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Sacred Placemaking and Urban Policy: The Case of Tepoztlán, Mexico

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Urban and Environmental Planning and Policy

by

Andrea Groves Hoff

Dissertation Committee:
Professor Scott Bollens, Chair
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Vita

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Abstract of the Dissertation

Sacred Placemaking and
Urban Policy: The Case of Tepoztlán, Mexico

By

Andrea Groves Hoff

Doctor of Philosophy in Urban and Environmental Planning and Policy

University of California, Irvine, 2020

Professor Scott Bollens, Chair

Sacred places – ranging from religious to secular structures, human created or natural areas, or places with ritual, symbolic, or cultural significance - are rarely addressed by urban planners but are sources of great meaning for many communities. One reason for this neglect is the inherent difficulty in measuring the value and meaning of place for different individuals or groups. This research focused on this challenge by using ethnographic field research methods to gain an in-depth understanding of how people view and interact with sacred places in their community. The case study site of Tepoztlán is an urbanizing *pueblo* in central Mexico where sacred places play a significant role in daily life, rituals, and festivals and urban forms facilitate these interactions. I asked how sacred meaning was ascribed to places in Tepoztlán, how the built environment impacted behavior around these spaces, how communities preserved sacred places, and the impacts of urbanization on preservation efforts. Findings derived from 53 interviews and three months of field observations revealed five themes characteristic of sacred placemaking in Tepoztlán, including intricate patterns of neighborhood exchange, intergenerational beliefs in sacred mountains, collectivism, pedestrian oriented design, and

community involvement in construction of the built environment. Indigenous placemaking is then contrasted with two top-down urban development policies that changed the character of the town and threatened sacred places and placemaking. A tourism program called Pueblos Mágicos [Magical Towns] and expansion of the Pera-Cuautla freeway have degraded and commodified sacred sites and perpetuated unequal distribution of development benefits. The research discusses how employing different views of people-environment interactions beyond dominant Western views can help planners to better understand and plan for preservation of meaningful spaces and in turn preserve and enhance community identity, culture, and self-sufficiency.

Introduction

Sacred places can be religious or secular structures, human created or natural areas, or places made significant by ritual, symbolic, or cultural investment. Places can be sacred to local people and to visitors as well. Cities and towns such as Jerusalem, Benaras, Rome, Bodh Gaya, Amritsar and others are sacred places and important centers of religion. Other urban places are sites of significant religious buildings, such as churches, cathedrals, temples, mosques, or shrines. Nature and parts of nature can also be considered sacred, e.g. mountains, rivers, lakes, waterfalls, forests, trees, plants, and animals. Additionally, places can be considered sacred even if they are not directly linked with religion, such as those that make people feel awe like the Grand Canyon or historic monuments like the Vietnam Memorial. Broadening notions of what constitutes 'sacred' in environmental design literature suggests that sacred places can be religious or non-religious depending on the frame of reference of the experiencer.

Some sacred places, particularly in less developed countries, become designated as international cultural heritage sites by groups like the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). Cultural heritage preservation is increasingly recognized as critical to sustainable development and community well-being (Tweed & Sutherland, 2007), but built cultural heritage regulations are often inadequate in preserving many meaningful places. While some buildings may achieve designation, other cherished spaces have no regulatory protection.

Planners lack policy language to address non-instrumental value of places. This leaves planning solutions off the table that might leverage sacred places for community wellbeing or in the case of contested sacred places facilitate conflict resolution (McClymont, 2015; Sandercock & Senbel, 2011; Mazumdar, 2013). Despite the powerful influence that symbolic meaning and

sentiment can have on urban dynamics (Fiery, 1945), urban planning decisions traditionally rely on 'objective' or quantifiable evaluation criteria which may overlook the *meaning* that a place has to a local community (Whittemore, 2014; Schon & Rein, 1995; Ryan & Hoff, 2010; Mazanti & Ploger, 2003). This can result in neglect of local needs and desires and pave the way for destruction of cherished places in the name of profitable development (Friedmann, 2010).

This research examined the case of Tepoztlán, where residents are protesting the destruction of sacred places caused by development projects and have lost access to several sites due to recent earthquakes. This indigenous community has resisted and experienced territorial dispossession since colonialism. Large development projects have favored more affluent groups and much of the indigenous population lives in poverty. The situation in Tepoztlán presented a unique opportunity to understand how the value of sacred places can become pronounced when lost or threatened (e.g. Erikson, 1976; Hester 2006) and about the resiliency of sacred places. Tepoztlán is at an epicenter of conflict between preservation efforts and the urbanization process and there are cultural differences that manifest in the built environment. Loss of sacred places may "reorder or destroy something or some social process essential to the community's collective being" (Hester, 2006, p. 120). This research highlights community perspectives about threatened sites and articulates for planners and researchers how these sites are used, experienced, and impact the larger urban context. Findings reveal challenges faced by cultural heritage preservation agencies and how local views of preservation differ from views imposed by government and outsiders.

The goal of my research was to gain an in-depth understanding of how people view and interacted with sacred places through participation and observation of local everyday activities and interactions in their original context, or *in situ*. Drawing on contributions from both cultural

and phenomenological approaches to environment-behavior research, this socio-physical study uncovers culturally influenced views of scared places and explores the role of the physical environment -including urban design- in sacred placemaking. Socio-physical researchers emphasize the reciprocal and mutually constitutive influence of places and people. The research goals were twofold: first, to gain a better understanding of indigenous placemaking in field site and second, to examine successes and challenges of urban development and preservation efforts in this cultural context.

Ethnographic research methods were applied to the selected case study site of Tepoztlán, Mexico, where various natural/human-created and religious/non-religious sacred places play an integral role in the daily lives of community members and town ambiance. Tepoztlán neighborhoods celebrate hundreds of festivals or rituals annually that contribute to the creation and maintenance of sacred place. Unlike the U.S., where the disciplinary split of urban planning from design and architecture detached planners from discourse on the 'spirit of place' and placemaking (Sandercock & Senbel, 2011), Mexican planners retain strong design/architectural influences (Irazábal, 2009, p. 142). This context has contributed to a long-standing tradition of developing and using public spaces and symbolically and aesthetically rich cityscapes (Herzog, 1993; Mahiques, 2015). Mexico's common socio-political historical context and experience of global economic pressures allows such a case study to inform our understanding of struggles and successes of other *pueblos* in Mexico. The contested nature of cultural heritage in Tepoztlán is embedded in a larger socio-economic context that links local preservation efforts to larger networks of indigenous social movements to achieve autonomy and justice. This case reveals similarities with larger movements while also uncover unique, context-specific complexities of identity and neighborhood change locally.

A preliminary site reconnaissance trip in November 2017 resulted in preliminary interviews, field contacts, and list of potential sites and activities for observation, documentation, and analysis. During summer 2018, participant and non-participant observation data were collected at various sacred sites and during rituals and festivals in Tepoztlán over a three-month period to observe social interactions and use of space. Using theoretical sampling, 53 interviews were conducted to learn about local understandings of Tepoztlán and its sacred places. Ethnographic methods privileged the *emic* or insider's perspective as opposed to *etic* approaches, which privilege outsiders' perspectives, and sought context-specific and culturally influenced understandings of place and placemaking. Visual and textual field notes were created to achieve depth of understanding about explicit and tacit cultural knowledge regarding sacred placemaking in this community (Spradley, 1980, p. 6).

This report is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 is a review of literature in the field of environmental design research related to understanding sacred places and people-environment relationships. Chapter 2 presents the research questions, case study, theoretical approach, and types of data collection. Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 provide findings, including five socio-physical themes characteristic of indigenous placemaking in Terpoztlán, and analysis of urban development policies impacting placemaking. Chapter 5 provides study limitations and policy recommendations.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

Literature discussing sacred places is multi-disciplinary and includes perspectives from the fields of urban planning, environmental psychology, sociology, architecture, cultural heritage preservation, and tourism. This review begins with a discussion about broadening notions of what constitutes 'sacred' place and how a broad definition enables discovery of how communities view cherished places. I present cultural heritage preservation and tourism as mechanisms used to preserve certain sacred places, especially in less developed countries, that often fall short of preserving many communities' most cherished spaces. Additionally, urbanization and economic development projects threaten sacred places and are misaligned with values of communities. The review describes fundamental differences among how different groups understand their relationship to the environment through a discussion of five main approaches to people-environment research. After a review of these different approaches, key characteristics and qualities of sacred places are discussed followed by a summary of issues that have been neglected in prior research.

Broadening Notions of Sacred Place

This research uses a broad definition of sacred place, that extends beyond religion to include non-religious, cherished places in a community. The term 'sacred' could be exchanged with 'spiritual' or another general term that describes meaningful community places. Early academic work dealing with sacred place was narrower in its definition to describe such places, and often referred to supernatural power. These places are 'set apart' from profane space. For example, "Every sacred space implies a hierophany, an eruption of the sacred that results in detaching a territory from the surrounding cosmic milieu and making it qualitatively different" suggests Eliade (1957, p. 26). Profane space by contrast "appears and disappears in accordance

with the needs of the day" and does not provide orientation: "there is no longer any world, there are only fragments of a shattered universe" (Eliade, 1957, p. 23-24). For Relph (1976) neutral geometric space becomes sacred when "the fusion of dwelling and building, of the earth and the sky and the gods and mortals, is total" and access to different cosmic planes is thought to be possible (p. 15). Sacred place provides a reference point for a human's existence (Eliade 1957), orientation within a larger order, or a 'center of the world' (Relph, 1976, p.15).

More recently researchers have suggested more nuanced understandings of sacred place. For example, Mazumdar and Mazumdar (1994a) find that the bipolar sacred-profane categorization masks variety within these categories and identify a hierarchical spatial organization of sacredness ranging from "high sacred" to "low profane" with various levels of sacred, neutral, and profane space in between. Others point to the temporary nature of sacred place. For example, Holloway (2003) finds an "enchanted everyday" among New Age spiritualists, who 'sense' the sacred in what could be considered mundane places but create sacred space via their embodied spiritual practices (p. 26). Some designers have even extended notions of sacred to include community places such as an historic coffee shop or waterfront that is part of the town's collective memory (e.g. Hester, 2006).

The rise in non-religious spirituality in the West has coincided with broadening notions of 'sacred.' Spirituality necessarily moves beyond religiosity because it is seen as innate to all humanity beyond religious affiliation (Elkins et al. 1988). Spirituality is "a way of being and experiencing that comes about through awareness of a transcendent dimension and that is characterized by certain identifiable values in regard to self, others, nature, life, and whatever one considers to be the Ultimate" (Elkins et al. 1988, p. 10). Similarly, notions of sacred place have broadened to include those which "*point to the transcendent*, whether or not they are

explicitly grounded in religious traditions, with physical features (natural and/or built) and/or geography that have been richly imbued with symbol and meaning through rituals and ceremonies over time" (Abe, 2011, p.150). Stokols (1990) suggests a very broad definition of 'spiritual environment' as "a context in which fundamental human values can be cultivated and the human spirit can be enriched" (p. 642). The founding white paper for the Forum on Architecture, Culture, and Spirituality (ACSF) describes spirituality in the built environment as possibly including well known sacred places (e.g. those associated with religion or the supernatural) and broader notions of sacred places (e.g. those with significant cultural meaning):

- Places built to symbolize religious beliefs and facilitate communal rituals

- Places built for separation from the mundane

- Places with significant cultural meaning as established by archeological, historical or literary evidence as well as by a community

- Ancient places viewed by contemporary culture as possessing accessible, though often occult, knowledge that is applicable to today

- Places where the potential for epiphany is viewed as propitious

- Places revealed through some agent to be sacred, or where a significant event occurred

- Places where earth energies are believed to converge

- The act of creating spiritual places -- architecture as a media of spiritual development. (Barrie et al., 2007, pp. 4-5).

The above list allows for a range of places to qualify as sacred based on insiders' perspectives in different cultural or geographical contexts. Non-religious rituals of daily community life can also lead to certain places being considered sacred, as in the case of Manteo, where residents worked

to identify "sacred structures" that included ordinary places they considered vital to their town's identity because of their ritual use (Hester, 2006).

This research uses an inclusive notion of 'sacred place' in order to allow for discovery of emic perspectives regarding sacredness and sacred place. Borrowing in part from Abe's definition, this research examines places that in some way 'point to the transcendent' and are deeply valued by the local people.

Sacred Place and Urban Planning

Some urban planning scholars have suggested that sacred placemaking can enhance quality of life in cities (Friedmann, 2010; Sandercock & Senbel, 2011; Hester, 2006; McClymont, 2015). Sandercock and Senbel (2011) state that spiritually enriching environments are those where "we understand our responsibilities to other living beings and to other humans. They are places where rights meet responsibilities in a union of humility and awe at our common humanity and collective identity, despite our incredible diversity" (Sandercock & Senbel, 2011, p. 99).

Sacred places can evoke "strong affective ties of emotional commitment and connectedness, of a sense of history, belonging and rootedness" (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 1993, p. 237). Other scholars point out that sacred places reflect a self-conscious form of authentic placemaking as they are made with an awareness of the fundamental significance of place for human existence (Relph, 1976) and express our essential nature as human beings (Hester, 2006). Sacred environments move beyond individualism to evoke a larger meaning and purpose: "the sacred by introducing a critical note of otherness (human or divine) calls for something more than the enhancement of self" (Sheldrake, 2009, p. 163).

Sacred places can celebrate cultural expression, promote values of ecological sustainability (Hester, 2006; Bergmann, 2009), and engender compassion for others and the environment, creating more resilient and peaceful cities (Van der Ryn, 2013; Sheldrake, 2009; Hester, 2006). Environmental design researchers have found that some sacred places generate insight (Heard, Scott, & Yeo, 2015), foster meditation and reflection (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2015; Krinke, 2005; Kong, 1992), increase attention capacity (Herzog, Ouellette, Rolens & Koenigs, 2010) and provoke positive emotions of contentment and awe. Awe is experienced in the presence of something vast that extends beyond one's understanding of the world and may lead to prosocial or altruistic behavior by "broadening the individual's perspective to include entities vaster and more powerful than oneself and diminishing the salience of the individual self" (Piff, Dietze, Feinberg, Stancato, & Keltner, 2015, p. 895-896). Architects describe awe in built environments as Extraordinary Architectural Encounters (EAEs), or "strongly pleasurable and emotional events that provide immediate access to the timeless nature of physical, sensorial, and perceptual reality," as documented at Chartres Cathedral, the Notre Dame de Haut chapel of Ronchamp, and other sacred places (Bermudez & Ro, 2012, p.691). Awe is like an experience of 'extent' in Attention Restoration Theory or the model of restorative environments (Kaplan, 1995), which is also increasingly applied to sacred places (e.g. Herzog, Ouellette, Rolens & Koenigs, 2010). For planners and designers sacred places should be of increasing interest not only for the positive functions they provide but also as a way of understanding what city dwellers view as being significant (Lynch, 1960), how they experience and value such places.

For many researchers and planners, the sacredness of places is overshadowed by notions that sacred places can be the locus of division, conflict, and impinge on secularity. Religion is often viewed as divisive, regressive, and counter to liberal Western values (e.g. Sandercock,

2006; McClymont, 2015). For many researchers, the contested nature of sacred sites, or what Kong (2001) calls the "politics of sacred space" takes center stage (see Kong, 2001, for numerous examples). Contested sacred places can be external—between two or more groups sharing a site—or internal to one group, and can result in dissatisfaction, destruction, death, including harm to uninvolved persons. In describing shared sacred sites in India, Palestine, the Balkans, and elsewhere, Barkan and Barkey (2015) note "we see fluctuations between periods of peaceful sharing and of conflict over joint use. At times these sites can become the locus of communal violence" (p. 1). But conflict also exists in urban places that are not considered sacred; as Barkan and Barkley argue, "interreligious atrocities are neither more nor less vicious than other forms of group violence, and since the rise of nationalism in the nineteenth century, religious violence invariable mirrors national conflicts" (p. 5).

The current research proposes that a useful lens for understanding the sacred lies not in a focus on conflict but discovery of what contributes to sacred experiences and how communities view and experience cherished places. Focusing on what constitutes the sacred in cities may assist in rearticulating religious and spiritual values "as concepts which add a substantive positive dimension to planning and its conceptualization and construction of place" (McClymont, 2015, p.535) and in the case of contested sacred places may facilitate conflict resolution (Mazumdar, 2004). Mazumdar and Mazumdar (2013) also point out, "knowing how religion is playing a role in cities will help planners and designers understand religious groups, expressions, and needs. It will also be instructive to know the pitfalls and failures of the planning process…" (p. 224). They provide numerous examples of sacred places in cities and how they have changed the urban landscape yet have been neglected by planners and researchers.

Friedmann (2015) in his discussion of place-making in cities draws on Feuchtwang's (2004) research on Chinese sense of place to help articulate the significance of sacred places in the face of modernism. Feuchtwang (2004) found that interactions with sacred places in China such as the Tsu-Sze Temple, involved "gathering, centering, and linking" through cultural practices, rituals, worship, and community socializing, which is contrasted by the author and locals to modernist sense of cities:

> In China and elsewhere, the cosmology of the project of modernity is spatially signified by a line that is the arrow of progress or development… As lived, the time and space of modernity remains a space, not a place. In China, it is likened to the ocean… Everyone indeed fishes in the ocean of fortune. But it is nevertheless spoken about in China, including of course, by those that live by it, as chaotic. Modernity is the chaos of ordinary life, as out of abstract space and its lines to infinity, place and networks of trust, if not friendship, are made, imposing upon it a more sacred landscape of places, curved eaves, and home by the three gestures of gathering, centering, and linking. (p. 178)

Lynch (1960) noted in his classic *Image of the City*, most Americans are "hardly aware of the potential value of harmonious surroundings, a world which they may have briefly glimpsed only as tourists or as escaped vacationers. They can have little sense of what a setting can mean in terms of daily delight, or as a continuous anchor for their lives, or as an extension of the meaningfulness and richness of the world" (p.2) With purposeful attention to the urban physical environment and the potential of the city to be "soaked in memories and meanings," Lynch reminds us to look deeper at the city and how people interact with it. Research into people's interactions with sacred space in particular takes the image of the city one step further into the

realm of the ineffable, the immeasurable, and the numinous, or supernatural and mysterious experiences.

Current planning in the U.S. emphasizes quantifiable aspects of the urban environment such as cost, economic benefit, capacity, and land use efficiency, while immeasurable qualities such as beauty, meaning, and sacredness are neglected. The disciplinary split of urban planning from architecture and design was accompanied by an emphasis on positivist social science methods, spatial and socio-economic analyses, and land use regulatory work, while losing connection to the rich urban design literature dealing with the 'spirit of place' and placemaking (Sandercock & Senbel, 2011). Unlike planning, urban design has long benefited from discourse and engagement with the sensual experience or phenomenology of place (Hester & Mcnally, 2011).

The intellectual posture taken by planners and resulting geography in cities has been described as 'placeless,' or devoid of authentic experiences and lacking connection to local people and conditions. According to Relph (1976) "what is important is to recognize that placelessness is an attitude and an expression of that attitude which is becoming increasingly dominant, and that it is less and less possible to have a deeply felt sense of place or to create places authentically" (p. 80). Some scholars argue that city forms are produced for consumption by a mass public, and characterized by a generic, international aesthetic that lacks place-based identity (Relph, 1976; Nute, 2004). Others point to the role of transportation and communication technology in removing distinctions between near and far, creating perpetual sense of distancelessness or lack of distinctiveness of local places (Heidegger, 1971; Southworth & Ruggeri, 2011). Sheldrake (2009) suggests that modern design rationalism that divides the city into separate 'cells' for living, working, and leisure "fragments the ritual of daily life," creating a

sense of separation between people and with the natural world. Premodern societies often used immaterial elements such as myth, spirit, ritual, and symbolism to make the landscape meaningful (Rapoport, 1982; Relph, 1976) and such that a sense of the sacred pervaded entire cities, reinforced by ritual and consecrations (Sheldrake, 2009, see also Lynch, 1981).

Placelessness is a quality of rationalist planning that emphasizes common and average characteristics of people and of places and techniques that neglect the existential significance of places (Relph, 1976). Places are treated in an emotionally detached way, like machines that can be objectively manipulated with predetermined procedures and restructure according to values of functional efficiency, economics, and reason (Relph, 1976). The production of inauthentic spaces results from an imposed, extrinsic rather than an intrinsic process that emerges organically out of the daily life and context of place (Relph, 1976). This imposed process relies on use of 'objective' or independently derived evaluation criteria to justify projects and plans that overlooks the meaning that such evidence has within local communities. This can result in neglect of the needs and desires of residents and destruction of cherished places in the name of profit and efficiency. Friedmann (2010) suggests that successful places can create "centering"—or places of encounter and/or gathering—which is typified by sacred place yet often neglected at the hands of planners and developers:

> In relation to placemaking, centering and acknowledging that certain sites are endowed with a sense of the sacred are much the same thing. But the local state is typically unaware of sacrilege when it reduces a neighborhood to rubble in order to make way for a profitable real estate venture such as an office building or shopping mall…the erasure of places is a violent act, as established patterns of human relationships are destroyed. (p.157)

In some cases, communities' abilities to preserve cherished places has defied strictly economic analysis leading scholars to affirm the powerful influence that symbolic meaning and sentiment can have on urban dynamics (Firey, 1944). McClymont (2015) proposes the term "municipal spirituality" in order to help planners to articulate the value of emotionally meaningful spaces that allow access to the transcendental and where the common good can be expressed and embodied, but that do not have clear instrumental value. According to Stokols (1990), a spiritual view of people-environment relations recognizes the importance of symbolism and meaning and significant immaterial and emotional qualities, and the value of places that engender feelings of tranquility, autonomy, insight, and restoration, compassionate engagement with local conditions and people, and ones that strive for human well-being.

Cultural Heritage Preservation and Tourism

Sacred places can become the subjects of cultural heritage preservation efforts and tourism. Increasingly, cultural heritage attractions drive global tourism (Akama & Kieti, 2007). Similar to the more inclusive notions of sacred places, definitions of heritage tourism have expanded to include both tangible and intangible cultural elements, including language, food, festivals, music, and lifeways (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009). "Heritage by appropriation" describes a process whereby places gain significance even though they are not conservation zones nor designated buildings (Tweed & Sutherland, 2007). Appropriated heritage may include less obvious or less tangible examples like a street layout or ensemble of urban form (Tweed and Sutherland, 2007). While UNESCO and other international and local preservation authorities have begun to consider 'intangible' elements, preservation of lifestyles and ensembles of heritage has proven difficult where the forces of urbanization, globalization, and modernization are at work (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009). A universalist discourse of modernization, progress,

and development is often used as a justification for harmful development policies serving to suppress local voices and agency (Shepherd, 2013).

Despite the popular view that modernization projects threaten heritage preservation, researchers warn against overemphasizing a binary view that modernization and urbanization are necessarily incompatible and destructive to cultural heritage (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009). Some challenge the view that modernity is 'disenchanted,' suggesting that modern rationalization, secularization, and science have not necessarily led to a loss of transcendent meaning, purpose, and wonder in society (e.g. Saler, 2006; Bennett, 2001). Shepherd's analysis of tourism at the religious heritage site Wutai Shan in China illustrates how the Chinese communist party used heritage preservation as "a tool of not just economic development and therefore modernization but for the *civilizing* of society" (p. 21). In the Chinese context, cultural heritage preservation was used as a tool to define and shape the past, to create a common unifying force that would elevate a nationalist agenda and socialist values. Heritage sites were restored not for the sake of preservation but because they could be used to construct a narrative about the past that supported political goals. This contrasts greatly with the dominant view that civilization is a threat to preservation. This also underscores the significance of power and resources in designation of official sacred places and the potential for cultural heritage tourism destinations to serve particular interests. Across the world, cultural heritage tourist destinations are locations of great disparity between those benefitting from tourism and those incurring impacts without benefitting. Degraded housing conditions and lack of sanitation and other services are prevalent in slums adjacent to expensive hotels serving heritage destinations in many countries. In Kenya, for example, "Grinding poverty and social deprivation is so extreme that, quite often, there is a mismatch and miscommunication between tourism developers in the public

and private sectors and marginalized communities," causing dissatisfaction and inequality (Akama & Kieti, 2007, p. 740)

Heritage tourism is particularly relevant in developing countries, where sacred places draw visitors from across the world to experience built and living cultural assets. The UNESCO and its technical committee ICOMOS have listed hundreds of World Heritage Sites in developing countries, including six of the Seven Wonders of the World. "Developing countries" as a category is imperfect, as many countries do not fit easily into a homogeneous group and each has unique circumstances. Yet, tourism and heritage preservation scholars agree that because of similar socio-economic characteristics – e.g. low per capita GDP and income, low urbanization, high birth rate, and low literacy - heritage tourism in some countries is different than in more affluent parts of the world (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009). In particular, the legacy of European colonialism and associated exploitation of resources have contributed to a form of neo-colonialism where the less developed countries remain dependent on developed countries for trade, income, and governance (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009). This relationship manifests today as continued exploitation of less affluent countries to satisfy needs of foreigners – degradation or overuse of sacred sites by tourists, prioritization of tourism over other types of development, displacement of local communities from heritage regions, commodification of sacred activities and places, and loss of control/ownership over culture. Shepherd (2013) agrees that in most cases "the net result is business as usual: a seemingly endless cycle of development projects carried out by outside actors who, although often acting with the best intentions, replicate the logic of colonialism" (p. 26). "Enclave tourism" has been described as tourism that primarily benefits outsiders, a kind of extension of colonialism (Mbaiwa, 2005). The legacy of colonialism includes buildings that on one hand represent a painful history of oppression and conflict, but on the other

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have become revered. In many historic towns, colonial era buildings have become embedded in the vitality of everyday living, including activities that occur organically occur between buildings such as the case of Yangon, Myanmar (Roberts, 2017). In these cases community members have appropriated colonial structures and combine their use with native practices.

Some negative consequences for heritage preservation result from a lack of collaboration between cultural heritage organizations and tourism leading to poor management of heritage assets (McKercher & du Cros, 2002). The variety of impacts in developing countries include physical (e.g. air pollution, litter, overuse, economic growth, increased awareness of conservation), socio-cultural (e.g. forced displacement, cultural change and commodification, loss of control/ownership over culture), and economic (e.g. increased access to fees and financial resources) (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009). Tourism, while blamed for many negative impacts is also a significant opportunity for many less developed countries to gain wealth, recognition, and partake in the global tourism industry.

Inherent in the relationship between cultural heritage and tourism is a tension between stakeholders who seek to conserve intrinsic values of place and those pursuing extrinsic values of place for consumption by tourists (McKercher & du Cros, 2002). The transformation of cultural assets into cultural products can be complex within a large global context and if done blindly can create misunderstandings and damage to the assets themselves. Many cultural heritage sites are caught between being preserved and promoted as tourist attractions and being protected and cherished by religious practitioners. Shepherd (2013) describes 'religious heritage sites' as "preserved yet alive, caught between the preservationist ideal of freezing time and the practical realities of faith as a life practice" (p. 13).

In several countries, including Mexico, political instability and leftist rebellions have affected tourism, at times creating fear and drops in tourism and at other times becoming sources of tourist attraction (Schluter, 2009). For example, the leftist indigenous Zapatista movement in southern Mexico caused great uncertainty and damaged the tourism industry, but also became an attraction for tourists after the conflict subsided by the late 1990s (Domínguez et al, 2001). Heritage tourism in Latin America is comprised of colonial and indigenous assets set against a backdrop of decades of human suffering, colonialism, and globalizing economic forces in which the region is among the 'have-nots' in the global south. Each country has its unique historic situation but many share common elements resulting from colonial invasion of the territory and subsequent economic, political, and social subordination.

An important goal of examining sacredness from an insider perspective – what the current study undertakes - is to counteract the hegemony imposed from the global north over cultural heritage designation and preservation and discover the lived experience of residents around religious heritage sites in the case study site of Tepoztlán. Whereas tourism and cultural heritage literatures commonly take the perspective of the tourist, the foreigner, and the western-dominant view of people-environment relations, the current research emphasizes analysis and description on *sacred placemaking* from the perspective of the practitioner and local residents and their dealings with preservation and preservation authorities.

Approaches to Studying People-Environment Relationships

To learn about people's views of their environment, different scholars and disciplines make varying assumptions regarding people-environment relationships. These assumptions are important for preservation policy because they influence the values upon which policies are based. Among environmental design researchers, at least four broad approaches are identifiable:

(1) positivist, (2) psycho-social, (3) cultural, and (4) phenomenological. These approaches are not mutually exclusive but vary in their epistemological and methodological emphases. Some fields in environment behavior research may apply any of these approaches to their work. The theoretical approach used for my research draws on contributions from the cultural and phenomenological approaches and is termed socio-physical because of the dual emphasis on the cultural aspects of interactions with place and the physical dimension of the environmental. After discussion of the four main approaches I describe the socio-physical approach and justify its use for this study.

   Positivist approaches. Positivist approaches in environment behavior research view the environment as an object that can be studied objectively (Bell et al. 2005). This approach is based in modern rationalist scientific thought and seeks to uncover generalizable, causal relationships based on objective empirical, ideally experimental, observation. Positivists in environmental psychology have interpreted place through objectively recording observable behavior. Place is understood by looking at the sum of separate environmental objects and individuals. This approach divides the environment into components to regroup and describe according to conceptual categories (e.g. visual data are combined into 'complexity,' 'mystery,' or 'coherence' – See e.g. Kaplan 1995, Bell et al. 2005). Some environmental psychologists have noted that the environment is experienced as a unified whole, including social and multi-modal sensorial experience (e.g. Ittleson et al. 1974). Positivist researchers tend to extract components and analyze them in an isolated way (Ittleson el at. 1974, Stokols 1978). The positivist environmental psychological approach gives preference to experiments over descriptive research (Bell et al. 2005) and research that is individual rather than group focused.

Positivist research related to perception and environmental preference may use abstractions of actual environments, such as photographs, as a stand-in for experience of a real environment to uncover generalizable theories about psychological processes. The use of photographs to study how people relate to the built environments has been criticized for leading to a shallow understanding of space and experience (Mazumdar 2008); one that places most import on the individual and his/her internal cognitive functioning, independent of environmental context. Environmental psychology scholars have recognized that people's relationships to their surroundings are more complex than just discrete stimuli and responses, and that this relationship is more reciprocal in nature (Stokols 1978). Despite the field's move toward more interactionist and transactionist views of the relationship, critics continue to attribute to the field an overemphasis on the individual (ego centric) and an under-emphasis on the special qualities of 'place' itself (Mazumdar 2008).

Early contributors to the field of environmental psychology clearly articulated how the assumptions underlying positivism and modern Western scientific thought stem from Judeo-Christian cultural values and worldviews. Ittelson et al. (1974) detailed how the doctrine of a created universe gradually separated man from a distrusted natural world, denied the sensual human experience, and led to the adoption of linear time and cause-and-effect thinking; "This conceptualization of nature as external to the self, as part of a divine master plan, invited the systematic investigation of its parts. Thus, the Western experiments in changing the face of nature has at its roots the political cosmology of Christian belief" (p. 36). Religious influences coupled with the scientific revolution contributed to an increasingly reductive view of the environment, "breaking the perceptual field into assimilable bits" and experiencing "nature itself as a collection of separate things" (Ittelson et al. 1974, p. 37). This view of nature dominates

modern Western culture and planning today. Value is quantified (usually monetarily) and hard-to-measure aspects of place value are considered subjective at best, and irrational or primitive at worst.

Psycho-social approaches. In 1978 Stokols and others focused on people's interrelations with the socio-physical *milieu*, rather than looking at links between stimuli and behavioral responses. Numerous studies were found to have "situation-specific" findings, and therefore needed more attention to "ecological validity" (p. 256). In other words, findings from studies were not rooted in social and environmental context, having internal validity but not external validity (Holahan 1986). Environmental design researchers aimed for applicability and relevance for critical environmental issues and the field responded with a 'sociocultural paradigm' that attempts to take a more social lens, followed by an approach that is "historically grounded" in order to account for differences in political and economic context in different locations (Saegert & Winkel 1990). For example, Bonnes and Secchiaroli (1995) argued that it is reductive to neglect that people are components of their social and physical context:

> "…the environment not only constitutes a source of stimulations or sensory information, whole saliency derives from the intrinsic properties of its physical components (for example, architectural, spatial, functional structures), but also includes factors of symbolic prominence, of norms and/or opportunities for action and systems of social relations. These factors become constitutive properties of the environment primarily through shared attributions of meaning, constructed through social interaction and communication" (p. 77).

Bonnes and Secchiaroli (1995) assert that environmental psychological studies which look at psychological preferences related to environmental stimuli such as noise, temperature,

and light, often fall short of a more complex approach that would take into account social or other factors influencing people's decisions: "many and various are the environmental characteristics (physical, social, functional) that people tend to assume simultaneously as reference points for defining the degrees of their satisfaction/dissatisfaction" (Bonnes & Secchiaroli 1995, p. 100). Other environmental psychologists have explored transactional nature of people environment interactions through emphasis on the spatial-physical dimension of the environment and interactions among people and groups in society (e.g. Stokols & Altman, 1987). A holistic and dynamic view of the environment includes people, psychological processes, physical settings, and time aspects (Werner, Brown & Altman, 2002). Sociologists also emphasize the importance of 'social' variables how social structures, categories, hierarchies, relations, power, interactions, and emotional attachments are situated in place (See Gieryn 2000). The sociological approach to studying people-environment relations focuses on spatial behavior, including how human environments communicate aspects of social relations, social order, and social control (Baldassare 1978). Some researchers focus on relationships between cultures and although not always separate in practice, the following discussion highlights distinct focus of cultural approaches.

Cultural approaches. Cultural approaches enable identification of design elements that are unique or meaningful to groups of people and may address the variety of ways that different cultures experience and conceptualize space. Within the cultural paradigm, authors clearly identify distinct elements of 'culture' and consider their symbolic and meaningful influence on environmental interactions. Cultural approaches emphasize the shared values, cosmic and worldview, mores, traditions, customs, practices, and religious beliefs of a group of people as fundamental to their interactions with the environment. Attachment to place can be triggered or

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facilitated by meaningful symbolism in space, such as features that reflect cultural worldviews, including an understanding of the cosmos or religious beliefs. Rapoport (1982) suggested that emphasis on objective environmental elements has led scientists to ignore "fuzzy" aspects of the environment like meaning; yet, it is the meaning of environments that drives our emotional response to place. People use meaning-laden terms first and foremost to describe environments and assign meaning before evaluating their surroundings in other more specific terms (Rapoport, 1982).

While positivist approaches to environmental behavior research aim for universal aspects of spatial experience, culturalists look for indigenous uniqueness among different groups' interactions with their environments. Culturalists view psychological processes, including perception, as inseparable from cultural influence and therefore do not assume them to be there a priori when studying people's interactions with the environment. People from different cultures "inhabit different sensory worlds" and culture "has penetrated to the roots of his nervous system and determined how he perceives the world" points out Hall (1966, p.188).

Cultural approaches view research questions, concepts, and theoretical frames themselves to have cultural influence and therefore tend to employ methods that strive for local or emic understandings rather than imposing etic or researcher-generated concepts (e.g. predetermined responses on a survey). One of the earliest distinctions made between emic and etic approaches to research was made by Pike (1967), who categorized phon*emic* (using member-relevant concepts) versus phon*etic* accounts of language sounds, which are observable, researcher relevant categories of linguistics research. Culturalists frequently emphasize in-depth qualitative data collection that allows the groups to describe their experiences and views in their own words and "expressive language which captures the nature of the dwellers' experience of a particular

socio-cultural milieu" (Minami, 2009). Rapoport (1973) emphasizes symbols, imagery, and meanings in the built environment, which allow people to know what cultural behaviors and activities are expected of them. People rely on mental schemata to relate to their surroundings, and shared schemata representing the values, meanings, and norms of a society are made concrete through symbolic artifacts such as buildings (Rapoport 1974). Understanding the culture allows more in depth understanding of the built forms within that culture (Rapoport 1969). Rapoport details the actual space that people of different cultures create and use. His case studies come from diverse cultures around the world, including but not limited to communal dwellings of Motilone Indians in the Amazon, village design of Australian Aborigines (1974), and popular fast food joints in the U.S. (1973) He calls for a deep understanding of environments and their qualities gained through emic perspectives rather than using pre-determined categories or etic understandings. Other cultural research emphasizes the "complex, rich network of social, cultural, political, historical narratives and realities grounding these places, as well as their often contested nature" (Abe, 2011, p. 152; Lane, 2001).

Phenomenological approaches. Phenomenological traditions environment behavior research emphasize direct, firsthand experience of specific, concrete places, instead of aiming for abstract, universal conceptualizations about interactions with environments. This approach differs from "placeless" or "trans place" environmental psychological theories such as territoriality, privacy, and environmental cognition (Bonnes & Secchiaroli 1995, p. 162). Phenomenologists emphasize the 'total' first-hand experience of place (e.g. Grange 2000) and argue that places cannot be described by means of analytic concepts. Instead, researchers should 'return to things' rather than "abstractions and mental constructions" (Norberg-Schulz 1980, p. 7). Norberg-Schultz (1980) explains that "a place is a qualitative total phenomenon, which we

cannot reduce to any of its properties, such a spatial relationship, without losing it concrete nature out of sight" (p. 7). Rasmussen (1959) notes in the case of the built environment, "it is not good enough to see architecture; you must experience it. You must observe how it was designed for a special purpose and how it was attuned to the entire concept and rhythm of a specific era. You must dwell in the rooms, feel how they close about you, observe how you are naturally led from one to the other" (p. 33). To phenomenologists, a place is not understood as comprised of separate physical objects 'out there,' but rather an entire ambiance including the space between objects and the experiencer. Phenomenologists address intangible aspects of place: "environments, landscapes and places are multifaceted in character, projecting a range of world which extends from tangible sense data to less visible qualities such as atmosphere, spirit, and sacredness" (Saemon & Mugerauer 2000, p. 11).

Phenomenological approaches emphasize the fundamental role of the human body in the experience of place. The body has a structure and set of processes that guide the range of human experience in the world including a particular scale, upright posture, and receptivity to environmental elements such as temperature, light, texture, etc. (Seamon, 1982). Holloway (2003) explores the role of body and bodily practices in the enactment of sacred space and emphasizes "corporeal perception that takes all the senses, as well as the rhythm and comportment of the body in action, as central to the affective making of sacred space" (p. 1964). Other geographers explore the human experience through the body and embodied action as key ingredients to new spiritualities in contemporary space (Philo, Cadman, & Lea 2001). Grange (1985) argues, "if place is ever to be seen in its concreteness, the implicit, subconscious prose and poetry of human flesh requires explicit articulation" (p. 72). He explains:

…the human body, in the final analysis, cannot lie. Perception is our conscience. Place, while not our body, arises as a felt phenomenon through our body's participation in it. When we act through our body's posture, orientation, feel and comprehension, we begin the human effort towards founding, celebrating, and building place (p. 83).

This view differs greatly from the Western notion of place, which consist of the built environmental objects, while people are viewed as autonomous individual actors within a separate space that surrounds them (Nitschke 1966). Western concern for 'time' (a socially constituted mental construct) has led to a neglect of concern for 'space,' which many see as having more authentic significance. As a result, 'space' (and its partner, the built environment) in the Western sense – seen as a vessel for objects – has lost its power, potential, and value. The concept of 'lived space' as a form of wisdom and source of knowledge on the other hand, finds support across writings of Eastern philosophers, phenomenologists, artists, and religious studies scholars. Space is seen as the fundamental generator of the conditions for life to emerge (Bergmann 2009). Spiritual notions of 'mindfulness,' 'emptiness,' 'stillness,' 'zero,' 'no-mind,' 'shunya,' and 'clearing the mind,' all point to the spiritual power of the space within and around us (Pilgrim 1986, Bognar 1989, Nitschke 1966, Mazumdar 2009, Correa 2003, Krinke 2005).

Some scholars critique phenomenologists for promoting "essential" qualities of place (Seamon & Mugerauer, 1985), leaning toward what some consider to be a universalist attitude toward people-place interactions without regard to cultural differences. Different cultural groups may experience space quite differently and overemphasis on the power of place can neglect the role of human ascribed sacredness. Sacredness is viewed as "endemic to the place itself" rather than socially constructed and determines all space outside of sacred space as necessarily profane (Abe, 2011). On the other hand, a strictly social constructivist view of sacred space can overlook

the power that places have on people, dismiss alternative world views that see people as innately connected to their surroundings (people-environment connectedness), or relegate the environment to something that only exists conceptually, falling into the classic critique by Wohlwill (1974), who declared to design research scholars, "The environment is not in the head!"

Socio-physical approaches. The approach used for my research is socio-physical and brings together elements of the phenomenological tradition (i.e. focus on physical environment and physical experience) and the cultural approach. Socio-physical researchers emphasize the reciprocal and mutually constitutive influence of places and people. This approach is like the 'people-place' perspective suggested by Abe (2011). Carmona's (2019) socio-physical approach examines place qualities or design features (physical) and how these contribute to intangible place values (socio-). He suggests that analysis of physical features should also consider the placemaking process that shapes them, or the social workings of place. Mazumdar and Mazumdar (1994b) provide a socio-physical model for understanding both the intangible and tangible aspects of place. Using their model, they are able to describe how (intangible) societal values and norms are made manifest in (tangible) architectural values and artifacts. Rasmussen (1964) in his classic Experiencing architecture emphasizes total sensorial experience - including texture, light, color, acoustics, rhythm, effects of solids and cavities, color planes, and scale and proportion - but also notes that experience of space is influenced by culture.

Susuki's (1997) socio-physical approach provides a useful bridge between views that focus on how individuals perceive and interact with their environment 'out there' and the cultural approach, which accounts for socially shared aspects of relating to our surroundings. He is able to also allude to a deeper understanding of people-environment connectedness. Suzuki uses the

Japanese notion of I-Kata, or 'mode of being' to describe different ways that people interact in urban space, or how they place themselves in a scene. This is a rare perspective that accounts for the type of space and its affordances, as well as the different social and cultural behaviors exhibited by space users. Rarely have planning researchers provided this type of holistic view of being in space –one that manages to capture multiple perspectives simultaneously (including the psychological, psycho-social, sociological, design, and phenomenological). The emphasis on "being" calls on researchers to consider worldviews that are not bound by linear time and separate psychological processes, but that view space as inseparable from human's socio-cultural and physical experience in the present moment.

Socio-physicalists find that ignorance or neglect of the varying cultural contexts where people experience their environments can lead to inappropriate imposition of designs that reflect ideals of outsiders. A cultural approach to understanding people-environment relationships understands that 'cross-cultural' imposition of one group's culturally derived planning can be disastrous for the other. Minami and Yamamoto (2000) explain how imposition of a rational western grid on Japanese towns can harm their vital nature. Towns in Japan are believed to be living entities (Minami and Yamamoto 2000), including both structures and people in them (Nitschke 1966) and must be rejuvenated both physically and with regard to communal life. The *oku* is also celebrated through the layering of urban space, which would be diminished by a street grid that abruptly divides space into public and private domains and by architecture that demands a highly visible location. In China, Confucian influences contributed to a reverence for the rural countryside where people were "more attuned with the world of nature and its rhythms, and therefore better understood the universe and man's place in it. In Confucian logic, this gave them better moral character and simple goodness" (Murphey 1984, p. 192). As a result, imposition of

urban manufacturing centers by Westerners that neglected the moral, economic, and practical value of the rural countryside, failed. The varying ways of knowing or epistemologies that emerge from different cultural contexts present challenges for planners, who are called to meet needs of a diverse citizenry with varied culturally influenced views. Much of the planning profession is based on meeting the needs of a globalized western style and culture, but if other cultural groups are to be represented, understanding their world view is critical.

Some argue that emphasis on social and cultural variables can overlook the importance of place (Gieryn, 2000; Abe, 2011). In order to avoid environmental determinism which could reduce the significance of social and cultural variables and hinder generalizability of findings, some researchers have taken an "anti-spatial perspective" approach and neglected the importance of place as an important factor influencing sociological mechanisms (Baldassare, 1978, p. 39; Gieryn, 2000). Approaches that focus too much on symbolic content and/or abstract social or mental constructs fail to describe the exact nature of the physical form or objectifications of such constructs (Mazumdar and Mazumdar, 1994b). This results in incomplete information with which to understand and create (or save) places that are meaningful to inhabitants. The next section describes how sacred places are characterized in the environmental design literature.

Characteristics of Sacred Place

Figure 1. Sacred place typology.

Some of the categories of sacred places are strictly religious in nature (e.g. decision by god or gods), while others cut across religious boundaries (e.g. beauty and power in nature). Most categories however could fit anywhere along a

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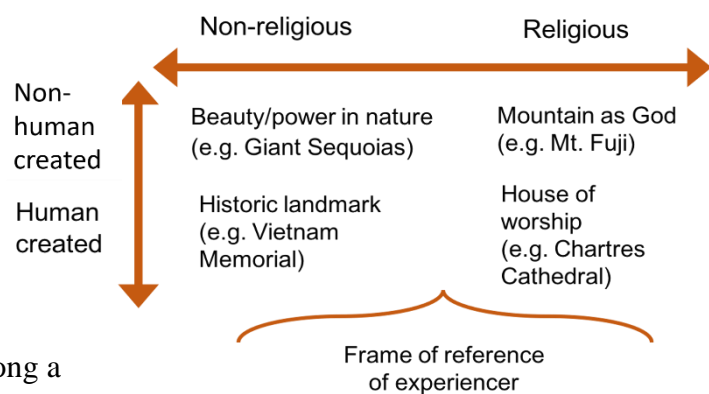
religious/non-religious continuum depending on the frame of reference of the user (Figure 2).

Experiential qualities of sacred places such as transcendence or affection can also be religious or

non-religious depending on the person experiencing them. The following sections categorize

attributes of sacred places. The categories are neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive but

identified as helpful in understanding perspectives in current research and ways that people

understand their connections to these significant places.

Decision by god(s). Some places are considered sacred because people believe that a

decision was made by a god or gods. For example, in Singapore the founder of the Kaliamman

temple at Old Toh Tuck Road reported that he was told in a dream by a deity to move the temple

there from a previous site (Kong, 1992). The Tewa Indians of New Mexico also have sacred sites

that were chosen by gods during mythic times, including village centers marked by a circle of

stones and nearby flat top mountains created by sibling deities who threw mud toward specific

cardinal directions (Ortiz cited in Saile, 1985). In Japan mountains and other natural features are

made into shrines because *kami* deities are thought to have descended there. In Tepoztlán,

Mexico, the hills surrounding the town are the home of the god *El Tepozteco*. Sacred places

chosen by god(s) have been called 'intrinsically' sacred because the community views the place

as being innately sacred, rather than imposed by humans (Kong, 1992). When Lane (2001) notes

that "sacred place is not chosen, it chooses," he echoes the suggestion that a place can have

power and agency leading to sacredness that is beyond human control.

Ritual or prayer. The sacredness of a place can be created and reinforced through rituals

or prayer. Lane (2001) suggests that one of the four axioms for understanding sacred place is "it

is ordinary place, ritually made extraordinary." Ritual practices such as meditation can 'create' a

sacred space (Holloway, 2003) or enhance and reaffirm the sanctity of relationships between

people and their environments over time. Mazumdar and Mazumdar (1994a) detail ritual elements of the sacred *pooja* room in the Hindu house where users conduct purification rituals before entering, ritually arrange objects within the room, and conduct *pooja* rituals such as sitting in a yoga posture to meditate. Hindu temple building also involves purification and sacralization rituals to determine location, orientation, design, and construction (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2006). Kong (1992) describes the Hindu temple as being infused with divinity extrinsically, or through a process that results from human rather than divine action. Christian churches are also considered to be sacred because they have been consecrated (Kong, 1992). Kong's (1992) study of religious practitioners in Singapore showed that sacred places are those where people feel god's presence and "sacredness emanates from being a place of prayer" (p. 20). Non-religious rituals of daily community life can also lead to certain places being considered sacred, as in the case of Manteo, where residents worked to identify "sacred structures" that included ordinary places they considered vital to their town's identity because of their ritual use (Hester, 2006).

Significant event. Some sacred places are the site of a significant event, such as a birth, death, historic or religious moment, or natural disaster. Assan in Tibet is sacred because it is the legendary site of Buddha's death (Waddell cited in Lynch, 1960). Mazumdar and Mazumdar (1993) provide the examples of "the *pipal* tree under which Siddhartha Gautama meditated and received enlightenment in Gaya, the small hill on the plains of Arafat where Prophet Muhammad preached his sermon on his last pilgrimage to Mecca, are all imbued with sacred meaning" (p. 233). Some sacred places mark the location of a natural disaster and serve to remember those lost. In Joplin, Missouri, for example, a sacred community space was created on the site of a devastating tornado and provides a reflective space for mourning and healing. The project uses sculpture, water features, art, and a communal journal to emotionally connect with visitors, many

of whom have described powerful reactions and a sense of peace when there. Some sacred places memorialize the loss of life during war such as the Vietnam Memorial, which is able to solicit emotional reactions because of its powerful design and symbolism. Cemeteries also memorialize the death of people and may be considered sacred partly for this reason. In Tepoztltán, the local cemetery is a key site of the annual, multi-day *Dia de los Muertos* [Day of the Dead] celebration that involves music, food, elaborate decorations, reflection, prayer, and ceremony.

Cosmic alignment or energy. Some sites are sacred because they are thought to be in alignment with cosmic energy or principles. People may recognize a "higher energy level" in sacred places that is understood as being somehow in tune with the universe (Kong, 1992, p. 20). *Feng-shui* (geomancy) is a belief system and method used to build environments in line with the principles of the natural universe. In the Suen Wan area of Hong Kong villagers opposed the despoiling of a ridge because it would disturb the *feng-shui* of the village and lead to misfortune (Boxer, 1968). Other systems of sacred geometry include arrangement of buildings in relation to the four directions (as in various Native American cultures) or orienting buildings according to *Vastu Shastra*, a traditional Hindu system of architecture.

Placement of object or structure. Sacredness can be related to the placement of sacred objects or structures. Vietnamese-American Buddhist families use sacred artifacts such as flowers, incense, Buddha statues, figurines of monks, and prayer beads, to help enhance a sense of sacredness (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2015). In the Hindu *pooja* room, "accumulation and arrangement of ritual objects further sacralizes the setting," such as water from the Ganges River, sacred texts, lamps, and incense (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 1993, p. 236). Statues can be places where gods are invited to dwell and therefore contribute to sacredness in space (Kong, 1992). Kong (1992) suggests one of three major ways that the physical environment contributes to

sacredness is through placement of objects: "the presence of physical forms such as statues and engravings evoke and/or enhance the divine experience" (p. 23). In Japan, a room or the entire house can be made sacred through a combination of ceremonies and placement of portable Shinto and Buddhist altars or sacred rope (*shimenawa*) (Bognar, 1989, p. 193). Labyrinths are considered a sacred space by some people and can be created by drawing lines in sand or arranging rocks in a special design.

Beauty and power in nature. There is a long history of spiritual ties between people and natural landscapes, including bodies of water, mountains, and trees (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 1993). Natural landscapes have been the source of revelation or insight and many believe that viewing nature can reveal spiritual truths. In Buddhism even the act of gazing at a flower can teach the fundamental truth of impermanence and help one to reach enlightenment (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2015). Recent design research also points to biophilia, or the innate human need to be connected with the natural world (Kellert & Wilson, 1995) and biomimicry or using nature as a model for improved design (Benyus, 2002). These are viewed as critical aspects of how spirituality manifests in place (Birch & Sinclair, 2003). Van der Ryn (2013) considers biophilia and integration with nature critical to "empathetic design," which promotes spiritual inner self-transformation and compassion for local conditions and communities. Day's (2002, 2007) 'life-giving' and 'ensouled' buildings and architectural ideas also necessarily respect the natural landscape, reduce harm to the environment, and bring in natural elements to enhance spiritual qualities of place. Some design firms currently specialize in "nature sacred" projects that bring nature into urban environments in order to facilitate connection to the natural world and associated physical, psychological, and spiritual benefits (http://naturesacred.org). In the field of leisure studies researchers have also found links between nature-based recreation and spiritual

outcomes (Heintzman, 2009). Krinke (2015) identifies psychological, physical, and contemplative benefits of forests and gardens as well as their aesthetic, ethical, and numinous qualities. The restorative, stress-reducing potential of nature is well documented (e.g. Ulrich, 1979; Park et al., 2010; Kaplan, 1995) and research suggests that meditation and contemplation can be enhanced in natural settings (e.g. Gomm, 2014).

Contemplative landscapes. Contemplative places may be considered sacred because they facilitate feelings of deep self-reflection, spiritual focus, or tranquility. As described by Kabat-Zinn (2003), contemplation is a religious or non-religious form of meditation, which could include focusing on an object of thought (like a mantra), clearing thoughts, or just being a witness to passing thoughts. Krinke (2005) defines a contemplative landscape as one where "the designers have set out to create a space that quiets the mind – facilitating a developmental activity or process where the individual has more choice over their thoughts – perhaps to focus their reflection, perhaps to focus on inner silence" (Krinke, 2005, p. 108). Julie Moir Messervy, designer of the Toronto Music Garden and many other contemplative gardens in the U.S., researched people's childhood favorite places and contends that the human urge to find contemplative space stems from childhood experiences - climbing trees, building forts, finding nooks in the woods - and the longing to return to these secret, special places (Messervy, 1990). Researchers have identified specific properties of contemplative places, such as engendering a sense of vastness (Sonntag, 2014; Hermann, 2005), detachment from surrounding stimuli (Sonntag, 2014; Moir, 1978; Hermann, 2005), inclusion of archetypal symbols (Sonntag, 2014; Hermann, 2005), sense of tranquility (Moir, 1978; Messervy, 1990) and harmony (Sonntag, 2014). Hermann (2005) suggests that a contemplative state is induced at the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California, by creating a sense of human/cosmos connection via juxtaposition of finite

human scale architecture with the view/experience of the infinite vast ocean (Hermann, 2005). In the Monastery-Church of Sainte-Marie de la Tourette near Lyon, France, contemplation is aided by an inner-orientation and creation of a sanctuary detached from surrounding stimuli. On the other hand, the Woodland Cemetery in Enskede, Sweden, and other woodland cemeteries modeled after it, point to archetypal symbols such as the sacred clearing, sacred mountain, and sacred grove (Hermann, 2005). Krinke's (2005) comparative case study of the Bloedel Reflection Garden and the National Library in France suggests that both approaches to space take visitors out of the everyday busy urban scene into a contemplative realm.

Experiential Qualities of Sacred Place

Places can be considered sacred because they elicit certain feelings. The following section describes experiential qualities of sacred spaces that have been identified in environmental design literature. These feelings are not always clearly distinguishable and may overlap; yet, an effort was made to establish analytic categories based on existing research. Below the following experiential qualities of sacred spaces are described: transcendence, awe, serenity, contemplation, and affection.

Transcendence. Sacred place has been associated with feelings of transcendence. Transcendent experiences are referred to as mystical, religious, spiritual, or peak experiences - and characterized by altered or expanded awareness (Levin & Steele, 2005) or what some call "cosmic" or a "higher state" of consciousness (Taylor, 2010). Accounts of transcendent experiences have persisted in philosophical and religious traditions throughout human history across cultures but are varied. Scholars who have catalogued characteristics of such experiences generally agree that feelings of transcendence are characterized by a perception of reality that extends beyond the physical body, loss of identification with one's personal identity and ego, and

a sense of oneness with the source of existence, nature or the divine (Levin & Steele, 2005; Hanes, 2012). Such experiences are also inherently hard to describe and often explained as being beyond words (Hanes, 2012) or beyond analytical or intellectual capacities (Bermudez & Ro, 2012). Transcendence may feel like a sort of "awakening" to an experience of "clarity, revelation and joy in which we become aware of a deeper (or higher) level of reality, perceive a sense of harmony and meaning, and transcend our normal sense of separateness from the world" (Taylor, 2010, p. xviii). Feelings of transcendence can be associated with religion but not necessarily. People can feel a powerful connection to or oneness with nature or the cosmos and describe such feelings without using religious terms. Transcendence in architecture is called Extraordinary Architectural Experiences (EAEs), which are common among visitors to the Pantheon, Chartres Cathedral, and the chapel of Ronchamp, for example, and consist of a "powerful and lasting shift in one's physical, perceptual, emotional, intellectual, and/or spiritual appreciation of architecture" (Bermudez & Ro, 2012, p.689). EAEs are "strongly pleasurable and emotional events that provide immediate access to the timeless nature of physical, sensorial, and perceptual reality" (Bermudez & Ro, 2012, p.691).

Transcendence has been used interchangeably with 'awe' and even 'contemplation,' and there is disagreement upon distinct uses of these terms across or even within disciplines. The current proposal describes transcendence and awe separately despite the possible overlap in these experiences (both are characterized by a sense of reality beyond oneself), because transcendence evokes a more intense religious or spiritual experience that can occur without an external object (e.g. through meditation), while awe is usually used to describe a reaction to some object (e.g. night sky) and seems to be preferred by scholars who take a less theological approach and describe experiences in non-religious settings.

Awe. Awe has been described as an emotion felt in the presence of something vast that extends beyond one's understanding of the world. Certain places are considered sacred because they engender feelings of awe. The Grand Canyon or other striking natural areas are often considered to "have a 'presence,' a sort of animation or peculiarly vivid reality, that is felt by peoples of utterly different cultures" (Lynch, 1960, p.135). Stonehenge and other ancient ruins may lead to feelings of awe because of their age and mystery. Buildings can also lead to feelings of awe and may be cherished as a result. Researchers suggests that awe leads to prosocial or altruistic behavior in people by "broadening the individual's perspective to include entities vaster and more powerful than oneself and diminishing the salience of the individual self" and are calling for further exploration into the link between sacred places, such as places of worship, that elicit awe and pro-sociality (Piff, Dietze, Feinberg, Stancato, & Keltner, 2015, p. 895-896). Awe is a non-instrumental, extreme form of what Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) describe as an experience of 'extent' or in their model of restorative environments. Extent "promises a continuation of the world beyond what is immediately perceived" and more abstract experienced of extent include a "sense of connectedness between what one is experiencing [e.g. in the wilderness] and what one knows about the world as a whole" (p. 190). However, awe in the context of sacred places (including non-natural ones) requires moving beyond instrumental conceptualizations of people-environment interactions that emphasize the environment's functional utility to humans [in this case to restore directed attention] and benefits that hinge on solely cognitive, analytical functioning (rather than emotional or non-cognitive aspects of spiritual encounters).

Serenity. Sacred places can lead to feelings of serenity, calm, or peace. Mazumdar and Mazumdar (2015) explain how Vietnamese-American Buddhists create sacred places "to create

an island of calm, a peaceful sanctuary conducive for meditation and quiet reflection away from the "noise" and bustle of daily life" (p. 47-48). Serenity is a word used to describe experience in sacred place among various religious practitioners in Singapore (Kong, 1992). Feelings of serenity can stem from here-and-now experiences in sacred place when one becomes attuned to the present moment. Contemporary Western authors refer to this state as 'mindfulness' or alert awareness and attention to the 'here and now,' and openness, curiosity, and acceptance of the present moment and surrounding external stimuli (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). The term mindfulness may seem counter-intuitive, because it does not refer to having a mind that is 'full;' rather mindfulness is closer to having an "empty" mind, it is a state of pure awareness of whatever is occurring in the present moment without thinking or analyzing it. Mindfulness is allowing thoughts to arise and pass without attaching mental constructs, emotions, or analysis to them; accepting the situation at hand and not emotionalizing or ruminating about the past or future. The goal of an 'empty' or 'still' mind relates to ancient Buddhist notions of 'no-mind,' believed to be the key to enlightenment. In religious life, the contemplative tradition also stresses the calming of the passions and emotional quietude (Emmons & Paloutzian, 2003). Both contemplation and mindfulness are a slowing or quieting of the mind, which can lead to feelings of serenity.

Certain environments help to quiet the mind through engagement of the senses or meditative activity. Harris (2014) details the temporal and sensual experience of walking a labyrinth and notes that it facilitates deep contemplation because of the bodily rhythm of the walk and the back and forth pathways that one traces toward and away from the center. Heard, Scott, and Yeo (2015) explored the views and meaning of the labyrinth experience for residents of a forensic mental health care facility and suggest that walking the labyrinth is supportive of developing insight, spiritual self-care, and self-reflection. Landscape architects are also

beginning to call for urban environments that foster enjoyment, calmness, and a "dwelling pace" - pedestrian orientation that discourages speed and encourages lingering (Hester, 2006), or spaces designed to quiet the mind to allow for reflection (Krinke, 2005), to engender feelings of tranquility (Moir, 1978), or transcendence (Hermann, 2005).

Affection. Kong (1992) found the notion of "preciousness" expressed by users of sacred places in Singapore; these are places that are not to be destroyed (p. 20). Sacred places are loved and revered and garner feelings of honor, care, and concern. Attachment to sacred places can be deeply emotional, as with sacred space in the home, which "evokes strong affective ties of emotional commitment and connectedness, of a sense of history, belonging and rootedness" (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 1993, p. 237). 'Place attachment' describes the emotional connection between people and places and 'place dependence' describes the extent to which people are attracted to specific places that best meet their social and physical needs (Stokols & Shumaker, 1982). In the case of sacred places, place dependence can be strong and losing such places can lead to "feelings of profound loss, grief, and morning" (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 1993, p. 238). The emotional bonds with sacred place nurtured through familiarity, memory, and ritual may form part of one's identity, personal or family history, or sense of self. They are places of importance and to be preserved and protected. For some, the loss of sacred places "would reorder or destroy something or some social process essential to the community's collective being" (Hester, 2006, p. 120).

Understudied Aspects

There is little documentation or discussion of sacred places or how such spaces function in a community and surrounding urban space and public realm. Urban planning scholars have avoided notions of sacred urban environments (Sandercock & Senbel, 2011) because of a general

skepticism toward organized religion - particularly its potentially exclusivist role in the public sphere - and rational planners' tendency to reject normative and hard-to-measure elements of place (e.g. meaning, beauty, the numinous). Sandercock and Senbel (2011) suggest for example, that a sense of the sacred is at the heart of the planning profession, which is fundamentally "an ethical enquiry" and "a work of organizing hope," yet planners have shunned the concept: "The paradox at the heart of planning is that we do not discuss what makes our heart beat" (Sandercock & Senbel, 2011, p. 88). This has led to a lack of understanding regarding what city dwellers view as being significant, how they view such places, and how these places fit into the surrounding urban fabric.

Cultural heritage preservation is one mechanism designed to preserve significant sites. Since the mid twentieth century the United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) have worked to identify and preserve cultural heritage for the benefit of humanity. Over time, the definition of cultural heritage has expanded to include intangible elements such as festivals, events, entire towns. Despite the broadening notions of cultural heritage and tourism, there continues to be a need for research on how cultural tourism affects developing regions (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009). Additionally, the dominant cultural heritage preservation organizations promote a universal set of conservation principles and operate largely under the assumption that cultural heritage is 'out there' separate from individuals. In other words, much of the preservation and tourism industries and literature are driven by western notions of people-environment relations. This deemphasizes the embedded context in which sacred placemaking occurs and limits understandings of heritage to those which commodify and objectify the environment. Another disadvantage for local people in developing countries is the tourism

industry that prioritizes Western travelers over domestic ones, downplaying the economic significance of many types of religious tourism, e.g. pilgrimage (Timothy and Nyaupane, 2009).

Much of the work in the larger field of environment behavior research and planning, emphasize western ideas about how people interact with space –like use of individualistic terms and analytical world views - which may be inappropriate for different cultural contexts (Minami, 2009; Corral-Verdugo & Pinheiro, 2009; Mazumdar, 2008; Minami & Yamamoto, 2000). Objectifying the environment as something separate from humans to be used or exploited contradicts world views that consider human's existence part of for example a "Web of Life" or "ecocultural community," both of which call for respectful treatment of ecosystems (Raymond et al., 2013). Ecosystems services scholars are increasingly acknowledging that fundamental differences in how people view the world spiritually are at the heart of many human-environment conflicts and ecosystems services valuations based on economics and science are at odds with other prevalent views based on aesthetic or spiritual valuations (Cooper, Brady, Steen, & Bryce, 2016). Raymond et al. (2013) argues that "although it is appropriate in some cases, this focus on direct use and economic quantification is often limiting and can detract from environmental research and effective management, in part by crowding out other understanding of human-environment relationships." They recommend an open deliberation approach, where researchers engage conservationists and local users to makes these views explicit. Understanding, respecting, and learning from alternative world views to inform preservation efforts will improve overall quality of life for communities and the larger global community.

The belief that individuals are separate from each other negates belief systems that values the collective above self. This cultural bias in environment-behavior research can lead to the design of environments that do not fit nor respect their sociocultural context. 'Indigenous

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psychologies' are needed to better understand social and environmental interactions in diverse cultural contexts and in turn how to plan and design spaces. In Latin America Corral-Verdugo and Pinheiro (2009) found that "traditions of collective participation, holistic worldviews, emotional attachment to places and other individuals, biospheric attitudes and preference for diversity" are key components of social and environmental relationships that interact with cultural traditions adopted from Europe (p.366). Their research informs our understanding of why current Western urban form seems to prioritize efficiency (e.g. freeways, wide roads, auto-centric design), materialism (e.g. shopping centers, places for accumulation), and privacy (e.g. gated communities, detached homes). "Culture affects the physical environment" (p. 369). They note that values of individualism, liberalism, and rationality have dominated our technical and egocentric urban planning efforts. They also suggest that this has come at the expense of solutions that emphasize emotional connections to places, collective participation, and holistic perception. Finally, across disciplines – with the exception of design - there are few attempts to contextualize or examine the places where social or psychological processes occur (e.g. social interactions or networks, spirituality and religiousness) (Abe, 2011).

An overarching goal of this research is to shed light on the capacity of the environment to alter our social and physical experience. The current research seeks an understanding of what Abe describes as two complementary elements of sacred placemaking: *sacrilization* – the ways that sacred places can have powerful influences on people – and *sacralization*, or the ways that people ascribe meaning to these places and imbue them with sacredness. This dual focus on both cultural views and the physical setting is a significant contribution of this socio-physical study.

Chapter 2: Research Methods

Research Aims and Questions

The goal of this research was to gain an in-depth and context-specific understanding of how people view and interact with places they consider to be sacred. The research design began with a focus on discovering culturally influenced understanding of sacredness to prioritize *emic* or insider views. This understanding was used to examine the role of physical environment and urban design in experiences of the sacred and analyze the role of urbanization and urban policy on preservation efforts. The following research questions guided this dissertation research:

- How do community members view sacred places and how do sacrilization and sacralization processes manifest in community placemaking?

- How do community members preserve sacred places?

- How does urbanization influence sacredness and community life?

Theoretical Approach

Interpretive framework. The interpretivist framework is well suited to answer these research questions. Interpretivists view experience and perspective as valuable sources of knowledge (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011) and seek to uncover the interpretations of reality that participants have based on their understanding of the world (Roth & Mehta, 2002). Interpretivists focus on understanding how meaning is created via the interaction between humans or between humans and their environment (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). This approach helped guide discovery of the meanings that spiritual activities, interactions, objects, and places had for participants as well as the distinct cultural values, norms, beliefs and worldviews that shape these meanings.

Socio-physical approach for studying sacred place. Within the interpretive framework this research uses a socio-physical approach to understand people's interactions in space. This approach emphasizes the significant influence of culturally shared values and norms, while not losing sight of actual physical artifacts or features of the environment and people's physical experience of them. Combining the two approaches enabled an understanding of what Abe (2011) describes as two complementary elements of sacred placemaking: *sacrilization* – the processes by which places and their physical attributes/design features can have powerful spiritual impacts on people - and *sacralization* – the processes by which people ascribe spiritual meaning to places. The term sacrilization has been used by scholars to describe the process of becoming sensitized to the spiritual or sublime (rather than repressing spiritual feelings or values) and is a key component of models of spiritual wellness, and one that can be facilitated through participation in certain activities (e.g. meditation) or settings (e.g. wilderness experiences) (Chandler, Holden, & Kolander, 1992; Heintzman, 2002). A socio-physical approach ensures appropriate consideration of the physical, material environment as well as socially constructed aspects.

This theoretical approach is coupled with use of aesthetic sensibility. Apostolos-Cappadona uncovers the etymology of "aesthetics" (Greek roots include aisthesthai-to perceive, aistheta-perceptible things, and aisthetikos-perception through the senses) and finds that it "supports the possibility that 'how we come to know' may be through the human senses and not just through the intellect." Von Bonsdorff (2005) proposes the term 'habitability' to describe a way of exploring the beauty of everyday human habitats in way that is reflective, self-reflective, and consists of an "aesthetic mode of experiencing and perceiving alongside other activities" (p. 119). Von Bonsdorff frames habitability within phenomenological concepts of lifeworld and

intersubjectivity, aesthetic theory elements of sensuous and experiential environmental knowledge, as well as ethical dimensions in order to define habitability as "deep aesthetic value."

The idea that our sensorial experience can teach us about our environment and about people-environment relations is supported by non-functionalist architects and anthropologists or others who use drawing and sketching to 'generate insight' and create new knowledge (e.g. Hendrickson, 2008). Sketching an urban scene creates intimacy between the person sketching and the details in the scene. One 'gets to know' the scene as details are discovered that would have otherwise been missed. Lighting, atmosphere, color, and meaning are noticed. Figure 1 illustrates a personal experience with coming to know a scene through sketching. The scene was forever etched in the author's mind after sketching it and the knowledge generated became useful on multiple occasions when analyzing urban design issues in other contexts.

Louis Kahn (1931) suggested that architects sketch a site with emotion and focus on self-expression, rather than relying too much on precise architectural tools. Camillo Sitte (1889) called city planning more than just a technical matter, "but should in the truest and most elevated sense be an artistic enterprise." The mechanical application of straight lines to a site *a priori*, without concern for the existing terrain or local circumstance echoes a fundamental limitation of positivist thinking that would apply an 'a priori' theory to understand people's interactions in space without consideration of the emic perspectives and experiences of users. Aesthetic sensibility recognizes the value of situation-specific experiential knowledge while inherently calls upon our "intersubjective responsibilities" and compassion for nature and fellow humans. In this way, 'good and beautiful' architecture invites us to 'see' the world differently.

Figure 2. Sketch of cityscape in Guanajuato, Mexico.
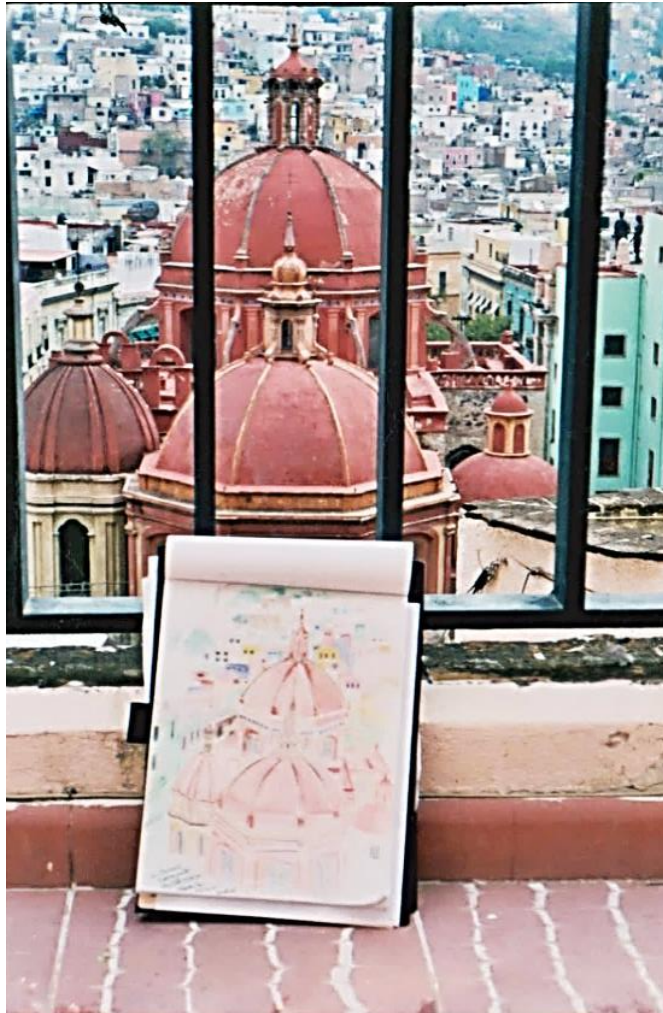
In order to uncover emergent emic understandings of the sacred, this research begins with openness to people-environment connection and other alternative views beyond views of individual-environment separateness. This socio-physical approach was selected to uncover cultural aspects of place in the context of land use conflicts between indigenous people and governments. Many indigenous social systems and beliefs run contrary to the dominant view prioritizing economic value over all other types of value. Generally, scholars argue that the indigenous world view is fundamentally opposed to the western view that natural resources can be exploited for human profit and benefit. Based on a review of numerous case studies of indigenous peoples, Fenelon and Hall (2004, 2005, 2008) find four general characteristics of indigeneity in the context of resistance to globalization, including:

1. Global historical context

2. Cultural traditions stressing community and consensus-driven governance

3. Holistic, social, and spiritual values that embody generosity and reciprocity as opposed to competition and accumulation

4. Worldview that interact positively with the earth's environment and land, rather than "profiting" from natural resource exploitation

Cooper et. al (2016) state that strictly economic, functionalist, and consequentialist accounts of the value of environmental places are inadequate, because "aesthetic and spiritual values emerge from (and, in turn, shape) discourses that have different ontological conceptions of nature and different axiological conceptions of the value relationships between nature and humans" (p. 225).

Facilitating an empathetic understanding of the sacred in developing countries requires a shift in focus from the visible and tangible to the unseen and ineffable dimension of the built environment (Lobell & Kahn, 1979). The socio-physical approach enables examination of place and interconnected cultural worldviews that consider an immaterial and spiritual environment.

This approach leads to discovery of significant physical features/design contributing to the ambiance of a town as well as the social and political processes that shape place. Visual tools, including visual field notes, sketching, painting, mapping, and graphic design were used to understand design elements and peoples' use of space. These tools were combined with more common ethnographic field research methods to piece together local, cultural perceptions of place. Conflict over and preservation of sacred place emerged as significant points of analysis. As a result, two major urban development policies are examined linking local preservation efforts and place-shaping with larger efforts to preserve indigenous cultural heritage.

Data Collection Techniques

Ethnographic research methods were used, including participant and non-participant observation, interviews, review of archival material (e.g. sacred texts, municipal planning/design documents, maps), sketching, mapping, and photography. The goal of the field research was to collect the "richest possible data" or a "wide and diverse range of information collected over a

relatively prolonged period of time in a persistent and systematic manner… through primarily sustained and direct face-to-face interaction with the participants in some social location or circumstance" (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006, p. 15).

Observation. Observation and experiential data were collected over a three-month period at various sacred sites and during festivals and rituals. Observation data were collected during five neighborhood *fiestas* and five community-wide celebrations. Ten sacred places and their users were also observed outside of celebrations. Observations contributed to an in-depth understanding of social interactions and use of space. The researcher moved through different roles ranging from complete participant (fully engaged with the people in space) to participant as observer (participating in the activity while observing) to nonparticipant observer (watching and taking field notes as an outsider) (Creswell, 2013, p. 167). The researcher sketched scenes and recorded information. Behavior mapping included use of site plans or maps to document the routes people take within and between sacred places (Zeisel, 1981, p. 213-217). Attention was given to how sacred placemaking activities occurred within the public realm and urban space.

Interviews. Fifty-three in-depth interviews were conducted with 47 people. A semi-structured interview format enabled learning about uses and value of space without constraints of a predetermined questionnaire. Table 1 organizes interviewees into categories based on participants' activities and/or characteristics during the time of the interview and provides pseudonyms for those who are cited in the paper. The table provides context for the interviews, as it helps to illustrate the perspectives of respondents and where identity boundaries are drawn, including those of native residents (Tepoztecos) and non-native residents (Tepoztisas), *fiesta* participants and organizers, *comerciantes* or business owners located in the center of town,

officials, volunteers and organizers of the Arc of Seeds, activists involved in protesting the freeway widening project, and member of the local Pueblos Mágicos citizen committee.

The approach to recruitment was a directed snowball technique, contacting potential interviewees initially through key informants and subsequent referrals. Interviewees were also recruited at or near sacred sites identified during a pre-dissertation site reconnaissance trip and during rituals and festivals surrounding sacred sites. At least 15 sacred sites were visited, experienced, discussed, and documented as part of the findings. Fifty-three interviews were conducted with 47 people (second and third interviews were held with some respondents when follow up was necessary for additional learning and clarification). The final number of interviews was reached when the main concepts derived from the data showed depth and breadth of understanding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 149) and when interviews ceased to provide revelatory information regarding research questions (Small, 2009). Several general questions were asked of all respondents, while others served as follow up questions or as guides to spark conversations. The interview approach did not intentionally create distance between the researcher and participant, but rather strived to "connect with them on a human level" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 13). Interview questions emerged during a preliminary visit and during data collection the guide was again fine-tuned as new insights revealed a need to ask questions to expand on a concept. Questions covered a range of topics, including motivations for visiting sacred places, feelings before, after, and during visits to such places, descriptions of sacred activities/rituals around these places (e.g. routes taken, activities, objects used, preparations made, prayers conducted), loss and creation of sacred places/activities, and perceptions of neighborhood change and urbanization. A list of sample questions used to guide interviews is contained in Appendix A.

Table 1. Interview types and pseudonyms

No.	Pseudonym	Resident		*Fiesta* Participant /Organizer	Central Business Owner	Govt. Official	Arc of Seeds		Activist[1]	Pueblos Mágicos Comité
		Native	Non-Native				Volunteer	Organizer		
1	Victoria	X							X	
2		X		X			X	X		
3		X			X					
4	Martha		X							
5		X				X				
6	Paola	X		X						
7		X		X						
8		X								
9			X							
10	Esther		X							
11	Rosa	X		X						
12		X		X						
13		X			X		X			
14		X								
15		X		X					X	
16	Angélica	X		X	X		X		X	
17		X		X		X				
18	Javier	X		X		X				
19	María	X							X	
20			X						X	
21		X		X						
22		X								
23		X								
24		X		X						
25	Martin	X		X						
26		X					X			
27		X					X			
28			X			X (Federal)				
29	Jorge	X		X	X	X	X	X		
30	Georgina		X				X			
31	Carlos	X					X			

[1] Activists are involved in the Frente en Defensa de Tepoztlán, an activist organization opposed to the expansion of the Pera-Cuautla Freeway

No.	Pseudonym	Resident Native	Non-Native	*Fiesta* Participant /Organizer	Central Business Owner	Govt. Official	Arc of Seeds Volunteer	Organizer	Activist[1]	Pueblos Mágicos Comité
32		X			X		X			
33		X					X			
34		X					X			
35		X			X					
36	José	X		X				X		
37		X						X		
38		X			X			X		
39		X		X						
40		X		X	X			X		
41		X					X			
42		X					X			
43	Jesús		X							X
44	Juan	X				X				
45		X			X					
46	Mario	X							X	
47		X		X						

Visual recording. Visual tools were used during field research for generating insight and recording data. The researcher sketched, painted, mapped, and took photos. Visual tools were used to document the experiential qualities and design elements of spaces and corroborate or add depth to descriptions provided by interview participants. Visual field notes were created using drawing to generate insight and create new knowledge (Hendrickson, 2008). Gieryn (2000) calls for a "visual key" beyond words, statistics, and abstract concepts to fully grasp the significance of place for sociology, as "so much is lost in this translation of street scene to measurement or narration or

Figure 3. Sketch study of funeral ritual items**.**

abstraction" (Gieryn, 2000 p. 484). Tools such as maps and drawings can help to visualize and understand how physical, three-dimensional place and its meaning affects social structures, activities, norms, values, and categories (Gieryn, 2000). Louis Kahn (1931), known for his deeply moving architecture, advocated that architects sketch a site with emotion and focus on self-expression, rather than relying too much on precise architectural tools. Similarly, Sitte (1889) called city planning more than just a technical matter, "but

should in the truest and most elevated sense be an artistic enterprise."

My research collects visual data as key components of understanding place. Data sources include maps and sketches created on site or from memory. The sketches require detailed recollection or observation in order to record objects on a page. These sketch studies were a major component of data collection. They were also used to ask questions and clarifications of future interviewees if needed. Figure 3 is an example of a sketch study of a funeral ritual completed after attending. Various insights and questions arose from this exercise about the materials used for the cross (i.e. wood), the adornments (e.g. white flowers, black ribbon, candles, *saumerio* or incense holder), who brought them (e.g. assigned relatives, church members), how they are arranged, and order of events. This combined with audio recording of the rosary/prayer ritual contributed to depth of understanding about cultural knowledge, or the "acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behavior" (Spradley, 1980, p. 6). This includes *explicit* knowledge – what people know and can communicate easily - and perhaps more importantly *tacit* cultural knowledge – cultural influences that people are less aware of.

A general, flexible strategy was used to guide data collection. Table 2 displays a summary of data collected. Observations and recruitment for interviews took place at neighborhood festivals, community-wide festivals, during the gluing of seeds for the Arc of Seeds, and other significant locations. Interviews were conducted with a variety of local residents, focusing on those who were familiar with community sacred places and activities. In addition, maps were created using a combination of hand drawing and graphic design.

Table 2. Data collection summary

Sacred Places and Activities			Data Collection Methods		
Location	Date(s)	Events observed	Interviews	Visual Recording	Audio
Neighborhood *Fiestas*					
San Pedro	6/23/18	Celebration of San Pedro, San Pablo: *Las Dancitas*	Participants, organizers	Photos, video, sketches	MP3
Santo Domingo	7/5-7/15/18	Celebration of *el Divino Reventor, novenario*	Participants, organizers	Photos, video, sketches	MP3
	7/27-8/4/18	Celebration of Santo Domingo, *novenario*.	Participants, organizers	Photos, video, sketches	MP3
Santiago Tepetlapa	7/25/18	Neighborhood *fiesta*	Participants, organizers	Photos	-
Ixcatepec	8/7/18	View *promesa* (gift of cloth for *Imagen*) and altar day after neighborhood *fiesta*	Participants, residents	Photos	-
Santa Cruz	8/6/18	Neighborhood *fiesta*, including dancers, *los Arrieros Alcoholeros*	Participants, organizers	Photos, sketches	MP3
Community-wide Festivals					
Town center, *Av. del Tepozteco*, pyramid	9/7/18	Offering to *el Tepozteco*	Participants, organizers officials	photos video, sketches	MP3
	9/8/18	*Reto al Tepozteco* performance		Photos, video, sketches	MP3
Main Church	8/26-8/3/18	*Jubileo, novenario*	Participants	Photos, sketches	MP3
Main Church, *La Santísima*	8//31/18-9/3/18	*Fiesta* de la Virgen de la Natividad, *novenario*	Participants, organizers	Photos, video, sketches	MP3
Main church Atrium	8/1-9/7/18	Gluing of seeds for Arc of Seeds	Volunteers, organizers	photos, video, sketches	
Other Sacred Places and Activities					
Route to *el Tepozteco*	Various	Visitors, environment, pyramid	Residents, visitors	photos, video, sketches	MP3
El Zócalo	Various	Diverse visitors and activities	Residents, visitors	photos	-
Las bodegas	7/15-7/19/18	Children's summer art camp	Residents, vendors, artists	photos	-
Las cascadas, deer sanctuary	9/10/18	Visit sanctuary and waterfalls	Residents	Photos, video	MP3
La Iglesia San Sebastián	-	Visit off hours to take photos	-	photos	-
Pera-Cuautla Freeway	Various	View archeological site Youjalinchan and freeway construction	Residents, activists, officials	photos	-
Amatlán Elementary School	7/28/18	Inauguration of community mural	Participants	photos, video	MP3
Town center	various	Traditional flower ritual after *fiesta*	Participants, organizers	Photos, sketches	-
Private residence patio	8/9/18	Funeral ritual on day five of *novenario*	Participants	Photos, sketches	MP3
Ixcatepec Community Center	11/20/17	Youth print making hosted by local artists	Participants, organizers	Photos	-

The Field Site: Tepoztlán, Mexico

Tepoztlán is a town located approximately 50 miles south of Mexico City in the central

state of Morelos (Figure 4). Tepoztlán, like many places in Mexico, has a deeply-rooted cultural

heritage, a tradition of developing and using public spaces (Herzog, 1993), diverse ecology, and

Figure 4. Tepoztlán is located in the state of Morelos (map source: GoogleMaps)

a collectivist spirit (Corral-Verdugo & Pinheiro, 2009), which contribute to a unique aesthetic in the built environment (Mahiques, 2015). Tepoztlán was selected because it has many natural and built places considered to be valuable or sacred that play a significant role in community daily life, rituals, and festivals. The town also has ancillary

spaces and urban forms that facilitate interactions with sacred places. In the U.S., the disciplinary

split of urban planning from design/architecture has neglected discourse on the 'spirit of place'

(Sandercock & Senbel, 2011), while Mexican urban planning retains strong design/architectural

influences (Irazábal, 2009). Mexico City was recently named the 2018 World Design Capital by

the World Design Organization in recognition of its passion and innovations in design that have

contributed to physical and social urban regeneration in low-income areas. Programs include

public gardens, parks, play grounds, bike sharing, communication, and security (World Design

Organization, 2019). Central Mexico is also the historic location of some of the most innovative

and sophisticated construction and urban planning of the ancient world. According to Smith

(2017) "the ancient Mexican city of Teotihuacan had the most aberrant design of any city in

ancient Mesoamerica" (p. 1). It had apartment compounds, urban innovations, and was home to an astounding number of people for its time (more than 500,000) reaching its height somewhere between 100 and 650 A.D. Subsequent implementation of colonial urban design after the invasion added ornate churches and additional government services and plazas, which have been appropriated by residents as places for socializing and interaction among neighbors. Latin American community and spiritual life are more 'public' and visible than in the U.S. and many towns and cities host a unique combination of indigenous and contemporary religious sites, multiple religious festivals, and symbolically and aesthetically rich cityscapes. Indigenous identity and spirituality in Mexico reflect vestiges of native societies that used the immaterial such as myth, spirit, ritual, and symbolism to create meaning in the landscape (Relph, 1979; Sheldrake, 2009). Because of their location along historic exchange routes between the Pacific Coast and the Valley of Mexico, the community of Tepoztlán was exposed to a variety of political and cultural groups and developed an ability to absorb external influences while preserving their own cultural values and beliefs (Pérez y Zavala, 2001). Many local people practice a mixture of Catholicism and indigenous spirituality.

Tepoztlán was also selected because it is at the front lines of conflicts between urban development policy and preservation efforts, and it is a case that can illustrate tensions between indigenous social movements and neoliberal policies geared toward globalization. While shedding light on these larger structural forces, this grounded case study also points out how context specific and cultural factors contribute to a more complex relationship among indigeneity, urbanization, and sacred place.

The town has fine grain morphology (e.g. small blocks) with narrow, rock surfaced streets organized in a grid. Streets generally slope away from the surrounding steep hills in the

north southeast toward the town center, including the municipal building, public plaza, popular pedestrian market, historic Cathedral, and former monastery (now museum). Sacred places in Tepoztlán are embedded in the townscape and contribute to the public realm and rituals at the sacred sites often involve processions through town streets or from one sacred site to another. Figure 5 shows 18 sacred sites identified during field research. Observations of rituals centered around these locations. Although findings suggest that community notions of sacredness extend beyond buildings into the entire town, these locations serve as catalysts for sacred placemaking and these locations guided collection of data. Table 3 provides a visual description and depictions of each site.

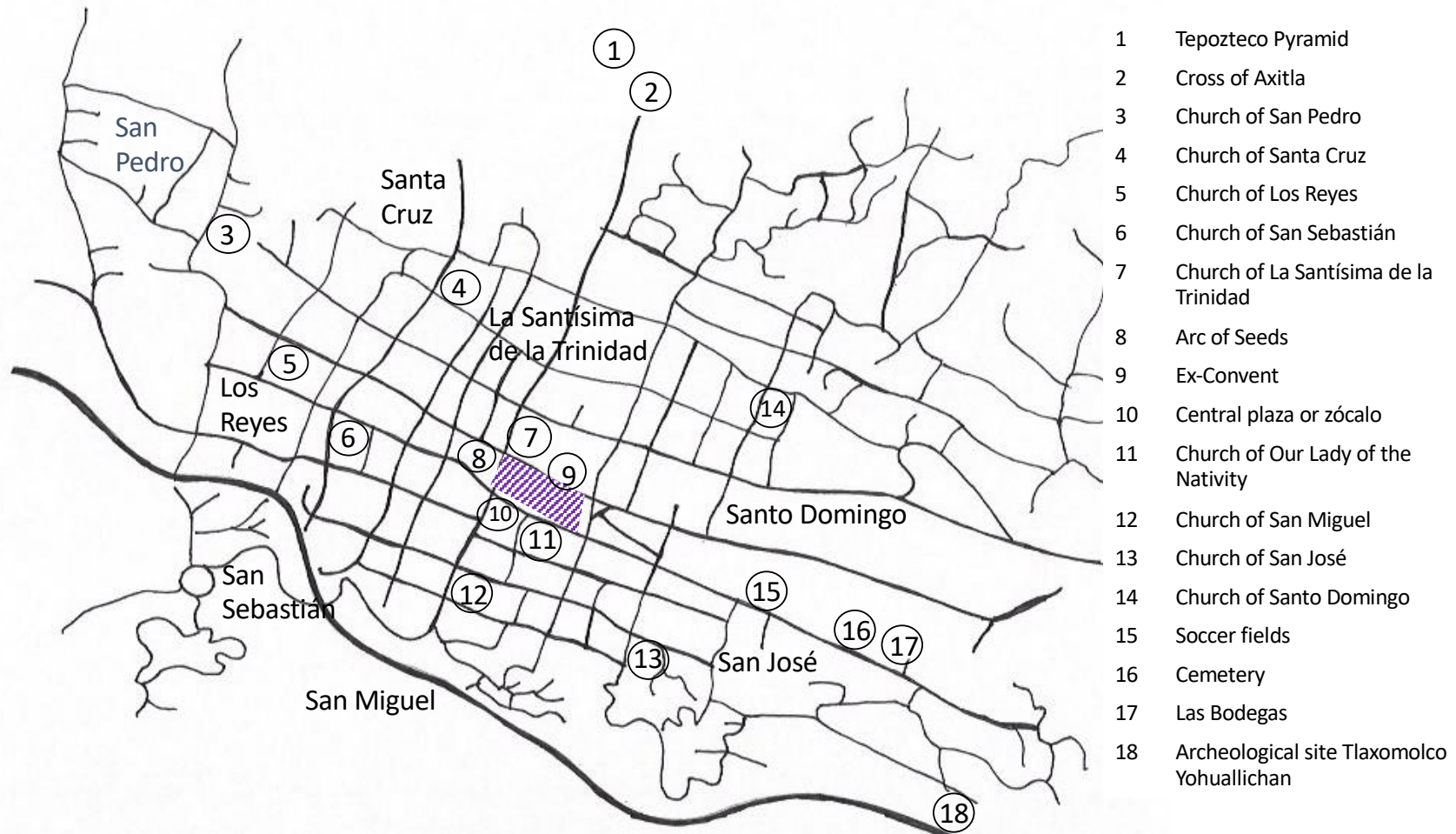**Figure 5.** Sacred places in Tepoztlán identified during field research.

1	Tepozteco Pyramid
2	Cross of Axitla
3	Church of San Pedro
4	Church of Santa Cruz
5	Church of Los Reyes
6	Church of San Sebastián
7	Church of La Santísima de la Trinidad
8	Arc of Seeds
9	Ex-Convent
10	Central plaza or zócalo
11	Church of Our Lady of the Nativity
12	Church of San Miguel
13	Church of San José
14	Church of Santo Domingo
15	Soccer fields
16	Cemetery
17	Las Bodegas
18	Archeological site Tlaxomolco Yohuallichan

Table 3. Tepoztlán sacred places

Map No.	1	2	3	4
Name	Tepozteco pyramid	Cross at Axitla	Church of San Pedro	Church of Santa Cruz
Description	Archeological site, national park, ancient pyramid to honor god el Tepozteco. Namesake of town, place worshiped, respected, for gathering, tourist attraction.	Legendary location of baptism of el Tepozteco, at head of the trail leading up to pyramid.	Place to visit after death of a relative to bring flowers and candle for San Pedro, keeper of the key to heaven. Legend says San Pedro can open the mouth of speech-delayed children. *Las dancitas* shown here in church patio (due to earthquake damage inside).	Santa Cruz location of annual dance of *Los Arrieros Alcoholeros*.
Visual				

Map No.	5	6	7	8
Name	Los Reyes Church	San Sebastian Church	Church of the *Santísima de la Trinidad*	Arc of Seeds at entrance to main Church.
Description	Church in Los Reyes Neighborhood.	Church in San Sebastián neighborhood	Church in Santísima neighborhood.	Mosaic gateway, offering to the Virgin of the Nativity who is carried through annually Sep. 8 (shown here).
Visual				

Map No.	9	10	11	12
Name	Ex-Convent	Zócalo	Church of our Lady of the Nativity	San Miguel Church
Description	Former Dominican monastery converted into museum in town center. The observation towers were damaged in 2017 earthquakes, but first floor remains accessible.	Central public plaza in town for various activities, including concerts, band practice, vendors, meeting up, and socializing	Main Catholic parish in town center dedicated to the Patron Saint, the Lady of the Nativity. Church was badly damaged in earthquakes, and structure (shown in background here) was built outside in atrium by community members.	Chapel in San Miguel Neighborhood (image source: Google Streetview)
Visual				

Map No.	13	14	15	16
Name	San José Church	Santo Domingo Church	Soccer Fields	Cemetery
Description	Church in San José neighborhood (image source: Google Streetview)	Church in Santo Domingo Neighborhood	Playing fields located along Revolución de 1910 Cuauhtémoc (image source: Google Streetview)	Local cemetery frequented throughout the year for funerals and celebration e.g. Day of the Dead.
Visual				

Map No.	17	18
Name	Las Bodegas	Archeological site Tlaxomolco Yohuallichan
Description	Local shopfronts rented by artists and other small businesses.	Location of pre-Hispanic pyramid among other uses; being disturbed by current freeway construction.
Visual		

Chapter 3 will describe the main socio-physical themes characteristic of indigenous placemaking in Tepoztlán. Chapter 4 then examines the development policies, emic or insider perceptions of these issues, and potential impacts of urbanization in Tepoztlán. Chapter 5 discusses study limitations and proposes policy recommendations to provide and enhance community identity and culture.

Chapter 3: Socio-physical Geography of Tepoztlán

Five overarching socio-physical themes related to people's interactions with sacred place emerged from analysis of interviews, observations, and visual recordings in the field site. Field research revealed the following five themes: (1) an intricate *pattern of neighborhood-based ceremony and exchange*, (2) *intergenerational beliefs in sacred mountains*, (3) *collectivism*, (4) *pedestrian orientation*, and (5) *involvement of residents in constructing the built environment*. These themes paint a picture of local placemaking in Tepoztlán.

Neighborhood-Based Ceremony and Exchange

Community members participate in a continuous cycle of religious celebrations. Some celebrations are community-wide such as Día de los Muertos and Carnival, while others are familial rituals like weddings, baptisms, and funerals. Most, however, are *fiestas de barrio* and center around neighborhoods churches. Tepoztlán is organized around a town center and eight neighborhoods or *barrios*. Each *barrio* is named after a Catholic saint and each has a native symbol (e.g. animal). These saints and symbols are well known in the community and form part of the collective identity of Tepoztecos (Aquiles, 2004). Figure 6 shows the *barrios*, their native symbols, neighborhood churches, and town center. The neighborhoods form the backbone of community life and identity in Tepoztlán.

Figure 6. Map of Tepoztlán neighborhoods, churches, and local symbols

Legend

- Town Center
- Symbol
- † Church
- ✳ Meeting spot
- ▲ Other sacred places
- ∞ Archeological site

San Pedro

Santa Cruz

La Santísima de la Trinidad

Los Reyes

San Sebastián

San Miguel

San José

Santo Domingo

Approx. 1000 ft

San Juan Tlacotenco

Santo Domingo Ocotitlán

To Mexico City

To Cuernavaca

Izcatepec

Huilotepec

Amatlán

Santiago Tepetlapa
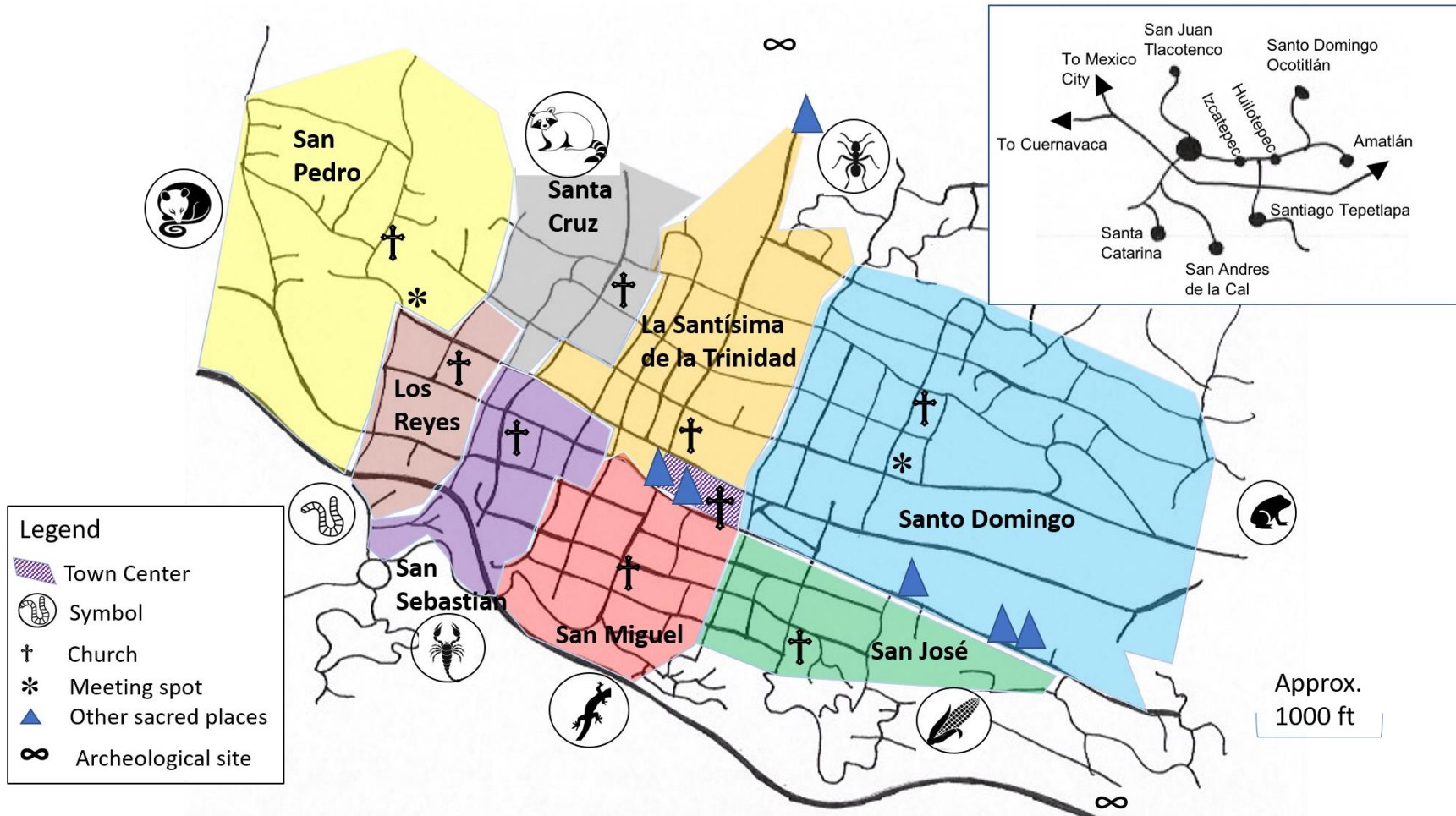
Santa Catarina

San Andres de la Cal

Figure 7. Mayordomo greets neighboring saint and adorns *estandarte* with flower.

The eight *barrios* of Tepoztlán are collectively known as the *cabecera* [headboard] and are surrounded by additional communities within the overall municipality of Tepoztlán (See Figure 6 inset). Members of each *barrio*/community celebrate the patron saint of their church twice per year (e.g. San Pedro Neighborhood celebrates St. Peter 4/29 and 6/29). *Fiestas* are usually preceded by eight days of rosary ritual comprising a *novenario* that includes multiple processions, exchanges of *promesas* or donations between neighbors and saints/churches, rosary readings/prayer, and sharing food. During processions, the *imagenes* or images of neighborhood saints are carried through the streets on a cloth banner called *estandarte*. Statues may also be carried. These *imagenes* are treated with reverence, affection, and care. Some homes have *imagenes* and processions may visit these homes to allow the *imagenes* to 'greet' each other. These greetings are common during ritual processions. Two banners of saints 'greet' each other by having church members briefly touch banner to banner. Figure 7 shows one *mayordomo* or church leader that facilitated a greeting of two saints and adorns the visiting banner with a flower. The ninth day of the *novenario* is the day of the *fiesta*, an all-day event with bands, vendors, fireworks, and church activities (prayer, donations, sharing of food, ceremony).

Promesas [promises] are a foundational element of religious practice and social interaction in Tepoztlán. They are an exchange between a person or groups of people and a saint. The saint does a favor for someone or some group and in exchange, that person or group gives a gift to the saint. *Promesas* can be personal or community-based, and recurring or one-time only. Several examples of such exchanges were noted during field research. The festival of the "*dancitas*" [little dances] in Barrio San Pedro is an example when children perform dances for the Saint Peter in exchange for their safety and health. One interviewee from the Santo Domingo neighborhood brings adornments to the *imagen* of Jesus in the Xcatepec community every year during their celebration, an arrangement that began two generations ago. I traveled with this resident to see her gift, a specially sewn cloth to adorn the *imagen*. One group decorates the floor of the Xcatepec church every year with a meticulously created mosaic made of died saw dust (Figure 8).

Figure 8. *Promesa*: mosaic made of tinted saw dust.

Fiestas and related events are announced with *cuetes* or rockets that are shot off in the street making a loud bang (Figure 9). *Cuetes* can be seen and heard from far away, signaling to community members that neighborhood celebrations are underway. Like flares, these explosions show where the procession is located as it moves through the streets. One local describes her community: "*donde los cuetes no paran*," which translates as, "where the rockets never stop." The sounds of *fiesta* are

Figure 9. Man shoots *cuete* off during procession.

characteristic of Tepoztlán. They announce *fiestas* to the community, calling people to join the celebration. The soundscape, including bells, *cuetes*, signing, and music, reinforces the sense of social exchange and communication.

Typically, a *novenario* lasts nine days and begins on day one with *cuetes* and a gathering at the church along with preparations such as hanging decorations. The events continue with processions each of the nine days to receive gifts from other neighborhoods. Invitations are sent out by each church leader to other neighborhood churches inviting them to visit a specific day/time during the *novenario* and to carry their saint's banner in the main procession, which occurs on day eight when all neighborhoods participate in the main procession of *estandartes*. On the ninth day community members open their doors to feed friends and neighbors in their homes (traditionally serving *mole*). During *fiestas de barrio*, neighborhood representatives and individuals bring different types of *promesas* to the Saint being honored, which are received in procession. The day of the *fiesta* vendors set up in the streets near the church, the band arrives and plays most of the day. *Ceras escamadas* or special wax candles created by local artisans are delivered by different neighborhoods throughout the day and celebrations continue into the evening. Figure 10 is a sketch study of the Santo Domingo neighborhood presenting *ceras*

escamadas to the Lady of the Nativity. These candles are created locally and presented at the church during all *fiestas*.

Figure 10. Sketch Study of *promesa* being brought to the Virgen.

Table 4 shows the *novenario* activities for the celebration of the *Divino Reventor* in the Santo Domingo neighborhood. Details in the table are not exhaustive but aim to give a general idea of the nine-day ceremonies, which are similar to those of the other seven neighborhoods in the *cabecera* and surrounding communities. Taken together, residents of Tepoztlán experience a year-round calendar of events.

Table 4. Example of *novenario* activities for Santo Domingo neighborhood *fiesta*

Day	Example of activities	Visual recording	Visual description
Day one	*Cuetes* in evening, call to mass with church bells, reading of rosary/prayers in church, gathering with food and drinks (*convivencia*), on-going preparations like hanging up decorations		Church members help hang hand made floral decorations on church.
Day two	*Cuetes*, short procession to receive gifts from previous mayordomos, reading of rosary/prayers in church, gathering with food and drinks		Church members walk in procession with previous church leadership to receive donation of vases and other items.

Day	Example of activities	Visual recording	Visual description
Day three	*Cuetes*, short procession to receive *promesas* from other neighborhoods (schedule of days/neighborhoods prepared in advance and formal invitations sent out), reading of rosary/prayers in church, gathering with food and drinks		Invitation from Santo Domingo to San Pedro inviting them to exchange *promesas* and participate in the procession of *estandartes*. Invitations are sent to all other neighborhood churches, each with a specific time to be received during the *novenario*.
Day four	*Cuetes*, short procession to receive *promesas* from other neighborhoods, reading of rosary/prayers in church, gathering with food and drinks		Church member procession to receive *promesa* and *estandarte* from neighboring colonia. The group often sings as they walk. Some women wear *rebozos* or traditional shawls over their shoulders.

Day	Example of activities	Visual recording	Visual description
Day five	*Cuetes*, procession to receive *promesa(s)* from other neighborhoods, reading of rosary/prayers in church, gathering with food and drinks		Carrying flowers into the church as part of a *promesa* brought to Santo Domingo.
Day six	*Cuetes*, short procession to receive *promesa*(s) from other neighborhood(s), reading of rosary/prayers in church, gathering with food and drinks		Church members receive gifts from previous church leadership in Santo Domingo. Altars become filled with gifts of flowers, candles, vases, and other items as promesas are received throughout the week.

Day	Example of activities	Visual recording	Visual description
Day seven	*Cuetes*, short procession to receive *promesas* from other neighborhoods, reading of rosary/prayers in church, gathering with food and drinks		*Convivencia* in the church courtyard (under tent), including volunteer contributions of food and drink, band, prayer, and socializing.
Day eight	*Cuetes*, all-neighborhood procession (procession of *estandartes*) prior to reading of rosary/prayers in church, gathering with food and drinks, preparations for *fiesta*		All-neighborhoods procession. The *imagen* of the saint is carried along with sacred objects through the neighborhood.

Day	Example of activities	Visual recording	Visual description
Day nine (Day of the *fiesta*)	*Cuetes* start at dawn, breakfast for participants, band arrives and begins playing, greeting of saints with band, candles (*ceras escamadas*) brought throughout day, vendors in streets around church, firework castle, food, drinks all day/ evening. Neighbors invite others home for *mole*.		Firework castillo [castle] built for the evening *fiesta*, when it will be lit.

Processions to and from the church and around the neighborhood take place during *fiestas de barrio* and other religious events. Usually churches have a meeting spot where visiting neighbors are greeted and walk in procession with church members. Figure 11 shows various meeting spots and procession routes for only a small sampling of events that happen in Tepoztlán. The route of the procession depends on several factors including streets that are voluntarily decorated by the neighbors (the Saint will pass by streets with more decorations), the location of the church leaders' homes, and/or other *imagenes* that may be in the neighborhood. In all cases, the streetscape is transformed by the procession via volunteer community decorations and celebrations.

Figure 12 is a sketch study of a neighborhood *fiesta* procession drawn after the event. This sketch uses a birds-eye view to illustrate procession details. People carrying *estandartes* lead, followed by a child tossing flower petals, church leaders carrying sacred objects and incense, the saint carried on the backs of six men, the band, and the *cuetes*. The route of the saint is decorated by neighbors and traces are left marking the saint's path (e.g. petals).

Figure 11. Procession routes for various events.

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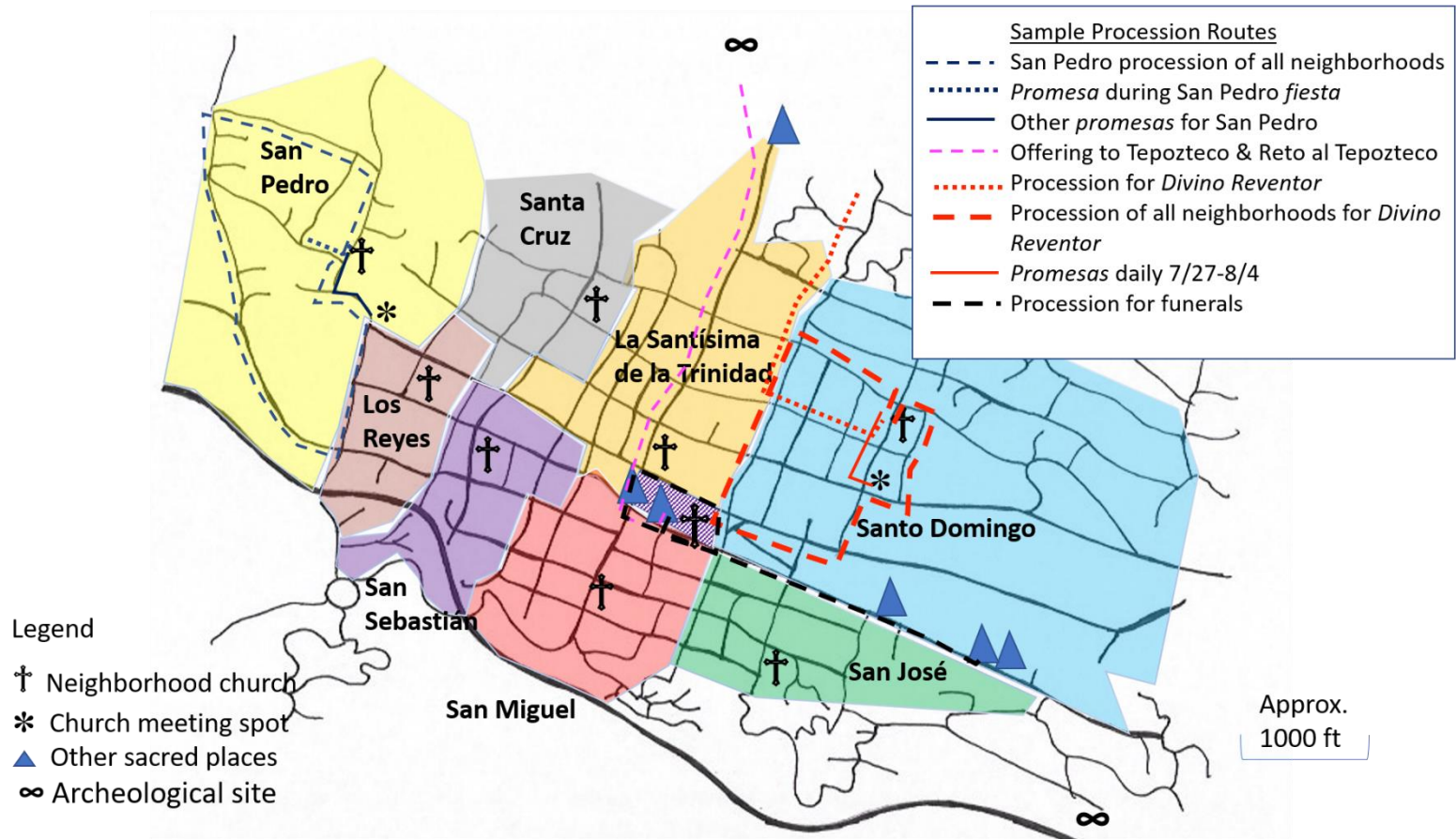
Figure 12. Sketch study of procession showing order, objects, and streetscape.

Local neighborhood processions/exchanges are a form of ritual pilgrimage. The pilgrimage is an important symbolic activity in Tepoztlán and surrounding communities that reinforces social interaction. Some processions cover long distances such as *caminos rituals*, or recurring ritual walks traverse a network of ancient trails through the surrounding mountains (Cuellar, 2018). Some trails have been used for centuries for trade, religious walks, and

transportation between communities. Many surrounding villages or towns are also historic and routes between villages have been traversed for centuries. Figure 13 is map provided by the municipality showing existing and proposed land uses, jurisdictional boundaries, and other features. Communities surrounding Tepoztlán include Santo Domingo Ocotitlan, San Juan Tlacotenco, Santa Catarina, San Andres de la Cal, and Amatlán de Quetzalcoatl. Exchanges and *promesas* between communities via pilgrimage/procession, *promesa*, or procession are acts of religious devotion that maintain links among communities and bring different generations together. One interviewee described her participation in the San Andres de la Cal walk from Tepoztlán, as special time to spend with her children and older relatives. Local residents said there are fewer and fewer participants in such events over time as the *pueblo* grows. Despite this trend, field research revealed that the tradition of carrying the saint, sacred relics, good will, and devotion on a walk singing God's praise to uplift the spirit remains strong and embedded in daily life in Tepoztlán today.

Tepoztlán's active public realm (e.g. in streets and between buildings) causes sacred placemaking to extend beyond fixed locations and pervade much of the town. The general atmosphere interacts with smaller scale neighborhood identity to contribute to unique sense of ownership and involvement in place in Tepoztlán. People on the street and the act of contributing to their neighborhood's *fiesta* encourages social interaction, neighborhood identity, and social ties.

Figure 13: Municipality of Tepoztlán land use map.
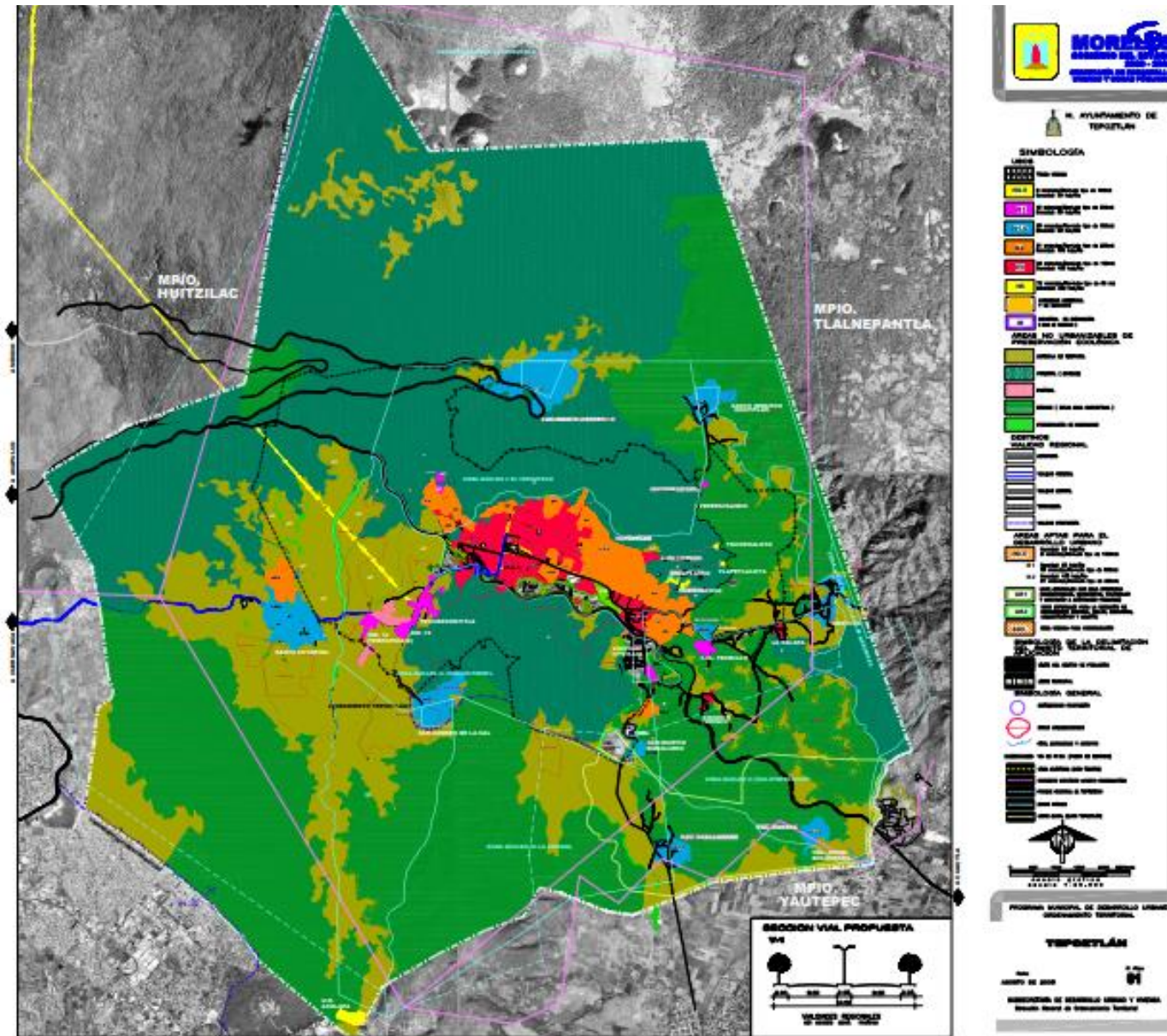
Intergenerational Beliefs in Sacred Mountains: *El Cerro Sagrado*

The second socio-physical theme that emerged as characteristic of Tepoztlán is an

intergenerational belief in sacred mountains. The mountains or hills that surround Tepoztlán are

a defining characteristic of its culture, history, and lifestyle. Admired by locals and visitors,

rocky cliffs and hills form a natural boundary around the town. Their fishers and gaps show

through green plants and moss. Many hills and mountains have ancient trails and caves, some of

Figure 14. Sketch study of Cematzin (Nahuatl) or Señor una Mano (Spn.)

Figure 16.Vigilante Nocturno [Nightguard] or Cerro del Enano [Dwarf Hill].

Figure 15. Chalchihtepetl or Cerro del Tesoro [Hill of the Treasure]

which are still used by those who know their locations. There are various native rituals that honor gods in the mountains. The mountains are significant in the town's collective imagination. Each mountain has a name in the indigenous Nahuatl language and Spanish, and a legend associated with it. The mountains are well known among residents by these names and are a significant part of their relationship with their town. One resident, Mario, described the hills this way:

This is a beautiful place because we are surrounded by hills. Each one of the hills represents a way of seeing our daily life. They are the witnesses of our history… we have named all of the hills and this makes us feel a sense of belonging to our place. We identify with the hills and know that they are present and, in a way, serve to protect us.

Local resident and community leader Angel Zuñiga Navarrete (1996) wrote of the mountains of Tepoztlán in *Las Tierras y Montañas de Tepoztlán*. Using this resource combined with firsthand accounts by residents, at least the following hills surrounding Tepoztlán are identified: *Cematzin* or *Señor una Mano* also commonly known as bull's hoof because it has a split down the center like a hoof (Figure 14). *Yohualtetatl* or *Vigilante Nocturno* or Nightime

Watchman (Figure 15) is known as *Cerro del Enano* or Hill of the Dwarf, because its form resembles a dwarf lying down. Figure 16

Figure 17. Cerro del Aire [Hill of Air/Wind].

shows *Chalchihtepetl* or *Cerro del Tesoro* [Hill of Treasure] as viewed from atop the Tepozteco Pyramid. *Cerro del Aire* or Hill of the Wind (Figure 17) is said to be a location where the legendary Tepozteco ran across the hills forming fichers with his axe.

The *Cerro del Hombre* or Hill of Man (Figure 18) overlooks the Los Reyes neighborhood and adjacent to the El
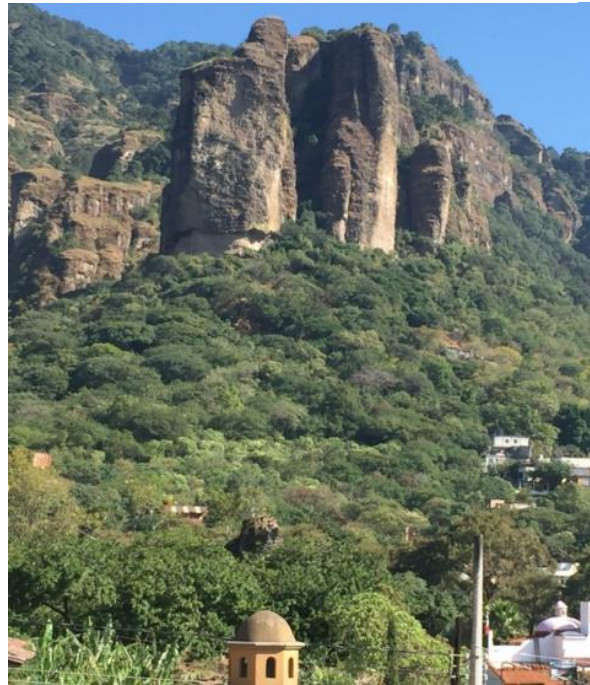
Figure 18. Cerro del Hombre [Hill of Man] overlooks the Los Reyes neighborhood.

Tepozteo pyramid. *El Tepozteco* is the site of a pre-Columbian pyramid built to a god of *pulque*, an ancient fermented beverage. This location atop a hill is believed to have great spiritual power and is an ancient pilgrimage site that remains a place of worship, tradition, and a popular tourist destination (Figure 19). *El Tepozteco* (a name that commonly refers to the god,

Figure 19. El Tepozteco Pyramid

mountain, and pyramid) – is a major part of the local culture, including myths, legends, rituals, celebrations, politics, and community identity. Community members generally combine elements in a popular version of the Tepozteco legend (Corona Caraveo & Pérez y Zavala, 1998). It is a story of a king born of a virgin who ends up liberating the town from a terrible ogre and converts to Catholicism while retaining his indigenous powers, including warrior and shamanistic skills and a sacred connection to the surrounding mountains and other natural elements (Corona Caraveo & Pérez y Zavala 1998).

The hills are the objects of celebration and ritual in Tepoztlán. The largest town festival is the annual festival of the *Reto al Tepozteco* [The Tepozteco Challenge], which is combined with the celebration of the patron saint of Tepoztlán, the Lady of the Nativity. Popular legend suggests that the Catholic ceremony was designed as a way to take participants away from the original indigenous all-night festival honoring the god of *pulque*. The current day event includes numerous community-wide celebrations centering around September 7 and 8. Residents of Tepoztlán hold a dramatic ritual and festival that takes place at several sacred sites. The festival includes a procession from city hall with an offering to el Tepozteco in the morning of September 7 sponsored by the municipality (Figure 20). The local government conducts rituals to honor the sacred mountain god. An offering is brought by city staff and volunteers up the

mountain (Figure 21, Figure 22). At the top of the pyramid a musician plays the traditional

teponastle drum while the offering is placed. Once visitors gathered, the group walked to the

pyramid to hear the mayor among other public figures speak. In 2018 the mayor asked for

permission and blessings for the new character of el Tepozteco (a youth was taking over the role

from the recently passed resident who had played the part for decades). He asked that the

festivities be successful. The tradition is presented as integral to the identity and beliefs of the

community. The ritual lasts approximately 30 minutes after which beverages and snacks are

gifted to all visitors by the municipality and other volunteer community contributions. This is the

traditional *convivencia* portion of the celebration when folks socialize and eat/drink together.

The night of September 7, the pyramid is illuminated and community members traditionally

climb the mountain (stemming from the original indigenous festival).

In the procession the following day, there are 40 maidens that accompany the Tepozteco

king as he is baptized at the Cross of Axitla and travels to visit the *Santa Patrona* of the town,

the Lady of the Nativity. The maidens are played by local youth who practice weekly for several

months to learn a variety of dances that they perform September 8. (Figures 23, 24, and 25).

They either grow their hair all year for this purpose or put extensions in to play the part of

maiden. In 2018, the maidens donned a black ribbon on their shawl in remembrance of a recently

passed local man who played a major role in the celebrations during his life (See Figure 23). The

following day, there is a theatrical reenactment of the baptism of the legendary hero/god *El*

Tepozteco or *Tepoztécal* and procession from the head of the pyramid trail to the town center

church (the Christian supplant festival). There, community members reenact the defense of the

new faith by Tepozteco against angry kings who accuse him of abandoning their native gods. It

is thought that the performance was written by Dominican friars to assist with colonial

missionary efforts. The Tepozteco legends integrate indigenous and Catholic belief systems. This god/king decides to accept monotheism yet continued to be worshiped as a wise indigenous leader and god with supernatural power.

Some interviewees explained that the native belief system is referred to more when dealing with nature, e.g. praying for healthy harvest/rain. Although designated as an indigenous *pueblo*, and apparently still very connected to a pre-Hispanic past, residents have adopted Catholic belief systems into their sacred activities and culture. Rosa described an example of this synthesis during the annual corn harvest festival September 28-29 that also is a celebration of the Arc Angel Saint Michael:

> The families go to the fields to cut *elotes* [corn cobs] they cook the corn there and eat it there together. And well, here in Tepoztlán pre-Hispanic traditions have always functioned together with Catholic traditions. Like the harvest when they harvest and share with other families…they invite you to eat grilled corn, boiled corn, corn with lemon and salt, they make you food and bring drinks and everything… and this functions with Catholicism because the following day is the celebration of Arc Angel Michael. We call the 28th the day of the corn, because it is a celebration and gathering to share corn, but also is the time to cut the flowers that are used to make the crosses for the following day the 29th. The crosses must be put on one's door prior to the 29th when the devil/satan comes out. So we go to eat corn and gather *pericón* to bring home flower crosses that will protect the home the following day… so here… I am not sure if it is the same in other states – we have hybrid traditions. I tell you, they function with both the Hispanic and pre-Hispanic, where are essentially the same but obviously they each have different gods. This is how it works… they made a mix of traditions…

One interviewee described this synthesis with indigenous gods being relied on for requests dealing with the natural world.

When I was born, my mother told me she believes in the virgin and Jesus Christ, so I have that as part of me…But

Figure 20. Participants climb pyramid carrying offerings.

like I mentioned when we go to request rain, we go to a village here San Andrés and we make an offering of food, pulque, toys, and that offering is placed in caves for the gods of the wind. And we talk to this god and say that we brought this offering to you because we know that the wind/air brings us good clouds and when it rains we have good harvests. We do this for things that are linked to the natural world…

Figure 21. Sketch study of participants carrying offering to El Tepozteco September 7.

Figure 22. Items brought as offering for el Tepozteco
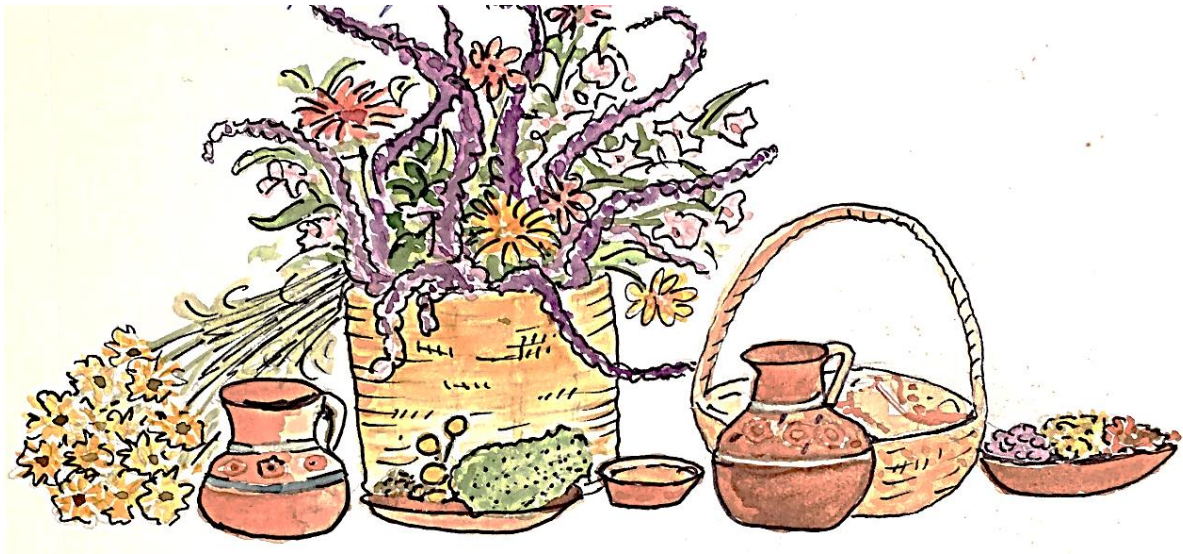
Figure 23. Maidens carry incense; black ribbon on shoulder.

Figure 24. Weekly dance practice for el Reto al Tepozteco. Aug. 31, 2018

The maidens perform dances, including the candle dance using local artisan-made *ceras escamadas.* Eventually the actor playing el Tepozteco convinces the others to join him on stage and dance to celebrate their agreement on the new faith. The patronage toward el Tepozteco and the emphasis placed on his celebrations illustrates how ingrained this figure is in the town. The dances and traditions associated with the festival are passed down from generation to generation. For example, the man that plays the *Teponastle* drum (believed to be the same drum stolen by King Tepozteco in ancient times) learned this practice from his father. The elders look on and ensure correct interpretation of the script written in Nahuatl and translated to Spanish.

The integration of the mountains in daily life, annual rituals, and community identity illustrates a depth of emotional attachment to them. The relationship that some residents have with the mountains is one of respect, awe, and humility. There is pride and joy in knowing and telling the legends of the mountains and celebrating the traditions around them. This relationship with the natural world extends to trees, which are banned from felling in Tepoztlán. Maria lives nearby the hills and described her relationship with them:

From the time you are very young you go [to the hills] because they call to you, they call you to climb them, they attract your attention, you grow up learning/knowing the plants, which usually the elders teach the children: 'Look, this plant is called this, and look this nest is from this bird,' and you learn all of this as if it were something everyone in the world learns, but now you discover that this is not the case. I have also lived outside [of Tepoztlán] and there is not the same attachment that we find so normal.

Figure 25. Sketch study of maidens performing Dance of the Candles

Residents also use animism when speaking of the hills. Martha, who immigrated to Tepoztlán:

> I have a very special connection with the landscape, especially with this hill here called the Hill of Man [*Cerro del Hombre*]. Every day we see it and depending on how it looks, I know if it's going to be a good day or not, as if he had an effect… more than personality, like if he had a say in how things are going to be.

Relationships with the land – mountains in particular- in Tepoztlán highlight sacrilization processes in community placemaking. From their perspective, the mountains have power, agency, and visual impacts. Simultaneously, participants ascribe meaning to the spaces created with the Tepozteco rituals, such as the altar and offering set up during Reto al Tepozteco.

Collectivism: *Convivencia,* communal labor, and public art

The term "*convivencia*" was used throughout interviews and present in local cultural exchanges. *Convivencia* relates to the *fiestas de barrio* and other indigenous placemaking events. It usually describes the time of gathering and sharing food that happens before, during, and particularly after church events. The popular term translates into English as 'co-exist,' but based on conversations with residents, it describes the union of people, gathering together, socializing, connecting, and sharing each other's company in a healthy way. In a study of Latin American civil society and the concept of *convivencia*, Mockus (2002, p.19) suggests that it summarizes "the ideal of a life in common among culturally, socially or politically diverse groups; a viable common life; a stable, possibly permanent, "living together" desirable for its own sake and not only for its effects." Field research in Tepoztlán revealed that *convivencia* can be with people, but also with plants, mountains, or other parts of the environment. It refers to connections made between living beings. According to residents, these connections are a major part of Tepoztlán's

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appeal. The notion of *convivencia* is viewed as more significant for 'sacred place' than actual physical place. The harmonious interaction among residents is valued and considered a major reason why Tepoztecos love their *pueblo*.

      Convivencia after church services or events is often made possible by collective contributions of residents. Residents may be asked to contribute several hundred pesos for their neighborhood's *fiesta*. Church leaders in Santo Domingo collect door-to-door two Sundays prior to the event and are received by many willing contributors. Some neighbors may not participate (particularly newer residents) while others adhere to tradition contributing what they are able

Figure 26. Women peel fruit in preparation for the *fiesta*.

(suggested donation in this case was $300 pesos). Interviewees described their contributions as critical and obligatory. Contributions to *fiestas* also include food preparation (Figure 26). The church and participants feed the entire group of visitors. Common foods include *atole*, a warm beverage, tamales, vegetables, and meat dishes. The notion that each person does their part voluntarily is similar to the indigenous tradition of *cuatequitl* or voluntary, cooperative labor. Communal labor is still used for some community land projects, e.g. road repair, farming, home building, and tending to the

church communal land or *la milpa*. When earthquakes damaged the main town church,

community members immediately constructed a *capilla abierta* or open chapel in the atrium

using communal labor. When INAH threatened to dismantle the chapel, residents organized

meetings and fought to save the needed gathering space built with cooperative labor. A notice

hung on the church gate inviting residents to hear from authorities regarding the potential

removal of the community-built chapel (Figure 27). The practice of communal labor and group

or social consciousness is integral to local cultural preservation. A group of activists is working

to revive the traditional practice of *la milpa* and proposing use of native farming practices and

creole or native seeds as a way to remain self-sufficient in the face of globalized agrobusiness

that can compromise their way of life. One of the organizers, Maria, explains how restoring *la*

milpa restores autonomy, which is critical for conservation of her *pueblo*:

> The communal *milpa* using creole or native corn seeds free of agrochemicals leads to
>
> self-sustainability in various respects…When you buy a Kit from the agroindustry, you
>
> are buying seeds that have been genetically engineered and will require subsequent
>
> purchases of fertilizer and weed killer in order to avoid cleaning it by hand… when they
>
> sell you the kit you are choosing high yields but at the cost of one's autonomy because one becomes dependent and has to buy the kit the following year… There are families that have conserved seeds over the course of 40 or 50 years, and they grow their seeds and harvest and continue to keep seeds for

Figure 27. Meeting notice to protect community-built chapel

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the following year and this continued over generations. And as a result, one sees the

conservation of the *pueblo*, this is conservation at a large scale.

The Arc of Seeds project is another example of *convivencia*, *cuateketl*, and cultural

preservation. Organized mainly by the business owners in the town center, the *Arco* is a mosaic

Figure 28. Record shows volunteer worked from 12 to 4:30 gluing seeds.

made of a variety of seeds created by volunteers during a two-month period prior to its installation at the culmination of the main town festival in

September. The project is considered an offering to the Lady of the Nativity, the patron saint of

the town. As an offering, the mosaic is meticulously created over two months by hundreds of

people, ranging from high school students earning community service credit to vendors fulfilling

their suggested contribution toward the effort (8 hours or $200 pesos), resident volunteers,

tourists or visitors, and others. *Comerciantes* or vendors in the market area are expected to

contribute time or money and are given coupons to have signed by the project organizers in order

to fulfill the suggested amount of hours/labor (Figure 28). Each year a new design is created by

project organizers, depicting the town's cultural symbolism, combining Christian and Aztec

motifs and community significant events or themes.

Figure 29. Arc of Seeds 2018.

For the 25th anniversary, the mosaic honored two local figures who had died recently (Figure 29). Alfredo Martinez, an original founder of the project and famous wood carver is depicted on the mosaic. His portrait is surrounded by images of wood carvings of fruit and was carefully created by seasoned participants in the project that had fine-tuned their seed placement skills over many years. The other figure, Ángel Sandoval, played a native instrument (the *chirimia*) at festivals. The rest of the design illustrates life and death scenes using Aztec symbolism. Each of the characters has their name below their portrait and symbolic objects from their lives around them. The Virgen of the Nativity is displayed in the top left. Pride and devotion are evident in participant Jose's description of the project:

Figure 31. Arc of Seeds is made from over 100 types of seeds.

Figure 30. Participants work together to construct Arc of Seeds.

I leave all other responsibilities that I have during the year in order to dedicate myself to building the arc of seeds and I feel proud because I am working for the *patrona*

and when September 7 arrives one feels a pride inside to look directly at her and tell her

one more year I have worked for you. I do it for the pleasure and passion. Many people

from all over the world come to see the arc and are impressed and they want to have

something like it and it makes me feel exceedingly proud that we have this in our

community. Maybe many people here do not value it, but one sees that visitors would

love to have even one meter squared of something like this. Yes, there is a pride in

knowing that this is a one-of-a-kind piece in the world and recognized internationally.

Figures 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33 show the Arc of Seeds project, including intricate seed

placement, cultural imagery, communal labor, and creation of sacred space. The mosaic of seeds

engenders *convivencia* among participants. People take turns bringing food and drinks to the tent

Figure 32. Participants work carefully gluing seeds.

area where the project is built

(Figure 32). New relationships are formed,

while others are continued from the previous

year. It has also become a way to express

political statements that reflect the socio-

political reality of residents. After the social

resistance movement that stopped a Golf

Club project, the 1995 Arc of Seeds design

used symbolism and imagery to illustrate the

struggle against the state government and

other project proponents. As a mode of social

expression, the Arc project captured a

collectivist, rebellious consciousness that was revived during this notorious resistance

movement. Salazar (2014) explains in their analysis of social movements in the region:

> The seed portal is made manifest the social consciousness. Its imagery narrated
>
> the exploits of the people, guided by their alter ego Tepoztecatl who repeated the
>
> epic of the past, but now he was facing the new enemies of the people: the
>
> governor of Morelos, Jorge Carillo Olea and GTE-KS (p. 231).

The activity of gluing seeds, which takes great attention and care, is calming and

Figure 33. This portion of the mosaic shows the Tepozteco pyramid.

like a type of therapy similar to meditation. In this way, the Arc of Seeds serves as a contemplative space. The idea of spaces designed for 'contemplation' – as opposed to ritual or ceremony - is largely overlooked in the Latin American context (Imbert, 2007; Jones, 2015). For many builders of the Arc of Seeds, knowing that the art piece would be a gift to the town's patron Saint is precious. To others, the slow, steady,

attention absorbing experience of gluing seeds one-by-one draw residents back each year to contribute their time (sometimes months) to the communal project. Others come to learn the technique of gluing seeds and take this skill back to their hometown to make their own art pieces. The project combines artisanship, history, tradition, and collective labor, further building relationships among community members. Participant Jorge described the project this way, highlighting the religious, social, and cultural identity:

> This is in line with our traditions and our beliefs. The scriptures speak of the birth of the Virgen Maria and this is what we celebrate, the birth of the Virgen Maria. So, when we celebrate her birth as part of our faith, we give her a gift and this is what we are referring to as an offering. We are happy and content that the virgin was born so this emotion with this love we prepare this Project for her. This is one of the primary objectives that motivates us to make this Gateway. But another objective is to conserve our roots and our traditions, our cultural, our history and through the making of the mural we send a message to our children, our youth, our elders. We have taken up several important themes in Tepoztlán, such as the legend of the Tepozteco. Now with the advance of science traditions and legends are lost – not passed on to the next generation. And so, we hope this will help to conserve this part and with a drawing send a message to our people that they have rich culture and history and learn that many people visit Tepoztlán because it is the place of one of the demi-gods. Who is the Tepozteco? He was a wise leader and guide, a legendary man. He also embraced the faith and many modern youths no longer understand their heritage and this is the moral goal, to conserve this tradition, message, and culture.

A collective skill and jargon are developed as people work together on the project. As seeds are selected, and prepared – sometimes cut in pieces, parts of seeds have special names that the group learns to understand and recognize. For example, the spot on one side of a bean is called the *umbligo* or belly button and the other side the *espalda* or spine/back. Seeds are selected based on color, size, texture, shape, and symbolism. The process of selecting seeds and arranging them has become more sophisticated over the years. Both sacrilization and sacralization are evident in the seed project. Community driven placemaking allows community members to ascribe sacredness to the space of the gate; creating a special community cultural identity signage. But to a select few, the space under the archway where the seed gate is installed is a source of energy. One resident explained that a person can stand under the archway and restore one's energy, particularly when that person does a ritual involving the four cardinal directions. From a social science perspective, only the culturally ascribed meaning of the archway is valid. But from this resident's perspective, spiritual energy and this specific location have a sort of agency or power. Another way that the environment has direct influence over ceremony and sacredness via the built environment is pedestrian orientation of the streetscape.

Pedestrian Orientation

The layout of the town and its physical urban design features facilitate community ceremonies. Strong centers draw diverse people and activities to them. There are a variety of uses along narrow, textured streets. This section highlights how the built environment has a critical yet often undervalued and overlooked contribution to community life. Urban design features such as strong centers, mixed-uses, and narrow streets facilitate ceremonies and placemaking.

In the center of the town is the Ex Convento de la Natividad, the main Catholic church and monastery established by Dominican Friars in 1650 as part of the Spanish invasion. The monastery is now a museum and designated an UNESCO world heritage site. The church is dedicated to the patron saint of the town, the Virgen of the Nativity, and both the church and former monastery are renowned for their architecture and intricate interior murals. The church was regularly used for religious rituals and community festivals before earthquakes in 2017 damaged the building, preventing access. Now *fiestas* are held in the adjacent large open space in two temporary structures built by community members.

Figure 34. Uses in Tepoztlán town center. Basemap source: Google Maps
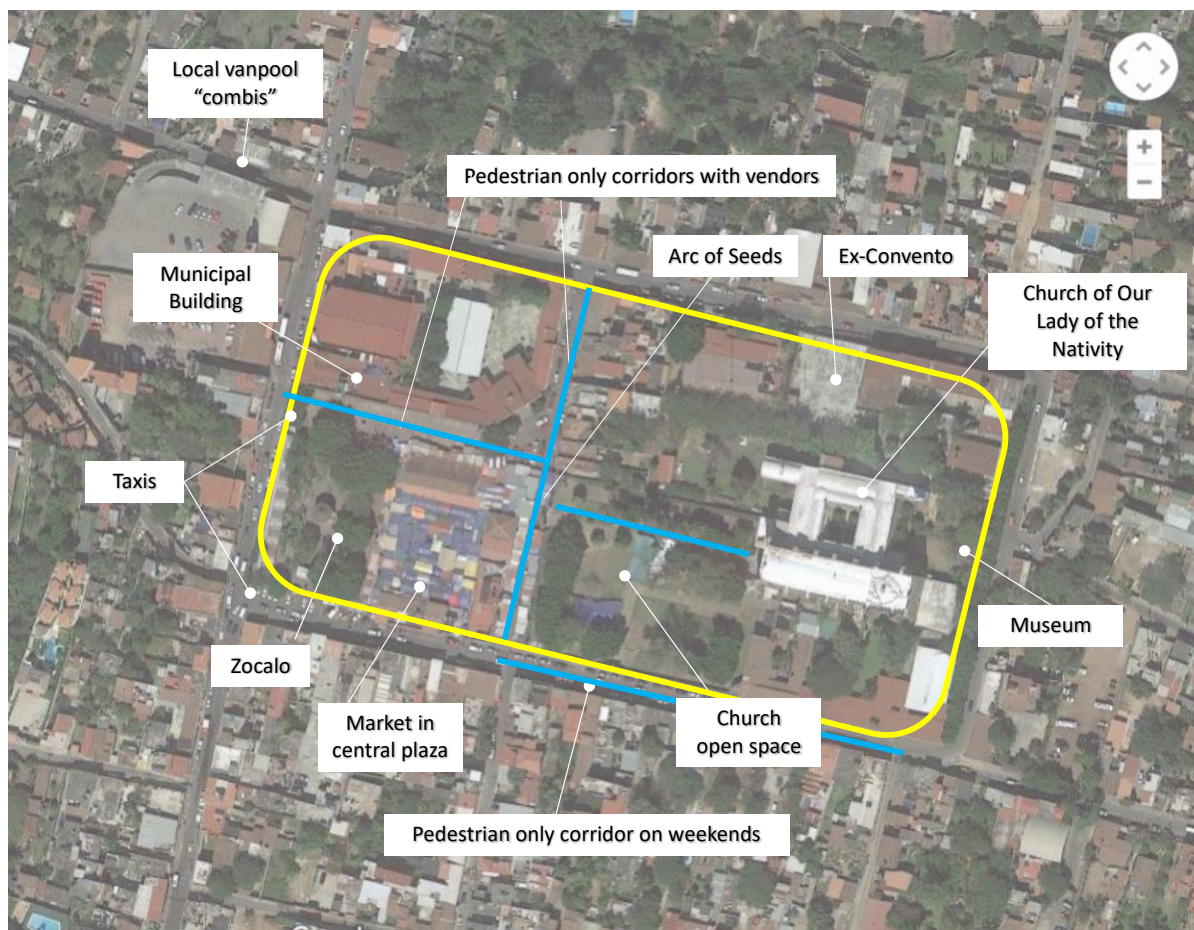
The town center design and surrounding grid street network are typical of Spanish colonial towns. Colonizers organized indigenous people into 'pueblos de Indios,' each with an 'ejido' or communal land to keep livestock. Over time, various forms of land tenure and land use emerged, while the town center and communal ownership schemes continued to play an important role in town life. The current use of the streets in the town center creates a vibrant and desirable atmosphere around the main church, the market, the municipal building, *zócalo* or large public plaza, a school, public health center, theater among other uses (Figure 34).

The main church was designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1994, being one of 14 Monasteries on the slopes of the ancient mountain and volcano, Popocatépetl, designated as architectural and historic sites because they represent an architectural style that became the model for evangelizing groups as part of the invasion of North American territories by the Spanish. The architectural style is characterized by a large open space outside of the Church used by missionaries to speak to large groups of indigenous people, low thick fortress-like walls for

Figure 35. Busy day in town center.

protection around the atrium, and small chapels in each corner of the courtyard. The native people were not accustomed to worship inside and therefore were evangelized outside and these atriums became known as a point of connection and gathering between the colonizers/friars and native people. Today the large open space also serves as a gathering place for festivals, community events, and various types of community interaction.

This strong central courtyard has a pivotal function in the community's urban ambiance.

Similarly, today's municipal plaza is the location of many businesses and space for many events, including police meetings, community meetings, protests, socializing, annual and other celebrations. Costumes of the performers of the Reto al Tepozteco are placed on display in the patio of the municipal building the day before the *fiesta*. It is also the location of the sit-in protest against the freeway expansion. Direct and visible access to the municipal authorities facilitate public interactions with government representatives, such as protests, debates, security meetings, or police displays of new vehicles or other upgrades. When there was a spike in crime, residents and business owners held meetings in the *zócalo* or Municipal building porch to discuss the issue.

Figure 36. Costumes on display at city hall.

The town center consists of pedestrian corridors and plazas. The center is dominated by tourist and residents on foot, especially on Wednesday when many of the food items are sold, and the weekends, when tourists are plentiful (Figure 36). Most of the popular market sets up daily and vendors sell food, art, and other products. The human scale popular town center serves as a hub of activity and information, while the variety of uses and walkability creates a social atmosphere. The center draws significant types of transportation, particularly taxis, 'combis' (van/truck shuttles), bikes, motorcycles, walkers, cars, buses, etc. And many of these

modes (e.g. *combis* or shuttles, taxis, buses, and cars) interact with pedestrians. Strong

community serving centers are also based in the eight neighborhoods of Tepoztlán and

surrounding villages, each with their own central chapel and plaza. The churches distribute

information and services formally and informally through social gatherings.

The fine grain morphology of the townscape facilitates the exchange of *promesas* and

Figure 37. Funeral procession in town center.

processions in the streets. Even away from the town center, there are small shops and other commercial activity embedded in neighborhoods and access to most basic daily needs is usually within walking distance for most people, creating much activity in the streets and among the buildings. The streets are narrow and paved with stones, which slows traffic. Riding in a car is bumpy and cars travel slowly to avoid damage. This indirectly facilitates pedestrian activity. Also, processions take place in the middle of the street causing cars to wait behind them and follow slowly (Figure 37). A portion of one street in the town center is made into pedestrian-only

corridors allowing processions or other pedestrians to occupy the street. At the same time,

processions and other activity in the street enlivens the between the buildings and the street is

undeniable and the mixed-use compact structures facilitates religious celebrations. These in turn

create active street fronts, bustling businesses, and encourage enjoyment of the cultural tradition

by many people. Given the frequency with which *fiestas* and other processions are held (and the

nine-day *novenario* that most celebrations also include), the streetscape is continuously created (decorated, occupied) contributing to people's affection for the streetscape.

Resident-Constructed Built Environments

Field research revealed high levels of interaction between community members and the built environment. Community-constructed environments were predominant and included altars and churches built after earthquake damage, street decorations, market sales booths, homes, hotels, structure additions, rock walls, fences, streets, and sidewalks. While walking through the streets of the Santo Domingo neighborhood for example, one can see multiple single-family home additions (e.g. second story) being built by occupants. Many homeowners are physically and directly involved in the construction of spaces in their community. Municipal officials described the practice of *cuateketl*, an indigenous practice of voluntary communal labor, still used today for road repairs and other types of construction projects. The tradition of communal agriculture is also remains in Tepoztlán today.

Community members are also involved in decorating the streets for celebrations, including hand-made floral or plant-based adornments (Figure 38 and Figure 39). The transformation of the streetscape creates an atmosphere of celebration, beauty, and involvement in the public realm. Flower petals line the streets where the image of the Saint passes through. These material "traces" left by residents impact the ambiance. Flower arrangements are an important element in all *fiestas* and play an important role in the pedestrian life in Tepoztlán. Churches and their procession routes are adorned with meticulously created floral décor. After a neighborhood *fiesta*, participants can obtain a flower as a memento for a small donation to the church.

One resident said that such a flower can be used to purify oneself if passed over the image of a saint. This tradition remains in Tepoztlán despite an increase in noise, traffic, tourists, and changing socioeconomic conditions (Figure 40).

Resident participation in design and construction of homes has created an organic mix of neighborhood land uses. The homeowner-created buildings add to the sense of community ownership of the townscape. What some might describe as unregulated or haphazard growth is the product of community-

Figure 38. Neighborhood decorated street.

driven design efforts, which contrasts with more manufactured construction in the U.S. governed by strict zoning regulations. The people in Tepoztlán have direct hands on involvement in the creation of the built environment, which contributes to a sense of ownership of the streetscape and a deeper sense of connection between residents and their town.

Murals in Tepoztlán are another example of community involvement in streetscape design. There is a 'culture' of murals in the town (Figure 41). Independent residents paint murals and the municipality is also actively involved in mural making. One program sponsored by the municipality hired local and foreign artists to paint the walls of streets connecting to the town center in order to lure people away from the congested center. For example, one route leads pedestrians through a story panel by panel along the street. The story is an epic tale of a little girl named Maya who saves her pueblo from over-industrialization by planting a tree. The story begins by describing a wonderful town that is changing into a city killing all the plants and trees. The panels describe the unintended consequences of industrialization and development. One panel in the mural reads:

Figure 39. Children line the Saint's path with petals.

> The town grew and grew and it was no longer a small *pueblo*, but had changed into a big city. People brought cars and trucks. Buildings and skyscrapers replaced the small colorful houses. A mall was built where the small bakery once was. An enormous factory was built where there was a street full of small stores. Days, moths, years passed. Freeways, parking lots, and buildings were covering up the green spaces. There was so

much traffic that one could no longer hear the song of the birds or the wind blowing the

branches on the trees.

Figure 40. Sketch study of women with single flower

.

Figure 41. Examples of Tepoztlán murals.
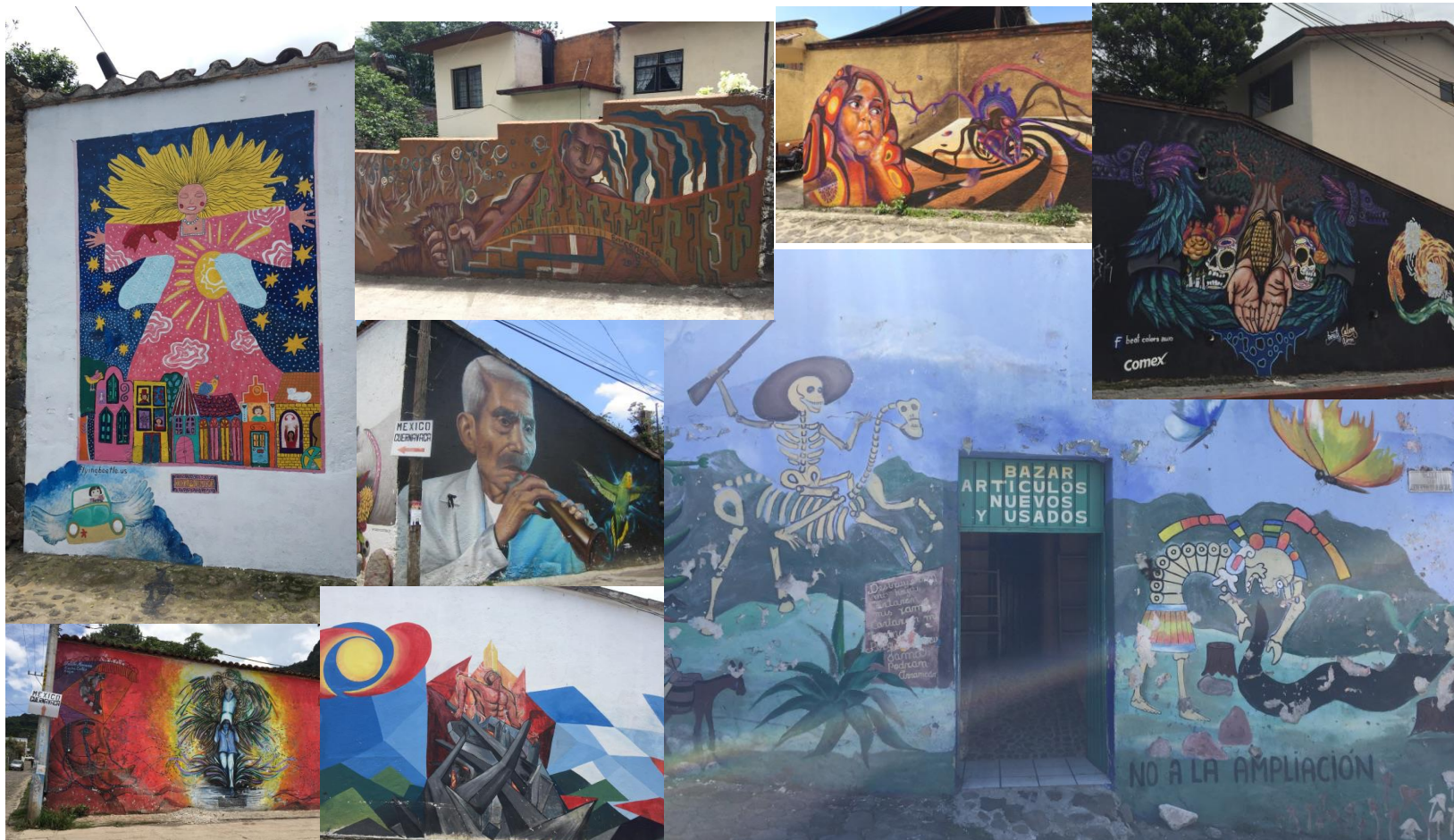
Discussion

Chapter 3 identified five socio-physical themes that characterized indigenous placemaking in Tepoztlán, including *patterns of neighborhood-based ceremony and exchange*, *intergenerational beliefs in sacred mountains*, *creation of convivencia*, *pedestrian orientation*, and *direct participation in the creation of built spaces*. These themes reveal several theoretical insights related to sacrilization and scaralization processes, cultural heritage preservation, and indigenous identity.

The theme of *neighborhood-based ceremonies and exchange* shows how indigenous placemaking is embedded in the physical design of the town, based around eight distinct neighborhoods. This theme highlights sacrilization processes because the environment (e.g. spatial layout and design) affects sacred placemaking. Residents identify with a geographic entity and express a sense of belonging through use of symbols, participation in church activities, and contributions toward neighborhood *fiestas*. The neighborhood churches are physical elements that serve as catalysts for continual resident participation in activities through communication (e.g. announcing events), gatherings, and calling for contributions of money or labor/participation. They are hubs of handmade crafts, flowers arrangements, candles, and gifts. The community serving nature of local churches in the U.S. has been documented by researchers, including their positive affect on crime prevention (Warner & Konkel, 2019). In Tepoztlán, they have even greater sacralization impacts. They are a destination in the neighborhood and a symbolic, social, and physical center in the community. The town layout has a vital yet often overlooked role to play in preservation. Cultural capital is tied to the landscape and dismantling or changing the physical design of the town can either dismantle neighborhood exchange or work to reinforce relationships. Development pressures that change the town

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streetscape (increase in cars and traffic, increased pollution, unregulated building height, concentration of alcoholic beverage sales, etc.), can have disastrous effects on heritage maintenance in the community. Cultural heritage preservationists will benefit from considering how placemaking and urban design are interconnected.

At the same time, the ceremonies/activities themselves permeate the entire public realm, rather than existing solely within specific buildings. This finding highlights the sacralization aspect of the people-place relationship, because the people are imbuing places with sacredness showing less dependency on places themselves and instead emphasizing activities as drivers of creating sacred place. Community arts and cultural festivals elsewhere were also found to have "transformative potential, by adapting space, or our perception thereof, while at the same time creating an opportunity for casual social contact and trust-building through cultural engagement" (Stokols, 1988; Brownett & Evans, 2020, p. 2). Through loud processions, projecting mass over loudspeakers, and regular exchanges of gifts among neighborhoods, the entire town and social interactions are imbued with sacred meaning. One resident, Paola, seemed perplexed when I asked her about the most meaningful or significant places in her community and responded, " the most important… well here the really important part is the *ferias* [*fiestas*] that happen… this is what we consider important, the *ferias* or the *fiestas patronales* [celebrations for the patron saints]." Questions about physical sacred places led repeatedly to puzzlement on the part of the respondents, who pointed to instead the relationships, people, values, and gatherings as predominant in their notions of sacredness and emotional attachment to their town. The *fiestas* create a "permeability" within what normally was considered mundane space. Here sacred place takes on a meaning beyond the classic 'sacred' versus 'profane space' that Eliade (1957) introduced. These intangible assets such as traditions and ceremony combine with the built

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environment (including street layout, width, texture, land use, and vernacular architecture) to create a sense of place and place attachment among residents. Such festival spaces encourage contacts that strengthen relationships (Brownett & Evans, 2020).

The *intergenerational belief in sacred mountains* fits well within a long history of spiritual ties between people and natural landscapes, including bodies of water, mountains, and trees (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 1993). Notable in Tepoztlán is how reverence for the mountains and their deities co-exists with Catholicism. Many of Latin America's cultural heritage assets are categorized as either indigenous or colonial by tourism scholars (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009), but pre-Hispanic and colonial cultures manifest together in the cultural landscape and are not easily separated. Similar to the simplified dichotomy of 'sacred' versus 'profane' space, the bipolar characterization of indigeneity as strictly separate from Catholic religious spaces does not represent fully the nuances of embedded everyday interactions with the townscape. Strict division of cultural assets overlooks the lived experience of community members where the two cultures have merged in particular. The legend of Tepozteco, an indigenous figure, recounts his conversion to Catholicism during the main town festival (El Reto al Tepozteco), combining elements of both cultural traditions to create and maintain sacred places and activities. From the practitioner's perspective, both belief systems and both sets rituals co-exist in their lives and the built environment. This confluence of traditions complicates the notion of "indigeneity" often considered opposed to modern belief systems and structures. The indigenous worldview outlined by Fenelon and Hall that "interact positively with the earth's environment and land, rather than profiting from natural resource exploitation" (p. 1868). The Catholic church, although used as a tool for imperial expansion, has become a cherished aspect of daily life and contributes to a sense of place, which cannot be ignored in understanding heritage preservation. When

indigenous residents speak of conserving their traditions in the face of urbanization, many speak of preserving traditions that originated from both their native ancestors and colonialism. Understanding the integration of the two cultures within local people's daily lives is critical for enhancing cultural heritage preservation in this context.

The notion of sacredness in Tepoztlán is also expressed in animistic references in language and in belief structures. Some locals touch a tree on their way up the mountain as a way of asking permission to ascend. This is an example of sacrilization, when the environment is experienced as having a direct influence on human life. Observations and interviews revealed that a sense of life extended to all types of objects – both natural and man-made- and objects are treated with the same respects that is reserved for humans in other cultures. For example, interviewee Esther pointed out that "*animismo*" can be found in common phrases like, "*las sabanas están trabajando,*" which translates as "the sheets are working" but means the sheets are on the bed. The sheets, just as all objects, have their function and their place and were experienced and discussed as having agency. During field research I heard a neighbor say that a piece of malfunctioning plumbing "*no respeta"* or 'it is being disrespectful,' which meant it stopped working.

Animism expressed through language aligns more closely with the view that people are not separate from their environment but connected and interacting. An emic understanding of sacred mountains points to the power and agency of nature. Religious activities involving the mountains include offerings to gods and encounters with the mountains characterized by mutual respect and exchange. These practices are salient examples of an ontological belief system that see humans existing within a web of interconnected forces, each with their own role or function.

The *notion of convivencia* in Tepoztlán is a significant cultural value that de-emphasizes the individual compared to the collective and emphasizes the social and ecological whole. Activities like communal labor and agriculture, sharing time and resources with others, and communal land ownership require collaboration and public contribution. Communal land ownership has been prevalent in Mexico over centuries (over 50% of land is owned by some form of collective) (Barnes, 2009). In Tepoztlán, "the system of communal landholding has remained practically intact through both the Aztec and Spanish Conquests" (Lewis, 1951, p. 114). Collective management of land, labor, and resources stems in part from indigenous social structures focused on consensus-driven governance and social values of generosity and reciprocity rather than consumption, accumulation, and competition (Fenelon & Hall, 2008).Tepoztlán has at least two types of communal land ownership that have been established over the years, *ejidos* and *comunales*. *Ejidos* became popular when Mexican Revolutionaries like Emiliano Zapata argued that land ownership was fundamental to freedom and had value beyond purely economic. *Ejidos* are governed by committee and promote an agrarian or forest-based livelihood strategy and an equitable distribution of resources (Barnes, 2009). *Comunales* are lands managed by the municipality but tended to by locals. Church farmlands exemplify communal management of resources and land. Barnes (2009) makes the critical point that land tenure mediates the inter-relationship between humans and the environment. In Tepoztlán the cultural tradition of collective land tenure facilitates a collective community-oriented relationship with the land.

Collective property is different than models supported in the U.S., which focus on land as an individual or public good to be bought and sold. The clash between people who continue to value the land as a public good and those who seek to own, buy, and sell the land for economic

gain continues today. Over the 20th century *ejido* ownership expanded dramatically until neo-liberal reforms by President Carlos Salinas accompanied the passage of NAFTA and together drove privatization of many *ejido* lands in order to bring them into the modern global economy (Barnes, 2009). Since then, a gradual tendency to privatize has continued punctuated by protests among those who believe in non-monetary or the sacred value of land.

The Arc of Seeds project previously discussed shows how this sacred place/placemaking activity supports the practice of *cuatequitl* or communal labor. In the 1950s, Oscar Lewis noted in his ethnography of Tepoztlán, three types of *cuatequitl*, including village, barrio, that of *cuatequitl* among neighbors, and occasionally inter-village *cuatequitl*. Lewis found the practice of compulsory labor characteristic of village *cuatequitl*. Barrio *cuatequitl* is more voluntary and is collective care of land for the local saint. Finally, neighbors may join together to make road repairs or build a water tank. The current research revealed *cuatequitl* five decades later, a persistent practice and although challenged by a variety of modernization forces. *Cuatequitl* is a tradition that is being purposefully preserved or revived today through the Arc of Seeds, restoration of *la milpa*, and community ceremonies. The Arc project draws on endemic artisanship and spirit of voluntary labor to experience *convivencia* and *cuatequitl*, two notions that are inseparable from cultural heritage preservation. To participants, the project is a direct and effective way to preserve cultural heritage. Yet, preservation officials have not focused on this effort and the project has not benefitted from the "municipal spirituality" that the Tepozteco festival and other placemaking activities enjoy. There is no funding from the municipality, INAH, or the PM program to sponsor the effort. Yet the love, devotion, and interpersonal aspects of participation in this project is clear. This disconnect between officials and community members are not uncommon in developing countries. Ownership of culture and determination of

what constitutes heritage are often under the control of outsiders who capitalize on cultural elements and give little in return to local communities (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009). In Tepoztlán cultural heritage managers at the national and global level prioritized the UNESCO designated church building over the community-built replacement chapel, which INAH threatened to dismantle. It was notable that local sacred placemaking rituals, including honoring the Lady of the Nativity, practicing the *Jubileo*, holding confirmation ceremonies, hosting funerals, and celebrating the *fiestas* were cause for participants to immediately built a structure for their needs. This structure – far from being designated as 'historic' or worthy of heritage designation by authorities was the place of celebrations that inspired and nourished community members' lives. It expressed collective communal ownership of place, which was not considered in INAH actions regarding preservation.

The socio-physical theme of *pedestrian orientation* and ceremony points to the significant impact that the town layout had on placemaking and ambiance. Empirical research shows that the built environment can enhance or degrade community life. In particular, a built envioronment that provides places to gather, have casual encounters, and walk to services can improve trust and neighborliness. The mix of uses in Tepoztlán, narrow pedestrian oriented streets, and central gathering places contribute to social capital building in the community and when combined with festivals create a type of placemaking that is pro-social, and may contribute to well-being by bringing diverse people together fostering community cohesion (Brownett & Evans, 2020). Pedestrian orientation as opposed to vehicle orientation has also been found to contribute to a sense of community and ability to organize, or "collective efficacy" (Eicher & Kawachi, 2011).

Residents' *direct hands-on involvement in the creation of streetscapes* adds to the authenticity and sense of community ownership over town spaces, which are designed in a way to support interaction. Tepozteco involvement in building homes, designing streets, and decorating spaces reflect community *control* over space, or the right to be present, use, appropriate, and modify space (Lynch, 1981). Lynch describes congruence of user control as key to good city form, which includes "control by those most familiar with place use and most motivated to improve it" (p. 208). Relph also argues that remarkable places are "manifestations of a deeply felt involvement with those places by the people who live in them" and people-environment relations can be as significant as close relationships between people (1980, preface). In Tepoztlán involvement in constructing environments as a factor in place quality and authenticity is enhanced through animism and beliefs in the sacredness of both natural and manmade forms.

Overall this chapter furthers the idea that people-environment relationships with regard to sacred places are exchanges and mutually constituted. Places like the mountains have strong influences on people, drawing them to them and inspiring awe and protection. Simultaneously it is clear that built forms have direct impacts on the survival of cultural assets and practices and that sacred activities are producers of sacred places as well. Purely constructivist views of place overlook the power that our built environment and natural environment has on us, while purely physical environmental determinism overlooks the role of people in creating place. This chapter shows how sacred places are products and producers of both sacralization and sacrilization processes.

Chapter 4: Urban Development Policy and Sacred Place

During field research it became clear that certain urbanization processes and programs were degrading sacred traditions, lifeways, and places in Tepoztlán. This chapter examines how urban development policy intersects with community life. Two urbanization programs emerged during data collection as having a transformative effect on the built environment, particularly with regard to indigenous placemaking as examined in Chapter 3. The policies examined are an urban development and tourism program called Pueblos Mágicos [Magical Towns] and an initiative to expand the Pera-Cuautla freeway. I describe the impacts of these policies on the built environment and how they affect community life from the perspective of residents. The investigation revealed how these urban development policies are examples of larger systematic inequalities at the national and global levels faced by indigenous people.

The Pueblos Mágicos (PM) program is a driving force in tourism-related changes in Tepoztlán. The program has strained resources, caused desacralization of sacred places, and was criticized by residents for perpetuating crowds, cars, traffic, tourists, and noise. Many residents avoided the town center on certain days or leave town on weekends to escape crowds. Residents described the sharp increase in hotels in the town center and an increase in "Tepoztisas" or people that move to Tepoztlán. The program is notorious for commercialization of the town and providing only superficial façade changes in the tourist-oriented town center ("el centro"). This chapter discusses how the combination of changes to the "urban image" and shifting economy to support tourism has commodified social relations, structures, and landscapes.

A second urban development policy, the widening of the Pera-Cuautla freeway, is a state initiative aimed at building regional transportation and power generation networks. The project

has driven development and also caused damage to sacred sites and changed the atmosphere of the community. Field data revealed how project proponents use the discourse of progress and modernization, while construction of the freeway degraded cultural resources in Tepoztlán, strained community resources, and neglected local perspectives on preservation.

The Pueblos Mágicos Program

Urbanization in Mexico over the past two decades has included economic development strategies focused on tourism (Schluter, 2009). Particularly since the 1960s tourism has been viewed as a solution to the problems of scarce resources and foreign investment (Getino, 1993). Promises of tourism to host communities include employment and business opportunities, preservation of cultural heritage and natural resources, local development, and improved living conditions (Akama & Kieti, 2007). This discourse of economic development and socioeconomic improvement drives tourism initiatives from both the private and public sector actors (Pérez-Ramírez & Antolín-Espinosa, 2015). The PM Program aims to attract tourists toward central destinations of Mexico (away from the already popular 'sun, sea, sand, sand' destinations) to experience cultural heritage assets. To qualify for PM funding and programming, a town must be located near a big city/airport, have some endemic natural or cultural heritage feature, maintain adequate hotel capacity, and implement certain architecture/urban design features (Gobierno de México, 2020). Tepoztlán was one of the first towns to receive the designation by the national Secretariat of Tourism in 2001. There are now 121 Pueblos Mágicos across Mexico. The Mexico Secretary of Tourism describes PM this way:

A Magical Town is a place with symbols, legends, and history, many of which have experienced momentous events in our country. They are places that reveal our national

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identity in every corner, and a magic that emanates from its attractions; visiting them is

an opportunity to discover the charm of Mexico.

Designated towns receive funding for streetscape and infrastructure improvements.

Investments are concentrated in the tourist-oriented areas in the town, such as the central plaza,

church, market, hotels, and shops (Figure 42). Since the designation, Tepoztlán has experienced

dramatic population growth and development. Nearly all people interviewed during the current

investigation described the changes in Tepoztlán over the last ten to twenty years as an explosion

in population and traffic. Municipal representatives described the town's main challenge as

infrastructure capacity to handle the increase in tourists and new residents. There are critical

circulation issues caused by increased automobile traffic traversing narrow streets not designed

for cars, causing gridlock traffic during peak periods. Traffic competes with pedestrians

conducting processions, ceremonies, and leisure, exacerbating pedestrian-auto conflicts. There is

a shortage of overnight accommodations, especially during major events when tourists have had

to return home because there were no vacancies in hotels. Once a small town with a few hotels,

the municipal tourism department reported in 2019 at least 130 registered hotels and countless

unregistered establishments. In many cases the needs of communities are deprioritized compared

to needs of outsiders and new actors or interests consume the economic benefits derived from

increased tourist activities (2015). City official Juan explained:

> Surely there will be commercial development along the freeway and many more people
>
> will come to Tepoztlán. And we do not have the capacity to absorb so many people. The
>
> town is small, the streets are narrow, and we do not have many resources like water. So
>
> the location will become more expensive for those who live here…

The uneven distribution of tourism benefits can exacerbate inequalities that already exist in a developing and urbanizing context. Researchers examined the last two decades of ramifications and changes in communities in Mexico related to the PM program and found this scenario consistently. Pérez-Ramírez and Antolín-Espinosa (2015) for example, found the program was promoted and exploited by many as a strategic tool for economic opportunity in El Oro, México, but critiqued the high environmental and social costs incurred by host communities and concentration of benefits with few outside stakeholders.

Figure 42. This building received new paint, paneling, balconies, and sidewalks.

Figure 43. Adobe construction with brick second story added.

Local residents expressed concern about overuse of resources. Hotels and other services strained water supplies to the point of service interruptions. Longtime resident, Mario, described his personal experience with shortages:

When we were children, they would turn the key [water distribution pipes] and water would flow every day. There was water, water, water. And then the distribution of water became every third day and now it is once per week. Soon it will be disbursed every 15 days and then once per month because the

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quantity of water that is being absorbed by tourism complexes does not permit enough water to fill the wells. There are many aspects of the program that have not been examined.

The over-use or "*la carga*" of archeological or other historic sites is another resource concern among preservation officials and community members. Visitors damaged the spaces without concern for the sacredness of the land. Off-road vehicles used by tourist excursions caused noise pollution and erosion in the hills surrounding the town. Local resident and activist Angélica explained that people who were not familiar with the traditions of the town and the belief in the sacred mountains spent time in the canyons and climbing the hills, but left trash without respecting the space.

Figure 44. The first block received improvements (adobe remains on side streets.)

Residents also have interest in the increased commercial activity brought through tourism. Homeowners capitalized on tourism by converting structures into hotels and marketing crafts and products to tourists. Artisan crafts compete with mass produced tourist souvenirs. Increasing density has increased single occupant vehicles and traffic and original homes were being replaced and/or converted to multiple story structures as the population and tourism grew (Figure 43). Local resident Martin said that his family considered starting a hotel in the town center and wished they

had, given the current demand and profit potential. According to local planning documents,

densities in Tepoztlán range from 19 to 30 dwelling units per acre in the town center and the

town should expand outward at lower densities in the surrounding countryside. There was no

indication by interviews or observations that growth was slowing down. According to a member

of the program committee, Jesús, the "*imagen urbana*" or urban image is supposed to be

protected and improved by PM funding. He said that the biggest threat to preservation is the

community itself, suggesting that the focus of the PM program is conservation of historic

architecture and integration of improvements with appropriate historic building styles. An

architect and representative from INAH are tasked with conducting an assessment of the building

to determine preservation measures. He stated:

The needs of the residents are changing and so the community's image is changing with

it…Building to two

stories is permitted within

the regulations. But

construction of three

stories are not permitted

and the residents ignore

this. The regulations are

hard to enforce.

Figure 45. Decorative faux balconies installed along frontage.

The PM program's focus on the urban image manifests as restrictions on exterior paint color, signage, building scale, and architecture. Historic aspects of place identity embedded in construction, such as *adobe* homes and *tecorales* or rock walls were replaced or changed to conform with program requirements (Figure 44). Some residents complained that the restrictions take away from community identity. *Adobe* construction is the traditional material for structures and was covered up with the balconies to give the impression of a human scale colonial town (Figure 45). One resident explained, "we are not a colonial town, we are an indigenous town."

Figure 46. Sketch study of unified frontage and color scheme.

Another interviewee said one side street received improvements only because it led to a popular hotel, while other spaces used by residents were neglected. Awnings were added, older construction was covered up or added to, and decorative features were installed, presumably to enhance the walk of tourists from the hotel to the town center. A unified color scheme was adopted with requirements for painting buildings (Figure 46) Griselda, a native resident, described the changes she saw as a result of the PM program:

> The regulations call for sad, sickly colors. One tone, one color. The windows are the same, because they cannot see how the people inside actually live. Some do not have toilets or the necessary elements of a decent home, but the outside is newly painted – it is nothing more than make-up. Tepoztlán does not want to be a Pueblo Mágico... before we had high quality tourism… now we have young people that come to drink what they call '*micheladas*.' Now there is an excessive, exaggerated amount of alcohol in Tepoztlán.

Some residents describe homogenizing the urban image without consideration of original construction traditions as causing a loss of local autonomy and character. Critical community needs (residents mentioned for example, the need for medical facilities, adequate housing, and involvement in land use decisions) remained unfulfilled while significant investments were made for foreign tourists. A resident who lives outside of the center suggested that they must not be part of the Magical Town, because they did not receive any funds or enhancements on their street. It became clear in the field that various and opposing views of the PM program co-existed in Tepoztlán. This interviewee agreed:

> But there has been no redistribution of resources that provides funding here but also uses a portion to enhance community services – hospitals, health, education, environment, I

don't know. There has been a concentration of services in the town center but not in the

periphery where people also really need them.

The uneven distribution of benefits from tourism is common in developing countries.

Akama and Kieti (2007) found that the tourism structure in Mombasa Kenya results in few if any

gains for local residents, because the industry is managed by outsiders, lacks local involvement

and distribution of resources. Tepoztlán is similar in that there is a "mismatch and

miscommunication between tourism developers in the public and private sector and marginalized

local residents" (p. 740, 2007). Empirical evidence shows that in developing economies, as

tourism income increases, so does economic inequality (Chi, 2020) particularly without a

comprehensive tourism strategy that contributes to social development programs (Carbone,

2005).

Expansion of the Pera-Cuautla Freeway

The Pera-Cuautla freeway passes East-West through the southern portion of Tepoztlán,

connecting to the larger cities of Cuernavaca to the northwest and Cuautla to the southeast. The

freeway is a major transportation corridor in the state of Morelos and forms part of the larger

system of roadways being improved under the federal *Plan Integral de Morelos* (PIM). The plan

includes construction of two thermal electric plants, connecting pipelines, and aqueducts in the

state of Morelos connected by freeways and other infrastructure.

The widening project underway in Tepoztlán has been opposed by many residents because it is damaging a sacred hillside and compromising environmentally protected lands, trees, and archeological sites (Figure 47, 48, 49, 50, and 51). The archeological site Tlaxomolco-Yohuallich is located near the path of the freeway and where a large pyramid and other ancient remains were discovered. Tepoztlán is part of two federally protected ecological zones, the Parque Nacional El Tepozteco established in1937 (which includes the entire town and surrounding hills) and the Area de Protección de Flora y Fauna Silvestre, Corredor Biológico del Chichinautzin, founded by presidential decree in in 1988, which covers territory in several cities in the State of Morelos. The Programa Municipal de Desarrollo Urbano de Tepoztlán [Municipal Urban Development Program] calls out the significance of local environmental assets, including the

Figure 47. Yohualichan before freeway construction. Photo by participant 10/24/13.

climate, forest, hills, and biodiversity (Ayuntamiento de Tepoztlán, 2006). The city program advocates for protection of the city's natural heritage from negative exploitation and degradation by neighboring human populations (p.30). Local officials recognize the potential environmental

damage that the freeway is likely to cause. The freeway widening project will perpetuate reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, which contribute to air pollution and threaten the pedestrian orientation and ceremonies of people in Tepoztlán. A city official, Juan, described the consequences for the environment and residents of the town and how these impacts were not addressed by project developers.

There will be serious impacts, but we won't see them for 15 or 20 years. Obviously, it will increase vehicle flow and thereby increase GHG. They killed over 6,000 trees…it is illegal but it was allowed because supposedly SCT already owned the right-of-way. They also developed an environmental document with a mitigation program, but many of the promises made will never be fulfilled. For example, they said they would transplant trees, but this did not happen. The document was accepted by the federal government and this area is a federal zone.

This quote highlights irony embedded in federal policy outcomes at the local level. On one hand the designation as an ecological zone can serve as a tool for conservation. Protestors used the conservation designation to impose stop work orders through the courts. But despite federal laws protecting the area, the freeway expansion has damaged the native plants and animals and altered the topography of the hillsides. Placing the land under federal control also allowed the Federal government the authority to use the zone for their economic development goals. An official explained that the environmental document for the project was manipulated to minimize stated environmental impacts by characterizing it as a modernization project rather than new construction.

Protests against the project have been on-going for over 5 years, dividing the community and sometimes ending in violent clashes. Some scholars have called the project a case of

territorial dispossession, which many community members also believe (Figure 46). The project

has been implemented by the state despite municipal and community level objections. Victoria

described her experience protesting the freeway:

> …we are conducting a sit-in here at city hall. There, we are protesting what Graco and
>
> SCT are doing, which is illegal. There are no permits and that is why we are peacefully
>
> protesting. They do not understand. They have come and mistreated us; they have sent
>
> fighters to beat our comrades. They beat a doctor, they threw her. They hit one person in
>
> the head, another lady on the arm, another senior gentleman was thrown, they kicked him
>
> everywhere, another young man too, of those who are standing guard. It is a frightening
>
> thing.

Proponents I spoke with defended the project as a "necessary evil" and see it as part of

Figure 48. Amate Amarillo threatened by freeway. Photo by participant 4/ 27/ 2013

development and progress. One interviewee said he thought the freeway was needed but should not have caused such dramatic destruction of thousands of native trees (Figure 48). Here the place-shaping processes were objectionable, characterized by secrecy and top-down implementation guided by profit and commercialization.

Tepoztlán has a history of successful social movements opposing projects that threaten the town's way of life and rights of its

people. In the 1990s residents stopped a golf course project, ousted the sitting mayor, and set up

community-driven government structures in his place. In the years following several other

attempts to build large scale projects in Tepoztlán failed due to resistance movements and

protests. Protesters hoped to gain the same momentum and show of force that their parents did in

the 1990s. This more recent opposition force was not as big or united as previous successful

ones. One opponent and native resident Angelica describes her experience:

> …we had a precedent, another project imposed on the town in 1995/1996, the golf
>
> club and our parents were very involved in the opposition struggle and now we are the
>
> children and grandchildren of these parents… and we have formed a youth opposition

Figure 49. Freeway construction eliminated mature trees. Photo by participant 1/14/2013.

group to take a stand against these things we see as unjust. We tried to open the eyes of

the older residents; we told them, 'you were the ones who taught us to defend our

homeland/territory. And what is happening now?' And this could have been a factor that

was not as favorable as in the 1990s during the golf club protest because the social

movement was not as powerful as we hoped it would be.

Interviews and observations pointed out two distinct perspectives regarding sacred sites.

Figure 50. "No to the illegal and unjustified expansion." Photo by participant 8/24/2013

The official perspective measures and counts assets. It does not elaborate publicly on the

meaning of the assets to residents and the meaning of the assets to the history of the location, its

culture and identity. Resident Mateo agreed that the approach of preservation authorities focused

on certain assets (i.e. the Tepozteco Pyramid) while ignoring others (e.g. Tlaxomolco):

Six months ago we were in the offices of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) working to avoid the destruction of the archeological zone located at the foot of the hill called Yohualichan. This is the location of a pyramidal construction in the form of a *talud-tablero* that appears to have been built *prior* to the time that the Tepozteco pyramid was built, which is the most popular pyramid in Tepoztlán… There is also a lime kiln that was discovered which is some ten meters in diameter. It is a very large kiln and one of the oldest in the country and threatened to be covered up by the project. We asked how or what happened to rescuing this part of your culture, your history?

In his statement, Mateo points to a disconnect between how different stakeholders view

Figure 51. Protest against freeway expansion. Photo by participant 8/24/ 2013

cultural and historic value. For some residents, the cultural significance of the pyramid and kiln is invaluable. Figure 51 shows protestors walking with a banner that reads, "Save the archeological site Tlaxomolco." For some the pain and loss that some residents attribute to the freeway project is poignant. Maria, described hearing construction of the freeway very near to her home:

> Now that I am here in front of the construction of the freeway expansion, in the mornings I would wake up and hear a disturbing noise… bang, bang, bang…because they were chipping away at the rocks and my whole body hurt and felt as if they were piercing me… because for some, the stones do not feel anything, but for you the rock has life, has history.

> Here the rock has life, negating a view of people-environment relationships that demotes rocks and other natural objects to inanimate and without value. Maria's understanding of the world, including a history of legends, lessons, and familial and community rituals assigns life to the hills. The developers of the freeway justify the destruction of the hills in the interest of economic development. Material gain and resource use are a societal institution built on the idea that inanimate objects are available to exploit for human benefit and do not fight back.

The National Institute of Archeology and History or INAH is another institution in the cultural heritage management sector that appears to have failed to consider the community's perspective on protecting the remains found there. According to residents, INAH was entrusted to care for archeological remains, yet was accused of damaging significant remains found within the expansion zone. Interviewees complained that they did not know what happened to the remains and argued that such significant evidence of their ancestral culture should be available for viewing in a museum in Tepoztlán. Mario noted:

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… they had been able to locate the remains, but they are not taking into account the history of the location or the significance that this place has for the people and their daily lives. They only consider the technical aspects - that they are excavating an area of 4x4x4x4 meters, but they are not considering its history.

The protests and resistance against the freeway expansion mirrors a national and global struggle to protect indigenous rights and improve socio-economic conditions of local communities. There are similarities across the Americas regarding economic and social conditions of indigenous groups and resistance efforts to defend territory and sacred places. The National Indigenous Congress, representing indigenous peoples across Mexico, includes representatives from Tepoztlán and has taken a stand against the freeway project. The Congress' close ally, the Zapatista National Liberation Army also denounced the project.

The National Human Rights Commission found that rights of indigenous people were violated through lack of proper consultation during implementation of the *Plan Integral de Morelos*. The environmental impacts – including its location adjacent to the Popocatépetl volcano – were not adequately evaluated or shared with residents (Alonso, 2018). The lack of transparency was echoed by Mario with regard to the freeway widening project:

From one night to the next morning they took down so many trees and they promised to replant, but there is nothing of this. These promises are left blowing in the wind. We see that this project comes from the federal government and does not take into account the unique characteristics of the municipality, the opinion of the townspeople

The overlap between broader indigenous movements and the protests in Tepoztlán became apparent during an interview with Victoria:

But now for that reason ... you will soon realize that the people in Mexico are already

unifying to fight this corrupt system of government. The people already join what is

called CNI, which is the National Indigenous Congress and there is a woman who has

been named the *vocera* or spokesperson. She is currently aspiring for the presidency, an

indigenous woman for the first time this is possible. We may win, but we are on the way

to becoming recognized here in Mexico and all over the world. We are protesting. This

corrupt government is not going to leave us. But it has all the people fed up because of its

evil form of government. Already, you have humiliated us, you have already divided us.

We already admired you, but your time is now up. Now that the time has come for the

people to rise up and see that there is a free life, that there is a healthy life, that there is a

safe life and we can all go together toward this. Why? Because we want to leave to those

who come after us a healthy life, where people can live in peace that is what we want,

and I hope we achieve it.

Discussion

Several lessons emerge from this chapter's examination of urban development policy and

conflicts around land use and development in Tepoztlán. It is clear that development processes

have strained resources and run contrary to local desires. Tepoztlán experiences a type of enclave

tourism focused on benefits to a select few, particularly outsiders. In the case of Tlaxomolco-

Yohuallich, the federal and state vision of connecting cities, power generation, and providing

transportation infrastructure overpowered local desires to conserve sacred sites. Institutions

designed to preserve cultural heritage failed in saving critical sites and were used to degrade

them. The struggle to counteract negative forces of development on the part of residents places

this community among the many indigenous communities fighting to save their territory and culture.

Enclave tourism is characterized by uneven distribution of benefits to host populations. Negative environmental and social impacts are born by local communities and resources gained from increased economic activity become concentrated into the hands of elite groups or are exported (Pérez-Ramírez & Antolín-Espinosa, 2015). In Tepoztlán much of the wealth from tourism flowed to owners of large resorts located on the edge of town, which leveraged the Valle Sagrado [Sacred Valley] to market to foreigners seeking a mystical experience. Ironically Tepoztlán has long been famous for mystical spiritual attributes. The PM program capitalizes on spiritual attraction, but the actual spiritual identity and cultural landscape has deteriorated as a result. One resident succinctly responded to my inquiry about the PM program impacts this way: "Tepoztlán is not really a town anymore and it is no longer magic either." Another respondent described their changed town as "Pueblo Trágico" [tragic town] instead of Pueblo Mágico. Like other heritage sites in less developed countries, much needed revenue generation has been prioritized over conservation, leading to the deterioration of heritage places (Timothy & Nyuapane, 2009). In Tepoztlán, this often meant continued sprawl development, deforestation, loss of agricultural land and native habitat, and overuse of archeological sites.

In other contexts, uneven distribution of tourism benefits in host communities results from private sector business interests that have the ability to influence decision making about preservation and investment (Sasidharan et al., 2002). Environmental and socio-cultural impacts such as "erosion of cultural identity, over-development of cultural landscapes and cultural heritage sites, and changing attitudes of local communities are likely to be downplayed, and even overlooked" by sustainable tourism schemes due to methodological complications with

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measuring them and compromises between environmental protection and the profit-oriented agenda of tourism businesses (Sasidharan et al, 2002).

Tepoztlán is a case where institutions designed to protect cultural heritage failed to stop damage to significant natural and archeological assets. While protesters were able to use environmental laws to obtain court-mandated stop work orders to halt damage temporarily, ultimately the ecological argument proved unsuccessful in stopping progress on the freeway. Martin (2005) noted similar tools uses in the 1995 fight against the Golf Club and previous development protests in the city (p.233). Despite these tools, however, Martin describes the protests as fragmented and punctuated by the "politics of loose connections" or the undulating support for resistance movements because of internal familial ties and conflicts. Similarly, Pezzoli's examination of the ecological conservation area of Ajusco, Mexico, revealed "highly contested terrain subject to intense pressures of urban expansion, where interests of the state, popular groups, *ejidarios*, and developers clash." In Tepoztlán, opponents of the freeway project used ecological conservation arguments as the primary tool to delay the project, but ultimately, *ejidario* y *comunero* land holders were divided over the freeway project and voted to turn the needed land over to the state in exchange for economic benefit. Some communities were promised new services like a bridge or community center and may have favored the freeway as a result. The conflicts over land use and cultural heritage preservation in Tepoztlán illustrate how place is tied together with values of a diverse population. "Space is dynamic – it is both producing and produced by people, people of different kinds, who relate to each other in a myriad of ways. Understood as such, as socially produced space…patterned with differences of all kinds" (Rendell, 2002, p. 19)

Chapter 5: Discussion, Limitations, Policy Recommendations

This research examined cultural heritage preservation, tourism, and indigenous placemaking in Tepoztlán. My findings show that 'sacredness' in Tepoztlán is not something confined to the material walls of their churches or pyramids. Ritual activities that contribute to sacred placemaking in Tepoztlán happen in the streets, plazas, and people's homes. Sacredness exists in relationships and gatherings and pervades the town and natural landscape through sounds of *cuetes*, church bells, processions, and neighborhood exchanges. In Tepoztlán sacredness is in social relationships and the embodied lived experience of *convivencia*.

Observations, interviews, and field research revealed key themes that characterized indigenous placemaking in Tepoztlán, including neighborhood-based exchange, intergenerational belief in sacred mountains, collectivism, pedestrian orientation, and resident constructed spaces. First, the town's atmosphere and unique ambiance were linked to exchanges among neighborhoods. *Fiestas* and place identity were hinged to the physical layout of the town and its surrounding environs. Residents had a strong emotional connection to their town that extended beyond the environmental psychological concept of place attachment. In order to fully understand this "*apego*" (attachment), there was a need to move beyond a sense of attachment that exists between two distinct, separate entities (people and the material world located 'out there'). The socio-physical lens helped bridge this gap by considering cultural understandings of place that support a belief system or world view that sees the environment existing together with its inhabitants. The view of people-environment connectedness and related sacralization processes were evidenced by aspects of community life, including a belief in sacred mountains. Animism in Tepoztlán gave the mountains life and personality. *Imagenes* were treated with respect and reverence. The notion that a connected

collective was just as significant as (if not more than) the individual contributed to group activities like the Arc of Seeds and cooperative farming of *la milpa*.

Much of Tepoztlán's magic was facilitated by pedestrian-oriented design. The urban morphology slows cars, encourages actitivites between buildings, and was built with the help of residents' hands. Community members' involvement in creation of built spaces perpetuated a sense of common history and encouraged respect and care for the town by residents. It showed authentic involvement in the production of place. From a phenomenological perspective authenticity in the modern world stems not from things or places but "as a condition of connectedness in the relationship between people and their world" (Dovey, 1985, p. 33). Industrialization creates distance between people and manufacturing of buildings, making architecture that is less personal and more standardized. Industrialization has separated people from the production process and "as we encounter the environment as a finished commodity" we face inauthenticity in our experiences in the world. Dovey (1985) explains:

> The argument is that both fakery and the quest for authenticity are symptoms of a deep crisis in modern person–environmental relationships and of a mistaken belief that authenticity can be achieved through the manipulation of form. However nebulous and ambiguous this notion may remain, authenticity is a property not of environmental form, but of process and relationship. As process, it is characterized by appropriation and an indigenous quality. As relationship it speaks of a depth of connectedness between people and their world. Authentic meaning cannot be created through the manipulation or purification of form, since authenticity is the very source from which form gains meaning (p. 33-34).

The authentic culture for residents exists in improvements created through *cuatequitl*, such as the community-built chapel (Figure 52). When local users built the structure in the church atrium to replace the main church damaged in the 2017 earthquakes, the preservation management authorities attempted to stop the construction (presumably for preservation concerns). Ceremonial space was needed by local people for important events like confirmation ceremonies, the Jubilee, and Reto al Tepozteco. There was an authentic connection to the space and residents fought to have it preserved. In other words, sacralization processes or the community's assignment of sacredness to the community chapel for them were just as significant as

Figure 52. Community-built, temporary chapel

feelings of sublime and the divine that may have emanated from the lofty and historic walls of the UNESCO church. Authentic environments both met the needs of residents and were built by them.

The Arc of Seeds was also an example of authentic placemaking. The seed mural became a cornerstone of fall festivities to celebrate Tepozteco and the Lady of the Nativity and while the municipality capitalized on this project as a tourist attraction, funding is still purely community generated. This sacred activity was conceived by community members and became an important means of preserving local legends and transmitting values to the next generation. It was heritage appropriated through use by the people rather than the subject of formal designation.

Activities like the Arc of Seeds and community festivals illustrate how community members create and re-create their own cultural heritage sites in the context of larger preservation efforts. These community-driven activities are essential to the town ambiance and create authenticity. Sustainable heritage preservation moves beyond the physical environment to "the living culture that created, and is still shaping, the distinct townscape, or genus loci, that characterizes heritage places" (Nasser, 2003, p. 468; Norberg-Schultz, 1980).

This research analyzed urbanization and development projects that lack this same connection to everyday life and the context of place, raising questions about their contribution to authenticity. The PM program strove for authenticity through manipulation of built forms or 'urban image' to create a tourist-driven authentic cultural experience, but locals saw superficial façade changes. The PM program brought a massive increase in tourism and thereby increased the 'exchange' value of the town's cultural assets. But the 'use' value of sites decreased for many residents. The program focused on foreign and domestic tourists, while the residents contended with the water shortages, crowds, traffic, pollution, and noise. The local rituals and

sacred hills were degraded by the increase in tourists. The PM program designed spaces that contradict residents' cultural identity as an 'indigenous' *pueblo*. Cultural heritage was manipulated by the program "privileging certain groups while others are ignored or misrepresented" (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009, p. 78). Installation of false balconies and façade improvements did not serve residents in need of *convivencia*, which stems from social interactions and involvement in placemaking. Concentration of investments in the town center worsened existing inequalities as needed services in surrounding areas remained undelivered. In the face of change, preservation by community members was driven by a desire to preserve the town that they cherish, while official cultural heritage managers prioritized only certain designated sites and tourism promoters prioritize needs of outsiders. The case of PM in Tepoztlán illustrates the disconnect between cultural heritage management (aimed at preservation) and cultural heritage tourism (aimed at selling cultural products and experiences) (McKercher and du Cros, 2002). The preservation perspective focuses on the intrinsic value of tangible and intangible cultural heritage assets, while the tourism perspective focuses on the extrinsic value of assets for consumption by tourists. Often commercial gain outweighs conservation and cultural values (Nasser, 2003).

The PM program like other tourism-led development places an "overemphasis on the physical, external aspects of heritage and conservation, at the expense of an in-depth understanding of urban culture" (Nasser, 2003, p. 472). Some PM improvements resulted in "Disneyfication" because they imposed a fictional style of architecture made to feel authentic (in this case the colonial style supplanted the original *adobe* style). By contrast, Tepoztlán's authenticity stems from hands-on, direct contributions to building the environment and connection to each other and the natural world. Simultaneously, the influence of physical urban

forms, e.g. narrow streets, small blocks, mixed-uses, and strong centers, on people and sacred placemaking is important.

Over the past several decades more development ocurred and large state development policies have impacted residents. As the town urbanized, increased automobile use threatened the link between the built environment and inhabitants. Increased use of autos caused people to spend less time walking and more time in their cars where casual encounters with neighbors is less likely. Although hard to prove conclusively, the urbanization process in Tepoztlán, including freeway widening and increased auto use, seems to have accompanied a decrease in the collective efficacy of protests against projects that threaten territory. Resistance movements are not as strong as they were several decades ago. It is possible that degraded sacred spaces contribute to less collective power and that commodification of the town as a PM is partly to blame for increased apathy toward harmful development projects that threaten sacred places. Some residents thought so. Residents claimed that the culture of collectivism in Tepoztlán was changing with urbanization to one that emphasized the individual, a view that favors personal gain over collective benefit. Mario explained:

Little by little we are losing this element of *convivencia*, of having a common history. Now, more than ever we are experiencing a process of urbanization that is making us more individual. There is no longer the same form of being, of relating to whoever is next to you; instead now the path is toward the individual and no long toward the collective and this is why we are trying hard to save the traditions that remain, because the collective plays a role. I mean the fact that you have a *fiesta* and everyone cooperates/ contributes, this is very positive because everyone supports each other and we are trying, the town is trying to conserve these community traditions so as not to fall into the

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individualism that exists in cities, where one does not know their neighbors. You come

home from work and you shut out the world and don't care what happens around you. So

here, I believe that through our customs and traditions we are still able to, we are trying

to rescue this communal element that we want to continue, because if not we will reach a

point when we don't care what happens to our community.

Tepozteco urbanization has meant increased individualist world views that de-emphasize

the connections among people and between people and the environment. Interviews and

observations seem to suggest that modernization and increased population and diversification

lead to degradation of sacredness in community life. *Convivencia* stems from collective

cooperative systems maintained through rituals, customs, and traditions. Changes to this setting

in the form of development projects, urban interventions, and policy disrupts this relationship.

People-environment relations become embedded in economic exchange of products and services

in support of the tourist economy. Community relations become commodified (Richards and

Hall). As Henderson (2009) found in Southeast Asia the outcome and function of tourism can

mean manipulation of socio-cultural heritage to advance political objectives and privilege certain

interest groups. Activist Maria explains how a sense of individual posession runs contrary to her

more integrated view of a people and their land:

I cannot see Tepoztlán as a territory that belongs to me… instead; I am part of a

conformation between all the native people that live here…I believe this is very

important because when one views things as a possession, they try to control it and many

times the noblest things in a community have less to do with possession and more to do

with an equilibrium or symbiosis that exists among the town's inhabitants. This leads to

the intention to conserve and to take care of… to do community conservation work,

because you know that caring for the land means you are caring for the health and security of the community.

The extension of sacredness to include intangible elements and to take place in all areas of the town is similar in some ways to the indigenous practice of worshiping outside rather than inside a church. This cultural characteristic motivated early colonizers and evangelicals to build churches with large open spaces outside to encourage indigenous participation. Imported Spanish Catholic traditions created a synthesis of beliefs that exist together in the daily lives of residents. Other regions with colonial histories experienced similar synthesis. In the Philippines and Tepoztlán architecture reflected both native and colonial influences. Native construction laborers incorporated their craft (e.g. in ornamental elements) into colonial architectural models (Ubalde, 1996).

This grounded case study shows how context specific and cultural factors contributed to a more complex relationship among indigeneity, urbanization, and sacred place, the nuances of which are not considered in preservation policies. The needs and desires of so called 'indigenous' groups have become intertwined with Catholic colonial belief systems. Tepoztlán's main Catholic church earned UNESCO's world heritage status, but other cherished sacred places in the community were not protected.

This research suggests that the socio-political and economic context within which Tepoztlán is experiencing change is important. Tepoztlán's urbanization and development process reflects larger trends of cultural heritage tourism in less developed countries. The way of life in Tepoztlán, including traditions, rituals, ceremonies, and other intangible cultural elements, are threatened by urban development policies. Some federal development and tourism programs stem from and perpetuate a world view that sees the environment as separate from humans. In

contrast to the prevalent elements of an indigenous world view in Tepoztlán – one that understands the earth and its creatures as being connected spiritually – the values of formal UNESCO preservation efforts are universal principles of conservation which stem from western environmental consciousness.

This is especially acute at religious heritage sites, where needs of tourists compete with needs of the surrounding community of local users, many of which are fundamental to happiness, cultural identity, and individual well-being. Residents describe the loss of their traditions and way of life when youth leave to attend university or new residents move in who do not share a local history and do not practice local ceremonies. Increasing population, tourism, development create more anonymity among the population and more auto-centric lifestyles. In an effort to preserve "*las tradiciones que nos queda*" [traditions that remain], researchers have documented traditions and activities, promoted them, and highlighted their value (Cuellar, 2018). In the face of change, community views of the need for preservation are driven by a desire to preserve the town that they cherish, while official cultural heritage managers, tourism promoters, and other top-down decision makers' priorities are to attract outsiders and preserve only designated sites.

Limitations

This research usefully reveals an emic perspective of the sacred qualities of Tepoztlán and its residents. Nevertheless, this study is limited in generalizability because respondents were not randomly selected, questions were not fully consistent across respondents, and there were no controls or statistical analysis. Instead, respondents were interviewed in-depth and sometimes multiple times to gain a deep understanding of their perspectives. The case study saw individuals as each contributing a distinct perspective that together begin to illuminate a comprehensive cultural understanding.

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Another factor limiting knowledge about placemaking in this local context was the limited data collection period. Important festivals and community events that took place during July, August, September, and November were not observed as part of this study, including Christmas celebrations, Easter, Carnival, and several neighborhood *fiestas*. A fuller set of observations in different weather, seasons and during different holidays would lead to additional cultural knowledge about Tepoztecos and their built environment.

The current study also focused on residents and local perspectives and did not study the tourist perspective. Limited information about why people travel to Tepoztlán was included in the data. In an effort to elevate voices of communities facing injustices, the emic views were more prevalent than the voices that already are linked to power, decisions, and travel opportunity. Perspectives toward the freeway widening project on the part of visitors were not part of interviews. Future research could look at what several residents have demanded, which is evaluation of program outcomes to quantify measurable impacts of the policies on income and socio-economic conditions. Such quantitative analysis can complement the qualitative data collected here especially as urban policy continues to be focused on 'objective' measures.

Policy Recommendations

Lessons emerged from this research that can inform preservation policy and planners' approaches to working with sacred places. Table 5 lists policy recommendations and actions to implement those policies. The first recommendation calls for learning from and listening to residents. Discovering what is sacred to a group of people requires delving into the culture or "epistemological world" of another. Umemoto (2001) describes this practice as "walking in another's shoes" and notes that this skill is rarely emphasized in planning practice. These different epistemological worlds become especially strident when considering sacred place,

Table 5. Policy recommendations and action items

Policy Recommendations	Sample implementation actions for planners and policymakers
Listening and learning approach	-Ask and document residents' views regarding development and preservation in their community. -Listen and document community members' suggestions for improving their community. -Allow stakeholders to speak, comment, ask questions, receive timely answers, and be heard regarding development in their community. -Maintain a culture of respect toward residents and other stakeholders
Map sacred structures	-Hold community charettes to identify culturally significant places. -Discuss ideals and community vision with residents to prioritize and uncover a place's unique qualities. -Conduct site visits and observation of spaces and users. -Sketch spaces to generate insight about their use.
Promote environmental justice	-Identify location of EJ communities. -Consider EJ communities when siting land uses. -Acknowledge harmful histories and provide formal apologies and reparations. -Ensure mitigation measures where negative environmental impacts harm EJ communities -Inform EJ communities of projects in their area -Develop environmental justice focus for General Plan. -Implement evaluation programs that help to show results of projects (using measures that residents' help to select and the identify environmental injustices).
Promote transparency	-Translate regulatory information into direct practical terms for residents and stakeholders. -Provide handouts at city hall that summarize processes (e.g. entitlements, regulations). -Use translation services, hire people who speak native languages. -Provide easy to access links to planning documents

	like zoning ordinances and general plans.
Promote *convivencia*	-Create spaces that support community interaction such as murals, human scale buildings, pedestrian orientation, collective farms or gardens. -Follow guidance from public health officials and institutions that are civic minded. -Share food together and participate in group public art projects.
Promote authentic placemaking	-Involve residents in the construction of their environments. -Consider cultural festivities as recurring events between buildings.

because fundamental views of what constitutes reality become obvious and important. R. Hester,

a landscape architect, who worked with communities to develop maps of 'sacred structures,'

made the following observation:

> In Manteo ... the Sacred Structure map depicted fundamental social patterns and cultural
>
> settings more effectively than any other planning document ... If I could make only one
>
> map of any community to use as a basis of decision making, I would opt for a map of
>
> sacred places. That information most enables community. (2006, pp. 125–126)

Allowing a community to identify and map their sacred structures can create and strengthen

social relations and reveal community priorities. Openness to alternative views of reality among

the people being planned for can enhance cohesion and allow people to work better together

toward common goals. Culture-based planning as defined by Umemoto "legitimizes multiple

epistemologies and, theoretically at least, gives them equal standing in the spirit of pluralism (p.

19)." The view that people are not separate from their surroundings or that other-than-human

spirits have agency challenges many of the basic assumptions of science and 'truth' dominant in

western culture.

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This open discourse is required in order to dismantle current unjust structures and policies. A culture-based planning may require recognition of past harmful acts. Governments must acknowledge the devastating effects of decades of colonization, slavery, and exploitation in order to move forward. Policy can be supplemented with acknowledgement of collective trauma faced by indigenous people and residents whose sacred places have been dismantled or degraded. In planning work with native Hawaiians, Umemoto and team found it invaluable to listen to their research partners and truly hear their perspective giving it the same weight as their own: "Not only was it important to understand the past as conveyed from the standpoint of residents, but it was important that those with whom we worked understood that the university team valued that history and their worldview" (p. 21).

Community engagement in the planning process may be contentious and time consuming but "should not be skipped for expediency, as communities carry with them the legacy of both positive and negative experiences over time" (Aboelata, Ersoylu & Cohen, 2011, p. 299). The 'good city' according to Lynch (1981) allows residents to responsibly control policy.

> Those who control a place should have the motives, information, and power to do it well, a commitment to the place and to the needs of other persons and creatures in it, a willingness to accept failure and to correct it…training people to be place managers is a useful social task, and so is reshaping the setting in order to open up opportunities for place management. Indeed, progressive responsibility for place is an effective means of general education, both intellectual and moral (p. 211).

These scholars and community members agree that more control, opportunity, and access to information among diverse citizenry is critical for improving cities and the built environment.

Planners can translate technical regulatory information into direct accessible language so that people of various backgrounds can affect change in their communities.

A listening and learning approach in Tepoztlán will allow discovery of suggested policy changes that community members would like to see. Listening to resident policy suggestions can lead to innovative and practical ideas to solve community problems. Residents in Tepoztlán suggested transparent evaluation programs with results provided to community members. For example, Mateo suggested the PM program outcomes should be evaluated:

> Whenever there are these types of programs, there is never an evaluation of the outcomes - an evaluation of the 16 years since adoption. Where are we now? Do we have in 2018 what was promised in 2002? There is no evaluation, no self-criticism – this is what we lack: the municipality evaluating and saying, in 2002 you promised that the program would decrease the level of poverty in 2018, but things remain the same no? Overall, the impact of the federal program is seen only in two or three blocks in the town center and the people of the *pueblos* did not receive any benefit from the 100 million pesos that I have told you they invested. Have all the funds gone to painting buildings or where?

Other planning solutions identified by Tepoztecos emphasize successful cooperation and healthy design outcomes. The arrangement of the buildings – narrow blocks and streets, strong centers of mixed uses and human scale design – nurtured the cultural aspect of sacred space in Tepoztlán, which is within notions of *convivencia*. Some ideas from residents included murals and other public art initiatives, community-initiated road and building design and construction, and collective farming and land management. Residents suggested that the community needed a medical clinic and more education and workforce opportunities for youth. A listening and learning approach to planning gives ideas like these a voice in decision-making.

In Tepoztlán, residents have an intangible set of understandings that requires policy that is inclusive, redistributive, and empathetic. Erikson (1976) described a similar sense of collective community spirit in his research:

> A state of mind shared among a particular gathering of people, and this state of mind, by definition, does not lend itself to sociological abstraction. It does not have a name or a cluster of distinguishing properties. It is a quiet set of understandings that become absorbed into the atmosphere and are thus a part of the natural order. (p.189)

The 'natural order' of a place is context-specific and its discovery requires talking to people, listening to their concerns, fears, and goals. The policy recommendations are not mutually exclusive nor exhaustive. These are some of the possible approaches to creating and maintaining cherished places in communities that arose from this research. The challenge for planners is to create policies using a cultural listening and learning approach that promotes social and environmental justice and continues to make progress toward economic growth and improved governance.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

These are sample interview guiding questions. The exact phrasing varied as would a

conversation, which allows parties to explore different topics and insights as the interview

progresses. Questions also depended in part on the interviewee and their perspective and cultural

knowledge. Nearly all interviews were conducted in Spanish (translated here):

General guiding questions asked of all participants

Do you live in Tepoztlán?

How long have you lived in Tepoztlán?

How would you describe your *pueblo*/Tepoztlán in your own words?

How has Tepoztán changed over the past 10-20 years?

Can you describe what Tepoztlán was like when you were a child?

Do you climb the mountains?

What is this like for you?

Do you participate in the neighborhood *fiestas*?

What are some challenges if any that your community faces?

What does *convivencia* mean?

Can you have *convivencia* with nature?

Is this/your neighborhood different than other neighborhoods (why?)

Examples of specific questions relating to participation in *fiestas*:

Why do you carry incense?

What are the images on the banners?

Can you tell me the story of this saint?

What is a *mayordomo*?

How do the neighbors plan and organize the *fiestas*?

Can you describe your relationship with your grandparents?

Are you familiar with the Pueblos Mágicos Program?

What changes if any did this program bring?

Are you familiar with the freeway project?

What is your perspective on the freeway project?

Why was the Golf Club protest different than this one?

What is your hope for Tepoztlán in the next five or 10 years?

Sample questions relating to the Arc of Seeds

How long have you participated in this project?

Why do you participate?

Do you enjoy working on this project?

What is your favorite aspect of this project?

Is this project an offering to the Virgin? What does this mean?

Would you describe this project as involving *convivencia*?