

**PERCEPTIONS OF SPACES IN
PUERTO VALLARTA, JALISCO, MEXICO**

Working Paper #2004-1

August 2004



Rural Development Institute, Brandon University

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Casa del Pueblo

Los palacios del pueblo son las plazas.

...

La casa del pueblo son las plazas y somos alli todos y ninguno.

The House of the People

Plazas are the palaces of the people.

...

The houses of the people are the plazas and there we are, everyone and no one.

Alfonso Chase

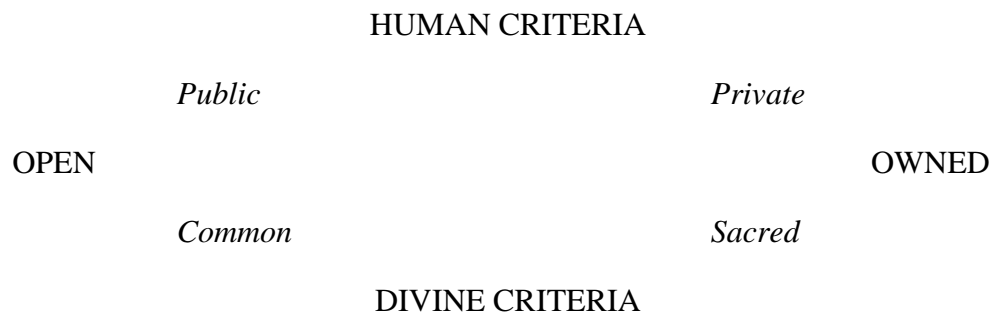
1.0 Introduction

Land use patterns in rural areas and cities, and other settlements, reflect the interplay of competing and complementary forces involving the environment, social and economic conditions and political systems. The resulting patterns are influenced by, and in turn influence the social behaviour of individuals and groups as they lead their daily lives. Within the context of an urban place there are two somewhat distinct types of land use that can be characterised as occupying either private spaces, for example, manufacturing, commercial, retailing and institutional, or those activities that occupy what have been called public spaces, for example, streets, plazas, squares and parks. Clearly, the private spaces have elements of public usage built in as individuals often use such spaces to stroll, gaze, rest, chat and shop and hence treat them as public spaces which do not generally require special permission from an owner to enter. It is also observed that there are spaces that are reserved for 'chosen people' or members of specific groups. Membership is defined in a variety of ways, for example, by religious affiliation, clan membership, social or ethnic status: or more informally by the feeling that one is welcome and belongs and is not a stranger.

One of Britain's most celebrated contemporary playwrights is Alan Ayckbourn and recently he has used the theme of public spaces as a vehicle for a play that explores the lives of six people, six separate lives, as a tale of the misheard, the unspoken and the sadly misunderstood. The play "Private Fears in Public Places" (www.sjt.uk.com) provokes consideration of the connections between public and privately observed lives. In public spaces life may appear to be on public display, yet often many of the feelings of individuals may well be hidden from view. The individual who wanders seemingly aimlessly around the square, the tramp, the drifter, the 'misfit' may be watched and scrutinised closely as a potential risk or treat to others. The psychological aspects of human behaviour that are exhibited in public places are a topic for further exploration. Mass celebrations and demonstrations and the like have been observed and written about often, but what of the lives of individuals in public places?

Heneff and Strong (2001: 1) provide a careful and incisive overview and analysis, using literature from the classical period as well as the contemporary scene, to examine "...the nature of the space in which human beings encounter each other with the intention of determining how their lives in common shall be lived." They remind us that this topic is perhaps "...the oldest of

political questions” and in western thought dates back to the second book in Homer’s Odyssey. Their overview chapter on ‘The conditions of public spaces: vision, speech, and theatricality’ that introduces a series of essays by respected authors uses Cicero’s quotation *Res publica est res populi* to head the chapter: a quotation that has been examined many times by philosophers and legal scholars as to its relevance and place in understanding human behaviour and collective action, and legitimate authority. Heneff and Strong (2001: 2) assert that apart from being *public*, space may be *private*, *sacred*, or *common*, and they offer a simple taxonomy of such spaces with the two basic dimensions on axes that describe ownership- OPEN or OWNED and HUMAN or DIVINE aspects of place.



Heneff and Strong (2001: 4)

They argue that public space is “...is the space created by and for humans that is always contestable, precisely because whereas there are criteria that control admission to its purview, the right to enact and enforce those criteria is always in question.” In a word public space is a human construct, for example “...Saint Mark’s Place Venice is a public space; the alleys and canals are not.” (Heneff and Strong 2001: 5)

Two important questions about public space are the foci of attention in the essays. First, “...in what ways does a life in common with others require signs, symbols, and, most fundamentally, a space in which the expression of that life can be the object of legitimate and legitimating contention?” Heneff and Strong (2001: 27). The second question examines the effects of modern technology such as film, television and the communications on the qualities and possibilities of public space. The boundaries and nature of public space are becoming *virtual* in some respects: strangers are connected in communities that never have face-to-face contacts. Any general introduction to the topic of space must include a reference to the classic work of Lefebvre (1974) and his book *The Production of Space*. A short summary does not do justice to his elaborate treatment of this complex topic but perhaps it is sufficient to say at this point that great emphasis is placed on the notion that space is a social construct: “...any space implies, contains and dissimulates social relationships-and this despite the fact that a space is not a thing but rather a set of relationships between things (objects and products).” Lefebvre (1991: 83)

In the province of Alberta in Canada a facility –the William Watson Lodge-was constructed in 1981 in the Peter Lougheed Provincial Park to cater to the particular needs of Albertans who are

challenged by disabilities. This quasi-public space has restricted usage and accessibility. In some parts of the National Parks of Canada access is restricted to a daily quota to lessen the environmental damage from overuse. In New Zealand certain spaces that are accessible to Maori are referred to as *Marae*. Such spaces provide a meeting place, a place to celebrate community life, a place of education. Specific rights and obligations are followed by those who use these spaces. Custom and tradition dictate usage and access to these important spaces. Similarly in Samoa the *fale* are settlement types and building structures that have different collective property rights arrangements from the common western private property ownership pattern, and Samoans use these important spaces for living, family activities and group meetings, as well as for burial sites. Use of spaces and places varies widely among societies and across cultures. In Singapore there is still the reminder of an earlier colonial period when the *padang* was a public place for community activities. Now this space serves as a sports area. Religious sites are often restricted to members of particular groups or those who show respect for a religion by adhering to a particular dress code for example, and type of quiet behaviour. A classic example is the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. Men and women have different access rights. We should also note that certain spaces and places are perceived of as unsafe or no-go areas. Such places may exist only at night while during the hours of daylight they are safe for all. Other places are unsafe to certain persons at all times. It is these places that are the sites of confrontation and conflict among individuals and groups. These places indicate failures of society to develop practices, habits and behaviour among individuals and groups to be tolerant and respectful of differences of class, colour, creed and the like.

One of the most ambitious public space planning projects currently underway in the USA is Millennium Park. This involves a 10 hectare site on which the new park will be built over unsightly railway tracks, near Lake Michigan, Chicago. Frank Gehry designed the centre piece, The Jay Pritzker Pavilion, for this project. Stern (2004) reviews the enterprise and suggests that this project will help to redefine Chicago's skyline and go some way to restore the former architectural glory of this city. The park is not without its detractors some of whom feel that the US \$475million investment could have been better spent on other worthy public projects, such as housing, to enhance the public good and improve the QOL for some citizens in Chicago. Conflict and competing views about investing in public space projects is not unusual. The short term need to improve the QOL of some individuals, by providing public housing for example, confronts the long term objects to have public spaces like parks, plazas and gardens that will contribute indirectly to the QOL of citizens. Gardens and parks have been referred to as 'cultivated spaces' by Orr (2004) and she argues that "Canada has an abundance of cultivated spaces, from the romantic, ruin-strewn grounds of former prime minister to public gardens founded for the health and cheerfulness of ordinary citizens"

In the 21st century a discussion of spaces would not be complete without mention of virtual spaces where individuals can meet and interact without actually being together. The spaces of the web and Internet provide opportunities and challenges for strangers to be connected. This new phenomenon of connecting strangers and friends using computers is a new and emerging feature of contemporary society.

The role of the Internet to empower citizens and cause governments and agencies of the state to be more responsive is the general topic explored by Fountain (2001) *Building the Virtual State*. This publication is available at (www.ksg.harvard.edu/fountainbooks/virtual_state.htm). She

argues that citizens must be informed of all aspects of the Internet to ensure they do not lose control over the institutions that employ such technology. Will citizens be willing and able to undertake this daunting task and act in common to protect their rights as individuals and as a collectivity? Perhaps the gathering of citizens in informal settings such as cyber cafes –third spaces of the Oldenburg (1999, 2001) kind- will contribute positively to link virtual public spaces and strangers with real spaces.

Howard Besser (www.gseis.ucla.edu/~howard/Papers/pw-public-spaces.html) (viewed 11/28/03) in his paper on *Intellectual Property: the attack on public space in cyberspace* argues that large scale economic forces contribute to the elimination of public spaces that allow culture and politics to flourish and such forces "...have launched a full-scale attack on public information spaces, many of which exist on the Internet" His article "...uses the disappearance of public spaces in cities as a metaphor for the disappearance of public spaces in cyberspace." The consequences Besser asserts are a direct assault on "...free speech, artistic endeavour, and entire way of life" as copyright law assaults the public domain to turn all information into commodities. In a related intellectual vein the urban critic and social thinker Jane Jacobs in her recent book published in 2004 encourages all citizens to remember the past and fight against collective forgetting of the consequences on the human condition of events not talked about when people congregate. The absence of opportunities to congregate assists in collective forgetting. Public spaces are places for citizens to congregate and to engage in social discourse. Boulevards are vital public spaces for walk and talk, and for democracy to thrive: these spaces must be preserved. This point is elaborated in the fascinating paper by the planner Michael Hebbert (2004) on *The street as locus of collective memory* in which he looks at the critical reconstruction of contemporary Berlin.

It has been long recognized by planners, architects and citizens that public spaces, squares and plazas (i.e. civic spaces) are important elements in the life of all communities. This can be especially true in urban settings that typically do not have the markets that characterize rural villages and where citizens meet for formal and informal social and economic exchanges.

In his classic book on 'great good places' Oldenburg's (1999: xxvii) opening sentence is worth quoting: "Great civilizations, like great cities, share a common feature. Evolving within them and crucial to their growth and refinement are distinctive informal gathering places."¹ Similarly, Oldenburg (2001) argues that a healthy vibrant society needs 'third places' to complement the 'first places' of home, and the 'second places' of work where people can congregate. The 'third place' is the less formal setting for social intercourse that is so necessary for civil society and social life to achieve a balance in an age of work and consumption -- such as the square or the plaza that is the subject of this paper. However, Banerjee (2001) asserts that public space is shrinking, and the future of such spaces that are necessary for civility to flourish must confront three major trends of privatization, globalization and the communications revolution.

Although the need for civic spaces is perhaps widely recognised, their use has been the subject of some discussion. The Open Spaces Act (1906) in the UK offers a set of bylaws under section 15 that clearly defines acceptable public behaviour in parks and public squares in London. For example, the magnificent Soho Square that has existed since the 1680s follows the bylaws closely, and they do not hinder full safe usage of this square which lies at the heart of the high density built environment of the west end of central London. The park is a haven for locals and

visitors to sit, eat and watch the world go by, however, there is limited social interaction among users.² During the period June 12-13, 2004 the garden squares of the Bloomsbury District of London were open to the public. Visitors and locals alike enjoyed the open square days that marked the seventh Open Garden Squares Weekend in London. There are over 600 garden squares in London and they add immensely to the attractiveness of the city. Unfortunately some of these fine spaces are typically closed to the public and only available to certain residents of neighbouring areas. The public can enjoy the sights of the wonderful squares from outside the fences, but they cannot walk and sit in them.

On 12th July 1996 Nelson Mandela unveiled a plaque in front of South Africa House on the edge of Trafalgar Square, London: the site of numerous anti-apartheid demonstrations over the years. The citation reads, in part, “Trafalgar Square is the centre for national rejoicing, assemblies and rallies of various causes.” The book by McKellar (1999) includes detailed and fascinating information about the planning and design of London in the period 1660-1720 when many public spaces were designated as critical parts of the urban structure. Many such spaces remain today as remnants of the wisdom and imagination of early planners, politicians and citizens who insisted on the important roles for public spaces in the life of a city.

Rochon (2003) offers a critical appraisal of the architectural planning of selected places that could potentially contribute to increased social interactions. The title of her three-part series that was published in *The Globe and Mail*, is “Place and Placelessness” and the articles clearly identify the fact that without careful planning some public spaces fail as places where people congregate and feel a sense of belonging as well as safe, secure and at ease. An elaboration of the form and design of squares is given in Moughtin (1999). Comments on the social advantages of civic spaces are given in Whyte (1989), Spreiregen (1965) and Hume (2003). It follows that planners have a responsibility to promote public spaces.

The plan to develop People’s Park in Berkeley, California in the 1990s has been discussed by Mitchell (1995) and he notes the conditions of confrontation surrounding public and private property that led to riots and violence. Ideally civic spaces are places for citizens to meet and interact. Further such spaces can add to the quality of life (QOL) of people and places if the spaces are planned carefully and function effectively. An overview of QOL is provided by Massam (2002) under the title: Quality of Life: public planning and private living. The organization Project for Public Spaces (PPS) offers a detailed web site (www.pps.org) with information on the attributes of successful public spaces, the reasons why some spaces fail or succeed, and examples of such places from around the world. Comments and an overview of the PPS project are given in Miles et al (1978). The focus in this work is on the western city, yet Lefebvre (1991: 286) reminds us that in all societies “Space is permeated with social relations: it is not only supported by social relations but it is also producing and produced by social relations”. The public plaza (or square) is no exception to this general claim.

According to Zucker (1959: 2) “The square represents a psychological parking place within the civic landscape ...the square dictates the flux of life not only within its own confines but also through the adjacent streets for which it forms a quasi estuary...There exists today in towns and cities ‘squares’ marked as such on maps which actually are no more than plain voids, empty areas within the web of streets. ...Artistically relevant squares, however, are more than mere voids; they represent organized space, and a history of the square means a history of space as the

subject matter of artistic creation.” Zucker’s (1966: 1) book provides a classic overview of squares in the life of a city and town, and he reminds us that: “The unique relationship between the open area of a square, the surrounding buildings, and the sky above creates a genuine emotional experience comparable to the impact of any other work of art ...this central formative element [the square] ...makes the community a community and not merely an aggregation of individuals.”

2.0 Squares Over Time and Space

Planned squares which are clearly recognized as such, appeared in ancient Greece from the 5th century BC. The diffusion among civilizations over space and time of the idea of incorporating civic spaces into a city plan is elaborated in Zucker (1966), and other writers such as Cleary (1999) have focused either on specific squares (Places Royales in France) in particular countries and cities, or on the merits of open spaces on the quality of life of citizens. Perhaps the most well know writer in this latter regard is Olmsted who is credited by Fabos et al. (1968) as the founder of landscape architecture in America and as a remarkable planner of urban parks and open spaces. Sutton (1971) provides an overview of the contributions of Olmsted in the project of ‘civilizing American cities’ through the use of open space plans.

While much emphasis has been placed by academics and planners on public spaces in western societies it is also clear that in countries in Asia the public space is an important phenomenon of social interaction and production of social relations. A recent issue of *Urban Studies* focused on Asian cities (Kong and Law, 2002) and articles on urban public spaces were included. Drummond (2000) has written about streetscapes as public and private spaces in Vietnamese cities, and with respect to South East Asia more generally there is a growing body of literature on colonial public spaces. For example, Yeoh (1996) has written about Singapore, Kusno (2000) comments on Jakarta. Philip and Mercer (2002) write about Burma, and Logan (1999) and Wright (1991) refer to Vietnam. Other works on contemporary public spaces in Asia are presented on Singapore by Yeoh and King (1995), and Yeoh and Huang (1998); on Manila by Cornell (1999), on Penang by Goh (2002); on Kuala Lumpur by Bunnell (2002); and Malaka by Cartier (1993,1997). Chua and Edwards (1992) and Pu (2001) offer collections of papers on public spaces in Asia.

The open civic space can be related to the arcade; the covered street where citizens promenade and shop, and observe each other. The famous Arcades Project of Walter Benjamin (1999) excites our imagination as we read the notes he made over more than a decade in the early part of the 20th century on the roles of arcades in Paris as this city sought to become the ‘capital of the 19th century’ in cultural terms. Benjamin (1999: 423) asserts that the streets, or in our case the public plazas, “...are the dwelling place of the collective. The collective is an eternally wakeful, eternally agitated being that- in the space between the building fronts- lives, experiences, understands, and invents as much as individuals do within their own four walls.”

Clearly the arcade and the square are critical elements in the life of a town or city and with careful planning they can enhance the status of a place as well as provide a necessary condition to ensure civic pride. For these reasons we argue that a city such as Puerto Vallarta in Mexico, that seeks to attract tourists and integrate local citizens in everyday commercial and social/recreational life of the growing number of visitors, and is the major subject of study for

this paper, should pay close attention to the planning of its plazas and civic spaces as they are valuable assets to be preserved and protected.

Within the context of Latin America Middleton (2003) discusses the impact of informal traders in historic city centres and the effects on international tourism in such centres. His fieldwork was conducted in Quito, Ecuador. He argues that old city centres can be seen as sites of confrontation, namely contested spaces, however with careful planning and citizen participation they can develop as attractive sites that accommodate traders, the local public and tourists. Low (1999) has examined the role of the plaza in Costa Rica using over 25 years of fieldwork that began initially in 1972, and was followed by detailed work on plazas in San Jose from 1985. This work was complemented by studies of plazas in Spain, France and Italy. She reminds us that plazas may be designed to offer citizens views of military parades – remnants of Hausmann’s designs for Paris - or such plazas may offer views of important buildings or, more humbly but no less significantly, they can provide spaces for informal discussions among individuals and for group activities. The plaza has indeed been the site of political manifestation as was evidenced in Tiananman Square in Beijing in 1989 - reputedly the largest square in the world - and the daily demonstration in the Plaza de Mayo of Buenos Aires, Argentina by mothers protesting the disappearance of their children.³

Perhaps it is hard to imagine Paris without the public gardens and open squares, Amsterdam before the walk ways along the canals, London before magnificent squares and parks in the centre of the city, or New York before Central Park. Yet cities that enjoyed ‘golden ages’ stretching back to Greek and Roman times, and certainly during the Renaissance, typically attracted cultural innovations in the form of civic spaces as Hall (1998) carefully documents in his magnum opus on *Cities and Civilization*. Cities in Central America in ancient times had civic spaces as integral elements of their design.

The plaza is a common physical feature of settlements throughout Hispanic America (Arreola, 2002: 68). Different types of plaza have been identified, with different functions, characteristic landscape features, and typical activity patterns (Arreola, 2002: 68). For instance, many Mexican villages, towns, and cities have a traditional (Spanish-origin) structure that includes a plaza or plazas as organizing principles (Arreola and Curtis, 1993). The main plaza was the principal public space and was commonly surrounded by institutions such as the church and government offices. It was often a hub of commercial activity, as well as for social and recreational activities. The plazas also related to the social geography of the town and influenced the location of the residences of higher status groups, with those with greater social standing trying to locate closer to the main plaza. What Arreola and Curtis (1993: 45) term “proper Spanish colonial towns” also had smaller secondary plazas that had different functions and were related to different patterns of urban activities. To a greater or lesser extent these spaces and places have maintained themselves as the urban forms, have grown and developed and “modernised”, and taken on different functions such as modern-day industry and commerce, and recreation and tourism.⁴

In this paper we will discuss, in particular, civic spaces/plazas and the public good as well as the relationships with quality of life and planning. We will report on an empirical study of four selected plazas that we have conducted in Puerto Vallarta (PV), Jalisco State, Mexico from 2001 to 2003. This study will be complemented by a study undertaken in April 2004 using perceptual

data on the four plazas and set of opinions of local professors regarding the attractiveness of these public spaces. Specifically we will provide a classification of the four plazas in terms of criteria relating to ‘place making’ as elaborated by Whyte (1980) and discussed on the PPS web site. Also we will provide comments on the planning implications of the classification and the prospects for improving the quality of the spaces to enhance QOL for residents of PV region (approximately 350,000) and for the many visitors (2.5 million) who visit PV every year. We will also offer selected maps of Puerto Vallarta regarding general social spaces, as well as special spaces such as the cultural areas as they have evolved over time as manifest by the locations of galleries, and the recently emerging space that has been characterised as a space for gay people.

We assert in this paper that a civic space, such as a plaza or square, is a public good and as such deserves to be supported by public investments. Bunting’s (2002) comment is an apt reminder that: “The free market’s promise of cheaper prices, more choice and rising wages can’t provide a sense of identity-that comfort of place and status, of knowing who you are and knowing others know who you are and knowing who they are-that provides the will or talent to compete in capitalism’s race with a sense of purpose and potency. Insecurity is the shadowside of globalization, which hybridizes cultures and centralizes power, creating a winner’s global metropolitan culture, and brutally marginalizes those who have no appetite for the relentless pace of change.” The civic spaces of a town or city complement other efforts by the state to enhance identity and the quality of life of citizens, and the civic spaces in Puerto Vallarta continue to play a vital role in this regard. The planners of civic spaces are faced by conflicting priorities and goals, and we will identify some of the major ones and we encourage public debate on the search for the appropriate roles for civic spaces in a place such as Puerto Vallarta.⁵

Following this introduction the next section (3.0) will offer comments on the public good, QOL and public spaces. This will be followed in section 4.0 by a description of the four plazas in Puerto Vallarta that we studied. Section 5.0 will offer comments on the elements that contribute to make a public space successful – that gives them life - and we will draw on the ideas presented by the Project for Public Spaces that was mentioned above. A classification of the four plazas using selected criteria for evaluating a plaza will also be presented in this section. In section 6.0 we will offer a critique on the classification exercise, and suggestions to assist in the planning of the plazas in PV will be offered. In the final section, 7.0, we offer some introductory comments on some other spaces in PV that for part of the city’s social mosaic: in particular cultural/artistic spaces and the gay space referred to earlier will be briefly discussed. Some concluding remarks will be made in section 8.0.

3.0 The Public Good and Quality of Life

The study of the public good is a worthy topic of inquiry for planners and of considerable significance in the formation and evaluation of public policies that focus on the roles for public places and space in the promotion of QOL and the public good. The cement that bonds a community or society is *trust* as John Locke declared over three hundred years ago in his book, Essays on the Laws of Nature (von Leyden, 1954). Hollis (1998) has examined the propositions that ‘trust grows fragile when people become too rational’, and that ‘truly rational people are both trusting and trustworthy’. He argues that a deep notion of reason, which is founded on reciprocity and the pursuit of the common good, will yield trust and provide strong identity for

citizens in their diverse commitments to communities both local and universal. The informal setting of plazas provides a safe place for citizens to interact and to promote reciprocal trust. The rational project of the Enlightenment argues that through trust the bonding of truth, virtue and happiness will occur and yield increases to human well-being. The plaza has the potential to contribute to community spirit and identity: hence trust is enhanced.

As an introduction to the topic of the public good it is appropriate to offer a few comments on the words *public* and *good*, but we will not attempt a long discourse on the term *the public good* other than to repeat Saul's (1997: 3) definition—"the good of the whole." As an adjective, *public* is defined in Black's Law dictionary as "pertaining to a state, nation, or whole community; common to all or many, open to public use." The Oxford Dictionary offers the following definition of the word *good*, "desirable end or object, thing worth attaining; movable property; merchandise, names, useful, reliable for a purpose, efficient in function." The planner must be aware of matters of access and community when evaluating the effectiveness of a plaza to citizens in a place such as Puerto Vallarta (PV). Of course given the vast numbers of tourists who visit PV every year the plazas play a major role in their satisfaction with the place too. A term similar to *the public good* is *the common good*, and Black's Law Dictionary defined this as "...a generic term to describe the betterment of the general public." We interpret this to suggest processes that yield positive outcomes on QOL to citizens and visitors to PV.

As Habermas (1987: 319) maintained, the network of public spheres should 'make it possible for a private person to participate in the reproduction of culture, and for a public of citizens of the state to participate in the social integration mediated by public opinion. Public culture is therefore associated with the notions of civil society and the welfare economics concepts of 'public goods', and a cultural *planning* approach would seek to apply resource, facility and land-use allocation and distribution-including what cultural geographer Crang (1998: 164) identified as 'ideas of space to which everyone has access in which people can meet as formal equals harking back to the Roman market-place.' (Evans, 2001: 39).

Clearly there is a strong relationship between the number, size and location of civic spaces that provide opportunities for the public to gather and meet informally or for formal occasions, and the distribution of benefits and costs to citizens, as well as QOL. It has been argued by Whitfield (1992: 11) among others, that unfettered market systems do not operate with appropriate efficiency to satisfy all of the needs of citizens. For example, '...social goods or services such as roads and street lighting, defence, law and order, would not be provided if left to the market, and services such as health and education probably cannot be produced in sufficient quantities at an affordable price.' Civic spaces require both public funds and private contributions to flourish.

The celebrated economist and social thinker Galbraith (1998) has reminded us that "...the survival and acceptance of the modern market system is, in large measure, the accomplishment of the socially concerned. It would not have so survived had it not been for our successful civilizing efforts." In a word, for capitalism to thrive, a necessary condition is that a full suite of collectively consumed goods and services be provided, and this includes cultural activities, for example, civic spaces. In the case of Puerto Vallarta, for tourism to flourish a necessary element would appear to be the successful planning of plazas that maintain and enhance the attractiveness of the town.

Specifically with respect to Canada Gwyn (1995) has argued that a necessary condition to enhance *civitas*—the sense of responsibility toward the larger society, beyond the individual citizen—is to support, nurture and encourage things Canadian, for example in the sphere of arts and sports. The public space as a site for such activities can help in the development of *civitas*. The planning of public spaces in Toronto has been criticised by Hume (2003) and his words should be noted. He claims that: ‘...in recent years, the shared elements of the city—its streets, sidewalks, squares, parks—have been neglected and discounted.’ It is clear from his article on selected civic spaces in Toronto that they are failing in some instances, as they do not fully satisfy the criteria for success identified in the introductory section of this paper. In contrast Rochon (2003) has written of the planning contributions of the Canadian architect Cornelia Oberlander and specifically her work on the design of public spaces that reflect the basic characteristics of a successful place as defined by the PPS project mentioned earlier. Rochon (2003) notes that: ‘She is designing a courtyard of birch trees with a wooden pedestrian bridge for the New York Times headquarters. And, after designing many of the important civic spaces on the West Coast, it was a high time that she be invited to contribute a landscape to Toronto. Oberlander has been asked to design a part of a major redevelopment of the Wellesley Hospital site. For the Wellesley Park in Toronto, Oberlander takes the rambling aspects of some of the parks in Paris and London for inspiration. Like so much of her work, the 0.6 hectare park is intended to be a minimal design—an oasis of muscular shade in the summer, a relief of tree limbs in the winter—that beckons gently to folks wandering by. The park is surrounded around its perimeter by a healthy complexity of building types and diverse programs.’

We argue that the public good is in large measure the perceived quality of life of individuals, and hence the collectivity, and it owes much to the availability and the effective, equitable utilization of the facilities that cater to the myriad needs of citizens as we progress through life from birth to death. The civic space can contribute positively in this regard if it is indeed a space where all are welcome and all feel safe and secure.

The commodification of the public good yields attitudes and practises of the market place including ownership and property rights, price and cost, competition and consumption patterns. The unfettered enterprise culture is described by Friedmann (1987: 313-314) in his magistral work on *Planning in the Public Domain* as offering “...the pleasant ascent up the candy mountain of consumption...” He goes on to argue that: “Although there are strong arguments both for and against the concept of a public domain, the recovery of a political community requires that we believe in the reality of common interests and, thus, in the possibilities of the common good. Failing this, we clear the way for a retreat into privatism that will leave the political terrain undefended against an authoritarian and repressive state.” Citizens and locals alike in PV need to do more than consume in private places such as shops, they need public spaces as sites of interaction and for free pleasure. The famous Malecón in PV is the classic example of a public space. In fact it is a pathway where all can promenade freely, back and forth. This walking space is a connecting link among the main public spaces in PV as shown on Figures 1 and 2.⁶

Let us now turn to the civic state and begin with the proposition that such a state is a necessary condition to promote the civic space as a public good. Spinner (1994: 170) elaborates on this: “The state is about space and memories; through these commonalities, liberal citizens often develop overlapping memories. The civic state ... is eclectic, pragmatic, fair, just and reasonable; it stresses identity and recognition while working for egalitarian, democratic

institutional arrangements for individuals, voluntary groupings and state agencies to cater to all the needs of all citizens..." The civic state is a work in progress that seeks to promote and protect the public good. But what is this good? Certainly it refers to the betterment of the whole and QOL as mentioned earlier, but not all citizens in a state share the same definition of either the ways to achieve it or the desired end results.

If public and private initiatives and energy can be marshalled to provide and enhance all those elements of culture, including public spaces, as well as health, education and general welfare, that stimulate and promote civic virtues and identity then a civic state and *civitas* may emerge, and the public good as QOL is surely enhanced. A strong case can be made for the promotion of the civic state to enhance QOL and the public good, and the future of civic spaces. A detailed elaboration of the conditions of the civic state is presented in Massam (2000).

4.0 Four Civic Spaces in Puerto Vallarta

When the Spanish first reached the area now called Puerto Vallarta there was an **Indian** settlement with ten thousand inhabitants (Fregoso, 1986, Everitt et al., 2001)). However, such settlements appear to have soon disappeared and little further evidence of large-scale indigenous urban settlement is recorded for this region. The exact date of foundation of the contemporary **Spanish** settlement is unclear. There is some evidence of a village (El Carizzal) near today's old town in the late 1700s, and certainly there was some development during the 1800s related to local trading (and smuggling), mining, fishing, whaling, and long distance exchange. In 1851 the settlement of Las Peñas ("The Boulders") was founded by the Sánchez family at the mouth of the Cuale River - perhaps where the old village of El Carizzal had also been. In 1880 the population was about 1,500, in 1885 a port was inaugurated, and official status as a commissariat was acquired in 1886. In 1918 the town was elevated to municipality status and the name was changed to Puerto Vallarta in honour of an ex-governor of the state of Jalisco. In 1968 Vallarta became city, but growth has been (until recently) quite slow. From 12,500 in 1964, by 1970 the population of the settlement had risen to only 24,115. However, by the mid 1990s the population of Puerto Vallarta had grown to 162,000 and that of the Jalisco coast, which can be viewed as "greater Vallarta" now has an estimated population of over 350,000. Two thirds of this number is found within the urbanised area centred on PV (Jiménez Martínez, 1998; <http://www.pvconnect.com/map.html>).

The relatively slow and recent growth has meant that the retention of "character" has been part of the charm of the settlement, and this includes the plazas and their associated land uses. One result is that the core/downtown of the city (Viejo Vallarta) still retains many older buildings, of traditional architectural style, although many of these have been converted from (e.g.) upper status housing to (e.g.) restaurants, art galleries, and cyber cafés, and Puerto Vallarta is considered by many to be the "most Mexican" of all the beach destinations in Mexico.

Arguably the most noticeable recent developments along the Jalisco coast have been the cultural landscape changes which, as is often the case, provide primary sources of information which enable us to understand the evolution of a region. Over the past twenty years the urban area has grown dramatically, and what was once a Mexican centre with tourism grafted onto it, has become a popular resort with Mexican character. Many new hotels, condominiums, and villas have been built, and the tourist landscape has been extended both to the north and to the south of

the old centre. This has led to massive functional changes within the downtown itself. The old centre of the city is becoming noticeably less residential -- for non tourists -- and many of the old upper status dwellings are being converted to new commercial uses (such as restaurants, art galleries, and cyber cafés). The poorer dwellings in the hills behind the town are being commonly replaced by tourist-residential structures. The previous inhabitants are relocating elsewhere.

The more affluent people have, of course, a greater choice and are locating to a variety of sites along the coast. The poorer people have a more limited choice and are often being pushed inland -- if the environment is suitable -- or into pre-existing inland villages such as El Pittilal or Ixtapa. El Pittilal, now a town in its own right a few kilometres inland from the Marina, is more-or-less an extension of the Vallarta urban complex, although it retains its political independence and its town-like services for its inhabitants. Ixtapa, which lies about twenty kilometres northeast out of the centre of Vallarta, was once the major agricultural centre of the region -- larger even than Vallarta. Although still retaining many central place functions for the surrounding agricultural area, it is now economically tied to the tourist industry. The local agriculture itself has now become more tourist oriented, and Ixtapa also plays host to many workers in the tourist areas along the coast. Some resorts (such as the Mayan Palace) run their own fleet of buses to allow the workers to commute from Ixtapa to Nuevo Vallarta.

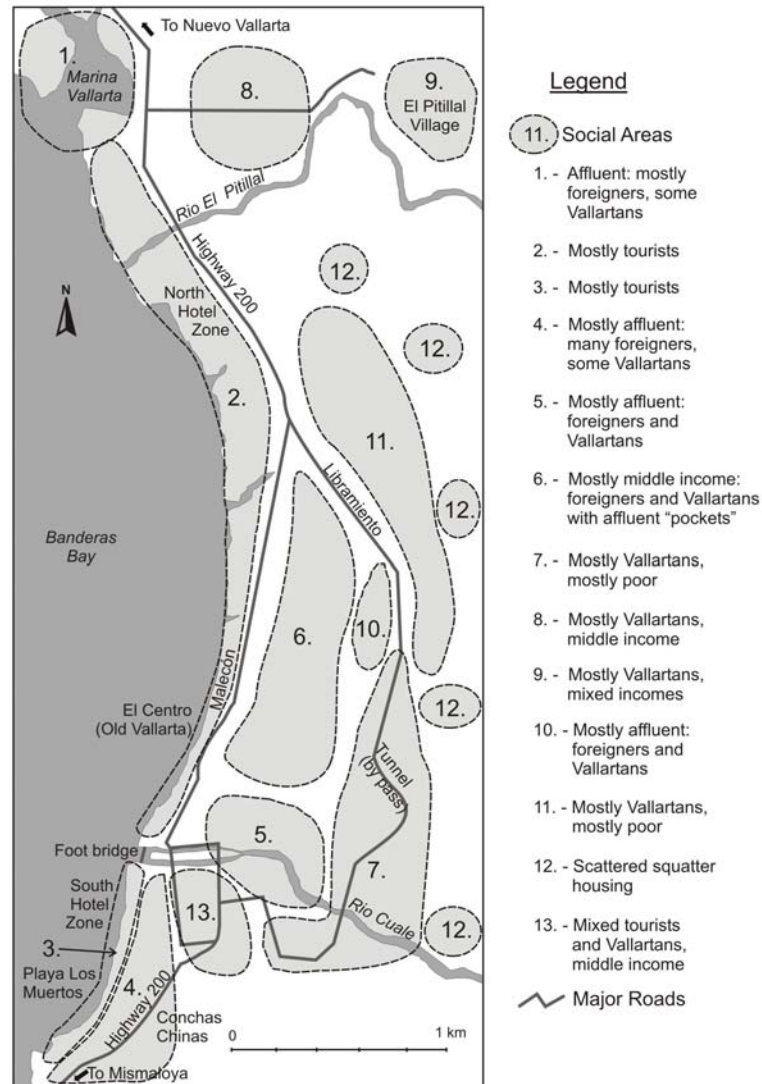
Today the greater Puerto Vallarta region can be seen as a series of zones. For the purposes of the present discussion, two sets of zones can be identified (although as we will argue in our conclusion, Puerto Vallarta could be profitably divided and investigated in a variety of other ways). The first set is related to what we term the general social geography of the city, and the second is related to the more specific tourist social geography of Puerto Vallarta -- although these two sets of spaces intertwine and overlap.

There are several widely used models of city structures that attempt to describe the basic social and economic patterns of urban areas. Although many of these have been based upon and applied to Anglo American cities (Concentric Zones, Sectors, Multiple Nuclei) others have been aimed at cities elsewhere in the world (Jordan-Bychkov and Domosh, 1999: Chapters 1 and 10), including the "Latin American City". These models are usually based upon observed and mapped land uses within the city, but may also be based upon people's perceptions of the urban area. In this latter case sketch maps prepared by samples from the population, or by key informants have been used to give an idea of the ways in which people perceive cities. These may not accord with objective land use mapping procedures, but arguably are more useful in understanding the uses that people make of the city -- their observable behaviour patterns.

Such maps were first successfully used by Kevin Lynch, in his ground-breaking work in Boston, but variations have been successfully utilised in a variety of cities in many parts of the world. Although they do not easily lend themselves to the compilation of composite images, maps from a small number of key informants can give a good idea of their perception of the social geography of an urban area (Knox, 1995:260-275). In a preliminary study in Puerto Vallarta we asked a set of key informants to draw sketch maps of the social geography of the city. These informants included university faculty, city employees, city historians and city planners. Clearly the generalizations that we have drawn from these mapping procedures should be treated with caution (Figure 1), but they do give us a preliminary view of the social geography of the PV

region which can at least act as a visual hypothesis from which we can outline further research problems and issues.

FIGURE 1: MAP OF PV WITH SOCIAL AREAS



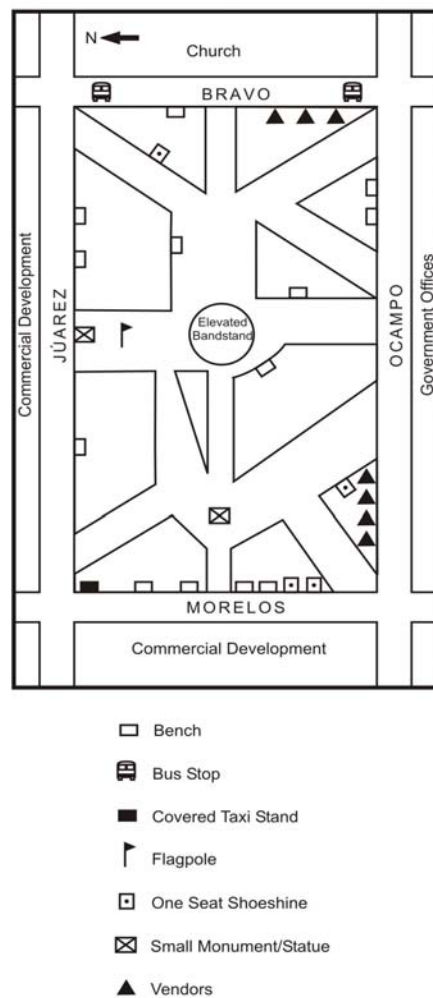
Traditionally two tourist zones have been recognised within the older areas of the city, although nowadays some others can be identified within the larger urbanised region (to the north and south). First there is the “southern hotel zone”, which lies south of the Cuale River. Second there is the “central town” or Viejo Vallarta (Old Vallarta), which lies north of the Cuale River.

FIGURE 2: MAP OF PV WITH AREAS AND PLAZAS



In addition there is a “northern hotel zone”, which has seen the greatest recent growth (Figure 2). Arguably it begins at the site of the still extant Hotel Rosita, and extends northwards as far as the Marina (a relatively new fourth zone to the north), which itself exemplifies recent developments in maritime tourism. For the purposes of the present paper, we will be concerned with the first two zones, which constitute the traditional city, as opposed to the latter pair, which has developed quite recently and which are almost entirely tourist oriented. Arreola and Curtis (1993: 49) suggest that a number of traditional functions have persisted in many Mexican cities despite significant cultural landscape change. One of these five is the plaza (Figure 3).⁷ Four important plazas can be identified within the study area. One is clearly the most important, with the other three being secondary and subordinate to it as public spaces and places, but just as obviously all four contain many elements of a common model. That is to say the plazas have many universal elements, while not conforming to any standardised plan. These elements are characteristically Mexican, but often are derivatives from France reflecting that country’s influence at an earlier time (Arreola and Curtis (1993: 133-143).

FIGURE 3: GENERIC PLAN OF A MEXICAN PLAZA



The most important square (what Arreola and Curtis (1993: 133) term the plaza mayor) is located in the heart of the old city (“el centro”). Arreola and Curtis argue that “Perhaps nowhere in the public areas of the border cities is the impress of tradition more evident than in the plazas of el centro, especially the plaza mayor.” (1993: 133). It is our contention that this case can also be made for Puerto Vallarta, even though this is a more recent urban construction, and has been consequently affected by somewhat different processes. Officially termed the Plaza de Armas, the plaza mayor is one of the most conspicuous features of the urban cultural landscape of Puerto Vallarta (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4: PLAZA DE ARMAS



It is uncertain when this place was first created, but it appears to date to at least the early twentieth century. It probably predates this time as a civic space, but had in the past a different cultural content and thus functioned as a place somewhat differently (De Oca de Contreras, 2002). For much of the history of Vallarta this plaza was also the centre of the elite residential area of the central city and it is possible that social status was based upon residential distance from this plaza, as was true elsewhere in Mexico (Arreola and Curtis, 1993: 45). Certainly many of the early fine homes can still be detected in this area, although they often now function as restaurants, cyber cafés or art galleries.

Like most Mexican plazas, and like its Vallartan companions, this plaza is rectangular and encompasses a city block (about 2000 square metres).⁸ Although the square today contains a considerable amount of open space around its central bandstand (kiosco), in the past it did contain a larger extent of formal gardens, separated by criss-cross pathways, similar to those still found in two of the other squares (De Oca de Contreras, 2002). Its landscape has no doubt been cleared and paved in the recent past in order to provide a greater amount of space for the various functions it services, but it still contains many cast-iron benches, which are typical plaza-features. The Plaza de Armas⁹ has a number of contemporary functions, including cultural ceremonial, official ceremonial, touristic (including sales of lower-order goods and services), recreational (sitting, standing, talking), as a site for political demonstrations, and as the symbolic centre of the city – it is arguably the “uncontested central nexus of public life” (Arreola and Curtis, 1993: 133). It is flanked on one (northern) side by the Palacio Municipal or City Hall (built on this site in 1981, replacing stores and houses), and on the eastern side by stores (but these lie just in front of a major church (“The Lady of Guadalupe”) – the tower of which is one of the landscape symbols of PV).¹⁰ To the west is the Malecón, the historic seafront walkway (“boardwalk”) that connects the Old Town together¹¹, and to the west are more commercial

establishments, including banks and shops, and the consulates of both Canada and the USA. The sheer space of the plaza is striking, but the uses of the space within the plaza really characterise it, and make it successful as the functional and symbolic heart of the city. Its city-wide importance is reinforced by the statue of Don Ignacio Vallarta, after whom the present city was (re)named in 1918.¹²

The second plaza lies at the northern end of the old city, near the Hotel Rosita, built in 1948 as the city's first true hotel (and recently renovated) (Everitt et al, 2001). It is known as Miguel Hidalgo Plaza (after Father Hidalgo) and was inaugurated in 1954 (Figure 5).¹³ It thus serves as a marker for the city's growth to the north. Like the Guadalupe Plaza, this square has many of the classic elements of a Mexican plaza (Arreola and Curtis, 1993: 133).

FIGURE 5: HIDALGO PLAZA



It is, however, an irregular quadrilateral and not a perfect square as two non-integrated grid patterns of the older city meet at this point. It is about 5400 square metres in area, reflecting the larger blocks in this part of the city. It is a conspicuous landscape feature and is a tree-shaded urban oasis of “managed nature” - in fact so "green" and shady that it is hard to get good photographs of this area. It contains many cast-iron benches, as well as plaques and other commemorative features common to the Mexican plaza (Arreola and Curtis, 1993: 138). Quite characteristically this plaza gives the impression of both spaciousness and containment (Arreola and Curtis, 1993: 136). It serves a number of functions, but although similar to those in the plaza major, there are also significant differences. One side of the plaza (the south) serves as a bus station (another typical plaza function), and another side (the west) is a permanent daytime market for locals as well as selling lower-order tourist goods. To the east (where the old city cemetery was located in the 1950s) is another large church (La Iglesia de la Virgen del Refugio),

as well as some more government offices. To the west is a Baptist church that seems to be a more recent addition to the area. Although this plaza serves many tourists who are walking from the central city to the hotel zone to the north, it is also a very local-neighbourhood space. It is much more so than the Plaza de Armas, which also attracts many Vallartans, but from all over the urban area. Hidalgo plaza is also successful as a place, but for somewhat different reasons than the plaza mayor. An important question becomes, can we in some way, isolate, or even quantify these differences?

The third plaza is a core landscape feature for the southern hotel zone popularly known as the "zona romantica". This region of the city was relatively isolated, by the river, from the old town until 1959 when the first concrete bridge was built over the Cuale. Prior to this a hanging/swinging bridge served this area, but in the rainy season this was a problematical pathway (De Oca de Contreras, 2002: 253). Officially our study place is called Lázaro Cárdenas Plaza, named after a hero of the Mexican civil war of the early twentieth century (Figure 6).¹⁴

FIGURE 6: CARDENAS PLAZA



It is a rectangle shape rather than a perfect square, about 3300 square metres in area, as it extends farther east-west than north-south, reflecting its proximity to the shoreline. It has a bandstand, criss-cross pathways, and is home to many cast-iron benches, as well as plaques and other commemorative features. It also has a bus station on one (eastern) side, as well as a school to the south, commercial developments to the north, and tourist oriented beach commercial and hotel developments to the (extended) west of the plaza. Compared to the other plazas it is underused, perhaps because there is little local population as the area has become more tourist-oriented, but at the same time has little to appeal to most tourists. It is thus less successful than the other two, even though it has many of the same physical components.

The fourth plaza, the Plaza Pavillon Mall, is located close to the city centre, just to the north of the Cuale River mouth (Figure 7).¹⁵ But is isolated from general view by buildings, lower order services (a line of vendors' kiosks), and a major roadway. It is also a considerable distance away from significant areas of local housing, is essentially unserved by public transportation, and has no church or public buildings close to it.

FIGURE 7: PLAZA PAVILLON MALL



It is thus in some ways the antithesis of a typical Mexican plaza. Strictly speaking a rectangular symmetrical plaza, it gives the impression of being less formal in shape as it is flanked on two sides by the ocean and the river, and on a third by a curving roadway. It is about 5000 square metres in area, and has considerable growth potential. On the ocean side it is paralleled by an unfinished extension of the Malecón that runs south of the Cuale River to join to the beach areas of the zona romantica. It is at present an under-utilised and unsuccessful plaza, despite containing a number of cast iron benches and children's play equipment, but is one that does appear to have considerable potential for future use by both locals and tourists. Because it currently has few of the characteristics of a successful public space identified by the PPS project it is arguably of the *most* interest for this paper as it offers the greatest possibility for change and successful development as public space in the future. In a sense it acts as a kind of control group for our ideas. In the past two years this plaza has been integrated to a much greater degree into the movement patterns of Vallartans and tourists by the construction of a foot bridge over the river which links the Malecón with the beach areas to the south of the Cuale River (Figure 8). The park is still somewhat stark in appearance, but has been “spruced up”, and is now seen by many more people, even if it has not yet become extensively used. The connection north to the Malecón and south to the zona romantica still needed to be completed/improved (as of April

2004), but it is likely to become increasingly integrated into the behaviour patterns of residents and tourists in the future, although its function within the plaza ‘system’ remains unclear.

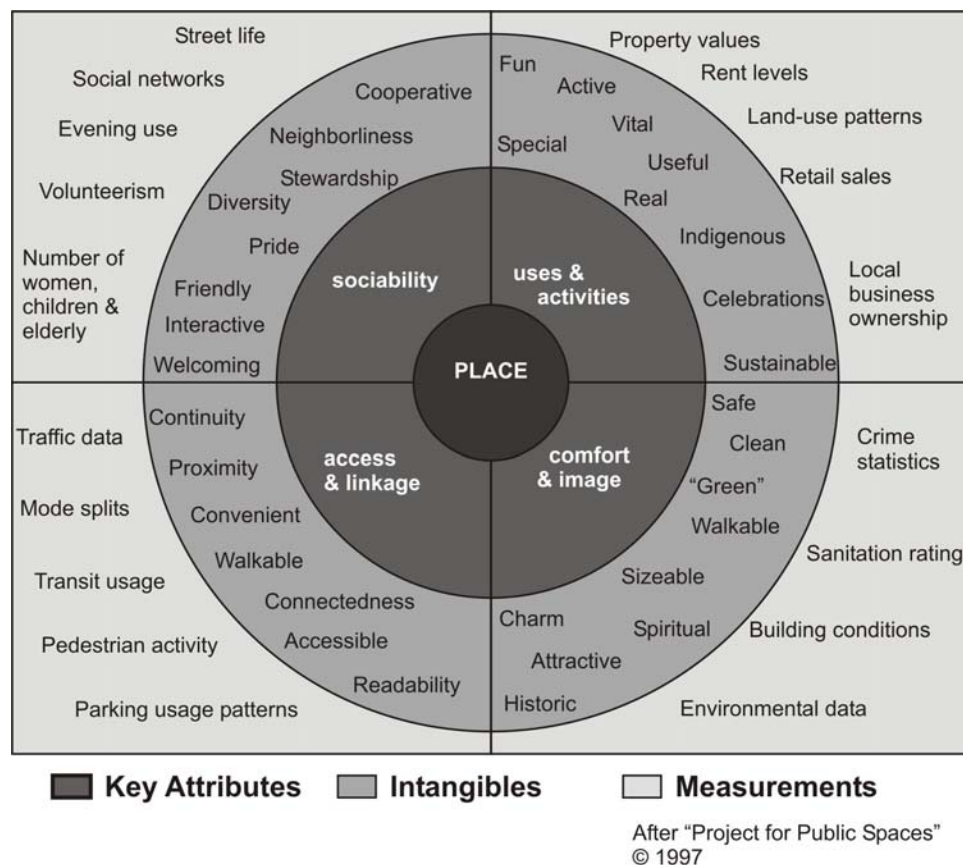
FIGURE 8: NEW FOOTBRIDGE



5.0 What Makes a Successful Place?

Our discussion here is greatly influenced by the work of: “The Project for Public Spaces” (PPS). The PPS grew out of William H. Whyte’s “Street Life Project” of 1971 which was a classic attempt to spark the regeneration of the open spaces of contemporary Anglo American cities. An important follow-up of this work was published by the PPS in 2000 and is called “How to turn a Place Around.” This research was concerned with places that “worked” and those that “didn’t work”. Initially it was concerned with playgrounds (in New York City) but later was extended to a variety of kinds of public places - and particularly plazas/squares. It was concerned with the critical roles that public places play in our communities, in terms of giving identity to cities, benefiting cities economically and environmentally, and of providing settings for cultural activities. Although we do not have the time and space to go into great detail about these projects at this point, suffice it to say that the PPS project personnel have been very successful in characterizing the key qualities of a successful place, which they summarise as being “accessible”; having “activities” for people; being “comfortable” and with a good image; and being a “sociable” place where people meet and take other people (Figure 9).

FIGURE 9: WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL PLACE



This led them to enunciate a series of “benefits of creating good public spaces”, and to the elaboration of a number of “principles for creating great public spaces” (see PPS 2000; Whyte, 1980 and also www.pps.org). In particular the PPS, by looking at a number of successful plazas around the world, developed a set of ten benefits of creating good public spaces. It believes that such benefits include the ability to:

- Support local economies
- Attract business investments
- Attract tourism
- Provide cultural opportunities
- Encourage volunteerism
- Reduce crime
- Improve pedestrian safety
- Increase use of public transport
- Improve public health
- Improve the environment

In addition, the project for public spaces project has identified a set of eleven principles for creating great public spaces.

- The community is the expert.
- Create a place, not a design (i.e. a place, not just a space).
- You can't do it alone. Look for partners.
- Officials say, "It can't be done". But it can.
- You can see a lot just by observing.
- Develop a vision.
- Form supports function: what do the users want?
- "Triangulate": locate elements of place so that they will be used.
- Start with the petunias: small, short-term actions can make a difference.
- Money is not the issue: sometimes too much money is a problem.
- You are never finished. A true place needs ongoing management.

Although the PPS research was fascinating and promising, it seemed to us that this work could (and should) be taken out of the Anglo American context and tested elsewhere, in order to see if it has a wider validity. Our prior experience in Jalisco indicated that this could be a very suitable laboratory for testing some of these benefits and implementing some of the principles, as public space in this part of Mexico (both small town and larger urban) is still very much characterised by a variety of uses, by pedestrians, and thus fits many of the criteria that concerned the PPS. As noted above Puerto Vallarta has a number of public places (and in particular, plazas) that are based upon what might be termed a "Mexican model", and so PV became an obvious study area within a larger cultural region. Thus our evaluation of the PPS research led us to an analysis of the plazas in Puerto Vallarta and to a classification of these civic spaces based upon an extension of the PPS principles. Our classification is summarised in Table 1. In this table we present the results of an evaluation of the four major plazas that we analysed. We used local informants as well as the PPS research to pick the best criteria for evaluation. We then spent time in each place, at different times of day and on different days, and "scored" each criterion for each place on a five-point scale.

Table 1: A Classification of Civic Spaces in Puerto Vallarta

	Criterion	A	B	C	D
	Places (see legend below)	(Armas)	(Hidalgo)	(Cárdenas)	(Pavillon)
1	seats/benches/low walls for sitting	5	5	5	1
2	well situated vis-à-vis the town centre/Malecón	5	4	4	2
3	close to public buildings-church/city hall/library/social services centre/schools	5	5	2	1
4	landscaped/gardens/plants/trees	4	5	5	1
5	eating places very close or <u>in</u> plaza	4	5	5	1
6	vendors use plaza	3	4	5	3
7	band stand	5	1	5	1
8	harsh walls/buildings define edge of plaza	3	4	5	2
9	locals and tourists use the plaza	5	4	3	2
10	plaza is named and name is readily recognized	5	3	3	1
11	women alone use plaza	5	5	3	1
12	families use plaza	5	5	3	2
13	easy access to the plaza no busy streets to cross	2	2	3	4
14	neat/tidy/well-kept	4	4	4	1
15	shops nearby	5	5	5	2
16	shade and sufficient trees	4	5	5	3
17	washroom availability	2	4	1	4
	Total Score (out of 85)	71	70	66	32

Legend**A - Iglesia de la Virgen de Guadalupe: Plaza de Armas****B - Iglesia de la Virgen del Refugio: Plaza Miguel Hidalgo****C - Plaza Lázaro Cárdenas****D - Plaza Pavillon Mall**Data for classification: a five point semantic scale - *excellent* (5): *good* (4): *satisfactory* (3): *poor* (2): *very poor* (1)

In April 2004 Everitt and Massam conducted a workshop on perceptions of space at the University de Guadalajara in Puerto Vallarta with eight colleagues there. One of the purposes of this workshop was to explore the use of a formal pair wise comparison methodology to classify places or spaces. A set of data on the opinions of each member of the group of eight was collected and analysed. The focus of attention was the same set of four plazas Everitt and Massam had studied earlier and their results are reported above. Also, to complement the numerical data we collected a set of semantic indicators for each of the four plazas. Comments on this information will be provided later in this section after a discussion of the pair wise methodology and results.

The pair wise method we used was derived from the analytical hierarchy method (AHP) of Saaty (1980). Details are provided in Massam (1993). Specifically we set up the problem of classifying the plazas by structuring the hierarchy as shown on Figure 10.

Figure 10: Basic Hierarchy for Classifying Plazas: Six Criteria and Four Plazas

I. Matrix to compare criteria

	C ₁	C ₂	C ₄	C ₈	C ₁₀	C ₁₄	Weights
C ₁	X	A	B				WC ₁
C ₂		X	9				WC ₂
C ₄		1/9	X				WC ₄
C ₈				X			WC ₈
C ₁₀					X		WC ₁₀
C ₁₄						X	WC ₁₄

Cell A : C₁ compared to C₂

B : C₁ compared to C₄

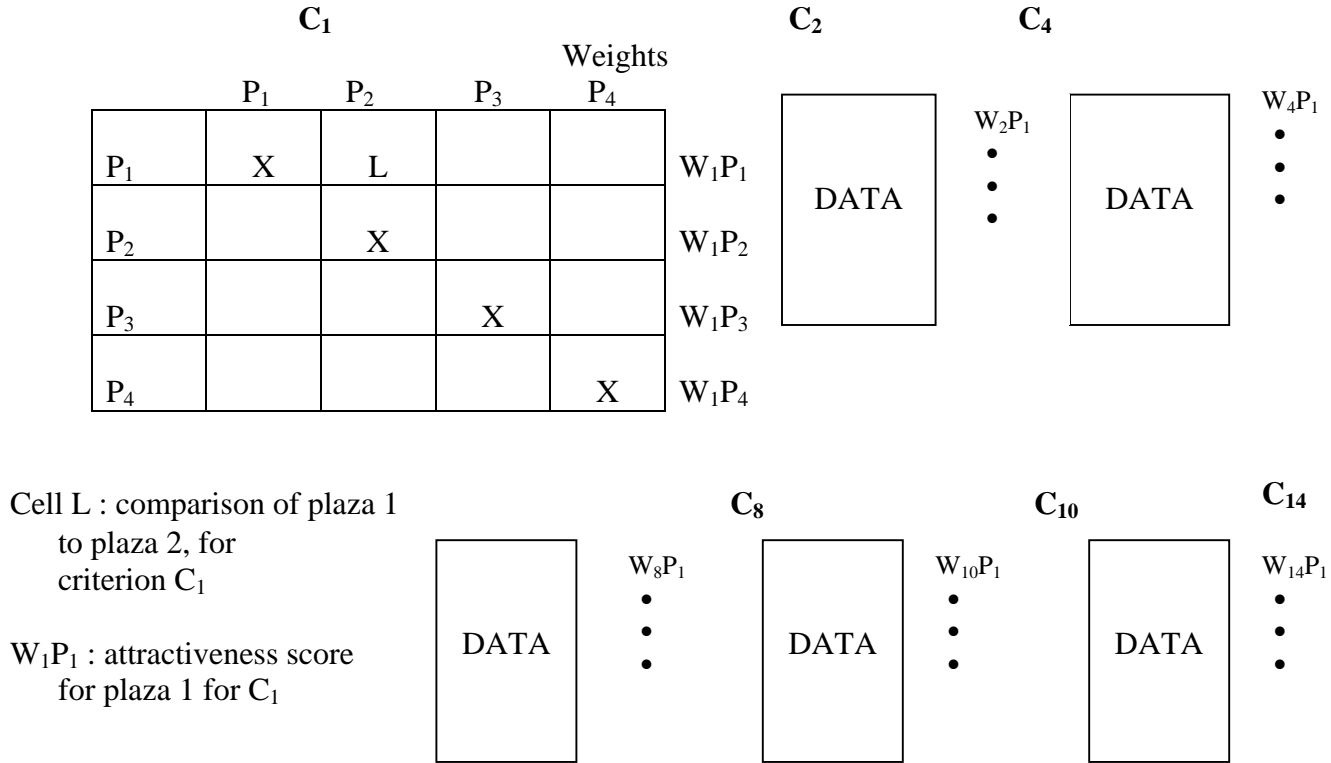
etc.

Cell [C₂ : C₄] – C₂ is extremely more important then C₄ : score is 9

[C₄ : C₂] – C₄ is 1/9 as important (positive reciprocal of 9) as C₂

WC₁ : using data in the matrix weights for each criterion are calculated. These are a measure of the importance of each criterion.

- II. Matrices to compare plazas. As 6 criteria are used there are 6 matrices, one for each criterion.



Calculation of overall attractiveness score (SP₁) for plaza 1.

$$SP_1 = (W_1P_1 \cdot WC_1) + (W_2P_1 \cdot WC_2) + (W_4P_1 \cdot WC_4) + \\ (W_8P_1 \cdot WC_8) + (W_{10}P_1 \cdot WC_{10}) + (W_{14}P_1 \cdot WC_{14})$$

* is a multiplication sign

On Figure 10 two pair wise matrices are shown first, for a comparison of criteria and second, for the comparison of the four plazas. While only one pair wise matrix was required for the criteria the AHP requires that for each criterion a separate comparison matrix is need for each criterion. Hence six pair wise matrices were constructed for comparing the plazas for the six criteria, one criterion at a time.

Rather than use the full set of 17 criteria as in the initial study the group decided that a sub-set of six would be sufficient to test the method and give results. The criteria that were selected from the set of 17 are listed below. The definitions of the criteria are shown on Table 1.

C1	seats/benches
C2	well situated
C4	landscaped
C8	harsh walls nearby etc
C10	named plaza
C14	neat, tidy etc

The AHP allows a comparison matrix of criteria to be analysed so that a set of weights is calculated that represent the relative importance of each criterion. The weights can be interpreted for the criteria as measure of importance, and for the plazas as measure of attractiveness: the higher the value the greater the importance or attractiveness.

Also the method allows for the examination of the degree of consistency in the pair wise comparisons for each individual. For example, if a person is perfectly consistent in the sense that they say that C1 is preferred to C2, and that C2 is preferred to C4, and that C1 is preferred to C4 then the index of inconsistency is zero. However, if a person says that $C1 > C2$, and that $C2 > C4$ and that $C4 > C1$, then inconsistency is demonstrated, and the index of inconsistency measures this. For each pair wise comparison we ask the subject to describe the degree of preference of one criterion over another. A semantic scale is used with the following words. This is converted to a nine-point scale. The words in the semantic scale are:

EQUAL (1) MODERATE (3) STRONG (5) VERY STRONG (7) EXTREME (9)

If C1 is perceived to be equally important as C4 then a value of 1 is placed in the cell. If C1 is perceived to be extremely more important than C4 then the value is 9. However, if C4 is perceived to be extremely more important than C1 then the value is record as the reciprocal of 9 that is 1/9. The values in the criteria matrix represent the full set of pair wise comparison scores for all pairs of criteria. These values are used to calculate a set of weights for the criteria and the index of inconsistency.

A summary of the results for the weights for the criteria and the four plazas is shown on Table 2. On this table we also record the inconsistency index results.

Table 2 Summary of results for weights (attractiveness/importance) for criteria and plazas

Person	C1	C2	C4	C8	C10	INC%	A	B	C	D	INC%
1	23	16	29	7	14	25%	40	25	19	15	15%
2	27	11	22	5	3	11%	52	22	9	17	16%
3	34	20	15	7	6	11%	47	14	20	18	11%
4	32	25	16	8	9	39%	48	18	19	16	31%
5	27	28	23	11	8	44%	40	30	19	9	31%
6	31	17	22	12	12	49%	43	42	8	8	26%
7	32	28	19	10	9	27%	34	38	18	9	14%
8	42	25	13	9	6	26%	41	33	17	9	14%

It is noted that the index of inconsistency (INC%) is quite high and suggests that the subjects were not too experienced in using the methodology.

Using the results from Table 2 we derived average weights for the criteria. They are shown below.

C1	31
C2	21
C4	20
C8	9
C10	8
C14	11

Clearly the first three criteria are the most important ones from this set. These weights were used with the raw data shown in Table 1, for the six criteria, to calculate attractiveness scores for the four plazas. The method for calculating a score for each plaza was the simple additive weighting method. Details of the SAW are given in Massam (2002). Basically the score for a plaza for a particular criterion is multiplied by the weight attached to that criterion, and this is repeated for the set of all the criteria used in the analysis. The final score is a dimensionless number that is a measure of attractiveness for the plaza: the higher the number the greater the attractiveness. The original analysis shown on Table 1 assumes that all the criteria are equally important, hence the weight attached to each criterion is 1.0. The results using the new weights are shown on Table 3. Also on this Table we include the results using equal weights for the four criteria and the original scores from Table 1 for the four plazas.

Table 3: Results comparing new weights for 6 criteria and initial results as shown on Table 1

Plaza	new weights (average values) Using AHP method	new weights using 6 criteria	results of 17 criteria all equal weights
A	43	30	29
B	28	30	29
C	16	30	27
D	13	8	13

The average index of inconsistency for the data for the criteria is 29% and the result for the four plazas is 20%. These figures are quite high and we note that the time available to test the methodology was probably insufficient to allow each subject to fully explore the significance of the index and the notion of inconsistency. This topic will be pursued further in future work.

Whereas the eight local professors clearly distinguished differences among the attractiveness of the four plazas Everitt and Massam as outsiders were less able to draw clear distinctions. Perhaps this raises the issue of attractiveness of a public space to a local person and to a visitor. This issue is critical in the context of Puerto Vallarta as the town seeks to plan public spaces to cater to both groups and tourism is a vital source of revenue to the community.

To complement the formal numerical approach to describe the attractiveness of the four plazas we also undertook a semantic exercise. This involved asking each subject to list a set of words that come to mind immediately a particular plaza is mentioned. Each subject provided an independent list without consulting each other. Seven of the set of eight professors provided

words for each plaza. Prior to asking each to list words in the order that they came to mind to describe or characterize a plaza there was general discussion of the features of a plaza that would like be considered. For example, words that describe the users: men/women/children for example: words to describe safety issues such as safe at night: words to describe features of the place, for example, clean, neat: words to describe activities that occur there, for example, walking, sitting, festivals. The list of words is provided on Table 4.

This exercise helped to clarify the views and opinions of the plazas. In particular, two conclusions can be reached that are worthy of further investigation. First, the plazas are viewed differently by each of our key informants. That is to say, there is a considerable “between” variation from plaza to plaza for each respondent. Second, the informants view the individual plazas in a somewhat similar manner. That is to say, there is less “within” variation from plaza to plaza, or to put it another way, the plazas are seen as essentially similar (if not homogeneous) spaces by the respondents. If we can assume (and our previous research with other Vallartans and tourists indicates that this assumption is not unreasonable) that our key informants are representative of the larger population, then these public spaces are distinctive in terms of their functions within the community, despite their conforming to a large degree to the ‘generic’ plaza model. Thus the plazas are performing different, but related jobs within the community.

Table 4: List of descriptors used to characterise each plaza

PLAZA A	PLAZA B	PLAZA C	PLAZA D
PERSON 1			
music	typical food stalls	traffic	few tourists
meeting place	used during week	large	paseo
all ages	few tourists	old PV	good views
Sundays use	informal vendors	contaminated	smelly
clean	traffic problems	environment	dirty
remodelled	green spaces	unsafe	no green areas
the most important plaza	games	night danger	dangerous
key point of reference	birds	green spaces	young people
paseo	dark	new commerce	dark
socio-cultural events	safety issues	few tourists	
vendors	full		
government offices near	old		
cultural activities			
locals and visitors			
PERSON 2			
cultural events	cars	trucks	garbage
clean	food vendors	traffic	smelly
safe	traffic	vendors	floods
fiestas	noise	closed	swings-kids
entertainment	fiestas	food	couples
many tourists	locals	large	families
music	visitors		wine festival
fireworks	vendors		car wash
young people	garbage		dirty
night shows	few seats		dark

day use			
good views			
food vendors			
few sitting places			
PERSON 3			
family	exit of PV	meeting place	
safe in day		family	
traditional events	vendors	local recreation	commerce
information place	information	tourist areas: sitting	meeting
promotions	cultural identification	meeting place: school kids	locals
special events	meetings	way out of PV	tourists
lines for bank machines	unsafe: night	school events	lovers
municipal offices	solitary visitors	low safety	swings
education	to plaza	gays	family
entertainment	artisans		artisans
bulletin boards	national foods		vendors
traffic signs			
rest place for locals	education		
PERSON 4			
safe	meetings	buses	dirty
traditional fiestas	unsafe at night	bus owners	ugly
family use	ok daytime	older couples	beautiful views
entertainment	fruit vendors	dangers at night	small
promotion	Hispanic parties	school events	families
walking	traditional parties		
traffic nearby	cars		
vendors	educated people		
young women safe	women & kids		
children	gay couples at night		
nice			
clean			
PERSON 5			
family	vendors	tourists mainly	young people
tourists	painting exhibits	artisans	tourists
festivals	safe	safe	relatively safe
safe		seasonal festivals	
Afternoons: elderly			
regional exhibitions			
government events			
school fund raising			
selling of natural products and religious items			
music festivals			
PERSON 6			
family	tourists	more men than women	families
tourists	families	artisans	view of sea
safe day & night	food stalls	strolling/sitting	safe: day
festivities	safe day & night	unsafe: night	teenagers
young and old people			

PERSON 7			
families	tourists	mostly tourists	few events
tourists	families	men/women alone	adults
safe day & night	local goods	safe: day	walking
festivals	walking	less safe at night	no activities
walking	few festivals	few activities	
sitting	safe day & night	tourists	
young males and females		vendors	

6.0 Civic Spaces, Social Responsibility and Planning

Our results from the earlier data using the information collected by Everitt and Massam demonstrate that two of the plazas are relatively problem free and consequently are very successful in drawing people; one is slightly less so; and one has a long way to go as it currently keeps most people out, and thus doesn't work as a place. Interestingly, however, even the Plaza de Armas has deficiencies when scrutinised through our demanding lens. In fact, although it is the 'plaza major', it "scores" little better than the Hidalgo plaza, because its very success in some categories has meant that it is penalised in others, and its central location almost inevitably causes leads to new challenges.

If we look at our variables in turn, there are four major problem areas for this first plaza. First, there is limited vendor use (variable #6) within the plaza. However, it should be noted that vendor use is extensive just a short distance away, across the (major traffic) street (Morelos) on the Malecón. In addition on special occasions vendors do occupy the plaza to a much greater degree. This deficiency has been recognised by the city, which is looking for some way of reducing traffic on Morelos and/or improving the connection between the plaza and the Malecón, which would probably increase vendor use.¹⁶ Second, the plaza is harshly defined by the surrounding buildings (#8). It is hemmed-in on three sides (with Morelos on the fourth). It seems unlikely that much can be done here, although if traffic patterns were to be changed this would probably affect this "score", by opening the square to the west side. Similarly, by definition, a change in the traffic patterns would raise the score on #13. Lastly, washrooms (#17) are available in City Hall and in other buildings around the square, and along the Malecón. Once again traffic changes would improve this score. In some ways it is less 'green' than other parks, but this reflects its higher level of use. Sometimes success is failure. In terms of the PPS "four key qualities", this plaza is has an accessible situation, but there are problems with site access. People are commonly engaged in activities in the square, but there is room for improvement. The space is quite comfortable, and has a positive image. Finally, it is a very sociable space – especially when organized (official and unofficial) activities take place.

Hidalgo plaza lacks a bandstand (#7), but within its context this does not seem to be that serious a deficiency, as it is well served by seats and, landscaping. Its name (#10) has is known by the locals, but it does not have high name recognition with tourists. It is again difficult to reach from some directions because of heavy traffic (#13), but as with the plaza major, a change in this variable might be difficult, expensive, and contentious. The plaza is also accessible, but not so central as the Plaza de Armas. People engage in a variety of activities in the plaza, and the space is comfortable and has a good image – but more so for locals than tourists. It is a sociable space, particularly in its centre rather than on its edges.

Cárdenas plaza suffers from its remoteness (#3) from the core functions of the city, and it is hard to see a simple remedy for this challenge. Its lower score also reflects, more importantly, its relative isolation from local populations, but in some ways its resultant tranquility can be seen as part of its charm. Washrooms are available in restaurants in the vicinity. The challenge for this plaza could be seen as somehow increasing its use for both locals and tourists, but its proximity to some of the best beaches in the region (including the perhaps unfortunately named Playa los Muertos) might make this challenge insurmountable. Thus perhaps this “deficiency” could better be sold as an advantage, and the serenity of the plaza could become its successful feature. Generally, this plaza is accessible to those in the zona romantica, but little known by others, and particularly tourists from the hotel zone and marina. Activities take place on the fringe of the plaza, but only in its centre on organised occasions. It is a comfortable space, but its image is less well defined.

Plaza Pavillon Mall still has some way to go. It is unnecessary to go variable-by-variable, but it scores poorly on most. In addition it has recently been challenged by major storms, and storm damage, and by becoming a storage site for the resultant clean-up materials. But it would appear that it has always been more problematical as a public space, and that more energy needs to be concentrated in this area. Its advantages (close to the city centre, the presence of washrooms, and its proximity to the gradually extending Malecón) are considerable, but it is an area where community planning might be of paramount value, and where the eleven PPS principles might be put to particularly good effect. There need to more activities in this plaza that include a wider cross section of people. It needs to be made into a sociable space, and it needs to be made more comfortable. Its image is in need of a major overhaul, and in the past year or two this renovation has clearly become a priority of the city. The good news is, that if the PPS methodology is implemented, a successful change is perfectly feasible.

In summary, using the Everitt and Massam data, the study plazas are all different, but at the same time have essential place similarities. The first three plazas must be judged as successful places, using both intuitive (qualitative) evaluations as well as quantitative scoring methods. This is not surprising for as Whyte indicates (1980: 17) “the best used plazas are sociable spaces” and these plazas are well used. At the same time the city and the citizens of Puerto Vallarta might decide to “improve” these plazas by, for instance, increasing their accessibility (although this has a cost); increasing the variety of activities that take place there (in order to draw a wider cross section of people (tourists and/or locals) to these places, more of the time; making them more sociable and more comfortable to more people, and thus changing their images. That is to say, these places do not need to be “turned around”, but the principles elucidated by the PPS could be profitably applied to these places to make them even more successful. The fourth plaza, the Plaza Pavillon Mall, needs to be the centrepiece of a community planning process based upon the ‘principles’ in order to determine where it fits in the general schema of public places in Puerto Vallarta, and how the goals for its development as a more successful place can best be achieved. It is our contention this would enable this plaza to be “turned around”, and a successful place be created that would enhance the social and economic viability of Puerto Vallarta, and improve the quality of life of both the city’s citizens, as well as the visitors to this key tourist destination.

The recent construction of a new (if controversial¹⁷) footbridge has increased the traffic flows close to the latter park, but does not yet appear to have led to a significant increase in park usage, nor to a re-definition of the character of this plaza. These difficulties are indicated by the fact

that this public space is often not recognised as such by many Vallartans who describe it (if they know it at all) as a parking lot - admittedly one of the functions of the larger space. In addition we found many people who did not know who was represented by the statue in the plaza (Benito Juárez), and different citizens had different names for the plaza. Even people working on the edge of this space were uncertain of its name. There is no doubt that this plaza has been, and is being, physically improved, but it still has no well-defined function nor identity. Placemaking still needs to occur.

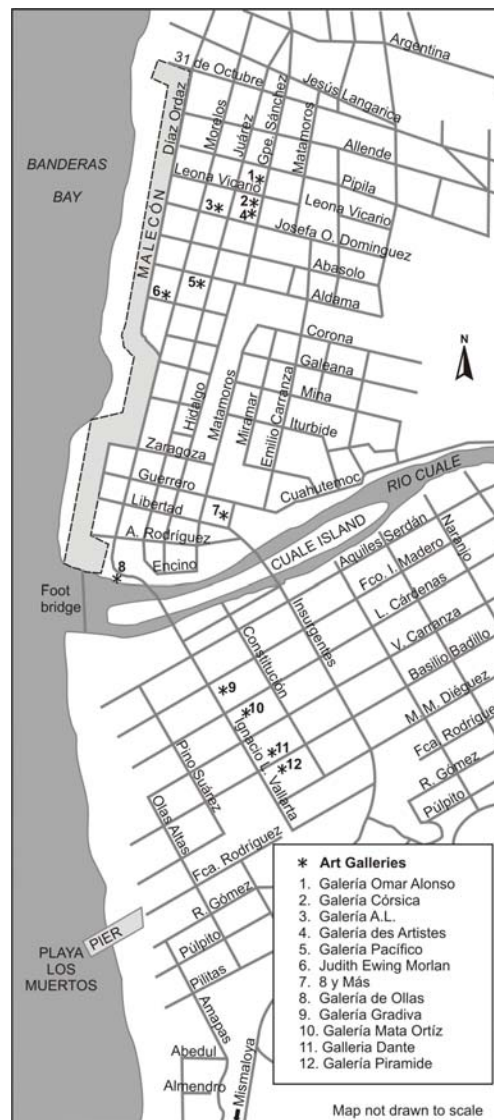
7.0 Two Special Spaces: Cultural Activities and Gay Area

One aspect of this working paper series is that we are able to introduce some new topics where research has begun, but where results and conclusions are not definitively presented and argued. This section concerns such material on what might be termed 'alternative' social spaces, as they represent usages of the city that have only recently begun to feature in 'mainstream' texts.

An early 'function' that emerged in Puerto Vallarta in the late 1950s and early 1960s was the art gallery. "In all its manifestations – fashion, jewellery, sculpture, ceramics, painting, poetry, writing, the list is endless – art is now firmly integrated into the fabric of" the city (Wilson, 2004). Although local Vallartans (and other Mexicans) were involved in this process, it was greatly stimulated by the presence of 'expats' and particularly those from the United States. In time these expats produced their own art, as well as promoting (and selling) the work of Mexicans. A number settled permanently in PV, in some instances marrying into the local population. Arguably the first gallery was in the Hotel Oceano (now Tequilla's bar and restaurant) on the Malecón, although the first formal gallery may have been Lepe's – also in El Centro. Galería Uno on Calle Morelos bills itself as the first professional gallery in PV. Clearly there is a definitional challenge and more work needs to be done in this area. The Vallarta Lifestyles Gallery Guide (2004) states that there are "more important galleries (in Vallarta) than anywhere else in Mexico with the exception of the capital" (nnp).

Currently there are some two-dozen galleries (although over the years there have been many more), reflecting the significance of this function within the city, although a definitive list is hard to come by. In part this reflects turnover in the industry, and in part the independence and/or the advertising preferences of some gallery owners. There are now at least two mapped tourist 'walks' (one of which is shown in Figure 11) around the galleries (Vallarta Lifestyles Gallery Guide 2004),¹⁸ and on designated days ("frequent art openings") these walks are combined with the serving of wine and snacks and visits with some of the artists ("meet the artists while you shop"). The galleries are utilised by the local population, but are particularly marketed to tourists for "that perfect one-of-a-kind gift". Gallery/studios where the artists "create their wares before your eyes" are also "gaining popularity" (De La Mora, Ricardo Blanca (ed.) 2000). These 'artistic spaces' are deserving of more academic attention.

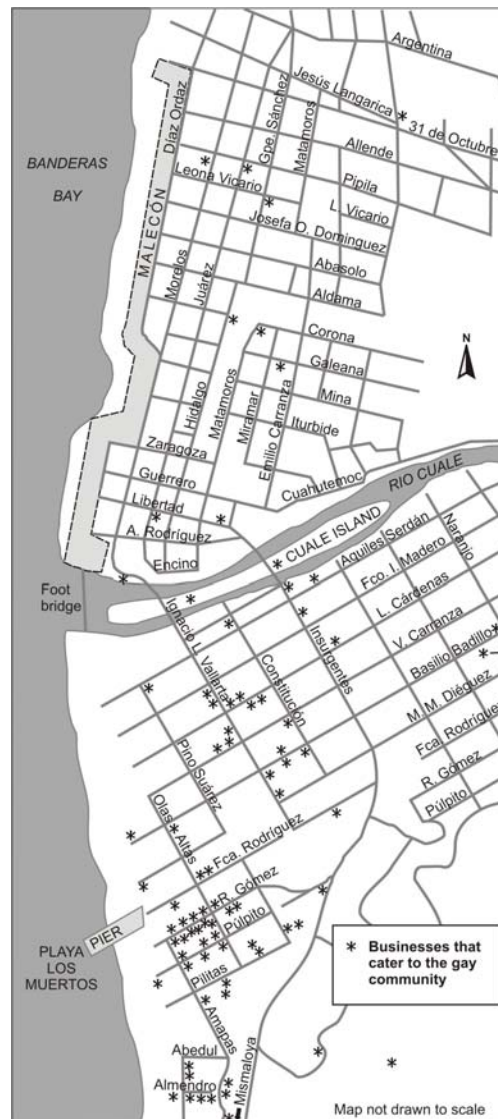
FIGURE 11: MAP OF ART GALLERIES IN PV



Another neglected aspect of social geography is the gay landscape, although this has recently been celebrated in PV by the production of a Gay Guide (2004) and a website (<http://gayguidevallarta.com>). This contains, amongst other things, a “gay calendar”, a map of businesses (Figure 12) that cater to the gay community, and a list of “gay things to do” – including “Paco’s Paradise Gay Wilderness Park”, and a variety of tours designed for members of the gay community.¹⁹ As the website puts it “(e)very year Puerto Vallarta seems to become more popular as a gay vacation spot”, and certainly the gay landscape is becoming more and more important socially and economically, although it is only ‘obvious’ to non-gays in a few symbolic places (such as Blue Chairs Resort). Certainly though these are “spaces of resistance to the dominant order”, although as elsewhere, they appear to be more male than female (lesbian) oriented (Knox 1995: 190-191). Although there has been research on urban gay communities, the Vallartan tourist scene still has not been studied in the academic literature. It does seem likely, however, that the presence of gay men (and perhaps lesbians) in institutions related to the tourist industry (see Figure 12) is influencing the growth of the tourist landscape within Puerto

Vallarta. Such lifestyle segregation and community building is found elsewhere, most notably perhaps in San Francisco (Jordan-Bychkov and Domosh, 1999: 319, 447-448). Certainly there are some parts of the city (near Los Muertos Beach, in particular) where there are more gay-owned or gay-friendly urban functions, and there is anecdotal evidence that gays are living or vacationing to a much greater extent in this region than other areas of Vallarta. As with the artistic spaces of PV, however, the 'gay spaces' are deserving of more academic attention.

FIGURE 12: MAP OF GAY PV



8.0 Conclusion

Let us close by noting that in the ethos of western society, where individualism, materialism, and the emergence of a technocratic and sensate culture became established, dramatic changes are forcing human progress, the public good and quality of life to be defined by economic growth. Inevitably, this will occur at the cost of diminished environmental protection: *homo economicus* reigns. However, as Whyte (1980: 15) points out the creation of places that work for people also has economic advantages that result from the improvements in their QOL (see also PPS, 2000: 14). Further, the rise in the importance of the state - with its vested interest in growth for strategic reasons - exacerbates the issue of reconciling economic growth and environmental protection to ensure sustainable communities. The question remains: precisely what is to be sustained or conserved, via what kind of stewardship? Is there such a person as *homo sustiens*? In the context of Puerto Vallarta this is further complicated as the 'citizens' can be seen to include both locals and tourists. Ultimately the focus of the civic space as a public good must be on the quality of life of citizens, taking into account existential aspects of being and having. The heightening of consciousness from the Hegelian perspective argues that this is the cause, not the effect, of the material world. The means of enhancing consciousness to empower citizens to define and implement alternate paradigms of progress beyond economic growth continues to challenge policy makers and ordinary folk, as well as academics and practitioners including planners who seek to define appropriate roles for civic spaces to play in contemporary urban life. Perhaps the use of the PPS principles as guidelines to make the public spaces of PV better could be a way of promoting such an empowerment.

When discussing "Social Geography and the Sociospatial Dialectic", Knox (1995: Chapter 1) suggests that "Urban spaces are created by people, and they draw their character from the people that inhabit them. As people live and work in urban spaces, they gradually impose themselves on their environment, modifying and adjusting it, as best they can, to suit their needs and express their values. Yet at the same time people themselves gradually accommodate both to their physical environment and to the people around them. There is thus a continuous two-way process, a sociospatial dialectic, in which people create and modify urban spaces while at the same time being conditioned in various ways by the spaces in which they live and work" (1995: 3). It has been our aim in this paper to report on an investigation of some aspects of this dialectic. We have discussed the general social spaces of the city, the tourist spaces, and (in particular) the public spaces (plazas) where the Vallartans and tourists intersect and overlap during their daily life courses.

We have also suggested that there are some other distinctive social spaces in Puerto Vallarta that are worthy of more research in order to understand the sociospatial dialectic from the point of view of specialized social groups. In this context we have introduced discussions of 'artistic space' and 'gay space'. Each of this has a significant influence within the social geography of Puerto Vallarta, but each is worthy of more intensive study. But there are other spaces that need to be investigated. One oft-cited characteristic of the interaction between residents and non-residents in a tourist landscape is the development of landscapes of 'safety' and 'unsafety', and even those of fear. There are also landscapes that relate to vice and drugs, and to other characteristics of modern life that may be exacerbated by tourism. There are also suggestions of

gendered landscapes in PV that are related to a greater or lesser extent to these other characteristics (such as fear) and which themselves may be related to time of day, and perhaps in a tourist landscape, time of year (Knox, 1995: 271).

There are also new landscapes (in the sense of their having been almost untouched in the literature) such as those related to ‘virtual behaviour’ that has resulted from the widespread use of computers and the internet. In addition there is a growing concern with other aspects of public space (many of which are identified in the website of the Toronto Public Space Committee) ranging from trees and parks to billboards and garbage cans that could be the subject of future study (<http://www.publicspace.ca/>). Once again there is a clear connection between these innovations and other social spaces. It is our hope that we can, in future research trips, further investigate the social geography of the Puerto Vallarta area, or at the very least leave some guideposts for others who may come later, to investigate the sociospatial dialectic in this region of fascinating variety and ongoing change.

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10.0 Endnotes

¹ An overview of one of the great squares of the world is available on the web site www.worldsquares.com: this is Trafalgar Square in London, and the site describes the recent changes that have been made to improve its usage.

² London has lots of squares, with houses and buildings around a central garden or park. The central garden is sometimes private, built for the enjoyment of the residents who hold a key, but there are many that are open. Fourteen squares in London are profiled at http://www.touruk.co.uk/london_squares/london_squares.htm

³ Details are given on the web site www.madres.org.

⁴ One of the most successful plazas in the world is recognized as Plaza de la Constitucion de Oaxaca (Zocalo) in Oaxaca City, Mexico. A full description of this wonderful plaza with its fountains, low shrubs and attractive lay-out that encourages people of all ages to stroll together, meet and talk in peace and security, eat and enjoy the wares of the vendors is provided on the PPS web site under the section on Great Public Spaces. Other widely recognized successful public squares/plazas and civic spaces include Balboa Park in San Diego, Bryant Park in New York, the Champs-Elysees in Paris, Circular Quay in Sydney, La Rambia in Barcelona, Parc Guell in Barcelona, Piazza San Marco Venice, Prospect Park in Boston, Rua August in Lisbon, The Galleria in Milan and Toth Arpad Setany in Budapest. Pictures and descriptions of each with the basic reasons why they are successful are given on the PPS website www.pps.org.

⁵ While it is gratifying to look around the world for success stories of civic spaces it is not inappropriate to look for planning mistakes or planning disasters as Peter Hall mentions in his book on Great Planning Disasters (1982). He argues that we can learn from planning mistakes. Examples of civic spaces that fail are given on the PPS web site under the section on Hall of Shame, and they include Boeddeker Park in San Francisco, City Hall Plaza in Boston, Columbus Park Pavillion in New York, the HUD plaza in Washington, Occidental Park in Seattle, Parc de la Villette in Paris, Skyline park in Denver and South Bank in Brisbane. In most cases such civic spaces fail as they lack basic facilities for sitting, poor lay out, they are surrounded by busy traffic arteries, inaccessible to retails outlets and they lack eating facilities. Design characteristics typically include bare and imposing walls and there is a lack of shade or water. A general feeling of insecurity pervades the space and it remains empty or underutilized.

⁶ Although a beach-front walkway has existed (probably) since the town was founded, the present massive concrete structure dates to the early 1950s.

⁷ The others are the “relative compactness of communities”, the “core-versus-periphery tradition”, the distinctive barrios, and the persistence of small neighbourhood stores and stands.

⁸ Although essentially rectangular, the plazas not necessarily ‘perfect squares’, as they are sometimes affected by surrounding cultural and physical landscape features.

⁹ The name reflects the military parade ground origin of many of these plazas, and it is likely that the ‘plaza mayor’ in PV fulfilled this function at times, as well.

¹⁰ The church was built in 1951, with the crown-shaped tower being added later. The crown was modelled after the one belonging to the nineteenth century Empress Carlota who went insane after her husband was executed. Construction began on a church on this site in the late nineteenth century.

¹¹ The contemporary Malecón is a relatively new landscape feature, which is constantly being changed and developed – principally as a tourist place. But a seafront walk of the same name dates back many decades (De Oca de Contreras: 2002).

¹² Don Ignacio L. Vallarta was a lawyer and ex-governor of Jalisco.

¹³ Father Hidalgo was an important Mexican folk hero who Cried out for Mexico’s independence from Spain in the mid eighteenth century). Many towns have plazas named after him (see <http://www.inside-Mexico.com/laentrevista2.htm>).

¹⁴ See http://www.mexconnect.com/mex_/history/jtuck/jtlcardenas.html

¹⁵ The name we use for this plaza is just one of several used by Vallartans, with the confusion around the nomenclature reflecting the isolation and under-utilisation of this public space.

¹⁶ It has been suggested that bus traffic be restricted (or eliminated) in this part of the city, and that automobile traffic be re-routed if possible. There is considerable local opposition to this option, which is seen as a way of pandering to some groups of people (e.g. the tourists who use the Malecón and the Plaza) at the expense of others (e.g. local workers, who work in the stores/stalls and use the buses).

¹⁷ The process whereby the design and construction of the footbridge took place caused some problems as some citizens viewed the process as undemocratic and the resulting structure as undesirable.

¹⁸ This map contains fourteen galleries. Another brochure (The “Old Town Art Walk”) has eleven in its 2002 edition and twelve in its 2003-2004 edition. Only eight of the 2002 galleries appear in the later edition. Some of these are not included in the Vallarta Lifestyles Gallery Guide 2004.

¹⁹ The map (the basis of Figure 12) includes a variety of services: bars (18), lodging (13), real estate (3), restaurants (30), cafés (5), beach clubs (2), concierge (2), shops (7), spa and gym (2), and ‘survival’ (3).