people navigate around them as separate or merged.

I used different kinds of ethnographic methods in my fieldwork in order to collect not only visual and textual data but also notes on smells, noises and textures. I spent five and a half months collecting data in my study sites (August 2005 – January 2006). In the following sections I will describe my methods in detail.

2. Observation in the field

I devoted my first month exclusively to observing the sites and people's interaction there, without having conversations or conducting interviews. I registered interactions between physical elements and people's practices. I paid attention to physical features such as materials, site diagrams, texture, colour, composition, size, scale, light, style and context (see Annex 1 for main observation guidelines). The importance of the physical is related to the way in which the environment is not just a stage for practices, but simultaneously structures and is structured by them (Frisby 2001).

I will argue that the materiality of the world, our environment and the objects we use for our practices, is both a product of our practices and an important element in shaping them. Our bodies develop in an intertwined relation with the world's materiality. Addressing this approach to body, action and meaning, I argue that many of the understandings embodied in Chileans' practices are related to the place of the practice, the history of the practice and the bodily process of acquisition of the dispositions for it.

I demarcated a set of observed social interactions in the sites as a practice when it constituted a way of doing and saying oriented to a kind of purpose and framed within a set of rules. The continuity of these types of behaviour embodying intentionality, and thus an understanding, was determinant in my identification of practices. I observed the same practices for a length of time in a particular area within my sites. Thus, I understood practices as a routinised way of doing and saying, although the possibility of change is always present in them, as I will show in my analysis.

For instance, I distinguished the daily performance of a group of comics in the Plaza as a practice. I saw them the first day of my fieldwork and subsequently, I found them every time I was in the Plaza. Consider the following passage from my field notes:

> "I saw a large group of people standing in a circle outside the Cathedral. I walked towards them and joined the crowd. It was a comic show. Two guys wearing everyday clothes were speaking to the audience about ordinary facts. They made fun of poverty, gender relations, Peruvian immigrants
>
> (who meet every day at one corner of the Cathedral), unemployment, Chilean family relations, sex, the police, politics, fashion, class relations and religion." (Field notes, 1st September 2005).

The comic show is a practice that takes place in Plaza de Armas. By observing the comics I learnt about their schedule, their routine, their way of approaching the audience, their way of asking for tips. I explored different elements of this practice such as the comics' outfits, the audience, the place, the dispositions of the comics that make people laugh, the show's rhythm, timing and variations. The extrapolation of the comic

show, as a practice, from the background of the Plaza allowed me to explore and analyse its elements, which led me towards an understanding of its meaning.

Regarding the social interactions implied in practices, I focused on the observation of who was enacting the practices and the nature of the relations among different actors. I could enter into the practice by talking to people, but mainly by spending time with them and participating in their practice. For instance, I became familiar with the practice of shoe-shining in the Plaza by often sitting for hours with Ruben, one of the shoe-shiners, and participating in his routine: his interactions with clients, colleagues and friends in the Plaza.

I explored traditional and 'contemporary' practices going on in the places, how different kinds of practices relate to each other, how the urban design of places relates to practices and what dominant themes were related to people's practices. The observation included both visual and written tools. I documented every site through photographs, maps and diagrams, and a verbal description. This first period of time allowed me to map the sites and identify the main practices in them. First, I drew a plan of both sites and registered the location of different practices within them. Also, I drew sketches and took pictures of people using the place's furniture, objects and layout (paths and streets related to the Plaza and the Park) in different ways. This visual registration helped me to enrich my field notes later, bringing in reflections on concrete physical features related to the observed practices. In other words, it allowed me to explore connections between material forms and the practices of inhabitants (Lozanovska, 2002).

My focus on those practices which were constant at the sites made me more aware of the importance of place in practice. If place was a guiding research enquiry since the beginning of my study, observing the same practices in the same place over time demanded that I pay attention to how body movements, ways of handling objects, social agreements and time constituted an assemblage with the physicality of place. In that vein, I observed and analysed place in relation to practice, in which features of the practice were a product of place, and vice versa. I looked at the situation of the Plaza and the Park within the city and at the layout of each site —mainly, furniture and design— in relation to each practice. I observed the urban structure of the site, this is, the relationship between buildings and voids and the framework of routes and spaces that connect the sites with its surroundings. I also gave attention to the density and mix

of the sites; the amount and range of uses of them. Regarding buildings, I analysed type, scale in relation to the street and the other buildings in the site, and the way in which they do or do not encourage certain practices.

With reference to body and practice, I conducted detailed observation of how the actors of each practice have embodied a disposition for it. An essential guide to understanding how body and action are connected to meaning is Simmel's "Sociology of the Senses" (1997 [1907]). There Simmel focuses on the senses and looks in detail at how people use their eyes, ears, noses, tongues and skin. Simmel argues that, of the individual sensory organs, the eye is used for the connection and interaction of individuals enshrined in the act of looking at one another. His observations of interactions therefore dwell to a large extent on the face: "The face, in fact, accomplishes more completely than anything else the task of creating a maximum change of total expression by a minimum change of detail" (Simmel 1959 [1901]: 280). He also focuses on the ear, which in his view lacks the reciprocity of visual interaction between one eye and another, but nevertheless reveals certain things about the person speaking and the person hearing.

Simmel observes the way in which people use their senses in their practices as a gateway to understand the meaning of practices. Simmel develops this line of thought within his reflection about modernity. He argues that the modern person avoids differentiating the senses, in order to block out the violence in the environment:

> "The modern person is shocked by innumerable things, and innumerable things appear intolerable to their senses which less differentiated, more robust modes of feeling would tolerate without any such reaction" (1997 [1907]: 118).

Simmel's reflection on modern people's blocking of their senses and the consequences for social interactions refers to the space of the modern metropolis. Modern urban space develops together with the modern way of life and institutions. The body of metropolitan men and women changes in a way that follows the formation of social interactions in the city:

> "[I]n our interaction with others in the metropolis, the body takes on another significance. [...] In order to participate to the maximum in that struggle, individuals must adopt functional specializations, whether in production, circulation or consumption. In this context, the body itself must become functional" (quoted in Frisby 2001: 144).

In the same vein, Erving Goffman (1971, 1990) looks at how a detailed exploration of our behaviour in social interaction can lead us to meaning. He argues that we perform rituals which contain specific meanings in public. By the same token, we shape the image of ourselves with others by acting aware of the meaning that can be inferred from our action by others.

Within this understanding, I did an exploration of practices as interactions. By focusing on the body in the study of walking, playing and sitting, I could grasp the characteristics of the body in practice, its rhythm and form, the relation of the body with the objects used in the practice and with the surrounding world. In other cases, I explored the body in practice analysing the learning process in which individuals acquire the set of dispositions for their practice.

Regarding objects and practice, I approach objects' materiality as a cultural process that develops together with practices. Putting practice at the centre of my ethnographic work helps me to avoid reducing my observations to subjects and objects. Following

Goffman's analysis of the framing of our behaviour by the context, I would argue that objects are also frames for action, or as Miller puts it "backgrounds for living" (Miller 1987). Objects not only constrain or enable our practice (Miller 2005: 5) but, more importantly, they work as non-obvious yet crucial elements in our process of construction of meaning. By the same token, it is also important to look at what happens before and after the artefact (Buchli 2002:18) regarding practice, because this helps us to understand how the appropriation of objects is part of a broader process of construction of meaning that happens in practice.

Approaching objects as entities endowed with meaning lends strength to my exploration of practices as meaning. The phenomenological and somatic effects of

material culture beyond textuality are a reassertion of the problematic relations between bodies and things (Merleau-Ponty 1962). To delve into the materiality involved in practices implies constructing materiality.

By the same token, if we think of objects and places as being shaped in practice, their production becomes a performance through which persons and objects create and define each other (Tilley 1994). Therefore, practices exist in the material. It is impossible to think of practices in an empty environment, just as it is impossible to think about goods without linking them to people.

One of the most important current reflections about objects and agency is that of actor-network theory (ANT) which proposes that objects are an effect of stable arrays or networks of relations (Law 2002). Objects are part of the connections that shape practices. The ANT approach to objects offers interesting insights for the understanding of object creation, reproduction and role in practices. Every node of the network of actions involved in any set of interactions —oriented to material production, affective expression, theoretical thinking, social encounters and so on— reveals, explains and gives a horizon to the interactions taking place.

> "One of his [Bruno Latour, main ANT thinker] influential strategies [...] has been to take the concept of agency, once sacralized as the essential and defining property of persons, and apply this concept to the nonhuman world [...] Where material forms have consequences for people that are autonomous from human agency, they may be said to possess the agency that causes these effects." (Miller 2005: 11).

Anyhow, I intend to maintain a certain distance from ANT in my reflection insofar as I will construe the body as the heart of practices; not as one more connection but as the motor for every connection. In the vein of Alfred Gell and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, my first reference point is to people and their intentionality behind the world of artefacts. I agree with Latour about the mediating role and importance of all the actants mobilized towards a result, but I insist that the main coordinator of those is the human body.

During my observations I registered how practices develop along with objects and the environment; objects as elements of practice offer their materiality to it and are part of the rules and dispositions of practice. For instance, the form and materiality of a bench allows certain specific uses and discourages others. In order to explore practices, identifying the objects involved in them is as necessary as identifying the body and the place of the practices. I looked at the kind of interactions people establish with objects and the role that the objects' traits play in shaping those interactions.

By exploring practices as actions and understandings that exist through the material, we will reveal the material factor that is present in the way people make sense of their world. In this vein, I observed the position of items within the sites. Their materiality, age, and relation to the other objects present, and their function and permanence in the sites, shape the practice together with body and place.

Within this framework, objects are an important part of the exploration of practices as embodied understandings of the world of Santiago's people. Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal are full of things. I do not refer to all of them in my analysis; however, considering them in my observations led me to interesting findings. Objects are integrated into the practices performed in those places; hence, their characteristics required careful examination. Many of my informants take the material for granted. It has always been there so they do not think about it all the time. But their every action and thought is related in some way to the material. As Molotch asserts:

> "[A]rtifacts do not just give off social significations but make meanings of any sort possible. (...) [O]bjects work to hold meanings more or less still, solid, and accessible to others as well as to one's self. They form the tangible basis of a world that people can take to be a world in common" (2003: 11).

Observation was very important during the first month of fieldwork; it became the backbone of my methodology, and the conversations and interviews that came after were rooted and supported by constant observation. By observing, I was able to see repetitive and cyclical interactions, negotiations and trajectories. Also, observation helped me to integrate what I perceived with different senses.

By observing, I aimed to capture not only what I saw, but also what I heard, smelled, touched and tasted. Hence, my primary observation of the sites served to identify important issues related to the sites that deserved further discussion with people in the Plaza and the Park. For instance, observing people's schedules opened a door to my exploration of users' understandings of work and leisure, as well as on their right to particular areas within the sites that are used by different groups under a shift system. Features such as strong smells or noise in the sites opened conversations about respect, social arrangements and class; some noises and smells are related to particular classes' lifestyles. In sum, this early observation helped me to expand my initial guiding questions and in many cases to relate sensorial facts —shapes, noises, smells, textures— to some of my enquiries.

2.1. Observation and interviews out of the sites

I spent some time with people at the sites during a second visit to Santiago (August-September 2006). I met them out of the Plaza, at home or in places they like to go near the sites. Such participant observations shed further light on the relation between people's practices in public places and the rest of their lives.

3. Historical documentation

Historical documentation about the sites was useful to me in my observation. I reviewed the history of the sites, old maps and pictures and significant literature. I became informed about the physical changes to the sites and their historical, symbolic meaning within people's imaginary. In the case of the Plaza, I looked at both the original plans of the site and the plans of the renovation and I interviewed architects involved in the latter, covering a set of issues. In the case of the Park, I interviewed an architect who has studied the site in depth (see Annex 4 for more information about these interviews). As with the observation, this documentation helped me to define themes for conversations and in-depth interviews.

4. Informal conversations and interviews

I built a list of topics related to my initial observations of the sites, the people in them and their practices, and I used it as a starting point to approach people. Firstly, I approached people in informal conversations. I spend time with them, often sharing their activities. I went at least twice a week to each site so the regularity of my visits helped to gain my informants' confidence. After talking to many of them, I made a list of the informants that I wanted to interview in relation to the practices I had identified in both sites. I made appointments for a more formal interview, asking them if we could talk for around an hour and if I could record the conversation.

I conducted 34 in-depth interviews drawing on the group of topics I re-defined during my initial observation period, drawing on both my first research questions and my theoretical framework. As explained earlier, my research questions were dynamic and changed along with the progress of my ethnography, principally, with my conversations with users in the sites. As I advanced in my interviews, I included new topics that emerged in the interviews and in my continuing observation and experience of the sites. The topics were not the same for everybody all the time; they depended on the person and his/her practice in the site and they delved deeply into the elements that were interesting in each case.

The interview was not the end of my relationship with informants. I continued observing people's practices, paying attention to their interactions in a detailed way; noticing gestures, words, movements and routines (Goffman 1971). It is important to note that the present study searches for meaning in practices and the analysis of narratives is one part of the process. Therefore, even though narrative analysis is very important in the exploration on practices, it is only one part of the data I gathered in my search for meaning embodied in practices. After some weeks, this combination of observation, spending time with them, talking freely and conducting more formal interviews happened very fluently. I came back to several people for a second interview and to spend more time with them and to share their routines. In that sense, I understand participant observation in a broader sense (Denzin and Lincoln 1994; Maso 2001; Kusenbach 2003; Atkinson 1994) that includes sharing activities with people, talking with them, individually or in groups, and walking around the sites.

Regarding the relationship I built with my informants during my fieldwork, I tried to manage it within a range between distance and proximity. I intended to be a "stranger" following Simmel's definition of it: "a particular construction of distance and proximity, indifference and commitment" (1971 [1908]). Although I became very close to many of my informants, I consciously tried to constantly step back in order to maintain my freedom[6].

5. Field notes

Regarding data recording, I made field notes during the observation and after it as a reflection on the elements that had been explored. Also, I made field notes after my interviews to bring in some elements of the conversations that could not be registered by photography or voice recording, such as the atmosphere of the conversation in terms of social interaction (if it was friendly, open, scared, defensive, and so on), details about the emphasis in the body language or the voice of the interviewee in relation to certain topics, the flow of the conversation and so on.

Field notes, as an account of experiences, observed events and registration of conversations with users, do not aim to be objective descriptions of what I observed, but to make "thick description" possible (Geertz 2000). I included personal reflections on my observations and interviews and ideas about possible linkages with theoretical positions.

6. Questionnaires

Observation and in-depth interviews, however, did not provide me with information about an important group of people in both the Plaza and the Park: the passers-by. These people do not stay for long at the sites, they wait for someone, look at something particular or just walk through the Plaza or the Park towards their destination. I acknowledged I could not integrate them into my study as interviewees because they

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[6]Rolf Lindner devotes a chapter of "The Reportage of Urban Culture" (1996) to the figure of the stranger as a form of social researcher. In it, he analyses Simmel's stranger together with other forms of strangers such as Robert Park's marginal man and Schutz's stranger within the context of the study of urban culture.

were always in a hurry, so I could not keep them for an hour, and they were not daily users of the sites, so I could not build a relationship leading to an interview or a conversation. Nevertheless, passers-by are a constituent of both sites, so I developed a different tool to research them. I constructed a short, five-question interview to grasp what they were doing there (1) the area of Santiago they were coming from (2) with whom they were at the Plaza or the Park (3) how often they come to the sites (4) how they had reached the Park (means of transport) (5) Also, I asked for their age and recorded their sex. In some cases, the interview led to a longer conversation. I conducted 65 questionnaires at the Plaza and 95 at the Park. I stopped doing them when the answers started to repeat themselves and I decided I had a good picture of the kind of people who were passing by in both sites.

7. Visual methodologies

Visual methodologies played an important part in my observations, participant observations and interviews. Working with images reflexively contributes to the generation of knowledge (Pink 2001) and in that sense, images —pictures, maps and diagrams— illuminated many of my explorations. Using visual tools in the study of people's practices in public places not only led me to a collection of photographs, maps and diagrams, but it also helped me think about how people's embodied meaning of their lives is related to visual understanding.

The visual methods I used during my fieldwork were photography, mapping and diagramming. I worked with them in two ways: as starting points for interviews or conversations and as a means for both registering images and reflecting through the practice of making images (Bateson and Mead quoted in Banks and Morphy 1997). Within the first modality, I showed and discussed pictures with my informants. Also, I discussed my maps with them. These discussions opened the door to grasp how they understand their place. Many times, however, the visual material was forgotten after the first five minutes of conversation and people went on talking about what they wanted but, even in those cases, visuals served as a research tool. People were interested in seeing pictures, maps and old photographs of the Plaza and the Park and talking about them and other kind of topics followed from there.

Regarding pictures of the sites, I showed two sets of pictures to my informants. The first was a collection of old pictures of the sites which I showed them and asked for comments. The first approaches were comparisons with the present: how do you prefer it, how it was then or how it is now. Then we talked about how much they remembered about things that were not there anymore, and moved easily to experiences in the sites and value judgements about past and present times, practices and places. Photographs awakened people's memory in many cases, not in a linear way like matching memories with images, but so that people could delve into their fragmented memories inspired by photographs and reach their own remembered images. As Siegfried Kracauer argues: "Since what is significant is not reducible to either merely spatial or merely temporal terms, memory images are at odds with photographic representation. [...] they [memory images] are opaque, like frosted glass which scarcely a ray of light can penetrate. Their transparency increases to the extent that insights thin out the vegetation of the soul and limit the compulsion of nature" (Kracauer 1995, [1927]: 50-1).

The discussion of archive pictures of the sites with my informants opened a door to their perception of time and history in relation to the Plaza or the Park. Although the exercise with old pictures aimed to track mainly physical changes, it opened my research to much more: memories tied up with how people value certain practices and goods appeared very strongly as a topic to be studied.

The second set of pictures was made from my own recordings in the sites during my initial observation period. They were two kinds of pictures. First, scene pictures: landscape and action pictures. My purpose was to register the site as a whole and people in relation to it. And second, pictures of practices: I aimed to capture the practice visually: its body(ies), objects and place.

This set of pictures helped me to bring the materiality of the site and social interactions in it into the conversation about their everyday practices in them. I asked about particular things shown in the picture: what is this that you are handling here? Or for people appearing in the pictures: who is this person here? I've seen you with him/her... Pictures helped start interesting conversations about how people understand themselves, how they think others understand them and how they understand others. Additionally, pictures served as a means to start conversations. Every time I took a picture of

someone I asked for permission, either before ('may I take a picture?') or after ('I took this picture, may I keep it?').

Within the second modality of usage of visual tools, I tried to capture visual reflections. For instance, I took portraits. I took most of them after the interview as a way of registering particular physical characteristics of my interviewees, where I felt it could be useful to write about them. Also, I took pictures of objects, of the "tools" involved in practice as extensions of the body or place. These pictures helped me to analyse the objects in depth and understand them in relation to practice. Both kind of pictures shed light on the existing social order, in which the observed practices are inscribed; this is post-1990 Chile's social order. In this regard, my pictures were part of my material for study. Walter Benjamin reflects on August Sanders's photographic work in this same vein. Sander carried out a sociologically oriented project which included portraits of peasants, workers, artisans, capitalists, and artists, among many others. His work was the product of direct observation. Benjamin writes: "It was assuredly a very impartial, indeed bold sort of observation, but delicate too, very much in the spirit of Goethe's remark: 'There is a delicate empiricism which so intimately involves itself with the object that it becomes true theory'" (Benjamin 1999 [1931] : 520). I do not claim to have attained Sander's mastery in my pictures but hope that I have shared his spirit.

Regarding mapping, I started working with maps of the sites based on architectural plans that I obtained from the architects involved in the analysis and rehabilitation of Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal. From the material obtained, I developed more simple visual representation that retains just the essential elements of the sites. My own pictures were very useful to complete or complement some information related to the everyday that I wanted to emphasise in the maps, such as paths, practices' locations and relations among places, boundaries and borders. Some maps turned into diagrams. Even though I built them based on site plans, they stress landscapes, mobility, practices and objects present in the sites. Diagrams are interesting tools of analysis that combine information about the sites and people in them.

Acknowledging the importance of visual methodologies, I use them not only as an illustration of what I am explaining verbally, but also as a way of reinforcing my arguments. In some cases, I use diagrams containing arguments that cannot be made verbally only. For instance: making the point about social distance through physical

distance is easier if you actually show the latter by drawing signs on the picture or site map. Image may be a way of feeding social reflections based on narratives and social theories.

Diagram building is an on-going process that did not finish with the fieldwork. The diagram can be an analysis itself drawing on the way in which pictures, maps and signs are put together and I hoped my diagrams helped to develop the argument in some chapters[7]. This is not to say I will not always explain the images —I am aware that not all images are self-explanatory— but that I aspire to reinforce my arguments through them.

I am aware of the reflexivity issues concerning visual data, so I did a particular effort to avoid over-interpreting them. However, visual data, like any other data, is a representation and a product of an author and even reflexivity issues concerning visual data are most frequently raised regarding other forms of data and other methods of research where there are similar difficulties: "[W]riting is also inherently polysemic, and it is as easy to select a particular quotation that supports the point one is making as it is to manipulate the framing, lighting or tone of a photograph to present the desired effect" (Knowles and Sweetman 2004: 13).

Finally, I want to make two comments on the use of visual methodologies. Firstly, visuals enforce rigorous ethical behaviour because you cannot replace people's images in pictures as you replace people's names in written forms. Informants' anonymity cannot be maintained. What you can do is use their image with their consent and with the utmost respect. Secondly, the use of visuals stresses the perception of reality through vision. Relating what we see and capture through visuals to other kinds of data is key to maintaining the complexity of people's experience. I rely on written field notes to give an account of what I perceived with other senses, always being aware of the limitations of the written form.

[7] The work of Camille Zakharia, who used photo-montage as a medium and message, is an inspiring starting point for this task (Bullington 2006).

8. Data Analysis

I conducted a first data analysis using Atlas ti. This computer package permits working with both images and texts. I coded field notes, interviews and pictures according to the themes involved in my research questions. After a first round with Atlas ti I abandoned it, the main reason being that I started to lose reflexivity using the software. I coded in a machine-like fashion without reflecting on new codes and new alternatives and I was afraid of ending up with an oversized and unwieldy set of codes. I started to lose the big picture of my data and I could not see the connections between codes and my research enquiries anymore. I started to draw graphics by hand to impose order on what I had coded and that worked nicely. I decided to use handwritten notes on printed transcriptions of field notes, interviews, pictures and graphs to think about my categories and arguments. The information I had coded in Atlas ti works as a data base where I can find things easily, but no longer as a tool for thinking.

9. Ethical issues

I conducted my fieldwork in two public places. Because of their public nature I did not have problems accessing the field; I did not have to ask anybody's permission to be there. Accessing people was a different matter. I discarded the possibility of obtaining the consent of every person that I observed or photographed from a distance because it was logistically impossible. Nevertheless, I worked with respect and care for those present in the sites. In relation to participant observation and interviews, I told everyone I talked who I was and what I was doing. I asked for their consent to talk longer with them, to stay or to interview them. I did not use consent forms because in the Chilean context this would have appeared overly formal and would have broken the fluency of the encounter. Instead, I chose to give my contact card to each of them. The act of giving them my card with my name and my contact information was a way of saying that they could come back to me to ask for explanations, recordings and pictures. Also, that they could contact me to discuss issues or complain about how I managed the information they gave me. By giving them my card, I was telling them they could find me if they ever wanted to.

As regards the content of the conversations and interviews, I was very careful of my informants' intimacy. Every time I came to a private topic within an interview I asked my informant if he/she really wanted to talk about that. This offered a way out. Sometimes they took it and I lost the opportunity to delve deeper into interesting topics. I remember, for instance, a conversation with Julio, the owner of a very old-fashioned cafe in Parque Forestal neighbourhood. He told me he was in prison during dictatorship. I asked him if he wanted to tell me what happened to him there. And he said: "I do not talk about the past, it hurts, and every time I do talk about it, it is like going through situations again, so I prefer to pass". I did not try to insist in any way. Instead, I changed the subject. Other times, informants did not want to avoid personal topics. This was the case of Daniela, a prostitute in Plaza de Armas. While she was telling me about her life she started crying. She was going through how she was abused by her father and abandoned by the father of her child. I told her that she did not have to tell me all about it if she did not want to. She dried her tears with a napkin and she went on: "It's okay, I do want to tell you".

Reciprocity was another element at the core of the relationships I built with my informants. As they talked about themselves they wanted to know about me. They asked back and I answered. This acted as a gauge of how far I could go in asking about their lives. I did not go into topics that, in relation to myself, I found too intimate. This thought is rooted in the acknowledgement of the power relations existing in the research process. I was in an advantaged position in relation to my interviewees. I was asking the questions, I was the researcher, I was the one with the knowledge and, in many cases, I was the one from the upper class (most of the Plaza interviewees belong to lower-middle and lower classes, and class is a strong source of power in Chile).

Within the context of reciprocity, I helped my informants in their daily work, as they were helping me. For instance, in the Plaza, I watched their stools at lunch time, I bought things for them when they were stuck at their stools selling their wares, and I shared with them cigarettes, sodas, beers and lunch. In the Park, I looked after their children and dogs, I helped them to gather up their goods when the police were coming, and I handed out flyers for shows. Building a relationship based not only on trust and friendship, but on reciprocity was very important to balance the unequal power relation between researcher and informant. I would not have been in such a strong position if

they could not have asked me what they wanted and if I hadn't made it clear to them how important they were for my work.

CHAPTER TWO: PLACE SETTINGS

"Te derrumbaron el cuerpo
y tu alma salió a rodar,
Santiago, penando estás"

"They destroyed your body
and your soul came out to travel
Santiago, you are a ghost around"

Violeta Parra[8], "Santiago penando estás"

In order to explore social practices, social interactions that happen in place, it is necessary to look deeper into the places where they occur. Interaction and place develop together; interaction takes place in place, it cannot exist without a place and its form depends to some extent on the place where it happens. If we understand place as the space and time where we belong in social interrelations and co-presence (Massey 1996), then social interaction is shaped and developed in a particular space and time and only exists as such in that particular space-time condition, in that particular place.

In this chapter I want to describe both the materiality and the forms of social interactions happening in the sites and, in so doing, explain how social practices develop in place. I will relate the physicality of the sites to forms of interactions or social practices using different perspectives for my analysis. Within this framework, the analysis of one site is not equivalent to that of the other in every respect because some reflections are not relevant for both.

Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal hold different meanings as a result of people's practices within them. They are symbolic public spaces in Santiago and are part of the official Chilean history and the memories of Santiago's people. We can see this in figure 1 and 2 which show Santiago's early maps by the Jesuit Alonso de Ovalle, sixteenth century. These maps —or similar ones— commonly illustrate Chilean school history text books. They emphasize the role of Plaza de Armas in the Hispanic colonial city.

[8] Chilean composer (1917-1967).

Figure 1: Santiago's colonial drawing
Source: Centro de Investigaciones Diego Barros Arana 2002

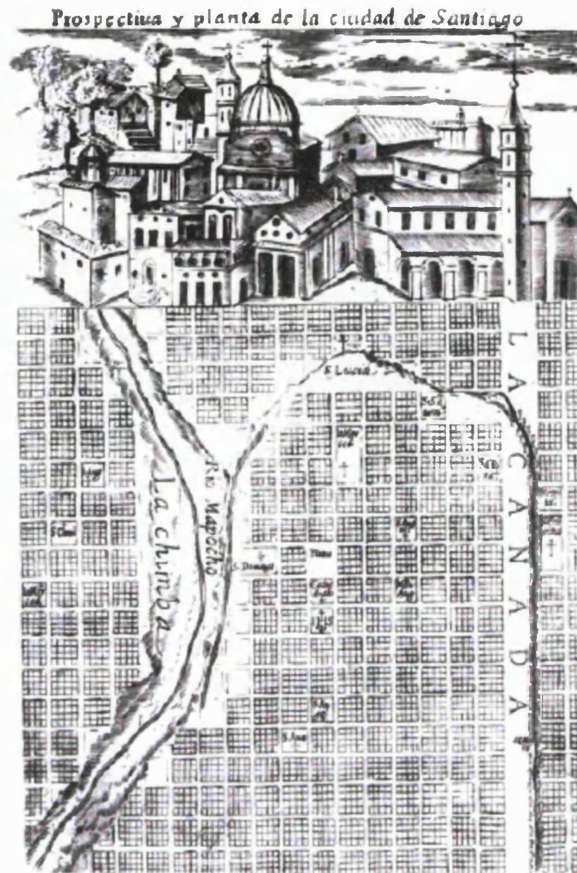

Figure 2: Santiago's colonial drawing
Source: Centro de Investigaciones Diego Barros Arana 2002

Practices in the Plaza and the Park are not only diverse in terms of their form and actors —ie. in terms of sex, age, ethnicity and social class[9]— but they also relate to different

[9] My approach to class in this study is very much informed by Pierre Bourdieu's approach to class. I intend to understand and explain the interdependencies and connections between economic, social and cultural capital (Crompton and Scott 2005). The most common way for defining class in Chilean social studies is income level. However, I argue that class in Chile is very much an interweaving not only of income and education, but also family origins. Income and education are not sources of social mobility in the short term. The Chilean upper class is related to particular families who were the original rich families in colonial times. These groups still belong to the upper class even if they have no fortune left. I believe that the theme of class in Chile —as in many Latin American countries— is intermixed in very complex ways with rank; people do not belong to the upper class because of their income only, they need to belong to the exclusive group of families who have ruled the country since the nineteenth century. As I progressed in my fieldwork I tried to classify my informants by class drawing on the observation of their lifestyles, their narratives and their acquaintances, as well as their income and educational level. My data about class is, therefore, my construction.

I use the term class in a flexible way leaving room for manoeuvre within the categories. In this vein, I introduce the categories of lower-middle and upper-middle class when additional distinctions make a difference in the argument. As a starting point, however, I draw on income and educational level: I denote as lower class people those whose individual income is around the poverty line (the Ministry of Planning in Chile sets the poverty line at 43,712 pesos per month (approximately 50 pounds), which corresponds to

dimensions of everyday life such as power relationships, work, economics, religion, art and leisure. Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal are like *alephs*, to borrow Borges's image[10], containing other places: bits of Santiago and other Chilean cities are present in their users' practices and narratives. Because of their location within the city —in the foundational area, linked to Santiago's metropolitan area's main roads and public transport systems— the Plaza and the Park function as corridors amongst and between places. Today the city of Santiago is the country's largest city —with almost six million inhabitants according to the latest census (2002) — and, as figure 3 shows, the Metropolitan area has extended, developing from the foundational triangle.

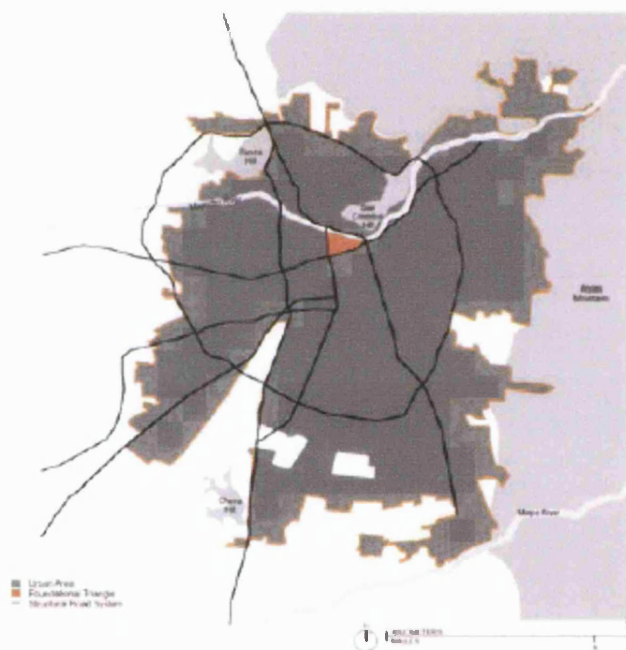

Figure 3: Growth of Santiago's Metropolitan area
Source: MINVU archives

Santiago's foundational triangle, shown in figure 4, is in the inner city; at the north side is Parque Forestal which runs along Mapocho River. Close to it and towards the south is Plaza de Armas. Alameda, Santiago's main avenue, runs east-west along Mapocho river

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the cost of two individual basic baskets of goods and services) and includes those who did not finish secondary school. Middle class denotes people whose individual income is around 500,000 pesos monthly, who finished secondary school and had the opportunity to study at a technical institution or a university. Upper class denotes people whose income is around 2,000,000 pesos or more and who went on to further study after school.

[10] The Argentinean writer, Jorge Luis Borges, tells us about the *aleph* in a short story; it is a little sphere located in a remote corner of a Buenos Aires house basement. It contains all that exists: the Absolute — places, feelings, languages, gazes, times, laughter, tears, all that every being has lived, narrated and imagined.

at the south of the Plaza and carries many of Santiago's buses as well as its first underground line.

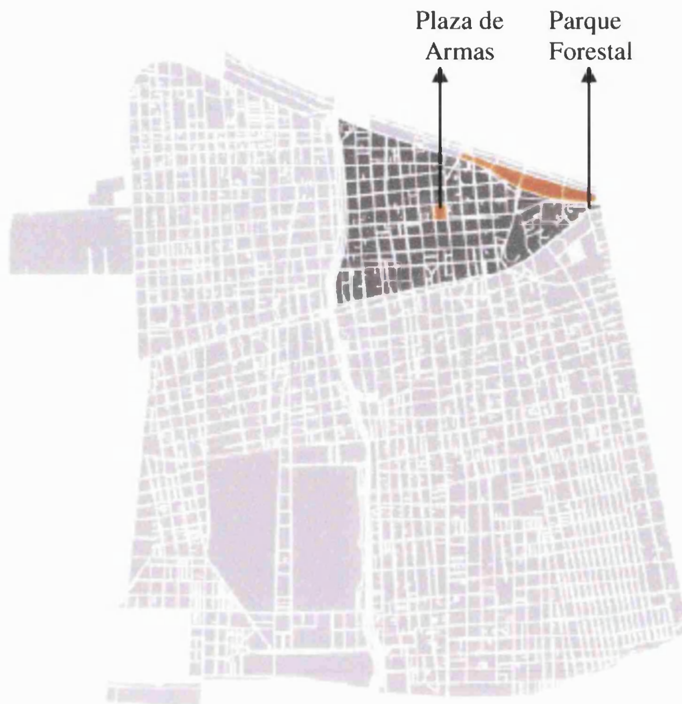


Figure 4: Foundational triangle within Santiago's district
Source: Author's composition

In the following sections, I will describe how the Plaza and the Park forged their symbolic and contested character over time. I then aim to introduce Chile's current tensions and show how they are set in a sensual form, all within the context of place.

The Plaza

Plaza de Armas was established as the most important city square at Santiago's foundation (12 February 1541), as was every Plaza de Armas or Plaza Mayor in Hispanic based cities. From the time of Santiago's foundation until the end of the eighteenth century, the Plaza hosted significant political, economic and cultural events in the city, such as military triumphs, markets, royal oaths, funerals, weddings, celebrations, religious feasts and chivalric games. On the north side of the Plaza was the city hall, as well as the government and the legislative offices. Initially, they were under brick arches and later on, at the end of the sixteenth century, in official buildings

constructed for those functions. The east and south sides of the Plaza hosted the market established by the Spanish authorities in order to provide people with basic goods. This market was in front of the residential buildings on the Plaza's east and south sides. The west side was dominated by the Cathedral whose entrance did not face the Plaza until the end of the eighteenth century.

At the end of the eighteenth century, the Spanish authorities commenced a reconstruction programme in the city, which included most of the buildings that surround the Plaza today. They first rebuilt the Cathedral, which had been damaged during the 1730 earthquake. They built a larger one taking account of Santiago's increasing population and shifted its entrance to the Plaza. Although the Cathedral was not finished in its present state until the end of the nineteenth century, these changes were the beginning of an authoritarian effort to clear the Plaza of beggars, vendors and people who worked in the market. These changes aimed for a less popular and crowded Plaza and sought to establish order and introduce an atmosphere of civilisation and civic life. In addition, built were a house for the governor and two new buildings for the city hall, the government secretaries and the legislative authorities on the north side of the Plaza. Today these buildings host Santiago's district town hall, the National History Museum and the Chilean Post Office headquarters. At the end of the eighteenth century, the authorities moved the market to a site near Mapocho River in order to clear the Plaza of animals. On the east side of the Plaza they built Portal Mc-Clure, an elegant residential building with fancy shops on its ground floor.

The Spanish government's efforts to tidy and clean up the Plaza continued with the Republican government. In 1825, the name was changed from Plaza de Armas to Plaza de la Independencia (Independence Plaza) and in 1838 the old fountain at the Plaza's centre was replaced with a large marble monument imported from Geneva. Around the monument, gardens were built and trees planted, giving the Plaza an entirely different character. Several changes in the Plaza design came after the first renewal, all of them were aimed at endowing the Plaza with a more bourgeois appearance. However, despite these alterations, the Plaza remained popular and crowded. People continued to call it Plaza de Armas. Tramcars made for easy access and the Plaza continued to be a place for encounter and diversity. As described in Harper's Magazine in 1890 by Theodore Child: "It is the centre of Santiago's dynamics, the end of tramcars' routes, the big parking area for coaches, the great evening walk (...) What a joyful aspect a Latin

square has! And what an important role it plays in city life! The Plaza has benches and trees to offer shade and rest to citizens, mothers, wet-nurses; to the elderly, adults and young people alike." (Quoted in de Ramon et al. 1984, author's translation).

In 1930, the authorities tore down the buildings on the east and south sides of the Plaza and built new ones, while preserving the front archways. These buildings remain today and are mostly commercial. Portal Bulnes, on the east side of the Plaza, is known as the "bag portal" because it hosts bag and clothing shops in its archway, and Portal Fernandez Concha, on the south side, is called the "food portal" because its archway is filled with fast food establishments. The angle formed by the two portals encompasses the epicentre of the Plaza's commercial activity. Passers-by use them as shopping corridors between Paseo Estado and Paseo Ahumada, the two main commercial streets running south-north and ending at each side of Portal Fernandez Concha.

In 1998, a public competition was held to redesign the Plaza's interior. On the one hand, the plan was viewed as a logistical necessity, since it would include the construction of an underground station. On the other, the narrative favoured by the public authorities and architects involved in the renewal was that the 'new Chile' which commenced in the 1990s with the recovery of democracy required a qualitative change in the main public space of Chile's capital, one representing Chile's political achievement. Just as the building of the Ringstrasse in Vienna has been read by many as a visual expression of a social class (Schorske, 1981: 25), I argue that the new design of Plaza de Armas is a projection of one group's values and desires onto a space.

The new project for the Plaza was finished in 2000. The successful architects' team maintained that their project aimed to make possible multiple signifiers, expressions, times, transits, routes, encounters and experiences in the Plaza. They assumed the Plaza embodied multiple qualities and their goal was to reinforce that. They underlined the void space of the Plaza in order to emphasise the numerous actions taking place within it. The project was intended to create a theatrical space which would re-establish the celebratory dimension of the Plaza. This would be accomplished by increasing the public ground surface in order to create an esplanade. Areas of grass were cleared and paved while space-efficient palm trees replaced the more cumbersome leafy variety. The architects also gave a key role to the Cathedral and elevated it to the most important building of the Plaza by clearing the trees and street furnishings from in front of it.

What is more, the project aimed to turn the Plaza into both a centripetal and centrifugal space; hosting people while connecting them with their context through the design of double sided benches which look to the Plaza's interior and the street.

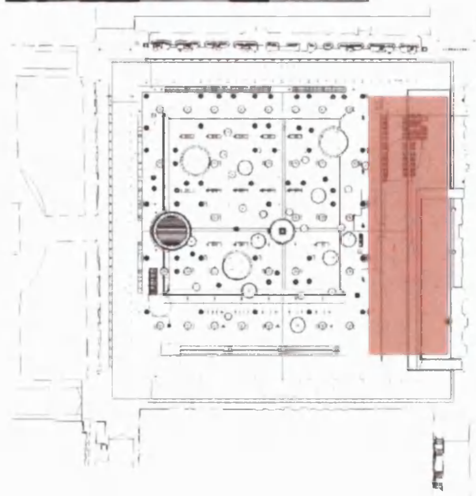
As may be seen in the figure below, the architects' proposal comes to life in an institutional form in September when the Plaza hosts two major Chilean events: the Te Deum, an ecumenical mass to pray for Chile on the day of National Independence, and the Virgin Carmen procession on the last Sunday of the month which starts and ends at the Cathedral. In everyday life, the Plaza remains as a place for the celebration of the ordinary, as we will see in the section on social practices in the Plaza.

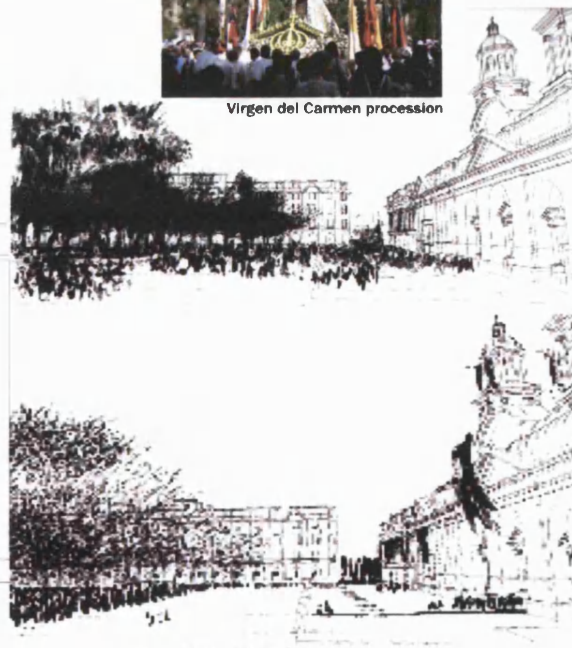
The Everyday Life

The Ceremonial Days

Te Deum Ceremony

Virgen del Carmen procession





Plaza de Armas Project

Figure 5: Plaza de Armas project
Source: Croquis by the architects (Perez de Arce et al. 1998), author's pictures and Michelle Bachelet picture from www.minsegpres.gov.cl

The project was very well received in architectural circles; it secured very positive reviews in architectural magazines and it is still quoted as an exemplary work of public

architecture. Nonetheless, most of Santiago's population did not like the new Plaza. A hard surfaced square is unusual for Chile where most of the main town squares' designs are based on grass lawns and paths. People expect a Plaza to be green and shady. They argue that Plaza de Armas was made into a grey, concrete place. The architects' design appears as a view from above; a distant and somewhat remote idea of what Santiago's main Plaza should be. It is perceived by its users as resulting from the gaze of power; a gaze that does not engage with ordinary people and their everyday life experiences, like the gaze of Icarus described by Michel de Certeau in his famous chapter "Walking in the City":

> "An Icarus flying above these waters, he can ignore the devises of Daedalus in mobile and endless labyrinths far below. His elevation transfigures him into a voyeur. It puts him at a distance. It transforms the bewitching world by which one was "possessed" into a text that lies before one's eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a god." (de Certeau 1984: 92).

In this vein, let me present some examples of actual users' opinions, starting with Iris:

> "Iris is a woman who works for a cleaning firm. She usually goes to the Plaza at lunch time. She sits on a bench and rests for a while. She tells me that she has two daughters and remembers the time when she used to visit the Plaza with them, when they were little girls. Now she thinks that the Plaza is too busy and has too much concrete. "I don't like it", she says. "I really enjoyed coming here with them here to play but not anymore." (Field notes 27 September, 2005).

Iris talks little. She is not very interested in talking about the Plaza. For her it is just a place near her work where she can get away from the office environment. She is neither enthusiastic nor completely negative about it. She is indifferent to the place. Luis, a passer-by, has a more elaborate opinion of the site design, yet he too is equally detached. The day I met him he had come to the business centre to pay bills:

> "I don't like Plaza de Armas. I always walk across it but I never stop; I would never come to spend time here. This was a mistake by the man who is sitting over there", he says, pointing towards the district's town hall building. "He thinks that his office is a little Moneda[11] and as an obsessive act of modernization he made this, which does not have anything to do with Chile. There is no logic, it is an empty site, there is no shade. I am from Tomé, from the south, and there the square is like a refrigerator, you don't feel hot in it because it has trees. Plus, this Plaza has been transformed into a decadent place; it's a site for prostitution and robbery." (Field notes, 15 September 2005).

Luis uses the Plaza as a starting point to comment on major authoritarian decisions, the way he perceives Chile and Santiago's crime issues. Converted into an urban site, the Plaza plays host to crime. Luis's words link modernisation, urbanisation and a growing crime rate. Like many of my interviewees, he tends to link the countryside with a virtuous life. The Plaza, stripped of its natural elements —trees, grass, shade— turns into a depraved site. Marcelo also misses the trees, not as a sign of virtue but as ornaments. He links the Plaza with the image of Santiago as a capital city and thinks that it should glow more; he misses the variety of colours and finds the Plaza's lack of contrast boring.

> "I don't know, but I think that the main square of the capital of Chile should be more ... I find it kind of boring. Squares in other Chilean cities are prettier; full of colours and flowers; this square is very sad."(Field notes, 2 November 2005).

Nevertheless Marcelo comes to the Plaza and finds entertainment: on the one hand, he says the Plaza is sad and boring yet, on the other, he is there looking for fun; watching the chess players is his entertainment: he likes to stand behind them and follow their moves closely. He used to play chess; coming to the Plaza to play every now and then. He now works in a nearby bank and prefers to spend his lunch hour in the Plaza, rather than in the adjacent shopping Mall on Puente Street. For Marcelo, the Plaza has not changed in terms of practice. He is still to be found at the chess players area as he was in the times before the renovation.

[11] The Government House of Chile is called Palacio de la Moneda.

Like the passers-by, the people who work in the Plaza also miss the trees and their shade, and their critiques have a political emphasis. "For 63 years, Ubilla (everybody calls him by his surname) has been shining shoes ten hours a day in the Plaza. He is 81, widowed and remarried, lives with his wife, and knows the Plaza very well. He has spent more time at the Plaza than at his home. He comes to his spot every day. For him the Plaza renovation was an idea born of the politicians' arrogance:

> "All these gentleman who think that because they studied abroad they know about things. They destroyed this Plaza because they wanted to make a Plaza in a European style and they destroyed it. All these politicians think that because they studied they know it all. Bullshit!" (Interview with Ruben Ubilla, shoe-shiner, 3 October 2005).

As with Luis, Ubilla's opinions about the Plaza are interwonven with his opinions about Chilean politicians and authorities. He perceives the Plaza's renovation as an authoritarian act by people educated elsewhere. He experiences the renovation as exclusion; once again, decisions are made by the small group of people who govern the country, without taking into account the rest of the Chileans.

A similar opinion is held by Robinson, a painter who hides himself and his anger behind a big beard and under a green umbrella. He is in his late forties and has worked in the Plaza for many years. He lives in the Portal Fernandez Concha building, on the south side of the Plaza.

> "The Plaza was the centre of Santiago, since the Spaniards founded it; here they held trials, they executed people, and they built the Cathedral, the Royal Audience and so on. We are copying Spain and now they built this new Plaza which is an attempt to be modern and it makes no sense!" He blames the political transition: "our political transition is also a copy of the Spanish one, that's what Santiago's movida[12] is all about, Santiago wants to be like Madrid." (Interview with Robinson Abello, painter, 22 September 2005).

[12] The Spanish "movida" was the name for Madrid's night-life after Franco's dictatorship. Similarly, Robinson talks about Santiago's movida referring to Santiago's night-life, which includes new clubs, restaurants and shows.

Robinson links the Plaza's renovation with Chile's political transition. His real disappointment is not the new Plaza design but the direction that the Chilean government is taking. He is politically left-wing and was expecting something more from the democratic governments that have ruled the country since the dictatorship. He wanted Chile to take an original political path instead of following external models. The comedians who perform daily in front of the Cathedral also link their opinions of the site to Chile's political history. They miss the days when they performed everywhere in the Plaza telling jokes against the dictatorship and had to run from the police, dressed as clowns.

The public link the Plaza's renovation not only with the government authorities' purposes but also with the will of the Catholic Church. Alejandro, who sells balloons and plastic toys at the Plaza, thinks that the new renovation had something to do with the Catholic Church's attempts to reinforce its presence within society:

> "This was all about the Catholic Church; it was the Catholic Church that pushed for the changes. The construction of the underground was not reason enough to change the setting [...] the problem was that people couldn't see the Cathedral for the trees and the Catholic Church wanted people to notice it, they wanted to make it important. That's why they changed everything. Now, when you come to the Plaza, what do you see? The Cathedral! It is the most important thing in the Plaza right now. They cut down the trees, took out all the other things to leave space for the Cathedral. Otherwise they would not have made all these changes." (Interview with Alejandro, vendor, 24 September 2005).

Alejandro was the only one who brought up the Cathedral as an issue. However, my interviewees often link criticism of the Catholic Church with criticism of the ruling political system. They perceive the Catholic Church as a political power rather than a religious institution. By the same token, all people's opinions on the Plaza involve tension between the understanding of Chile's new times from above, the way in which politicians and the Church make sense of Chile, and their embodied understanding from below. As in Vienna earlier, modern transformation, in the case of the Plaza de Armas, demonstrated that aesthetic criticism is anchored in broader social issues: "If the Ringstrasse embodied in stone and space a cluster of social values, those who criticised

it inevitably addressed themselves to more than purely architectural questions." (Schorske, 1981: 62).

The figure below illustrates the way in which the Plaza design has hosted different practices over its history. In the beginning it was mainly a place where the Spaniards practised their power: they traded Indians and ruled the colony in the institutional buildings in the Plaza. Then, together with the settlement of an upper class of Chileans (formed by Spaniards' descendants), the Plaza acquired a function of entertainment as a place for gatherings and walks. Consequently, its form shifted from an empty esplanade to an ornamental garden. However, all social classes continued using the Plaza. The Plaza layout of 2000 is closer to the original one, which privileged its institutional aspect.

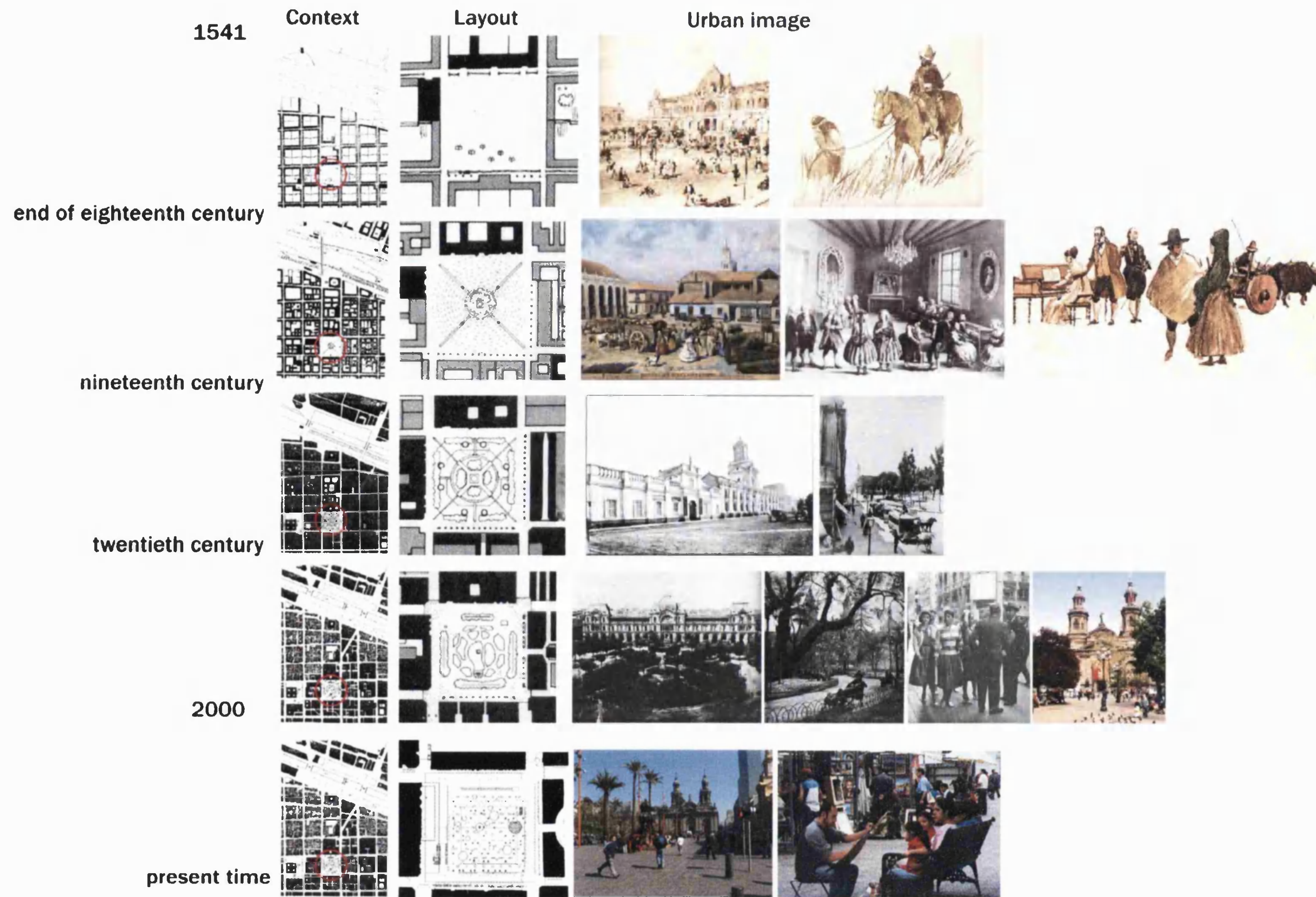


Figure 6: The Plaza since its foundation
Source: Author's composition

The Park

Parque Forestal differs from Plaza de Armas insofar as it has undergone little change since it was first set out (1903). Today it remains very much as the 1930 Baedeker guide to Santiago describes it:

> "[Parque Forestal] runs along the southern side of the Mapocho canal from Claras Street up to Baquedano Square. It was made on the grounds left after the canalization of the river being the most central promenade and handsomest as regards forestall ornamentation, in the city. It was planned to take advantage of the undulations of the ground and the trees, plants, lawns and lakes are of good appearance and deserving of praise having been the work of the gardener and landscape designer Mr. Dubois."

Although the lake was subsequently filled in and the terrace is a playground today, the park's ornamental design is still its most distinctive characteristic. The Palace of Fine Arts (Museo de Bellas Artes), a French-style building from the turn of the twentieth century, gives the site an imprint of high culture and the Fine Arts School is today the Museum of Contemporary Art (MAC). It was recently restored and re-opened in December 2005. French parks were the inspiration for Parque Forestal and its designer, landscape architect Jorge Dubois, who returned from Paris in 1901, was very much influenced by French architecture.

Parque Forestal's genesis is also related to the modern idea of progress through urban renewal and the building of major urban infrastructures. We could argue that the French influence was not only architectural but also political. The site of Parque Forestal was a wasteland filled with squatters' houses. At the west end of the site was a cockfighting pit, which was considered a very popular and low-class activity. The removal of the lower classes from the site mirrors Haussmann's cleansing of Paris. Also, there is an affinity between the idea of building from rubbish and a constructed concept of nature and the ideals of modernisation.

In David Harvey's terms, the urban works that characterised the Paris of modernity were developed amidst a "struggle to give political meaning to concepts of community and class; to identify the true bases of class alliances and antagonisms; to find political, economic, organizational and physical spaces in which to mobilize and from which to press demands". (2003: 296). In Santiago's case, the Park was part of a broader group of projects celebrating Chile's first centenary as an independent country. It was, therefore, a political action, a way of reinforcing the Chilean identity as a country of Parks looking towards modernisation, moving beyond the precarious condition of a dump.

Also, Parque Forestal's origins are reminiscent of Haussmann's responding "to the emphasis upon health and hygiene, upon the revitalization of the human body and the psyche through access to the curative powers of "pure" nature, which had lain behind a series of proposals made by the "hygienists" of the 1830s" (Harvey 2003: 245). In Paris, Haussmann's transformation of the old city dump into the Buttes Chaumont Park was a response to the emphasis upon health and hygiene. In Santiago, the Park was a product of the new infrastructures related to the conduct and the use of water, as part of an overall urban strategy developed at the end of the nineteenth century, whose main aim was to make the city more hygienic. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Mapocho river was channeled and a system to remove sewage and rain water was put in place. Santiago's mayor at that time, Benjamín Vicuña Mackena, proposed the channelling of the Mapocho river as a mandatory issue and included the construction of Parque Forestal into the project (Vicuña Mackena 1872). The Park's design was rooted in the treatment of water. Its landscape architect, Dubois, flooded sections of the Park, taking advantage of the proximity of the river in order to plant the Park in a soil that was not, originally, suitable for planting trees. The planting of the Park took ten years and it had an important influence on Santiago's environment.

In terms of design, the Park imposed a French style on Santiago's centre and many buildings were constructed around it following French building styles. This includes the Estación Mapocho train station, the Palace of Fine Arts (Beaux Arts Museum) and a monument donated by the French Government. The creation of the Park was not only related to the channelling of the Mapocho River but also to real estate business. The Park gave rise to a new neighbourhood in which the main architectural works of the centenary were built. It was a haute bourgeois neighbourhood into which the upper

classes moved and a bourgeois spirit led the Park's landscape plan. The Park was divided into four sectors: the main avenues —paths of some four metres wide— were planted with imported species from France. Also, a number of wealthy Chileans, such as Salvador Izquierdo and Antonio Bascuñán Santa María, donated trees (El Mercurio newspaper, 27 April 1987).

The Baedeker guide to Santiago (1939) describes the Park's terrace —located on the north side between the lake and the avenues— as a lovely place "with picturesque fixtures where in the evenings and nights of the good Season a great crowd assembles to dance and take refreshments" and it says that admission must be paid. Yet, the Park's exclusively bourgeois character did not last, however. Although most of my interviewees made sense of it as an originally upper-class place, other ways of making sense of the site accumulated over the years.

In the nineteen twenties the French fever came to an end. The working classes elected Arturo Alessandri Palma, a liberal man with egalitarian ideas, as President and discourses of social justice and labour rights came to dominate the political scene. The city authorities decided to extend the Park to the west as far as the doors of the central market of the city -a very popular place- by constructing four squares, and in 1944 they filled in the lagoon. In figure 7 I attempt to show how this extension added activities such as card playing amongst market vendors and sleeping drunk on the grass to the bourgeois atmosphere of the Park.

Figure 7: Park's extension: a break with the bourgeois ornamental design.
Source: Author's market area pictures, De Ramón et al. 1984, Fischer and Storandt 1960.

Since then, the Park has been the scenario for many cultural representations: the literary vanguard of the fifties gathered in the Park surroundings, Chilean artists studied in the Fine Arts School and then exhibited in the Palace of Fine Arts and the Museum of Contemporary Art (MAC), socialist demonstrations took place in the seventies and so, more recently, did art performances and political demonstrations. Today, Parque Forestal remains a site for leisure, but it is mainly a place of diversity. Its public is much more mixed than when it was built. It is one of the most widely used public spaces in the city and people from many of Santiago's districts come to spend their weekends there, as I could confirm on a spring Sunday afternoon:

> "There is a pregnant woman sitting on a bench near Fuente Alemana fountain. She is 32 years old and lives in Puente Alto. She was walking elsewhere but she was so tired that she stopped in the Park to rest. There are a grandmother and grandson talking. She is a young grandmother, in her late sixties. She likes to come to the Park with her 17-year-old grandson. She has lived in this Santiago district for three years now and every other week comes with her grandson to the site. There is a father playing with his 10- and 12-year-old sons on the lawn beside Fuente Alemana. They had a long trip from Puente Alto by bus and underground to reach the Park. They come every two months and enjoy it. There are other families who came by bus or underground from San Joaquin, Curacavi, Lo Espejo, Cerro Navia, Nunoa, San Miguel, Cerrillos, Renca, Independencia. All these trips last around one hour so most of them came early after lunch and plan to stay until the daylight has gone."(Field notes 16 October 2005).

Sunday activities at the Park form the background for what is happening in the neighbourhood. Since the early nineties many young professionals —a cultural new class, to borrow David Ley's terminology (Ley 1994)— started to move into the area. It was not a market-driven process of gentrification since Parque Forestal's neighbourhood was not decayed like other parts of Santiago's inner city, but was driven by Parque Forestal's symbolic meaning. People perceive it as diverse, democratic and human. I will devote chapter five to Parque Forestal and the Chilean cultural new class, but let me introduce the setting here. After almost 15 years of newcomers moving in, Parque Forestal's neighbourhood has become a trendy area.

Long-term residents are living alongside newcomers and a rich mix of ages and social classes can be found in the neighbourhood. Many buildings have been renewed in order to suit newcomers and new businesses and services have started up to serve the new population: including cafes and internet cafes; restaurants; clothing, furniture and decoration boutiques; theatre and film venues; and art galleries. All of these have an international feel and are aimed at middle and upper-middle class consumers. Their prices are high and their style seeks to imitate that of cosmopolitan cities.

Diversity has become one of the neighbourhood's main assets and new entrepreneurs take advantage of it. Danitza, the owner of Café Mosqueto, started her business in the neighbourhood not only because she lived there but also because she thought its diversity made it an interesting spot:

> "The interesting thing about this neighbourhood is its heterogeneity. The café is ageless; it is a place whose richness is based on variety. (...) Here you have many Oriental people as well, with Chinese restaurants, Japanese restaurants, and the people live here. There are many foreigners around, French people, I don't know, there is more variety in many ways and that is very rich. Chileans are accustomed to homogeneity and that narrows your perspectives in life, children's perspectives, everything." (Interview with Danitza, café owner, 17 October 2005).

Parque Forestal, because of its location in relation with the rest of Santiago's Metropolitan area, serves as a border, as a place for exchange and movement, as a "living edge" (Sennett 2006). Although it is in a section of Santiago's urban grid that is used more by lower-middle and lower classes it is not stigmatised as belonging to those classes. Santiago's east starts at Plaza Italia, at the eastern edge of the Park, and the west at Mapocho bridge, at the western edge of the Park. The richer you are, the further east you live in people's understanding. The Park is in the centre.

However, users experience the Park in very different ways. Middle class newcomers keep their distance from the Park. They do not use it at the weekend, when people from all over Santiago metropolitan area go to it. Instead, they have made the Park a backdrop for their lifestyle. They look at it from above, staying in their flats and trendy cafes. In this way, the neighbourhood's function as a border serves their purpose of

being there and at the same time, not being involved. They experience the site in fragments, without combining conflicting experiences.

Loreto, a Parque Forestal resident, celebrates the possibility of being part of what is now happening in Chile and, at the same time, maintains a distance from it. At election time in late 2005 she was able to follow the demonstrations in Alameda and the Park from her flat:

> "When something important is happening at a national level I turn off the television and I hear it from my balcony. I find that great! Great that I don't need anybody to tell me about it! Great that I am here, near enough to know but far enough so I don't feel invaded." (Interview with Loreto, Parque Forestal resident, 19 January 2006).

Parque Forestal neighbourhood gives residents a measure of diversity. Sebastián, a 33-year-old doctor, moved from his parents' place in Vitacura, an upper class neighbourhood, to Parque Forestal five years ago and feels that this is the place where he wants to be:

> "When I look at this neighbourhood from Puente Alto [where he works as a public medical practitioner] I find it very posh, very snobbish, many things. But when I look at it from Vitacura I find it adequate. Well, I really don't know what adequate means but I see it as a neighbourhood that within my personal process works as a turning point. At the end it means not making such a radical move as moving from Vitacura to a slum but making one that I can tolerate. I mean, it is a place that satisfies me in many ways and even though it has many comforts it is less elitist than Vitacura within the social imaginary." (Interview with Sebastián, Parque Forestal's neighbourhood resident, 9 January 2006).

As in the case of Plaza de Armas, we can distinguish two different approaches to the Park among its users, both visitors and residents. On the one hand, the popular classes from all over Santiago's Metropolitan area experience the site as a sensorial place of encounter and diversity: they spend their Sundays in the Park and get involved in the many different practices taking place there. On the other hand, the Chilean cultural new

class also thinks of the site as a place of encounter and diversity but they do not experience it. The Park is a non-sensorial idea for them, an architect's plan.

The characterisation of the Park in the illustration below shows how its original urban form remains —not only its main buildings but its furniture and layout as well— and welcomes a variety of users. Interestingly enough, middle class newcomers drawing on consumer practices have built new physical forms around the Park in order to use the neighbourhood. Their main forms are cafes, clothing and designer shops.

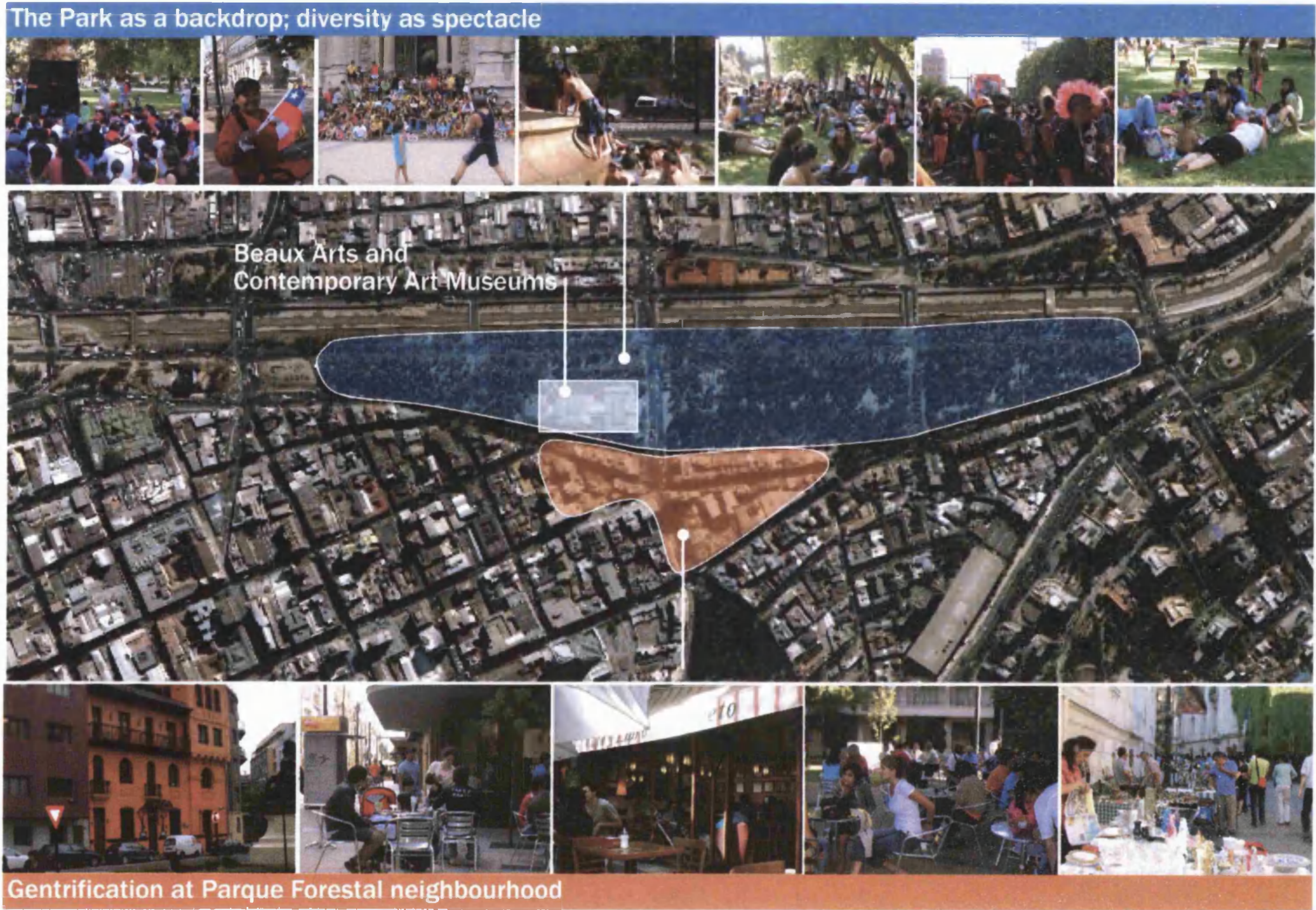


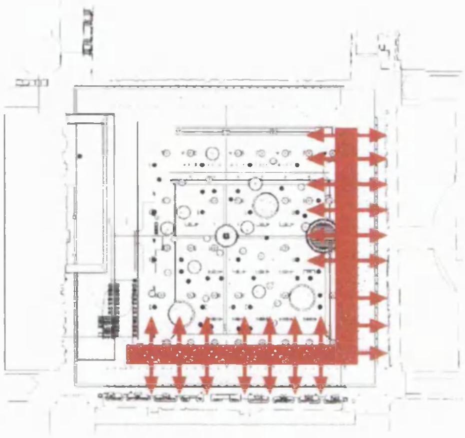
Figure 8: Parque Forestal area
Source: Author's composition and pictures

Aspects of form and practices in the sites

The materiality of Plaza de Armas and the Park —their location within the city, the surrounding buildings, their furniture and layout— are deeply connected with people's everyday practices in these areas. An analysis of their form based purely on plans, detached from actual social practices, misses the connection between people's way of making sense of Chile's new times and their experience of place. In the following section, I will discuss the materiality of the sites and the social practices occurring in them as embodied ways of making sense of Chile's new times.

The Plaza

Viewed from above, Plaza de Armas is a 19,600-square-metre area limited on all four sides by buildings. From below, we learn about the coexistence of an institutional order in the Plaza and the haphazard coming and going of its users. The commercial use of the front archways of the east and south buildings of the Plaza helps to connect the buildings with the street, and moreover, with the busy everyday life of Santiago's business centre (see Plaza section, figure 9a). Opposite, the line of benches along the east and south sides of the Plaza function as connectors between the Plaza and the archways. Because of their design, the benches look to both the interior and the exterior of the Plaza, thus connecting the Plaza with the commercial streets. People in the Plaza interact visually and sometimes talk with people in the streets. Benches and archways help social interaction between people in the street and those in the Plaza. The buildings and the Plaza, originally separated by the street, are connected by the commercial archways and the dual direction benches. The buildings, which are private spaces, are connected to the Plaza which itself is a public space. The physical form of the archways and the benches help to connect what was separated in our minds. As Simmel argues in his essay "Bridge and Door": "only for us are the banks of a river not just apart but 'separated'; if we did not first connect them in our practical thoughts, in our needs and in our fantasy, then the concept of separation would have no meaning." (1997 [1909]: 171). Thus, the archways and the benches are built in the world of finitude aiming for unity.



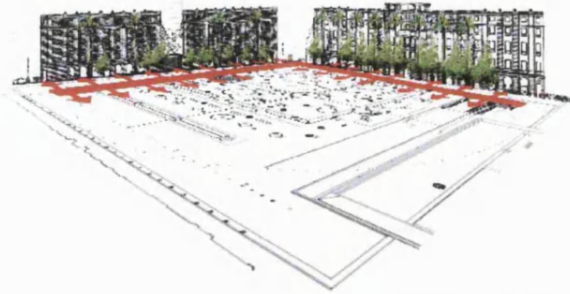


Figure 9a: The diagram of the Plaza section shows how the east and south side buildings merge with the Plaza.
Source: Author's composition and pictures

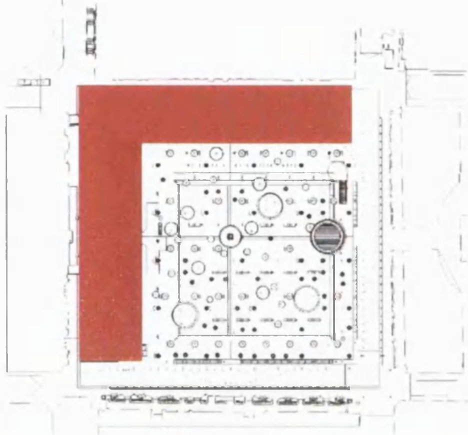


Figure 9b: Conversely, the west and north side buildings remain separate from the Plaza's interior, as it is explained later..
Source: Author's composition and pictures

The elements are not united by physical form alone; social interaction reinforces their role as bridges. Since practices involve social interaction, following Simmel, I argue that places are involved in shaping the structure of practice, and conversely, that practices are at the core of the making of place. In the Plaza, benches and archways are part of how social interaction occurs in the east and south streets around the Plaza. For instance, street actors use the archways as a backdrop for their performance. The street therefore becomes a site for social interaction.

Let us observe the following pictures. In figure 10 the mime artist shapes his practice according to the physicality of the site. He brings the passers-by into his performance by following them and making fun of them. By doing so, he connects passers-by with the people watching his show from the Plaza benches. Interestingly, the mime practice is a source for interchange between these two groups of people, that of the passers-by and that of the observers. His practice facilitates social interaction and the street

becomes a border, a site for interchange. In the same vein, figure 11 shows us the daily scene of people sitting facing the street watching the passers-by. Benches and archways are bridges, in the sense that Georg Simmel defines a bridge: "[T]he bridge indicates how humankind unifies the separatedness of merely natural being" (1997, [1909]). Figure 11 shows the layout of the benches in the Plaza and how they are bridges that connect it with two of its surrounding streets, not only through physical design but also by facilitating social practices between the street and the Plaza.

Figure 10: Mime artist on the east side of the Plaza.
Source: Author's pictures

Figure 11: People become part of what is happening in the street while sitting on a bench, between the Plaza and the Portals. Benches-as-bridges connect the surrounding buildings and the Plaza and facilitate social interaction.
Source: Author's pictures

Simmel's understanding of modern space as fluid (1997, [1903]) —which is very much tied in with his analysis of borders and boundaries— facilitates an in-depth description and reflection on practices as social interactions. He plays with the possibility of interconnections within space. These interconnections are made through social interactions in the sense that diverse people use the space simultaneously and have to share with others. Also, interconnections can be made through negotiation or struggle between the users of space. The idea of connection and fluidity is simultaneously linked to the act of separation. We can recognise separation in space in opposition to fluidity. If the east and south sides of the Plaza may be read as fluid spaces, where people from the street come and interact with those in the Plaza and vice versa, the west and north sides of the Plaza are mainly spaces of separation.

Simmel argues that 'the boundary is not a spatial entity with sociological consequences, but a sociological entity that is formed spatially'. By the same token, he compares the door to a border where the opportunities for interaction are given: "[N]ot in the dead geometric form of a mere separating wall, but rather as the possibility of a permanent interchange (...) life flows forth out of the door from the limitation of isolated separate existence into the limitlessness of all possible directions" (1997 [1909]:173).

Therefore, for Simmel, spatial boundaries are generated and maintained by the absence of social interaction. Thus, the facades of the Cathedral, the Post Office Headquarters, the Historical Museum and the district town hall, which dominate the scene of the west and north sides, create a separation —a boundary— from the Plaza because, in general, they do not facilitate social interaction in the streets opposite them. Returning to Simmel's essay, "Bridge and Door", we could think of them as doors in the sense that they belong to the messiness of the Plaza, but somehow the site's new design removes them from this and cuts them off from the Plaza's disorder, emphasising their institutional character. We can see in figure 9b and 12 how the west and north sides of the Plaza are somehow distant from the Plaza interior. While the Portals (in the east and south sides of the Plaza) are messy and their shady corridors disguise the buildings' facades, the west and north side buildings are bright and defined. The wide paths in front of them give the pedestrian a perspective of these buildings as a whole. The vegetation in front —tall palms— does not interfere with the view. Coming from Paseo

Ahumada you can see the Post Office and the Cathedral from a distance, before arriving at the Plaza. Its facades act as barriers that do not interconnect easily with the Plaza.

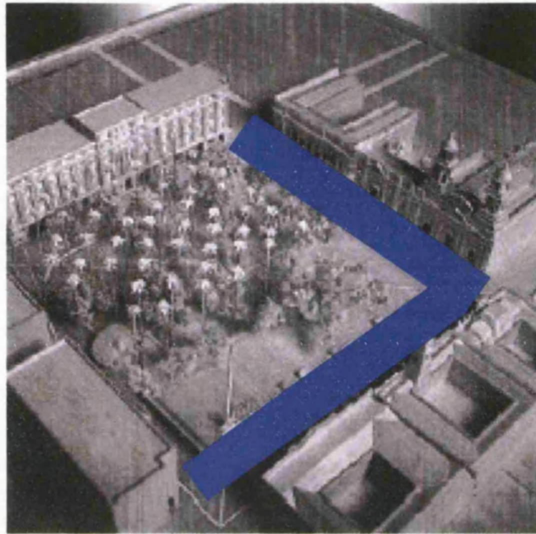


Figure 12: The wide paths in front the buildings emphasise their detachment from Plaza activity.
Source: Author's picture of project model

There are some exceptions to this: Peruvian immigrants gathering at the Cathedral corner, comedians performing at its entrance and vendors selling at the Post Office doors break this trend. Peruvians sit on the Cathedral's side wall and form a line that extends to the middle of the north block of the Cathedral. Most of them are looking for a job and employers looking for a cheap labour force know that they can find it in the Plaza. Others go there to socialise, make phone calls, use the internet or eat Peruvian food in the shops that have opened at the Cathedral's opposite side. By the same token, the Cathedral offers its steps to street actors and "life flows forth out of the door from the limitation of isolated separate existence into the limitlessness of all possible directions" (Simmel, 1997 [1909]: 173). As may be observed in the diagram below, the comic show spills out into the Plaza; it calls to people who are in the Plaza interior and connects what is happening there with the performance occurring at the margins, in the street. Also, in the case of the Cathedral the sense of detachment between the building and the Plaza is lessened by the flow of people entering and leaving the building. Finally, the Post Office entrance serves as a selling point for envelope and stamp vendors and their practice is a link between the street and the Post Office building, but not with the Plaza.

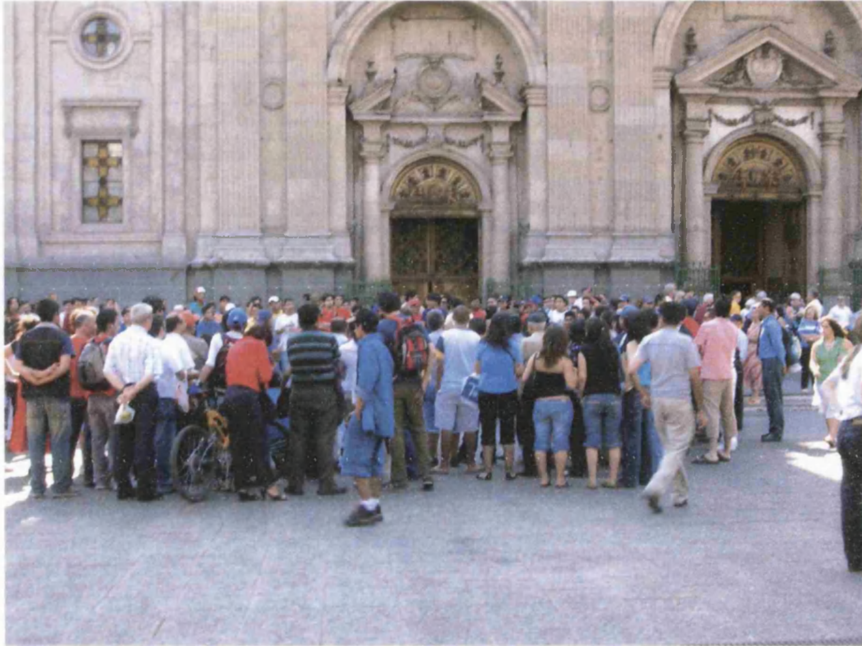


Figure 13: The comics' practice in front of the Cathedral is a connection between the Plaza's exterior and interior. Plaza's walkers and passers-by shift from the inside to the outside in order to watch the comics' show.
Source: Author's picture

The possibility of buildings or furniture functioning as bridges or doors, to use Simmel's terminology, depends on both material and immaterial factors. On the one hand, interaction is a social act which occurs in a material location and materiality is part of a web that makes particular social actions possible[13]. On the other hand, interaction is embedded within a number of changing contexts at the same time; both material and immaterial. Relationships between buildings, technology, people, space and time reveal many meanings embodied in social interaction. For instance, if portals indeed form better links to the Plaza's adjacent blocks than do the Cathedral, the Post Office, the Historical Museum and the Town Hall, this is not only because their archways host interesting goods, but also because the west and north side buildings reflect the structures of power. They are institutional buildings; representing the Church and the Government. They form a massive solid wall that strengthens the idea of the Plaza as an enclosed space. On the other side, people feel free around the Portals where

[13]My analysis of social interaction embedded in a web of elements that make action possible does not follow actor network theory (ANT) but places social interaction as the start. Although ANT offers a theoretical framework of analysis that allows for the social construction of technological objects, practices and knowledge by heterogeneous actors across a number of different contexts (Jenkins, 2002), I establish connections between social action and materiality emphasising the human being as the starting point for action.

they can continue with the disorder and fast pace of commerce present in Paseo Ahumada and Paseo Estado.

The Plaza's furniture is part of the materiality interlinked with social practices in the Plaza. As noted earlier, benches are relevant elements. Many practices revolve around them: people sit and have lunch, rest, wait for friends, sleep, listen to the preachers and read. As figure 11 showed, some of them are located at the perimeter of the square and form a border between the Plaza and the adjacent streets. The benches' design has three direct consequences for social interaction: first, as mentioned before, they connect the Plaza with the commercial streets, second, they serve as viewpoints for the Plaza's activity, and third, the benches' design encourages close proximity, so strangers have to congregate on the benches when they are full. Figure 14 shows one strip of benches at lunch time. People are sitting in lines on them, some of them are in pairs or groups and others are alone. As Simmel argues, "external circumstances, which translate themselves into the liveliness of social interactions, is offered by space through the sensory proximity or distance between people who stand in some relationship or other to one another" and "spatially based interactions can also fundamentally modify the primary relationship, even from a distance" (1997 [1903]: 151-2). Closeness facilitates different forms of sociability, as figure 11 showed. The woman in one of the pictures in the right side of the diagram is homeless and is sharing with a group of men. We also see other regular visitors to the Plaza's benches: school students. The Plaza's benches are meeting points for those playing truant. Students from different Santiago districts make new friends here while they are sitting on the benches. Thus, contact amongst people sitting on the same bench may sometimes turn into a conversational proximity, but it always implies visual closeness and the sense of smell and hearing.

Sensory proximity may be comfortable, uncomfortable or repulsive. In some cases this closeness causes the metropolitan blasé attitude Simmel describes in his essay "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (1997 [1903]). Individuals avoid making contact even though they are sitting next to each other. For instance, in figure 14 the man at the right of the picture is isolated from his environment and the woman sitting next to him is avoiding eye-contact. In a similar vein, Simmel's understanding of city borders and boundaries together leads to consideration of the metropolis as a place for encounter and disencounter, as a common yet unfamiliar place. This twofold perspective helps us to reflect on practices as experiences of differentiation or similitude. Simmel's line of

thought on borders and boundaries is related to Arendt's explanation of the public realm as the common world that "gathers us together and yet prevents our falling over each other, so to speak" (1998: 52). The consideration of both borders and boundaries in the analysis of social practices on and around the Plaza benches helps us to think about how the public and the private co-exist in the Plaza; both intimate interactions and impersonal ones use the benches as a physical support.

Figure 14: Spatial proximity: sometimes detonating sociability and other times indifference. "Here the indifference to what is spatially close is simply a protective device without which one would be mentally ground down and destroyed in the metropolis" (Simmel 1997 [1903]: 154).
Source: Author's picture

Interestingly, although social interaction develops around the benches, when asked about their opinion on the Plaza furniture, my interviewees told me they do not like them and that they prefer more traditional ones[14]. They said they are uncomfortable, not private and that their layout within the Plaza is strange. Also, a vendor in Portal Bulnes

[14] Along with the wooden double-sided benches, the architectural team included old fashioned benches, made of steel in their proposal as a link with the past. Most users think they are remains from the old Plaza, forgotten in the Plaza interior sector.

pointed out that they attract homeless people because they are comfortable to sleep on. "They are like beds," she argued.

I would like to comment on another characteristic of space proposed by Simmel: how actors adapt place to their own reality and circumstance through their practices. Simmel argues that the way actors perform within a space is related to their own existence. That is, practices in public spaces involve an actor's personal history, time and context. By looking at practices, we can explore how people adapt places to their own modes of making sense of the world. Within this perspective, let me discuss the use of other furniture in the Plaza: plant pots. Big plant pot frames serve as seats. The biggest one is called "la rueda" (the wheel) and is beside the Mapuche monument. Diverse groups of people sit along its perimeter: the homeless hear the protestant preacher sitting on the east side; prostitutes wait for customers at the south side, facing Portal Fernandez Concha; vendors occupy the west side; and men working at the construction sites within the neighbourhood meet at the north side.

The wheel is a temporary seat. Everyone sitting there is waiting *for* someone or something, expecting, resting *for* then going to work. It is a transitional seat. It is a seat for those who do not have a seat, a place and, in that perspective, sitting on the wheel you make sense of the world from the condition of marginality. The wheel is different from other informal seats like the edges of the fountain and the Odeon steps, where many people sit at lunch time to eat and use the Odeon as an amphitheatre to look at the Plaza's scene. Many architecture students come to sketch the west facade of the Plaza (where the Cathedral is) and sit on the Odeon steps. People who sit at the Odeon have a place: they work in the surrounding offices of the Plaza or they study. They come to the Plaza with a clear aim: to have lunch, draw a sketch, take a break from shopping. It is a transitional place but they know for how long; one hour or two.

On summer days, the Odeon is one of the few spots in the Plaza which has shade and people try to escape under it from the heat.

> "It is a hot, hot day in Plaza de Armas. It is 3.30 pm and the pavement irradiates heat. The environment reflects heat. Children play around the fountain and some of them are already in it, all the benches in the sun are empty and people are crowded in the shaded areas of the Plaza. On the

> Odeon's steps I found two guys who work in Tarragona, a food place in Phillips Street, beside the Plaza. They complain about the lack of shade and say that sometimes they prefer walking around the streets at lunch time to coming to the Plaza because of the heat." (Field notes 7 November 2005).

The Plaza is like a stage that sets the conditions for action but does not determine it. Within that understanding, I intend to present in the diagram below the merging of physical space and social practices in the Plaza. Drawing on my observations I recognised a constant pattern of location of the different practices which I represent in the following figure: it shows every practice in its spot at the Plaza. The fact that every user has his/her own position within the Plaza allows social interactions between neighbours. Some of them are friends and others hate each other, but there are few who are indifferent. However, people in the Plaza are mobile, and the diagram is intended to show their mobility and the way in which different practices overlap in place.

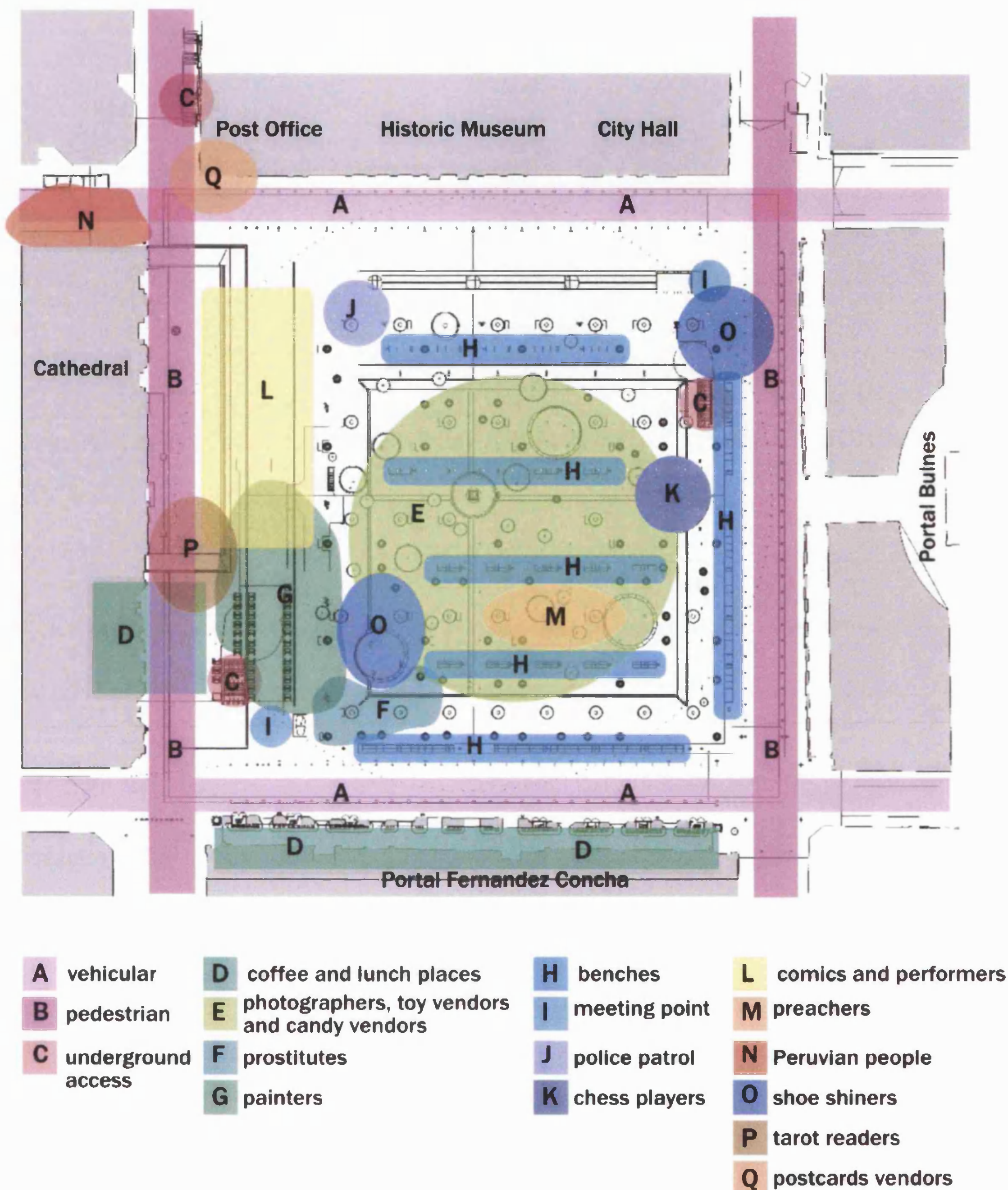


Figure 15: Plaza de Armas as a stage.
Source: Author's composition

Passers-by also set a regular pattern of location —in their case, a mobile one— by their walking through and short stays in the Plaza. Their general direction does not change much from one hour to the next, but there is a big difference between week days and weekends as regards the flow of people walking across the Plaza. During week days fewer people walk in the Plaza interior. Drawing on my observation I described this pattern in graphical figures (figure 16a and 16b). We can distinguish a heavy flow along

Paseo Ahumada, which is the main commercial street around the Plaza, and people taking a shortcut and therefore drawing diagonals across the Plaza.

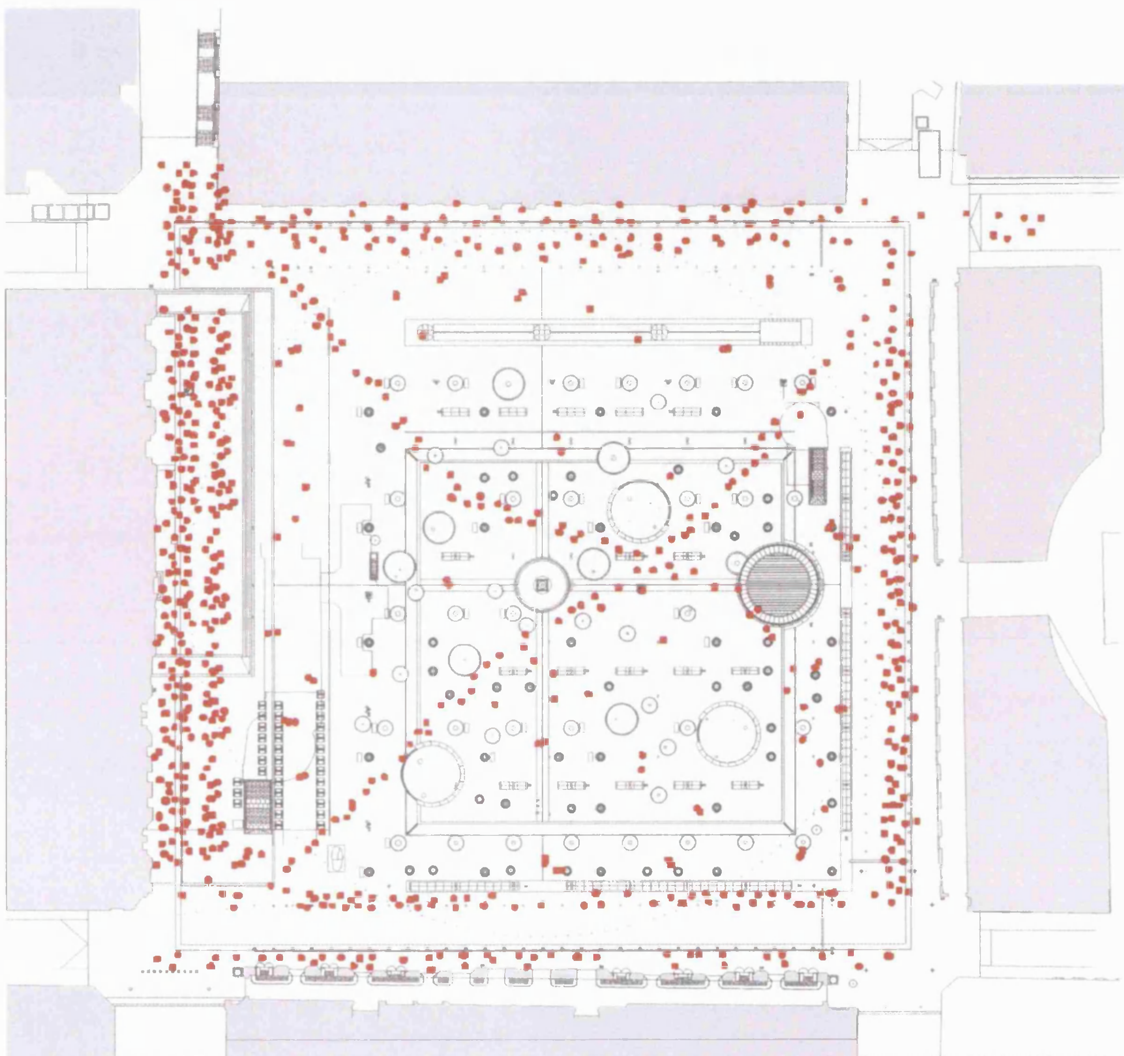


Figure 16a: People walking during week days. Evening rush hour (6.30 pm-7.30 pm).

On week days people walk along Paseo Ahumada and Paseo Estado, the main streets that run north-south and connect Santiago's main straight street, Alameda, with the Mapocho area (around the river) where bus terminals, the Central Market and a former train station converted into a cultural centre are located. Also, two diagonal streams stand out: people taking shortcuts, revealing that people use the Plaza itself as a corridor. Passers-by transform the Plaza into a big street and their paths are shaped not only by the Plaza layout but also by the location of the Plaza's permanent users. At the weekend the passers-by are people visiting Santiago's downtown commercial streets and shopping malls, without the rush of the office workers. Their paths show the purpose of their visit to the Plaza; the diagonals are less prominent and the flows along

the non-commercial streets that have office buildings —such as Catedral (Cathedral) Street (the north street of the Plaza) and Compañía (the south street of the Plaza)— are weaker. Instead, passers-by take diverse directions in the Plaza: some walk and simply look around and others use the Plaza as a shortcut to reach their destination.

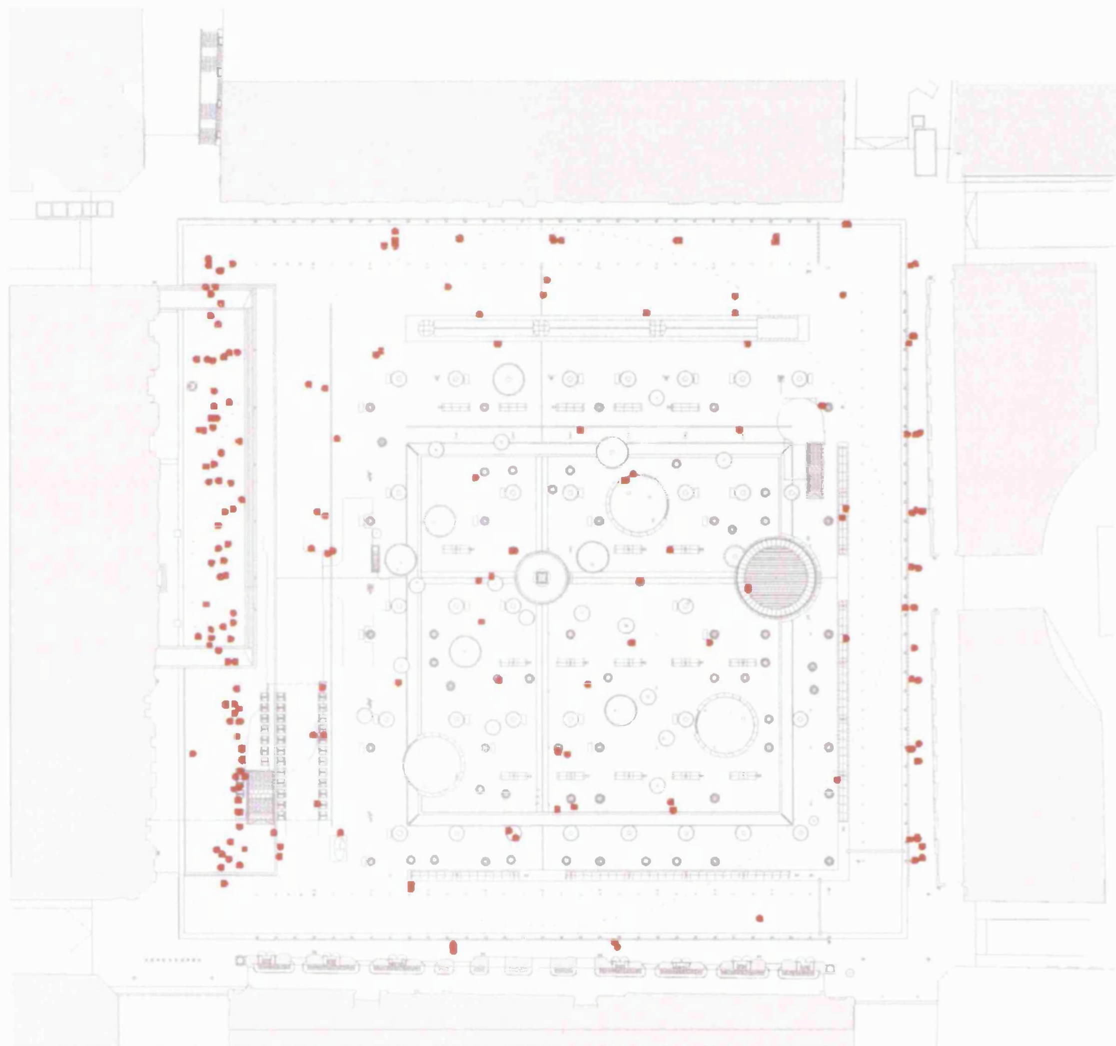


Figure 16b: People walking at weekends. Evening (6.30 pm-7.30 pm).

Thus, we can distinguish between straight, heavy flows showing the Plaza functioning as a corridor —when people walk along the square's sides or cross it diagonally— and the curved flows showing the comings and goings of the people who go there to spend time looking and walking around.

However, just as action is unpredictable, the concentration of actions —practices— and the relationships between them prevent a defined output in the Plaza. Although some regularity can be observed —from Monday to Friday during office hours the Plaza is the heart of old Santiago's business district, and in the evenings and at weekends it is a

working class leisure site— we cannot approach the site as a closed container of practices. Having said that, let me offer the following description as a constantly evolving process, which may change from one day to the next.

If we take the early morning as a starting point for practices in the Plaza, first, we find the people who work in the Portal's food shops starting their jobs at 7 am. The cleaning people and the gardeners also start early and homeless people who sleep in the Plaza have to move from their corners. Some of them remain sleeping on the benches until noon but most of them collect their things and begin their unpredictable walks. School students skipping classes arrive around 8 am and sit on the benches for a while. Between 8.30 and 9 am many people come out of the tube and walk through the Plaza to their jobs. The rush hour flow stops around 9.30 am. The Cathedral opens its doors at 9 am and beggars and people who sell stamps, candles and religious objects come to its doors around 10. Between 10 and 11 the shops beside the Cathedral and in the portals open, and painters, photographers, vendors, shoe-shiners, comedians, street actors, mime artists, tarot readers and Peruvian immigrants looking for a job or needing to make a phone call arrive. This process is slow though, since it is not until noon that the Plaza stage is fully set (figure 15).

At lunch time, office workers come to eat and rest in the Plaza. At 1 pm the chess association opens at the Odeon and it reaches its peak between 1 and 3 in the afternoon when office workers come to play chess during their lunch break. It continues after that but fewer players are around. At 6 pm the chess tables are full again with people coming from their offices. Prostitutes also come at lunch time and stay around, sitting on one of the big pot frames.

Most permanent users of the Plaza are people who work there. They are a mixed group in terms of gender, age, income and education. There are women and men of different ages among the vendors, although the shoe-shiners, painters and photographers are all men; some of them are young and others old. Regarding income there are huge differences. For instance, some vendors, comedians and photographers earn as much as a well paid office worker; they own their homes and pay for their children's healthcare and education. Others, such as some shoe-shiners and prostitutes, have problems surviving. In relation to formal education, there are the painters who attended Art

School at one extreme and, at the other, there is the shoe-shiner who did not complete secondary school. In between there are people with various levels of education.

Passers-by are on and around the Plaza at all times. They form a diverse group and they cross the Plaza in different directions during the day. The biggest flow comes from Paseo Ahumada heading north. After 6 pm many people come to meet in the Plaza and stay to watch the comedians, eat something, play chess, listen to the band (it plays every Thursday evening), rest after their shopping or just look around. Even though they are not permanent users of the Plaza, they are nonetheless significant for its character. Passers-by are the crowd in the Plaza: individuals walking to work, waiting for someone, having a break sitting on a bench, hearing comics' jokes, disappearing into the underground stairways, shopping in the commercial streets around the Plaza, smoking a cigarette, having an ice-cream or a beer or a coffee or a *mote con huesillos*[15] during the summer.

> "I make a round of the Plaza conducting short interviews with passers-by: a 19-year-old guy who lives in Cerro Navia[16] is waiting for his mother. She works in the central district and he meets her every day after work. A man who lives in Ñuñoa[17] says that "in the Plaza I wait. I sit on a bench, talk on the phone, look around until it's time". A dark-haired woman with almost no teeth sits on a bench every day. She is 22 and lives near the Plaza. She is unemployed and comes to the Plaza for some distraction. A man from Pudahuel[18] comes to the Plaza twice a week to watch street actors and chess players and stays all afternoon chatting with people: "with anyone who happens to sit beside me and is in the mood for talking". Three girlfriends met today in the Plaza because it is close to lots of shops and they can go for something to eat. Two women and a man are sitting on a bench writing a letter that they have to hand-in to the district town hall. A man from Puente Alto[19] is waiting for a friend: "I come every week to meet him here". A woman is waiting for her boyfriend and another woman is waiting for a friend. A man is resting from work and another is coming out from a job interview. I keep going: a man is waiting for an overdue foreign

[15] Typical cold drink made of boiled wheat and dried peaches.
[16] Marginal district of Santiago's Metropolitan area.
[17] District of Santiago's district Metropolitan area.
[18] Marginal district of Santiago's Metropolitan area.
[19] District of Santiago's Metropolitan area.

> magazine delivery, a mother comes to buy clothes for her three children; the kids are happy, eating ice-cream and getting dirty while her mother tells me that they come to shop in the mall on Paseo Puente (the continuation of Paseo Ahumada) because in San Bernardo[20] there are not many shops. A 25-year-old mother is engaged in the same activities. She is with her two children, one is a baby. She came on the bus with them from La Reina[21]. An architecture student is sitting on the Odeon steps drawing the site, and a group of Pentecostals is waiting for their preacher to walk him to their Church." (Field notes 26 October 2005).

This extract from my field notes shows the variety among the passers-by who populate the Plaza. They fill it with diversity in terms of gender, age, class, skin colour and mode of dress. They bring noise and movement to the site. Everyday different people form the group of passers-by but they are a distinctive presence in the Plaza because of their practices there: walking around, spending time, waiting, looking, talking.

Yet, however diverse the group of people who congregate in Plaza de Armas, it is not representative of all Santiago's population. There is nowhere in Santiago where a representative sample of the city's population congregates. Although Plaza de Armas is one of the most diverse public spaces of the city, it is clearly a place for the middle and lower-middle classes. Upper class people are hardly ever seen in the Plaza. Downtown has become run-down as a business district and most important offices have moved out. Any upper class people who still work there go by car and lock themselves in their offices.

At the weekend, Plaza de Armas is patently a working class leisure site. This activity starts later: little happens before noon, there are only some early tourists having a coffee at the Marco Polo café and some old local residents attending mass in the Cathedral. After noon the fun starts. All the people who usually work in the Plaza on weekdays also show up. There are the mime artists playing jokes on passers-by and living statues moving with the sound of dropped coins. There is the clown with pockets full of balloons to turn into any animal the children want. There is the folklore dance group inviting people to join in with clapping; the girls dressed in colourful outfits and the

[20]Marginal district of Santiago's Metropolitan area.
[21]District of Santiago's Metropolitan area.

boys stamping on the pavement. There are the tarot readers; their cards on their tables, their gaze seeking any desperate soul. There are the painters, the vendors, the Peruvians. There are the comics telling their jokes at the Cathedral steps and a living robot statue moving awkwardly at the Cathedral corner. There is Panchita, the Peruvian vendor, walking around, pushing her cart restlessly offering her chocolates and drinks.

On the opposite side of the Plaza, between Paseo Estado and 21 de Mayo, a flea market opens on Sundays. Old books and magazines, records, antiques, clothing, bags, food, crafts and fashion accessories, among other items, fill the stalls and attract the public. The opening of this market was part of the former mayor's strategy to attract people to Santiago's business centre at weekends. It started five years ago, not without opposition. It is a structured market that competes with informal vendors who cannot afford to rent a stall in the market and who sell their stuff wherever they can.

The layout of practices results from the Plaza users' recognition of each other's position. In 2004, the new administration of the Santiago district tried to relocate the practices within the Plaza through a set of regulations and permits, but to no avail. People defended their corners, ignored the district inspectors, refused to pay fines for illegal use of public space and stayed where they were. Since then, there has been no clarity about the regulations of the Plaza. The more fearful started paying for permits and others did not. This situation has provoked ongoing quarrels among the Plaza's users and a sentiment of being abused by the authorities.

The Plaza as social space is where social struggle is played out and different power positions come into conflict. Practices in space are about the struggle for recognition. In "Writings on Cities" (1996: 61-181), Lefebvre exposes the conflict between right and need, use value and exchange value and habit and inhabit, as space dialectics. Social space is shaped in the struggle for meaning and, as both the product of and material for production, it may help or prevent the reproduction of power relationships. Within this framework, the Plaza becomes a place where people may question their identity. It is a place for contestation, where people may experience the contradictions of capitalism and the limits it imposes on social relations.

The Plaza's landmarks, points of access and visual fields

The Odeon is not only a place to escape from the sun but also a landmark within the Plaza. Each area of the Plaza is named by a landmark; there is the Odeon, "the Horse" (a statue of Pedro de Valdivia, Santiago's founder, riding a horse) at the north-east corner, "the Indio" (a monument honouring the Mapuche culture) at the south-west corner, and the Cathedral. The meeting points are linked to access corridors (see figure 17). The Horse is linked to Paseo 21 de Mayo, the Indio to Paseo Ahumada, the Cathedral to Catedral Street and the Odeon to Paseo Phillips.

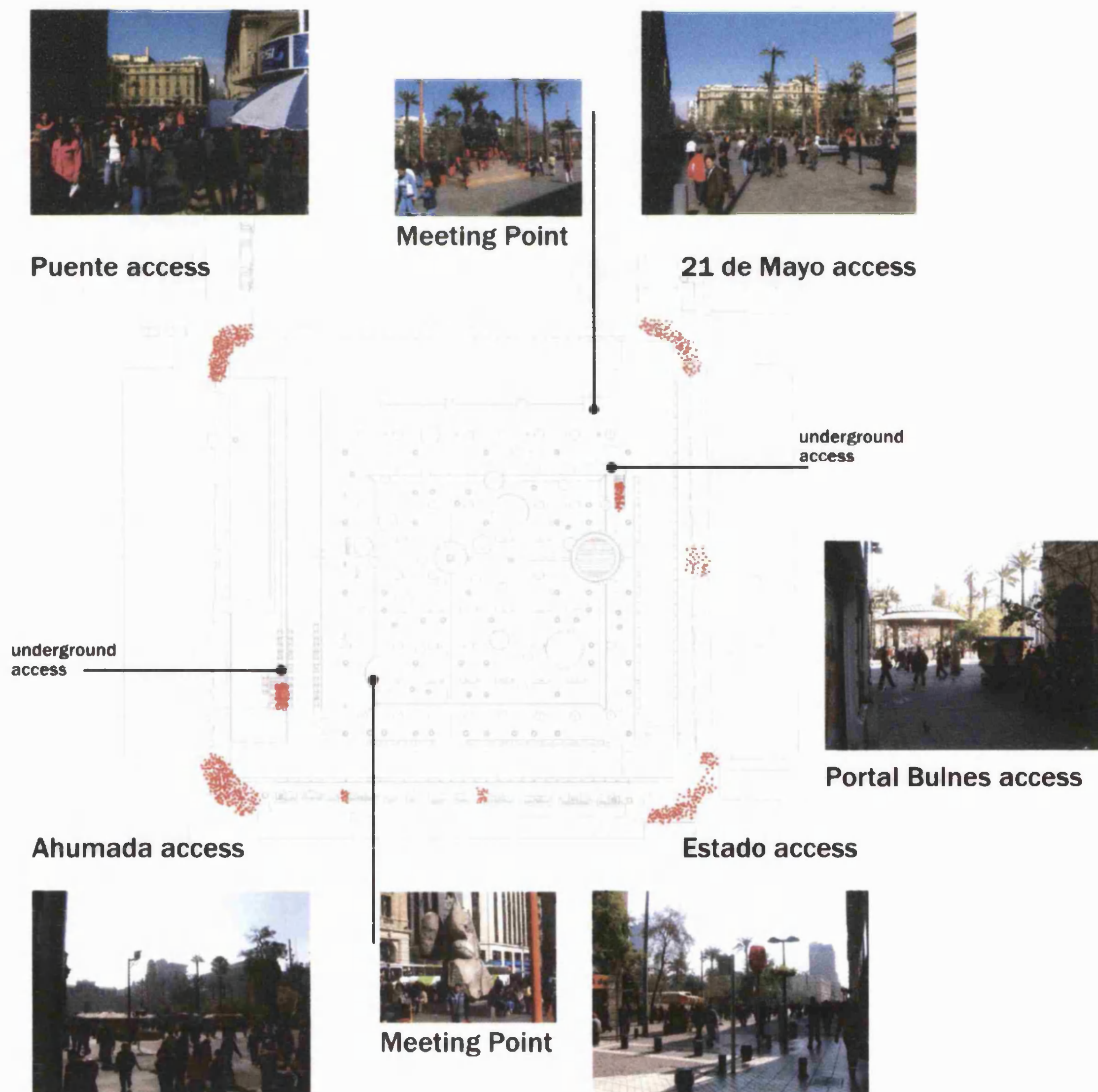


Figure 17: Plaza's access and meeting points. The dots show the people accessing the Plaza through its corners, the alley opposite to the Odeon and the underground stations.
Source: Author's composition and pictures.

Access to the Plaza is linked to people's perception of it at their point of arrival to the site. For instance, access from Paseo Ahumada is very crowded, with people coming from the Alameda subway station. At that corner, the Plaza is perceived as a busy place and it is difficult to imagine it as a place in which people are relaxing and playing chess. At that corner, however, the Plaza is an extension of Paseo Ahumada, an emblematic site of Santiago's urban culture[22]. By the same token, the accesses from from Paseo Puente, at the north, or from Merced, at the east, have their own character. The first is very much a gateway to the shopping mall in Paseo Puente and the connection between the bus terminals in Mapocho area, and thus is commercial and busy. The second is an exit to the east area of the business centre which is calmer and more residential than the area near Alameda. It leads to Santa Lucía, Parque Forestal and Teatro Municipal[23].

Circulation around the Plaza is mainly pedestrian, and most access to the site is on foot. The streets running south-north at both sides of the Plaza are pedestrianised and the vehicles on the two streets running east–west move very slowly, so people walk in between them as if they were fixed artefacts (although taxi drivers' swearing, smoke from bus exhausts and horns contribute to the perception of messiness at the Plaza site).

People's perception of the Plaza as a busy place is also related to the Plaza's visual fields. Although the new Plaza design offers less vegetation than the previous one, the interior of the Plaza cannot be clearly seen from any of the four access points, so from each of them you perceive the Plaza differently. On the one hand, the Plaza interior remains protected from the rhythm and volume of the Plaza's edges which are fast and

[22] Many Chilean poets have talked about it in their works. They express the experience of the urban crowd, where people feel isolated among strangers: "Estoy solo en la inmensidad del Paseo Ahumada" (I am alone in the immensity of Paseo Ahumada) wrote Enrique Lihn (1995). I registered similar experiences in my field notes:

> "I walk to the Plaza through Paseo Ahumada. Paseo Ahumada is in Santiago's business centre. It is a commercial pedestrian street. Its buildings are tall office buildings, grey from smog and dust. While walking in Paseo Ahumada you feel part of the crowd. People are everywhere, surrounding you, touching you. Vendors offer their fake merchandise on the ground: DVDs, cigarettes, perfumes, books, make-up, clothing, bags. My walk through Paseo Ahumada from Alameda underground station is like an initiation ritual for getting in the mood for the masses. I look at people's faces in the crowd. They don't look happy or sad. They are keeping busy, doing stuff, concentrating on their walk and their destination. The sensation of being in a corridor provided by the line of buildings on both sides of Paseo Ahumada ends when I reach the Plaza. It is the culmination of the Paseo and reaching it feels like a rest from the compression of the masses. Even though there are many people in the Plaza, it functions as a resting place within the urban grid." (Field notes, 1 September 2005).

[23] Teatro Municipal is Santiago's main venue for classical music, opera and ballet.

loud; it cannot be clearly seen from the Plaza edges, but on the other hand, you can see what is happening on the Plaza limits from the interior, as figure 18 and 19 show.

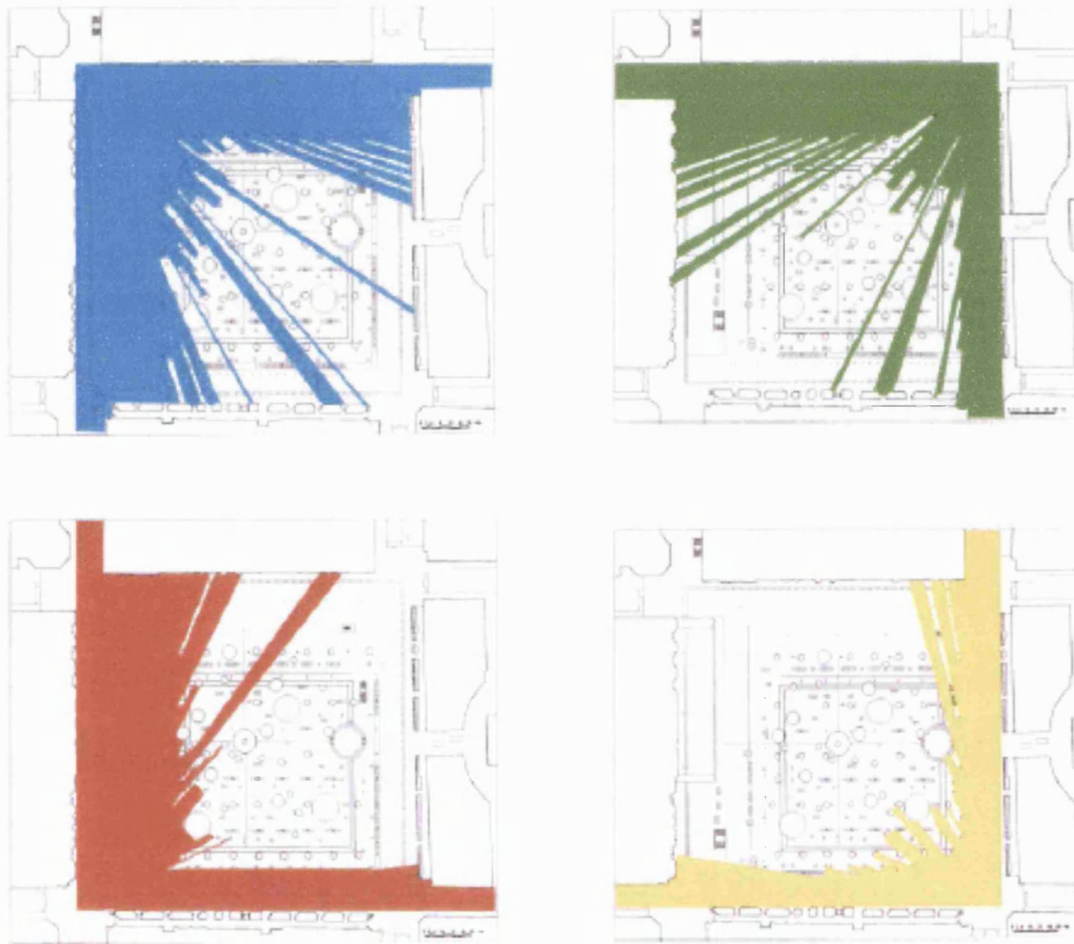


Figure 18: Visual fields from the four corners of the Plaza (starting from the north west corner clockwise). The shaded areas in the following diagrams show how much you can see standing in each of the corners. (Palominos 2000).

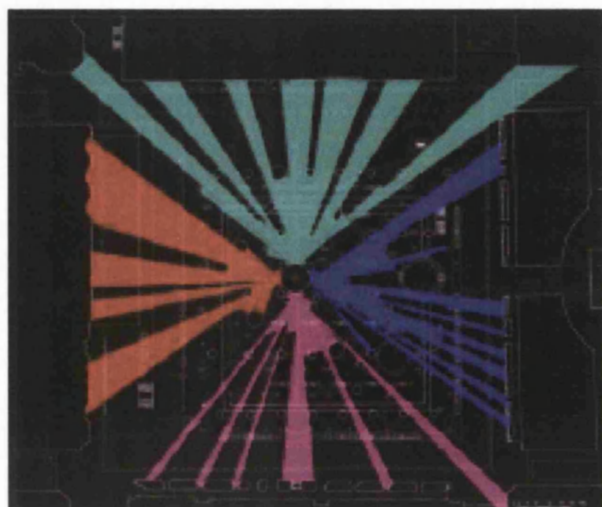


Figure 19: Visual field from the centre of the Plaza. (Palominos 2000).

Robbers and informal vendors take advantage of these conditions to hide from police in the Plaza. Vendors who do not have a permit to sell on the street can see when the police are coming to the Plaza and hide their merchandise before they arrive. Manuel, a man who sells cold drinks from a Coke stand in the Plaza, informed me how the illegal activities in the Plaza work. I learned that in the Plaza interior vendors and thieves have established a system of protection against the police. When someone sees the plain clothes police coming, he announces it to everyone with a single whistle-blow and in an instant a system of shouts, whistles and merchandise-hiding begins. Robinson, a painter, acknowledges he knows who is who: "They are all in there, you have to be careful." (Field notes, 22 September 2005).

The interior of the Plaza serves as a place for permanent practices and long interactions —such as those amongst illegal vendors and thieves. People who work in the Plaza know each other well. Some of them are good friends; others maintain their independence but still know their neighbours in the site. As my fieldwork advanced, I was able to see different relations amongst people. Photographers share films, vendors give credit to regular customers and painters look after each others' stuff when they go for lunch. Daniela, a 27-year-old prostitute, feels secure in the Plaza because of her friends: "They know me and they always tell me to let them know if someone wants to take advantage of me. I know that they will come to help me if anything happens." (Interview with Daniela, 10 January 2006).

The Park

Parque Forestal is designed with grass lawns, paths, big, old trees and playground areas. There are three buildings in the Park: a little castle-shaped building which is part of Santiago's district offices, The Fine Arts Museum (MBA) and the Contemporary Art Museum (MAC). Regarding social interaction and its relation with the existence of borders and boundaries, the Park is a much more fluid space than the Plaza. There are no obvious major physical obstacles to social interaction, yet we can see two very different areas within the Park in terms of social practices: the eastern zone, from Vicuña Mackena Avenue to José Miguel de la Barra street, is peaceful and silent. Parque Forestal's furniture facilitates family gatherings, lovers' encounters, walks and children playing in the east side of the Park. Its simple furniture does not stand out

from the environment. Wooden park benches, plastic playground swings and slides, telephone cabins, rubbish bins and lamps are constructed along discreet design lines. The trees, lawns and paths are what really matter in the Park.

Local residents walk their dogs and meet there during the week and people who walk from the underground station further west use the Park as a corridor. Students who skip school also come to the Park to drink and smoke. Local residents complain about them and police ask them to get rid of their drinks, but they continue doing it. At weekends, all kind of families from different areas of Santiago come to the site.

The western zone of the Park, from the MBA and MAC museum buildings to the Central Market, hosts mainly young people at the weekends and has a bad reputation among the older, more conservative Parque Forestal residents. They complain about young people drinking alcohol and taking drugs but they prefer to stay in the neighbourhood rather than to migrate with the upper classes to the eastern areas of Santiago. Sundays are the busiest days in Parque Forestal and are when most of the conflicts between the police and young people occur. In the afternoon, large numbers of young people hang out behind the Contemporary Art Museum. They practise juggling and capoeira and set up a flea market where they sell crafts, clothes, old magazines, discs and books. Young people who are learning juggling tricks rehearse in the space at the back of the Museum while the rest watch, talk, smoke and socialise. The Park is a place for this group of young *Santiaguinos* to get together. Most of them belong to the lower and lower-middle classes and Parque Forestal is one of the few places in Santiago where they can meet. Even during the months of my fieldwork, when the Contemporary Art Museum was being restored and its rear resembled a construction site, they continued to meet there because they did not have any alternatives. The police constantly patrol Parque Forestal on Sunday afternoons. Every week they threaten young people who are smoking pot, drinking alcohol and selling things without a permit. But things do not change. It is always the same: the police come, the young people stop doing what they know is prohibited, the police leave, and the young people resume drinking, smoking and selling.

Vendors are all over the Park, but on the east side they are not evicted by the police. They sell sandwiches, sweets, crafts and homemade toys. Also, many street actors and puppeteers work in the Park at the weekend, with few problems in comparison with the

troubles that young people have on the west side of the Park. The east side is known as a family site, and even though people do not have a permit to sell goods there the police do not arrest them. Regulations within the Park are not clear: on the one hand, local residents think that the Park should be a site for families and peaceful walks whilst on the other, young people think of the Park as a site for diversity and social relations such as the ones behind the Contemporary Art Museum. Illicit vending, taking drugs and drinking alcohol are legal prohibitions but, since the police attitude towards them is arbitrary, young people do not take them seriously: some days the police do not arrest anyone and other days they invade the square behind the MAC on horseback and expel all the vendors; or they arrest people in the west side of the Park but they do not touch the ones selling in the east area.

The figure below intends to show the Park as a fluid, unprogrammed space. The Park provides a basic layout for action to happen, where everything is more mobile than static, spontaneous than planned.

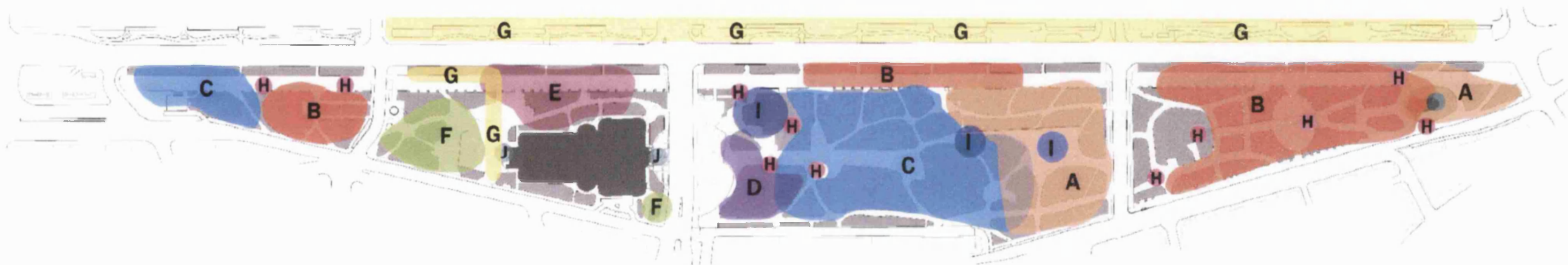


Figure 20a: Practices in Parque Forestal
Source: Author's composition

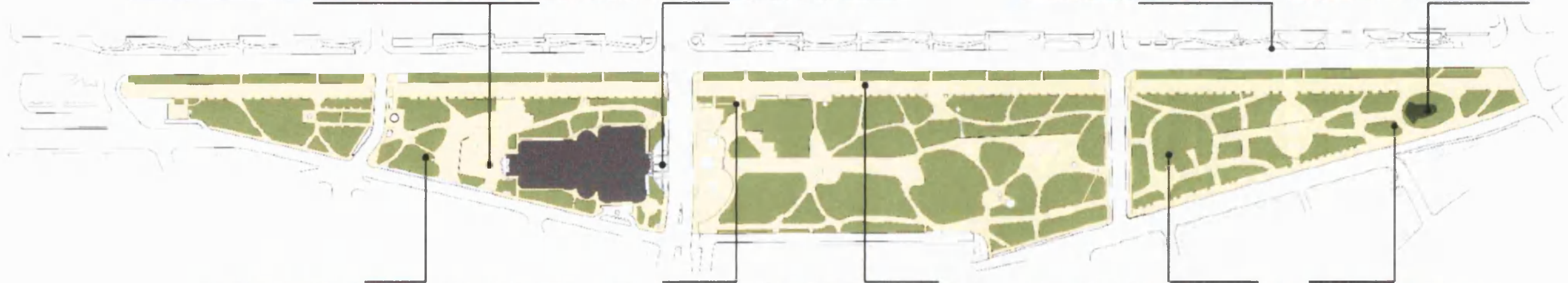
MAC front square hang out

Juggling toys vending

Jugglers in front Beaux Arts Museum

Flee market

Monuments as pools



Trapeze practice in Park's trees

Chinchineros in playground

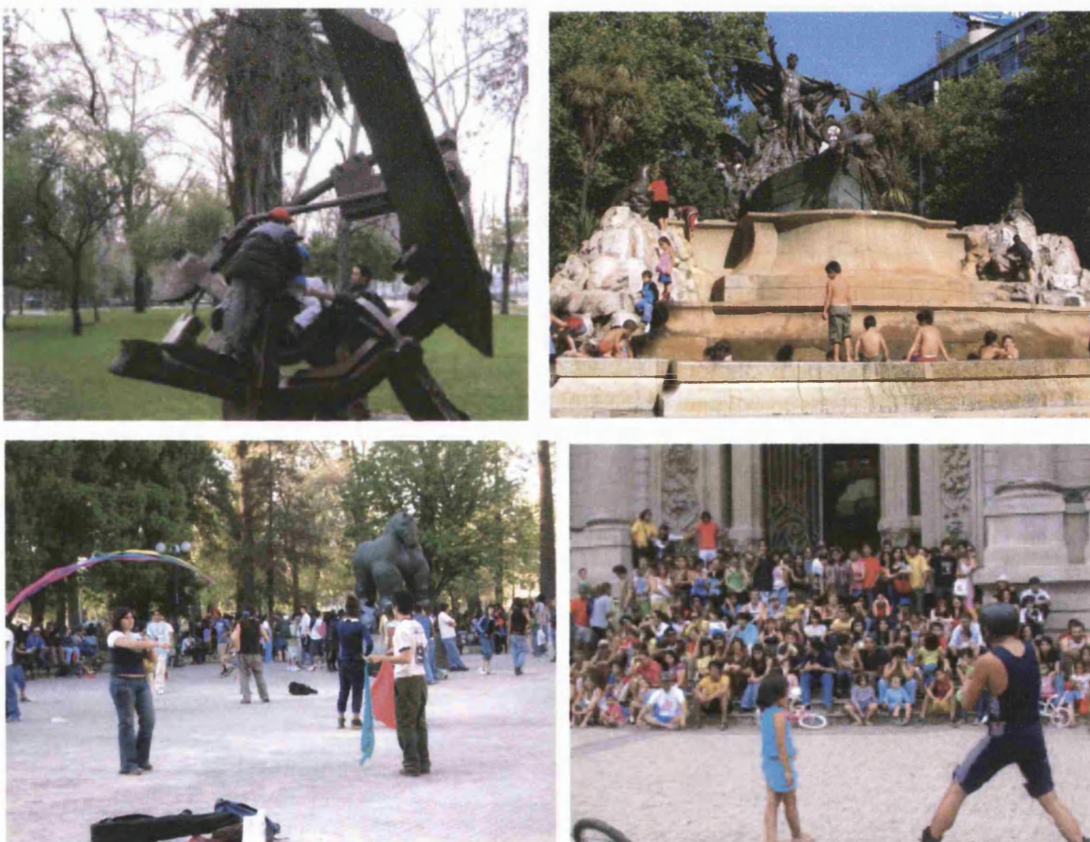
Couples in the Park

Climbing sculptures

Family in the Park

Figure 20b: Practices in Parque Forestal
Source: Author's composition

By the same token, the Park is not programmed in terms of the activities users may do in the site. On the contrary, users create the Park's programme in practice, drawing on its urban form. Elements which are not actually park furniture have been given different, unplanned uses. Children use monuments and sculptures as playground climbing frames (figure 21a) and Fuente Alemana becomes a public pool during the summer (figure 21b). People sit on the MBA's steps to watch street actors or a mime artist who works on the road in front of the museum (figure 21c) and the square behind the MAC is the jugglers' favourite space, because they can move on its paved surface without stumbling (figure 21d).



Figures 21a, 21b, 21c and 21d (clockwise): Unplanned uses in Parque Forestal
Source: Author's pictures

The Park's visual fields, landmarks and points of access

Park users not only integrate built structures such as monuments and buildings in their practices but also less tangible characteristics of the site such as silence, noise, light and shadow. Old people take refuge in the more silent areas of the Park and lovers

dwell in the more forested ones. In the Park, as in the Plaza, passers-by cannot see the interior of the site from the edges. Not only trees, but also slopes within the Park landscape, prevent a clear view. Also, the perception of the viewer is one of dispersion insofar as the Park, unlike the Plaza, is not as contained within the clear limits of buildings. The inability of seeing the Park interior clearly from the outside makes the site intimate in nature. Lovers, in particular, take advantage of this opacity but their presence remains very obvious to the walkers in the Park, some of whom are disturbed by what they see as amoral practices.

The Parks's opacity also contributes to people's perception of it as an escape, as a place where you cannot be seen by the outside world or where you are protected. I will develop later the understanding of the Park as an intimate space, but I would like to underline here how a physical feature of the Park, its vegetation, is linked with practices and understandings. Figure 22a shows lovers' practices in the Park as if it were an intimate space. The fact that they know they are not been seen from the outside of the Park —the street— strengths their understanding of the Park as a hidden place.

Figure 22a: Lovers' practices
Source: Picture by Victoria Achurra

Something very different happens at the edges of the Park, which are the main corridors of the site. They face the avenue where cars pass and the lines of trees do not constitute a barrier between the Park edge and the street. As we can see in Figure 22b, people walking along these paths are not in an interior space, but in an open space characterised by the speed of cars.

Figure 22b: The Park's edges limiting with the street at the left side of both pictures
Source: Author's pictures

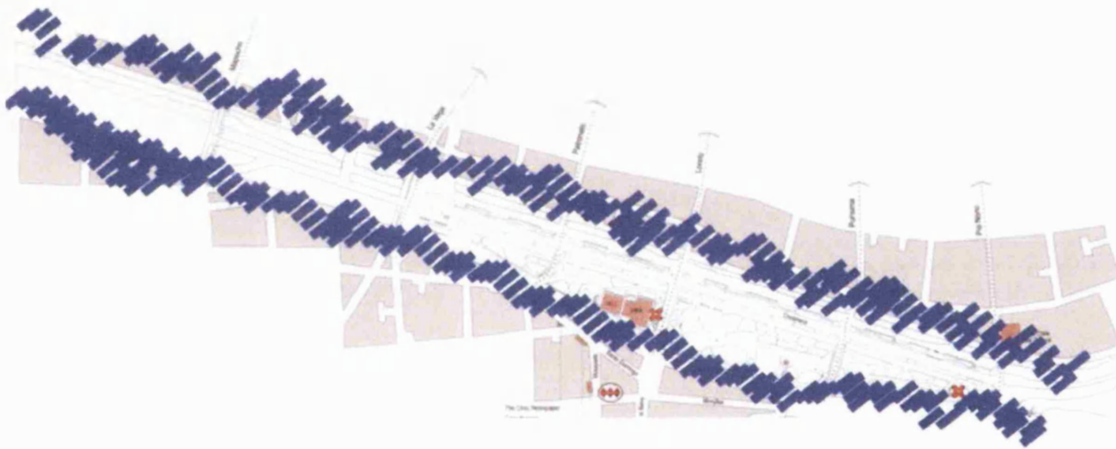


Figure 22c: Visual fields from the edges of the Park. The shaded areas in the diagram show how much you can see from the border of the Park.
Source: Author's diagram

The Park's landmarks are also main points of attraction: at the eastern edge, Plaza Italia. Plaza Italia is the area of three main landmarks that characterise the eastern edge of the park: Universidad de Chile Law School, located on the opposite river bank; the Telefónica building, a high office tower which hosts a Spanish telephone company headquarters, opposite the Park; and Fuente Alemana, a big fountain in the Park. The whole area is known as Plaza Italia, because near the underground station there is an obelisk which was donated to the Chilean government by the Italians. It is the site for celebration of sporting victories and it was one of the preferred sites for political

protests during the dictatorship period[24]. Also, it is the border between the upper classes' Santiago and that of the lower classes. The phrases *up from Plaza Italia and down from Plaza Italia* are associated with class differentiation. Both museums –Fine Arts and Contemporary- are also landmarks in the Park and serve as a demarcation of the two main areas of the Park: the eastern and the western area. Finally, the Fish Market marks the end of the Park area and the beginning of a run-down area of Santiago, both commercial and residential, but poor.

Access to the Park is through any of its bridges (as the river runs along the north side of Parque Forestal) or side streets. Passers-by and neighbours access the Park from different points either to enter it or to cross it. I want to emphasise the use of the Park as a corridor. Because of its length it works as an alternative avenue to Alameda for walkers who want to skip the noise and traffic of this avenue. Figure 23a shows the Park in the context of Santiago's inner city. We can see how the Park links two important city hubs: Plaza Italia and Mapocho. The fact that the Park runs east – west makes it an important alternative route since that is Santiago's main axis[25]. It is also an access route to the business centre, located to the south, and to specific neighbourhoods located to the north. Pío Nono bridge leads to the Bellavista neighbourhood, a place full of discos, pubs and artists' studios; Patronato bridge leads to the Patronato neighbourhood, an area of cheap clothing businesses run by Oriental immigrants, mostly Koreans and Chinese; and the Mapocho bridge is the gateway to La Vega, the city's biggest fruit and vegetable market.

[24]When Pinochet died, in December 2006, people went spontaneously to Plaza Italia to celebrate his death.

[25]The east-west axis shapes mobility practices in Santiago: the main underground and bus lines run east-west, the river runs east – west, and Santiago's topography inclines from the east to the west. Thus, the up and down –used in everyday language for giving directions and experienced while you are walking or cycling within the city- is related to the east and the west. The main city landmark, Cordillera de los Andes, indicates the east and reinforces the east – west reference in Santiago's people urban imaginary.

1/ La Vega Market 2/ Patronato Neighbourhood 3/ Universidad de Chile Law School 4/ Bellavista Neighbourhood

5/ Central Market 6/ Estación Mapocho 7/ Plaza de Armas 8/ Plaza Italia

Figure 23a: The Park's context
Source: Author's composition

Figure 23b: The Park as a corridor
Source: Author's composition

Acknowledging the importance of the Park as a corridor within Santiago's context, the concept of mobile places and multiple symbolic meanings of place merits reflection[26]. In that connection, Doreen Massey has proposed rethinking the concept of place in

[26] The concept of mobility is central regarding the discussion about space and place in times of globalisation (Massey 1996, Urry 1999) as it is the understanding of place which stresses the importance of social interaction.

terms of the articulation of social relations, which necessarily take on a spatial form in their interactions with one another (Massey 1996). She argues for an 'adequately progressive sense of place' and within this context there is room for understanding place as mobile.

I will support the proposition of mobile places, since places are defined by the social interactions produced in them. Moreover, as Massey argues, "a proportion of the social interrelations will be wider than and go beyond the area being referred to in any particular context as a place" (Massey 1996:168). That is the case for many practices in the Park: the place of the practice is enlarged by the practice itself, so the practice is related to places other than the study sites. The Park surrounding areas are very important in shaping and hosting practices that happen not exactly in the Park. The most exemplary are the living practices of newcomers to the Park, who take it as a backdrop and a symbolic reference for their practices that occur in the surrounding residential neighbourhood. Interestingly enough, the meaning of these other places is referred to the Park. For instance, the contested as well as traditional character of Universidad de Chile Law School has something to do with its location at the edge of a contested and traditional place: Parque Forestal.

In this context, I will reinforce the notion of place —mobile or rooted— as where we dwell in the world. In both cases, place is not about mere location. Place reduced to "simply being there" is a misunderstanding and it is not what Heidegger or, later, Merleau-Ponty meant by being-in-the-world. In 'Getting Back into Place', Edward Casey unfolds this discussion underlining the importance of horizon. This is what is always the backdrop of our place-related experience and allows us to distinguish the 'here' from the 'there'. We are aware of the horizon because our bodies move so we have varying viewpoints:

> "Moving in the near and into the far is always done in regard to the horizon. This is not merely a matter of fact but points to a condition of possibility: there would be no places to which to move unless any given place were what it is in relation to an encompassing horizon." (Casey 1993: 62).

Following on from this, it is impossible to conceive of place as stationary. I recognise the worth of emphasising the mobile facet of place today when there may be vast possibilities for mobility, but I agree with Casey that an aspect of place has always been not being altogether limited by determinate borders (1996:42). We can only experience place in relation to other places; our mobile condition as human beings is implied in our experience of place. As Casey asserts:

> "To be in place, to be place(d), is to be located here or there, near or far. No place is not here or there, not near or far. Conversely, to be neither here nor there, neither near nor far, is not to be (in) place." (Casey 1993:65).

The relational perception of place does not refer to other physical locations, but to other sets of interactions occurring in other places. Place specificity has always been formed, as Massey argues in her re-conceptualization of place, 'by juxtaposition and co-presence there of particular sets of social interrelations, and by the effects which that juxtaposition and co-presence produce' (Massey 1996). Thus, place-making, as searching for belonging, becomes embedded in social interaction. This search is not easy —it has never been— but is a motive in every individual's life. Home is not a physical location, but a situation for living (Casey 1993: 300). Accordingly, I will argue that we search for our place in the world and we are tireless in this navigation. This struggle happens in practice, as a never-ending dynamic.

Driving through the Park

Pedestrian circulation in Parque Forestal takes place alongside heavy traffic running east-west on both sides. Although people visiting the Park go mainly on foot because it is not easy to find parking near the site, those who are not local residents use the underground or the buses running along Alameda to reach the Park. Drivers who are not visiting the site but driving through it only have a visual connection to the Park —it is a landmark they can see easily from the road— and interact at the red lights with the Park's vendors who offer them their goods and with young Park jugglers who perform at the traffic lights. Drivers who choose Costanera Norte highway to travel east-west

experience something different: they cross the Park in the underground tunnel at high speed seeing neither the Park nor its people.

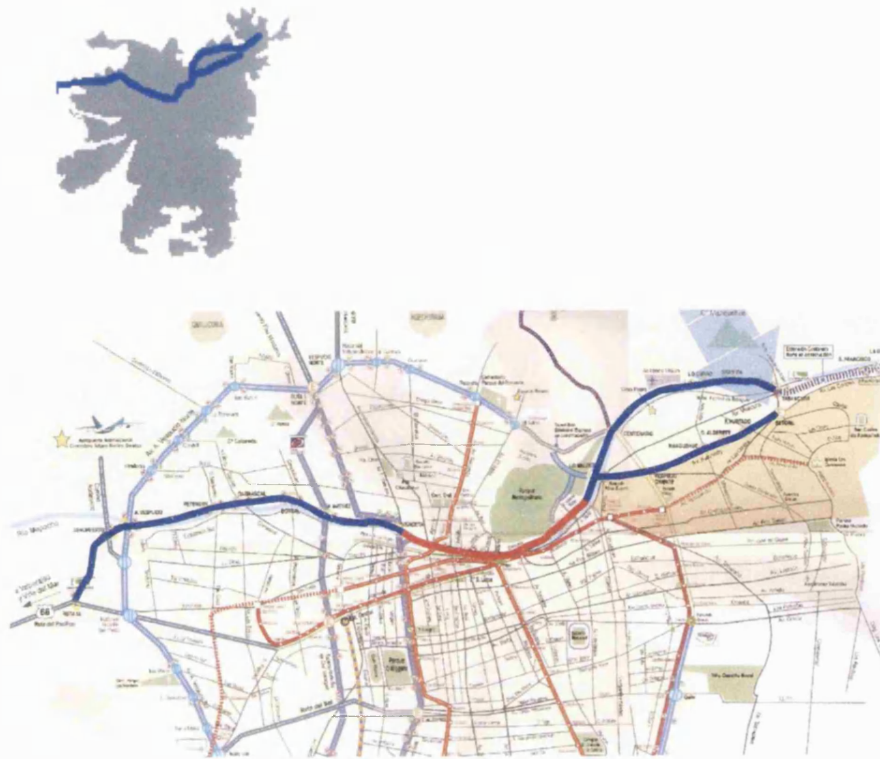
At the north edge of the Park, Costanera Norte highway is anything but a boundary. It runs along the Mapocho river from La Dehesa, an upper class suburb at the very east edge of Santiago's Metropolitan area, to Pudahuel, the south-west district where the city's airport is located (see figure 24). In the section that crosses the city's central areas it becomes an underground road. The process of its construction was contested from the very beginning. First, there was an environmental discussion because the construction of the highway implied reinforcing the use of the automobile in Santiago, which is already a heavily polluted city. Second, there was an equity discussion because the cost of the highway was extraordinarily high and many people thought that building it was not a priority. Third, the highway's original design consisted of an elevated road across the city which meant a barrier in the city centre. Finally, the building of Costanera Norte was undertaken by the Ministry of Public Works in partnership with foreign firms and the terms of that contract were obscured from many people. After much conflict, Costanera Norte was approved. The Ministry negotiated with the developers to change the design into an underground highway in the section that went across the city's central areas. The government argued that the cost of the highway was to be paid for by its users so there were no equity issues involved and public money was not used for it.

The project was finished in 2004. The more obvious consequences were visual: the access points to the highway's tunnels are far from being beautiful urban artefacts, and in the sections where the highway runs on the ground it constitutes an imposing division between the north and south of the city. But the deeper effects arise at the level of social interaction: Costanera Norte makes it possible for people to cross the city without interacting with it. Thus drivers —most of them upper class people, because the toll charged for using the highway is expensive— can go from their houses to the airport or out of Santiago without seeing anything in between. Costanera Norte is a private corridor. No public transportation runs through it, no visual contact with other people occurs. It is a tube within which no interactions take place.

People who want to go to Parque Forestal by Costanera Norte access the site by car and then park in private lots around the site. Most of them are business people who go

directly from their cars to their desks. They interact neither with other Park users nor with other pedestrians in the Park neighbourhood. Their experience is very different from that of those who reach the site using public transport. I am not denying that driving in the city is a form of social interaction in itself, as Nigel Thrift describes in his essay "Driving in the City" (2004) but I argue that driving to the Park through Costanera Norte highway is a practice whose place does not involve the Park nor the city. The place for the practice of driving along Costanera Norte consists of the private cars of those who are driving and their interactions in the tunnel. Although the Park is only a few metres above drivers, we cannot argue that the place of their practice is the Park.

Additionally, Costanera Norte has stressed social segregation in Santiago by preventing social interaction amongst drivers and pedestrians. In these terms it is a boundary. It is a tacit boundary because it cannot always be seen and its consequences appear harmless. The argument of the highway's defenders is: it cannot hurt; you can use it if you need it and are willing to pay for it. Otherwise, you can keep using the Alameda. Besides, it reduces traffic congestion because all the people using Costanera Norte today were using the Alameda before. This sounds like a logical justification, but behind it lie opportunities for interaction, tolerance and a sense of belonging which Santiago's people are now missing.



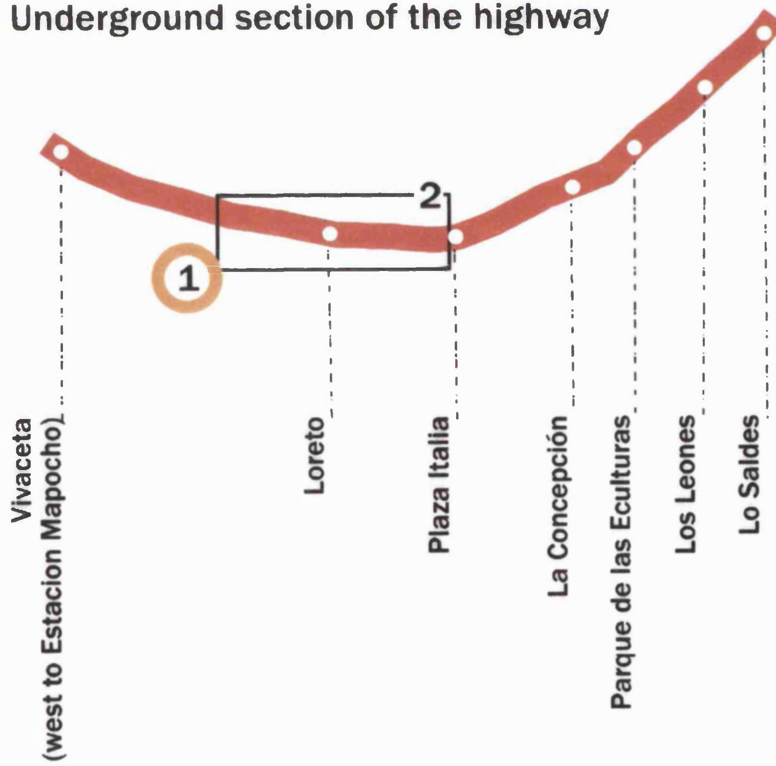
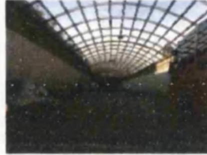


Figure 24: Costanera Norte within Santiago's context
Source: Author's composition

Lo Saldes Ground level Underground

Los Leones Ground level Underground



Parque de las Esculturas Ground level Underground

La Concepción Ground level Underground

Plaza Italia (Parque Forestal's east edge) Underground

Ground level

Loreto Ground level

Vivaceta /Parque de los Reyes (Parque Forestal west edge, next to Estacion Mapocho)

Ground level Underground

Figure 25: The place of the practice. I argue that driving through Costanera Norte is a practice that happens in the tunnel. Marc Augé would argue that it is a practice that happens in a non-place (1995). I think that the highway is a place, but one where social interaction is very limited and mediated by cars as extensions of the body (Thrift 2004).
Source: Author's composition

Conclusion

Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal host diverse people whose practices are the product of the interweaving of the characteristics of the site, other actions in the site, the sites' symbolic meanings and Chilean history. By presenting the sites, along with the social practices occurring in them, I have aimed to introduce the diversity of people's everyday experiences of the sites. By the same token, my purpose has been to introduce the tension amongst different users, not only at the level of their practices but also and more importantly, at the level of these people's embodied understandings of the world. The Plaza and the Park as places, as a confluence of social interactions in one location, contain both space and time. By exploring these places in relation to recent Chilean history we can learn about people's way of being in place, which is the synthesis of their experience of the temporal and the spatial.

Interestingly enough, although the Plaza is almost five hundred years old, people there recognise being in a site that contains an element of newness because of its refurbishment. Although users' opinions about the new design differ, they make sense of the site as a place in change. Within this understanding, they relate the changing of the Plaza to changes in Chilean political history. They link changes in one of Santiago's most important civic sites to some expectable or desirable changes at the level of political practices. In the case of the Park, the contrary is true: people relate the Park with stability and tradition, with some groups of values they want to maintain, such as sociability, friendship, family ties and neighbourhood community.

The Plaza and the Park are connected not only to each other but also to other places within the city because of their use as a corridor. This condition allows us to see the way in which people's practices in the sites are informed by their practices in other places. In this context, the study of practices in the Plaza and the Park sheds light on people's practices out of those sites, enlarging our knowledge of the background of social practices at the Plaza and the Park, and thus, our understanding of them.

The two sites are very different, which allows us to find a variety of meanings in their users' practices. However, when we consider both sites, we cannot argue that all of Santiago's people are represented in them. Rather, the diversity of the users allows us to

explore the understanding of Chile's new times through the practices of a vast range of people. In this regard, the two sites are complementary and taking them together enriches the possibilities for exploration.

Finally, the Plaza and the Park are two very different settings in terms of practices, and consequently, two different departures for meaning. The Plaza is an open space — although its form is like a cage— and the Park is a relatively closed space, an oasis within the urban grid, although it does not have built up limits. I have argued that our relation with others is realised in action —in practice— depending on spatial categories that are linked to physical settings. Hence, the Plaza and the Park offer different starting points for making sense of the world and at the same time, challenge their users' fixed understandings of it. We will see how similar practices such as walking, sitting and playing embody different meanings in the Plaza and the Park in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE:
EVERYDAY PRACTICES IN THE PLAZA AND THE PARK

"Su ir y venir es mi laberinto en que yo rumiante me pierdo"

"Its comings and goings are my labyrinth in which my ruminant self gets lost"

Enrique Lihn[27]*, "Paseo Ahumada"*

The practices of passers-by, their paths, voices, sounds and smells make up the ordinary scene in Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal. The background to their activity is the everyday, the terrain of the known and of the unknown. This might make the ordinary scene in both places appear amorphous, boring and empty of meaning, but the attentive eye and ear situated on the street may begin "to separate out, to distinguish the sources, to bring them back together by perceiving interactions" (Lefebvre 2004:27).

Attentive observers of the everyday in the early twentieth century are Georg Simmel, Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer. Simmel's focus is the labyrinth of social relations, as a web, the transitory nature of everyday life and the fleeting and fortuitous interactions that take place in the metropolis (Frisby 1985). Benjamin also understood the modern everyday as transitory. He was interested in digging into the different layers of those ephemeral experiences as a way of collecting fragments of the everyday. In a similar vein, Kracauer looked in everyday experiences for the order and meaning governing modern times.

I devote this chapter to the description and analysis of the everyday practices of walking, playing and sitting in Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal. As practices that are so common, they may appear irrelevant for the study of everyday practices. I will argue that they embody meaning, however. In all practices we perceive, know and understand: "Our understanding itself is embodied. That is, our bodily know-how and the way we act and move can encode components of our understanding of self and world." (Taylor 1993: 50). The body is the main starting point from which to

[27] Chilean poet (1929-1988).

acknowledge the world (Merleau-Ponty 1962) and individuals incorporate the experience of reality and apprehend it in their bodies in everyday practices.

On the one hand, the materiality of the body is always present and plays a definite role in practices. It is, in fact, the body's materiality that enables us to see, observe, share, learn and routinise practices. On the other hand, the body as the site of practices is where intention and expression, not the representation of these, dwell. It is what permits us to act and have a world. Maurice Merleau-Ponty understands motility as basic intentionality, in the sense that through action individuals make sense of the world: "motility is a new meaning of the word 'meaning'" (1962:170). His main point is to explain and stress that every action is embodied; without a body we could not act, thus, we could not understand.

Individuals do not make sense of the world in isolation; practices as embodied meanings are the product of a dialogue and a negotiation with others. The most important thing about practice is not its outcome but the social interactions it involves. Chris Shilling, drawing on Simmel (Simmel 1971 [1908b]), understands embodied subjects not only driven by individualised mental forms and pre-social contents and impulses but also by social properties that make the body a basis for society. "Bodily drives, dispositions and purposes involving erotic, religious and individuals towards others, into being with others, for others, or against others, and constitute and essential stage in the initial assembly of social forms." (Shilling 2007: 4).

I mean to explore how the practices of walking, playing and sitting are ways of making sense of the world. I will focus my analysis on the rhythm of these practices. I believe rhythm is a major element that opens the door to understanding of how meaning is embodied in those practices, thus, how people's rhythm is related to their understanding of the world. Simmel reflected on the rhythm of modern life, looking at how the periodicity of life was altered by the introduction of social interactions based on the money economy. He argues that once time's symmetry, given by accents and unaccents, is broken by the establishment of a permanent accent, the pace of life changes. He "particularly emphasized the significance of money for the development of the rhythmical and the specific-objective styles of life" (Simmel 2004 [1900]: 498) arguing

that in a great extent money symbolises acceleration in the pace of life. Simmel's reflection on the rhythm of modern life refers to his broader critique to modernity. In his terms, living at a permanent high speed does not allow us to satisfy our need for both diversity and regularity, change and stability.

A much more vague analysis of rhythm in practice is that of Henri Lefebvre. He identifies the body as the centre of rhythmanalysis: "At no moment have the analysis of rhythms and the rhythmanalytical project lost sight of the body. Not the anatomical or functional body, but the body as polyrhythmic and eurhythmic." (Lefebvre 2004: 67) but he does not suggest any particular way of decoding the body rhythm in terms of meaning.

I would like to take a more concrete approach to rhythm in my analysis of everyday practices, by following Cooper and Meyer's work on rhythmic structures of music (1960). They define rhythm as the way in which one or more unaccented beats are grouped in relation to an accented one (1960:6). Thus, we could think of individuals' understandings of the world as dynamic constellations organised by accents and unaccents that respond to different stimuli. The organisation of accents and unaccents in practice is embodied in a "tempo", which is not an organising force but a pace that depends upon how time is filled, in other words, upon how many patterns arise in a given span of time. Therefore I will explore both rhythm and its tempo in everyday practices in the Plaza and the Park.

In the body we develop our rhythms in a permanent dialogue with the world. On the one hand, our permanent exposure to the world is the stimulus for our understandings of it. Thus, in practice, we compose our rhythm:

> "*Exposed to the world*, to sensation, feeling, suffering, etc., in other words, engaged with the world, in play and at stake in the world, the body (well) disposed towards the world is, to the same extent, oriented towards the world and what immediately presents itself there to be seen, felt and expected: it is capable of mastering it by providing an adequate response." (Bourdieu 2000: 142).

On the other hand, "our rhythms insert us into a vast infinitely complex world, which imposes on us experience and the elements of this experience". (Lefebvre 2004: 82). We grasp the world existing in a rhythm and, at the same time, the world shapes our rhythm.

The attentive eye can discern the rhythms of people's practices in the Plaza and the Park: "Everywhere where there is an interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is a rhythm" (Lefebvre 2004:15); rhythms set the temporalities in which our lives take place. Rhythm is a fundamental aspect of our way of being-in-the-world; we embody a rhythm and we build our understandings of place within it. By the same token, we register a strange rhythm when it invades or surrounds us. We identify a rhythm that does not follow our flow, that challenges our own pace as would a stranger's eye (Simmel 1971 [1908]) and a change of rhythm may be the symptom of a crisis or an innovation (Lefebvre 2004: 14).

I will contrast the different rhythms of walking, playing and sitting by passers-by that shape the pulse of the everyday in the Plaza and the Park. Rhythm is played and displayed in our bodies, in practice. By analysing the rhythm of practices I aim to ground some of the dimensions through which people experience difference, tension, fragmentation and exclusion in Chile's new times[28]. Moreover, in the everyday of Chile's new times, I believe the rhythm of everyday practices embodies invisible elements of people's experiences: those that macro analysis cannot grasp. I aim to propose connections between the rhythm of the everyday practices and people's way of making sense of daily experiences related to work, education, health, government, family and sexuality. The connections may take the form of disjunction or continuity but I will argue that, in either case, rhythm, as part of practice, embodies meaning.

[28] By "Chile's new times", I am referring to the period commencing in 1990 after Pinochet's dictatorship; a period characterised by the twin struggles for justice regarding human rights crimes and social equity, on the one hand, and for an even financial keel, on the other. Accordingly, for the many who view the results as poor, the hallmark of Chile's new times is disillusionment.

Walking

> "Where does it start? Muscles tense. One leg a pillar, holding the body upright between the earth and sky. The other a pendulum, swinging from behind. Heel touches down. The whole weight of the body rolls forward onto the ball of the foot. The big toe pushes off, and the delicately balanced weight of the body shifts again. The legs reverse position. It starts with a step and then another step and then another ..." (Solnit 2001: 3).

Walking, that movement we learn early in life to transport ourselves from one point to another, may be construed as physical movement alone. We may focus on the body as a mere machine for walking. But walking is not only the physical coordination of movements. It becomes a practice when we turn that universal act into a ritual, a way of understanding and being-in-the-world. Walking in the Plaza and the Park is that sort of walking.

In the Plaza, it starts with the first-comers early in the morning and the awakening of those who slept on its benches. Throughout the day, people's walks add up, like taps on a drum, to a rhythm. The amble of those wandering around contrasts with quick steps of the crowd rushing to its duties. The Plaza is like an egg with a yolk of unhurried everyday walkers and a white consisting of the tireless crowd. Walkers' steps contrast with those of the urban mass that crosses the Plaza towards a destination; offices, shops, services, universities and schools. The latter's walk draws straight lines, takes shortcuts and does not stop except for the routine break at the red lights. Conversely, walkers' paths describe irregular curves, they may or may not stop; you never know, they are not programmed.

The Plaza located in Santiago's business district —loud, busy and polluted— is on the route of many people who work in its vicinity. At first sight, the urban crowd looks like the protagonist of the site, the thick flow of its fast walking forms the four sides of the Plaza. However, not everyone perceives and understands the site as a hub of business and trading. As we move away from the bordering streets towards the interior of the Plaza we encounter those who walk. Not the fast-walking people who stride along, legs slicing the air, mind clear, in a defined direction. But women and men —young people,

adults and elderly folk— who celebrate the aimless purpose of everyday strolling. They take their time, they do not rush, they delay and hold their slow rhythm against the fast tide of the big city in the Plaza. They walk from one corner to the other without any particular target and they stop to look when something catches their attention. They are the Plaza walkers.

Most of the Plaza walkers belong to middle and lower-middle classes (it is very rare to see upper class people walking in the Plaza). Some come to the Plaza for a walk as a break from work. A courier comes to watch the chess players at the Plaza Odeon when he has a break between deliveries. A worker whose job it is to check the central district fountains stops in the Plaza between the reviews of one fountain and another. A merchant takes an afternoon off from his shop in the southern area of Santiago and comes to relax at the Plaza. Other retired and unemployed people come to the Plaza as part of their routine: an unemployed man tells me that he gets the bus to the Plaza twice a week to have a walk, look around and talk to whoever happens to be in the same mood. Unlike the walkers who are taking a break from work, among whom there are both men and women, those who come especially to the Plaza are mainly men. This is unsurprising: in Chilean society —still traditional in many ways— it is not a problem for unemployed women to stay at home; they have housework and childcare activities to occupy them. Men, however, are not supposed to be at home, so they go out even if they have no other reason than to contemplate the crowd in its daily rush.

In the Park, walkers are mainly neighbours on weekdays, but at the weekend people come to Parque Forestal from all over Santiago —not only for a walk, but also to picnic, watch the puppeteers and street actors who perform in the Park and spend their day as a family. It is a unique feature of Parque Forestal —which is not an enormous Park in comparison with others and does not have a tremendous infrastructure of playgrounds, lawns and street furniture— that it attracts people from all over the city at the weekends. Although the Park neighbourhood has always been upper-middle class, its location in the inner city leads to a perception that it belongs to all *Santiaguinos*, as Santiago's inhabitants are known. Families and friends make the trip specially to the Park to walk and lie on the grass. After two Sundays conducting short interviews with people in the Park, I was convinced that it plays a very important role in lower and lower-middle class

Santiaguino families. A stroll in the Park on a Sunday can be the only excursion in a month.

Relaxed walking: simple life or hidden disappointment?

In five months of walking and observing in the Plaza and the Park myself, I became familiar with the rhythm of these sites' walkers. None of them, apparently, is in any hurry to get anywhere or do anything. They are there because they choose to be, not explicitly but as a consequence of their way of understanding the world. They are not ambitious people, they want a simple life. A life with no luxuries or glitter, a peaceful life, slow enough to notice what is going on in it. Jose, a twenty-eight-year-old, tells me about his idea of a simple life as he sits on the steps of the Plaza Odeon, while he has a cold "mote con huesillos", a traditional Chilean drink.

> "At home we have had lots of problems, many things. [...] But I don't want to look back, I think one should look forward, it's much better, but there have been many problems. [...] I think it's important for people to look for alternatives, we should look forward. I don't like to dwell on the bad things because then I'd be stuck. I prefer to move past the bad things and get to see other things. I believe there are beautiful things in this life and you have to make the most of them, Chile is beautiful and we should keep our traditions alive, our folklore; people should voice what they are feeling, what they are living. If you spell out what's wrong, you can fix things. [...] I want to find a job [he is unemployed] and help my family [he lives with his mother, his sister and his two nephews], to live okay, so they will be okay. That's what I want. Maybe I'll go to live with friends afterwards but I don't want to leave before making everything okay." (Interview with Jose, passer-by, 2 November 2005).

When I asked Jose what he meant by "everything", he said, "well, being able to live well, so my sister doesn't have to worry and my mum can take it easy". He went to university but did not finish his course because he was unable to keep paying fees. He would like to go back and finish but that is not his priority. It seems that is not part of "making everything okay". His aim is much more modest and strongly associated with

taking care of his family. Jose's idea of life is rooted in the understanding of Chile as ruled by community ties, traditional values and solidarity. This understanding is embodied in his slow rhythm, one that allows him to take his time and enjoy a typical drink in the Plaza.

In a similar vein, by spending time walking in the Park Santiago's people affirm the importance of family ties, friendship and sociability. For them, a walk in the Park is a way of spending their time with others without needing anything more than nature to have a nice day. Walking in the Park is a pastime linked to a nostalgic idea of the past, to an image of a slower life in which personal relationships seemed to be more important. However, the slow rhythms of the Plaza and the Park, although they appear as embodiments of similar understandings of life, draw on very different stimuli and perceptions of the present-day Chile.

Although Jose's narrative appeared sincere, there is a fine line between walking around the Plaza as a free soul not attracted by a stressed way of living and roaming around hopelessly. The walkers' conversations with their Plaza friends and acquaintances reveal a broad range of understandings. Walkers bring the slow and reflective rhythm of their pedestrian navigations into their discourses. Their commentary encompasses the people around them, the news, Chilean culture, politics and economics, TV programmes and their personal lives, among an infinite range of topics. They talk as if they were not fully rooted in the world they are commenting on. In some cases, this apparent detachment extends to a sense of marginality or exclusion.

Young walkers like Nicole and Ursula, two high school girls who often play truant and take a day off in the Plaza, exude a stronger experience of exclusion. They have no great expectations of Chile, they do not think about it, they care only about their own affairs; boyfriends, music, school, parties. On that note, Nicole has no interest in the coming elections:

> -"What for? We're poor now and we'll still be poor whatever government we have. [...] The bad thing is that Chile is full of snobs. They look at you as if you were trash and they're full of shit saying that they help people and that they care about others but they don't do anything", says Nicole.

-"Do you mean people on TV?" I asked.

-"Yes and everyone else. On TV there's nothing but snobs and everybody looks like a model, blond and pretty. They try to tell us that in Chile we are all pretty and that everything is okay and that's not true, we're not all blond. For me it`s all the same, they can do whatever they want. I just want to be happy, I don't care about anything else, they can do whatever, they can fill their mouths with words." (Interview with Nicole and Ursula, high school students, 3 October 2005).

They don't get involved because they don't think it would make any difference. They don't see much room for them. We talked about Pinochet —who was still alive then— and the whole debate on human rights and Nicole told me: "I don't know. I wasn't there. I don't know why they keep complaining about the same things all the time." Their detached attitude and apparent relaxed rhythm looks like protection against disappointment. The less they commit, the less it hurts.

We could argue that the case for walkers in the Park is a very different one. Slow walking in the Park is much more about having a simple life that a way of hiding disappointment. For instance, the group of friends who walk their dogs in the Park are lovers of the slow rhythm. In it they dwell and act; the slow rhythm allows them to weave and by so doing, bring the world of their experience into being. Let me introduce you to them in order to show how they weave their friendship dwelling in a slow rhythm:

"About ten people make up the group of dog walkers. They are all Parque Forestal neighbours. Sonia lives across the river; she is a seventy-something-year-old widow, has grown-up children and grandchildren and her flatmate is Amelia, her dog. She is a sporty woman who wears trainers and does not dye her hair. She is skinny, agile and has an easy laugh. Gaston is a retired English teacher. Also a widower, he seems to always be happy. He is a very small man with white hair and a little hump. He lives in a tiny apartment near the Park. Carmen has lived opposite the Park since she was twenty years old. She is single and did not have a professional career. She has worked here and there doing different things. She is in her sixties now and enjoys living in the

area because of the Park and the cultural events that take place around about. Matilde moved to the neighbourhood last year; her mother died and she sold the uptown house where she lived with her, bought a dog and rented a flat near the Park. 'I wanted to have neighbours, where I lived was too solitary,' she says. Tito joins the group every evening after work. He lives by himself opposite the Park and finds company in the group of dog walkers. Vicky is a regular in the group although she is continually announcing she is about to leave. But she stays. Her huge apartment across from Parque Forestal can wait because she enjoys talking to Sonia and the others. She is a rich woman who seems to be always a little bit angry with the world. She does not leave her jewellery at home to walk her dog and Gaston thinks she is a 'little bit complicated' but a very good woman." (Field notes, 9 October 2005).

The diversity of the group is the first thing that strikes me. As noted earlier, upper and upper-middle classes are not usual users of public spaces in Chile. They stay at home, in Santiago's north-east residential neighbours or in suburban gated communities. Instead, within the group who walk their dogs, there are men and women, and two of them look very rich; they live in the apartments that overlook the Park, they are wearing expensive jewellery and have a posh accent. Others are middle class; they live in the neighbourhood and wear sportswear to walk their dogs. They have different political views; some are socialist and support the presidential candidate, now the Chilean president, Michelle Bachelet, others are right-wing and hope the right will win. They have different perceptions about youth behaviour in the Park and about crime and violence in the city of Santiago. The right wingers follow the media in its fear campaign and think crime is turning Santiago into hell on earth, while the others are less impressed by the news and think it has always been more or less the same: "good and bad people around, same as everywhere", says Sonia.

Dog-walkers tend not to overlook the differences among them in order to be friends. Rather they turn them into points for encounter, dialogue and conversation. They laugh about themselves and the others, "Vicky is such a conservative, she is always shocked by the way young people dress", Gaston tells me in front of Vicky, teasing. They meet each other every evening, all with their dogs and ready to walk and talk for over an hour. The conversation ranges from dog-related matters to TV programmes, films,

politics, crafts, card games, food, restaurants, books, family issues and health, to name but a few of an endless list. They met in the Park initially and they see each other there daily but also they gather in each others' houses to play cards and have dinner.

Breaks in the walk: sharing the struggle to live and the nostalgia for the past

If a slow rhythm embodies different understandings in the Plaza and the Park, by the same token, it takes different forms in the two sites. Laughing ironically about life is one form that the relaxed rhythm can take in the Plaza. Robinson's painting spot is good for that kind of mood and one of the Plaza's walkers' favourite stops. Robinson's green parasol, at one corner of the Plaza, welcomes passers-by coming from the Paseo Ahumada access to the Plaza. Almost every time I talked to Robinson people either stopped to join us or called out a greeting as they walked past. Robinson constantly explained who people were: "She is a friend, she works here in the bank at the shopping mall", or, "I know him because he used to stop and look at my paintings", or, "That guy's an insurance salesman, he visits the offices around here and he's always stopping to say hi." Interestingly enough, Robinson is not very approachable at first. He is ironic and critical and always seems to be in a bad mood. The other painters call him 'grumpy' because of it. Maybe that's part of Robinson's attraction for walkers: you never know what kind of response you are going to get. People who stay and chat borrow Robinson's stool and sit for a while under his parasol. It offers pleasant shade but sometimes, when more than three people are standing around Robinson telling him stories, it is not big enough. Sometimes people try to start a conversation with him by looking at what he is painting —he is always working on some picture or another at the Plaza. Depending on his mood, Robinson may turn a cross and unwelcoming face to them or he may start an amenable conversation.

One day I was with Robinson when a passer-by stopped to say hello. He was an old friend of Robinson's, he used to paint too and that was how he became interested in Robinson's work. They started to have little chats about art at the Plaza. And, from art, they moved on to other topics. That day, Ricardo told Robinson he had been at the hospital with a stomach problem. The doctors there had recommended a set of tests and pills but Ricardo told Robinson he could not take the treatment because he could not afford it. Brimming with humour, they made fun of the Chilean public health system:

-"I decided not to get sick but as I got older I couldn't keep my resolution", says Robinson.

-"Well, what the hell, you haven't got a choice and it's better to sign up for Fonasa [Chilean public health system] and pay because if you want to declare yourself indigent you have to talk to the social worker. They visit your home, the council person comes as well, it's a mess. And when they come to your place and see you have a fridge, that means you're not poor anymore so bye-bye. The way they measure poverty in this country it's impossible. They measure it *a lo gringo*; you have to be swimming in shit to get any help. So, get a piece of shit! If you are clean then you're not poor anymore." [...]

-"I eat pineapple, they say it's good for the kidneys, and it's cheap. If it hurts anyway, I just put up with it. I can't afford to buy medicine", Robinson said.

–"That's why when I think I'm too old and ill I'll kill myself. Gun in the mouth, no pain, and you're gone."

-"You're not serious, I suppose", I said.

-"Of course I am", he replied. "I've planned it. If I don't have a home and I'm ill; I've already lived, it doesn't matter. I'm not going to go to a public hospital to die, what for? I saw how my father and my brother died in a hospital bed. My father was skinny as a wraith and the doctors did nothing, it's not worth it. It's much better to go when you are still doing okay." (Field notes, 22 November 2005).

They criticise a system which charges for everything, doctor's ethics they see as unethical, the lack of social solidarity that the private health regime implies and the overall tragedy of illness and death. Ricardo, funny and sour, acknowledging that there is no reason to rush because he has nothing to gain anyway, takes his time. Instead, he has something to gain by going slow. Walkers share their everyday life with others, their difficulties, their surprises, their losses and gains. By participating in their chats I came to realise that the rhythm of their walking is also the rhythm of their talk. They go over and around the facts of their lives several times, their chats follow the same erratic course as their trajectories in the Plaza. Most of conversations in which I was involved in the Plaza involved the struggle to live: economically, politically or culturally. A

general sense of discomfort is apparent when people talk about their lives, as if the breaks in their walks served to dispel their uneasiness.

In the Park, nostalgia for the past times invades the conversations of adults and old people, men and women alike, walking in the Park. They are happy neither with the way Chile is going nor with the way society all over the world is going. They are very critical of Chilean society turning consumerist and they stress their preference for a walk in the Park versus one in a shopping mall as a radical action. Some of the most common complaints about Chilean society are crime and violence in the city, youth immorality ('they walk along the street with almost nothing on', 'they are always drinking here in the Park and taking drugs', 'it makes me sad, but they are rolling on the grass, kissing and everything in front of everyone'), lack of taste and sense of preservation ('they are knocking down all the beautiful buildings around here to build awful cheap tower blocks') and lack of culture ('young people don't read', 'TV shows are awful and vulgar, full of plastic women showing their boobs and behinds').

Maria Luisa, an elderly lady who has lived in the Park for forty years, walks around the Park with her husband every spring and summer afternoon. They go for a walk with their maid because both of them are over eighty years old and they need some help to walk. Maria Luisa likes her neighbourhood but she liked it better in the old times. Hearing her, it is apparent that what has changed for her is not related to physical characteristics of the site but to people's practices in the neighbourhood:

> "There's a lot of drug dealing here now, for instance, here, in that building in the opposite street, this very wealthy family Hurtado, well, they rent their flat to a homo who lives partying, he throws these huge parties, but he signed a contract and they cannot kick him out. [...] and in the square [in front of the Contemporary Art Museum] it smells like pot [...] Sundays it's like a zoo: jugglers mixed with punks, others smoking pot, others throwing the bottles into the air, it's a mess". (Interview with Maria Luisa, Parque Forestal neighbour, 27 October 2007).

Maria Luisa links old practices in Parque Forestal neighbourhood with cultural preferences she thinks people do not have anymore. In her opinion, people enjoyed

attending cultural events in the old times ("I had a season ticket for the Opera in Teatro Municipal all my life") but now they are "running around completely nude" (referring to the performance that the American Photographer Spencer Tunick did in Parque Forestal some years ago[29], in the street opposite Maria Luisa's flat). Her view is critical of the cultural openness that has emerged in Chile since the nineties. She does not like the advent of diverse cultural forms:

> "All that is over now [cultural life] because this country changed, completely. It went from being an educated country, where education existed in all social classes, to being a vulgar country. [...] I once lived in a distinguished country with no poor people, no hungry people, without all that sort of thing and I have ended up living, at my age, seeing poverty, drug addiction, I'd better not tell you about young people, not about our children but about the ordinary ones. They are all criminals. So, that has been the change in culture that has happened. Before this was a closed society, now everybody comes. You have to be careful if you are wearing a gold medal because they steal it from you in a minute." (Interview with Maria Luisa, Parque Forestal neighbour, 27 October 2007).

Breaks in the walk invite nostalgia for the old times. Maria Luisa sits on a bench outside the Beaux Arts Museum with her husband and watches those young people she does not like: "On Sundays this Park turns into an awful slum, you can see everything, people from who knows where come here, do you realise? And that guy who is shouting in front of the Museum... before the Philharmonic used to play there, now people do not listen to that kind of music anymore." However, she enjoys watching the scene as if she could see the young people of the past walking in front of her. "I like this neighbourhood, it's a happy place, full of life", she tells me. (Field notes, 20 November 2005).

I have described breaks in the walk as moments of encounter, when people bring some perspective to their lives by contrasting their own rhythm with others' and that of the country. Within that context, the apparently common narratives of disappointment in the

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[29]The American photographer Spencer Tunick visited Chile in 2002. Around 4000 people posed nude for his pictures in the Park.

Plaza and of nostalgia in the Park, take different forms. Narratives of disappointment and nostalgia about the past open a door to reflections about the future and, in that vein, walkers bring into their conversations feelings of fear and uncertainty. Ester, a woman who is walking around the Plaza while she waits, is afraid in advance of being disappointed in the future:

> "I talk with a woman, Ester, while we watch the comic's show in front of the Cathedral. She is waiting for her cleaning shift to start, smoking a cigarette and listening to the comics. She hangs out walking around the Plaza every day between shifts. She relaxes, looks around and talks. She tells me that she is worried about her daughter because she suspects that she is having sex with her boyfriend. She is in despair. She has not talked to her daughter but she knows about it because she found a prescription in her schoolbag. She is afraid that her daughter will get pregnant but she does not want to talk to her about contraconceptive methods. "I don't want her to have sex, I don't like it, I don't want it. I've worked all my life to give my children everything but if she lets me down, I've already told her to forget about me. My daughter's very intelligent and she's going to a very good school. She could be someone if she keeps working. That's why I'll kick her out of the house if she lets me down and gets pregnant. I couldn't bear it. She has all her life ahead, she should study and work." (Field notes, 2 November 2005).

Ester makes sense of Chile's new times as new opportunities and possibilities for her daughter. Her disappointment would materialise if her daughter became pregnant, dropped out of school, lost her career and opportunity to join Chile's fast rhythm. Her fear is born of her own history as a woman who did not have the opportunity to study and devoted her entire life to taking care of her children and an alcoholic husband who used to beat her. However, her fear is not reason enough to condone her daughter using contraconceptives: "that's wrong. I cannot even bear to think about it!" She is afraid of both maintaining past practices and changing them. Ester wants her daughter to have a different life than she did, she wants her to have her share of Chile's new opportunities but cannot accept that women's participation in the workplace goes together with family planning.

Even without meeting her, we might safely hazard a guess that Ester's daughter has a very different understanding of sexuality from her mother. Teenage pregnancy is a big problem in Chile. It is associated with such social problems as low levels of schooling (because young people used to drop out of school to work and take care of children), overcrowding and poverty. Since 1990, Chilean governments have tried to promote social policies freely of religious beliefs, but every initiative turns into a stand-off with the Chilean Catholic Church and conservative politicians.

Ester's fear of disappointment is mixed up with her desire for a quiet life. She lives in Renca, a lower-middle class district in Santiago, and she works in two cleaning firms. "I work hard to get things for the house, I bought a new TV because my son, who is not living with us anymore, took the one in the living room so I had to buy a new one. Now I'm going to buy a new stereo." She shops in the big stores around the Plaza, where she pays with a store card and builds up debts. She checks out the stores during her breaks so she is well informed about the sales and new products. She likes being able to rely on the financial system to get new things that make her happy. She enjoys staying at home watching a film on her new TV. She construes her shopping as a way of having a quiet, unhurried life, like the possibility to stay at home and be comfortable. For her, Chile's new times are not about politics but about a chance of a better life.

She does not understand her daughter's eagerness for clothes, accessories, a computer and multimedia gadgets. She complains about her daughter's behaviour and she perceives it as different from hers. "It's different. Today's youth is different, they have much more than we had and still they want more, and they are proud of it," she says. She explains to me how important her daughter is to her and how much she has given her: "But she is becoming so demanding, she wants a certain brand of trainers, a very good stereo for her room, she asked for boots, then for shoes and I give her all of it. I've worked all day to give her things since her father died."

Ester's break in her walk situates her in between the slow rhythm of the past and the fast one of the future. She looks back and does not want her daughter to have her life. She looks ahead and is afraid of the possible results of a different way of doing things, such as her daughter's sexual or consumer practices.

In the Park, uncertainty about the future is linked to neighbourhood change. Old residents are suspicious of new businesses coming into the site and new residential buildings. They want their neighbourhood to remain residential and although they like the liveliness linked to young entrepreneurs they do not want cafes to turn into bars or small shops to turn into supermarkets. They cannot stop neighbourhood change so their talks about it take the form of discourses of resistance towards invasion, like the one I share with a group of female residents one afternoon, while we walked in the Park:

> -"Look, why should we move out?"- a lady answered when, after hearing her complaints about newcomers in Parque Forestal, I asked her if she had thought of moving out.
> -"This is our neighbourhood, why should I move away from my place because they come to invade me?" (Field notes, 13 October 2005).

Interestingly, they are not afraid of losing the Park as such. Although in Santiago city many green spaces have been reduced or destroyed in order to build highways or new buildings, Parque Forestal appears for these old residents as untouchable, as a permanent feature that makes it worth staying in the neighbourhood, despite its changes.

> -"Well, but we have told you negative things only"- one of the women said.
> -"So, what are the positive aspects of your neighbourhood?", I asked.
> -"This". She stopped walking, looked up into the sky and showed me with her hands the surroundings. "The air, the trees, this Park is very pretty, it's a wonder." (Field notes, 13 October 2005).

The Park's materiality functions as a means for certainty about the future, perhaps because its appearance has not changed much since it was constructed. The contrary is true in the Plaza where material change echoes changes in people's preferences and ways of doings.

Walking and thinking and walking: the construction of a narrative

Conversations like the one about the health system take place every day in the Plaza. They all draw on people's experiences. 'Walking and thinking and walking' emerges as

a sequence, as Rebecca Solnit points out in "Wanderlust. A History of Walking". Drawing on the writings of Rousseau and Kierkegaard, she argues that walking is itself a way of grounding one's thoughts in a personal and embodied experience of the world. In his journals, Kierkegaard, insists that he composed all his work afoot. "Most of Either/Or was written only twice (besides, of course, what I thought through while walking, but that is always the case); nowadays I like to write three times" (Solnit 2000:24). Similarly, Walter Benjamin quotes Nietzsche's reflection on walking and thinking: "I walked around the whole bay...all the way to Portofino. This place and this scenery came even closer to my heart because of the great love that Emperor Frederick III felt for them...It was on these two walks that the whole of Zarathustra I occurred to me, and especially Zarathustra himself as a type. Rather, he overtook me." (Nietsche quoted by Benjamin 2002: 360). In the case of the Plaza walkers, the sequence 'walking and thinking and walking' is done in interaction with others. The idea of the philosopher as a solitary walker contrasts with the social walking of the people in the Plaza. The rhythm of their walking and thinking is a collective one. It is accentuated by dialogue. There is a special interest in sharing and negotiating understandings among the Plaza walkers. To an extent, a strong desire for a common narrative lies at the background of their roaming.

Disappointment may appear as a narrative shared by most of the walkers. Disappointment is related to the unrealised dream of change. After 1990, people expected a change in the political, economic and cultural realms of Chilean life. Since the most important thing that had to be changed —removing Pinochet from power— did change, expectations were apparently well-founded. But people's everyday lives did not become any better. It is not my aim here to discuss the fairness of that judgement, but to show that the Plaza's walkers belong to the group of people who are not satisfied with the history of the last fifteen years. Their disappointment suggests that their past and the years of struggle were not worthwhile and, at the same time, that there is no future, no promised land anymore. The future became the present and the present does not look like the future they dreamed of.

Disappointed in this, walkers always bring into their conversation a comparison with the times of dictatorship. Their personal history stopped making sense because their expectations —of themselves, others or the country— were not fulfilled. The irony in

the conversation of Juan, a 52-year-old, sheds some light on my argument. I had just met him at Robinson's spot when he told me that he lived in Peñalolén, in Villa Grimaldi, where the torture centre had been.

> -"Have you been there?"
> -"No, I haven't."
> -"We should go one day, I can give you a tour", he said ironically, "they made a beautiful park, I've known it quite well since the time when it was a torture centre..." He leaves the sentence unfinished, waiting for me to ask why he knew it in those times.
> -"How did you get in if it was a prison?"
> -"I went to take cigarettes to the people who were arrested. They were blindfolded."
> -"I'm not getting the story. How could you get into Villa Grimaldi?" (Field notes, 18 October 2005).

Juan was held for three days, arrested out of sheer bad luck when he was hanging around doing nothing at his university in 1973 —'anyway, I got off lightly,' he says, showing me his fingers which, thanks to the hammers, are not quite straight anymore. Then he met a CNI (Pinochet's security service) guy at the university and asked him if he could help in the torture centre. Apparently the CNI man owed him some kind of favour because he agreed. Juan started taking cigarettes to political prisoners and soon became involved in politics, committed to the struggle to recover democracy.

> -"And are you still involved in politics now?"
> -"No, I work in Ripley", he says with a weird mixture of shame and relief. [Ripley is one of Chile's big department stores. As well as selling goods, it operates as an insurance company and a bank.]
> -"And what is it like being there after living through what you told me?"
> -"A bit odd, but you have to earn a living and I am doing really well. Plus, I have a life pension from the Government as a payment for my contribution to the return of democracy, it's like a pension. I still work though. I didn't get a job in the Government, but I prefer to keep working. I feel guilty for helping people to get into debt selling them department store credits but ..."

> Robinson interrupts him and completes the sentence: "I bet that half of the people who are here, now, in the Plaza are in DICOM."[30] (Field notes, 18 October 2005).

Juan is not happy with the way things turned out after 1990, when Chile returned to democracy. Failing to secure a Government job, he went to work in the private sector. He sees how people struggle for a living within an economic system that is not so different from Pinochet's times. Although he acknowledges that a democratic Government is totally different from a dictatorship, he still thinks that there is too much inequality in Chile and that those with economic power always get what they want. His words also reveal a sense of disappointment over the way the Government has moved on from the human rights abuses; making a park in Villa Grimaldi and giving a life pension to people whose rights were demolished does not solve the problem. Many people in Chile still do not know how their relatives died, because Pinochet passed an amnesty law disallowing legal process. Also, there are many who have admitted their guilt but will not be judged because they are protected by that law. Juan can talk about those things freely in the Plaza, taking a break from the system in which he is immersed and that takes him from one office to another offering store cards.

Juan's rhythm embodies the incongruity of his history; he walks calmly and spends his lunch hour in the Plaza, and then he runs off to his job as a store card salesman. He perceives his salesman rhythm as a strange one, as one that lays bare the fragmentation of his life, as a rhythm that does not fit him. It is a rhythm that hurts and that pain is what makes Juan aware of his own uneasiness. Juan embodies in his rhythm of walking and talking in the Plaza an understanding of the world as a place for sharing with friends and family, but that rhythm is disrupted by the urgency of a job which he perceives solely as a source of income. The rhythm of business disturbs his way of being-in-the world; he feels perturbed by it. The rhythm of development —his fast rhythm— is a not an authentic one for him.

Juan deals with his disappointment in the form of fragmentation and compartmentalisation. He does his best to try out the rhythm of his job, the rhythm of a successful Chile, the rhythm of democracy with limits. His fragmented experience

[30] DICOM is the register of people with financial commitments in arrears.

allows him to escape conflict and to keep going. By the same token, Juan's experience of the Plaza is also fragmented. He lives its interior as the strolling walker who is chatting with his friends one minute and submerged in the crowd of Paseo Ahumada and lost in the masses in the next.

Like Juan, Alejandro (Jano for short), the balloon and toy vendor at the Plaza, was politically active during the dictatorship. He was involved in protests and political action and, although he does not see Chile as the epitome of social revolution, he takes what he can get from it. Jano brings a positive attitude to bear on his disappointment and his steadiness is apparent in his chats with walkers who stop at his spot. He has a clear recollection of the difficult times and a strong opinion about them. However, no anger is involved:

> "We had to flee the country because of the military coup so —imagine! — we don't want the right governing again. We were all committed. I was in the Young Communists, my dad was the president of the trade union, my brother was the director of a workers' association. They didn't get my dad because he had a haemorrhage and one side of his body was paralysed, so they didn't beat him but they broke into my mum's house lots of times. My house had three gates and in the end my mum left them open so they didn't break them down every time. [...] We helped from abroad sending money to my old mum. I wanted to be a Spanish teacher but with all that happened I never got to study." (Field notes 5 December 2005).

Jano lives one day at a time. He is thankful for having a job that allows him to live well; he bought a house in Lampa, outside of Santiago, where prices are lower and the air is cleaner. He commutes to the Plaza every day. He acknowledges it is a lot of work but he takes it without complaint:

> "I have worked hard for everything I have, and I have enough. I like to enjoy the good things in life, having a family, going fishing, playing with my grandchildren [...] Now we have a full house. My daughter is staying with her children and, since we come to the Plaza all day, they stay at home. And, of course, things are not tidy any more but it is nice; they cheer you up.

There's someone there when you get home. Everybody's there." (Field notes 5 December 2005).

A calm, peaceful rhythm pervades Alejandro's talk in the Plaza. Walkers see him as a kind man and his spot offers a break from the business district buzz. Many walkers in the Plaza like this rhythm. They are bored at home or in their offices and they escape to the Plaza. They are not there looking for answers but for company. They come to the Plaza for a rhythm full of little encounters and scenes. Their intention in spending time in the Plaza is to escape, to get some relief from their everyday routine: 'I am here because I do not have anything else to do,' says Enrique, a sad, 80-year-old widower.

The sequence of walking and thinking and walking takes the form of a nostalgic reflection about past times in the Park, when face-to-face interactions, traditional cultural performances and family gatherings were the rule. This thinking, like that of Plaza walkers, develops together with the slow rhythm of walkers' steps. However, I would argue that another way of thinking about Chile's new times happens in the fast rhythm of young people's body practices and children's playing in the Park. The sequence of walking and thinking and walking is replaced, on the one hand, by young people's thinking in play: "[Play] is brought into focus by body-practices like dance and which 'encourages the discovery of new configurations and twists of ideas and experience" (Schechner quoted by Thrift 1997: 145) and, on the other hand, by the newcomers' practice of bringing or sending their children to play in the site.

Playing at the Park

Young people's body practices in the Park embody the understanding of present-day Chile as a place of freedom and diversity. As well as juggling by young people behind the Contemporary Art Museum —which might be more connected to different factors, as I explain in another chapter— capoeira dancing and drum playing develop amongst a very diverse group of young people, coming from all Santiago's areas. Playing in the Park "vanishes together with freedom. There is no such a thing as obligatory play, play on command. One can be coerced to obey the rules of the game, but not to play..." (Bauman 1993:170). Playing in the Park is playing in social space, where things are in

flight, not secured; where the urban flaneur may be a travelling player and the stranger has not been labelled so he or she still may invite us to think differently (Bauman 1993). Young people reinforce their own way of dressing, talking, dancing, juggling in play in the Park and if there is a common trend amongst all of them it is the search for individuality: "the body is not merely a vehicle for departing from social norms, for escaping from the structures of moral codes. It is, in its positive aspect, the grounds for configurating an alternative way of being that eludes the grasp of power" (Radley 1995: 9).

Many other practices develop in association with play as creative practices: there are puppet shows; selling of crafts, toys and sweets; music playing; and kite building. Play, as a way of spending time in the Park by families, leads to practices of consumption of traditional goods and forms of entertainment as alternatives to the shopping mall culture. While for lower and lower-middle class families bringing their children to play in the Park is a cheap way to spend a weekend afternoon, for newcomer parents it is — in a manner of speaking— a political action, a self-imposed obligation that they practice mainly on weekdays, when the Park is not too crowded.

Young couples in Parque Forestal belong to Chile's cultural new class (Ley 1994), a group which started to become recognizable among other middle class groups in the early nineties, consisting of young liberal and left-wing professionals.[31] They want their children to play and avoid television, the "mechanical nanny", and to become used to meeting different people in the street. They make sense of Chile as a country that is progressing and becoming diverse and cosmopolitan and want their children to learn values such as tolerance and respect, which they link to globalisation. They believe that learning the rules and respecting them is a challenge for children at the Park's playgrounds. There are usually fewer swings than kids and they learn that if there is no swing available they can play on the slide. They want their children to learn flexibility in play, as Richard Sennett argues: "play teaches the rules themselves are malleable, and that expression occurs when rules are made up, or changed." (Sennett 2002: 322). When I talked to some of them they admitted they were bored at the Park but they said that ultimately they like coming because they know it is good for their kids. Within their

[31] I explore the topic of Chile's new cultural class in a later chapter.

understanding, bringing their children to the Park is important not only because they can play, but also because they encounter difference:

> "The Park is intimately linked to the neighbourhood. My son has to come here everyday, play with his ball and all that. This neighbourhood is very interesting for children, there is the chinchinero[32] playing at the playground, there are the jugglers at the square beside the Contemporary Museum, there are the puppeteers who perform every weekend, there are two areas of swings, you also have the Museum which I consider as a place for children too, you have so many things here! (Interview with Danitza, Parque Forestal resident, 17 October 2005).

In the same vein, Teresa climbs the slide's stairs with her children, walks to the back of the museum on Sundays to watch the jugglers and enjoys watching the old 'chinchinero' playing at the Park:

> "My girls are happy here, they are happy girls, they know the people in the Park, they talk to them, walk around, they love the two playgrounds, they meet other children, we spend a lot of time here." (Interview with Teresa, Parque Forestal neighbour, 8 November 2005).

However, newcomers understand the Park more as an aesthetic space than as a social space, to borrow Bauman's terminology (1993). They go to the Park *in order to* encounter difference. The experience of diversity becomes programmed and the stranger in the Park is for them a spectator's pleasure; the "sublime" and the unknown becomes aesthetic proximity. It is interesting to compare the play of a newcomer mother with the play of uninterested nannies who are there out of responsibility and need. The artificiality of the newcomers' practice of playing with their children in the Park as a way of encountering difference comes into light observing nannies' practices. The rhythm of Susana, Bruno's nanny, is not that of somebody who is having fun. She gets really bored at the Park and she does not play. She sits on a bench and watches Bruno, shouting at him when he strays out of her sight. She does not look at me while we talk, she does not loose Bruno from sight for a second. She does not explore the Park, she is

[32] Chinchinero is the name for a traditional Chilean music player with a drum strapped to his back and cymbals tied into his feet.

completely indifferent to it. For her spending time with somebody else's child for money is not fun. Both of Bruno's parents work. They are film-makers and ask Susana to bring their child to the Park. It is not an order, but a recommendation, as Susana told me, and she, although bored, follows it. Like Susana, many other nannies look after children during weekdays in the Park because most of the young residents with children work.

Susana's slow rhythm, a product of her boredom, clashes with the fast, diverse and enthusiastic rhythm of those who come to play in the Park from all over Santiago on Sundays. Non-residents, mainly from areas that are lower-income than the Park neighbourhood, get the most benefit from the Park, because Parque Forestal is a paradise compared with the scanty park and playground infrastructure in poor areas in Santiago. In spring and summer, play days in Parque Forestal are long and parents and children invent many different games, for instance: water showers, trampolines, dancing and drawing, and a play atmosphere pervades the Park. Invention, rule-making and learning make play a creative practice at the Park. By the same token, they do not confine themselves to the playgrounds —there are two in Parque Forestal— but go for walks, climb the sculptures, gather stones and seeds, watch the dogs and so on.

Playing Chess at the Plaza

Young people's and newcomers' play in the Park flows in a different rhythm from the older residents' walking and, thus, we can easily distinguish play from walking in the site. Something different happens in the Plaza, where play is an extension of people's walks. Play adds to slow walking in the Plaza. However, people playing go beyond the narrative of disappointment and develop in play what Michel de Certeau calls tactics or ways of operating (de Certeau 1984: xix).

People invent new paths within apparently rigid structures. An example is the practice of playing chess at the Plaza Odeon. At lunchtime the place is at its peak. All the tables are full with men playing chess. I went there regularly. I watched different matches, navigating around the tables, chatting with players and trying to learn the logic of chess. But I also tried to understand what it is that makes chess so fascinating for that group of

men. One day I met Sergio and he asked me for a match. 'No way,' I answered, 'even after all these months I still haven't a clue.' But he insisted and there I was, sitting at the centre of the Odeon, attending Sergio's class. He let me win and, as my pawns mercilessly ate his royal pieces, he told me about chess. Not about chess as a technique but as a practice.

> "For Sergio chess in the Plaza is about taking time, slow rhythms and sinuous dialogues. 'I meet my friends here. That's why I come. I am not that good at chess, there are others who beat me all the time, but the important thing is to come. [...] Coming here is my own thing, my little luxury. I don't have to ask for permission to come here, this is my thing, my little pleasure." (Field notes 7 December 2005).

Sergio talks about his time in the Odeon playing chess as a kind of deviation, as if playing were prohibited. If we understand playing as a significant function of culture, acknowledging that "in play there is something "at play" which transcends the immediate needs of life and imparts meaning to action" (Huizinga 1949: 1), we could identify playing chess at the Plaza as that "action accomplishing itself outside and above the necessities and seriousness of everyday life" (Huizinga, 1970: 26). For many men, playing chess at the Plaza is their escape from work, their only time to be free of obligations, whether family or work-related. For them, playing chess is more than moving the pieces: it is the whole ritual of coming to the Plaza, joking with others, meeting friends, getting to know the newcomers, challenging the best players, trying a new strategy, smoking a cigarette, talking about football, politics, money and women and delaying the end of the play time as much as possible.

The fact that there are no women at the Odeon is part of what chess means for the Plaza players. In the Odeon they feel free of control. It is quite the opposite of what one guy told me when I asked why there were no women around: "they are afraid of us". Maybe the truth is that the process of going from a very macho society towards a more egalitarian one is not easy for them. Strikingly enough, there is evidently a much greater reluctance to admit women into everyday practices historically regarded as men's activities or into public places than into official spheres. The best example is the election of a woman as President. On the other hand, women in the Plaza are not

interested in playing chess: "that's a men's thing, it's boring". Chess-playing in the Plaza embodies the old gender divisions that still rule many Chileans' lives.

Chess players have been meeting at the Plaza for more than twenty years. They are men who work around the Plaza or are pensioners. The system works smoothly: they come, ask the man in charge for a set of pieces, sit at a table with the chess board drawn on top and play a match with whoever sits opposite them. A Chess Club runs the chess tables from noon to eight in the evening. You have to pay to use the table and the pieces and you can stay as long as you want. Some men pay a monthly membership. There are many newcomers every day, curious people who stop to watch the men playing. The players do not mind being watched. On the contrary. They are happy to perform for others, in Erving Goffman's terms, to present themselves before an audience (1990)[33].

In "The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life", Goffman argues that, "when the individual presents himself before others, his performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society, more so, in fact, than does his behaviour as a whole" (1990:45). This notion may shed light on the stance that the Plaza chess players reinforce through their game practice. The Odeon is a place where they need not follow the flow of the system, where they can delay, socialize unhurriedly, and have face-to-face interactions. In that sense, playing chess at the Plaza is a practice embodying friendship, slowness and personal interchanges as values. They may value efficiency in terms of a time-product relationship or technological means of communication as well, but in their performance in the Plaza they are making a stand for an ethic which often appears to run counter to the mainstream system of work and time. Returning to Goffman's quotation, I would argue that chess players in the Plaza, like walkers, stand against the fast rhythm of business and work in practice. Thus, in practice, they act like the kind of person they would like to be.

Chess players act out their freedom playing chess. In playing chess they find a way of spending time with their friends, walking around the Plaza and stepping out of their work routine. De Certeau argues that tactics are the art of the weak and that they belong to the other. "They remained other within the system which they assimilated and which

[33] Within Goffman's understanding of performance in everyday life, performance and practice are different because the former supposes an audience while the latter does not. Nevertheless, the practice of playing chess in the Plaza is a performance because it happens in front of others.

assimilated them externally" (1984:32), so they cannot abandon their living conditions but they have the creativity to diverge from them without leaving them. Although for de Certeau's critics, tactics are only minor gestures of the weak and do not signify a real resistance to the oppressive system, I think de Certeau's approach is a powerful one. By describing tactics as the art of the weak, de Certeau celebrates creativity and self-knowledge. It is because chess players recognise their disempowerment that they look for an alternative place, the Plaza Odeon, where they feel empowered; it is because they acknowledge their need and pain that they look, discover and invent new possibilities:

> "Dwelling, moving about, speaking, reading, shopping and cooking are activities that seem to correspond to the characteristics of tactical ruses and surprises: clever tricks of the "weak" within the order established by the "strong", an art of putting one adversary on his own turf, hunter's tricks, maneuverable, polymorph mobilities, jubilant, poetic, and warlike discoveries." (de Certeau 1984: 40).

Lalo has been absolutely passionate about chess since his youth —today he is in his mid-sixties. I met him one day when he was sitting at a table filling in the newspaper crossword while he waited for someone to come and play with him. He told me that he has been coming to play there since the Odeon was at the other edge of the Plaza, before the renovation. He was once the president of the Chess Club. He used to pay 300 pesos to play (less than one American dollar) and then he decided to become a member. He is an accountant who works and lives in the business centre. He came to the city from Rengo, a small town to the south of Santiago, when he decided to study accountancy and since then he has been coming to the Plaza to play chess and have a chat. He stays for a long time, even though he is supposed to be at work, but he does not worry because he runs his own business. He started it after the military coup, when he was fired from the public office where he used to work. At that time he went back to Rengo to start an office there and couldn't help forming a Chess Club too:

> "They lent us a high school classroom or the church to play but one day, when everything was closed, we started playing at the Plaza, at the Plaza de Armas of Rengo. It was around eleven o'clock and the police came and

> imprisoned us arguing that we were conspiring against the military government. They said that we were using the chess playing as a trick of disguise. They beat us to make us confess but we didn't have anything to confess! They had big copper tubes and they hit us with those. So my wife came from Santiago to get me and finally they released me. It was madness. Rancagua's prison was full of people there for no reason. This was in November 1974 and some people had been there since September 1973." (Field notes 16 November 2005).

Lalo tells the story humourously, as part of the chess game, as if playing chess were more important than being unjustly beaten by the police. Lalo's story encloses his understanding of what is not negotiable under any circumstances: his right to play. Playing involves expression of the self, freedom and creativity: "Play is like art in its unproductiveness, its essential freeness" (Perez de Arce 2003). Public spaces, understood as places to play, are places for expression and freedom and the practice of playing chess in Plaza de Armas reinforces that capacity. Interestingly enough, chess players held on to their spot in Plaza de Armas during the dictatorship, when all sorts of other activities involving assembly (such as neighbourhood associations) were prohibited. Lalo's enthusiasm for chess is the enthusiasm for a world with room to play. He is optimistic about the current Chilean government. Still involved in the Socialist Party, he believes things are changing. Happy in front of the chess board, he is ready to keep playing.

Play almost always involves an element of slowness and, by the same token, playing chess is immersed in the rhythm of the walker. Playing chess for the men in the Plaza is a stepping-out of their routine, be it their job or their boredom at home where they have little to do. It is not a "stepping out of "real" life into a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all of its own" as Huizinga establishes (1949: 8). Play is real, it is part of life. Moreover, play is ordinary for the men of the Plaza. They live in play more than out of it. Some of them, unemployed and pensioned, come every day and play chess for five hours at a stretch in the shade of the Odeon.

The questions I put to some of the unemployed and pensioned players were like "glimpses behind the scenes of a performance", to borrow Goffman's words (1990:

228). When I asked them about their work they were not comfortable, they evaded the question and tried to move the conversation towards other topics. They tended to be vague about what they did, their schedule and obligations. As if they had somehow been caught doing something naughty, they appeared to be ashamed of being at the Odeon instead of working hard, rushing around for a living. Goffman reflects that this feeling of shame is unwarranted: "[T]he individual may come to feel ashamed of a well-intentioned honest act merely because the context of its performance provides false impressions that are bad" (Goffman 1990: 229). What is the context of the chess players that makes them feel ashamed? I argue that it is the fast rhythm present not only in the Plaza but also in official Chilean discourses, which insist on the importance of economic efficiency.

Playing at the Plaza is a different way of living, a checkmate to the mainstream system. As a *fiesta*, playing chess at the Plaza is a return to the experience of sociability rooted in social interaction and not in economic exchange. At the Plaza Odeon people are meaningful because they are ready for a chess match, a chat or a joke, not because of what they can produce or their class status. Equality is at play at the Odeon. Everybody plays to the same rules; as in any game, there are no privileges. By the same token, there is equality in the opportunities for display. Everyone may display themselves in the game at the Plaza, present themselves to others and, thus, construct their identity. This happens because, at the Plaza, everyone has the opportunity to play.

From another point of view, we could argue that the rhythm of playing and walking in the Plaza is a sort of compensation for the disappointed ones, those who cannot or do not want to live in the fast rhythm of Chile's new times. Walkers and chess players who are not improving their socio-economic status make sense of their practice in the Plaza as something that they could not do if they were in charge of a successful firm.

Clash of rhythms: walking, playing and social inequality

"When relations of power take over relations of alliance, when the rhythms of 'the other' make impossible the rhythm of 'the self', then a total crisis explodes" (Lefebvre 2004: 239). As explained at the beginning of the chapter, the rhythm of people's practices is a constantly changing response to the world's stimuli. I have argued that Plaza walkers and chess players embody the rhythm of disappointment, one that

develops in the shadow of the social inequality and lack of opportunities for social mobility in Chile's new times. Dwelling in a slow rhythm, as a way of dealing with their needs and unfulfilled expectations, sometimes works for them, but when the disappointment looms larger, neither a relaxed walk nor a good chess match serves as a refuge. The stronger face of disappointment is raw dissatisfaction. The rhythm of dissatisfaction is a monotonous one. It does not have any aim, it grinds on like an endless complaint without any alternative proposal. More striking than everybody's complaints about money, which are common everywhere, are the constant protests about rich people and powerful politicians: 'It's always the same people who get the money in this country,' 'They might be socialists but they are thieves, the same old shit as with Pinochet,' 'The pig is badly skinned in this country,'[34] 'There are people with a lot of money in Chile, Chile is doing great, there is money around, the problem is that none of it comes our way.' They make no plans in either direction; neither to find a job within the neo-liberal system, nor to fight for change. Their rhythm and narrative are characterised by bitterness and anger. But an anger that no longer has the power to mobilise them.

As noted earlier, the Plaza walkers' rhythms have an apparent unity. Their way of dealing with disappointment takes very different forms, reflecting the extent of their perceived exclusion from and/or betrayal by Chile's new times. At a deeper level of analysis, we could identify clashes not only between the rhythms of the crowd rushing to work and that of Plaza walkers but also among the latter.

At the heart of the clash is the topic of economic well-being. Some people, although aware of the horror of dictatorship, think that the way to go is to make the best of it. Those who are doing well financially are less critical of the system than those who are not. They are more disposed to speed up their rhythm, accept unfair working conditions, put money in their pockets and save themselves from poverty. But for many Chileans that is not an option. At the same time, people's rhythms are not constant, they change, mingle, become confused. People I talked to in the Plaza are not entirely sure what to think. The death of Pinochet at the end of 2006 made this confusion explicit: many people saw him as a murderer yet as someone who did great things for the country. People try to add and subtract things that cannot be added or subtracted because the

[34] Translation of "*el chancho está mal pelado*", an idiomatic expression meaning that wealth and assets are unfairly distributed.

units of measure are not the same. In the effort to average out the dead and missing with favourable macroeconomic indexes, and tortured people with foreign investment and international agreements, the tensions between Chileans' understandings of the world are thrown strikingly into relief.

If economic well-being is at the heart of the clash of rhythms in the Plaza, then social class —not as a matter of income only but also of education, family origins and location in Santiago city— is a main source of conflict in the Park. The rhythm of young people belonging mainly to the lower-middle and lower classes clashes with that of old residents. Rhythms start to clash when they encounter young people playing truant and drinking alcohol in what they view as their territory. They consider the area behind the Contemporary Art Museum, where young people meet, as already lost and want to defend the rest of the Park of what they consider a threat to their peaceful walks.

Interestingly, the rhythm of the walkers in the Park and the rhythm of the young people who come to the Park for their Sunday fun are two different versions of rhythms embodying a similar aim, which is to reinforce human-scale environments against big leisure and shopping developments, spontaneity of place versus space making, person-to-person relationships —even if they are on the Internet— versus institutional, mediated ones, family and friendship versus individualism. However, no encounter happens among them. Young people are bothered by old residents' complaints about their noise and their practices. They come to the Park to be free and to be with their peers doing what they want, not to be judged by what they perceive as conservative eyes. Conversely, adults and families perceive young people's practices as a threat to their children's education and their own well being. They think that the young in the Park are a bad example for their children and an illustration of bad manners.

At first sight, the clash of rhythms in the Park has something to do with age. Wealthy residents regard the Park as their place and within that context there is an acceptance of lower-middle and lower class families; as long as they behave and share their practices. However, at the heart of the matter is class. Young people hanging out in the Museum square belong mainly to the lower-middle and lower classes and in the eyes of wealthy older residents their practices are marginal. By the same token, many neighbours patronise lower-middle and lower class families and complain about them leaving

rubbish on the grass, sleeping on the lawns and using the fountains as swimming pools in the summer. These families, likes young folks, do not belong to their class and thus, deserve to be invigilated. Sometimes they complain in the district office or in the neighbourhood association because of families not respecting nature in the Park or young people's drinking and smoking practices.

The newcomers' rhythm apparently does not clash with that of the lower and lower-middle classes. But this is because they avoid coexisting with it. Newcomers, mostly young students and professionals belonging to the upper-middle classes, evade the messy rhythm of the Park on Sundays. They stay on the margins, in new cafes or in their flats, immersed in their own world.

Sitting, watching and waiting

The practice of sitting in the Plaza and the Park will serve to dig beneath the public space as a place for encounter. Sitting may embody solitary rhythms, that turn people into distant voyeurs of the Other or into absent contemplators of their intimacy, as well as participatory rhythms that lead to different forms of encounter and clustering. The act of sitting in the Plaza and the Park embodies the need for both solitude and socialisation. Sometimes it is confined to a stationary observation of what is going on around about. In this vein, sitting is closer to flânerie than walking. While in the latter the walker interacts with others in a conversational form, in the former people sitting become men and women of the crowd: "on one side, the man who feels himself viewed by all and sundry as a true suspect and, on the other side, the man who is utterly undiscoverable, the hidden man." (Benjamin 2002: 420). Distance is the measure for those who are sitting and watching. Although they are sitting they share the peculiar irresolution of the flâneur who walks tireless along the streets. People sitting in the Plaza and the Park walk with their eyes through the different scenes of the public space.

Sitting, watching and waiting at the Plaza reinforces the place's slow rhythm. Those in no rush, and those such as pensioners and homeless people, sit and watch for hours. Others who are waiting not only watch while they sit, but do something else as well, such as talk on their mobile phones or read. They are not anxious but absorbed by the

scene. Plaza de Armas is a pleasant meeting point not only because it is known by many of Santiago's inhabitants and it is accessible for almost everyone in the city, but also because the Plaza is fun. Being a meeting point involves different realities, biographies and places of the city at any one time. People see other people whom they do not see every day; they hear others' conversations while they are sitting on a bench waiting, the waiting turns into an exercise of experiencing the Other.

From another perspective, solitary sitting in the Plaza and the Park may embody the rhythm of intimacy. As Fran Tonkiss points out: "The eroticism of urban space lies not only —perhaps not primarily— in the fascination of the other, but in the estrangement of the self. It is not simply that one encounters the city as a place of strangers, but that you experience yourself as a stranger there" (Tonkiss 2005: 137). Sitting in the Plaza and the Park may be an experience of connection with the immensity; the exterior place, the public space, turns our reflection towards our interior (Bachelard 1994), and confronts us with what and where we are through the spectacle of what and where we are not.

In other cases, sitting is a participatory activity. We observe not only friends sitting together in the Plaza, but strangers; the design of benches in the Plaza helps this to happen. In this regard, the experience of the public place as the possibility to meet the difference goes beyond the visual engagement that flaneurs have in their walks. Interestingly, in the Park, sitting is mostly practice as a private activity. In there, neighbours and comers sit with their friends as if they were in their sitting rooms. Sitting in the Park is not about watching and waiting only but mainly about flirting and talking. The practice of those more intimate activities emphasises the Park's character as an extension of the private home. People do in the Park things that they could do in their homes, but they prefer to go to the Park, perhaps because they do not have enough room or enough privacy at home.

At first sight, the public park as a place for privacy may be seen as an inversion of the essence of the public space: where you can see and hear others and can be seen and heard by them (Arendt 1998). Look again, though, and the public space is the place where 'nobody is really looking', as Tonkiss puts it (2005: 139). Lovers and friends find calm in the Park and young people find freedom from control and home rules. The Park

as a place for privacy appears as an alternative to many Chileans' overcrowded homes. For financial reasons, young Chileans often live with their parents until their mid-twenties and Chilean homes require the participation of the whole family in many instances. Homes are places for sharing where sometimes it is difficult to have privacy. People living under the same roof expect conversation, help and attention from the others. Many of my young interviewees expressed a desire to move out, not because they had a bad relationship with their parents but because their families were too demanding.

Clustered sitting

The reflection on the practice of sitting in the Plaza and the Park opens the door to an exploration of the spatial divisions amongst the diversity of users of the Plaza and the Park. Although both sites are places where many different people meet, when we analyse how they sit on both sites we notice different people do not really mix in the space. The distribution of space that operates among the Plaza benches is fascinating. Roughly speaking (because no rule can entirely capture spontaneous human location), gay friends meet at the north-east corner, on the benches near the statue of Pedro de Valdivia. They know that they will find peers there. Truanting high-school students meet at the centre of the Plaza. They meet students from other schools, arrange parties and spend the day hanging out, sitting on the benches. At the south-east corner of the Plaza elderly people and pensioners get together. It is a sunny corner, so when the sun is too strong they won't be there. Prostitutes, robbers and drug dealers meet in the south-west part. The north-west corner does not have a regular group because the police patrol car occupies that territory. Peruvian immigrants gather at the corner of the Cathedral, against the wall.

I will argue that although different groups have their own sitting area within the Plaza and that they do not mix, they share a similar rhythm. Many of the people sitting in the Plaza are sidelined from what major public discourses have to say about developments in Chile. Chilean economic growth and stability has not improved conditions for pensioners, gays, prostitutes, dealers and robbers, public school students or immigrants. The Plaza is an alternative for all of them; to meet, do their "work" (in the case of robbers and dealers), take their time and go through the everyday in a slow rhythm. The

Plaza has gained a reputation as a result of all those 'sittings'. Many passers-by say that the Plaza is full of people doing nothing, not working, begging instead of looking for a job. Others say that it is full of criminals hanging out on the benches and others that it is a homeless hostel.

In that context, those who come to the Plaza to sit and rest after shopping or visiting central offices experience the difference amongst their rhythms and those sitting in the Plaza directly. Central district shoppers and office users who stop in the Plaza are mainly lower-middle or lower class. Many of them come to the Plaza as if it was a day trip. The Plaza forms the heart of the central district —the most accessible area of the city for many people to shop, go to the bank or to their health insurance and pension scheme offices. This is related to Santiago's enormous spatial segregation, which forces people to travel to do such basic things as pay bills. People spend their whole day in the central district paying bills and shopping around. They turn their day of administrative procedures and shopping into a special occasion. Many of them come as a family and enjoy an ice-cream in the Plaza sitting on a bench. For many of them, coming to the Plaza is part of a whole day of activities that flows in a fast rhythm: shopping, walking around, eating and maybe catching a movie.

There is something about the slow rhythm of the Plaza that disturbs the passers-by who are running around, juggling for living, always late and stressed. They do not accept that not everybody is living in their rushing mood. In discussing work and unemployment in Chile and economic conditions in general, some of the office workers I talked to told me that, in Chile, if people do not work it is because they do not want to. I heard that argument many times, phrased in different ways but with the same core idea: you have to be on the move to get a good quality of life. Being slow takes you nowhere. In other words, not wanting to join the fast rhythm is equivalent to not wanting to work.

Conclusion

In the exploration of the rhythms of everyday practices, it became clear that different people's ways of walking, playing and sitting in the Plaza and the Park embody very different understandings of Chile's new times.

First, I would argue that spending time in the Plaza and the Park is a practice contrary to the official rhythm of Santiago as a big city. In these places, people can take up and perform an alternative position. This one encapsulates nostalgia for the small scale, for slowness and interpersonal relationships. It emphasises the city as a living environment that includes nature as well as built forms —many of my interviewees perceived the Park as an oasis within the city— and it reinforces creativity within a system of ready-made leisure alternatives. Walking, playing and sitting are practices that run counter to the culture of consumerism and efficiency. Time is valued as experience, not as means for productivity. Their rhythm is like the protest of those flaneurs who used to walk with turtles in the middle of the nineteenth century described by Benjamin:

> "Around 1840 it was briefly fashionable to take turtles for a walk in the arcades. The flaneurs liked to have the turtles set the pace for them. If they had had their way, progress would have been obliged to accommodate itself to this pace." (Benjamin 1973: 54).

Within this context, people who spend their time in the Plaza and the Park do not come under the vigilant eye of the disciplinary city. They do not respond to the demand to participate in the city as a machine, but experience a city where freedom is possible. Creativity drives the practice of spending time in the Plaza and the Park. People invent new forms of delaying in walking, playing and sitting without following any pre-established way of being in those places.

Public place is a platform for different rhythms, including those which run contrary to the mainstream rhythm of the big metropolis. In this regard, the clash of rhythms we experience in the Plaza and the Park connects us with what we are not, what we do not want or what we need. This clash may be painful, yet it is also part of the attractiveness of public space; the exposure to the Other, surprising, inspiring or violent, leads us to a better understanding of what we are: "We must therefore rediscover, after the natural world, the social world, not as an object or a sum of objects, but as a permanent field or dimension of existence" (Merleau-Ponty

1962:421). Moreover, Sennett argues that the experience of pain and need is what mobilises us:

> "How will we exit from our own bodily passivity –where is the chink in or system, where is our liberation to come from? It is, I would insist, a peculiarly pressing question for a multi-cultural city, even if it is far from current discourse about group injuries and group rights. For without a disturbed sense of ourselves, what will prompt most of us –who are not heroic figures knocking on the doors of crackhouses –to turn outward toward each other, to experience the Other?" (1994:374).

Sennett underlines public space as the realm where pain can be experienced (somehow different from Arendt who relegates need to the private realm). While Sennett stresses the sense of incompleteness as the condition to move towards the other, Simmel departs from the uncomfortable experience of the Metropolis to explain how individuals block themselves to others. This blocking is an interaction in itself and a form of communication. As places where we encounter others' rhythms or where we develop mechanisms for ignoring them, public spaces contain multiple social interactions. Public spaces, as dense places for interaction, capture different dimensions of our struggles to belong, be in place, understand.

Second, walking, playing and sitting in both the Plaza and the Park are not lonely practices in general. Social interaction is at the core of the practice, whose intentionality resides in the interaction with others while walking, playing or sitting. To take the case of the Plaza: the walkers' stops in the Plaza characterise their walk and give it rhythm, there is no point in going to the Plaza just to walk. The whole "walking" in the Plaza is about socialising, talking, watching what is going on and commenting on it with whoever is around. It does not matter whether you know the person or not. People standing in a circle watching the comics in front of the Cathedral in the Plaza talk to each other and laugh together: that is the real pleasure, to be with others. In this vein walking in the Plaza is different from flanerie. Plaza walkers are not discovering the street as Benjamin described for:

> "[T]he man who walks long and aimlessly through the streets. With each step, the walk takes on greater momentum; ever weaker grow the temptations of shops, of bistros, of smiling women, ever more irresistible the magnetism of the next streetcorner, of a distant mass of foliage, of a street name. Then comes hunger. Our man wants nothing to do with the myriad possibilities offered to sate his appetite. Like an ascetic animal, he flits through unknown districts" (Benjamin 2002: 417).

Third, I present different rhythms based on people's understandings of both sites. In the case of the Plaza, different rhythms are related to different ways of making sense of the place: the new Chilean Plaza —its practices and physical characteristics— embodies Chilean inequalities and new values; it is different from the Plaza in the past which was experienced as a place for citizen participation and social encounter. Many people in the Plaza do not feel fully part of Chilean democracy, economic growth and spreading globalisation. Some do not find opportunities for work, expression and justice in the Chilean order. Others do not agree with it and do not want to join in. In the case of the Park, on the one hand, traditional upper class people (and also some others) feel nostalgia for the old times when the Park was a site for the upper classes and have difficulty in accepting the newcomers. On the other, people from all over Santiago come and use the Park and understand it as a place for everyone, but they encounter regulations and social pressures that limit or inhibit their purpose.

Finally, through their practice of walking, playing and sitting in the Plaza and the Park, people conquer and claim those places for themselves. In so doing they link those places to a function which is closer to leisure and informal labour than to office work in a big city. The Plaza and the Park become places for slowness, which refers not to the urgency of the Metropolis's duties but to the flexible pace of leisure. Accordingly, those places' characteristics —their location within the city, their street furniture and their history— encourage and shape practices in them.

Recognising the centrality of place in practice, we could observe how walking in the Plaza and in the Park is walking *in* place. The practice of walking sets its own rules

in both sites. While walking in the Park is walking and talking to friends, walking in the Plaza is meeting strangers. In the same vein, people's perceptions of places have to do with the way they embody the practice of walking. The Park as a family place bundles the practice of walking in it into a celebration of family and friendship ties. By contrast, walking in the Plaza involves the worries of unemployment and old age or the guilt of skipping work.

When it comes to play, people conquer places through imagination. Imagination, rooted in practice, drives the possibilities for play and seeks out new forms for the practice. "Imagination ... decomposes all creation; and with the raw materials accumulated and disposed in accordance with rules whose origins one cannot find except in the furthest depths of the soul, it creates a new world –it produces the sensation of newness." (Baudelaire quoted by Benjamin 2002: 290). The Plaza and the Park, as sites, host play and offer a physical environment for the game —the chess tables, the shade of the Odeon, the playgrounds, the vegetation— but at the same time people *in* play make the Plaza and the Park places *for* play. Their play practices shape not only the physicality of the place —when the Plaza was refurbished the conservation of the chess players' area was not even an issue— but also a life situation involving a time and a place for playing.

Next, I will explore how people involved in art and craft as working practices in the Plaza and the Park go beyond the intentionality of survival and turn their practices into creative ways of facing post-1990 Chile's institutional framework. By the same token I reflect on the role of imagination in the lived particularities of social life.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRECARIOUS EXISTENCE

"Con la plata se creía
un hombre muy importante,
le cantamos al instante,
tres monedas nos tiró
y enseguida se corrió...
¡Nos miró como atorrantes!"

"He pretended to be with his money
a very important man,
we sang to him at once,
he dropped three coins to us
and ran away...
He looked at us as if we were riffraff!"

Lalo Parra[35], *"Mi hermana Violeta su vida y obra en décimas"*

Street vendors, shoe-shiners, mime artists, painters, dancers, toy makers, comedians, jugglers, prostitutes, singers, protestant preachers, photographers, tarot readers. All earn their living at Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal. They belong to the informal sector of the economy, some of them hold permits to sell and perform in the street and are in a more stable position than those who work on the fringe of legality for those sites. I will argue that these workers exhibit a variety of ways of managing existence and understanding it. On the one hand, there is a group of vendors and performers who link their work to creativity and draw on traditional and new ways of doing arts and crafts in developing their practices. On the other hand, there are some vendors who sell industrially manufactured objects and do not ascribe to their work any other meaning than the satisfaction of their needs and those of their families.

Both ways of surviving through vending and performing in the streets contain a sense of revolt against formal work. We may see in them characteristics of la boheme, described by Benjamin, which was related to those who lived at the margins of the establishment:

[35] Chilean popular poet and singer (1918).

> "Their uncertain existence, which in specific cases depended more on chance than on their activities, their irregular life whose only fixed stations were the taverns of the wine dealers –the gathering places of the conspirators- and their inevitable acquaintanceship with all sorts of dubious people place them in that sphere of life which in Paris is called la boheme" (1973: 12).

I will devote this chapter to describing and analysing the practices of those who embody a version of bohemianism and at the same time have to be in the market place, in the Plaza and the Park, to survive. Those who make sense of themselves more as artists than vendors share with other workers of the Plaza and Park everyday vending practices and needs, although they try to present themselves in a different way.

I will explore people's working practices in the Plaza and the Park in order to describe how they dwell in the situation in-between employment and unemployment and make sense of it within the context of post-dictatorship Chile. I argue that by making sense of their working condition as self-employed, informal work or creative work, they hide their precarious condition of semi-employed or even unemployed. The bohemian character of their working practices assists this construction in many different ways. Pretensions to freedom and discourses about resistance are at the heart of people's ways of making sense of their unstable job situations.

In the following pages, I intend to analyse the development of these practices in order to show how vendors and performers in the two sites have an understanding of post-1990 Chile that has distinctive features conferred by their condition of "semi-employed". On the one hand, their working practices embody the experience of urgent material necessity and, on the other, they relate to imagination and hope.

First, I will reflect on the Plaza and the Park as stages for different kinds of street actors: jugglers, comics, mime actors, dancers, musicians and magicians. I will explore the practice of juggling which, I think, has interesting elements for understanding different

approaches to making sense of street acting. I will argue that jugglers make sense of their practice not only within the frame of performing as a way to survive, but also as a creative practice, a political action and a mode of sociability. This co-existence of meanings opens the door to exploring the senses of fragmentation and exclusion that characterise this group's understandings of post-1990 Chile. Then, I will explore the comics' acting practice to bring in some additional elements of analysis. Taking off from there, I will continue my analysis by exploring the Plaza and the Park as sites for expression and interchange.

Juggling for a living

The best known performers in the Park are the young jugglers[36], who practice every Sunday in the square at the entrance to the Museum of Contemporary Art (MAC). The practice of juggling in that space began in the early nineties and was part of the multiplicity of citizens' expressions in public spaces after the re-establishment of democracy. Initially, juggling was an entertainment for young people. Its main object at that time was to get together to juggle and learn from the experts. After a while, many of them started to earn their living from juggling, by giving exhibitions, teaching and doing performances for drivers sitting at traffic lights on Santiago's traffic intersections.

Juggling as a technique of the body (Mauss 1973 [1936]) is at once an individual and a collective practice. You learn to juggle by watching others and doing it yourself. However, the importance of social interaction is related not only to learning juggling techniques but also to a way of understanding sociability. Sharing with others is the way of being-in-the-world of jugglers. Young jugglers share their lives and make decisions together establishing very few limits: without knowing themselves very deeply they start business, some of them share a place and do juggling trips. Chapa's first encounter with a juggler friend initiates a relationship of trust:

[36] I use "juggling" as a general term to refer to circus practices. I use the term thus because young people who perform circus practices in Parque Forestal in Santiago are called 'jugglers' by the rest of the city's inhabitants.

> "There was this one guy, Benjamín, Benja, who arrived early as well and sat down on the bench in front of me, at the other side of the square. So, I was sitting in one corner and he was sitting in the other and I looked at him and he looked back at me, and I wondered: this guy ... is he a juggler or not? [...] So I opened my backpack, took out my *golo*[37] and put it beside me, on the bench. Then he took a *diabolo*[38] from his backpack and put it beside him. I thought that was great! I thought the code was incredible! So we both walked towards the centre of the square and greeted each other." (Interview with Chapa, juggler, 19 December 2005).

Erving Goffman underlines the potential for openness of this kind of interaction: "The initiation of an encounter marks the beginning of a period of heightened access among the participants. [...] Thus, when two individuals join each other to form a "with", they obviously expose themselves to increased access." (Goffman 1971: 78). Regarded in this light, we can think of the practice of juggling in the Park as a product of social interaction among young people. Moreover, we can understand sociability and openness to others as one disposition of what Pierre Bourdieu would call the juggler habitus. Habitus, "the system of structured, structuring dispositions" (Bourdieu 1990: 52) that defines our being in the world, the way we think and act, is built in practice. By the same token, the juggler's habitus is not limited to the technique involved in the practice but "it is the site of durable solidarities, loyalties that cannot be coerced because they are grounded in incorporated laws and bonds, those of the *esprit de corps*" (Bourdieu 1999:191, author's translation).

In this sense, juggling is a performance that occurs within the walls of a social establishment (Goffman 1990). Moreover, people 'frame' physical stages to build and support their performance (Goffman 1971). In this case, the square at Parque Forestal is the stage for the juggling practice and the practice cannot be reproduced as such elsewhere but belongs to the specific site. Juggling in Parque Forestal turns out to be a

[37] Juggling toy which consists of three sticks. The juggler uses two of them to balance the third.
[38] Juggling toy which consists of two cones joined at their tips. The juggler uses a rope to balance the diabolo and throw it in the air.

re-invention of juggling (Pantzar and Shove 2005[39]) with its own particularities. Exploring the practice of juggling in the Park implies retracing how new configurations of existing elements of the practice of juggling fit together with the skills and the place of this particular group of young people. In this context, I would like to focus on the jugglers' heterogeneity. I argue that to understand the practice of juggling in the Park we have to explore how different jugglers fit together in the same place. Jugglers in the Park's square, although they belong to the same age group, come from different socioeconomic backgrounds and districts of Santiago and make sense of their practice of juggling in very different ways.

In order to claim their membership of the group of Park jugglers they have to be seen in the square every Sunday. Their presence there is a performative act. Also, they have to defend their position within the field of juggling by visible performances in the Park that embody their way of understanding their practice, thus, their identity. The first one I would like to explore is juggling as a political action.

Kote and his brother Mao get involved and denounce issues they think politicians do not treat seriously such as racial discrimination and social inequality. Kote sees himself as a clown:

> "The clown is a buffoon who uses humour to bring to the surface the things we don't want to see. [...] You have to wake people up [...] to wake up the living dead". (Interview with Kote, juggler, 19 December, 2005).

However, his discourse is not free from contradiction. Kote is 25 years old, he has a partner and he is going to be a father soon. He changed his university studies for traffic-light busking, he has long Rasta hair and resists cutting it, although he knows he would get more jobs if he had a classic clown look. His 'manifesto' is 'not to get involved in the system' but once he is on the road of earning a living from juggling he is constantly demanding the goods and services that the system he hates can provide. What he earns is not enough for a living and his anger is mixed with a sense of betraying his beliefs if he does jobs just to earn money. Kote wants society to realise that juggling is his job and

[39] Elizabeth Shove and Mika Pantzar carry out an interesting exercise in which they look at Nordic walking as a re-invented practice. They explore the trajectory and the ingredients of the practice in their re-invented form.

that he is not unemployed, but he wants to engage in juggling on his terms. He does not want to look like a classic clown (see figure 1) and wants to explore different modes of circus practices. Kote has built his own "juggling tools" — bike, outfit, puppets, balls and so on— that he displays in his performances (see figure 2). Also, Kote wants to write his own juggler script, linked to social issues. In other words, Kote claims from the established system —the Government, the economy, the cultural grants— enough possibilities to develop his own individuality (and/or performances) against the system.

Figure 1 and 2: Kote acting in the Park and in front of the Beaux Arts Museum
Source: Author's pictures

Nevertheless, juggling emerges in its own contradictory way as a new modality of participation for young people in society. Jugglers distrust politicians —most of them are not registered to vote— and prefer to skip the process of reaching agreements. They want to do something for themselves and, in that regard, their political action ends up being apolitical and individualistic. Originality becomes a very important value for them. They want to shine by themselves. If we pay attention to Kote's outfit and accessories, we may say he is desperate to appear modern, new and unique. He is searching for his own juggling style and wants to be recognised for it.

Kote's aim of being political is unsuccessful because he lacks enough "capital inscribed in available tactics, strategies, technologies, and conducts in order to pursue various projects. [...] Being political presupposes the appropriation of at least one form of capital". (Isin 2002: 38). Jugglers think about the post-dictatorship Governments political discourses as hypocritical. They remember many promises of opening new opportunities for developing cultural practices that have been realised, but they have not succeeded in

inculcating their own virtues as dominant because they lack of capital, mainly cultural and economic capital.

Although they develop their own initiatives in an independent form such as an Annual Circus Meeting and round table discussions on circus practices in the square in front the MAC, these independent activities contain similar contradictions than the individual claims: their aim of getting public funding for their practice persists and the different ways of reaching that goal are main topics in their discussions.

A second way of making sense of juggling is as a work option. Although all jugglers understand their practice as a job, in some cases, like Daniel's, juggling is understood as a work opportunity for those who did not have opportunities within the framework of a very uneven and unequal society. Daniel finished high school in San Bernardo, a lower class district in Santiago, and could not afford to study for a career. Instead, he made a career in juggling, starting from scratch, and today he is a model for those who share his initial socio-economic condition.

> "I was a mess [...] I needed to hold on to something to grow, to develop as a person", Daniel told me. After trying some formal jobs, he started to work in a theatre group with Andres, an actor who taught him the technique. After a while he saw mime artists acting in the street and he went enthusiastically to talk to Andres: "I want to be a mime artist, I said to him. I want to work by myself... And the guy taught me!" (Interview with Daniel, juggler, 20 October 2005).

Daniel learned how to perform in the street and little by little he started being hired for shows, as a storyteller for children and in a discotheque as part of the night show. He was always willing to learn more and that is how he arrived at Circo del Mundo workshops. He became a proficient diabolo juggler and got hired as the publicity image of a toy factory that made diabolos. He travelled to Italy promoting diabolos, visited different cities and did juggling in squares, contacted circus and theatre groups and returned to Chile with a network of contacts. Since then he has combined street performance with publicity events, shows and social projects such as workshops in schools, districts and social institutions.

Figure 3: Daniel playing diabolo in Parque Forestal.
Source: Author's picture.

Daniel at the Park (figure 3) is a complete success. People are hypnotised by his tricks and he fills the scene with his posture and outfit, his strong voice and fast movements. He feels recognised for his work, not like when he worked in a factory and a bank, from where he was fired. Daniel's story is a model for those who want to make juggling their living, but it is not a common one. Parque Forestal's young jugglers are not the neo-bohemians described by Richard Lloyd (2002); they have not integrated their practice into the dominant economic system like cultural producers who, guided by artistic creativity, have developed their own way of belonging to the system. The positive perception of juggling as a way of earning a living coincides with a negative attitude towards formal jobs, where most of these young people feel discriminated against, but not with a mode of working as jugglers in post-1990 Chile.

Raúl, a designer of juggling toys, sells his toys at the MAC square every Sunday along with his sister and cousin and prefers informality and even illegality to a job where he would feel unvalued and trapped:

> "They [the police] have caught me lots of times, it was not that bad but you waste the whole afternoon. They get you and then, at the police station you have to talk to the judge. And he always told us, 'it's okay, you are good', because there was always the same judge and he was super relaxed." [...]

> When I asked Raul why he doesn't get a permit to sell at the square he tells me: 'you can't, it's a never-ending story. They tell you to go to the culture office, but there, they tell you to go to commerce [office], then again back to culture [office] and you get nothing. Or they ask you to submit an application and then they tell you that permits are not allowed". (Interview with Raúl, juggling toys designer, 18 October 2005).

Although he chose to work independently, he thinks the economic system does not offer him the conditions to develop his business as he wished. The prohibition on selling in the square impacts not only his selling but also his creative process. He would like to be recognised as a designer and stop being pursued by the police. However, he continues selling in the square because it is the best place for him (figure 4). He needs to be in the square to develop his individuality as a toy designer. He not only sells in front of the MAC, he also imagines in place, by watching the jugglers, which new toys he could make. He needs his imagination to be animated by a matter, in his case, by air; the air that surrounds the movements, colours and materiality of jugglers' toys flying in the Park. Just as "Novalis's[40] imagination is directed by a caloricity, that is, by the desire for a warm, soft, enveloping, protective substance, by the need of a matter that surrounds the entire being and permeates it" (Bachelard 1998:63), Raul's imagination, in order to develop in-depth and be a material imagination, needs to be guided by the air, which inspires principally movement, change and dynamism (Bachelard 1958). In the Park, the flying objects are free, in the kingdom of imagination. As Bachelard remarks, the closest epithet to air is free. Natural air is free air. The practice of juggling also relates to freedom and movement as a possibility for change.

[40] German poet (1772 - 1801) quoted by Bachelard in his work on poetic imagination.

Figure 4: Raúl selling toys at the MAC square
Source: Author's picture

Jugglers who work on corners also complain about lack of opportunities and police repression (the police do not allow them to perform in the streets for money). The majority of jugglers who work at the traffic lights come from the lower social classes and did not have the chance to study after school. For them, living from juggling is not a refuge from a bourgeois style of life, as Bourdieu argued with regard to artists in "Distinction" (1984). The jugglers' case is completely different. Many jugglers have problems with their families because they do not bring money into their homes or work in a formal job. Within this context, class differences play a role in young people's possibilities of succeeding in making juggling an earning occupation. The ones who are successful at earning a living through juggling are those who went to high school, studied a technical speciality or have learned about project management. Manuel, a young civil engineer who juggles as a hobby, reflects on the situation and thinks leaving studies for juggling gets you nowhere. He believes in juggling as a way to earn a living, but only if you are capable of dealing with the economic system and engaging in it by its rules.

> "They practise like crazy and at the end of the day they end up at a red light. Chapa, for instance [Manuel's friend who studied Visual Communication], has another approach to juggling. He sells projects to districts and institutions and he is getting pro in managing juggling activities. [...] These other guys

> have no skills. They quit studying and they are getting nowhere with no skills." (Interview with Manuel, juggler, 12 October 2005).

Many jugglers, although they have reached proficiency in the techniques of juggling, are not recognised; their capital (cultural and social) does not function as symbolic capital, as a sign of importance to others[41]. A feeling of discomfort invades them and their mastery of juggling becomes useless. In this vein, they understand post-1990 Chile as an environment lacking in opportunities, tolerance and social equity; they cannot realise their individuality as they wish, as jugglers. The experiences of exclusion and inequality contrasts with the experiences of integration and equality that jugglers have in their shared learning processes. Moreover, I would argue that their experiences of exclusion and inequality are perceived by them as particularly intense because of how they experience integration and equality in practice: in their bodily training and in the Park.

Proficient jugglers integrate juggling movements with the rest of their body movements so deeply that they are less conscious of them. Their bodies become 'absent' from their awareness (Leder 1990) in the same sense that we are not aware of our bodies while we use them daily to eat, walk and breathe. We are not thinking at home of every inhalation, our body disappears from awareness (Csordas 1994). Also, the proficient juggler is able to adapt his/her body to irregularities:

> "Having acquired from this exposure [the body] a system of dispositions attuned to these regularities, it is inclined and able to anticipate them practically in behaviours which engage a corporeal knowledge that provides a practical comprehension of the world" (Bourdieu 2000: 135).

Their bodies are seen not as objects but as dynamic and mutable events that can integrate new experiences. In that sense, the apprentice juggler's path to proficiency depends on the integration of new experiences into the juggler's body. As Manuel says:

[41] Bourdieu writes: "there is no worse dispossession, no worse privation, perhaps, than that of the losers in the symbolic struggle for recognition, for access to a socially recognized social being, in a word, to humanity" (Bourdieu 2000: 241). Further, the accumulation of economic capital becomes possible once symbolic capital can be reproduced (Bourdieu 1990).

"[Juggling] has a lot to do with training the speed of the eye-hand response [...] it is about fast reflex and the ability to respond to what is going on at the same time, it is about amending your mistakes". (Interview with Manuel, juggler, 12 October 2005).

When Manuel says, "once you understand how balls move in the air you realise that there are rhythms," he is referring to the understanding of the practice that he gets as a practical knowledge of the world. Manuel deals with passers-by, other jugglers training around him, noise, sunlight, among other elements in the Plaza at the MAC (figure 5), and he is able to anticipate and adapt to them. Manuel understands juggling because "he knows it, in a sense, too well, without objectifying distance, takes it for granted, precisely because he is caught up in it, bound up with it; he inhabits it like a garment [un habit] or a familiar habitat" (Bourdieu 2000: 142-3). The Park's square is very important in this navigation through proficiency. In place, jugglers learn new tricks from others and test their performance in front of their peers.

Figure 5: Manuel in the plaza in front the MAC
Source: Author's picture

The absolute control jugglers have of their bodies contrasts with the little or nonexistent control that some jugglers have of their work life. In this way, young jugglers make sense of their experience of discrimination as the negation of what they consider their most valuable skill, that of adaptation and ability to integrate new experiences. When they are rejected for a job because of their looks or social background they perceive

rejection as an a priori negation of their ability to adapt their bodies to different requirements.

The intensity of the juggler's dual experience of integration and exclusion is illustrated by the story of Chapa, who experiences integration in both body and work dimensions, and is able to make sense of his practice as a trapeze artist as his way of being-in-the-world:

> "My body started to change, my mind started to change a lot, do you understand me? I was the guy with long hair and beard who hid from people, who would never have taken off his T-shirt in public. I was extremely shy and I started to feel that my body was changing, and I felt much better! I mean, psychologically the trapeze helped me a lot, it raised my confidence, the fact that I could say, "I am a trapeze artiste" made me feel proud of myself. [...] They were very tough teachers, it was like 'go up, hang up from your feet, okay, did you hurt yourself? Doesn't matter, it always happens ... I would come home a wreck." (Interview with Chapa, juggler, 19 December 2005).

By adapting his body, Chapa adapted his understanding and made sense of his world from his practice: "I am a trapeze artist". The training of his body included its adaptation to the objects involved in his practice. Chapa recognises a moment in his learning process in which he became one with the trapeze, the trapeze became an extension of his body (Polanyi 1978) and he felt a transformation:

> "I was hanging from the bar, very tired, and I felt that my chest went "crac", and I said, shit, something broke. I was afraid to come down, I was afraid to move at all, and I felt that my chest was a centimetre bigger, that my chest was a centimetre more open. It was very odd and I went down, I touched myself and I was very worried. And then I started thinking about what I'd felt and I realised that it wasn't bad. It was as if something that had never opened before had opened now. [...] And that "chest opening" became a turning point in my life. My chest opened, my chest opened... in the end everything

in me opened. My chest, my mind, my personality, my health, you know what I mean?" (Interview with Chapa, juggler, 19 December 2005).

Chapa not only reached proficiency as a trapeze artist but also made the trapeze his job. He presents himself to others as a trapeze artist (Goffman 1990: 81) and today he teaches in Providencia district's workshops and organizes events in the district parks and squares. His being one with the trapeze turned into a way of relating to others. Sitting on the trapeze he talks about it —its ropes, its size, its softness or harshness— to his students (figure 6), and in doing so he discloses his involvement with the world through speech. If to act is to begin to disclose ourselves as beings, to practise our human condition "is the beginning of somebody who is a beginner himself, Then action "becomes relevant only through the spoken word in which he identifies himself as the actor, announcing what he does, has done, and intends to do." (Arendt 1998: 178).

Speech happens in place. Juggling practice as embodied meanings is the product of a dialogue and a negotiation with others who share the place of the practice. Visibility produces a sense of 'intercorporeality' (Crossley quoted by Entwistle and Rocamora 2006: 743) which is displayed through the use of the tools of juggling (the toys), a way of greeting and dressing. Visibility in place is relevant not only in the building of their juggler's habitus but also in establishing and reproducing their position within the field of juggling. Chapa can be seen in the Park square every Sunday, when he does his juggling tricks, talks to others and advertises his workshops.

Arendt's argument on the connection between the concepts of practice and action clarifies this point. Her definition of action, on the one hand, stresses what is the individuals' own (*idion*) and, on the other, the fact that their uniqueness and difference exist only in interaction with others, which happens, in her terms, in the public sphere. Individual differences visible in the public place are starting points for negotiation and dialogue, for building of collective understandings. The main purpose of their practice for jugglers is communicating with others, establishing social ties, imagining new ways of being as capable individuals —open to learning and change— in contrast to inefficient people who cannot work and earn a living.

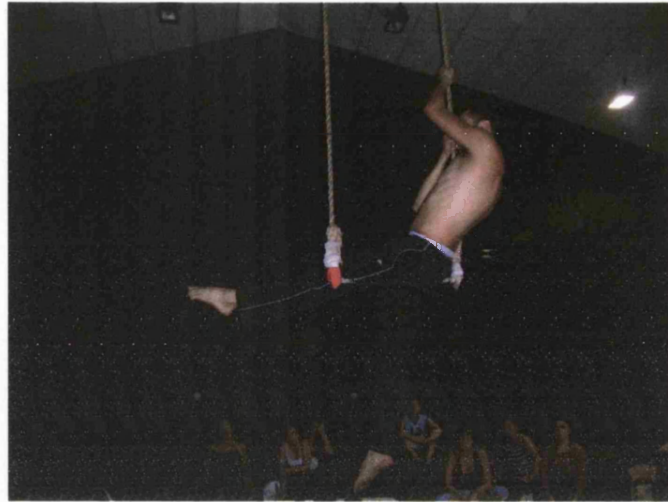


Figure 6: Chapa on the trapeze
Source: Author's picture

This takes us back to the point that embodied understanding exists not only in individuals as isolated agents; it exists in them as the co-agent of common actions. Bourdieu's definition of practices as the *interweaving* of habitus, capital and field (Crossley 2001: 96) means that practice is neither only the result of individual agency nor exclusively the product of social structures. Cultural orientations, personal trajectories and the ability of actors to play the game are involved in practice. Thus, social interaction is at the heart of practices.

Chapa was able to adapt his body to his practice and his being in the world because of his mastery, but also because of dispositions which are not related directly to the juggling field, such as education, social networks and physical appearance. By the same token, inequalities among jugglers exist outside of the realm of technique. Those who lack education and belong to the lower classes are disappointed and think Chile does not offer the conditions to accumulate economic or cultural capital. On the one hand, they see Chile as an economically successful country and hear governmental discourses about equality and democracy and, on the other, they cannot access an education that would enable them to get a job. Similarly, some of them feel discriminated against because of the way they look: "You know Mao, don't you? My brother. Well, he is whiter than me, with lighter-coloured eyes and, well, they call him for many more jobs than me." (Interview with Kote, juggler, 19 December 2005). Therefore, the jugglers' understanding of post-1990 Chile as a space where they are not recognised is not linked

so much with the difficulties of earning a living from juggling but with inequalities existing outside the practice: not all jugglers are treated equally.

Jugglers also live out a dual experience of integration and exclusion in relation to the place of their practice, Parque Forestal. If jugglers' dispositions are embodied they are also territorially located. Place is a basic component of practices. Not only because practices can be understood as bodily performances, but also because the intentionality of the practice refers to the place where it is performed. In the case of Parque Forestal's jugglers, dispositions are adjusted to the sense of their place in Parque Forestal. They feel comfortable there because they have won their space and social recognition. When they started gathering at Parque Forestal they had problems with the neighbours because of the noise they made on Sunday afternoons. After much argument, Santiago's local district conceded that they had a right to be in the public space. Now Santiago's inhabitants recognise them as the jugglers of Parque Forestal and expect to find them in the plaza behind the MAC every Sunday.

Although jugglers do not share the lifestyle of Parque Forestal's neighbourhood residents, who belong mainly to the middle classes[42], they feel respected and included in society and the city because they are allowed to juggle in the Park. As I explained earlier, the Park is one of the most valued public spaces of the city and Santiago's people associate it with culture. Thus, jugglers construe themselves as part of the place's cultural history. This perception of inclusion contrasts with the experience of exclusion they have outside the Park. Kote talks about what happened to him at a child's birthday party in the suburbs where he went to work as a clown:

> "After a stupid kid shouted lots of fucking bullshit at me: '*flaite*[43], you're not professional, you're off the street', lots of shit, I kept his attention for twenty minutes and made him laugh like crazy with only one balloon. With one single balloon I entertained him and his parents for twenty minutes. I said to him: okay kid, which balloon do you want? The green one or the red one?

[42] I explore Parque Forestal's neighbourhood gentrification process in the next chapter.
[43] *Flaite* is a slang word used by young people. It means an underclass social parasite who is usually involved in crime, drinking and drugs.

> The green one, he said. And I went, well, I'm gonna give you the red one so you learn that you cannot have everything in life." (Interview with Kote, juggler, 19 December, 2005).

Kote may make sense of his experience in the birthday party as exclusion because he has experienced the opposite in the Park doing the same act. In this same vein, their sense of being part of the Park was diminished when they were not invited to the opening of the MAC, after the refurbishment works were finished.

> "I left the MAC and it was already dark. In the plaza some blokes were practicing with sticks, lighten by fire lamps. Three of them ran to meet me on the steps: D'you have a spare ticket? Does it look good? Lagos was in there, wasn't he?" (Field notes, 16 December 2005).

Jugglers were not invited to the opening ceremony after following the works in the MAC for months and although they were by far the group most attached to the site. Their feeling of exclusion contrasts with the way in which President Ricardo Lagos talked about opening new opportunities for culture during the ceremony.

However, whilst jugglers make sense of their practice as a creative practice or as a political action I argue that those understandings contain a strategy for resolving two tensions. Jugglers hide their disappointment by seeing juggling not only as a job but also as a creative practice or a political action and by so doing, firstly, they hang on to the discourse about not selling themselves to Chile's post-1990 system which they claim to despise, and secondly, they keep up the hope of making a living through the one capital they do have: their juggler's body. Being a creative juggler or a clown helps them to soften their perception of their extreme poverty. They lack cultural and economic capital and their only way of survival is to sell their juggling tricks.

Lastly, juggling in Parque Forestal is also a place of encounter and entertainment for young people. It is a place where they can express themselves freely, without money or class constraints. Many young people in Santiago have few options for leisure other than going to a bar or sitting on the street with their mates and, given the city's high level of

social and spatial segregation, these activities are set into a very narrow cultural and economic frame. Today, the square in front of the MAC is not only a place of encounter for jugglers but also where punks, gothic groups, capoeira dancers and many others meet.

The trajectory of a practice can say much about the meaning embodied in it. In the case of juggling in Parque Forestal, we could argue that young people reinvent the practice of juggling in order to adjust it to their social, economic and political environment. Reinvented practices embody new meanings. In this regard, practice is not a simple mechanism for social reproduction but a possibility for reinvention and change.

Theatrum mundi at the Plaza

Comedians in the Plaza make their show a critique of post-1990 Chile in a more explicit way than the jugglers do. Their comedy embodies the contradictions and paradoxes of Chilean society. Walkers in the Plaza observe their show not as neutral —and impartial— spectators but agreeing with the social critique contained in the performance:

> "One comic said:
> -"We are going to do a clapping exercise here. So, those who support Universidad Catolica football team please clap". Universidad Catolica is the team supported by Chile's wealthy class. Only one person in the audience clapped and the rest laughed at him.
> -"So you are from *la Cato*?" asked the comic. "How do you expect me to believe that with that *cuico* face of yours?" (Cuico is a slang meaning high class). "Anyway, that is not a football team. The only football team that counts is Colo-Colo".
>
> People clap and shout. Colo-Colo is the most popular team in Chile. Its name refers to a Mapuche warrior whose profile is the team's symbol. The team is currently bankrupt because of bad management, but Chileans continue to support it. Colo-Colo is not allowed to play with Universidad Catolica in Universidad Catolica's stadium. They have to play in a neutral place, otherwise the site ends up totally destroyed by the hooligan contingent among

the fans. The comedians act out aspects of the quarrels between the football teams' supporters and the social anger involved in them by imitating two kinds of fans. Universidad Catolica ones are represented as weak, gay –a status that the majority of Chileans do not publicly accept- and stupid. Colo-Colo fans are represented as real men – strong, powerful and authentic Chileans. The Colo-Colo fans' narrative is full of pride in belonging to the Chilean working class. They perceive Universidad Catolica fans as rich, fake and outsiders as regards the genuine Chilean world." (Field notes, 1st September 2005).

Tensions of class, race and body are implied in this scene. The comics feel supported by the public, not only as actors; people laugh and later on, at the end of the show, reward them with money, but also recognise them as social critics. They represent what many people think about wealthy, upper class people in Chile. There is a strong sentiment of class and race division that goes beyond football team preferences. They like to be the voice of the majority which, in their understanding, lives in a parallel world from that of the upper classes. They live in poor Santiago neighbourhoods and they make fun of people who live in wealthy areas.

> -"Have you seen the *cuicas* (upper-class women) walking like this, not looking at anyone?" He walks around in a funny attitude, very straight and trying to be taller. The other comic tries to talk to him and he (the one playing the woman) says:
> -"Here, have a coin", and gives him one.
> -"But I haven't asked you for money", replies the comic.
> -"You always do", and he continues walking around, playing the rich woman." (Field notes, 1st September 2005).

The understanding of Chilean society as one where upward social mobility is impossible is embodied in the act. There is no opportunity for work, only for begging. And comics in the Plaza make sense of their practice as work and want to be recognised for it. Beggars in the Plaza do not display a creative act, they are passive presences outside the Cathedral, on a bench or hanging around. Their survival practices do not embody a

critique of present Chile's economic system, like the comics' practice does, but a deep experience of material need.

The comics' dialogue may be read as an ironic commentary on the neo-liberal economists' "trickle-down" theory, which was very popular during the Pinochet era. They argued that the best solution for poverty was economic growth, whose effects would trickle down to the poorer classes. The dialogue also implies that the upper class do not allow for the possibility that lower classes might be asking for something else besides money, and that they act in a paternalistic way. In the act, the wealthy woman has a top-down attitude: hand over a coin and get on with your life. People show enthusiasm about the comics' performance. Like them, they think that in post-1990 Chile, wealthy people do not recognise them for their capabilities and continue to treat them as servants.

Turron (T), Gordo (G) and Flaco (F) are comics. They are in their mid-forties and have known each other for 25 years. They met at Parque O'Higgins, a park located in the south west of Santiago. They worked together when they acted as clowns and now they have been a team for 15 years. They are very critical of the Government and the way wealth is distributed in Chile. Within that framework, they make their jokes by taking topics from local news and day-to-day situations. They think democracy has not improved their working conditions and complain about the new mayor. They say that he hides behind closed doors and does not face up to problems. They feel betrayed by the administration that denied them a permit to perform in the Plaza but gave one to some "newcomers". Flaco stresses the point that everybody supports them —the police, the priests of the Cathedral and the passers-by— but, despite all that support, only thirty permits to perform in the Plaza were issued and they were one of the twenty acts left out.

They feel oppressed by the city authorities and a sense of unfairness predominates in their narrative. Aside from the support they have from the people who watch them, they feel unrecognised and oppressed by the authorities.

> -"Are you going to vote in December?"
>
> T: -"No, I'm not interested, I'm registered to vote but I'm not going to, what for?"

F: -"I'm not interested in politics".

T: -"I just voted for the "No"[44], then I've never voted again and they haven't fined me because they don't care about me[45]. Just as they don't care about my vote, they don't care about me, my vote doesn't count, I'm 0.0% of the population and they start to be interested from 1% if that, so what would I vote for?" (Interview with Turron, Gordo and Flaco, comics, 22 September 2005).

The disinterest in politics contrasts with their sense of belonging to the Plaza. Turron, Gordo and Flaco feel that they belong to the Plaza and they create their work from the experience of it. They watch people, read the news, take the measure of political critique, social unhappiness, and economic shortages and use all of that to invent their jokes. They do not dress up for the act; they like to play the ordinary man. They need to be in the street to do their work, not just to perform their routines but also to invent and create them. Between each act they merge with the Plaza's crowd. Sometimes they go together to the bar at the corner of the Plaza to have a beer; at other times they sit on a bench with other comics to smoke a cigarette. They know everybody in the Plaza and talk a lot with all of them. They are always talking.

G: -"People like our show, they cooperate with us, they always give us a coin and if they do not have one they drop a thousand pesos note in our bag at the end of the month. That's the Chilean system, when you have less money it is difficult, we all walk slower, and then when you are just paid you are happy, people are happy and they drop a note for having watched you all month long. They pay monthly."

F: -"We have a lot of public; many people come to the Plaza to watch us, people who work downtown, customers who come always to watch us. All types of people, lawyers, promotion guys, salesmen, the guys who work the tables in the restaurants around here, people from the law courts, all types of people pass by around here and watch us. They like current affairs, that kind of stuff. That's early in the afternoon, then, later, we have another public:

[44] In 1988's referendum the option NO (no to Pinochet's Government) won and democracy was re-established in the country.

[45] The election system in Chile establishes voting as an option, but once you are registered it is a lifelong obligation.

people coming from the building sites, that's the night public, and then on Saturdays and Sundays we have a more family-oriented crowd. Children, people with strollers and babies, come to walk around and shop in the mall. They come with the family so at the weekends we keep the show a little bit cleaner." (Interview with Turron, Gordo and Flaco, comics, 22 September 2005).

Comic groups take turns to use the space in front of the Cathedral as a stage. For them it is the best spot in the Plaza because it is the corridor between Paseo Ahumada and Paseo Puente, two pedestrian main streets. Additionally, they are always looking for new strategies to make their practice more profitable. One of the most successful ones is to make home-recorded videos in DVD format and sell them after their presentation. Some of the groups are very proud of introducing technology to their work and they view their work as comics as a professional activity. Some of them also act outside Plaza de Armas sometimes, in other Chilean cities. They arrange a presentation in a local festival or event or try local squares. Thus, the Plaza comics are not trying out the practice as a way of earning a living. On the contrary, they have lived off the business for a long time. However, they talk about the times when they made sense of their practice not only as work, but also as a political action. A sense of nostalgia invades their narrative about past times:

> T: -"We have fought all our lives, we worked better when Pinochet was in power."
> -"Why?"
> T: -"Because we came to work, at least we came to fight, we came with such a desire to fight against it, and if we didn't, we didn't get the money. We fought, the police chased us, we ran away with our big clown shoes, paf, paf, paf, paf, they beat us sometimes because the police... you know." (Interview with Turron, Gordo and Flaco, comics, 22 September 2005).

Today they see their show as mere work, not as a struggle. And sometimes that tires them. This sense of routine and boredom contrasts with the laughter they spread while they are acting. "For us this is just a job", says Flaco. "We finish around nine and go back home". "We are all married with children, sons, daughters, grandsons", he jokes.

Comics make good money and, even though they do not have a secure income, they do think they have a job. However, they understand their practice in the same way they understand today's times: lacking in soul. They are disappointed with how things have developed in democracy because they expected radical economic and social changes that have not happened. The Plaza, instead of a stage for expression and demands, has become a site of hopeless complaint and irony.

Art and vending: the making of the marketplace

Danilo stands in the Plaza every day dressed all in red. He stands still for hours, changing his position every time a passer-by drops a coin in the box located at his feet. Like the comics, he also wants his performance to make people think about their lives, but his theme is not based on everyday situations but on the ones people do not even think about, immersed in their daily routine.

His appearance is attention-grabbing: no hair, wearing a piece of red cloth at the waist and standing in a red cylinder. When I asked what does his character represent he tells me that he is a slave. He thinks few people understand that he is acting a slave but that is not what he is interested in:

> "I show expressions, I use my hands in certain ways, like defending myself some times, I use, I adopt different glances and feelings. That's what people do understand". (Interview with Danilo, street artist, 24 November 2005).

Danilo's character is very successful. In addition to his work in the Plaza he works in commercial events, either as a producer or as an actor. Working in the Plaza helps him to get more jobs, because people know him and hire him for different jobs as a mime or a dancer. In a sense, his option is close to that of jugglers who do not want to be bossed around in a factory. He worked as an elevator technician for years but got bored and gave it up. Unlike the jugglers', Danilo's practice is a solitary one. This is good for his business because he has little competition and he has been able to position himself within the Plaza. He shares his clients with no one and earns good money:

> "Just from tips I earn about 400,000 pesos a month. And then I make money acting in an event or a production. I don't know, but when I have money I buy stuff, food, I go to the supermarket and buy durable food. I waste all the money, I'm very careless with money, I have no idea how much I earn." (Interview with Danilo, street artist, 24 November 2005).

Danilo has learned not only to perform his characters but also to advertise himself. He always carries business cards ("Events and Productions. Sound, light, human statue, painted bodies, dancers, mimes and others. Danilo Acuna. Manager.") and pictures of his work in the Plaza and outside it. He shows me some pictures from a job he did for the National Gas Company: he and other guys were all dressed as Ancient Greek characters advertising different gas heaters. Danilo is happy with his work and does not complain. He has been able to match what he likes, different types of street performance, with his needs. He is 30 years old, married and has two children. His mother sometimes works with him making the outfits and his wife has acted with him in some of the events he has organized.

Interestingly enough, Danilo expects similar things to most of the office workers who join the crowd everyday in the Plaza. He cares about himself and his family and even though he watches every day from the height of his pedestal how pickpockets open people's bags, he keeps immersed in his business. He is interested in what is happening in the country and plans to vote in December[46], but politics is not his topic. He believes everything is going to be always the same "the ones who are poor now are going to continue being poor. There's not much to change."

He thinks Plaza de Armas is the best place for performing because it is a corridor, so many people walk past him and drop a coin. Every morning he does his make-up, gets dressed and acts for a few hours. Then he eats in the Plaza, acts again for a while and after his working day goes home. Like any other working man. At the same time, Danilo is a stranger to the Plaza in the sense that his attitude denotes elements of the sociological form of the stranger that Simmel describes: "a particular construction consisting of distance and proximity, indifference and commitment" (Simmel 1971 [1908]). He comes and goes from the Plaza watching everyone who is there, being

[46] Presidential elections were held in Chile at the end of 2005.

critical and understanding but not friendly. He does not belong to the Plaza community of vendors and actors who share their daily duties; setting their stands, eating lunch, fighting with the police, complaining about the good and the bad weather, and at the same time he is one of them because he shares the street acting practice. He is much more of an observer; he can identify everyone in the Plaza and understands it as a site where, like him, many people earn their living:

> "Can you see those three guys at the Cathedral's door? Well, one plays tricks with a football ball at Paseo Ahumada and the other sells second hand pens. He buys them very cheap and then sits there and tries them on a newspaper. Then he sells the good ones. The other one is the drunk who took my coins from my box." (Interview with Danilo, street artist, 24 November 2005).

Danilo thinks Plaza workers are, like him, immersed in a system that is not going to change. We might suppose that his character, the slave, talks indirectly about that. Things are clear to him and his detachment, announced by his red silhouette standing out from the background (figure 7), comes not from his indifference but from his certainty that poverty and social injustice in Chile is going to continue.

Figure 7: Danilo as a red slave in the Plaza.
Source: Author's pictures.

In this vein, Danilo understands his practice as both an art and a job. He defines himself as an artist and one of the things he appreciates about democratic times is that there is more openness to new ways or representations "now you see many more things," he argues.

In contrast, painters in the Plaza have a more confused construct of what they do. Somehow they want to be recognised as artists and not be confused with other people in the Plaza involved in vending or begging. In this vein, they have a discourse of resistance against the district system of application for permits to work in the Plaza because they think they should not have to have a permit to make art. The Plaza master plan limits the space where painters can stand with their canvas and they are not allowed to be anywhere else within the Plaza[47].

Also the Plan permits a limited number of painters to be in the Plaza. The painters who wanted to stay in the Plaza had to participate in a painting contest run by the district to maintain their position. Many of the old painters were left out and lost the possibility of working in the Plaza. New painters think that they won their right to be in the Plaza through the contest, but the old ones who were left out think that painting in the Plaza is not about painting but about tradition and having been there for a long time. There are many supporters of the old painters among those who did win a spot and they start quarrels with the newcomers.

There are huge disagreements over the distribution of space. Painters are literally fighting for square centimetres and for clients. A sense of distrust is present in the interactions between painters. Some of them think that painting in the Plaza is a way of earning a living so they do not mind selling their pictures really cheaply and they do not pay much attention to quality. They paint what people are willing to buy: landscapes, portraits, nature. Other painters believe that they are in the Plaza because it is a good place for creating art and being with people. They do not want to sell their paintings at any old price because they consider that they have value as a piece of art. Those painters are always angry because they do not sell as much as the ones who sell very cheaply. Robinson belongs to the latter group as we can learn from his words:

[47] Some of the regulations on street vending in the Santiago district reflect the administration's concern about hygiene and congestion, but end in simple exclusion that invites many protests. In this vein, and drawing on Lefebvre's theory of space, scholars have reflected on street vending emphasising its linkages to the broader theme of space and protest (Stillerman 2006). Although I do not wish to ignore that possibility, I will not develop that line of analysis.

-"Here it is impossible, most of these guys haven't even studied art, they don't have any idea. They paint what people ask them, it's just business to them. Everything is a business here."

-"Would you go elsewhere if you could?"

-"Yeah, I'd go to Buenos Aires if I had the money".

-"Isn't it that kind of the same thing"?

-"Yeah, but people have more knowledge there, they know about art, there's more stuff happening." [...]

-"Has the Plaza changed since you've been here?"

-"Yeah, of course, the change is that now everybody's in the shopping mall, that's what has happened in all the big cities.

-"Have you thought about going and painting in the mall?"

-"No! I don't sell myself to that, that's not my choice, I want to do art.

-"Do you always paint portraits?"

-"For people yes, that's what people buy. You have to keep a balance between what you want to do and what people want. If I was selling in an uptown art gallery I could paint conceptual things and people would understand them and buy them. Here people are looking for the landscape, the sea, the countryside; they are looking for something to decorate their homes. Instead of hanging the picture of the Pope or a saint, as their parents did, they are looking for a decorative painting." (Interview with Robinson Abello, painter, 22 September 2005).

Robinson tries to establish a difference between what he does and what the painters who are part of the district system do. But he cannot resolve the dilemma between being an idealistic human being and someone who has to eat and pay rent. He has three children so he has to earn money, even if it means making copies of photographs, and at the same time he keeps doing paintings that no one wants to buy:

"Now I'm painting something different to participate in a contest organized by the Chilean Painting Association. I'll show you". He opens his toolbox and gets out a piece of cardboard. The drawing on the cardboard shows a couple. "They are wood-face and ass-face". The woman has an ass as a head and the man one is a piece of wood. "I want to do social criticism with my

> painting. This is the portrait of the ones that do not care about anybody but themselves." (Interview with Robinson Abello, painter, 22 September 2005).

In Robinson's opinion, most people in Chile are turning into ass and wood faces. They pursue what they want no matter if that involves not caring about others or committing illegal acts. What he hates most is the double discourse that dominates Government speeches and the alienation in which people spend their entire lives working to make money.

Andres, a 39-year-old painter, does not get angry like Robinson. He thinks of the Plaza as a place to work and defends it as such. He does not say anything bad about the Plaza because he does not want to help ruin its reputation as a nice place to visit. He started painting at the Plaza two years ago, after securing a position in the district contest. He is a graphic designer and he paints watercolours of Santiago's scenes for tourists. He does not claim to do art but he does not want to do rubbish either. He paints decent watercolours and follows the rules.

> "There were too many painters in the Plaza and not enough space for walking and moving around. That's why the district wanted to impose some order on it. It was impossible not to win the contest. Only seven painters did not get a permit. The main problem that we have is not about having a permit but about not having district resources to support our work. Apart from that, the Plaza is one of the best places I have ever worked. This Plaza is a millpond in comparison with other places where I have been." (Interview with Andres, painter, 21 September 2005).

Andres is not very sociable. He starts work every morning at 11 am and stays at his spot until 7 in the evening. He has learned to deal with tourists and does not complain about not selling. He has his studio near the Plaza and goes there for lunch. The thing that disturbs him most is the noise. Behind him a preacher talks all day, non-stop. "He says that he is allowed by the police to preach and install loudspeakers. I don't know. He is awful, that's all I can say".

Andres and Robinson sell their paintings in the Plaza, one in a non-complaining manner and the other resisting all the way. However, beyond their discourses of resistance or acceptance of the rules, is the issue of how they understand the private and the public. The district administration assigned specific locations for all people who work in the Plaza. Their purpose was to order and clean the Plaza, as I have explained earlier. By doing so they tried to restrict the possibilities of the public sphere as a space for free interchange. In this sense, we could say —as Jean-Christophe Agnew argued for sixteenth century England markets (1993)— that the regulations intend to suppress a more direct popular recognition of the solvent and subversive dynamic of market culture.

> "[The] "antitheatrical prejudice", an abiding fear of all change and instability of form. [...] [A]ntitheatrical asceticism appears to have been not simply an economic strategy for ordering a class of workers set in motion *by* the market but a cultural strategy for ordering a mass of meanings set in motion *within* the market." (Agnew 1993: 194).

However, they did not succeed in the Plaza. In it, like a market place, public and private life assumes an extraordinarily theatrical style: the Plaza turns into a stage where many different people interact and the attraction of the Plaza for its visitors is exactly its condition of theatrum mundi; a site where the world is somehow represented. In this vein, some painters, such as Robinson, make sense of the regulations as restrictions on individuality. That's why he does not like the white parasol that the district gave to painters to make them all look the same and keeps using his old green one. He likes diversity and interchange.

Nevertheless, even though Andres and Robinson have their space in the Plaza they feel insecure about it. Their condition of semi-employed is related to their space condition in the Plaza. Regulations can get stricter and they can be kicked out as other painters were in the past. They cannot come and go like the comics, running every time they are threatened. Their practice includes canvas, paints, pencils —heavy things. A phantom of authority has always been present since the Plaza master plan was made. This perception is linked with their sense of belonging to the Plaza and their narratives about art and culture. Robinson's dreams of going to Buenos Aires are related to his fear of being

kicked out. By the same token, painters' complaints about being on a site where people do not appreciate their art emerge in the context of insecurity.

It is interesting that Danilo who has his permit and feels comfortable working in the Plaza is not worried about passers-by not understanding what he is doing but is concentrated on observing them. The same is true for the comics who think of the Plaza space and its inhabitants (mainly lower-middle classes) as a perfect match for their practice. They create their art from the space and that strengthens their sense of belonging to the Plaza, regardless of their opinions on the regulations.

Something similar occurs in the Park every Sunday, when the site becomes a market place. Craftsmen (and craftswomen) who offer their products in the Park relate their crafts to the site. The Park, as an historical place in the city, represents values that many users relate to Chilean identity, such as family ties and close relationships. Accordingly, craft vendors offer traditional Chilean sweets, kites and jewellery among other things, as items that belong to a style of life ruled by those values. Carlos, a traditional toy vendor who hates cars and goes everywhere on his tricycle, likes to sell in the Park because it is full of people. He makes his toys from recycled rubbish and offers them to the many kids around:

> "People come here because they know there are things to see; vendors, the street spectacle. Lavin (Santiago's former mayor) wanted to kick all of us out and clean up everything, and if he had done that, then no one would have come to the Park anymore, what for? To see more people? If this is what it is, it is because we are here, the ones who give life to the Park. Last year, Lavin, lying about arranging the gardens kicked us out [...] They think people are stupid and that they can do whatever they want with us and there are whole families that depend on our work, it is a big irresponsibility." (Interview with Carlos, paper toy craftsman, 10 October 2005).

Carlos's understanding of the Park as his place for work is twofold: on the one hand, the Park is a place where he has the opportunity and the right to work and, on the other, he makes sense of his work as a contribution to the site. His exhibition of birds made out of paper hanging from the Park's trees is not only his vending spot but a beautiful scene. He

needs the Park and the place would disappear as it is now without him and the other vendors. The puppeteers working in the site think similarly. Luis, who works by himself in order to earn more money, also recalls last year's episode when Lavin wanted to expel them and he is not surprised that the regulation did not succeed:

> "It is full of people [the Park], people come here because they know they are going to find entertainment. [...] the Park has always been a place for cultural things, it is a tradition." (Interview with Luis, puppeteer, 10 October 2005).

The Park is for Luis the site where people perform and sell crafts on Sundays and he does not conceive it as something else. By the same token, *Tekai*, the other puppet company, defines their work as the work of old troubadours and the Park as the site for them:

> "We are itinerants, we arrive to a square, a town and do our show and the public get interested [...] Here it's for families, the work we present is for families, for children and for the parents, for them to watch the puppet theatre show with their children. [...] We like Parque Forestal because all kinds of people come here, more people, from everywhere they come here." (Interview with Tekai, puppet theatre company, 16 October 2005).

Accordingly, Tekai creates their plays with the public of the Park and the Park itself in mind. They adapt very simple stories that may be understood easily amidst the lively and noisy atmosphere of the Park. Drawing on people's experiences in the Park, they emphasise contents of urban behaviour in public spaces, such as recycling.

Figure 8: Tekai performing in the Park
Source: Author's picture

Together with traditional craft vendors and street actors and musicians performing, there are young people selling their creations. They join the tradition of craft making and selling in the Park but they prefer to locate beside the square of the MAC where most of their clients, young people like them, hang around. Their merchandise is not traditional stuff but sculptures, paintings and clothes. Christian, a young craftsman, uses wire to make all kind of insects and trees and has a lot of success in the Park. Selling in a public space is important for him because he is not only interested in selling his creations but also in publishing his work. He is open to talk to anyone who is curious about what he does. He enjoys the relationship with passers-by and although he knows that most people in the Park are young folks who do not buy much, he likes to exhibit his work as pieces of art to them.

> "I wanted to distinguish my work from the category of crafts because my stuff comes near to sculpture, because it has three dimensions, the size, and the other thing is that it does not fulfil any function like ... it's not a candelabrum, it's not an earring, it's something else, it's simply a figure." (Interview with Christian, 15 December 2005).

Figure 9: Christian at his place with his wire insects
Source: Author's picture

Christian argues that vending as a craftsman in a public space is a way of living to him, not a mere source of income. He likes the diversity that he finds in the Park and he believes it does not exist in a shopping mall. That is why he has chosen to sell his products in a public space and not in a design shop:

> "I like it there [the Park] more than for selling, for sharing. There is diversity of trends, dressing styles, art, and that's beautiful, it's beautiful to enjoy that, to go there to share your stand with the world". (Interview with Christian, 15 December 2005).

In that vein, he tells me that last Sunday he came to the Park and did not sell anything but did barter. "A big wire tree for that big drum [he points the instrument standing in his living room], so I had a good day anyway". Christian belongs to the Park and makes sense of it as a place that helps him to improve at what he does. The Park as a marketplace is a site for interchange: interchange of goods but moreover, interchange of visions and understandings.

Artists and craftsmen and women vending their creations, either in the Plaza or in the Park, appears as a practice that finds its very best inputs in the site when it happens within the frame of a sense of belonging there. In these cases, interaction with the sites makes possible imagination *in* practice, material imagination that expands the limits of the practice and makes it exist beyond the urgency of survival.

Vending for the sake of it

"What is a market? Is it a place? A process? A principle? A power?" Agnew's questions (1993: 17) contain part of the answer. A market is not only one thing. People make sense of their exchange in many different ways and those define what a market is in each case. We have seen how those who sell their own creations in the Plaza and the Park turn those places in marketplaces. However, although they participate in the market they want to differentiate themselves from those vendors who do not belong to the street art and crafts. The way in which vendors make sense of their practice works as a sort of social stratification factor. Vendors who do not create what they are selling, and are thus not creators but merely individuals in need, are relegated to the last step of this hierarchy by those who claim to be at the top of it, like painters.

If those involved in creative practices see developing their imagination in practice is part of their utopia and way of being, for vendors who "just" sell, the aim is to satisfy material needs. If for the former group keeping things open and not knowing the outcome of their practice is part of their bohemian way of living, for the latter it is all about looking for certainty. This urgency pushes them to develop survival strategies, such as those regarding managing the use of space, in their vending practice in order to ensure the outcome.

Social networks make possible the regulations that organize these marketplaces as places of exchange and in that sense are a means for survival (Lomnitz 1975). Physical proximity of people in the Plaza and the Park help to strengthen social ties as resources of poverty (Gonzalez de la Rocha 1994). However, these survival strategies have limits and generally they are less effective for the poorest vendors (Gonzalez de la Rocha 2001). If we walk around the different stalls in the Plaza we can see how vendors make sense of their proximity and interchange within the context of their working practices. Let's begin with Ubilla, the shoe-shiner who has been working in the Plaza for 63 years:

> -"It is all about having a strong mind," he argues. "The ones with weak minds get sick and depressed. Here I have had young people sitting in my chair complaining about their lives while I shine their shoes. They have to look for

> something to do, look for their life. I have worked my whole life being responsible and I have always found a way to survive."
> I asked him about his leg. He lost it when he was 17 because of an infection: -
> -"It was sore and I never went to see a doctor and when I did it was too late. But besides that surgery I've never been to the doctor. People think that because I have only one leg I can't do anything, but I can do most things. Obviously I can't join you for a run or a football game but I can do other things. People do not like to see me here but if I don't come I'll die." [...]
> -"And do you have any friends in the Plaza?"
> -"Friends? No. People I know, yes. My friends are not here any more, some are dead and I lost the track of the rest." (Interview with Ruben Ubilla, shoe-shiner, 3 October 2005).

Ubilla is too proud to tell me how much people help him every day in the Plaza. During my fieldwork I observed how he shared cigarettes with other shoe shiner everyday: his friend came to his spot and opened the 20 cigarette pack and split it with Ubilla. Also he greets Javiera, the woman who sells balloons and toys near him and the photographer every day. They look after one another's merchandise and together, follow the rhythm of the Plaza: its rainy season, the holidays —when the district administration invades the space with commercial stands for Christmas and Independence day— and the ordinary days. Ubilla, Jano, Javiera, Robinson, Andres and Pablo, a photographer, are always at the south-west corner of the Plaza and respect each others' space limits. Also, they are company for each other; they talk and spend the working day together.

This group of vendors, at the south-west of the Plaza (figure 10) approaches their working practices as employment. The fact that they have worked together in the site, each of them in his/her spot, gives them some sort of stability that privileges that way of understanding. Also, Ubilla, Javiera, Jano, Pablo and Robinson have been in the Plaza for many years, which enhances the sense of stability. They make a living out of their practice; although the services and goods they offer may not appear appealing at first sight ("who would pay for a Polaroid picture sitting on an old toy horse in Plaza de Armas?" I wrote early in my field notes during my fieldwork), they sell them. The most needy is Robinson, who is not very successful with his paintings. However, although all of them have necessities they count themselves among Chile's employed population. In

this respect it is interesting how the physical and social frame plays an important role in the way they make sense of their practices as stable jobs. As I try to illustrate in figure 10, the Plaza corner encloses vendors' daily interactions.

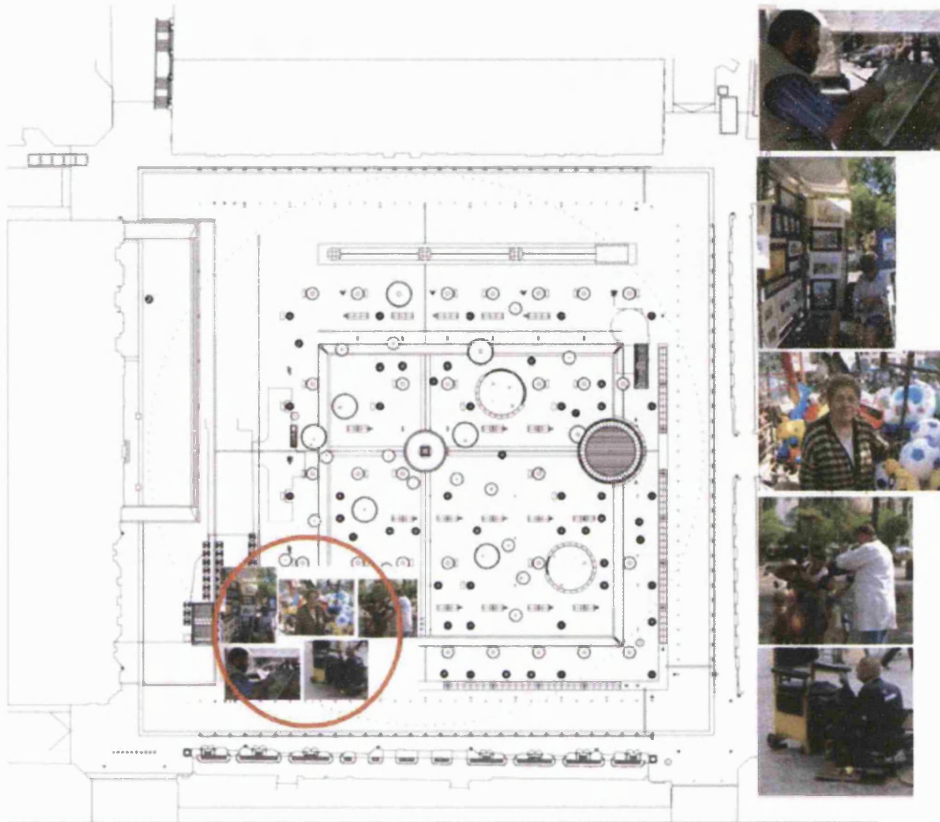


Figure 10: Clockwise starting from below: Robinson, Andres, Javiera, Pablo and Ubilla. They are all clustered in a very small area, at the south-west corner of the Plaza.
Source: Author's composition.

At the other side of the Plaza, Carlos, a 47-year-old man who sells envelopes and postcards at the main entrance of the Post Office, also has company but not a sense of being employed. His vending is a family business. When I met him he was with his daughter, Macarena, who has just finished the school year and during the rest of the summer I got to meet his mother, his brother-in-law, two of his nephews and his brother (some of them in figure 11). They all live in poor neighbourhoods in marginal districts of Santiago. Carlos lives in San Gregorio slum, well known for drug dealing. The vending business is not enough for Carlos and his family; they are always struggling to pay the rent and buy their food. However, it is what they do. They don't plan to get a better job, they are resigned to the idea of poverty. When I asked Carlos about the presidential elections, he told me that all of his family votes for the centre-left parties because "we are all democrats" but he is not expecting things to change. He does not

own or rent a house but lives with his family (his wife, two daughters, his son-in-law and a grandchild) in his parents' place. He wants to buy a house, and is now applying for the subsidy offered by the Ministry of Housing, but he is not able to save the 180 thousand pesos for the application:

> "It's difficult to save, money goes away. We have always been poor, now it's a bit better, but I believe Chile is not as good as some people say. Good for the ones who win, could be, we continue the same, the thing is too difficult [...] clothes and diapers are difficult to get money for, because for food I always have, if three can eat four can eat, don't you think?" (Interview with Carlos, street vendor, 7 November 2005).

Carlos lives one day at a time; he does not save and he only fulfills his and his family's very basic needs. Carlos's way of survival depends on his ties with others; at home, with his parents and at the Plaza not only with his family but also with the police. He does not have a permit but keeps a friendly relationship with the policemen that are around in the Plaza: "I buy them a sandwich and a soft drink, you see, you have to give too". Interestingly enough, Carlos does not think that this is corrupt in any way. On the contrary, he sees it as an act of friendship.

Figure 11: Carlos and his daughter Maca at the Post Office front entrance. At the right, his brother-in-law.
Source: Author's pictures.

Vendors' possibilities of economic improvement at the Plaza are almost nonexistent, and they know it. Their presentation of themselves includes the view of themselves they ascribe to others. "I'm from San Gregorio," Carlos told me. Have you heard of it? [...]

Well, it's like La Legua, equally bad". They live carrying the stigma of being poor and believe they have no real way out. Moreover, their stigma stops them from taking action to improving their condition: many people cannot find a job if they give a La Legua or a San Gregorio address (Bengoa et al. 2000). In the same vein, the actions they take are developed under the umbrella of stigma (Goffman 1968). Within this dynamic they play the game of survival as a group and manage social relationships to keep themselves afloat. In this vein, conversations among vendors about social injustice, unfair regulations and Chilean politics and economics in general, cheer them up and make them feel empowered. The perception of themselves as persons who know what is going on in the country gives them a sort of confidence that we can recognise in their narrative: "There are no real politicians in Chile anymore. They are a joke, a lie", says Ubilla, smoking a cigarette.

If we compare street vending in the Plaza with that in the Park we see the latter as a much more solitary activity, even there are still interactions among vendors. On the one hand, solidarity among vendors is not as strong as it is in the Plaza because, in the Park, many vendors sell things they have made themselves, art and crafts, and their first aim is not to survive but to create. On the other hand, the site is much bigger, so larger distances separate one vendor from another. Regarded in this light, vending in the Park for the sake of it seems to be harder and more tiring than vending in the Plaza. Hilda, a 58-year-old vendor who sells little flags, drinks and candies in the corner of the street that runs along the Park, is a solitary figure in the site. She is an outsider to the Park's neighbourhood, lives in Pudahuel, a poor district, and takes the bus every day to reach her corner. She is on the outside looking in at what is happening in the neighbourhood and the Park, but does not belong to it. She tries to do her best to earn an honest living, but she does not expect too much: "As long as there is work, I don't care who is in government because, in the end, everybody steals. All governments move things under the table." (Interview with Hilda, street vendor, 17 September 2005).

She recognises without anger that in Chile there are big inequalities, there are people who have a lot of money, who accumulate too much and do not give opportunities to the rest. Her experience underpins her words: "I worked around the upper site [of Santiago], I always had good masters, always, although in the end, with my pension they did not behave well." (Interview with Hilda, street vendor, 17 September 2005).

Hilda's employers did not pay her pension contributions[48] and that is why she does not have a pension today, even though she worked for years. But she was not interested in understanding how the private pension system works, what her rights and possibilities were. She wants to rest and take care of her grandchildren. "I'm tired, too many years working". She dreams of saving enough money to build a room for rent at her place and live off that money. This is difficult, because every now and then she gets arrested by the police (because, like many other street vendors, she does not have a permit to sell in the street) and has to pay a fine of 60 thousand. "A board costs more than ten thousand and with the fines I haven't been able to save".

Hilda has a son and a daughter but they cannot support her financially. Her son also got caught by the police and had such a bad experience in jail that he does not want to go back to vending. Her husband left her but now is back; he gets drunk and asks her for money all the time. Hilda's condition is too extreme to be improved without the help of more than social networks. She may survive with the help of her friends in the Park but most probably she will not be able to have even minimal living standards when she stops working.

Figure 12: Hilda selling flags and candies at the Park corner.
Source: Author's picture.

[48] It is the employer's responsibility to contribute to the private pension system for each of his/her employees.

What is striking is that besides her extreme poverty she interacts with the wealthy people living in the Park neighbourhood without resentment, standing in her marginal position. Hilda has the peasant's attitude. She came to the city from the southern countryside when she was a teenager and understands the world as divided between rich and poor. Chile's new times are not new for her but more of the same. She tells me that a former minister of Pinochet's lives in the building opposite where we are standing.

> "There, where you see the green curtains. It's an enormous apartment, like 500 square meters. One single person in such a big house. I don't know what for. When he moved here the police came to supervise, the things, to take care of his things while they were moving them so they didn't get stolen because he has lots of very valuable things. And he also has a second apartment down there [she points the next building] where he throws parties." (Interview with Hilda 20 September 2005).

Neighbours know her, greet her and one woman, who lives in a building in the street where Hilda sells, even comes every day at lunch time with a sandwich for her. Taxi drivers who stop at her corner are very good clients; they buy drinks in summer and candies for their passengers. Also, they tell her when policemen are coming so Hilda has time to stop selling so she does not get caught. However, Hilda's daily interactions with the wealthy neighbours and the moving taxi drivers do not encourage her to see herself as part of the Park.

In her solitary activity Hilda is at the margin. She is in a very different position than those who are make sense of their working practices as creative practices rooted in place and developed amongst others. She is also in the outside in comparison to those Plaza's vendors who support each other in their everyday routine. Hilda is not the only one who looks from the outside, however, within those displaying survival practices in the Plaza and the Park Peruvian immigrants are a very large group who stands at the margin of the Plaza aiming for material stability.

Peruvians immigrants: new services and goods offered at the Plaza

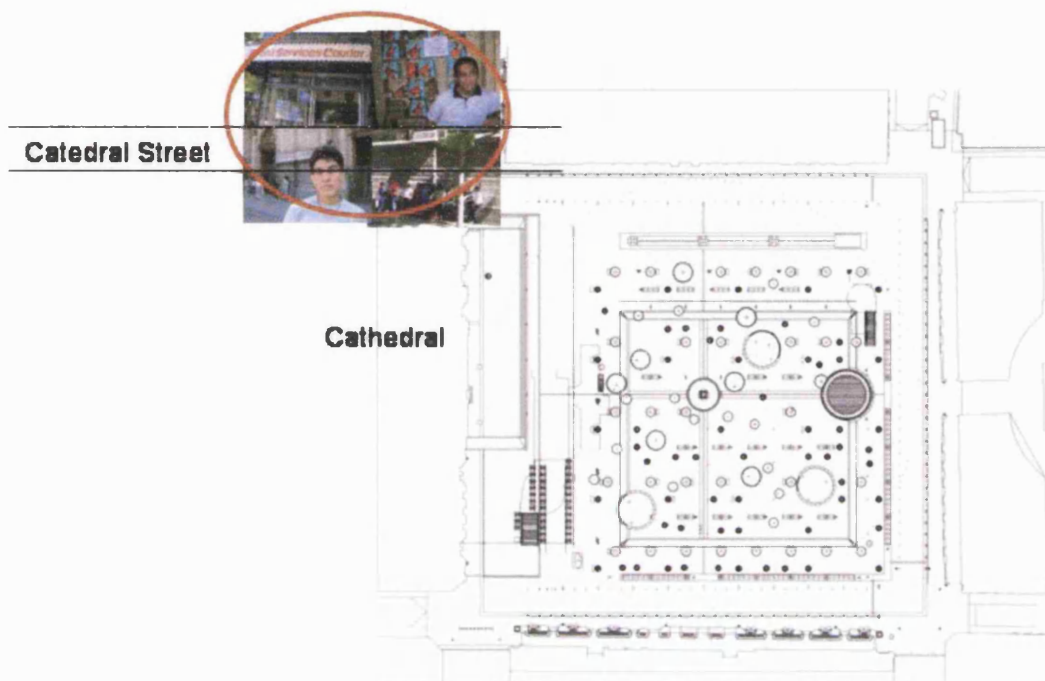
Between 1992 and 2002 Peruvians' immigration to Chile increased by 394%, according to Chilean Foreign Office data. Most of these immigrants came looking for jobs and a better quality of life. Women get jobs in Chile working as cleaners, nannies and cooks in private homes and men mostly work in commerce and the building trade. The Plaza is where Peruvians meet. They have colonised Catedral (Cathedral), the street at the north side of the Cathedral. The block in front the Cathedral is full of shops for calling abroad and Internet cafes and Peruvian vendors sell typical Peruvian food in the street. At the opposite side, Peruvian men and women sit on the Cathedral's walls, waiting for potential employers. People who need workers for building, agriculture and cleaning jobs come to the Plaza. Rosa found her first job sitting on the Cathedral walls:

> "When I first came to Santiago I went to Plaza de Armas, to the Cathedral's corner. I came to Chile to work and I didn't know anyone here so I went there because they had told me that that was the place to find work and other Peruvian people who could help me. [...] A man from Viña del Mar[49] came. He needed someone to do the things at home, full-time, living at the house, so I went with him. First I lived in Viña and then I came to Santiago, to Ñuñoa[50] with the same man [...] but he wanted me to do too many things, it was too much work, he wanted me to take care of the house and also to work in his bookshop, he asked for too much and that was no good." (Interview with Rosa, Peruvian immigrant, 19 January 2006).

Like Rosa, many Peruvians think that in Chile they have good work opportunities but they do not want to be exploited. Most of them maintain strong ties with their families in Peru and want to be in Chile just while they are working. By the same token, Peruvians in the Plaza do not merge with Chileans too much and keep themselves in the Cathedral corner. They are in their business in Catedral Street but they do not interact with other vendors. Moreover, most of people who buy their food and use their telephone shops are Peruvians, which makes Peruvian vending and business at the Plaza into a sort of cluster: "Chileans only come here when they need to make a call by mobile," says Helmes, a Peruvian employee of a telephone call and Internet shop.

[49] Chilean city near Santiago, by the sea.
[50] A Santiago district.

Peruvians in the Plaza are a closed system that constitutes a separate marketplace. In figure 13 I intend to show how Peruvian vending and business exist outside of the Plaza.



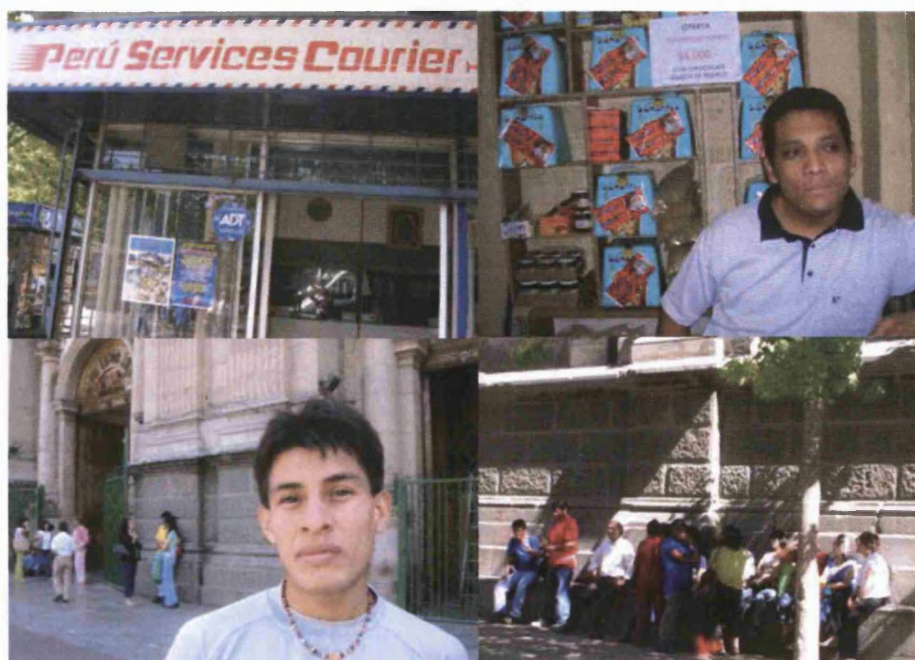


Figure 13: Clockwise starting from the upper left, Peruvian telephone call shop, Helmes working in another telephone shop, Peruvians waiting for employees at the Cathedral walls and Johny, Peruvian waiter in front of the Cathedral, spending his time on his day off from the restaurant.
Source: Author's composition.

Panchita, a woman who sells candies and soft drinks around the Plaza is an exception to this figure and may help us to reflect on how both Chilean and Peruvians workers in the Plaza make sense of Chile's post-1990 economic success. On the one hand, Panchita is discriminated against by Chileans, who see on her the figure of the poor Peruvian who misbehaves in the Plaza. Comics make fun of Panchita in their shows: "here she comes, the ugly one" and some vendors told me they think Peruvians are robbers and dirty people, "they eat around here and leave all their rubbish behind," "they steal mobiles to sell calls to Peru, watch out for yours!".

Chilean vendors talk about Peruvian immigrants in the Plaza either with indifference –"I do not bother" – or looking down at them. Interestingly enough, they see them more as a problem attached to Peru's failing economy than to Chile's economic success. Viewing it from their own condition of poverty, they think Peruvians are escaping from corruption rather than seeking job options in Chile. Few of them feel threatened by Peruvian immigration in terms of losing their customers.

On the other hand, Peruvians do not say they feel discriminated against. Their narrative is focused on the opportunities they have in Chile and how much Lima and Santiago are alike: "I feel at home here, the Cathedral in the Plaza is like the one in Lima," says Panchita. However, their practices embody the understanding that they are better off amongst themselves. Johny, a 24-year-old Peruvian who works in a restaurant as a waiter tells me that he prefers not to mix with people who want to "kill the Peruvians". He has lived in Santiago for a year and wants to stay. All his family has come and now they all live together in Santiago. His girlfriend is also Peruvian, a girl he met at a Peruvian discotheque, who works as a servant in a private house.

Peruvian immigration in Chile is too new to forecast how it will develop. However, Peruvian's presence in the Plaza reveals Chileans' racist attitudes. Immigration in general is a new feature in Chile's recent history —though it formed part of a colonisation strategy during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries— that may make race issues often hidden in Chilean culture more relevant.

Conclusion

The daily experience of street vendors and performers in the Plaza and the Park is very different depending on how they make sense of their practice and their own perception of belonging to the sites. Some make sense of their practice beyond mere survival and see themselves as part of a way of life that celebrates the transitory, the fleeting and the fortuitous as their form of approaching time, space and causality. For them the uncertain outcome of their work is part of their identity; what they value and pursue. They live to keep things open, in the air, as jugglers do. As we have learned, however, looking at the experiences of this group of people, this attitude contains a number of contradictions related to Chilean new times. It appears that the group of artists and performers vending and acting in the streets expected a new framework for their practices in Chile's post-dictatorship times and are disappointed at the lack of perceptible changes. They still perceive Chile as a country with very few opportunities for economic and social mobility.

Those vendors who look for stability draw on the sense of place they cultivate in the Plaza and the Park to develop social relations that, to some extent, support their work. At the heart of their different understandings is the level of stability they have in their vending practices. Belonging to a group, having a permanent spot in the Plaza and a permit are elements that help the sense of stability. However, like Gonzalez de la Rocha (2001) I believe that social networks are not enough to overcome poverty when it is extreme, as it is for some of the Plaza and Park vendors, and when the state does not offer a minimal level of social support.

> "[P]oor and working-class urban households have moved toward a situation permeated by a "poverty of resources" that erodes their capacities for survival. [...] The capacity of households and individuals to achieve certain levels of income and well being is the outcome of complex social processes in which labour market opportunities play an important role." (2001: 72).

Within this context, it is not surprising that most poor vendors and performers in the Plaza and the Park make sense of their practice as a weak tool for survival but as the

only means they have, given the economic and social conditions of Chile. Vendors go into the business because they have no other job option in which they can earn the same amount of money (OIT 1988). They can gain access to this job without going through a selection process in which they may suffer discrimination, they do not have to meet educational requirements and they do not have to invest start-up capital. Street vending is somehow an immediate option for earning a living, albeit a very poor one.

In Santiago, a major problem in earning a living is that vendors cannot rely on their jobs because they are constantly being arrested by the police and expelled from their spots at the Plaza and the Park. In this vein, Mitchell Duneier writes in "Sidewalk", an ethnography on New York street vendors, about how what people standing at the outside of the established economic activity really need is inclusion:

> "Any society with high levels of economic inequality, racism, illiteracy, and drug dependency, [...] will have a vast number of people who cannot conform to the requirements of its formal institutions. Given this, the correct response is not for the society to attempt to rid public space of the outcasts it has had in producing. It is vital to the well-being of cities with extreme poverty that there be opportunities for those on the edge to engage in self-direct entrepreneurial activity" (2001: 317).

Remaining at the margins of society, vending and street acting practices may be seen as tactics for survival, as ways of operating or doing things and as the typical action of those who live within the framework of society's structure. Writing about how people develop tactics, Michel de Certeau argues they have the status of the dominated, which "does not mean —for him— that they are either passive or docile" (1984: xiii). De Certeau recognises in them an ability to develop ways of operating that are clever tricks to get away with things within nets of discipline. In de Certeau's terms, the use of tactics: "[T]akes advantage of "opportunities" and depends on them, being without any base where it could stockpile its winnings, build up its own position, and plan raids" (1984:37).

In this vein, imagination and sociability play a significant role in the practices of street vending and performing, turning people's ways of making sense of their practices into something that goes beyond survival. Imagination is material for those involved in creative practices. Jugglers, puppeteers, musicians and craftsmen understand the Park and the Plaza as the site where they are empowered by the elements. Their material imagination, imagination animated by the matter, is rooted in their practices in place. For the material imagination of a juggler animated by air "our being must lose its earthiness and become aerial. Then, it will make all earth light." (Bachelard 1998: 52). In-depth imagination is open and hard to define, it is the very experience of opening and newness (Bachelard 1998: 19). Material imagination links the practice to the individual and, in turn, people make sense of their practices as their way of being, as what they are, human beings capable of creating.

Imagination also expands the possibilities of the practices beyond a way of simply earning a living. In this case, I would argue that imagination is dynamic, linked to strategies to capture clients and deal with tourists. Plaza vendors have a dynamic imagination, are people of action, moved by the urgent necessity of survival. "It is the purely active life, the life of long courage, of long preparation; it is the symbol of an aggressive, tenacious, and alert patience." (Bachelard 1998: 43). "It is all about having a strong mind", Ruben argues.

Regarding sociability, interchange amongst performers and craftsmen occurs more at the level of artistic creativity than of survival. The character of the Park as a place for cultural practices plays an important role in the way interchanges of creative imagination become a part of a social world, that of cultural practices. As discussed earlier, speech plays an important role in disclosing action and the Park is an important part of the particular discourse of vendors and performers at the site. In words, they express their sense of belonging to the Park, their feeling of being part of Parque Forestal cultural activity, how they relate to a social world.

We may argue, as well, that sociability is a way for a group of vendors in the Plaza to make their practice a reference of belonging. Their membership of the 'vending set' in the Plaza locates them inside rather that at the margins of place. On the contrary, Hilda in the Park and the Peruvians in the Plaza remain looking in —into the apartment with

green curtains, into the Plaza's interior— from the outside. In this sense, we will see in the next chapter how people understand themselves being in or out of place in the Park's neighbourhood and how this perception of belonging is embodied in their practices in the site and related to their way of making sense of their being in post-1990 Chile.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONFIDENT EXISTENCE

"El Santiago de mi infancia tenía pretensiones de gran ciudad, pero alma de aldea"

"My childhood's Santiago pretended to be a big city, but it had the soul of a town"

Isabel Allende[51]*, "Mi Pais Inventado"*

It was around May 2006 when Parque Forestal neighbourhood residents noticed that something was missing from their streets. The homeless man who used to offer all kinds of junk objects for sale in Jose Victorino Lastarria Street was no longer there. The entire neighbourhood was used to seeing his distinctive figure: tall and fat, wearing a woman's skirt and a handkerchief on his head, he would push a supermarket trolley full of different curiosities around the neighbourhood. He never went very far, since his everyday path was through the Park and along the surrounding streets. He walked as if he had no particular direction in mind, yet decidedly and surely like a local who knew his way around. He also used to set up a mini-bazaar on the neighbourhood pavements and offer his merchandise to passers-by. His things included poems he had written himself, old electrical appliances and clothes. Sometimes he would lecture people in the street in his high-pitched voice, for no particular reason. He talked to no one in particular and everyone in general about the broadest range of topics, such as politics, big corporations, the Chilean police and sexuality. On the night of May 15 2006 the police told him that they were taking him for a medical exam in the public hospital. He agreed to go voluntarily. But the ambulance took him neither to the hospital nor for a medical exam. Instead, he was committed to a psychiatric institution.

[51] Chilean writer (1942).

EDITORIAL

HASTA LUEGUÍSIMO

Por Patricio Fernández

nos dimos cuenta
nal en el barrio.
que nadie veía
conocido como
bre verdadero es
uatro hermanos,
, estudió en el
Lastarria, donde
ó a Jorge Shaul-
libros, y un día

carro de supermercado. En el último tiempo le dio por juntar dos, según nosotros para tener su propio transcarro. En ellos acumulaba todo tipo de cachureos. Lo suyo era la arqueología instantánea. Botellas de Coca-Cola, peinetas usadas, latas vacías, gorras de baño, clavos guachos. Calcetines. Broches, etc. Verdaderas joyas para los museos del futuro y basura para sus

truyen en la cuadra. El Señor-Señora, para ellos, sería un estorbo indecoroso. Quizás sea la vista de la pobreza lo que los violente. El Anticristo, como su enemigo, eligió los andrajos. No creo que lo haya hecho, sin embargo, para dar ejemplo de nada. Muy por el contrario, todo indica que soltó las riendas, dejó de pensar lo pensable y se arrojó dichoso a las calles

THE CLINIC

Figure 1: The "Antichrist", as everybody calls him around the neighbourhood because of his preaching in the street, in *The Clinic*.

The Parque Forestal people found out what had happened. They were informed that the property developer who was building a loft complex on the site had asked the homeless man's family to have him committed. "The Clinic", a newspaper based in the neighbourhood, published the story and received many letters supporting the homeless. Some of the neighbours organised a protest in front of the property developer's public office on the site and, a week later, the homeless were back in the street.

Why, on this particular occasion, were the Parque Forestal residents so keen to have the homeless people around? Why did they care? The answer to this question is strongly linked to residents' understanding of themselves in the Chilean 'new times', particularly the group of young people who moved into the neighbourhood in the early 1990s. In this chapter I will explore the living practices of what I call Chile's "cultural new class" (Ley 1994). I will understand as living practices the group of behaviours involved in inhabiting the downtown neighbourhood of Parque Forestal. I draw on the concept of 'loft living' developed by Zukin (1982) which pinpoints a life style linked to a certain kind of dwelling, the loft. I then go beyond it and include in my understanding of living practices the way newcomers organise their daily routines, how they use public and private spaces, their trajectories around the neighbourhood, their consumption in the nearby shops and their use of other zones of the city of Santiago. I argue that in Parque

Forestal neighbourhood newcomers adapt bourgeois patterns of living to a neighbourhood which, although it has been always an upper class one, is embedded in downtown where mainly middle and lower-middle class live.

I will examine Chilean cultural new class's city-living practices as the embodied understandings of post-1990 Chile on the part of those who "gentrified" the Parque Forestal. I aim to explore how their living practices in the neighbourhood are linked with their need to reinforce their identity within the country's new context. I argue that the group of young upper-middle and middle class professionals that has gravitated to the Park neighbourhood since 1990 belong to the Chilean cultural new class, drawing on David Ley's concept: I identify the group of newcomers as belonging to the Chilean cultural new class because the geographical dimension is very important in order to understand them as a group. Ley draws on different authors who explain the concept of a new middle class by emphasising either the political orientation of this new class or its occupational profiles. Ley's own concept is of a cultural new class in the form of a new middle class possessing a geographical as well as a sociological dimension:

> "A far more specific niche for left-liberal politics is found among the cadre of social and cultural professionals, often in public or nonprofit sectors, that I have called the cultural new class. [...] In its collective identity, geography matters, for central city living is far more than a convenience for the journey to work; it is a constitutive of an urban life-style" (1994: 69).

Their place for living, the Parque Forestal neighbourhood, helps them to match their aspirations to their capabilities of realising the dispositions of the kind of people they want to be. In the case of the Chilean cultural new class, they share a mix of liberal and new left values and, as I will argue in the chapter, Parque Forestal's newcomers think they can realise them in a better way by living in the city centre neighbourhood.

As I described in a previous chapter, historically Parque Forestal neighbourhood has been an upper-middle class residential area. Many of the wealthy residents of the neighbourhood remained in their apartments and did not join in any of the different stages of upper-class migration out of the inner city. The upper classes started moving

to the north-east areas of Santiago in the 1950s, escaping the proletariat masses coming to Santiago's inner city from the rural areas of the country. Then there was a major migration with the radical liberalization of Chilean urban land markets in 1979 under Pinochet's regime, and land prices in urban Santiago rose steadily after the elimination of the law on "urban limits". A strong private real estate sector emerged in the 1980s and promoted —among other developments— new upper-class residential areas in the north-east of Santiago. Nevertheless, the Parque Forestal neighbourhood did not suffer the decay that other inner city neighbourhoods did. The fact that most owners of the apartments facing the Park, the upper-middle class strata, did not move helped to maintain the elegant and traditional character of the neighbourhood.

However, the Parque Forestal neighbourhood stands as an inner city neighbourhood and that fact is at the core of why newcomers make sense of it as an integrated neighbourhood, compared with the segregated upper class suburbs at the north-east of Santiago. Also, the fact that the Park itself is now visited by people from all over Santiago (mainly because of its central location, large size and abundant vegetation in comparison with other public spaces) reinforces the neighbourhood as one which is integrated into the city.

The Park within newcomers' imaginary map

The fact that Parque Forestal is in the inner city is central to its significance for the Chilean cultural new class. "We map the city by private benchmarks which are meaningful to us" (Raban 1974: 160) and thus, Plaza Italia, the east edge of the Park works as a meaningful benchmark for newcomers. It is where uptown and downtown encounter each other. As I explained elsewhere, Parque Forestal's location in relation to the rest of Santiago's Metropolitan area works as a border, as a place for exchange and movement. Newcomers make sense of the neighbourhood location within the city as a place of encounter: "Two very different worlds meet here: the one which starts in Providencia and extends towards the upper side and the one which starts in Providencia and extends downtown. Downtown begins right here." (Interview with Danitza, resident, 17 October 2005).

In that context, newcomers like the neighbourhood to be technically downtown. Their address stands as an identification of what they are, what they value and where they locate themselves within Chilean society. They are inner city people, different from well-off, comfortable professionals living in wealthy suburban homes. If SW1, SW3, NW1 and NW3 are prestigious postal districts in London (Raban 1974: 162), then Santiago's district works in the same way; like a talisman, it magically guarantees a certain kind of identity. So, what are Parque Forestal neighbourhoods like, in their own eyes? Not exclusive, not privileged, not posh. At least, they do not want to be perceived as exclusive and privileged; moreover they do not want to live in a place which is perceived as elitist within the urban imaginary of Santiago's people.

> "It is an entirely irrational way of imposing order on the city, but it does give it a shape in the mind, takes whole chunks of experience out of the realm of choice and deliberation, and places them in the less strenuous context of habit and prejudice." (Raban 1974: 162).

When Sebastian, a resident, says: "I mean, it is a place that satisfies me in many ways and even though it has tons of comforts, it is less elitist than Vitacura within the social imaginary" (Interview with Sebastian, 9 January 2006), he is expressing how important it is to him how other, different people perceive the place where he lives. He told me that Victor, a colleague who works with him in the district clinic of Puente Alto, a poor area of Santiago, thinks that Parque Forestal is posh and Sebastian does not want to be perceived this way. On the contrary, if he moved from upper class Vitacura to the inner city, it is precisely because he does not want to live in a posh neighbourhood.

Figure 2a and 2b: Parque Forestal neighbourhood within Santiago. The square at the south of the Park is Plaza de Armas, Santiago's inner city centre.
Source: Author's composition.

Figure 3: Parque Forestal's symbolic landmarks: 1. Central Fish Market, 2. La Vega vegetable market, 3. Plaza Italia.
Source: Author's composition.

The central location of Parque Forestal is not only physical, but also symbolic within the context of the Chilean new times. The Central Fish Market, at the west edge, and La Vega vegetable market, to the north-west of the Park, are places where local communities celebrate popular and traditional culture in food and music. Plaza Italia, at the east edge of the Park, is the site par excellence for left-wing demonstrations, the last of which was the celebration of Pinochet's death in December 2006.

The symbolic meaning of Parque Forestal reinforces the Chilean cultural new class's understanding of the site as embodying values they want to be recognised for, as I will explain in the following sections. The political alliance that has governed the country since 1990 has taken advantage of this linkage between place and the values involved in their political discourse. In 2000 they started what they called "La Fiesta de la Cultura," a cultural activity which brings together different artistic expressions in the Park. Also, the socialist candidate and current Chilean president, Michelle Bachelet, launched her campaign here in September 2005.

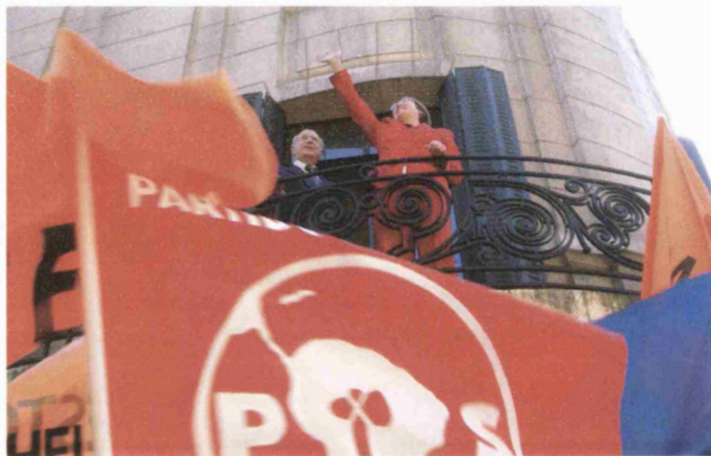


Figure 4: Current President Michelle Bachelet greeting crowds from an apartment balcony in front of the Park.
Source: Author's picture.

Nevertheless, newcomers take actions such as liberating the homeless man from the psychiatric institution in order to reinforce the Park's symbolic meaning. "Space is a doubt. I have constantly to mark it, to designate it. It's never mine, never given to me, I have to conquer it" (Perec quoted by Tonkiss 2005: 126). This means that the irrational definition of a place, that drawing on subjectivity, has to be constantly reinforced and, by the same token, it is dynamic and mutable. As we will see in the concluding section, I argue that today, the characterisation of Parque Forestal by Santiago's inhabitants is shifting from being an inner city neighbourhood towards a trendy and posh one.

Chilean new cultural class identity and place

Behind the concept of the new cultural class, there is an understanding of class that goes beyond stratification based on income. In order to explore class, we need a more complex understanding of the relationship between class and culture. Following Bourdieu (1993), we may develop a "distinctive approach to issues of class, culture and identity that focus on the complex interplay between habitus, reflexivity and identity" (Devine and Savage 2005). I argue that the interdependencies and connections between economic and cultural capital should be at the heart of any exploration of class and, by the same token, of the study of identity.

Based on my ethnographic observation and interviews, I term those educated young professionals, mostly left-wing or centre-right politically, who moved to the Parque Forestal neighbourhood during the 1990s as "cultural new class people". Some of them experienced the impact of dictatorship directly, because they were from left-wing families who were involved with Salvador Allende's socialist government. They had parents or friends who were killed, suffered abuse or lived with their parents in exile. Others were less involved with the political struggle, but their understanding of Chile today is very much informed by the country's recent history. All of them are making up their minds about Chilean politics, economics and culture, and within that framework they are seeking to redefine their identity as a group.

I will understand identity as constituted in and through the taking of moral stances (Taylor 1989). Identity is that stance from which we understand the world and define what is valuable for us. It is rooted in our moral orientations, in what we believe is good or bad, desirable or not. In other words, we have preferences and desires: we value *life goods* in relation to our aims and dreams and, at the same time, we steer by *hypergoods* which provide the moral criteria that establish why these other choices are good. At the heart of our identity is our orientation in moral space; 'our identity is what allows us to define what is important to us and what is not'" (Calhoun 1991: 236).

Following in the footsteps of Taylor, I will explore what is important for newcomers, those belonging to the Chilean new cultural class. My intention is to grasp their moral criteria in their living practice. In order to do so I will analyse the role of place in

generating identity, i.e. how they make sense of their living place, how place facilitates certain kinds of social interactions and consumption, how the history of place allows them to make sense of themselves temporally, as part of the events that have shaped the country in the recent years. In sum, I will examine how place and their practices in it embody what they value and desire and helps them to construct or redefine their identity.

Place, at the same time that it favours certain newcomers' practices, is changed and re-made by them. These two processes are intertwined and mutually reinforcing: newcomers make their identity in place, in practice and by so doing they make place. Newcomers thus create a distinctive identity that is spatially located and, conversely, they understand Parque Forestal neighbourhood as it is today, as a place made by them.

Newcomers' living practices are related to their general perception that Chile is doing well and that new generations are central to its possibilities for success. They live well; they are educated and have well paid jobs, their flats are comfortable and stylish, they have good coffee and some good restaurants around the corner. They are well-off in economic and cultural terms but do not want to isolate themselves from the process of development. They want to conceive of themselves as active agents of Chile's new times and supporters of the wide range of possibilities they see for Chile. However, they experience the tensions and fragmentation of post-1990 Chile. On the one hand, the newcomers are part of the process of rebuilding social relationships after the Chilean dictatorship and, on the other, they are proud of the economic development which commenced in Pinochet's times. In this light, I argue that their migration downtown and their living practices in the neighbourhood are ways of making sense of these tensions.

Taking the Parque Forestal neighbourhood as an inner city neighbourhood, not as a posh one, newcomers adapt the place to their practices. Their way of being in the Park is not precisely "being" in the Park, but having it as a backdrop. The Park is a very different kind of 'stage' than the Plaza: the latter is a stage where action happens; the Park, on the contrary, is a stage-set only, a mere decoration. Their sense of belonging to the neighbourhood is contradicted by their behaviour: they shop in big suburban supermarkets packed with all kinds of delicatessen goods, fashion boutiques, restaurants and bars around the shopping mall, they have a parking slot outside their house and

send their children to uptown private schools. Their high regard for education and diversity and quality of goods sets them apart from the locals on an everyday basis. To understand their option as consumers regarding their residential place, we must look in depth at who the gentrifiers are (Rose 1984, Ley 1994, Butler 1995, Slater 2004). If we identify them as a Chilean new cultural class we may say, following what Tim Butler described in "Gentrification and the urban middle class" that: "[S]patial differentiation is an important aspect of middle class formation [...] people make choices about where to live that are informed by their sense of "who they are", which, in turn, confers an identity to them" (1995).

In this way, Parque Forestal's gentrifiers may be construed as a new class in the process of formation. By the same token, their identity is being redefined. I do not intend to argue that class formation and identity redefinition is a spatial phenomenon only, but I do acknowledge that the construction of place is conditioned by the subjective orientations of newcomers, many of whom make explicit recourse to discourses of equity, integration and diversity within other new left values. Conversely, place's historical and physical characteristics reinforce some newcomers' orientations.

Constanza, a 34-year-old upper-middle class resident of the neighbourhood, remembers that she first came to the site because a classmate of hers —also an upper-class girl— lived there. The fact that Constanza, who attended an exclusive private school in Santiago, had a classmate who lived in Parque Forestal gives us a sense of the kind of residents remaining there at that time. Her memories of her friend's apartment are all about wealthy living:

> "My best friend, Marti, lived in Parque Forestal [...] at that time we were 15 years old. [...] Her father had one of the most wonderful apartments [...] one of those gorgeous buildings in front of the Park, everything inside was wood-panelled, it had three kitchens, a very grandiose apartment." (Interview with Constanza, resident, 20 January 2006).

From a real estate perspective, the best located apartments in the Parque Forestal neighbourhood, the ones closest to the Park, have consistently retained their high value. It did not decrease in the 1980s, nor in the 1990s, when Chilean young professionals

started moving to Parque Forestal, and nor has it decreased in the present times. Today, the average price per built square metre in the Parque Forestal neighbourhood —in the area facing the Park— is 600,000 pesos. This is comparable to the average price of similar apartments in consolidated upper-class neighbourhoods such as Vitacura, where it is 700,000 pesos per square metre; Las Condes (650,000 pesos) and Providencia (600,000 pesos). (2006, author's data collected from *El Mercurio* real estate section).

In spite of the "diversity" label that newcomers have constructed for it, Parque Forestal has always remained a middle class neighbourhood. If we talk about gentrification[52] in the area it is because of the process that has occurred in the Santiago-Centro district, to which Parque Forestal neighbourhood belongs[53]. This process is linked to the cultural new class moving downtown and their way of making sense of the place.

If we observe the real estate adverts for the new buildings in the site, we see that they offer a lifestyle that corresponds to the new cultural class way of living. For instance, one advert says: "a neighbourhood to live on foot", referring to a neighbourhood where you will have face-to-face interactions with others when you run errands in the surrounding areas and, by being in the city centre, you will have access to public

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[52]Gentrification (the term was coined by Ruth Glass in 1964), as the process whereby low-cost, physically deteriorating neighbourhoods are converted into middle-class residential areas, has been a prominent topic in urban studies. Scholars began reflecting on the topic within the context of American, Canadian, European and Australian cities. Tim Butler affirms that the focus of the early studies on gentrification in Anglophone cities probably has to do with the way these societies suburbanized in the post-war decades as compared with southern European and Latin cultures more generally, where the middle classes clung to the urban core for longer. (Butler 1995: 190). Later studies included the role of public policies in urban clearance and thus dealt with issues of race, poverty and urban segregation. Today, gentrification is seen in the context of globalisation (Atkinson and Bridge 2005).

The early discussion on gentrification turned into a battlefield where explanations developed to account for the phenomenon were presented as opposing forces allowing no room for the integration of different points of view. After more than 40 years of debate, gentrification is a topic of discussion in the context of every big city in the world. Reflections on it encompass a diverse range of possibilities articulated around the two original sources of explanation; capital and culture (Hamnett 1991).

[53]While , prices in the better zones within Parque Forestal held steady, prices went down in some parts of the district —not immediately overlooking the Park— during the late seventies and eighties and no new developments took place there until the late 1990s. However, property prices in Parque Forestal surroundings were not exceptionally low in relation to other inner city areas. No residential units were abandoned in Parque Forestal and there is no evidence of a wide enough rent-gap to ensure a profit. Neil Smith defines the "rent gap" as the relationship between land value and property value. Smith argues that once the existing structure has depreciated far enough, house values fall and the area's level of capitalized ground rent drops below the potential ground rent. Then, gentrification or redevelopment can occur (1996).

transport as well as other traditional services associated with personal interactions, such as La Vega vegetable market and the Central Fish Market.

Figure 5: Adverts for the loft complex building linked with the Antichrist story. They offer loft-style dwellings two blocks from the Park.
Source: Author's pictures.

Figure 6: Property developers emphasise identity, modernity, history and sharing as values linked to their units. All together.
Source: Author's pictures.

Patricio, director of *The Clinic*[54] at the time I interviewed him, belongs to the Chilean cultural new class as I understand it. His family background is upper-middle class in terms of income, education and tradition —this last element is very important in the Latin American definition of class— and a left-wing background in terms of political orientation. He fought hard for the return of democracy as a university student during the 1990s and today he believes that Chile is doing well, people are opening up and a lot is happening in the country. When he talks about Parque Forestal, he explicitly links the site with the group of people who are embodying the spirit of Chile's new times:

[54]*The Clinic* newspaper was founded in 1999, when Pinochet was arrested in London. Its name refers to the hospital where Pinochet was arrested and alludes to all the events in the news at that time.

> "The group coming here [the Park's neighbourhood] is not a group that sees itself as closed but as more open every day, if I can put it like that. So it's not strange that it's here, in this neighbourhood, where the gays' areas appear. It's not surprising that young designers' shops have opened lately, designers who do their own thing. It's not odd that there's a literary world circulating here, and so on. Because this is a place that expects to bring together, I think, very different voices that can meet each other in a quiet place." (Interview with Patricio Fernandez, director of *The Clinic*, 2 December, 2005).

Patricio celebrates diversity and openness and thinks that Parque Forestal is a place for that celebration. Thus, the newspaper he directs aims to be a forum for diversity and openness. In his view, the location of the paper's offices in Parque Forestal is absolutely consistent with that spirit:

> "We moved here, let's see, how long ago? Five years, four? Five, and you might say that we participate in the neighbourhood in some sense. Or more accurately, more than participating, we've signed up for the neighbourhood. I think it's something like that. [...] For instance, we have to leave these offices now and there's kind of a unanimous agreement among ourselves that we have to move somewhere else within this neighbourhood. Why? I guess that in a sense this neighbourhood represents something, let's say, put it this way: if *El Mercurio* [main conservative Chilean newspaper] has its offices in Santa Maria de Manquehue [Santiago's upper-east suburb], for me it's quite logical that *The Clinic* should be located in Parque Forestal." (Interview with Patricio, director of *The Clinic,* 2 December, 2005).

So it is that Parque Forestal neighbourhood evokes an image of freedom and newness for the newcomers. Parque Forestal is a place where they can start new things, innovate and explore. Creative practices linked to art and political action have historically taken place in Parque Forestal: the Park was the home of the Fine Arts School for years and after that, for the National and Contemporary Art Museums; Chilean vanguard literature

developed around Parque Forestal in the 1950s[55]; and socialist meetings were held there during the 1970s. In the early 1990s a new group came to the Park: actors, circus artists and street performers. The practice of juggling in the Park was part of a wave of different types of expression in public spaces that followed the re-establishment of democracy. The movement started growing and young people from different districts of the city of Santiago started juggling every Sunday in the square behind the Museum of Contemporary Art (MAC) in Parque Forestal. Parque Forestal's newcomers do not participate in the juggling but they do want the jugglers there, as a landmark of freedom and self-expression. By the same token, since 2005 Santiago's Love Parade takes place in Alameda Avenue, in the Parque Forestal neighbourhood. Loreto, a resident, celebrates these practices. Even though she does not participate in them, they are key elements in her understanding of the site:

> "I always come, not to participate but to watch [...] I went to the Love Parade the other day [Figure 7], my head was about to explode with the noise of these guys, and I said to myself 'I'm not going to get involved' but I needed to go and have a look. [...] I think things like the Love Parade are like opening your mind and, yes, at the practical level it's a mess; they left the site all dirty, bottles all over the place, the smell of alcohol everywhere, it wasn't far short of finding toilet paper in the Park, the noise was dreadful. There's a kind of echo where I live, so really my head was about to explode, d'you understand? If you think at a practical level it might be a nuisance, but these events are like European —and I don't mean that because they are European they are good— but that it's great that the community gets together to jump around, sweat, get wet and dance for the sake of it. I found that wonderful! And again: what place welcomes these people? This place! D'you understand? [...] This is a friendly place, a super-friendly place that always will have room for you. So it's like 'okay, let them come', d'you understand? What does it matter, we can clean up afterwards,' that's kind of the feeling: let them come." (Interview with Loreto, resident, 19 January 2006).

[55] The group of "The Poets" as Alejandro Jodorowsky names it in his autobiography "La Danza de la Realidad" (2006) hung out in Parque Forestal neighbourhood and in other inner city areas nearby.

Figure 7: Love Parade in the Park, the neighbourhood and Alameda Avenue. The pictures aim to illustrate how the site was packed and messy and became a gathering place for different young groups.
Source: Author's pictures.

In this scheme the neighbourhood is more than a landscape for newcomers; it is, as Bachelard noted referring to the house, "a psychic state" (1994: 72). Newcomers make sense of their neighbourhood as a corner in the city, as a place of intimacy, where they feel in place, in tune with what they believe and value. It is a place where they do not feel challenged but secure. As a corner, the Park "is a haven that ensures [them] one of the things we prize most highly-immobility. It is a sure[56] place, the place next to my immobility" (Bachelard 1994: 137).

Just as the arcades were a bourgeois interior (Benjamin 2002), "a cross between a street and an intérieur" (Benjamin 1973: 37), so the Park is a city interior for the new cultural

[56] Although in the translation it says 'sure' I think Bachelard is referring to 'secure'.

class. It works as a viewing point towards the exterior: "the terraces of cafes are the balconies from which he looks down on his household" (Benjamin 1973: 37) and in this sense, the Park as a corner "is a sort of half-box, part walls, part door" and an illustration of the dialectics of the inside and outside. Newcomers find their intimacy in the inner space of the Park and "this intimate immensity" (Bachelard 1994) takes them back to the outside; "when the level rises outside, it also rises in you" (Rilke quoted by Bachelard 1994: 229).

The neighbourhood indicates a sense of the self that is comfortable there. I would argue that the newcomers' perception of comfort in the site is related to their understanding of the Park as a place that embodies what they value. They desire to be embedded in the downtown district and experience everyday urban living. Yet the way they are embedded in the neighbourhood is superficial. As I will argue in the following sections, it is narrowed almost to their address and does not include deep social interaction with old residents and downtown users.

The values of the Chilean cultural new class

Democracy is a major value in Chile's new times. Obviously this is no surprise given the country's recent history. However, what I want to argue here is that when many of my interviewees brought the word "democracy" into their narratives in relation to Parque Forestal, they used the term as a label to talk about specific situations of urban segregation and access within the city rather than to refer to a political system. For instance, Loreto, links democracy in the Park with the possibilities of experiencing difference in it:

> "This place welcomes everybody; it is a place that's different because it belongs to everybody. We live in an extra-stratified city and in an extra-stratified country, even squares are taken by particular groups of people [...] [Parque Forestal] is one of the few places in Santiago that maintain that... that heterogeneity and that democratic coexistence." (Interview with Loreto, resident, 19 January 2006).

If we go back to the Greek origins of the word democracy, demokratia, "the root meanings of which are demos (people) and kratos (rule)", we may say that in democracy —the form of government in which the people rule— there is some form of political equality amongst people (Held 1987: 2). Loreto's understanding of democracy does not refer at all to the role people have in ruling the site; she understands the neighbourhood as a framework in which different people coexist but do not rule together. If we consider that there are many disagreements regarding how a democratic government should be, it is surprising that newcomers do not refer at all to issues such as who the people who rule the place are, what kind of participation is envisaged for them, or how broadly or narrowly the scope of rule is to be construed in relation to the use of public spaces. Loreto, by saying "this place welcomes everybody" is giving to the people not an active but a passive role, the role of the visitor; "the people" do not create or rule the place.

It is striking that Loreto perceives Parque Forestal as an exception within the context of Santiago. However, if we follow the sense that she is giving to the term democracy, we can understand that for her it is possible that in times of a democratic government, most of Santiago's public spaces are non-democratic, thus, not diverse and inclusive. She does not link a system, a way of doing, with a result in Santiago's public spaces. There is no connection between these facts and a more general set of rules that govern the country. In that vein, it appears that the Chilean new cultural class has no problem with the lack of diverse and inclusive public spaces as long as they can live in what they understand as a "democratic" place. Their response to this non-democratic city is to take refuge in the one corner of Santiago that they see as democratic. They focus on one of the outputs that a democratic political framework could have —a diverse and inclusive society— but not on the framework itself.

In this regard, we may reflect on the new cultural class as a group who focuses on the results rather than on the method, and in that light we can understand the coexistence of centre-right young professionals with left-wing ones. Both of them want the same results —Chile doing well, being successful and integrated into the world— and both of them defend liberty and equality. The differences between them, which are related to the way of pursuing those goals, do not seem so important at the level of outcome. One reason for this could be that the Chilean new cultural class do not want to risk the

outcomes they pursue by discussing the method for reaching them. Nina Eliasoph in her book "Avoiding Politics" (1998) argues that a major reason for avoiding political discussions is the fear of disagreement. Eliasoph argues that even the volunteers who work for the 'public good' avoid making political judgments or linking social problems to political causes. In a similar vein, although new comers see themselves as committed to the political change Chile is going through, they end up avoiding politics by focusing in the outputs of the Chilean political and economic system.

None of my interviewees referred to any kind of action as regards the rest of the city. Although they perceive the Parque Forestal neighbourhood as a democratic one as opposed to the areas where they used to live, mainly upper-east zones of the city, they do not link that fact to any kind of action. They do not make sense of freedom and equality as conditions *for* establishing an agreed governmental framework, thus a democratic framework. They make sense of freedom and equality as results of something they do not name. By the same token, they are critical of their former neighbourhoods at the level of what exists, when they compare it with Parque Forestal, but not at the level of the causes of the conditions. For instance, Sebastian became critical of his former neighbourhood when he moved into Parque Forestal:

> "The change of neighbourhood influenced me. I started to appreciate Santiago a lot. I started to look at Vitacura [his childhood neighbourhood, an upper class Santiago district] in a very different way and I started to live in the city. Because before I did not live in the city, I mean, because of the place where I was living. I mean, I lived in the city but the neighbourhood where I was living was not related to it, it was a residential neighbourhood [...] I started to look at it [Vitacura] as a residential neighbourhood where few things happen outside, on the exterior, where social class is very important and where there is probably less room for movement [...] I mean, I was aware of many things but it's different to start feeling like a foreigner in that place. I mean, it's not only something I think but something I feel when I go there now. I mean, now I feel what I thought before I moved here" (Interview with Sebastian, resident, 9 January 2006).

The shift from thinking to feeling is a relevant one. Moving downtown appears as a practice in the sense that it is related to an everyday life experience rather than to an abstract thought. Newcomers deal with the tensions of Santiago's urban segregation by changing the knowledge of living in a segregated city to an experience of living in a neighbourhood they perceive as democratic. By moving to the Parque Forestal neighbourhood they avoid living in a segregated city. However, their experience of democracy remains at an abstract level since they understand democracy in a very limited way.

Their narratives of their democratic living practices are framed as individual experiences, as consumers of a democratic product, as if democracy were a value that could be achieved at an individual level, at a user level, without regard to the collective experience of the rest of the inhabitants of Santiago. Newcomers understand democracy as the right system to be in, as a system linked with certain kind of outputs, something that exists once it is achieved, not as something that has to be conquered everyday which is linked with ways of doing.

Maria Teresa, a resident and owner of a shop in the Parque Forestal neighbourhood, reflects on the Park as a new way of experiencing the public space in Chile and, in doing so, she tends to encapsulate the meaning of democracy:

> "The Park is no worse than other things. In that sense, in Chile, people have related to the city as if it were a problem rather than an opportunity. There is this idea that people who don't have a house with a garden have to go to the square, and people who have a garden feel fortunate not to have to go to the square, that's the logic that operates in Chileans' brains. So you have the upper class neighbourhoods full of parks that nobody uses because it's like, 'that's for poor people, people who have nowhere else to be go to the square'. It's not as if squares are seen as places for encounter, citizenship and culture. There is very little culture of telling children to share with other kids. It's like [she puts on a "posh mom" voice]: 'you can't wander about outside like a tramp, my girl, go home - you have a garden, a pool and your own skipping rope there [...]' In that sense this Park has become democratic and the jugglers, the coffee shops and, in general, I would say, young people

> are the main agents in making that happen." (Interview with Maria Teresa, resident and shop owner, 8 November 2005).

Maria Teresa does not make sense of the jugglers and other young people as the ones ruling the space, but as the ones benefiting from its openness. Her shop is a private place but she construes it as public in the same limited way that she construes democracy: understanding it as an open place where somebody other than the users, rules. If we analyse the contradictions and tensions between discourse and practice we may argue that many of them are linked with the way people construct their discourse. There is a tendency to classify practices and the places where they occur in polar binaries that do not include in actors' intentionality but the product of those practices only. For instance, Maria Teresa makes sense of her life in the Park as a way of living in a different manner than the majority of upper class people. She lives in the inner city, other upper class people live in the suburbs; she takes her children to the Park playground, other upper class people take them to the shopping mall or McDonald's. She goes to the theatre around the corner; other people rent a video at Blockbuster.

Nissim Sharim, an actor and theatre director who has worked in the neighbourhood since the 1960s doing political theatre, has noticed a change in his audience since the early 1990s and he recognises that new people now come to his theatre. Nevertheless, even though newcomers adapt their lifestyle to the inner city and, to an extent, they do things they did not do before, their practice intentionality sometimes remains the same:

> "During Pinochet's dictatorship this was the first theatre, the first theatre that intended, within the limits, to face dictatorship. [...] People who were looking for a time, a universe that seemed lost, and that no one wanted to loose, came here. That lasted until the 1990s. [...] With the return of democracy our topics have changed a little but the heart is the same: they are about survival, need and resistance to being subjugated. With the need for freedom and to understand our dreams as valid ones and so on. Now, a larger audience does not mean a better quality one. I have the impression that the audiences who come now do not have the same qualitative dimension they had before. They do not care if the show is not that good or touching, as long

> as it makes them laugh, for instance, or if it is audacious." (Interview with Nissim Sharim, 18 November 2005).

As Sharim points out, the audience receives his company's plays —which continue to centre on social critique— as a show, not as a calling. In that regard, the audience of the Ictus theatre in Parque Forestal follows the same logic as the goers to a shopping mall movie theatre. In a similar vein, the group who moved into Parque Forestal make sense of the Park as a democratic place (everybody is welcome, there are diverse people in the Park) but do not go into the undemocratic situations that occur there; users cannot participate in making the rules of the place. Having watched the police breaking up the Sunday gathering in the square behind the Museum by riding into it on horseback, pursuing vendors and disrupting young people's practices, I raised the issue when I interviewed *The Clinic*'s director. He told me:

> "Well, on Sundays things start to get rough in the late afternoon because there is a lot of drinking and.... you know, but I have never seen many violent scenes. I mean, I've seen the odd situation, the odd fight, but I don't feel oppressed by the State when I cross the Park. No! In fact, when I see a policeman riding his horse it gives me a sort of calm, and that's new! I always used to think that the police were looking for me. I imagine that if a policeman finds a bloke smoking pot ... only if he is a very stupid one... there is not going to be a big... well, maybe I'm lying, but I tend to imagine that. [...] That aversion to the police, when I tell you that I felt that the police were pursuing me, that aversion is there, I believe it is in many people and it's a natural thing, I mean, the police were our enemy for many many years. But I also think that the aversion is getting toned down and, okay, there might be young folks that are more at war with the world and feel the pressure more strongly but [...] I don't know, I don't think that the overall atmosphere is an oppressive one." (Interview with Patricio, director of *The Clinic*, 2 December, 2005).

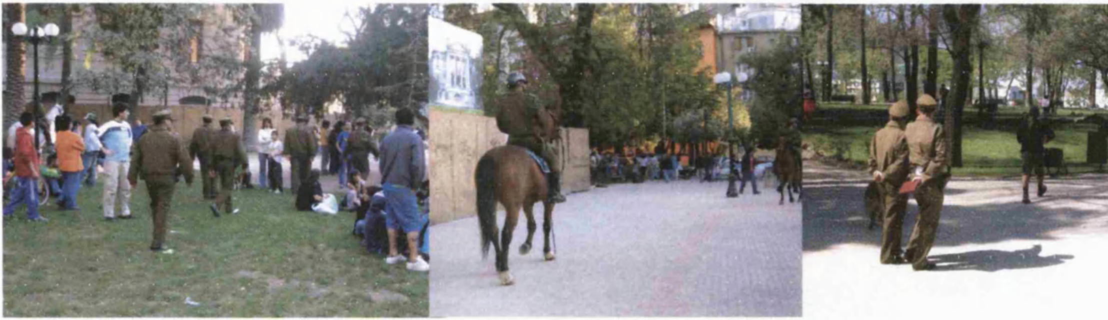

Figure 8: Policing the Park on Sundays
Source: Author's pictures

Patricio does not go into specific situations that occur in the Park because, as he told me, he does not go there. What often happens is that the police interrupt Sunday gatherings with no reason, acting on the suspicion that something against the law is going on, as prevention only. Patricio hangs out having lunch in the restaurants nearby and looking around the shops. Besides, he sees the MAC square from his window. He greets the usual comers when he goes in and out of his office but he is not personally involved. Instead, *The Clinic* wants to seem involved. They interviewed Hilda, a 58-year-old woman with whom I used to hang out during my fieldwork. Her personal story, as a neighbourhood character who sells drinks and little flags at the traffic lights, one block from the MAC square, took an entire page of the June 2006 issue. I talked to her later that year but she did not buy the newspaper and had not read the article. Hilda is not included in the way the space is ruled, even though she is in the newspaper. As an illegal vendor she does not participate in defining what the uses of the space are.

The characterisation of the Park as a free place is another way in which newcomers avoid experiencing it as a place of conflict. Newcomers value freedom and they experience that value in the Park. However, I would argue that they make sense of freedom within a limited scope. Most of them understand freedom in terms of access. For them, Parque Forestal is a place where everyone can come and get something, and the fact that not all can access the same things is not an issue. Against a backdrop in which one of the greatest problems of Chile's new governments —those who came after 1990— has been the difficulty in achieving more equal income distribution, newcomers see the Park as a place where the rule of equal opportunities for all works. This sense arises from the general perception that in the Park you are free to do what you want and

there is plenty to do. The active Sunday scene in the Park emphasises that perception of freedom, as I wrote in my field notes:

> "Today it is a real spring Sunday in Parque Forestal. It's packed. Puppeteers are hypnotizing children; they perform for free and afterwards they ask for 'collaboration'. Many parents come every Sunday to watch them because their children love them so much. Young people are hanging out in the Museum's back square. The big Sunday party is taking place; jugglers perform their tricks and take their time to learn new stuff from their peers, street actors perform their routines for families and passers-by, craftsmen-vendors offer all sorts of jewellery and home decorations, capoeira dancers meet at one corner and have their *roda* while drummers fill the site with their rhythm. It appears that there is fun for everybody who wants to have it. The shops, cafes and restaurants near the Park are open and people are sitting outside. Others are having their wine or beer sitting on the sidewalks or in the Park." (Field notes 25 September 2005).

However, if we delve further into the practices taking place in the Park on a Sunday, we learn that there are both explicit and tacit regulations at work. Those tacit regulations constitute a group of informal rules well known by both residents and visitors. Informal regulations empower old and new residents relative to visitors because the latter do not have an explicit rule to complain about. These non-phrased understandings rooted in tradition and status exacerbate the disempowerment of those users who lack that capital. For instance, old residents manifest their displeasure at young people's sexual behaviour in the Park by looking daggers at them and in some cases, they succeed in inhibiting the practices they revile. By the same token, newcomers think they are being 'nice' in allowing young people's gatherings and not complaining about them as if they had any legal right over them.

Tacit regulations are unfair because they are imposed partially whenever a resident feels like it. In this vein, they reinforce exclusion and class privilege. For instance, although parking is prohibited in many of the streets of the neighbourhood, residents tolerate cars parking if they belong to someone they know. Similarly, residents are more tolerant of loud noise from private parties in their own buildings better than music from public

venues. However, young residents are much more tolerant than older ones regarding young people partying around the neighbourhood. They are closer in age to those young groups and they link young people's practices with the values of freedom and diversity, as explained earlier. Conversely, some old residents do not value such practices as juggling or dancing in the Park because they link them first, to drug and alcohol consumption and, second, to social disorder; some residents, like Maria Luisa, link certain practices in the Park with those artistic practices pursued in the Park by young artists (mostly left wing politically) during the late sixties and early seventies. In this regard, we could argue that old residents maintain their politically conservative profile but they do not have the means, or the right, to exclude people from the public space.

Interestingly enough, the explicit regulations empower visitors not belonging to the upper-middle and upper class living in the Park. They know they cannot be expelled from the site because it is a public space and that they cannot be silenced or censured in their performing practices. However, the police are in charge of enforcing other explicit regulations as well, such as the prohibition on street vending, drinking alcohol and consuming drugs. Young people in the square in front the MAC are often pursued by the police if they are drinking or selling crafts and old clothes without a permit.

Amongst performers —jugglers, capoeira dancers and musicians— there are also tacit regulations at work regarding the use of the space in the MAC square. They struggle with each other to protect their own space within the square and the best means to do it is to be there every Sunday using their piece of square land.

At the level of private spaces around the Park, the regulation of who uses them is a function of capacity to pay. Most of the new shops around the Park are expensive, which makes them inaccessible for many people. If we look at figure 9 we can see that the appearance of these new shops follows an international style; they could be in any gentrified neighbourhood of a big metropolis. Nevertheless, the shops' owners want to stress the friendly look of their business. "Emporio La Rosa", a coffee shop and market opened in 2001, is one of the most successful ones. Its owner, Maria Teresa, has lived in the neighbourhood since the early 1990s and tells me that she wants her shop to be like a little "neighbourhood market":

"It's like the thing that happens in Europe, like what happens in Buenos Aires. The neighbourhood shops there are charming places, d'you see? They are not places of horror like here. I mean, if you have to go to the big supermarket to buy king-size stuff there you have to go five kilometres out from the inner city. It's not like here where you have one of these on every corner. [...] So my original idea of placing some tables outside the shop was that people could sit down if they wanted to eat some of the food I sell. [...] And today this shop is really a meeting place for the neighbourhood people." (Interview with Teresa, resident and coffee shop owner, 8 November 2005).

Figure 9: Shops in Parque Forestal neighbourhood
Source: Author's pictures

Obviously, Maria Teresa understands neighbourhood people as the ones who can afford her shop's prices. She is not including visitors and some of the not-so-wealthy older residents. Also, it is interesting how newcomers make sense of their neighbourhood as a place very close to what they are, almost as something unique, but at the same time they give it the appearance of any other gentrified neighbourhood. It is contradictory that on the one hand they are trying to reinforce their identity by living in a particular place and, on the other, they make that place look like other places.

It is interesting to delve into the way democracy and freedom are linked with a third important value for Parque Forestal newcomers: diversity. In this respect, newcomers do not exclude difference from the site, on the contrary, they welcome it. They construe diversity as the possibility to encounter different people in their everyday lives, but the encounter is not a practical one. It stays in the background. Alejandro, a coffee shop owner and neighbourhood resident, tells us:

> "I love to go out into the street and see the diversity of the people. From the old-fashioned lady to the most crazy. [...] People who come to live here as a fashion don't last, they stay for a year or two and then leave because it bothers them that there's a prostitute on the corner, or the smelly streets bother them, or whatever. If you live here you should want to live in a city, and a city, at least for me, does not have one single kind of people." (Interview with Alejandro, resident, 10 November 2005).

Diversity becomes a spectacle. People are interested neither in social mixing nor in social involvement. Social interaction is reduced to the activity of the eye. Guy Debord's critique of the society of spectacle offers some insights into how individuals may be *"isolated together"*. (Debord 1994: thesis 172, emphasis in original quoted by Pinder 2000). He argues that "spectacle dominated social life and space, homogenising and fracturing space, unifying and separating, and becoming 'the perfection of separation *within* human beings'." (Pinder 2000: 365).

Interestingly, diversity is confused with social inequality; the neighbourhood is diverse if there are poor and wealthy people in the same site. Thus, diversity becomes a cynical discourse that establishes a distance from those who are different. No action is taken to overcome inequalities, for the sake of maintaining diversity. Exclusion remains in private places where consumption is paid for, which that newcomers consider public spaces because they are open. Nevertheless, not all that is open is public.

Also, within this limited scope, the possibility of interacting with diversity is more important as a neighbourhood asset than in terms of one's own interactions. In that

sense, diversity is linked with cosmopolitanism[57] and new possibilities of development. In other words, diversity is understood not only within the context of Chilean history, as a value which was lost because of oppression and can be recovered again, but also as a source of openness to the world, as a condition for progress.

However, the desire for diversity contains a desire for homogeneity. Parque Forestal fits with the idea of Chile entering into a global world and leaving behind the times of isolation, when dictatorship prohibitions and economic restrictions limited Chilean people's possibilities. Which possibilities? For many of the newcomers those possibilities relate to meeting "global people like them". Alejandro describes it very well when he tells me why he thought his restaurant could be successful in the neighbourhood:

> "We [Alejandro and his partners] thought that if people like us lived here, people who came here because of those new flats with small bedrooms, if people were looking for that then they would be looking for nice coffee like the coffee we would look for, a place to get a cappuccino which is a real cappuccino, with foamed milk [cappuccinos are usually served with whipped cream in Chile],where you can get a croissant or a nice sandwich, a salad, I don't know." (Interview with Alejandro, resident, 10 November 2005).

Within that context, diversity is a framework for living between equals more than an experience. If public "came to mean a life passed outside the life of family and close friends; in the public region diverse, complex social groups were to be brought into ineluctable contact" (Sennett 2002: 17), newcomers' everyday life in the Parque Forestal neighbourhood is not a very good example of it. Nevertheless, they make sense of diversity as a value embodied in their living practices, even as an economic asset. Many of the new businesses in Parque Forestal were inspired by the cosmopolitan spirit of the neighbourhood; they are mainly cafes, clothes shops, restaurants, bookstores, record stores and internet services. Danitza, the owner of café Mosqueto, moved into the Parque Forestal neighbourhood during the early 1990s and recognised that she started her business inspired by the neighbourhood's diversity:

[57] Sennett notes in "The Fall of the Public Man" that "[t]here is a word logically associated with a diverse urban public, the word "cosmopolitan". A cosmopolite, in the French usage recorded in 1738, is a man who moves comfortably in diversity; he is comfortable in situations which have no links or parallels to what is familiar to him" (2002: 17).

> "The interesting thing about this neighbourhood is its heterogeneity. The café does not have any age restrictions; it is a place whose attraction lies in variety. (...) There are many Oriental people around here as well, there are Chinese restaurants, Japanese restaurants, and their people live here. There are many gringos around, French people, I don't know, there is more variety in many ways and that is very enriching. Chileans are accustomed to homogeneity and that narrows your perspectives in life, children's perspectives, everything". (Interview with Danitza, café owner, 17 October 2005).

In Constanza's case, the decision to live in the neighbourhood was precisely because of its Amsterdam-like possibilities:

> "I was coming back from Amsterdam to live in Chile and I was returning with my [Dutch] boyfriend and I thought immediately: the most Amsterdam-like place I can find in Santiago is Parque Forestal, it's the closest we can get. [...] Full of coffee shops and a mix of international people. So, I thought it was the ideal place to be, the place that would be the least of a shock." (Interview with Constanza, resident, 20 January 2006).

This relationship is interesting because it sheds light on some of the contradictions among the cultural new class values. On the one hand, they want social equality and, on the other, they look forward to participating in global development. The Chilean cultural new class understands neo-liberalism as something that may coexist easily with democracy, equity and freedom. They aim to run the country within the rules of globalisation and capitalism in order to maintain Chile's economy in good shape. Nevertheless, the neo-liberal setting is not particularly helpful for those living in poverty. At a personal level, the defence of social equality and liberal thinking clashes with their own possibilities of success and well-being as individuals. In that vein, they make sense of their living practices in Parque Forestal as living in a democratic, free and diverse place. However, in order to understand the place as such, they have to keep their ideas of democracy, freedom and diversity within a limited scope. Otherwise, their secure living in Parque Forestal would clash with the non-democratic, non-free and segregated situation seen in many areas of Santiago.

Together with the ideas of democracy, freedom, diversity and cosmopolitanism, there arises an understanding of Parque Forestal as a "human" place. What is interesting is that newcomers make sense of what is human in a much clearer way than they are capable of doing with regard to the other values they mention. As we have seen, most of the newcomers are young professionals who are part of the last 15 years of economic success in Chile. Many of them have demanding jobs and less time for family and friends. Nevertheless, it appears that the Chilean cultural new class does not want to confuse success with coldness, or coolness with lack of passion. They want to celebrate the value of close social interactions and they emphasise that, although Chile's new times may be about economic success, that does not imply forgetting the small, beautiful things. Danitza, a resident of the neighbourhood, uses an example to explain what she understands by "a human place":

> "In my building there is this lady who lives by herself. So one day she knocked on my door, I was with my babies, and she said: 'Hi, I brought you a piece of cake because today is my birthday and I'm alone and I bought this cake and I want to share it with someone.' So I asked her to come in and we sang Happy Birthday and we ate the cake together and then she went home. That could never have happened in Vitacura, in Las Condes, in any other place!" (Interview with Danitza, resident, 17 October 2005).

Parque Forestal's residents are active subjects of the site as a human place. At the level of practice they get to know their neighbours, they are common visitors to the neighbourhood cafes and shops and greet each other in the street. However, although there is a discourse of intermixing, there is no real intermixing between longstanding residents and the newcomers. If we pay attention to the everyday practices of newcomers and old residents we see a clear distinction between them. They do not share daily practices. For instance, longstanding residents are not usually customers of new shops, which are important places for socialisation amongst neighbours, and do not furnish their places as lofts. They do not share tips on goods and services with newcomers as newcomers do amongst themselves.

At the practical level, both groups should encounter each other in neighbourhood meetings because all residents have a say in terms of what kind of businesses are accepted in the neighbourhood, what should be done if the Park is damaged or if Sundays turn too loud because of young people's gatherings. However, even though both groups have rights none of them attend the neighbourhood meetings very often. Marta, an old lady in charge the neighbourhood community board argues that at the end of the day she is the one who has to take care of everything because neighbours, both old residents and newcomers, do not participate.

Old residents have continued with their ordinary living in the neighbourhood: they use the Park daily and walk around with their friends and dogs even on Sundays, when the place is packed. Since they do not usually frequent any of the new shops, when they do so, it is a "going out" thing: "The other day I had an ice-cream at Emporio La Rosa, very nice, well done," Matilde told me while we walked her dog in the Park. Old residents have lived in the neighbourhood for decades and they like young people coming because they "make the neighbourhood very lively", as Sonia, another long-term resident put it. Maria Luisa, whose grandchildren number many young people, jokes: "I am always being visited now that so many things happen in the neighbourhood. I live in front of the Park and my grandchildren love it. They call in the morning and tell my maid, 'I'm coming for lunch,' so you have to always be prepared for that" (Interview with Maria Luisa, resident, 27 October 2005).

Conclusion

On the one hand, newcomers want to live in Parque Forestal because they want to be confronted with difference: surprisingly, unexpectedly, in everyday life. This sentiment is especially marked in those newcomers who belong to the conservative upper classes, who grew up in right-wing families and whose own opinions and values have shifted in step with the history of the country. They want to make a change in their lives, not as a rebellion against their origins but as the building of their own set of values and beliefs. They want to distance themselves from the more conservative values linked to the upper classes' life style; living in the north east areas of Santiago or in the suburbs enclosed in gated communities, travelling by car everywhere, buying in the shopping mall and not knowing who their neighbours are. On the other hand, although they would not put it

like that, they keep their distance with Park users coming from other areas of Santiago: they prefer to look from above. Hence, the neighbourhood's border status serves their purpose of being there and, at the same time, not being involved. They want the difference to exist, it helps them to reinforce their identity as an open group that welcomes diversity but, at the end of the day, when the crowd invades the Park on Sundays they want to be safe in their flats and cafes. They want to be part of the neighbourhood but have the option of going in and out of their suburban upper class homes. They experience the site in fragments and avoid putting together conflicting experiences. Newcomers have made the Park a backstage for their lifestyle and spend their Sunday afternoon in their apartments, the neighbourhood cafes or in some other area of Santiago city, where their family and friends live.

In a similar manner, although most of the Chilean new cultural class affirms that they love to walk, many of them spend much of their day in their cars. The construction of Costanera Norte highway[58] helped many of them to circulate between the north-east of Santiago, the wealthy zone, and downtown. Many of them still escape to their former neighbourhoods to do some things:

> "I found something [a gym] but I'm not going. That's the thing, it's around the corner but it's dirty, terrible. Do you understand me? There are some things, services, nice gyms, where it's a pleasure to take a shower without being revolted, and those are all in upper-side neighbourhoods. Or the dry cleaners where you know they are not going to burn your dress or your suit! So, whenever I need a dry cleaners' I go all the way up [to the suburbs]." (Interview with Constanza, resident, 20 January 2006).

Newcomers make sense of their living practices in a way that is coherent with the values they want to stand for. However, looking at their practices from a critical perspective, many of them do not embody those values. Their practices become a discourse of the values they want to incorporate into their identities, but they are detached from practice. The tension between their self-narratives and their everyday experiences is silenced by the way in which they make sense of their practices.

[58]Costanera Norte runs from the very edge of residential north-east areas to the airport, situated at the south-west of the city. It is a toll highway; so many people cannot afford it. Nevertheless it was built under the socialist government of Ricardo Lagos (2000-2006) and was supported by the Chilean new cultural class.

Parque Forestal is a place that allows them to live their contradictions, but this strategy is limited. The understanding of inequality as diversity cannot last for long because in turn inequality is reproduced. Allowing and encouraging homeless people to hang out in the streets is not promoting diversity but being indifferent to inequality and poverty. Regarded in that light, Chilean new cultural class living practices are not political at all. We can see their political numbness in their living practices and in the way they make sense of the Park neighbourhood.

If we understand identity as the horizon from which we are capable of adopting a stance and making sense of the world, the newcomers' identity is a contradictory one. Their preferences and desires, the life goods they value, are not clearly linked to their aims and dreams at the level of practice. The moral criteria they use to establish why their choices are good appear confused when we explore how they experience what they call democracy, freedom and diversity. If "[w]e cannot have an identity without having an orientation in moral space" and "[c]onversely, 'our identity is what allows us to define what is important to us and what is not'" (Calhoun 1991: 236), we could argue that the Chilean cultural new class newcomers are still struggling to define their guiding moral references.

The fact that the Chilean cultural new class moves downtown does not lead to a mixed neighbourhood but rather to what Tom Slater has called 'social tectonics'. People do not really mix in place. They only share a common space without sharing their experiences:

> "[Social relations] might be characterized as 'tectonic'. That is to say, broadly, that relations between different social and ethnic groups in the area are of a parallel rather than an integrative nature; people keep, by and large, to themselves ... social groups or 'plates' overlap or run parallel to one another without much in the way of integrated experience in the area's social and cultural institutions." (2005: 77-8)

Chilean new cultural class living practices fall short of being practices that lead to real social intermix. On the contrary, they carry on Santiago's trend of urban segregation but

they do so within a discourse of social intermixing. Why does the Chilean new cultural class insist upon the discourse of social intermixing? Why do they think it is desirable? I could say that a social intermix does not exist in any of Santiago's neighbourhoods. I argue that, as happens for the case of different cultures and races, the idea of conviviality is much more helpful. Conviviality allows us to experience diversity without trading our identity. Paul Gilroy's reflection on conviviality illustrates the powerful possibilities of the concept:

> "The processes of cohabitation and interaction [conviviality] that have made multiculture an ordinary feature of social life in Britain's urban areas and in postcolonial cities elsewhere. I hope an interest in the workings of conviviality will take off from the point where "multiculturalism" broke down. It does not describe the absence of racism or the triumph of tolerance. Instead, it suggests a different setting for their empty, interpersonal rituals, which has another virtue that makes it attractive to me and useful to this project. It introduces a measure of distance from the pivotal term "identity", which has proved to be such an ambiguous resource in the analysis of race, ethnicity, and politics. The radical openness that brings conviviality alive makes a nonsense of closed, fixed, and reified identity and turns attention toward the always-unpredictable mechanisms of identification." (2004: xi).

Nevertheless, if the Chilean new cultural class is far from intermixing in its neighbourhood so it is from conviviality. I argue that cynicism about politics is at the heart of the matter. By making sense of their everyday living practices as political, they build a political discourse whilst abandoning real political actions. Parque Forestal's residents were keen to have the homeless man around because he is part of their discourse on social equality. They chose him as an example to show themselves to be interested. The discourse on post-1990 times in Chile, in which the cultural new class takes part, operates with the same logic: although nothing has dramatically changed at the level of the everyday, at the level of discourse, Chile seems totally different.

Official discourses disengaged from experience cannot erase memory, however. In the next chapter I will introduce the tensions existing between memory and discourse as history and how they relate to the shaping of everyday practices in post-dictatorship Chile and the values embodied in them.

CHAPTER SIX: PATHS OF MEMORY: TRACING CHILE'S NEW VALUES

"Mira las estrellas [....] Estamos rodeados por el pasado, lo que ya no existe o sólo existe en el recuerdo o en las conjeturas ahora está allí, encima de nosotros, iluminando las montañas y la nieve y no podemos hacer nada para evitarlo."

"Look at the stars [...] We are surrounded by the past, what doesn't exist anymore or exists only in memory or conjecture, is there now, above us, lighting up the mountains and the snow and we can do nothing to prevent it."

Roberto Bolaño[59], *"2666"*

This chapter explores the role of memory in practice as embodied meaning. In particular, I look at the way memory, intertwined with practice, plays a role in how people make sense of post-1990 Chile. I analyse people's practices and narratives, showing how memory forms part of them. In the light of this, I distinguish different ways in which memory is involved in the embodiment of meanings and of what people value. People's memories emerge from their position in the present and, conversely, their position in the present shapes their memories. Within that context, I will explore links between memory and identity as our moral orientation in the world.

I consider place as a core element in my study of memory and the embodiment of meanings. In that context, I examine the Plaza and the Park as gateways to memories or barriers to them, as possibilities for remembering and forgetting. Both remembrance and forgetting are at the core of Chileans' understandings of their country today. I reflect upon the role of forgetting as it relates to traumatic experience and place. Some people strive to forget their difficult experiences in the past and believe in historical discourses, set apart from practice, about today's Chile, while others remember traumatic times and use them as to construe Chile's current success with suspicion.

[59] Chilean writer (1953-2003).

Place and memory

The importance of place in memory is at the core of the relationship between memory, practice and identity. If we agree that memory and practice are embodied and, thus, placed, then we can understand why "places provide situations in which remembered actions can deploy themselves" (Casey, 1987: 189). Place, in this sense, may act as the detonator of *memoire involuntaire*[60] because it can awaken our senses. However, when the meaning of place is fixed by historicism, then place loses its potential to transport us to our past experiences. Hence, place is not a fixed structure for remembrance supported by a physical surrounding, as Maurice Halbwachs argued (1980:140), but a changing constellation made up of the fragments of our experiences. As a gateway for traces of experience, place makes involuntary memory possible through what, in Benjamin's terms, would be an auratic experience: "To experience the aura of an object we look at means to invest it with the ability to look back at us. This ability corresponds to the data of memoire involuntaire" (Benjamin 2003 [1939]: 338). We experience the uniqueness of a place when it transports us —with its smells, dimensions, lights and shadows, sounds and silences— to our past experiences.

I would argue that the Park and the Plaza are gateways for different kinds of memories: the Park is an interior where people withdraw into themselves and their families. It transports its users into memories of family relations and personal processes, such as those related to creative practices, whereas the Plaza is an exterior where people remember their collective experiences as inhabitants of the city. Both places are intimate in the sense that they call out to our past experiences. On the one hand, the Park, like a house, integrates thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind (Bachelard 1994:6); on the other hand, the exterior spectacle of the crowd in the Plaza helps intimate grandeur unfold (Bachelard 1994:192).

Within the context of place as the site of memory, the users' memories awakened in the Park and the Plaza work in different ways in post-dictatorship Chile. Selected memories work by sealing traumatic memories, as ways of not remembering. However, the indifferent memory that wants to close the box on the past is challenged once and again

[60] Proust's idea of 'involuntary memory' refers to "those memories which are triggered by a particular inadvertent stimulus and which seem to envelop the person from their place in the past, so breaking the apparent boundary between past and present and bringing lost hopes and dreams to mind" (Savage 1995: 208).

by everyday experience in place. I would like to explore into the intimate aspect of memory that gives meaning to both present and past individuals' experiences. Carmen, the librarian of "Biblioparque", a public library located in the Park, remembers family moments in the site. She spends every morning in the Park and tells me how much she likes it:

> "Calm and quiet [...] it is like an oasis within the city [...] It has its charm, even in winter when trees are bare, but there are always beautiful things. When it rains we don't open, the other days, yes, I come wrapped-up [...] I love mornings, I love doing everything in the morning." (Interview with Carmen, librarian of Park library, 4 October 2005).

In the Park Carmen finds memories of her youth, when she used to come with her children to outdoor concerts given by the Santiago Philharmonic Orchesta and classic ballet presentations. "That was beautiful, it was very, very beautiful. Now that's lost." When she is in the Park, Carmen experiences the sense of closeness and family atmosphere she remembers from those days. People come and talk to her, not about politics or how well or badly the country is doing, as walkers in Plaza de Armas often do, but about their personal issues, love affairs and feelings:

> "I have met very friendly people. Once a man told me how he had a stroke when he was walking back home. He ended up in a very bad state, he thought he was never going to recover, he was in the clinic for a long time and now he goes for walks. He told me so many things about his life. I wished I had a tape recorder, because we talked about God, the Psalms, many things. [...] I have learned to talk here, I don't have great friendships but I have developed that side of myself here, I have learned to talk, I'm better at hearing than at talking but here [...] Once a woman came crying and she told me she had a problem with her husband and we started talking [...] after a lot of talking she told me that I was her angel." (Interview with Carmen, librarian of Park library, 4 October 2005).

Carmen finds in the Park, for herself and for others, "the sure place, the place next to [her] immobility" (Bachelard 1994:137). The Park objects, its old benches, lamps, trees

and walkways transport her and her friends to memories of a calmer life and lead them to reflect on the way they live their lives now. Thus topics such as family, marriage and beauty surface in their conversations.

German, an unemployed painter, comes every day to read the newspaper at Carmen's library in the Park. He likes the Park because it transports him to the 1960s when a lot of cultural activities went on there. At that time he had his studio in a dead-end street near the Park:

> "Before the coup the whole world and the environment in Santiago were different. There`s a sort of nostalgia for those times, there's something that stays in the environment, in the air, in the music [...] and time erases those things; with progress, in quotation marks, those things keep vanishing." (3 November 2005).

German thinks that both Chile and the world in general are in the hands of people who seek nothing but their own benefit. He is very negative about politicians and people with money. He also complains about people being rude and poorly educated. Against that background, he is looking for something that can help him to connect with more human things.

> "I'm shocked at young people's language. I grew up... I come from a very traditional family, very Catholic, a strong Catholic education, and I'm shocked by all these people. [...] The Park has all these trees, it draws me, with my past in the countryside, I relate it to the countryside, greenness has always attracted me, it brings a sort of calm to my gaze." (Interview with German, passer-by, 3 November 2005).

It is interesting to see how the memories that people bring into the present, aided by their experience of place (of the Park), are linked to different values. Carmen and German value a life that revolves not around money and consumption but around personal relations, and their narratives suggest that a calm environment is a condition for developing strong ties with others. Both of them refer to young people's bad language and mode of dress —"they look like they're wearing a costume", says

Carmen— and the pointlessness of politics when everything is pre-arranged with money. However, other people remember times of freedom, difference and openness in the Park. Danitza, a coffee-shop owner and neighbour, relates her memories of the Park to her notion of what a diverse city should be, to a place where she encountered difference:

> "My father is a journalist and he worked at the TV station [located in Bellavista neighbourhood, next to the Park] and my mother worked there too, so my brother and I used to go to the daycare beside the station when we were children and afterwards we came to the Park, to play on the swings. So that was when it started, my relationship with the Park. And then I studied Law in Pio Nono [Universidad de Chile located next to Plaza Italia, at the east edge of the Park] so me and my friends would come to the Park to study. All my life has been around here, [...] the Japanese soups in a nearby restaurant, the concerts at Mulato Gil Square [...] The city has a kind of adrenaline that I believe is important, there's an energy that pushes you to coexist with the other, with people different from yourself, and that's very powerful. In the city you touch real poverty, the different, the neighbour, all these figures stop being ideas and become real; they are here. Here in the neighbourhood you see Oriental people, elderly people, poor people, students, it's very diverse, and you see it, it's not just a story." (Interview with Danitza, coffee-shop owner and neighbour, 17 October 2005).

In the same vein, Valentina, a high school student, finds in the Park memories of a diverse environment but she does so through her father's memories. She remembers her father's stories about the Park and she appropriates the place through them:

> "My father always tells me about the times of the Unidad Popular[61] and their gatherings here with his hippie friends. Then, under the military government they didn't come here anymore." (Field notes, 15 September 2005).

Valentina's father avoidance of the Park is related to the emblematic memory of the site as a controlled place during dictatorship, like all public spaces in Santiago[62]. However,

[61] Salvador Allende's socialist Government.

his stories about the site related to his intimate memories of it are the ones that move Valentina to come to the Park and spend the afternoon with her classmates, drinking wine and talking, reclining on the grass. It's a weekday and she and her friends have skipped school. They tell me that they like it here because no one bothers them. Young people use the Park as if it were the backyard of their home; they behave in public as if they were in a private space and, in this sense, some of their actions, such as excessive drinking in public and making out under the trees, are not welcomed by neighbours and the police. However, although young people sometimes get into trouble because of their behaviour in the Park, they make sense of it as a place where they can be themselves and encounter others who are different from them.

Drawing on her memories, Maripi, a young girl who dances capoeira on Sundays in the Park with her friends, also experiences the Park as a place for diversity and interchange with others. She started going to the Park with her parents who were politically active in the 1970s.

> "I've been coming to the Park since I was a child, because my parents are very involved politically, so they used to go to the Park when I was a little girl. My father is an actor so they went to perform plays, different things, or to spend their Sundays there. I have images of the Park from a long time ago, memories. And I have come to the Park to dance capoeira since I started learning. Every Sunday. [...] It's different to dance capoeira in the Park because you are opened, exposed to whatever is happening." (Interview with Maripi, young capoeira dancer, 25 November 2005).

While she dances capoeira in the Park, Maripi has to put up with people smoking and drinking around her, and this is a challenge for her. Even so, she likes being in the middle of the hubbub. She thinks that young people in Chile today have chosen art forms to express themselves and to stand, in practice, for what they value. Friendship, diversity and creativity are prime assets for her and she embodies them in her practice of capoeira. She has danced with the same group for many years and she construes her practice as a way of communicating with others. She understands it as a variation of

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[62] Steve Stern argues in his work on Chilean dictatorship and memory (2006) that unlike random memories which appear unbidden, emblematic memories work as orders to remember. The emblematic memory making is the product of a collective process and appears as a social agreement.

what her parents did in their youth and, in that sense, the memories of her childhood and her parents' practices in the Park encounter her experience; her own practice of capoeira in the site:

> "My parents fought hard to make this country different and they fought with their lives, my father was in prison and for me that has been very important, to be able to move on [...] I have this image of the rainbow[63] when the "No" won in the referendum of 1988, I was born in that time, I was not there in the times of the coup, [...] my mother participated in the Ramona Parra brigades,[64] my father was involved as well, they had to fight for a very clear purpose. I feel that at this point [youth], you have to rebel against something, it is part of a life process and if we do not have someone to rebel against, I feel that our path is one of art. Most of my friends want to allow their emotions to unfold, everything that is going on inside them, through art." (25 November 2005).

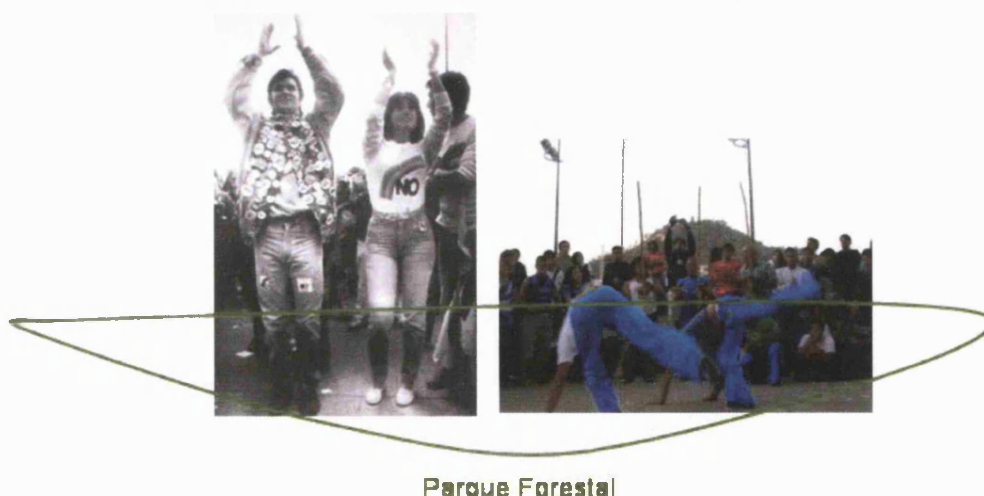

Figure 1: The Park, memory and experience
Source: Navarro 2003 and author's picture.

Figure 1 shows how two practices meet in place. The demonstrations in support of the "No" campaign in 1988, when Maripi had just been born, and Maripi's capoeira practice are not events connected as parts of a sequence. They are connected in experience; both practices embody the values of freedom and openness. They are connecting fragments of a whole, pieces that must be interpreted in order to relate to the story that lies beneath

[63] The rainbow was the symbol of the "No" campaign in the 1988 referendum — "No" to Pinochet's proposal to continue in Government.
[64] A revolutionary group that used graffiti to protest against the dictatorship.

the surface of history about the dictatorship. Fragments are founded in place; we hunt in place, the heart of our memories: "[F]or authentic memories, it is far less important that the investigator report on them than that he mark, quite precisely, the site where he gained possession of them" (Benjamin 1999 [1929]: 576).

However, although memory always involves body and place we cannot attach memories to a single place in a fixed way. Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal are sites for people's memories, but the experiences lived in both sites are embodied as memories by individuals. As experiences that have been lived, memories embody meanings beyond the frames of the "container" sites; they embody meanings of places which are not defined by their physical sites but by particular social interactions occurring in them.

Within that understanding we can think of the Plaza and the Park as intimate spaces embodying experiences. Following Bachelard, we could think of the Park and the Plaza as interiors where people may sit and reflect among other people. Also, regarding the passers-by rushing across the Plaza we can think of the site as an exterior for them, where they experience the weight of their own humanity in the crowd. Both possibilities refer to intimate experiences of people in place. The experience of the crowd, for instance, is one of solitude that helps people in the Plaza to reflect on what they have gained and lost. Baudelaire argues that "the depth of life is entirely revealed in the spectacle, however ordinary, that we have before our eyes, and which becomes the symbol of it" (Baudelaire quoted by Bachelard, 1994: 192). However, I will argue that this revelation may occur only if people are aware of their own presence in the crowd, as Baudelaire was. Otherwise, the experience of the crowd does not lead to reflection but to impoverishment of experience (Benjamin, 1999 [1933]).

Javiera, a vendor of toys in the Plaza, notices this. She observes that people rushing through the Plaza do not talk amongst themselves and she sees this as an impoverishment of the everyday experience there. In her opinion, many youth problems are linked to lack of conversation in the home: "Conversation is very important. We were twelve siblings at home, four girls and eight boys, and we always sat with our parents at the table", she remembers.

Javiera has worked at the site for more than thirty years and her son, Alejandro, is in charge of the business now, but she still comes to help him several days of the week.

She finds the atmosphere of the Plaza today stressful and she misses the times when it was calmer. She does not like the painters lined up in front of the Cathedral and working as if they were selling a mere commodity, people rushing around the shops and the lack of vegetation in the Plaza. She thinks that everything that was good in the site is gone now.

> "This Plaza used to be very beautiful, it had enormous trees, but now, look how it is! [...] The true painters of Plaza de Armas used to sit in front of the Cathedral to paint children, but they are not here anymore." (Interview with Javiera, toy vendor, 10 November 2005).

The redesign of Plaza de Armas offers a window onto the destructive dimension in Chile's post-dictatorship years and how it relates to the shift in values and the sense of disorientation and dislocation. New developments, such as shopping malls and tall apartment buildings, have replaced high-street shops and residential houses in many neighbourhoods. As Benjamin argued, there is a "connection between destruction and systematic eradication of memory and, at the same time, a displacement of experience into other spheres" (Frisby, 1999: 106).

Javiera watches the crowd every day and reflects about Chile's trend towards consumerism and impersonal relationships. The Plaza's new obstacle-free design encourages the rapid passage of passers-by. They walk across the Plaza immersed in their obligations, leaving no trace. Most passers-by I tried to talk to in the Plaza were in a hurry, running errands or going to work. However, at the same time, we see how activities such as walking, sitting, playing, performing and selling are still present in the Plaza. In that light, although I agree with Benjamin, I argue that eradication of memory by destruction is not that strong in the Plaza because practices remain in place. In figure 2 we see the Plaza before refurbishment, with the trees Javiera remembers still there: it is *materially* different from today's Plaza but at the level of practice is similar.

Figure 2: The Plaza before refurbishment.
Source: Street postcard.

Like Javiera, Luis, the Plaza photographer, is also a watcher of the crowd. He does not share the eagerness of passers-by for shopping. Also, people in a hurry are not good customers. It takes time to take a picture, even with a Polaroid. Benjamin explains how consumerism in modernity leaves no time or energy for reflection: "They have 'devoured' everything, both 'culture and people', and they have such a surfeit that it has exhausted them" (Benjamin 1999, [1933]: 734).

The weekday crowd going to work and immersed in its own stress may leave no trace in the Plaza, but traces have been left by the 1980s crowds protesting against Pinochet's regime and by the multitudes entering the Cathedral every September for the day of Virgen del Carmen, Chile's patron saint. And these traces, which are not collated in history but in people's memory, help them to understand their present experiences. Javiera, who is not interested in politics, remembers many occasions during the 1980s when the police came to the Plaza and turned water cannons on the crowd to stop the protests. Sitting at her stall during those events, she experienced the Plaza as a site of chaos and her non-political stance is rooted in her memories of abuse: "Allende, that was an evil thing, he was a good president but people hid the food, the political right wing hid everything." (Interview with Javiera, toy vendor, 10 November 2005).

Memory, practice and identity

Memory constructed in-place is an important element of practices that are rooted in a place. Memory is thus related to our way of doing things, our preferences and values. What we choose to remember and forget, in other words, what we decide to honour or reject, celebrate or revile as a prologue for our own future (Casey 1987: 291-2), is embodied in practice. Also, in many cases our memories are mediated by others' practices; others awake our memories through their practices. This is the case of those who sing and compose *cueca* –a traditional Chilean of song. They make their audience recall and in so doing they also remind them of and reinforce their identity: "a production [personal identity] proceeding by the free remembering of the self by itself" (Casey 1987: 292). Identity is deeply rooted in practice, generated through interaction with others, it lives in social practices, within which it shapes its structure and crafts its changes. Also, identity is closely bound up with individuals' memories, and their memories are, in turn, intertwined with and affected by practice.

The revival of the practice of *cueca* by young people in Parque Forestal sheds some light on issues concerning how memory and practice are related to identity. On the one hand, Los Trukeros, a band which performs every Monday evening in the Park, draw on their memories in order to develop their practice and, on the other, their audience draw on Los Trukeros' memories to remember. In this process the audience recognises these singers as people who remember well; who know about Chilean persecutions in the past.

Cueca's origins hail back to colonial times. *Cueca*, like other Latin American forms of music such as cumbia, tango and habanera, is derived from the Arabic-Andalusian tradition. *Cueca* was developed by mixed race, mainly Moorish, Spaniards belonging to neither the military nor the Catholic Church tradition but to the lower classes. They arrived aboard Spanish ships looking for an opportunity in the new world, but they were not allowed to enter the Spanish stratum in any Hispanic colony. They formed the lower class and developed a mixed culture with Arabic and gypsy elements. *Cueca* became popular in Latin America at the beginning the nineteenth century and it was sung and danced mainly in cities and ports: Santiago, Coquimbo, Valparaíso and San Antonio. Then, around 1930, the government and the upper-middle classes began to persecute it.

The causes of the persecution were social: *cueca* was the voice of the lower classes in a time of economic crisis and popular organisation. It was a symbol of the threat of social insurrection. *Cueca* locked itself away in brothels, prisons, bars, fishermen's coves, marketplaces, slaughterhouses and train stations, away from the contempt of Chile's upper classes.

Rodrigo, a member of Los Trukeros band, knows cueca's origins well. In remembering those persecutions he remembers all who have been persecuted. His practice of composing and singing *cueca* implies an act of redemption, "what is remembered has been saved from nothingness" (Berger 1980: 54-5). Eyes glimmering with passion, Rodrigo tells me how he was seduced by *cueca*:

> 'I had already been involved in *cueca* for some time. Well, with *cueca* and the Chilean *fiestas* [festivities] in general. I've been steeped in it since I was a child. In my family, my grandmother was a *fonda*[65] singer, in the countryside, in Rancagua, around that area. And it's as if I've always had it. Folklore, the Northern rhythms... I tried many things out and here I found my own language; very urban, *cueca* is urban, it is a lie that it belongs to the countryside. Two of us started playing in an old band and then we had this idea. We joined two other musicians, guys from Estación Central,[66] people from here and there and we put together this group' (Interview with Rodrigo, member of Los Trukeros, *cueca* band, 20 January 2006).

Rodrigo is a 35-year-old composer, singer and guitar player and one of the eight members of Los Trukeros. The group is part of a new generation of *cueca* bands that started up around eight years ago. They wanted to play *cueca* in a different way, to move away from the caricature of the country tune sung by men dressed in rigid outfits pretending to be *huasos*[67] and the stereotyped songs telling love stories about powerful men and weak women. They got into *cueca brava*,[68] which tells stories of the city and the port. These are not beautiful fairy tales; they are honest and direct, they do not hide

[65] Cheap restaurant where people sing and dance *cueca* and eat typical Chilean food. Fondas are normally set up for Chilean national festivities but in the countryside they are often found running all year round.
[66] Low-income Santiago district where the main train station is located. It is also a former industrial area that has become an area of small, informal businesses.
[67] Name given to people who work in agriculture and ranching in Chile.
[68] *Brava* means fierce, tough or fiery.

naughty and violent details, and they use everyday street language, without censure. *Cueca brava* singers do not wear ponchos and spurs. Dressed for performances, they look like people in the street; working-class people struggling with the tough and challenging circumstances of urban life. Rodrigo affirms that what they are doing is not reinterpreting the *cueca*, but recovering its real meaning. The navigation through the journey of recovery opens the door to improvisation in the practice. That is, a different set of dispositions can enter into the *cueca* musician's habitus generating new relations between the different powers in the *cueca* field, which, together, may broaden the possibilities of the practice.

Rodrigo explores his own experience to compose his *cuecas*. *Cueca* does not speak about abstractions, it tells a story, a concrete one, located in place and time. Rodrigo grew up in La Legua, a very rough Santiago neighbourhood. He still lives there. He is a man of the street, everybody knows him and he feels safe walking at night along dark alleys where drug-dealers and troublemakers hang out. He spent his teenage years sitting on the sidewalks, looking, hearing and talking. The sound of the city runs in his veins and so do its stories. Rodrigo translates his life in the street, his own account of practice, into the experience of composing and singing *cueca*. In and through his body, he translates his past experiences into his *cueca* practice through adaptation. In "Veleidosa y Pendenciera" (Capricious and Troublemaker) —a *cueca* with touches of jazz and swing— he describes a night's episode under a bridge, where a crowd of marginalised young guys get into trouble and run away from the police. The city night, capricious and trouble-stirring, sets the atmosphere for the tale: *Muchacho, mendigo, moreno mal comido/ que van mordiendo los dientes del alba/ tuvieran una mesa y una manta/ y no serian la cosa esa que ensarta* (Kid, beggar, poorly-fed dark boy/ biting dawn's teeth/ if they had a table, a blanket/ they wouldn't be that thing that plunges).

Youth gangs in La Legua are known for their violent behaviour. High on *pasta base*, the Chilean equivalent of crack, young boys get involved in crime. Poverty and hunger push them to hang out in the street. There is nowhere else to be: houses are small and there are almost no public spaces. The police rarely enter La Legua at night. It is such a bad neighbourhood that they go in only for specific missions. Rodrigo belongs to La Legua. He situates his self in that neighbourhood and composes, sings and faces the world from it. La Legua is his place in the world, where he learned what is important to him. Even

surrounded by poverty and crime, he acknowledges the importance of family, sharing and *fiesta* in La Legua. This is where he learned what enjoying life was all about: for him, eating a whole pork roast for birthdays and drinking wine by the litre with his mates, living with passion, committing himself to those he loves, calling out greetings, singing here and there, coming and going freely. He learned to play the guitar and beat the tambourine in family and neighbourhood gatherings. For him, festivities are something unplanned, spontaneous and free. The singing of *cueca* is for him a festivity in itself –*cueca* means the comings and goings and people joining the tune with no need for invitation.

Cueca is linked to its origins and later persecution. Los Trukeros are committed to bringing *cueca* back to the public space and restoring it as the voice of the people. The group's singers are in their thirties or late twenties. They did not experience the Chilean military coup of 1973, but they did grow up with its consequences and have constructed a "memory" of those times. The night curfew and the closure of many bars and brothels stifled the popular tradition of *cueca brava* and it was lost definitively in marginalised neighbourhoods after 1973. By the same token, the dancing of *cueca* alone by women without a partner was a mode of protest for the killed and missing people during dictatorship times. *La cueca sola* ("*cueca* alone") was danced at the margins of legality, as a prohibited practice. Figure 3 shows a woman dancing alone in 1978, in the protests for the killings of Lonquén, where many people were burned and disappeared. C*ueca* alone brings absence into the present as a way of remembering.

Figure 3: Cueca alone
Source: Navarro, 2003.

The work of Los Trukeros is a mission to rescue the repressed practice of being in public and that is why they choose the Park and sometimes La Vega market, which is nearby, to sing. Figures 4 and 5 shows the area and the trajectory of Los Trukeros in the public space. They sing in the Park and often walk to the Vega Central market to keep singing. They like those sites because they are places of diversity and ordinary people.

Figure 4: Parque Forestal and La Vega Market within Santiago inner city context. In order to get to La Vega from the Park, Los Trukeros cross Mapocho river bridge singing.
Source: Author's composition

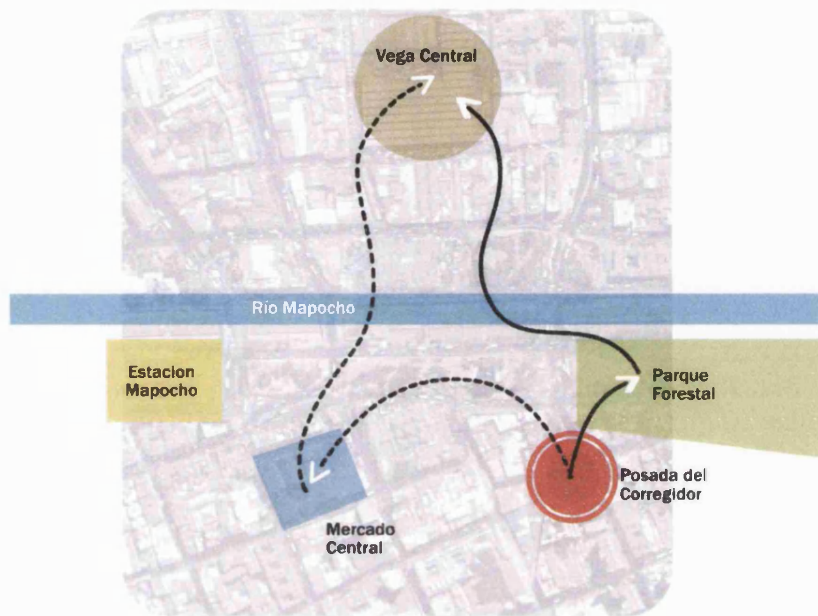

Figure 5: Los Trukeros usual trajectories around the Park. Central Market and La Vega Market are usual destinations after singing in the Park.
Source: Author's composition

Within this context, *cueca* singing in a circle —*canto a la rueda*— is a very important feature of Los Trukeros's practice. They rescue the original setting for *cueca* singing; that is, in a circle of people where everybody sings in turn. The circle is a metaphor for equality, where no one is more important than anyone else. It is also a symbol of community, communication and shared experience. Singing *cueca* in a circle is an endless sequence of verses that seek to make the fiesta go on without end. Los Trukeros's singing in the park engages passers-by, friends and the curious who join the circle and freely come and go in the round.

Everybody is both performer and audience in the circle, which does not mean that there is no distinction between the two roles. What happens is that everybody has a chance to be performer and audience. In the setting of the circle, the structure of social encounters —"the structure of those entities in social life that come into being whenever persons enter one another's immediate physical presence" (Goffman 1990 [1959])— is marked by both equality and diversity. Everybody is welcomed with equal rights. The circle singing prevents *cueca* from appearing as a finished, polished and packaged product. *Cueca* is a work in progress which is not presented to others to be judged but to be shared and completed. Understood in this way, improvisation in practice —the potential

of agents to invent new techniques to add to the rules of the game— comes into play in the *canto a la rueda*. Improvisation is not an exception in practice but a constitutive element of it. The habitus is nothing but the capacity for structured improvisation (Calhoun 1993: 4). Individuals improvise within a framework of possibilities given by their habitus and the field of the practice. In this manner, practice is beginning, not rupture, and beginning points to novel forms that can also appear as ways of following existing patterns.

Figure 6: Canto a la rueda in the Park
Source: Author's picture

The practical engagement with events occurs in the interaction of an individual agent with others. Los Trukeros, as mediators of their audience's memories, involve the crowd not only in the singing of *cueca* but also in their compositions. They started with *cueca brava* to sing about those who were historically excluded from the public realm. They sing tales about poor, marginalised and revolutionary characters. *Cueca* brings them back to life and places them back in the public sphere, where they can be seen and heard. Cerro Condell Cinco Estrellas (Condell Hill Five Stars) is a *cueca* about a very poor neighbourhood on one of Valparaiso's hills. It gallops along cheerfully, telling about how people gather on the streets and make love there. Cerro Condell Cinco Estrellas is a play on words that describes the hill as a brothel. They judge neither lovers nor the prostitutes, nor the use of the public space to make love. The emphasis is on the hill as a place for encounter, where disorder is accepted: *Caramba, Cerro Condell cinco estrellas/ caramba, que está lleno de parejas/ caramba, ten cuidado muchachita/*

caramba, donde te clava la abeja (Caramba, Condell hill five Stars/ caramba, is packed with couples/ caramba, be careful little girl/ caramba, about where the bee sticks you). Similarly, De farra (Partying) tells a tale about a long night of drinking and singing in the city's downtown neighbourhoods. The recovery of public space is something to be celebrated for Los Trukeros, the end of the prohibition for *chingana* (party) is a persistent theme in their songs: *¿A dónde vamos hombre?/ A donde usted quiera pueh/ ¿y si celebramos un cumpleaños falso?/ ¡otra vez!* (Hey man, where are we heading? / wherever you want/ what about celebrating a fake birthday? / again?).

Los Trukeros' practice of composing and singing *cueca* embodies an understanding of the world rooted in their memories and experience of the Santiago streets. The street provides the frame within which they determine where they stand on questions of what is good, or admirable, or of value: "[Habitus] is immediately present, without any objectifying distance, in the world and the 'forth-coming' that it contains (Bourdieu 2000: 142).

Since the habitus is shaped in the world and oriented towards it, the *cueca* composer-singer habitus is structured by the world to which his/her body is exposed. For Rodrigo, the *cueca* composer-singer has to be exposed to the city world in order to embody the intentionality of *cueca brava* practice, that is, making public the Chilean street identity:

> "The *huaso* doesn't know how to sing *cueca* because to sing *cueca* you have to be from the neighbourhood, from the street. *Cueca* is sung in poor neighbourhoods, in the market, at work, in the slaughterhouse, in Estación Central, where you have stories to tell." (Interview with Rodrigo, member of Los Trukeros, cueca band, 20 January 2005).

Rodrigo's phrasing tells us something more about the shaping of his practice, rooted in his memories and experiences. Rodrigo's *cueca* composer and singer habitus is rooted in his life in the street; his dealings with workers, young gangs, violence, poverty, family ties, popular festivity and noise, are essential to acquire the dispositions of the composer-singer habitus: "[W]e are disposed because we are exposed. It is because the body is (to unequal degrees) exposed and endangered in the world, faced with the risk of emotion, lesion, suffering, sometimes death, and therefore obliged to take the world

seriously (...) that it is able to acquire dispositions that are themselves an openness to the world, that is, to the very structures of the social world of which they are the incorporated form" (Bourdieu 2000: 140-1).

In order to sing *cueca brava* you need the shout of the man in the market, in La Vega, who exclaims his truth out loud, throat inflating, heart racing: "morelei pelao y calientito" (morelei skinless and hot). Then in the *cueca* you hear: "calientito el morelei/ gritan con mucho salero" (hot morelei/ they shout with a lot of salt). The expression *salero* comes from Cuba and means to put flavour into the rhythm. People get involved in *cueca brava* because they hear honesty in what is said. It is totally different from the kind of *cueca* that dominated the scene during authoritarian governments: model-clean and orderly, sung by a *huaso* dancing choreographed steps.

As Taylor argues: "the issue for us has to be not only where we *are*, but where we're *going*" (1989:47). Young Chilean *cueca* singers *are* in a position, temporally and spatially, and they are looking where they want and can go next. The values implied in their practice of *cueca* are tied with their memories and those of others that remember through their singing. They celebrate their origins, the openness to diversity, the free use of public space, the inclusion of the disempowered, the importance of creativity and disposition for change and improvisation, as opposed to many occasions they remember in which they could not do it. Their memories embodied in their practice puts us on the track of what matters to them and to those who like to hear and sing with them in the Park. In a similar vein, we will see how the experience and memory of body pain help us to understand the strength of values linked to human rights in many of the users of the Plaza and the Park.

Remembering pain

The experience of pain is beneath the surface of people's everyday practices in the Plaza and the Park. Walk into those sites, start talking to people and after a while you cannot help being struck by how often people's everyday experiences and narratives refer to Chile's last dictatorship. Some of those connections between practices and the dictatorship years are very obvious, such as the political messages in the comics'

performances in the Plaza. Also, people's narratives frequently link up with the past understood as the section of Chile's timeline immediately before the current democratic period. In this sense, one could argue that people talk about the past as a measure for other things: politics, economics and social relationships in Chile are *better or worse than* during dictatorship and this is the case *because* of what happened during dictatorship. Even more interesting is when the past is made present and the present is established as the "time of the now" (Benjamin 1999, [1940]: 255). Thus, the past-present, the now, becomes a part of people's everyday experiences. Past events exist in the present as experiences, as fragments of a constellation. In order to understand the way people make sense of their past experiences we should approach the past like the historian who "stops telling the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary" and "[i]nstead, he grasps the constellation which his own era has formed with a definite earlier one" (Benjamin 1999, [1940]:255). This means making qualitative differences amongst experiences and not taking them all as the same thing.

Past and present coexist as one in the body, the centre of human experience. We experience the world though bodies that have already experienced past worlds. The present experience not only allows us to recover our memories, as Proust argued in his description of being transported to the past by the taste of a *madeleine* (Benjamin 2003, [1939]); it also forms a whole with the past. We cannot recapture the past without a present experience; conversely, we cannot make sense of the present without understanding the past. Within this context, I intend to argue that people's embodied understandings of post-dictatorship Chile are not the product of a linear sequence of events that they have experienced but the conjunction of scattered experiences. By the same token, embodied understandings are not fixed; they change as new memories and experiences are embodied.

An everyday topic of conversation in the Plaza and the Park during my fieldwork was the forthcoming presidential elections. Interestingly enough, many arguments about political preferences had nothing to do with the actual candidates, but were about people's past and present experiences. Luis, a friend of Robinson, a Plaza de Armas painter, starts talking about the coming elections because of a terrible kidney pain he had on New Year's Eve:

> "I ended up in hospital, I almost died. Nothing's hurt so much since the time they caught me in '73. How I remembered those times with this pain. Imagine how much the damned thing hurt! It felt like I had fire inside me." (Field notes, 10 January 2006).

Luis was in prison and participated in the MIR (Left Revolutionary Movement) until 1976. The following Sunday he will vote for the socialist candidate Michelle Bachelet, not with any great conviction, but because he cannot stand the idea of the political right governing Chile:

> "If Piñera [right-wing candidate] wins we should take to the streets. Of course. We made too much effort to recover the thing to hand it over to the fucking right like that. It's clear, if Piñera wins, onto the streets, that asshole cannot come into power." (Field notes, 10 January 2006).

The pain Luis felt in his body in 1973 is still with him. He sees the present through that pain, he feels the present with his body and "this bodily withness, though elusive, is ever-present" (Whitehead quoted by Casey, 1987: 259). Luis understands Chile with an injured body, a body that asks for justice to be done. He is a teacher in La Pintana, one of the poorest districts in Santiago. At the time we talked he was attending a teacher-training course at the University:

> "They made us introduce ourselves and I felt like Salvador Allende at the United Nations when he was surrounded by people from developed countries. I told them: I don't come from any of those paradises where you teach, I come from La Pintana. [...] I tell you, it's tough teaching those children, teaching angels is not difficult at all but I get the children of drug-dealers, prostitutes, the unemployed, the homeless, it's a real challenge. [...] It's difficult because there is too much inequity. Because, of course, if you go to a good school, you come from a good neighbourhood, you are the kid of so-and-so, you have your future fixed. But if you're Juan Perez[69] from La Pintana you're fucked." (Field notes, 10 January 2006).

[69] Juan is considered a very common given name in Chile and Perez a very common family name. Thus, the expression "Juan Perez" signifies the most ordinary of men.

Luis's daily experience is one of injustice, even if he does not experience the injustice himself anymore. Therefore, he views fundamental rights such as life, education and health as non-negotiable, at any price. Gaston, a retired English teacher who walks his dog every day in Parque Forestal, has a similar experience. He was not imprisoned or tortured in 1973, but his sister and brother–in-law were:

> "They were vets and both of them got jobs in the public hospital in Punta Arenas.[70] It was a good opportunity, because at that time there weren't many animal clinics around, and they went there just after Allende came to office and they signed a Communist Party document. So much the worse for them, because that very September 11th, they came for them. They raped my sister, shut her two children in the wardrobe and took my brother-in-law prisoner. My sister was not imprisoned and she brought her husband food in prison every day. They never gave it to him. And he was tortured. They put him on the *parrilla,*[71] they applied electricity to his genitals, awful. He was there until March and then they went to Argentina. They were there for 17 years and when Aylwin[72] won they came back." (Interview with Gaston, Parque Forestal neighbour, 13 December 2006).

The past unfolds itself in the present and Gaston cannot make sense of Chilean politics separately from his family experience. He admits that he likes Piñera, the right-wing candidate ("everything he touches turns to gold"), but although he sees him as the most capable candidate for President, he will not vote for him. In the same vein, he cannot be angry with people coming to Parque Forestal on Sundays and leaving rubbish everywhere:

> "I do not reproach them because there are no green areas in Santiago, so people have to come here on Sundays, they leave the place, uuuuh, I cannot tell you how bad it is. If they are sitting here where we are now, even though

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[70] City in the south of Chile.

[71] The "grill", consisting of electric shocks applied to the victim's body while he or she is tied to a metal bed frame.

[72] Patricio Aylwin was Chile's first democratic president after the Pinochet dictatorship.

> the bin is right there [he points] they leave their rubbish here, on the ground." (Interview with Gaston, Parque Forestal neighbour, 3 November 2006).

Gaston makes sense of the Sunday crowd gathering in the Park as the expression of poor people's lack of opportunities for education and green environments. He has lived in the Park neighbourhood for forty years and, although he remembers the place as a site for equality in the 1960s, when university students from all over the city gathered there and held parties and exhibitions, he perceives it today as a place where the output of an unequal society is manifested. The Park continues to be used by different kinds of people but it is less and less a place for the encounter of different social classes. The classes are physically close in the Park, but they do not touch, as described in an earlier chapter. Gaston's memories of the Park work as fragments of his understanding of the Park today. They relate to the Park's meaning for Gaston, not in a causal form such as "once upon a time different classes did interact in the Park but then the dictatorship came and now there is segregation", but in the form of a constellation. Gaston's memories together with his present experiences —always fleeting images escaping from the present— tend to form a whole, a unity, an understanding of Chilean "time of the now". The interlaying of past and present experiences happens in the everyday, unexpectedly. The richness of the interweaving of the past and the present in the everyday is given by the authenticity of everyday experience. Unlike ceremonial acts of remembering when past events are brought into the present as closed packages, memories appearing in the everyday are opened experiences that permeates the present and change our understanding of it.

Walter Benjamin remarks in "On the Image of Proust" that "[e]ven the free-floating forms of *la memoire involontaire* are still in large part isolated —though enigmatically present— images of faces. For this very reason, anyone who wishes to surrender knowingly to the innermost sway of this work must place himself in a special stratum —the bottommost— of this involuntary remembrance, a stratum in which the materials of memory no longer appear singly, as images, but tell us about a whole, amorphously and formlessly, indefinitely and weightily" (1999 [1929]: 246-7). It is through their senses that people in the Plaza and the Park are transported to the past and catch its fragments. The sound of Chile's dictatorship times is mainly the music people heard and sang in street protests. They do not remember them as discourses but as music, as an element

linked with a sense of solidarity amongst people in pain. One morning in the Plaza, while I was talking with Alejandro, the toy vendor, some people came to protest against Santiago's new transport system (Transantiago). They were singing a Victor Jara song. Jano (Alejandro) was disapproving when I asked him who they were:

> -"They are a folk group, and they sing Victor Jara's songs. Those songs have nothing to do with them! When we sang those songs back then, it was different, protests were a different thing."
> -"How so?" I asked.
> -"They were good ones, then. There were real discussions there. [...] Those were fun times."
> -"Do you miss them? Jano doesn't answer and smiles at me. The group starts playing a different song."
> -"Do you know this one? It's about Manuel Rodriguez [...] Run, run, run, 'cause they are going to kill you." (Field notes, 5 December 2005).

Jano understands political discussion during dictatorship as "fun times", all about being together and looking out for each other. That sense of community is at the heart of what Jano calls fun. It is interesting that the song that connects Jano with his past experiences is about Manuel Rodríguez, who was a rebel during Chilean Independence at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Figure 7: Plaza de Armas, 1983
Source: Hoppe, 2003.

Run, run, run. Jano's memories are about running together from the police, as Manuel Rodríguez ran from the Spaniards. Manuel Rodríguez's times and the Chilean dictatorship are approximately 150 years apart, yet they are part of the same whole. Thus, past memories of community experiences co-exist with Jano's everyday experiences of community in the Plaza. As described earlier, Jano's vending spot is one of the longest-established in the site and it functions as a point for dialogue, support and welcome for walkers and other vendors.

While Jano's memories of the dictatorship are filled with experiences of community that he likes to transpose to the present, for many people the predominant body memory is "traumatic" (Casey 1987: 157). Julio, today a coffee-shop owner in Parque Forestal, was caught by the military forces in 1973. He was in the navy and studying in England when the military coup took place. He does not clarify how things occurred but goes back and forth, intermixing past and present events, thoughts and perceptions in his narrative:

> "So you were in prison?" I asked. After a moment of silence, he said: "I had to present a book about what happened in the Navy, some time ago. And I really remembered that movie, Amarcord.[73] There is a scene where he is telling his son about the things that happened to him in the psychiatric hospital [...] and he walks towards the guards, arms open, asking them to put him into the straight jacket. You see, remembering is like things passing through your heart again and every time I do it I feel something like that too [...] when I'm asked, my whole day starts to ... my stomach starts functioning wrong, everything." (Interview with Julio, Parque Forestal neighbourhood coffee-shop owner, 26 December 2006).

Julio remembers an Italian film about remembering and a book about memories as part of the same thing. Something that makes him sick. When he offers me a Turkish coffee and a pastry he cannot clearly answer why and how he became a cook and a coffee-shop owner:

> "Turkish coffee, Turkish sweets, all matters of chance. [...] It's like having lived two lives, I was in England studying, the Navy had sent me, so from

[73] Amarcord (I remember) is a movie by Federico Fellini about his memories.

> there to being a baker… it was a good programme, very professional, and then … becoming a baker." (Interview with Julio, Parque Forestal neighbourhood coffee-shop owner, 26 December 2006).

Julio does not talk about the past but about the present. He has very strong political opinions and he has made his coffee shop a place for political discussion. Jugglers and other young people are frequent customers at his shop and you cannot be there without talking about politics. Art, music, literature: every theme turns political around Julio's table. Respect for institutional order is a prime value for him. He understands contemporary Chile as a democratic country because there is a democratic regime in power. His narrative is much more detached from experience than that of Jano, Luis or Gaston. As if he were trying to block out the traces of the past with discourses of the past, he constructs his meaning of the present as a continuity of past events.

However, a number of sensorial elements interfere with Julio's discourse about the past and more can be learned about his traumatic body memories by using them as a funnel into his experiences. There is a place, La Comedia theatre, located opposite Julio's coffee shop in the Parque Forestal neighbourhood, which transports Julio to his past through his senses:

> "I had the good luck to end up here, in this neighbourhood, near La Comedia theatre where there was…, it's a bastion of culture against the government. Ictus [the theatre group] did a lot, it did it very well. I'm a good friend of Nissim Sharim [actor and Ictus group's director], in that room you could breathe bits of freedom, we are very good friends." (Interview with Julio, Parque Forestal neighbourhood coffee-shop owner, 26 December 2006).

When Julio places his experiences in the neighbourhood, he connects them with experiences of friendship and bodily comfort. Also, his remembering *in place* can bring his feelings of fear into the present:

> "People came out of the theatre scared, looking around, hoping not to be caught by the CNI.[74] I remember one play that ended with a song called 'I

[74] National Intelligence Service during Pinochet's regime.

> name you Freedom' and people came out singing the tune and then they fell silent, scared of being heard by possible CNI spies." (Interview with Julio, Parque Forestal neighbourhood coffee-shop owner, 26 December 2006).

By placing his memories, Julio captures his past as an experience. Place connects him with melodies and images of concrete scenes, with a shared feeling of fear. In the same place, many years later, Julio brings into the present his experience of the neighbourhood as a site for contestation through culture. His welcoming attitude towards young jugglers and his memories of cultural acts as protest and expression exist together in the present. By the same token, the music that accompanies the political conversations in his coffee shop —which was compiled into an album by some of the usual young café-goers— stands alongside the music of Julio's past, the two merge in Julio's coffee shop.

> "I had two options, stay or go. I decided to stay. Not to stay but to STAY. I stayed although I was having a very hard time in practical terms, with a lot of fear as well, but with a lot of energy, in order to end the cruel dictatorship happening in this country." (Interview with Julio, Parque Forestal neighbourhood coffee-shop owner, 26 December 2006).

Like Julio, many people have stayed, not only physically in Chile but in their memories of Chilean dictatorship times. They choose to remember the pain and bring the experience of it into the present. Like Benjamin's angel of history, they want to stay in the present, facing the past in fragments in order to make whole what has been smashed (Benjamin 1999 [1940]: 249). But Benjamin tells us that a storm is blowing in from Paradise. The return of democracy in Chile brought economic growth and better opportunities for the wealthy part of the population as well as mounting socio-economic inequality. How and why do Chileans remember and forget under the storm of progress in the Plaza and the Park?

Remembering and forgetting: past and present practices

The Plaza and the Park, as sites of the metropolis, are openings to both remembrance and forgetting (Frisby 1999:102). On the one hand, they can be thought of as arcades, as interiors that hold traces of the past.[75] The traces are to be found not only in the built environments but also embodied in people's practices in those sites. On the other hand, both sites are places for reconstruction and, thus, destruction. Again, both processes are related not only to buildings and objects but also to practices. Some issues addressing remembering and forgetting came to light while listening to Luis, a photographer in Plaza de Armas. I met him one hot day in December when he was working with his uncle, taking pictures of children sitting on the lap of a man dressed as Santa Claus in the Plaza. He was not happy: his business was not going very well that year because the Polaroid company had installed a kiosk in the Plaza where people could take their children for a free photo with Santa. "That's unfair competition, and the district administration allows it because Polaroid pays them. What am I supposed to do? (Field notes, 18 December 2005).

Luis, now aged 33, started working in the Plaza when he was 8 years old. He learned to take pictures with an old camera that he inherited from his grandfather, which he still uses for some special shots.

> "All the photographers here have to have this kind of camera [old box cameras] because that's the tradition here in the Plaza, but no one uses them, really. We take Polaroids and I'm one of the few who know how to take pictures with the box camera. People prefer modern cameras, the digital ones now. There are over 50 years of tradition of taking pictures with these old box cameras and we are losing it because there is no support for it. I do not want to become modern myself. I like the traditional thing, I would like to stay with this. I would like these kinds of things not to be lost." (Interview with Luis, Plaza de Armas photographer, 7 January 2006).

[75]Drawing on Walter Benjamin's Arcades Project amongst other sources, Beatriz Colomina gives an interesting analysis of the city as an arcade, with an emphasis on traces in the interior in "Privacy and Publicity" (1994). Traces, both existing and removed, inform about modern times.

Luis has his old camera on show for the record, but ends up working mostly with his Polaroid. He has adapted to the system, to people's being in a hurry and getting their pictures in five minutes. Also, working in the Plaza, he has noticed the changes in the site. In his opinion, the Plaza is becoming less and less of a family site every day, and more of a site for walking across to get to work or to the shops around about. People do not come to spend time as a family anymore.

> "Now everything is becoming less human, the shopping malls, people buying all the time, everything is pushing in that direction... the environment, here, in the city, is as if less human things were pushing you." (Interview with Luis, Plaza de Armas photographer, 7 January 2006).

I show Luis an old picture of my grandfather taken in the Plaza in the 1970s and he wonders if it was taken with his camera. "I like these pictures but people like the colour ones better, in general. I am from a family of photographers." Luis lives in La Legua, a very poor Santiago neighbourhood that has bad reputation because of drug-dealing. The wealthy parts of the city, where he has sometimes been working as a photographer, are a different world to him. As a photographer he feels stuck. After participating in an art installation in the Venice Biennial, where he took pictures with his old camera, some days he sits for hours in the Plaza without taking a single one. His anger turns to inaction and scepticism. He does not intend to vote in the coming elections: "Why is it important whether I vote? I don't think anything is going to change." Luis would like to remember the old times, when his work was more successful, before modern technology turned it into a mere mechanical thing.[76] Luis likes the old way of taking photos. He misses the days when people did not rush so much and enjoyed spending time getting their picture taken in the Plaza. But he believes people in general do not want to remember those times.

Destruction and construction relate to the forgetting of a lifestyle in the Plaza and the Park. The Plaza's new design, which was discussed in an earlier chapter, does not recapture the experience of the past but a linear sequence of events. By giving

[76] The process of making a good print with a box camera is slow and requires proficiency. Luis took a picture of me one day and I observed the whole process of placing the camera, getting the negative and making the print. It took thirty minutes for a single print.

predominance to institutions, the plan denied everyday experiences in the site such as family gatherings, selling and street art. The Plaza's modern design gives rationality a higher value in work and leisure and this contrasts with the ethos of many of the Plaza's vendors and actors. What is the use of a man selling soap for blowing balloons that vanish in the air a few seconds later? (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Vendor in the Plaza, 1977
Source: Navarro, 2003

In the Park neighbourhood, destruction and construction, and refurbishment as well, take place along with remembering and forgetting. On the one hand, new shops and decoration embody the spirit of Chile's new times, that of progress, new opportunities and economic growth. Loft-living in Parque Forestal is about forgetting more than remembering, even though the facades of the neighbourhood's old French-style buildings remain. It appears that to move on it is necessary to build a construction of history that leaves out some of the experiences of injustice associated with the current economic system. There are some past events that wealthy people living in Parque Forestal cannot bring into the present without conflict, so they prefer to focus on the possibilities of Chile's future than on the pain of its past. On the other hand, the Park is still a place for face-to-face relationships, encounter, traditional games, toys and food.

The "Tekai" puppeteers tell me that their work is slow and they require special techniques to get children's attention in the Park:

> "Doing puppet theatre is not a simple thing. [...] People here are not enclosed like in a theatre room. There, people stay because they have paid for a ticket. Here it's different. If they don't like it, they go away. I like it in that way because it's always a challenge to retain people. If they stay it is because you are making them do it! It's working. And people here pay according to the results, they pay if they like it." (Interview with Tekai puppet group, 16 October 2005).

Giving puppet shows in the Park is not the most efficient way to earn a living. It is uncertain; your past results cannot reliably predict your future earnings. Like the puppeteers, all the workers in the Park rely on its possibilities as a site for diversity and sociability in order to make money. Usual visitors know the vendors and actors and they often give them tips or buy homemade sandwiches from them because of the social relationship that is involved more than actual need. Roxana, from Tekai, has been around for twenty years and she recognises some parents who used to come to see her act as children.

The past trajectory of practice is thus a resource for the puppeteers. Not only in terms of the technical arrangements their practice needs but also in terms of their practice as a form of communication. They did political theatre before they did children's stories and their practice is tied in with the people who taught them, many of whom were persecuted during the dictatorship. They blame the current government for not recognising what those people did for Chile:

> "Two of them [...] died last year. They were out on the streets around 1979, 1980 and they are people who are going to stay in the past, they died applying for government funding for their art and never got it, they never gave them anything." (Interview with Tekai puppet group, 16 October 2005).

The Tekai puppeteers would like to keep their mentors' legacy alive by continuing their practice. In the Park, many young people learn from puppeteers, jugglers and vendors

and seek to appropriate experiences that they did not live themselves. In this case, the absence of memory of the dictatorship years —not because it has been forgotten but because the younger generation never had it in the first place— works as an idealisation of those past times. Other young people, conversely, are tired of hearing memories from the dictatorship period and interpret them as a form of attachment to past events that distorts reality and stretches the realms of possibility: "Let's change the subject. Pinochet, who's he? I don't know him." Instead, they bring into the present more recent events in the Park as experiences of movement towards the future. The two Love Parades held in the site and the Spencer Tunick[77] photographic performance (Figure 9) are the most remembered. Young people link those kinds of practices to new possible ways of being in Chile and they relate them to a country which is open-minded and connected with the world. They make sense of Chile's post-dictatorship period as a space free from the censorship that characterised the past. Their sense of censorship and persecution is not rooted in practice, however. It lacks the experience of pain that characterises the older generations' memories.

Figure 9: 4000 Chileans pose nude in Parque Forestal
Source: http://www.museum-kunst-palast.de/mediabig/1027A_original.jpg

In this light, we may argue that the younger generations' participation in Tunick's performance was very different from that of people who were already adults during the dictatorship and directly or indirectly experienced bodily pain. In such an everyday

[77] The American photographer Spencer Tunick visited Chile in 2002. Around 4000 people posed for his nude pictures in the Park.

experience as an art performance, the memory of pain came to the surface. The tortured body, the naked body in pain, encountered the free body in the public street. Two opposing body experiences are fragments of the same whole regarding people's understanding of the present-day Chile. Figure 10 shows an obvious relationship between freedom as embodied in the action of being free within the naked body in the street and freedom from police authority, which for many represented the torture not only of the naked body but, more importantly of the free body. In this sense, Tunick's art performance, as the practice of *cueca*, acted as a mediator of memories of torture and as an act of redemption. People could remember pain through it and within the framework of a festivity act, heal themselves.

Figure 10: Participants in Spencer Tunick's art performance in the Parque Forestal neighbourhood
Source : www.periodismo.uchile.cl/.../images/350/29.jpg

Regarding memories of torture and persecution, it is interesting that there were so many —some four thousand— people participating in Tunick's naked performance. Pain in the naked body during the dictatorship led to terror and "[i]t has frequently been observed that terror can rule absolutely only over men who are isolated against each other" (Arendt 1967: 474). In isolation, men and women are powerless and unable to act at all. Conversely, people acting in concert can achieve what they want. The naked bodies were not isolated in Tunick's performance. People understood that they were many and they were together; at almost no distance, able to touch and smell one other. Being naked together in the public space was thus an experience of empowerment.

Building the past in the present

Remembering involves creating something that was not there before; we construct memory when we choose to hold on to the past and remember, to learn about the past through others' experiences or to forget past events as if they had never happened. If memory is a construction we form in the present, it is, then, dynamic and adaptable. The mutable condition of memory is important with regard to practice. As a source of dispositions for our practice, memory does not determine our practices but informs them. Within this context, in practice we unpack our memories and rebuild them: something we could not do with the past as a fixed construction. As such, it imposes limits on practice: we cannot experiment, reinvent or imagine[78].

In this light, I would like to discuss Maurice Halbwachs' argument about space and collective memory. He argues that what he calls collective memory —part of the living experience of a group— unfolds within a spatial framework and thus "we recapture the past *only* by understanding how it is, in effect, preserved by our physical surroundings" (1980: 140, author's highlight). In this construct, memory would be fixed, contained in a space, supported by a group framed in space and time. Contrary to views that reduce memory to a discourse, some of which pursue domination through it as Le Goff has argued (1992), I favour an understanding of memory drawing on the idea of:

> "[I]nvoluntary recollections closed off from explanation and historical reconstructions [...] As memory traces they enabled the spectator to come to terms with the shocks and surprises for which the latter remained unprepared, yet by displacing literal experiences they seemed to the unconscious" (Boyer 1994: 483-4).

People in the Plaza and the Park are not made to remember by the site's built environment but by unpredictable stimuli that may or may not occur in the site. People do not make sense of monuments by drawing on the historical discourse attached to them but on their own experiences. There is no single way of associating events with

[78] Bachelard argues that "Imagination is always considered to be the faculty of *forming* images. But it is rather the faculty of deforming the images [...]; it is especially the faculty of changing images" (1998: 19).

objects and places. Otherwise, memory would be a mere monument or memorial removed from experience. And monuments would be artefacts of history, apart from people's everyday life. On the contrary, people integrate those built forms into their practices using them as objects to play and meet. Fuente Alemana, one of the Park's main monuments, was built in honour of the German colony in Chile, but is known as a favourite site for children to play in the summer time, when they cool off in its pool and climb its statues. By the same token, people use monuments to poets as places and accessories for play in the Park. Similarly, people use the monument honouring the Mapuche people in Plaza de Armas and the statue of the Spaniard Pedro de Valdivia representing Santiago's early days as main meeting points.

Something similar happens with historic buildings. The Cathedral in Plaza de Armas and both the Museum of Beaux Arts and the Contemporary Art Museum in Parque Forestal are sites for memory. People remember different experiences through them, in a spontaneous way. As a stimulus for memory, place functions in an unpredictable way. If the city is memory, it is not the locus of the collective memory, as Aldo Rossi argued (2002), but a platform on which different memories clash. For instance, for some people the Cathedral evokes times of protest and pro-human-rights meetings at the neighbouring Vicaría de la Solidaridad offices, headed up by the Catholic Church, whereas for others it evokes the official ceremonies that took place there during the dictatorship.

Nevertheless, places involve traces of the past and can embody common memories. Place offers a possibility for building a common narrative of the past, by binding elements of people's memories. As Benjamin argued:

> "[E]very street is precipitous. It leads downward –if not to the mythical Mothers, then into a past that can be all the more spellbinding because it is not his own, not private. Nevertheless, it always remains the time of a childhood. But why that of the life he has lived? In the asphalt over which he passes, his steps awaken a surprising resonance. The gaslight that streams down on the paving stones throws an equivocal light on this double ground" (2002: 416).

In this context, we could argue that the Plaza and the Park contain both private and public memories, present and past experiences that meet in place as fragments. "The notion of the city as "a mnemotechnical aid" espoused by Benjamin unequivocally invokes the city as a constellation of memory sites and memory traces" (Frisby 1999: 109).

Conclusion

In place: dialogues between memories

As we have observed, the Plaza and the Park are places that transport people to their memories and help them to bring these memories into the present. Different experiences belonging to different temporalities form a sort of constellation of meanings placed in the Plaza and the Park. At the same time, we have seen how memories inform us about people's particular values, moral orientations and aims. On memory as part of the experience from which we define who we are, I would argue that memory confronts history to form a particular horizon that enables individuals to understand their being in the world. Charles Taylor argues that: "To the extent that we move back, we determine what we are by what we have become, by the story of how we got there" (1989: 48) and that "as a being who grows and becomes I can only know myself through the history of my maturations and regressions, overcomings and defeats. My self-understanding necessarily has temporal depth and incorporates narrative" (1989: 50).

The way in which we grasp our past through memory or history differs. In the first case, we are bringing experience that is full of meaning and sensorial traces into the present; in the second, we are bringing into the present a discourse —ours or somebody else's— which has no traces of the past. Although it is *about* past experiences, a mere sequence of events is, in itself, empty of experience and does not connect with people's practices and narratives. Hence, it cannot confer understanding: "Historicism contents itself with establishing a causal connection between various moments in history. But no fact that is a cause is for that very reason historical" (Benjamin 1999 [1940]: 255). Nevertheless, we are immersed in history, in a linear discourse about collective experience which claims to form the foundation of our values. Yet people cannot make sense of Chile's

new times by drawing on history. On the contrary, they look at historical discourse and do not find their everyday experience narrated there and that mismatch is a source of tension; they do not belong to the history of their country.

The struggle for clarity about what one really values is an individual one. People embody memories and, with these memories, feelings of rejection or preferences for certain ways of doing things. The way people make sense of their memories in terms of positive or negative, pleasant or painful, and so on, is embodied as a disposition that serves to guide their actions. Memory is a source of conflict among people in the Plaza and the Park. First, because people had very different experiences during Salvador Allende's socialist government and Pinochet's dictatorship; and, second, because there is enormous socio-spatial segregation within the city of Santiago. Hence, different groups experience Santiago in totally different ways, as if they lived in two separate cities.

With this in mind, I have tried to emphasise the importance of place in awaking our involuntary memory, the one that leads us to our past experiences. The material form of the sites both helps and hinders this awakening. Just as the historical buildings facilitate remembering, so destruction and changes in the neighbourhood help people to forget. The practices in both sites work in the same way, as facilitators for remembering or forgetting. Also, although memory always involves body and place we cannot attach memories to a single place in a fixed way. Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal are the sites for people's memories, but the experiences lived in the two sites are embodied as memories by individuals. Memories as lived experiences embody meanings beyond the frames of the sites as containers; they embody meanings of places which are not defined by their physical sites but by particular social interactions occurring in them.

Different past experiences bringing different understandings about the now into the present, meet in place. As sites for memory, the Plaza and the Park thus become places for dialogue amongst memories. The importance of dialogue does not lie in reaching a consensus, but in enabling the encounter of diverse and contradictory meanings. The power of the Plaza and the Park as places for memory lies in their ability to hold not a single common understanding embodied in body and place, but multiple ones. There is no such a thing as a unique collective memory, there are only group and individual

memories which unfold in place. The problem of a segregated city such as Santiago, in terms of memory, is not that people do not share similar experiences, but that they cannot put them together. The Plaza and the Park help different memories to meet.

CONCLUSION

"You will say: 'Tell me, my sister, some tale of marvel to beguile the night. So I will tell stories that will be cause of Muslim daughters' emancipation, if is Allah's will."
Anonymous, "Tales from the Thousand and One Nights"

"Experience which is passed on from mouth to mouth is the source from which storytellers have drawn".
Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller"

The exploration of the everyday practices of the users of two public spaces in Santiago, Chile in post-dictatorship times allowed us to unravel understandings of Chile's new times that are lying 'beneath the surface' (Kracaeur quoted in Frisby 2001: 311). Practices may appear self-evident to us, because they are part of our ordinary experience and always in front of us. Ethnographic observation of practices has helped us to study them in-depth and in so doing we have learned about such meanings hidden in the routine of the everyday. The present ethnographic research on everyday practices as embodied meanings reveals how we make sense of the world in practice. Although we are building understandings about abstract concepts such as friendship, family, working relations or power, we do not approach those ideas in theoretical terms, but in practice. Conversely, our everyday practices contain an intentionality related to our stance in the world. Our identity is rooted in practice, and hence so is our moral orientation to the world.

In this vein, a first concluding note is a methodological one. Ethnographic methods appear especially appropriate for delving into how people make sense of their everyday experience. Although quantitative factual data can enlighten us about the social and historical context in which people are living out their experiences (thus making sense of them), through ethnographic research we can go beyond possible causal explanations of people's narratives to develop multidimensional explanations of people's practices. By the same token, the exploration of practices together with people's narratives offers very rich possibilities for interpretation. Observing people's practices and talking with my informants about them implied a constant exercise of contrast between what people do and what they say they do and they are. This was not a mere fact-checking exercise but

a way of discovering points for further reflection in my data analysis. I was able to interpret people's narratives in the light of specific elements I had observed in their practices, for instance, their way of talking about family and friends unfolded in particular routines involved in their ways of doing. Similarly, abstract terms such as risk, fear, exclusion and disappointment came sharply into reality in my observation. Interestingly enough, most people do not make a conscious link between their narratives and their everyday actions. Their perception of the world works as a tacit disposition embodied in practice.

As we have seen, biographical facts and people's location are elements implied in both practice and narrative, and their analysis helps us to understand how individual narratives are socially organised in practice. People share their practical experience in speech and thereby build a common social world with others. Within this context, we can follow a thread amongst the understandings of similar kinds of people and we can recognise certain conditions for their practices. At the same time, an individual narrative, related to the individuals' personal characteristics, runs in parallel with the common one.

The ethnographic study of people's understandings of post-dictatorship Chile led to findings on what Chileans' concerns are, quite differently from explanations based on political theories or quantitative data. Some of these explanations claim that there is a need for an institutional framework that can serve all Chileans, not only those who already participate in the political and economic systems. They argue that the sense of tension, fragmentation and exclusion dominating people's perceptions of Chilean society is linked to a sense of a state that does not answer to them (Castells 2005). In the exploration of people's ways of making sense of contemporary Chile through their practices, we learn that the recovery of democracy or the continuity of the military regime are no longer the most important common references for many Chileans. Chileans are less and less concerned about institutional frameworks and increasingly wrapped up in their own personal lives in the present.

In many cases, everyday practices are independent of institutions. By the same token, we see changes that individuals make in their everyday practices as disconnected from those taking place in institutional frameworks. This disconnection is at the heart of the

sense of strangeness felt by many people in the Plaza and the Park. They do not aim for institutional aid but for a space where they can develop their individuality. In this sense, we can see how Chile is entering a process of individuation which has already progressed in developed countries, but which was not so relevant to Chile before 1990.

The users of the Plaza and the Park miss having a stronger connection with each others' experiences and being able to understand others' everyday experiences, even though there is no intention of equality. The exploration of social practices leads us to affirm that individuals appreciate their individuality very much and, indeed, one of the reasons for wishing to be more connected with others is to discover new ways of reinforcing their own individuality. What people want is to have spaces for sharing, not for uniformity. They do not want a common narrative, but rather to tell and hear different stories.

Public places in the city such as the Plaza and the Park offer an interesting opportunity for interchange and their users defend them against conversion into what Zygmunt Bauman (1993) has termed "cognitive and aesthetic" spaces. In the former, rationality rules every practice, whereas in the latter social interaction becomes a spectacle. We observed, in the case of the Plaza, how users maintained their practices within a physical space redesigned for rationality and, in the case of the Park, how visitors' appropriation of the Park prevents the neighbourhood from being totally gentrified (although it does not prevent social segregation).

The Plaza and the Park are most like, to borrow Bauman's terminology, spaces for *being with*, when the self enters into interaction with the Other and takes responsibility for him or her, when place becomes a platform for memory. Without the possibility of an interchanging and sharing of memory experiences, Chileans could not move on to dialogue about their understandings of present-day Chile. By delving into users' memories in the Plaza and the Park, we learn about the need for redemption felt by many Chileans. Remembering could be a starting point for sharing different perspectives regarding what we value and expect and, thus, of unravelling the diversity of identities present in post-1990 Chile.

We saw how encounter and interchange of experiences and associated stories in the Plaza and the Park are facilitated by the location of those places within the city, their history and particular features of their designs. Also, we learn how some of their physical characteristics discourage social interaction. By exploring experience of place in the study sites, we also learn about people's experiences in other places, where fear of the Other and exclusion dominates their perception. Users recall their sense of fear when they talk about some of the poor neighbourhoods where they live, and exclusion refers mainly to upper class neighbourhoods where some of them work as cleaners or which they know only by name.

I have emphasised the importance of place in relation to practice. Social segregation is very much related to the way people use the city, which is the product of combined individual and social economic, physical and cultural conditions. In other words, the way in which we experience place is part of our way of being –hence understanding– the world. We looked at who the users of the study sites were and how they used them. It was very important to start by identifying the users of the sites, because this gives a sense of their routes within the city, the services they use and the people they interact with. In Bourdieu's terminology, the way people use the city would be part of their habitus.

By the same token, an analysis of place in relation to practices reveals possibilities not only for social reproduction but also for change and social mobility. For instance, the inclusion some groups of young people experience in the Park —their place experience— nourishes their practice and opens up possibilities to try out new alternatives as regards work, friendship and political participation. Similarly, the Chilean new cultural class experience of place in Parque Forestal neighbourhood could form the basis for a new form of class identity. On the other front, the shifts that have occurred regarding the Plaza's design, importance within the city, users and symbolic meaning also highlight the involvement of place in social changes. The upper classes's abandonment of Plaza de Armas happens together with the continuity of different kinds of craft, vending and theatre practices in the sites. Segregation amongst different social groups in Chile occurs at the level not only of space, but also of practices: what we do in our leisure time, how we work and how we socialise.

The exploration of people's practices in place sheds light on the roots of the uneasiness that invades the users of Plaza de Armas and Parque Forestal with regard to their way of being in present-day Chile. The way they use the city in times of change, such as Chile has been going through since 1990, relates to how they experience that change. On the one hand, we have argued that the urban place, in this case, forms the physical and social dimensions of users' practices. On the other hand, we have also argued that place is part of the undetermined possibilities of practices; practices are reinvented in place, material imagination is developed as the subject becomes one with the matter of his/her practice.

Practices appear to be an essential element in a spatial analysis of any place. Practices enable us to build a map of places rather than one of physical sites. The city experienced in practice looks very different from one detached from everyday life. We may understand the urban place as a constellation of practices: dynamic, allowing overlaps amongst different physical sites and temporalities. By the same token, the image of the Aleph (Borges 2006) helps us to understand what many of the interviewees live every day: a superposition of different places in their practice, as if one place unfolded another, and another and another, endlessly.

Based on this research into how a group of Chileans make sense of their country's new times, I would like to reflect on three important trends that the exploration of people's practices pinpointed from among the diverse practical experiences and embodied understandings. First, the strong experience of marginality felt by those people belonging to the lower-middle and lower classes and —the other side of the coin— the discourse of a promising and successful future maintained by the middle and upper-middle classes. The everyday experience of the more disadvantaged users of the Plaza and the Park does not match what they see on the surface. The country's rapid economic growth and renewed democratic political system appear illusionary to them, a world to which they do not belong. As we observed in the practice of walking, sitting and playing in the Plaza, disappointment and strangeness invade the everyday routines of the Plaza people. Outside the economic and political framework, people perceived themselves to be out of place.

Although material need is an important source of discomfort, we have seen that the exclusion felt by a group of Plaza and Park users is reinforced by the lack of opportunities to develop working practices that not only bring monetary rewards but also build up social and cultural capital. Individuals' expectations and values are involved in their practices, together with their biographies and everyday social interactions. In that sense, it is important to note that those excluded during the dictatorship period had great expectations about the new Chilean times around 1990, immediately after the end of Pinochet's regime, and their past hope for new opportunities makes their present sense of discontent all the stronger.

At the other end of the scale, users who are better off financially try to be optimistic about Chile's political and economic future, though this stance is not always viable if they share the urban environment with poor people. In describing the upper-middle class's understandings of contemporary Chile we cannot talk about as strong a sense of discomfort as that felt by the lower classes. However, those who are better off economically and empowered politically also look for ways of belonging. Although they are comfortable in Chile's new times they do not feel in place in it. Hence, they direct their practices towards a confluence with their moral orientations as regards the economic and political framework that suits them so well. In this vein, social segregation lies beneath a surface on which difference turns into spectacle, as we observed in the Parque Forestal neighbourhood.

Very different groups' understandings of the Chilean new times construct place, and this takes me to the second important trend that emerges from the exploration of practices in the Plaza and the Park: the role of imagination in users' practices. Imagination appears as a constituent feature of subjectivity in the Chilean new times. Individuals' deep engagement with the material and social form of their world in their practices allows them to imagine in a way that is rooted within the matter of their everyday life, in which their imagination is material, not an abstract construct. We analysed how a variety of users of the Plaza and the Park imagine in practice, as they engage with their material and social world. In that connection, I have argued that users imagine in practice new ways of belonging to their world. For instance, the main source of belonging amongst the users of the sites is the experience of family and close friends; by the same token, those who lack family and friends think of them with nostalgia. Within this context, we

see how some of the users enlarge the possibilities of their practices by reinventing them and creating new forms of association, survival, entertainment and consumption. In this vein, we distinguish in this work looser kinds of sociability and belonging, aimed at supporting the development of the self.

People build up their practices as ways of belonging in many different ways. As they do so, the material world forms a whole with the actor, there is an interweaving between subjects and objects and the materiality of the Plaza and the Park makes them sites of belonging insofar as people display their practices of belonging in them. Different practices in the Plaza and the Park embody different ways of belonging; some of them dwell on sociability, others on economic gain or on political leadership. All of them, however, shape place and are shaped by it. Thus we see how "unplacement becomes implacement" (Casey 1993: 29) as users reshape their sense of place in the Plaza and the Park.

Users' images of what they want to do or accomplish are not suspended somewhere overhead but rooted in place. We have seen how the materiality of the Plaza and the Park, their location within the city, their physicality —design, furniture, trees, objects, and so forth— permeates practices. For instance, craft and vending practices are animated by the materiality of place; by the beat of the pavement streets, the urban facades, the disposition of objects and buildings in the sites, people's bodies, and many elements we reviewed in the foregoing chapters. The same may be said of other practices we analysed, such as remembering, city living, walking and playing. The present exploration of practices aims to show how place is an essential component of them.

Finally, by exploring people's practices we learn about social segregation as a source of strangeness with respect to Chile amongst my informants. Empirical analysis based on economic and social indices would argue that unmet needs as regards welfare and equal opportunities are at the heart of people's discontent. However, an ethnographic approach to social segregation offers a quite different range of possibilities for interpreting the respective quantitative data. This work finds that social segregation is not only linked with material inequality, family origins, ethnicity and location within the city, but also related to the impossibility of common ground amongst the increasing

diversity of understandings embodied in practice. Chilean social segregation is strongly linked with the distance prevalent in Chileans' everyday experiences. We observe many disconnections amongst different users of the sites.

Following Benjamin, I have affirmed that meaning is rooted in experience rather than in history and I would say that the lack of a shared experience may underlie the sense of fragmentation that many informants expressed. If individuation is increasing and collective interests are fewer, sharing imagination emerges as a possibility of collective experience and of "fuel for action", as Appadurai argues:

> "It is the imagination, in its collective forms, that creates ideas of neighbourhood and nationhood, of moral economies and unjust rule, of higher wages and foreign labour prospects. The imagination is today a staging ground for action, and not only for escape." (Appadurai 1996:7).

I argue that the uncanny anxiety of being out of place moves the users of the Plaza and the Park to develop their imagination and share their experiences searching for ways of belonging, of being in place. From that perspective, we could argue that social imagination is richer in those groups where change is more intense. However, as described in the present work, where need turns extreme it blocks the possibilities for agency and action. Within the context of social segregation observed in Santiago, we have seen how in present-day Chile, certain groups that have enjoyed economic growth exist alongside many others that have yet to escape poverty.

ANNEX 1
OBSERVATION GUIDELINES

In this section I will present some guidelines to observation as a way of setting out the things that I looked and listened for in the field. These guidelines were a baseline from which I moved to further information through chats, interviews, pictures, diagrams and walks.

Physical space:

-relation between buildings' shape and size
-rhythm of building frontages along the street (used and empty lots)
-buildings' shape and urban design impact on views, vistas and skylines
-building type (institutional, commercial) residential
-relationship between facades and the street
-buildings' role as boundaries and borders
-meeting between streets, corners and people
-building materials and details, relationship between different materials and textures.
-environment, pollution and nature

} how are these elements related to practices?

Social space:

-public and private spaces
-spaces perceived to be safe or unsafe
-busy and calm areas within the sites
-location of practices within the sites
-time of practices within the sites (schedule and duration)
-flows of people walking, standing and sitting in the sites; mobility (trajectories versus stationary uses).
-accesses to the sites, points of access to the site by time

Actors:

-Who the users of the space are (gender, age, dress, gestures, language, and relationship with others)

-What the users' practices are

-How practices relate to each other

-The aims of the practices

-The feelings expressed through practices observed

Objects:

-What urban furniture is present in the sites?

-How urban furniture relates to practices

-How urban furniture is set within the sites

-What the particularities of each element are

-Which other objects are involved in users' practices

-What their particularities are

-How they relate to practices

I also paid attention to the timing of social practices and how they were affected by the weather.

ANNEX 2
GUIDELINES FOR INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS AND IN DEPTH INTERVIEWS.

I have already noted that this guideline was an initial approach only. I worked through it as I was conducting my fieldwork in order to cover topics that appeared in my interviews and observations.

Space:

-How they would define where they are (in Santiago's centre? at Plaza de Armas? on a bench?). Limits of the space they are using.

-Definition of that space, how they would describe it (as a square, a nice place, a park, a typical Chilean space, my neighbourhood, beautiful, a space used by adults/the middle classes/working people, a safe area, a polluted place). I did not mean to suggest categories to them. However, the elements that I looked for were related to the perception of that space in terms of beauty, comfort, people who use it, security, old or new, cleanliness, order, fun, good/bad space to work if that was the case).

-Things they like and dislike about the space (furniture, paths, vegetation, shadows and sun, people, etc.).

-Space's neighbourhood and surroundings: how they would describe them in terms of beauty, comfort, people who use them, security, old or new, cleanliness, order, fun).

-Space in the context of the city (central/not central, easy/difficult to access, busy or abandoned).

-Importance for the city as a landmark or historical place of the Plaza or the Park.

Time:

-Time and its relation to users' practices.

-Time of the practice: which part of the day, the week, the month, is devoted to the practice? How often do you come here and sit on the bench? How often do you interrupt your journey to hear the comic show? How many hours do you work selling candy at the Plaza? How often do you skip school and come to the park?

-Other practices: how much time they devote to other activities.

-Perception of time in those spaces: are those places the same as five years ago? Since when the users have been coming? How do they perceive the passage of time in those spaces? What changes can they identify?
-Historical time. How would they describe the times they are living in? How would they describe this moment in Chile's history? How is that moment manifested in the site that they are using?

Social relations:
-Relations with other users of the site. How do they get along? Who are your friends around here? Who are the ones you know? Who are the ones you do not know?
-Spatial distribution and its links with social relations. Why did they choose this site, this part of the park or the Plaza, to sell, read or act? How did they set the spatial limits for their activities, if they did so?
-People's social relations outside the sites. Families and friends and how interviewees' practices are linked to them (working, praying, preaching, hanging out because of unemployment or retirement, skipping school, juggling for a coin, juggling with friends, smoking pot, and drinking).
-Experience of democracy. I will ask about democracy linked with social relations because I want to explore the link, if there is one, between the way people relate to each other and the fact that Chile is now a democracy: are social relations in public spaces different? How have they changed, if they have?
-Work: what they do for a living. Do they like it? What are their needs? What do they want in material terms?

Mobility:
-How they get to the sites. I want to know how they access them (bus, foot, subway, car), and how long it takes them and then move on to their experience of mobility within the city.
-Cost of moving around and the possibilities to do so. Why do they come to this park or plaza and not to another? Is it related to mobility costs?
-Experience of mobility within the site. Both Parque Forestal and Plaza de Armas are spaces that are used by different people in a fragmented way. Users stay on one part of the site. Why do people choose their location in the space? Why do they not change it?

What is the logic of that location? What is the connection between location within the space and individual practices?

The new and the old:

-The new and the old, or the modern and the traditional, linking that topic to spaces but also relating it to practices. I want to discuss with people possible reasons why practices appear, disappear or are maintained over time. What value, if any, do they attribute to the traditional photographer in Plaza de Armas? How do they understand the rapid expansion of the cafes in Parque Forestal area? Why do they think that circus practices, especially juggling, have become so popular among the young, and particularly lower and middle class youth?

-The Chilean condition in terms of old and new, modern and traditional. How do they perceive the country? Do they think that it is all modern or all traditional or do they think that there is some of both? Do they think Chile is culturally open?

-Economic growth and the construction of a developed country. Perceptions in relation to practices in terms of how people situate their practices in a developed/developing country.

-The popular and the refined is linked with the narratives of the old and the new. How is the popular connected to the old and why is it difficult to maintain popular and traditional culture in a new country? What do users think about physical changes in the spaces they use (new shops around Parque Forestal, Contemporary Art Museum refurbishment, Costanera Norte highway along the river, Plaza de Armas's redesign)?

Gender:

-How gender relates to practices

-How users make sense of gender

-How their gender influences their practice

-Many of the practices observed are performed only by either men or women. What they think about that. For instance, why there are no women playing chess in the Plaza?

-How do users think that their gender influences their practices?

-How do people think that gender is related to such dimensions as family, work, religion, uses of public spaces, politics?

Body: The discussion on body with users took a different tack. This topic was covered jointly with others, but here I specify the kind of concerns that I brought into conversation.

-How their bodies are part of their practices. In what way are their bodies important in performing an act, selling or preaching. How do they construe their bodies? Is the body a tool for work, is it an image, is it permanent, is it temporary? Do they like their bodies? Why? Why not?

-How do their bodies relate to space? How do they relate to the objects involved in practices? Do they feel big or small in the spaces? Do they think urban furniture is appropriate for their practices?

-How do they perceive through their body? What senses do they most use and value? How are those senses involved in their practices?

-There are a range of issues related to gender and the way the body is inserted in the understanding of being a woman or a man. What is a woman's/man's body like? Is the body equally important for being a woman as for being a man?

-Dress is part of the discussion on the body but also of the reflection on the new and the old, the modern and the traditional, economic growth, poverty and social opportunities. Dress reflects class, gender, economic position and image of social role. I discussed these issues with the interviewees starting from their practices. Why do you dress the way you do? How important is the way you dress to you? How is the way you dress important for your practice?

Ethnicity: Ethnicity is a covert topic in Chile. It is not faced directly and in the last few years it has arisen in connection with Peruvian immigration. I asked about ethnicity mainly in the Plaza, where the Peruvians are.

-How their race is part of their practice. In some cases this is very obvious (the practice of Peruvians sitting at the corner of the Cathedral every day as a strategy for maintaining their network, finding jobs and spending their free time), but in other cases a conversation about ethnicity had more abstract points of departure.

-Ethnicity in terms of their understanding of their condition within the context of the rest of the country.

-Users' level of acceptance of other races. Perception of use of space, work opportunities and bodies of those perceived as Others.

ANNEX 3
LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

In the Park:

1. Carmen, woman in charge of Park library.
2. Danitza, café owner.
3. Alejandro, café owner.
4. María Teresa, café owner.
5. Kote, juggler.
6. Manuel, juggler.
7. Daniel, juggler.
8. Chapa, juggler.
9. Raúl, designer.
10. Rodrigo, cueca singer.
11. Gastón, dog walker.
12. Hilda, street vendor.
13. Loreto, neighbourhood resident.
14. Sebastian, neighbourhood resident.
15. Coni, neighbourhood resident.
16. María Luisa, neighbourhood resident.
17. Julio, café owner.
18. Yolanda, restaurant owner.

Additionally, I had informal conversations with other people such as Sergio, the man in charge of the Park library; Bárbara, nanny; Fernando, passer-by; Luis, gardener; Sebastián, passer-by; Exequiel, juggler; Badogui, capoeira dancer; Felipe, art student; Paz, capoeira dancer; Valentina, high school student; Matilde, dog-walker; Fernando, juggler; Susana, nanny; Rodrígo, capoeira place manager; Sonia, dog-walker; Te-kai company's puppeteers; craftsmen and craftswomen; among others.

In the Plaza:

19. Lalo, chess player.
20. Jano and Javiera, toy vendors.
21. Robinson, painter.
22. Juan, passer-by.
23. Luis, passer-by.
24. Carlos, vendor.
25. Danilo, performer.
26. Turrón, Gordo and Flaco, comics.
27. Johny, Peruvian waiter.
28. Panchita, Peruvian vendor.
29. Nicole, high school student.
30. Úrsula, high school student.
31. Ubilla, shoe-shiner.
32. Luis, photographer.
33. Carlos, tarot reader.
34. Daniela, prostitute.

As in the Park, I had informal conversations with other people in the Plaza. Many of them were passers-by rushing to their duties, pensioners, painters, vendors, photographers, tarot readers, prostitutes, Peruvian immigrants and chess players.

ANNEX 4

GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWS WITH ARCHITECTS ABOUT THE SITES

Regarding Plaza de Armas, I interviewed two architects, members of the studio that redesigned Plaza de Armas (Rodrigo Perez de Arce and Alvaro Salas).

My topics for the interviews were:

-Why it was important to refurbish Plaza de Armas?

-What do they think a main Plaza of a city should be?

-What did they set out to achieve with the changes? What were their design motivations?

-Which design elements did they use to pursue their objectives?

-What are the new project's main achievements?

-What were the main problems in the development of the project?

-How do they think people like the new Plaza?

-Why do they think people say they do not like the Plaza –as it appeared in newspapers when the project was finished?

Regarding Parque Forestal, I interviewed Fernando Perez, an architect who has studied the site in depth. My topics for the interview were:

-What is the importance of Parque Forestal within the city of Santiago?

-How does the Park fit in with the French style architecture developed around the beginning of the twentieth century?

-What have the main physical changes been in the Park since it was built?

-What have the main changes been in the uses of the Park since it was built?

-How does the Park fit into the city in the present time?

-What is the relation between the river and the Park?

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