<u>A New Direction in Evaluating the Outcomes of Creative Placemaking: Arts Ecosystems,
Vibrancy, and Social Media</u>

By
Meera Chakravarthy

Senior Honors Thesis
Department of Music
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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Approved by:

Emil Kang

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Thesis Advisor

Emil Malizia, Reader

James Moeser, Reader

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Abstract

The arts play a large role in our world, impacting all types of people, and all sectors of the economy. From individual artists to large nonprofit institutions, the arts live within interconnected systems. In recent years, there has been a trend in arts funding called "creative placemaking," which funds arts projects designed to physically place arts and culture in the center of communities and urban planning strategies. Expanding upon the concept of "placemaking" coined by Jane Jacobs in the 1960s, creative placemaking attempts to get actual community stakeholders—community members, grassroots organizations, and specifically the artists in a community—to help plan and execute changes in the places they live.

The benefits of creative placemaking are measured in both economic and noneconomic ways. Funding agencies, however, have tended to use mostly economic measures to gauge the impact of creative placemaking and the arts. Analysts saw economic change as a representation of well-being: *the more financially well-off this arts organization and its surrounding area become, the better they are doing.*

My research focuses on understanding a new way to evaluate creative placemaking impacts—the well-being of a place, also called its vibrancy. Indeed, the arts ecosystem, the interactions amongst producers and consumers of arts communities, has become more complex to include people communicating and engaging with the arts on digital platforms—a space to share attitudes and behaviors on arts projects. One effective medium to evaluate vibrancy of a place, I propose, is through the data we can collect on social media. In this paper, I outline the need for a new way of thinking about the impact of creative placemaking projects and make a case for collecting social media data to measure vibrancy, the well-being of a place.

Introduction

  Space is an abstract concept. Over time as we get to know a space deeply by creating and constructing within it, making memories, and inviting other people to it, it is transformed into a *place*. The structures we build and the communities we form begin to naturally "clarify social roles and relations" within the space.[1] This transformation from a *space* to a *place* occurs around us everyday. Whether it is building a new home in rural North Carolina, or a skyscraper in New York City, these *spaces* become *places* because of the people, the communities, and specifically the arts and ideas that are exchanged within them. Often, this transformation is driven by the arts and participation in the arts. This distinct transformation is one that is not planned; it *evolves* over time.

  Let us further explore two examples of this space-to-place evolution. In Detroit and Pittsburgh, creative placemaking, a new funding strategy for communities to put arts and culture in the center of urban planning, has transformed spaces to places through their respective organizations: REVOLVE and the City of Asylum Project.

  REVOLVE, as described on their website, "is a collaborative program of the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation that partners with community leaders, building owners, entrepreneurs, and artists to activate vacant storefronts with transformational businesses and art installations. The goal of the program is to foster the evolution and vibrancy of Detroit's neighborhood business districts." [2]

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[1] Yi-Fu Tuan. Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1977. Pg. 6.
[2]"What We Do." Revolve Detroit.com. Last modified 2016.
http://revolvedetroit.com/what-we-do

Angela Foster, a pastry chef who had just moved to the Detroit area, responded to a request for proposal in 2012 and was chosen by REVOLVE to open a pop-up shop in Detroit's West Village. With a goal to revitalize four vacant store fronts, REVOLVE worked alongside building owners to open retail shops that the community itself not only wanted, but helped create. In a few months, Angela built up a coffee shop with just a little money. The community donated other material such as furniture, artwork, decorations and gifts.[3] Over time, artists began to showcase work and art installations within and along these storefronts. A small community was finding ways to express itself and create a space it *wanted* in the West Village. As Michael Forsyth of REVOLVE puts it, "'If we build it, we will come.' Engaging citizens in the revitalization project creates ownership."[4]

REVOLVE began not through a city-mandated project, but through the organic retail needs of a community. However, it needed key community and government partners (such as the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation) to achieve success. Many of the businesses REVOLVE helps still struggle with moving beyond the "pop-up" phase towards becoming sustainable, long-lasting businesses. To get past these struggles, REVOLVE would benefit from a way to evaluate impact that can accommodate the evolving nature of its creative placemaking projects.

450 miles east of Detroit, a neighborhood in Pittsburgh called Sampsonian Way had been engaging its community in arts revitalization for about 10 years through their City of Asylum project. Unlike REVOLVE, this project began with the artists as the catalysts.

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[3]Revolve Detroit. Chapter 2: Case Studies and Best Practices. *Guide to Detroit's Retail Revolution.*
[4] "Urban Innovation Exchange: Revolve Detroit, interview by Detroit Lives! Vimeo. 2014. https://vimeo.com/91960046

The City of Asylum aims to provide sanctuary for writers who have been exiled from their home countries. Although it receives funding from organizations such as ArtPlace America and the National Endowment for the Arts, the City of Asylum is already largely sustained through donations.[5] From its inception, the City of Asylum project provided exiled writers a place to live, medical benefits, a stipend, and other necessary assistance, and watched as the community of Sampsonian Way began to organically form relationships and interact with these writers who were expressing themselves in a safe place. For example, Huang Xiang created a "house poem" by painting Chinese characters on the sides of his house. This led people to write and share their own poems and even put these poems in his mailbox. Over a few years, the City of Asylum also started a free jazz poetry concert for community members to share their work. Simultaneously, buildings and performing arts spaces were popping up because the needs of this community were changing. [6]

Both REVOLVE and the City of Asylum, projects that began with small grassroots missions, have spread physically *and digitally* beyond a single street in a neighborhood. It seems likely that both these projects can no longer adapt and change to the needs of the community through just word of mouth. Projects are generating volunteers and engaging people online, sharing and spreading ideas at rates higher than the community may be able keep up.[7] In addition to the need for stronger and more sustained philanthropic support, communities need to figure

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[5] "History." City of Asylum.org. Last modified 2015. http://cityofasylum.org/about/history/
[6] "Creative Placemaking." City of Asylum.org. Last modified 2015.
http://cityofasylum.org/creative-placemaking/
[7] "City of Asylum," facebook page.
https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=city%20of%20asylum

out a way to adapt with the evolving and growing needs of the arts ecosystem. This will certainly require a much more enhanced methodology for evaluation.

To sustain their programs, these organizations and their funders need a way to evaluate the impact of their ever-evolving creative placemaking projects through a system that adapts to these changes. To evaluate and distinguish all of the impacts creative placemaking has on the greater arts ecosystem, I propose to measure the vibrancy (well being) of a place in addition to economic outcomes. I define vibrancy as the attitudes and behaviors associated with a place, which are ultimately both cause and effect in the transformation of a space to a place through community engagement, social relations, and artistic contributions—a virtuous cycle.

Evaluating vibrancy analyzes this transformation by examining people's interactions within places. Often, vibrancy changes occur at a faster rate than economic or other measurable changes. Economic measures, the most commonly used indicator for evaluation, may not be sufficient data for organizations to prove impact over the short term. Nowadays many interactions are happening digitally, such as on social media, making arts communities even more complex. Incorporating measurement of vibrancy can add the new dimension communities need to convey these impacts. One way to evaluate vibrancy, I believe, is through the data we can collect from social media.

In this thesis, I propose a method and model to evaluate vibrancy in the arts. The goal is to not prescribe a set of standards for the arts cultural ecosystem, but to better understand the ecosystem itself.

In this paper, I present an argument in four chapters. **Chapter 1** examines the history of creative placemaking and deconstructs its multiple definitions. **Chapter 2** synthesizes current models that aim to evaluate the impact of the arts. **Chapter 3** reviews the need to evaluate vibrancy and proposes tools to measure the vibrancy of creative placemaking through social media. **Chapter 4** discusses how we might map and evaluate vibrancy against economic and other changes through the progression of a creative placemaking project.

Chapter 1: The History of Creative Placemaking

Section 1.1 Factors that led to creative placemaking

Practitioners have long believed the idea of creative placemaking originated centuries ago. They think of creative placemaking in its broadest sense as a naturally occurring (social) survival mechanism.[8] Ever since humans began gathering to eat, build shelter, and foster community, they have also shared stories through sounds, words, dance and visuals, leading to a general sense of security and happiness. By making spaces more livable, relatable, and dynamic, people congregate and form naturally occurring relationships in these places. In these centers, a particular place (a town, or a village), or multiple places, helps define the collective identity of its residents, promotes conversation, and serves as an intellectual/social/and cultural lab in which the people experiment with different art forms and modes of communication.[9] In a broad sense, practitioners claim the practice of creative placemaking enhances the interconnected nature of the producers and consumers within community systems by promoting a cross-pollination of cultures and ultimately making a place more diverse and livable.

Through my research, I have identified two historical shifts that have driven policymakers to label and define creative placemaking. 1) The demographic shifts through the movement and migration of people 2) The shift in arts funding towards community based projects.

This section will further explore these two shifts.

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[8] Jamie Bennett, informal interview, July 15, 2015.

[9] Zaid Hassan, The Social Innovation Labs Revolution: A New Approach to Solving our Most Complex Challenges. (San Francisco: Brett-Koehler Publishers Inc. 2014) 15-16.

1.1.1 Increased diversity of the US population

Throughout the 20th century, advances in technology and reasons to migrate have led to a more diverse population in the United States. For example, the revision of the 1924 immigration act and the increasing affordability of air travel, allowed many more people to immigrate into the United States.[10] These demographic shifts have perpetuated the natural development of arts and culture within the unique spaces in which people chose to reside. As populations began moving to new corners of the US—anywhere from New York City to rural Idaho—people formed artistic and cultural communities in those places. Whether it was a Vietnamese family opening a restaurant in rural Wyoming, or a Haitian community sharing music in New Orleans, migration has enabled a deep cross-pollination of culture that has demanded we rethink how we plan communities in order to advance the wellbeing of these people.

1.1.2 New federal community development strategies

These migration trends have correlated with the federal government's adoption of community development strategies. Over the past 50 years, federal policy with respect to the improvement of cities has changed from warehousing the poor to providing livable spaces conducive to engagement and interaction.

During and after the Great Depression of the 1930s, the federal government wanted to focus on revitalizing the United States. Quality of life had declined as city finances were depressed, public spaces were run down, and citizens were finding it difficult to be employed. Activists and organizations in the Progressive Era, such as Settlement House owners and

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[10] "The Immigration Act of 1924." Office of the Historian. History.state.gov. Last modified 2016. https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act

charitable organizations, were committed to getting rid of slums and providing better living conditions.[11] When Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected president, his administration began to fund public community development projects through the New Deal's' Public Works Acts[12] that sought to revitalize spaces by fostering the development of communities of people in a space, and building structures that suited their needs. Not only did Roosevelt focus on city centers, but he also revitalized many rural regions such as the Tennessee Valley.[13] While most of these projects were focused on built structures, the agencies in the Roosevelt administration commissioned artists to help make the built structures more vibrant and aesthetically pleasing.

1.1.3 Impact of government interventions

President Truman's administration continued these types of projects with the Housing Act of 1949. This act built large multi-story apartment complexes in cities for low-income families and the immigrants who had begun to come into the United States.[14] While the government had good intentions in trying to help develop depressed city centers by providing affordable housing to low income people and minority groups, these strategies ended up being "undemocratic."[15] Top-down government strategies[16] ultimately created more segregated clusters: the very notion Roosevelt and Truman's community development strategies had hoped

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[11] Alexander Von Hoffman, The Past, Present, and Future of Community Development in the United States.
[12] projects such as hospitals and street revitalizations
[13] Alexander Von Hoffman, The Past, Present, and Future of Community Development in the United States.
[14] Ibid, 14.
[15] Ibid, 13.
[16] "Top Down Strategy" is a decision making strategy where senior level officials (in this case government leaders) are the only ones making decisions that ultimately affect the lower level officials.

to counter. As low-income communities migrated to the clustered projects, the racial and socioeconomic divide worsened in almost every corner of society. This not only created segregated places, but it also prompted higher crime rates as residents experienced sharp inequality and suffocation from staying in their "place" in the community rather than having the freedom to explore.

These top-down community development strategies contributed to at least two unintended outcomes:

1. Migration of elite populations out of the city into the suburbs, and the movement of artists into cities.

2. Activists and organizations began the fight for community-led initiatives rather than top-down strategy.

1.1.4 Demographic shifts out of urban centers

In the mid 20th century, upper middle class whites became anxious with the shift towards a racially diverse city. With a consistent flow of immigrants and the movement of many African Americans into city centers, these white upper middle class people were uncomfortable with the changing nature of of their living environment. People were not only nervous for their safety, but worried that their property values would decline.[17] They feared the crime ridden housing projects, which had a concentration of immigrant and/or black populations, and they felt suffocated by the growing population in city centers. The idea of the suburb was up and coming, and it attracted these white upper middle class people who found comfort in more space, less diversity, and less noise. This was movement was known as "white flight."[18] Furthermore, because the economy was shifting from an industrial economy to an information-based economy [19] there was a lack of skilled job opportunities in industrial city centers. At this time, it was cheaper to build new suburban infrastructures than spend money on revitalizing projects in the cities.[20] Businesses were getting tax breaks to move to the suburbs, making suburbs an overall financially advantageous place in comparison to cities. This motivated many groups to move to the suburbs, especially white educated people who had the opportunity to get jobs there.

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[17] William H. Frey. 1979. "Central City White Flight: Racial and Nonracial Causes". *American Sociological Review* 44 (3). 2.
[18] Ibid, 3.
[19] Seifert, Susan C.; Stern, Mark J.; "From Creative Economy to Creative Society." 1.
[20] Alexander Von Hoffman, The Past, Present, and Future of Community Development in the United States.

1.1.5 Certain groups occupy urban centers

It is important to note that around this time, not only did minority populations occupy city areas[21] but many artists began to take residency in central cities as cities were now places of cheap housing, diversity of thought, new opportunities, and inspiration. If large populations were migrating away from the city, the city became run down, not family centric, with low living costs, which led to the ideal conditions for artists' work and life to thrive. While cities were an inspiration for artists' work, these very artists were slowly making efforts to be both critics and changemakers in the environments and spaces in which they resided.[22]

For example, in the 1960s, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) coupled with the J.M. Kaplan Fund to work on a radical revitalization project: turn the old Bell laboratories in the Lower West Side of Manhattan into affordable housing for artists. The federal government funded this project and successfully housed artists and their families in a cheap and centralized place while providing them performance spaces and studios. The housing district was overseen by the non profit Westbeth Housing Development Fund Corporation. One of the many unlabeled placemaking projects with a "creative" component that is still standing today, the Westbeth Housing for artists was one of the first artist-focused projects that began to show the power and capacity of artists in changing their environments.[23]

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[21] Marilyn Salenger. " 'White Flight' and Detroit's Decline." *The Washington Post.* July 13, 2013. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/marilyn-salenger-white-flight-and-detroits-decline/2013/07/21/7903e888-f24a-11e2-bdae-0d1f78989e8a_story.html
[22] Richard Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class,* (New York: Routledge, 2005.) Pg 113-129.
[23] "History," Westbeth.org. Last modified: 2015. http://westbeth.org/wordpress/about/history/

1.1.6 Community members as urban planners

During the period of white flight, people who could afford it moved to the suburbs while low-income individuals were housed in large projects. Simultaneously, "orthodox urban planners" such as Le Corbusier attempted to "decentralize" big cities through the construction of more skyscrapers.[24]

At this time, a political movement arose within city centers. Activists such as Jane Jacobs believed the housing projects were misguided attempts at planning. Jacobs was dissatisfied with the housing projects, claiming even inadvertent segregation alienated the very people they were trying to help, leading to increased crime rate and damaged downtown vitality. Jacobs was a firm believer that a city should be mixed in terms of culture, demographics, and structures, therefore comprised of mixed-use development in order to attract the most diverse people and foster interaction. She believed that when planning neighborhoods, districts should have many uses. Blocks must be short, buildings must vary in age, and there should be a dense concentration of citizens. Jacobs, along with many other activists of the time such as William Whyte, began a movement of "placemaking" that had spillover effects, especially in private foundation and corporate grants geared towards community development.[25]

In 1961, the Ford Foundation, concerned with urban and racial issues, began to award "community grants" to help foster a focus on community development and racial integration. Big businesses such as IBM initiated social and community-based programs, bringing a whole new

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[24] Jane Jacobs. Introduction: *Death and Life of Great American Cities. (*New York: Vintage Books. 1961) Pg. 18-19.
[25] Jane Jacobs. Introduction: *Death and Life of Great American Cities. (*New York: Vintage Books. 1961) Pg. 18-23.

corporate sector of the economy into the conversation of community development. This was labeled "corporate social responsibility."[26]

The financial community joined the trend. In the 1970s and 1980s, many banks began to specialize in social-purpose loans. Banks such as ShoreBank were founded to give loans to "mom and pop" businesses to help foster community in low income neighborhoods. Financial Intermediaries such as Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and the Enterprise Foundation began to support social and nonprofit groups all around the United States. [27] The United States Congress created Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) to help low-income communities. At this same time, nonprofits such as community development corporations and neighborhood housing service groups became reliable and well-known institutions because they provided affordable services and opportunities that were easy to access and use.[28]

Rather than depending primarily on federal government-based-policies, the individuals, communities, nonprofit and private sectors began investing in people-based community development, also known as placemaking. These changes brought a variety of people and businesses back to newly revitalized city centers and the surrounding areas. The people and businesses most likely to move back were those that were daring and a bit more willing to

[26] Abagail McWilliams and Donald Siegel. Corporate Social Responsibility and Financial Performance: Correlation or Misspecification? Strategic management Journal, (Vol. 21, No. 5. John Wiley and Sons: May 2000.)Pg. 603-609. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3094143 .
[27] Alexander Von Hoffman, The Past, Present, and Future of Community Development in the United States. 26-29.
[28] Ibid, 47.

experiment. These people and the kind of people that these businesses employed have been referred to by Richard Florida as the "creative class."[29]

1.1.7 The emergence of secondary cities and the migration of the "creative class"

The spillover effects of community development broadened the original top-down government initiatives to include corporate and community sector involvement. This was met with another movement of people: "the creatives." In the 90s, people and businesses started to return to city centers and their immediately surrounding areas, not only because of lower rents and living costs near blighted urban environments, but because they saw more opportunity to be creative (a concept that was growing and valued by businesses) within these revitalized cities.[30] In the early 2000s, Richard Florida labeled this emerging category of professionals as the "creative class." Unlike the artists who were moving into cities for convenience, these creative class members were moving into cities and the surrounding environment for a lifestyle. "He (Florida) argued that place had replaced the industrial corporation as the key economic and social organising unit of our time."[31] Florida defined the creative class as a group of highly educated, high-salaried[32] people who do a variety of change-making jobs which value "individuality, difference, and merit."[33] With post-industrial shifts in the labor force, and a development of new job opportunities that were more human-capital based and less manufacturing based, businesses

[29] Richard Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class,* (New York: Routledge, 2005.) Pg 15-27.

[30] Richard Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class,* (New York: Routledge, 2005.) Pg 35-36.

[31] Davies, Anne. "Mapping Sydney's creative clusters"*Ilawarra Mercury.* April 9, 2016.
http://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/3839310/mapping-sydneys-creative-clusters/?cs=7

[32] People are not necessarily high salaried, but they are given equity in the company which can turn into substantial income

[33] It is easy to assume the creative class means artists, but Florida's definition of the creative class includes graphic designers, professors, lawyers

and institutions began to strongly value individuality and creativity. They did so by building business environments that encouraged employees to be creative and to engage in this creativity within the community.

The major geographic effect of this changing labor structure was the migration of people, especially creative class members, to smaller, "secondary cities,"[34] persuaded in part by economic development agencies in these secondary cities. Businesses and people were no longer solely attracted to a handful of thriving cities, but to smaller cities that had low barriers to entry and likeminded individuals, attracting members of the creative class, for example Austin, TX and Chapel Hill, NC. In other words, if a city had areas with relatively low rent, great access to nightlife, and corporate jobs and start-ups, it was attractive. Some people feared that this concentration of the creative class in all types of cities forced low-income and less-educated residents out of the area, a process known as "gentrification." There was also worry that the creative class, moving from many other places, would cause a loss of cultural roots and values within a place.[35]

1.1.8 Rejection of "creative class" and introduction of "cluster development"

Around this time, researchers voiced concerns with Richard Florida's view of the creative class. Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania with the Social Impact of Arts Project (SIAP) argued that the migration of the creative class led to gentrification because only highly

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[34]Brian Roberts, "The systems of secondary ciites: the neglected drivers of urbanizing economies," CIVIS 2014, http://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/citiesalliance.org/files/CIVIS%20SECONDARY%20CITIES _Final.pdf
[35] Richard, Florida. The Rise of the Creative Class. Washingtonmonthly.com. Last Modified: 2006. http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2001/0205.florida.html.

educated and salaried people made up the creative class. While many people hoped the creative

class would bring about the artistic qualities that help define a place, SIAP and other researchers

argued that the creative class was too broad a term to encompass this change. The creative class

and creative artists cannot be considered synonymous, SIAP implies in the paper "from Creative

Economy to Creative Society." "The creative economy literature has examined a wider set of

industries in which 'creativity' is viewed as an asset and spur to productivity[…]Richard

Florida's work—with its claims about the role of the 'creative class' in global competitive

advantage—encouraged the trend to treat nonprofit and for-profit firms as a single sector and

expanded definitions of culture to include design and related fields as part of the creative

economy."[36]

Richard Florida's creative-class argument had also helped shift how people viewed the

economy. No longer was the US primarily a manufacturing, or industrial economy, but a *creative*

economy. This creative economy valued imagination and ingenuity in what people produced and

what they bought.[37] SIAP also voiced concerns with the original creative economy concept,

suggesting that current practices within creative economies led to a "winner takes all" model in

the arts world. Rather than spreading creativity to the masses, the best artists and creatives

gained the most recognition and opportunity. "Within the creative economy, artists are especially

vulnerable to the winner-take-all dynamic. The handful of opera singers, concert pianists,

dancers, and authors seen as the best in the world garner incomes that dwarf those of gifted

practitioners who are seen as less extraordinary.[38]" Thus, a small sample of the best artists earn

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[36] Seifert, Susan C.; Stern, Mark J.; "From Creative Economy to Creative Society." 2.
[37] Jake, Tilson. "The creative economy deals in ideas and money." The Creative Economy.
http://www.johnhowkins.com/wordpress/?page_id=9.
[38] Seifert, Susan C.; Stern, Mark J.; "From Creative Economy to Creative Society." 7.

the highest incomes when all other artists may struggle to put food on the table. SIAP defined the creative economy as more than just a marketplace, but a place to acknowledge the producers, providers, and participants in the place in order to focus on community-life benefits rather than just economic benefits.

In an effort to be more representative of the needs of a community, SIAP avoided top-down planning initiatives and community-building grants as these initiatives would not remedy the issues of inequality; instead SIAP championed investment in neighborhood "cluster development." In the Journal of Planning Education and Research in 2010, Mark and Susan Seifert of SIAP published an article on the value of arts cluster development over planned cultural districts. They imply that local citizens are the consumers cities should be catering to, not tourists. They even came up with a Cultural Asset Index to measure the density of culture in neighborhoods through a series of indicators.[39]

These dialogues on placemaking and the creative economy spurred more revitalization of old industrial cities into cultural development centers. Many worn-down factories were turned into artist live/work buildings, art centers, or festival grounds. The federal government began to realize these revitalization strategies actually improved the economy because large amounts of disposable income were spent on cultural participation and new jobs were created.[40] Not only did

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[39] Mark J. Stern and Susan C. Seifert, Cultural Clusters: The Implications of Cultural Assets Agglomeration for Neighborhood Revitalization Journal of Planning Education and Research (March 2010 29:, first published on January 12, 2010) pg, 262-279.
[40] consumption theory

these efforts contribute to the creative economy, but they also created "urban distinctiveness" which is a quality that attracts and retains artists and creative people in an environment.[41]

The growing interest in placemaking, the migration of both artists and the creative class back into city centers, and SIAP's research on cluster development, all set the stage for the NEA to begin conversation about creative placemaking.

1.1.9 Creative placemaking policy

Up to this point, the NEA had little or nothing to do with revitalization projects. Just prior to this in the early 90s, the NEA was recovering from a reduction in arts funding due to the "NEA Four" artist scandal. In the 90s, four artists were taken to court because their projects were deemed by some authorities to be too controversial to be funded by taxpayer money. Although the artists' projects were ultimately funded, Congress decided it was best to simply stop funding all individual-artist projects moving forward, changing the nature of NEA funding. The nonprofit art sector was losing ground as federal and state funding waned, so rather than funding just artists, the NEA needed to find a new way to fund the arts. To lead the NEA in a new direction, the Obama administration chose investment fund owner, arts entrepreneur, and theatre owner, Rocco Landesman, as the Chairman of the NEA.

Appointed in 2009, Landesman quickly acknowledged the country's changing placemaking trends. He saw that cities across America were adopting the "creative city" model

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[41] Ann Markusen. *Cultural Planning and the Creative City*. (Paper presented at the annual American Collegiate Schools of Planning meetings, Ft. Worth, Texas, November 12, 2006.) http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.460.8123&rep=rep1&type=pdf

as they revitalized their old industrial and manufacturing centers. [42] Landesman saw this as an

opportunity to make the arts a part of the revitalization process. Chairman Landesman began

work on a new form of arts funding—community-building projects through the perspective of

the arts.

There are two main objectives these grants were designed to achieve:

- Minimize gentrification in cities

- Revitalize spaces to preserve the cultural heritage of a city

    With this effort in mind, Landesman commissioned Ann Markusen, an economist from

the University of Minnesota, to write the first white paper putting a definition to this concept

under the term *creative placemaking.*[43]

    Markusen built her argument on the degree of intention and care required to create a

creative place. She, along with SIAP, found flaws in Richard Florida's creative class argument

and stated that artists or the "bohemians" are different than most members of the creative class in

socioeconomic status, lifestyle, and social interactions. Markusen developed case studies on

various artists to show how their relationships to city centers are more complex than the creative

occupations described by Florida. She noted correlations between the number of artists present

and the growth of a place; however not all creative class members had the same correlation.

Even though artists were finally receiving recognition in cities through the buzz of Richard

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[42] Ann Markusen. Creative Placemaking: How, Why, Outcomes | Cultural Policy Center at the University of Chicago/City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. Video. (2012) http://metrisarts.com/creative-placemaking/

[43] Ann Markusen and Anne Gawda. *Creative Placemaking.*White paper for The Mayors' Institute on City Design, a leadership initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the United States Conference of Mayors and American Architectural Foundation. Metris Arts Consulting: 2010. https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf

Florida's creative class, artists naturally have stark differences from other members of the creative class, both in socioeconomic status and lifestyle. In fact, many artists are not a part of the creative workforce because they have to work service jobs to sustain themselves. Therefore, Markusen argued for a different and intentional approach to include the artists in the creative class conversation, to avoid being overshadowed by highly paid, highly educated creative class members.[44]

In her white paper, Ann Markusen argues to put arts and culture at the center of planning objectives, therefore putting artists at the the forefront of many of these planning strategies. Markusen's ideas were consonant with SIAP's focus on creative clusters. In her paper, she outlined creative placemaking:

"The problem: American cities, suburbs, and small towns feel structural changes because of labor force, demographic, and economic shifts.

The solution is revitalization by creative initiatives that animate places and spark economic development.

The payoffs are gains in livability, diversity, jobs, and incomes. Products are also made for the cultural industries."[45]

Around this same time, Chairman Landesman saw that government and public tax dollars could support only a limited amount of projects. He saw the potential of creative placemaking as

[44] Ann Markusen, Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class: Evidence from a Study of Artists. (Environment and Planning A 2006, volume 38, pages 1921 ^ 1940. May 2005) http://epn.sagepub.com/content/38/10/1921.full.pdf+html

[45] Ann Markusen and Anne Gawda. *Creative Placemaking.*White paper for The Mayors' Institute on City Design, a leadership initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the United States Conference of Mayors and American Architectural Foundation. Metris Arts Consulting: 2010. Pg. 3 https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf

a growing trend for funders and saw that it needed more investment in research and projects. Therefore, Landesman led the creation of ArtPlace America, a 10-year initiative to spearhead creative placemaking projects all across the USA.[46] The funding for ArtPlace America did not come from the NEA, but from a collection of private and public foundations in a joint partnership.

1.1.10 Creative placemaking today

Creative placemaking has become the new arts funding label adopted by government agencies and organizations. This is because creative placemaking is an all-encompassing way of arts funding which affects multiple sectors of the economy.

Creative placemaking strategy was one born out of practice. A name to a strategy that has been in place for years, creative placemaking serves as a label to help brand a set of practices and promote legitimacy for government and other funders. However, putting a definition on projects is not the only step to legitimacy—the critical step is measuring the outcomes of these projects.

Section 1.2: Consolidating the definitions of creative placemaking

Creative placemaking has a spectrum of interpretations that different organizations adopt to meet their project and planning objectives. Chapter 1, section 2 dissects a few of the most frequently used definitions of creative placemaking and concludes that each definition focuses on two major types of outcomes for creative placemaking: economic change and changes in

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[46] Ann Markusen. Creative Placemaking: How, Why, Outcomes | Cultural Policy Center at the University of Chicago/City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. Video. (2012) http://metrisarts.com/creative-placemaking/

vibrancy. After defining both economic change and changes in vibrancy, this section describes how most time and energy has gone into measuring economic change outcomes. While practitioners have mostly focused on economic change arguments to prove outcomes, nonprofits, artists, and placemakers want more information on how their art affects the wellbeing of their community, *the vibrancy*. I propose that we must evolve in how we look at the outcomes of creative placemaking. Vibrancy, the well-being of a place, is not independent of economic change and other changes, rather all these changes work in tandem as part of a larger ecosphere.

1.2.1 Difficulties of a single definition

To fully grasp creative placemaking projects and outcomes, we must first define how a creative placemaking project evolves. Creative placemaking projects involve multiple stakeholders and are primarily developed by organizations and government entities that apply for creative placemaking grants. The creative placemaking projects referred to throughout this paper are spearheaded by nonprofit and community arts organizations' cross-sector partnerships of various sizes that have some amount of funding from private or public grants. For example, in their Our Town grant application requirements, the NEA specifies a relationship between nonprofits and government agencies as a necessity for a grantee to be eligible for a creative placemaking grant:

> "A key to the success of creative placemaking is involving the arts in partnership
> with committed governmental, nonprofit, and private sector leadership. All applications
> must demonstrate a partnership that will provide leadership for the project. These

partnerships must involve two primary partners: 1) nonprofit organization, and 2) local

government entity, as defined by these guidelines"[47]

This means many nonprofit organizations that lead creative placemaking projects (and all

those receiving NEA funding) form partnerships with local and or government agencies to create

change in the community.

Because there is a wide variety of organizations and objectives involved in creative

placemaking projects, there are many ways a community can interpret creative placemaking. For

this reason, there are multiple ways people practice and define creative placemaking.

While the projects that fall under the term creative placemaking may significantly differ,

practitioners and funders tend to report the progress and outcomes using similar metrics. Most

funders demand a financial and data driven approach to measure outcomes of creative

placemaking projects because it is consistent with the goals of economic development agencies.

This method of evaluation follows a traditional economic development model, rather than

communicating what the actual artists and arts organizations may value: "an appreciation and

evaluation of the intangible value added to a community," which is vibrancy.[48]

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[47] OUR TOWN: Arts Engagement, Cultural Planning, and Design Projects - Grant Program
Description. Arts.gov.
https://www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-town/arts-engagement-cultural-planning-and-design-projects-grant-program-description
[48] Noah Isserman and Ann Markusen. *Shaping the Future through Narrative: The Third Sector,
Arts and Culture.* (International Regional Science Review. 36(1) 115-136. Sage Publications:
2013) pg. 114-122. http://irx.sagepub.com/content/36/1/115.full.pdf+html

1.2.2 Multiple definitions

Because creative placemaking was a label born out of a wide range of practices, it was necessary to create an umbrella term to encompass all the projects. As mentioned in section 1.1, NEA chairman, Rocco Landesman, with the research of Ann Markusen, not only helped coin the term creative placemaking, but also acknowledged that this concept could not be confined to the federal government; rather, it needed to be spread and be adopted by community arts organizations all over the country.[49]

As creative placemaking became a popular term, many organizations began to adopt this label and create their own definitions so they could start revitalizing and enlivening spaces at the neighborhood and town level.

In Ann Markusen's white paper,[50] creative placemaking was initially defined as:

"*In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, tribe, 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.*"[51]

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[49] Jenna Moran, Jason Schupbach, Courtney Spearman, and Jennifer, Reuth Beyond the Building Performing Arts Transforming. Pg 17.

[50] The goal of this white paper was to introduce the concept of creative placemaking Ann Markusen developed 14 creative placemaking case studies. Markusen looks at a wide variety of projects ranging from creating an artist housing community out of an old automobile factory in Buffalo NY, to a "City of Music" initiative in Seattle, Washington.

[51] Ann Markusen and Anne Gawda. *Creative Placemaking.*White paper for The Mayors' Institute on City Design, a leadership initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the United States Conference of Mayors and American Architectural Foundation. Metris Arts Consulting: 2010. Pg. 3

After Markusen's white paper introduced creative placemaking, many organizations began to adopt their own definitions of creative placemaking to seek funding for projects.

For example, Artspace, an arts nonprofit located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, describes creative placemaking as an "evolving field" that has two tiers of goals.

"Creative placemaking is an evolving field of practice that intentionally leverages the power of the arts, culture and creativity to serve a community's interest while driving a broader agenda for change, growth and transformation in a way that also builds character and quality of place."[52] Locally, it tries to garner interest in community-building, but broadly speaking, it has a goal for change, growth and transformation in terms of the quality of a place.

Alternatively, ArtPlace America,[53] a Brooklyn based funding agency carrying out a 10-year creative placemaking initiative, defines creative placemaking as follows:

"ArtPlace believes that art, culture, and creativity expressed powerfully through place can create vibrant communities, thus increasing the desire and the economic opportunity for people to thrive in place. It is all about the local."[54]

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[52] "Mission and History: Building Better Communities through the Arts, " *Artspace,* Accessed Jan 18, 2016, http://www.artspace.org/about/mission-history

[53] ArtPlace is a 10 year initiative to add value to community through arts and culture in a holistic, human centric, and locally informed structure; headed by Jamie Bennett. ArtPlace aims to fund creative placemaking project initiatives that are not funded by NEA, as well as research creative placemaking to reach a wider audience than the NEA has capacity for. ArtPlace is a 10 year initiative to add value to community through arts and culture in a holistic, human centric, and locally informed structure. The goals to ArtPlace's creative placemaking project steps are: Define a community, articulate a change that community/group of people would like to see, propose an arts based intervention to help achieve that change, and develop a way to know whether the change occurred.

[54] "Introduction," *ArtPlaceAmerica*, Accessed December 14, 2015,. http://www.artplaceamerica.org/about/introduction

Both these organizations have specific local goals they hope to achieve through creative placemaking. The Artspace mission is to create physical places for artists to thrive with a particular goal to change the *quality of place* in which artists reside. ArtPlace America focuses on identifying a certain change needed in a community, ranging from increased job opportunities or greater cross-sector participation, that can be achieved as a result of creative placemaking.

In addition to these two organizations, creative placemaking has been defined in even more diverse ways. Michael Rohd at Center for Performance and Civic Practice, a New York-based nonprofit, defines creative placemaking as:

"bringing artists' assets into dialogue and action around issues of place, public good, equity, coalition-building, problem-solving and opportunity."[55]

Furthermore, the NEA's Our Town Grant Projects specify that creative placemaking projects,

" *should represent the distinct character and quality of their communities, and must reflect the following livability requirements: A vision for enhancing the social and/or economic livability of the community.* [56]

Although there are multiple definitions of creative placemaking, by comparing some of these definitions, we can identify commonalities within them. Most all definitions, among them that of the Connecticut Office of Arts,' hope to *"improve the community's economic conditions*

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[55] Jenna Moran, Jason Schupbach, Courtney Spearman, and Jennifer, Reuth Beyond the Building Performing Arts Transforming pg. 21

[56] OUR TOWN: Arts Engagement, Cultural Planning, and Design Projects - Grant Program Description. Arts.gov.
https://www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-town/arts-engagement-cultural-planning-and-design-projects-grant-program-description

and quality of life." [57]

1.2.3 Dissecting the definitions

Through all the definitions of creative placemaking, there are consistently two parts to each.

1. The project: (what is the creative placemaking project?)

    a. examples are creating an arts center in a rural community, constructing an art

      park, or revitalizing an old building to serve a new artistic purpose

2. The outcome: (what are the results from the creative placemaking project?)

    a. examples are a reduction in crime rate and increased civic engagement

This paper will focus mostly on the outcome side of the definitions.

 Similar to the various ways practitioners define creative placemaking (as shown above), the discussions on how best to evaluate creative placemaking have also varied, but all contain two important factors: how the area's economy has improved and how the well-being and quality of life in a place have changed over time.

The outcome side of the definition of creative placemaking generally has two components:

1. Positive economic changes

2. Changes in vibrancy (public value and well-being)

   These definitions show how creative placemaking projects are intended to meet the needs of the surrounding community environment and also suggest that these community needs are at least two fold. One is more financial, opportunistic, and job-growth related, which I will call

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[57] "Department of Economic and Community Development Offices of Culture and Tourism," *State of Connecticut,* Accessed October 14, 2015, http://www.ct.gov/cct/cwp/view.asp?a=3948&q=464520

"economic change factors." The other need is dealing with quality of life and is focused on how people interact within an artistic place. These I call "vibrancy change factors."

Through researching and analyzing many definitions of creative placemaking, I have arrived at a more comprehensive definition:

Creative placemaking refers to cultural and artistic initiatives intended to help revitalize or vitalize the community system in which they reside. As creative placemaking works within this larger system, two interconnected types of outcome, economic opportunity and well-being, or vibrancy, are expected to occur.

1.2.4 Economic change outcomes

In this paper, economic change is defined as a change, whether growth or decline, in financial status, goods and services, and demographic shifts over periods of time.[58] In terms of measuring the impact of the arts, economic change is represented by a sets of indicator measurements such as job growth, increase in expenditure, government or private funding, etc. There are also often indirect economic change factors in the arts world, such as the *multiplier effect*, where arts projects lead to a chain reaction of more investments. Another indirect economic change factor is the *substitution effect* where people choose to spend their money on local arts or activities due to a new creative placemaking project rather than spending the same money elsewhere. While economic change is a large part of how the arts operate and sustain themselves as a system, it is not the only measure of the ways in which producers and consumers interact.

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[58] "Economic Growth," *Investopedia,* Accessed February 16, 2016, http://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/economicgrowth.asp

1.2.5 Vibrancy change outcomes

Unlike economic change, vibrancy does not look at financial changes, but is rather evaluated by the intrinsic, qualitative changes in the attitudes and behaviors of people who come in contact with creative placemaking projects. In a paper on cultural planning, Ann Markusen states "These efforts (creative placemaking) are also aimed at nurturing urban distinctiveness and contribute to the creative economy by producing, attracting, and retaining artists, who in turn export significant portions of their artwork[...]"[59] Urban distinctiveness contributes to vibrancy, a quality that differs in each place and each community.
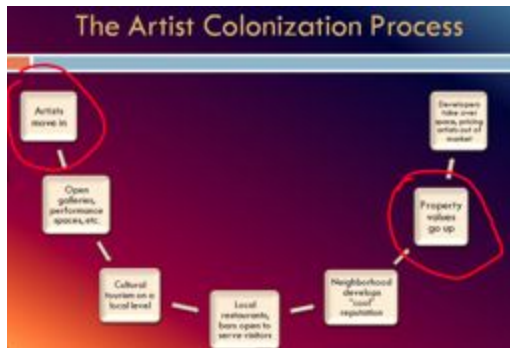
Vibrancy is a very important characteristic to the public in part because certain organizations and individuals value vibrancy when they decide to visit or move to a place. In a conference on creative placemaking held by the NEA, Ashley Sparks of the Network of Ensemble Theatres said, "it means nothing to create language around creative placemaking if the community does not understand what is being said." A community may not necessarily want to know how much money or how many jobs a project has created, rather they may want to know if the place is *vibrant* and thriving enough for them to spend time visiting it.[60]

There are at least two definitions of the term vibrancy. Ann Markusen has defined vibrancy as "unusual scale and intensity of specific kinds of human interaction," and ArtPlace America has defined vibrancy as "synergy among people, activity, and value in a place that

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[59] Ann Markusen. *Cultural Planning and the Creative City*. (Paper presented at the annual American Collegiate Schools of Planning meetings, Ft. Worth, Texas, November 12, 2006.) http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.460.8123&rep=rep1&type=pdf
[60] Jenna Moran, Jason Schupbach, Courtney Spearman, and Jennifer, Reuth Beyond the Building Performing Arts Transforming pg. 18.

increases vitality and spurs economic opportunity." I choose to define vibrancy as *the wellbeing of a community or the intensity with which people feel, interact, and activate a space.*

Practitioners have talked about many of the desirable characteristics of vibrancy without using the term. In his blog post, "[Creative Placemaking has an Outcomes Problem](http://createquity.com/2012/05/creative-placemaking-has-an-outcomes-problem/)," Ian David Moss mentions that the arts create a "ripple effect," for example, artists' projects lead to a more "thriving community," leading to a "cool reputation," and increasing economic change such as "higher property values." People talking about the "thriving community" and "cool reputation" are indicators of vibrancy.[61]

1.2.6 Traditional emphasis on solely economic change

Vibrancy is relevant when looking at the outcomes of a creative placemaking project, but is not simple to measure. Because vibrancy is found in largely qualitative information on how people feel about a place, it is often times collected by surveys which are not always reliable and fail to represent all members of the arts community. Funders have not generally focused on vibrancy outcomes to convey impact, but instead focused more on economic change as evidence that arts are an engine for development.

For example, by successfully funding a writer's theater in the heart of Glencoe, Illinois, the NEA Our Town Grants have asserted that there are two effects: increases in economic

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[61] Ian David Moss, "Creative Placemaking has an Outcomes Problem" *Createquity* (blog)*,* October 4, 2015.
http://createquity.com/2012/05/creative-placemaking-has-an-outcomes-problem/

transactions (both direct and indirect) and an increase in population and job growth. They do not refer to any indicators of vibrancy.[62]

Even case studies or narrative-based descriptions of the impact of creative placemaking are often centered around economic change. Noah Isserman and Ann Markusen discuss how narratives are important in planning practice, but are often based on data driven models fit for large organizations that track their progress in terms of economic growth. Isserman conveys how funders look for organizations that have clear narratives of growth which are easy to follow. There are 290 billion dollars worth of resources going to American nonprofits, which is not a large number.[63] Therefore, funders prefer to give money to the organizations that can best document and manage their resources and prove the realization of their stated goals[64] with economic evidence. Nonprofits that display "rigorously gathered statistics" most readily receive funding. The nonprofit sector has historically measured growth through the interpretation of Internal Revenue Service (IRS) data: budgets, employment, revenues, expenditures and other data. Larger arts and cultural organizations have more successfully collected and interpreted this data to provide evidence of economic change. They also have a greater capacity to hire staff that can manage and interpret data around creative placemaking projects. Smaller arts and cultural organizations often are overlooked or ignored because they do not have the same capacity to

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[62] "Glencoe, Illinois Writers Theatre," *Our Town Grants*, Accessed Dec 20, 2015. https://www.arts.gov/exploring-our-town/writers-theatre

[63] Noah Isserman and Ann Markusen. *Shaping the Future through Narrative: The Third Sector, Arts and Culture.* (International Regional Science Review. 36(1) 115-136. Sage Publications: 2013) pg. 116-119. http://irx.sagepub.com/content/36/1/115.full.pdf+html

[64] Isserman says that this focus on resource and data management for nonprofits are a result of the free market narrative where funders and fundraisers speak solely in terms of investment and return (i.e. economic growth)

present this data persuasively. As a result, large organizations are often given support over small

and innovative placemaking projects that may, in fact, make a place more vibrant.[65]

1.2.7 Absence of noneconomic impact metrics

Even though nonprofits are asked to show changes in economics, they are not necessarily

required to "prove whether or not they have achieved their social missions."[66] Therefore, arts and

culture nonprofits have tended to fall into a complacent cycle of proving their worth only

through financial and economic "health" when in reality, this cycle does nothing to verify their

social impact, or their "vibrancy."

Because there has been no universally understood way of measuring vibrancy impacts,

arts and culture nonprofits have had to expend resources on viability rather than innovation and

social impact. If we want to give organizations and individuals a chance to have sustainable

funding and consistent projects funded within the arts, I conclude that a new way of thinking

about the outcomes of arts and cultural nonprofit work is necessary.

This section of chapter 1 introduced several definitions of creative placemaking, and

specifically defined two types of interconnected outcomes: economic change and changes in

vibrancy. It also proposed a synthesized definition of creative placemaking to include vibrancy

as an integral outcome of these projects. While evidence of economic changes is most accessible

when conveying impact, it does not tell the whole narrative of every nonprofit's creative

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[65]Ibid,118-121.
 An example of this is when the California Cultural Data Project was profiled against the actual
number of nonprofits, the research showed many nonprofits were underrepresented, because only
large nonprofits of reve $500,000 + were filling out the survey. The actual non profit arts sector
was much more diverse, but data on these nonprofits were not accessible.
[66] Ibid.

placemaking projects' impact. I propose that we must reexamine how we evaluate the impacts of creative placemaking to include vibrancy. In order to do this, we must first find a way to measure vibrancy.

Before we begin to examine ways to measure vibrancy, chapter 2 will offer an overview of the existing models that evaluate creative placemaking impacts to set a foundation for the work ahead.

Chapter 2: Approaches for Evaluating Creative Placemaking Outcomes

This chapter discusses the need to focus on and measure the outcomes of creative placemaking, and profiles major research approaches that evaluate creative placemaking projects. These approaches are not the only ones used in practice, but they are the most common approaches referenced in journals, conferences, and placemaking projects. Furthermore, this chapter introduces various organizations' approaches to evaluate the impact of creative placemaking projects, and practitioners' opinions on the effectiveness of these existing approaches to measurement. The chapter concludes that a more flexible model which adopts an arts ecosystem perspective can be used to evaluate the outcomes of creative placemaking. This model is proposed in chapter 3.

2.1 Importance of evaluating creative placemaking

Evaluating the outcomes of creative placemaking is vital in order to make it a sustainable and replicable practice. Elaine Morley and Mary Winkler from the Urban Institute assert the importance of not only communicating the accomplishments of creative placemaking, but also sharing good practices amongst other practitioners.[67] At a 2013 creative placemaking conference, Anne Gawda Nicodemus, founder of Metris Arts Consulting, offered four reasons as to why it is important to measure the outcomes of creative placemaking projects:

1. Ensure the project actually makes a difference

2. Build support from other sectors through case making

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[67] Elaine Morley and Mary K. Winkler, "Assessing a Set of Indicators for Creative Placemaking: Reflections from the Field." *Community Development Investment Review*. Vol 10: Issue 2. (2014): 49. http://www.frbsf.org/community-development/files/cdir-10-02-final.pdf

3. Substantiate return on investment

4. Have the ability to adjust strategy

These four reasons are important because not only do funders and collaborators need to substantiate the work of creative placemaking projects, but they also need evidence to support the benefits of creative placemaking.[68] There is value in investing and measuring the outcome of a project. Placemakers do not want creative placemaking to be simply another fad for the NEA. Making creative placemaking sustainable yet spontaneous is a challenge, but it begins with carefully restructuring how we think about measuring its outcomes. If we can find a way of measuring results that is more relevant to both the funders and those who are funded, we can then communicate a more balanced picture of impact.

2.2 Alternative evaluation metrics

Before we can create a new system to evaluate the outcomes of creative placemaking, it is necessary to identify how creative placemaking projects are *currently* evaluated.

Currently, some practitioners are measuring the impact of the arts based on general and broadly available data or a nationally collected set of metrics such as Internal Revenue Service (IRS) data.[69] Other practitioners have employed individual metrics for each creative placemaking project, often using local data and individually tailored surveys and observations to evaluate impact. While these methods differ—different cross-sectional data across different periods and

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[68] Anne Gawda, "Indicators, Metrics and Evaluations, Oh My!" Presented at the Art of Placemaking Conference (Providence, RI, 2013), Accessed: September 27, 2015. http://metrisarts.com/creative-placemaking/

[69] Larry McGill, Kiley Arroyo, and Sarah Relbstein, "A Portrait of the Cultural Ecosystem," *Sustain Arts/SE Michigan and the Foundation Center.* 2014, Accessed: Nov 8, 2015, http://foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/research/pdf/sustainarts_se_mich_2014.pdf

with different measurements—most of the measurement methods deal primarily with economic indicators with a variety of common factors. The following analysis summarizes a selection of these existing indices and measurement tools in order to propose a new strategy for measuring arts impact.

2.3 Major existing approaches

Over time, research approaches to evaluating the impact of creative placemaking have evolved. This evolution has occurred because placemakers have different opinions on what should be measured and how these items should be evaluated. The purpose and methodology for each of these evaluation approaches differ, as do the conclusions placemakers draw on the impacts of creative placemaking.

The following describes evaluation approaches from different researchers who have studied and engaged with evaluating the impact of the arts.

Where possible, this chapter profiles these approaches in terms of:

● Methods (of measurement)

● Changes (that were measured)

● Conclusions drawn using each tool (based on the changes that were measured)

Research Approaches to Evaluation Discussed in this Chapter:
● Cultural Vitality In Communities: Interpretations and Indicators: 2006 Urban Institute
● Arts Index from the Americas: 2012 Americans for the Arts
● Creative Vitality Index: 2014 Creative Suite
● Vibrancy Index: 2014 SMU
● Stephen Sheppard: 2010 Hedonic Analysis
● VALI Index: 2014 NEA and Urban Institute
● Matarasso analysis 1993

2.3.1 Urban Institute:

In 2002, the Urban Institute published a paper called "A Framework for Measurement" that first discussed the importance of incorporating arts and culture as a new dimension in monitoring the well-being of a community. Maria-Rosario Jackson and Joaquin Herranz Jr. discussed the needs for a theory based system in order to "anchor material with conclusions that narrative-only systems cannot provide." They also mention how "the arts" itself is a broad term and simultaneously operates amongst other factors, making it very difficult to pinpoint the impact of arts projects. The authors were worried that potential impacts and measurements of social outcomes would be oversimplified and that causal relationships will be overstated.[70]

Following on these discussions, in 2006, as part of its Arts and Cultural Indicators Project, the Urban Institute published **Cultural Vitality in Communities: Interpretations and Indicators**. This paper:

1. Defined *cultural vitality* "we define cultural vitality as evidence of creating, disseminating, validating, and supporting arts and culture as a dimension of everyday life in communities."

2. Used this definition to figure out what data is necessary to evaluate impacts of arts in a community.

3. Developed a set of arts and culture indicators from publicly available data sources.

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[70] Maria Rosario-Jackson, and Joaquin Herranz Jr., "Art and Culture in Communities: A Framework for Measurement," *The Urban Institute*: 2002, pg. 39, PDF. http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/311008-Art-and-Culture-in-Communities-A-Framework-for-Measurement.PDF

The Urban Institute publication discussed the rise of "tracking comprehensive indicator systems in cities" and how the arts should be included in these systems. The publication introduced "cultural vitality" as more than just financial transactions at a specific arts event, rather changes that affect all areas of the economy. The paper presented ways to track these new changes through different types of data. It created a clear picture for future measurement tools to access and utilize new data to measure the impact of the arts. It also proposed that both quantitative and qualitative data on the arts can be collected.[71]

Methods (of measurement):

The Urban Institute, "categorize[d], in terms of usability for arts and culture indicator development, the wide array of actual and potential data sources we have identified" into 4 tiers:

- **Tier 1:** Quantitative data that is publically available and free

- **Tier 2:** Data that is also quantitative and publically available, but able to be broken down to at least the Metropolitan Statistical Area level

- **Tier 3:** Quantitative data that is restricted to a specific period of time or sporadic

- **Tier 4:** Data on qualitative or pre-quantitative documentation and phenomena of interest [72]

Changes (that were measured):

This Urban Institute paper utilized case studies on Seattle, Boston, and Philadelphia in which data from these four tiers were obtained to show how these tiers can be applied. The case

[71] Maria Rosario-Jackson, Florence Kabwasa-Green, and Joaquin Herranz Jr., "Cultural Vitality in Communities: Interpretations and Indicators." *The Urban Institute*: 2006. PDF. pg. 3-4, 8-9. http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/311392-Cultural-Vitality-in-Communities-Interpretation-and-Indicators.PDF
[72] Ibid, 13.

studies were profiled over one specific time period. The paper was not an index to measure the arts impact, rather it was a guide for future measurement tools to navigate how to gather data for the arts.

Drawing Conclusions (based on the measurements):

This Urban Institute paper not only helped define arts and culture in a more nuanced way, but suggests ways to use different data (both quantitative and qualitative) to interpret impact. The case studies showed us a variety of sources to gather this data from, but did not indicate how to gather or interpret the data. [73]

2.3.2 Americans for the Arts *Arts Indexes*:

Americans for the Arts issues an annual report on the "health and vitality" of the arts in the United States. One of its goals is to provide "a common currency of language" for people to talk about the arts in a more informed manner. They issue both a National Index and a Local Arts Index.

Method (of measurement):

Information for both indexes is presented by way of 81 indicators that fall under four dimensions:

1. "Financial Flows—philanthropy, artist income, business revenue, payments for artistic services"

2. "Capacity—artists, organizations, employment"

3. Arts Participation—consumption of arts activities, attendance, experiences"

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[73] Ibid 12-15.

4. Competitiveness—the position of the arts compared to other sectors—market share, how the arts compete for philanthropy, discretionary spending"

<u>Changes (in measurement):</u>

The national index is computed by creating a scorecard that compiles these 81 indicators under these four dimensions, and organizes them in a logic model created by Robert Kaplan and David Norton.

> "The National Arts Index compresses many arts indicators into one number, an index, that is calculated the same way every year—making it easy to compare time periods for the nation as a whole."[74]

The Local Arts Index is also comprised of these 81 indicators under four dimensions. However, within each of these four dimensions "are a series of *factors* that group (81) indicators around similar issues such as government support or cultural participation." "The Local Arts Index looks at the arts in many places (counties)." If one searches a town, they will find a "snapshot" of indicators for that town in a given time period. With these two indexes, users can compare snapshots (national or local) over time to see how the profiled indicators have changed from year to year.[75]

<u>Drawing Conclusions (based on the measurements):</u>

This measurement tool is used to see how the country or county's arts engagement has changed over time. "The Index highlights changes in demand and supply, how audiences are

[74] Ronald Kushner and Randy Cohen. "National Arts Index." *Americans for the Arts*. 2014. PDF. http://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/information_services/art_index/2014-NAI-Full-Report.pdf
[75] "Local Arts Index." Americans for the Arts. Accessed Nov 18, 2015. http://www.artsindexusa.org/local-arts-index

engaging with (and spending money on) the arts and the constant tension between what artists and arts organizations produce and what the public wants to consume." Its overall goal is to be a tool "to stimulate public dialogue about the value of arts and improve policy in the arts."[76] Using mathematical scorecards and county mapping, these indexes show how the arts, over time, have an economic impact in a community.

2.3.3 Creative Vitality Index:

The Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF), a regional non-profit that attempts to "strengthen the financial, organizational, and policy infrastructure of the arts in the West" created The Creative Vitality Suite which incorporates an index called the **Creative Vitality Index (CVI).**[77] This index is a "research-based economic development tool that has high quality data on the creative economy." The tool aims to help organizations and people better understand, collect data, and map the creative industries that contribute to the creative economy.

Method (of measurement):

The data is collected in five categories that all represent indicators of economic change:

- Creative occupations (just looks at $)
- Creative industry
- Sales
- State arts grants
- Nonprofit creative revenue

Changes (in measurement)

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[76] Ronald Kushner and Randy Cohen. "National Arts Index." *Americans for the Arts.* 2014. PDF. pg.i.http://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/information_services/art_index/2014-NAI-Full-Report.pdf
[77] "Who We Are." WESTAF. Accessed March 24, 2015. http://www.westaf.org/about.html

The tool "compares regions using an indexing methodology based on per capita estimates and measuring the growth of creative economies over time."[78] It uses a set of indicators to take a snapshot of the arts in a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

Drawing Conclusions (based on measurement)

The CVI's overall goal is to be a user friendly site to monitor the cultural economy. This tool is most often used by non profit organizations to examine how their organizations' cultural environment has changed over time in a state/county or MSA level. The creators claim nonprofits can use this tool to "tell their story." While there is not a direct cause and effect relationship between the existence of specific nonprofits and changes in the creative economy, organizations can use the creative economy data generated from the CVI to help write narratives about how the arts have impacted their communities.[79]

2.3.4 Vibrancy Index:

The Vibrancy index, created in 2014 by the National Center for Arts Research at Southern Methodist University (SMU), deals with a vital question in creative communities "what factors make up a community's arts vibrancy, and what cities possess them?" To answer this question, NCAR has "undertaken an analytical assessment of arts vibrancy across U.S. cities and developed the Arts Vibrancy Index, a set of data-based indices that highlight metropolitan areas whose arts and culture scenes pulsate with vigor and activity in a variety of ways."[80]

[78] "Creative Vitality Suite." CVsuite.org.
http://cvi.westaf.org/bundles/westafcvi/img/CVSuiteOverview.pdf
[79] "Creative Vitality Suite." CVsuite.org. Accessed Nov 19, 2015. http://cvi.westaf.org/
[80] Glenn Voss, Zannie Giraud Voss, Rick Briesch, with Marla Teyolia. "NCAR Arts Vibrancy Index: Hotbeds of America's Arts and Culture."*NCAR*. 2014. Pg. 2
http://www.smu.edu/~/media/Site/Meadows/NCAR/NCARArtsVibrancyWhitepaper

Methods (of measurement):

This vibrancy index uses "a variety of metrics": dollars, providers, and government funding for Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA). Within each metric, multiple indicators are profiled to provide per capita snapshots on support given to the arts.[81]

Changes (in measurement):

Measurements for each category of vibrancy are taken annually and each MSA is ranked for each category. (ex: Seattle is 19th in arts providers but 134th in government funding) For each MSA, a brief description of the history of arts and culture in the corresponding region is provided. This qualitative narrative of the arts scene gives readers a context for the vibrancy ranking system and helps them draw conclusions on how the historical setting of the arts has affected vibrancy in each of these MSAs.[82]

Drawing conclusions (based on these measurements):

These descriptions and general rankings are meant "to stimulate a conversation about how cities vary in their arts vibrancy and what vibrancy can look like, not to engender competition. Our measures of vibrancy say nothing about the quality of the art itself, or the multitude of community conditions that make a place ripe for creative activity, or data on who participates in the arts, or the revenues and expenses of commercial arts entities."

NCAR is continually doing research on new ways to measure arts impact and engagement. Over the years, scholars have collected data on most all arts organizations in the country, and have geo-coded these organizations and linked them to their communities'

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[81] Ibid, 3.
[82] Ibid, 11.

characteristics and to census bureau data. Through regression analysis, NCAR "determined what the important community factors were in order to understand the factors that drive performance for arts organizations." The NCAR has innovated many tools to measure arts impact/engagement that are specifically designed to encourage and facilitate dialogue amongst cultural and artistic leaders.[83]

2.3.5 Stephen Sheppard:

Some creative placemaking measurement tools are used to measure a direct correlation between the existence of a cultural institution and a positive change indicator such as housing prices or wages. This is labeled as "hedonic analysis." **Stephen Sheppard** writes that in order to have more reliable methods for evaluating the impact of arts in communities, we can use hedonic analysis, meaning we isolate and measure a particular variable. For example, one might claim that the presence of cultural organizations increases property values. This is an assumption based on correlations measured by indicators.[84]

Method (of measurement):

Sheppard asserts that the way to measure these correlations is through hedonic analysis of the housing markets "to isolate the separate impact of artists and culture activities to the value of residential property."[85] Hedonic analysis measures the benefits people attain when living in a community. In this case, Stephen Sheppard attempts to isolate the effects of the presence of

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[83] Zannie Giraud Voss. phone call conversation. November 19, 2015.
[84] Sheppard, Stephen. "Measuring the Impact of Culture Using Hedonic Analysis." *Center for Creative Community Development.* 2010. Pg 2.
http://web.williams.edu/Economics/ArtsEcon/library/pdfs/UsingHedonicAnalysis2010.pdf
[85] Ibid, 3.

cultural organizations in relation to housing values from other factors that may influence housing

values. "Mid to upper tier cultural organizations" were used to conduct this analysis because data

on how cultural organizations affect housing prices were most readily available in these

examples.[86]

Changes (in measurement):

Hedonic analysis measurement is taken over time, specifically over two time periods: 1)

when the cultural institution was first created, and 2) a few years after the cultural institution was

created. From this data, Sheppard suggests we can infer that a cultural institution has made

change in the indicator in a specific area/region.

Drawing Conclusions (based on measurements):

Hedonic analysis is designed to be used to measure a cause and effect relationship

between the presence of an organization and specific indirect benefits, such as property values or

growth in local services. While the point of hedonic analysis in this context may be to accurately

describe how a specific indicator correlates with a creative placemaking project, it does not tell

the whole story of creative placemaking impacts. Hedonic analysis refers to the changes in how

pleasurable something is. However the indicators used in hedonic analysis are most frequently

associated with real estate and real estate values. Real estate going up does not necessarily mean

the area becomes more pleasurable to live in and most definitely not more pleasurable for artists

whose rents go up with those values.[87]

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[86] Ibid 4-5.
[87] Ibid , 9-15.

2.4 Economic benefit versus social benefit

Economic benefit is not necessarily social benefit. While most of the above approaches to measurement have used indicators of economic change to measure impact, some have questioned the value of these economic indicators to adequately measure impact.

2.4.1 VALI Report:

The VALI report was prepared by the Urban Institute under contract to the NEA to measure livability and creative placemaking outcomes in an area. "The NEA initiated the Validating Arts and Livability Indicators (VALI) project to qualitatively validate or 'ground truth' its candidate indicators. The validation effort sought to assess which of the indicators and/or data points 'rang true' to community representatives in their conceptual dimensions of livability, which indicators or data were not perceived to do so, and which ones may require additional research." [88]

Method (of measurement):

The authors of the **VALI Report from 2014 (Validating Arts and Livability Indicators)**, interviewed stakeholders in order to validate a set of 23 "candidate indicators" specifically for creative placemaking initiatives. These 23 indicators fall under 4 key dimensions:

1. Quality of life

2. Arts and cultural activity

3. Economic conditions

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[88] Elaine Morley and Mary K. Winkler, "The Validating Arts and Livability Indicators VALI Study: Results and Recommendations." *Prepared by Urban Institute for the National Endowment for the Arts*. 2014. Pg. 2. https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/VALI-Report.pdf

4. Resident attachment to community

These NEA indicators were then tested in Our Town creative placemaking project areas in which stakeholders discussed how well these indicators described livability, and how well they described creative placemaking project impacts.[89]

Changes (in measurement):

"Qualitative validation"[90] was collected through site visits, day long convenings, and focus groups. Results were tabulated and key findings/recommendations were created.

Drawing Conclusions (based on the measurements):

Most stakeholders said the study described livability well, but it was too large a scope for creative placemaking. Specifically, the use of data describing large geographic areas was not applicable for small creative placemaking projects. The authors of the VALI Report clearly state that this report does not prove causation by way of creative placemaking projects. "Tracking these publicly reported data is expected to provide reasonably reliable indicators of changes in a community's livability. While *such changes cannot be seen as having been caused by the creative placemaking efforts,* they could be examined in combination with local or project-specific data to better understand a project's effects, or they could be used as a starting point for more rigorous project evaluation [emphasis added]."[91]

This was one of the first studies that looked at different perspectives of impact within creative placemaking projects. In order to profile different types of outcomes, economic

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[89] Ibid, 6.
[90] Ibid, 2.
[91] Ibid, 6.

indicators such as economic conditions were contrasted with social indicators such as "community attachment."

2.5 Social impact of the arts

"When we're looking at vibrancy measures we find out we cannot find consistent measures over time in the areas of well being, so it forces us to go into administrative measures. We don't have social measures that are reliable."[92]-(An unidentified participant at the Art of Placemaking conference, Providence RI, 2013)

2.5.1 Matarasso:

The efforts to represent the social impact of the arts goes back more than twenty years. In 1993, Jack Matarasso wrote a paper on the social impact on the arts proposing to help "make the arts relevant in policy and processes."[93] The paper focused on small grassroot arts organizations that made changes to the community, rather than on what the community can do to "help the arts." "The objective of the research" Matarasso wrote, "is to advocate for the funding of participatory arts programmes on the grounds that they can produce positive social effects which are 'out of proportion to their cost'(Matarasso, 1997, p. 81)."[94]

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[92] Anne Gawda, "Indicators, Metrics and Evaluations, Oh My!" Presented at the Art of Placemaking Conference (Providence, RI, 2013), Accessed: September 27, 2015. http://metrisarts.com/creative-placemaking/

[93] Paola Meri, "Evaluating the social impact of participation in arts activities A critical review of François Matarasso's *Use or Ornament?"* Accessed February 14, 2016. http://www.variant.org.uk/19texts/socinc19.html

[94] Ibid.

Matarasso's proposed research methodology was to collect subjective data on participant experience through surveys. Paola Meri criticizes Matarasso's research, writing that it valued "abstract concepts that are not measurable" such as the arts can "extend a control over one's life" or how the arts "can make a community-wide impact." Another of Meri's criticisms is that surveys are (unintentionally) biased questions written by the surveyor that force the survey taker to answer questions in a particular way leading to inauthentic conclusions. Matarasso's research was an important beginning to conversations about the values and the "indirect impacts" of the arts on a community.[95]

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[95] Ibid, 12.

2.6 Analysis of measurement approaches

	Cultural Vitality in Communities: Interpretations and Indicators	America for the Arts: Indexes	Creative Vitality Index	Vibrancy index	Stephen Sheppard	VALI Report	Matarasso
What does this tool evaluate	Vitality	The impact of the arts on both a community and the USA	Impact of arts nonprofits in a region	The level of vibrancy of MSAs across the US	The relationship between housing prices and the presence of the arts	People's responses to indicators that evaluate creative palcemaking's impact	Social Impact of the Arts
Who Created the Evaluation Tool	Urban Institute	America for the Arts	WESTAF regional nonprofit	NCAR at Southern Methodist University	Stephen Sheppard	NEA and Urban Institute	Jack Matarasso
Who is the intented Audience	researchers/planners/arts communities/government leaders	anyone interesteed in knowning the local and national impacts of the arts	nonprofit organizations	cultural practioners	economists/urban planners	NEA, Creative Placemakers in the Our Town Projects	Arts organizations
What type of data is used	variety of national and local	national	national	national	national	local	local /survey data
Does it use more than 1 indicator	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no
Is it an Index	no	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no
Does it take measurements in 2 or more time periods	yes	yes	no	yes	no	NA	no

Most measurement approaches are or suggest indexes using national economic data.

2.7 Organizations' approaches to evaluation use social media

Organizations that are involved in creative placemaking initiatives have different approaches to evaluating impact, and align more with the social-measures methodologies, for example Matarasso's research. Presently, arts organizations around the US continue the effort to make the social impact of the arts relevant. Some organizations do this through mediums such as

storytelling or blogging. For example, **EmcArts**, an NYC based nonprofit, writes in-depth case study reports to communicate impact as well as updating an online resource hub, ArtsFwd, with videos and blogs.[96] [97]

The NEA began publishing online case studies of their **Our Town**

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS:

The team implemented each of its proposed programs and was able to meet many of their original goals. The National Symposium on Arts/Cultural/Entertainment Districts drew 22 speakers from 13 states, each presenting different approaches to designing, implementing, and financing district-wide arts programs. The proceeding attracted 150 attendees, two-thirds of whom traveled from outside the Baltimore area. 29 different artists participated in the Open Walls Baltimore program, producing 23 separate murals throughout the SNAED area. The Final Friday program featured 190 artists spread across 11 different venues, while the Think Big award granted $44,600 to different projects that involved 160 different local artists. As a way to gauge the local response, SNAE also conducted a community-wide survey, finding that a majority of local residents and business owners felt that the programs had positively changed their feelings about the neighborhood. The average rating for Open Walls Baltimore was 4 out of 5.

UNEXPECTED IMPACTS:

What caught the organizers by surprise was the amount of interest that their efforts created. The Final Friday program surged from an initial participant pool of 100 to 1000 attending monthly, and the 160 local artists who were part of the Think Big award pool ended up producing 29 separate projects at 20 different locations across SNAED. The response to Open Walls Baltimore was far more enthusiastic than they could have anticipated. This response includes both the degree of local participation and mentions in major national media outlets, including The New York Times, Washington Post, and the Huffington Post. Many of the programs were covered favorably by local and regional press, including a designation of SNAED as a "must-see" in Baltimore. In the end, the project expanded beyond the coalition's original vision and grew to include many others. Several arts organizations and galleries have moved into the area, while others have expressed intent to do the same. For the finale of Open Walls Baltimore, which took place in a vacant lot in a residential area, Chan reported that over 1,000 people from the neighborhood and from across the Baltimore/DC area attended, which, as she said, "was one of the most diverse and active events we've ever had."

grantees, which were organizations that were given creative placemaking grants and were located all over the US in both rural and urban communities. These case studies are descriptive tools created by the NEA to describe in words the experience of how a community has changed due to a creative placemaking project. In addition to specific information regarding the process, a description of the anticipated and unanticipated impacts of the creative placemaking project outlines both what the project hoped to do for the community, and the extra benefits that resulted from this project. The "unanticipated impacts" are

[96] "Programs." *EmcArts.https://issuu.com/artsfwd/docs/cocabiz_final_may11_2015?e=4472090/12793941*
[97] "Innovation Lab for Performing Arts." *EmcArts.* Jmprint. 2015 http://emcarts.org/index.cfm?pagepath=Publications&id=60056

examples of vibrancy characteristics that the NEA has yet to measure, but finds extremely valuable in telling the story of creative placemaking impacts.[98]

ArtPlace America uses a community matrix index to evaluate the different types of arts' impact (Y axis) on different sectors of the economy (X axis). This framework offers us a way to keep tabs on the arts disciplines and types of practitioners that comprise the creative placemaking field.[99]

ArtPlace spreads most of this research through social media in the form of blog posts and field scans. ArtPlace America does qualitative field research on how each type of art influences each

	Civic, Social & Faith	Commercial	Government	Nonprofit	Philanthropy
Craft & Culinary Arts					
Dance					
Design & Architecture					
Film & Media					
Folk & Traditional Arts					
Literature					
Music					
Theater					
Visual Arts					
Other					

defined sector of the economy to evaluate where the overlaps are and identify which art forms and sectors creative placemakers should place the majority of their efforts.[100]

" As we move forward, we will deploy the community development matrix to more systematically approach this line of work, allowing anyone interested in creative placemaking to discover connections across rows and columns with relevant projects/practitioners."[101]

To support their cases, some artists and organizations are also beginning to use social media data as evidence of the social impact of their work. In Chapter 8 of *Coughing and*

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[98] "Revitalizing Station North." *Exploring our Town.* National Endowment for the Arts. Accessed Dec 15, 2015. https://www.arts.gov/exploring-our-town/revitalizing-station-north

[99]

[100] Jamie Bennett, informal interview, July 15, 2016.

[101] Prentice Onameyi, "Community Development Matrix 2.0," Artplace (blog), Nov 17, 2015, http://www.artplaceamerica.org/blog/community-development-matrix-20

Clapping, Investigating the Audience Experience, **Lucy Bennett** explores texting and tweeting during live music concerts. Through a case study of Tori Amos concerts, she studies how "mobile internet and phones are an impact on popular music fandom. Bennett points out how mobile device use during concerts expand the interested audience/fan base beyond people physically present at the concert.[102]

This focus on social media use goes beyond just artists who want to collect data on responses to their performances. **Gehl Architects**, an architecture firm that combines "people's quality of life and the built environment,"[103] wrote a publication in which one section compares Instagram feed to a ballot box. The publication claims photos on Instagram help Gehl planners learn about the diversity of people in a space and the specific things people care about—without having to ask them directly.[104]

2.8 Problems in current approaches to evaluation

Anne Gawda Nicodemus at the 2013 Art of Placemaking Conference in Providence, Rhode Island, said that most evaluators' efforts have been on "investing in the development and testing of indicators." However, using these tools and indicators does not identify a particular creative placemaking project as the catalyst of change. Observers began to question if these broad indicators could actually be useful to creative placemakers in measuring the impact of these projects. In the same 2013 Art of Placemaking conference headed by Nicodemus,

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[102] Karen Burland and Stephanie Pitts, *Chapter 8: Coughing and Clapping, Investigating the Audience Experience.* Routledge 2014, pg 99.
[103]"Our Approach."*Gehl Architects*. Accessed December 5, 2015.
http://gehlarchitects.com/approach/
[104] Ibid.

stakeholders commented on their struggle in evaluating creative placemaking efforts. "How do we balance the larger national level efforts to develop comprehensive ways to look at this work of creative placemaking with the realities on the ground, where you may be doing something small scale with a modest impact."

Executive Artistic Director of WaterFire Providence, Barnaby Evans, commented on why evaluation matters in creative placemaking:

> "This is the field of arts and so much of what the arts does is intangible, emotional and civic. None of us want to lose sight of the fact that[…] the economic impact, which is only one of the things we are trying to evaluate, is sort of the tail of the larger thing we are trying to do[...] Most of the people who are oriented with the arts part of creative placemaking[...] are primarily interested in the transformation of place, perception, and aesthetic connection and building civic, social capital and all those things. Those are very hard to measure and even to agree with."

> Nicodemus ended her presentation by stating, "This is important work. It's challenging. But there's hope. The more we can take advantage of these opportunities, share, and learn from each other, the better. Try not to discount qualitative case studies. Be thoughtful about how you evaluate. Sometimes you may need outside help."[105]

This theme recurs in the 2014 VALI report, in which researchers queried stakeholders on the validity of 23 indicators' ability to measure the impact of Our Town creative placemaking projects. The consensus drawn was that some of these indicators were too broad to measure the

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[105] Anne Gawda, "Indicators, Metrics and Evaluations, Oh My!" Presented at the Art of Placemaking Conference (Providence, RI, 2013). Accessed: September 27, 2015, 15:36. http://metrisarts.com/creative-placemaking/

impact of a specific creative placemaking project. Participants wondered if it was even possible

to quantify the impact a specific creative placemaking project had on a larger community.[106]

The Art of Placemaking Conference (2013) and the VALI report (2014) were not the first

to discuss the importance of evaluation and the validity of indicators. As early as 2012,

Ian David Moss, a blogger for Createquity, said the NEA had forgone traditional evaluation and

not adhered to the indicator system. He claimed we cannot accomplish the goals of creative

placemaking (growth of communities) without really examining the causal relationships between

projects and their outcomes. Moss argued that "if the NEA claims creative placemaking has a

transformative effect on vibrancy in communities, then why are there no indicators used to

measure this vibrancy?"

Moss said using just an indicator system does not effectively address this impact and:

- ○ "Doesn't give a clear road map for project selection to identify areas where

  investment will make the biggest impact

- ○ Doesn't provide tools to go back and analyze why things have worked

- ○ Does not acknowledge complex economic ecosystems and the role the arts play in

  them

- ○ Provides little insight into how to pursue arts-led economic development." [107]

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[106] Elaine Morley and Mary K. Winkler, "The Validating Arts and Livability Indicators VALI
Study: Results and Recommendations." *Prepared by Urban Institute for the National
Endowment for the Arts*. 2014. Pg. 2. https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/VALI-Report.pdf
[107] Ian David Moss, "Creative Placemaking has an Outcomes Problem" *Createquity* (blog)*,
October 4, 2015.
http://createquity.com/2012/05/creative-placemaking-has-an-outcomes-problem/

Also criticizing indicators, Sunil Iyengar (2014), the NEA Director of Research & Analysis, said, "an indicator at best is an external measurement of change in some value over time, but without context it is value-neutral."[108]

2.9 Building upon these approaches towards a better solution

What if there were measures that could provide context? What if these were indicators that measured vibrancy?

Anne Gawda Nicodemus' presentation at the Art of Placemaking Conference might be summarized as follows: *Creative placemaking as a field is at a time when it must begin communicating outcomes both intentionally and accurately.* The evaluation tools, conferences, and discussions profiled in this chapter are examples of attempts to evaluate outcomes with a variety of data we can capture. To continue building upon these discussions, we can collect and analyze data on the vibrancy (well-being) of a place. Chapter 3 proposes that we can do this by extracting and analyzing social media data.

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[108] Sunil Iyengar, "Taking note: Learning is the New Word for Evaluation." NEA (blog). May 8, 2014. https://www.arts.gov/art-works/2014/taking-note-learning-new-word-evaluation

Chapter 3: Analyzing Vibrancy Through Arts Ecosystems and Social Media

This chapter explores the evaluation of vibrancy impacts of creative placemaking through social media data. To do so, I introduce a theoretical definition for the arts ecosystem, a way of looking at the arts as a complex and multifaceted system. Next, this chapter explores how to evaluate different components of this ecosystem. Federal economic big data has been used to evaluate the economic changes in an arts ecosystem. I propose that social media data can be used to recognize trends in attitudes/behaviors, ask new questions, and quantify various types of vibrancy changes, in this ecosystem.[109] In addition, this chapter examines different social media platforms and ways we can extract data from these platforms to begin assessing vibrancy.

3.1 The diversity of the arts ecosystem

Evaluating a creative placemaking project can be done in terms of a multitude of variables such as monetary transactions, stakeholder opinions, or artistic impact; all of which represent different perspectives on the arts community. To better understand the multiple components of creative placemaking project outcomes, and their interactions, it is valuable to look at creative placemaking as being part of a larger arts ecology. In a video on the National Arts Strategies website, Ian David Moss urges people to look at the arts through a macro perspective, examining how artists interact with not just other artists, but their entire surrounding community. He emphasizes knowing the "supply chains of arts organizations" and understanding "what they have to spend money" on and how they compete and collaborate with each other,

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[109] Reza Zafarani Mohammad Ali Abbasi Huan Liu, *Social Media Mining: An Introduction.* Cambridge University Press: 2014. E-book. http://dmml.asu.edu/smm/SMM.pdf

identifying how individuals interact even in very small ways to create diversity. Moss believes a deep understanding of the arts ecosystem will help in the creation of "smart policies and decisions through which to effect positive change and substance."[110]

The arts ecosystem as a concept has been used to describe the interactions of producers and consumers in the arts. In 2014, Sustain Arts in SE Michigan published "A Portrait of the Cultural Ecosystem." They state, "Opportunities to engage with the arts are supplied by an increasingly diverse range of actors, intensifying the need to scrutinize the fundamental structure and historic position of traditional arts ecosystems within the broader cultural economy." The ecosystem is becoming more diverse, in turn complex. This requires adaptations in the approaches to evaluation.[111]

3.2 The arts ecosystem includes both people and institutions

Ian David Moss suggests producers and consumers in the arts ecosystem are more than just the institutions and organizations. He uses the label "healthy arts ecosystem" to describe an environment where "each human being has an opportunity to participate in the arts at a level appropriate to his/her interest and skill," focusing on the people rather than the institutions. In Moss' view, the complexity of the arts ecosystem includes a range of elements from the

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[110] "How does mapping a community's cultural assets benefit the arts and culture field? *National Arts Strategies.* Ian David Moss. July 29, 2010.
http://www.artstrategies.org/leadership_tools/videos/2010/07/29/ian-david-moss-how-does-mapping-a-communitys-cultural-assets-benefit-the-arts-and-culture-field/#.VwcEuBMrJn5
[111] Larry McGill, Kiley Arroyo, and Sarah Relbstein, "A Portrait of the Cultural Ecosystem," *Sustain Arts/SE Michigan and the Foundation Center.* 2014, Accessed: Nov 8, 2015, pg 8.
http://foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/research/pdf/sustainarts_se_mich_2014.pdf

interaction of nonprofit institutions and big businesses', to the individual stakeholders such as executive directors, actors, and audience members.[112]

While Moss talks about the complexity people and relationships bring to the arts ecosystem, Urie Bronfenbrenner, a developmental psychologist, had already identified and labeled various levels of the *family* ecosystem. These levels lend themselves to describing the arts ecosystem. Bronfenbrenner's model[113] identifies a combination of individual players, relationships amongst players, social setting, and the progression of time as contributing factors when analyzing a family's ecosystem. His analysis can be adapted to the arts ecosystem in order to examine how the stakeholders, the relationships amongst organizations, the social environment, and the progression of time all play a role in navigating and defining the arts. The specifics of how this model relates to arts ecosystem analysis will be further explored in chapter 4 when considering how to visually map the impacts of of creative placemaking projects.

While all these practitioners have discussed the importance and use of an arts ecosystem, rarely have they defined it. In this paper, I will define the arts ecosystem as:

An arts ecosystem is the interrelationships among people and organizations, both physically and digitally, that help arts thrive in a community. It is made up of organizations, institutions, artists, audiences, philanthropists, federal and local agencies, and community members who uniquely and systematically interact with each other to take part in arts exchanges and help new ideas emerge. These interactions range from financial transactions to non

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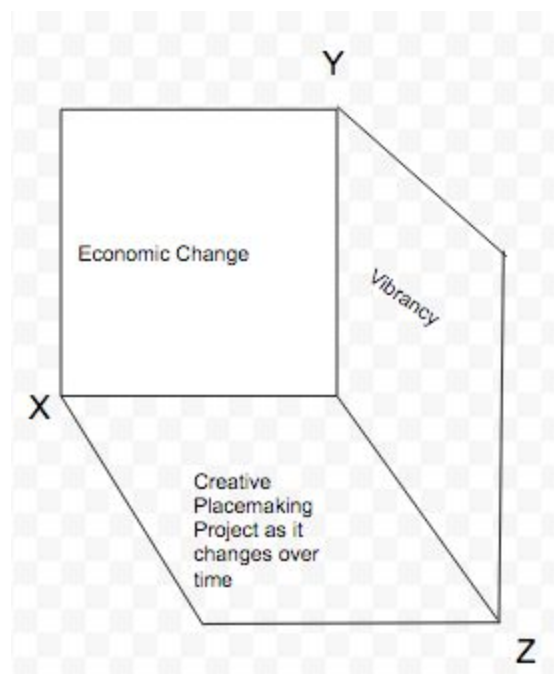[112] Ian David Moss. "A Healthy Arts Ecosystem." *Createquity* (blog). October 27, 2014. http://createquity.com/2014/10/a-healthy-arts-ecosystem/

[113] "Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory." Youtube. March 12, 2014. Accessed: February 12, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5htRhvm4iyI

economic transactions. Interactions can occur face to face or on digital platforms such as social

media.

Creative placemaking involves more than just artists, it includes all types of people,

institutions, and forms of interaction in the arts ecosystem—especially digital interactions.

Creative placemaking demonstrates that the arts ecosystem is complex. The effort to evaluate

creative placemaking highlights this complexity, therefore I propose that creative placemakers

may benefit from a new model of evaluation that will take this complexity into account.

3.3 Considering a 3D model for evaluation

Before I examine how to analyze the complexity of the arts ecosystem—specifically

digital contributions, the discussion might benefit from modeling the complex layers of the arts

ecosystem to create a context for the role of digital communications. I have found that these

layers can best be visualized by examining changes and outcomes of creative placemaking on a 3

dimensional model.

The first dimension is the creative placemaking project itself *as it changes over time*. This takes into account how a creative placemaking projects' intentions and objectives shift at any point—even from a few hours to a few years.

Economic changes, the second dimension, are changes in the economy that are strongly influenced by the creative placemaking project. "Economic change" is an umbrella term for a large number of changes in economic variables such as employment, property value, and ticket sales. In their Our Town Grant guidelines page, the NEA even states job growth/revenue are "intended objectives" for creative placemaking projects.[114] While there are most certainly changes other than economics that occur in this dimension, I will focus specifically on economic change because it is the perspective most commonly discussed by practitioners.

The third dimension in the practice of creative placemaking is "vibrancy," a term analysts have adopted to represent the well-being of a place. Vibrancy, is evaluated by the intrinsic, qualitative changes in the attitudes and behaviors of people who come in contact with creative placemaking projects.

3.4 Utilization of digital interactions for evaluation

As mentioned in Chapter 2, some organizations are beginning to use social media as evidence of their social impact on a community. For example, EmcArts and the Our Town NEA grant-makers use online resource hubs and case studies to share research on web-based platforms. Gehl Architects use Instagram feeds to better understand the diversity of people in the

[114] "Grants: OUR TOWN: Projects that Build Knowledge about Creative Placemaking." *NEA*. Accessed February 24, 2016. https://www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-town/projects-that-build-knowledge-about-creative-placemaking-grant-program-description

area in which they want to create built structures. While many of these organizations are beginning to use social media as evidence of their impact, their use of social media is more supplementary than substantive. *Social media shows evidence of their social impact, it does not necessarily measure social impact.* The next step is to actually create methodologies around obtaining, extracting, and analyzing social media data to make overarching, and more objective conclusions on the vibrancy impact a creative placemaking project has on an arts community.

3.5 The arts ecosystem includes digital interactions

Over 65% of the adult population use digital platforms to communicate and have relationships with people, ideas, and institutions, suggesting that the interactions within the arts ecosystem have become equally more complex.[115] When analyzed effectively, big data can be a useful tool to evaluate the changes in the arts ecosystem. A 2014 paper by Sustain Arts outlines the importance of data in a changing arts environment to help us better understand the ecosystem as a whole:

"For the first time, we are also in a position to employ increasingly robust data to map out the broader cultural landscape in which arts and cultural organizations operate…we can begin thinking more holistically about the sector, as an ecosystem within which individual organizations are born, grow, thrive, or pass away, and examine the contextual factors that constrain or sustain them."[116]

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[115] "Social Media Usage: 2005-2015. Pew Research Center: Internet and Tech. October 8, 2014. http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/10/08/social-networking-usage-2005-2015/
[116] Larry McGill, Kiley Arroyo, and Sarah Relbstein, "A Portrait of the Cultural Ecosystem," *Sustain Arts/SE Michigan and the Foundation Center.* 2014, Accessed: Nov 8, 2015, pg 7-35. http://foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/research/pdf/sustainarts_se_mich_2014.pdf

While researchers and practitioners are gesturing towards using big data analysis to help draw conclusions about the arts, it is important to carefully analyze big data before conclusions are drawn. As seen in chapter 2, many researchers are already using economic change data through IRS forms to primarily analyze economic outcomes.[117] If we are to measure vibrancy, (well-being of a place), we should consider the attitudes and behaviors associated with a place. Data on how people feel and behave in a place is readily found on social media.

3.6 Democratizing public opinion through social media

"Social media are web-based communication tools that enable people to interact with each other by both sharing and consuming information."[118] These tools are used daily by billions of people around the world to stay in contact, share, and spread information. One of the most distinctive factors about social media is that it democratizes public opinion. Anyone who possesses access to an internet connection can now share attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge with the rest of the world with just a quick mouse click or iphone. "Fast-developing technology, especially in the digital media environment, has empowered individuals and other stakeholder organizations to be creators of communication messages rather than remaining as the static receiver of communication content (McClure, 2007, February 26).[...][119]   Instead of being passive recipients of messages, publics are now active enough to select communication channels, especially when they care about an issue (Rubin, 2002)." When using social media platforms,

[117] Ibid, 10.
[118] "What is Social Media? Explaining the Big Trend." *Abouttech.* Accessed: March 27, 2016. http://webtrends.about.com/od/web20/a/social-media.htm
[119] Minjeong Kang. "Measuring Social Media Credibility: A Study on a Measure of Blog Credibility." *Institute for Public Relations*: 2010. E-book. Pg. 2-15. http://www.instituteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/BlogCredibility_101210.pdf

people have a sense of ownership and feel comfortable posting how they feel. When analyzed, there is high potential for social media data to accurately and credibly represent people's opinion, giving evidence of the "vibrancy" or well-being of a place.

Individual users are not the only ones who see the value in social media data. A white paper written by Oracle states, "we are entering a new phase for social (sic) that sees it growing from just a 'marketing' thing to something that provides value across marketing, sales, service, commerce, and more. The growing wealth of customer insights social provides is a major reason why."[120] Businesses and organizations understand the range of information and "insights" the social media world can provide and is researching methods to capture this data themselves. The non-profit arts world is not far behind. A tech consultant with EmcArts stated, "In the next 10 years, nonprofits will have a data management person who analyzes data, especially social data."
[121]

In relation to the arts, social media is a tool artists use to show their work, spread information about what their work means, look for employers or collaborators, or even just dialogue with other artists. The possibilities are endless, however most all of these digital interactions are grounded in communicating feelings and behaviors. When collected over time and in a large sample size, these feelings and behaviors may be exactly what creative placemakers need to show how their project is having an influence in an area.

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[120]Gina Pingitore, Suxi Li Adirana Gigliotti, Miriam Eckert,"The Validity of Social Media Data within the Wireless Industry.
https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.casro.org/resource/collection/E270CC91-6B72-4C37-BCC0-5503CBB66C55/Paper_-_Gina_Pingitore_-_JD_Power_and_Associates.pdf
[121] Brittany Beyer, Phone Conversation, March 12, 2016.

3.7 Social media interactions are evidence of vibrancy

Social media data is "noisy and unstructured."[122] Before one can extract social media

data, there needs to be a way to classify the components/evidence of vibrancy. In chapter 1,

vibrancy was defined as: *the well being of a community or the intensity to which people feel,*

interact, and activate a space. To better understand the different classifications of vibrancy, let

us return to the City of Asylum example.

In the City of Asylum, vibrancy emerges through the various social interactions of producers and

consumers in the arts environment.

- Initially, the writer is a consumer of the safety, sanctuary, and support of the City of

  Asylum

- Because the writer *feels safe*, he/she *feels*

  comfortable and *begins to produce honest*

  art [123]

- Next, people in the city and outside the

  city begin to consume his/her art and

  consequently *feel and react to the art*

- **Those consumers produce responses to**

  the work of the City of Asylum writers.

  They produce these responses in many

  forms, *in part, in social media.*

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[122] Reza Zafarani Mohammad Ali Abbasi Huan Liu, *Social Media Mining: An Introduction.*
Cambridge University Press: 2014. E-book. http://dmml.asu.edu/smm/SMM.pdf
[123]Randy Gilson. Facebook Post. November 14, 2015. Screenshot.
https://www.facebook.com/cityofasylumpittsburgh/posts_to_page/

- **Often times, these responses are** *conveying attitudes* **towards a written piece,** *intent to behave, reciprocal responses* **to the art, or** *indications of support*

These interactions as a whole convey evidence of vibrancy in a place. But, social media can be much more than evidence of vibrancy because it can also create and enhance vibrancy. The remainder of this chapter will focus on how social media can be analyzed to provide evidence for and enhance vibrancy.

3.8 Evaluating social media data

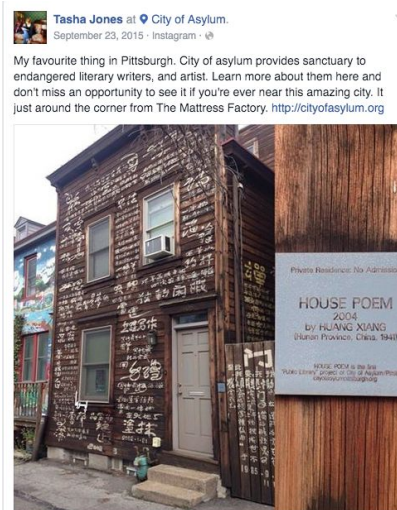To extract the correct data on the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of people's interactions on social media, we need to deconstruct vibrancy. I propose two lenses to measure vibrancy. Vibrancy can be measured by first gathering people's instantaneous responses on social media and then classifying those responses. It can also be measured by analyzing the demographic data of the people who participate on social media.

3.8.1 Analyze instantaneous social media activity

3.8.1.1 Sentiment Analysis

As previously mentioned, people respond to social media in at least four ways:

1) Conveying attitudes (I love this place! #Hashtags, word choice, pictures) [124]
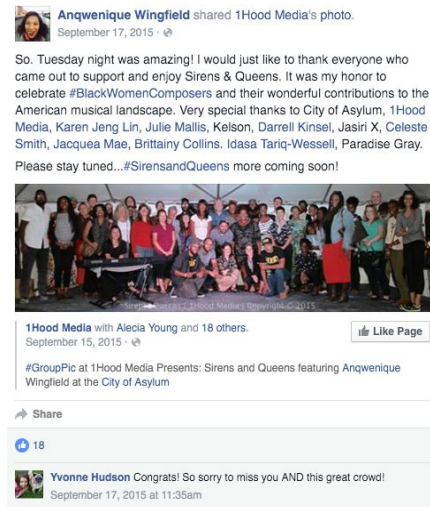

2) Intent to behave (I will attend this event/I'm interested in this event) [125]

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[124] Tasha, Jones. City of Asylum Facebook post. September 25, 2015. Screenshot.
https://www.facebook.com/cityofasylumpittsburgh/?fref=ts
[125] "Art+Retail on the Ave: Proposal Gallery. Facebook Event. July 25 2013.
https://www.facebook.com/events/408177462637190/

3) Reciprocal responses to the posts (This work inspired me to showcase my own artistic

   creation. Look here!) [126]

4) Indications of support (Likes, shares, reposts, photos, geo tagging)[127]

[126] Anqwenique Wingfield, Facebook Post, Nov 17, 2015.
https://www.facebook.com/cityofasylumpittsburgh/?fref=ts
[127] Meera Chakravarthy, Facebook Post. Shared National Endowment for the Arts Post. March
23, 2016. https://www.facebook.com/meera.chakravarthy.3

The above are instantaneous and unstructured, sentiments. That is, there are no

pre-determined set of questions users are trying to answer; rather, analysts are looking at users'

natural subjective responses in and towards a place. *"Wow, this museum was the best museum*

I've been to in New York, everyone should see it!"

These sentiments consist of: attitudes, emotions, and opinions. Recently, a field of

research called "sentiment analysis" has developed around this concept. Sentiment analysis

extracts and analyzes data on people's digital opinions and reactions. This work aggregates

"subjective insights" utilized in multiple sectors of the economy, ranging from business

communities to sociologists. Sentiment analysis can also lend itself useful to the arts.[128]

Whether one is analyzing the reasons consumers are not purchasing products, or how

people feel/react to a policy before it is enacted, sentiment analysis allows analysts to dig deep

into the impacts of a particular place/event. In the case of creative placemaking, analysts can use

sentiment analysis to distinguish vibrancy, or how people feel and react to placemaking projects

over time. "I don't like the Executive Director of the arts center." or "The red chairs designed

and created by those artists really made my trip to the park pleasant!"

Similar to these instantaneous, digital responses, creative placemaking has elements that

are largely unstructured in practice. Because every aspect of the project is not necessarily

predetermined and planned, gathering opinions on a creative placemaking project through

sentiment analysis can help placemakers determine what direction they should go next.

Sentiments can be mined using many data driven techniques. The default way to

disaggregate sentiments is by polarity. *Either you like something or you don't. Either something*

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[128] "Introduction to Sentiment Analysis." Course Slides. Accessed February 2, 2016.
http://lct-master.org/files/MullenSentimentCourseSlides.pdf

makes you happy or sad. However, sentiment analysis can go many steps further such as classifying key words or short phrases to form categories of how people feel. *"I loved, liked, laughed, cried, yelled, or was confused in this space."* Additionally, evaluating the number of likes, smiley faces, tweets, or hashtags, is a way to perform sentiment analysis. These are all "reactions" to a digital opinion/attitude that convey how people feel. Overall, sentiment analysis research is integral to this paper, because it is a data driven methodology to help evaluate vibrancy—how people feel and interact in a space as it contributes to well-being.[129]

3.8.1.2 Richness of social media data

Sentiment analysis is performed on data gathered through different forms of social media, also known as platforms. With hundreds of different platforms to use, ranging anywhere from Wordpress blogs to the Facebook app, analyzing sentiment data associated with a place becomes challenging. Although this paper will profile a few major platforms commonly used by consumers and producers within the arts ecosystem, these are not the only forms of digital interaction utilized. This is an area for future research.

As mentioned in chapter 1, most creative placemaking projects are led by nonprofit organizations. These days, most organizations have their own Facebook account, Instagram, Twitter and even a blog. This section will profile these four major social media platforms and evaluate what types of data can be extracted and how that data can be used to perform sentiment analysis on creative placemaking projects.

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[129] Ibid, 7-15.

Facebook:

Facebook, a platform started in Harvard dorm rooms by Mark Zuckerberg, has grown to be used by not only people but by many businesses. An infographic created by Grosocial shows, "93% of marketers use social media for business." Businesses have free advertising opportunities by creating Facebook pages and groups to engage users. Furthermore, "70% of active Facebook users are engaged and connected to local businesses" leading to "over 645 million views on local business Facebook pages and 13 million comments."[130]

Facebook is a place to share ideas. For example, if REVOLVE is starting a new project in Downtown Detroit, they are likely to post their accomplishments on Facebook. People will naturally respond to these project ideas in numerous ways from liking it, to reposting information about the projects, or even commenting on the plans.

However, measuring Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on likes, shares, and posts is not the only way to evaluate how people feel and respond to places and events. Analysts can now evaluate semantic data on peoples' posts by using sentiment analysis through advanced machine learning or natural language processing tools.

An article from DatumBox, shows just how practicable it is to create your own Facebook sentiment analysis tool. "In a nutshell, we need to fetch the Facebook posts and extract their content and then we tokenize them in order to extract their keyword combinations. Afterwards

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[130] "Why Every Business Should Use Facebook," *GroSocial by Infusionsoft*, Accessed March 14, 2016. http://app.grosocial.com/graphics/facebook-numbers-help/

we perform feature selection to keep only the n-grams that are important for the classification problem and we train our classifier to identify the positive, negative and neutral posts."[131]

Twitter:

While Facebook and Twitter appear to be similar platforms on which people can post, share, and "like," they are often used for very different purposes. Facebook is the space to engage people who are already on board with a cause or organization and have extensive thoughts and opinions about the items being discussed. Twitter, on the other hand, is "considered to be more of a networking platform."[132]

Twitter is used to build brand and awareness for new businesses and ideas. Twitter also limits its "tweets" to 140 characters, so the message one can convey on Twitter must be short, concise, and to the point. Similar to Facebook, analysts can also perform sentiment analysis using Twitter data. Because "tweets" are short and often use slang, emojis, or jargon, the tools to analyze tweets are different than Facebook. "In order to build the Sentiment Analysis tool we will need 2 things: First of all be able to connect on Twitter and search for tweets that contain a particular keyword. Second, evaluate the polarity (positive, negative or neutral) of the tweets based on their words."[133]

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[131] Vasilis Vryniotis, "How to Build your own Facebook Sentiment Analysis Tool," *DatumBox.* (blog). February 3, 2014.
http://blog.datumbox.com/how-to-build-your-own-facebook-sentiment-analysis-tool/
[132] Ronald Pruitt, "Why nonprofits should use Twitter," *4aGoodCauseBlog.* September 15, 2015.
http://www.4agoodcause.com/blog/article-why-nonprofits-should-use-twitter.aspx
[133] Vasilis Vryniotis, "How to Build your own Twitter Sentiment Analysis Tool," *DatumBox.* (blog). September 2, 2014.
http://blog.datumbox.com/how-to-build-your-own-twitter-sentiment-analysis-tool/

Instagram:

Instagram is a social media platform most commonly used for "visual storytelling." Users take pictures using their mobile devices, upload them to Instagram, apply filters, and write small messages with hashtags. Instagram is useful for businesses to share what they are doing without having to rely heavily on words. While Facebook relies largely on sharing past experiences, Instagram is a platform that does not just tell, but immediately *shows* followers what you are doing.[134] Although Instagram does not use a lot of text, its data can also be mined for purposes of sentiment analysis. A paper written by Yilin Wang, Suhang Wang, Jiliang Tang, Huan Liu, and Baoxin Li at Arizona State University outlines how text-based semantic analysis has been researched extensively, but visual-centric semantic analysis has not been explored as much. "In this paper, we study the problem of understanding human sentiments from large-scale social media images, considering both visual content and contextual information, such as comments on the images, captions, etc. The challenge of this problem lies in the 'semantic gap' between low-level visual features and higher-level image sentiments. Moreover, is (sic) the lack of proper annotations/labels in the majority of social media images presents another challenge." The authors propose a new way of looking at analyzing social media images called unsupervised semantic analysis. More research can be found in the cited paper.[135]

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[134] Beth Kanter, "Nonprofits and Instagram: The Ultimate Curated Collection of Best Practices, Examples, and Tips," *BethsBlog*, September 24, 2014. http://www.bethkanter.org/instagramming/

[135] Yilin Wang, Suhang Wang, Jiliang Tang, Huan Liu, and Baoxin Li, "Unsupervised Sentiment Analysis for Social Media Images," Arizona State University. Accessed March 24, 2015. PDF. http://yilinwang.org/papers/Paper158_UESA.pdf

Blog platforms:

Blogs can provide significant insights because they communicate ideas/thoughts in large

texts that may include anything from an opinion piece to a scholarly analysis. Creative

placemakers often use blogs to share stories about what they are doing. ArtPlace America has a

blog in which it not only notifies readers which new grantees were funded, but also updates

people on research methodologies.

> *"We're excited to continue our new blog format: The Huddle. As anyone who's journeyed through our ArtPlace website will see, we have a very diverse group of funded projects that make up the ArtPlace family. But as with many large and dispersed families, it's often hard to connect with one another.*
> *The Huddle recaps conversations where our ArtPlace funded projects and organizations came together to talk through topics, get advice, and perhaps even gossip a little. After each one we will use these blogs to recap the insights, questions, and provocations from these conversations.*
>
> *This round featured a conversation with Joseph Kunkel of the Santo Domingo Tribal Housing Authority's Heritage Art Walk, Nicole Crutchfield of the City of Fargo, Janet Kagan of Art-Force, and Caitlin Butler of the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program on the question: 'What can I do to generate more and better coordinated public sector support?'"[136]*

Not only must analysts look at blogs written by funders, and especially the comments on

those blogs, but also blogs by people who are simply interested in creative placemaking, or the

projects that creative placemaking produces. Common blog platforms that allow for easy data

gathering are Wordpress and Tumblr. Because blogs have large texts, they require NLP and

machine learning tools to collect sentiment data.

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[136] "The Huddle: Public Sector Support," *ArtPlace* (Blog), February 24, 2016.
http://www.artplaceamerica.org/blog/huddle-public-sector-support

3.8.2 Analyze demographic data of social media users

Vibrancy can also be evaluated by examining the demographic data on social media users. Demographic data may include characteristics such as age, ethnicity, zip codes (geotagging),[137]time, and income. For analysts to determine if a space is vibrant, evaluating demographic variety will lead them to indications of vibrancy based solely on the non-sentiment characteristics of people and a place. *How many people in the Pittsburgh area are actually taking part in the City of Asylum events? How many African Americans are involved in the REVOLVE project in downtown Detroit?*

This data, when combined with sentiment analysis, allows analysts to put actual background information (location, ethnicity, age, etc.) to a specific creative placemaking response. *Is the person who likes the red painted chairs in the park from out of town? female? white? employed?*

Evaluating demographic data has great potential to measure one of the objectives of creative placemaking projects, which is to involve a more diverse array of people in a place.

Gathering this data allows creative placemakers to not only know how people feel about a place, but also know what types of people feel what way about the place. With this information, placemakers can more effectively reach specific audiences and get accurate feedback to take the next step in the creative placemaking process.

While demographic data is useful, accessing it is not an easy task. In order to get the most accurate data of/on social media users, analysts would need approval from social media

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[137] Geotagging, or assigning an electronic tag that identifies a specific location, is essential when dealing with creative placemaking projects because the tags allow analysts to gather data on how many people are actually present in creative placemaking project when they are commenting or responding to it.
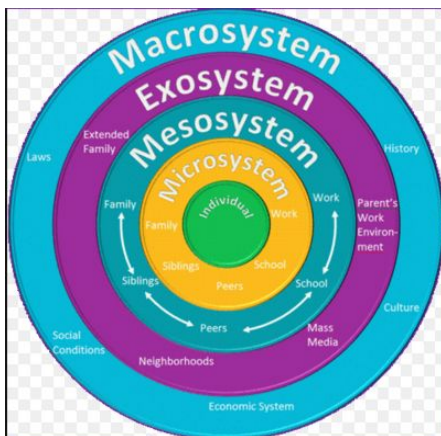
companies to access private data. However, some sentiment analysis can still be done using the vast amount of public data available. Using public data is a good starting point for creative placemakers to analyze the vibrancy outcomes of creative placemaking projects. This is also an area for future research.

3.9 In sum...

This chapter built on a relatively recent image of the arts as an ecosystem, proposing that this ecosystem helps creative placemakers examine their projects through multiple dimensions. While one of these dimensions is economic change, a more complex, social impact driven dimension is vibrancy. Vibrancy, the well-being of a community, is introduced as a new dimension when evaluating creative placemaking projects. Vibrancy is an emergent characteristic in creative placemaking projects which can be represented in numerous forms. Social media is a key way to analyze vibrancy. Through gathering sentiment and demographic data, analysts can more accurately obtain and evaluate up to date information on how people feel about creative placemaking projects as they move along the first dimension and engage with the creative placemaking process.

Chapter 4: Visualizing and Mapping the Arts Ecosystem, the 3 Dimensional Model, and Vibrancy

Chapter 3 challenged placemakers to look at creative placemaking impacts through an ecological lens rather than viewing only the economic benefits. This model allows placemakers to ask questions about how the financial and intangible impacts interplay with each other in a system, and it opens up vibrancy as a factor in evaluation of creative placemaking. *Visualizing* these concepts introduced in chapter 3 will help placemakers both understand and communicate these impacts. In this chapter, I present a visual model of the arts ecosystem for placemakers to understand the interconnected variables that show economic change and vibrancy, as well as other changes. I also create a visual representation of the 3 dimensional model introduced in chapter 3. Finally, I discuss various ways to visually display each dimension to more clearly portray the impact of creative placemaking projects, with a special focus on mapping vibrancy, the most undeveloped dimension in this model.

4.1 Visualizing the arts ecosystem in layers or "dimensions" [138]

Visualizing the arts as an ecosystem is a fairly new concept for the arts. Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (referenced in chapter 3) uses a visual representation that can be adapted to the arts. Bronfenbrenner visualized the *family*

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[138] Dumcho Wangdi, Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, *Dumcho's Notebook,* (blog), February 20, 2015, Screenshot.
http://dumchowangdi.blogspot.com/2015/02/bronfenbrenners-ecological-model.html

ecosystem as being made up of "layers" consisting of a microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem,

macrosystem, and chronosystem. These layers represent, for example, changes in work, family,

mass media, culture, economics, and the passage time as factors that change within an

ecosystem.[139]

Similar to Bronfenbrenner's theory, I visually represent the arts ecosystem as being made

up of "layers," or "dimensions." For this paper, I have created a visual representation of the arts

ecosystem in which vibrancy is tangent to all layers and perspectives within the system. While

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[139] "Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory," Youtube, March 12, 2014, Accessed: February 12, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5htRhvm4iyI
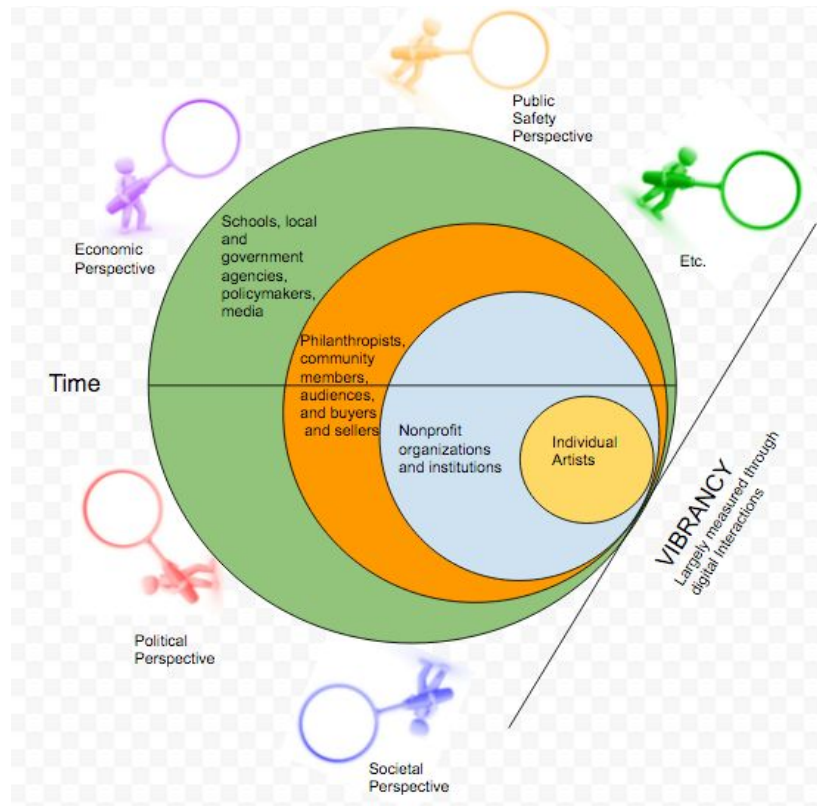In anthropological research, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory evaluates the various influences on human development by analyzing an individual's multiple components or "systems". In his analysis, Bronfenbrenner examines a system's ecology in terms of 5 levels:

- "microsystem" *(a church, a school, a home. places where social agent interactions take place)* (footnote paraphrase)
- "mesosystem" (*the relationships between microsystems. How do school experiences relate to church experiences etc),*
- "exosystem" *(The links between a social setting in which the individual does not have an active role in the context. For example, a father receiving a promotion.)*
- "macrosystem" (*The culture in which individuals live. This includes socioeconomic system, environmental events, values of community that one belongs. Ex: divorce, 9/11.)*
- "chronosystem"(*dimension of time in relation to a person's development)*

In this study I adopt an ecological systems lens to examine specific arts ecologies. In an arts ecosystem, the individual is represented by a creative placemaking project (such an an new arts venue). The venue's microsystem is composed of performers, executive directors, audience members, marketers, and tourists, to name a few. The venue's mesosystem is the relationships between these microsystems, such as financial transactions, networking to build artistic contacts, and interviewing executive directors for promotional advertising. An arts venue's exosystem is represented by indirect changes in its microsystem, such as management changes in the marketing department of an ad agency that represents the arts venue. The macrosystem of an arts venue consists of social/economic/political changes going on around the venue's environment. The chronosystem of an arts venue is constituted by processes and occurrences in society such as ongoing gentrification, the introduction and emphasis on social media use, and changes in the business community that occur during the process of creative placemaking project. The chronosystem changes elements of the system such as the composition of the audiences that attend arts venues.

there are many perspectives through which we can examine an arts ecosystem, I will focus on mapping its economic change against its vibrancy.
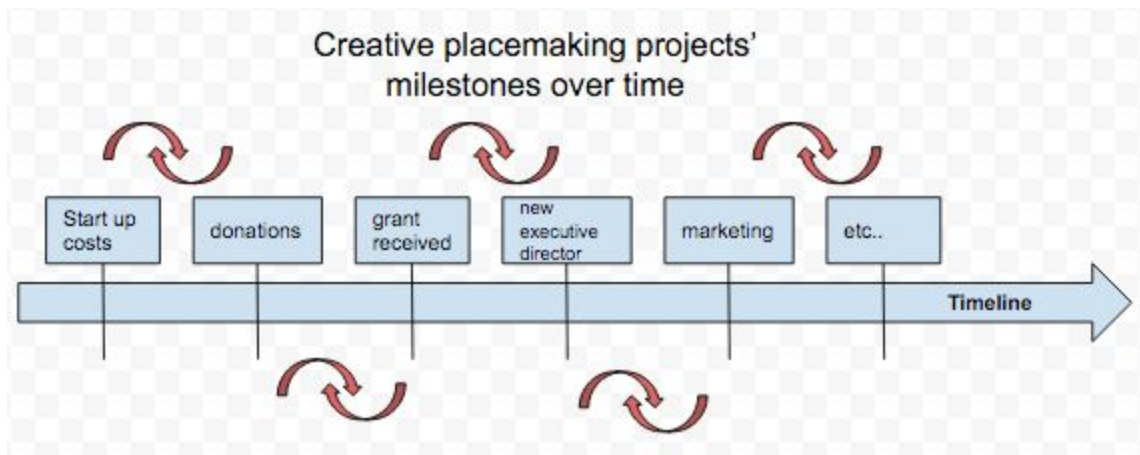
Arts Ecosystem

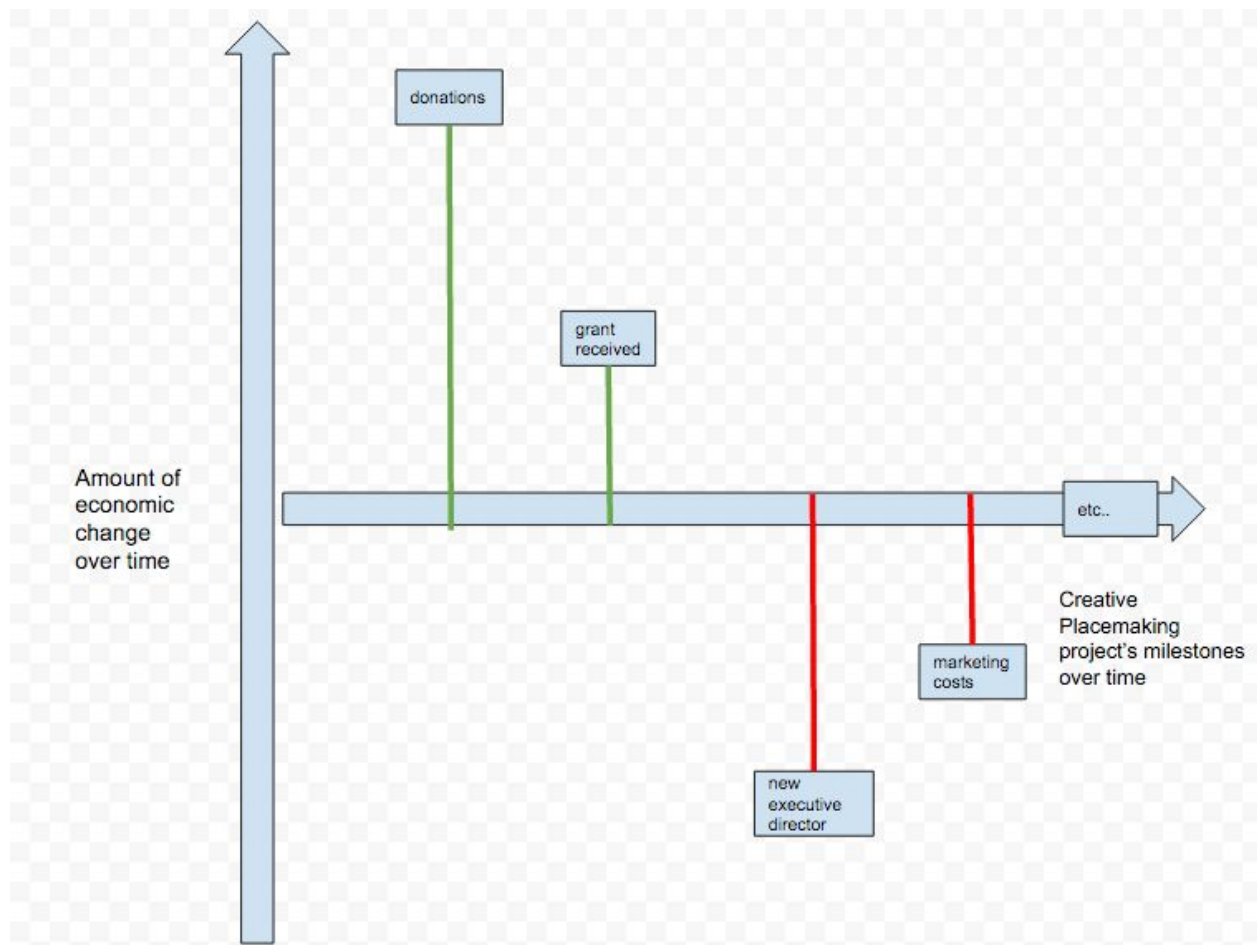**4.2 Visualizing the 3D model**

As discussed in chapter 1 and chapter 2, at any point in evaluation, practitioners may be asking "what is the creative placemaking activity that is going on," "what is the economic impact," and "what is the impact on vibrancy?" They should be able to actually visualize these

changes. The following diagrams explain how the 3D model I proposed in chapter 3 is constructed.

On one dimension, we can see a timeline of milestones in a creative placemaking project, for example, the hiring of a new executive director or raising new grant money. These milestones represent economic and noneconomic events and changes over time.

Creative placemaking projects' milestones over time

In this 2 dimensional figure, the Y axis shows these milestones as quantitative variables. Instead of a line, it is a graph with two variables, one of which shows changes in numbers. This dimension can also show project milestones that are not economic changes, as long as they can be operationalized.

What if we wanted to know what kind of impact we have on the people in the community? In this 3D figure, we see not only the amount that milestones have changed over time, but also how people feel about a place. Now, we are able to map and see that a place may still be vibrant even if it has negative economic change. For example, the hiring of an new executive director may account for negative changes in economics, but the buzz of vibrancy on social media may prove just how positive this change was for the arts community.

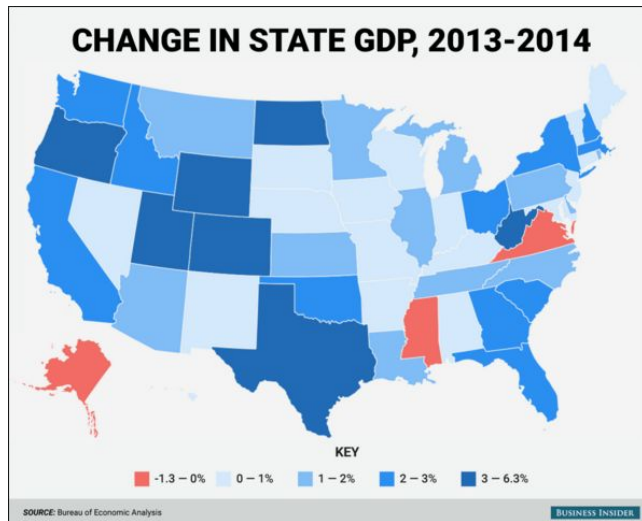**4.3 Mapping the impacts of creative placemaking**

The above figures presented a framework for visualizing 3 dimensions. The next step is for these dimensions to be broken down and mapped.

The practice of creative placemaking is deeply rooted in the concept of a physical "place" where arts and culture are used as instigators to bring diverse communities and thoughts together. Mapping is integral to understanding *where* the impact of creative placemaking has taken place.

The objective for mapping the 3D model referenced in this chapter is to visualize the changes as they occur over time. We may, for example, observe that The Villages in downtown Detroit experienced a dramatic increase in vibrancy indicators in 2009—such as social media responses and intents to behave—long before detectable changes in any of the traditional economic indicators. By overlaying economic change and vibrancy data from The Villages, we can see how the two interplay and observe that the increase in vibrancy may have been caused by REVOLVE first announcing their pop-up retail revolution.

4.4 Mapping vibrancy [140]

We know we can map traditional economic changes over time using graphs and charts with readily available national statistics such as employment, housing prices, revenue from arts events etc. City planners routinely use physical maps to illustrate the effect built structures have on immigration and emigration or income levels of the people in an area. But, can we do this with vibrancy as it changes over time?

In chapter 3, I proposed extracting and analyzing social media data to convey vibrancy. While social media provides us platforms to gather data on people's instantaneous responses in the form of attitudes and behaviors, there are many ways practitioners can interpret this social media data.

We can begin *mapping* vibrancy through social media indicators by visually quantifying qualitative responses. Below, I attempt to put a structure to this data mapping and interpretation.

4.4.1 The process of social media mapping

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[140] "Changes in state GDP," Business Insider, Screenshot, Accessed April 11, 2016. https://www.google.com/search?q=image+of+economic+growth&espv=2&biw=1280&bih=728 &source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiG14DTqYfMAhVJ6x4KHes0AUIQ_AUIBig B#tbm=isch&q=image+of+economic+change+map&imgrc=neJVXJn2WXsJMM%3A
.

1. Ask thoughtful questions

    Before analysts start creating indicators of vibrancy, they need to have an understanding of what the goals of the creative placemaking project are and make sure they are asking clear questions about the data that help draw conclusions regarding these goals. Generally, a creative placemaking project has certain intended goals/results. Some examples are:

    i.   Attract diverse communities

    ii. Increase attendance at arts events

    iii. Connect the business community to the arts

    For example, the NEA Our Town grant application states:

    "Successful Our Town projects will impact livability by affecting community priorities such as public safety, health, blight and vacancy, environment, job creation, equity, local business development, civic participation, and/or community cohesion. The anticipated long-term results for Livability projects are measurable community benefits, which include: Growth in overall levels of social and civic engagement, New avenues for expression and creativity, Design-focused changes in policies, laws, and/or regulations, Job and/or revenue growth, and Positive changes in migration patterns.[141]

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[141] "Grants: OUR TOWN: Projects that Build Knowledge about Creative Placemaking." *NEA*. Accessed February 24, 2016. https://www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-town/projects-that-build-knowledge-about-creative-placemaking-grant-program-description

Sometimes, not all placemakers and practitioners will be thoroughly familiar with the goals of the project as outlined in the grant application, or the project itself may have goals that change over time. This is not uncommon in evaluation. Part of this process is being able to recognize these changes and adapt the questions one asks to the changing criteria.

2. Collect raw qualitative data

The next step is to collect actual data around these questions. First, one must identify the social media platforms that are accessible and are used by the community/creative placemaking project being analyzed.

Next, one must start collecting the data on these platforms. This qualitative, raw data is a wide array of responses people can make. In chapter 3, I categorized responses into 4 general types that will help transform this data into quantifiable and *mappable* terms.

1) Conveying attitudes (I love this piece! #Hashtags, word choice, pictures)

2) Intent to behave (I will attend this event/I'm interested in this event)

3) Reciprocal responses to the art (This work inspired me to showcase my own artistic creation. Look here!)

4) Indicate support (Likes, shares, reposts, photos, geotagging) What platforms are most useful to use when analyzing

3. Quantifying and mapping qualitative data

Once data is collected, it can be made into different maps. For example, one can create a map on how many people

hashtag #REVOLVE in

downtown Detroit and where these people are located. [142]

On the right is an example of an infographic using twitter data on #flu #sick to map the location and intensity of the flu across the US. Different colors are used to code the level of intensity.

Another example, TagTagCity, a Belgium based web platform, "aims to create a crowdsourced overview of practically any location one can visit for leisure, entertainment, arts and culture." Rather than just relying on ticket sales, this data allows practitioners to see who is actually "checking in" and showing interest in attending arts and cultural events. [143]

We can also generate data on text responses on social media. By using sentiment analysis (discussed in chapter 3) we can, for example, categorize who is dissatisfied with a creative placemaking project and not only map their responses, but map where they are located so we know where (or where not) to focus our energy for the next step of the project.

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[142] "Social Media Sickness Trackers," Social Media Mapping, Screenshot, March 25, 2016. http://www.trendhunter.com/protrends/social-media-mapping
[143] "Crowsourced Location Tagging," Social Media Mapping, Screenshot, March 25, 2016. http://www.trendhunter.com/protrends/social-media-mapping

4. Compare and analyze data

Once these maps are created, they need to be analyzed in relation to other factors. This is why the 3D model is so important, because we can visually map these concepts against each other and ask questions such as "what is the degree of diversity in this area in relation to economic impact?" "How many people are "checking into a space" (geotagging) and are commenting about a creative placemaking project in comparison to the number of attendees or ticket sales?" "How did people's social media responses change when a new executive director came into office?"

While I propose an interesting new way to *analyze* and *visualize* evaluating the outcomes of creative placemaking, this model still has a long way to go before it can support decision making in the arts world. The challenge that now lies ahead is to learn how to convert these findings into productive steps that practitioners can take to better their projects and *help* each other with what they have learned.

Conclusions and Next Steps:

This paper introduced a 3 dimensional ecosystem model to map the impacts of creative placemaking projects. More specifically, it focused on vibrancy, the well-being of a place, as a new, and necessary dimension in evaluation. This paper proposed social media data as a key source for analyzing vibrancy and has also suggested how to visualize and map this new method of evaluation.

This analysis is only setting up the framework for future research. This paper is the beginning structure for a larger project on how to evaluate vibrancy impacts in both creative placemaking and in the broader arts world. From here, substantial research must be done in the disciplines of media analysis, sentiment analysis, GIS systems, and basic creative placemaking field research, to name a few. We need to figure out not only how creative placemaking projects are represented in and use social media, but also how people respond to creative placemaking

projects via social media. To accomplish both of these, we must learn to extract data for sentiment analysis and begin using the right tools to geographically map the outcomes.

Counterargument: It has been argued that social media is not used by the entire artistic community, let alone the entire population, and most of the populations using social media or having access to the tools to use social media, may not accurately represent an equal distribution of the entire population. If we are not getting a good sample of the population that represent the intended audiences of these creative placemaking projects, we may not get a good sample of vibrancy.

I would counter this statement by observing that even the least represented segments of the population are on social media. With statistical analysis we will be able to analyze a wider range of people and their responses that we would have never been able to gather through survey data alone.

We can learn a lot about vibrancy by collecting data on people's responses to creative placemaking projects which may be found on a variety of social media channels. But, our understanding of these responses will be strengthened once nonprofits build social media into their strategies. This is an ongoing process.

Creative placemaking is a complex concept that is ever evolving. At the root of its mission, creative placemaking simply aims to turn a space into a place; turning a geographic area into a community where people of all demographics feel comfortable and inspired. Because creative placemaking is an outgrowth of traditional economic development efforts, people have

found it difficult to evaluate its non-economic impacts and have often relied on purely economic indicators or, at the opposite end of the spectrum, narratives to convey impact. In the opinion of researchers, creative placemakers and other stakeholders, both these methods have often fallen short in telling a comprehensive story of what creative placemaking projects do for a community and why people should invest in them.

This paper proposed a more comprehensive way for practitioners to look at evaluating the outcomes of creative placemaking projects. It challenged placemakers to examine creative placemaking within a larger arts ecosystem. Two main types of outcomes arise from this ecosystem: economic change and vibrancy. While traditional methods of evaluation have focused on economic change as the main method of evaluation, this paper suggested that an ecosystem perspective on creative placemaking allows placemakers to see vibrancy (the well-being of a space) as an integral outcome. Furthermore, this paper proposed that we can evaluate vibrancy by collecting, measuring, and analyzing social media data. Social media is filled with rich data on people's attitudes and behaviors towards a place. Being able to collect and analyze this data will present a new perspective on how people really feel and interact with a creative placemaking project. Finally, this paper proposed that vibrancy data can be mapped against economic change and the progression of the creative placemaking project to draw conclusions in new and more quantified ways.

This research represents the beginning of a way to measure how people feel in a place and also alter how we give and receive funding within creative placemaking. With this new model, creative placemakers should be able to collect representative data on how people think and feel about their projects, which is clearly indicative of the project's success.

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