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## **EDITORS' INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL ISSUE: CREATIVE PLACEMAKING AND ARTS ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

The Pave Program in Arts Entrepreneurship, now Herberger Institute Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Programs, not only publishes *Artivate: A Journal of Entrepreneurship in the Arts*, but also holds a biennial national symposium on entrepreneurship and the arts. In 2013 and then again in 2017, the symposium focused on the interaction between arts entrepreneurs and creative placemaking. *Artivate* is pleased to be able to now devote a very special issue to this topic as well. The journal solicited submissions broadly but also specifically from presenters at the 2017 symposium. Four of the five articles in this special issue developed from presentations at the 2017 symposium, “Arts Entrepreneurship In, With, and For Communities,” held in Tempe, Phoenix and Mesa May 5-7, 2017. Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson and Greg Esser were invited to serve as guest editors of this special issue and contribute the introductory essays below. The articles that follow move from the perception of individuals -- the artists who work in creative placemaking and other contexts -- to the implications of system-level change in the planning and policy sectors. Between, articles explore ways to expand pedagogy to build the knowledge and skills needed to support place-based strategies that integrate art, culture and community engaged design.

### **Equity-based Creative Placemaking**

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This collection of articles represents an important contribution to a nascent and growing body of literature about *Creative Placemaking*—the integration of arts, culture, and community engaged design into comprehensive community development efforts towards building places where all people can thrive. Placemaking has roots in urban planning and urban design concepts of the 1960s and 1970s intended to encourage planning and design processes anchored in a people-centered and community-driven approach. Creative Placemaking, coined in 2010 in a publication of the National Endowment for the Arts, intentionally brings into relief the centrality of arts, culture and community engaged design as crucial elements of comprehensive and cross-sectoral efforts to improve communities (Markusen and Gadwa, 2010). Recent and longstanding research contributing to the rise of Creative Placemaking points to the roles of artists, arts organizations, and formal and informal participatory art practices in community contexts and their contributions to the strengthening of social fabric, civic engagement, stewardship, physical transformation, and narrative of place as well as economic, education, and health outcomes among others (Jackson and Herranz, 2003; Wali, 2010; Stern and Seifert, 2013).

At its best, Creative Placemaking is based on recognition of the following (Jackson, 2016):

- existing community creativity, traditions, history, wisdom, and aesthetic expressions of its residents as well as a community’s natural and built environment are assets from which to build;
- the contributions of artists, designers, heritage and tradition-bearers are necessary at critical junctures in community change processes including helping to frame community issues and devise solutions;
- the integration of art, culture and design is not a panacea, but an important element of



necessarily multi-pronged approaches to complex conditions, and

- care must be taken to ensure that residents in vulnerable and often historically marginalized communities, in fact, benefit from change.

With the growing proliferation of Creative Placemaking and evidence of demand for artists and arts administrators to go beyond conventional well-established patterns of professional practice in the arts sector, what are the implications of Creative Placemaking for the field of arts entrepreneurship? How does the integration of art, culture, and design into community development impact arts entrepreneurs' sense of how they can contribute in community contexts? How does it impact societal perceptions about the roles of artists, arts organizations and their contributions? How does it impact arts entrepreneurship training and professional development? Are existing validation mechanisms sufficient to recognize the increasingly complex and legitimate ways in which artists and arts administrators are creating their careers and contributing to society? Does Creative Placemaking impact our current concepts of an arts ecology? How does Creative Placemaking impact the boundaries of cultural policy and planning?

This issue of *Artivate* and the specific articles herein signal an emerging strand of arts entrepreneurship scholarship critical to the evolution of Creative Placemaking and, more generally, to our understanding of what it takes and who is implicated in helping to build healthy, equitable, and artful communities. On this trajectory, as Creative Placemaking and related practices continue to proliferate and be topical in arts entrepreneurship, we can expect to see areas of scholarship and pedagogy blending. Optimally, topics in arts entrepreneurship will be relevant to community development, urban planning, public health, and social services among other fields where there is evidence of arts entrepreneurs working strategically towards equitable communities and improved quality of life. The reverse is also true. Optimally, scholarship and pedagogy in community development, urban planning, public health, social services, and related areas will also be relevant to arts entrepreneurship as the field recognizes its potential influence in a broader and more complex terrain. Moreover, we will increasingly need to interrogate our current structures, assess the extent to which they impede or facilitate this trajectory, and be open to adaptation or the invention of new structures that make strategic synergies possible.

We are in the early stages of a generative and paradigm-altering period where we can reposition arts, culture, and design in how we conceive of healthy and just places where all people can thrive. Our charge is to move out of our respective comfort zones, seize the opportunity to learn across traditional boundaries, and forge new frameworks and alliances that benefit us all. This issue of *Artivate* is a step in that direction, with anticipation that future scholarship will have an even stronger grounding in an equity framework. At Arizona State University, through the efforts of the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, the College of Public Service and Community Solutions, and other ASU divisions, we are committed to advancing a national and international body of scholarship, pedagogy, and practice anchored in an equity framework that includes the sustained integration of arts, culture, and community-engaged design in place-based strategies that address structural barriers to opportunity and improve quality of life for all, and especially for historically marginalized communities.

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## **Creative Placemaking is Not One Thing**

*Greg Esser*

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Creative Placemaking is not one thing.

Creative Placemaking, even as a contested and debated term, is currently one of the most rapidly adopted and absorbed terms within cultural policy in the United States, due in part to investments totaling more than \$200 million and the implementation of on-the-ground projects in communities of all sizes throughout the country through ArtPlace America, the National Endowment for the Arts, Kresge Foundation and others. Dr. Steven Tepper, Dean of the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts at Arizona State University has referred to Creative Placemaking as “the most robust cultural policy framework in the United States since the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts.”

This issue of *Artivate*, along with the recent 5th Biennial Pave Symposium on Entrepreneurship and the Arts, “Arts Entrepreneurship In, With, and For Communities,” explores intersections between arts entrepreneurship and Creative Placemaking. The five essays collected in this special issue point to emerging and evolving strands of research and opportunities to deepen work and practices within the frame of Creative Placemaking while beginning to map future ways Creative Placemaking might influence more equitable communities.

If Creative Placemaking advocates for expanding the role of individual artists in society, and we are to measure those changes over time, it is also critically important to understand how we define and think of artists, and how the general public understands artists and their roles in communities as distinct and apart from their output as creators. Jennifer L. Novak-Leonard and Rachel Skaggs explore the public perception of artists and point to the role of public perception in shaping public policy. We need to distinguish between the composer and the composition, the painter and the painting. While we value process as much or more than product, we must also decenter traditional notions that privilege professionalization over participation. In so doing, we expand the circle of creators to more fully embrace those who might not readily self-identify as artists.

One of the challenges with standard arts funding models and practice is the artificial creation and reinforcement of the perception of an environment of scarcity that may be contrary to collaboration. One of the key concepts behind Creative Placemaking is that the comprehensive integration of creativity into other sectors leads not only to new and unprecedented opportunities for artists prepared to work in new contexts, but better outcomes for the challenges addressed through new collaboration across sectors. Creative Placemaking envisions new professional pathways for artists and designers not solely dependent upon traditional arts funding models. Amy Whitaker’s essay addresses a “more is more” approach. As Senator Al Franken often quotes the late Senator Paul Wellstone, “We all do better when we all do better.”

Reimagining and rebuilding new models for 21st century design and arts education is critical to empowering the leaders of tomorrow. Roger Mantie and Kevin Wilson embark on a project to begin to redefine how current education models might evolve through cross-sectoral collaboration within the university and by bridging traditionally siloed students in new place-based projects and environments. This approach is more notable in that it originates within a conservatory education model, arguably the least flexible of contexts in arts and design higher education.

Another key concept within Creative Placemaking is that place-based cross-sectoral collaboration can drive innovation, synergy, and more equitable outcomes for more people. Yet traditional professional sectors are too often reinforced “to protect territory” through a perception of limited resources to the detriment of new ways of thinking and new innovative solutions. Tom Borrup explores some of the traditional and sectoral barriers that have stymied more collaboration between the fields of urban planning and arts and culture in his call for “Just Planning.”

Kiley Arroyo situates lessons from Creative Placemaking into the need for systems change at the level of public policy, arguably one of the most significant sectors where more creativity is needed. As she posits, “human imagination is the generative basis on which individuals and societies successfully engage with complexity, envision alternative futures, transform systems, and successfully adapt to change.” It is artists who can ignite our imaginations and build bridges to better futures.

We hope the diverse range of approaches to examining the many facets within the Creative Placemaking policy framework reflected in these pieces complicates and deepens your appreciation for the complexity, the value, and the diversity that Creative Placemaking encompasses. We also hope that this issue inspires you to add your own research questions.

Arizona State University, as the New American University defined by access, impact and excellence, is driven by equity as the leading value for this work. Our definition of Creative Placemaking at ASU centers on the strategic integration of arts, culture and community engaged design into comprehensive community planning and development. We believe:

- All communities have cultural assets—including the creativity, imagination and wisdom of residents—from which to build.
- Art, culture and community engaged design are intrinsically important AND are crucial elements of strategies aimed at building equitable communities where all people can thrive. They contribute positively to a range of interrelated community conditions and dynamics such as, but not limited to:
  - strengthening community fabric and stewardship,
  - physical transformation of place,
  - changes in community narrative,
  - civic engagement,
  - health and economic development, and more.

To learn more about this evolving work, please visit: [creativeplacemaking.asu.edu](http://creativeplacemaking.asu.edu)

## **PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF ARTISTS IN COMMUNITIES: A SIGN OF CHANGING TIMES**

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Rachel Skaggs, Vanderbilt University

### **Abstract**

There is a growing recognition within the arts and cultural field that the public roles and work of artists are changing. Within the field, artists are increasingly lauded for their work as entrepreneurs, civically-minded problem-solvers, and agents for social change. Amid a shift away from the arts policy paradigm that has largely focused on nonprofit organizations over the last half-century within the United States, there is a hypothesis stemming from within the arts and cultural field that a policy paradigm focused on artists' roles in community change, development, and placemaking will take hold. Public opinion and perceptions have an important influence on the formation of public policies, yet whether and how artists' roles in public life are perceived beyond the arts and cultural field is unknown. This lack of understanding impedes the arts and cultural field's ability to monitor if such a policy paradigm shift is occurring and to develop policies to support artists' work within and with communities. Therefore, we developed and pilot tested survey indicators to gauge public perceptions of artists within communities. In this article, we describe the indicators, report on the national pilot test topline results, and discuss the indicators' merits to be used over time drawing from the pilot test results. Understanding public perceptions of artists within communities can inform and influence policies supporting artists' work and offer a means to monitor shifts to the larger arts and cultural policy paradigm in the U.S.

Keywords: artists; entrepreneurs; public perception of artists

There is a growing recognition—at least from within the cultural sector—that the role of the “artist” in contemporary society is shifting. The once commonplace understanding of an artist as a genius, often creating in isolation (Kidd, 2012), is seemingly being replaced by one focused on artists' roles in public and civic life. Artists are predominantly being recognized as entrepreneurs and agents for social change, thus making these individuals integral to community change and development (Bell & Oakley, 2014; Cornfield, 2015; Jackson et al., 2003; Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Markusen, 2014). Highly visible creative placemaking initiatives, such as the National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA) Our Town program and ArtPlace, are being recognized as aiding a paradigm change from artists being seen as seeking community support to one of artists contributing and leveraging their skills to support communities (Bonin-Rodriguez, 2015; Markusen & Gadwa, 2010; Redaelli, 2016). Art as a vehicle for social messages and societal critique is not a new idea, but increasingly the work of community development, civically-minded problem-solving, and entrepreneurship that is mindful to issues of equity, accessibility and empowerment is included in the repertoire of artistic process and practice (Bedoya, 2013; Center for Cultural Innovation, 2016; Jackson et al., 2003; Center for Performance as Civic Practice, 2015). Through a growing body of cases and qualitative research, we know that in some communities enterprising artists are creating and facilitating creative work in ways that contribute to the development of inclusive, expressive communities (Cornfield, 2015; Scott, 2012). In addition, expert cultural commentators have described current means by which artists are working in new contexts and with new approaches (Center for Cultural Innovation, 2016; Goethe Institute, 2014; McGlone, 2017), suggesting a new epoch for how artists are perceived and how they are working in enterprise, in civic life, and within local communities.

Since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century, arts policies within the United States have largely focused on the non-profit infrastructure (Kreidler, 2013; Mulcahy, 2006; Peters & Cherbo, 1998; Toepler, 2013;

Woronkiewicz, Nichols, & Iyengar, 2012), but the policy paradigm for arts and culture within the United States is currently amidst dramatic change. Shifts in demographics, advances in technology, and expectations for social interactions are contributing to the disruption of the extant paradigm (Novak-Leonard et al., 2014), and the policy paradigm for arts and culture that will emerge after this punctuated change remains to be seen (Toepler, 2013). An important feature of this time of change, however, is the increased focus on arts and cultural policy decisions being made on the local level (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010; Morley & Winkler, 2014). Given the current momentum and pervasiveness of creative placemaking, which values artists as vital community assets and provides them with catalyzing jurisdiction (Bonin-Rodriguez, 2015), there is a hypothesis stemming from within the arts and cultural field that a policy paradigm focused on artists' roles in community change, development, and placemaking is taking hold.

There has never been a singular norm or definition of "artist" (Markusen, 2013b), but the term has been operationalized in particular ways to inform different facets of public policy discourse connecting with arts and culture over time. Over the past 20 years, a dominant approach to researching artists has been discipline-based employment (Jackson et al., 2003; Menger, 1999), which has been used to monitor employment trends and to "counter misperceptions about artists not contributing to economic welfare" (Iyengar, 2013, p. 498). For example, the NEA has used eleven occupational categories employed by the U.S. Census Bureau, which has established a convention used in other research; Alper and Wassall (2006) is one key example. Studies of artists from an occupational lens have a vast body of literature to build on, and operational indicators like income, employment status, educational credentials, and years of employment that make comparison between studies more direct. When it comes to data availability, an occupational operationalization of who counts as an artist intersects with economics and employment research more broadly, which facilitates partnerships with agencies that are concerned with the financial impacts of the arts and arts industries, such as the Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account from the Bureau of Economic Analysis and NEA (National Endowment for the Arts, 2017).

However, the role of "artist" is not exclusively tied to any required credential, job, process, or place (Lena & Lindemann, 2014; Markusen, 2013a; Markusen, Gilmore, Johnson, Levi, & Martinez, 2006; Menger, 1999), so the occupational framing of "artist" does not fully meet the needs of policymakers and researchers in the cultural field. While it is vital to have a discipline-based accounting of employment to inform trends in arts employment and the related economics, it represents a limited conception of artists and their possible impact. Studies that select for artists occupationally may not generalize to artists more broadly and may miss important variations in artistic practice and needed refinements in the understanding of who artists are and the measures we need to inform policy. Even among individuals who many would consider artists on the basis of earning a credential, it can be difficult to get a clear picture of who is or is not an artist depending on personal conceptions and definitions of what counts (Lena & Lindemann, 2014). In recent years, as policy matters related to concerns about equity and changing demographics within the U.S. have come to the fore, there has been a collective broadening in the understanding of what it means to be engaged with artistic participation and forms of expression, and advances in how to measure these activities beyond occupations (Ivey, 2008; Novak-Leonard, Reynolds, English, & Bradburn, 2015b; Tepper & Gao, 2008).

Existing research about group formation and cohesion in social networks can be informative when considering the relationships and personal connections that constitute the social dynamics of creative placemaking in local communities. The propensity of people to know and interact with people who are like themselves is a strong social force that can make it less likely that people who are of a different race, class, occupation, or religion will meet or build personal relationships (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). Artists work in locales across the U.S. in rural communities, small towns, suburbs, and cities (Markusen, 2013a), but communities can contain many different cliques, groups, and factions (Wimmer & Lewis,

2010), which means that while some individuals may know or interact with artists in their communities, others do not. We also know that closeness of ties to others influence what resources individuals are able to access (Lin, 2001; Van Der Gaag & Snijders, 2005), which raises questions about who interacts with artists, and how; who may be the beneficiaries of creative placemaking initiatives leveraging artists' skills; and how policymakers might take into account issues of accessibility and equity in the distribution of their efforts and allocation of resources within communities.

Based on the collective actions and language being used by many within the arts and culture field, a vital notion of artist within policy discourse has shifted from one defined by a discipline-based occupation or product to one of processes and ways of working, thinking, and connecting with others within their communities. If this notion also resonates with the broader U.S. public, then this would be a pivotal change in public understanding of and attitudes towards artists from just over a decade ago (Jackson et al., 2003). Public opinion is an important factor in the formation of public policies (Burstein, 2003), yet whether and how artists' roles in public life are perceived beyond the arts and cultural field are unknown.

Therefore, we developed and pilot tested survey indicators to gauge public perceptions of artists within local communities and to assess the closeness of relationships between local community members and artists within the community. The findings of our pilot test provide foundational insights for monitoring the roles of artists in public life, which can inform art policies to evolve from the current period of punctuated change in the United States.

### Methodology

The aim of our study was to develop and test survey measures of public perceptions of artists in order to gauge how well they may serve as indicators to monitor potential changes in public perceptions. In this article, we develop the theoretical underpinnings for our survey measures, draw upon cognitive interviews conducted to test and refine the measures, and share the results of the pilot survey fielded with a national sample.

In February 2017, we conducted cognitive interviews with ten adults identified through an intercept methodology in variety of public spaces, including a public library, cafes, and a college campus within the Greater Nashville area. Each interviewee was paid a \$10 incentive to participate, and each interview lasted approximately twenty minutes and was conducted in English. The interviews were semi-structured, including a general question about what the word 'artist' meant to each interviewee and how, or whether, that differed when asked to think about artists that the interviewee might see or interact with in their own local community; descriptions of artists' activities; and the closeness of relationships the interviewee might have with any artists in their local community. Concurrent probing techniques were primarily used. We aimed to cognitively test the questionnaire with demographically diverse adults. Of the nine individuals who agreed to self-report their demographic information at the end of the interview, five were female and four were male. Three respondents were between the ages of 18-24, three between the ages of 35-44, two between the ages of 45-54, and one between the ages of 65-74. Regarding educational attainment, one had a high school diploma, two had associate's degrees, one had completed some college, three had completed bachelor's degrees, and two had graduate degrees. Our interviewees were racially and ethnically more homogenous. Seven interviewees identified as white, one identified as black or African American, one identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, and one identified as Pacific Islander; interviewees had the option to identify as more than one race or ethnicity. We iteratively refined the pilot test questionnaire based on feedback and observations from the cognitive interviews.

Between March 23-27, 2017, the pilot test survey questions were fielded on the AmeriSpeak<sup>®</sup> Panel, a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population, which is



operated by NORC at the University of Chicago. The sample is comprised of 1,110 adults (age 18 and older) from across the U.S.; 954 respondents answered the questions online, and 156 completed the questions by phone. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. For our analyses, we apply sampling weights provided by AmeriSpeak<sup>®</sup>, which account for age, gender, the nine Census divisions, education, and race/ethnicity. The total survey margin of error is +/- 4.04.<sup>1</sup>

### **Indicator Design And Key Insights From Cognitive Interviews**

Indicators that capture public perceptions of artists and assess relationships between local community members and artists are the focus of our research. In order to understand public perceptions of artists within their own communities, a primary aim for the design of the indicators was to encourage respondents to think carefully and widely, but quickly, about identifying practices and activities that respondents may think of as artists doing, while simultaneously directing the survey respondent to focus exclusively on artists within their local geographic community. Given the various ways artists and their work have been and can be viewed, our goals in developing indicators for this study were to focus on three key constructs: (a) what people identify artists doing within their community, (b) the closeness of social ties with artists within their community, and (c) opinions of how artists should be employed or funded within their community. The purpose of each indicator and insights garnered from the cognitive interviews are further explained and resulted in the pilot test indicators in Figure 1.

### **Identifying Artists in Local Communities**

Given the various concepts of what an artist could be and the focus of our indicators, a critical aim in designing our indicators was to encourage survey respondents to think inclusively about the forms of artistic practices that respondents may identify artists as doing, while also directing the survey respondent to focus exclusively on artists within their local geographic community. One key hurdle to overcome in the design of our indicators is the common association with the general term ‘artist’ being taken to mean a painter or musician (Urban Institute, 2002). The results of our cognitive interviews underscored this challenge as eight out of ten interviewees referenced visual artists, primarily painters, when initially asked, “What comes to mind when you think of the word ‘artist’?” Interviewees also referenced famous musicians and performing artists, such as Van Gogh, Taylor Swift, and Kurt Cobain. Hence, a primary goal for the indicator design was to develop framing language to help respondents think more inclusively than these commonplace responses, but to also not exclude them.

Toward this goal, we included key elements into the framing language for the pilot test. First, in order to encourage respondents to think broadly about what they may consider artists to do and to encourage respondents to feel comfortable making their own choice about what they might include as an artist, we used a triangulation of terms to describe the types of activities artists might be involved - “artistic, creative, and cultural activities” (Novak-Leonard, Reynolds, English, and Bradburn, 2015a, p. 15). We adapted this triangulation of terms from the California Survey of Arts and Cultural Participation, as this inclusive priming language encouraged respondents to think broadly and inclusively about the forms of their own participation.

The following questions are about artists. The word ‘artist’ can bring to mind a variety of people who do different kinds of artistic, creative, and cultural activities. For example, some people think of famous painters from the past or current celebrities when they hear the word ‘artist’. **The following questions ask specifically about the kinds of artists you see or interact with in your local community.**

1. **Please describe examples of any artists you see or interact with in your local community.**
2. **Which of the following would you use to describe the artists that you have seen or interacted with in your local community during the past 12 months, that is between March 2016 and March 2017: (choose all that apply)**
  - Represent or serve as a spokesperson for the people who are part of your community
  - Bring attention to community concerns or causes
  - Collaborate with local individuals and organizations
  - Think about new ways to solve problems
  - Create or perform art as a way to earn money
  - Other, please explain: *[capture response]*
  - I do not see or interact with any artists in my local community *[skip to Q6]*
3. **Which of the following best describes the artists you have seen or interacted with in your local community during the past 12 months? (choose one)**
  - Represent or serve as a spokesperson for the people who are part of your community
  - Bring attention to community concerns or causes
  - Collaborate with local individuals and organizations
  - Think about new ways to solve problems
  - Create or perform art as a way to earn money
  - Other
4. **Thinking again about the artists that you have seen or interacted with in your local community during the past 12 months, what are your relationships to them? (choose all that apply)**
  - I am thinking of myself
  - Family member
  - Friend
  - Acquaintance
  - No personal relationship, but I know of them
5. **Which of the following describes the primary relationship you have with the artists that you have seen or interacted with in your local community during the past 12 months? (choose one)**
  - I am thinking of myself
  - Family member
  - Friend
  - Acquaintance
  - No personal relationship, but I know of them
6. **Which of the following, if any, do you feel should employ or provide funding for artists in your local community? (choose all that apply)**
  - The federal government
  - The state government
  - The local government
  - Businesses or corporations
  - Charitable corporations
  - Community organizations or clubs
  - Individual contributors or sponsors
  - Artists should be self-employed or self-funded

Figure 1  
*Pilot Survey Questions*

Second, in order to help define the survey respondents' frames of reference to focus exclusively on artists within their local geographic community, we next asked respondents to think about artists they "have seen or interacted with in their local community." We used the cognitive interviews to probe interpretations of "community" to garner insight on the degree to which interviewees would develop a frame of reference for community defined by geography as opposed to personal interactions and relationships without regard to geography. Seven out of nine interviewees understood community in terms of geography; two interpreted community as defined primarily by relationships. However, even among these latter two, the relationships they referenced were still seemingly anchored by geography, as opposed to online interactions or personal identity, such as identifying with the scientific community or LGBTQ community. For example, one middle-aged woman referenced her CrossFit exercise group, a Bible study group, and her husband's professional network at a local university as her community. While these are relationship-focused groups, they all still exist within the geographic limits of the town in which she lives. One interviewee described community as, "people and the space, ideally a space where people can come together." While the chosen framing language is not exclusive to communities defined by geography, based on the cognitive interviews, the phrase "*local community*" adequately guides respondents to focus on their geographically local community. Examining variations of the phrase "have seen or interacted with" revealed negligible differences in responses or provided examples. We included an open-ended priming question in the pilot test – "Please describe examples of any artists you see or interact with in your community" – in part to assess the adequacy of the framing language. In addition, the open-ended question aims to elicit examples of respondents' interactions and perceptions of artists in their local communities in their own words to examine against descriptions of artists' roles in local communities used in the following close-ended indicators.

### **Describing Artists' Roles in Local Communities**

Within local communities, our key indicators seek to capture the various notions of how the general adult public may perceive artists and the dimensions of their work. In contrast to prior studies, we did not ask about artists' discipline of practice; rather, the indicators collect opinions on five descriptions of artists' behaviors in their local communities in effort to shed light on how the public interprets the motivations, goals, and purpose of their work. The five measures used in the pilot test draw from existing literature and significant refinement based on results of the cognitive interviews. We define the prior twelve months as the recall period, which has been a convention used in multiple general population surveys regarding arts and culture, including the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (National Endowment for the Arts, 2015), American Perception of Artists Survey (Urban Institute, 2015), California Survey of Arts and Cultural Participation (Novak-Leonard et al., 2015a), and the General Social Survey – Arts Supplement (Smith, Marsden, & Hout, 2016). Respondents are asked to choose from the following descriptions all that apply to their experiences, as well as which one best describes their perspectives. The descriptions are not mutually exclusive from one another, but rather emphasize different possible dimensions and perceptions of artists' activities within communities. If none of these apply to the respondent's experiences, the pilot test includes options for the respondent to report no interaction with artists as well as write in one's own description of artists in their local community. The five substantive responses for this question are:

"Represent or serve as a spokesperson for the people who are part of your community." As part of the paradigm shift in cultural policy, artists are increasingly being presented as individuals who serve as representatives for the communities they live in to "uniquely testify from and about a particular public" (Bonin-Rodriguez, 2015, p. 2). In the cognitive interviews, the examples that respondents generated in response to this prompt referenced artisan markets and shop owners who serve to represent the communities in which they are located and promote other local artists, artists who fill "ethnic and economic niche[s]", an

artist whose local exhibit focused on drawing attention to understanding mental illness, and an artist friend who the respondent talks with about community issues. Understanding a baseline measure and changes over time in whether artists are perceived as representatives or spokespersons in their communities would provide insight into artists' levels of connection to and alignment with the communities in which they live.

During cognitive interviews, respondents also cited examples such as a political dance group, the recent women's march, and other political statements by artists, suggesting a varied response that describes artists' roles as bringing attention to community concerns or causes. Additionally, the Creativity Connects report indicates that artists, "[give] voice to community concerns and aspirations" (Center for Cultural Innovation, 2016, p. 3). Hence, in effort to capture this sentiment, we include, "Bring attention to community concerns or causes," to elicit whether individuals perceive artists who they see or interact with in their community to be involved in issues of concern in local communities.

"Collaborate with local individuals and organizations." Artists have always been involved in the fabric of their communities in addition to being members of their profession. The idea of the patterned cooperation (Becker, 1984) that connects artists to one another is well-established, and artists are highly aware that their work exists in interconnected occupational communities in which connections to others and a good reputation are essential for their career (Cornfield, 2015; Dowd & Pinheiro, 2013; Gallelli, 2016; Menger, 1999). When asked in cognitive interviews, individuals who perceive artists in their local community to collaborate with local individuals and organizations referenced a tea shop owner who collaborates with local chefs for special events; the community of makers and hackers who collaborate to bridge the gap between artistry and innovation; artists working with the Red Cross and other relief organizations when there are disasters and tragedies like the East Tennessee wildfires in 2016 or a local shooting that targeted an Army recruitment storefront in Chattanooga, TN; opportunities for children to work with local artists through the school system; and numerous arts and music festivals or events. As networking, partnerships, opportunity recognition, and the ability to "recombine resources" are prominent characteristics of arts entrepreneurship in scholarly literature (Chang and Wyszomirski, 2015, p. 25), this measure offers a high-level indicator of the degree to which individuals perceive artists to be operating entrepreneurially in their communities.

"Think about new ways to solve problems." Artists have been described as, "thinkers, creators, and problem-solvers" (Center for Cultural Innovation, 2016, p. 11), and this indicator is intended to capture entrepreneurialism in terms of innovative approaches and problem-solving. Initially, we cognitively tested a phrase used in the 2015 Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) survey, which addresses "inventing new methods to arrive at unconventional solutions" (Strategic National Arts Alumni Project, 2015, p. 1); however we chose alternative language based on cognitive interviewees' preference for easier interpretation. In the cognitive interviews, respondents said that "think[ing] about new ways to solve problems" is a sign of a good artist and that artists "should" do things differently than what we know works currently. One interviewee replied, "I hope so! That is what I want artists to do." Understanding whether individuals perceive artists in their communities as innovative problem solvers offers an additional indicator of understanding artists as entrepreneurs.

"Create or perform art as a way to earn money." Our study seeks to understand public perceptions of artists beyond the occupation-based definition of artist, as well as to understand perceptions of artists as primarily seeking to earn a livelihood and make money. One interviewee explained, "you've got to make a living or you can't do it." A few of the interviewees referenced artists who do not create or perform as a way to earn money; some artists, one respondent said, "give people voice," and another said that he has seen some artists transition from pursuing art as a hobby, but gradually turning their practice into a money-making venture. Lastly, one interviewee said that he thinks artists have to create or perform art as a way to



earn money more than ever at this point in time since he thinks people are less willing to have the government fund the arts and that artists have to raise their own money using Kickstarter or other self-initiated ways of earning money.

### **Social Ties and Financing Artists in Local Communities**

Lastly, we include indicators of social ties and of attitudes toward employment and funding for artists. To examine social ties between artists and community members at a high level, we include an indicator of one's social proximity to artists. The response categories for this question stem from the resource generator tool (Van Der Gaag & Snijders, 2005), which is used to measure social capital in terms of the types of resources that individuals are able to access from within their personal social networks. Our final indicator by and large replicates a measure used in the American Perceptions of Artists Survey (Urban Institute, 2002) to measure opinions about funding and employment opportunities for artists. The 2002 survey revealed that people tended to be more supportive of individual and community-sponsorship than support from any level of government (Princeton Survey Research Associates, 2003, p. 16). To further inform hypotheses regarding a paradigm shift of artists' work moving toward entrepreneurialism and away from subsidy and test to what degree the public perceives that artists should be self-reliant, we added the response category, "artists should be self-employed or self-funded."

### **Reflection on Cognitive Interviews**

The aim of the cognitive interviews was to examine and refine language to develop survey indicators that would allow us to establish a baseline, and subsequently monitor changes, of how individuals perceive and relate to artists in their communities. We recognize that Nashville's concentration and visibility of artists, musicians in particular, creates a unique context for interviewees (Peoples, 2013) and acknowledge that our cognitive interviewees likely provided examples from the city's vibrant community of commercial music artists more so than would likely occur from many other communities. For example, one interviewee noted that his interactions with artists in his local community regularly included national and international music artists like Elton John and Jack White. This was the most striking example, but, on the whole, many respondents talked about seeing live music and interacting with professional musicians. In the cognitive interview process, we noted that at some points respondents might abstract the idea of 'artist' further out to the idea of 'art' and respond about art more generally rather than about artists. For example, interviewees referenced buying art from vendors in local markets, listening to punk music, and attending music festivals, but not interacting with musicians at the festival. Overall, the cognitive interview process was iterative and led to many improvements toward reflecting language meaningful to the general public about their perceptions of artists.

### **Pilot Test Results**

The pilot test results provide initial insights on public perceptions of artists, establishing a baseline for monitoring the potentially changing roles of artists in public life and monitoring paradigm change within the United States. We also critically reflect on the results in effort to further improve the indicator measures for future use.

### **Identifying Artists in Local Communities**

Overall, 38.4% of the weighted sample reported having seen or interacted with artists in their local community within the prior year. Men and adults without a four-year college degree reported significantly higher rates of not having seen or interacted with artists in their community than women and those with

degrees respectively. Logistic regression analyses examining race/ethnicity and college education showed that having a college degree significantly predicts higher odds ( $\exp(\beta)=1.70$ ,  $p=.003$ ) of having seen or interacted with an artist, as does identifying as Black ( $\exp(\beta)=1.62$ ,  $p=.055$ ) or as 'Other, Non-Hispanic' ( $\exp(\beta)=2.14$ ,  $p=.026$ ); there were no significant interaction effects between having a college degree and race.<sup>11</sup> While having a college education is a well-recognized determinant of participation in the arts, in general (McCarthy, Ondaatje, & Zakaras, 2001; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011), typically rates of participation are highest for those identifying as White, Non-Hispanic according to findings from the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (Silber & Triplett, 2015). While arts participation is not necessarily equivalent to having seen or interacted with artists in one's community, the differing patterns of engagement by race/ethnicity are relevant to artists' practices and to supporting policies addressing matters of inclusion.

Of the 439 survey respondents (unweighted) who reported having seen or interacted with artists in their local community, almost half (202 survey respondents) provided substantive responses regarding who those artists were. We use these qualitative responses to gauge how well the priming language prompted and helped frame the type of artist the survey measures aim to understand. In total, 87 respondents - 43% of those who described artists in open-ended responses - identified a personal relationship with an artist; 22 identified themselves as an artist, 29 identified an artist by name, and 36 referenced friends and family members as artists. Examples of relationship-based responses are: "friendship with a pianist", "I work in the arts, so it is my daily job to interact with artists and artworks", "My brother has had his paintings in the newspaper and on display. A friend, [*first and last name of friend, blinded for privacy*], is an artist and just published a book. My sister is an artist also." Other responses about artists were more generic, but still focused on the roles that artists have rather than on the art that they create. For example, respondents answered: "local theatre artists, actors, directors, designers, playwrights, etc.", "Artist from New Zealand painting downtown", "Blues musicians."

While 202 respondents focused on artists, an additional 118 responses addressed art more generally. We observed a similar challenge in the cognitive interviews, wherein some respondents expanded the idea of 'artist' into one of seeing 'art' more generally. For some survey responses, it was difficult to make a distinction between a respondent's characterization of art vs. artists, so we chose to code discussion of people, roles, or relationships as a response focusing on artists (e.g., "A double bass player in the Tucson Symphony Orchestra is a good friend"; "A few friends who are artists"; "musicians"). If the respondent's answer focused on objects, places, or events, we coded their response as focusing on art (e.g., "Art is regularly displayed in the building where I work on a rotating basis by local artists."; "I like to visit independent local craft shops."; "Painting, music, graffiti"). Of the respondents who talked about art, but not about artists in their responses to this question, most listed types of art and locations or events where they view art in their community. For example: "Richmond, VA has lots of public murals in our city", "Walker Sculpture Garden, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Guthrie Theater, Ordway Theater, Summer music festivals", "Live music."

### **Describing Artists' Roles in Local Communities**

Most respondents (50.3%) who saw or interacted with artists in their local communities described the artists as creating or performing art to earn money. A large proportion of respondents would describe the artists who they see or interact with as bringing attention to community concerns or causes (43.3%) and collaborating with local individuals and organizations (46.5%). About a quarter of respondents describe artists in their community as thinking of new ways to solve problems (24.7%) or representing or serving as a

		<b>N</b>	<b>Weighted % of Total Sample [95% CI]</b>	<b>DID see or interact with artists in local community [95% CI]</b>	<b>DID NOT see or interact with artists in local community [95% CI]</b>
<b>Adults</b>		1,110		38.4% [.3462, .4231]	61.6% [.5769, .6538]
<b>Gender</b>					
	Male	514	48.4% [.4447, .5234]	36.2% [.3092, .4185]	63.8% [.5815, .6908]
	Female	596	51.6% [.4766, .5553]	40.4% [.3517, .4594]	59.6% [.5406, .6483]
<b>Education</b>					
	Earned BA or above	379	25.1% [.2218, .2836]	47.8% [.412, .5448]	52.2% [.4552, .588]
	Earned high school degree or lower	731	74.9% [.7164, .7782]	35.2% [.3075, .3999]	64.8% [.6001, .6925]
<b>Age</b>					
	18-29	208	21.3% [.1809, .2499]	42.3% [.3338, .5167]	57.7% [.4833, .6662]
	30-44	332	26.5% [.2329, .3004]	34.7% [.2837, .4172]	65.3% [.5828, .7163]
	45-59	284	24.8% [.2166, .283]	40.8% [.334, .4863]	59.2% [.5137, .666]
	60+	286	27.3% [.2393, .3096]	36.7% [.2974, .4432]	63.3% [.5568, .7026]
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>					
	White, Non-Hispanic	729	64.4% [.6054, .6803]	37.2% [.3257, .4215]	62.8% [.5785, 6.743]
	Hispanic	174	15.8% [.1321, .1866]	28.2% [.2095, .3676]	71.8% [.6324, .7905]
	Black, Non-Hispanic	135	11.8% [.0962, .1449]	46.7% [.3614, .5762]	53.3% [.4238, .6386]
	Other, Non-Hispanic	72	8.0% [.0595, .1078]	55.3% [.3983, .6987]	44.7% [.3013, .6017]
<b>Area</b>					
	Metro	981	87.8% [.8467, .9029]	37.6% [.3373, .4167]	62.4% [.5833, .6627]
	Non-Metro	129	12.2% [.0971, .1533]	43.9% [.3178, .5683]	56.1% [.4317, .6822]

Table 1  
*Sample Demographics (Total) & Demographics of Adults Who Did & Did Not See or Interact with Artists in their Community*

spokesperson for the people (25.8%). After respondents checked all descriptions that they felt applied, we asked them to choose which description best fit the artists who they see or interact with in their communities. Of the 400 individuals who answered this question, the highest percentage (34.8%) describe artists as creating or performing art to earn money, yet nearly two thirds of respondents felt there were better ways to describe artists in their communities. The next most frequent responses describe artists as bringing attention to community concerns or injustices (20.7%) and as collaborating with local individuals and organizations (16.5%). The remaining respondents said that the best description of artists in their local communities were thinking about new ways to solve problems (9.4%), representing or serving as a spokesperson for the people (8.8%), or another response (9.8%), which they detailed in an open-ended text box.

	<b>Descriptions of Artists' Roles in Local Communities [95% CI] n=439</b>	<b>Best Description [95% CI] n=400</b>
Create or perform art as a way to earn money	50.3% [.4384, .5672]	34.8% [.2868, .4136]
Bring attention to community concerns or causes	43.3% [.3704, .4972]	20.7% [.1591, .2658]
Collaborate with local individuals and organizations	46.5% [.4009, .5292]	16.5% [.1206, .2209]
Other	11.7% [.0804, .1666]	9.8% [.0626, .151]
Think about new ways to solve problems	24.7% [.1992, .3027]	9.4% [.0623, .1404]
Represent or serve as a spokesperson for the people who are part of your community	25.8% [.2059, .3178]	8.8% [.0594, .1277]

Table 2  
*Descriptions of Artists, Among Adults Who Saw or Interacted with Artists in their Communities*

Applying simple logistic regression to the ‘best description’, we find that adults who identify as Black, Non-Hispanic have significantly higher odds than White, Non-Hispanic adults ( $\exp(\beta)=2.88, p=.016$ ) to choose “Bring attention to community concerns or causes” as the best description for artists they see or with whom they interact in their local community.

Of the 439 respondents who had seen or interacted with artists in the past year, 47 chose to provide their own answer to this question after selecting the box “Other, please explain.” We inductively coded and analyzed these open-ended responses to gain insight into where the descriptions of artists that we generated may be unclear or less inclusive than intended or if there were common perceptions of artists not included in the pilot test descriptions. While we would argue that about a quarter of these responses match the given closed-ended descriptions of artists, two emergent patterns of responses suggest the possible inclusion of additional descriptions for the future use of these indicators. Seven responses talked about art as a hobby, a vocation, or unpaid activity. One respondent said, “create art for my own enjoyment,” and another said, “Pursue art as a life long interest.” Another said, “True artists don't care about the money. They care about



the art. They are in touch with their feelings.” This suggests that a description of artists that explicitly identifies individuals’ interests in creating or performing art as a personal interest, hobby, or unpaid activity, might also be useful. An additional seven respondents described artists as educators. Five of the seven respondents specifically referenced artists’ role in youth development or teaching art to children (“Provide educational resources and outlets for others in the community. Especially young people”; “. . .to help young people develop and engage in the arts and get them off the streets.”). As many people come into contact with artists through education, it may be important for future indicators to include a response that allows respondents to indicate whether they see artists to be educators either in formal or informal capacities.

In addition, seven responses divulged specific examples of artists or arts-related activities. Of these, four talked about artists and two gave examples about art or spaces where art is made, displayed, or performed. For example, one respondent said, “A friend will be having readings on her book coming up next month,” and others referenced specific musicians in their town or particular art galleries, events, or organizations. Only two respondents noted that they interact with or see artists and art online. On the whole, these results suggest additional descriptions of artists in communities that are meaningful to residents.

### **Social Ties with Artists in Local Communities**

In general, most respondents who interacted with artists know them as friends (33.5%), acquaintances (35.1%), or know of them but do not have a personal relationship with an artist (51.4%). Just over one quarter of respondents have closer personal relationships with artists, as 14.2% of respondents have a family member who is an artist in their community, and 12.2% of respondents identify themselves artists. When asked to identify their primary relationship to artists in their community, respondents answered similarly with 45.0% reporting their primary relationship with artists they know of, but with whom they do not have a personal relationship. Approximately a fifth reported a friend (22.1%), or an acquaintance (19.1%), and a lower overall percentage of respondents reported having familial ties (6.8%) to artists, or being an artist (7.1%).

### **Financing Artists in Local Communities**

In line with the American Perceptions of Artists Survey in 2002, we found that in general, respondents are more supportive of private, local organizations and entities employing or funding artists in comparison to government funding or employment. More than half of respondents felt that individual contributors or sponsors (54.8%) should fund or employ artists. Likewise, slightly more than half of all respondents felt that artists should self-fund their endeavors or be self-employed (51.6%). Fewer respondents felt that private organizations and entities, that is, community organizations or clubs (47.7%), charitable corporations (40.2%), and businesses or corporations (35.1%), should fund or employ artists. On the whole, government funding or employment of artists was the least popular set of responses. Respondents were more supportive of more local forms of government funding or employing artists (local government 32.4%; State government 26.0%) than they were of federal government funding or employment of artists (21.5%).

There are significant differences between who respondents felt should fund or employ artists based upon whether they had seen or interacted with artists in their local community in the past year. Adults who did not interact with artists in the past year were generally more supportive of non-government entities, organizations, and individuals funding or employing artists. They were most in favor of artists self-funding their own work or being self-employed (57.4%) and least supportive of the federal government as a funder

	Relationships between adults and artists in their local community	Primary Relationship
	[95% CI] n=408	[95% CI] n=402
Myself	12.2% [.0851, .1708]	7.1% [.044, .114]
Family member	14.2% [.1014, .1948]	6.8% [.0417, .1081]
Friend	33.5% [.2741, .4009]	22.1% [.1698, .2818]
Acquaintance	35.1% [.2871, .4196]	19.1% [.1401, .2536]
No personal relationship, but I know of them	51.4% [.4477, .5795]	45.0% [.3855, .5156]

Table 3

*Social Ties to Artists, Among Adults Who Saw or Interacted with Artists in their Community*

or employer of artists (15.4%). Adults who have interacted with artists in the past year are generally more supportive of both public and private funding and employment for artists. They are most in favor of individual contributors or sponsors (61.2%) and are also least supportive of federal government support for artists (31.4%), though they are far more supportive of the federal government as a source of funding and employment for artists than are those who have not interacted with artists. Of note, adults who did not interact with artists are more in favor of artists self-funding their work or being self-employed (57.4%) than are those who did interact with artists (42.4%).

### Reflections on Effectiveness & Limitations

Our goal in this study was to set baseline measures of perceptions of artists in hopes of establishing initial understandings of perceptions of artists that can, over time, be used to understand whether the public perceives the shifts identified and initiated at the policy level. This pilot test survey constitutes the first national study of perceptions of artists since the American Perceptions of Artists Survey in 2002, and expands the understanding of artists beyond disciplinary-based occupations. We sought to establish baseline measures of individuals' perceptions of artists in their local communities and to measure the closeness of relationships between individuals and the artists who they see or interact with in their communities. While the cognitive interview process helped us to make the survey indicators more parsimonious, the results of the pilot test provided insights on possible approaches to further increase the effectiveness of the survey items.

An issue we anticipated was distinguishing between art and artists. This was a prevalent abstraction in the cognitive interviews and was also observed in the open-ended responses of the national survey, which captured this common mismatch between the intent and purpose of the survey and the respondents' understanding of the questions. If respondents are expressing opinions about their perceptions of art, places where they view art, and art-focused events in their local community in the open-ended questions, it is

n=1,110	Support for employment and funding sources for local artists (% of adults) [95% CI]	DID see or interact with artists in local community [95% CI]	DID NOT see or interact with artists in local community [95% CI]
Individual contributors or sponsors	54.8% [.5083, .5874]	61.2% [.5462, .674]	50.8% [.4585, .5579]
Self-employed or self-funded	51.6% [.4764, .5551]	42.2% [.3601, .4868]	57.4% [.5243, .6226]
Community organizations or clubs	47.7% [.4376, .516]	53.3% [.4678, .596]	44.2% [.3935, .4914]
Charitable corporations	40.2% [.3643, .4409]	48.1% [.4171, .5455]	35.3% [.3078, .4005]
Businesses or corporations	35.1% [.3146, .3888]	43.3% [.3701, .4972]	30.0% [.2575, .3459]
Local government	32.4% [.2887, .3617]	45.6% [.3922, .5206]	24.2% [.204, .2848]
State government	26.0% [.2259, .2963]	35.9% [.2984, .4235]	19.8% [.1607, .2412]
Federal government	21.5% [.1837, .2509]	31.4% [.2555, .3791]	15.4% [.1209, .1941]

Table 4  
*Financing Artists*

possible that they may also be thinking of these examples instead of thinking of artists who they see or interact with in their local community when answering multiple choice questions. This insight reminds us to be especially careful with question and response item wording and to consider adding additional framing language that makes it clearer that the survey is about artists but not about art. We expect that this may be an ongoing challenge in this line of research.

While possible additions for artist descriptions as educators or hobbyists were previously addressed, we also note the possibility to reduce or narrow the description of artists. Of those who answered “Bring attention to community concerns or causes” as a description of artists within their community, 44% also selected it as the *best* description; of those who answered “Represent or serve as a spokesperson for the people” as a description of artists within their community, 30% selected “bring attention” as the *best* description. We suggest collapsing these two descriptions in the future. In the cognitive interviews, respondents tended to give different examples for these two items, with “bring attention” being more focused on philanthropic and charitable issues and “represent” more frequently eliciting examples of political or social issues, but the results of the national pilot test suggest that the potential differences between the two are not as empirically meaningful.

### Discussion

In light of the seeming paradigm shift underway that is hailing artists as entrepreneurs, agents for social change, and problem-solvers in public life, the goal of our study was to gauge if this concept of artist is

meaningful to the general public and to understand public perceptions of artists. In this pilot study, we tested indicators of public perceptions of artists and community members' closeness of relationships with artists as a means of monitoring potential paradigm change and informing public policies supporting artists' work in civic and public life. Our results highlight modest modifications for improving the exactness of the indicators and establish a baseline understanding of how communities see artists, the closeness of relationships between individuals and artists, levels of self-identification as an artist, and opinions of who should fund artists, including a measure of the expectation that artists act entrepreneurially in the form of self-financing or self-employment.

The pilot test's topline results suggest that public opinion data is an important complement to employment statistics, case studies, and qualitative work in informing community development and arts policies. While approximately one-third (34.8%) of the pilot test respondents who had seen or interacted with artists in their local community described artists primarily as an occupation and seeking to earn a livelihood, nearly two-thirds of respondents felt there were better ways to describe artists in their communities. This suggests that segments of communities are aware of artists leveraging their skills to support their local community, and this in particular would be important to monitor over time, offering insights on the national level and, with appropriate samples and data collection means, to monitor potential change in public perceptions within specific communities.

The indicators of public perceptions can also be used to inform arts policies at the local level. Our results signal that the general public wants artists in their local community to be self-employed or self-funded, which dovetails with the artists working as entrepreneurs and civic problem-solvers. Such information can inform conversation about decisions and policies regarding opportunities and efforts that can involve and benefit the community. Deployed at the local level, these indicators offer insights into a community's sense of understanding artists as community assets and can shed light on a community's public readiness to engage or reaction to engaging with creative placemaking efforts.

Public opinion matters for taking stock of and informing public policies, at the national and local levels. Beyond intermittent measures of opinions toward public funding for arts (DiMaggio & Pettit, 1998), the arts and cultural field has little systematic understanding of public perceptions, let alone how they may change over time. More than ever, as artists and the broader arts field seek to work within and with public life, understanding how the public may or may not connect with artists will be important for fostering supportive policies and to take stock of this unprecedented time of change for arts and cultural policies within the U.S.

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<sup>i</sup> Additional technical documentation is available at <http://amerispeak.norc.org/research> [Accessed April 18, 2017]

<sup>ii</sup> Complete regression results available from authors.

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## **PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIES FOR CREATIVE PLACEMAKING IN TEACHING ENTREPRENEURIAL ARTISTS**

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### **Abstract**

As entrepreneurship education for artists expands, business strategy itself gets adapted to the particular ways in which artists and other creative placemakers work. Traditional business strategy is based on competition for scarce resources—as exemplified in Michael Porter’s iconic Porter’s Five Forces analysis and as extended to non-profit management by Sharon Oster’s Six Forces framework, which includes donors. Yet creative placemaking often entails collaboration more than zero-sum competition. Even in underfunded fields in which resources are scarce, business strategy frameworks that are based on partnership and collaboration, most notably Brandenburger and Nalebuff’s “Value Net,” more effectively support community engagement and partnership strategies associated with creative placemaking. This paper takes as a case study a workshop taught to choreographers and other movement artists as part of a Business Structures and Planning curriculum I developed in 2016 for the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC) and The Actors Fund. The core question of the Value Net, “If I succeed, who succeeds with me?,” led to unexpected ways of mapping the ecosystem of the arts and to fruitful community engagement. In reimagining business strategy more holistically, this approach is also part of a larger pedagogy toward a principles-based, rather than rules-based, model of teaching business as a creative design medium itself.

Keywords: creative placemaking, arts entrepreneurship, competitive strategy, co-opetition

In May and August of 2016, I led two pilot workshops of a curriculum I designed as a “2.0” approach to “Business Structures and Planning” for a partnership between the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC) and The Actors Fund (Whitaker, 2017). The aim was to teach practitioners with a substantial track record in the field how to shift their practices to achieve scale and sustainability on their own terms. A core component of the workshop was partnership strategy. Unlike traditional business strategy, which is predicated on the assumption of competition, partnership strategy is based on a non-zero-sum structure in which multiple stakeholders can succeed by working together. Particularly in the case of artists with a creative placemaking practice, and artists whose work exists in performance and public-art venues, these partnership strategies map the arts ecosystem in usefully networked systems that follow from the question: *If I succeed, who succeeds with me?*

This paper illustrates specific approaches to teaching partnership strategy as a lens onto pedagogical approaches to business as a creative discipline itself, and places these teaching experiments in a larger context of business education for artists.

### **The History of Teaching Business to Artists**

The field of teaching business to artists has evolved and grown substantially in the last twenty years. The Tremaine Foundation has piloted funding of business and professional practice programs, as well as initiatives to study these programs. In 2015, the Herberger Institute at Arizona State University and the Tremaine Foundation released a report, *How It’s Being Done: Art Business Training Across the U.S.* studying the current state of business resources for artists (Essig and Flanagan, updated 2016). In the same year, the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) released *The Career Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Artists* (Skaggs, 2016).

This paper takes as its case study a pilot program co-organized by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council which, along with Creative Capital and the New York Foundation for the Arts, has piloted business education programs for artists, both within New York City and nationally.

The teaching described in this paper stems from a framework that models approaches to business education for artists at various levels, first published in the essay “Why Teach Business to Artists” in *Hyperallergic* (Whitaker, 2016a). An accompanying diagram mapped these levels of business engagement in a triangle, following the visual structure of Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, which models human motivation from basic survival through an apex of “self-actualization” (Maslow, 1943). These “levels” of pedagogical methodology for teaching business to artists are illustrated in Figure 1:

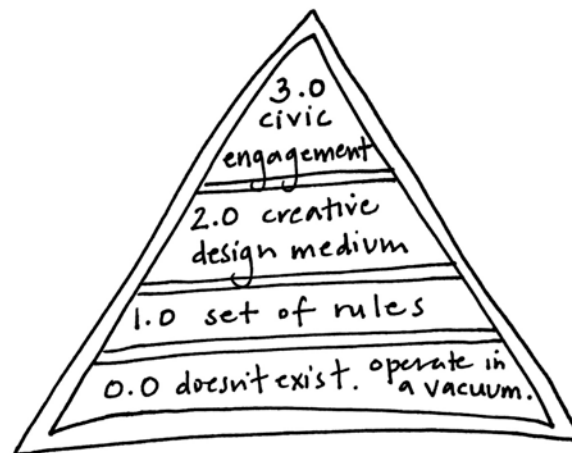


Figure 1

*A Framework of Methods for Teaching Business to Artists* (Whitaker, 2016a)

At the base of the pyramid is a “0.0” approach to business in which one pretends that business does not exist. This attitude is intended to foster a focus on the art itself but often leaves artists without skills to navigate the practical world. At the “1.0” level, business is taught as a set of rules that are enacted in a specific way. The “1.0” is normative; it includes assumptions about how business should work. In contrast, the “2.0” level presents business as a set of building blocks that can be used however a person sees fit. In this framework, business is a parallel creative practice, in essence, a medium that can be approached with the same creative methods one brings to one’s art. Finally, in the “3.0” realm at the top of the pyramid, business is a tool for civic engagement, a way of talking collectively about the design of the world. The 2.0 and 3.0 levels are particularly significant to partnership strategy because so many financial challenges that artists and other creative workers face are collectively held. Solutions often involve pooling resources, either to save money by sharing overhead or to create critical mass by working together.

This focus on business as a creative design medium dovetails with principles-based theories of pedagogy, in which students are invited to work open-endedly by applying the first principles of a field, rather than having to work toward a single known solution or a right way to do something by following a set of rules. These theories are subject to subsequent study via priming methods in social psychology. One hypothesizes that artists and other creative placemakers who are taught business by first principle would be primed to engage more imaginatively and resourcefully in an assigned problem-solving task.

From an artist’s standpoint, the first principles of designing with business are to amplify the reach of your work and to protect space in which to make the work in the first place. These applications of business

align with the shift described in this paper from competitive to cooperative strategy. If traditional business strategy is normative in a “1.0” way, carrying an assumption of competition, partnership strategy carries a “2.0” ability to think laterally about collective success as well. Sometimes it is the creation of collective success—the elevation of the field or the critical mass of convening power—that leads to individual success at all. This collective success is central to community engagement and creative placemaking (Florida, 2002).

### From Competitive to Cooperative Strategy

Modern competitive strategy is perhaps best encapsulated in Michael E. Porter’s 1979 framework Porter’s Five Forces. Built on the spine of a supply chain, a manufacturing-centric diagram of the linear progression from raw materials to finished products, the core axis of Porter’s Five Forces is from suppliers to buyers. The framework also isolates different aspects of an organization’s strengths and weaknesses as expressed as vulnerabilities to new competition (“barriers to entry”) and protections of product differentiation (“threat of substitutes”). The center of the diagram holds space to describe the structural nature and degree of competition within an industry. Figure 2 illustrates these relationships. Note that the original diagram was drawn with a horizontal axis from suppliers to buyers. The vertical axis here lent itself to the way the workshop was taught.

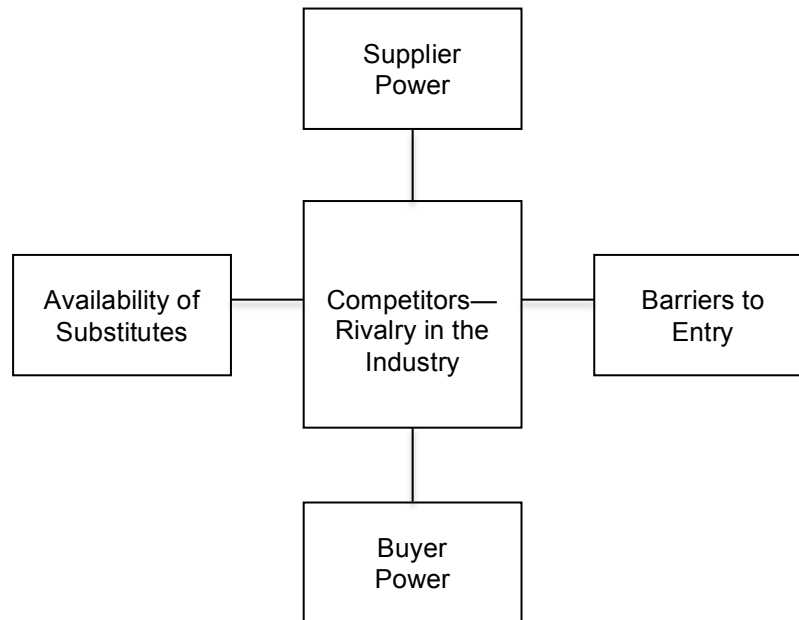


Figure 2

*Porter’s Five Forces, adapted from “Forces governing competition in an industry” (Porter, 1979, p. 141)*

The diagram lends itself easily to the analysis of more traditional business models but, critically in the case of partnership strategy, it does not model network externalities well. That is, it does not take into account systemic creation of value rather than competition for scarce resources. If a positive externality is defined as a benefit that is not priced in, a network externality is a subset of a positive externality in which the benefit arises from a critical mass of common behavior. Examples of network externalities include community platforms such as Facebook, city districts for shopping or art, destination events such as art fairs with satellites, or even philosophically basic shared knowledge like speaking a common language.

Creative placemaking and arts entrepreneurship projects of widely divergent method often share a fundamental concern with systemic value creation. These efforts therefore rest on a consideration of

networked creation of value that is often not priced in. A simple vector of competition does not encompass that shared creation of value among many different stakeholders in a community.

For example, in the airline industry, the capital intensiveness -- or money required -- to purchase airplanes and the difficulty of securing gates at an airport constitute key barriers to entry. In contrast, applying Porter's Five Forces analysis to a performing arts festival does not easily model the upside involved in the creation of partnerships; it more so models the risk that competition may follow, once those partnerships are established and a marketplace is saturated. Thus, the framework assumes that even where partnerships are concerned, there is a fight for resources, rather than any avenue by which collaboration could be generative. The different parts of the framework succeed in mapping aspects of competition and the overall fierceness of rivalry in a field without mapping the ecosystem of mutually dependent and collaborative relationships.

### **Supplier Power**

The fewer suppliers an organization has, the more power those suppliers have because there is more dependence on them and a resulting inability to switch to a competitor, or to play off a competitor in a negotiation. Suppliers also have greater power if there are relatively high "switching costs" of moving a relationship to another supplier. Stuckey and White (1993) discuss three different kinds of asset specificity: site, technical, and human capital. This specificity of fit between buyers and suppliers greatly affects one side's switching costs. For instance, if the buyers of supplies have had to build factories located in a certain place, machinery and systems geared toward that supplier, or employee familiarity and know-how specific to that supplier, then that asset specificity gives the supplier more power by increasing the buyer's level of commitment and related switching cost. Conversely, if there are available substitutes and if it is relatively inexpensive to switch to another supplier, then the supplier has less power.

The supplier's own business strategy and structural nature will also characterize its power. If the supplier's business success depends on producing goods in volume, then they have an incentive to maintain their sales relationships and therefore have less power. If your supplier could easily get into the same business that you are in (to forward integrate) then the supplier has more power because it is, in a way, a potential competitor of yours. In a performing arts context, one could imagine a producer who has the capacity to present work, or an artist who has the ability to circumvent a gallery and sell directly to collectors.

### **Buyer Power**

Buyer and supplier power are often flipsides of the same coin because the dynamics are structurally similar, just seen from different sides. Buyers have power when they have many available alternatives to your product offering. To the extent they can compete with a supplier at its own product offering, the buyer will have more general forms of leverage in negotiating price. In this framework, the ability to set price is often analogous to market power. In an artistic context, many other forms of value—social, aesthetic, relational, reputational—and power come into play.

### **Rivalry**

A key aspect of rivalry within a field is how many other actors there are, that is, the industry concentration. The more actors in a field, the more they compete against one another for opportunities. At the same time, if an industry is concentrated into a handful of powerful companies, it is hard to compete if you are not one of those powerful players. Economic theory models free entry and exit from fields, meaning free mobility of resources to follow opportunities. If, in reality, there are barriers to exit—obstacles to leaving the field—then the rivalry will be more intense.



Regarding barriers to exit, in economic theory, any previous investment (education in a field, years already spent trying to break in) is considered a “sunk cost,” that is, money already paid that cannot be recouped and that therefore should not be considered in decision-making. However, practically speaking, many people would consider this investment as a barrier to exit, because they have tried so hard already. Other barriers to exit might include long-term leases or other commitments.

The cost structure within a field also characterizes the competitive nature of the field. If companies are fixed-cost-intensive, meaning they mostly have overhead as opposed to more flexible ad-hoc or variable costs, then they will strive to compete for audience members to defray that overhead. Performing arts venues have this characteristic of fixed cost intensiveness and extremely low cost of an incremental audience member when the seats are not all full. Lastly, if the industry is growing overall, the competition will be less severe because there is more room for everyone. In constricting fields, rivalry can be fierce, even for fewer resources.

### **Barriers to Entry**

Barriers to entry are factors that stop other actors who see your success from copying you. The economic basis of this risk is a belief that if others enter your field, they will compete with you for customers. Some barriers to entry are structural: organizations that have operated for a long time may have achieved a scale that gives them cost advantages, or they may have amassed specialized knowledge from a history of operations. A firm may also have a long history of working relationships, partnerships, and access to distribution (e.g., stores, performance venues, customers). Other barriers stem from regulation: intellectual property frameworks such as patent and trademark stop other actors from copying a technology or replicating a successful brand. The sheer money needed to start up also constitutes a barrier, one that varies substantially across fields. (The money needed to start as an Etsy seller is markedly different from the capital needed to start an airline.) The presence of existing customers can also constitute a barrier if there is a high “switching cost” for that customer to change over from an incumbent company to a new one. One can imagine the time and effort required to change bank accounts from one institution to another. Even exploring a new performing arts venue as an audience member involves switching cost of learning how to get to the new venue and to navigate its space.

### **Threat of Substitutes**

Switching costs also characterize the threat of substitutes. If it is expensive to shift to a new product, then the threat of the substitute is lower (see Stuckey and White (1993) on “asset specificity”). With regard to substitutes, the entire marketing campaign and enduring brand of Coca-Cola aim to teach us that there *is* no substitute. The competitive dynamic around substitutes maps onto microeconomic analysis of price elasticity, indifference curves, and other aspects of consumer demand. It also maps onto intuitive consumer tastes, so one knows at what price or under what circumstances you would make do with a stand-in.

### **Resource Scarcity: Classical Economics**

The entire map of Porter’s Five Forces emanates from neoclassical business assumptions of scarcity. As Leonard Read argued in his classic essay “I Pencil,” (1958) and as retold by Milton Friedman (1980) in a PBS special on free market economics, no one person could singlehandedly manage all the parts of creating a pencil. It is the miracle of the pricing system that allows people to come together and coordinate making the different parts. This assumption of market efficiency was first argued by Adam Smith (1776) in his famous example of workers creating straight pins more efficiently by dividing the process into steps.

These assumptions of resource scarcity do not, in general, model innovation or, specifically, artistic creativity. They show how a pencil is made efficiently but not how it is invented. Efficiency applies to

manufacturing what you already know how to make, but not to research and development of new work (Whitaker, 2016b). The theory of economics thus holds in tension the notion of efficiency and the necessity of invention, what Joseph Schumpeter called the “creative destruction” that is required to make progress (1942). One must be willing to move beyond, or even to destroy, previously successful products in order to maintain long-term success. This theory follows the economic incentive to innovate: a firm makes profits, other firms enter the market and compete those profits away, and then the first firm must innovate in order to make profits again.

These assumptions have been adapted to non-profit management by Sharon Oster (1995) with the addition of a “sixth force” for donors, alongside buyers. Donors are, strictly speaking, those people who pay for the product disproportionately to their own use, where “users” are buyers who pay proportionately to their usage. See Figure 3.

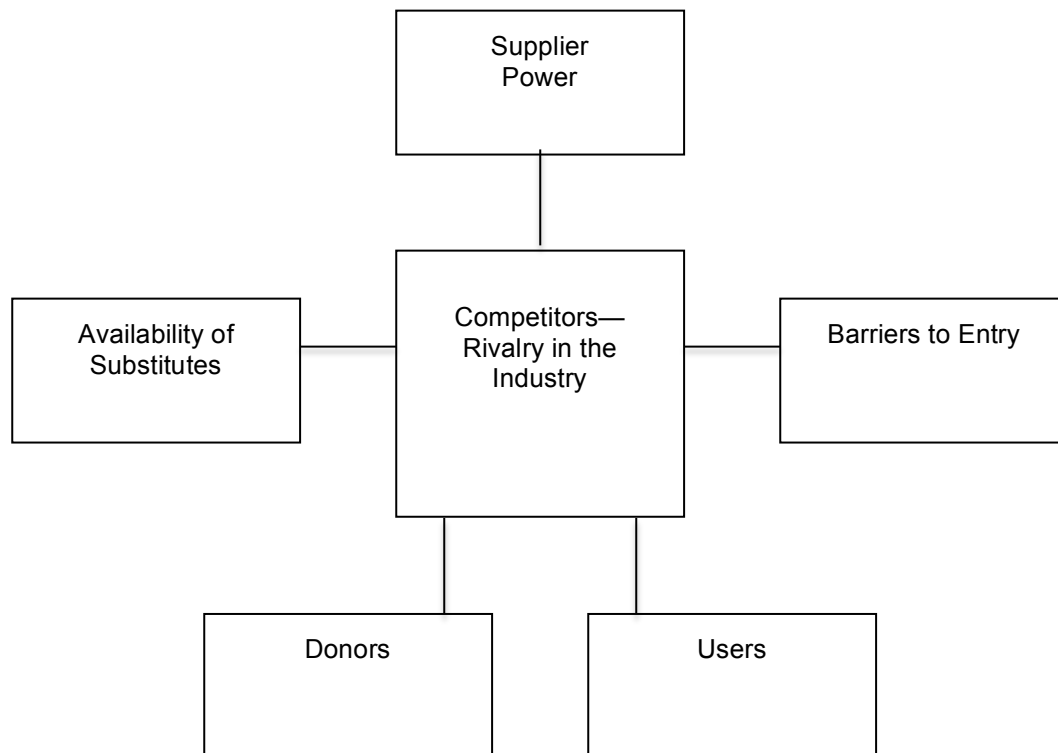


Figure 3  
*Sharon Oster's Six Forces Model (Oster, 1995)*

### **Competitive Strategy and Efficiency in Teaching Context**

In practice, in applying both Porter's Five Forces and Sharon Oster's Six Forces in the LMCC-Actors Fund pilots and otherwise, artists are often confused by the distinction between buyers and suppliers. They often perceive donors as suppliers of capital. And the supply chain by which art is made is often non-linear and circuitous, which is to say, hard to shoehorn into a strict linear chain. Oster's original diagram was drawn with suppliers to the left and buyers to the right. For teaching purposes, both Porter's and Oster's diagrams were drawn with a vertical instead of horizontal supplier-buyer axis.

In addition, although efficiency of manufacture and messiness of innovation are often at odds, efficiency is still important for artists. Esther Robinson, the founder of ArtHome and a teacher of business to artists, often says that artists think they are bad with money. They are actually good with money; they just have an income problem. That is to say, artists are incredibly resourceful, sometimes ingeniously so, but are

often simply too resource-constrained for their valiant efforts toward efficiency to be enough.

In teaching business to choreographers and movement artists, as compared to teaching visual artists, notable distinctions emerged in what one might call lottery-ticket hopefulness. Because the visual art world sits adjacent to the upper echelons of art fair and auction price points, even though only 1% of artists of all time have sold work for over \$1 million (McAndrew, 2017), there is a perception that that level of success could conceivably happen, the same way that a holder of a lottery ticket could conceivably win the jackpot, however slim the odds. Choreographers perceived greater hopefulness or upside potential in the careers of visual artists.

In addition, the specter of competition is real. Artists and arts organizations do compete with one another for limited funding. Yet at the same time, constriction in funding and the challenge of finding adequate support are larger obstacles that are collectively held and experienced across the field. There is space to collaborate and to share resources, and to work together to elevate the overall level of funding within the arts and beyond.

### Partner Strategy

Partner strategy adapts competitive strategy to consider mutual and simultaneous success. In 1996, Barry Nalebuff and Adam Brandenburger wrote a book called *Co-opetition* proposing, as the title portends, a combination of competitive and cooperative strategy. They took traditional business cases, such as the rivalry between Coca-Cola and Pepsi, and argued that, although the two companies look like fierce rivals, it is the competition that, in effect, normalizes the fact of ingesting a fizzy brown liquid capable of dissolving a penny. A competitive advertising campaign actually benefits both firms. Similar strategic outcomes occur in more overtly collaborative contexts. For example, the Milk Board is a consortium of local dairy farms who together build the overall audience for drinking milk. A rising tide lifts all boats. Extending that theory to the arts here, you can compete—and have to apply for the same grants and presenting opportunities—but also collaborate to develop the field.

The central idea of co-opetition is to accept the objective advantage of holding a smaller part of a larger pie. That smaller slice is larger in absolute terms. As Figure 4, illustrates, the entirety of the smaller pie fits inside the fractional share of the larger pie. Everyone is better off.

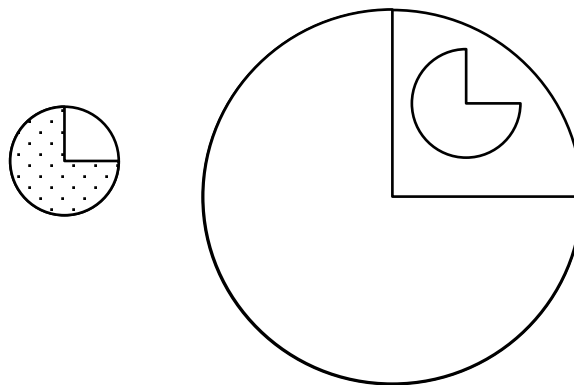


Figure 4

*Increasing the Size of the Pie Before Dividing It Up* (from “Business Structures and Planning” participant workbook for the LMCC-Actors Fund curriculum, 2017)

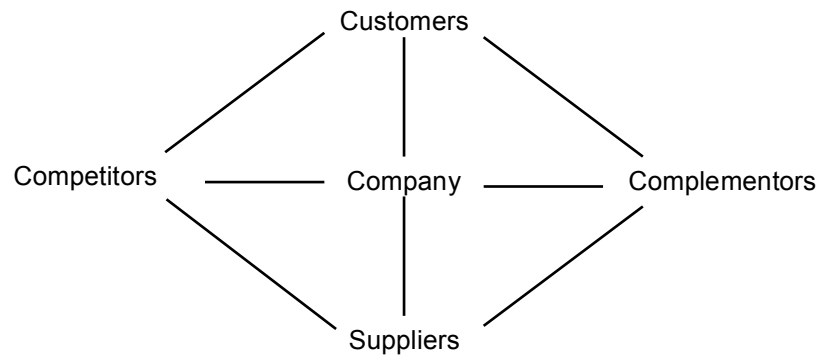


Figure 5  
*The Value Net* (Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1997)

In the language of economics, this shift from competitive to collaborative strategy is a shift from focusing on substitutes, those other offerings with which your success is zero sum, to focusing on complements, those products that are enjoyed together, like a left and right shoe or wine and cheese.

In the co-opetition framework, called the Value Net, the axis of suppliers and buyers still exists, but it is buoyed by a split between substitutes and complements. The framework is expanded not just to look at threats (availability of substitutes) and protections (barriers to entry), but also at complementors. The fundamental question for defining a complement is to ask: if I succeed, who succeeds with me?

In the case of experimental dance, the Mexican restaurant that serves compelling guacamole and tequila across the street from the Chocolate Factory Theater, an artist-led experimental performance venue in Queens, is a clear complement. If the dance venue succeeds, the restaurant does too, and vice versa. Within the larger creative ecosystem, if one performer wins a coveted commission at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) and beats out other contenders, it is possible that their success and rave reviews will prime a larger audience for the difficulties and rewards of engaging with experimental performance.

A festival or showcase provides a clearer case of partnership strategy. Returning to the idea of a network externality, a positive attribute that is not priced in and that comes about through collective action like a friends and family cell phone plan or the critical mass of a gallery district, an event like a performing arts festival that relies on critical mass lends itself to value creation through partnership and collaboration. Ben Pryor's founding of American Realness, a festival that occurs at Abrons Art Center during the annual Association of Performing Arts Presenters (APAP) conference, is a case in point, and a case study used in the LMCC curriculum. The critical mass of presenting organizations from all over the world who have representatives attending APAP creates the chance to bring emerging performers together for a second showcase via American Realness. The phenomenon of art fairs and satellite fairs has a similar pattern. These event-driven partnerships' micro-economies relate to larger, enduring creative placemaking efforts in which multiple arts venues band together to create a destination or creative hub. The answer to "if I succeed, who succeeds with me" ranges from the arts venue and the performing arts space, to the restaurant next door, to the bank or corporation that recruits top employees to a vibrant city, to the field in general, as new work is created, championed, and shared.

### Conclusions

Partnership strategy lends itself to creative placemaking at the same time that it opens up pedagogy around business education for artists. Seeking partnerships is essentially open-ended. One can have infinitely many partners, in theory, and so the question, "if I succeed, who succeeds with me" does not have a single right answer but many. At the same time, co-opetition creates a nimbleness or code-switching between the vectors of competition and individual excellence, and those of expansiveness and critical mass.

In the experience described here of teaching the LMCC-Actors Fund workshops, the juncture of partnership strategy was critical for opening up the study of business to encompass an entire ecosystem of creative activity. As such, the teaching of partnership strategy had its own effect on the intersection of art and business: taking two fields that often compete and finding their complementary. Partnership strategy created a lens onto the multiplicity of ways in which art and business interact, including the ways that artistic intervention leads to economic development, that business knowledge leads to artistic robustness, and that the two together build the fabric of community partnerships and sense of place.

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## INSPIRING SOULFUL COMMUNITIES THROUGH MUSIC: CONNECTING ARTS ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT VIA CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

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### Abstract

Due to its focus on business topics such as entrepreneurship and management, arts entrepreneurship education has often focused on economic motivations and market-driven rationales (Beckman, 2007; Manjon and Guo, 2015). The same often holds true for the community development field (Phillips, 2003). This article examines an interdisciplinary collaboration between courses in two disparate units of a university: music and community development. Creative placemaking activities are presented as pedagogical tools for connecting arts entrepreneurship and community development goals. At the heart of the experiences described was a desire to extend beyond the dominant paradigm of both arts entrepreneurship and community development in relation to economic development of the individual and collective. In so doing, it is suggested that these projects represent a soulful approach to learning and community building (Westoby, 2016; Westoby and Dowling, 2009) via creative placemaking.

*Our charge [as arts entrepreneurship educators] is to prepare students for a professional life of means, meaning, and the opportunity to give back, equipped to thrive within the world they will soon inherit, a world rife with challenges, yet ripe with opportunities.*

- Mark Rabideau

Recognizing the importance of weaving arts activities into the fabric of community development practice, the National Endowment for the Arts introduced a focus on “creative placemaking” in 2010. Markusen and Gadwa (2010) describe creative placemaking as a process whereby:

[P]artners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired. (p. 3)

ArtPlace America, a ten-year collaboration between a number of foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions, has been at the forefront of efforts to advance creative placemaking. Drawing on the urban planning ideas of Jane Jacobs, ArtPlace America suggests that community development work “must be locally informed, human-centric, and holistic,” and that in creative placemaking projects, “art plays an intentional and integrated role in place-based community planning and development” (ArtPlace America, 2016) Due in part to the relatively large investment of economic capital in creative placemaking projects over the past ten years, creative placemaking has become an important conceptual and aspirational ideal influencing arts entrepreneurship and arts-related training programs in higher education.

Arts entrepreneurship education (AEE) is an area of growing interest in arts education and pedagogy research that resonates with the discourses of creative placemaking. In part, AEE is a response to the creative industries placing value on the consumption of arts, entertainment, and culture for economic growth in urban development (Beckman, 2007; Chang & Wyszomirski, 2015; Lloyd, 2002). Due to its emphasis on business topics such as entrepreneurship and management, AEE has generally been focused on economic motivations and market-driven rationales (Beckman, 2007; Manjon & Guo, 2015). Yet, there is growing support that more humanistic characteristics, such as self-efficacy, self-actualization, place-making

for exploration and innovation, empowerment, trust building, collaborative engagement, and sense of community are inherent to the pedagogy and practice of arts entrepreneurship in higher education (Beckman & Essig, 2012; Manjon & Guo, 2015).

Pollard and Wilson (2014) identified five goals with respect to AEE: (a) the capacity to think creatively, strategically, analytically, and reflectively; (b) confidence in one's abilities; (c) the ability to collaborate; (d) well-developed communication skills; and (e) an understanding of the current artistic context. Welsh et al. (2014) suggest that the effectiveness of AEE is directly related to the extent to which AEE programs address and meet both the professional and academic needs of students. Roberts (2013) echoed this notion, suggesting that entrepreneurship in the arts goes beyond building a business skillset, and he advocates for pedagogy to be innovative by means of genre blending.

While scholars have presented various pedagogic methods and dispositions for AEE in recent years (Essig, 2013, 2015; Pollard & Wilson, 2013; Welsh et al., 2014), collaborative and experiential learning has been deemed effective in developing innovative ideas for students to utilize as value-enhancing knowledge sharing processes (Essig, 2013; Welsh et al., 2014). Essig (2013) suggests that mentorship, collaborative team projects, and experiential learning are three useful pedagogies for developing "entrepreneurial habits of mind." This situates universities as mediating structures for the creative process of arts entrepreneurship in linking the means for arts entrepreneurship (i.e., alertness, specialized knowledge, financial capital) with its end-goals (i.e., wealth creation, value creation, sustainable culture) (Essig, 2015).

In this article we describe the practical application of the university as a mediating structure by examining an interdisciplinary collaboration between courses in two disparate units of the university: music and community development. The intent of our collaboration was to offer a humanistic approach toward building and bridging relationships and developing human capacities that reach beyond the economically dominant paradigm within which research and practice in AEE have typically been situated. While not officially (or even unofficially) courses in arts entrepreneurship, we believe the activities that resulted from our two courses embody the spirit of AEE and demonstrate how AEE thinking can be embedded in the fabric of arts training and community development. We believe our interdisciplinary collaboration responds to, and supports, Rabideau's claim that AEE:

must thrive in non-curricular spaces, as much as be infused across curricular initiatives; cross-pollinate among faculty, regardless of generational boundaries, traditional silos, and tenured lines; and unite campus and community, with particular attention to those at the margins of society. (Gartner, Roberts, & Rabideau, 2015)

We further support Jackson, Herranz, and Kebwasa-Green's (2003) assertion that there is a need for comprehensive documentation of the various ways in which people participate in cultural activities that can provide better grounds for understanding community dynamics. This article represents a modest step in that direction.

### Setting the Stage

Fortunately, from our perspective, community engagement projects variously described as outreach, engagement, creative placemaking, and more are becoming increasingly common in arts education and training programs in higher education. To our knowledge, however, instances of these initiatives originating in music units are less common than in other artistic units. Although AEE has advanced considerably in recent years, it is still, particularly in the higher education music field, in its relative infancy. In order to advance work in this area, ongoing theorizing is imperative. Toward this end, we offer conceptual elaboration that is, to some degree, *post hoc* in nature. While our initial joint discussions were grounded in our respective pre-existing theoretical understandings as instructors and researchers and



we had what might be loosely be called “working hypotheses,” our collaborative efforts have helped to bring forth additional insights that we believe can add value to AEE discourses.

### **Dialogical Community Development (DCD)**

Community development has been concerned with the notion that economic development is a chief indicator of community wellbeing (Bhattacharyya, 1995, 2004; Phillips, 2003). Yet, in order to ensure social support and a sense of community, humanistic characteristics such as agency, empathy, hospitality, resilience, and civic engagement are significant elements of sustainable community development (Bhattacharyya, 1995, 2004; Putnam, 2000; Westoby & Dowling, 2009). Establishing trust and empathetically engaging with others in a manner that welcomes reciprocation opens the door for communication to spark collaboration.

The conceptualization of community for this article heeds the call from Westoby and Dowling’s (2009) critical insight into the essence of community work. Westoby and Dowling coined the term “dialogical community development” (DCD) to reflect the practice of listening deeply and making oneself present to the other. DCD “invites awareness, attention and imagination that are directed at our relations to one another, our relations to place, to practice, to economics, culture, earth, politics and the traces of history and so forth” (p. 14). The “dialogue” in DCD is considered a “mutual process of building shared understanding, meaning, communication, and creative action” (2009, p. 10).

DCD requires attentiveness throughout the process and orients community as hospitality by “welcoming other people, other ideas, and other ways of thinking about community life” (Westoby & Dowling, 2009, p. 12). Westoby and Dowling suggest that DCD is a social practice that fosters social relationships, invokes multiple elements of personal and collective agency, and aims to reclaim places as spaces of social activity rather than the current “norm” of speculative economic activity. In order for this to occur, this social process encourages *poetic participation* “that comes when people genuinely participate in community life as an intimate engagement of their creative imaginations” (2009, p. 18).

In *Creating Us: Community Work With Soul*, Westoby (2016) introduces the term “soul” to describe the animation of the individual and the collective body. This builds upon his previous work with Dowling (Westoby & Dowling, 2009) where they quote rhythm and blues legend Ray Charles’s classification of soul as “the ability to respond from our deepest place” (p. 14). Westoby (2016) suggests that community work from a soulful perspective is a social process to be embraced as a responsive dance, something Westoby and Dowling describe as:

a quality, a dimension, a movement towards experiencing life in a way that adds depth, value, relatedness, heart and substance...A soulful orientation invites hospitality towards other people and places and other ways of being, doing, and imagining. It requires...‘another’ way, one that demands heart, emotion, and will. (p. 15)

Dialogical community work with soul, then, is founded on finding deeper social and cultural meanings together and appreciating alternative ideas and ways of thinking, a notion that resonates strongly with the concept of hospitality found in the community music literature (e.g., Higgins, 2007, 2012).

### **Creative Placemaking**

Bennett (2014) argues that “communities consistently employ creative placemaking interventions to strengthen economic development, encourage civic engagement, build resiliency, and/or contribute to quality of life” (pp. 77-78). He suggests that as part of organic community planning, creative placemaking ideally engages residents in the neighborhood development process. In response to various criticisms highlighting issues of gentrification and displacement (e.g., Bedoya, 2012), creative placemaking has more

recently been deemed the deliberate integration of arts, culture, and community-engaged design in community development practices to expand opportunity for vulnerable populations (Borrupt, 2016). In his chapter, “Creative Placemaking: Arts and Culture as a Partner in Community Revitalization,” Borrupt (2016) emphasizes that creative placemaking contributes to community building in that it amplifies “local human, physical, and cultural assets to enhance the social and civic fabric” (p. 1). Aligned with aforementioned arguments concerning community development work and creative placemaking, Borrupt suggests that creative placemakers achieve success by thinking holistically and continuously pushing to connect established silos of practice.

When done effectively, creative placemaking can arguably foster what Debra Webb, following Roberto Bedoya, calls an “aesthetic of belonging” through place-based arts initiatives (Webb, 2014). This can contribute to what The Urban Institute’s Arts and Culture Indicators Project (Jackson, 2006) calls “cultural vitality.” Cultural vitality is considered “evidence of the creation, dissemination, validation, and support of the arts and cultural activity as a dimension of everyday life in communities” (Jackson, 2006). While admittedly limited in scope and aspiration, the creative placemaking activities described in this article sought to enact soul, hospitality, an aesthetics of belonging, and cultural vitality by respecting and capitalizing on local people, places, and spaces. For purposes of analysis we have borrowed from Webb (2014): (a) placemaking that is guided by civic engagement activities that foster cultural stewardship; (b) placemaking that spurs systemic social change and youth empowerment; and (c) placemaking that articulates a shared aesthetic of belonging.

### **Partnership**

The community music projects discussed in this article were the result of a collaboration between the instructors of a school of music graduate course entitled “Music and Community Engagement” and an undergraduate course entitled “Leisure and Quality of Life” in the university’s community resources and development school. Students in the school of music class were partnered with selected students in the community development class and tasked with planning, facilitating, and evaluating community-based music projects overtly described as “creative placemaking,” and deliberately placed within a “community cultural development” frame. While this collaboration occurred in both 2015 and 2016, we wish to highlight the evidence from the inaugural year of the project to set the stage for how these projects illustrate the benefits for students within the contexts of creative placemaking, DCD, and AEE.

The overarching goal of the collaborative project assignment was for each school of music student to organize a “one-off” event with the potential of being sustainable for future engagements. The school of music students functioned as the music leaders and content specialists. The community development students served as “community development officers” responsible for researching and coordinating logistics. As instructors, we decided not to impose too much structure, enabling each project to be as broad or as narrow as desired. Criteria were listed in the course syllabi as follows:

- event should occur no later than the last day of the semester
- event should be at least 30 minutes (but may be longer)
- should involve as many community members as feasible/reasonable; advertising and “recruitment” will be important
- must be self-supported [i.e., no course money available]
- must involve some form of documentation (i.e., pictures, video, post-event interviews with participants, etc.)

In order to provide the greatest latitude for creative thinking, assessments were intended to focus attention on reflection without becoming overly prescriptive. The music students were required to submit a

short write-up that provided: (a) a brief description of the event (e.g., Where and when did it take place? How many people did it involve? Who were they?); (b) evidence of success that involved some sort of indicators or metrics (e.g., 7 of 10 people said afterwards they were satisfied or very satisfied and would do this again); and (c) brief thoughts on what might be changed or improved if one were to do the project again in the future. The community development students were required to submit a short reflection paper that identified: (a) how the project was personally, socially, and culturally beneficial to quality of life of the participant; (b) how it may have impacted the quality of life of participants personally, socially, and culturally; and (c) considerations for the future facilitation of these community programs. The community development students also offered a short class presentation after the completion of the program that illustrated how the event contributed to quality of life through photos, video, and other participant accounts.

We initiated this partnership with the hope that students would listen to each other, as well as the participants from the community, throughout the creative process in order to address tensions and complexities collaboratively. As such, a goal was to offer an opportunity for students to step outside of their comfort zones in unfamiliar surroundings to think critically and cultivate new ideas with people they had never met. The results of this vision manifested through seven unique creative placemaking projects in 2015.

### The Projects

The seven projects for this experiment in creative placemaking took place in fall 2015. Serving as examples for the discussion to follow, they are presented in no particular order.

#### Community Garden

The community garden project connected the music student, a low brass player, and the community development students with volunteers from a local community garden, as well as some other community members. The community garden volunteers explained the work they do and gave tours to the students. The event was a potluck style luncheon formed in appreciation for the volunteers of the garden, and included a tuba quartet playing polka music. There were about 20 people in attendance. At the conclusion of the event, the students drove the leftover food to the local homeless shelter.



Figure 1.  
*Community Garden*

## Heritage Hallelujah

The Heritage Hallelujah event, named after the school and the famous chorus by Handel, was an opportunity to bring together people of all ages in song. The idea was sparked from a desire to create an annual tradition to invite alumni of the school, a private charter school with a circumscribed community, to actively participate in their December concert by joining the choirs on stage to sing a final number. There were a total of 50 people in attendance, 30 females and 20 males. Of the 34 attendees who completed the exit survey offered by the student event hosts, all except for one indicated they would like to do this event again and 25 relayed that the event motivated them to pursue participating in similar music events in the future.



Figure 2.  
*Heritage Hallelujah*

## “Beat Lab” Workshop for Girl Scouts

The Beat Lab was a collaboration between the music student, a local museum, and the Girl Scouts organization. The activity fused acoustic and digital music-making in an effort to educate and encourage the participants to create their own musical arrangements (subsequently uploaded to the cloud for later sharing with their parents) and perform live in front of their peers. Approximately 100 Girl Scouts attended the event, necessitating the school of music student to involve three other music students from the university to “apprentice.” Over 85% of the girl scouts said they enjoyed the lab. This particular event was the launching pad for the music student’s startup business that now travels the local area facilitating activities and workshops similar to those offered at this initial event.



Figure 3.  
*“Beatlab” Workshop for Girl Scouts*

## Musical Maps

The Musical Maps event involved members of the community listening to live music while making art. Significantly, the event occurred at a geographic area striving to become known as another arts corridor in the city's downtown, emulating a successful example of one two miles away. The event was advertised using social media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) for a local nonprofit organization leading up to the event. During the three-hour event, approximately 40 community members attended. Collaborative efforts were supported by donations from a local for-profit music venue that provided compensation for the live performers, as well as food and drink donations by a company known to one of the community development students.



Figure 4.  
*Musical Maps*

## Music and Art Making Workshop

This event was in some ways very similar to the musical maps event, except that it occurred on the university campus and involved only eight participants, most of whom were from the university's international community, and it involved structured activities. The stated goal of this event was to mix music with visual arts in order to improve the quality of life for participants.



Figure 5.  
*Music and Art Making Workshop*



### **Epic Instrument Maker Challenge**

The Epic Instrument Challenge was modeled after the Musical Hackathons held in New York and was inspired by what is often referred to as “maker culture.” Student facilitators created the event with the notion that it might promote creativity and participatory culture (Jenkins, 2009). Because the local geographic area is dispersed due to urban sprawl, they hoped that it would bring together like-minded people. Even though the event had fewer participants than anticipated, a young boy illustrated the ethos of the project with a wooden cigar box acoustic guitar he built with his father. He was rewarded for his innovative instrument and conjunctive performance with a small collection of records donated by a local record store.



Figure 6.  
*Epic Instrument Maker Challenge*

### **Instrument Making out of Recycled Materials**

This event took place at a local community center that focuses on providing life skills and an accommodating environment for underserved youth. Eight girls from the nearby community attended the event. The students facilitating the activity brought recyclable materials (i.e., water bottles, empty toilet paper rolls, etc.) to the center in order to work with the children to create their own instruments. The event also involved customizing a song from *The Sound of Music* by using lyrics made up by the participants.



Figure 7.  
*Instrument Making out of Recycled Materials*

## Discussion

As is hopefully evident, the projects undertaken by the students illustrate the value of community development and arts entrepreneurship beyond strictly economic factors. Pictures of the events illustrate how the projects were soulful experiences for participants per Westoby's (2016) definition of *soul* as the animation of the individual and the collective body. As discussed below using Webb's (2014) three framework components, we hope to provide a more intimate association between AEE and DCD that amplifies the "dialogue" component of DCD, considered as a "mutual process of building shared understanding, meaning, communication, and creative action" (Westoby & Dowling, 2009, p. 10).

### Civic Engagement Activities that Foster Cultural Stewardship

While the elements of DCD as a soulful approach to building community were evident in some capacity across all community music events, the aspects of civic engagement were showcased, despite their obvious dissimilarities, most prominently in the community garden, Heritage Hallelujah, musical maps, and recycled instruments projects. Each of these individual events foregrounded a sense of hospitality and ways of being, doing, and imagining that helped to build a sense of community. As one of the community development students wrote in her reflection about the community garden event:

A social benefit of this event was that I...was able to communicate my passions and future goals with [the community garden volunteers]. A cultural benefit was that we are all a part of a group small or big and we were able to come together and share our common goals...As students, we were able to make a difference and do something positive in other people's lives.

Although the Heritage Hallelujah event occurred within a physical and social context that in some ways stretches the definitions of "public" and "civic," it most certainly engendered a sense of cultural stewardship, one that helped to ameliorate differences of age and class. At the same time, the cultural and ethnic/racial homogeneity in this event was striking, highlighting the paradox in community development that, while communities are lauded to the extent they represent a genuine sense of belonging and participation, they are also defined according to in-group and out-group membership. When cultural stewardship promotes hierarchies and exclusion, civic engagement becomes just another mechanism whereby the already-advantaged entrench their dominant positions in society. In this respect, the recycled instruments event and, to lesser extents, the musical maps and community gardens events represented creative placemaking engagements that did not further enshrine economic and socio-cultural privilege.

### Systemic Social Change and Youth Empowerment

Social change entails that people in a community have the capacity to engage with and feel as part of the participatory process. We felt this aspect most overtly in the beat lab, recycled instruments, music and art making workshop, and the epic instrument maker challenge. The capacity for community music projects to facilitate a sense of empowerment was recognized by one of the community development students, who, in reflecting on the recycled instruments event, remarked, "This project was something that anyone could do. It didn't matter what age, gender or social class." In an environment where waste tends to be overlooked, particularly relevant to the urban environment in which these projects took place, the recycled instruments project highlighted the notion that innovative use of materials can encourage creative solutions. It allowed for creative placemaking to be carried out in a no-cost, eco-friendly, and fun manner that helped the underserved youth to recognize their inherent musicality and their capacities to be creative.

Validation can also be empowering for youth as they attempt to "feel out" whether or not participation is acceptable. This was borne out in the epic instrument maker challenge, where the young boy with the wooden cigar box acoustic guitar was rewarded with a small collection of records donated by a



local record store for not only working with his father to create his instrument, but also performing classic rock songs to the receptive audience in the music-maker project. Notably, the impact of the community music projects was as impactful on the students as it was on the participants. As one community development student remarked:

Working with youth that have bad home lives or struggle for their next meal was new for me. It was very eye opening to see these kids that have some type of struggle in their lives but they still had smiles on their faces and a positive attitude.

Despite their seemingly positive impacts, the one-off events undertaken by the students clearly do not qualify as *systemic* social change. That said, change is reliant upon empowerment, a concept that can take many forms beyond its socio-political implications. The beat lab, for example, provided not just a sense of confidence for the Girl Scouts, but demonstrable and tangible evidence of their creative capacities. Exit tickets and student reflections all point to a very powerful event for everyone involved. The music and art-making workshop, while it involved primarily older youth, was also seen as a valuable and empowering learning experience for everyone involved. As one of the community development students revealed:

This project was personally beneficial to me because I got to learn different aspects of music and visual arts that I did not know before. I got to learn how to play a song on the piano and I got to try and learn how to draw. Take in mind, I am not the best at drawing, but I gave it all I had.

### **Shared Aesthetic of Belonging**

Contributing to the sense of belonging that comes from creative placemaking, the community garden and Hallelujah events were both potluck-style events. As a result, the structure of these projects was inherently participatory in nature. In both cases, the provision and donation of food contributed to the overall sense of sharing, togetherness, and belonging. The participants were not merely consumers of the creative placemaking activities but were also active producers of the experience.

The feeling of belonging is a key component to building community. One of the community development students from the music and art project conveyed her feelings that being in a safe and hospitable environment, coupled with encouraging dialogue, added to the experience in a positive manner: “Throughout the entire event, all of the participants exchanged laughs and words of encouragement...Everyone seemed to enjoy each other’s company, which benefitted each of the participant’s quality of life personally.” The reciprocal exchange of humor and positive dialogue support a soulful approach to community work. It helps establish a better sense of situational trust and acceptance, especially in an environment comprised of individuals from an array of cultural backgrounds. As another participant in the music and art project remarked:

We all got to be in a comfortable setting where everyone became friends. They were also culturally benefitted because we all come from different places, so we got to learn about each other and we all got to learn about music and visual arts.

The fact that both music and visual art were utilized in various fashions to bridge language and ethnic barriers and propagated creative placemaking suggests that it was an effective strategy for navigating these potential constraints.

Webb’s (2014) notion of aesthetics of belonging builds upon the work of Bedoya (2012), who interrogates the notion of *dis*-belonging as it arises from creative placemaking work and its potential for displacement. We would argue that, while none of the events undertaken by the students reached the level of impact that might effect/affect long-term belonging or dis-belonging (and might go so far as to argue that belonging and dis-belonging are two sides of the same coin where both, by definition, co-exist), sensitivity to the aesthetics of belonging is critical to ethically-conducted creative placemaking work. While our

geographic area does not currently contain a large Black/African-American population relative to national figures, it does contain a relatively high percentage of Native Americans; participants in all the creative placemaking events were primarily white and Asian, with a few observably classified (particularly in the recycled instruments event) as Hispanic. Although demographic category is but one variable by which belonging might be measured, it is a primary one.

### Utility

Together, students from two units of the university helped to facilitate experiences that offered a platform to illustrate resourcefulness and innovation towards creating value for themselves and the community. Public (i.e., community garden, community center) and private (i.e., museum, local business) spaces were animated via music and art in these creative placemaking projects. Local business viability was integrated through partnerships to provide food and drink, as well as getting more foot traffic through places of business. This said, the actual impacts of the project engagements were clearly limited, reflecting the scale and scope of the collaborative pedagogical experiment.

In our opinion, the most useful aspect of this exercise with respect to creative placemaking and AEE was its utility for fostering what Pollard and Wilson (2013) call “an entrepreneurship mindset,” or what Essig (2013) describes as “habits of mind for arts entrepreneurship.” As mentioned earlier, musical instances of creative placemaking and arts entrepreneurship are rarer than with other art forms. As a result, existing capacity for creative placemaking in the music field pales in comparison with, for example, visual art, dance, and drama. Although our community music projects were mostly the result of partner pairings (sometimes 3 in a group), their collaborative and applied nature responds to Essig’s (2013) call for collaborative team projects and experiential learning. If initiatives such as this one were scaled to other universities, perhaps entrepreneurial habits of mind might become as commonplace among musicians as they are among other artistic disciplines.

### Conclusion

Universities have evolved from traditionally being considered as detached from the community to now having a significant role in the cultural development and social fabric of communities (Chatterton, 2000; Langston & Barrett, 2008). It is important for institutions of higher education to be embedded within their local communities to bridge AEE and community development efforts. Evidence of positive community planning and community building is carried out by and with communities (Bennett, 2014) and it can be facilitated by embedding university-driven initiatives within the communities in which they are situated. This amplifies the need for universities to consider the effects of bridging campuses and educational levels in order to present students with optimal opportunities for engaging with one another to learn (Gartner et al., 2015).

At the heart of the experiences described here was a desire to extend beyond the dominant paradigm of both AEE and community development in relation to economic development of the individual (AEE) and collective (community development). In so doing, we argue that these projects represent a soulful approach to learning and community building (Westoby, 2016; Westoby & Dowling, 2009). Although not necessarily life-changing in any respect, the individual events reflected a genuine sense of poetic participation for everyone involved. With respect to AEE, the three areas of mentorship, collaborative team projects, and experiential learning were integrated within each of the community music projects. The projects also exemplified, at least to some extent, Pollard and Wilson’s (2014) five goals of AEE (i.e., the capacity to think creatively, strategically, analytically, and reflectively; confidence in one’s abilities; the

ability to collaborate; well-developed communication skills; and an understanding of the current artistic context).

Despite being located within a university coursework, the projects articulated here presented the students, per Gartner et al.'s (2015) recommendation, with a "non-curricular space" in which they could work with community members and students from other disciplines to co-create their own learning environments. Although not public-facing, the reflective aspects of the projects help to build the capacity to respond to Jackson et al.'s (2014) call for greater documentation of community dynamics. Our interdisciplinary collaboration implemented creative placemaking activities in these non-curricular spaces in an effort to connect AEE and community development. Creative placemaking activities provided opportunities for students to participate in civic engagement as community/cultural workers. The events themselves can be considered examples of cultural vitality in that they present "evidence of the creation, dissemination, validation, and support of the arts and cultural activity as a dimension of everyday life in communities" (Jackson, 2006).

Lest our presentation be read as overly rosy, we must acknowledge that there were many challenges, frustrations, and mistakes that arose throughout the 2015 semester (many of which, incidentally, continued in the 2016 semester). Communication between the graduate and undergraduate students was not always smooth, and the open-ended nature of the assignment, while certainly consistent with the "spirit of entrepreneurship," was not necessarily something comfortable for students accustomed to the kind of explicit, narrowly-proscribed assignments and curriculum that have become commonplace throughout much of the education system.

At the risk of over-generalizing, programs of study in music at the higher education level have historically focused on performance preparation, not community engagement or community development. Based on anecdotal appraisal, the music students were, with maybe 1-2 exceptions, most certainly out of their comfort zone with these events. Programs of study in community development, while perhaps more flexible than music study, do not typically feature arts entrepreneurship as prominent subject matter, as the community development field, for the most part, has not explored the possibilities of arts entrepreneurship for community development. This lack of attention to arts entrepreneurship education in community development practice and education is exactly why creative placemaking has become such a popular approach for garnering interest and integration into the discourse. The reflections from the community development students evidenced more surprise and recognition of the possibilities of arts entrepreneurship for community development. This is noteworthy to instructors in the community development field and like fields such as tourism and public policy, as it highlights the significance of arts and culture being amplified in the name of urban development.

Community development has figured prominently in the creative placemaking discourse practically since its inception. While there may have been a pragmatic aspect intended to marshal political support through economic rationalization, many creative placemaking discourses have, in our reading, moved in a more socially-conscious direction. Although there may be other instances of collaborations between arts disciplines and the field of community development beyond what we were able to uncover, we argue that such synergies represent under-realized potential for AEE. We hope that through greater sharing of examples, especially theorized examples, AEE can continue to effect greater change for the benefit of both practitioners and the communities they serve.

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## CREATIVE POLICYMAKING: TAKING THE LESSONS OF CREATIVE PLACEMAKING TO SCALE

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### Abstract

As political forces reshape the role of localities, creative practitioners are uniquely positioned to directly affect the direction of development in new ways that build community power and position cultural considerations at the heart of governance. Social justice advocates believe that policy change offers the most direct route to advancing equity and transformation at scale. Inclusive practices like creative placemaking, an emerging model of equitable development, has the potential to help facilitate the development of participatory policymaking in ways that ensure that the voices of those with less historical political access and influence aren't excluded from transforming the systems that allocate power and resources. Despite this knowledge, equity-focused strategies often stop at the programmatic level. To date, key actors are investing in horizontal strategies to integrate creative practices across organizations, sectors, and systems. However, insights gained from local successes have not been fully translated vertically into systems-level policy change or to galvanize into a coherent ecosystem of social innovation. This paper examines how the rules of civic problem-solving are evolving to prioritize citizenship and leverage local knowledge, one expression of culture, by drawing on longstanding discourse in fields that range from architecture and planning to economics, political science, philosophy, sociology, and community psychology. The insights revealed suggest that by grounding practices within a systems change framework, acquiring new competencies, evolving institutional structures and roles, and expanding the application of creative practices to participatory policymaking, an inclusive set of stakeholders can advance a more transformative model of equitable development. Participatory policymaking should not be seen as an end in itself, but rather an effective means by which to promote human agency, intercultural dialogue, and societal wellbeing. Doing so can help to strengthen creative democracy, which recognizes that human imagination is the generative basis on which individuals and societies successfully engage with complexity, envision alternative futures, transform systems, and successfully adapt to change.

Keywords: Community Planning; Public Policy; Cultural Policy; Public Administration;

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*A society's values are the basis upon which all else is built. These values and the ways they are expressed are a society's culture. The way a society governs itself cannot be fully democratic without there being clear avenues for the expression of community values, and unless these expressions directly affect the directions society takes. These processes are culture at work.*

— Jon Hawkes, *The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: Culture's Essential Role in Public Planning* (2001)

The modern word *creativity* comes from the Latin term *creō*, “to create or make,” which stems from the Proto-Indo-European root *kerh*, “to cause something new to grow.” As a composite of the Greek word *demos*, “the people,” and *kratos*, “power,” the root meaning of *democracy* is “power of the people” (Ober, 2007). But power to create what? In modernity, democracy is often construed as being concerned with a voting rule for determining the will of the majority. Framing the purpose of democracy this way

minimizes its value and possible functions, particularly as a process that enables inclusive participation “in the governance of the polity” and “realization of commonly agreed collective goals” (Castoriadis, 1995).

Almost eighty years ago, philosopher John Dewey (1939) argued that democracy’s highest potential is the fulfillment of “community life” and a robust civic capacity to create new solutions to local problems. Dewey believed that human experience provides the insights necessary to bring about a vibrant and just society in which all share and to which all contribute. This conception of democracy recognizes the central role of citizens to not only authorize government to act, but to act with it, and even beyond it, if that is required to affect meaningful change. Dewey’s perspective on the ways local actors should cooperate based on personal knowledge complements political philosopher Hannah Arendt’s (1958) “theory of action” and use of the ancient concept of *praxis*. Praxis refers to the process of transforming ideas into action. For Arendt, praxis is the highest form of active life, or *vita activa*, which she analyzed through three fundamental human behaviors: labor, work, and action. For Arendt, human action refers to the capacity citizens have to envision new possibilities and the potential for those ideas to influence the shape and direction of the public sphere they share. To exercise effective political action, communities must first be willing and able to develop a shared identity. Arendt recognized this enduring challenge of participatory citizenship but also viewed the deliberative process of finding common ground as its highest value. By engaging in critical self-reflection Arendt believed that communities could continually renew themselves by asking: *who are “we,” what do “we” value, where do “we” want to go together, and how will “we” get there?*

Dewey and Arendt both believe that a vibrant democracy requires meaningful participation by an active citizenry who recognize the dynamic nature of communal living and draw from local culture to navigate change. In this context, culture can be understood as the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features that characterize a society or social group, including not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, embodied heritage, human rights, value systems, traditions, and beliefs (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2012). These dimensions of culture combine to produce place-based knowledge. Dewey and Arendt also see shared experience as the means by which individuals with diverse cultural identities exchange ideas, learn from one another, build trust, and eventually establish a shared vision for the direction society should take. This perspective complements that of human rights and social justice advocates who see the expression of cultural freedom as a necessary condition for democracy and essential component of human dignity.

Building on these ideas, a *creative democracy* can be considered one that intentionally strengthens peoples’ power to negotiate difference and affect change in ways that benefit everyone. In doing so, a *creative democracy* recognizes that a just and cohesive society is not a static goal to be achieved, but rather an ongoing commitment that requires constant renewal and recalibration in the face of dynamic conditions, which enable change. By enhancing citizens’ competencies, including the ability to engage in productive dialogue with others whose world views, values, identities, and experiences may differ from their own, a creative democracy empowers communities to collectively imagine and effectuate the world to which they aspire. This kind of intercultural dialogue between citizens is the oldest and most fundamental mode of democratic conversation. Its objective is to enable us to live together peacefully and constructively in a multicultural world and to develop a sense of community and belonging. Intercultural dialogue is an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures that leads to a deeper understanding of the other’s global perception (Council of Europe, n.d.).

### **Critical Imagination**

Developmental psychology demonstrates how human imagination forms the basis of both individual and collective agency. Without imagination, without the ability to conceive of non-existing (yet potentially existent) alternatives to the present state of affairs, humans would be enslaved by their immediate



situations (Zittoun & Gillespie, 2015). In this field, two fundamental approaches to imagination can be distinguished. First is the “deficit approach,” wherein imagination is tolerated because of its positive role in early childhood development. Conversely, the “expansive approach” advocated for by Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky positioned imagination as a specific, productive, unique feature of the human mind that allows people to distance themselves from their own experience and, by drawing on that experience, propose new syntheses that open new thoughts and actions. Alternative visions serve an important function: they are part of the collective semiotic guidance system (Valsiner, 1998), encouraging people to explore and to voyage into possibility (Zittoun & Gillespie, 2015). A creative democracy embarks on that journey, recognizing that critical imagination is the generative basis on which individuals and societies successfully adapt to changing conditions by introducing novel ideas, prototyping alternative futures, and learning how to behave differently. Without the human capacity to imagine, humanity would be bereft of new narratives about who we are and what we might become. It is through the process of envisioning alternative futures that anxiety about change can be transformed into excitement for the possibilities it may yield.

The theory of narrative identity postulates that individuals form a personality by integrating their life experiences into an internalized, evolving story that provides the individual with a sense of unity and purpose. Personal narratives integrate one's reconstructed past, perceived present, and aspired future. Some creative placemaking practices aim to amplify similar narratives, though at the community scale. In a longitudinal study, social psychologists found a positive correlation between the coherence of individuals' personal narratives and sense of agency. In fact, the same researchers determined that changes in patients' stories consistently occurred before improvements in their mental health could be seen, suggesting that our capacity to imagine alternative narratives is deeply connected to personal, and by extension our collective wellbeing (Adler, 2012).

### **Communities as Complex Adaptive Systems**

The substantive problems societies face—human rights, public health, safety, employment, housing, education, economic opportunity, the environment, and beyond—are complex and shifting. Complexity science tells us that the “wicked” nature of these issues is not evidence of a balanced system gone awry, but instead a positive indication that diverse actors are engaged in collaborative learning to achieve a more functional fit with their current environment. Without the ability to experiment and adapt, complex systems harden and change becomes impossible. A sub-discipline of urban planning, complexity theory of cities, emerged in the 1980s. Viewing communities as complex adaptive systems (CAS) allows us to view the issues they face in a new light. The efficacy of the mechanical worldview and the need to rationalize cities by design reached its zenith in the dehumanizing urban renewal projects of the 1960s. By the 1980s ecologists, economists, and planners alike began to see the consonance between complex systems that could learn and evolve such as forests, markets, and cities. Soon after, researchers identified a set of characteristics that enable these systems to learn and effectively navigate change. In short, complex adaptive systems contain main autonomous actors that use simple rules to interact coherently, change by testing novel ideas, exchanging feedback about what works and what doesn't, and self-organizing. Together, these traits combine to create conditions that enable new behaviors to emerge.

Complex systems like communities move through cycles of development as they strive to “achieve a more functional fit with their environments” (Cleveland, 1994). This is driven by the ongoing need to make optimal use of the resources currently available. Systems “on the edge” of change are notable for a “hunger” for novelty and disequilibrium that distinguishes them from rigidly ordered systems. At the same time, however, they possess a deep underlying coherence that provides structure and continuity, and distinguishes them from chaotic systems as individual agents interact and learn from each other. Through the lens of CAS, one can see how the limits of top-down planning and ways it imposes a rigidity that eliminates adaptability, spontaneity, and the vibrancy that make places unique. Inspired by these insights,

the rules of civic problem-solving are evolving to prioritize participatory citizenship, building on longstanding discourse in fields that range from architecture and planning to economics, political science, philosophy, sociology, and community psychology.

### **Placemaking: Spatial Justice in Community Planning**

The term “placemaking” emerged in the late 1960s in the planning and design fields, encouraging greater community participation in neighborhood revitalization efforts. Few voices have been more influential than that of activist/urbanist Jane Jacobs, who referred to cities as “organized complexity” and said, “Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody” (Jacobs, 1961). Landscape architect Lynda H. Schneekloth and planner Robert G. Shibley define placemaking as “the way in which all human beings transform the places where they find themselves into the places where they live” (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995), advocating for a more inclusive and democratic approach to advancing spatial justice. Participatory concepts such as placemaking were enhanced further by the emergence of asset-based community development strategies, first developed by practitioner-scholars John McKnight and John Kretzmann as a more equitable approach to place-based revitalization (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Their asset-focused methodology encouraged communities to become more aware of their existing resources and power, to have the confidence in their own capacities to affect change, and to take authorship of solutions to local problems.

### **Economics and Human Rights**

This orientation complements Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen and philosopher Martha Nussbaum’s capabilities-based approach to just human development, which asserts the importance of freedom to achieve personal and collective wellbeing through the creation of conditions that maximize opportunities. In this context, economic development should not be seen as an end in itself, but as an intermediate goal; human flourishing should be considered the most meaningful aim. In contrast to models that foreground economic metrics, the capabilities approach is a normative framework that draws attention to individual and social wellbeing, with a focus on people’s ability to be and to do what they desire. Such flourishing is rooted in human agency, which results from development efforts that aim to build human capital as much as the physical or policy infrastructure of place. An individual’s ability to act upon the world to achieve his or her goals without being unfairly constrained by social class or position defines Sen’s view of agency. His work also speaks to how existing institutions of power can enable greater personal empowerment through the cultivation of new skills and capacities: “All persons possess a set of key capabilities and it is the realization of these capabilities that gives him or her claim to agency and liberation from the ‘unfreedom’ that results from social injustice” (Sen, 1999).

Nussbaum claims that Sen’s view is too vague and would prefer he specify a definitive set of capabilities as the most important ones to protect (Nussbaum, 2003). In response, she created a list of Central Human Capabilities that she views as central requirements of life with dignity. A society that does not guarantee these to all its citizens, at some appropriate threshold level, falls short of being a fully just society, whatever its level of opulence (Nussbaum, 2003). Many of the capabilities included in Nussbaum’s fosters creative democracy, precisely the critical role of the senses, imagination, and independent thought, as well as our capacity to show concern for others and exercise effectively political agency and participate in processes that shape our environment. Similarly to Sen, Nussbaum also believes institutions have the responsibility to nourish these capabilities. Both Sen and Nussbaum view human agency as the ability to act and affect change in line with one’s values, voice, and objectives, which complements emerging models of equitable development that integrate local culture and prioritize citizen participation. This view also suggests that if practices such as creative placemaking are to contribute to greater equity, then its practitioners are

advised to not only promote fair access to processes but should also strengthen individuals' capacities to engage meaningfully by helping them build new skills and confidences.

### **Sociology and Community Psychology**

Recent research from the fields of sociology and community psychology deepens our understanding of why inclusive citizen participation must be prioritized in transformative change efforts, specifically in light of the root social causes of most contemporary issues. For instance, Heide Hackmann (2013), Executive Director of the International Social Science Council, argues: "Climate change is primarily a social problem, not an environmental one because its causes and consequences are social—and so the solutions must be too." In this sense, contemporary issues are viewed as not naturally occurring and instead are the result of human behavior. This insightful observation suggests that breakthrough solutions must support the emergence of new behaviors and recognize the values, attitudes, and cultural norms that inform them. This orientation complements views held by community psychologists who represent a new way of thinking about human behavior and wellbeing in the context of *all* environments and social systems. Community psychology is like public health in that it promotes healthy environments and lifestyles, considers problems at both the individual and communal levels, and adopts a preventive orientation (Levine, Perkins & Perkins, 2004). Proactive solutions are informed by psychological knowledge, or insights about the local values, attitudes, and norms that shape individual and collective behaviors. As such, community psychology provides a helpful lens with which to understand why communities act the way they do, and how equitable development efforts can be intentionally designed to nudge people to behave in more positive ways.

### **Public Administration and Experimental Governance**

It is widely acknowledged that the erosion of old institutions does not automatically generate new ones that will work, but does create space for more participatory strategies to emerge. As emergent models of creative placemaking and participatory development become more mainstream, the efficacy of existing structures, practices, and roles are being challenged in ways that can encourage democratic institutions to experiment and evolve. Breakthrough problem-solving in democratic societies calls for more multidimensional forms of accountability, and more practiced, skillful combinations of learning and bargaining by civic actors (Briggs, 2008). Better government by design also calls on public-sector leaders to prioritize evidence-based decision-making, greater engagement and empowerment of citizens, thoughtful investments in expertise and skill-building, and closer collaboration with the private and social sectors (Farrell & Goodman, 2013).

Exciting precedents exist, such as social and public labs, which first emerged in the 19th century alongside theories that made the case for experimentalism over top-down strategies. For instance, John Stuart Mill advocated for living experiments and believed it was the states' responsibilities to provide people with space to test new ideas. While there is no universally recognized definition of what constitutes social or public labs, they tend to conduct intentional experiments inspired by everyday life, and with the goal of generating new ideas about how to address social needs in effective ways. Many pioneering labs, such as the Musée Social in Europe, focused on social change and provided space for government to develop new ideas in collaboration with other actors. Much like today, early proponents of social innovation labs believed that small-scale experiments could be used to prototype development trajectories in multiple disciplines.

A problem many communities face is that they have become dominated by institutions that articulate an idea of the "official" future, leaving little room for people's everyday aspirations and imagination. This has led to a serious disconnect between institutions of governance and the public, with many people feeling that the future is something that has already been decided rather than something owned and created by everyone (Hassan, Mean, & Tims, 2007). But perhaps the problem has more to do with the

specific design of our institutions than with the tasks they face. If so, the challenge is to develop new organizational structures that enable cross-functional cooperation and adopt creative practices that leverage a community's most abundant source of ideas—its people. Doing so can stimulate the kind of institutional change necessary to transform systems that allocate power and resources in ways that both promote creative democracy and advance equity and societal wellbeing.

What contemporary community life can supply beyond feelings of belonging and affiliation is a capacity to act together on environmental problems, crime and insecurity, illness, educational failure, and more in ways that are efficacious, rewarding, and even irreplaceable (Briggs, 2008). The promise of this collective efficacy requires communities to cultivate civic capacity, which is shorthand for the ingredients that *can* make the machinery of governance more effective. Civic capacity concerns the extent to which different sectors of the community—businesses, parents, educators, state and local officeholders, nonprofits, and others—act in concert around matters of community-wide import. Scholars have defined this form of social capital as resting on patterns of small-scale social organization, notably among neighbors in larger cities and societies; hinged on proximate trust (trusting in particular those who share one's neighborhood), social cohesion, and the expectation that others will act with you if the need arises (Briggs, 2008). Community civic capacity can be cultivated through creative and participatory governance practices, which hold tremendous potential to contribute to more equitable outcomes due to a more inclusive set of stakeholders sharing decision-making power.

A noteworthy innovation during democracy's "third wave" has been the widespread incorporation of participatory governance practices. Participatory governance is a subset of governance theory that puts emphasis on inclusive engagement through deliberative practices, and seeks to deepen citizen participation in the governmental process by examining traditional assumptions and activities that can hinder the realization of a genuine democracy (Fischer, 2012). Participatory budgeting and policymaking practices can be found in regions and cultures throughout the world dating at least as far back as ancient Greece. Participatory democracy strives to create opportunities for all members of a population to make meaningful contributions to decision-making about allocation of public resources and the direction of government. The most extreme example as of late can be found in Iceland, where, in 2010, 950 citizens were randomly chosen to participate in drafting the country's new constitution (Farrell & Goodman, 2013). Participatory democracy is not a rejection of representative governance; rather, it represents an effort to redesign institutions and improve the quality of democracy, social wellbeing, and the state (Fischer, 2012). Creative approaches to participatory policymaking prioritize citizen engagement as a critical means to ensure that agenda setting, solution development/implementation, and assessment processes are rooted in local cultural knowledge and values that reflect an inclusive set of voices and aspirations. The federal government's current interest in devolving greater power to localities places a greater burden on municipal actors to do more with less, but also invites leaders to adopt more participatory governance models that empower citizens to play an active role in shaping their communities. This foundational change could provide the opportunity to galvanize a more comprehensive model for creative place- and policymaking, and the equity movement more broadly.

### **A New Era of Comprehensive Cultural Development**

Comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) have a long history in American social policy, starting with the settlement houses of the 1900s and resurfacing in popularity every thirty years or so. CCIs encompass a variety of strategies in their efforts to mobilize citizens and their connections to one another, foster their ownership of the work, identify and build on their assets, and strengthen their civic capacity (Stanger & Duran, 1997). When the first CCIs were created, their designers assumed that a "comprehensive" approach to change would generate the alignment between strategies, systems, and stakeholders necessary to catalyze transformative outcomes. Over the past two decades, CCIs and related

place-based efforts have evolved to prioritize issues of racial/economic equity and inclusive practices more overtly. In parallel, the field of community cultural development or “creative placemaking”, comprising social justice-oriented artists, cultural organizations, activists, and community leaders, has also matured, along with practitioners’ understanding of the central role of local values in sustainable development.

Internationally, it’s increasingly common for sustainable development efforts to acknowledge a combination of interconnected factors (cultural, environmental, social, and economic) through “transversal strategies,” or integrated approaches that intentionally cut across all four dimensions and between different scales of governance and citizen participation. A transversal approach to development includes a combination of horizontal and vertical integration strategies that reinforce each other. Horizontal strategies cut across and connect programs, organizations, and sectors that lie within a nested system. Vertical integration strategies focus on ensuring policies developed by different levels of government to create an enabling environment for horizontal strategies in which to take root. Community change researchers believe that comprehensive approaches that include vertical efforts prioritizing the relationships between policies at the federal, state, and municipal levels, in concert with horizontal activities at the ground level, can help stakeholders from different sectors establish a shared vision and understand how efforts can be aligned to be mutually reinforcing. For example, state-level policy that requires arts education to be offered in all public schools helps to create an enabling environment for teaching artists and other kinds of arts education providers.

Across the United States and around the world, many local governments are recognizing the essential relationship between local culture and equitable development through a dual approach: (a) as a driver of development through the establishment of solid cultural policy, and (b) as an enabler of development through advocacy for the recognition of culture in all public policy (United Cities and Local Governments, 2017).

Over the past decade, work at the nexus of social justice, cultural vitality, environmental resilience, and community wellbeing have emerged with greater regularity and have energized efforts to advance creative systems change across the United States. New relationships have emerged between and across adjacent fields, resulting in new insights and interdisciplinary praxis promoting individual voice, collective agency, and mass imagination—in short, to act as creative democracies. The emerging field of creative placemaking represents the latest chapter of equity-focused community cultural development.

### **Creative Placemaking**

While pieces of the infrastructure needed to sustain creative placemaking practices exist, they have yet to coalesce into a cohesive whole. To date, arts funders and intermediary organizations are investing in lateral strategies to integrate creative placemaking across organizations, sectors, and systems. However, insights gained from local successes have not been fully translated into the systems-level policy change required to have sustained impact. By adopting a comprehensive model of place-based change, these actors can incentivize encourage practitioners to explore how creative practices can be integrated not only horizontally but also vertically through a transversal approach, generating more conducive conditions for this approach to become the standard model of sustainable equitable development.

In the United States, the definition of creative placemaking differs among key actors; yet one shared aspiration has been improving the quality of life for all citizens through the intentional use of arts-based strategies that empower local residents and leverage communities’ distinct cultural assets. Since 2011, the National Endowment for the Arts, ArtPlace America, and the Kresge Foundation, among other local and intermediary funders, have invested over \$200 million toward an impressive variety of creative placemaking projects in all kinds of communities (J. Bennett, J., personal correspondence, March 27, 2017). The majority of these investments have been towards horizontal strategies to integrate creative placemaking into diverse organizations, systems, and sectors in the arts and beyond. Less emphasis has been placed on

understanding how creative practices can be integrated vertically to encourage participatory citizenship and facilitate the cooperative development of public policy, however. Vertical integration can help to create more enabling conditions for equitable development by providing a mechanism to ensure that the voices of those with less political access and influence aren't excluded from transforming the systems that allocate power and resources. By expanding the focus of creative placemaking beyond altering the physical attributes of place, and adopting a transversal approach to strategy design, a cross-section of practitioners can help demonstrate the value of this emerging field in ways that improve its long-term sustainability.

### **The Role of Policy in Placemaking**

The techniques of creative placemaking can provide both physical and ideological space for people with varying worldviews and social positions to interact, negotiate differences, share power, and come to care for the common good. A growing body of evidence demonstrates how these practices can amplify the efficiency of investments in both the built and natural environments, enrich the aesthetic qualities of place, strengthen social fabric, stimulate civic participation, and fuel economic growth. As our knowledge of the impact of creative placemaking matures, how might we begin to apply similar techniques towards achieving greater equity through more imaginative and participatory forms of local governance and policymaking? Developing a common definition of equity and the means by which it can be achieved may be an important first step.

The Center for Social Inclusion's definition of racial equity, which can also be applied to social equity generally, reads, "A lens and outcome, which requires an inclusive approach that empowers people to transform systems that allocate power and resources in order to create communities where all people have equitable access to opportunity" (Strong, Prosperous, and Resilient Communities Challenge [SPARCC], 2016). Creative placemaking has the capacity to serve as this "inclusive approach." To realize this promise we must reflect on the function, both perceived and potential, of creative practices; the role of storytelling in policymaking; and ways adaptive change frameworks can ground and connect individual projects to larger systems of practice.

When thinking about comprehensive community development it may also be helpful to consider three primary components of place: the "hardware" of physical infrastructure, the "software" of economic systems and public policies, and the "operating system" of the everyday lived experience of community members (Lefebvre, 1974). Creative placemaking has the capacity to enhance each of these elements in mutually reinforcing ways. To date, however, the vertical integration of creative placemaking as a means to facilitate the participatory development of public policies has not been fully explored. By incorporating a transversal approach that includes better vertical integration, creative practices can help to ensure that the voices of those with less political access and influence aren't excluded from transforming the systems that allocate power and resources towards development activities of all kinds, including creative placemaking. This application of participatory democracy expands existing notions of who can engage in policy entrepreneurship, which has historically been reserved for established political operatives rather than the general public.

Movement toward vertical integration of policy and practice requires making clear the distinction between public policy and organizational strategy, which are often conflated. Public policy refers to the regulatory frameworks, laws, and funding priorities related to different areas of civic concern and the ways government makes decisions at multiple scales. Put simply, public policy is the mechanization of value, the applied expression of public priorities, and accountability for realizing those aims. Though sometimes seemingly invisible, public policy, whether set at the municipal, state, or federal level, plays a critical role in shaping the environments in which we live, work, and create.

Conversely, cultural values inform public policy in implicit and explicit ways. For example, environmental awareness represents a fundamental attitudinal shift that has contributed to the creation of

new legislation. Hence, public policymaking is inherently a cultural activity, because it is grounded in human values. When designed within an equity frame, creative placemaking can reveal and, when necessary, challenge these community values and help stakeholders establish a shared vision about the direction society should take. That vision can subsequently energize local planning, placemaking, and policy, rendering each more responsive to and representative of the diverse stakeholders who will be affected by them. In essence, mass imagination becomes a powerful means to inspire civic participation.

Public policy should not be conflated with politics either, and the decision-making processes that accompany the creation and enactment of legislation. Politics can be defined as the art of governing, while policy refers to the plan that articulates explicit goals. A major challenge to creative democracy is to influence existing patterns of political decision-making, which is largely a negotiation between diverging values, visions, and interests. Changes to political decision making occurs when new constituencies gain the necessary power to influence negotiations through organizing, advocacy, and activism.

### **The Future is Unwritten**

As discussed above, critical imagination is a requirement of effective systems change, for without it there would be no possibility of action. The vibrancy of any place largely depends on how successfully it mobilizes the widespread participation of its people to co-create new solutions rooted in their stories and experiences. Society's capacity to transcend existing challenges, address "wicked problems," and adapt to uncertainty relies on our ability to cooperatively envisage, assess, and realize alternative narratives. This process represents an act of futures-oriented, collective imagination.

Shared experiences strengthen connections between diverse groups and allow ideas to flow more freely, which improves a community's capacity to navigate uncertainty and ultimately adapt to change. Social scientists use the term "futures literacy" to describe thinking imaginatively about the future so that we can challenge our current assumptions, make explicit our shared values, engage in rich dialogue with others, and speculate on outcomes that are possible, probable, and preferred. The ideas and expectations developed through improved futures literacy contribute to more robust decision-making in the present about the preferred trajectory of local development. By increasing our capacity to improvise and be spontaneous, live with permanent ambiguity and novelty, futures literacy enables us to embrace complexity (Miller, 2011). When framed as a tool for advancing forward-looking collaborative problem-solving, creative placemaking can help communities evolve by increasing futures literacy. Strengthening this capacity sets into motion a healthy process of collective reflection and action, stimulating change and collaborative learning that can gradually encompass a wider range of community issues across multiple scales of practice.

### **Connecting the Dots**

*Collaborating for Equity and Justice: Moving Beyond Collective Impact*, a report released by *Nonprofit Quarterly* in January 2017, articulates a set of guiding principles intended to facilitate participatory systems change. The recommendations, co-authored by six social justice practitioners, highlight the critical role of policy in advancing transformation at scale: "Policy offers the most direct route to measurable progress, but all too often collective impact practice stops at the programmatic level." The authors' suggestion is "to amplify the possibilities inherent in local successes and translate the lessons and insights into the systems, policy, and structural change needed to have sustained impact on whole populations" (Wolff et al., 2017).

The capacity exists to both deepen investments in individual projects and connect them to larger systems of activity. Creative placemaking has the same not-yet-realized catalytic potential to help policymakers and community members imagine the future implications of different policy options and local investments. To activate this unrealized promise, creative placemaking practices must be grounded in more comprehensive strategies that weave horizontal efforts to align work across programs, organizations, and

sectors together with vertical efforts to work at multiple scales—both integral components of complex place-based change.

*Creating Change through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development: A Policy and Practice Primer*, a report released by PolicyLink in February 2017, articulates ways in which arts and culture actors can leverage public policies and major investments to centralize their role in equitable development. The report includes case studies that demonstrate how different communities have employed creative strategies to operationalize their equity-focused policy objectives. The authors advocate for the integration of arts and culture into community development systems, practices, and comprehensive plans. They also describe ways in which public agencies and philanthropy can “expand their practices and invest in arts and culture assets” in order to strengthen the capacity of these resources to contribute to greater equity (Rose, Daniel, & Liu, 2017). In this context, creative practices are primarily used to *implement* equity-oriented policy objectives. But complementary examples are emerging, both in the US and internationally, of ways creative practices including storytelling, cultural organizing, resident-driven impact assessments, design fiction, and visual arts are being used to facilitate the participatory *development* of innovative public policy as well.

### **The Art of *What If*?**

Increasingly, municipal agencies are integrating creative practices as means to empower a diverse cross-section of stakeholders to directly inform the policies that shape their lives. Government initiatives around the world are demonstrating how arts-based methods amplify marginalized voices, harness local cultural knowledge, and help communities find common cause.

One example of the vertical integration of creative practices to facilitate the collaborative development of public policy comes from the UK-based Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC). In 2015, the AHRC launched the ProtoPublics initiative to support researchers and community partners in becoming active participants in “crafting new services, experiences, projects, and policies that address contemporary issues.” A series of ProtoPolicy workshops were held in partnership with individuals who had direct experience of specific issues. Workshops employed “speculative design fictions”—a participatory method that uses texts, visualization, artifacts, films, and storytelling to generate provocative scenarios, kindling insights into the future shape and direction of public policy. In the initial phase of ProtoPolicy, older community members participated in a series of creative workshops that examined the country’s Aging in Place policy agenda. By prompting visions of what a future of “flexible living” might look like from the perspective of those who will experience that reality first-hand and empowering them to directly inform public investments, ProtoPolicy was able to build a shared understanding of the constraints and opportunities inherent to different policy options in ways that recognized older residents as a critical source of insight. Those stories and the insights they revealed were then used to design responsive policies and strategic investments for Britain’s elderly. Today, sectors ranging from public health to sustainable development are now using this citizen-led approach to public policymaking (Dunne & Raby, 2013).

Port Phillip, Australia’s Community Pulse initiative, launched in 2001, intentionally uses place-based measures that relate to people’s everyday experiences as a means to inspire residents to express themselves and play a central role in local governance. Local leaders asked community members: “How do you know your neighborhood is getting better?” The community’s reply: “When we feel control over our destiny.” In response, policymakers invited residents to set benchmarks and long-term development goals to help safeguard local assets and generate evidence to stimulate political action and accountability. This participatory methodology provides a vehicle for multi-directional feedback between the City of Port Phillip council and community that strengthens individuals’ capacity to identify and assess issues as well as participate in the design, development, and delivery of policies. A formal evaluation in 2011 found that this creative strategy has contributed to “services and infrastructure that are better tailored to need, the community has greater faith in the process of local government [e.g. trust], and the City of Port Phillip



council has greater faith in the community's commitment to their vision for the future [e.g. reciprocity]." As a result, the initiative has been formally integrated with the city's long-range Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (City of Port Phillip, 2001).

The City of Minneapolis and Intermedia Arts established Creative CityMaking (CCM), a multi-year, arts-based innovation initiative within local government designed to advance the city's goal of eliminating economic and racial disparities, in 2013. Through in-depth collaborations between city departments, skilled community artists, and the public, CCM demonstrates how arts-based engagement can inform policymaking at multiple levels of government, provide underrepresented communities with direct access to influence decision-making, and revitalize municipal agencies with fresh ideas. One such collaboration was designed to facilitate the development of the city's emerging Blueprint for Equitable Engagement, a five-year plan to ensure local leaders seek, value, and incorporate all community voices in public processes. To highlight the range of perspectives, local artists created an "equity pulpit" from which community members could share and document their views. The pulpit moved around the city, appearing at block parties, festivals, and parks, where stories were collected from individuals whose voices were previously unlikely to be heard through traditional engagement practices. In a subsequent evaluation, CCM staff learned that 90 percent of the program participants reported they had never contributed to a local planning process before and that participation by communities of color increased from 30 percent of the total participants to 60 percent. By connecting this program to larger public systems and embracing an adaptive framework, CCM provides participants with a powerful vehicle for identifying emerging opportunities to proactively address the strategic priorities of a risk-averse city. By intentionally designing projects from the outset with these needs in focus, CCM has been able to demonstrate its value in ways that build the political will necessary to sustain such programs over time. Creative CityMaking is now institutionalized within the City of Minneapolis (Kayim, G., personal correspondence, March 29, 2017).

Performing Statistics, a project by Art180 and Legal Aid Justice Center, connects incarcerated teens, artists, designers, educators, and leading state policy advocates in order to transform Virginia's juvenile justice system. The project asks the question, "How would criminal justice reform differ if it were led by currently incarcerated teens?" Performing Statistics empowers youth to become civic leaders and directly affect laws and public policy that influence the school-to-prison pipeline (Performing Statistics, n.d.)

Among its many efforts to advance social justice, Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts New York (NOCD-NY) weaves arts-based practices into the typically closed, meeting-based process of public budgeting, enabling a greater variety of people and perspectives to inform local investment decisions. Participatory Budgeting (PB) connects community members who might not usually interact. For example, Friends of the High Line has teens, many of whom live in nearby public housing, help run their PB workshops, which strengthens relationships between public housing residents and others living on Manhattan's West Side. By making physical representations of projects for funding consideration, the process becomes more concrete, contributing to more transparent decision-making (Atlas, C., personal correspondence, September 29, 2016.).

These examples demonstrate how creative placemaking can function as a tool for institutional change, advancing collaborative problem-solving and realizing alternative futures that benefit everyone. They achieve this by developing individual projects within systems-change frameworks, fostering meaningful dialogue between diverse parts of local systems, expanding access and redistributing power, and creating space for new possibilities to emerge. Furthermore, these strategies identify and leverage the unique expertise each participant brings to the table, which is consistent with any asset-based strategy. Finally, each example demonstrates how working in partnership includes a shared commitment to using insights generated to fuel systemic change.

## Facing the Future

Equitable development efforts that intentionally integrate the arts, local culture, and participatory design have enjoyed significant investment in recent years. The increasingly widespread adoption of creative placemaking practices is inspiring a diverse ensemble of actors to reflect on their core values and the extent to which existing institutional structures support more collaborative approaches to local governance and public problem-solving. Institutional arrangements and relationships are evolving to become less siloed, more porous, and adaptive as colleagues incorporate new practices and begin to work cross-functionally. As a result, communities large and small are only starting to realize the promise of a genuinely creative democracy. The underdeveloped nature of the infrastructure supporting creative placemaking and equitable development presents strategic opportunities to influence its shape, purpose, and direction. Policymakers, creative practitioners, funders, and local citizens can play important roles in helping to craft a more coherent and resilient ecosystem of innovation. The conditions are favorable for the fields of equitable development and creative placemaking to evolve in mutually beneficial ways, and an emerging set of principles, practices, and structures can light the way forward.

Democracy cannot exist without democratic institutions, political processes, and public policies, which themselves cannot work in reality unless they are grounded in a culture of shared values, attitudes, and practices. A combination of values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge are needed to empower a more inclusive set of citizens to participate effectively in a creative democracy. Values, including the primacy of human rights, equity, and cultural diversity, are of central importance. Attitudes, including openness, trust, mutuality, civic responsibility, and tolerance for change, are equally important. Skills, including the capacity to cooperate, navigate conflict, listen, engage in intercultural dialogue, and deploy one's imagination, all help to create enabling conditions as do knowledge, including critical understanding of the self and desire to know others coupled with an authentic interest in local issues, understanding of adaptive systems change and of the policymaking process. These competencies combine to foster creative democracy and a participatory citizenry. Therefore, a primary task of institutions of power, including public agencies, funding entities, and civil society organizations, is to strengthen the power of everyday people to not only believe they can affect change but to develop the skills necessary to do so. Through this process, creative democracy can fuel transformative change and significantly contribute to societal wellbeing.

While these competencies are necessary for stakeholders in favor of creative democracy to exhibit in order to participate effectively and equitably, they are not a sufficient solution for transforming the systems that allocate power and resources. In addition, we must design new organizational structures that enable cross-functional cooperation and creative practices that leverage a community's most abundance source of ideas—its people. One way to do this is by adopting transversal strategies that cut across issue areas and provide citizens with direct avenues to express community values, and for those perspectives to inform the shape of policy at multiple scales of government. In doing this, measures must be put into place to address inequalities in access and structural disadvantages with the aid of tools such as developmental evaluation. In the absence of such, well-intentioned practitioners may inadvertently privilege established players.

The potential for creative practices to enhance the development, implementation, and analysis of public policy is tremendous and not yet fully explored. While some practitioners develop strategies with the goal of transforming structures in mind, projects are still often fractured from the systems within which they are nested. An opportunity exists to strengthen citizens' and creative practitioners' understanding of how policy is made as well as policymakers' appreciation of the ways in which imaginative approaches could be adopted to encourage greater civic participation. In doing so, local governments in particular can begin to model a new institutional character, one that is less focused on reproducing practices and outcomes and more interested in transforming the craft of contemporary governance through citizen participation. Structure enshrines value and shapes behavior. In the year ahead, the author will work with a cohort of interdisciplinary partners, from rural, urban, and indigenous communities to establish a new Creative

Policymaking Lab. The lab will prototype new institutional structures, processes, and relationships, grounded in the values of equity and inclusion, to promote collaborative and creative systems change. Working within an adaptive systems change framework, we will launch a discrete number of place-based pilots designed to sharpen understanding of the efficacy of specific creative practices to facilitate the development of participatory policy. We will integrate developmental evaluation methods to refine the design of our processes, deepen our understanding of the optimal composition of each pilot group, how best to raise issues, negotiate conflict, and establish consensus in different cultural contexts.

Public policy provides one important mechanism for institutionalizing constructive creativity, while creative activities themselves may inform future policies. By embracing a systems perspective of the diverse ecology of activity already underway, local government, along with funders, creative practitioners, and citizens can work together to draw out insights to inform transversal strategies and accelerate a more cohesive field of practice. Benefit can be found in allocating resources toward deepening our understanding of how creative methods can facilitate participatory policymaking at various scales. Local governments can map existing organizational structures and traditional planning processes with an eye toward understanding the extent to which they enable cross-functional collaboration and citizenship engagement. Where possible, new and more porous structures as well as cross-functional roles can be introduced. Formal roles should be established for practitioners working in the interstitial space across systems to build scaffolding into the future. Embedding artists and designers to lead such processes can be particularly powerful as a means to offer a new way of seeing and organizing political processes. Creative practitioners should explore ways to facilitate participatory policy entrepreneurship by creating spaces and processes that lift up local issues, encourage inclusive dialogue, promote collaborative learning, and strengthen citizens' capacity to imagine and realize alternative scenarios.

Practitioners can advance creative policymaking by taking a hypothesis-driven approach to solution design that incorporates local knowledge and research as means to test policy innovations. Helping practitioners design projects from the outset with policy change being the ultimate objective by setting benchmarks and incorporating critical evaluation can help to substantiate the value of creative placemaking to municipal agencies and communities. By actively generating a robust evidence base, creative practitioners can demonstrate the value of participatory development practices in ways that resonate with municipal agencies as well as other partners for whom data informs decision-making. A commitment to learning and evaluation can also help to ensure that processes are transparent, parties are held accountable, and assets are fully leveraged. Data can also ensure vulnerable groups—particularly those residing in the margins of society—are identified and care is taken to enable their engagement. Trusted spaces such as public libraries can be leveraged as platforms for open dialogue, knowledge building, and cultural expression in ways that directly inform local policy outside the traditional, and often uninviting, walls of government. Exchange programs can be especially valuable ways to help partners, both current and potential, develop greater empathy and understanding for each other's daily realities and the ways in which their unique expertise might be leveraged creatively.

Democracy is a process that enables diverse individuals to discover collective goals and the means by which to achieve them—not only for the select few, but also for everyone who lives beneath its banner. It is a collective act of imagination that is as fragile as it is powerful. In a world that's increasingly divided and uncertain, communities need creative approaches that promote inclusive dialogue, harness the cultural vitality that exists in all places, and leverage the solidarity that springs forth when individuals recognize their interdependence and come together to imagine the shared futures they want. As political forces reshape the role of localities, creative practitioners from diverse disciplines are uniquely positioned to directly affect the direction of development in new ways that build community power and position cultural considerations at the heart of governance. In doing so, we can foster creative democracy and embrace change as a natural and necessary resource that enables societal renewal and vibrancy.

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## JUST PLANNING: WHAT HAS KEPT THE ARTS AND URBAN PLANNING APART?

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### Abstract

The creative and cultural sector, including artists, creative entrepreneurs, cultural practitioners, and most nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, remain on the fringes of the larger enterprise of urban planning and city building. Only recently have limited forays demonstrated potentials that theorists and cultural planners called for 40 years ago. This article examines early ideas to bridge arts and culture with urban planning and explores why these two complementary practices have kept their distance. It surveys the history, theory, and practice of cultural planning and its relationship to urban planning. Meanwhile, increasing complexity and diversity of populations of cities creates greater urgency to bring the disciplines closer. This article argues that a deeper appreciation of culture in cultural planning, and blending of the best of both practices, can bring about a hybrid of *Just Planning* – a culturally informed approach to urban planning that promises greater civic engagement and a move towards social and economic equity. The emergence and evolution of cultural planning practice over the past four decades in the U.S., and many parts of the world, has been steady but neither ascendant nor as impactful as scholars such as Bianchini (1999), Mercer (2006), Mills (2003), and Stevenson (2005) anticipated. Meanwhile, urban planning, as practiced widely by towns and cities of all sizes, fails to acknowledge dimensions of human culture that impact patterns of behavior, livelihood, settlement, social practices, recreation, and other activities.

Keywords: cultural planning; urban planning; cultural policy; creative placemaking

The creative and cultural sector, including artists, creative entrepreneurs, cultural practitioners, and most nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, remain on the fringes of the larger enterprise of urban planning and city building. Only recently have limited forays demonstrated potentials that theorists and cultural planners called for 40 years ago. This article examines early ideas to bridge arts and culture with urban planning and explores why these two complementary practices have kept their distance. It surveys the history, theory, and practice of cultural planning and its relationship to urban planning.

While a full integration of cultural planning with urban planning may not be around the corner, the increasing complexity and diversity of populations of cities creates greater urgency to bring the disciplines closer. This article argues that a deeper appreciation of culture in cultural planning, and blending of the best of both practices can bring about a hybrid of *Just Planning* – a culturally informed approach to urban planning that promises greater civic engagement and a move towards social and economic equity. This hybrid practice may be one of the most underutilized tools available to more effectively address challenges facing communities big and small across the globe, whether these challenges be climate change, inadequate housing, economic disparities, or violence against immigrants.

The emergence and evolution of cultural planning practice over the past four decades in the U.S., and many parts of the world, has been steady but neither ascendant nor as impactful as early advocates such as Bianchini (1999), Mercer (2006), Mills (2003), and Stevenson (2005) anticipated. Meanwhile, urban planning as practiced widely by towns and cities of all sizes fails to acknowledge dimensions of human culture that impact patterns of behavior, livelihood, settlement, social practices, recreation, and other activities.

The assertion in this article is that if planners and policy-makers are unable or unwilling to account for the cultural make-up and dynamics of their communities, they cannot effectively resolve challenges across any of the domains of urban planning. Likewise, if the arts sector continues to see cultural planning as

a “circle-the-wagons” strategy to leverage additional resources for their ongoing operations, they restrict the practice and narrow the ends; cultural divisions will continue to grow. The same will happen if urban planners continue to fixate on spatial and physical uses without giving deeper consideration to users.

A 1979 treatise on how the City of Los Angeles should address the arts, authored by urban planner Harvey Perloff, may not constitute the origins of cultural planning, but it has been cited by various scholars as the “Big Bang.” During that same year, a group of notable American policy makers, city planners, scholars, arts administrators, and others, convened in San Antonio to explore “a utopian marriage of culture – of design, art, and performance – and astute city planning” (Covatta in ACA, 1980, p. i). Proceedings published as *The Arts and City Planning* (1980) by the American Council for the Arts (forerunner of Americans for the Arts), set a stage and a bar still elusive to both urban and cultural planners. While there is evidence of sporadic dating, the marriage called for in 1979 has yet to be consummated.

A simultaneous gravitational pull and repellent force are largely responsible for keeping the two practices apart, with cultural planning playing a relatively marginal role. The disconnects between them stifle progress of both fields. The gravitational pull comes from a narrow default definition of culture promoted by formal arts institutions and agencies to keep cultural planning within their orbit. The established urban planning field, on the other hand, supplies the repellent—fixating on a scientific and physical orientation to communities. Bernie Jones (1993), a planning and community development professor who conducted the first formal research on cultural planning in the U.S., observed that cultural planning emerged at the intersections of urban planning and the arts. Cultural planning, however, remains on one corner, usually with cup in hand asking for spare change.

Interest in arts and culture as a revitalizing agent for cities around the globe exploded in the 1980s (especially in Europe), and took a place central to building new cities and urban districts (especially in Asia and the Middle East). Similar interest grew exponentially in the U.S. with a focus on the creative class (Florida, 2002) and the branding of creative placemaking (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010). Much attention has since been paid to arts-led regeneration, cultural districts, creative cities, and the creative economy, among other topics. British scholar Jamie Peck (2005) criticizes the abandonment of comprehensive cultural planning in favor of what he calls urban fragments and the selective development of neighborhood-nodes of upscale housing, coffee shops, and cultural and entertainment amenities designed to attract creative class residents, while leaving out those less privileged.

### **Cultural Planning: The Promise**

Cultural planning emerged in many parts of the world as part of efforts to engage local communities in cultural policy development. Unlike many other aspects of cultural policy, cultural planning is primarily, if not entirely, place-based (Montgomery, 1990). “Unlike traditional arts policy, cultural planning is supposedly not simply concerned with aesthetic notions of culture (e.g. performing and visual arts),” writes Canadian scholar Jason Kovacs (2011, p. 321). “Rather, cultural planning is intended as a joined-up; cross-departmental approach to community development” (p. 321).

According to Australian geographer Deborah Mills (2003), cultural planning should not be:

An argument for justifying why arts and culture should receive public support. Nor is it an argument for the arts as a tool for achieving government economic, environmental and social objectives. Rather, it is a way of making visible what has until now remained invisible to planners, the cultural concepts which underpin, often implicitly, many public planning policies. If we can acknowledge these concepts and recognize them as living, breathing parts of individual and community life, then we can give new meaning and force to efforts to achieve sustainable economic, social and environmental development. (p. 9)



Cultural planning promises a novel approach to urban policy and planning, or, as Kovacs describes it, “an ethical corrective to physical planning” (2011, p. 322). Put a different way, Ghilardi (2001) writes, “Cultural planning is not the ‘planning of culture’, but a cultural (anthropological) approach to urban planning and policy” (p. 125).

In similar arguments related to another dimension of cultural planning, U.K. planning scholar Franco Bianchini (1999) writes, “Cities will not become more ecologically sustainable if we do not address how people mix and connect, their motivations, and whether they ‘own’ where they live and change their lifestyles appropriately” (p. 195). Ghilardi (2008) describes cultural planning as “A way of enabling policy-makers to think strategically about the application of the culturally distinctive resources of localities to economic and urban development, together with the delivery of policies capable of responding to local needs, aspirations and perceptions of place” (p. 4).

As early as 1993, Jones called for greater involvement of urban planners in cultural planning. Urban planners, he writes:

Bring to the table more thorough models of planning and tougher-minded methods. They can help build into plans more of the features that enhance the chances for plans being implemented. Finally, planners could greatly facilitate the integration of cultural plans with comprehensive plans, thus blending the arts more fully into the community. (p. 97)

While social policy in general, including most cultural policy, is typically a one-size-fits-all solution, U.K. planner and writer John Montgomery (1990) argues that each place requires unique approaches and solutions. “Because towns and cities are unique, they will have different problems, different potentials, and different opportunities. It is important to build from what exists rather than pluck ‘off-the-shelf’ models from other towns and cities” (p. 23).

Cultural and urban plans typically serve a single municipality, yet some communities have banded together to create regional plans. The promotion of regional thinking is perhaps one of the less-recognized benefits of cultural planning. Scholar Eleonora Redaelli (2013) asserts, “Cultural planning is much more than a policy framework for the arts because it links cultural resources to the localities’ wide range of social and economic needs” (p. 31). Cultural planners find that cultural concerns, whether in the context of audiences for the arts or in the anthropological context, do not conform to municipal boundaries. Cultural planning both requires and facilitates active engagement of leadership and stakeholders crossing jurisdictions, as well as what is essentially a regional market analysis of cultural assets, conditions, and needs.

Australian cultural planner and author Colin Mercer (2006), one of the early practitioners and pioneering thinkers, describes cultural planning as “the strategic and integral use of cultural resources in urban and community development” (p. 6). Cultural planning has to be part of a larger strategy, he argues. “It has to make connections with physical and town planning, with economic and industrial development objectives, with social justice initiatives, with recreational planning, with housing and public works” (p. 6). To make an impact, cultural planning cannot come after the fact of other municipal planning, he argues. That both marginalizes culture (as in the ways of life of people), and disadvantages urban planning by leaving it detached from culture (as in the ways of life of people).

A way-of-life approach to planning, as described by Montgomery (1990), includes, “having a vision for the future (as well as respect for the past), setting goals, and building up a bank of initiatives to get us from where we are to where we want to be” (p.23). Adopting such an approach forces urban planners to look at cities in a new way, he argues—“from the standpoint of users rather than uses, and with an awareness of quality. The result is to root planning in a cultural sense of place” (p. 23).

Can urban planners shift to such a focus? Rather than beginning with land use, to start with ways-of-life of residents, workers, and visitors, and developing a cultural sense of place – to think first about users and then uses? Has cultural planning provided what Kovacs (2011) called a “joined-up; cross-departmental approach” (p. 321)? Or will it continue to confine itself to a stand-alone practice serving communities in a limited way?

### **Cultural Planning: The Beginnings**

*Promoting a greater understanding of how the cultural, social, natural, and built environments affect the quality and prosperity of communities.*

– Robert McNulty, *Partners for Livable Places* (1983, p. 18)

Both Craig Dreeszen (1998), a cultural planner and scholar in the U.S., and Lia Ghilardi (2001), a planner and scholar working in Europe, trace roots of cultural planning to the 19<sup>th</sup> century City Beautiful Movement, the WPA of the 1930s, and the community arts movement of the 1940s. Dreeszen points out the practice also shares antecedents and tools with urban planning, a practice and profession formalized around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Rohe, 2009).

Ghilardi (2001) also cites roots of cultural planning in the “tradition of radical planning and humanistic management of cities championed in the early 1960s, chiefly, by Jane Jacobs and the idea of the city as a living system” (p. 125). Ghilardi points out that Jacobs acknowledges Scottish biologist and philosopher Patrick Geddes for advancing this line of thinking. Geddes is often credited as originator of the practice now known as urban planning in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Jacobs and her book, *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), are probably the most-cited inspiration by contemporary urban planners. Australian cultural planner and author Colin Mercer (2006), and Canadian planner Greg Baeker (2010) similarly claim the essence of cultural planning appears in the work of Geddes as well as that of mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century historian and sociologist Lewis Mumford—whose impact on urban planning is profound.

Canadian administrator, educator, and consultant Donna Cardinal found evidence of cultural planning in city planning documents from as early as the 1950s. She argued that cities including Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, and Kitchener explicitly addressed culture through citizen participation, diversity and pluralism, and used a broad definition of culture and the term “community cultural development as the integrating framework for linking arts, heritage and cultural industry to broader civic concerns” (cited in Baeker, 2010, p. 30). These were not stand-alone cultural plans—the form that became dominant in the 1980s. Those Canadian city planners practiced what Covatta (ACA, 1980) called astute city planning. They saw culture as both a phenomenon and a vehicle.

As Dean of the School of Planning at the University of California Los Angeles, Perloff launched the formal practice of cultural planning (Dreeszen, 1998; Kunzmann, 2004). The 1979 Perloff study *Arts in the Economic Life of the City* established the framework of cultural planning as a way for communities to identify and apply their cultural resources to community improvement. Perloff offered a blueprint for arts and culture in Los Angeles – a plan that was largely activated within a decade. His plan made suggestions in four broad areas for establishing a cultural element in the city and county general plan to enhance the arts in city development. To: (a) provide more information about arts activities; (b) make broader and more flexible use of public and private facilities for arts; (c) probe for ways the arts can be tied into public services so as to enlarge the scope of arts-related employment; and (d) make plans for the fuller use of the arts in urban development and redevelopment. This framework remains the dominant model and has since been replicated with some variation hundreds if not thousands of times in cities large and small – although less often integral to city comprehensive or general plans. While Perloff prescribed a relatively broad role for the arts, his plan did not invoke a broad definition of culture as did some planners, particularly in Australia and

Canada (Baeker, 2010; Dowling, 1997; Mercer, 2006).

Jones (1993), Landry (2008), and Ghilardi (2001) credit American Robert McNulty for advocating new thinking about cultural policy and planning beginning in the 1970s both in the U.S and internationally. Founder of Partners for Livable Places (now Partners for Livable Communities), a Washington, D.C. advocacy, research, and publishing group, McNulty moved away from the traditional value proposition of most arts programs. According to Ghilardi (2001), McNulty, “placed the arts and culture in the broader context of community development, building on their economic role, and expanding that role to include other social and community concerns” (p. 127). Building on the concept of livability, McNulty championed amenities as critical and transformational urban assets beginning in the mid-1970s. This set the stage for both holistic thinking about urban regeneration and for the practice of cultural asset mapping (Borrupt, 2006; Baeker, 2010).

While the Perloff plan may have represented the first formal or stand-alone cultural plan, McNulty describes in a 1983 report that many cities involved in his organization since 1975 “identified some aspect of cultural planning as a focus for their local projects” (Partners for Livable Places, 1983, p. 55). In the same report, McNulty recounts a 1976 conference when he was employed at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and a subsequent conversation with Perloff about the idea of examining cultural amenities in Los Angeles. A 1978 NEA grant to a group led by Perloff resulted in the 1979 Los Angeles plan.

As a parallel or precursor to the formal practice of cultural planning, McNulty promoted amenity development strategies. This includes taking stock of local assets including public spaces, design quality, cultural resources, natural and scenic resources, tourism and community image, distinctive neighborhoods, and marketing plans. He advocated leveraging these amenities in economic development strategies.

In the U.K. pioneering cultural planner Charles Landry formed the consulting practice Comedia in 1978 to bridge thinking about city life, culture, and creativity. According to Baeker (2010), “Many consider the Cultural Plan for Glasgow in 1990 developed by Comedia, to be the first integrated cultural plan in which cultural resources were used as a catalyst for urban regeneration” (p. 25). Landry, a leading author and international consultant, helped put arts and culture to work in urban transformation projects across Europe and Australia beginning in the 1970s. His work and writing made major impacts on cultural planning and how cultural solutions and creative thinking can be applied across many areas of municipal policy and city development.

Much of the early and most comprehensive cultural planning was carried out in Australian cities beginning in the 1980s. In a retrospective on the practice, Australian cultural geographer Robyn Dowling (1997) observes, “The theory of cultural planning begins with a fluid and broad definition of culture” (p. 23). Such an approach was advocated by Mercer (2006), among others. In practice, however, most cultural planning focused narrowly, using a material and Western European definition of culture.

A movement towards community arts and community cultural development, away from elitist notions of the arts, was strong in Australia from the 1970s, explaining the push towards a broader definition of culture. According to Australian cultural geographer Deborah Stevenson (2005), all major cities in that country had cultural plans by the early 1990s. In New South Wales all local governments were required to have them by 2004.

McNulty and Landry were articulating approaches that some community activists and artists were already acting upon, yet there were few formal organizations in the U.S. adopting and advancing these practices. One notable exception is the Arts Council of Winston-Salem, North Carolina established in 1958. Director Milton Rhodes described long-range planning he undertook in 1971 when the organization decided, “We were not in the business of serving only the arts institutions in our community. We were in the business of serving the whole community on behalf of the arts” (Rhodes in ACA, 1980). Decades later, this philosophy has begun to spread but is not the norm.

Why urban planning and cultural planning have not been closer when they share so much common heritage and common goals seems a mystery. “In Europe,” writes Ghilardi, “where aesthetic definitions of culture tend to prevail and policies for the arts are rarely coordinated with other policies, cultural planning has had, so far, little application” (2001, p. 126). The tradition in European cultures of separating or elevating the arts from other aspects of life may be one culprit.

### **Cultural Planning: The Practice**

*Cultural planning is about harnessing the assets of a community; celebrating the unique resources, such as heritage properties, natural assets, and community spirit; revitalizing downtown cores that too often have deteriorated; honouring and respecting the unique contributions of our artists and artisans; creating diverse and safe neighborhoods; raising the bar for urban design; protecting our green spaces and becoming better stewards of our environment; and the many other elements that make up a community moving forward confidently in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

–Greg Baeker (2010, p. vi)

For his cultural planning research, Jones (1993) surveyed 52 U.S. communities that had completed cultural plans and analyzed 32 plan documents. Similar to and building on the Perloff plan, he found typical goals were: (a) enhancing community image and promoting economic development; (b) promoting cooperation among cultural organizations; (c) calling for development of cultural facilities; (d) identifying financial resource needs and improving organizational management; (e) enhancing arts marketing and promotion; (f) increasing quantity, quality, and diversity of arts programs; (g) advocating arts education; (h) supporting individual artists. These remain common elements in cultural plans with a focus on the formal, nonprofit cultural sector, its needs and aspirations.

Dreeszen (1994) conducted similar research at roughly the same time evaluating cultural plans from across the U.S. He prefaces cultural planning with the word community to name the practice *community cultural planning*. He found it “a structured, community-wide, public/private process that identifies community arts and cultural resources, needs, and opportunities, and plans actions and secures resources to address priority needs” (p.vi).

A primary outcome for communities engaging in this process, Dreeszen (1994) concluded, was increased funding for the arts, which stood in contrast with national trends at the time. Seeing pots of gold at the end of the planning rainbows, the practice was further promoted in the U.S. by the NEA as well as state and local arts agencies. A variety of monographs and practical handbooks were published in different countries by entities promoting the arts or providing tools to municipal governments since the 1980s to elucidate the practice and support cultural planning.

In addition to variations of how plans define and embrace culture, cultural planning has been practiced across a spectrum of approaches. And while most plans are undertaken to inform municipal policy and resource allocation, some are undertaken by private nonprofit, or public/private consortia, especially in the U.S., not simply to inform policy but to organize and mobilize collaboration among community players.

Cultural planning in most cases, including Australia, has been commissioned or overseen by arts or cultural agencies. This constitutes one of the challenges, according to Kovacs (2011). “The placement of cultural planning in an arts-centered department,” he writes, “only reinforces the narrow understandings of what culture and cultural planning are all about” (p. 332). The struggle to land on a clear definition of culture remains one of the obstacles to clarifying the real purpose of cultural planning.

When cultural planning in Australia entered the mainstream of municipal governance, it brought an “emphasis on strategic intergovernmental, interagency, and interdepartmental connections with the

publication of the 1993 report *Integrated Local Area Planning*” (Baeker, 2010, p. 27). Described as a joined-up approach, it connected five policy domains: the economy, environment, social policy, infrastructure, and culture.

As the practice has evolved, common purposes of cultural plans fall on a spectrum from: (a) focusing on sustained or increased funding for formal arts activities and organizations; (b) enhancing arts and cultural organizational capacities to advance their individual and collective missions; (c) expanding the range of people and cultural practices included in the identify of a community and/or resource and space allocations; (d) ascertaining and building on distinct cultural assets and community identity typically for tourism marketing or product branding; (e) employing collective cultural assets to address economic and/or neighborhood development or other social or educational challenges; (f) identifying complex community-wide challenges and strategies bringing cultural resources to bear to advance a community vision and/or address challenges; and (g) analyzing the unique cultural characteristics of both people and place – and the diversity within those characteristics – so as to inform an array of municipal policy choices from transit and housing to recreation and health.

### **The Disconnect – The Gravitational Pull**

Many reasons have been postulated for the disconnect between urban planning and cultural planning (Kunzmann, 2004; Mercer, 2006; Stevenson, 2005; Landry, 2008). These scholars argue the promise of cultural planning has been sidetracked by the vested interests of arts institutions and their systems of support, while others argue cultural planning has been marginalized by an urban planning profession unable to see beyond quantitative thinking and the seeming imperative of land use allocations.

According to Mills (2003), “Culture has remained marginalized because it has been viewed as something to add to the list of topics that an integrated planning process must address, rather than something which could inform the whole planning process itself” (p. 7). Language, common metaphors, and dominant paradigms, she adds, “can hold us back from fully realizing the potential of culture as part of integrated local area planning” (p. 9).

In the practice of cultural planning, there is a distinct gravitational pull towards maintenance of the cultural status quo and, at least in the U.S., to advance Western European art forms and organizations. Other (non-Western) cultural practices are sometimes included especially when they conform to institutional delivery-system models built around industrial era organizational structures predicated on production, distribution, and mass consumption (Borrup, 2011). Organized arts communities have developed a sense of ownership of cultural planning that Stevenson (2005) concludes has “privileged art over culture” (p. 40). Describing such cultural plans, Kunzmann (2004) writes, “Tiresome culture-related shopping lists are not helpful” (p. 399).

Describing a cultural plan development in an Australian community in 1999, Mills (2003) writes, “The cultural policy is informed by and in turn informs the sustainability plan, participation policy, youth strategy, the urban design strategy, the town planning scheme review, the artworks in public spaces strategy, the green plan and the recreation plan” (p. 8). The choice by a city recreation department to build and maintain tennis courts, basketball courts, or soccer fields is a cultural choice, or should be.

“Frustratingly, for Mercer and other proponents of the anthropological definition of culture”, observes Kovacs (2011), “this tendency is often manifested when representatives from the arts community ‘spontaneously’ revert from the latter definition to the former” (p. 326). In the experience of this author, it is not only the default position of the arts community but typically of city officials, planning staff, and the local business community, among others. This surprisingly includes many who value and carry non-Western cultural identities and traditions, thus leaving a cultural plan with little relevance outside a dominant Euro-centric local arts community.



Cultural planning, argues Mercer (2006), “cannot be generated from the self-satisfied and enclosed position which holds that art is good for people and the community” (p. 6). Writes Kovacs (2011), “This discriminating and extremely powerful concept blinds us to the existence of other cultural systems” (p. 323). In other words, it denies the opportunity to apply a culturally tuned lens to other elements of urban planning and policy, and to benefit from ways of thinking outside the so-called norm.

To counter the ‘it’s-good-for-you’ value proposition of the arts, an active research effort since the late 1990s unleashed multiple arguments for benefits of the arts with economic impacts commanding center stage. Impact areas include youth development, health and wellness, public safety, environment, civic engagement, and others. These arguments have often been applied so as to maintain a value proposition favoring institutional arts to the exclusion of understanding the broader implications of culture.

The sway over cultural planning and its outcomes held by local, mostly Eurocentric arts communities serves to secure resources and elevate their capacities to produce and deliver arts experiences. This seems a worthy undertaking to many and it need not be an either/or choice. However, it discounts a wider range of cultural needs and potentials and denies other social systems and infrastructure the benefits of a deeper understanding of their inherent cultural biases and new pathways to solving complex problems.

Beyond its value in economic development, cultural planning has failed to raise the status of cultural concerns within municipal government (Kovacs, 2001), and it fails to promote a fuller “integration of culture into local planning praxis” (p. 322). The ineffectiveness and marginalization of cultural planning, argues Mills (2003), “will continue so long as there remains an arts-led push to cultural planning.” Expanding the definition of culture to include human behavior, interaction, and ways of life, as advocated by Ghilardi (2001, 2008), Bianchini (1999), Mercer (2006), and Montgomery (1990), is core to creating more highly functioning communities.

Another factor in the disconnect between cultural and urban planners may be in the limits of experience of many cultural planners, suggests Bianchini (1999). “A narrow training in arts administration is inadequate for cultural planners, who also need to know about political economy and urban sociology, about how cities work (as societies, economies, politics, and eco-systems, as well as cultural millieux) and of course about physical planning itself, otherwise they cannot influence it” (p. 200). Evans (2001) sees that:

Land-use and culture are fundamental natural and human phenomena, but the combined notion and practice of culture and planning conjure up a tension between not only tradition, resistance and change; heritage and contemporary expression, but also the ideals of cultural rights, equity and amenity. (p. 1)

### **The Disconnect – The Repellent Force**

*Minds which for decades have ceased to ask why they do what they do have doomed themselves to mere systems maintenance...The result has been a generation of technicians rather than visionaries, each one taking a career rather than an idea seriously.*

–Higgins (1994, p. 3)

On the other side of the equation, the formal field and practice of urban planning has been unsure how to welcome or accommodate cultural planning or even to see its relevance outside occasional creative district or arts facility planning. City planning lacked the astute quality called for by Covata (1980). Bianchini (1999) puts the urban planning profession into context of the historical development of cities. “Every period... seems to need its own forms of creativity. Urban planners this century [20<sup>th</sup>] have been especially influenced by the creativity of engineers and scientists... responding to problems of overcrowding, mobility, and public health generated by the Industrial Revolution” (p. 195). Moving into the

21<sup>st</sup> century, he continues, there is a growing awareness that “Physical and scientific approaches can only be part of the solution” (p. 195).

Kunzmann (2004) offers a critique of urban planning. “Creativity has become a topical theme, though still only with a very small audience” (p. 391). He calls for bridging the arts and urban planning in profound ways and makes a blunt assessment of urban planning education, suggesting, “Their creative skills development is neglected, sacrificed on the altar of science” (p. 400). “Many people, both in planning and in the arts, still have a hard time reconciling the left-brain activity of planning with the right-brain one of artistic expression,” writes Jones (1993, p. 89). Kunzmann further argues that planning has to incorporate culture and has to be more creative. His examination of the curricula of planning schools reveals little connection between culture, creativity, and spatial planning. “Few sociologists have brought their concepts of culture into planning education, even when they were very cultivated and culture-minded individuals themselves” (p. 400).

“In short what urban planners also need today,” writes Bianchini (1999), “is the creativity of artists, more specifically of artists working in social contexts” (p. 195-196). He recommends the integration of six attributes into the education of planners, that it be: (a) holistic, flexible, lateral, networked; (b) innovative, original and experimental; (c) critical, enquiring, problematizing, challenging the status quo and questioning; (d) people-centered and humanistic; (e) cultured and critically aware of history, of the culture of the past; and (f) open-ended or non-instrumental.

Part of what city planners are rarely trained to appreciate are symbolic elements of place, and even the symbolism in their own actions as they work in communities. Bianchini (1999) advocates urban planners, “have to learn something from the process of thinking used by people working in the field of cultural production – i.e. the production of meanings, images, narratives, and ideas” (p. 199). The meaning of place often fits more into the silo of landscape architecture but less often urban planning. Mercer (2006) asserts, “Planning is not a physical science but a human science” (p. 5). As such, he writes, planners need to be, “anthropologists, economists, and geographers, not just draftsmen. . . They need to know how people live, work, play, and relate to their environment” (p. 5).

Some critics of urban planning lament the narrow physical science and land-use focus that guides the profession (Landry, 2008; Sandercock, 2003, Kunzmann, 2004). Mercer (2006) argues urban planning has provided a “professional specialization in developing a two-dimensional relationship to the urban environment without a feel for what is actually going on in those coloured rectangles and between those model buildings” (p. 5). Even for leaders in the cultural sector, argues Dowling (1997), the “Physical manifestations of culture remain the focus, rather than webs of meaning” (p. 29).

To the credit of planning practice in Australia, Mercer (in Baeker, 2010) observes what he calls the cultural turn in urban planning. “This manifests through positioning and marketing of towns and cities, in itself, a response to the profound implications for how cities work and survive in the context of two major forces: globalisation and the new economy” (p. 15). The New Economy is known in some circles as the Knowledge or Information Economy and in others as the Creative Economy where technology, creativity, human capital, and capacity for innovation are the primary drivers. Such ideas, popularized by Richard Florida (2002), and the global competition to attract talent have raised the level of awareness of cultural diversity and the development of vibrant places for some urban planners.

Significant differences in approaches to planning are evident where cultural planners focus on the human, social, organizational, and symbolic dimensions of cities. Urban planners begin their work by mapping the physical or natural and built elements. Mercer (2006) describes how in the process of planning, “We must excavate the layers of our city downwards into its earliest past. . . and thence we must read them upwards.” To do so he advocates cultural mapping, “tracing people’s memories and visions and values – before we start the planning” (p. 5).



### Can We Conduct Just Planning?

The concept of Just Planning constitutes a creative hybrid where cultural sensibilities and cultural analysis informs all elements of urban planning. What Bianchini, Ghilardi, Kunzmann, Mercer, and others call for is a fundamental shift in how both urban planners and cultural planners approach their work. Language, common metaphors, and dominant paradigms have kept cultural planning and urban planning professions and practices apart (Mills, 2003). Culture has been conflated with elitist notions of art, while critical understanding of human cultures (ways of life) and diversity have been off the table for those designing and building both places and systems.

The debate that is needed is whether cultural planning is really planning by and for arts communities, or whether it is a process to address ways of living in communities and the cultural dimensions of policy options across a spectrum of municipal concerns – or some hybrid. Ghilardi argues:

Cultural planning – with its integrated approach to local development and by linking culture and other aspects of economic and social life – can be instrumental in creating opportunities for a variety of social and cultural constituencies. . . . Cultural planning can help urban governments to identify the *distinctive* cultural resources of a city or locality and to apply them in a strategic way to achieve key objectives in areas such as community development, place marketing or economic development.  
(p. 5)

A core question for cultural planning remains in the definition of culture that has privileged some cultural practices and/or institutions over others and masked the real importance of culture in communities. Issues related to cultural equity across all dimensions of concern to urban planners and policymakers cannot be fully addressed unless notions of culture and what it means are laid bare. Ghilardi (2001) argues, “Difference needs to be considered as the constant intersection of many features where none of them can claim importance over another” (p. 124.) Lack of understanding of the various cultures and ways of life within a city result in policy choices and physical development patterns that privilege some while denying others equitable access to resources and to conduct ways of life that respect and accommodate their cultures.

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