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Social Forms and Culture Within Miller Park

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SOCIAL FORMS AND CULTURE WITHIN MILLER PARK

Andrew Griffin

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This research explores the physical design and usage of Miller Park in Bloomington, IL for evidence of a cultural lineage to Frederick Law Olmsted and for indications that Miller Park functions as a third place locale as envisioned by Ray Oldenburg. The research also attempts to identify key cultural characteristics of the park, document park use, and assess Miller Park's cultural significance within the local community.

Observation sessions within the park and targeted intercept interviews provide first hand data about park usage and physical design elements. Key informant interviews and historical research were used to provide data about the park's history and its meaning to the local community.

Identifiable civic, military, historic, ceremonial, and familial elements help to reveal a culture of Miller Park. Research indicates that Miller Park is evocative of Olmsted's legacy through specific design elements, broad aesthetic characteristics, and types of observed and reported activities. Elements of Oldenburg's third place are present within Miller Park, however the important characteristic of expected meaningful conversation was not found to be present during observational research and was not mentioned within interview sessions.

Park users interviewed within the park, and key informants from the surrounding community, each portray Miller Park in positive terms, with much of the associated meaning of the park connected to opportunity for contact or interaction with nature. Specific park amenities and characteristics associated with outdoor activity appear to be influential in drawing people to the park. But upon observed and reported data, the park also exhibits some ability to function as community capital within the neighborhood community that it is located.

SOCIAL FORMS AND CULTURE WITHIN MILLER PARK

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Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

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2014

SOCIAL FORMS AND CULTURE WITHIN MILLER PARK

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CHAPTER I
THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

Statement of The Problem

Miller Park in Bloomington, IL was built at a time when the ideas of Frederick Law Olmsted had vast influence within landscape design, and social theory throughout the U.S. (Kowsky 1987), and exists now in a time where places of open public discourse and social engagement are increasingly scarce (Oldenburg 1999). The park is physically situated in an area of Bloomington's West side community that is comprised mostly of a working class demographic, and distinctly different in culture and economic status than it's East side counterpart. As an entity the park has come to be representative of the positive attributes of Bloomington's West side community (interview notes 2013).

As a social space Miller Park represents a unique part of the Bloomington landscape, containing elements of Ray Oldenburg's idea of a third place (Oldenburg 1999), with a heritage that is tied to the park design style envisioned by social theorist and park designer Olmsted (Kowsky 1987). But do these elements fully explain the complex social and cultural space that is Miller Park?

As an early advocate for sustainable human ecology Frederick Olmsted saw the incorporation of parks into urban landscapes as paramount to the social health of expanding cities and towns, to deal with the pressures of urban living, and the feeling of disconnection from nature associated with expanding urban life (Olmsted 1971).

Historically the traditional city park has retained this association as a place of refuge from

urban pressures and blight (Kowsky 1987), with emphasis on solitary, quiet pursuits, and casual neighborly contact. The modern park landscape is part of a legacy of Olmsted's design work (Martin 2011). However, there is evidence that the park has likely increased in complexity of use, over time (Madden 2010, Young 2005) and a broader scope may be needed to fully understand the social functions of such spaces. I believe that Miller Park is a cultural space reflective of its community and users, which contains elements of Oldenburg's Third Place ideals, and which is part of a tradition of park space that has emerged from the design philosophies of Frederick Law Olmsted.

Miller Park has been part of the west Bloomington, IL residential neighborhoods for more than one hundred years. In that time the park's use has become intertwined with the identity of the local neighborhood and the community (Flynn 2008), and it has developed its own unique cultural heritage (Brady-Lunny 2009). There are identifiable historic, civic, and social elements that suggest a culture of Miller Park (Steinbacher-Kemp 2007), and given a unique cultural identity, the park space becomes a "place" which can be identified by the larger outside community via these distinct characteristics (Gieryn 2000). This local neighborhood park also has many of the characteristics of a third place (Oldenburg).

Consistent with classic ideals espoused by Olmsted (1971) as an early park planner and advocate, Miller Park provides opportunity for outdoor recreation, communion with nature, and solitary reflection. These types of opportunities are increasingly scarce within our modern urban environs (White 1996), which may offer explanation as to why people gravitate toward park spaces. The park also serves as a social and cultural platform for exchange and interaction, a place for meeting and for

being met; what Oldenburg might interpret as a third place. As a social space, the park allows for unique culture to take place and develop over time, provides a forum for expression, and is inherently political (Tonkiss 2005).

“Third Place” is a modern sociological concept, which posits that people seek places away from work or home that help fulfill the desire for social connection. These places serve as points of interaction between people, effectively allowing those people to expand their social circle and differentiate their leisure time from work and home life (Oldenburg and Brissett 1982). Americans long for the sense of belonging, and shared identity, which are present within close communities (Miller 1999). The modern urban park can be envisioned as one type of third place that serves socialization and leisure apart from the realms of home and work, but one which I think is unique from other public spaces in form and in function. As the park becomes more of a destination (increases in use), its ability to function as a third place is increased (Oldenburg and Brissett 1982).

Miller Park combines the social and convivial aspects of other meeting places, with the prospect of secluded nature and solitary reflection. The park has many of the characteristics of a third place, primary among these that it provides the setting and opportunity for social interaction, on a continuous basis (Oldenburg and Brissett 1982), however Miller Park is unique among such places due to its complexity of use, its local meanings and cultural output, and its naturalized setting.

Given the artifice of design found in park landscapes, the park is a cultural machination at work (Olmsted 1971, Cronon 1995). Case studies have previously shown increasing complexity of use within modern park spaces (Madden 2010). A careful study

of Miller Park as a social system should likely reveal elements of both social meeting place, and urban sanctuary, suggesting a complex and unique locale. A comprehensive understanding of park life herein should incorporate each of these elements.

Methodology

Operating from a perspective that views the park as part social realm, part urban retreat, I endeavored to formally investigate the use of Miller Park through participant observation research methods, as well as targeted intercept and key informant interviews. Using these multiple frameworks should help to reveal some of the increased complexity of behavior and social diversity suggested by Young (2005) and Madden (2010). The final product is an ethnographic, descriptive account that documents the culture of Miller Park to the extent that my observations allow, focusing specifically on park use at different times and within different areas of the park.

Through this research I am attempting to develop an understanding of the collective cultural significance of Miller Park to the people that use the park, and to ascertain how these diverging elements of the park as third place, and park as urban refuge, play out through specific park behaviors within the Miller Park locale. Classic ideals of park use, those ideals espoused by Olmsted, should be reflected in the uses and activities found within the park, as well as its design elements, while examining the park as a third place should help to provide insight into the more social aspects of park life.

My guiding research questions have been: How are park uses and design elements within this space representative of the classic theoretical ideas of Olmsted? How does the park culture reflect the people who use the space and the greater community? Does this park function as a third place? The resultant ethnographic account is intended to detail

the social and cultural makeup of Miller Park, and to contribute to a sociological understanding of this specific park space.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Background

It is perhaps due to their seemingly ubiquitous presence within American cities that parks have not garnered wide-spread attention in the world of urban sociology, or perhaps it is that the value of parks seems self-evident that has precluded them from more extensive study. This may represent a failure on the part of sociologists to build upon the work of human ecology sociologists such as Robert Park and Ernest Burgess (Sallee 1979), and further research is certainly called for in this regard (Sallee 1979).

Frederick Law Olmsted was a social critic, writer and world traveler, who wrote about the benefits of parks as social spaces. Olmsted won acclaim as a landscape architect and designer, though he viewed himself ultimately as a public servant (Rybczynski 1999). As an influential figure on park design and development within the United States, Olmsted conceptualized park-space as having a calming and rejuvenating effect on the citizens within urban locales. In Olmsted's estimation park spaces existed as a means for the city to achieve higher moral character, through the relief that exposure to the elements of nature was thought to provide, as well as through access to recreational opportunity (Olmsted 1971). In Olmsted's view, the park was the place that reinvigorated the spirits of city dwellers, and made these environments more livable through contact with elements commonly found in more Primitive or natural settings, like water, trees, fresh air, open space and grass land (Twombly 2010).

Though Olmsted designed spaces for personal leisure and respite, he was mindful of the cultural aspect of park life, wanting his parks to reflect and enhance their surroundings with “a character of magnificence, admirably adapted to be associated with stately ceremonies, the entertainment of public guests, and other occasions of civic display” (Martin 2011:292). Olmsted’s philosophies and designs have influenced nearly every American city (Kowsky 1987), and were informed through his travels to European cities and his rural, leisure rides on horse and buggy (Martin 2011).

According to Olmsted, a city without parks would cut off access to the wonderment and inspiration of nature, what he called “God’s handiwork”, especially among the less economically prosperous citizens (Martin 2001:146). Olmsted felt the park could allow for both solitary reflection and neighborly interaction within similar spaces, enhancing the lives of those who partake in these opportunities (Olmsted 1971). His park landscape designs were intended to help revitalize human spirits through relative tranquility, and yet allow for casual interaction and exchange with friends or strangers along a promenade or walking path (Martin 2011), indicating that Olmsted was cognizant of the third place type of social potential for park interactions.

These types of interactions are now heralded as contributing to greater social bonds within communities (Sallee 1979, Oldenburg 1999, Whyte 2003). The use of public space within a community is influenced by numerous and often competing interests. Sociologist Fran Tonkiss succinctly sums up the argument for the importance of public spaces thusly, “The distortion or disappearance of public space can be seen as an index of the weakening of public life and also a causal factor in its decay.” (Tonkiss, 2003)

Olmsted's thoughts on space and social connectedness were developed after having traveled extensively in the rural South as a writer, studying Southern economy. The great distances between the ruralized, agrarian, citizens, led to a sort of cultural vacuum, where social connectedness was practically nonexistent. Olmsted espoused multiple common spaces within cities, such as he employed in his design plan for Riverside, IL, which would draw people together, fostering social bonds and cultural development (Martin 2011).

Planning for park-space inclusion in public design was of concern to Olmsted, who viewed cities as *necessarily* expanding over time, and thus becoming more pressure filled for the people who live there (Twombly 2010). Access to nature, via the public park, was an antidote to the ills of urban living. By making these spaces widely accessible, people would have some refuge from forced contact and interaction, thereby allowing the unique pressure of urban life to be dissipated, and quality of life to be enhanced (Olmsted 1971). Olmsted was among the first to assert that environmental health leads to social health and community vitality. He wrote, “ the further progress of civilization is to depend mainly upon the influences by which men's minds and characters will be affected while living in large towns” (Olmsted 1971:64). Ultimately Olmsted viewed himself as a public servant, tasked with helping to make urban space more livable for the broad swath of humanity (Martin 2011).

Urban Nature Access

Olmsted's prediction that cities would inevitably expand over time has played out in the years since. In 2008, the world crossed a threshold among the population, as more people now live in urban environments than live in rural areas, a first in human history.

By 2050, as much as 70% of the world's population will live within urban areas (Husqvarna Report 2012). In many of the world's most urbanized areas, green spaces are disappearing at an alarming rate (Husqvarna Report 2012). Given the change in our built environs and our change in work in the post-industrial world, human beings are no longer connected to nature in the same way we once were (Richard White 1996). Human's now have within them a longing for connection to their own nature and to this end people seek out opportunities for connection to nature within their urban lifestyle (Cronon 1996). This condition is exacerbated, given that within modern built environments we are simply further away from the physical realities of nature (Cronon 1996).

This reduced exposure to natural elements that Olmsted spoke of, has been detrimental to human development (White 1996). White feels that our human bodies blur the lines between the natural world and the world of man, but the idea of mankind apart from nature is a myth, that can lead to gross mismanagement of natural resources (White 1996). Human's once needed the built environment to shelter themselves from the realities of natural elements, but with the change in cultural meaning of nature (post urbanization) people seek the energy and spirituality found through recreation in the outdoors. Man now seeks refuge from the indoors, spurring a culture which pursues nature in a domesticated form (White 1996).

Though we are able to meet our physical needs for sustenance and shelter, we have become disassociated from our own naturalness as humans (Cronon 1996). People seek out opportunities for contact with that which is perceived as natural, or which exhibits nature and allows them to be placed within such a realm (Cronon 1996), suggesting that Olmsted's park use theories still have merit within modern park spaces.

People also crave places that allow for casual and disassociated social contact with others, within recreational environments, and a dearth of such spaces is detrimental to social cohesion (Oldenburg 1999). The park is a unique public sphere in which each of these types of pursuits exists.

The park space in Olmsted's mind is envisioned as *democratic* space to be enjoyed by the citizens, both in groups, and as individuals, but without regards to social status (Kowsky 1987); this type of access and social leveling are elements of third place characteristics as well (Oldenburg and Brissett 1982). People seek out places outside of work and home, in which to socialize (Oldenburg 1999) a function that an open park space can fulfill. Currently, public places including parks are often seen as disappearing from the landscape (Madden 2010), which may be linked to their under-valuation in terms of economic measurement (Berry 1976).

Human Ecology

Olmsted's theories can be thought of as informing the human ecology movement. Among the primary aspirations of the urban human ecology movement was "an understanding of the relationship between the social organization of the city and its spatial layout" (Baldassare 1978:30). Unfortunately for those of us interested in spatial relationships within the social realm, this aspiration has gone largely unfulfilled (Baldassare 1978). This is not to say that there is no basis in previous sociology from which to draw, and with a proper conceptualization of the issue there are numerous works to help understand the sociology of these spaces.

Michael Stubbs (1996) has written on proposed minimal green space guidelines for urban areas, of which parks are a component. Stubbs work attempts to codify a set of

standards, which would be seen as requirements within built environments, hoping to guide public policy and future development, in assuring future allocation of space to parks and green space (Stubbs 1996). French architect and urban-design theorist Le Corbusier thought that by putting his buildings within naturalized, park-like settings, the pressures of living so close to fellow humans could be alleviated (Woudstra 2000).

Chicago School

Parks are part of the urban built environment, and there is certainly research on how urbanized environments influence social development. Urban sociologists most often date their theoretical nadir to the works of Chicago School theorists Lewis Mumford and Louis Wirth, famous for studying the effects of urban pressures upon their inhabitants. Mumford explored what elements make up a city, “In it’s complete sense a geographic plexus, an economic organization, an institutional process, a theater of social action, and an aesthetic symbol of collective unity” (Mumford 2006:94).

Wirth explored the social lifestyle of urban existence, of which park life would be a component, part of what he called “complex traits that make up the characteristic mode of life in cities” (Wirth 2006:98). In Wirth’s conception, the city reflected a changing interaction of components each of which affected numerous others, to form a larger entity, reflective of its component pieces, but greater than the sum of its parts (Wirth 2006). Miller Park should reflect some of this complexity of use and meaning, and ultimately reveal itself to be the product of numerous cultural influences as well as physical elements, both built and natural.

Park spaces are built elements along the urban landscape, though not all built elements serve social connectedness, part of why it is important to study spatial usage

and its impact on community. Lyn Lofland (1998) has shown how “sprawl” has an objectionable effect upon human social bonds and urban livability, a factor that parks should help to minimize (Olmsted 1971). According to Lofland (1998), the built environment affects how and where interaction can take place, and the content of that information as well, and open park space such as what Miller Park provides would be seen as desirable.

By designing spaces for social use with concepts such as scale and functionality, we can influence peripheral issues such as crime. William Whyte points out that when the physical elements of public spaces are designed with these concepts in mind, people are more apt to use them, and the more average (non-criminal) people use an area, the less likely crimes of opportunity become (Whyte 2003). Within park spaces then, it is people who regulate the activity through their own usage (Whyte 2003). Fran Tonkiss (2005) has identified elements within the built environment that allow for “control by design” of the citizens by the government, showing how built environs can work quite contrarily to Olmsted’s ideals for a type of freedom through design.

The Politics of Space

Space itself is inherently political (Tonkiss), in that there are rules for control, access and use, and public space can be the platform for protest and assembly. Park spaces are not different in this regard. In interpreting the park space as political platform, Janet Abu-Lughod (1994), has written about how park spaces are reflective of their constituents. Specifically she has written about Tomkins Square Park in New York City, as political battleground, and about the battle for its spatial usage rights among disparate parties (Abu-Lughod 1994). In this sense the park is very much social capital upon which

demonstrators may gain a foothold, and indeed provides insight into the democratic access vs. control debate. It would seem that park spaces offer mostly democratic access, though that access can sometimes be physically blocked or feel otherwise restricted.

An often-cited work by Kaplan, et al (1978) was among the first that demonstrated people prefer natural scenes to urban landscapes, and preference is given to landscapes that appear to foster survivability and health. This gives backing to the idea that people will gravitate towards park spaces and use them based upon the landscape that they offer, as Olmsted (1971) surmised. Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) have affirmed that proximity to nature is viewed as favorable, and that the quality of openness is a predictor of preference.

Parks and green spaces may also be contributing to safer neighborhoods by providing the type of environmental qualities that have shown positive impacts among city dwellers. Greening of areas within urban landscapes has shown to have an influence on crime reduction in those areas (Wolfe and Mennis 2012, Kuo and Sullivan 2001). People also report feeling safer in urban areas that have had undergone greening initiatives, where vacant lots were converted to green spaces (Garvin et al 2012).

There is strong sentiment that green spaces such as parks can contribute to communal ties, and improve a neighborhood. Such spaces can function as a “hub of public social life” (Husqvarna Report 2012:22). Within cities, spaces that contain vegetation are more vital, supporting a higher level of social behaviors (Sullivan et al 2004). Park spaces, which contain trees and other natural elements, are more likely to be used than similarly located spaces which do not feature such natural features, especially for residents within *densely* populated areas (Sullivan 2004). These spaces are also

frequently mentioned as areas to be protected even in the face of neighborhood improvement strategies (Sullivan 2004). Park spaces are more likely to be used when they enhance the qualities of urban existence and provide diverse possibilities of use (Burgess 2005). Urban green spaces help to make city ecologies more livable by helping to combat urban hot spot issues, filtering storm water runoff, and absorbing air born pollutants, in addition to providing places for exercise and congregation (Husqvarna Report 2012).

Open public spaces can be areas of democratic social inclusion, as Olmsted envisioned, or stratified exclusion (Madanipour 2003). Accessibility plays a key role in the level of enjoyment people get out of a place (Berry 1976), as such Miller Park should reflect primarily how localized residents (those with the greatest level of access) use the space. Herzog and Kaplan have shown that preference for *style* of landscape is culturally correlated (Herzog et al. 2000). Cultural preference could explain why an Olmsted style design might be employed in a park of this age, given the milieu of the time being so informed by Olmsted's design work (Kowsky 1987).

Park spaces can encourage certain types of healthy behaviors. People report being more likely to exercise when they have increased access to parks or other green spaces (De Sousa 2006). Research suggests that people with access to green spaces are not only more likely to exercise, but are less likely to report feeling stressed, angry, or depressed, when living in urban environs (Husqvarna Report 2012). Numerous eco-therapy researchers have shown spiritual, mental, and physical, benefits from exposure to park-like green spaces (Burls 2007), however there is a gap in showing how this translates to social health. Burls also refers to both built-environment and lifestyle as determining

factors in neighborhood health with lifestyle being among the most controllable factors, and park spaces being beneficial for each (Burls 2007). Access to nature and green space has shown benefits for maintaining health in long-term residential-care patients as well (Kearney and Winterbottom 2005).

New Urbanism

The design ethos known as New Urbanism fundamentally believes that the physical environs within urban areas can be sculpted to create the feeling of “community”. In this vein, emphasis is placed on parks and other public spaces that offer opportunities for unique chance-encounters, with neighbors, thereby strengthening communal bonds (Talen 1999), effectively designing public places into the landscape. Satisfaction with where we live is also affected by aesthetic beauty, a value that is held across social class lines (Husqvarna Report 2012). Some cities, such as Vancouver, and Singapore, have sought to differentiate themselves among a global marketplace by pursuing strategies to add more green spaces within their urban areas (Husqvarna Report 2012).

At their base level parks exist as design elements within the physical environment. Jane Jacobs (1961) famously wrote about sidewalks among numerous other built elements, describing how these once ubiquitous design elements contribute to social life, and how their disappearance has had adverse effects. Jane Jacobs’ theories about space and physical elements are reflected in New Urbanist ideals, and seem to mirror Olmsted’s (1971) ideas that planning for urban pressures can make these spaces more livable. Parks are now seen as contributing not only to the mental health and

physical well being of urban citizens, but also to fostering social capital (Baur and Tynon 2010).

Green Space and Access

Within some cities, the demand for recreation areas has been tempered by a lack of green spaces for parks, spurring the use of streets and other areas for recreation purposes (Wilson et al 2012). Parks and green spaces have also been designed within recent years, as means of rejuvenating decaying urban areas and making them more citizen friendly (Siikamaki and Wernstedt 2008). One such example of this is the transformational project on Manhattan's High Line freight train passage. By turning the physical rail structures into garden passages, a new park was created in the heart of Manhattan, complete with flowers, plants, birds and walking paths. One rallying point of the project that it helped to preserve the history of the High Line, a neighborhood cultural touchstone, while creating new usage, and greater localized access to greenspace (N.Y. Times 11-2-2003). The High Line is considered a great success, attaining public status as a landmark, and is now a model that other cities are pursuing as an avenue for increasing available park space (Broder 2013).

Urban green spaces including parks and community gardens can be used to affect environmental equity (Ferris et al. 2001). Elements in the built environment are also reflected in the cultural imagery of a city (Bridger 1996), such as the use of Miller Park as an icon for the city of Bloomington. Visiting parks is seen as a way to get away from urban settings by people who live there (Burgess 2005). The urban park landscape is not so much an escape but a relaxation of sensory assault and safety from hustle and bustle,

along with all of the requisite health and social implications that the space and outdoor setting can offer (Burgess 2005).

Olmsted emphasized that to realize the greatest level of benefit to citizens park spaces should be easy to access (Olmsted 1971). Access is among the numerous objective and subjective factors in determining how and if a greenspace gets used, as affirmed by Stubbs (1998), and Burgess, et al (2005). Access is also a characteristic of control by design (Whyte 2003). People with greater amounts of park space available to them are more likely to use parks within urban settings, though proximity to said parks does not appear to be a causal factor in their use. (Lin 2014). People who express an orientation towards “nature” are also more likely to use park spaces, as well as to spend time within their own yards as a means of enjoying nature (Lin 2014). Groups that experience social or physical impediments, towards use of greenspaces are less likely to value or use such spaces or to incorporate them into their daily life (Seaman et al. 2010).

By the early part of the 20th century, parks were already under pressure to modify their spaces to accommodate a greater number of recreational opportunities, and move away from pastoral designs (Taylor 1910). Complexity of park uses has increased over time (Madden 2005), and Terence Young (1995) describes the shift in uses within a particular area of San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park as showing how use of spaces can become reflective of their users. Young envisions the park space as responding to its users changing interest, in deciding the overall ethos of park design. When the public showed a desire towards creating specific athletic fields, a design ethos against such types of social segregation was changed to allow for activity specific uses, as opposed to the larger, open, non-defined space that had previously existed in the spot. Young views this

type of segmentation as at least moderately moving away from garden style landscapes, to use specific designs. (Young 1995)

Sociologists exploring what makes for adequate green space reserves, point out that developing standards of adequacy for total park reserves is exceptionally difficult, given diversity of personal choice and expression within the activities that take place at public parks (Stubbs 1998). Rest, relaxation and contact with nature are among the benefits to be enjoyed at city parks, as well as the chance for recreational activity (Butler, 1956), all of which reflect the ideals of Olmsted.

Space and Meaning

The more a space is used the greater the number of qualities that impart the sense of place (Gieryn 2000). This transformation takes place as people ascribe “qualities to the material and social stuff gathered there” through collective culture (Gieryn 2000:472). Park use and increased complexity then lead to greater opportunity for cultural meaning within the community (Davenport et al 2010).

Park spaces are often under pressure for economic development (Berry 1975). The values which people often ascribe to open spaces (utility, functional, contemplative, aesthetic, recreational, and ecological values), may lose out to the one value that developers place greatest emphasis upon, which is economic value (Berry 1975). However, in demonstrating how humans express preference for such spaces, Bolitzer and Netusil (2000) have shown how access to parks and similar open spaces can positively affect housing values in the immediate surrounding areas. Natural settings, such as parks, provide multiple benefits beyond their recreational use, and people even develop emotional bonds to such spaces (Davenport et al 2010)

There is room for further study surrounding green space and its effects on the human condition (Jorgensen and Gobster 2010). There remain numerous questions about the green elements within “green space.” What are the qualities of biodiversity and ecological makeup that equate to good spaces? How does each element within such spaces contribute to improved well-being? (Jorgensen and Gobster 2010).

Summary

Given the park’s interplay of space and social actors, it would make sense that elements of Oldenburg’s (1982) third place concept would be present within this realm. Some scholars do view parks as possible third places (Husqvarna Report 2012). People are able to gather here within a shared space and inter-mingle in a setting that encourages random interaction and chance meeting, but also allows for some sense of the familiar. The idea of third place is at least partly reflective of Olmsted’s design beliefs, in which he called for spaces suitable for “receptive” and “neighborly” recreation (Olmsted 1971:74). Toward this end Olmsted incorporated the use of promenades, as he had witnessed in Europe and elsewhere having brought people together: “with evident glee in the prospect of coming together, all classes largely represented, with a common purpose, not at all intellectual, ...each individual adding by his mere presence to the pleasure of all others, all helping to the greater happiness of each.” (Olmsted 1971:75)

An ethnographic account of the Miller Park space based upon repeat observations, should help to augment understanding of what is a complex and diverse social space (Madden 2010). By studying the unique cultural and social significance of this particular space, its role within and meaning to the local community can be ascertained. In

addition a better understanding of the complex, social-framework of Miller Park should emerge.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

This research was conducted primarily through participant observation sessions within the Miller Park locale. The observation sessions were designed to directly discern how people use the park space, independent of the observer's presence, as well as to gain knowledge of the general social organization of Miller Park. Written notes were taken focusing on the use, physical characteristics, and cultural aspects of the park, with the intent of creating a descriptive ethnographic account of the culture of this unique space.

The observational data were combined with targeted intercept and key informant interviews, as well as research from various archival sources including McLean Co. Historical Museum archives, newspaper accounts, and other historical reference, to develop a temporal sense of the culture of Miller Park. Such cultural artifacts include newspaper articles, scholarly papers, postcards and ephemera relating to Miller Park, events and activities, or historical moments.

The observational research time period began on April 15 and continued until September 1, 2013. Observational research was designed to include *at least* two of each of the following time periods: morning, afternoon, evening, weekend morning, weekend afternoon, and were conducted for at least one hour each.. A total of 14 formal observation sessions were conducted where notes were recorded regarding park activities and use. The final total included four morning, four afternoon, two evening, two weekend morning and two weekend afternoon sessions, using varied locations throughout

the park to account for the diversity of use found within the park. Two of the observation sessions were conducted in April, two in May, five in June, three were conducted in July, and two in August. Two additional observation sessions were conducted in May, strictly documenting the physical characteristics of the park.

Observation sessions were conducted utilizing multiple vantage points within the park, spending appropriate time at each vantage point as to record sufficient notes about the day's activities and uses. Notes were analyzed to develop themes of use, which could show patterns of behavior within Miller Park, and to develop an overall cultural depiction of the park and its constituents. Extracted themes were then used to find similarities or differences to ideals on park use espoused by Olmsted, and compared to Oldenburg's criteria for third place locales.

Because inclement weather could have a deterring effect on outdoor activity, observations were performed during times where weather conditions were favorable for people to use the park (minimal chances of rain or bad weather). The varied time periods were intended to allow for observations to take place with different numbers of park occupants, and account for the nebulous social composition, which is found within the park.

Two types of interviews were employed to further develop the data on park usage and meaning among its constituent groups. Targeted intercept interviews were conducted with park users within the park, and key informant interviews conducted with community members who have special knowledge or ties to the park. The interviews were intended to allow participants and informants to describe their park usage in their own terms, to help discern the cultural significance of the park, and to gain greater insight into what

park attributes users find most appealing or important. The targeted intercept interviews were conducted concurrent with the observational research, through my intercept of people within the public park spaces, using short, open-ended questions (see appendix for questionnaire). “Semi structured interviewing and observation offer us the most systematic opportunity for the collection of qualitative data” (Schensul et al. 1999:164). Interview notes were again analyzed for themes of use that relate to Olmsted and Oldenburg.

Thirteen independent, discrete, targeted intercepts were conducted. Adults over the age of eighteen were the only park users to be interviewed and they were read a statement of informed consent prior to the interview. Protected populations were excluded from this study. Thematic analysis was used to develop and group related themes, to help discern how park users qualify their own use as it relates to established social theories. Using Provisional Coding (Saldana 2009), allows for grouping of shared or common themes within interview responses. These shared themes are the basis for my data analysis.

A total of seven key informant interviews were conducted to as a means of bringing some outside meaning of the park into the descriptive account, and to elaborate on the meaning of the park space to those people who have a relationship with it. Interview accounts have been used as supporting material throughout the ethnographic description of the park, to help illustrate some of that which is unique about the park space.

Using mixed Ethnographic methods is intended to allow for connecting much of the sociological theory that already exists surrounding park spaces, into a more cohesive

theoretical understanding of a specific setting. “Ethnographic research is constructed recursively, it begins with a set of connected ideas that undergoes continuous redefinition throughout the life of the study until the ideas are finalized and interpreted at the end” (Schensul, et al. 1999).

My own knowledge and experience as an entrenched community member, park user and an active participant in local culture is the final part of this research. Having spent countless hours within the environs of this specific park helped me to understand through observation, the broad array of use found herein. This material has been woven into a narrative of the unique park space and it’s inhabitants, from which analysis has been conducted and interpretation of meanings extracted. The research is informed by the ideals of Frederick Law Olmsted as well as Ray Oldenburg’s Third Place theory, and as such these theories offer opportunity for critical analysis and interpretation of interview responses as well as observed behaviors.

The study is designed to increase socio-cultural understanding of a specific park space through the use of mixed ethnographic methods. By looking at micro-level interactions and behaviors, I hope to ascertain a level of understanding about Miller Park as a complex system of social actors. “Ethnographers engage in bottom-up inductive thinking, they generalize from concrete data to more abstract or general principles” (Le Compte 1999:16).

This particular park space has been selected in part due to its location, surrounded by residential neighborhoods, making it attractive for studying the interplay of space and human interaction. It is hoped that this park space may be representative of numerous

other spaces throughout the modern urban environment, and that some understanding may be gained about parks as social spaces in a more general sense.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Miller Park History

Founded in 1889, Miller Park is the city's oldest public park, and has been a featured landmark of cultural relevance to the city, appearing on early postcards, and being the center of numerous civic events such as the Fourth of July holiday fireworks (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Archives). Within Bloomington this would be considered the city's most prominent and iconic park. Historically the park has been featured on cultural ephemera such as postcards, as a depiction of Bloomington, IL and life herein. The park has been the focus of much public discourse as well (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Archives). The city has invested considerable resources over time to develop, maintain, and promote the park, and Bloomington has plans to double the amount of available park space in the city by the year 2025 (Guetersloh 2006).

Miller Park is the second largest park within the city of Bloomington, occupies 67.6 acres of land upon the city's southwest side, contains a zoo, bandstand, pavilion, sporting fields, a lake, numerous recreation areas (CityBlm.org), and it became the city's second park, its first *public* park, when it opened in 1889 (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Archives). The city of Bloomington has a citywide master park plan that operates under Illinois Department of Natural Resources guidelines for park planning

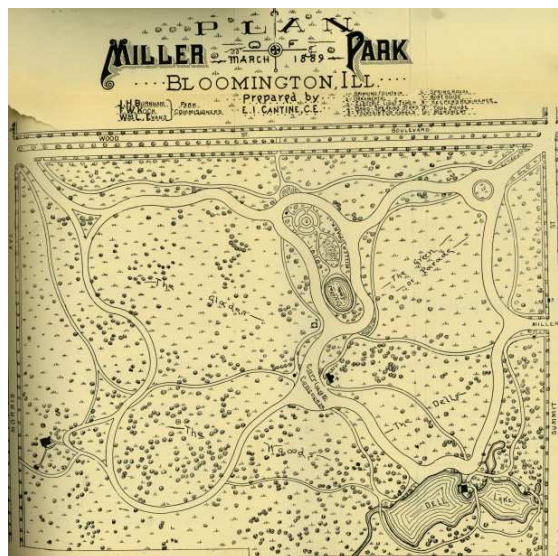
(Guetersloh 2006). Bloomington reported a total population of 74,975 in 2010 (CityBlm.org). The park was brought into existence through an act of the Bloomington City Council in February 1889, giving approval to plans developed for the land, which had been previously purchased from the heirs of James Miller of Bloomington for the sum of \$17,000. Miller had instructed his heirs to sell the land at a discount to the city if they would use it for the park and they followed his wishes (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Archives).

Further contribution from the Miller family came when the city had a budget shortfall of \$5000. The Miller's contributed \$500 towards the shortfall, with the stipulation that the park be named in the family's honor. The city agreed with the stipulation. Though its amenities and usage have changed over the years, much of the original park layout design remains relatively intact, as does its name, tying its modern use to its beginnings (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Archives).

From its inception the park has been a part of the Bloomington cultural landscape, invoking public discourse on the park's location, design, need, use, and benefits, much of which played out in articles and editorials within the city's newspapers of the time (Pantagraph 1889). Through the decades, the park has remained a topic of public interest and debate (Guetersloh 2006). Images of the park began to be used as representations of Bloomington, on postcards and other memorabilia items (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Archives). The park began to be revered as a place where families could relax, recreational enthusiasts could congregate, and the beauty of nature could be enjoyed.

Park Layout and Design

The physical layout of the park is its most tangible characteristic and one whose attributes may be examined for ties to the design philosophies of Olmsted. The original plan (fig. 1) for Miller Park presented the space in a more or less unadorned state, with an emphasis on space and natural beauty as the primary attraction for the park, evoking elements of Olmsted's legacy (Kowsky 1987). Carriage paths and sidewalks, a band stage, a boathouse, a zoo enclosure, a drinking fountain, and an electric lamp post, were among the very few listed "improvements" to be made for the space. (McLean Co Museum of History: Plan of Miller Park March 1889)



Source: Image Property of McLean Co. Museum of History. Reprinted with Permission.

Figure 1. Original Park Plan of 1889

The park space remains in much the same spatial configuration that the original design shows, though with the addition over time of numerous amenities, including the bandstand, pavilion, war memorials, playground, and expanded lake (observation notes 2013). The physical space of Miller Park accommodates the numerous uses observed and reported within the park. An account and examination of the physical space helps to

better understand how this space contributes to a unique culture of Miller Park, and investigate the presence of ties to the design ethos of Olmsted.

The northeast portion of the park, bordered by Wood and Summit streets was developed as what the planners called the “parade”. This space was intended to retain its grassy area and trees, and to be used for “games, parades, exhibitions, drills.” It was deemed that the trees and grass should be preserved in this area “if possible, to all future time” (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Archives). Similar parade style spaces can be found throughout Olmsted’s park design work including his Long Meadow design within Prospect Park in Brooklyn, NY (Martin 2011), and Buffalo Park (Kowsky 1987). Emphasis within the plan was placed on retaining the trees and grass as attractive features of this area, and these features remain largely intact today, with wooded picnic areas surrounding the greatest portion of the outside, and an open field used for ballgames and other types of recreation. This early emphasis on preserving and promoting existing elements of nature within the park ties the park design to the prevailing park philosophy of the time as espoused by Olmsted (Twombly 2010).

The northwestern portion of the park was referred to as “the glades” within the original plan. Planners foresaw the areas between the trees within this section as a spot for “boys’ and girls’ playground”, and suggested little in the way of improvement other than adding some sidewalks and drives which “would permeate all parts of the park” (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Archives). Physically, this area today appears almost as described in that original plan, with playground and picnic areas, though also with the addition of a memorial space for soldiers from the Vietnam and Korean wars. The glades mimic the copses of trees that Olmsted carefully orchestrated in

his park designs to create inner divisions of space within park settings, well suited for relaxation or intimate conversation (Olmsted 1971, Martin 2011).

The southeast area of the park was labeled “ the dells” within the original plan, and was seen as a prime location for lake improvements intended for fishing and boating purposes. The planners noted an “absence of water surfaces in this vicinity” and as to the lake’s enlargement, emphasized “the strongest, possible argument for these purposes” (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Archives). Over time the original pond has been enlarged at least two different times, now extending the entire width of the southern part of the park (MCMH), and marking perhaps the largest physical departure from the original park layout, though keeping very much with the founders plan.

The middle corridor of the park was referred to as “ the woods” on the original park plan, and though many mature trees still occupy this area, it now also includes the park pavilion, part of the zoo grounds, and some playground equipment. Little in the way of improvements had been prescribed for this area within the original park plan, other than the sweeping park roadway that winds through here. Similar to Olmsted style designs (Martin 2011), the park planners plotted roadways that wound through the park space rather than transecting it. The roads laid-out as carriage paths on the original design look much like the roads found within the park today (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Archives). This centralized area of the park has in years past been home to events such as the Bloomington Cultural Festival, where food vendors, and informational booths line the roadway adjacent to the activities on the stage such as music, dance and speeches by community leaders. The festival celebrates the diversity of

ethnicity found within Bloomington, which is a characteristic of the city's west side where the park is located (Brady-Lunny 2009).

To the east of the main road passing south, are a ball field, and a promenade (walkway), which runs north and south from the memorial area to the stands at the ball field, terminating at the roadway. Near this point is the stage area that is used for various performance events. Theater in the park happens here at times during the summer, along with various band or musical performances (CityBlm.org). There are benches here for theater seating. Attendance at some events that I have witnessed has been what I would estimate into hundreds of people (observation notes 2013).

Located immediately east of the promenade is the parade ground, part of which is made up by the baseball field. There is a backstop behind the home-plate area, and some small sections of bleachers for observing the play on the field. The ball field serves as a space for sports and recreation, but is also a green space that blends with the other elements of the park (observation notes 2013). On the north end of the parade ground, the field is affixed with cannons that face south, giving the ball field the appearance of a battlefield as well. The cannons are part of the Soldiers and Sailors monument (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Archives).

Across the northern border of the park, stretching from the parade grounds on the east side to the west side glades, are three separate military memorials. There is the Korea and Vietnam War memorial garden area in the northwest corner of the park. Near the park's main entrance are the battle implements used in World Wars I and II. The northeast corner houses a prominent statue and is adorned with plaques dedicated to early

U.S. conflicts including the Spanish American war and Civil War, with the plaques displaying the names of the war dead from McLean county (observation notes 2013).

Near the south end of the ball field are some restrooms and a snack bar area, which I have seen used at some park events. There are picnic tables and benches here for people to use. The physical space of the park, its abundance, and the amenities of inner park spaces such as this, are just part of the resources to the area residents and community members, made available by the park (observation notes 2013).

Within the original park plans, the planners made note of their lack of detailed improvements for many areas of the park, saying that economic uncertainty prevented them from pursuing a more elaborate plan. Though natural beauty and preservation were clearly part of the park plan, the planners foresaw an idealized space of constructed beauty within the park (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Plan of 1889). Park planners also proposed creating a plan of beautification for the park, utilizing the cultural design milieu of the day. While they don't refer to Olmsted by name, the planners mention specifically that the "highest and best developed parts of the park, calls for an immediate adoption of the most perfect and elaborate detailed plans that the present development of landscape art can devise" (McLean Co. Museum of History: Miller Park Plan of 1889). To this end the park has always been a place, which celebrates the natural landscape, but pursues the qualities of picturesque beauty over a truly natural state. The park also prominently features numerous cultural artifacts that adorn the space and contribute to the park's cultural identity (Gieryn 2000).

Cultural and Historic Artifacts and Elements Within the Park

Part of the physical landscape and the cultural legacy of Miller Park is comprised of artifacts of historical significance to the City of Bloomington and County of McLean, located within the park. These items preserve elements of history and shared experience and help to connect the park's modern existence to the past. The elements appear to function as reminders of Bloomington's unique cultural heritage (observation notes 2013). These physical artifacts stand in contrast to the natural elements of the park, but are nonetheless elements of the park's overall character and help to impart meaning upon the park space (Gieryn 2000). Such elements would be considered by Olmsted to be accessories to the park space, employed as items of contrast and context to the landscape that they inhabit (Twombly 2010).

Military and War Monuments

The Soldiers and Sailors Monument (fig. 2) located in the northeast corner of the park is dedicated to the memory of soldiers killed in early American wars. Constructed of granite, with bronze sculptural adornments, the monument features 3 distinct figural representations referred to as "The Color Bearer", "Anxiety" and "Picket" depicting the bravery and peril of soldiers at war. Constructed for a cost of \$41,750 the sum represents a significant outlay of funds for 1912-13, when it was built (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Archives).



Figure 2. The Soldiers and Sailors Monument

The monument rivals some of the taller trees in the park at 81 feet 10 inches, with a center column that weighs 32 tons. Prominent Bloomington architect David Frink was the designer, and materials and craftsmen were sourced from Chicago and Vermont among other places (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Archives). Within the interior arches of the monument are bronze plaques listing the names of 6,053 soldiers from Bloomington and McLean County, or those who enlisted outside of McLean County, who are now buried here. Of the names, more than 4,000 were killed during the Civil War. Other wars honored by this memorial include the Black Hawk War, War of 1812, Mexican War, the Spanish American War, and 11 names from the Revolutionary War that are buried within Bloomington cemeteries (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Archives). The monument presents itself as one of honorific remembrance and acknowledgement of military service (observation notes 2013).

The monument, being part of the collective cultural identity of the park, is one of the more prominent features within the park, and was dedicated at the park on Memorial Day, May 13, 1913, with much herald and celebration. The day's events included a

parade with marching band, invocation, a speech by former Vice-President Adlai Stevenson, a flag drill on the parade grounds and performance of the military anthem “Taps” (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Archives). Though great pomp and reverence accompanied the monument’s arrival, it has incurred some vandalism over the years, and sometimes used for a place to hang out, with what appears as little regard for its history or solemn origins (observation notes 2013). The monument reflects a cultural value of venerating those who have passed in the service of our country, helping to tie that legacy to Miller Park, and to the city of Bloomington (observation notes 2013).

The World Wars I and II war implements, (fig. 3) parked along the Wood street border near its central entrance, act as monuments to the wars and again to those soldiers who fought and served during those wars. The guns appear as a physical reminder of war but do not give the feeling of memorial or somber reflection found at the other two war monuments within the park (observation notes 2013). Unlike the other memorials within the park, there is no list of names of the war dead near these implements, which include an artillery canon and two different types of tank vehicles. A plaque that had once been affixed to one of the guns is now missing, likely due to theft or vandalism (observation notes 2013).



Figure 3. World Wars I and II War Implements

A repeat observed activity here is people playing and climbing on the implements, or taking pictures on and around them (observation notes 2013). The implements may remind passers by that war has been a major event in American history, part of our shared experience, but they appear to serve more as a celebration of “success” and triumph; these vehicles were not lost in the fight, they returned from the war once their duty was done and now hold a position of honor within the park (observation notes 2013).

This site within the park also once featured a canon retrieved from a Spanish galleon, though that gun was sacrificed and scrapped during a local World War II war drive effort (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Archives). Through honorific remembrance, ceremonial celebration, physical monuments and historic preservation, and with a legacy of contribution, Miller Park’s cultural history has indelible ties to the military history of the United States (observation notes 2013).

Situated in the northwest corner of the park bordered by Wood and Morris streets, immediately north of the zoo, is a memorial (fig. 4) and garden area dedicated to soldiers who served and were killed or are considered missing in action from the Korean and Vietnam wars. The sight displays granite headstones with the names of the war dead or missing from the area, including counties outside of McLean. The center point of the memorial garden is a large granite alter and three flag poles, displaying the flags from Illinois and The United States, as well as one which says POW MIA on it. The northern edge of the garden area features an earthen berm with ornamental trees, the effect of which seems to be helping to shelter and seclude the area from the nearby street (observation notes 2013).



Figure 4. The Korea and Vietnam Wars Memorial

The area is shaded with large trees, and there are benches present near the headstones, which allow for rest and contemplation within the memorial garden. These wars being the most recent of wars honored within the park, there are names depicted here of people who likely have living relatives, and I observe flowers placed near a headstone as a traditional act of remembrance (observation notes 2013). The flags here are illuminated at nighttime, and are sometimes flown at half-mast, as another traditional form of reverence or remembrance (observation notes 2013).

Bloomington Courthouse Remnants

The fire of 1900, which obliterated a large part of downtown Bloomington, IL including the courthouse (Steinbrecher-Kemp 2007), has had a residual effect on the landscape of present day Miller Park. In no less than three identifiable locations within the park, are items once integral to the courthouse structure. The bridge along Summit Street at the east end of the lake, as well as the pedestrian bridge which transects the center of the lake, and the metal dome which occupies the lawn south of the pavilion, all feature materials that originated at Bloomington's first courthouse, that were relocated after the fire (Steinbrecher-Kemp, 2007).

At the far eastern edge of the lake, the water drains to an area running beneath Summit Street (observation notes 2013). The Summit Street Bridge (fig. 5) is of stone construction, with multiple classical columns in place that were once part of the courthouse entryway. Salvaged after the courthouse fire (Steinbrecher-Kemp 2007), the columns were employed in the construction of the bridge, and are easily visible when viewing the bridge from its western aspect (observation notes 2013).



Figure 5. The Summit Street Bridge

The pedestrian bridge (fig.6) that connects the north and south shores of the lake's larger pool, was constructed when the lake's original dam was breeched to expand the lake for a second time. A new dam was built, further south and west, and the pedestrian bridge erected to pass over where the breach was created. Stone rubble was brought in from the courthouse, to be used in the bridge's construction (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Archives). The stones are visible but I observe no plaque that honors their presence or origin (observation notes 2013). The bridge was dedicated as "The Friendship Bridge" in 2012, and a small plaque is present bearing this name and honoring the relationship between Bloomington and sister city Asahikawa, Japan, a relationship dating back more than 50 years (Wolfe 2009).



Figure 6. The Pedestrian Bridge

Appearing much like a sculptural work of art, the large metal structure that sits to the south of the pavilion was once the framework for the courthouse dome (fig. 7). After being brought to the park, the dome was originally encased in wire mesh and used as an animal cage before eventually being used in its present manner as object d'art and historic artifact (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Archives). There is a plaque in place that explains the origins and history of the dome, near its base. It is an element of contrast against the rolling lawn on which it sits, with the lake as its backdrop (observation notes 2013).



Figure 7. The Courthouse Dome

Rhodes Mill Stones

Near the north end of the promenade, on the edge of the parade grounds is a set of mill stones (fig. 8) that were part of the Rhodes Mill in McLean County. A plaque on the mill stones informs park goers that two benefactors, Victoria Ames and Clara McNamara donated them to the public. The mill stones were not placed within the park until 1941, done so by the local American Legion post. With no other information present, it seems that the intent of its placement was as a remembrance of times past, to celebrate Bloomington's blue collar roots, and a tie to the early history of McLean County (observation notes 2013).



Figure 8. Rhodes Mill Stones

Miller Park Pavilion

The Pavilion (fig. 9) at Miller Park is a multi use building, evocative of the U.S. arts and crafts period in design, and one of the most prominent built features within the park landscape (observation notes 2013). The numerous windows of the upper level, as well as the expansive porch area, allow for ample viewing of the lake, which is closely situated to the rear of the pavilion (observation notes 2013). The building itself was designed by an architect of local renown, George H. Miller, and was opened first in 1906 (McLean Co Museum of History). Though the pavilion has undergone some repairs over

the years, at more than 100 years old, it still appears much as it did in its original form (Proeber 2006). The pavilion has been the location for numerous cultural events throughout its history, including band performances, cotillions, and dances (cityblm.org). Recent cultural events within the pavilion have included a spaghetti dinner, orchestral performances, and a Christmas celebration. Among it's current uses, the pavilion serves as an election day polling location, hosts yoga classes, parties, receptions, community meetings, and houses a senior citizen center with outreach and recreation programs in the basement (cityblm.org).



Figure 9. Miller Park Pavilion

Nickel Plate Railroad

Near the main entrance to Miller Park sits a large locomotive with a coal tender and caboose in tow. The train is parked on some rails and enclosed within a chain link fence. There are steps and a platform, which seemingly provide access into the train, however the fence prevents entry to this area. The locomotive bears the name Nickel Plate Railroad (fig. 10), and the engine number 309 on the side. There is a sign near the perimeter of the fence, which details the origins of the train and the date that it was moved to Bloomington. Near the perimeter of the surrounding fence is a large steam

whistle that was once used in Bloomington's trainyards; with a plaque commemorating its use and its dedication by local labor unions on Labor Day 1982. The train and steam whistle, appear as reminders of a previous time in American history, specimens of earlier culture and of curiosity to children and adults alike (observation notes 2013).



Figure 10. The Nickel Plate Railroad

Observed Uses and Activities

The physical space of Miller Park is a widely varied topography, and enjoys an abundance of open spaces, as well as some more enclosed alcoves and gathering spaces, in addition to the numerous built elements and recreation equipment found here. The park space is ample enough to accommodate a broad range of use, which appears to attract a correspondingly broad range of users (observation notes 2013). A better understanding of the culture of Miller Park can be attained through its observed uses within the context of its physical construct.

Given this broad range of uses and users within Miller Park, collecting observational data within the park required attention to both macro and micro level interactions that occur in a seemingly on-going manner within the park confines. Park activity at Miller Park is a phenomenon whose core constituents (users) change on a daily

basis, and indeed change over the course of a given day, comprising what seems like a very loose association (observation notes 2013). Observed park users varied from individuals to groups of differing sizes, with seemingly unrelated actors comprising the overall demographic of park goers, each interacting with the space in their own desired fashion, pursuing varied types of activities. There is however a great level of observed continuity from day to day with respect to *how* the park gets used, reflecting its cultural characteristics within Bloomington (observation notes 2013).

In analyzing written notes collected during observation sessions within the park, I was looking for evidence of park usage evocative of the types of uses that Olmsted both espoused and predicted, and characteristics of third place locales described by Oldenburg. It is from these categories that I extracted themes of usage, used in parsing the observational session notes. These themes are the basis for analysis of the park's physical characteristics, and the uses and behaviors observed therein.

Olmsted's designs evoke qualities of nature in appearance, but were also intended to support wide ranges of recreation uses, of both the "exertive" and "receptive" types (Twombly 2010). These two categories of use then, if found within Miller Park, indicate some level of direct connection to Olmsted's park ideals. In addition to solitary receptive uses, Olmsted further divided receptive recreation into different socialization types: "neighborly" being that which was shared with friends and family, and "gregarious", in which there is interaction with strangers among the parks social spaces (Twombly 2010). This element of gregarious recreation is one that is closely associated with third place characteristics as well (Oldenburg 1999). These categories provide a continuum of usage behavior, upon which park going activities can be plotted and which are general

opposites of each other. Given that Olmsted's design philosophies aimed at promoting such uses (Twombly 2010), the presence of such characteristics would evoke a tangible connection to Olmsted.

Thematic analysis of observed behaviors and activities within the park suggest that park activities at Miller Park can be broadly found to be representative of the two distinct usage types describe by Olmsted: exertive recreation and receptive recreation, with multiple observed activities noted in each of these categories, on multiple dates. Broadly, among observed park behaviors, the park would also appear to support activities on both ends of the social / solitary continuum, containing some level of openness to casual contact with strangers (observation notes 2013).

Exertive Activities

To the thematic category of exertive behaviors, I have assigned such observed activities as leisure walking and pet walking, exercise (bicycling, jogging, calisthenics, etc.), and sports (tennis, football, soccer, baseball), mini-golf, recreational games, play and playground activity. These behaviors all have components of movement and active participation that set them apart from the more passive behaviors that I have observed in the park space. Some of these activities display a greater level of motion and physical exertion, though each in its own way requires a negotiation of the park's physical space. The broad number of observed activities within this category indicates a strong presence of such behaviors found within Miller Park (observation notes 2013).

Receptive / Neighborly Activities

Observed receptive activities and behaviors of the neighborly variety include meditation and reflection, prolonged sitting, sleeping, sunbathing, reading / studying,

photography / painting, fishing, leisure driving, parking, family based cultural celebrations and gatherings. Such activities require a minimal amount of physical expenditure, though again there is some variance in the amount of motion observed within these activities. Within some of these activities it is not uncommon to see some level of physical movement, such as in casting a fishing reel, or within the interaction that is observed at a birthday party or other type of gathering, however the activities here are ones with little required in the way of physical exertion.

The sociability level of these activities appears to vary from solitary to highly interactive and social but they are generally confined to individuals or small groups that appear to be comprised of close friends or family, with little expectation of chance encounters or mingling outside of one's immediate self or group (observation notes 2013). Having observed such receptive and neighborly activities on a repeat basis within the park, I have determined that these activities require less physical exertion to participate in than do even the least physical activities within the active group. Again here a broad, repeat presence of such activities indicates a strong pattern of use for such behaviors within Miller Park (observation notes 2013).

Socially speaking, fishing within Miller Park appears as a widely varied activity, with some elements and instances of social interaction observed, containing elements of a unique fishing culture. I have observed fishermen approaching the lake, or entering and leaving the park, in the company of one another. I have also observed verbal exchanges or conversation between fishermen who otherwise appear as strangers (observation notes 2013). These examples notwithstanding, the bulk of the fishing activity that I observe involves solitary individuals, standing or sitting quietly, with little social interaction, and

little notable exertion aside from casting the reel, reeling the line in, or moving from one spot to another. Though fishing within the park can exhibit widely varying characteristics, based upon my observations I have deemed the pursuit of this activity within Miller Park to be broadly of the receptive / solitary variety.

Receptive / Gregarious Activities

Receptive activities of the gregarious variety involve a heightened expectation of social interactions. Observed receptive, gregarious activities include open conversations (sitting within social areas of the park), cultural events and gatherings, and different social mixers and parties that take place within the pavilion and elsewhere in the park. Activities within this thematic grouping require little physical exertion but a component of each activity is that there is an elevated expectation of interaction or mingling with other people, perhaps even strangers. For these types of activities there is also greater level of social or group inclusion, due to sharing the same physical space in fairly close proximity.

Concert performances and similar events are again somewhat difficult to categorize, displaying sometimes-contrasting types of characteristics. Though the majority of concerts and other performance based events are spent with people quietly observing the performance on stage, I have observed that there is a fair amount of mingling and conversation in the moments leading up to and following the performance. The audience members interact in the social realm of the park, though the performance itself is essentially a solitary experience with the cultural expectation that little conversation or interaction will take place as it is performed. It is for these reasons that such performances are included as receptive and gregarious (observation notes 2013).

At other social gatherings and celebrations observed within the park there is the same type of receptive / gregarious dynamic, though the opportunity for and expectation of social interaction is greater and more prolonged. The core element of the party or gathering involves social interaction. It should be noted though that some parties or events could involve only close family members, in which case the activity would be considered neighborly as opposed to gregarious.

Sporting contests such as football, soccer, baseball, are for their participants, exertive behaviors. There also appears to be a receptive and gregarious quality observed among parents, friends and other spectators at such events. At one youth football game I observe within the park, lively conversation among parents and spectators appears to be a large part of the activity, though the football game is ostensibly the reason for gathering within the park (observation notes 2013).

A Narrative of Park Use

(author note: This narrative is an amalgamation of recorded, observed data which took place over multiple days. It is intended to represent that which is typical within Miller Park's dynamic landscape.)

The cultural entity that is Miller Park is comprised of the physical space itself, the actors who inhabit the park space, and the uses that they pursue herein. Observed behaviors and uses have been compiled for the purposes of a narrative of park life within Miller Park. A narrative of the space allows for scalable observation of its characteristics.

The days at Miller Park typically begin at first light, as the empty park space begins to fill up with early morning patrons. On this summer morning I observe familiar figures, fishermen and women, taking their places along the banks of the lake, they are often among the first patrons within the park each day. The bulk of the park seems quiet

in the early hours, in contrast to the more noticeable mid-day or afternoon activity that is appears present on nice days. However, the morning time appears to represent a distinct group of park users, composed often of dog walkers, joggers, some bike riders, and fishermen (observation notes 2013).

As I observe fishermen assume spots around the lake perimeter, there are also people transecting the park on the sidewalks and roads. Some of these people are out for morning exercise, walking or running, some with pets, with very little notable social interaction. Though people sometimes pass within close proximity of one another, contact among park goers seems fleeting or nonexistent, as each person ambulates at their own pace and vector (observation notes 2013). The parking spaces near the zoo also begin to fill in, as some people apparently arrive here for work. Some of the people I observe within the early hours of the day give me the impression that they might have used the park to sleep in, as I notice the presence of blankets or sleeping bundles among their possessions (observation notes 2013).

There are considerably fewer cars present at this time of day than what I notice later in the day. Also there is notably less commotion associated with children playing and the greater numbers of people. During the morning time, the people I observe seem to be isolated by themselves, or in very small groups of only two or three people (observation notes 2013). The greatest level of morning activity generally appears to be near the lake. Though I do observe some of the fishermen intermingle at times, they appear to separate into individual spots as they fish. Pets or companions likewise accompany some walkers or joggers, but the endeavors have very little evidence of sociability as, the actors move through the space. The nature of the activity appears to be

mostly recreational, and widely scattered, with little congregating or social conviviality (observation notes 2013).

As the morning progresses greater activity becomes apparent in many of the different interior spaces of the park. Noticeably the parking lot near the zoo begins to fill up with cars. Near this area, located within the parks “glades”, is a children’s playground and water splash-park, situated among the numerous mature trees. This appears to be a popular destination for kids and families, and as I watch, it fills up on this day with children and numerous parents or guardians (observation notes 2013).

On the playground, kids play in the splash-park, or on the large jungle gym structure. The nature of the playground equipment seems to lend to a sort of freeform play among the children. There are numerous access points, and points of departure on the apparatus itself, with various modes of mobility allowing movement in multiple directions upon the equipment (observation notes 2013). Ladders, slides, bridges, monkey bars, all lead in different directions. Given the physical design and layout of the space, this area is unmistakably intended for recreation and playing (Observation notes 2013).

The type of play observed on the jungle gym appears loose and free form. This is not sport, there are no formal rules or clear objectives to achieve. The equipment suggests a use, but accommodates alternate uses as well. There is no posted set of instructions on how to use the equipment, yet none of the kids seems in need of explanation in how to use this space. There appears to be an easy intermingling of groups or parties of kids, with both casual and prolonged contact taking place (observation notes 2013). My observations suggest that this type of activity is likely

commonplace at the playground, happening on a recurring basis throughout each day (2013).

Parents take up seats around the play area, or in shady spots, which are ample in this area of the park (observation notes 2013). From the comfort of shaded areas the adults can watch over the children and tend to them should it become necessary. There are picnic tables around and grills not far from here, and on the weekend I notice groups of people picnicking and grilling nearby (observation notes 2013). I have also observed multiple parties in this area too, birthday parties and graduation parties, and holiday celebrations. This area within the park seems especially popular among park goers during my observations, providing ample space for gatherings or ritual celebrations, in addition to its use as a recreation area (observation notes 2013).

During one observation session in June, I see a bus in the nearby parking lot, with the name of a local church on it. Several of the children playing wear identical t-shirts, as do a group of adults tending to the kids. It appears as if this is a summer camp or possibly a day care group. I count five adults with this group and they congregate together in a loose collective as they watch the activity. The kids play on the playground and generally have fun; occasionally the adults interact with them or instruct them as they play. The area feels quite active and the collective mood seems lighthearted (observation notes 2013).

Having observed this section of the park on multiple occasions, and at various times of day, it seems to be one area of the park that is most often busy, or at least occupied, throughout the day (observation notes 2013). During my observations, activity appears nearly constant in this area, as cars seem to stream in and out at the playground

and zoo for most of the day. However even close by here, there are areas that seem considerably less active in their use (observation notes 2013). The memorial area situated near the playground appears much more reserved, with a mood that I note as being significantly more subdued (observation notes 2013).

Occupying the northwest corner of the park is a memorial dedicated to area soldiers killed or missing from the Korea and Vietnam wars (McLean Co. Museum of History). Observations within this area (2013) indicate that it is a place of quietude with little observed physical activity that takes place, though it is physically situated adjacent to the playground area. The behaviors I observe here appear to be largely passive and reflective in nature (2013). One person I observe sitting within this area on multiple occasions, appears to me as though he might be homeless, as I see he is carrying a number of personal possessions with him in a small cart (observation notes 2013).

There are flag posts that fly the U.S., and State of Illinois flags, and one that honors prisoners of war and soldiers missing in action (POW / MIA). Around the center monument and the memorial stones that ring the perimeter, is a large earthen berm that blocks much of the view to the street. With the large shade trees nearby, the memorial area has the feeling of a backyard or garden (observation notes 2013). The physical design of the memorial area seems to serve this contemplative activity particularly well. For the duration of my observations, this area appears to me as an island of physical and psychological calm, between the busy streets outside the park, and the activity filled playground area (observation notes 2013).

The park's main drive loop passes close by here, winding through the zoo lot and continuing south. Road access is present throughout the park, and it should be noted that

there is an identifiable element of recreational driving within the park. A notable part of the constituency of Miller Park access the park via car, and some seem to experience it largely or entirely from the confines of their vehicle (observation notes 2013). There seems a strange and uneasy engagement between the leisure drivers and the pedestrian park users, on and around the roadway. Multiple park users I interviewed mentioned a lack of good pedestrian paths through main areas of the park as a negative aspect (Interview notes 2013).

As the road moves south away from the playground, it turns easterly and passes by the Miller Park Pavilion continuing down towards the lake. The lake appears as the most prominent physical attribute within this area of the park (observation notes 2013). There is a beach and a swim area at the far northwest corner of the lake, complete with locker and shower facilities, and swimming was once a popular activity at Miller Park (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Archives). In recent years an open-water swimming competition was held there (Richardson 2010), but there is no longer public swimming offered within the park.

The grounds around the pavilion are comprised largely of rolling lawn and some scattered trees, making for ample recreational space, though I note only minimal usage of this area during my observations (observation notes 2013). The area of roadway near the water appears to be a popular area to park, and I observe people along the road, partaking in the offerings of park life from the confines or comforts of their automobile (observation notes 2013). Automotive enthusiasts seem to be a distinct group of park users, who seem drawn to the park experience and what the park has to offer, yet isolated

from other park goers and the shared social aspects of park life through the physical constraints of their cars (observation notes 2013).

Activities observed here, within the dells to the North of the lake, appear mostly subdued, with little physical exertion noted during my observation sessions (2013). Through here I observe small groups or individuals sitting or walking, or again some people parked in cars along side of the road. Picnicking, reading, socializing, fishing, sunbathing, drinking, solitary individuals, relaxing, all of these are things that I observe here (2013). The behaviors are mostly passive, but appear to retain a level of sociability in some instances (observation notes 2013).

Among the physical amenities in this area are benches and picnic tables situated along the northeast edge of the water, where I observe people relax and watch the lake's water fountain or feed the geese and ducks that inhabit the lake and its surrounding grounds. The dells are an attractive and popular space, though through here I also observe a fair amount of litter at times, and signs of illicit drug use and alcohol consumption (beer cans, hypodermic needle and syringe) (observation notes 2013). With the lack of recreational equipment or activities in this area, the dells appear to reflect a decidedly more adult usage during my observations (observation notes 2013).

Across the lake there is an entrance from Summit Street for the roadway that crosses through the park area south of the water. Along the road I again observe cars parked and people scattered along the shoreline, some occupying the benches near the water's perimeter. Other than fishing, the observed activities in this area appear to be mostly sedentary with little notable physical exertion. The view looking northward across the water features numerous trees and rolling hillside topography (observation

notes 2013). I do observe some people walking through here along the road, and others feeding the geese and ducks. On one occasion I observe two young women with hula-hoops, apparently enjoying the access to open space and sunshine along the south bank, as they hoop (observation notes 2013).

Though this area of the park remains somewhat active with people coming and going, and others who appear to be passing through, the feeling within this part of the park during my observations is decidedly less active than within the playground, or parade areas. There is little play that I observe taking place here, and the mood as suggested by the slow pace of activity is much more relaxed and subdued, what I would qualify as more introspective (observation notes 2013). Where the activity of the playground area appears more frenzied, exuberant, and playful, the south bank of the lake exhibits qualities of quietude, and apparent relaxation during my observation sessions (2013).

The amenities such as park benches and tables appear to me to be physically further apart in this part of the park as well, offering a greater buffer of space between the people who occupy them. Around the lake I observe numerous people whose attention appears focused on the water, including people viewing the lake from the comfort of their cars. Of the cars that I observe during one weekend session, the number of pleasure cruisers seems relatively fewer on this side of the lake, compared to the road on the northern side (observation notes 2013).

The southwest corner of the park is a rolling lawn area, sporadically planted with a few scattered trees. Immediately north of the lawn area are three tennis courts, enclosed by a gated fence. I have witnessed the tennis courts in use, but they are often

unoccupied during my observation sessions (observation notes 2013). The lawn space also has the appearance of mostly being unoccupied. This space is physically situated at the opposite side and end of the park from the playground area, and the mood and activity here feel just as far removed. During my observations there is little observed activity to remark on in this area, other than a few people I see walking along the street, outside of the perimeter of the park (observation notes 2013).

West of the tennis courts, a small grove of trees borders the park road, and in here there are a few picnic tables and grills to be utilized. Given the close stands of trees that are present, this area feels sheltered and somewhat private even in the midst of the other park activity around it (observation notes 2013). In this area, I observe on one occasion people who are possibly homeless, sleeping on and below a picnic table. Such activities are testament to both the shade and privacy offered among the trees in this part of the park, and also an example of park users utilizing the park environs for sanctuary (observation notes 2013).

Along the southern end of the park, which borders Tanner Street, I observe people fishing, feeding water fowl, and walking along the bike path which runs from the southern edge of the lake around its western border and terminates at the south entrance and parking area by the zoo. Looking back across the water from this vantage point you see the pavilion as it looms above the northern edge of the lake, and the stone pedestrian bridge which connects the north and south shores, as well as the east and west pools of the lake. This view of the park, with its contrast of built and natural elements, is one, which evokes Olmsted's desired picturesque quality of park design (observation notes 2013).

Occupying a large portion of the park's East side is the Parade area. Although in form ostensibly a baseball diamond, within the Parade area I have also observed kids' sports (football and soccer) games being played, people exercising, sunbathing, pickup football, kite flying as well as people playing Frisbee, a man hitting golf balls, and people playing with their dogs (observation notes 2013). This area of the park provides the greatest expanse of open space, appearing to allow for great freedom of activity. The infrastructure of the park seems to support the adoption of multiple uses through availability of space. The open space appears to allow for users to employ the park amenities to their own benefit or use, and within this area I note a broader variation of activities during my observational sessions, compared to other areas of the park (observation notes 2013).

Within this area of the park I attended a meeting for a local neighborhood group with ties to the park, which helped to illuminate the park's usage as a tool of civic engagement. The group chose the shelter adjacent the ball field for their meeting spot, given the ample seating and shade provided by the structure. There was a concert nearby in the park that evening as well. Two city alderpersons whose districts encompass part of the surrounding park neighborhoods were in attendance for the meeting. The Mayor was also present having first stopped by the concert. The group was meeting that evening to discuss a local business that was trying to expand liquor sales in the area, to which the neighborhood group voiced mostly opposition. The mayor and alderpersons were able to use this information preceding a vote on the issue, and the neighborhood group seemed well assuaged to have given their input. The park in this instance provides the literal ground upon which political exchange and engagement is made (observation notes 2013).

On such days, the cultural and civic presence Miller Park has in the lives of local residents is perhaps at it's most far reaching. Having observed the park on numerous occasions and at various time periods it does not always appear this active, or wide ranging in terms of use. Activity and use appear to ebb and flow within the park on a given day, and from one day to the next (observation notes 2013). Conditions within the park are likely a contributing factor to these ebbs, though variables such as time, and competing recreational opportunities may also have influence on park activity levels (observation notes 2013).

Weekend activity within the park seems especially busy during my observations (2013), appearing to begin early on Friday and continuing throughout the weekend until Sunday evening. Activity levels during weekend observation sessions indicate an increase in overall park visitors and a noticeable increase in group-activity and celebrations as well (observation notes 2013). During my weekend observation sessions, it was common to see picnics, cookouts, and parties occupying the tables, shady areas, and shade structures throughout the park, sometimes even with balloons or other celebratory items on display. I also observed parties for birthdays, graduations and family reunions, which were not noted during my weekday observations. The park as a whole is active and the level of sociability seems higher during these time periods (observation notes 2013).

The increased human density of the park during the weekends appears to bring with it a social component, transfixing the space to more of a social meeting ground or shared environment of cultural import. Park activity during this time appears much like a celebration, with food and sometimes music playing, it is a unique element of

Bloomington culture that appears to venerate enjoyment of the outdoors and the amenities of park life (observation notes 2013).

Observed data also suggests park uses can sometimes include more covert activities or perhaps have a negative impact on the park space. Litter and vandalism, though not at all emblematic of Miller Park in my observations, are present in areas throughout the park, including around the Pavilion, at the Soldiers and Sailors monument, and among the playground equipment (observation notes 2013). There is also some noted evidence of drug usage within the park. I have found hypodermic needles, and other drug paraphernalia while walking through the park and witnessed people smoking marijuana within the park on multiple occasions (observation notes 2013). More common and somewhat more visible are people drinking alcohol within the park, which is prohibited per Bloomington law, a law that is posted on signage within the park. I have observed people consuming alcohol within the park and other evidence of alcohol exists throughout the park in the form of beer cans or bottles littered amongst the parks many gathering spots (observation notes 2013).

Spatial Relationships Within the Park

One unexpected aspect of Miller Park's culture, which was at least partially illuminated through the observation sessions, is that of spatial relationships between actors within the park. The park users come together with only a loose association or bond, and are intermingled within the park space, left to negotiate their own use of the park and how that is shared with others. Each of the observed park uses has its own accompanying rules and etiquette, though it seems a culture of park use is what helps regulate these relationships with one another (observation notes 2013).

One part of the park, where I notice this informal process of spatial negotiation take place, is near the lake, among the fishermen. While observing the people fishing along Miller Park's lake, it seems notable that each person along the bank has assumed a position sufficiently far from the next so as to make conversation or social engagement a non-issue. When viewed as a whole, the fishermen appear to be spaced equidistant from each other, as if through some prearranged agreement (observation notes 2013). Likely pursued out of logistical, rather than anti-social reasoning, space here helps avoid tangling of lines, or competition with one's counterparts. The spread is noteworthy nonetheless, for it's uniformity of employment, and absence of observed negotiation. As I observe people approach the lake to fish, there appears to be almost uniform recognition of these spatial norms (observation notes 2013).

These ad hoc spatial negotiations appear to take place in other areas throughout the park. In areas of the park such as the Parade, or the Wood, ample space allows for wide separation of groups or individuals (observation notes 2013). This ample space can appear as sort of a buffer zone, lending itself to quiet enjoyment, as I have observed people reading, sitting, resting, and leisurely strolling. This space also allows for activities that command a greater amount of space and motion, such as sports or various types of exercise (observation notes 2013). The open space here seems to encourage and allow for this variety of uses, while cultural norms likely encourage actors to spatially avoid one another in their pursuits.

The Glades, by comparison have spaces that physically encourage casual contact between park patrons, within closer confines (observation notes 2013). Within my observations, this area accommodates multiple groups of people and often parties, with

increased levels of activity within physical proximity of each other. Within the glades people appear more closely situated even between groups, while still maintaining areas of quietude and separate use (observation notes 2013). Olmsted's designs actively called for such juxtaposition of spaces, where patrons would be free to casually mingle with others within open spaces, or to spatially segregate or seclude themselves among the private confines for solitary pursuits (Rybczynski 2011), something that I observe as being expressed prominently through the usage of Miller Park.

War Monuments and Park Use

The war monuments present within the park are prominent in their placement within the park's geography, and represent a unique cultural element within the park. Bonder has suggested that "monumentality" can be seen as a quality, measured in a space or object's ability to create a feeling of recall or reflection in a person to a place beyond themselves (2009). Monuments can be seen as occupying the space between traumatic events and our present. Dealing with traumatic remembrance as they do, the monuments tread a fine line of conflicting interests and park uses within a public space. "A monument's ethical function arrives from its capacity for establishing dialogues with, and presenting questions about, the past (and the future)" (Bonder 2009:64).

This idea of "monumentality" may help to explain the observed difference in behaviors noted at the three distinct monument areas of the park. The Korea and Vietnam wars memorial exhibited a notably more subdued level of activity during the observational research, while the other two memorial areas exhibited greater activity and more group interaction (observation notes 2013). It is possible that the physical and psychological characteristics of the Korea and Vietnam memorial exhibit a greater sense

of monumentality, eliciting a higher feeling of reverence and reflection among those who interact with the memorial spaces. While the shady area of the Korea and Vietnam memorial, with its accompanying benches and stone memorial markers, would appear to promote quietude and passive interaction, the other two areas seem more active in their usage with a greater amount of socialization noted (observation notes 2014). If as Bonder (2009) has asserted, the dialogue created by the artistic and architectural elements of the monument has contributed to the disparate use, then the underlying message being conveyed about war is likely vastly different between these spaces as well.

Another possible explanation for this difference in noted usage can be tied to the collective or cultural memory of the wars being memorialized. Cultural memory focuses on fixed events in history, allowing for shared recollection of past events through “figures of memory”, including monuments, events, and rites (Assmann 1995:129). These figures of memory allow historic events to be viewed over time preserving “the store of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of its own identity and peculiarity” (Assmann 1995:130). The monuments here help to reconstruct past events each with their own narrative and associated emotional and psychological responses.

The observed behaviors within Korea and Vietnam monument area seem to reflect a cultural memory that evokes feelings of reverence or perhaps reflection and even mourning (observation notes 2013). These wars are the most recent of any of the conflicts that are honored within Miller Park, and given that the honorees remembered here may have immediate family members still living and perhaps visiting the park monument, this shrine is the most memorial of the park monuments. Observed behaviors here are notable for what is absent, such as the absence of commotion, and a lack of

active behaviors. The behaviors observed here involved mostly solitary use of the receptive type (observation notes 2013). Interestingly none of the interview respondents mentioned the monuments as elements that they sought out during their park use (interview notes 2013), but each of my observation sessions record at least some level of use at the monument spaces within the park (observation notes 2013).

Targeted Intercept Interviews

Targeted intercept interviews within the park were held on two different weekday occasions (May 15, June 4) and one weekend (July 13), concurrent with observational research sessions. The total number of targeted interview respondents was 13. In analyzing data from the interview sessions, words and phrases invoking similar ideas and themes were searched for within the written notes. These themes were extracted to determine how park users depict their park own use and how they conceptualize the park, as a basis for comparison with the observational data, and to develop further understanding of the park as a cultural entity. Themes were also analyzed to ascertain if park use as described by the users fits within the construct of Miller Park as third place, or within Olmsted's vision for urban park use.

Patterns of Transmission

One theme that emerged from interview data analysis was how people were introduced to Miller Park, which I grouped under the theme "patterns of transmission." Interview data from park users indicates that Miller Park has a pattern of use that is often culturally transmitted from one generation to the next. Multiple respondents mentioned either coming to the park with their parents when they were younger, or bringing their children to the park as a reason for visiting Miller Park (interview notes 2013). Claire, a

park patron who was there with her young son, said that her first memories of Miller Park were with her parents, a pattern of transmission she is now continuing as a parent. Park user Julie told me that her friends brought her to Miller Park for the first time when she was an area college student. Now that she lives in the neighborhood close to the park she says she visits regularly, and has started bringing her son to the park as well (targeted interview notes 2013). In all, more than half of all respondents mentioned family or a family member when questioned about the park and its importance in their life. Several interviewees also tied their early park use to different cultural events that they had attended at the park with family members or loved ones, including the Fourth of July fireworks (targeted interview notes 2013).

Miller Park Meanings

When talking to park users about what the park means to them conceptually, respondents broadly framed Miller Park as a desirable destination, providing respite and opportunity for recreation amid pleasant surroundings (targeted interview notes 2013). Jay explained his feelings on the park as, a “place that I can go to get out of the house for a while.” Michelle, a local neighborhood resident, called the park “a peaceful, cool place, better than walking through the neighborhoods.” Speaking of the positive qualities of the park Tony, visiting from across town, summed it up as “fresh air and trees ” saying, “I love that it (the park) is here.” Claire called the park “beautiful and peaceful,” adding, “there isn’t any other place around here like it” (targeted interview notes 2013). These types of responses are indicative of the types of benefits envisioned by Olmsted for people in urban settings, pursuing the elements of nature and the prospect of tranquility

and relaxation, or more active recreation, within an attractive and shared outdoor setting (Twombly 2010).

Nature and Outdoors

Looking more closely at what park users report liking about the park, the interviews show that an affinity for outdoor space and the associated qualities of nature is a big reason for visiting Miller Park (targeted interview notes 2013), indicating a level of support for the style of landscape that Miller Park presents to its park users. Respondents mentioned qualities of “outside”, “outdoors” “open” and / or “space”, in all but four of the targeted intercept interviews, when asked about reasons for visiting the park. Among the elements of nature that respondents specifically mentioned; “I love being close to the water and seeing the birds”, “I used to try to go over there a couple times a week to watch the sunset”, “I love all of the trees”, (Interview notes 2013). The most common, desirable park nature characteristic that interviewees mentioned was trees, having been mentioned in all but two of the interviews.

Another of the park’s physical nature elements, the lake, was mentioned in more than half of the interviews as being a desirable feature of Miller Park. One interviewee, Jay, assessed the lake as “the best fishing around”, summing up why he likes to come to the park, while Andre, who had ridden to the park on his bike said, “I like the lake,” when asked what attracts him to the park. It seems, based on the targeted intercept interviews, that the elements of nature within the park are a big part of what people seek when visiting Miller Park (Interview notes 2013), a factor that evokes Olmsted’s beliefs about what park users seek from park exposure.

Amenities

Aside from the elements of nature present, several of the built amenities of the park were mentioned as desirable park characteristics (Targeted interview notes 2013). The playground / jungle gym received the most mentions (six) among the built elements that were mentioned as desirable within the park, followed by the zoo, and the water spray park, having each been mentioned five times. The built elements of the park offer at least some utilitarian benefit to park users. One woman, Jane, whom I interviewed near the playground indicated that the spray park area of the playground offered a chance for her children to cool down in the summer heat: “We came here so the kids could play in the splash park, (because) it’s so hot out.” Also, although nobody specifically mentioned them as amenities, the roads and pathways earned de facto recognition by the number of people who mentioned walking or riding through the park (targeted interview notes 2013) making them among the most popular amenities based upon reported use.

Park Uses and Activities

Exercise within Miller Park appears to be a common reason for visiting, among park users that I spoke with. The most common type of activity that targeted interviewees specifically reported doing within the park was some form of exercise (including walking), having been mentioned by a total of eight respondents. Targeted interviewee Sam said “This is the best place to exercise, it’s beautiful”, saying he often jogs through the park in the morning when it is less busy. Dog walking, being a presumably different type of walking was also mentioned as a popular activity within the park (targeted interview notes 2013).

There also appears to be a notable sense among the park users I interviewed that the park is something that can be passively experienced (targeted interview notes 2013). Sam said, “I like to come through here to *feel* the park” when asked what he enjoys about the park. Mark said that sitting or hanging out in the park, “helps me to relax”. These types of responses appear to underscore a cultural mindset that the park is a place that is beneficial to use and experience on a subliminal level, a strong suggestion that Miller Park reflects the ideals of Olmsted (Kowsky 1987). “It helps you feel good to see the trees and flowers,” remarked one interviewee Lisa, a local resident who was there for a leisure walk. Said another person, Kate when questioned about why she comes here, “I feel good when I’m at the park.”

This type of activity emerged as a recurring theme among interviewees. Tara said, “I come here just because it’s the park.” “I like to walk through here, just to look at it sometimes,” said Michelle, a targeted interviewee. Another interviewee, Andre said, “I come to look at the water, it’s my favorite thing about the park.” Olmsted’s park design theory promoted spiritual rejuvenation through passive activity as a benefit of park life (Martin 2010), which is at least a part of how modern day Miller Park users portray their park experience (interview notes 2013).

Miller Park may be representative of the cultural divide between the west and east side communities of Bloomington, with multiple targeted interview respondents saying that they walked to, or had a close proximity to the park, indicating a high level of use by local residents (interview notes 2013). Some of the disparity in use may be simply tied to easier access among west side residents, however the value assigned to Miller Park as a space seems heightened among local residents and this is likely a factor in their park use

(observation notes 2013). For some people however the amenities at Miller Park appear to be worth pursuing, even when that requires some travel time. One respondent (Lisa) reported traveling about 97 miles to get to the park, which suggests that the park is likely an attractive destination that is being sought out by visitors from a broad geographic area (interview notes 2013).

Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted over the span of the research process. Informants included several local residents living in areas around the park, a local business owner whose business is adjacent the park, a realtor who has been involved with properties in the park vicinity, and a local community organizer. Among the key informant interviews, attitudes towards the park can be characterized as overwhelmingly positive (Key Informant notes 2013). When asked in general to describe Miller Park, “One of the better parks I’ve seen”, “I love it”, and “a great place” were among the typical responses (targeted interviews 2013).

The Park as Community Capital

Among key informants, thematic data analysis indicates a shared feeling that Miller Park represents a resource which local residents are able to take advantage of, in ways that help to affect positive change for the localized area (Key Informant notes 2013). This appropriation of park space treats the park as what sociologists often refer to as community capital, utilizing existing human, social and built infrastructure for community benefit. When asked about *how* the park contributes to, or benefits, the surrounding neighborhood, multiple respondents indicated that while the greater west side of Bloomington is known as an economically depressed part of town, the park stands

out within the whole of Bloomington as a prominent and highly regarded feature. Respondents broadly framed Miller Park as an amenity to be sought out among the whole of Bloomington, which can also be utilized as a gathering space, for events, and meetings (key informant notes 2013). Among the responses were phrases like “an icon for the West Side” and “a real asset”, which frame the park as contributing to both the image and resources of the local area (key informant notes 2013).

Mike, a local community organizer involved in Miller Park’s surrounding residential neighborhoods said “It gives people confidence in their neighborhood to have an amenity such as this (in the area)” and “we’ve used it for (our neighborhood group) as a meeting spot.” The neighborhood group he participates in identifies strongly with the park, having had meetings within the park space on numerous occasions and utilizing the park name within their group identity (key Informant notes 2013). The adoption of the Miller Park name for the neighborhood group likely indicates a hope to identify with the desirable elements and imagery that the park evokes, as an effort to define the overall experience of living close to the park.

The positive qualities of the park appear to reflect upon the larger surrounding area, at least to some of the respondents. Informant Tara said about the park as a whole, “It just provides so much to the neighborhood.” Key Informant Charles, a realtor within Bloomington, said glumly “Without Miller Park the west side would have nothing.” Cindy, a homeowner within the Miller Park neighborhood put it less dramatically, “It’s why I live over here (to be near the park)” (Key Informant notes 2013).

A factor noted by Oldenburg, as a way in which third places positively impact their communities, is by contributing to social connectedness and to the strength of

communal bonds (Oldenburg 1999). By providing a forum for the activities that foster communal connection, such places help communities build upon their limited resources. This idea helps to illustrate the idea of social capital. Miller Parks' use as a community meeting space for some local residents highlights its role as a resource to those citizens. In addition to being a source of local pride through the positive image it invokes, the park provides access and space where social exchange is given a forum, and local residents can engage one another, coordinate and mobilize their efforts (key informant notes 2013).

Research has shown that such spaces can have a positive effect on communal neighborhood bonds. "By spending more time in greener outdoor common spaces, residents actually get to know their neighbors better and end up spending more time socializing with them. It seems likely that spending more time in nearby common spaces with trees and grass fosters informal face-to-face contacts among neighbors that lead to more social interaction" (Sullivan et al, 2004:695).

Access and Availability of Use

Many of the key informants mentioned that having close proximity to the park is advantageous in utilizing the park as a resource. This theme of park availability being an amenity for people living in the adjacent neighborhoods was one that was echoed by Vincent, a homeowner who had moved to the area within the past two years. "I looked around at other areas, but none of them could compare to having (the park) near by." When I asked him about what attracted him to the park space he continued: "There is so much to do over there without any cost, and it's beautiful. Also its always available (to use)." Opportunity for use by local residents was mentioned as a desirable factor by

Cindy, who said, “My favorite thing about the park is that it’s so close. I can walk there and that’s great for me.”

This localized access underscores how Miller Park helps to serve what many see as an under-served part of the community. The emphasis on how the park elevates the West side Bloomington neighborhood in which it resides shows a belief among key informants that communal benefits can be derived from useful, well-planned spaces in the built environment (interview notes 2013). Mike, the community organizer who is also a local homeowner, said “It raises the level of the neighborhood just by being there. It gives everyone around here a reason to keep their properties looking good” (interview notes 2013). Key Informant Tara referred to the park as “an asset” to the neighborhood, saying “it really helps” (interview notes 2013).

Differing Attitudes Towards Miller Park

Upon analysis, thematic differences emerged in the attitudes towards park, between the two different groups of respondents. In general terms targeted intercept interviewees spoke about the physical appearance and amenities found within the park, such as the lake, the trees, the playground, or talked about how the park makes them feel (targeted interview notes 2013). The park experience in these terms is tied to the physical qualities or the experience of being within the park environment. As Claire remarked “There is not any other place like it around here, it’s so beautiful and peaceful” (targeted interview notes 2013).

When compared to the targeted intercept interviews on the whole, there was a noticeable difference in the *types* of positive attributes described by key informants. The key informants spoke generally about what the park does: “elevates the neighborhood”,

“gives people around here something to be proud of”, “draws people to this part of town” (Key Informant notes 2013). One key informant who owns a business near the park, said that his business benefits from being close to the park, given the amount of foot traffic that passes by during summer months. “I notice a big difference in the summer, even though this is not a seasonal business. It (the park) helps” (Key Informant notes 2013).

Likely the park amenities and the qualities described by the targeted respondents contribute to the park functioning in the manner described by the key informants. The access, attractive qualities, and opportunity provided by the park space, create a prominent and desirable locale that can be utilized as capital by local residents who have the greatest level of access to the park. These qualities may, as some key informants suggest, elevate the image of the area around the park, perhaps even to the level of stimulating commerce among local businesses.

Negative Aspects of Miller Park

Among both targeted intercept interviews and key informants there were few notable negatives when talking about Miller Park’s design or activity (Interview notes 2013). However, multiple people I interviewed mentioned that sidewalk access is quite limited throughout the park and walkers are generally expected to share the roadway with the cars and bicycles of the park. When asked about any negatives to Miller Park, one key informant, Julie, mentioned difficulty when pushing a stroller through some areas of the park where sidewalk access is limited, while Tara said that it is often hard to share the road with cars driving through the park, adding “It would be nice to have better sidewalks around the outside of the park too”(interview notes 2013).

In her intercept interview, Claire, told me that she has felt unsafe in the park, including during the 4th of July fireworks, due to the seemingly raucous crowd assembled, and a lack of security presence, though she noted that her experiences at the park have been almost entirely positive (interview notes 2013). Key informant Charles, mentioned the surrounding area as a negative about the park, saying that it would be nice if the park “were located somewhere else.” The majority of respondents however declined to say anything negative about the park, emphasizing only positive attributes (interview notes 2013).

Identifying Olmsted and Oldenburg Within Miller Park

In observing activity and use within the Miller Park space I focused on the ideals of Frederick Law Olmsted, given his far-reaching influence on park design and American park culture, and as an example of classic theory on the social benefits of park spaces. In addition, I utilized Ray Oldenburg’s Third Place theory as an example of more contemporary social theory. I felt that there would be a reasonable expectation of finding evidence of each of these theories at work within the Miller Park and that they might help to provide insight into the culture and use of Miller Park as a unique space within Bloomington.

In relation to these theories, the park could be conceptualized as a place of open social gathering, where, through contact with natural elements and reflections of nature, urban pressures are diminished and community bonds are strengthened. Such a space would bring together the thoughtfully planned elements of Olmsted’s design work, blending pastoral expanses and open vistas, with close quartered spaces that bring people together in proximity and use, and where socialization is a core component of the

activity. But is this actually an accurate portrayal of modern day Miller Park and its associated uses? Does the Miller Park landscape function as an urban refuge where the elements of nature are actively sought out? Within this park landscape, does Miller Park exhibit the qualities of a third place?

Ray Oldenburg details a number of qualities that are indicative of third place locales, among them: a light mood, an expected level of sociability, neutral territory, regular patronage, non-stratified, and wide accessibility and accommodation of use (Oldenburg 1999). Based on my observations these elements are an apt description of what Miller Park generally has to offer as a space (observation notes 2013).

Oldenburg (1999) emphasizes that people, as social beings, need access to neutral spaces within easy traveling distance. Easy park access is a factor that was noted as desirable in both targeted intercepts and key informant interviews (2013). Third places are places that people choose to come of their own desire, and where they are able to partake in casual interactions with others in their community, a description that park spaces seem likely to emulate. Like Olmsted's vision of urban park spaces, Oldenburg envisions third spaces as ones that help to relieve the stress of modern urban human existence. "In the absence of an informal public life, Americans are denied those means of relieving stress that serve other cultures so effectively. We seem not to realize that the means of relieving stress can just as easily be built into an urban environment as those features which produce stress." (Oldenburg 10:1999)

People pursue comfort and relief from the pressures of daily life in third places (Oldenburg 1999), similar to what Olmsted has also suggested parks provide (Twombly 2010). This element relief and relaxation is one that was mentioned within multiple

intercept interviews, as being a desirable quality of Miller Park. Interviewee Claire said “I feel good when I come to the park, I’m able to get away for a while”, while Jay said “It just feels good to come here (to the park).” The park is also physically situated within a residential area, where numerous people have easy access to it (observation notes 2013).

Third places are also notable for their desirable qualities rather than merely being a shelter amid chaotic urban life (Oldenburg 1999). What Oldenburg describes as a type of home away from home, appears to be found in the comfort afforded visitors to Miller Park. As reported in the targeted intercept interviews, the space of the park is an inviting one (2013), and the mood of the park seems free from the social expectations of home or work life (observation notes 2013). Thematic analysis of interview data suggests that people visit Miller Park for a wide number of reasons, including its amenities and uses, as well as its attractive presentation and natural design elements (interview notes 2013).

A playful mood is another characteristic found within third place locales (Oldenburg 1999), one that seems especially apparent within Miller Park (observation notes 2013). Many of the observed and reported uses within the park involve play and recreation. Though there are areas of the park that seem to evoke quietude and reflection, observational data suggests that regardless of the activity within the park the mood that pervades the overall space is one of recreation and relaxation (observation notes 2013). The park appears playful by its very nature of use, hosting games and lighthearted activities, with laughter and celebration often present within the space (observation notes 2013).

It appears then, that Miller Park exhibits many of the qualities that Oldenburg has described as indicative of third place. The park is neutral territory for the people who use

it, existing away from work or home for these people, and granting access to that element of informal public life. The park provides a status-leveling environment across what appears to be a broad cross-section of citizens, with little observed status assignments associated with park use (observation notes 2013). Also there is an observable engagement in social repartee' that takes place within some areas of the park, such as near the playground area, (observation notes 2013), which is indicative of qualities that exist in other known third places (Oldenburg 1999).

However it is this last characteristic that may indicate a divergence for Miller Park from other third places. Oldenburg places *significant* emphasis on the importance of conversation as part of being a third place. Expectation of lively conversation is part of the essence of a third place, it is the thing that sustains the space as a third place (Oldenburg 1999). It is this element of socialization as specified by Oldenburg, which I observed only sporadically within Miller Park (observational notes 2013).

Miller Park is a large physical space, which allows for a separation of uses and users (observational notes 2013). However, given the number of smaller spaces within the park, it seems that there may be areas of the park where this type of socializing *could* take place. Socialization within the park does seem to be influenced by the number of people occupying a particular space. As greater numbers of people occupy areas such as the playground, casual interactions appear to increase through heightened physical proximity, and the social nature of the space appears to increase as well (observation notes 2013).

The area of the park that I observe the most sustained social interactions during my data collection is the area around the playground within the park glades

(observational notes 2013). While observing this playground area, I have seen adults (likely parents of the children) conversing with one another in what appears as easygoing conversation, while the children play among the park amenities. Some adults have moved from positions of separation, to closer, shared space, to mingle with one another or make conversation (observational notes 2013). It is here that I have witnessed the greatest level of social interaction, between seemingly independent groups or individuals (observational notes 2013). This type of socialization appears considerably less evident in other areas of the park, such as the lake or near the parade grounds, during my observation sessions (observational notes 2013).

What seems to differentiate Miller Park from third place locales is that in observed uses, the park and its amenities appear to remain the main attraction to park users, beyond being the physical setting where activities take place. The uses and activities that the park accommodates appear to take general precedent over social mingling and sustained levels of lively conversation (observational notes 2013). Kim, a young woman I interviewed within the park mentioned that the park and more specifically the playground, is a frequent destination for her and her children. “We try to get over here (the park) as often as possible when the weather is nice. The kids love it and it’s fun for me too.” However, typical of other targeted intercept interviews, Kim made no mention of pursuing social conversation as part of the park’s allure, focusing rather on the setting and park amenities (targeted interview notes 2013).

The level of outward social interaction within areas of the park appears to vary dramatically from space to space, even as the spaces are mostly made of loosely defined boundaries (observation notes 2013). Based on my observations however, neither Miller

Park as a whole nor its small inner areas such as that surrounding the playground, can be truly considered third places, given a lack of *sustained* socialization among park patrons (observation notes 2013). The expectation of vigorous repartee or conversation on the level described by Oldenburg (1999, 1982) is simply not a sustained part of observed park activity within Miller Park during my observations, and the conversation lacks the appearance of being primary among the overall activity (observation notes 2013).

There is also little indication that an expectation of a known social group exists at the park, rather it appears more prevalent that groups form here based upon a loose association of shared space, and the interaction witnessed does not feel intimate, but superficial and unfettered (observation notes 2013). Though some people may likely recognize others via repeat interactions within the park, little evidence of cohesive bonds through shared use of the park space emerges from my observation sessions or interviews. Conversation appears to be a by-product of the other activity within the park (observation notes 2013).

Rather than creating a social network through use of the park, Miller Park feels more like a loose assembly of actors within a common location, that provides for the possibility of socialization, though allows the actors to remain distant or segregated from social interaction in the wide majority of instances (observation notes 2013). Though people seem to be quite willing to make conversation and socialize within the park setting, I did not observe anything resembling a cohesive social group within the park (observation notes 2013). None of the targeted intercept interviews mentioned visiting Miller Park to engage in spirited conversation with other park patrons, or even mentioned socializing at all as a factor in visiting the park, suggesting that sociability may be a by-

product of park use, but not necessarily an activity which is regularly pursued herein (Targeted interview notes 2013).

Given the number of similar characteristics to other third place locales, Miller Park does seem to exemplify much of what Oldenburg (1999) sees as disappearing from America's urbanized landscape, public areas of social interaction and community. Oldenburg assigns a level of import to such informal meeting grounds and even characterizes the types of social benefits granted by such places: "There is an engaging and sustaining public life to supplement and complement home and work routines. For those on tight budgets who live in some degree of austerity, it compensates for the lack of things owned privately. For the affluent, it offers much that money can't buy" (Oldenburg 1999:11).

Oldenburg's third place characteristics in fact seem to relate well to Olmsted's vision for park spaces within the urbanized landscape. Third place ideals about access and status leveling echo how Olmsted felt parks should be utilized among the public sphere, as he advocated for their availability across a broad swath of society, for the greater good of *all* people (Twombly 2010). Much as Olmsted wanted to preserve casual human contact with nature within urban environs, Oldenburg hopes to help preserve places that promote casual social contact between humans within those same environs.

Olmsted's views on parks developed as a traveler and visitor to many great parks in England and France (Twombly 2010), and via numerous sojourns to the American countryside on buggy rides (Martin 2011). Though park spaces were already part of the landscape of the time, in Olmsted's estimation they were not of the type that would fully serve the wants and needs of urban dwellers. Olmsted thought that park spaces of the

time, which were well suited for exertive recreation but not well fashioned for receptive uses, should be rethought with an eye towards beautification through the use of natural elements (Twombly 2010).

I believe Miller Park is an example of a park space where Olmsted's cultural influence can be clearly seen (observation notes 2013). The parade, the expanded lake, the meandering roadway through the park with multiple access points from the park exterior, are design elements that are notably evocative of Olmsted's work. Similar design elements can be identified among Olmsted's park creations including Buffalo Park (Kowsky 1987), Prospect Park, and Central Park (Rybcynski 1999). In addition, the incorporation of design features such as the promenade, glades, the wood, and the use of natural elements such as grass and shrubbery to soften the constructed features and obscure park boundaries, are all hallmarks of Olmsted's designs (Martin 2011, Twombly 2010). Elements of both pastoral and picturesque qualities abound, mirroring Olmsted's design ideals (observation notes 2013) As a collective, these design elements evoke a cultural ideal of park spaces descended from Olmsted's design philosophies (Twombly 2010).

At a very basic level Olmsted endeavored to create spaces that stimulated contemplation and peace among park goers, mixed with areas of use, which brought park users together in a "receptive" fashion (Rybcynski 1999). In this task he viewed park topography as an overriding characteristic that would affect all persons who had access to the park space: "...we must study to secure a combination of elements which shall invite and stimulate the simplest, purest and most primeval action of the poetic element of human nature, and thus tend to remove those who are affected by it to the greatest

possible distance from the highly elaborate and artificial conditions of their ordinary civilized life” (Twombly 2010:196).

Targeted intercept interviews broadly characterize Miller Park as evocative of the type of landscape Olmsted described, citing both the physical nature elements (trees, water, grass, open space,) and the mood of the park (relaxing, inviting) as positive park attributes (targeted intercept notes 2013). One key informant I interviewed Cindy, a young woman who lives in the neighborhood, unknowingly invoked the ideals of Olmsted when she remarked, “With all of the trees, and the grass, it’s just such a relaxing place to hang out or take a walk.” Park user Claire said, “It’s peaceful and it’s beautiful” when asked about what the park offers to visitors (targeted intercept notes 2013).

Water is one of the parks nature elements that appear to be especially attractive among park users (observation notes 2013). People sitting near the lakeshores’ edge watching the water, the regular appearance of people feeding waterfowl, the presence of fishermen, all suggest usages for which Miller Park is uniquely capable of providing access, within the Bloomington community in which the park is located. Interview data would also seem to support the idea that the lake draws users to the park. According to interviewee Jay whom I interviewed near the edge of the lake, “There is no other place around here (like this)” (Targeted Interview notes 2013). Littoral access within the park was an important factor in the early inception of the park and in the expansion of its small pond (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Plan of 1889), is a feature that is mentioned as being desirable by park goers that I interviewed (2013), and is an element relating strongly to Olmsted’s design and access ideals (Kowsky 1987).

Olmsted's designs often included the use of trees and other natural elements to obscure the boundaries of the park, when viewed from within the park (Kowsky 1987, Twombly 2010), attempting to create spaces that appeared apart from their urban locales. Such spaces were intended to allow the pressures of urban life to disappear into the background through a type of sensory shift, engaging the mind through aesthetics, and yet allowing one to relax (Martin 2011). Of his design in Brooklyn's Prospect Park, Olmsted said "Here is a suggestion of freedom and repose, which must in itself be refreshing and tranquilizing to the visitor coming from the confinement and bustle of crowded streets" (Martin, 2011:273). Miller Park's physical layout features grasses, trees, and earthen berms that help to define the smaller inner spaces of the park and obscure what lay beyond their borders. During my observations within Miller Park, the elements of nature appear to move to the forefront for the park user, and the streets surrounding the park seem to disappear into the background (observation notes 2013).

Though Olmsted sought to provide access to nature through his parks, the layouts within his park designs were cultural creations constructed to improve upon those characteristics that each park site possessed, echoing cultural ideals of nature. "The landscape had to be totally engineered yet made to look utterly natural" (Martin 2011:279), offering that suggestion of repose which Olmsted espoused. To Olmsted then the elements of the park create an illusion of nature, a space that is both a psychological and physical buffer from the world that exists outside of its boundaries.

Olmsted attempted to adjoin differing types of landscape within his park spaces, marrying the "picturesque" with the "pastoral". Picturesque landscapes offered adornment to create spaces of grand or unusual beauty, while pastoral landscapes evoked

the quiet and peaceful tranquility of rolling rural topography (Twombly 2010). In relation to these elements, Miller Park features the pastoral open space of The Parade, and the rolling natural topography of The Woods, along with areas of more scenic or picturesque beauty such as the views afforded near the lake (observation notes 2013).

As part of Olmsted's vision for the picturesque quality of park life, numerous man-made and constructed elements can be found within his designs (Twombly 2010). Miller Park has features which adorn the space and which are very much apart from "natural" elements, such as the pavilion, the stage, the playground, the war monuments, and the train. These items were, to Olmsted, accessories that were acceptable to the extent that they serve the greater park function of receptive and hospitable sanctuary, noting that the subtle nuances of the park environs may sometimes be enhanced through contrast (Twombly 2010). Describing the picturesque features that may be found within park spaces, Olmsted left room for multiple types of adornment to park spaces: "Rocks for instance may be such accessories, so may thick wood, so may shrubbery. So may buildings, monuments, etc., but these are not what make a park; they are not characteristic of it. The word park as a common noun, as a descriptive word, should indicate such graceful topography, such open pastoral, inviting hospitable scenery as I have indicated" (Twombly 2010:197)

Olmsted advocated for spaces that supported both receptive and exertive types of recreation, ideally blending the two within proximity of one another, but with enough space to serve each equally well (Martin 2011). Miller Park then is evocative of Olmsted not only in physical design; many of the park uses evoke the ideals that Olmsted espoused. The broad range of observed activities within Miller Park indicate that a

strong presence of both exertive and receptive uses, creating another tangible connection to Olmsted (observation notes 2013)

Within Miller Park, people are presented with multiple options for socially integrated or private recreation. People pass casually along the promenade or on the roadways, able to converse with others that they may see, while others may segregate, or seclude themselves in the more private enclaves of the glades or among the rolling woods or lawn areas, still others exercise or play (observation notes 2013), evoking the uses Olmsted advocated for within parks (Martin 2011). Some park patrons congregate around the lake to fish or possibly to simply be near the water, much as Olmsted had suggested they would at his similarly constructed lake within Prospect Park in Brooklyn (Martin 2011). Though Olmsted could not have foreseen all of the possible uses, that modern park spaces such as Miller Park support, he planned for spaces that were adaptive to multiple purposes, thereby allowing for changes in public tastes and uses over time (Twombly 2010). Olmsted's foresight likely even contributed to the type of increased park use complexity that Terence Young observed in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park (Young 1995), a park commission that Olmsted did not receive, yet had direct influence upon (Martin 2011).

Olmsted thought that parks should represent the highest level of forethought and planning, representing a human oriented, socially engineered space: "The park is a work of art, designed to produce certain effects upon the mind of men. There should be nothing in it, absolutely nothing- not a foot of surface nor a spear of grass- which does not represent study, design, a sagacious consideration and application of known laws of cause and effect with reference to that end"(Twombly 2010:200).

Within Olmsted's mind then, the park is a cultural creation designed for the betterment of public social and psychological health. As a means of affecting the greatest level of benefit for the people within urban communities, providing abundant access to park spaces was an important factor to Olmsted (Twombly 2010). Interview data (2013) suggests that access to Miller Park is important to the people who live close to it. As key informant interviewee Mike remarked, "Being close to the park lets you take advantage of everything that is over there." Key informant Tara called the park "a real benefit to the neighborhood," saying also "it helps to be so close." Jay a targeted intercept interviewee who was at the park to fish at the lake said "I don't know what I would do if this place (the park) wasn't here." To those Miller Park patrons that I spoke with, access to the park appears to be a valuable commodity with broad ranging benefits (interview notes 2013).

Summary

Present day Miller Park is evocative of Olmsted through its design elements, its wide-ranging types of use, and through a cultural tradition of park spaces within the U.S. that evolved in large part from Olmsted's advocacy. And while Oldenburg's third place characteristics apply broadly to observed Miller Park characteristics, observed behaviors here lack the important aspect of sustained social interactions that help to define third places. Miller Park then cannot be fully considered to be a third place as Oldenburg describes (interview notes 2013, observation notes 2013).

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Findings

Miller Park is a center of community activity, in a time where community centers are disappearing (Oldenburg 1999). People within the park appear to gravitate towards the recreational, communal, social and spatial opportunities afforded by the park setting and its uses within the social realm are numerous, based upon both observation and interview data (2013). The physical park space and its associated usage retain direct links to a culture of park design that is descendent from the work Frederick Law Olmsted (2013). Elements of casual and sometimes extended interactions among peer groups in an outdoor, relaxed, public, socially-regulated setting, seem to be uniquely present at Miller Park (observation notes 2013).

The culture of Miller Park appears to be a unique collective, comprised of its meanings among park users and local residents, its civic and historic significance within Bloomington, it's physical space, and its usage. The park has a legacy that is intertwined with the history of Bloomington, its image has been used as an emblem for the city on postcards, and elements within the park reflect a cultural tradition of historic remembrance and veneration (McLean County Museum of History: Miller Park Archives). Treating the park as a type of social capital, some local residents have utilized the park to facilitate space based needs for meetings and events, and as an emblem for their community image. The perceived elevated stature of Miller Park, among public

entities, is seen as a positive reflection upon the local community among the key informants whom I interviewed (2013).

The diverse array of observed uses within Miller Park include civic, social, festive, cultural, recreational, and spiritual / introspective, all within the same physical locale (observation notes 2013). This would likely make Miller Park unique within Bloomington for the setting, variety, and types of activities and use that it supports. As these diverse qualities and associations take on a collective meaning within the community they help to imbue the park with a cultural identity, (Gieryn 2000), which has developed at Miller Park over time (Steinbacher-Kemp 2007).

An informal culture of park use seems to help regulate activity and interaction within Miller Park (observation notes 2013). Codified usage rules exist on signs within the park, though there appears to be little formal presence for enforcement. Rather, it appears as though cultural ideals of park space help to regulate the activities and uses found therein. Given the manner that spatial relationships formulate within particular usage areas of the park, informal regulation through agreed upon usages and behavior seems very much present (observation notes 2013).

Interview data suggests that use of the park can be tied to familial traditions (targeted intercept notes 2013). Among the park users that I interviewed, this unique culture appears to reflect an ideal that Miller Park provides access to enjoyment of outdoor activity and a recreational exposure to nature. These park users broadly framed the park as a place to enjoy natural elements, or to take advantage of recreational opportunities within an attractive setting (targeted intercept notes 2013).

Access to outdoor space is among the most readily observable characteristics of Miller Park, and one that was frequently mentioned as desirable by the park users that I interviewed (2013). Being a defining feature of park life, the outdoor character is omnipresent. The activities within the park area seem reflective of a culture that venerates the enjoyment and benefits of outdoor activity. The space of Miller Park provides access to playgrounds, open green spaces, trees and water, sports and exercise, pastoral tranquility, and monuments of historical and cultural significance, and does so with little tangible cost associated to its usage (observation notes 2013). Such access to many of these elements may be otherwise unavailable without the park, a factor noted during the creation of the park by its founders (McLean Co. Museum of History: Miller Park Archives).

The open access and loosely defined space of the park allows for numerous different uses to happen simultaneously and allows varied uses to blend among the same setting. The park seems to operate as an open physical arena, adorned with natural elements, within which people largely decide their own methods of use (observation notes 2013). Interior park spaces can help to define their usage through design and physical elements. Constructed park elements help to provide context for the space, and help tie a loose collection of geographies into a more cohesive space (Twombly 2010). Within the Miller Park playground area, the slides, bridges, swings and ladders comprise the space and appear to be the primary attraction therein. Within other parts of the park, the trees or water may be the attraction, while the paths, benches and tables appear to promote and regulate usage among park patrons, indicating where to walk, sit, or to congregate (observational notes 2013)

Given Frederick Law Olmsted's early contribution to social theory on environment and space, and his far-reaching influence on the city park in America, (Kowsky 1987), it is fitting to involve Olmsted in any thorough analysis of Miller Park as a social space. Olmsted's theories and ideals focus on the public health and social benefits that may be achieved through the enjoyment of public parks, and he was widely accepted as an authority on park design at the time that Miller Park was first built (Kowsky). Observational data suggests that Miller Park's design and culture can be tied to the social theory and design work of Olmsted (2013). Miller Park's physical landscape retains the juxtaposition of pastoral and picturesque presentation that is representative of Olmsted, and the uses found herein evoke Olmsted's receptive and neighborly categories of leisure (observation notes 2013)

People within modern society seek out experiences that bring them in contact with elements of nature, or that which is perceived as natural (Cronon 1996), something that observational and interview data within Miller Park seems to affirm (2013). Even with Olmsted's emphasis on nature, his park designs are not a reflection of nature, but rather his parks are a cultural ideal of that which can be experienced in nature (Kowsky 1987, Cronon 1996). Olmsted's park spaces are engineered as a way to bring people back into contact with their own nature, and with that which might be scarce among urban environs (Martin 2011).

The nature elements of the park are here to be experienced and enjoyed, though in a very constructed and manipulated manner, representing picturesque and pastoral ideals rather than a primitive or completely natural landscape (observation notes 2103). Miller Park is a place where nature's desirable elements exist in direct relation to the

surrounding neighborhood and community, providing easy access and open opportunity (observation notes 2013). Observational and interview data within this study underscore that enjoyment of nature elements is an influential factor in park use among some park goers, (2013).

Within targeted intercept interviews numerous respondents mention the park setting, and it's access to nature, as desirable qualities that Miller Park provides. Regardless of the activity within the park, cultural values of nature's picturesque beauty appear to be represented through the elements that make up the park space. Park users I interviewed specifically mentioned the trees, open space, water and grass as elements that they seek out in Miller Park (interview notes 2013). Throughout the park space elements such as grass, flowers, trees, or rocks, obscure the constructed, physical elements, and the borders of the park (observation notes 2013), again tying the physical elements of Miller Park to Olmsted style design (Twombly 2010).

Olmsted's concept of receptive recreation also earned mention from some of the park users that I interviewed, who view the natural park elements as enticing. Some park users I interviewed come to the park merely to pass through it and experience it on an existential level or for its abundance of nature elements.

Observational data (2013) seem to support that receptive types of uses, are regular activities within the park. Much of the park use recorded during my observation sessions, involved sedentary, solitary, or slow paced activities where enjoying the park's physical and sensory backdrop appear to be the primary attraction (observation notes 2013). People were also observed gathering in the shade of the trees, walking near the water's edge, or playing among the pastoral areas of the park (observation notes 2013). Among

the observed activity around the lake, I note numerous cars parked with people sitting in them, near the water. These people appear to be partaking in the receptive element of park life from the privacy of their vehicle (observation notes 2013).

Among the activities that park users give for visiting the park, opportunity for recreation resonates as a theme throughout interview responses. “We come here so he can play” a young mother, Sarah, told me as we stood near the playground swings where her son was swinging. Another woman Lisa, whom I interviewed, mentioned driving there specifically because there was a “spray park and a zoo here.” They had driven there from more than an hour away, having seen the park on the city’s website. Other interviewees mentioned fishing or various activities at the lake, leisure walking, birthday parties, and the playground or play in a general manner (interview notes 2013).

The reasons for visiting Miller Park, as reported to me through the targeted interview sessions by people who use the park, are widely varied. Themes such as recreational enjoyment and relaxation were mentioned within the targeted intercepts as things that can be found within Miller Park, in addition to being a place of beauty, cultural significance, opportunity for recreation and exercise, and a destination for visitors (interview notes 2013). These wide-ranging types of activities are indicative of Olmsted’s belief that parks should serve a diverse array of uses to benefit the greatest number of park users (1971).

Within this wide range of activities observed at Miller Park, the only apparent common thread with all of them is the physical locale, each of them taking place within the confines of the park (observation notes 2013). Responses given during the interview sessions indicate support for the idea that the “outside” element of park life is part of its

allure. Every interview participant mentioned at least one aspect of being outside (i.e. “fresh air” “open space” “trees” “scenery”) with an emphasis that those things are desirable and can be found at Miller Park (interview notes 2013). Fishing, bird watching, and the water spray park are specifically outdoor activities, and although some of the observed activities (sitting, reading, yoga, exercise, leisure walking) can be done indoors, the park provides an attractive locale for doing such activities outside, and with free access. (observation notes 2013)

The democratic *availability* of space is another characteristic espoused by Olmsted in his theories of park spaces (Twombly 2010), which seems present within Miller Park (observation notes 2013). In a neighborhood where the homes have little separation from neighboring homes, the physical space of the park comprises over 67 acres of open landscape (CityBlm.org 2013). Olmsted knew that not every activity or use could be accounted for within the park, but thought that by providing space within the park, and access for the people of the city who comprised a broad demographic of humanity, the park space would adapt to the desires of the park users (Martin 2011).

Thematic analysis of data indicates that seemingly oppositional types of activities coexist within the shared physical space of Miller Park. Multiple interview respondents mentioned being in the park for reasons related to solitude or relaxation, describing the environs as “quiet” or “peaceful”(targeted interview notes 2013), however the park at varying times can be filled with people and feel very “active”, often with increased levels of noise as well (observation notes 2013). Miller Park appears uniquely capable of hosting these exertive and receptive activities within close proximity. During my observations of the park, even near the active motion and noise of the playground or zoo

there are people partaking in the quieter activities of the park, reading, sunbathing, lounging or sitting, apart from the activity of the park, but with a relationship to it (observation notes 2013). Miller Park has interior spaces with loosely defined borders of natural elements, adaptable to varying uses among the varied clientele within this public and open space, and providing adequate separation between users (observation notes 2013).

The relative quietude of the park appears to take place as a relation to its environs by the individual user, rather than through removal of all activity and movement (observation notes 2013). Active (exertive) and passive (receptive) enjoyment within the park are both part of a continuum in which most participation falls within the middle range, often evoking elements of each (observation notes 2013). The individual park user then, though immersed in his or her experience, is also part of the changing collective landscape of the park, which affects the experience that is shared by all. Ultimately Olmsted viewed the park as a social realm. As Olmsted stated “each individual adding by their mere presence to the pleasure of all others, all helping to the greater happiness of each” (Twombly 2010: 226).

The observed uses of the park may vary over the course of the day, and likely change as seasonal variations in weather and schedules change. However, in each of my observational periods, I observe both active and passive pursuits taking place, some solitary and some that appear more openly social. The physical design of Miller Park, and its ample amount of space seem well suited for accommodating this broad range of uses (observation notes 2013).

In addition to open access and accommodation of use, it would appear that Miller Park also has much of what Ray Oldenburg described as shared characteristics of third places. Characteristics such as, being a neutral meeting ground, having low cost, being a leveler of status, having a low profile and a playful mood, enjoying regular visitors, and feeling like a home away from home (Oldenburg 1999), are also descriptors that seem apt when observing Miller Park in use (observation notes 2013). Miller Park seems to epitomize such places.

However, there is at least some departure, mainly in the component of social conversation, which differentiates Miller Park from other known third places. In describing the elements that make up third places, Oldenburg (1999) stresses that they must have conversation and socialization as their *primary* activity. “*Nothing* more clearly indicates a third place than that the talk there is good; that it is lively, scintillating, colorful, and engaging” (Oldenburg, 1999: 26). Even within the most social areas of the park, near the playground and picnic areas, it seems inaccurate to portray Miller Park as a place in which conversation is pursued as a primary activity (observation notes 2013). Though open socialization is observed among many park uses, it does not appear to be the primary activity at any time (observation notes 2013). Activities abound within the park that appear to have little conversational interplay of the sort Oldenburg describes, and tellingly none of the interviewees mentioned conversation as an activity that draws them to Miller Park (targeted interview notes 2013).

During my observations, I also see no evidence of a core constituent group that convenes specifically for the type of convivial socializing found in other noted third places (observation notes 2013). In fact there appear to be many people who use Miller

Park for solitude and isolation, in a manner quite opposite of third spaces. There was no indication however, within either observational or interview sessions (2013), that people were gathering at the park specifically for camaraderie and conversation, though social conversation appears to be a byproduct of some Miller Park use (observation notes 2013).

Data from observational and interview sessions (2013) suggests that within Miller Park, people convene foremost to be *within* the park environs, and partake of the park experience and the activities that can be found herein. Although socializing is an observed attribute of Miller Park activity, it appears to occur peripherally to other pursuits found within the park (observation notes 2013), and thus portraying Miller Park as a third place as envisioned by Oldenburg, is not fully accurate.

The culture of Miller Park can be identified through its patterns of activity and use, its imagery, its historic significance and meaning within the Bloomington community (McLean Co. Museum of History), and through a broad heritage and cultural tradition of American parks (Kowsky 1987). Observational data seems to suggest that Miller Park exists as a loose association of individuals, which changes fluidly, without much appreciable difference on the collective activity found within the park space (observation notes 2013).

Park culture appears to help facilitate negotiations of space and use through informal means. People commandeer areas of the park for undetermined time frames and assume control of that area, with little apparent opposition from others within the park (observation notes 2013). An informal culture of park use and patronage likely helps people negotiate these small land claims among one another, much as it helps determine acceptability of behaviors and uses within the park. As spaces fill up and are used, other

spaces become available and perhaps repopulated, with seemingly nothing present in the way of organization, save the cultural machinations of park etiquette, to govern the social interactions of the park (observation notes 2013). Observational data also appear indicate an increase in visitors and activity levels at Miller Park for Friday and weekend observations, creating a more dense population within the space (observation notes 2013).

Though park rules, common use ideals and societal decorum rule the overt park use, park behavior appears to be mostly regulated by the people within the park, a factor that is likely determined by the number of regular (i.e. non-criminal) people who use the space (Whyte 2003). During my observation sessions there is little notable formal presence of regulatory policing within the park, and some illicit behavior is observed (observation notes 2013). However, illicit behaviors appear to be an extremely small part of what goes on within the park. The vast majority of observed uses within the park are of a more benign and socially acceptable variety (observation notes 2013).

Both key informants and targeted intercept interviewees portrayed the park in overwhelmingly positive terms, and key informants suggested that the park helps to improve the geographic area around it (interview notes 2013). Among the park features that were commonly seen as desirable by users at Miller Park, trees, open space, grass, playground, water spray-park, lake, and zoo all were mentioned multiple times, with the most common feature mentioned being trees (interview notes 2013). Observed activities at the park including fishing, biking, dog walking, cookouts, all seem indicate that the outdoor aspect of park-life is very much one of its desirable attributes (observation notes 2013). As White (1996) has noted, opportunities for casual contact with elements of

nature are decreasing in modern society, indicating that spaces such as Miller Park will likely only become more desirable over time, for people who are seeking out that type of contact. Contact with nature elements appears to be widely available within Miller Park (observation notes 2013).

Miller Park is utilized as community capital by some of the people who live in the area around the park (key informant interviews 2013). As to how Miller Park might contribute to social health, the park space can be thought of much in the same way Jane Jacobs portrayed urban sidewalks. Jacobs (1961) saw sidewalks as an element among the urban built landscape that provides common ground, upon which people may comfortably mobilize, meet and engage with fellow citizens. These qualities are all found within Miller Park as well (observation notes 2013), and both observed activity and interview responses indicate that Miller Park users find the location to be comfortable and desirable (2013). Sullivan et al. suggest that such spaces that feel vital and favorable for use bring neighbors into contact with one another, thus helping to strengthen bonds of community and connectedness (2004).

To the extent that Miller Park is a desirable location to spend time, it may also then be a place where bonds of community can be forged. It certainly seems fitting to portray Miller Park as such a place given its physical layout, observed behaviors, and reported uses (observation notes 2013). Through these uses Miller Park has, over time, come to be seen as a cultural touchstone or landmark within Bloomington (Brady-Lunny 2009), and Miller Park use is often passed on among family members or peer groups (interview notes 2013).

The observed uses within Miller Park seem indicative of Frederick Olmsted's vision for urban park use, given the observed presence of multiple neighborly and receptive behaviors that are representative of the types of activities that Olmsted advocated (observation notes 2013). The park's open access and its amenities and associated uses appear to attract a broad section of citizenry who intermingle in a setting that is sometimes social, and which stands apart from other built features within the urban landscape, given its outdoor setting and an emphasis on natural elements (observation notes 2013). Miller Park's aesthetic appearance also retains some prominent "pastoral" and "picturesque" design characteristics from its original layout, that when viewed as a collective appear broadly representative of Olmsted's legacy of park design. Such elements as the parade, the glades, the woods, and the lake are broadly reflective of Olmsted's design work and advocacy (observation notes 2013).

Conclusions

Although Olmsted's influence can still be felt throughout the landscape of American park design, Terence Young (1995) has shown that over time, park spaces have increased in complexity of use, creating segmented spaces, which have moved park designs away from pastoral layouts to more use-specific divisions of space. It seems accurate to depict Miller Park in this manner as well, given the addition of use specific elements such as the tennis courts, the playground, the baseball field, and the zoo (observational notes 2013). As uses and tastes have changed, the park space has followed, at least to some degree. However, the retention of so many design elements from the original design that hearken back to Olmsted's design philosophy, suggest that Olmsted's

influence and cultural legacy are still quite present within the modern incarnation of Miller Park.

While the park displays several characteristics that are representative of Oldenburg's third place locales, during observations and in reported data there is a noted lack of social conversation on the level indicative of known third places. Social interaction is indeed part of the observed activity within multiple areas of the park, however none of the observed conversational activity approaches Oldenburg's (1999) standard of being the main activity that defines a third place locale. Conversation among park users that I observed seemed to be more tertiary to the overall activity of the park and thus Miller Park cannot fully be portrayed as a third place. (observation notes 2013). Miller Park then seems to function as a type of modified third place, one which retains many of the attributes of other known third places, but with less of the socialization of such locales (observation notes 2013, interview notes 2013).

The Miller Park locale appears to be a unique space within Bloomington. The park constituents that I was able to interview view Miller Park overwhelmingly as a positive part of the landscape; part recreational playground, part community-capital, part urban sanctuary, within an area of town which is often viewed as troubled or deteriorating (interview notes 2013). To the extent that society values sports, recreation, leisure, civic accomplishment and engagement, public memorials, historical preservation, ritual, cultural performances, community celebration, representations of natural beauty, Miller Park can indeed be placed within the realm of revered public entities (observation notes 2013). As a community development tool, the park also appears to be a valuable

asset among local residents seeking to strengthen local communal bonds and increase interaction within the west Bloomington community (interview notes 2013).

Recommendations for Future Study

This research is intended to build upon previous study of park spaces and contribute to the overall understanding of how park spaces get utilized within urban neighborhood environments. Further study of this location could benefit from a larger sample size of park users and key informants to help create a more detailed account of the park culture. It is likely as well that targeted intercept interviews conducted at different time periods could reveal different data than those collected during the afternoon time period for this study. Thematic and Subject analysis of local newspaper articles could also help to more fully understand the importance that this park has to the greater Bloomington community, and the meanings ascribed to the park by local citizens. The greatest level of knowledge about the park however will likely always be obtained through careful observation of the uses and activities found therein.

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APPENDIX A

OBSERVED ACTIVITIES AND REPORTED USES

Observed Activities Within Miller Park

Dog Walking, Walking for Exercise, Fishing, Bicycling, Playground Use, Water park, Conversation, Picnicking, Photography, Frisbee, Miniature Golf, Hanging Out - Congregating, Socializing, Sitting, Reading, Strolling, Flag Football, Children Playing, Music Performance, Gatherings - Celebrations, Hitting Golf Balls, Feeding Ducks, Leisure Strolling, Tennis, Hula Hoop, Sleeping, Kite Flying, Drinking, Hanging Out, Zoo

Reported Park Uses from Interviews

Leisure Walking, Running, Biking, Relaxing, Dog Walking, Hang Out, Nature Watching (birds, flowers, trees, lake, etc.), Birthday Parties (celebrations), Playground (general play), Cookouts, Picnicking, Fishing, Exercise (general), Zoo, Tennis, Park Events, Frisbee

APPENDIX B

OBSERVATIONAL DATA COLLECTION DATES

Weekday Morning	May 15, June 4, July 12, Aug 16,
Weekday Afternoon	April 15, May 15 , June 4 , July 12
Weekday Evening	June 4, June 19,
Weekend Morning	April 20 June 8,
Weekend Afternoon	July 13 , Aug 24

*Dates in **Bold** were used for targeted intercept interviews as well

**Morning sessions were held between 8-11 a.m., Afternoon sessions were held between 12-4 p.m., and Evening sessions were held after 4:30 p.m.

Targeted Intercept Interviewees

Kim, Jay, Claire, Julie, Kate, Andre, Michelle, Jane, Sam, Mark, Sarah, Tony, Lisa

Key Informant Interviewees

Mike, Charles, Cindy, Tara, Dave, Vincent, Anita

APPENDIX C

INFORMATION ON MILLER PARK AMENITIES

67.6 acres in size, Miller Park is Bloomington's first public park. Home of Miller Park Zoo. Memorials honor veterans of the Civil War, Vietnam War and Korean War. 100 year old pavilion popular for weddings and events. 11 acre lake with paddleboat rentals. New playground and water play opened in 2008.

Concessions, drinking fountain, fishing, football, grills, picnic tables, playground equipment, restrooms, shelter, softball/baseball, water play

Listed on Bloomington IL Parks and Recreation Website. (As of June 2013).

APPENDIX D

TARGETED INTERCEPT QUESTIONNAIRE

The following was used as the guideline for conducting the targeted intercept interviews within Miller Park. The questions are intended to be open ended enough that some follow up questioning may be utilized based upon respondent's answers.

1. Why did you come to the park today? (What brings you to the park, what are you doing here today?)
2. How far did you travel to get here? (How long did it take you to get here?)
3. Tell me about how you feel about the park?
4. What is your favorite thing to do at the park? (What do you like about the park? What things do you like to do at the park?)
5. Are there any other things you enjoy about the park?
6. How often do you come here?
7. What is it that you do / don't like about the design of the park?
8. What improvements would you like to see within the park (Why is this important to you?) Are there any negative aspects about the park?
9. What does the park mean to you?

APPENDIX E

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR ADULTS

Perspective Participant,

I am a graduate student under the direction of Dr. Joan Brehm in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Illinois State University. I am conducting a research study about park usage within Miller Park, Bloomington, IL. The main focus of the research is how personal usage reflects the diversity of usage within the park space. I am requesting your participation, which will involve answering approximately 5-7 questions in an interview, and is expected to last less than 15 minutes.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled, and the subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled. Your responses are confidential and any information that might allow someone to identify you will not be disclosed.

There are no anticipated risks involved with participation beyond those of everyday life. Although no compensation is offered for your participation, a possible benefit of your participation is helping to inform others on how park spaces are used within Bloomington, IL.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call me at (309) 287-8228 or Dr. Joan Brehm in the Sociology Department at (309) 438-7177

Sincerely,
Drew Griffin

I consent to participating in the above study.

Signature _____

Date _____

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/ participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Research Ethics & Compliance Office at Illinois State University at (309) 438-2529.