

“A New Park, A New Opportunity”:

Place-Branding, Acculturation, and Cultural Diversity in Rouge National Urban Park

by

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## **Author's Declaration**

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

## Abstract

In 2015, the *Rouge National Urban Park Act* formally established the ‘newest member to the Parks Canada family’ in the form of Canada’s first-ever national urban park. Located in the eastern end of Toronto, the largest and most culturally diverse metropolitan area in Canada, Rouge National Urban Park represents an unprecedented opportunity to engage with audiences that are traditionally underrepresented in national park spaces, including immigrant populations. This thesis explores this new engagement potential and evaluates whether and how the Parks Canada brand is reaching and resonating with visitors to Rouge National Urban Park, particularly among those individuals who identify as immigrants to Canada. It considers whether and how this new opportunity to engage with Parks Canada’s protected landscapes through Rouge National Urban Park has impacted their perceptions of the Canadian identity. These questions are particularly relevant considering Canada’s increasing diversity, and the fact that there has been relatively little existing exploration of park use among culturally diverse clientele within a Canadian context. These questions also offer the potential to investigate certain unexplored areas in the literature, including the existence of a link between place-branding and acculturation among immigrants to Canada.

The findings draw from 81 surveys and interviews completed on-site with visitors to Rouge National Urban Park. They reveal an abundance of place-meanings associated both with the park and with the Parks Canada brand in general. All respondents, including a vast majority of foreign-born participants, agree or strongly agree that the landscapes protected by Parks Canada are directly linked to a national Canadian identity, and that experiencing nature is a strong aspect of what it means to be Canadian. The findings also confirm that one’s socio-demographic background greatly contributes to the ways in which visitors use and relate to national park spaces. For instance, foreign-born visitors seem more likely to associate identity-based meanings with the park, such as comments that describe a connection between the park and their country of origin. These findings speak to the importance of marketing Parks Canada’s ‘nationally significant’ landscapes in a way that is inclusive to all audiences. Given the growing diversity of the Canadian population, it has never been timelier to ensure that all audiences are able to see themselves reflected in the spirit and presentation of Canada’s national parks.

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## 1.0 Introduction

*On behalf of the people of Canada, we protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations.*

The Parks Canada Mandate (2002)

### 1.1 A Brief History and Overview of the Parks Canada Agency

On May 19, 1911, the House of Commons passed Bill 85 – a bill “respecting forest reserves and parks” – and officially created the world’s first agency devoted to the management of its national parks (Campbell, 2011). The agency at the time was named the Dominion Parks Branch under the Department of the Interior, and was initially responsible for managing a cluster of parks in the Rocky Mountains including Banff National Park, Canada’s first national park established in 1885. In 1914, the responsibilities of the agency expanded to also protect places designated as significant historic sites, ultimately laying the foundation for a modern system of iconic national parks and historic sites (Parks Canada, 2011a). Indeed, according to historian Claire Elizabeth Campbell (2011), “what began as a minor bureaucratic shuffle, simply to provide better management for the forest reserves and a handful of western parks, created an agency that over the next century would convince Canadians that in their national parks resided the true wealth of a kingdom” (p. 2). The modern-day Parks Canada Agency, which was formally established as a separate service entity in 1998 under the responsibility of Environment Canada, currently manages 47 national parks, 171 national historic sites, three national marine conservation areas, and one recently established national urban park. Protected within the boundaries of these sites are many stunning examples of the uniquely diverse Canadian landscape, including ecological sanctuaries that protect and preserve Canadian wilderness and wildlife.

Rather than merely representing “‘islands of wilderness’ saved from history” (Campbell, 2011, p. 2), however, the landscapes protected within national parks present records of Canadian history and document Canada’s relationship with nature (Saari, 2015). The wilderness that exists within these parks are not pristine, untouched refuges from modernity, but rather curated human creations that have guided an ongoing dialogue between Canadians and their land (Cronon, 1995; Campbell, 2011). As Kopas (2007) notes, “Canada’s system of national parks actually reflects more than a century of changing ideas about the natural environment” (p. 1). While national parks may have initially been created to be about the “spectacle of wilderness” (Kopas, 2007, p. 7), they have evolved over the years to take on nation-building and integration roles in addition to environmental protection purposes. In the 1950s, for example, during the early stages of defining a national park system, the federal government made a conscious effort to ensure that each province would be home to at least one national park, and that these landscapes would demonstrate “representative samples of Canada’s natural beauty” (Kopas, 2007, p. 55).

Indeed, natural landscapes in general, including the notable examples protected within national parks, have historically been linked to an overall Canadian identity. For example, one of the earliest expressions of Canadian identity around the time of Confederation occurred through the Canada First Movement, which was an organization that promoted Canada as a “Britain of the North” whose “unique and distinctive character” derived from the cold and rugged wilderness of its landscapes (Mackey, 2000, p. 126). Similarly, at a time following the First World War when Canada was filled with a surge of national fervor, the Group of Seven captured what are now considered quintessential Canadian landscapes through their groundbreaking work. Conversations about what it means to be Canadian have existed since Canada’s Confederation, and although this identity is perpetually dynamic and changing, the nation’s natural environment

has always had a place as a unifying symbol of Canadian identity. According to a more recent survey conducted by Environics Institute in 2010, national parks and the natural landscapes they protect are considered one of the top four symbols of Canadian identity, along with the health care system, the Charter of Rights and Freedom, and the Canada flag (Environics Institute, 2010). As a nation constantly separated by a variety of factors including an excess of geography, national parks have historically been used as mechanism of nation-building, and the same nationalizing philosophy continues to be reflected in Canada's current national park policy. In 2002, Parks Canada formally adopted a guiding mandate that proclaimed the sites protected by the Agency as "nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage" (Parks Canada, 2002). By branding these landscapes as representative of a national Canadian identity, Parks Canada (and the iterations of the national park agency that came before) has profoundly affected how domestic and international audiences view Canada. As Campbell (2011) notes, "no other government agency in Canada has had such imaginative power" (p. 2).

The history of Canada's national park system, however, did not always reflect this spirit of national collaboration and cohesion. In particular, as Stevens (1997) notes, while the Western tradition of national parks contributed to "the preservation of wilderness, biodiversity, valued cultural landscapes, spectacular scenery, and places of physical and spiritual renewal", their invention also had, and continues to have, profound implications for indigenous peoples (p. 10). As original stewards of all Canadian lands, many of Canada's protected areas are the original homelands of indigenous populations. Conservation planning has consequently emerged as a matter of great concern for indigenous groups, who historically have been evicted from their homelands to make way for these protected areas and national parks (Stevens, 1997). Indeed, in similar patterns exhibited in the United States, indigenous groups were removed from nearly all

of Canada's national parks, even at a time when it was deemed by administrators to be acceptable for permanent residents to reside within park boundaries (Binnema and Niemi, 2006). By the 1930s, if they did not exist already, towns were established with Canadian national parks in order to specifically cater to visitors (Binnema and Niemi, 2006). In 1906, the Minister of the Interior, Frank Oliver, noted the following of Banff National Park: "there must be a town some place in the Park if outsiders from a distance are to have full advantage of it" (Binnema and Niemi, 2006, p. 726). At the same time, indigenous groups were firmly barred from settling in the park and prohibitions against hunting within park boundaries were also strictly enforced by officials, depriving indigenous peoples not only of their homeland but also of their traditions and ways of life. There are countless additional examples of how Canada's national parks were established at the expense of indigenous rights and freedoms.

In the spirit of reconciliation, Parks Canada's current agenda has evolved from this darker past to embrace policies of collaboration and consultation with indigenous partners. According to Parks Canada's 2017-18 Departmental Results report, the Agency is currently working with over 300 indigenous communities across Canada in the management of the nation's national heritage sites; 32 of these places are currently managed cooperatively with indigenous groups, and in 20 sites indigenous partners have direct management and decision-making roles (Parks Canada, 2018c). In 2017, in an act of good faith, the Indigenous Circle of Experts (ICE) was created to facilitate an indigenous voice in the efforts to achieve Canada Target 1 (protecting 17 percent of the country's terrestrial areas and inland waters by 2020). These new management arrangements and general policies are also guided by and support the Truth and Reconciliation Report, specifically Call to Action 79, in which the federal government is called upon to "develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration" (Truth and Reconciliation

Commission of Canada, p. 9). This history is important to note not only as an important piece to the story of Canada's national parks, but also to mark a critical shift in policy and the important role of national parks in developing and fostering a spirit of inclusivity within Canada.

Indeed, as Canada's national population continues to become increasingly diverse, national parks as a nation-building tool will have to expand involvement to a growing number of immigrants who may be searching for integration into their society of settlement. Framed within these changing population dynamics, this thesis will explore whether and how Parks Canada's branding of their landscapes as "quintessentially Canadian experiences" (Parks Canada, 2014, p. 4) has resonated with an increasingly diverse Canadian population.

## **1.2 Increasing Diversity in Canada and in National Parks**

Indeed, in the spirit of inclusivity, understanding Parks Canada's protected landscapes as specific representations of Canadian identity is particularly important considering the changing dynamics of the Canadian population. As Canada continues to transform into a rich and multicultural society with a "diverse mix of views, perceptions, and experiences with nature", it is important to understand how future generations of new Canadians engage with nature and integrate it into an expression of cultural identity within their new society of settlement (Canadian Parks Council, 2014, p. 15).

According to data from the 2016 Census, more than one-fifth (21.9%) of Canada's total population are foreign-born. Between 2011 and 2016, 1,212,075 new immigrants permanently settled in Canada, and represented 3.5% of Canada's total population in 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2016). In 2016, 7,674,580 individuals identified that they belonged to a visible minority population, which represented more than one-fifth (22.3%) of the national population (Statistics

Canada, 2016). According to Statistics Canada (2016), this percentage could grow to between 31.2% and 35.9% by 2036. Multiculturalism is arguably one of Canada's greatest strengths, and it is important to ensure that these growing populations are included and represented within Canadian spaces such as national parks.

According to Parks Canada's report on *The State of Canada's Natural and Historic Places* (2011b), however, the average visitors to heritage sites administered by the Agency are not reflective of this increasing diversity in the Canadian population. As noted in the report, the average age of visitors to Parks Canada sites is over 50 years old; about one-third of visitors are over the age of 55, and one-half to two-thirds are over 45 (Parks Canada, 2011b). Overall, average visitors are typically older, middle to upper class, suburban, Caucasian adults and families, and older adults in rural communities (Parks Canada, 2011b). In fact, according to numerous academic studies, racial and ethnic minorities are one of the groups that face the most constraints to park visitation. Researchers Zanon et al. (2013), for example, note that "people from non-Caucasian backgrounds, low levels of education, low income earners, and older people, particularly those affected by poor health, are the groups most constrained from visiting parks" (p. 477). In the spirit of inclusivity, it is therefore extremely important that these increasingly diverse populations are accommodated and see their experiences reflected within these sites that explicitly brand themselves as "something fundamental to our understanding of what it means to be Canadian" (Parks Canada, 2014, p. 13).

In 2011, Parks Canada initiated an ambitious and unprecedented project for the Agency in the form of Canada's first-ever national urban park. The newly established Rouge National Urban Park located in the east end of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) was selected as a focal point for this project due to its location and proximity to such a densely populated and diverse

urban centre, and the unique and unprecedented potential for a national site administered by Parks Canada to engage with users that have been traditionally underrepresented within these spaces.

### **1.3 Rouge National Urban Park: “A New Park, a New Opportunity”**

In the 2011 Throne Speech delivered by the Right Honourable David Johnston, the Government of Canada committed to the creation of Canada’s first-ever national urban park in the Rouge Valley. In 2015, the *Rouge National Urban Park Act* was passed and came into force via Order-in-Council, formally establishing the park primarily within the Cities of Toronto, Markham and Pickering, and the Township of Uxbridge (Figure 1). A total of 79.1km<sup>2</sup> of lands have been identified and committed to the initiative, and Parks Canada currently manages or has a direct interest in 69.2km<sup>2</sup> of the area (CBC, 2017). Once fully established, Rouge National Urban Park will be 22 times the size of New York City’s Central Park, and will protect over 1,700 species of plants and animals, more than 10,000 years of human history, and a strong tradition of agriculture and farming on some of the rarest and most fertile land in the country (Parks Canada, 2017a).

Notably, due to its close proximity to nearly one-fifth of the nation’s population within the largest and most culturally diverse metropolitan area in Canada, this unprecedented project has the potential to “pave the way for a new degree of public engagement in Canada’s heritage treasures” (Parks Canada, 2014, p. 11). Indeed, according to Statistics Canada, Toronto had the highest immigrant population in Canada (2,705,550) recorded in 2016. In comparison, Vancouver and Montreal – the two other most populous metropolitan areas in Canada – were home to 989,540 and 936,305 immigrants respectively. In the areas immediately surrounding



Rouge National Urban Park, 192,290 people identified as immigrants in the City of Markham, and the City of Pickering held 31,155 immigrants within its boundaries. The unique accessibility of Rouge National Urban Park – which can in fact be accessed by public transportation – has the unprecedented opportunity to accommodate increasingly diverse and traditionally more constrained populations.

Furthermore, this opportunity to engage with Parks Canada sites may be of particular importance to Canadian immigrants, who may be searching for further integration into their country of settlement. Phinney (2003) notes that underlying an immigrant's cultural identity, there are two key and independent variables: first, an identity based on their heritage and country of origin, and second, an identity informed by their country and society of settlement. Various researchers have explored the ways in which these competing identities have specifically influenced acculturation strategies for immigrant populations. For instance, as noted by Ward (2008), "it has been argued in the personality, clinical and counseling literature that migrants often experience conflict between the demands of home and host cultures that this is likely to have negative psychological and social consequences" (p. 107). Main (2013) recognized that "negotiation of these somewhat bipolar aspects of identity and acculturation impact adaptation" (p. 292) both in one's psychological adaptation (positive mental health and overall well-being) and socio-cultural adaptation (one's ability to competently manage social interactions in an intercultural context). Positive adaptation consequences have been consistently demonstrated when immigrants pursue an integration acculturation strategy (Main, 2013). In other words, when immigrants both maintain their valued cultural identity as well as make efforts to adopt certain selected behaviours of the dominant host culture, the result is a more positive and healthy transition. Through Parks Canada's branding of their protected landscapes as "quintessentially

Canadian” experiences (Parks Canada, 2014, p. 4) and direct reflections of Canadian identity, this thesis will explore whether and how engagement with these landscapes may contribute to feelings of belonging with and integration into Canadian culture and society for a growing number of immigrants to Canada. This will be explored in the context of the newly established and first-of-its-kind Rouge National Urban Park in the east end of the GTA, due to its potential to engage with immigrant populations and visitors that have traditionally been more consistently constrained from park visitation.

## **1.4 Study Significance**

This research focus is particularly topical in contemporary Canadian society for a variety of factors. As Canada continues to become home for an increasingly growing number of immigrants and visible minority citizens, it is important that these populations see their experiences reflected in these national parks and historic sites. By offering specific recommendations on how best to accommodate changing Canadian demographics within sites that explicitly brand themselves as “something fundamental to our understanding of what it means to be Canadian” (Parks Canada, 2014, p. 13), a spirit of inclusivity may be fostered in a nation that is separated by numerous factors, including geography, history, and increasing diversity. Indeed, a more nuanced understanding of behaviour and visitation patterns of targeted audiences within Rouge National Urban Park may offer key insights into the development of more relevant programming and marketing strategies to better serve the needs of an increasingly diverse clientele.

This study is also particularly relevant considering recent research has suggested a decline in visitation to national parks (Shultis and More, 2011). While visits to national parks

increased rapidly over much of the twentieth century in both Canada and the United States, by the late 1980s, visitation per capita had peaked and began to fall (Shultis and More, 2011). Data and figures from Parks Canada suggest that per capita visitation to Canada's national parks has declined by a significant factor over the past twenty years (Shultis and More, 2011). Between 1995 to 2007, for example, visits to Canada's national parks dropped by nearly 15.2 percent (Shultis and More, 2011). In order to maintain relevance and political support for Parks Canada and the sites that it protects, it is therefore extremely important that visitors to these sites reflect the changing demographics of Canada.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

The overarching research topic of this thesis will be to explore whether and how the marketing and branding of Parks Canada's sites have influenced perception of national parks as symbols of Canadian identity. In order to address this overarching question, the following secondary questions were addressed: 1) whether and how the Parks Canada brand is reaching and resonating with visitors to Rouge National Urban Park, particularly those individuals who identify as immigrants to Canada; and 2) how and to what extent has their engagement with these natural landscapes impacted their perceptions of Canadian identity. This section outlines the methodological approach adopted to address these research questions.

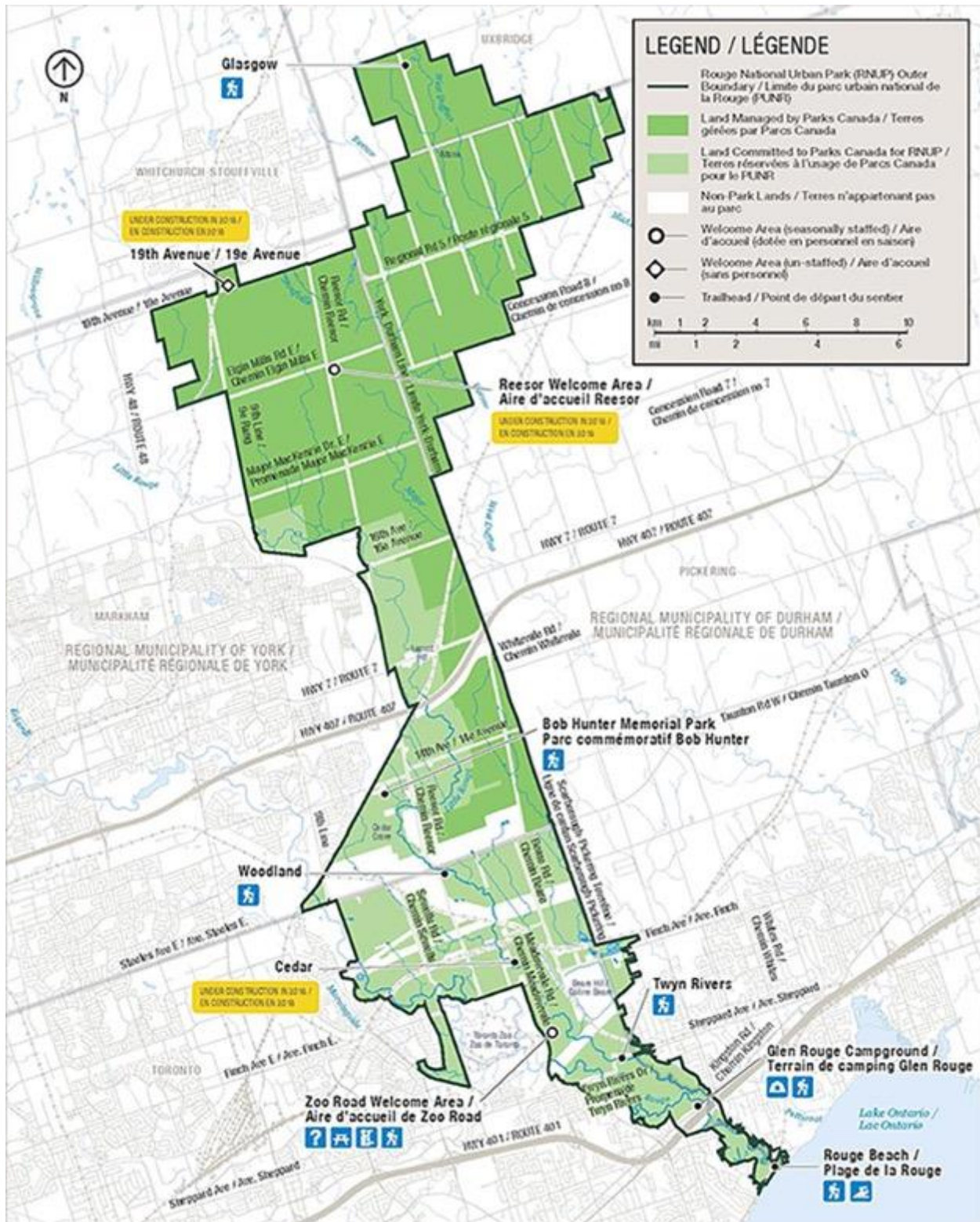


Figure 1: A map of Rouge National Urban Park boundaries and geographical context. Retrieved from the Parks Canada website.

## 1.6 Outline

This thesis is divided into seven (7) chapters as follows:

**CHAPTER 1.0 – Introduction (above):** This section introduces and contextualizes the overarching research question and objectives to be explored in this research project, including a general overview of the Parks Canada Agency, their challenges to engage with an increasingly diverse Canadian population, and an introduction to Rouge National Urban Park.

**CHAPTER 2.0 – Literature Review:** This section builds a theoretical framework and contextualizes this thesis research within existing bodies of literature in place-branding, acculturation, and cultural differentiation in urban park use.

**CHAPTER 3.0 – Rouge National Urban Park:** This section provides a general overview of the history and objectives of Rouge National Urban Park, including its geographical and socio-demographic context within the GTA.

**CHAPTER 4.0 – Methodology:** This section outlines the conceptual framework for this thesis research, and presents a primarily qualitative methodological approach that relies on short interviews and surveys of visitors to Rouge National Urban Park.

**CHAPTER 5.0 – Findings:** This section offers an analysis of the various place-meanings and perceptions that emerged through discussions with visitors to Rouge National Urban Park.

**CHAPTER 6.0 – Discussion and Recommendations:** This section allows for further discussion of the implications of the findings presented in the previous chapter, and offers recommendations as to how these findings can be translated into tangible policy actions. This section also provides an opportunity to reflect on the research process, and offer some concluding thoughts.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Overview**

The purpose of this literature review is to situate and explain the concepts and phenomena at the core of this research study within the larger body of scholarly peer-reviewed literature, and present a theoretical framework for this thesis. Central themes that will be explored include place-branding and the concept of place identity, its relationship to acculturation research and Canadian diversity, and cultural differentiation in the use of urban parks. Ultimately, this literature review will discuss the relatively unexplored connections between these fields of research within the context of Parks Canada and the newly established Rouge National Urban Park.

### **2.2 Place-Branding**

Place-branding is a growing and dynamic body of literature that is being increasingly adopted in planning theory and practice. While the desire for places to differentiate themselves from each other in order to attract visitors, investors, tourists, and other sources of revenue-generation is hardly a new concept – for example, city boosterism (or a city’s self-promotion) in the nineteenth century was foremost a “reaction to the growing competition between places occasioned by the nationalisation and globalisation of markets” (Kavaratis and Ashworth, 2005, p. 506) – only recently have earlier forms of boosterism developed into professional place-marketing practices. In fact, the application of branding techniques particularly to nations and cities has become almost expected in order to remain competitive in the global economy (Anholt, 2010; Dinnie, 2004). Several scholars including Kotler and Gerner (2002) and Olins (2002) argue that the development and management of a brand will be integral national assets in the

upcoming years, while Van Ham (2001) asserts that “the unbranded state has a difficult time attracting economic and political attention. Image and reputation are thus becoming essential parts of the state’s strategic equity” (p. 2-3).

The creation and knowledge in the field of place-branding has since been expanded and strengthened through input from numerous disciplines that are rarely, if ever, discussed in the context of marketing literature, such as sociology, history, and politics (Dinnie, 2004). The multi-disciplinary and continuously evolving nature of this field is such that there are several areas of contention within the literature, and discussion has only recently shifted towards developing strategic theoretical approaches to the practice of place-branding. This section will discuss some areas of consensus as well as conflict in the literature, including a definition of a brand/branding itself, and will contextualize this thesis research within an identity-based theoretical approach to place-branding.

### 2.2.1 The Foundational Literature

Several notable and landmark contributions to the place-branding field emerged particularly around the year 2002 when, as Gertner (2011) notes, the “discipline turned a corner” (p. 114). In an analysis of place-branding literature conducted by Keith Dinnie (2004), three foundational and landmark texts were identified as having made a significant contribution to the emerging discipline. First, Dinnie (2004) discussed the importance of the book by editors Morgan et al. (2002) entitled *Destination Branding: Creating the Unique Destination Proposition*. Featuring contributions from a wide array of professionals and academics active in the field of place-branding, the book offered a multidisciplinary perspective on the untapped potential of places to provide brand opportunities (Dinnie, 2004). Second, both Gertner (2011)

and Dinnie (2004) noted the importance of a special issue on the topic of the ‘Country as Brands’, which appeared in the April 2002 issue of the *Journal of Brand Management*. The special edition included contributions from some of the most prominent professionals in marketing and branding at the time. Finally, in 2003, Simon Anholt published what Dinnie (2004) considered to be an integral contribution to the discipline entitled *Brand New Justice: The Upside of Global Branding*. Within the text, Anholt (2003) proposed that market economies had the ability to brand their national image and exports, which consequently would make themselves more competitive in the global market. He noted specifically that this could turn the forces of global marketing by allowing poorer nations to escape from the status of supplier countries, and potentially transform them into richer and more developed nations. Dinnie’s (2004) analysis demonstrates the extremely complex and interdisciplinary nature of a growing field that continues to transcend the narrow confines of traditional industry sectors.

In a systematic overview of the current state of research in the field of place-marketing and place-branding, Vuignier (2017) reviewed 1172 relevant articles published between 1976 and 2016 in 98 different journals. As a systematic literature review, this study sought to provide an exhaustive summary of the existing published literature regarding place-branding rather than commenting solely on a sample of this subject matter. Accordingly, this study intended to build on and transcend the limits of existing literature reviews (see Gertner, 2011 among others) and, given the multidisciplinary nature of the field and its subject, “move away from a silo mentality in order to successfully gather together articles that address the same phenomenon while using different and at times diverging disciplinary approaches and perspectives” (Vuignier, 2017, p. 450). Indeed, upon conclusion of his review, Vuignier (2017) found that the field was profoundly suffering from a lack of any type of theoretical framework, conceptual clarity, or uniform



definitions. The majority of analyzed articles were predominantly anecdotal, single case studies, or lacked empirical evidence, and there was a noted lack of interest regarding the political and institutional aspects of place branding despite the importance of this context in public management. According to Vuignier (2017), asking very general questions such as ‘Is it possible to market a location?’ or ‘Can branding techniques be applied to places?’ is “no longer valid” as it “essentially ignores the advances that have been made since the 1990s” in numerous articles (p. 466). In order to grow as an area of research and practice, researchers must work towards developing theoretical frameworks and typologies.

#### 2.2.2 Areas of Consensus and Conflict in the Literature

The exact distinctions between place-marketing and place-branding remain somewhat unclear in the literature, as some researchers describe branding as a guideline for marketing, while others view it as one of many available place-marketing tools (Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2013). As a result, a uniform definition of place-branding is yet to be formally adopted and applied within the field. Simon Anholt, as the current Managing Editor of the *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy Journal*, articulated this need to find consensus in a definition of a brand and branding itself in an editorial preface to the sixth volume of the journal, which was dedicated to a discussion in removing some of the confusion in this area. Anholt (2010) and other researchers including Zenker and Braun (2017) have heavily criticized the highly cited definition of a brand from the American Marketing Association, which describes a brand as a “name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller’s good or service as distinct from those of others sellers” (2017). Zenker and Braun (2017) particularly note that this definition is too narrow to adequately encapsulate the high degree of complexity involved in the development

and management of a place brand. Ultimately, without a uniform definition, the relatively new and rapidly developing field of place-branding will be unable to further mature (Anholt, 2010).

One of the most comprehensive definitions of place branding that has been offered, however, defines a place-brand as “a network of associations in the consumers’ mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioural expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values and the general culture of the place’s stakeholders and the overall place design” (Braun and Zenker, 2010, p. 5). This definition is particularly useful, as it encapsulates many areas within the place-branding literature in which there is general consensus. First, it is widely accepted among place-branding researchers that a brand is created within peoples’ minds (Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2013). Rosenbaum-Elliott et al. (2010) note that they “exist in the mind of the market and so brand management is the management of perceptions” (p. 122). Similarly, Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) describe that “the place, its landscape, its atmosphere, and so on are stimuli that evoke associations in the minds of people who encounter them” (p. 70). In other words, while marketing may be viewed as the measurable promotion of a product or service, a brand is more specifically “an academic construct, a psychological process, a phenomenon for observation rather than a discipline to be practiced” (Anholt, 2010, p. 2). The understanding of place-branding as the management of perceptions and associations has become the standard in recent years.

Second, as also noted in the definition offered by Braun and Zenker (2010), there is consensus within place-branding literature that stakeholders are highly important in the brand development process (among others see Morgan et al., 2002; Hankinson, 2004; Aitken and Campelo, 2011; Braun et al., 2013). Hankinson (2004), one of the first to propose a conceptual model for place brands, describes branding in general terms as a multitude of relationships

between the core brand and stakeholders. Interactions and associations with the brand as a result of these relationships may, as Zenker and Braun (2017) add, either reinforce or alter the core brand message. The main target groups in place marketing and branding strategies are generally understood to be residents, tourists, and business (Kotler et al., 1993), and with such different expectations and interests, it is inevitable that there will be discord among the levels of brand awareness and attitude among each stakeholder group. Consideration and involvement of these stakeholder dynamics throughout the development of a place brand is therefore an important step in producing strong place branding results. However, this importance placed on stakeholder engagement is not reflected in current place-branding practice. Kavaratzis (2012) argues that rather than being viewed a necessary factor of successful place-branding, stakeholder participation has been more often considered a “necessary evil” or an inconvenient requirement that must be fulfilled before moving forward with a project. As place-branding literature continues to debate various theoretical frameworks, brand development and communication will require additional critical analysis and conceptualization.

Ultimately, the development of a successful and effective brand is a highly complex process that cannot rely on a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach, as it involves the consideration of numerous ongoing dynamics (Zenker and Braun, 2017). The majority of contributions to the discipline have been predominantly qualitative in nature, in which researchers have offered personal opinions or have discussed issues within case study examples or their own specific experiences (Gertner, 2011). There have been several attempts to formulate a place-branding theoretical framework; however as Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) note, some of these suggestions have been criticized due to a lack of consideration for local context. In other words, although some major steps may be the same, branding development and implementation cannot be

uniformly applied as place brands are highly subjective and rely on place-specific relationships and considerations (Kavaratzis, 2008; Zenker and Braun, 2017). The next section will discuss this need to rethink place brands, particularly in a way that considers geographical context and location-specific place elements, and will emphasize the overall importance of this approach to this thesis research.

### 2.2.3 Place Identity and Place-Branding

In recognition of the complex dynamics involved with developing and implementing a place brand, researchers have recently begun examining place identity and its relationship with place-branding practices. Indeed, as place-branding has generally come to be understood as the management of visual, verbal, and behaviour associations regarding a place in peoples' minds, "a clarification of place identity notion represents a meaningful point for the advancement of refining place branding theory" (Marzano, 2015, p. 41). This section will briefly define and contextualize the concept of place identity within the existing literature, particularly in the fields of urban planning and design and environmental psychology. In general, the literature describes two distinct aspects of place identity: 1) the identity of the place itself, which refers to the various characteristics that make a place distinctive; and 2) the place-based identity in which a person's own identity is informed by and intertwined with the identity of a place. This section will explore both of these distinct aspects of place identity, and will then introduce Kavaratzis and Hatch's (2013) novel proposal of an identity-based approach to place-branding theory, which will inform the conceptual framework of this thesis.

Considerable research has been conducted regarding the first described aspect of place identity within the field of urban planning and urban design, particularly with respect to how the

distinctiveness of a place may take on different meanings or significance to different observers. In his notable work *Good City Form*, for instance, Kevin Lynch (1984) defines place identity as the “extent to which a person can recognize or recall a place as being distinct from other places – as having a vivid, or unique, or at least a particular character of its own” (p. 131). While recognizing that place identity will inevitably vary for different users, Lynch (1984) argues that there are nevertheless certain fundamental commonalities in the experience of the same place by different groups of people. He notes,

“These constancies arise from the common biological basis of our perception and cognition, certain common experiences of the real world (gravity, inertia, shelter, fire, and sharpness, to name a few) and the common cultural norms that may be found among those who habitually use any particular place. Places have a greater or lesser sense, and so do events. Activities and celebrations associated with a location support its perception to the extent that they are themselves perceived as vivid and coherent” (p. 131).

In other words, while spatial form and structure of the place are important, so, too, are the cultures, experiences, and purposes of the people using the space. This contention is supported in the foundational work by David Canter (1977) entitled *The Psychology of Place*, in which he considers the urban environment to be a ‘place’ consisting of three intertwined dimensions: ‘form’ (i.e., spatial form or urban design), ‘activity’ (i.e., the types of activities conducted within the space by the people who use it), and ‘imagination’ (i.e., the cognition and perception, or experiencing the place through the senses). According to this prevailing theory, the quality of a place and its identity is at the centre of these three factors.

Other urban planning literature has specifically explored how specific media and marketing strategies have been used to leverage the distinctiveness of a place into a favourable city image. Peel and Lloyd (2008), for instance, discuss the strategic dilemmas particularly associated with transforming a negative city image, and explore how “contemporary theories of city communications can be used to help understand the potential active interplay between the

physical (infrastructure) and landscape (urban design, green spaces) dimensions of managing urban change and the governance (structural, organisational) and behavioural (strategic planning and leadership) facets of image communication” (p. 507). Similarly, Avraham (2004) evaluates how specific and targeted media strategies can and have been used to divert a city image-related crisis, such as a natural disaster or terrorist attack. One example that is explored is the use of Strategic Image Management (SIM), which is “an ongoing process of researching a place’s image among target populations, clarifying its advantages, examining the factors influencing its image and leading to changes over the years” (Avraham, 2004, p. 473). In both cases, the distinctive characteristics of a place are leveraged into a favourable place brand through an ongoing dialogue with relevant stakeholders, as it is through their perceptions of and interactions with a place that these distinctive characteristics take the form of a place brand.

As an allied discipline to urban planning and design, environmental and social psychology literature also discuss place identity as a core concept, particularly regarding the second described aspect of place identity. In other words, considerable attention within this field has been attributed to the ways in which an individual’s own identity is attributed to and associated with place. Environmental and social psychologists Harold M. Proshansky, Abbe K. Fabian, and Robert Kaminoff were among the first researchers to introduce and explore this concept (see Proshansky, 1978; Proshansky, Fabian, and Kaminoff, 1983). They defined place identity as:

“A sub-structure of the self-identity of the person consisting of, broadly conceived, cognitions about the physical world in which the individual lives. These cognitions represent memories, ideas, feelings, attitudes, values, preferences, meanings, and conceptions of behavior and experience which relate to the variety and complexity of physical settings that define the day-to-day existence of every human being” (Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff, 1983, p. 59).

In other words, the concept of place identity in this context describes the complexity of the relationship between a person and his or her environment, and the various ways in which a place may be viewed as an essential part of that person's identity. Indeed, as noted by Devine-Wright (2009), "physical and spatial contexts are more than mere backdrops to social and psychological phenomena" but rather a key component of the identity formation process (p. 428).

Other scholars have attempted to contribute to the theoretical development of the place identity concept. Korpela (1989), for example, linked the concept of place identity to a process of 'environmental self-regulation' in which the environment acts not only as a mediator in the process of social interaction and regulation but also as an agent in personal identity construction. Therefore, as Williams et al. (1992) described, "in addition to being a resource for satisfying explicitly felt behavioral or experiential goals, a place may be viewed as an essential part of one's self, resulting in strong emotional attachments to places" (p. 32). As similarly discussed in the place-branding literature, it is evident that the concept of place is by no means static; it has no single fixed identity. Rather, a place identity, like a place brand, is constructed based on people's experiences, interactions, and associations with it. As Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) aptly note, there are significant similarities between place identities and place brands, particularly as both are "formed through a complex system of interactions between the individual and the collective, between the physical and the non-physical, between the functional and the emotional, between the internal and the external, and between the organized and the random" (p. 76). Understanding place identities as processes rather than outcomes is essential for their proposed identity-based approach to place-branding.

#### 2.2.4 An Identity-Based Approach to Place-Branding Theory

Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) made a notable and novel contribution to the development of a theoretical framework to place-branding by proposing an approach that recognizes and conceptualizes the relationship between the place brand and place identity. Specifically, the authors take the position that as it currently exists, place-branding literature and practice has adopted “a rather static view on place identity as something that can easily be articulated and communicated for the purpose of branding the place” (Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2013, p. 69). This approach, however, does not adequately consider or address the level of complexity involved within the concept of place identity, and consequently limits the potential of place-branding (Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2013, p. 69). Their contention, which will inform the theoretical framework of this thesis, is ultimately that place branding is inextricably linked to an interactive process of identity construction through an ongoing dialogue between stakeholders and the place brand.

Indeed, in the past decade in particular, there has been a growing emphasis on ensuring that a place, often a city, has a positive image among stakeholders (Avraham, 2004). Growing competition between cities for potential consumers has made it impossible for them to remain indifferent as to how their images are perceived (Avraham, 2004). A city’s image, as defined in Kevin Lynch’s (1960) notable *The Image of the City*, is the “generalized mental picture of the exterior physical world that is held by an individual” and is “the product of both immediate sensation and of the memory of past experience...it is used to interpret information and to guide action” (p. 4).

Aligned with urban design theory and drawing on the work of Hatch and Schultz (2002), Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) also discuss the relationship between a place’s culture, identity, and



image, and the ways in which they are linked through four sub-processes (i.e. expressing, impressing, mirroring, and reflecting). Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) describe these interactions between the four sub-processes as follows:

“The internally informed aspect of identity (culture) is expressed by and expresses facets of the culture of the place, while this new round of internally formed and expressed identity leaves impressions on external stakeholders (images), which return the favour by informing the internally shaped aspects of identity by ‘holding a mirror’ to them. As the conversation continues identity is enriched and the enriched identity is absorbed back into the culture through reflection. Culture thereby changes such that any new cultural understandings will be expressed on the next round of expression from within the place to reframe and additionally inform the identity” (p. 78).

The interplay between these sub-processes is therefore not a linear trajectory, but rather one that is constantly repeating so that one can never form a complete and unchanging understanding of identity. As place-branding has a role to play in all aspects of identity construction, Kavaratzis and Hatch’s (2013) work proposes that branding should be viewed as a facilitator to the identity process rather than the final product of the process. This perspective is in contrast to the popular existing trend in place-branding practice for brand managers to work towards establishing and defining a single brand identity.

Furthermore, Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) emphasize that stakeholders are one of the most important elements of effective place-branding, as it is through their varied interactions with the core brand that meanings associated with a place are produced (i.e., place-meanings). In this sense, as Ryden (1993) notes, a place is much more than simply a geographical location, as it “takes in as well the landscape found at that location and the meanings which people assign to that landscape through the process of living in it” (p. 38). Considering the potentially diverse population groups that will interact with Rouge National Urban Park, this thesis will approach place-branding research from an identity-based perspective in order to build an understanding of how interactions with the Parks Canada brand may inform individual identities, and explore

various place-meanings associated with the park through its proximity to the largest metropolitan area in Canada.

#### 2.2.5 Summary

Through the protection and presentation of “nationally significant examples of Canada’s natural and cultural heritage” (Parks Canada, 2002), the Parks Canada Agency has branded itself representative of a national Canadian identity. Grounded in elements of urban planning, urban design, and environmental psychology, this thesis will rely on the place-branding theoretical framework offered by Kavaratis and Hatch (2013) in order to discuss the effectiveness of the Parks Canada brand in cultivating individual understandings of, and feelings of belonging to, a Canadian identity. This exploration is particularly relevant considering Canada’s increasingly diverse national population, which includes a growing number of immigrants who may be searching for further integration into their society of settlement. As the processes of identity formation and social and psychological development can be directly informed by the ways in which people interact with and are shaped by their surrounding environments, the next section will explore the relationship between place identity and processes of acculturation in a Canadian context.

### **2.3 Acculturation and Canadian Diversity**

The processes by which migrants adapt to their society of settlement have interested researchers in the field of cross-cultural psychology for decades. In particular, scholars have studied the processes of acculturation, which generally refers to “the cultural changes resulting from... [intercultural] encounters, while the concepts of psychological acculturation and

adaptation are employed to refer to the psychological changes and eventual outcomes that occur as a result of individuals experiencing acculturation” (Berry and Sam., 1997, p. 293).

Considering the multicultural nature of the contemporary Canadian population, this section will highlight the ways in which place identity can facilitate feelings of belonging for culturally diverse populations, as well as the role that natural landscapes can play in the construction of a unifying national identity.

### 2.3.1 The Foundational Literature and Framework

The first and enduring definition of acculturation was introduced by Redfield et al. (1936), who stated that “acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different culture come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups” (p. 149) In general terms, acculturation research explores the many ways in which human behaviour, culture, customs, and other social institutions adapt to changes in cultural contexts.

Expanding on the definition provided by Redfield et al. (1936), Graves (1967) made a distinction between acculturation as a group-level or individual phenomenon. At the group-level – the original level of the concept – acculturation represents a change in the culture of the overall collective. In contrast, Graves (1967) argued that acculturation at the individual level, which he termed psychological acculturation, describes the changes that affect an individual’s psychology. According to Berry and Sam (1997), “this distinction between the set of cultural variables that influence the individual on one hand, and the psychological outcomes of these influences on the other, is important in order to examine the systematic relationships between these two sets of variables” (p. 294). Indeed, acculturation research has recently taken more note of the fact that

not all individuals participate in or experience group-level acculturation at the same rate or in the same way. While the changes may be substantial for a group experiencing acculturation, certain changes may affect individuals to varying degrees.

These themes and variables have been particularly explored by Dr. John W. Berry, a pioneer of the field who has led, if not defined, contemporary research in acculturation. In his decades' worth of research, Berry has established a foundational acculturation framework through which he describes various acculturation strategies resulting from intercultural contact. The framework is centered on two key questions that face non-dominant acculturating groups; first, is it important for acculturating groups to maintain their original cultural heritage? And second, is it important for acculturating groups to engage with other cultural groups, including dominant cultures? (Berry, 1974; Berry and Sam, 1997). Figure 2 demonstrates how these key concepts, when dichotomized into 'yes' or 'no' responses, inform a conceptual framework that produces four acculturation strategies known as integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization (Berry and Sam, 1997).

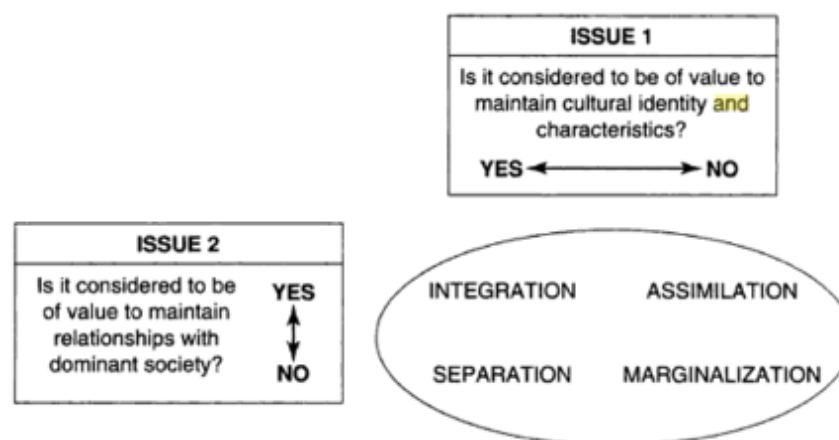


Figure 2: An overview of Berry and Sam's (1997) conceptual framework, which produces four acculturation strategies known as integration, separation, assimilation, and marginalization. The figure was retrieved directly from Berry and Sam (1997).

As described in Figure 2, integration results from importance placed on both the maintenance of one's original cultural identity and intercultural contact with the dominant society (Berry and Sam, 1997). In this case, some original cultural heritage is maintained while an individual simultaneously seeks to integrate themselves into the larger network of a multicultural society. On the other hand, if neither cultural maintenance nor intercultural contact is considered important, marginalization is the result (Berry and Sam, 1997). This may occur for reasons of enforced cultural loss that remove acculturating individuals from their original cultural heritage in addition to discrimination or exclusionary practices that prevent acculturating individuals from building relationships with others through intercultural contact (Berry and Sam, 1997). Separation results from importance placed only on maintaining one's original cultural identity (this may instead be referred to as segregation if such a strategy is imposed on non-dominant groups by the dominant cultural group) (Berry and Sam, 1997). Finally, assimilation may occur when only dominant society relationships are valued in acculturating groups, and original cultural identities are forgotten (Berry and Sam, 1997).

Given a stable environment, acculturation can transition into adaptation, the term used to describe the outcome of an acculturation strategy (Berry, 1992). Drawing from the work developed by Ward (1996), Berry et al. (2006) describe two pronounced means of adapting to acculturation. The first, known as psychological adaptation, "refers to personal well-being and good mental health", while the second, termed sociocultural adaptation, "refers to the individuals' social competence in managing their daily life in the intercultural setting" (Berry et al., 2006, p. 306). Depending on a number of factors, particularly the acculturation strategy, an acculturating individual may experience varying levels of social difficulty or psychological distress. According to a study conducted by Berry et al. (2006) involving immigrant youth, for

instance, found that those individuals who experienced integration had the best psychological and sociocultural adaptation outcomes. The study had important implications for immigrant settlement, and demonstrated that there was a significant relationship between an individual's acculturation strategy and how they ultimately adapt (Berry et al., 2006).

Berry and Sam (1997) note that preference for one of the outlined acculturation strategies may vary depending on a number of factors including context and time period. For example, in more private settings such as within a home or ethnic community, the maintenance of original cultural heritage may be more greatly valued than within broader public contexts such as the workplace or political spheres (Berry and Sam, 1997). In the same vein, there may also be less interest in building relationships with other dominant cultures within private spheres than in more public spaces (Berry and Sam, 1997). Berry and Sam (1997) also note that acculturation strategies are affected by broader national contexts. Multicultural societies, for instance, may allow individuals to adopt a preference for integration, whereas “assimilationist societies” (p. 297) may result in an assimilation strategy as the easiest course of action for acculturating groups. At times, individuals may evidently be constrained from adopting their preferred choice of acculturation strategy. However, as Berry and Sam (1997) also note, individuals may explore numerous strategies throughout the course of their lives, eventually settling on one strategy that is the most personally satisfying. In fact, given a stable environment, acculturation may transition to adaptation, a long-term form of an individual's acculturation experience.

Expanding on this foundational framework, other scholars have explored the social behaviour and applications of acculturation (see Phinney, 1990, 2003; Ward, 2008; Main, 2013 among others). Other researchers have confirmed that the two dimensions of acculturation – the maintenance of one's cultural heritage and adaptation to a dominant host society – are

independent of each other (Ward, 2008; Phinney, 2003). Similarly, Teske and Nelson (1974) clarify that while acculturation and assimilation have frequently been treated interchangeably or as stages of one another, the two concepts are distinguished by the fact that “acculturation is unidirectional, whereas assimilation constitutes a give-and-take relationship” (p. 353).

Researchers have also agreed that integration is both the preferred acculturation strategy for most acculturating groups, as well the strategy that may produce the most adaptive outcomes (Ward, 2008). However, despite the foundational framework outlined by Berry, there are still many areas that require further expansion and exploration. In an effort to “think outside the Berry boxes”, Ward (2008) noted that although “Berry’s model presents us with an orderly framework...it is not clear how people arrive at these orientations, and if they change over time. And while we know that empirically the two dimensions of acculturation are orthogonal, we do not know if acculturating individuals always experience them the same way” (p. 107).

### 2.3.2 Acculturating Groups in Canada

Acculturation processes tend to influence and induce greater change in the group adapting to a dominant host society, and are appropriately referred to as acculturating groups. In recognition of the fact that acculturation strategies vary, researchers have generally identified four different acculturating groups including immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, indigenous peoples, and sojourners (Berry and Sam, 1997; Berry, 1990). Each group represents “variations in the degree of voluntariness, movement, and permanence of contact, all factors that might affect the health of members of the group” (Berry, 1990, p. 243). Voluntary acculturating groups such as immigrants or sojourners, for example, may have a more positive acculturation experience than other acculturating groups who had less voluntary choice in the matter such as

refugees, asylum seekers, and indigenous peoples (Berry, 1990). Additionally, acculturating groups such as sojourners who are only in temporary intercultural contact may experience health problems due to lack of permanent social supports in comparison to settled acculturating groups such as immigrants (Berry, 1990).

Canada is home in abundance to all types of acculturating groups, and there is correspondingly a significant body of literature that explores multiculturalism and acculturation within a Canadian context. Stonefish and Dwantes (2017), for instance, offer a novel effort to quantify indigenous values and acculturation practices. According to the study in which Native Canadians were generally clustered on a continuum ranging from relatively higher attachment to both cultures to comparatively lower attachment to both cultures, sampled indigenous people were found to have a strong attachment to both their heritage as well as the dominant mainstream culture. Costigan and Koryzma (2011) explored acculturation through the lens of immigrant parent efficacy, in which a key conclusion indicated that a reason why “higher Canadian orientation is related to more positive parenting is because of the enhanced parenting confidence that parents experience when they are more involved in the new society” (p. 193). Overall, Canadian-focused acculturation literature reflects the diversity of Canada and explores a range of multicultural issues in order to bridge the gap between public policy, the dominant society, and acculturating groups.

In line with Canada’s value and promotion of multiculturalism as a defining concept of society, Canadian acculturation terminology relies on integration rather than assimilation. In fact, these values of integration, identity, and multiculturalism are codified in the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* within the Multiculturalism Policy for Canada, of which Frideres (1997) notes, has “shifted to forging unity from diversity, building a national identity and trying to



develop the ‘economic advantage’ of being Canadian” (p. 105). As outlined in the following sections, some of the basic objectives of this policy are identity maintenance and equal opportunity:

- “3(1) It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada to
- (a) Recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage;
  - (b) Recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of Canada’s future;
  - (c) Promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society and assist them in the elimination of any barrier to that participation”

Considering Parks Canada’s connection to a Canadian identity through its branding and its status as an agency of the federal government, this policy reinforces the importance of multiculturalism and ensuring that “individuals and communities of all origins” have equal access to “all aspects of Canadian society”, such as national parks.

### 2.3.3 Place Identity and Sense of Belonging

As discussed in Section 2.2, one’s surrounding environment has a direct and important role to play in an individual’s identity formation process. Williams et al. (1992) notes, “physical space becomes place when we attach meaning to a particular geographic locale, be it a chair in the living room; one’s home, neighborhood, city, or nation; or a variety of spaces in between” (p. 31). In other words, the various ways in which people relate to and interact with different places transforms geographic locations to spaces endowed with value and various meanings. In the context of acculturation, such a psychological and physical connection to place has important implications for the ways in which acculturating groups adapt to a dominant host society.

Ethnic neighbourhoods and enclaves, for example, are significant examples of the relationship between place and identities. As areas of relatively stable and homogenous culture norms, ethnic neighbourhoods or enclaves demonstrate “the role that place plays in the maintenance and reconstruction of identity and subsequent consequences for the emotional bonds formed” (Main, 2013, p. 292). In other words, such connections offer acculturating groups, namely immigrants, the opportunity to both remain connected to their heritage that they left behind, while also building attachments to new places in their society of settlement. In the context of European integration and growing diversity, Gospodini (2004) explores how “specific aspects of urban morphology such as built heritage and the innovative design of space may contribute to place identity” (p. 255) by offering various diverse population groups a new common terrain for experiencing and adapting to new forms of space. The relationship between an individual and their surroundings has also been explored through the urban design and environmental psychology concept of place attachment, which is generally understood to be “a multifaceted concept that characterizes bonding between individuals and their important places” (Scannel and Gifford, 2010, p. 1). As discussed by Ujang (2009), place attachment integrates the physical and psychological components of a place, and is expressed through “the interplay of affects and emotions, knowledge and beliefs, and behavior and actions” (p. 157). Influenced by cultural and experience, place attachment develops when a place is well-identified and determined to be significant by the users for providing fulfillment of their functional needs and for developing and maintaining a self-identity or group-identity (Ujang, 2009). In this sense, it is evident that developing bonds with their surrounding urban form and environment is highly important for acculturating groups in order to ensure a positive integration into their host society.

Parks Canada has employed language that seeks to brand their protected landscapes as representations of Canadian identity, and it is important that immigrants and other acculturating groups see their experiences reflected in the spirit and presentation of these national spaces. In doing so, Parks Canada may have the potential to help facilitate adaptation processes for acculturating groups who may be searching for further integration into their society of settlement, particularly through experiences of nature and natural environments.

#### 2.3.4 Natural Landscapes and National Identity

Indeed, while scholarly discussion regarding national identity and nationalism has been extensively explored in more recent years, there has been little attention devoted to the significance of natural environments in creating definitions of nationhood (Kaufmann and Zimmer, 1998). Attempts at establishing links between culture and nature extend beyond the contemporary moment to as far back as antiquity, where natural environments were transformed into collective means of identification (Kaufmann and Zimmer, 1998). As Kaufmann and Zimmer (1998) note, “when Tacitus, in the first century AD, described the Germanic tribes as rude and primitive, he mentioned how closely tied they were to the Teutonic woods as evidence of his claim” (p. 483). It was not until the sixteenth century, however, during a period marked by European territorial consolidation and growing national consciousness, that there was a societal shift in understanding from nature to the more specific notion of ‘landscape’ (Schama, 1995).

As a more modern example, Kaufman and Zimmer (1998) have also examined the identity-forming role of landscape depictions in Canada and Switzerland. They concluded that through communal narrative and linking the notions of wild landscape and the Romantic ideal of rugged nature, landscapes may act as forces capable of determining national identity and can be

transformed into a “homeland” for a nation (p. 503). Similarly, Olwig (2016) insightfully captures the importance of this unity through nature, particularly in defining the character of a nation and integrating a people separated by a number of factors. He notes:

“Because modern nation-states are largely made up of an amalgamation of ethnicities and cultures living within a large territorial entity, they constitute an ‘imagined community’ (Anderson, 1991) in which it is not bonds of family, ethnicity or spatial propinquity that tie people together, but the notion of a shared national identity rooted in abstractions such as ‘nature’. If, however, people can be convinced that the fact of having lived one’s life within the borders of a given nation-state means that one’s identity has been shaped by the nature within those bounds, it is possible to create a unified national identity as part of an imagined national community that, simultaneously, can be opposed to the identities of other nations” (Olwig, 2016, p. 73).

Despite the numerous factors that may divide a nation, including ethnicity, class, and geography, researchers have evidently noted that an organic link exists between a people and its landscape. This connection is particularly important in a nation such as Canada, where the imagery of nature and wilderness in a mythical “Great White North” has historically adopted an important role in the conceptualization of a national identity (Baldwin et al., 2011). Agencies such as Parks Canada who managed “nationally significant” (Parks Canada, 2002) examples of Canadian wilderness therefore have tremendous potential influence on how the Canadian people as well as international audiences understand what it means to be Canadian. Similar to the way in which Benedict Anderson (2016), in his notable work *Imagined Communities*, makes the argument that initiatives such as the ‘museum’, the ‘map’ and the ‘census’ “profoundly shaped the way in which the colonial state imagined its dominion” (p. 163-4), this thesis considers that Canada’s national park scheme may have been used in a similar way to create and reinforce a national identity and sense of belonging to a Canadian ‘dominion’. This thesis therefore further proposes that there may be an unexplored link between place-branding and acculturation research. Specifically, this thesis explores the potential role of branded landscapes protected by Parks

Canada to influence visitor perception of Canadian identity, particularly within acculturating groups such as immigrants.

### 2.3.5 Summary

Acculturation is an increasingly growing and relevant field of research considering the current dynamics of populations in Canada and across North America. Numerous researchers, notably John Berry among others, have explored the ways in which acculturating groups adapt to dominant host society cultures, and have offered a foundational theoretical framework to describe the various processes of this transition. This thesis explores elements of acculturation in the context of national parks, particularly within landscapes protected by the Parks Canada Agency. Specifically, this research examines whether and how experiencing landscapes branded as “quintessentially Canadian” sites (Parks Canada, 2014, p. 4) may influence acculturation strategies or general perceptions of Canadian identity within acculturating groups. National and urban parks, however, have traditionally been spaces in which certain populations have been underrepresented due to conflicts of equality, access, and inclusion (Main, 2013). The next section will explore national and urban parks as contested spaces, and will discuss several considerations related to cultural differentiation in urban park use.

## 2.4 Cultural Differentiation in Urban Park Use

The concept of national parks first emerged in the United States as a way to ensure “natural wonders” were “held in trust for all people for all time” (Runte, 1997, p. 1). However, as demonstrated in the growing body literature exploring leisure constraints, numerous barriers exist that prevent ‘all people’ from enjoying this land that was ‘held in trust’ for them. In

particular, research shows that segments of the population are more constrained from visiting park spaces than others, notably racial and ethnic minority groups. In a meta-analysis of 21 North American studies that explored barriers and constraints impacting park visitation, Zanon et al. (2013) noted that people with non-Caucasian backgrounds were among the groups most constrained from visiting parks. Mowen et al. (2005), in a Northeast Ohio study of change and stability in park visitation constraints over a ten-year period, noted that this unequal access to parks has remained consistent across the years. Despite being public goods, it is evident that parks currently face several barriers to equal access for all members of an increasingly diverse society.

Urban parks have emerged as important social and ecological features on the urban landscape, and have become particularly important players in the discussion of park use among diverse populations (Hester et al., 1999). Due to their proximity to people and development, urban parks have the potential to host higher levels of recreation use to a wide diversity of audiences. As a result, research to better identify specific needs and values of underrepresented user groups is necessary in order to simultaneously manage the socio-ecological system and produce opportunities for equal and inclusive user access (Kil et al., 2012). As Main (2013) notes, “without an understanding of the importance of public spaces to the communities who use them, we run the risk of interfering, threatening, and even destroying their significance and the multitude of benefits that accrue for the people who use such spaces” (p. 291). This section will briefly discuss the categorization of park visitors into ‘traditional’ and ‘non-traditional’ users, various constraints that particularly affect culturally diverse clientele, and will briefly connect the role of outdoor marketing to visitation barriers.

#### 2.4.1 ‘Traditional’ and ‘Non-Traditional’ Park Users

It is evident in the literature that certain population groups are more represented in park spaces than others. In recognition of this observation, Hester et al. (1999) categorized users into ‘traditional’ and ‘non-traditional’ groups. The categories were developed based on relationships between culture and park activities of visitors to parks. According to these definitions, traditional users were more typically white, affluent, and enjoyed recreational activities such as hiking and biking in small groups (Hester et al., 1999). In contrast, non-traditional users were described as generally lower income individuals who preferred to participate in large-group concentrated activities (Hester et al. 1999). The categorization of users into groups that are traditionally represented as well as underrepresented in park spaces speaks to significant conflicts of equality, access, and constraints to visitation. Various studies that examine park visitation constraints have identified that non-traditional users are more consistently constrained than other populations, due to constraints such as transportation, knowledge and cost (see Zanon et al., 2013; Doucouliagos and Hall, 2010; Crawford and Godbey, 1987 among others). Despite extensive American research that has been conducted on the subject of visitation constraints among non-traditional users, there is a lack of such research in the Canadian context. Considering the increasing diversity within Canada, the need to better understand how different populations use spaces such as urban parks is an important and under-explored field of research, and the unprecedented imitative of Rouge National Urban Park offers an opportunity to contribute to this gap.

Indeed, various studies have explored the ways in which immigrants may find a sense of belonging and rootedness in their new society of settlement at least partially through place-based interactions with spaces such as urban parks (see Main, 2013; Kil et al., 2012 among others). The use of urban park spaces by potentially new and highly diverse populations creates a number of

new questions regarding how they should be managed and designed in order to best serve these communities (Main, 2013). As Main (2013) notes, “without an understanding of the importance of public spaces to the communities who use them, we run the risk of interfering, threatening, and even destroying their significance and the multitude of benefits that accrue for the people who use such spaces” (p. 291). As previously discussed, there is extensive research pertaining to the ways in which diverse populations attach meaning to various places, particularly through practices such as place attachment (the emotional bonds between people and place) and place-based identity (the role that places may play in defining an individual or group’s own sense of identity). However, very limited research has been conducted pertaining to the full range of meanings that are associated with a place, particularly within the context of neighbourhoods experiencing significant population changes and growing cultural diversity (Main, 2013). The limited scholarship in this area has produced a need for studies to explore a broader range of place types and place meanings, particularly within the relatively unexplored spaces of urban parks. Considering the ways in which place has been used by acculturating populations to find a sense of belonging within their society of settlement, these studies may offer important insights into how to accommodate and support this diverse clientele. This thesis will measure a full range of place-meanings from Rouge National Urban Park in order to assess how engagement with Canada’s first-ever national urban park has contributed to a sense of belonging within Canada, particularly as being a national park under management of Parks Canada, it has been branded a “quintessentially Canadian” (Parks Canada, 2014) landscape.



#### 2.4.2 Marketing and the Racialized Outdoor Identity

As discussed, there is an extensive body of literature that explores constraints to park visitation based on cultural barriers. Martin (2004), for example, provides evidence of the emergence of a racialized outdoor identity that was partly created and rigorously perpetuated by advertising in outdoor magazines. In his study of American marketing and advertising, he noted that advertisements related to outdoor activities rarely featured Black models; instead, these models were confined to urban and suburban environments (Martin, 2004). Similarly, Finney (2014) examines the ways in which popular media has perpetuated a racialized identity of the great outdoors in America by excluding African-Americans and other minority groups from the environmental movement in general. She extends this discussion to issues outside of wilderness recreation, connecting the importance of equity in outdoor leisure marketing to equity in other issues of housing, employment, and education for non-dominant groups in society (Finney, 2014). This form of racism embedded in our understanding of natural landscapes is further explored by Baldwin et al. (2011) in their book *Rethinking the Great White North: Race, Nature, and the Historical Geographies of Whiteness in Canada*. In their work, Baldwin et al. (2011) consider the ways in which the Canadian national identity is tied to the idea and imagery of a “Great White North” that, while seemingly innocent, holds seeds of racist thinking. This will be an important theme to consider within this thesis research as it highlights the important relationship between marketing of place and the ways in which they are used. In particular, the marketing of Rouge National Urban Park is significant as a key target audience is culturally diverse clientele, who need to see their own experiences reflected in the spirit and presentation of the park, both on-site and in promotional representations.

### 2.4.3 Summary

In summary, there has been an extensive exploration in recent literature regarding leisure constraints and cultural differentiation in the use of parks. Urban parks in particular, due to their proximity to increasingly diverse populations and encroaching development, have become contested space in the urban landscape. They have become metaphorical battlegrounds where conflicts in access, equality, and inclusivity have been fought. Visitation constraints such as those related to transportation, cost, and site awareness have been consistently demonstrated to impact culturally diverse populations more severely than others. Rouge National Urban Park, due to its proximity to such diverse populations that have traditionally been underrepresented in park spaces, has the potential to explore these constraints and mitigation strategies in a Canadian context.

## 2.5 Conclusion and Conceptual Framework

The objective of this literature review was to identify and explore central themes within the existing literature related to place-branding and place identity, acculturation, and cultural differentiation in urban park use. Based on the findings from this review, Figure 3 provides an overview of key findings and relationships between themes that were extracted from the literature of each discipline. It also highlights areas for further exploration that will be addressed in this research.

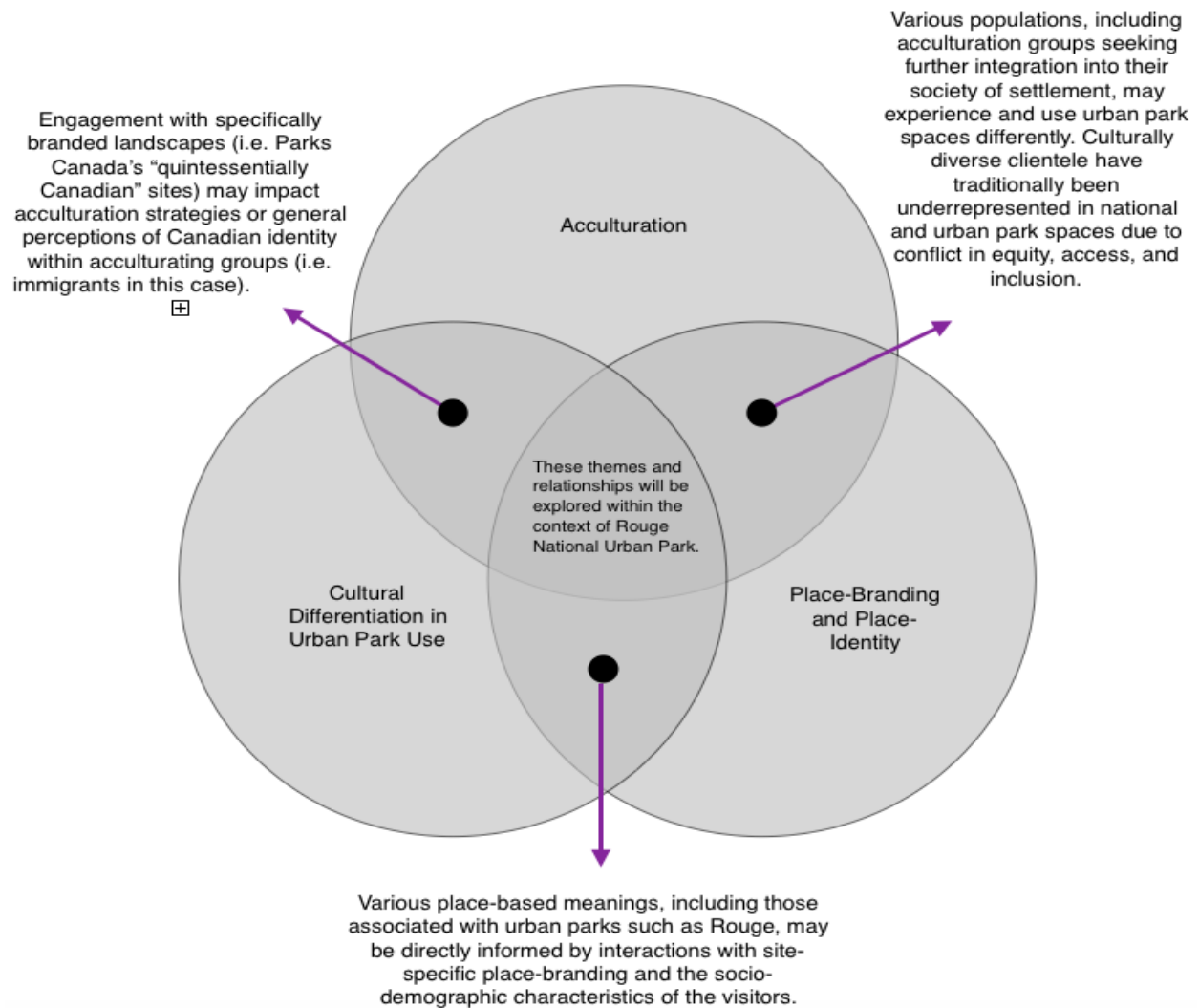


Figure 3: An overview of the conceptual framework for this thesis demonstrating the various relationships that will be explored between disciplines through this research.

Overall, this thesis is grounded in a conceptual framework that considers the relationships between three overarching bodies of research. In particular, it relies on the identity-based approach to place-branding proposed by Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013), in which the relationship between the place brand and place identity is recognized and conceptualized. Using this framework, this thesis will consider whether and how Parks Canada's place-branding is linked to and informed by an interactive process of identity construction among its visitors, particularly immigrants to Canada who may be searching for further integration into their society of settlement.

### 3.0 Rouge National Urban Park

*The story of Rouge National Urban Park is a truly Canadian story. It spans nearly 10,000 years and offers valuable insights into how these lands provided all the essentials our ancestors – and our country – needed to thrive. From Aboriginal settlements and travel routes, to early pioneer communities and agriculture, to 20<sup>th</sup> century recreational use, and more recent efforts to transform this place into a park, Rouge National Urban Park is rich in natural and cultural heritage values.*

Rouge National Urban Park Draft Management Plan (2014, p. 4)

#### 3.1 A Brief History and Overview of Rouge National Urban Park

On April 23, 2015, the *Rouge National Urban Park Act* received Royal Assent from the Governor General, which, upon coming into force by Order-in-Council on May 15, 2015, formally established Rouge National Urban Park as the “newest member of the Parks Canada family” (Parks Canada, 2014, p. 2). While the *Act* formally recognized Rouge as a “new type of federal protected area” (*Rouge National Urban Park Act*, 2015, “Summary”, para. 1), the conservation of the Rouge Valley in the GTA was a vision that had existed decades prior to federal nationalization efforts. In 1975, for instance, a group of local citizens concerned about the environmental impacts of various development projects formed a group called Save the Rouge Valley System (SRVS). The group’s primary objective was the creation of a national park in the Rouge River Valley, and they were vocal in their opposition to several local development projects in the region. For example, SRVS was a key objector in the 2000 “landmark battle” against Richmond Hill, in which the Town intended to “convert twenty-eight hundred hectares of agricultural lands and greenspace on the Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM) into seventeen thousand new housing units” (Wekerle et al., 2009, p. 279).

The original Rouge Park that was established in 1995 by the Province of Ontario was borne out of this political activism and public concern for the protection of the Rouge River

Valley (Wilson, 2012). The park was managed by the former Rouge Park Alliance, which was a voluntary partnership of 13 organizations including representation from all levels of government and the SVRS (Wilson, 2012; City of Toronto, 2018). In 2010, the Rouge Park Alliance commissioned a governance review in order to identify potential options in governance, funding, and organization models for Rouge Park (StrategyCorp Hemson Consulting, 2010). The report found that “the Alliance is facing a number of serious challenges and limitations” and that both Rouge Park and the Alliance had “reached a critical juncture in their evolution” (StrategyCorp Hemson Consulting, 2010, p. 4). According to the report,

“The Rouge Park is a remarkable environmental asset. Yet, it is even more remarkable for what it could be: a gateway to wilderness park experiences within an hour’s drive of almost 7 million Canadians – and accessible by public transit. To realize this vision, change is required. The Rouge Park needs new funding commitments and a new structure to give it a proper leadership and accountability structure” (StrategyCorp Hemson Consulting, 2010, p. 8).

The report recognized the park’s potential to provide Parks Canada with “opportunities to better connect its mandate and programs to the Greater Toronto Area” (StrategyCorp Hemson Consulting, 2010, p. 12) and ultimately recommended that Rouge Park be designated as Canada’s first national urban park. This recommendation was adopted in 2011 when, in the Speech from the Throne, the Government of Canada officially committed to establishing the nation’s first national urban park in the Rouge Valley.

Currently, a total of 79.1km<sup>2</sup> of land overlapping the Cities of Toronto, Markham, and Pickering and the Township of Uxbridge has been promised to Rouge National Urban Park, and Parks Canada currently manages or has a direct interest in more than eighty percent of these lands. The park is a nationally significant ecological area for a number of reasons including its position on the edge of the Carolinian Zone, a rare ecosystem that only covers less than one percent of Canada’s land mass (Wilson, 2012). Additionally, the Rouge Watershed and Rouge

National Urban Park are both specially recognized in the 2017 Ontario Greenbelt Plan (Section 3.2.7) for their role in providing an ecological and contiguous corridor between Lake Ontario and the Oak Ridges Moraine in the GTA. The ecological landscape of the park is also unique in that it is home to more than 1,700 plant and animal species, over 10,000 years of human history and culture, and some of the most fertile farming land in Canada. In fact, more than fifty percent of the park area is covered by farms, some of which have existed in the Rouge Valley since 1799 (Parks Canada, 2014).

According to Parks Canada, the diversity of “locally important and quintessentially Canadian” landscapes protected within Rouge National Urban Park is one of the reasons “why so many residents of the GTA have a connection with this special place” (Parks Canada, 2014, p. 4). Urban and new Canadian audiences in Canada’s largest cities, including the GTA, have been identified by Parks Canada as an underrepresented audience in the Agency’s visitor base (Parks Canada, 2017b). As the first of its kind, Rouge National Urban park “provides a unique opportunity to connect urban Canadians to their natural and cultural heritage and protects the park’s natural ecosystems and cultural landscapes, as well as maintaining its native and wildlife and the health of those ecosystems” (Parks Canada, 2017b). The next section will briefly discuss and visually explore the community composition surrounding the park, with a particular emphasis on immigrant populations in the east end of the GTA.

### **3.2 Community Context and Population Dynamics**

Geographically, Rouge National Urban Park is primarily situated within the regional municipalities of Durham and York, as well as the City of Toronto. Figure 4 visually situates Rouge National Urban Park within these municipalities, and demonstrates the composition of

immigrant populations in the immediately surrounding areas. In Durham, for instance, 150,885 immigrants were reported in 2016, which represented approximately 23% of the total regional population. In the City of Markham and the Township of Uxbridge, the boundaries of which overlap directly with Rouge National Urban Park, are home to 31,155 immigrants and 2,660 immigrants respectively. Durham Region has increased in population by 6.2% since 2011.

The Region of York has also experienced population growth between 2011 and 2016. In 2016, a total of 515,225 immigrants were reported in the Region, which represented approximately 46% of the total population. The City of Markham in particular, which overlaps directly with park boundaries, reported a total of 192,220 immigrants in 2016. The northern end of the park also directly abuts the Township of Whitchurch-Stouffville, one of the fastest growing municipalities in the Region (21.8% growth between 2011 and 2016). In 2016, the Township of Whitchurch-Stouffville reported 14,740 immigrants.

Finally, the City of Toronto continues to maintain its reputation as the most diverse metropolitan area in Canada. In 2016, Toronto was home to 1,266,005 immigrants, which represented nearly half (approximately 47%) of the total population of the City. In general, the east end of the GTA has experienced significant transformations in population dynamics over the past several decades. In the contemporary context, the areas surrounding Rouge National Urban Park are home to Canadians of all diverse backgrounds, including significant populations with South Asian, East Asian, Southeast Asian, and Caribbean origins (Finkelstein, 2018). Overall, Rouge National Urban Park is a celebration of Canadian diversity both in the landscapes that it protects and the growing communities that it has the unique opportunity to serve.

## Immigrant Populations Immediately Surrounding Rouge National Urban Park

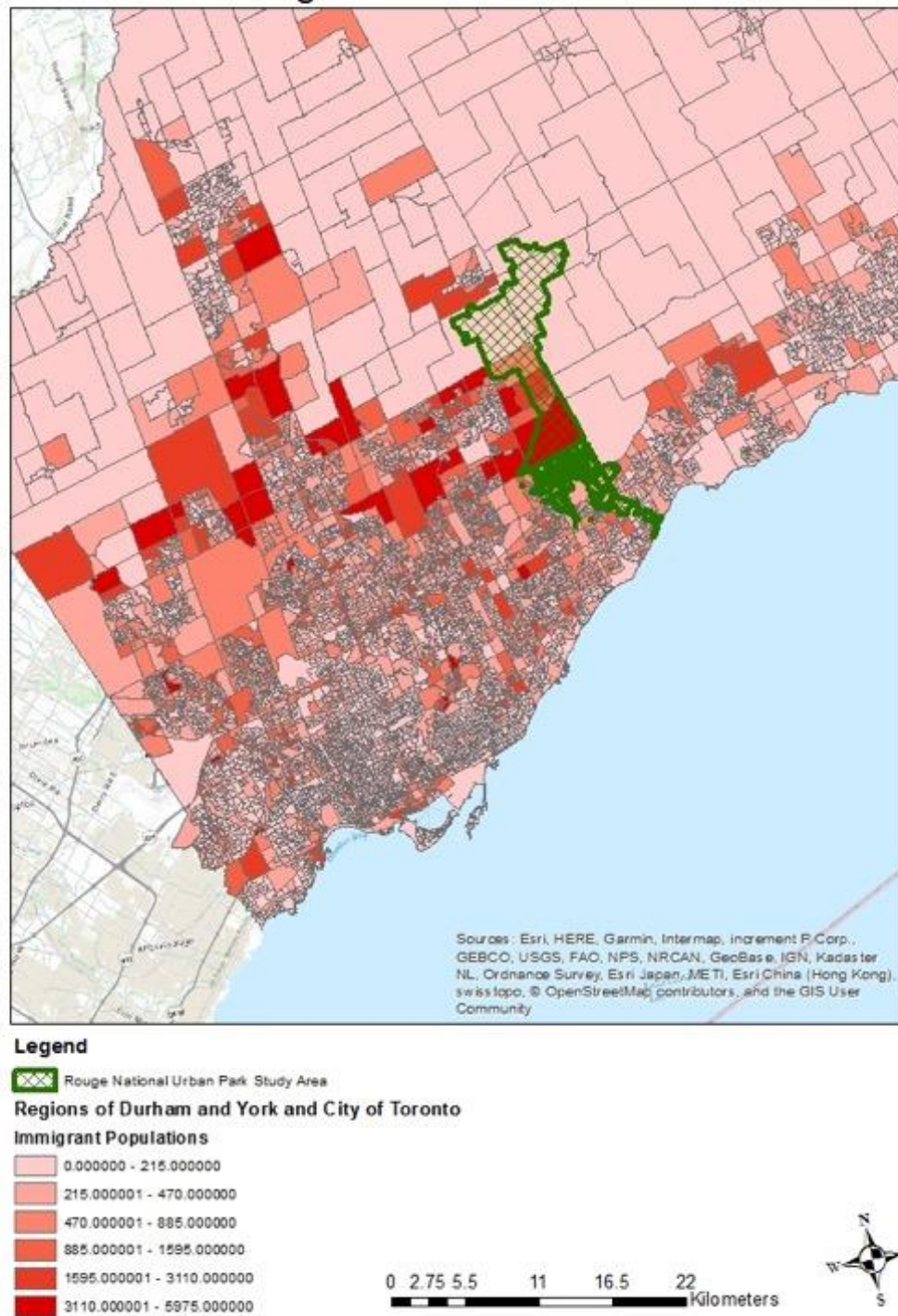


Figure 4: Immigrant populations within areas surrounding Rouge National Urban Park based on data obtained from the 2016 Census.



### **3.3 Summary of Case Study Selection**

In summary, considering the nature of the research questions, Rouge National Urban Park in the east end of the GTA was selected as the case study for this project due to a number of context-specific reasons, including: 1) its proximity to the largest and most culturally diverse metropolitan centre in Canada; 2) its subsequent potential to engage with audiences that have traditionally been underrepresented in Parks Canada sites and in national parks across North America; 3) the fact that it is the first-ever national urban park in Canada; and 4) the lack of existing research exploring the impacts of such a novel Parks Canada venture. The following chapter will outline the methodological approach employed to engage with visitors within the park, and will further elaborate on the appropriateness of adopting a case study approach to address the research questions.

## **4.0 Methodology**

### **4.1 Overview**

The following chapter will reintroduce the research questions being investigated in this thesis research, and will provide a justification for the approach and case study area selected to address these research questions. The selected research methods will also be introduced, which consisted primarily of semi-structured interviews and quantitative surveys conducted with visitors to Rouge National Urban Park. Further details regarding recruitment, interview format, data analysis, and ethical considerations will also be outlined below, and reflections on study challenges and limitations will be discussed.

### **4.2 Research Philosophy**

The nature of the research questions, which are more concerned with aspects of “the what, how, when, where, and why” rather than “counts and measures” (Berg and Lune, 2012, p. 3), provided the foundation for a qualitative approach to the research design that was applied within a case study of Rouge National Urban Park. Taylor et al. (2015) describe the importance of qualitative research in offering understandings of people from their own perspectives and frames of references, and allows a researcher to “empathize and identify with the people they study in order to understand how these people see things” (p. 86). The qualitative data analyzed in this thesis research was collected from the participants’ own setting and interpreted according to location-specific conditions.

This approach was selected due to several important benefits, including the fact that it allows the researcher to understand the context and reasoning for why individuals maintain certain perceptions or beliefs. Indeed, as Blumer (1969) observes,

“To try and catch the interpretive process by remaining aloof as a co-called ‘objective’ observer and refusing to take the role of the acting unit is to risk the worst kind of subjectivism – the objective observer is likely to fill in the process of interpretation with his own surmises in place of catching the process as it occurs in the experience of the acting unit which uses it” (p. 86).

In the case of investigating national parks as representative landscapes of national identity, exploring public perception of these spaces through qualitatively-driven methods will allow the researcher to measure place-meanings associated with Rouge National Urban Park and of the Parks Canada brand within the context of these spaces. The exploratory approach will attempt to “suspend or set aside” the researchers’ own perspectives and worldview in order to develop context-specific conclusions regarding the meaning visitors attach to Rouge National Urban Park (Taylor et al., 2015, p. 86).

Furthermore, the research is grounded in a constructivist interpretive research paradigm, which considers knowledge to be the product of subjective human interpretations of objective reality and lived experiences. According to Fosnot (2013), constructivist theory “describes knowledge not as truths to be transmitted or discovered, but as emergent, developmental, non-objective, viable constructed explanations by humans engaged in meaning-making in cultural and social communities of discourse” (p. 1). Considering that the topic under investigation is attempting to explore various place-meanings and perceptions associated with Rouge National Urban Park and the Parks Canada brand from diverse audiences, a constructivist philosophy was considered to be highly appropriate. While the ontology of this research is based on the premise that knowledge is the product of multiple socially constructed realities, the reciprocal epistemological approach is that “it is neither possible nor necessarily desirable for research to establish a value-free objectivity” (Groat and Wang, 2002, p. 33). This thesis research values the dynamics between the researcher and participant, and is explicit in recognizing the role of that

their own values and cultural background can play in the organization and interpretation of their findings (Groat and Wang, 2002). The sections below outline the research methods that were used to employ this research philosophy through engagement with visitors to Rouge National Urban Park.

### **4.3 Research Questions**

As demonstrated in the literature review chapter, a potentially unexplored link exists between place-branding and acculturation within the planning field. This thesis aims to address this gap in the literature through an exploration of Parks Canada, particularly whether and how the marketing and branding of Parks Canada's sites have influenced perceptions of national parks as symbols of Canadian identity. In order to address this overarching question, the following secondary questions were addressed: 1) whether and how the Parks Canada brand is reaching and resonating with visitors to Rouge National Urban Park, particularly those individuals who identify as immigrants to Canada; and 2) how and to what extent has their engagement with these natural landscapes impacted their perceptions of Canadian identity. This section outlines the methodological approach adopted to address these research questions.

### **4.4 Operationalizing the Research Questions**

In order to investigate the research topic, the research questions were operationalized into variables that were measured through research methods that are outlined in the following sections. In general, the variables used to address these questions related to place-based meanings associated with Rouge National Urban Park as well as general perceptions of the Parks

Canada brand, both of which may differ depending on a participant's socio-demographic background and previous engagement with Parks Canada's sites and promotional materials.

#### 4.4.1 Place-Based Meanings of Rouge National Urban Park

Several scholars including Main (2013) and Kil et al. (2012) have explored the ways in which place-based meanings impact a visitor's interactions with and experiences of an urban park. In particular, the study conducted by Main (2013) explored meanings associated with an urban public space in a Latino and immigrant neighborhood of Los Angeles, California through the use of short interviews, which asked both open-ended questions followed by statements to gauge emotional responses to the park (Main, 2013). Variables were developed based on quantitative studies that tested attachment to place. However, unlike other quantitative studies, Main (2013) used the statements to gauge how and to what extent participants shared feelings and meanings rather than using the data primarily to "measure, compare, and determine predictors of attachments" (p. 294). As Rouge National Urban Park is uniquely located within such close proximity to such a densely populated urban center and has the potential to engage with non-traditional users of national parks, the questions used in this study conducted by Main (2013) seemed appropriately transferable for this context as a means to assess place-based meanings. Table 1 outlines all of the qualitative questions used in this thesis to assess place-based meanings, the majority of which were adapted directly from Main's (2013) study. It also includes details on the variables that were measured through each of the questions, as well as the various themes and codes that emerged in the assessment of participant responses.

*Table 1: Open-ended qualitative research questions and corresponding variables related to place-meanings associated with Rouge National Urban Park.*

Qualitative Interview Questions	Variable		Indicator
	What was measured?	Details	
1. What do you know about Rouge National urban Park?	Knowledge of park	Considering the relatively new ‘national park’ status and the efforts of Parks Canada to increase awareness of both Rouge National Urban Park and the Agency in general, this question was intended to assess the level of knowledge participants held of the park. This question was developed based on feedback from management staff at Rouge National Urban Park.	This question broadly assessed what participants knew about the park, particularly their awareness of the park’s history and management. If the participant’s response included some of the following codes, they were considered to have a high level of knowledge: ‘national urban park’, ‘Parks Canada’, ‘largest urban park in North America’. Other common codes that emerged pertained to physical characteristics of the park (e.g. near Lake Ontario), or accessibility of the park (e.g. close to home, free shuttle bus). Respondents who indicated they knew nothing of the park were also recorded.
2. Why do you visit the park?	Motivation for park visitation	This question specifically addresses the motivation piece about why a respondent is visiting a national park. The question offers a flexible approach to assessing the level of attachment to the site, reasons for visiting, and awareness and perception of the Parks Canada brand.	Examples of themes that emerged include leisure activities (e.g. experience nature, fishing, dog walking, etc.), physical activities (e.g. hiking, walking, yoga, etc.), and sense of escape (e.g. escape traffic, work, Toronto, social media, etc.).
3. What do you like the most about the park?	Positive place attachment	This question was intended to assess the aspects of place-meaning that respondents positively	Examples of themes that emerged include preservation efforts (e.g. non-manicured,

		associate with Rouge National Urban Park. It directly addresses positive perceptions of the space and what makes the site important or attractive to the respondent.	untouched, organic, raw nature, non-commercial, etc.), and health and well-being (e.g. calming, peaceful, meditation, quiet, etc.).
4. What do you like the least about the park?	Negative place attachment	This question allows the respondent to address negative place-meanings in addition to voicing positive meanings they associate with the park. Several studies have confirmed negative associations with parks regarding issues of race and ethnicity, including feelings of exclusion in park spaces (see Main, 2013 and Byrne and Wolch, 2009 among others).	Examples of themes that emerged include parking issues (e.g. repairs to parking lots, more parking, clearing marking for parking, etc.), and cleanliness (e.g. littering, garbage, people leaving their mark on the park, etc.).
5. What about the park would you like to change?	Suggestions for park improvements	This question allows the respondent to reflect on potentially negatively perceived aspects of the park and offer recommendations for improvement from their perspective. It was also intended to directly produce applicable recommendations for park management as to how to enhance the park experience for diverse clientele (see Gobster, 2002).	Examples of themes that emerged include improved signage (e.g. wayfinding resources on trails, signage in different languages, sign for the park, etc.) and increased connectivity (e.g. more trails, better connected trail network through entire park, etc.).
6. With whom do you visit the park?	Interpersonal relationships and uses within park	This question further addresses how respondents interact with park spaces, particularly as empirical studies have demonstrated how racially diverse clientele tend to use spaces differently in this regard.	Responses fell within three primary categories: friends, family, and solitary exploration within the park.

7. What types of activities do you currently enjoy in the park?	Park uses and place-dependence	This question addresses how participants interact with the park by capturing the variety of activities in which they participate while on-site. This question was provided directly by management staff at Rouge National Urban Park.	Themes that emerged include leisure activities (e.g. fishing, playing cards, photography, drawing, etc.) and physical activities (e.g. biking, hiking, walking, running, sports, etc.). Participants who indicated they enjoyed certain activities in this park more than any other were recorded.
8. Are there certain types of programming or activities that you would like to see offered in the park?	Suggestions for park improvements	This question allows participants to reflect on how they use the park in order to offer recommendations on what services, activities, programming, etc. they would like to see offered to enhance their experience. This question was provided directly by management staff at Rouge National Urban Park.	Themes that emerged include enforcement of park rules (e.g. camping etiquette training, educational programs, penalties for littering, etc.), park-organized events (e.g. additional guided hikes, food festivals, learn-to-kayak/canoe programs, etc.), and improvements to facilities and amenities (e.g. playground, kayak/canoe rentals, washrooms, picnic tables, visitor centre, etc.).

Notably, questions 2-6 were intended to assess how different populations interact with and perceive national park spaces. For instance, respondents are offered the opportunity to voice both positive and negative place-meanings they associate with the park. As Main (2013) notes, “while a concentration on place attachment and positive experiences with place...has contributed to a deeper understanding of place experiences, this concentration has also obscured understandings of the range of place meanings, including negative ones, and the types of places, including urban parks, that have meaning” (p. 293). Main (2013) particularly notes that several studies have also confirmed negative associations with parks regarding issues of race and



ethnicity, including feelings of exclusion in park spaces. Similarly, Byrne and Wolch (2009) note how park user characteristics and park features may affect perceptions of parks, and these differing perceptions may contribute to individual place-meaning. Specifically, the authors note how several American park landscapes have been designed to “Anglo-Celtic landscape aesthetics...which may not attract foreign-born visitors” or negatively contributed to their experience of the park (Byrne and Wolch, 2009, p. 752).

Questions 1, 7, and 8 were the direct result of feedback from management staff at Rouge National Urban Park, who reviewed the research instrument before it was implemented in the field. These questions were meant to assess visitors’ level of knowledge of the newly established Rouge National Urban Park, and provide an opportunity for respondents to offer direct recommendations as to how to improve or enhance their park experience. Gobster (2002) conducted a survey within Chicago park spaces regarding the management of urban parks for racially and ethnically diverse clientele, and through the examination of items such as user preferences and management concerns, determined that various populations groups have distinct and different needs within the context of a park. Overall, the open-ended nature of the questions was intended to allow emergent themes to come forward and offer a flexible data collection approach that was sensitive to the diverse clientele that may be using the park for a variety of different purposes.

The variables offered by Main (2013) were further supported in this thesis research by a study conducted by Kil et al. (2012), which explored “the influence that place meanings have on [wildland-urban interface area] visitors’ benefits sought and preferences for landscape attributes and trail settings and suggests management implications” (p. 370). In this study, the authors assessed five dimensions of place meanings in the questionnaire, including nature and natural

processes, place dependence, family legacy identity, community identity, and place identity. All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’. These variables were used in this thesis research as a means to detect emotional ties to the park and quantitatively measure themes discussed in the open-ended questions provided by Main (2013). These variables were also particularly selected for this research project due to their evaluation of place-identity, which is directly relevant to this thesis research considering the overarching research questions explore whether and how interactions with Parks Canada’s national sites and marketing materials has impacted a visitor’s own sense of identity. Table 2 provides an outline of all quantitative statements and the variables that they measured.

*Table 2: Statements related to place-meanings associated with the park.*

<b>Quantitative Likert Scale Questions</b>	<b>Variable(s)</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
a) This park is important in protecting the landscape from development. b) This park is important for providing habitat for wildlife.	Place-meanings associated with nature and natural processes.	E.g. Responses of ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ indicated positive value placed on environmental preservation efforts of the park.
c) I get more satisfaction out of visiting this park than any other. d) I wouldn’t substitute any other park for doing the types of things I do here.	Place-meanings associated with place-dependence.	E.g. Responses of ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ indicated positive reliance placed on the park for enjoyment of certain activities. In these cases, several responses were qualified with additional statements such as ‘it is the best in the area’ or ‘because it is close to home’.
e) This park is a special place for my family. f) Many important family memories are tied to this park.	Place-meanings associated with family legacy identity.	E.g. Responses of ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ indicated positive attachment to the park based on family memories created within the park.
g) This park contributes to the character of my community.	Place-meaning associated with community identity/character.	E.g. Responses of ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ indicated a belief that the park added positive value to the surrounding

		community. Several responses qualified their understanding of community (e.g. as their neighbourhood, or all of Toronto, or Ontario, etc.).
h) I am very attached to this park. i) This trail means a lot to me. j) I feel that this park is a part of me. k) I identify strongly with this park.	Place-meanings associated with place-identity.	E.g. Responses of ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ indicated that respondents saw themselves and their values positively reflected in the park. The park contributed to their understanding of themselves.
l) I feel that the landscapes protected by Parks Canada are directly linked to a national Canadian identity. m) I feel that experiencing nature is an important aspect of what it means to be Canadian. n) I associate myself strongly with a Canadian identity. o) I actively seek out opportunities to learn about Canadian history and culture.	Place-meanings associated with a connection between the park and a Canadian identity.	E.g. Responses of ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ indicated a positive connection with a Canadian identity and a positive belief that nature in general and the natural landscapes protected by Parks Canada in particular represent a Canadian identity.

Items a) and b) measure place-meanings associated with nature and natural processes, which is particularly important for this thesis considering that the Parks Canada brand heavily emphasizes the importance of nature and wildlife conservation. These questions assess visitors’ individual beliefs about the “ecological functions of a place in producing healthy ecosystems” (Kil et al., 2012, p. 372) and the importance in preserving these natural landscapes. Items c), d) and e) measure place-meanings associated with place-dependence, which is defined by Williams et al. (1992) as “a form of attachment associated with the potential of a particular place to satisfy the needs and goals of an individual and the assessment of how the current place compares with other currently available settings that may satisfy the same set of needs” (p. 31). In other words, these questions assess the overall necessity attached to Rouge National Urban Park for enjoying

a leisure pursuit, or potentially in this case as a chance to integrate oneself further into Canadian culture and identity. Items f) and g) measure place-meanings associated with family legacy identity, and offer further insight into the ways in which respondents experience the landscapes protected within Rouge National Urban Park. Item h) assess place-meanings associated with community character/identity, which offers insight into the degree to which the natural and cultural landscapes of the park may contribute to community identity. Items i), j), k), and l) are meant to measure place-meanings associated with place-identity, which according to Williams et al. (1992) refers to “those dimensions of the self that define the individual’s personal identity in relation to the physical environment” (p. 32). In other words, these questions measure whether and to what degree the park may be viewed as an essential part of a respondent’s identity. Finally, items m) through p) are meant to measure place-meanings associated with a connection between the park and a Canadian identity, and represent a unique contribution of this thesis research. These questions are meant to expand on the previous items measuring place-identity, but specifically assess whether and to what extent respondents view Parks Canada sites as symbols of Canadian identity. These questions are ones that have been created by the researcher in order to build on established place-meanings assessment frameworks and contribute to the existing body of literature.

#### 4.4.2 General Perceptions of the Parks Canada Brand

In order to assess general perceptions of the Parks Canada brand, this research instrument also drew from a doctoral thesis conducted by Maingi (2014), which was a study that measured the efficacy of park branding in influencing choice behavior of Kenyan parks tourists and was deemed appropriately adaptable to the context of Rouge National Urban Park. The final section

of the interview asked questions such as ‘How did you first get to know about Rouge National Urban Park?’ and ‘Please describe your expectations prior to your travels to Rouge National Urban Park’ in order to explore the reach of the Parks Canada brand and if certain groups of the population are better served by Parks Canada’s promotional and outreach materials than others. As noted by Macdonald and Sharp (2003), “without brand awareness occurring, no other communication effects can occur. For a consumer to buy a brand they must be made aware of it. Brand attitudes cannot be formed, and intention to buy cannot occur unless brand awareness has occurred” (p. 1). In order to further assess brand awareness, participants were also shown an image of the Parks Canada brand and asked directly if they recognized it and what they associated with it. This was intended to assess the level of familiarity with the brand, particularly regarding the types of images, emotions, or features that respondents associated with it. The question was meant to measure a respondent’s perception of the brand as a whole, not just limited to their experiences and expectations of Rouge National Urban Park exclusively.

#### **4.5 Case Study Approach and Sampling Sites**

The previous chapter outlined key opportunities offered by Rouge National Urban Park that justified its selection as the case study for this thesis research. Namely, these opportunities included its proximity to the largest and most culturally diverse metropolitan centre in Canada, and its subsequent potential to engage with audiences traditionally underrepresented in national park sites. The new status of Rouge National Urban Park and the lack of existing research related to urban park use in Canada also strongly justified a case study approach, particularly one of an exploratory nature. As Hartley (2004) notes, “the case study is particularly suited to research questions which require detailed understanding of social or organizational processes because of

the rich data collected in context” (p. 323). Applying a qualitative case study to this research was selected as the optimal approach due to its strength in exploring ‘how’ and ‘why’ research questions, particularly “when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (Yin, 1994, p. 1). In order to evaluate existing perceptions of Rouge National Urban Park and the Parks Canada brand from diverse audiences, as well as “to develop pertinent hypotheses and propositions for further inquiry”, the type of case study was of an exploratory nature (Yin, 1994, p. 5).

Due to the fact that Rouge National Urban Park currently consists of 79.1km<sup>2</sup> of land, specific sampling sites were identified in order to maximize resources and collect a geographically representative sample of data. Sampling sites were identified in consultation with staff at Rouge National Urban Park in order to determine areas that are particularly popular with visitors. A brief overview of the sampling site locations in the park and the number of surveys collected at each are outlined below. They are also visualized clearly in Figure 5, where the red arrows highlight each of the six sampling sites that are described in the following sections, and the numbers within the arrows indicate the number of surveys completed at each site.

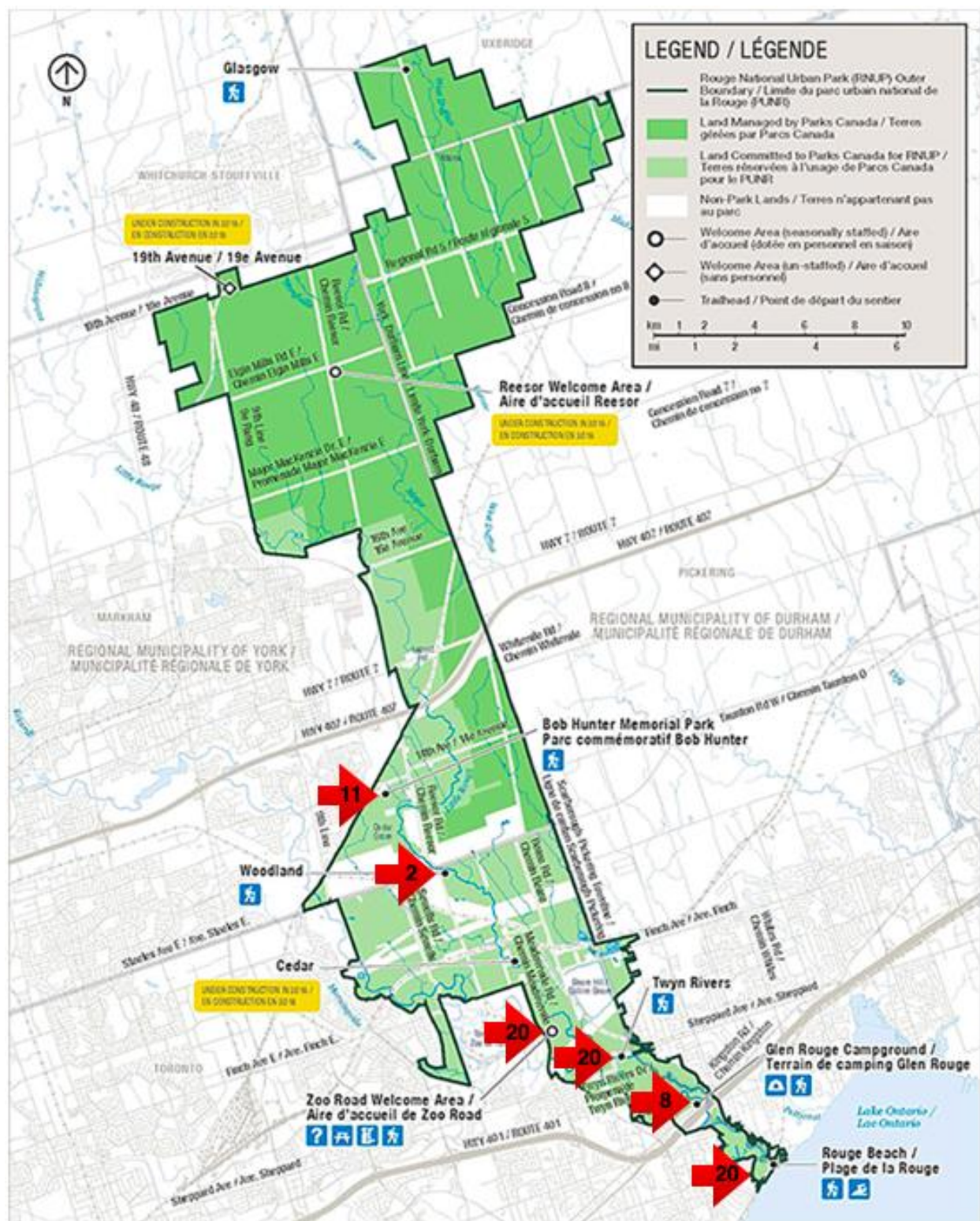


Figure 5: Map of Rouge National Urban Park with red arrows included to indicate sampling sites. The numbers within the arrows indicate the number of surveys completed at each site. The map was obtained from the Parks Canada website, and arrows were added by the author.



#### 4.4.1 Lake Ontario

Located primarily within the City of Toronto and the City of Pickering (corner of Lawrence Ave. E. and 195 Rouge Hills Dr.), this sampling site is the southern-most area of the park. The area contains a beach where Lake Ontario meets the mouth of the Rouge River, the Rouge Marsh, and the Waterfront Trail. Popular activities include hiking, paddling, cycling, swimming, and particularly fishing. A total of 20 interviews and survey were conducted at this sampling site.



*Figure 8: Views from the boardwalk overlooking Rouge Marsh.*



*Figure 6: A train bridge that crosses the Rouge River, which sees frequent traffic including VIA Rail and GO Transit passenger trains.*



*Figure 9: Visitors enjoying the sun on the Rouge Beach. In the background is the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station.*



*Figure 7: A woman enjoying a day of Stand-Up Paddle-boarding, while a mother supervises her children playing in the water at the mouth of the Rouge River.*



#### 4.4.2 Toronto Zoo Area

This site in the park is located in the City of Toronto on Zoo Road, adjacent to the Toronto Zoo. It is home to a new Parks Canada Welcome Centre, which is staffed from May to November every year. It also contains several trailheads, including the Cedar Trail, Orchard Trail, and the Vista Trail. A total of 20 interviews and surveys were conducted at this sampling site.



*Figure 11: One of the Parks Canada Visitor Centres located on-site at the Zoo Road Area. Staff are available daily between May to November to answer questions and provide information to visitors of the park.*



*Figure 10: Views from the observation tower on the Vista Trail, located a short walk from the Visitor Centre. Pictured at the bottom of the ravine is the Little Rouge Creek winding through the park.*

#### 4.4.3 Twyn Rivers Drive Area

The sampling site at Twyn Rivers Drive Area is located on the boundaries of the Cities of Toronto and Pickering. The site offers access to several trails, including the Orchard, Vista, Mast, and Glen Eagles Vista Trails. A total of 20 surveys were completed at this sampling site.



*Figure 13: A visitor begins a hike at one of the trailheads accessible from the Twyn Rivers Drive Area parking lot.*



*Figure 12: View of the Rouge River, which is visible from the Twyn Rivers Drive Area parking lot.*

#### 4.4.4 Bob Hunter Memorial Park

Bob Hunter Memorial Park – named after a Canadian environmental champion, journalist, and author who worked to protect and celebrate nature and biodiversity – is located in the City of Markham. The site offers several trails and contains another Parks Canada Visitor Centre. A total of 11 surveys were completed at this sampling site.



*Figure 15: Views from the Tallgrass trail, one of the paths accessible from the main parking lot area at Bob Hunter.*



*Figure 14: Another of Parks Canada's Visitor Centres located at Bob Hunter Memorial Park.*

#### 4.4.5 Glen Rouge Campground

Located on Kingston Road and visible from the Ontario Highway 401, the Glen Rouge Campground is the only campground in the City of Toronto. Similar to other sites in the park, the campground is accessible by car, transit, and bicycle, and contains the Mast Trail trailhead. A totally of 8 surveys were completed at this sampling site.



*Figure 16: Parks Canada oTENTiks recently introduced into Glen Rouge Campground.*



*Figure 17: Views of the researcher's campsite after setting up for a weekend of camping and data sampling.*

#### 4.4.6 Woodland Area

This sampling site is located within the City of Toronto on Reesor Road. It offers a relatively easy walking trail in a new growth forest. A total of 2 surveys were completed at this sampling site.



*Figure 19: Views from the primary trail accessible from the parking lot at the Woodland Area.*



*Figure 18: Free parking lot available for visitors to the Woodland Area of the park.*

## **4.6 Research Methods**

This thesis relied primarily on a research instrument that was administered in person to consenting visitors to Rouge National Urban Park. The research instrument consisted of a short interview followed by a quantitative survey, in which participants were asked about their experiences of the park, their perceptions of Parks Canada and its brand, and to describe certain socio-demographic characteristics about themselves. In a park environment that accommodates a diversity of visitors, the research instrument was administered using a next-to-pass method as a means to mitigate interviewer bias in selecting respondents (Booth, 1999). More specifically, this method was intended to ensure that respondents were selected randomly and without prejudice to produce an overall representative sample of visitors using the park. As an example of this method, at some sampling sites, the interviewer waited at a trailhead and approached respondents in the order that they came to the end of their walk. With the permission of those visitors that consented to participate, interview answers were recorded to facilitate the accurate collection of information. Participants were approached using a recruitment script (Appendix A), and were provided an information letter (Appendix B). Consenting participants were administered the research instrument, the details of which are outlined below and in Appendix C.

### **4.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews with consenting visitors to the park were intended to assess place-meanings and perceptions associated with the park and the Parks Canada brand. The research instrument used a mixture of both open-ended as well as some quantifiable or pre-coded questions to collect the intended data, as discussed above. The semi-structured nature of the interview was adopted in order to allow for some flexibility when asking the questions. In other

words, if a participant provided an interesting or unusual response to an interview question, the semi-structured interview format allowed the interviewer to follow-up and extract further details. An advantage of this type of interviewing is therefore the generation of comparable data while allowing the researcher a degree of flexibility in obtaining it. This type of interviewing also ensure that time spent with interviewing visitors to the park is used efficiently and effectively. It will demonstrate that both the interviewer and the interviewees are fully in control of what they want from the interview, but still offering an opportunity for both parties to uncover and follow new leads wherever the conversation takes them (Bernard, 2000).

#### 4.6.2 Quantitative Surveys

Participants were asked to complete a short quantitative survey following completion of the interview in order to obtain background information and gain insight into the ways in which Rouge National Urban Park is being used (or not used) by certain audiences. Many questions also addressed constraints to park visitation that have been demonstrated in the literature. For example, one question asks respondents how the respondent traveled to the park, as Rouge National Urban Park is one of the only national parks in Ontario that is accessible by public transit and lack of transportation is one of the most commonly cited constraints to park visitation.

Importantly, the quantitative survey also assessed the respondent's self-definition of their ethnic ancestry, heritage, or background. As outlined in the literature review and theoretical framework for this thesis, cultural diversity (and acculturation) has an important relationship to park use, place-identity, and place-branding. For instance, certain populations are more constrained from park visitation, and they also may interact with branded landscapes in different ways. According to Brown and Langer (2010),

“While the apparently ‘primordial’ implications of the ethnicity data that form the basis of such measurements are incommensurate with sophisticated theories of ethnicity, their employment in quantitative measure can be reconciled in so far as we treat ‘ethnicity’ as an indicator of concepts of diversity and social distance, rather than as the concept being measured in itself” (p. 433).

Respondents were also offered the opportunity to describe their ethnic or cultural identity in their own terms through an open-ended question, allowing the respondent more freedom in terms of how they express themselves, and creativity in terms of the groups to which they feel they belong. Questions on this quantitative survey were adapted from a similarly conducted survey in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area by the National Park Service in 2003.

#### **4.7 Data Management and Analysis**

Both simultaneous to and following the transcription of all the interviews, the transcripts were analyzed and thematically grouped into codes. Keywords from a review of all the transcribed interviews were identified from each question and organized into an excel chart, a sample of which is demonstrated in Figure 20 (and the full keyword matrix is included in Appendix E). The excel chart was made sortable so that participant responses could be organized by keyword and cross-referenced with socio-demographic characteristics, including age, sex, pre-tax household income, education, and most notably whether the participant was born in Canada. This review was conducted in order to develop connections between a participant’s responses and their background, and to see if patterns in behavior or perceptions emerged. The identification of themes and patterns was facilitated partially through the use of word frequency queries in NVivo 12 software, which identified the most commonly cited words for each question.



	1. What do you know about Rouge National Urban Park?	2. Why do you visit the park?	3. What do you like the most about the park?
Survey 1	News, largest park in North America	Wildlife, relax	Good bike paths, accessible, quiet, chill
Survey 2	Visiting for 2 years, scenic beauty, nearby, waterlogged, Parks Canada	Nearby, beach, scenic beauty, blueish, don't find that kind of view anywhere nearby, Bluffs, water colour, trail walking	Less crowded (compared to Woodbine, Bluffs, nearby parks in Scarborough)
Survey 3 (no audio)	Visited twice, clean, good to visit	Fishing with husband	Fresh air, leave downtown ("suffocated")
Survey 4	Fishing, carps, pike	Fishing, friends, beach	Beautiful, scenery
Survey 5 (no audio)	Google map	Fishing	Fishing
Survey 6	No idea	Close to our home, car, relax	Fish, relax, people that are around, fishing buddies here (some local from here, some other nationalities), "our way of connecting with others"

Figure 20: A screen-shot demonstrating a sample of keywords identified for each question based on a review of all of the transcribed interviews.

Analysis of the qualitative data was based in an emergent coding approach, in which the collected data was first reviewed in its entirety to allow codes and themes to be drawn from the text. This approach is a technique drawn from grounded theory methodology, where the “analysis of text allows the researcher to find the answers within” (Blair, 2015, p. 17) through line-by-line review of the text. Following this initial review and identification of codes, the data were further organized into categories and subcategories, and connections were established between the participants’ responses and their reported socio-demographic background, particularly whether they were foreign-born. Connections among other socio-demographic features were also explored, although the emphasis primarily focused on a participant’s country of origin as immigrant populations were a targeted audience of this thesis research.

In terms of quantitative analysis, the data was collected in several scales of measurement including nominal (e.g. in what country were you born?), ordinal (e.g. how many years have you

lived in Canada?), and frequency (e.g. how often do you visit Rouge National Urban Park?). All data was entered into an excel sheet in order to apply various descriptive statistics and provide a general snapshot of the types of visitors entering and enjoying Rouge National Urban Park. The quantitative data were primarily used to support and build connections within the qualitative data (e.g. is there a relationship between a visitor's household income and their motivations for visiting the site, which has no entry fee? Are there differences in the way foreign-born participants use and perceive the park?). The results of these analyses of both the qualitative and quantitative data are presented in the next chapter of this thesis.

#### **4.8 Ethical Considerations**

The University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee approved this study including its data collection and participant recruitment procedures, which was required considering the involvement of interviews and surveys with visitors to Rouge National Urban Park. Although there was minimal risk to participants while undertaking this research, the primary ethical concerns were to ensure that informed consent was achieved and confidentiality was maintained. Due to the fact that this study relied on an anonymous questionnaire during a one-time-only interaction with visitors to the park, written informed consent could not be reasonably collected. Verbal informed consent was obtained instead by approaching visitors and providing them with substantial detail about the study, followed by explicitly asking each participant the following questions: 1) With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree of my own free will to participate in this study; 2) I agree to have my interview audio-recorded; and, 3) I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research. Respondents were



also reassured that they could withdraw their consent at any point in the process. Confidentiality was protected by securely storing data and removing any personal identifiers from the results.

In addition to ethics clearance from the University of Waterloo, a Parks Canada Research and Collection Permit was also required prior to conducting data collection (Appendix D). This involved contacting the Research Coordinator at Rouge National Urban Park in order to discuss the research proposal and any ethical considerations, and submitting a detailed application for review by the Agency's national office in Gatineau, Quebec. The researcher was required to carry the permit on her person at all times as well as check in and out in person or via telephone with staff while sampling in the park.

## **5.0 Findings**

### **5.1 Overview**

This chapter summarizes data collected from visitors to Rouge National Urban Park during June, July and August of 2018. Quantitative data regarding socio-demographic characteristics of the visitors who participated in this research study will contextualize further qualitative data to inform a discussion of both place-meanings associated with Rouge National Urban Park and general perceptions of the Parks Canada brand.

### **5.2 Socio-Demographic Profile of Visitors to Rouge National Urban Park**

As described in previous chapters, the proximity of Rouge National Urban Park to Canada's largest metropolitan centre offers a unique opportunity for the park to accommodate an increasingly culturally diverse population. The socio-demographic characteristics collected from consenting research participants reflect this potential, and portray a diverse visitor base. The following sections will present a general overview of the socio-demographic characteristics of park visitors, including age, sex, level of education, household income, and countries of origin.

### 5.2.1 Age and Sex

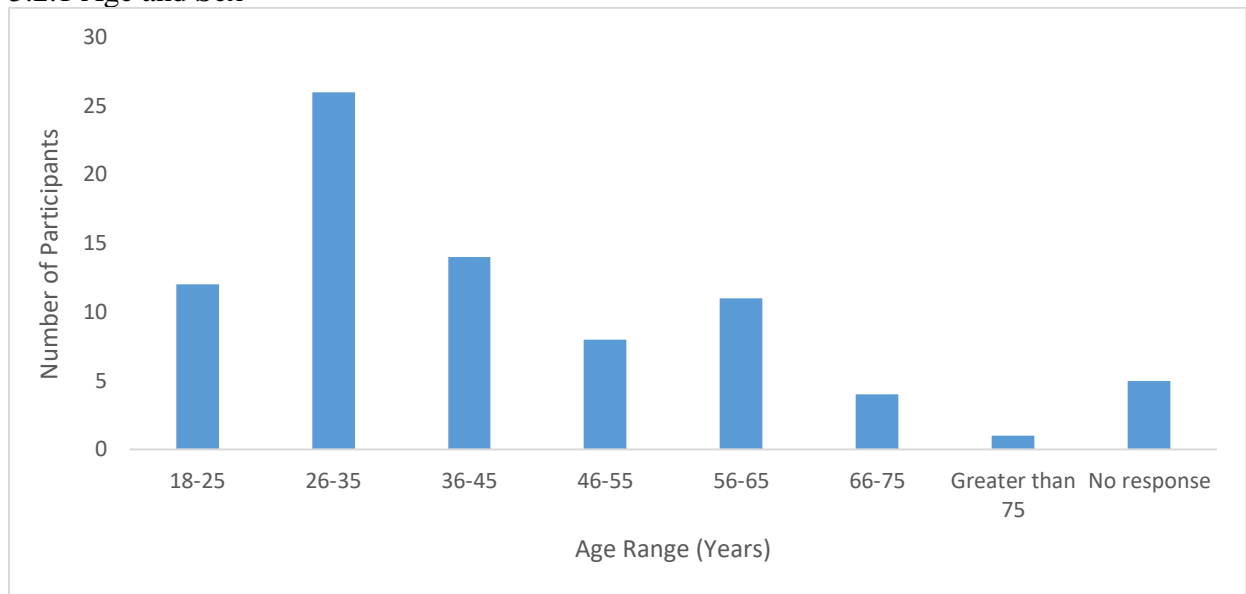


Figure 21: Frequency distribution of age categories among research participants.

Figure 21 demonstrates that the most frequently sampled age category included individuals within the range of 26-35 years in age (32% of participants). By contrast, the least represented age category was greater than 75 years of age (1% of participants). A total of 5 participants (6%) did not offer a response to this survey question. The younger distribution of participants is particularly notable as according to *The State of Canada's Natural and Historic Places* (Parks Canada, 2011b), the average age of visitors to Parks Canada sites is over 50 years old. The data also revealed a slightly higher number of male participants (51%) than female participants (44%), although the distribution was relatively equal. A total of 4 participants (5%) elected not to respond to this survey question.

### 5.2.2 Level of Education

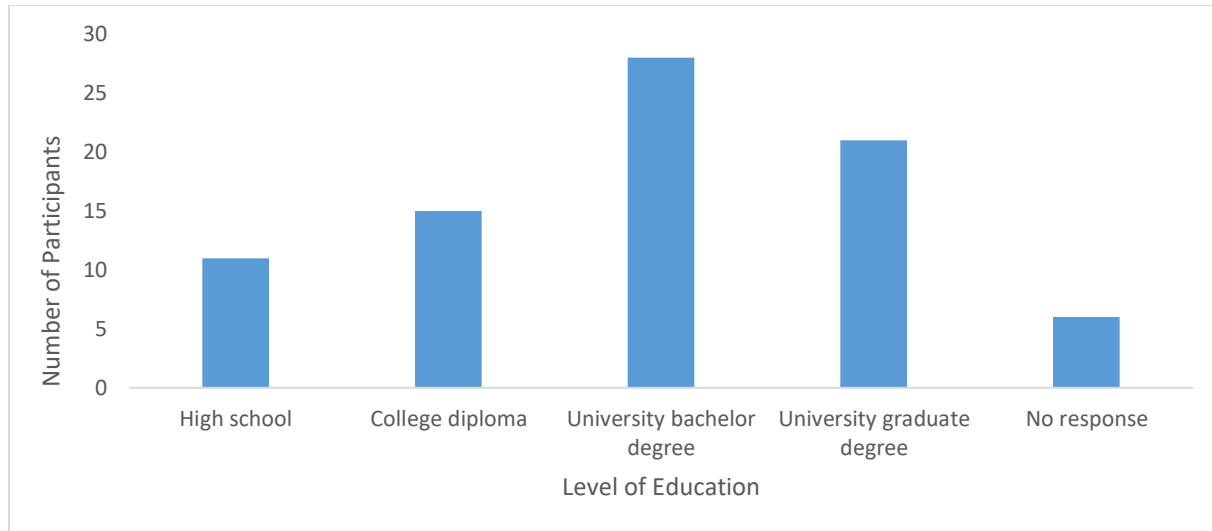


Figure 22: Frequency distribution of level of education categories among research participants.

As demonstrated in Figure 22, the most frequently sampled education category were those individuals who had obtained a university bachelor degree (35% of participants), followed by individuals holding a university graduate degree (26%), and individuals holding a college diploma (19%). A total of 6 participants (7%) declined to answer this survey question. According to several studies, an individual's level of education is a prominent socio-economic factor that influences awareness of and participation in public protected areas. Ostergren et al. (2005), for instance, noted that "people of lesser income and lesser education view high entrance fees as a barrier to visitation" (p. 27) and generally may face more constraints to park visitation. This is particularly relevant in the context of Rouge National Urban Park, as entrance to the park is free for all users (with the exception of camping fees at Glen Rouge Campground, and some other services).

### 5.2.3 Pre-Tax Annual Household Income

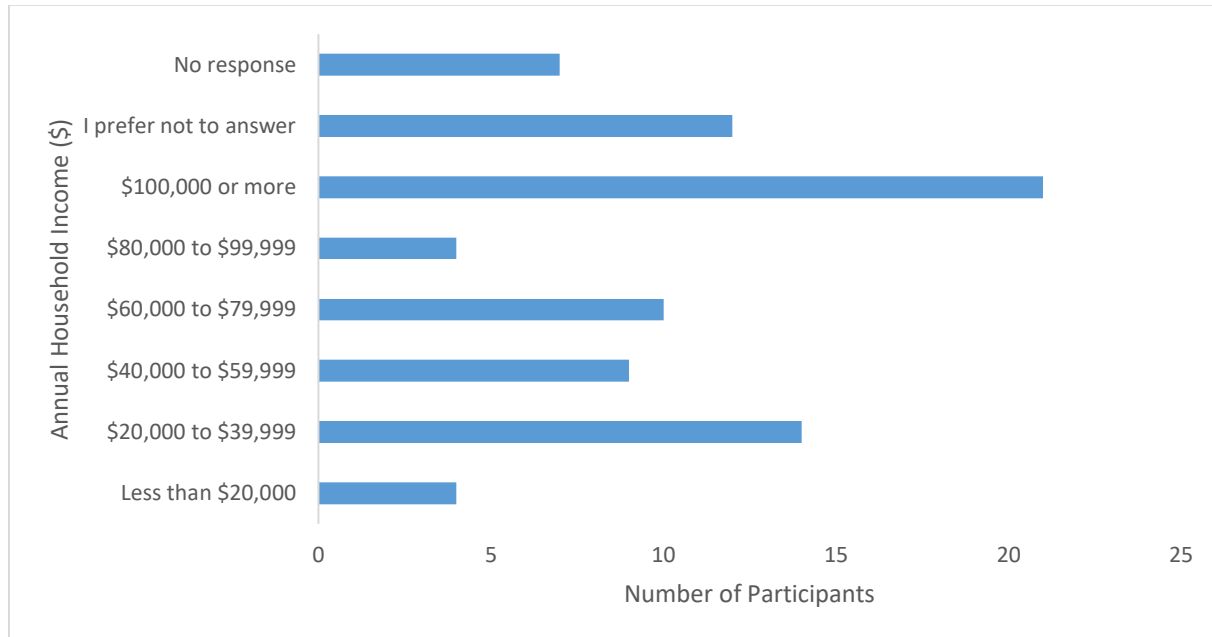
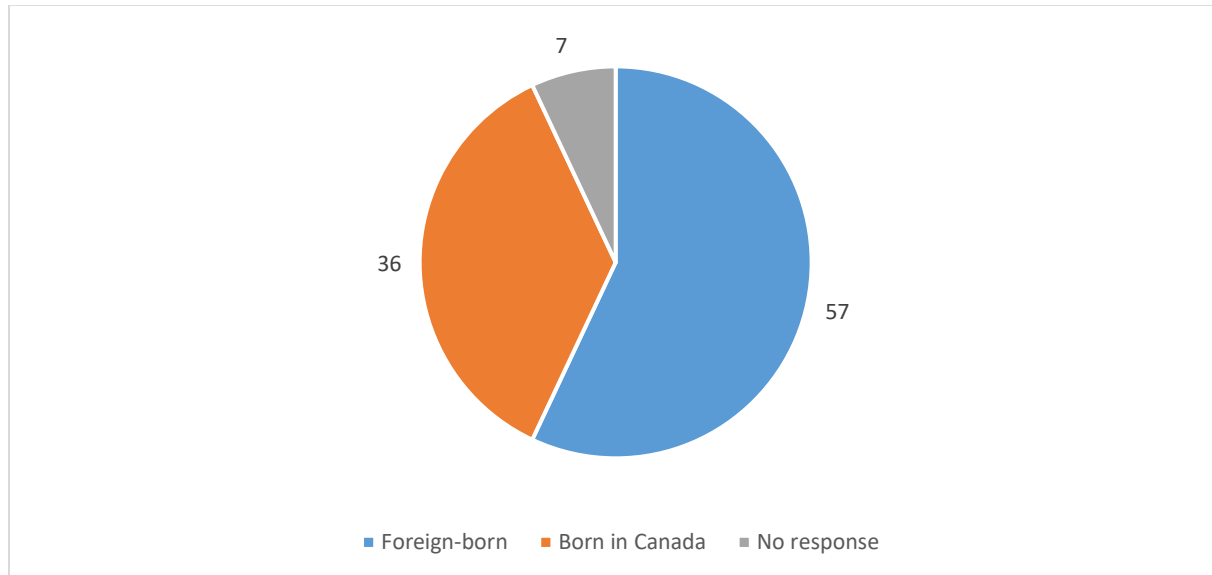


Figure 23: Frequency distribution of pre-tax annual household income categories among research participants.

Figure 23 demonstrates that the majority of participants indicated they earned \$100,000 or more in pre-tax household/family income (26% of participants). A nearly equal percentage of participants (23%) either indicated that they would prefer not to answer this question, or declined to offer any kind of response. On the other end of the scale, the second most reported income category was \$20,000 to \$39,999 (17%). Income is also a particularly prominent socio-economic factor considered to influence park visitation and participation. For example, Lee et al. (2001) noted that “people with higher levels of education and income are more likely to participate in outdoor recreation...[and] that level of income was equal, if not a better, predictor of outdoor recreation behavior than level of education” (p. 443).

#### 5.2.4 Countries of Origin



*Figure 24: Percentage of foreign-born ( $n = 44$ ) and Canadian-born participants ( $n = 29$ ). Approximately 10 % ( $n = 8$ ) participants declined to answer the survey question.*

All research participants – with the exception of 5 individuals (6%) who declined to answer the question ‘Do you live in Canada?’ – indicated that they did currently live in the country. However, as visualized in Figure 24, the majority of participants did not always live in Canada. Instead, 57% of the research participants reported that they were foreign-born, while a more modest 36% reported to being born in Canada (7% declined to provide a response). Within the group of participants who were not born in Canada, 33% reported they had been living in Canada between one to ten years, 26% between 11 to 20 years, 24% between 21 to 30 years, and 11% for greater than 30 years. Figure 25 outlines the various countries from which foreign-born participants indicated that they originated. The most frequently reported country of origin was China (22% of participants) followed by both Hong Kong and India (both represented 13% of participants). Although having reported to having no been born in Canada, 10% of these participants did not provided a response to the question ‘In what country were you born?’.

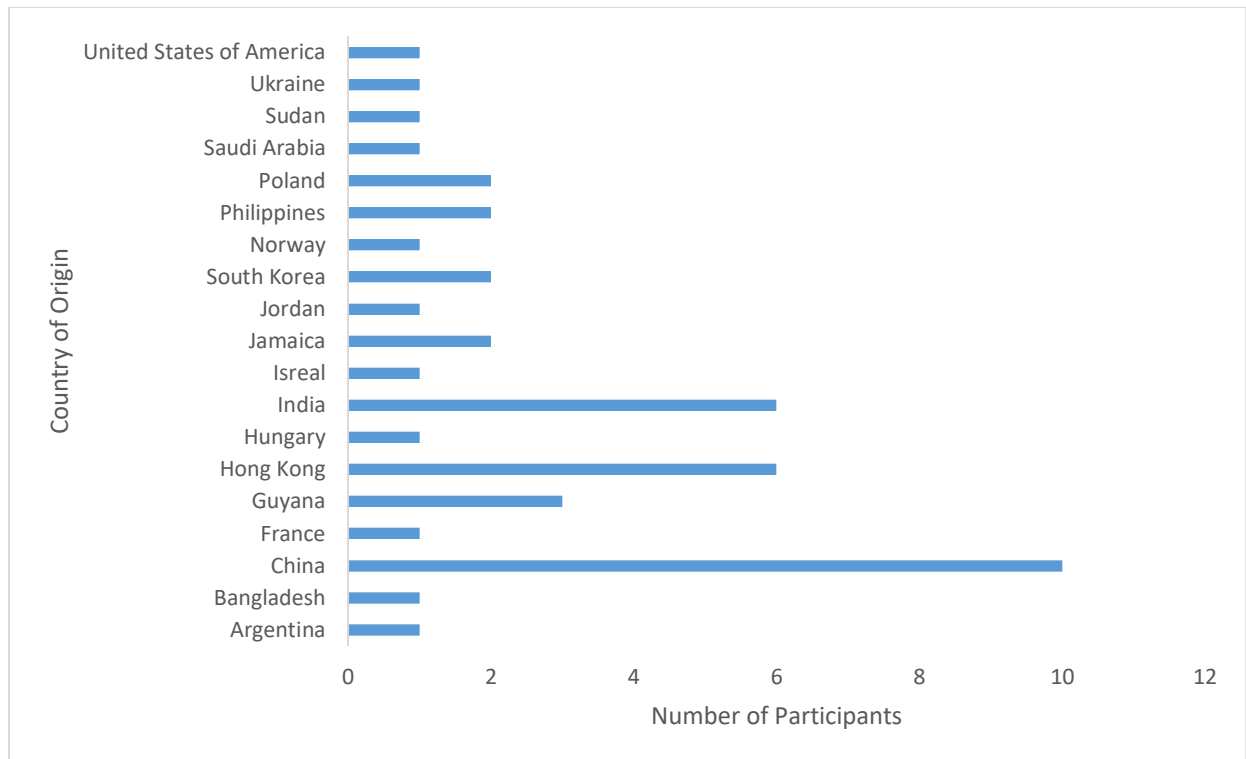


Figure 25: Frequency distribution of reported countries of origin among participants that indicated they were not born in Canada ( $n = 44$ ). A total of 8 participants (10%) who indicated they were not born in Canada declined to provide a country of origin.

Overall, there was notable socio-economic and cultural diversity among visitors to Rouge National Urban Park, which appropriately reflects the diverse composition of the surrounding communities. This diversity also reflects the variety of place-meanings that participants associated may associate with the park, and how the park is used and perceived differently by different populations. According to Main (2013), meanings associated with a place are “not inherent in the physical or social aspects of place” (p. 292), but rather are reflections of an individual’s socio-cultural characteristics.

Contextualized within this demographic information, the following section will present the qualitative data and describe the various place-meanings that participants associated with Rouge National Urban Park.

### 5.3 A Range of Place-Meanings Associated with Rouge National Urban Park

A range of all types of meanings and experiences associated with Rouge National Urban Park emerged in this study, both of a positive and negative nature. Based on extensive coding as well as word frequency queries in NVivo 12 software, significant text passages and keywords were identified and collaged by the researcher into themes for each question asked of participants. Additional quantitative data, including pre-coded questions regarding motivations for park visitation and responses to Likert scale questions, were used to support the qualitative analysis. The results are summarized below.

#### 5.3.1 General Motivations and Enabling Features for Park Visitation

When asked ‘Why do you visit the park?’, participants of all socio-economic backgrounds offered a broad range of reasons and activities that motivated their visit. As visualized in Figure 26, the most commonly enjoyed activity was the opportunity to ‘walk’ or ‘hike’ the trail network within the park. A total of 63% of participants participated in hiking or walking, and more than one third (35%) of this group described these activities as their specific motivation for visiting the park. Other commonly cited physical activities included biking (12%) and various types of sports, such as soccer, volleyball, lacrosse, and cross-country skiing (7%).

In addition to physical health, several participants were also motivated by emotional health and well-being related reasons, notably as an opportunity for restoration, refuge, and escape from urban life. Indeed, nearly half of all participants (43%) described relaxation and escape from routine as the primary factor that motivated their visit. For instance:

*“You know, it really rejuvenates you, relaxes you, and it’s just beautiful. And it takes your mind off of whatever is stressing you out during your day to day life, it’s nice to come out here and just see little things, like every time you come out here, there’s*



*something different, there's different flowers, there's different plant life, wildlife... This is the best piece of nature that we have near here" (Participant 13).*

*"... We wanted to go camping. I was kind of thinking that we'd get a detox from artificial light – I feel like there's always lights at home, there's lights at work, you get your phone out all day – so I wanted to go somewhere where there isn't much of that for the weekend" (Participant 38).*

As captured in these comments, in many cases, participants achieved relaxation, restoration, and escape through experiencing the natural setting of the park. Indeed, the opportunity to view nature and wildlife was the second most frequently reported motivation (37%), and for many participants, was viewed inseparably from other prominent motivations. For example, one participant described how “if I ask myself if I want to relax or escape from routine, couldn't I go to the waterfront or something? And maybe I can, but why do I come here? Because I can relax in nature” (Participant 68). Another noted that they were motivated “to be out with nature and just relax... It's relaxing to be out instead of in the urban jungle” (Participant 56). In response to the statement ‘This park is important for providing habitat for wildlife’, 64% of participants strongly agreed, while a further 31% agreed. Similarly, 63% strongly agreed to the statement ‘This park is important in protecting the landscape from development’, and 35% agreed.

Notably, foreign-born participants particularly cited the opportunity to socialize and enjoy a sense of community within the park as a primary reason for visiting. Indeed, Rouge National Urban Park was viewed both as a place to socialize with old friends and to meet new ones, particularly for newcomers to the area. For example, some foreign-born participants described the connections they had made on-site over the years:

*“Fish, we like to fish here, and then relax... We have a lot of fishing buddies, like they come here... Some of them are from here, and some of them are other nationalities... It's our way of connecting with others” (Participant 6).*

*“Oh, well, I'm retired, got a lot of friends up here. Go to church up here. And fishing buddies I have met over the seven years, they're all retired. Canadian – I'm the only*

*American – retired police officer, and a plumber, and oh boy what else, one of the guys is from Bell telephone...Met them all here, we've been buddies for seven years. We fish everyday" (Participant 8).*

Participant 6, who immigrated to Canada from the Philippines 16 years ago, noted how 'lucky' it was that he and his brother discovered the park, as it is a place they frequent often and where they both find a sense of community. American-born Participant 8, who moved to Canada within the past ten years, further expressed his appreciation for frequent get-togethers and barbeques with friends and family, and the general sense of community he had found within the park.

Additionally, foreign-born participants were also more likely to visit as a means to further explore and familiarize themselves with their new city of settlement. For instance, when asked 'why do you visit the park?', one participant who moved to Canada from India in the past year described, "I was just looking to see where I could travel to just outside of Toronto. I'm new to the city, so just exploring the city and surrounding areas" (Participant 54). Similarly, another participant who was a five-year immigrant from Israel noted, "We're not Canadians – we live here now but we moved here five years ago. So we're still kind of, you know, unfamiliar and feeling new and adjusting. So yeah, for us it's all about getting to know as much as we can and familiarize ourselves with the area" (Participant 73). Rouge National Urban Park evidently represents an important centre of community and an opportunity for visitors, particularly those who identify as foreign-born, to explore and get to know their city and surrounding areas.

Convenience and proximity to the park were noted as important enabling factors to motivation among participants. Approximately one fifth of all respondents (20%) indicated that they were specifically motivated to visit the park because the site was 'nearby', 'close to home', or 'close to the city'. For instance, one participant reflected, "I think it's because I wanted to get into nature and it's close to the city. I live in downtown Toronto, so it's pretty accessible"

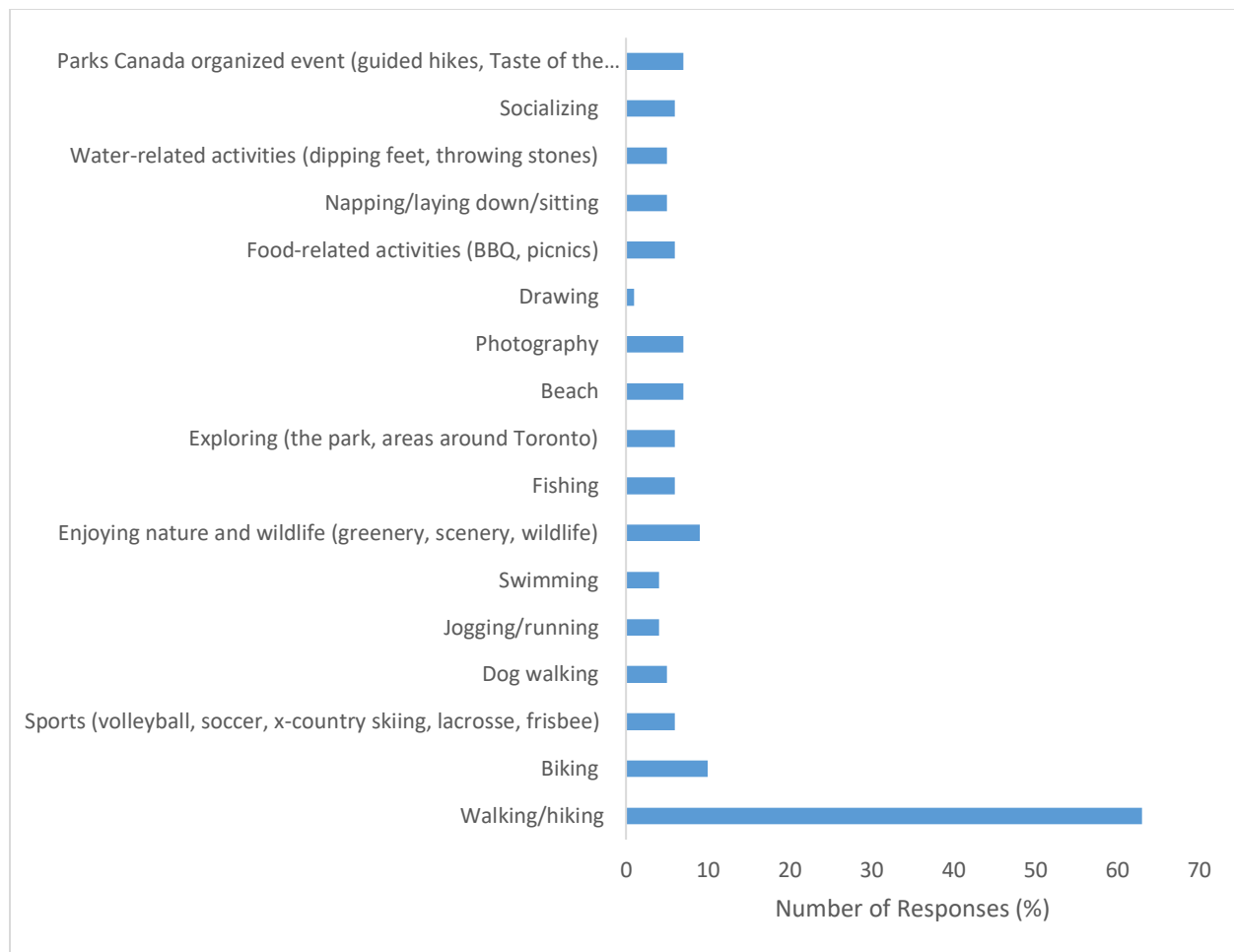
(Participant 22). For respondents that did not live immediately nearby, the convenience of the visit was facilitated by enabling factors such as free on-site parking, access through public transit, and notably the availability of a free shuttle bus (also known as Parkbus) between downtown Toronto and the park. Participant 38 appreciated that “it was kind of nice to find something that was actually accessible. Sometimes you don’t want to depend on other people to get you places, so I’m pretty happy about [the accessibility]”. Similarly, Participant 39 noted, “We just looked for a park that was on the bus line. So I’m from Toronto, she’s from Hamilton, and we just wanted to camp somewhere that was accessible by the TTC”. While participants who fell within the \$20,000 to \$39,000 pre-tax household income bracket were especially likely to appreciate the accessibility of the park, in general, its convenience and proximity were enabling features enjoyed by participants of all economic backgrounds.

The availability of a free shuttle was a particularly appreciated enabling feature, especially among urban participants who did not have access to a car. For instance, in response to the question ‘Why do you visit the park?’, Participant 71 noted, “We live downtown and we don’t own a car, so it’s fun to take Parkbus here – I think this is our second time doing this. We love nature but live in the city, so it’s nice to get out”. Parkbus is an organization with a mission to connect urban audiences to parks and nature, and from July to September of 2018, they partnered with Parks Canada to offer a free shuttle bus from downtown Toronto to Rouge National Urban Park. Sponsored by TD and MEC, the bus service was available every Saturday, Sunday, and holiday Monday between June 30 and September 30, 2018. Parks Canada staff accompanied every bus trip to provide on-board programming and a brief introduction to Rouge and Parks Canada sites (Parks Canada, 2018b). This initiative addresses accessibility constraints, which have been noted and discussed in numerous studies (see Zanon et al., 2013; Perry et al.,

2014 among others). A total of 11% of participants traveled to the park using this service on the day that they were interviewed. Overall, the convenience and proximity of the park were strong enabling features to a participant's motivation to visit. The assortment of motivations reflects the variety of ways in which the park is used and perceived by its visitors, as will be discussed in the following sections.

### 5.3.2 Overview of Reported Park Activities

As previously noted and as visualized in Figure 26, the vast majority of participants (63%) indicated that they used the park for activities such as 'walking' and 'hiking'. Other physical activities were also commonly cited, such as biking (10%), sport activities (6%), jogging or running (4%), and swimming (4%). Other leisure activities enjoyed in the park included enjoying nature and wildlife in the park (9%), socializing (6%), fishing (6%), and enjoying the beach (7%) among others.



*Figure 26: Overview of all reported activities enjoyed by participants within Rouge National Urban Park. Activities are grouped by theme and presented as percentages.*

Both Canadian-born and foreign-born visitors enjoyed many of the same activities within the park, although with a few notable differences. For instance, fishing was an activity that was more frequently reported by foreign-born participants (5% of all respondents) compared to Canadian-born visitors (1%). This tendency is important considering the role of fishing in building a sense of community for several foreign-born visitors. Additionally, while both groups reported that they enjoyed sports activities within the park, foreign-born populations preferred large group focused activities such as volleyball, soccer, or Frisbee, while Canadian-born visitors were more likely to use the park for independently-driven sports, such as cross-country skiing.

Foreign-born populations were also more likely to enjoy other group-concentrated activities such as a barbeque or picnic with friends and family, particularly on the beach. Participant 73, a five-year immigrant from Israel, noted that “I don’t know if I’ll come here by myself – I feel like this is kind of family-oriented. I’m very happy to bring my family here and obviously invite other family friends of ours”. As previously noted, these findings align with existing literature, which describes how non-traditional park users tend to enjoy parks in groups rather than individuals (see Hester et al., 1999 among others).

Indeed, the vast majority of foreign-born respondents indicated that they enjoyed the park either with family or friends. Only 5 foreign-born respondents travelled to the park alone, although in most of these cases, it was with the purpose of meeting and interacting with others. Participant 37, who was born in Jamaica but had been living in Canada for 46 years, described how he enjoyed returning to the Glen Rouge Campground in the summer to reconnect:

*“I came by myself hoping to meet up with people I had met last year...I met him last year, too. It was great to see him again. Good handshake, good hug. It’s about meeting good people...These are the people we meet, and we can have really good conversations”*  
(Participant 37).

Similarly, Participant 44, an immigrant from Guyana who has been living in Canada for the past 41 years, described how he visited the park with the intention of meeting and socializing with others. He often participated in guided hikes led by Parks Canada volunteers:

*“[I visit the park with] just me alone. I’m separated and my kids are at university, so I’m a real empty nest, I live in a house by myself. But I did meet some people when I was going the Wednesday walks, and I kind of got to know people. You see the same people, so you chat with them. There’s kind of a core group that goes to those Wednesday walks. If you come enough times, you meet the same people, and you chat with them about their interests, where they’re retired from. I like the fact that it’s a social event and that it’s not so focused on identifying trees. All the walks I’ve been on, people have almost been more interested with talking to each other than whatever the particular theme of the walk was [about]...most of the time everyone spends their time talking to each other. I like it...I don’t know that I would want to be by myself. I spend enough time by myself”*  
(Participant 44).

Both Participant 37 and Participant 44 also fall within older age brackets (both are over the age of 46 years), suggesting that age may also be an important factor in the types of activities enjoyed within the park. As previously described in Figure 21, the most represented age category was between 26 and 35 years, suggesting a generally youthful visitor population. However, it is important that park activities and services cater to the interests of all visitors, and this data suggests that social park activities are attractive for both older and foreign-born populations.

#### *5.3.2.1 Notable Park Activities with Policy Implications*

Although cited less frequently, the data revealed other notable park uses, particularly at the Glen Rouge Campground, that have potential policy implications. For instance, one participant lived in the park seasonally and commuted into the city for work: “I live up north and it’s a lot cheaper for me to go to work from here. I commute to go to work from here. I come for the summer, and there’s more jobs here in the city than there are up north. So you come down here, make your money, and cheap rent” (Participant 37). They had been camping since the park’s opening on May 4, 2018, and were planning to stay until its close on October 27, 2018.

Other participants described the park’s use as an alternative short-term accommodation:

*“Second time we were here was with family who came from up north and we kind of all met here and went into Toronto for a concert, so we stayed here. Just was cheaper than hotels” (Participant 40).*

*“There’s a bunch of guys here the last two nights – they’re a family, American...they went to a baseball game today, they played golf – they do it every year, the whole family...The whole family comes every year to watch the Blue Jays lose” (Participant 37).*

*“I had a client who lived just up the street and they were selling their home and they actually had their own trailer – like the driving kind – so they said while you’re selling our house, we’re just going to go to the Rouge Park and camp there for a few days...they were right in their backyard. It was pretty neat” (Participant 25).*

Participant 25 identified themselves as a real estate agent in the area who would often “use [the park] in my sales” to clients. This data reveals an opportunity for the park to increase its brand awareness through strategic partnerships, such as with real estate agencies, concert venues, and stadiums (like Participant 40’s concert and the Blue Jay’s game referenced by Participant 37). Such partnerships may help to bring more people to the park and further generate awareness of the site, including its accessibility to the city, and its new status as Canada’s first-ever national urban park. In pursuing these actions, however, it will also be important to ensure that strong environmental protection policies and practices are in place in order to balance large numbers of visitors with the maintenance of ecological integrity. Indeed, Participant 40 added that the park needed stronger enforcement of rules in order to ensure that campers had a minimal impact on the environment: “This particular park, you know, we see our neighbours kind of going back into the brush and busting up trees. I mean, I’m sure it’s not allowed, but there’s no enforcement and nobody in this park – mostly tend to be newcomers to camping – maybe don’t understand that that’s now what the park’s about”.

As another notable use, some participants reported using the park for artistic pursuits, such as photography or drawing. In fact, 7% of participants reported enjoying photography, and 1% described their use of the park for drawing. According to Participant 7, the park has potential to develop a reputation as an attractive location to take pictures:

*“I even have a friend who’s just getting back into photography but she lives out in Port Perry and she’s never been to the Bluffs or the Rouge...and she really wants to see it. Because she’s heard that you can get some really good shots, and she wants to come down here – that’s coming from someone who’s never been down here” (Participant 7).*

According to several studies such as the one conducted by MacKay and Couldwell (2004), visitor photography may be a valuable tool in understanding the image of a place or destination through a process known as visitor-employed photography (VEP). According to MacKay and



Couldwell (2004), when used in their study of a national historic site in Saskatchewan, “the VEP method provided highly visual records of what best captured the visitors’ images of the site, which then can be compared to pictures used in current promotional efforts” (p. 390). Visitors who participated in the study were asked to photograph images that were the best representations of their image – either positive or negative – of the site, and record in writing the subject of their photograph. The results produced a range of images, which were grouped into seven main categories. Overall, the findings represented highly visual records that captured visitors’ perceptions of the site’s image. When compared to promotional images, these photographs assist in determining whether there is consistency between how the site is being branded and how it is being perceived by visitors. Researcher Dunkel (2015) agrees that the process of “analyzing crowd sourced data may contribute to a more balanced assessment of the perceived landscape, which provides basis for better integration of public values into the planning processes” (p. 173). Applied in the context of Rouge National Urban Park, encouraging more photography among visitors may help management better understand how the park is being perceived by different audiences, as well as how to further integrate visitor values into the management and presentation of the park, and ultimately maintain a strong and robust place-brand.

#### *5.3.2.2 Visitor Recommendations for Future Park Activities and Programming*

Participants were asked to share additional activities or programming that would enhance their experience if offered by the park. Figure 27 demonstrates the wide variety of these recommendations. Notably, the most frequent response (27%) to the question of ‘Are there certain types of programming or activities that you would like to see offered in the park?’ was

either no response at all or one in which the participant described how they felt programming would in fact be a detriment to the park environment:

*“From my perspective, any activities added would defeat the purpose of keeping it as natural as possible. So for me, I would just keep it to a minimum, and maybe educate tourists or local visitors how to protect the park as a whole. I mean, how to minimize distractions as much as possible” (Participant 17).*

*“I find if [additional programming] happens, it’ll just be more touristy and with lots of people comes a lot of bullshit and trash, and it kind of loses its nature-esque, like that tranquility. Like, I don’t think you’ll find this here on a Saturday if the park starts offering tours and whatnot, you’ll find a lot more noise, you know? You won’t get to hear the water and stuff...Like less organic, almost. Like once everything gets filled with people, we’re like cancer. Just eventually kill it. So it’ll kill the feeling, I think” (Participant 21).*

These responses reflect a strong value placed on the preservation efforts of the park. Even when additional activities were suggested, the preservation of the natural environment was a priority. For example, 11% of participants noted that they would like to see additional variety in educational guided hike themes, and even offered a few suggestions including urban foraging, edible plant identification and collection, and general tree and plant identification. Another 9% of participants expressed an interest in seeing additional educational materials within the trail network, 6% were in favour of further education in conservation of the park (particularly how to ensure that littering was reduced), and 2% suggested additional education courses, such as stargazing nights and winter survival workshops. A total of 7% of visitors also expressed an interest in learning about the park from the water, either through a guided canoe or kayak tour along the Rouge River or through learn-to-kayak/canoe programs hosted by the park.

Another theme that emerged – particularly among foreign-born families – was an interest in more child-specific programming. Indeed, 9% of participants generally noted that they would like to see additional programming for kids, and 5% suggested adding playground structures. According to Participant 73, he and his family were expecting to find a playground on site: “We

saw one on the way and she [my daughter] was like ‘I want to go there’ and we said ‘don’t worry, there’s going to be plenty of that. I mean, activities for kids is always good, keep them entertained. She’s three years old right now so a hike is not engaging enough for her’. Similarly, Participant 68 noted:

*“I think you need to have some dedicated children’s spaces maybe. I say this because of a couple of my family friends and we were talking about going someplace and we said okay Rouge Park here, waterfront here. And people say what do we have in Rouge Park? It’s a hiking place. Why don’t we go to a place where the kids have something to do?” (Participant 68).*

Interestingly, one participant indicated they used the park exclusively as a family outing, and that camping at Glen Rouge Campground would in fact lose its appeal once their children got older:

*“This place I would say will lose its appeal as the kids get older, but I’d say we may have another year or so where we can’t do a bigger camping trip due to time constraints and/or the kids are still young and we decide we just want to do something simpler and closer. You don’t have a commute, because it’s right there. It’s convenient if you forget something, just go to a gas station nearby. It’s inexpensive – that’s a big selling feature. If it was much more money, we wouldn’t be here” (Participant 35)*

Considering the social and family-oriented nature of the park, particularly for foreign-born populations as previously discussed, developing activities and programming that further cater to younger populations and families may be important for park management to consider.

Finally, another notable theme was a further emphasis on wellness initiatives (6%). While the majority of visitors reported that they enjoyed physical activities within the park, others described an interest in well-being activities such as yoga and meditation classes. Participant 23 noted: “I just feel like it’s very common to have...groups doing fitness together, but there’s not a lot of wellness things...So I feel like even if it was just like group meditation, or group yoga, like even group writing or something in a cool spot...that’d be dope”. Overall, while participants were adamant against programming interfering with the natural environment of the park, they offered valuable suggestions for a variety of activities that could enhance the visitor experience.

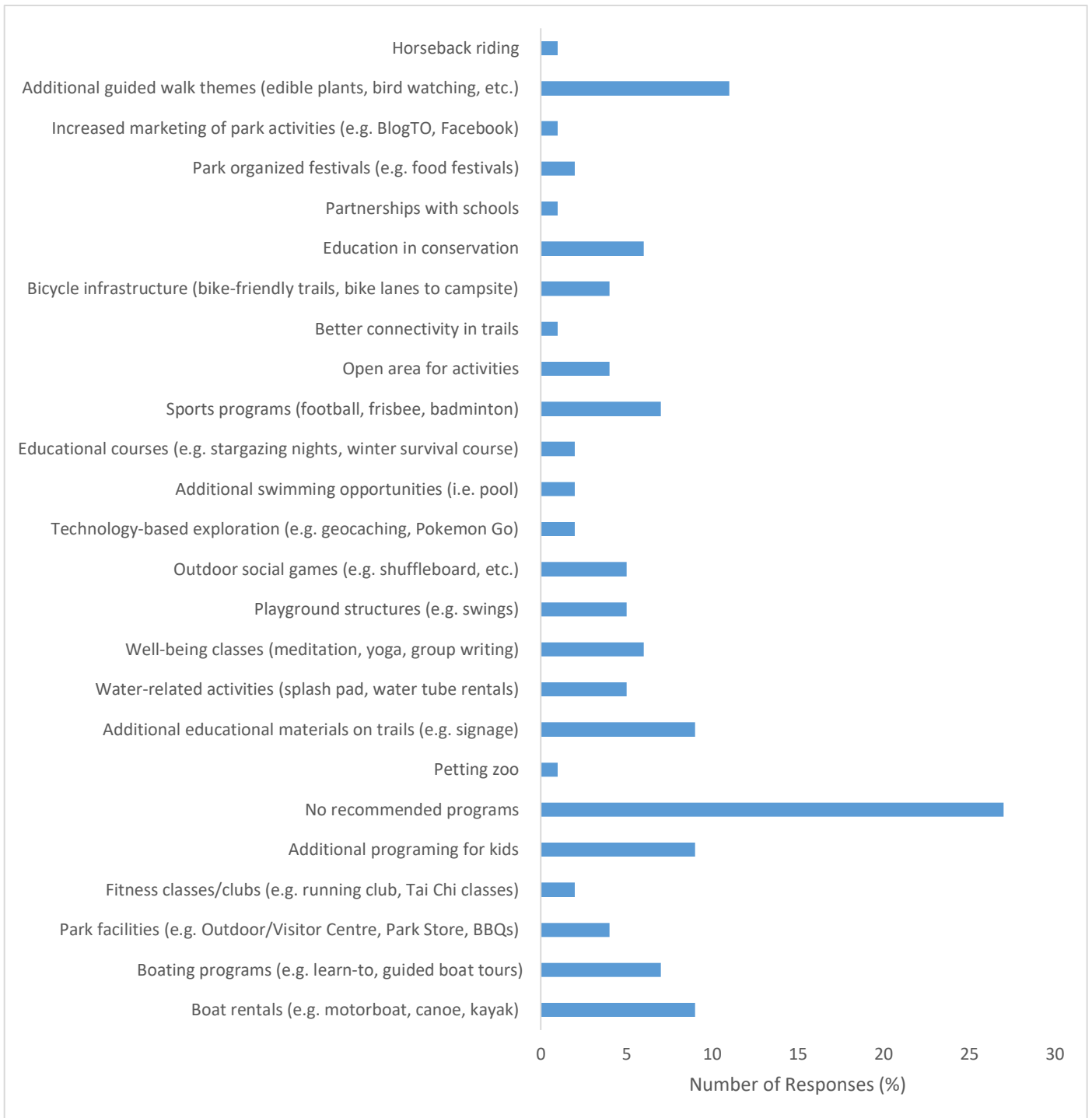


Figure 27: Overview of activities and programming recommended by visitors from the park. Activities are grouped by theme and presented as percentages.

### 5.3.3 Identity-Based Place-Meanings Associated with the Park

In addition to those described above, several participants described positive place-meanings related to the park associated with identity. In particular, several participants described meanings associated with a national Canadian identity or even with their own personal or cultural identity. For instance, while all visitors valued the natural environment and native flora and fauna in the park, for some foreign-born participants in particular, it served as a potent reminder of their sending communities. In fact, one participant was inspired to settle in the areas specifically because of Rouge National Urban Park: “I come from a place that is full of vegetation back in India. I was looking to find something equal and the closest I could find was this. I bought a house in Pickering about three kilometers away just because of the park” (Participant 68). Another participant was inspired to explore the park based on childhood memories from her country of origin: “I’m Argentinean and I’m from a big city in Buenos Aires, and we have parks but...when you go to a park, either you paint or you walk but you don’t hang out there...The idea was to see how [Rouge] looked like, to spend some hours outside Toronto” (Participant 74). In addition to more explicit cultural reminders of a visitor’s sending community such as signage or architecture, these findings support the importance of landscape to the construction and continuity of identity (Main, 2013). Participant 68 also offers an example of place-referent continuity as identified by Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996), in which participants are reminded of very specific places of importance from their respective countries of origin.

In order to further assess the level of a participant’s emotional attachment to the park, all participants were asked to respond to a number of statements (see Table 2 in Chapter 3). Certain statements produced notably differing responses between foreign-born and Canadian-born

visitors. For example, in response to the statement ‘I am very attached to this park’, foreign-born visitors were more likely to agree than those participants born in Canada (Figure 28).

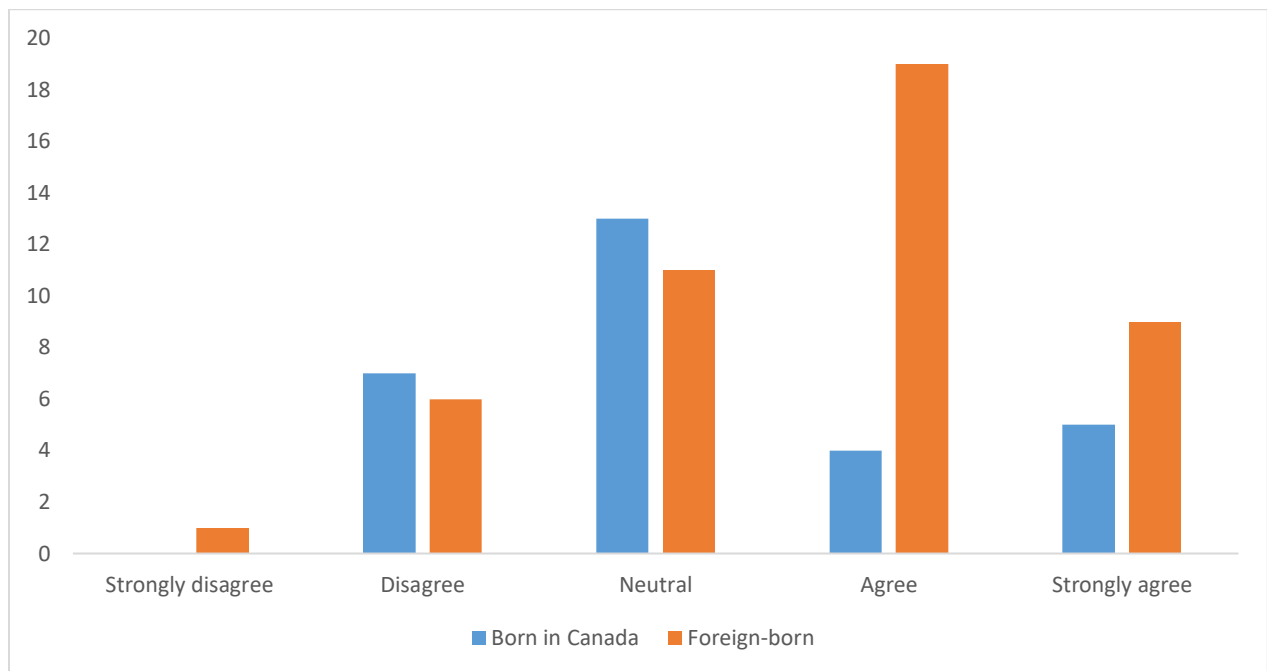


Figure 28: Responses to the statement 'I am very attached to the park' from both Canadian-born (n=29) and foreign-born (n=46) populations.

In the category ‘Agree’ in particular, 19 of 46 (41%) foreign-born participants indicated that they were strongly attached to the park, compared to only 4 of 29 (14%) visitors born in Canada. Foreign-born visitors also responded more frequently to the ‘Strongly Agree’ category, although the discrepancy was less notable. Participant 37, an immigrant from Jamaica and living in Canada for the past 46 years, excitedly described his strong agreement to the statement: “I met the love of my life in this park. I’ve got to show you a picture of her. We met here. She’s gorgeous. And she’s a teacher, and she’s a hippie chick, and she’s just so sweet. I’m glowing. She was here last week. So yeah, strong attachment. Can’t get any stronger than that”. These results further demonstrate how place-based interactions within the park may contribute to the development or reconfirmation of individual identities for all participants, but in this case, particularly for foreign-bon visitors.

Additionally, in response to the statement ‘This park is a special place for my family’, there was a notable discrepancy between foreign-born and Canadian-born responses (Figure 29).

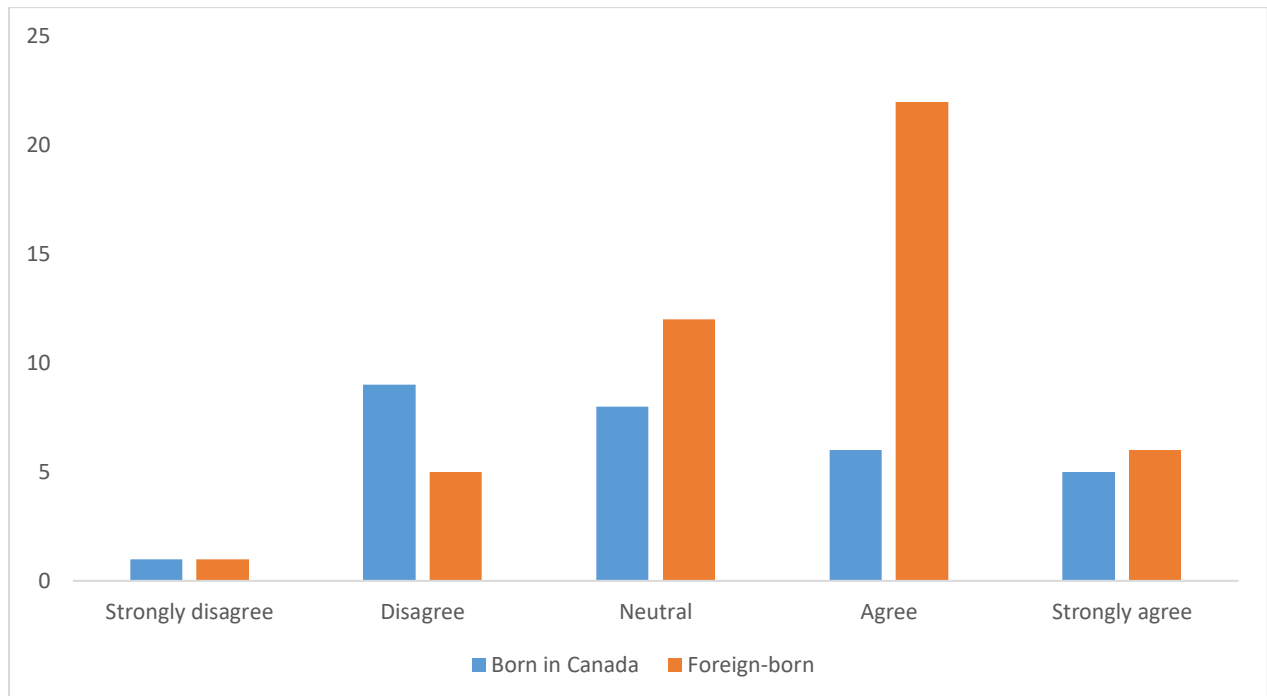


Figure 29: Responses to the statement 'This park is a special place for my family' from Canadian-born (n=29) and foreign-born (n=46) populations.

As visualized in Figure 29, foreign-born participants (48%) were particularly inclined to ‘Agree’ that the park was a special place for their family compared to visitors born in Canada (21%). This result aligns with previously discussed motivations for park visitation, in which foreign-born participants were particularly likely to cite social qualities as their primary reason for visiting. Overall, these results reinforce the notion that immigrants may create multiple ties and find a sense of belonging within their society of settlement at least partially through place-based interactions (Main, 2013).

#### 5.3.3.1 Parks Canada’s Protected Landscapes and a National Canadian Identity

Participants were asked about their interactions with Parks Canada’s protected places in order to gauge whether and how they viewed these sites as representations of Canadian identity.

Table 3 offers an overview of aggregated responses to statements assessing place-meanings associated with a connection between the park and a Canadian identity.

*Table 3: Percent distribution of participant responses to statements that measure place-meanings related a connection between the Parks Canada and a Canadian identity.*

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly disagree (%)</b>	<b>Disagree (%)</b>	<b>Neutral (%)</b>	<b>Agree (%)</b>	<b>Strongly agree (%)</b>
I feel that the landscapes protected by Parks Canada are directly linked to a national Canadian identity.	0	1	10	48	41
I feel that experiencing nature is an important aspect of what it means to be Canadian.	0	1	0	25	74
I associate myself strongly with a Canadian identity.	0	1	6	47	46
I actively seek out opportunities to learn about Canadian history and culture.	1	7	10	51	31

As demonstrated in Table 3, it is evident that the vast majority (nearly 90%) of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that the landscapes protected by Parks Canada are directly linked to a national Canadian identity. Participant 18, who agreed with the statement, elaborated: “I feel like you sort of get a better perspective of the landscape through parks. And the six [national] parks [in Ontario] are sort of varied in their location, like you have stuff up north, which is completely different than the stuff down here, so there’s a variety of Ontario”.

Another participant recounted an anecdote from her earlier experience in the park:

*“That’s very true. Actually, funny story, so that couple over here, they’re Spanish, and they were so funny – they came up to us and were like, ‘Wow, are you like professional campers?’ and we were like ‘no’. ‘Yeah, but you brought chairs!’ And then she was making a joke, she was like ‘is it a Canadian requirement to camp, like do you have to do that?’” ...It’s part of the identity. But we’re not legally required to camp [Laughter]” (Participant 38).*

Participant 38’s comments reflect a theme that emerged particularly at the Glen Rouge Campground sampling site, in which the act of camping within the park was considered an



expression of Canadian identity. Participant 40 discussed general camping expectations and the importance of enforcing an expected ‘camping etiquette’ among new campers in the park:

*“I think there should be more of a focus on the new campers and what is expected of them and what is not expected of them in terms of if you will, kind of a camping etiquette...There is a nature aspect to it. And that is one of the things I don’t see here. No etiquette whatsoever. Like anything else – playing golf or anything else – there’s etiquette or rule to the game. And it’s not understood in this park. People who have been coming for a long time know the rules. The people who are being introduced to it – which is why I suggest that – it tends to be some of these people that are here now, who don’t normally camp, it’s convenient, it’s their first time at it, it’s where they can get to very easily, but they really just don’t understand” (Participant 40).*

Participant 40, who was born in Canada, makes an interesting comparison between camping and golf, in which he describes them both to have rules to be followed. He implies that seasoned campers know the “rules of the game”, and in order for new campers to conduct camping ‘properly’, they must be made aware of and follow the same rules. He praised the learn-to-camp programs for offering new campers a chance to learn these important rules. From this perspective, camping may be viewed as a truly Canadian activity, and for campers who may also be new Canadians, the process of learning how to camp may represent a form of indoctrination into Canadian culture.

Figure 30 demonstrates that the population of foreign-born participants generally agreed with the statement that Parks Canada’s protected landscapes are representations of a Canadian identity. The majority of foreign-born visitors who expressed neutrality had only recently immigrated to Canada (<10 years). For instance, Participant 17, who had immigrated to Canada from China only three years ago, explained: “I don’t really know what national Canadian identity is. Because we’re new immigrants”. This finding indicates that new Canadians may require extended engagement with Parks Canada landscapes and branding before making connections between these sites and a Canadian identity.

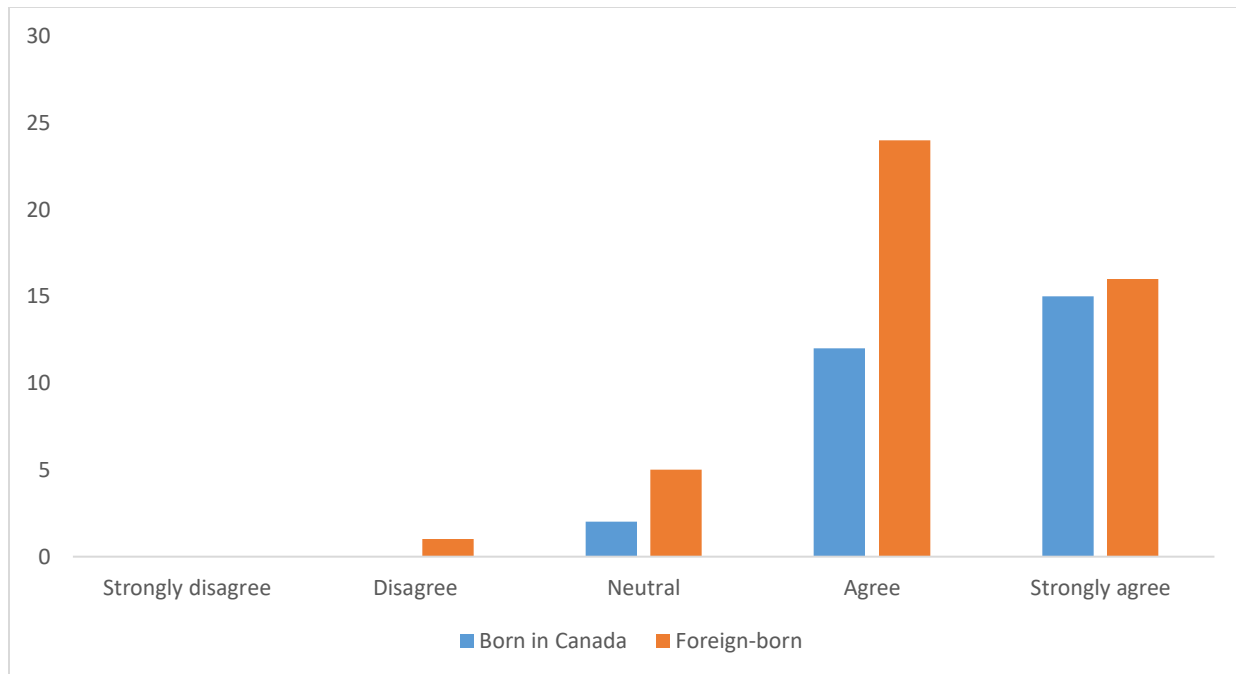


Figure 30: Responses to the statement 'I feel that the landscapes protected by Parks Canada are directly linked to a national Canadian identity' from both Canadian-born (n=29) and foreign-born (n=46) populations.

All participants were also asked to respond to the statement 'I feel that experiencing nature is an important aspect to being Canadian'. Nearly all visitors indicated that they either agreed (24%) or, in most cases, strongly agreed (74%) with the statement. Participant 45 elaborated that it was "such an important part of being Canadian. We have so much in Canada, it's one of our greatest assets" (Participant 45). Many participants, although they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, noted that the importance of experiencing nature went beyond a Canadian identity. Participant 35, for instance, noted, "100%! And human! Not just Canadian. Like my god, we were all monkeys at one point" and Participant 37 agree, "Not only being Canadian but being human. You feel kind of safe down here". As demonstrated in Figure 31, nearly the entire populations of both Canadian-born and foreign-born visitors indicated their agreement with the statement.

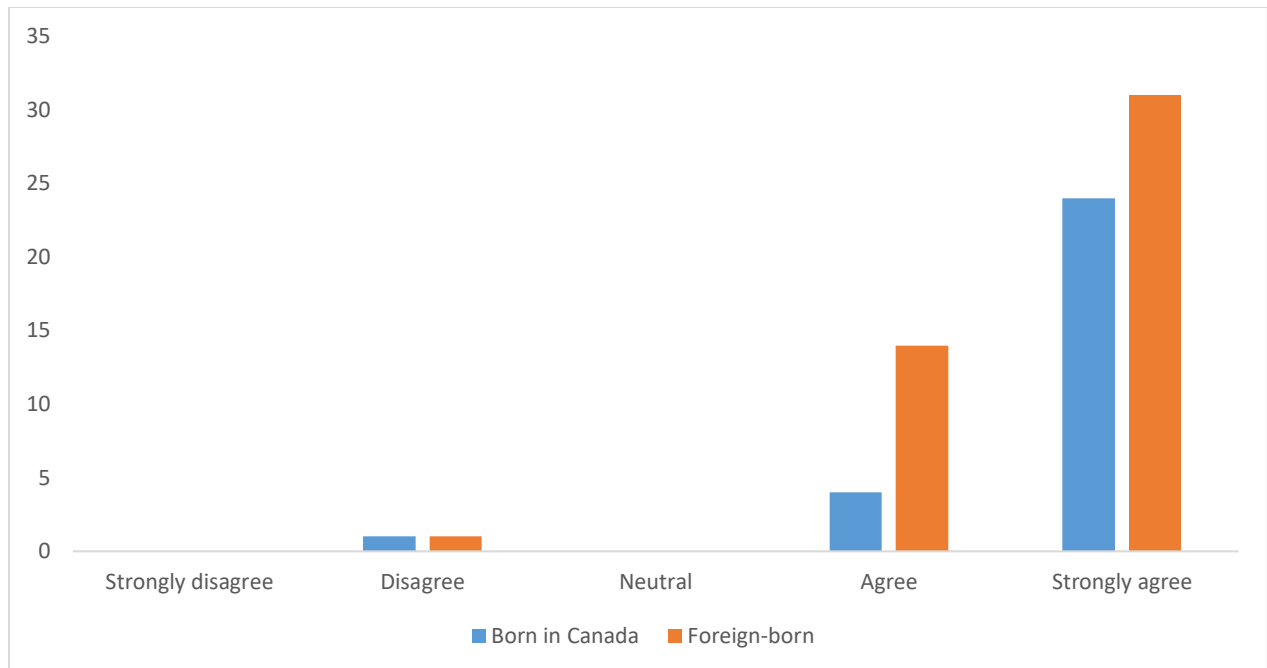


Figure 31: Responses to the statement 'I feel that experiencing nature is an important aspect of what it means to be Canada' from both Canadian-born (n=29) and foreign-born (n=46) populations.

In order to directly assess the visitor's sense of belonging to a Canadian identity, all participants were asked to respond to the statement 'I associate myself strongly with a Canadian identity' (Figure 32). Canadian-born visitors more commonly stated that they strongly agreed with this statement (62% of the entire Canadian-born sampled population). However, it is notable that a majority of foreign-born participants also either agreed (54%) or strongly agreed (35%). The number of years that the participant had been living in Canada (<9, 10-19, or 20+) did not significantly alter these responses, with approximately 30-40% in each group agreeing to the statement. Participant 30, for instance, who had immigrated to Canada from China less than five years ago, stated, "Yeah, [I agree] even though I am a new immigrant. Just a couple years. My son was born in China". These findings support the notion that immigrants may develop a sense of belonging within their society of settlement in a relatively short period of time, and interactions with places such as Rouge National Urban Park may help cultivate these feelings.

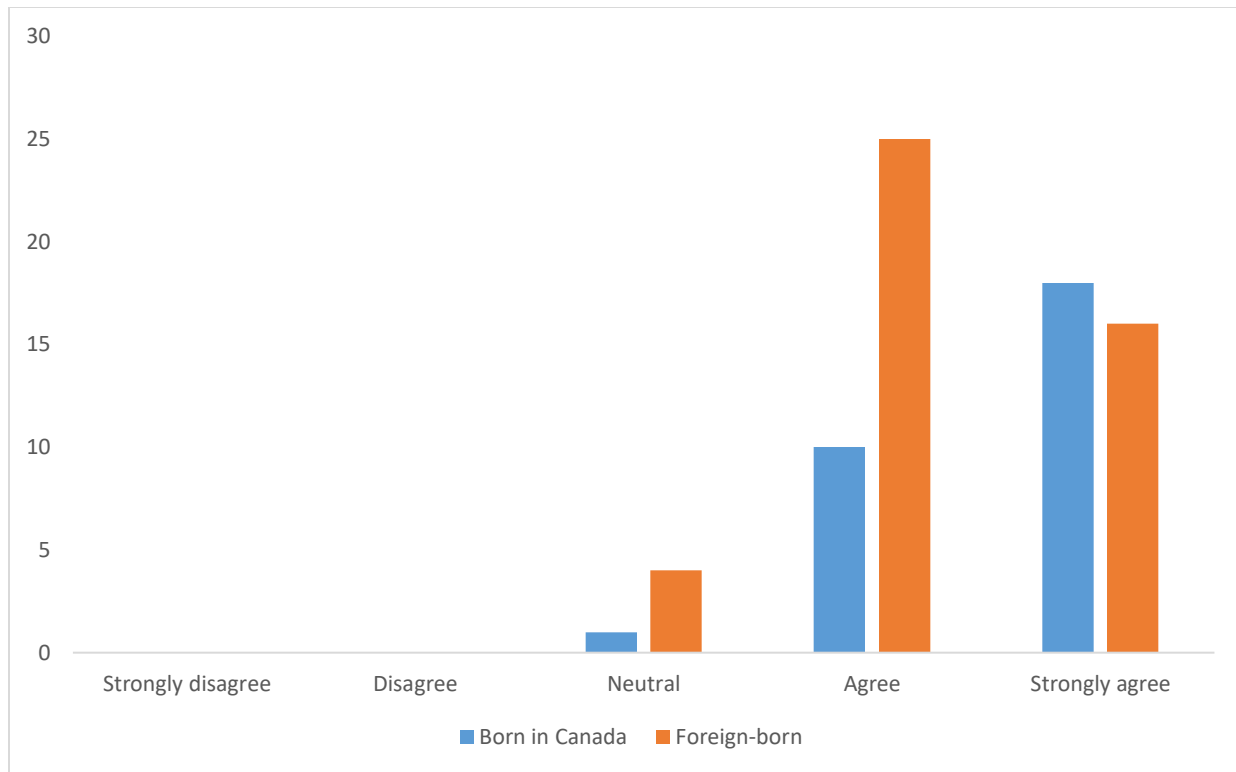


Figure 32: Responses to the statement 'I associate myself strongly with a Canadian identity' from both Canadian-born (n=29) and foreign-born (n=46) populations.

Finally, when asked to respond to the statement 'I actively seek out opportunities to learn about Canadian history and culture' (Figure 33), a notably larger proportion of foreign-born participants both agreed (54%) and strongly agreed (33%) to this statement compared to the proportion of Canadian-born participants who agreed (48%) and strongly agreed (28%). In other words, many immigrants to Canada expressed an interest in learning more about the history and culture of their society of settlement. Participant 63, for instance, spoke in length of the importance he placed on learning about Canadian culture, especially so that his children felt a sense of belonging in their society of settlement: "I learn a lot from my children, from teachers, about Canadian ideology. My kids, they have to be a real Canadian". Participant 63 identified as an immigrant from China, and had been living in Canada for the past 27 years. As previously discussed, one of the primary motivations for visiting the park, particularly for foreign-born populations who had recently moved to the area, was to explore and better familiarize

themselves with their new home. These findings support the idea that immigrants to Canada actively seek out opportunities to learn more about their new society of settlement, and that the landscapes protected in parks such as Rouge may offer a locale for new identities to be constructed or refined.

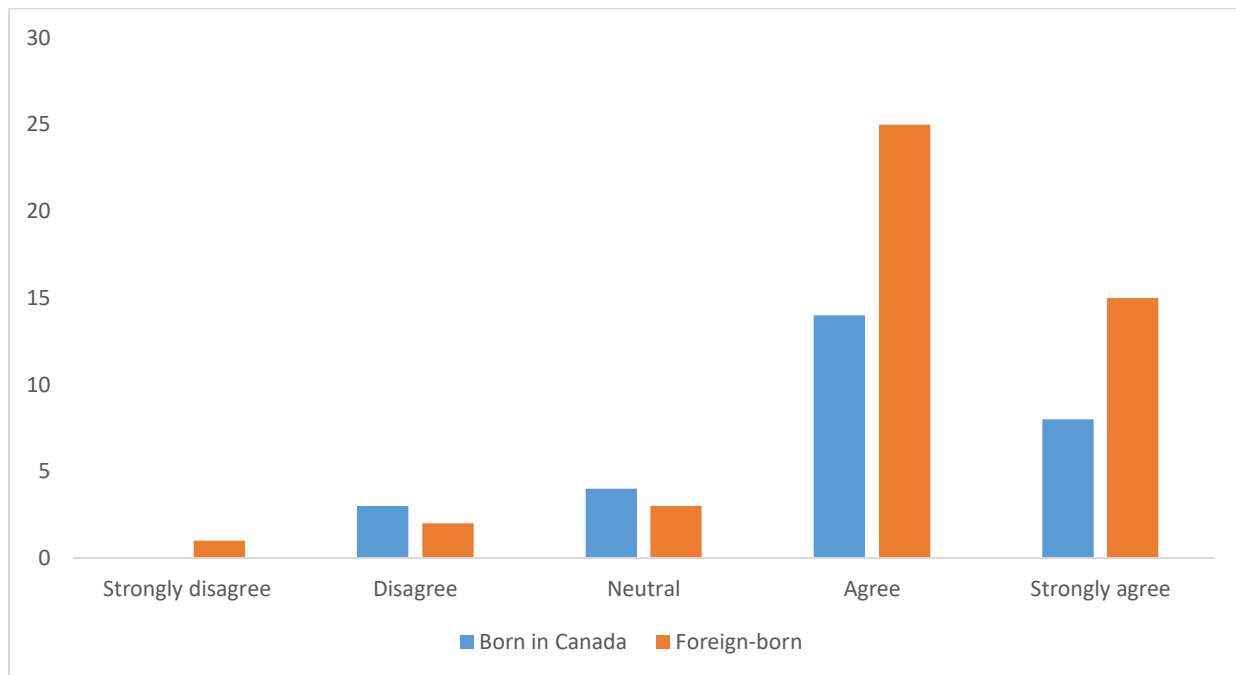


Figure 33: Responses to the statement 'I actively seek out opportunities to learn about Canadian history and culture' from both Canadian-born (n=29) and foreign-born (n=46) populations.

Overall, it is evident that Rouge National Urban Park holds a range of place-based meanings that may differ depending on a visitor's socio-demographic background. Considering the link between Parks Canada landscapes and a Canadian identity, the following section will further explore some generally held perceptions of the Parks Canada brand.

## 5.4 Visitors' General Perceptions of the Parks Canada Brand

### 5.4.1 The Beaver and the Parks Canada Brand

In order to assess the level of familiarity with the Parks Canada brand, particularly regarding the types of images, emotions, or features that respondents associate with it,

participants were shown a version of the Parks Canada logo. The range of participant responses is visualized in Figure 34.

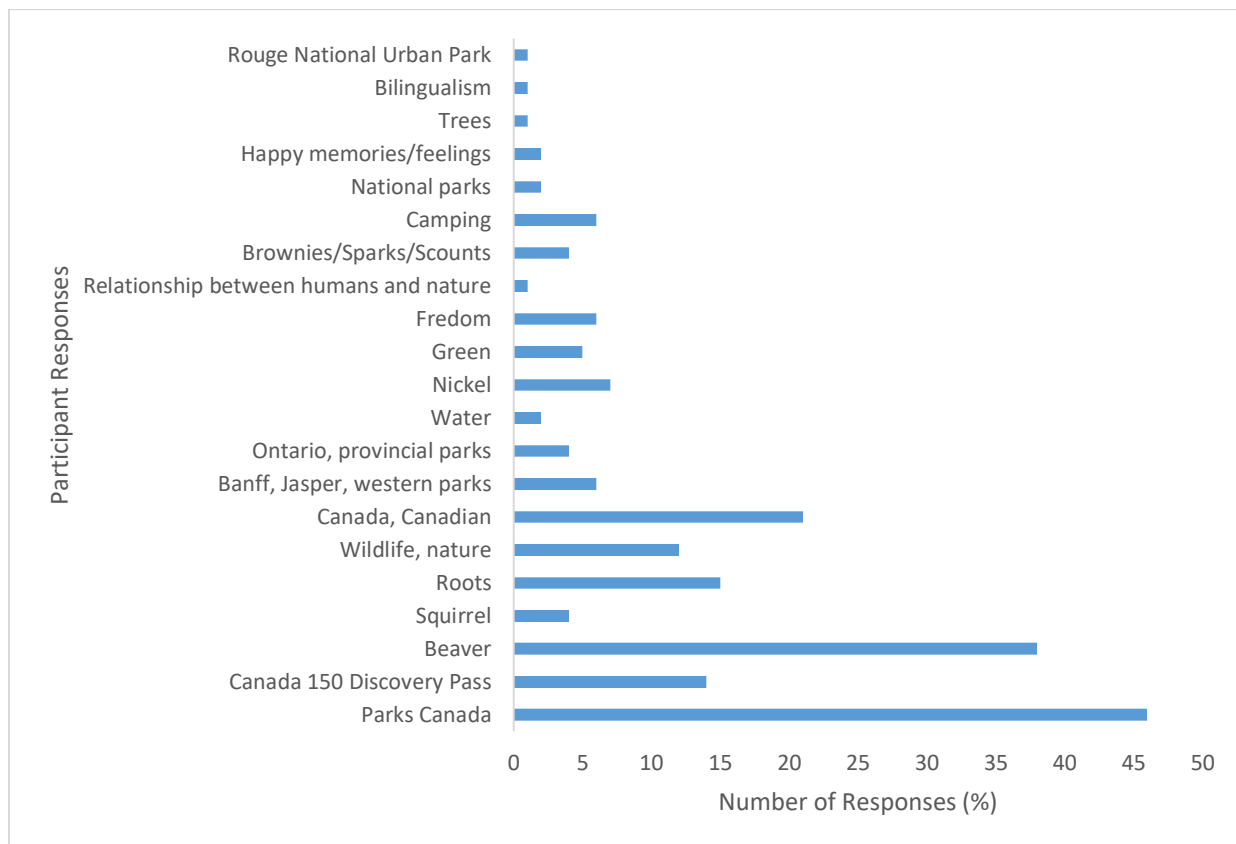


Figure 34: Responses to the question 'With what do you associate this brand?' (referring to the Parks Canada logo) from all participants. Responses were grouped by theme and presented as percentages.

Although several participants noted that the branding reminded them of the Roots clothing store (15%), overall, nearly half of all participants (46%) were able to directly identify the logo as belonging to and representing the Parks Canada Agency. A further 38% specifically commented on and noted their approval of the use of the beaver, which they viewed as a true symbol of Canada. For instance, Participant 65 described it as “this beautiful, passive, ridiculous, Canadian-type branding with this logo of a beaver”. Participant 13 called the beaver a “symbol of Canada”, while Participant 19 stated that the logo made him think immediately of “Canada, because there’s a beaver on it”. Indeed, 21% of participants felt the logo was directly associated with an image of Canada because of the use of the beaver.

For other participants, the branding brought back memories of times spent outside in nature, particularly when camping (6%) or from childhood experiences with Scouts, Brownies, or some other organized outdoor youth group (4%). Participant 38, for example, commented, “It makes me think of Brownies when I was a little kid, and like, Sparks because we’d go camping. Or like, camping with family”. Participant 17 noted, “What I’m thinking of with this brand is about the relationship between humans and nature”. These comments suggest that the existing Parks Canada logo does an effective job in most cases of making a connection between Canadian identity and its connection to nature. However, as explored in the following section, there are still challenges in ensuring this effective branding is reaching and resonating with visitors to Rouge National Urban Park. Indeed, while several participants were quickly able to connect the Parks Canada logo with sites like Banff and Jasper National Park in Alberta (6%), there were difficulties in translating this identification to aspects of Rouge:

*“I didn’t see a sign for the park. There’s nowhere that it says it’s a national park. Because every single national park I’ve been to has one...it seems not so much as a park, but as a park in progress... Yeah, the park doesn’t really have – it’s kind of like you went to a random forest up north, that’s what this park feels like” (Participant 49).*

*“I expected it to be a bit more... [My first experience] I had a couple family friends with me, and they were not really motivated by what they saw when they got to this very point. So I remember coming down, seeing this, going back up. So that is one experience. I say this because I’ve been to a few different national parks – I’ve been through BC and then I travelled to Alberta in a couple of parks, I’ve been to Prince Albert National Park in Saskatchewan, I’ve been to four national parks like Kootenay, Yoho – BC parks – and so those, you know, [they have] distinct characteristics...each one of them have a characteristic that it’s a Parks Canada [site] and you know as you get in. This one didn’t have it” (Participant 68).*

While the Parks Canada brand may be generally identified with national parks and a Canadian identity, this brand recognition has not entirely reached Parks Canada’s first national urban park. The following section will further explore how the Parks Canada brand is being perceived specifically from the context of Rouge National Urban Park.

#### 5.4.2 Parks Canada and Rouge National Urban Park

When asked to generally describe ‘What do you know about Rouge National Urban Park’, only about one third of participants (28%) were aware of the site’s national park status, and even fewer (4%) explicitly discussed any knowledge of Parks Canada as the management body. Only 9% of foreign-born participants were aware of the national park status of Rouge despite outnumbering the number of Canadian-born visitors that participated in the study. Overall, the majority of respondents indicated that they learned about the park either through a recommendation from a friend, family member, or colleague (36%), from living close to the park (19%), or by conducting research online to find a park close to the city (16%). Google Maps was frequently cited. Only 22% of respondents indicated that they had first become aware of the park through direct engagement with the Parks Canada brand, either through the website (17%), front line staff (1%), or the Canada 150 Free Discovery Pass initiative in 2017 (4%). In general, visitor awareness resulted from living nearby or through word-of-mouth rather than engagement in any way with Parks Canada’s promotional materials and staff.

Among the participants who identified as long-term visitors to the park, however, there was an overall positive response to changes made under Parks Canada’s management, particularly in the area of stewardship. Participant 44, who used the park least once a month to participant in Parks Canada’s organized guided hikes, observed:

*“I’m very glad that it’s become, that it’s now under management by Parks Canada. Because I’ve seen a difference. And I’ve seen the increase in funding, I’ve seen more stewardship of it or better stewardship of it. So I think that’s probably the biggest thing I’ve seen in the past couple of years – the difference that being under Parks Canada’s stewardship is making...I’m glad it’s becoming a national park. And I’m really glad that there’s such a large – well, I’m proud of the fact that it’s the largest urban park in North America. I think it would be hard to find an urban park even in Europe as large as this. So I’m really proud, really proud that it’s been protected all these years. And that the Rouge Valley didn’t become the Don Valley if you know what I mean” (Participant 44).*



Other frequent visitors noted their appreciation for the growing awareness they had noticed since Rouge had adopted a national urban park status. For example:

*“It’s nice to see that since Parks Canada has taken over from the TRC [Toronto Region Conservation Authority], there has been an initiative to expand the park so make it more aware. It feels like a lot of people either were not aware of the park’s existence or stayed away from it until Parks Canada took over and started hosting events” (Participant 75).*

Comments from both participants reflect the strong attachment that many visitors associate with the park. Participant 75’s observation that there has been an increased level of public awareness surrounding the park since its transition to a national park is particularly significant for a number of reasons. According to the Draft Management Plan for Rouge National Urban Park, one of the five strategies intended to guide the ongoing development of the park is to “foster a way of thinking about protected heritage areas and conservation in an urban setting, and to create a gateway to Canada’s protected heritage areas an urban setting, and to create a gateway to Canada’s protected heritage areas within Canada’s mot culturally diverse city” (Draft Management Plan, 2014, p. 12). In other words, one of the key management objectives of Rouge National Urban Park is to bolster awareness of the Parks Canada brand in general, and use the park as an opportunity to introduce traditionally constrained populations to the national park system. The fact that long-term visitors have noticed rising attendance and awareness, and the fact that the majority of visitors who participated in this research were not born in Canada, indicates that Parks Canada may be making progress towards this management objective.

In fact, several participants wanted to learn even more about the history and development of the park, but they had difficulty locating the appropriate resources to achieve this knowledge:

*“[I know] it’s one of the national parks, like I went on the website and I saw some of the trails and stuff...[but] coming into this, I didn’t really know what distinguishes national parks from the rest of parks, and who is managing it, like I don’t really know” (Participant 18).*

*“I just felt that the website didn’t have enough. And the difference between the conservation area and the park, like what’s the difference? Are they together? Are they different? Are they separate? Are they partners? That kind of stuff would be great” (Participant 22).*

The sentiments expressed in these comments speak to a need for improved communication between park management and park visitors regarding the governance of the park. As explored in the previous section, there is a strong level of attachment to the park from visitors of all socio-demographic backgrounds, and in this case, this translates into an interest in being informed as to how the park is being managed. Additionally, providing further clarity in this area may address more specific concerns that were expressed by participants, including perceived conflicts in providing park maintenance:

*“Parks Canada and Toronto Parks Commission or whatever it is – they kind of don’t agree on what is responsible for what, so they don’t maintain the trails. So there are sections that are blocked off because they can’t agree on who is going to fix it. And so – it’s a simple fix. Like, it’s just that the shore of the river is eroded...so all you have to do is move the path over a few feet. Not hard, but they can’t agree on who is going to do it, I guess” (Participant 43).*

Overall, developing stronger and clearer content both on-site and online may help to alleviate some of these concerns and generally bolster public awareness of Rouge National Urban Park and the Parks Canada brand. Increased signage and staff presence on site that are branded with the Parks Canada logo may achieve a stronger connection for visitors between Rouge National Urban Park and the overall Parks Canada Agency.

## **6.0 Discussion and Recommendations**

This study revealed a complex array of place-meanings associated with Rouge National Urban Park. As explored in the previous chapters, the placement of the park within the largest and most culturally diverse city in Canada allowed the park to engage with a number of visitors for a diverse range of social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Existing literature has explored how these socio-demographic characteristics may determine patterns and distinct dissimilarities in how different populations use and perceive the park (see Main, 2013; Hester, 1999, Zanon et al., 2014 among others). This understanding was further supported by the findings of this study. The various place-meanings associated with the park by different populations, including those that are traditionally underrepresented in national park spaces, offer important insights into how the growing initiative of Rouge National Urban Park may better accommodate visitors of all backgrounds in the future.

This research particularly focused on the experience of immigrants within the park in order to determine whether and how they viewed the landscapes protected by Parks Canada as representations of Canadian identity, and whether and how their engagement with these landscapes impacted their own understanding of what it means to be Canadian. As discussed in the literature review, an intention of this research was to consider a potentially unexplored link between place-branding and acculturation, in which it was proposed that foreign-born members of the Canadian public may use interactions with Parks Canada's protected landscapes as a means to find a sense of belonging and rootedness within their society of settlement. According to the findings, some of the meanings associated with the park did indeed reflect concepts of identity, including serving as a place where users could relax, recharge, be themselves, and in some cases, be reminded of their country of origin. The park was also often used for social

reasons and as a way for visitors, particularly those new to the area, to better familiarize themselves with their new home surroundings. As Main (2013) describes, these place-meanings related to identity and finding a sense of community in the park speak to the potential for “a relationship between the park and a developing sense of inclusion, belonging, and even rootedness” (p. 302) to be cultivated among visitors.

The data collected within this research study therefore have a number of significant implications for policy-makers. Notably, the data confirm that the visitor base of Rouge National Urban Park is representative of populations traditionally underrepresented in national parks spaces. Immigrants in particular, who are consistently identified in existing literature and Parks Canada’s own internal research as constrained populations, make up a notable percentage of visitors sampled in this study. Respondents identified connectivity features such as access to Rouge via Parkbus or the TTC as highly positive aspects of the park, confirming the site’s potential to mitigate traditional accessibility constraints and enable visitation for underrepresented populations. This also means that the resulting diversity of visitors requires that differing needs be accommodated within the park.

Indeed, as described throughout this study’s findings and supported by existing literature, different populations generally use and perceive urban park spaces differently. Immigrant populations in this study, for instance, were particularly likely to cite the opportunity to socialize and enjoy a sense of community within the park as a primary reason for visiting. They were also more likely to enjoy the park for family or large-group activities such as sports or barbeque picnics on the beach. When prompted to suggest additional park programming, recommendations were made along the same vein. All but five of the 44 foreign-born participants traveled to the park with friends or families, and of the five who traveled individually, their primary purpose

was to meet or reconnect with others in the park. The policy recommendations in the following sections reflect the need to accommodate different priorities and preferences among different visitor populations within Rouge National Urban Park.

Additionally, this study also revealed a number of notable park activities with policy implications for visitors of all socio-demographic backgrounds. For instance, the data revealed that several participants used the Glen Rouge Campground as alternative accommodations in a number of different situations (e.g., as a place to stay while attending a concert in Toronto, while waiting for their home to be sold, or for an entire summer while commuting to work). These findings provide a strong justification for the park to creatively expand its partnerships to include, as examples, concert venues in Toronto or real estate agencies in the vicinity. These partnerships may help generate further awareness of the park and further extend the Parks Canada brand to targeted audiences. This is particularly important considering that findings revealed there was a weak connection between the Parks Canada brand and Rouge National Urban Park specifically. However, in implementing these initiatives to bring additional people into the park, it is important that strong regulations are simultaneously enacted to protect the ecological integrity of the natural landscapes. Overall, participants placed very strong value on the preservation efforts of the park. One participant went as far as to say that the primary goal of management should be to “protect the park at all costs.” Capitalizing on unique experiences offered by the park as well as ensuring that a constant balance is maintained between visitor management and the park’s ecological integrity is extremely important considerations for policy-makers.

In terms of visitors’ recognition of and associations with the Parks Canada brand more generally, all respondents, including a vast majority of foreign-born participants, agree or

strongly agree that the landscapes protected by Parks Canada are directly linked a national Canadian identity. They also agree that experiencing nature is an important aspect of what it means to be Canadian. Foreign-born participants were more likely to associate identity-based meanings with the park, such as comments that described a connection between the park and the individual's country of origin. These findings speak to the importance of marketing Parks Canada's 'nationally significant' landscapes in a way that is inclusive to all audiences.

Based on this array of meanings, this section will present some recommendations for park management as to how to enhance the park experience for all visitors, but particularly those that identify as foreign-born and who are traditionally underrepresented in national park spaces. It will attempt to translate issues identified in the findings analysis into tangible policy actions. As noted, while the vast majority of all participants indicated that they associated the Parks Canada brand with an overall Canadian identity, there were challenges in translating this recognition to the context of Rouge National Urban Park. The first set of recommendations pertaining to strategies for generating further public awareness of and investment in Rouge National Urban Park.

## **6.1 Recommendations for Building Connections Between the Public and the Park**

It is evident from the findings that the Parks Canada brand produces strong associations with Parks Canada and an overall Canadian identity. The use of the beaver in particular evoked a strong sense of Canadian heritage among respondents of all socio-economic backgrounds. However, it is also evident from the data that knowledge of and engagement with Parks Canada materials specifically within the context of Rouge National Urban Park face certain challenges. In other words, while the Parks Canada brand may be strongly associated with other national

sites – particularly Banff National Park and Jasper National Park – there were limited associations with Rouge National Urban Park. Indeed, only a relatively small percentage of participants were even aware that the park had transitioned into a national site that was managed by Parks Canada. Considering that a primary objective of the park is to act as a “gateway” to connect new audiences to Parks Canada’s national sites, it is integral that the Parks Canada brand is strongly associated with experiences of Rouge National Urban Park. In this sense, the following recommendations offer suggested avenues to generate further awareness of Rouge National Urban Park, particularly as the ‘newest member to the Parks Canada family’.

#### 6.1.1 Building Partnerships

1. Park management may consider reaching out to entertainment venues within and around the City of Toronto in order to advertise Rouge National Urban Park – specifically Glen Rouge Campground – as a fun, less expensive, engaging alternative to a hotel in downtown Toronto. The data collected in this study suggests that several campers have used the park in this way in order to attend events in the City, such as concerts and sporting events. Developing partnerships that result in Rouge National Urban Park having a presence on websites or on-site at venues could help to generate further interest in the park and attract new potential park users.
2. VIA Rail Canada and GO Transit (particularly trains that travel through the Lakeshore East Corridor) may also be a beneficial partnership for park management to consider. Some participants indicated that they first became aware of the park when travelling via train past the Lake Ontario beach and marsh area. Their curiosity sparked them to travel to the site and visit for themselves. Through a partnership with these transit authorities, information

about the park could be provided to passengers either via signage aboard the train or at nearby GO stations (such as Rouge Hill GO, which is accessible to the park by both transit and walking). Similar to the way in which Parks Canada staff provide information about Rouge National Urban Park to visitors on the free shuttle bus while travelling to the park, information could also be provided via announcements over the PA system on the train. Parks Canada could create a short script to be read by on-board train staff in order to bring the attention of the passengers to the park's existence and its status as a national park managed by Parks Canada. Several participants who travelled to the park via the shuttle bus indicated that the introduction provided by a Parks Canada staff member on-route was very effective for dissemination information, and for many was in fact the first they had really learned about the park.

3. Considering the importance placed on the social aspects of the park and a general interest for additional youth programming expressed by participants, management may consider increasing efforts to partner with local schools. Parks Canada could consider developing an ambassadorial team, who could send representatives to local schools in order to give them an introduction to the park and help them to plan their visit. In doing so, Parks Canada would be building relationships with key targeted audiences (youth) and, by allowing the students to develop their own itinerary, the Agency could take an informal survey of the types of activities that interest these age groups. Tailored park programming could be developed based on this feedback. Building excitement for the park among youth may also encourage them to return with their families, ultimately introducing even more potentially new users to the park.



### 6.1.2 Engaging Participants On-Site

1. Allow visitors a forum to suggest their own ideas for themes of guided hikes within the park (e.g. a poll taken over social media platforms, or on-site suggestion boxes at visitor centres within the park). Several participants offered suggestions for additional guided hikes over the course of this research, such as urban foraging, identification of edible plants (and preparing a snack with the gathered ingredients after the hike), and other plant and tree identification hikes. By allowing visitors the opportunity to have a voice in the programming of the park, it may encourage greater attendance and therefore additional opportunities to experience and learn about both Rouge National Urban Park and the Parks Canada Agency.
2. Management may consider capitalizing on opportunities offered by photography within the park (e.g., implementing crowd-sourced photography initiatives or promoting photography-based social media contests specifically for Rouge National Urban Park). Management may also consider conducting studies on site using the previously described visitor-employed photography (VEP) in order to get a sense of how the park is being perceived by different audiences, while also obtaining material for promotion on the Parks Canada website or in other materials. Material obtained via VEP may also offer key insights as to whether the current marketing of Rouge National Urban Park reflects the ways in which the park is currently perceived and valued by visitors.
3. Management may consider increasing Parks Canada staff presence at trailheads and formal entrances to the park as a means to build brand recognition with the Parks Canada logo, distribute maps with additional information about the park to visitors, answer questions, and generally build stronger relationships between the Agency and visitors to the park.

Similarly, as a long-term objective, participants expressed an interest in seeing a more permanent Visitor Centre within the park as well as a Park Store, both of which are opportunities for staff to share information about the park as well as raise funds and sell merchandise branded with the Parks Canada logo.

## **6.2 Recommendations for Balancing Visitor Experience with Ecological Integrity**

One of the most valued aspects of the park was the natural environment that it protected, particularly considering its proximity to the largest metropolitan areas in Canada. Even when suggesting additional activities and programming within the park, the primary concern of participants was that they would not interfere with the natural environment and the conservation efforts of the park. As Participant 10 summarized, “Protect the park at all costs!”. As generating awareness of the park and building connections with target audiences is an identified priority of the park’s draft management plan, it is important that this is balanced with strict policies and guidelines that will ensure the sustained protection of the natural environment. The following recommendations suggest policy actions that aim to complement promotional efforts while ensuring that the park is indeed protected “at all costs”.

1. Develop and enforce strong ecological integrity policies, particularly in areas with long-term visitors such as Glen Rouge Campground, who may have an extended impact on the natural environment. This may be increasingly important if the site is marketed as an alternative to accommodations in downtown Toronto, and there is a higher intake and turnover of visitors. Additionally, as suggested by participants, ensure that these policies are well understood by visitors to the park, particularly campers. For example, during the

check-in process at the campground, staff could offer a brief orientation to important park rules, and have the campers sign an agreement that they will abide them during their stay.

2. Increase the staff presence within the park for purposes additional beyond providing strong customer service and positive brand ambassadorial services. Park wardens, for example, could help ensure that park rules are respected and the ecological integrity of the park is protected by making consistent tours of park sites and trails. A phone line may also be created for visitors within the park to call in and report if they notice anything that requires the attention of a park warden. This number would be advertised publicly throughout the park and within maps of the site. This increase in staff presence may also offer visitors comfort by providing a sense of safety if they feel they have a clear idea who they may contact if they ever require assistance while within park boundaries.
3. Develop and implement additional signage in all different languages throughout the park that focus on educating the public about the ecological sensitivity of the park's habitat and how they can help to protect the environment. Additional educational and action-based programs (e.g., a 'Trash Bash') could be organized in order to foster visitor accountability and help to keep the park clean and free from litter.
4. As suggested by several visitors, park management may consider implementing fines for offenses such as littering within the park and intentionally damaging the ecological integrity of the site. In places like Glen Rouge Campground where visitors must first interact with a staff member before entering the site, ensure that expectations are clearly outlined. Visitors could potentially be required to sign a waiver to this effect.

### **6.3 Recommendations for Accommodating a Diverse Clientele**

As demonstrated throughout the findings of this study and supported by existing literature regarding cultural differentiation in park visitation, different populations generally use and perceive urban parks in different ways. Rouge National Urban Park, in the unique position of being the only national park in Canada to be in such close proximity to such a large and diverse metropolitan area, has the exciting but challenging potential to accommodate visitors with a broad range of social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Based on the data collected in this research, which focused more specifically on the experiences of immigrants to Canada, the following are recommendations regarding various ways that the park may accommodate their diverse clientele, particularly by diversifying and expanding programs offered by the park.

1. Considering that foreign-born visitors were especially likely to cite social aspects of the park as their primary motivation for visiting the site, it may be worth considering investing in more picnic tables and pavilions that give space for communal gatherings. Indeed, several foreign-born visitors noted that they enjoyed gathering with friends within the park for picnics or barbeques on the beach. Offering designated spaces for the use of barbeques, or offering the option for visitors to rent the barbeques themselves from the park, may enhance the park experience for visitors as well as generate further income for the park. The suggestion for barbeques was one that emerged particularly at the Lake Ontario beach and marsh sampling site.
2. Similarly, the park may consider investing in sports equipment, such as volleyball nets for the beach, which would encourage large-group interactions and socialization in the park. This recommendation came particularly from the Lake Ontario sampling site and

the Glen Rouge Campground, where many visitors came with the intention of spending time on the beach or around campfires with friends and family. At the Glen Rouge Campground specifically, other social activities such as horseshoes, shuffleboard, and other outdoor billiard games were suggested.

3. Several participants indicated that they would like to see additional youth programming in the park, as they tend to visit as a family and they currently do not find that there is enough to entertain their younger children. In particular, some dedicated spaces for playground structures were recommended, as well as a splash pad for younger children to enjoy.
4. While physical activities, namely hiking and walking, were the most commonly cited activities enjoyed in the park, several participants indicated that they would like to see programming offered that focused more on wellness and not just physical fitness. Suggested activities included yoga, meditation groups, and writing classes. The more intimate and reflective activities, while providing clear health-benefits, also offer an opportunity for visitors to meet new people and build a sense of community and connection with others within the park.

## **6.4 Study Challenges, Limitations, and Areas for Future Research**

One of the most difficult challenges facing this thesis research was in the collection of the data. Due to the length of the survey, which on average took between five to fifteen minutes, it was at times difficult to find participants willing to dedicate the time especially if they were participating in any activities other than relaxing. Occasionally participants would agree to walk and talk while hiking along the trail; however, in the majority of cases, the researcher was

limited to collect data from visitors at formal entrances to the park. Considering the level of integration of the park in the surrounding neighborhoods, it can only be assumed that several visitors enter the park through informal entrances to the park, and their perspectives are largely missing from the data collected in this study.

A limitation of this study is in the sample size. Although 81 completed interviews and surveys offer some valuable insights into the types of populations using the parks and for what purposes, the park hosts thousands of visitors every year and these data are hardly generalizable. Time constraints and lack of resources (namely the fact that there was only one interviewer) prevented the collection of significant amounts of additional data. However, the data that was collected and analyzed provides a strong foundation for future research in this area within Rouge National Urban Park.

Indeed, considering the new status of Rouge National Urban Park and the fact that the study of cultural differentiation in urban park use is under-researched in Canada, there is a lot of potential for further research from this study. One interesting area to consider may be to conduct a similar study specifically with participants of Parks Canada's *Learn-to-Camp* program. In the Glen Rouge Campground, several participants commented that they viewed camping to be an activity particularly associated with a Canadian identity. Interviewing participants of the program with a similar line of questioning presented in this study may yield further interesting results, particularly as the *Learn-to-Camp* program was specifically designed to mitigate barriers for populations such as newcomers to enjoying Canada's national parks (Parks Canada, 2018a).

## 6.5 Conclusion

In order to provide a final reflection on the results of this study, this section revisits the research questions outlined in the introduction chapter, which were explored through semi-structured interviews and quantitative surveys. In general, the research topic focused on whether and how Parks Canada's marketing materials have branded their protected landscapes as representations of Canadian identity. This topic was explored through the following two primary research questions: 1) whether and how the Parks Canada brand is reaching and resonating with visitors to Rouge National Urban Park, particularly those individuals who identify as immigrants to Canada, and; 2) if their engagement with these natural landscapes has impacted their perceptions of Canadian identity. The relevance of these questions is emphasized by the relatively little existing attention on urban park use of culturally diverse clientele within a Canadian context. These questions also offer the potential to investigate certain underexplored areas in the literature, such as the existence of a link between place-branding and acculturation among immigrants to Canada.

Considering the first question, the findings of this study demonstrate that while participants generally noted a strong association between the Parks Canada brand and a national Canadian identity, the connections between this branding and Rouge National Urban Park specifically were not very strong. Indeed, few participants explicitly noted that they were aware of the park's national park status or that it had recently come under management of Parks Canada. While several participants would commonly identify other sites such as Banff National Park and Jasper National Park as having distinct "characteristic[s] that it's a Parks Canada [site]" (Participant 68), this type of immediate recognition was missing from Rouge National Urban Park. Indeed, only 28% of all participants were aware of the national park status of Rouge, and

foreign-born participants made up only 9% of this statistic despite outnumbering the participants who were born in Canada. However, when presented with an image of the Parks Canada logo and asked more generally about their perceptions, thoughts, and emotions associated with the Parks Canada brand, visitors spoke of a strong connection between Parks Canada's branding and their idea of a Canadian identity. All participants, including a vast majority of foreign-born participants, agreed or strongly agreed that the landscapes protected by Parks Canada were directly linked to a national Canadian identity and that experiencing nature was a strong aspect of what it means to be Canadian.

Regarding the second question, this study also explored various identity-based meanings associated with the park, particularly among foreign-born populations. In notable cases, interactions with the space, both as a natural environment and specifically as a Parks Canada protected site, influenced the way in which several visitors constructed their own identity. For instance, some visitors selected to visit or even live near the park due to being reminded of their country of origin. Others spoke of their strong attachment to the park, particularly as a result of its protected nature and connection to a Canadian identity. These findings align with existing literature that discusses the concept of place-based identity, in which a person's own identity is informed by and intertwined with the identity of a place. They also speak to the importance of marketing landscapes – particularly ones that are federally protected and of 'national significance' – in a way that is accessible to all types of audiences. Indeed, the overall results of this study indicate that a broad range of place meanings are associated with Rouge National Urban Park, and the socio-demographic background of these visitors may be a strong contributing factor to this diversity in perceptions and uses. Ensuring that these diverse audiences are able to see themselves and their interests reflected in the spirit and presentation of national



parks is particularly important considering the growing diversity of the Canadian population. Rouge National Urban Park, being in such close proximity to the largest and most culturally diverse metropolitan area in Canada, has a unique potential to engage with these diverse (and often underrepresented) audiences. It is therefore especially important that Parks Canada's branding and marketing within this site is reaching and resonating with these audiences, and this study offers some insights into how the future development of the park may best accommodate this diverse visitor base.

Rouge National Urban Park represents an inaugural effort in the development of future park models within Canada. In a nation that is becoming increasingly urbanized and diverse, it is more important than ever to mitigate barriers of access by promoting equity and inclusion within these spaces. By bringing the national park experience to people who are traditionally the most underrepresented in these spaces, Rouge National Urban Park offers an opportunity for creative approaches to urban park development that is truly Canadian.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Recruitment Script for Approaching Visitors

P = Potential Participant; I = Interviewer

I – Hello! My name is **Danika Guppy** and I am a master's student in the **School of Planning** at the University of Waterloo. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of **Dr. Luna Khirfan** on *how the Parks Canada brand is reaching and resonating with visitors to Rouge National Urban Park*. As part of my thesis research, I am conducting short interviews with visitors to the park in order to discover their **experiences and perceptions of Rouge National Urban Park and Parks Canada, followed by a short survey completed by the participant regarding some socio-demographic background information**. Would you be interested in participating in this study?

P - No, thank you OR Yes, could you provide me with some more information about the survey?

I - Background Information:

- The interview and survey would last **no more than 20 minutes**.
- The questions are quite general (for example, **why do you visit Rouge National Urban Park?**).
- Involvement in this **survey** is entirely voluntary and there are no known or anticipated risks to participation in this study.
- You may decline to answer any of the survey questions you do not wish to answer and may withdraw your participation at any time. With your permission, **your answers to the questions** will be tape-recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis.
- Excerpts from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications to come from the research. Be assured that all quotations will be anonymous.
- All information you provide as well as your identity will be considered confidential.
- The data collected will be stored in a restricted-access area at the University of Waterloo and disposed of in 2 years' time.
- If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please feel free to contact Dr. Luna Khirfan at 519-888-4567, Ext. 33906.
- I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. However, the final decision about participation is yours.
- After all of the data have been analyzed, you may receive an executive summary of the research results.

**If you are interested, here is** an information letter which has all of these details along with contact names and numbers on it to help assist you in making a decision about your participation in this study.

P - No thank you OR Sure (ask for informed consent, and proceed with administering the survey)

**I – Thank you for your agreeing to participate in this study! Before beginning the short interview and survey, I need to ensure that I have your full and informed consent to proceed. Answering YES or NO, do you consent to the following?**

- 1. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.**
- 2. I agree to have my interview audio recorded.**
- 3. I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.**

## Appendix B: Participant Letter

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by **Danika Guppy** under the supervision of **Dr. Luna Khirfan of the School of Planning** at the University of Waterloo, Canada. The objectives of the research study are to assess how the Parks Canada brand is reaching and resonating with visitors to Rouge National Urban Park. The study is a component of a master's thesis.

If you decide to volunteer, you will be asked to complete a short interview generally focusing on your experiences of Parks Canada's national sites and promotional materials, and a survey collecting some socio-demographic background information. The process will take no longer than 20-minutes, and may likely be shorter. Participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer and you can withdraw your participation at any time. With your permission, your answers to the questions will be tape-recorded to facilitate the accurate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. There are no known or anticipated risks from participating in this study.

It is important for you to know that your identity will remain confidential throughout the entirety of the study. All of the data will be summarized and no individual could be identified from these summarized results. The data collected from this study will have no personal identifiers with the exception of the first three characters of your residential postal code, which will be used to generally determine from where visitors are travelling to visit the park. Participants will also be asked to answer some questions pertaining to their socio-demographic background. Electronic data collected from the study will be maintained on a password-protected computer database, and written records, questionnaires, and audio-recording tapes will be stored in a secure and restricted-access location at the University of Waterloo. The data will be electronically archived after completion of the study and maintained for two years and then erased.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE#22909). If you have questions for the Committee contact the Chief Ethics Officer, Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or [ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca).

Once all the data are collected and analyzed for this project, I plan on sharing the information with the research community through seminars, conferences, presentations, and journal articles. If you would like to receive a copy of the results or have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact either myself, Danika Guppy, at [dguppy@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:dguppy@uwaterloo.ca) or Dr. Luna Khirfan at [lkhirfan@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:lkhirfan@uwaterloo.ca).

Thank you for your consideration to participate in this study!  
Sincerely,

Danika Guppy  
Candidate for Master of Arts in Planning  
School of Planning, University of Waterloo

## Appendix C: Research Instrument

### **Rouge National Urban Park Survey Form**

*To be filled in by the interviewer:*

Survey site:	_____
Date/time of interview:	_____
Interviewer:	_____

Since 2011, in an effort to create the first park of its kind in Canada, Parks Canada has worked to nationalize and increase in size the original Rouge Park in Toronto. As the park continues to be established in the coming years, several new trails, visitor centres, welcome areas, and wayfinding resources including improved signage and interpretive displays are scheduled to be added around the park. Keeping in mind that the park is still under development, please answer the following questions based on your current understanding of and experiences with Rouge National Urban Park.

#### **Part A: Place-Meanings Associated with Rouge National Urban Park**

1. What do you know about Rouge National Urban Park?

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2. Why do you visit the park?

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3. What do you like the most about the park?

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4. What do you like the least about the park?

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5. What about the park would you like to change?

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6. With whom do you visit the park?

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7. What type of activities do you currently enjoy in the park?

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8. Are there certain types of activities or programming that you would like to see offered in the park?

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9. Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements about what Rouge National Urban Park means to you:

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
a) This park is important in protecting the landscape from development					
b) This park is important for providing habitat for wildlife					
c) I get more satisfaction out of visiting this park than any other					
d) I wouldn't substitute any other park for doing the types of things I do here					
e) This park is a special place for my family					
f) Many important family memories are tied to this park					
g) This park contributes to the character of my community					
h) I am very attached to this park					
i) This trail means a lot to me					
j) I feel that this park is a part of me					
k) I identify strongly with this park					
l) I feel that the landscapes protected by Parks Canada are directly linked to a national Canadian identity					
m) I feel that experiencing nature is an important aspect of what it means to be Canadian					
n) I associate myself strongly with a Canadian identity					
o) I actively seek out opportunities to learn about Canadian history and culture					

## **Part B: Perceptions of the Parks Canada Brand**

10. How did you first get to know about Rouge National Urban Park? (*Select all that apply*)

- ☐ Parks Canada website
- ☐ Park front line staff
- ☐ Travel agent
- ☐ Sales promotion (e.g. free Canada 150 Discovery Pass in 2017)
- ☐ Commercial advertisement
- ☐ Recommendation from friend/colleague/family
- ☐ Tour operator/outreach staff
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Travel guide/magazine
- ☐ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

11. Please indicate the strongest factor that motivated you to visit Rouge National Urban Park (*select only one*):

- ☐ View nature and wildlife
- ☐ Physical activity
- ☐ Learn about Canadian history and culture
- ☐ Participate in a Parks Canada organized activity (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Social interaction/family bonding
- ☐ Relaxation/escape from routine
- ☐ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

12. Please describe your *expectations prior* to your travels to Rouge National Urban Park:

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*Respondents will be shown a larger printed image of the Parks Canada brand in-person for their reference.*

13. Do you recognize this brand? (*Select only one*)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

14. With what do you associate this brand?

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**PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS INDEPENDENTLY:**

**Part C: Visitor Characteristics**

15. What best describes your age?

- ☐ 18-25
- ☐ 26-35
- ☐ 36-45
- ☐ 46-55
- ☐ 56-65
- ☐ 66-75
- ☐ Greater than 75

16. What is your sex?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other

17. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- ☐ Elementary school
- ☐ High school
- ☐ College diploma
- ☐ University bachelor degree
- ☐ University graduate degree

18. What is your total annual family/household income before taxes? Please convert to Canadian dollars.

- ☐ Less than \$20,000
- ☐ \$20,000 to \$39,999
- ☐ \$40,000 to \$59,999
- ☐ \$60,000 to \$79,999
- ☐ \$80,000 to \$99,999
- ☐ \$100,000 or more
- ☐ I prefer not to answer this

19. Is this your first visit to Rouge National Urban Park?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

20. If NO, how often do you visit Rouge National Urban Park? \_\_\_\_/month

21. Have you ever visited any other Parks Canada sites?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

22. If YES, please list the names of the Parks Canada sites that you have visited:

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23. How did you travel to Rouge National Urban Park today?

- ☐ Car/truck/SUV/van
- ☐ Public transportation
- ☐ Group transportation (club/organization)
- ☐ Motorcycle/scooter
- ☐ Bicycle
- ☐ Walk/jog
- ☐ Parks Canada shuttle bus
- ☐ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_

24. For statistical purposes and in order to determine from where visitors are travelling to the park, please provide the first three characters of your residential postal code: \_\_\_\_\_

25. Do you live in Canada?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

26. Were you born in Canada?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

27. If you were NOT born in Canada:

- ☐ In what country were you born? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ How many years have you lived here? \_\_\_\_\_ years

28. People from Canada come from a diversity of ethnic backgrounds. Please indicate which of the following best describes the ethnic or cultural origins of your ancestors (*select all that apply*):

- ☐ Indigenous North American (i.e. Indigenous, Metis, Inuit)
- ☐ Other North American (e.g. Canadian, Quebecois, American, etc.)
- ☐ European
- ☐ Caribbean
- ☐ Latin, Central, South American
- ☐ North African
- ☐ Southern and East African
- ☐ Middle Eastern
- ☐ West Central Asian
- ☐ South Asian
- ☐ East and Southeast Asian
- ☐ Oceania (e.g. Australia, New Zealander, Pacific Islands, etc.)
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

29. In your own terms, how would you define your ethnic or cultural identity?

*Your ethnic or cultural identity is the ethnic or cultural group or groups to which you feel you belong. This may be the same as your parents, grandparents, or ancestors, or it may be different.*

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Are there any final thoughts you would like to share about your feelings for Rouge National Urban Park, the quality of your visitation experience, or about the survey you just completed?

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**That's all the questions in the survey. THANK YOU for your time, and for sharing your thoughts and opinions. If you would like further information on this project or a copy of the completed study, please contact Danika Guppy at [dguppy@uwaterloo](mailto:dguppy@uwaterloo).**

## Appendix D: Parks Canada Research Permit

Page 1 of 4



### **PARKS CANADA AGENCY RESEARCH AND COLLECTION PERMIT (NOT TRANSFERABLE)**

**PERMIT No.:** 2018-28277

**START DATE:** 2018-05-01

**EXPIRY DATE:** 2018-08-31

**Project Title:** National parks and Canadian identity: An exploration of the role of Parks Canada's marketing materials in constructing representations of national park nature

**Principal Investigator Name:** Danika Guppy

**Address:** 25 Oak Ridge Blvd. Belleville, ON K8N 5W1

**Telephone:** 613-922-5013

**Email:** danika.guppy@gmail.com

**Affiliation:** University of Waterloo

Is hereby authorized to conduct the research project entitled "National parks and Canadian identity: An exploration of the role of Parks Canada's marketing materials in constructing representations of national park nature", Research and Collection Permit Application Number 33701, in Rouge National Urban Park, subject to the terms and conditions set out below and/or attached to and forming part of this Research and Collection Permit.

**Members of Research Team:**

University of Waterloo Faculty Supervisor: Khirfan, Luna (Dr.), 1-519-888-4567 ext. 33906, 200 University Ave West, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G1, lkhirfan@uwaterloo.ca Dr. Khirfan will be out of the country for the entirety of April 2018, so email will be the best way to contact her if required.

**Additional PHA's involved**

**Issuing Authorities and Terms and Conditions:**



Canada

<http://intinet/arns/RPS/Permit> E:arn?noPERMIT ID=31535&noAPPLICATION ID=3... 14/05/2018



Permit issued pursuant to:

National Parks General Regulations: Section(s) \_\_7(5); \_\_11(1); \_\_14(2)

National Historic Parks General Regulations: Section(s) \_\_3(2); \_\_4(2); \_\_12(3)

National Parks Wildlife Regulations: Section \_\_15(1)(a)

National Historic Parks Wildlife and Domestic Animals Regulations: Section \_\_5(1)

Federal Real Property Regulations: \_\_Section 4(2)

Historic Canals Regulations: \_\_Section 11(3)

Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park Act: \_\_Section 10

(Other applicable Act(s) or Regulations)

National General Conditions:

Failure to comply with applicable Heritage Area regulations or the conditions of the permit may constitute grounds to cancel or suspend the permit, refuse to issue future permits, and may be considered as grounds for prosecution under the applicable Act(s) or Regulation(s).

All permit holders must be in possession of a valid permit before the fieldwork commences and at other periods as stated on the permit.

Permits are not transferable and each member of the field work team must have a copy of the valid permit in their possession.

The permit is valid only for the geographic location, the time period, the activities, and under the terms and conditions described on the permit, unless amended and revalidated by the Superintendent.

Restrictions:

The Superintendent may suspend, cancel, or restrict the scope of the permit.

The permit shall cease to be valid if the fieldwork is not started within six months of the date of issue.

Other Acts and Regulations:

The Principal Investigator must abide by applicable regulations and all other federal, provincial, territorial or municipal regulations applying to the Heritage Area.

If requested by the Superintendent, an authorized Heritage Area staff member, or police constable, the Principal Investigator or any team member will identify themselves and show the permit.

Principal Investigator Responsibilities:

A site, or site component(s) that has been excavated or disturbed shall be restored or conserved by



Canada



the Principal Investigator to the satisfaction of the Superintendent.

The Principal Investigator must advise the Research Coordinator of any adjustments in work location, research plan and methodology, implementation schedule, or main personnel, etc., during the course of the research.

Unless otherwise negotiated, Researchers working in a Heritage Area are required, as a condition of their permit, to submit:

- a) A report of progress sixty (60) days following the completion of the field season, unless otherwise agreed with the Research Coordinator;
- b) A final report, one (1) electronic copy and three (3) hard copies, no later than eight (8) months following the completion of the field season, unless otherwise agreed with the Research Coordinator;
- c) Submission of an online Investigator's Annual Report (IAR) within one year of signing the permit. In the case of a multi-year permits, the principal investigator will submit an IAR for each year of the research.

The reporting requirements above do not replace any reporting requirements set out in any contract between Parks Canada and the Principal Investigator.

The Principal Investigator will be responsible for all members of their party. All field assistants must observe any general or specific conditions of the permit.

The Principal Investigator shall at all times indemnify and save harmless the Crown from and against all claims, demands, loss, costs, damages, actions, suits, or other proceedings, by whosoever made, sustained, brought or prosecuted, in any manner based upon, occasioned by, or attributable to, anything done or omitted by the Principal Investigator or the project personnel in the fulfillment or purported fulfillment of any of the conditions of the Permit.

General Conditions Governing Social Science Research

Special Conditions:

#### Principal Investigator Signature

I, Danika Guppy, the Project Principal Investigator, accept all the stated Research and Collection Permit terms and conditions.

Danika Guppy  
Signature

2018/05/14  
Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

Approval:



Canada



Permit issued/approved by:

Omar McDadi  
Superintendent Name (Please Print)

[Signature]  
Superintendent Signature

2018/05/17  
Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

**Parks Canada Contact**

Julia Phillips  
Rouge National Urban Park  
P.O. Box 11024  
Guildwood Plaza 105 Guildwood Parkway  
Ontario, M1E 1N0  
Julia.Phillips@canada.ca  
pc.gc



Canada

## **Appendix E: Transcription Keywords**

	1. What do you know about the Rouge National Urban Park?	2. Why do you visit the park?	3. What do you like most about the park?	4. What do you like the least about the park?	5. What about the park would you like to change?	6. With whom do you visit the park?	7. What type of activities do you currently enjoy in the park?	8. Are there certain types of activities or programming that you would like to see offered in the park?
Survey 1	Largest in North America	Wildlife, relax	Bike paths, accessible, quiet spots to relax	Pollution in lake, high e coli - blue standards and improvements	Pollution, cleaning up debris, water erosion (there is less beach, would like to see it stabilized)	Myself, with son	Biking, walking, sitting, relaxing	Kayaking (learn-to-kayak, rentals)
Survey 2	Visiting for last 2 years, scenery, nuclear plant, flooding, Parks Canada	Nearby, scenic views and beach, nowhere else nearby, colour of water	Less crowded compared to other parks	No food or shops	Late night security (often leave earlier because of security), secluded walking, food shops	Wife, big group of friends	Fishing, beach, kayaking (no renting shop)	Fun events for kids (e.g. Woodbine volleyball), more self-exploration
Survey 3	Visited twice, clean, good to visit	Fishing with husband	Fresh air, leave downtown ("suffocated")	Mosquitoes	Seating, more "chairs to sit"	Family, friends	Exploring	Farm with animals (like High Park), water fountain, splash pad, BBQs
Survey 4	Nice park for fishing, big carps, pike	Fishing, friends at beach	Beautiful area	A lot of other fishermen	Allow BBQs to enjoy with friends	Family, lots of friends	Fishing	No
Survey 5	Google map	Fishing	Fishing	Bird droppings	None	Friends	Fishing	No
Survey 6	Didn't know it was a national urban park	Close to home (5 minute drive), come to relax	Fishing, relaxing, connecting with fishing buddies (met them here)	Cold and wind in wintertime, flooding during rain season	Nothing ("leave it natural"), maintain cleanliness (people leaving plastics around beach)	Brother, kids, family, friends	Fishing, beach, "sexy girls"	Kayak (learn-to-kayak for kids)
Survey 7	Lived in neighbourhood, close to Scarborough, not so ghetto	Relax, be near the water, not as busy as Scarborough Bluffs	Bonfires at night, bathrooms open all the time, including late at night, not as many people	Tick problems, fishermen keep everything they catch, near nuclear plant, noise from train	Small store, snack bar (esp. for ice cream), attractions, bring more people	Friends (for bonfires)	Fishing, bonfires	No
Survey 8	Fishing here for 7 years, American	Friends in area, church in area, fishing buddies (met them here and have been friends for 7 years, "fish everyday"), quiet solitude, patience	Quiet, solitude, patience, good fishing	Some people don't take care of the park, not enough people to pick up garbage	Nothing ("leave it natural"), maintain cleanliness (people leaving plastics around beach)	Fishing buddies (7 retirees)	BBQ cookout - but need permit for BBQ, expensive, make it less expensive in future?	Volleyball - bring that back!
Survey 9	Not much	Busy week, come here to relax in nice weather, isn't as crowded than Scarborough Bluffs	Stone beach area that extends to the water, facilities with washrooms	Dirty (leaving garbage in beach area)	Lifeguard for swimming especially if park area gets more popular	Girlfriend, family (easily accessible, may bring grandmother here)	Frisbee	No
Survey 10	Live in area, recently declared a national park	Close to home (5 minute drive, 10 minute walk), relax, enjoy scenery	Not busy, pretty quiet, no people trying to sell you stuff	Dirty (nuclear plant, dirty water)	More trails - one along lake but nothing that wanders north, more connection to park	Family (son, son's friends)	Bike along lakeshore trail, hang out on the beach, enjoy the sun, lacrosse	None that they know about, participated in a canoe camp from a private camp, park could hose some nature walks
Survey 11	Friend	Leisure	Blue sky, nice weather	Not many people	No, keep it natural	Family	Walking	Structure for kids, playground
Survey 12 & 13	Recently declared a national a park, coming for over 10 years	Get away, relax, being in nature, rejuvenate, take mind of stresses, always something new to see, High Park feels too manicured, paved paths would be horrible, best piece of nature we have around here	Sheer vastness, always discover something new	When people leave their mark on the park, garbage, QR code, more people coming into the park and disrupting ecological integrity	Like it the way it is, "wild is best", no changes except when nature changes it	Friends	Walking, hiking	No (Any activities added would defeat purpose of keeping park natural, minimize distraction)
Survey 14	Found online when searching for places to hike	Exercise, get closer to nature, make us healthier	Forest, fresh air	Insects, no cute animals	More signage (got lost several times), maps around the park	Husbands	Play cards, snacks, nap	No
Survey 15 & 16	Part of Greenbelt	Live in area, fresh air	Clean, well-maintained	Better parking spaces	More picnic areas, benches along trail	Friends	Hiking	Tai chi and fitness classes, kids area with playground
Survey 17	First time, found from internet (looking for different kind of parks, more green forests, trees)	Looking for forest park (looking for nature, feels good to escape), shaded	Pay attention to protecting wildlife more than other parks, preservation, natural sense to park, feels, so far from city	Nothing yet (first visit)	Information/more details about plants, animals, more info about birds in the park, clearer information about camping (to get the full experience)	Friends, family	Hiking, camping	No (Any activities added would defeat purpose of keeping park natural, minimize distraction)
Survey 18, 19, & 20	National parks, website, trails	Visiting for trails, close	Close to Toronto, being outside, amount of trees	More picnic areas and benches	More common areas, signage on trails	Friends, family	Dangerous corner and lack of safety while crossing the bridge over the river, hiking, picnic by the river, playing games	Stargazing nights, guided walks, geocaching, Pokémon go



Survey 21	Release a curse (instructions from astrologist)	Scenery, tranquil, will definitely be coming back	Water, likes to look at the river	Traffic (a lot of people here all the time), parking (but keep it natural)	Nothing	Friends, family	Nature walks, lots of trails	No (too "touristy", more programs will bring a lot more noise and make part less organic, kill the feeling)
Survey 22	First time here, training for a hike in Yukon (Chilkoot trail)	Get into nature, close to city (lives in downtown Toronto)	Trees, trails, areas in woods where you can't hear traffic, free	Near traffic, urban (nice to have things away from the city, but elements of the city still creep into the nature)	Not much, more information on the website, not enough info on website, couldn't find map of entire park on website, information booths in park, difference between conservation area and the park	Solo, might bring friends, family	Hiking	Swimming in natural water
Survey 23	Nice park, really beautiful, close to city	Exercise, peacefulness, scenery	Sound of running water, serenity	Bugs, lack of signage	More tall trees, more detailed maps ("enclosed")	Friends, family	Walking, exercise, meditation	Yoga in the park, fitness, more of a focus on wellness, running club,
Survey 24	One of largest urban parks, inventory of species	Calming, shades of green, nature puts everything into perspective	Calming, less attention on technology, look up from phones	Bugs, ticks, snakes	Seating areas - but want to keep them all natural	Family (kids, mom), friends	Picnics, walks, photos, rib fest at Thompson Park	Not really - don't really want to come to the park for programs, plaques with names of trees around the park, geocaching
Survey 25	Made national park recently	Beauty, quiet, online date	Beautiful place to be	More washrooms	Bridge over to other side	"Friend"	Hiking, running, picnic, climbing trees, putting feet in water	No (enjoy coming on own)
Survey 26 & 27	Google search for trails and found this one	Trails, hiking, shorter trail so chose this one	Scenery, fresh air, water	Litter on the trail, trails on the road without clear signage	Markers, signage, wayfinding	Friends	Hiking	No
Survey 28	Started coming recently. Nice beach, sand, weather	One of only places in GTA that is similar to being on vacation	Scent, nice beach	No complaints	Selling BBQs, places to eat or places selling food	Family, friends	Relax	Volleyball
Survey 29	Live in the area	Walk, mostly in summertime	Scenery, breeze, diabetes so use park to walk sometimes and burn sugar	Nothing really	More BBQs, good place for picnic, beer store around the corner	Family, friends	Walking	Kids programming, swing set/playground equipment
Survey 30	Come here several times each year	Easy to park, enjoy playing in the water, exploring wetland	Not crowded	Quality of water sometimes	Better facilities (washrooms)	Family, friends	Swimming/playing in water, BBQ, relax	Motorboat rentals, kayak rentals
Survey 31	First time here	Spending time with family, relaxing	Greenery, natural scenery	Perfect the way it is	Change nothing	Family primarily	Swimming, relaxing	Football, other games
Survey 32	Come here all the time during the summer, have been coming for several years (mentions 20 years in a later question)	N/A	BBQ on the beach (couple were very upset that a Parks Canada staff member had approached them earlier to inform that that BBQs were not permitted on the beach)	Nothing really	Stop telling people not to BBQ (ruin the freedom), let the people know you cannot BBQ, we pay enough taxes in this country	Family	Swimming, Playing in the water, sitting, relaxing, sand castles with kids	Volleyball, Frisbee
Survey 33	Not much - normally go to Scarborough Bluffs but full at 10am and found closest park	Beautiful park - more space, more parking	Water (despite nuclear plant), clean, pretty good	Perfect!	Nothing - well maintained and taken care of	Family	Volleyball, soccer, sports	No (Like doing our own things)
Survey 34	First time, saw it while travelling to Downtown on train	Long weekend, to relax, outdoor entertainment, family get-together, fresh air, beach	Greenery, water, well maintained, surprised, boardwalk water lilies	Messy by the beach - branches from the trees, benches and picnic tables missing	More parking spots, more nets - volleyball, soccer	Family primarily, friends	Cards (Poker), swimming (but a bit risky)	Sports program, soccer program
Survey 35	Close to where we live, great for smaller kids, adults here to support easy experience, convenient (worked yesterday and didn't leave until 4:30 and still arrived in time to make dinner)	Annual thing (plan for next year), good if we can't do a bigger trip, trip will lose appeal as kids get older, inexpensive (big draw), here if can't do a bigger trip, convenient	Kids can go free anywhere, great for bikes, access to swimming (petticoat park pool, \$2.75/person, would pay more if park had pool with lifeguard)	Ice should be competitively priced with gas stations - not priced competitively on all amenities, bought 9 bags of ice and 8 bags of fireworks outside of park, leeches in river, not private lots you know what you're getting	Only 2 swings, more play structures, upcharges for better fire pits, pictures of each site when booking online, more privacy for tent sites	Friends, family	Bikes, play equipment, no exercise equipment	Horse shoes, shuffle board, badminton, facilities, buildings with games
Survey 36	Flood plain with dams to control if floods happen again, houses won't be built here	Wife has cousins in Toronto, convenient	Very clean, only been here two nights	Sewer connection	Better connectivity with trails, better signage, educational panels throughout trails	Family, pets	Walking, bicycling, campfires	Guided walks
Survey 37	Not much	Drives up here and commutes to work from the campground, cheaper rent, meet good people, close to grandchildren	River - enjoy hearing the sound of it, good people and good atmosphere	Sound of traffic	Laundry facilities, wood prices (for people who don't drive), Wi-Fi is weak, waterpark for kids	By myself hoping to meet others	Drinking, relaxing, visiting with people	Family-oriented things, learn-to-camp program last year, volleyball, waterpark for kids

Survey 38 & 39	Just looked for a park on the bus line, took the GO bus, needed to find something accessible by transit	Camping, detox from artificial light, break from life and the world	Trails, river	Density, some lack of privacy	Park store only had wood and ice, swimming pool or splash pad on site	Friends	Biking, hiking, drawing	No
Survey 40	Live 2 miles away, very close, 3rd time	Visited 3 times (first time trying out new trailer, second time staying with friends from up north and headed into Toronto for concert as it was cheaper than a hotel, third was for girl's weekend with wife's friend)	Convenient, water hydro, proximity	No privacy	Men's washroom upgrade, true fire pits, not in right position for trailer units, plan campsites better	Family, friends	Trails, hiking	Not this particular park, more of a focus on new campers - camping etiquette more established and enforced, "rules to the game", many newcomers to camping in the park, further you go north the less casual the camping
Survey 41	Near the city, easy to access for people who don't usually have a car	Get out of work, de-stress, fresh air	Wi-Fi, clean especially considering the number of people, sink for cleaning, well maintained, community is good, respect for space	No clear boundaries for campsite, unclear directions about boundaries	Ditch for boundaries, sign to facilities, better lighting after dark for stairs up to facilities	Family, friends in future	Best part is relaxing, laying down, dirty picnic tables	Yoga classes, soccer, badminton courts, field for soccer, bike trails, signage for trails better
Survey 42	New national urban park - amalgamation of private and public lands and coming under federal jurisdiction through Parks Canada, Toronto-Pickering-Markham, Rouge River down to Lake Ontario	First time!	Convenience, easy to get to, not first choice for camping, camping usually done to escape but this doesn't provide that	Noise pollution (from highway 401), light pollution	More options for camping (e.g. campsite further north away from Hwy 401 with more privacy, better connected to trail networks), escape	Girlfriend	Camping!	Trail biking - dedicated areas friendly to responsible and leisure biking, bike park, bike lanes on roads to and surrounding campsite
Survey 43	N/A	Great to de-stress, live near the park	Trees, flowers, birds, river	Parks Canada and Toronto Parks Commission - confusion about who does what, don't maintain the trails, lack of clarity	Update/keep maintained the trails	Family (husband), dog, leading hikes (other hikers, hike leaders)	Walking, talking, flowers, pictures	More hikes than just 6/week, volunteers tripled recently from what they were before, winter survival and other little courses
Survey 44	N/A	Learn a lot about trees, being in nature, social interaction (meeting other people on walks), exercise, see wildlife	Natural oasis in the middle of the city that you can get to so easily, 10 minute walking distance from home, used to run through park, can feel like you're along, get away from hustle and bustle of city life, variable terrain and variety of flora and fauna	Sound pollution - busy streets running through the park (esp. noted Twyn Rivers cattle grate that makes a lot of noise), fewer through fares through the park	Guided walks are really good, free, refer to previous question - fewer through fares, better parking at some trailheads	Alone, meet some people during walks (core group on Wednesday nights that he's gotten to know)	Walks, used to go jogging, walking dogs (ex), outside of hustle and bustle	Guided kayak or canoe tour up the river (would be hesitant to go up river by himself without a guide)
Survey 45	Parks Canada, Canada 150 free pass campaign, nice beach, Scarborough Bluffs	Friend lives nearby (park in their backyard)	Water, swimming, Lake Ontario	How far away it is from downtown, better accessibility with TTC, one of the stops as Rouge Hill Park, Upass - access to Rouge and Bluffs	Better TTC access, cater more to greater diversity and surrounding community	Friends, friend's family	Beach, trail, walking, feels so different that downtown Toronto	"I don't know what this community needs", partner with universities or schools DT Toronto to shuttle, bring kids to the park who will encourage their parents to come back, yoga on the beach, marketing on Blog TO
Survey 46 & 47	Started coming when moved to area, park is expanding, national park - bad for management as it means that funding will be harder to attain	Walk dog and for pleasure	Close to where they live	Littering, crayfish poaching(?)	Less people, change people not the park, better signage with rules, stricter reinforcement, signs in more language	Family, dog	Walking, throwing stones, dog swimming	No BBQs and picnic tables (make a mess), penalties for littering
Survey 48	Used to be a dump (Canadian ingenuity)	Walking dog, "nature nut"	Not too many people	Traffic noise	Etiquette of joggers or bikers on trails who do not announce themselves and "sneak up behind" participant, less litter, reduce traffic noise	Dog (Oskar)	Walk, listen, watch, smell	Educate people more about wildlife and plants, more respect for nature and "what God has given us"
Survey 49 & 50	Beside zoo and a number of rivers, peaceful, national park	Explore area, Friday relaxation, less busy day, free parking	Rivers, creek, sound of water (calming sound for meditation)	Mosquitoes, lack of signage that indicates it's a national park	Feels like a park in progress, need bathrooms and visitor centre, feels like random forest up north	Relationship	Walking	Water tube, water related activities
Survey 51	Have the app	Live very close to the park	Trees, environment, water	Hot, less shady than expected	Lack of connectivity with other parts of the park	Family	Walking	No

Survey 52	Hiking in the park for 8 year, national park, largest urban park in North America, watched it grow and develop	Animals, flowers, hiking, close enough to the city but don't have to drive that far	Wildlife, quiet, trails, "park within a city", watched it grow and expand	Enforcing rules especially no biking - can hurt animals like turtles and snakes	- Make it even bigger, extend all the way up to the Oak Ridges Moraine, better connectivity	Family (mostly the two of them, sometimes with kids on rare occasions)	Hiking, photography	No (Leave it the way it is, let it develop more)
Survey 53	Canadian parkland, only national park within city boundaries, Lake Ontario to Highway 14, connected path through	Quiet, away from traffic, walking, nature while we walk, different from other walks, easy commuting here	Nature, quiet	Lack of connectivity in trails, better signage on trails	Signage (on paths for wayfinding, make it subtle so doesn't distract from enjoyment of nature), signs on flora (education signs for significant flora e.g. nearby bog), exercise activities/stations	Family, friends	Walking, hiking, training for Inca trail hike (filled bag with 10 pound weights and then climbing hills)	Know about a lot of activities (receive emails from the park), would like to see yoga in the park
Survey 54	Little bit outside of Toronto, keep it close to the city to conserve environment, small and new initiative	Travel just outside of Toronto, explore somewhere new and get to know Toronto and surrounding areas, moved to city a year ago	Bus ride - easy and convenient especially without personal car	Tuck shop near entrance - get something small to eat, or water	Tuck shop, not much	Visiting alone, would bring back friends and family for a day to chill, picnic	Walk, explore, guided hike	More guided hikes
Survey 55	Rouge conservation authority, nice park, hiking, 20 minutes away	Nature, nice hiking, nice park	Greenery and nature, semi-untouched, try to keep it as organic and natural as possible, clean (didn't notice much garbage)	Parking - issues with parking, sometimes closed, sometimes not enough, have to park far away from the trail	Grow it, make it better, make sure there are rules in place to maintain and protect it	Family, friends	Walking, picnics sometimes	Kids programming, not aware of existing activities and programming
Survey 56	First time here, friends like to motorcycle around here due to hills and weaving roads, meeting friends	Be out with nature, relax, get away from the "urban jungle"	Fresh air, green as a calming colour, calm and relaxing space	Parking (availability in certain areas)	Nothing - first time and cannot comment	Friends	Dog walking	Archery, axe throwing outdoors
Survey 57 & 58	Park bus, spiel on the bus - first national urban park in Canada	Free bus helps a lot and good incentive, outdoors, male from BC and miss being outside and hiking	Water (dipping feet in river during interview), water is calming	Dogs off leash, trails blocked off	More campgrounds, more learn to camp programs (looked at them but were fully booked and sold out)	Girlfriend, would bring friends back	Hiking, lack of connectivity in trails (e.g. how do we get down to the beach where there is canoeing? Do we need a car to get there?)	Canoeing (rental, learn to canoe), more specialized guided walks (don't already know much about walks)
Survey 59	Not much, go hiking here a lot	Mainly hiking, different views every season	Trails are nice, easy to walk through, trees, birds (more animals in the winter), photos	Nothing	Nothing really to change, continue to keep it free, more bridges to get across the river (used a tree trunk to get across earlier that day)	Friends mostly - goes hiking with a hiking group almost every Sunday to different parks, Rouge is a popular spot	Hiking, photography	No (Haven't attended any park programs, probably wouldn't attend any)
Survey 60	Live in neighbourhood (20 minute drive), bring kids when young to play in the water, now bring grandkids	Now and then come for a walk, like that it is not that busy, offers a quick walk (enough exercise), water	Natural	Busy certain times of the day	Like what it is now	Family, used to bring family dog	Walking	No (Just like trails, prefer programs out of the park)
Survey 61	Found park when they moved to area around 2011, visit every week or every other week	Trees, hiking, green space	Flowers	Invasive species should be more controlled (e.g. dog vine, trees have already died from it)	No changes, maybe fix parking lot	Family mostly, friends	Walking	No (Don't participant in activities, need more people to know about the park)
Survey 62	Visiting for last 10 years before son was born, hiking trails, observation deck (visiting before that existed), nice park, it is nearby so that is nice	Church is nearby, waiting for wife who is at choir practice, like nature and introducing nature to his son	Close to highway and main roads	Too crowded, a lot of garbage (education needed, hand out garbage bags for people to pick up garbage)	Enforcement about bikers on trails, signs about no biking, dangerous for hikers	Family, used to walk with friends in fall	Walking	Picnic areas, benches, more seating (although not too many for natural area), more portable washrooms/permanent washroom in parking lot
Survey 63	Not too difficult hiking, family-friendly, open to dogs	Every weekend visit a different locations for hiking, get exercise and stay active	Nature, quiet	Nothing really	Fix/smooth parking lot	"Alone, always alone"	Hiking, pictures	No (Prefer to explore on own)
Survey 64	First time here, short 20 minute walk, easy walking	Walk outside, wanted to see crawfish	Trail - nice and easy walk	Less shade in some trails, very hot	Garbage - more bins especially around parking lot	Family, friends	Walking	Picnic tables, more seating

Survey 65	Learned from website that it is the largest urban park in North America	Trees, nature, running water, proximity to downtown	Untouched - e.g. especially compared to High Park which feels more like a garden, size, ease, and variability	Electrical wires	More accessible by public transit	Friends, family, dog	Walking/hiking, dog walking, cross-country skiing in future, cycling with son	Walks about edible plants and other nature identification walks, urban foraging walks (go back and prepare the collected food), bird-watching tour
Survey 66	Good for families, hiking, observing different plant species	Nature lover, freshness, openness, more secure than going into full wilderness	Scenery, size - amount of protected space in the middle of Toronto is amazing	Lack of staff present (safety reasons, staff enforcement of rules)	More staff in case of injury, more visitor centres at each trailhead and park entrance	Family, friends	Walking, hiking, sightseeing	No (Independent exploration)
Survey 67	First time here	Look for easy walking trail as friend had hurt ankle	Difficult trails that provide a challenge, not many mosquitoes, play in water, very close	Trees in water and obstacles in past to get across river, cars on the road over bridge make it very dangerous for both pedestrians and cars when crossing on the bridge	Keep it nature, nothing much	Family, friends	Hiking	No (Independent exploration, keep the park clean like the park in Pickering near Highway 407, which they visit often)
Survey 68	First urban national park and biggest of its kind in North America, 22x size of Central Park in New York, bought a house just because it was near the park and reminds him of home in India, wanted kids to pick up love of nature	Waiting for a friend today, often comes alone to find some calm (important for people to find their own space)	Less commercial, just nature, to connect more people you need more signage, more benches and certain amenities, more promotion	Signage, benches along the way for those who need it	Signage, benches	Alone, kids sometimes	Hiking, biking on waterfront, trees	Guided tours for those who need it, like independently-driven exploration, dedicated area for kids - balance interests in the park
Survey 69 & 70	Free bus - found out that way, only national urban park	Hike, nice escape from city, made easy by taking the bus	Well organized with the bus ride and the Parks Canada staff that ride on the bus, maps, information, fun event	Lack of washrooms, better and more permanent facilities	More trails	Friends	Hiking	Guided hikes, more permanent facility for visitor centre
Survey 71	Learned about it through the spiel given on the bus ride here, but couldn't recall anything	First time here with daughter, live downtown with no car so really appreciate Park Bus, love nature	Creek, craft station for kids, nice event	Wish trail was longer and looped around, more accessible areas to explore (many parts of the trails were closed)	Playground for kids, perfect as it is	Family	Hiking	Guided tours
Survey 72	Weekend hikes all the time, go to the north and southern part of the park	Hiking, relax	The trails	Parking issues (esp in south end of the park, often not enough parking)	Better connectivity in trails, connect the northern system with the southern end of the park	Family	Guided walks - for learning different things about the park, been to them before and they are really good, good chance to socialize	More variety in guided walks
Survey 73	First time here, heard about it from friend who used to live in the area and came for hikes, heard about the event from Little Paper (website for young families about events going on around Toronto), get out of the city on weekends	Getting to know as much as we can about the area as they only moved to Canada 5 years ago and are still familiarizing themselves with the area	Don't know much yet, green, open, un-commercialized, event is awesome - gets you into the atmosphere of the park, no one trying to see you anything	Nothing really, probably the commute home	Nothing of what I've seen so far	Family, will recommend to friends	Planning to check out Club Parka event for kids in the future, came for the Taste of the Trail event, hiking	Playground for kids, activities for younger kids - hike is not engaging enough yet for 4 year old daughter
Survey 74	Beginning to learn more, a national reserve	Interested to know more as many people talked about it, wanted to go on a guided hike	Open area, native plants, flora, wilderness - wouldn't like to see it manicured, liked warning about ticks	Not enough shade	More washrooms, better facilities ("vital feature")	Family, friends, today by herself	See what it looked like, spend some time outside, walking, guided hike	Guided hike learning more about animals, insects, etc., individual exploration of the park - learning experiences, be close to nature
Survey 75	Available to people throughout GTA, accessible, free, discovery pass	Good to connect with nature, good for exercise	Nature - good to get away from the concrete jungle of the city	Not enough of a getaway from urban area, needs to be more enticing to people (e.g. host events like this on a more frequent basis), Canada 150 got attention but attendance is not the same this year as the 2017 free entrance year, difficulties with hiking	More washrooms, better facilities	Family	Casual stroll	More events like this one - enjoyed the event better last year when tents were scattered throughout the trails, enticed visitors to walk around

Survey 76	Used to be just Rouge Park before it received land and funding from federal government, now first national urban park in Canada	Do a lot of hiking in the park	Hiking is pretty, especially down by the Rouge River	Bugs	Nothing	Family	Hiking	Happy the way it is, would enjoy even more guided hikes although been on several already and enjoy them
Survey 77	Canada's biggest, located mainly in an urban area	Excellent idea to have wilderness in the city, illustrates how Canada was years before we arrived and began to destroy environment, opening to show what the park is about and participant in festivities	The setting, environment, location	"Nothing not to like"	Nothing, purpose is to move forward not to retreat	Alone, not enough advertising for this weekend event otherwise would have brought family as well	Hiking	Horseback riding, no bicycles - "bicycles destroy park environment", litter they product destroys the wonderment of any park, bicycles are yuppies
Survey 78	Read article in newspaper about expansion, shuttle bus makes it convenient	Chance to be outdoors away from city, especially nice with shuttle bus	Trails, walk around in nature	Nothing really	More trails - already walked around all of them here, better connectivity with other trails	Boyfriend, friends in the future	Hiking, picnic, saw festival going on when booking tickets, but did not choose to come this weekend because of the festival	Information sessions about local flora and fauna
Survey 79	Urban park close to the city, another area in the south end of the park	Read about it on the website, close by	Trails, close to the city but doesn't feel like the city, free food today, free shuttle	Some trails aren't clearly defined with markers and signage	More markers, improvement to maps (not very user friendly)	Friends	Hiking	Not a fan of commercial things in the park, keep it natural
Survey 80 & 81	Trails, read about it	Exercise, see nature	Calming, quiet, not crowded	Not much to look at	More seating for a rest on the trails	Friends	Hiking	Not really, self-exploration preferred