Creative Placemaking as a Mechanism for Community Revitalization: A Case Study of the SALT District in the Near Westside of Syracuse, New York

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Abstract
The purpose of this single qualitative case study was to identify the effects of creative placemaking interventions on the stakeholders of the SALT District in Syracuse, New York, and to explore how creative placemaking may help to revitalize other economically and socially blighted communities. Using the PolicyLink research and documentation framework to facilitate discovery, the researcher sought to understand the effects of creative placemaking on the people of the Near Westside. The participant sample included 12 stakeholders and their perceptions of creative placemaking in their community of Syracuse, New York. In addition to renovating warehouses and creating resident workspace for artists, the inquiry revealed that the initiative has created access to people and services, and it has created income-producing assets. Consistent with other research on the benefits of the arts, agency, self-efficacy, and empowerment emerged as a significant finding in the data. Arts participation and engagement, and representative leadership emerged while crime, as a result of the creative placemaking decreased. All 12 participants felt the initiative constructively impacted the area in some way. However, all of the participants thought it fell short of its promise. This research considered the impact of creative placemaking strategies on stakeholders of the Near Westside of Syracuse, through the lens of that community’s 50-year battle with systemic, perpetual poverty and scarcity. One recommendation for future research on creative placemaking in impoverished communities is to consider positioning similar studies with an eye toward urban thriving and elevating diversity as a value within the practice.

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Creative Placemaking as a Mechanism for Community Revitalization: A Case Study of the SALT District in the Near Westside of Syracuse, New York

By

Carol Dandridge Charles

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Ed.D. in Executive Leadership

Supervised by

Linda Hickmon Evans, Ph.D.

Committee Member

Najah Salaam Jennings-Bey, Ed.D.

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St. John Fisher College

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Dedication

First and foremost, I am thankful to God for life, health, and family. This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Carrie Bethesda Henley Dandridge, for being my lifelong inspiration. Your grace and ever-present faithful guidance abide in all that is good in me. To my husband, Merrill “Butch” Charles, whose pursuit and attainment of an impossible dream gave me the courage to pursue my aspirations, and whose love provided the covering for me to continue this pursuit when the going got tough. To my better angels, my beloved father, James Edward Dandridge, and Grandmother Lillie Mae Crawford—I am eternally thankful to you both for lighting my path. To my dissertation chair, Linda Hickmon Evans, Ph.D., for your mentorship—thank you for nurturing and growing the scholar within me. I’d especially like to thank Najah Salaam Jennings-Bey, Ed.D., for your sage advice on developing my study; my neighbor, Dr. Janet Jaffe, for your example, encouragement, and editing support; and my aunt, Geraldine Matthis, and my uncles, Guy and Alfred Henley, for being you and for always being there. Last, I dedicate this work to my 21-year-old self, I whisper to her memory, “it’s possible, it’s all possible.”
Biographical Sketch

Carol Dandridge Charles is a passionate artist, educator, and administrator. She currently serves as the Executive Director of the Dance Theater of Syracuse, an organization she co-founded to provide pre-professional dance training to aspiring young artists. She attended New York University from 1984-1986 and earned a Master of Arts degree in Arts Administration. Charles earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Syracuse University, where she studied Theater and Education from 1980-1984. Charles completed her doctoral studies in May of 2020 at St. John Fisher College where she attained an Education Doctorate in Executive Leadership. Her dissertation on Creative Placemaking as a Mechanism for Community Revitalization: A Case Study of the SALT District in the Near Westside of Syracuse, New York, was completed under the leadership and direction of Linda Hickmon Evans, Ph.D., chair and Najah Salaam Jennings-Bey, Ed.D., member.

Carol Charles is a member of Bethany Baptist Church in Syracuse, NY, and she is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. She is married to Merrill B. Charles III, and they have three children, Christian Noelle, Caroline Imani, and Merrill B. Charles IV.
Abstract

The purpose of this single qualitative case study was to identify the effects of creative placemaking interventions on the stakeholders of the SALT District in Syracuse, New York, and to explore how creative placemaking may help to revitalize other economically and socially blighted communities. Using the PolicyLink research and documentation framework to facilitate discovery, the researcher sought to understand the effects of creative placemaking on the people of the Near Westside. The participant sample included 12 stakeholders and their perceptions of creative placemaking in their community of Syracuse, New York. In addition to renovating warehouses and creating resident workspace for artists, the inquiry revealed that the initiative has created access to people and services, and it has created income-producing assets. Consistent with other research on the benefits of the arts, agency, self-efficacy, and empowerment emerged as a significant finding in the data. Arts participation and engagement, and representative leadership emerged while crime, as a result of the creative placemaking decreased. All 12 participants felt the initiative constructively impacted the area in some way. However, all of the participants thought it fell short of its promise. This research considered the impact of creative placemaking strategies on stakeholders of the Near Westside of Syracuse, through the lens of that community’s 50-year battle with systemic, perpetual poverty and scarcity. One recommendation for future research on creative placemaking in impoverished communities is to consider positioning similar studies with an eye toward urban thriving and elevating diversity as a value within the practice.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

According to Ashley (2014), creative placemaking is not a new phenomenon, as the arts and culture have been used globally to spur revitalization in disinvested cities for centuries. Art projects, which led to the regeneration of cities, produced buildings, cathedrals, museums, and centers of culture. Art projects have also memorialized in stone the names of the world’s wealthiest families since the 1800s. In the late 19th century, social reformers, civic leaders, and planners championed the City Beautiful Movement, and art led the direction by advancing aesthetic improvements to beautify and modernize decaying cities. During the early 20th century, this movement erected and renovated civic centers, parks, parkways, public spaces, and civic art, and it brought improved sanitation and beautification to cities throughout the United States (Ashley, 2014). Ashley’s (2014) research provides the sociohistorical backdrop and the precursor of the 21st-century ideas about the catalytic role the arts, culture, and creativity can play in community revitalization for cities in decline.

Christopherson (2004) wrote about post-industrial cities evolving into both knowledge economies and creative economies. The knowledge economy is one in which the production, distribution, and use of knowledge play a key role throughout the economy (Hogan, 2011). The creative economy consists of three overlapping domains, namely workers, industries, and places. Each component embodies a unique set of actors and institutions. The creative economy in the United States, according to Markusen and
Gadwa (2010b), consists of approximately two million artists, 3.6 million cultural workers, 4.9 million cultural industry jobs, and thousands of communities.

As a result of identifying the creative economy, opinion leaders and influencers are changing the thinking about economic development. These leaders link community revitalization and economic development to the quality of the location, the quality of the schools, and access to recreational facilities. Moreover, cultural amenities figure prominently in community success; therefore, cities try to cultivate neighborhood vitality in order to attract and retain skilled professionals and foster an economy that builds innovative potential. As a result, regions throughout the United States have developed creative economy initiatives. The success of these strategies depends on their ability to improve quality of life, improve standards of living, and enhance the environment for cultural expression throughout a place (Christopherson, 2004).

Over the last few decades (1999-2019), creative economic initiatives have been identified by many names: creative cities, cultural districts, culture-led regeneration, arts economic development, urban renewal or regeneration, revitalization, community building, city-making, and placemaking (Borrup, 2016). In 2010, as a result of a white paper commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010b), the intersection between the arts, culture, and community revitalization popularized the name creative placemaking. The term became a framework for increased resources for arts-led intervention strategies (Frenette, 2017).

Since 2010, the term creative placemaking has been used to define an arts and cultural community revitalization strategy. Markusen and Gadwa (2010b) are credited
with developing the phrase, and they described creative placemaking in the following manner:

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

Kresge Foundation CEO, Rip Rapson (2013), described creative placemaking as holding the promise of “creating an essence and elevating or assembling a collection of visual, cultural, social and environmental qualities that imbue a location with meaning and significance” (p. 5). Rapson (2012) advanced four principles of creative placemaking:

- creative placemaking should be grounded in a specific place;
- creative placemaking should deploy ongoing community engagement;
- creative placemaking should seek to embrace the community development systems that currently exist; and
- creative placemaking should invite the arts and cultural organizations to actively and visibly participate in the revitalization process. (pp. 4-9)

Creative placemaking unites people and organizations to advance a better quality of life and enhance the social and civic fabric of a community, within a geographically defined area, by building upon local, human, physical, and cultural assets as well as the distinctive local character of a place and its stories (Borrup, 2016). Schupbach (2015) stated that creative placemaking happens when artists, arts organizations, and community
development practitioners come together intentionally to integrate the arts and culture into community revitalization work. A long-term, partnership-based strategy that emanates from a commitment to social equity, creative placemaking seeks to create a strong economic base in a specific place and an improved quality of life for its residents (Borrup, 2016). Moreover, creative placemaking is a partnership-based strategy that increasingly advances the arts and culture as an effective community revitalization strategy for neighborhoods in decline (Rich, 2018). A long-term effort, this strategy necessitates a commitment to social equity for its residents and visitors, and by its makers, a stronger economy is created for any given area or community. An important element of the creative placemaking process is illuminating the identity and historic trajectory of a place (Borrup, 2016). “Ultimately, creative placemaking attempts to strengthen relationships between and among people, and between people and place, building a community where stewardship of one another, and of place is central” (Borrup, 2016, p. 1).

At its best, creative placemaking establishes a sense of place by encouraging public conversation on arts engagement, community health and safety, social and environmental justice and sustainability, and civic pride (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010b). Conversely, creative placemaking is also known to have shortcomings. One noted pitfall of creative placemaking is gentrification. Wilson (2014) stated that:

> What began as a reflection on the shortcomings of creative placemaking as a tool for economic development and its implications on gentrification and community displacement has become a cautionary tale for arts and community organizations
to question and better understand the potential outcomes of working with partners whose interests are rooted in financial profit. (p. 1)

Gentrification is the displacement of existing communities, most specifically low-income residents, particularly people of color. Arts-led revitalization strategies have become catalysts for this kind of gentrification. Moss (2012) characterized this path to gentrification as the “artist colonization process” (p. 9). Moss (2012) said that the arts create vibrant, thriving communities and transform neighborhoods. Although the arts bring people together and foster diversity, creative placemaking also attracts developers and businesses that bombard vibrant neighborhoods and take them over—to the exclusion of the poor.

Artists are often viewed as the shock troops of gentrification; new settlers in a neighborhood characterized by disinvestment and decay. Ironically, the catalytic artists who are instrumental in restoring neighborhood vitality and attracting capital redevelopment investments too often get priced out of the market, and eventually they are driven out of the neighborhoods they helped create (Rich, 2018). Moreover, “longtime residents of transformed neighborhoods won’t have asked for the change,(revitalized communities) and maybe adversely affected by it” (Moss, 2012).

Wilson (2015), in writing about the disintegration of the Intersection for the Arts (IA), a respected community arts organization in the Bay Area in San Francisco that collaborated with Forest City Enterprises (a developer worth nearly nine billion dollars) asserts that the collaboration resulted in a $777,000 award for the 5M project, but it was fraught with distrust. From the outset, stakeholders were concerned about the effectiveness of a project not activated by or inclusive of community stakeholders. In the
end, IA cut all arts, engagement programs, and staff. Wilson’s (2015) concerns echoed the criticisms of arts regeneration projects of the past that lacked the inclusion of the incumbent community cultural groups (Evans, 2005).

Webb (2013) also cautioned that when placemaking practitioners fail to uphold the principles of equity and social justice, they may gentrify struggling neighborhoods. Therefore, before implementing a creative placemaking initiative, practitioners should establish connections and take responsibility for planning for the integration of inclusion and social equity in their projects. To correct the course, Wilson (2015) suggested that practitioners should acknowledge America’s history of place taking. The goal of creative placemaking then becomes an equitable form of artistic and communal coexistence (Wilson, 2015).

Since creative placemaking surfaced in 2010, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has supported 256 arts interventions in all 50 states. The NEA’s creative placemaking investments totaled $21 million in 2015 (Wilbur, 2015). Furthermore, ArtPlace America, a consortium of foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions, has invested over $104 million into creative placemaking activities. ArtPlace was established in 2010. The 10-year collaboration will end in 2020. Since the funding began in 2011, over 200 communities across the United States have received funding. One of those investments was in the Syracuse Art Literacy Technology (SALT) District of Syracuse, NY.

The SALT District, Syracuse’s Near Westside (NWS) neighborhood, borders the Armory Square District of downtown Syracuse. The construction of Interstate 81, in the 1960s, prompted the physical and environmental decline of the area (Animashaun Ducre,
2012; Stamps & Stamps, 2008). Figure 1.1 captures the area around the James Geddes public housing complex designated for Urban Renewal in 1955. These designations appear to mark locations for clearance and redevelopment or conservation and rehabilitation (Animashaun Ducre, 2012). They also coincide with areas designated for construction of Interstate 81, which dissected the Fifteenth Ward, home to 90% of the city’s African American population.

Figure 1.1. Urban Renewal Plan Map. Adapted from “A Place We Call Home: Gender, Race, and Justice in Syracuse,” by K. Animashaun Ducre, 2012, p. 30. Copyright 2012 by Syracuse University Press.

Stamps and Stamps (2008) noted that Interstate 81 led to the disruption and dislocation of the African American residents in both the Fifteenth and Sixteenth wards. When Interstate 81 was completed, 103 acres had been cleared. City leaders stated, at the
time, the path of the interstate had been chosen as the least-disruptive choice. However, 80% of the city’s Black population was affected by this massive land clearance (Ducre, 2012).

Higgins (2014) suggested that over the next 50 years (1955-2005), the SALT District, a diverse, postindustrial, and impoverished area saw little private investment. The Near Westside Initiative (NWSI) was established by Syracuse University (SU) in 2007. Like many creative placemaking efforts, the NWSI was formed in collaboration with the Gifford Foundation; Home Headquarters, Inc.; the Syracuse Center of Excellence in Energy and Environmental Systems (COE); and a coalition of neighborhood residents and business partners. The mission of the NWSI was to use the power of art, technology, and innovation, together with neighborhood values and culture, to improve the quality of life for the residents of the area (Higgins, 2014). Toward that end, the NWSI endeavored to implement commercial and business redevelopment projects, implement housing revitalization projects promoting homeownership, engage in community building and resident engagement, start greening projects, and market the area for artist relocation into the area.

Interest in revitalizing the NWS of Syracuse originated with the efforts of Nancy Cantor. At the outset of Cantor’s tenure as Chancellor of SU, she began to advance a particular vision, which was a conviction that universities should connect into the community beyond their campuses and serve as a public good (Cantor, 2005b). Her interests were informed, in part, by the scholarship of Christopherson (2004). In a presentation on the Creative Campus, in 2005, Cantor quoted Christopherson (2004) saying, “all over the United States, there is a buzz about the creative economy. Careful
integration of knowledge worksites into the urban fabric can reinvigorate urban neighborhoods and downtowns” (p. 4). Figure 1.2 illustrates the location of the Near Westside within a map of the City of Syracuse. The figure also shares the boundaries and characteristics of the area.

Figure 1.2. NWS Neighborhood Profile. Reprinted from: Syracuse, New York website at http://www.syrgov.net/uploadedFiles/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/Content/Near%20Westside%20from%202010%20Syracuse%20Housing%20Plan.pdf

Nancy Cantor served as Chancellor of SU for a decade. She began her tenure in 2005 and consciously sought to understand and explore Syracuse’s history, stories, challenges, and dreams through dialogues throughout Syracuse (Cantor, 2012). Propelled by her vision, Cantor brought together community residents, foundations, businesses, not-for-profit organizations, state and city governments, neighborhood artists, entrepreneurs,
and innovators. These meetings evolved into the aforementioned nonprofit organization known as the NWSI. The purpose of the nonprofit was to rewrite the story and the future of the NWS community. The newly formed collaboration also served to increase awareness of the importance of place and emphasized history and knowledge as a value (Cantor, 2006).

After exploring and actively engaging the broader campus and community, “a bold proposition” (Boll, 2017, p. 2) developed for Syracuse, NY. The proposition was the purchase of an abandoned furniture warehouse to acquire and transform it into an academic and community space. Moreover, Boll (2017) posited the Warehouse purchase and renovation emanated from the goals of the community, specifically the desire that faculty and students increase community engagement, and a desire to implement an active physical and programmatic presence in downtown Syracuse.

SU purchased and renovated the Warehouse in 2006. The Warehouse was designed by SU alumnus, Richard Gluckman (‘70, G’71). The building became a multidisciplinary center of scholarship and an anchor for the aspirations of the SALT District. According to Cantor (2011), the NWS was a struggling neighborhood. She described it as a neighborhood, “on the cusp of revival”, and as a towering visual testimony to a leadership legacy built on collaboration, innovation, and the tenacity to take bold actions in service to a powerful vision” (Boll, 2017, p. 2).

The NWSI intentionally embedded art, technology, literacy, architecture, design, entrepreneurship, law, education, environmental engineering, public health, and public communications, as catalysts for the revitalization of the area. The newly formed NWSI, rebranded the NWS the SALT District (Syracuse Art, Literacy, and Technology District).
Cantor (2011) articulated the SALT acronym as the foundation upon which NWSI aspired to build its legacy to honor the generations that once built the prosperous salt industry of long ago.

At the time of this writing, the Warehouse is known as the Nancy Cantor Warehouse, and it is home to the SU School of Design. Programs within the School of Design enroll over 800 students and employ 45 faculty members to foster the creation of green homes, energy-saving technologies, public art installations, and La Casita, a Latino community center in an appropriated crack house (Short, 2013). The renovation of the surrounding neighborhood followed with an initial 7 million-dollar investment. That initial $7 million grew into more than $80 million in new capital investments in the area (Higgins, 2014). The relocation of the headquarters for King & King Architects, new office space for the engineering firm of O’Brien and Gere, the regional public broadcasting service WCNY (Central New York’s public television station), and the international headquarters of ProLiteracy followed, and they are cited as NWSI success stories.

The purpose of this research was to identify the effects of creative placemaking interventions on the stakeholders of the SALT District in Syracuse, NY, and to explore how creative placemaking may revitalize other economically and socially blighted communities. Using the PolicyLink research and documentation framework as a tool to align with indices being developed by monetary contributors, such as ArtPlace America, to measure creative placemaking impacts (Appendix A), this inquiry sought to understand the effects engagement with the arts has made to the residents of the SALT District, over time, regarding their attitudes, their relationships, and the community conditions. The
rationale for embarking on this research was to glean from the findings to what extent creative placemaking is a viable mechanism for community revitalization for other impoverished, postindustrial cities.

**Problem Statement**

In 2006, a few years before the NWSI was formed, the NWS of Syracuse was the ninth most-impoverished neighborhood in the United States. Over the last half century (1965-2005), the community saw both population and home values decline. The area was beset with a shrinking tax base, high crime, profound disinvestment, and low-performing schools. The homeowner occupancy rate was as low as 16%, and the area was home to 200 vacant parcels of hollowed-out industrial, residential, and commercial buildings as well as 83 vacant and boarded-up residential structures, and over 500,000 square feet of abandoned warehouse and manufacturing facilities. The 2000 U.S. Census captured the median household income at that time at $12,428 annually, and the neighborhood’s poverty rate was at 52% (Short, 2013).

Moreover, Syracuse is considered one of the worst cities to live in for African Americans, which is due to factors such as residential racial segregation, disparate income levels, lack of education, homeownership status, perpetual poverty, incarceration levels, and mortality (Comen & Sauter, 2017). Figure 1.3 illustrates housing designations set forth in 1937 that succeeded in herding minority populations into redlined areas.
Concerning its people, these statistics reveal that 41,710 Syracuse residents lived in poverty, which includes 47% of the city’s children under age 18. In the year 2000, nine Syracuse census tracts (Figure 1.4) were identified as impoverished; that figure rose to 30 tracts in 2015.
Wilbur (2015) postulated that the emergence of creative placemaking is promoting longstanding artistic practices, and it is emanating, in part, from a reaction to scarcity in the United States. Wilbur (2015) also suggested that creative placemaking proposes outcomes that seek to address inequality, and that it expands the role of artists in society. Research reveals that scarcity and living in extremely poor conditions cause harm, especially to children (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). Neighborhoods that face such extreme poverty need solutions that foster access to education and economic opportunity (Jargowsky, 2016).

As interest and investments in creative placemaking efforts grow, a concurrent interest is growing that focuses on measuring effective creative placemaking practices. Scholars, philanthropists, and practitioners have defined creative placemaking and sought to find empirical research to advance the arts-and-cultural strategy and its role in society.
According to Moss (2012), creative placemaking has a problem with measuring outcomes. Measuring outcomes poses a significant challenge because of the sheer variety of funded projects across the country. According to Redaelli (2016), there is a need for empirical studies among grant-making institutions. Building consensus on what to measure is also a considerable challenge. “We can’t accomplish the goal of advancing the understanding of how creative placemaking strategies can strengthen communities without digging more deeply into causal relationships” (Moss, 2012, p. 4).

According to Moss (2012), measurements are essential and should be “grounded in a clear and rigorous conceptual frame. Without a clear conceptual framework, creative placemaking projects can be successful projects but fail to move the needle on community revitalization in meaningful ways” (p. 4). Moss (2012) held that these measurements should be generalizable across purposes, methodologies, geographies, and other factors. While this study does not focus on the measurement debate, it does use a guiding research tool developed by ArtPlace and PolicyLink to align with an existing creative placemaking research framework.

ArtPlace is a consortium of foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions dedicated to positioning arts and culture as a central sector of community planning and development. ArtPlace selected PolicyLink to lead the research components of its community development initiatives in 2015. PolicyLink advances economic and social equity policies that affect low-income communities and communities of color. Together, ArtPlace and PolicyLink developed a research framework that began the conversation to measure the impact of creative placemaking practices on communities that receive support from ArtPlace.
Cities in the United States are in crisis (Florida, 2017), for various reasons and to various effects. In some areas of the country, the financial decline may be due to global trade and an emphasis on the tech economy, such is the case in the Northeast Region of the United State, with the decline of manufacturing jobs, according to Markusen & Gadwa (2010a).

For some people, the word poverty is about more than a person’s scarce financial circumstances. According to Erickson, Reid, Nelson, O’Shaughnessy, & Berube (2008), “poverty connotes places as well as people” (p. 3). Areas of concentrated poverty are causing once-thriving American cities to crumble socioeconomically and politically, leading to blight and thus a deeper level of poverty. Decaying infrastructure, high unemployment rates, underemployment, community disinvestment, mass incarceration, racial isolation, and social injustice are symptomatic of high poverty areas. These symptoms are the manifestation of extreme disadvantage over decades (Massey, 1990). The economic stress and distress in these cities were exacerbated by the Great Recession of 2008 (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010b).

Postindustrial cities and urban communities have growing pockets of concentrated poverty (Florida, 2017). Syracuse, NY, and cities like it that once flourished as manufacturing hubs, are seeking new economies and solutions to advance community revitalization. One of the many solutions community leaders in Syracuse have used to promote revitalization is creative placemaking. This study examined the revitalization efforts implemented in the SALT District and what those efforts may have to offer a tactical revitalization plan for other impoverished cities and communities.
Theoretical Rationale

As a theory of economic development, Florida’s (2003) creative capital theory posits that the presence and activities of artists in a region (in tandem with the co-presence of technology and tolerance) are related to positive economic outcomes; in the 10-year anniversary edition of The Rise of the Creative Class, Florida (2012, 2017) used new statistical analyses to restate this case. According to Florida (2012), “It is an empirical fact that the arts, design, and entertainment occupations are among the most important contributors to regional income and wealth” (Frenette, 2017, p. 336).

Florida’s (2003) creative capital theory informs this research. Florida’s (2003) theory advances the position that regional economic growth is driven by the geographic location choices of creative people who are the holders of creative capital. He further advanced that competitive advantage stems from creativity, initiative, design, technological skills, and the ability to be nimble and responsive to change (Florida, 2003).

Florida’s (2003) creative capital theory advances the role of place as an incubator of innovation and creativity. Florida (2003) derived the creative capital theory from Jane Jacob’s (1961) seminal work, which asserted that attracting creative people to a city will spur economic growth. Jacobs (1961) gained renown in her life as a writer and activist who rallied against urban renewal and organized grassroots efforts to protect neighborhoods. Florida (2012) also looked to William Whyte, a sociologist who studied people in public spaces. As a result of their writings on the subject, Whyte and Jacobs became central to the early discussions on placemaking. According to Florida (2012), “Whyte’s work lamented the rise of organizational society and the alienation, isolation,
and conformity it engendered. Jacob’s work showed the possibility of an alternative setting where difference, nonconformity, and creativity could thrive” (p. 29).

Florida’s (2003) theory evolved from empirical evidence that place and community are more important than ever before, as catalysts to economic development and community revitalization. In the economy of the 21st century, creativity and place spurred by creatives are vital components within a toolbox of items that fosters economic development.

Florida’s (2005) research asserts that “creative people power regional economic growth, and these people prefer places that are innovative, diverse, and tolerant” (p. 34). Florida (2003) categorized these people as “the creative class” (p. 8). Scientists, artists, poets, university professors, architects, designers, thought leaders, and writers’ researchers and analysts are included in what he extols as the “super-creative core.” Florida (2012) expanded this core group to include other creative professionals in high-tech occupations, legal and healthcare professionals, and those in business and financial services. Florida (2012) numbered these individuals at 38.3 million, constituting 30% of the workforce in the United States at the turn of the 21st century. These people are moving to places Florida (2012) called creative centers. These creative centers have become the economic winners of our age. These cities are winning because creatives want to live there. To understand these outcomes, as a result of the new economic geography of creativity and its effects, he proposed we consider the 3Ts of economic development: technology, talent, and tolerance (Florida, 2003).

Florida’s (2003) early research asserted, and then demonstrated, that economic growth is powered by concentrations of people who are highly educated. His research
specifically looked at the relationships between talent and technology clusters of educated and creative people and concentrations of innovation and high-tech industry. In 2002, Florida found that innovation and high-tech industry rely on concentrations of creative talent in a region. The creative capital theory says that technology, talent, and tolerance drive regional economic development growth. Florida (2003) advanced a lively cultural life sustained by established arts and cultural institutions, as well as a cultural life that promotes innovation and change as a tested strategy to advance revitalization in cities.

According to Christopherson (2004), the creative economy is organized around quality and depth of skills. The ability of workers to learn new skills and build their capacity to innovate advances economic development, driving innovation and thought in vital cities. According to Florida (2012), successful and vital cities are characterized by technology, talent, and tolerance.

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this research was to identify the effects of creative placemaking interventions on the stakeholders of the SALT District in Syracuse, NY, and to explore how creative placemaking may revitalize other economically and socially blighted communities.

**Research Questions**

This study sought to answer the following research questions as the pertain to creative placemaking strategies in the SALT District:
1. How do Near Westside stakeholders experiencing community transformation through creative placemaking strategies perceive the changes happening in their neighborhood?

2. What changes have occurred in the community as a result of the arts and cultural strategy implemented by the Near Westside Initiative, and has the initiative directly benefited or harmed low-income neighborhood residents or area businesses?

3. What can creative placemaking outcomes, and stakeholders in the SALT District of the Near Westside of Syracuse, tell us about creative placemaking as a mechanism for community revitalization in general?

**Potential Significance of the Study**

The NWSI sought to transform the community reputation of the SALT District by reimagining and rebranding the neighborhood (Rich, 2018). Creative placemaking, a gift of the muse (McCarthy, Ondaatje, Zakaras, & Brooks, 2004), is an art-encompassing tool that unites an unprecedented coalition of artists, civic leaders, institutional investors, and citizens toward the advancement of civic, social, economic, and environmental goals (Wilbur, 2015). From 2006-2014 the NWS of Syracuse, rebranded the SALT District, utilized creative placemaking strategies to leverage resources that succeeded in bringing $80 million in new investments to the NWS, one of the most impoverished, disinvested areas in the nation (Higgins, 2014).

In 2017, Syracuse, NY, tied for the nineth poorest city in the nation. In 2015, Syracuse poverty rates also showed the highest concentrations of poverty among African Americans (Jargowsky, 2015). Declining neighborhoods are adopting arts and culture-
based development in their revitalization strategies. As a result, the arts districts are proliferating in many cities and the urban neighborhoods within them have been reimagined (Rich, 2018).

This single, qualitative case study of the SALT District of Syracuse, NY, explored the effects of creative placemaking interventions on the perceptions of stakeholders with an eye to its efficacy, transferability, and pitfalls, to revitalize other economically and socially blighted communities. According to Borrup (2016) the stories of the people and their experiences of creative placemaking in their community are of significance and should be heard and not forgotten. Investigating how the arts and cultural revitalization strategies affect people within a community, given that millions of taxpayer dollars are utilized, may provide empirical evidence that creative placemaking strategies improve community livability in a meaningful way.

Definitions of Terms

The terms that follow are utilized throughout the text to explicate meaning of their usage within a creative placemaking context. The meanings of these words in this context are defined below.

*Actors* – a participant in an action or process.

*ArtPlace America (ArtPlace)* – founded in 2011, represents a 10-year collaboration among foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions purposed to position the arts and culture as a core sector of community planning and development.

*Creatives* – people with a never-ending, intense desire to produce based on originality of thought, expression, etc., that impact nearly every aspect of their lives, both in negative and positive ways (Urban Dictionary, n.d.). Scientists, artists, poets,
university professors, architects, designers, thought leaders, writers, researchers, and analysts are creatives (Florida, 2003).

Disinvestment – the withdrawing or lack of funding; the opposite of capital expenditures.

Place – the personality and identity of a geographical area or location. Places are spaces with meaning (Cilliers & Timmermans, 2014). A “place can be referred to as social space, where the environment is perceived through different senses and where perception is influenced by experiences, connecting a meaning to the environment” (Sentürk & Kovacheva, 2009, p. 10).

Redlining – a home finance system that disproportionately targets low-income urban residents and racial minorities in specific geographic areas. It was a rating system that promoted exclusion and or higher rates for specific borrowers based on potential risks of mortgage default. “Areas determined to have higher risk neighborhoods became synonymous with areas populated by racial and ethnic minorities. This rating system influenced housing initiatives under the Federal Housing Administration and the Veteran’s Administration” (Animashaun Ducre, 2012, p. 31).

Chapter Summary

Creative placemaking emerged as a national cultural policy in America as both a response and a reaction to scarcity. It became a national cultural policy when the NEA began to prioritize economic development initiatives over organizational projects and funding to individual artists (Rushton, 2015). Creative placemaking and other arts’ economic development strategies have been deployed as a mechanism for community revitalization (Frenette, 2017). Research on creative placemaking suggests that it is a
useful tool in community revitalization (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010b), and it has been for well over a century (Ashley, 2014).

The practice and implementation of creative placemaking are reshaping economic development initiatives in low-income communities across the United States (Redaelli, 2016). In 2007, SU formed the NWSI under the premise that the arts and neighborhood culture can unite to create a revitalized community with the commitment of an anchor institution (Higgins, 2014).

During the tenure of Chancellor Nancy Cantor, SU embarked on a creative placemaking initiative in the SALT District that sparked $80 million in investment (Higgins, 2014), including a $400,000 grant from ArtPlace. What is not known is the effect these interventions have had on the stakeholders of the NWS of Syracuse and its potential for transferability. This research asked SALT District stakeholders, after the intervention, about their experiences of creative placemaking in their community, post-intervention.

Chapter 2 provides a literature review of creative placemaking initiatives across the country. The literature review includes foundational studies by leading scholars in the field. The reviews are categorized under the following headings:

- Foundational Studies,
- Creative Placemaking as a Mechanism for Community Revitalization, and
- Creative Placemaking as a catalyst for Social Justice and Community Well-being.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the single, qualitative case study research methodology used in this study. A summary of the results of the research findings that
emerged are presented in Chapter 4. A discussion and analysis of the research findings is discussed in Chapter 5.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

Postindustrial cities seeking resurgence are utilizing creative placemaking, an arts and culture-based development strategy, to revitalize communities and sluggish economies (Rich, 2018). Rich (2018) asserted that reimagining urban neighborhoods into arts and entertainment districts has received state and national sponsorship and support since the latter part of the 1990s. According to Rich (2018), these districts are proliferating in cities around the world because of the promise of revitalization. Vazquez (2012) stated, “the value of creative placemaking is as much in the doing as in what is done” (p. 4), meaning creative placemaking’s strength as a mechanism for community revitalization is due largely to the processes that lead to the outcomes.

The tenets of creative placemaking have emerged as a national cultural policy (Redaelli, 2016). Communities across the United States benefit from hundreds of millions of dollars in targeted funding from national sources for creative placemaking initiatives. Since 2010, the arts investors have emphasized economic development initiatives over individual artists or organizational projects once based solely on artistic merit (Rushton, 2015).

Syracuse, NY, has an enormous problem with systemic poverty. Reasons for systemic poverty in Syracuse include segregation, discriminatory lending practices, redlining, and inequities in housing policies that geographically separate Blacks and Whites (Comen & Sauter, 2017). Ashley (2014) suggested that creative placemaking has,
in some cases, ushered in economic development, community resurgence, livability, and well-being in communities around the globe. Under the leadership of Nancy Cantor, then Chancellor of SU, creative placemaking was implemented on the NWS of Syracuse, which was considered the ninth poorest neighborhood in the country in 2007. The strategy brought over $80 million in investments to the area.

The goal of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive review of the literature on creative placemaking, particularly its impact in disinvested communities. This chapter explores studies that speak to the benefits of creative placemaking for economic development, as well as studies that highlight the arts and the cultural effects on community well-being. This literature review includes foundational studies by leading scholars in the field, and it is categorized under the following headings: Foundational Studies, Creative Placemaking and Community Revitalization, and Creative Placemaking, Community Well-being and Social Justice. Research in the area of creative placemaking is fairly new and evolving. As a result, existing studies in this area are limited. The purpose of this research was to identify the effects of creative placemaking interventions on the stakeholders of the SALT District in Syracuse, NY, and to explore how creative placemaking may revitalize other economically and socially blighted communities.

**Foundational Studies**

Foundational scholarship on creative placemaking includes two studies by Markusen and Gadwa published in 2010. Markusen and Gadwa’s (2010a, 2010b) research findings in both studies show that arts and cultural strategies make substantial contributions to local economies, development, livability, and cultural industry.
competitiveness. Prior to their foundational study on creative placemaking, Markusen and Gadwa (2010a) conducted a systematic review of empirical research articles about the arts and culture as an urban revitalization tool. The purpose of that study was to review the causal relationship between arts and cultural activity and economic development at that point in time. The study was conducted to assist local governments and communities by providing guidelines for cultural planning on the local level to optimize public investments in cultural districts or a tourist-targeted cultural investment strategy (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010a).

The research design of that study was a qualitative mixed-methods review of existing research over a 10-year period from 1999-2009. The researchers conducted interviews with city cultural planners and policymakers in the United States and Europe to understand the relationships between the arts and economic development. They also collected cultural policy case studies from cities of varying sizes. The analysis focused on the common independent variables advancing creative city initiatives such as quality of life, employment, arts-related businesses, crime rates, home sales, and the number of registered voters.

Markusen and Gadwa (2010a) used existing studies to evaluate norms between the arts and culture and economic development. The norms included economic impacts, regenerative impacts, and cultural impacts. According to Markusen and Gadwa (2010a) these impacts include community livability including community beautification; increased public safety; improvements in environmental quality; increased housing affordability and workplace opportunities for creative workers, and increased collaboration between potential community partners in civic, nonprofit, and government
spheres. Their findings included the determination that clustering arts within localities or specific neighborhoods may be more equitable and cost-efficient than creating a cultural district. The Markusen and Gadwa (2010a) study recommended subsequent research in the area of creative placemaking.

The Markusen and Gadwa’s (2010b) white paper, commissioned by NEA in partnership with the United States Conference of Mayors and the American Architectural Foundation, however, cemented creative placemaking as a national cultural policy. Markusen and Gadwa (2010b) reviewed over 100 case studies of creative placemaking projects. Their study examined placemaking infused by the arts and culture and their contributions to community livability, economic revitalization and resurgence, arts entrepreneurship, and other arts industries. The study highlights 14 exemplary cases of creative placemaking and uncovered several components in successful placemaking initiatives. Markusen and Gadwa (2010a) looked first at arts and cultural contributions as place makers. They found several common denominators among exemplars of arts and cultural revitalization strategies, namely:

• Creative Initiators – typically one influencer or influential small group with a vision.
• Design Around Distinctiveness – projects build upon existing distinctiveness of place.
• Mobilizing Public Will – good placemaking initiatives galvanize public support.
• Garnering Private Sector Support – facilitators typically include developers, civic leaders, and philanthropists.
• Securing Arts Community – Engagement of significant commitment of local arts community time talent and treasure.

• Building Partnerships – Encompasses creative initiators, civic leaders, artists, business leaders, and arts organizations (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010a).

Markusen and Gadwa (2010a) found a critical aspect of successful creative placemaking initiatives is the fostering of projects that serve people living and working within the community seeking a cultural infusion. According to Markusen and Gadwa (2010a) in the mid-1980s, some states, cities, and towns began turning to cultural planning as an economic and community development, revitalization strategy. In the 2000s, this interest burgeoned with many communities commissioning cultural plans and cultural districts, seeking to expand cultural capacity.

Creative placemaking contrasts with the arts intervention strategies that have an outward focus, such as community festivals and events that attract tourists or people from outside the area. Creative placemaking is, in some instances, a grass roots, community-driven endeavor led by a creative initiator who builds social capital within a diverse community. Other notable findings see creative placemaking to be both equitable and sustainable with measurable gains in the economic sphere regarding job creation and livability. As a result of the research of Markusen and Gadwa (2010b), creative placemaking now informs grantmaking by the NEA through its Our Town grant program. Moreover, creative placemaking informs the arts and culture investments of the Kresge Foundation and ArtPlace America (Frenette, 2017). As a result, significant monetary resources have been directed to communities across the United States. Many of these initiatives target low-income areas with the specific goal of promoting economic
development. Between 2010 and 2019, the NEA awarded $30 million to 389 arts organizations through its Our Town projects, and as of 2017, ArtPlace granted 262 projects totaling $96 million.

The research of Markusen and Gadwa (2010a, 2010b) has advanced our understanding of what is possible in the realm of community revitalization within a creative economy. When factors such as strong artistic initiators and the commonalities of exemplar creative placemaking initiative elements align, artists, practitioners, and local governments are advancing creative placemaking projects as a catalyst for community revitalization in their cities. In addition to Markusen and Gadwa (2010a, 2010b), scholars, such as Rich (2018), Stern (2014), Borrup (2016), and Vazquez (2012), studied similar cases of creative placemaking. The application of the arts and cultural intervention strategies are different and as diverse as the communities in which they are implemented. As these scholars sought to measure outcomes, they were looking at causal relationships, making comparisons, and assessing juxtaposed against the value of expenditures.

The University of Pennsylvania’s Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP) research studies spanned from 1994-2018. SIAP, led by scholars Mark J. Stern and Susan C. Seifert, has endeavored to study the impact of culture and the arts on community change since 1994, with an emphasis on neighborhood revitalization, belonging, and community well-being. SIAP uses social research and qualitative investigation to develop empirical methods to study the social impacts of cultural engagement, community change, and social well-being at the neighborhood level.
According to Stern (2014) SIAP’s work explores and reveals how a variety of cultural resources, such as nonprofits, resident artists, design firms, and other cultural participants, engage within a particular place to create a cultural ecology. SAIP’s research in Philadelphia and other cities, including Baltimore, New York City, and Seattle, began the development of a cultural asset index (CAI), which they innovated to link cultural data to other measures of social well-being to study the social impact of the arts.

Using their CAI, Stern and Seifert (2013) found “a change in poverty rates 2000 and 2005-09” (p. 14) in the selected cities of Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Seattle. Their research revealed that neighborhoods with the highest concentration of cultural assets enjoyed declines in poverty, while most other sections of these three cites saw their poverty rates increase.

**Creative Placemaking and Community Revitalization**

The research of Markusen and Gadwa (2010a) and Seifert and Stern (2010) depict causal relationships between the arts and culture and community revitalization. Their studies utilized robust samples and existing census data. One study chose to include targeted interviews. Both studies looked at data over time, between one and two decades. The data in both studies suggest a substantial correlation to the arts and cultural integration and a decline in poverty. Seifert and Stern (2010) found a 13% improvement in livability (quality of life, creative activity, and improved economic conditions) where the arts and culture entities were clustered. The research also indicates improvements in market and property values and the articulation of the arts and culture as a value in the personal lives of the people interviewed in the studies.
Similarly, Treskon (2015) conducted a quasi-experimental comparison study to assist arts and cultural organizations to better understand neighborhood changes attributable to the arts and entertainment. He gathered data from census tracts in the Station North Baltimore neighborhood over a 10-year period, from 2000-2010. Station North was the first state-sanctioned arts district in Baltimore. Treskon (2015) conducted qualitative interviews to supplement the data. He found data patterns that suggested a causal relationship of positive change in the arts and culture-infused neighborhoods including an increase in arts-based employment in the area, an increase in the home purchase market, and an increase in rehabilitation permits. The study harnessed pre- and post-research to examine the impact of the Station North district regarding livability, using the 2002 data as a baseline. The study compared data from 2000 through 2002 to more recent Station North data with a goal of uncovering the impact of neighborhood-level changes attributable to the arts and entertainment interventions.

Though challenges remain, the data revealed increases in economic development in the Station North District. Specifically, arts-based employment increased, home purchases increased within the market, and data revealed an increase in rehabilitation permits. Other measures of livability, such as violent and property crime, unemployment, and vacant and abandoned buildings, did not change.

Rich (2018) conducted an ethnographic case study of Station North. Through her research, artists, homeowners, community associations, community development corporations, universities, hospitals, philanthropic organizations, and political entities articulated the clashing missions and, in some cases, mission drift of Station North. Her research revealed conflicting sentiments among the residents that all voices had not been
heard equally. The conflict was between the artist and non-artist populations. Non-artists felt it was important to prioritize the elimination of crime and grime, which was essential to community well-being, while the artists were set on preserving the artists’ spaces, and they feared displacement.

Vazquez (2012) examined the economic development benefits of creative placemaking. The study involved multiple sites throughout the United States, with a team of researchers from Arts Build Communities, an organization at Rutgers University that serves placemaking professionals (urban planners and designers, architects and community development professionals) by offering capacity-building, continuing-education programs; research; and thought leadership to creative sector professionals, elected officials, and economic development professionals. The team conducted interviews with elected officials, artists, cultural professionals, and urban planners from 2006-2012. The research uncovered a number of arts- and culture-related benefits for communities, including higher property values, job creation, wealth retention, and attraction of new visitors to the communities through civic engagement. The researchers also found that art can bridge cultural divides and support youth career preparation.

Research conducted by Grodach, Foster, and Murdoch (2014) compared census data from 100 metropolitan areas with populations over 500,000, along with several independent variables, from the 2010 census. Grodach et al. (2014) found that different types of arts activities caused levels of neighborhood change to varying degrees based on the forms of art such as commercial arts versus fine arts.

Moreover, the NEA convened a panel of researchers and arts practitioners in 2015 to study creative placemaking and to develop an understanding of how performance-
based organizations, and the artists they engage, transform places through their artistic practices. A consensus emerged among the practitioners that transformation is at the heart of creative placemaking. Specifically, Moran, Schupbach, Spearman, and Reut (2015) found transformation of audiences, content, space, institution, community, artistic expression, and the artist can emerge from creative placemaking initiatives, and that stated,

Transformation of the audience; transformation of content (place can change the nature of the experience); transformation of space: re-imagined spaces that inspire; transformation of institution: new leadership, new funders, new ticket buyers; transformation of the community’s access to artistic expression: pride and ownership, economic activity. (p. 30)

Moran et al. (2015) found that their study panelists felt the impact of implementing creative placemaking work can be both cultural and physical, bringing visibility to previously neglected areas. Thus, the participants found that creative placemaking can refer to physical/built spaces as well as community engagement. This value gives new meaning to creativity in physical spaces by producing new ways to imagine space.

Moreover, Moran et al. (2015) found that performing arts events can transform places and people. The study posits that deep and inherent power resides in the story and narrative derived in performance—that can inspire opinions and ideas, and produce empathy and move people, and, when successful, these transformative events can give a physical space new meaning. Moreover, participants highlighted that creative
placemaking is about relationships and the continuum of the work not just a singular activity. The importance lies in being able to adapt programming to address local needs.

**Creative Placemaking, Community Well-being, and Social Justice**

Creative placemaking creates a sense of place by encouraging public conversations on arts engagement, community health and safety, social and environmental justice and sustainability, and civic pride (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010b).

The SIAP foundational research studies, for example, examined the impact of culture and the arts on community change with an emphasis on neighborhood revitalization, belonging, and community well-being. The SIAP has been doing this work since 1994. One of the findings of a recent SIAP four-part, mixed-methods comparative study (Stern & Seifert, 2017) was implemented in New York City in 2017. SIAP studied the impact of the arts and cultural well-being in all five boroughs of NYC. SIAP created what they deemed their cultural participation database, which consisted of administrative records from 17,981 cultural for-profit firms, 4,700 nonprofit or for-profit cultural organizations, 3,200 IRS records, and 1,230 administrative records of New York City nonprofit cultural organizations. They also sampled 33 organizations that received general operating support from the Department of Cultural Affairs. They found that even though lower-income communities and residents have fewer cultural resources, they are beneficiaries of having artistic outlets in their communities. These benefits include improved health, schooling, and personal security, which are measurable. The study shared a qualitative phenomenological study on placemaking applications that looked at community well-being (Stern & Seifert, 2017).
Findings within the SIAP’s studies of social well-being and the arts offers clear contributions to the social benefits of the creative placemaking debate (Stern, 2014). The first finding is that place matters. This finding came from asking policymakers and investors to form their ideas and policies around a neighborhood’s cultural ecology—a concentration of cultural assets such as theaters, galleries, and arts centers. The second finding, according to SAIP, is to advance a capabilities approach and a multi-dimensional definition of social well-being that allows for linkages with social outcomes, discussions, and debates emanating from other fields, such as public health, housing, community development, and education (Stern, 2014). SIAP embraced European literature on capabilities, a conceptual grounding, in 2009, as a way to link individual findings to a broader understanding of social well-being (Stern, 2014).

Stern (2014) asserted that, ultimately, creative placemaking initiatives are about making grants to organizations. Even these initiatives require collaboration between multiple partners. When these collaborations include only a fraction of existing artists and cultural assets in a particular neighborhood, the gap between cultures continues to pose a challenge to those seeking to apply creative placemaking to procure a specific set of social benefits.

These mixed-method studies advance an expanded view of creative placemaking as more than an economic intervention. After an extensive study, Seifert and Stern (2010) found “the presence of cultural resources is significantly associated with improved outcomes around health, schooling, and personal security” (p. 1).
Chapter Summary

This literature review highlights studies conducted on creative placemaking. The review provides an overview of the two seminal studies of Markusen and Gadwa (2010a, 2010b), who coined the phrase creative placemaking and evaluated the norms between art and culture as an economic development tool. They studied over 100 cases of arts and economic development around the country and presented a summary of their findings (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010a).

This literature review revealed that arts and culture can be an effective economic development strategy in communities experiencing poverty and disinvestment. The studies presented came from foundational studies on creative placemaking, studies that uncovered community development promise, and uncovered the ability to advance social justice and community well-being in neighborhoods. The creative placemaking moniker is 10 years old, and research in the area is limited.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the single qualitative case study methodology used to conduct this research in the SALT District. An explanation of why a single qualitative case study methodology was selected is presented. The chapter also describes the context, the participants, and the data instruments used to collect and analyze the data in this study.
Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

Rich (2018) stated:

The exchange value of a place, or the desirability of a neighborhood, is wholly created by people, and thus the way people imagine neighborhoods; land value and rents fluctuate according to neighborhood reputation as formed in city dwellers’ minds: the ghetto, the gayborhood, the arts district, or the university district. To raise the exchange value of a place, actors must transform its reputation through a rebranding and reimagining of neighborhoods. (p. 1)

The revitalization of the NWS into the SALT District, arguably, raised its exchange value. Void of investment for over 50 years, the SALT District realized $74 million in new investments (Higgins, 2014). Creative placemaking within the SALT District emerged from SU Chancellor Nancy Cantor’s vision and the NWSI, a nonprofit organization that operated out of SU’s Office of Community Engagement and Economic Development. The NWDI leveraged support from SU, the City of Syracuse, the State of New York, as well as from private foundations, businesses, nonprofit corporations, and neighborhood residents, to advance its mission (Short, 2013).

Creative placemaking is a partnership-based strategy that typically includes institutional investors and unlikely alliances from the public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors that increasingly advance the arts and culture as an effective community revitalization strategy for neighborhoods in decline (Rich, 2018). A long-term
effort, creative placemaking, is a strategy that ideally comes with stakeholder commitment to social equity for residents and visitors, and stakeholder commitment to creating a stronger economy for any given area or community. An important element of the creative placemaking process is illuminating the identity, history, and antithetical nature of a place (Borrup, 2016). “Ultimately, creative placemaking seeks to strengthen relationships between and among people, and between people and place, building a community where stewardship of one another, and place is central” (Borrup, 2016, p. 1).

As Borrup (2016) suggested, Cantor formed relationships in Syracuse with businesses, foundations, state and local governments, artists, and community members. A partnership evolved on the NWS, resulting in a 10-year financial commitment by SU to forge an interactive physical and programmatic presence in downtown Syracuse. As prescribed, Cantor’s (2016) vision shed light on the history of the city, starting with references to its historic past by ascribing the name, SALT District, which pays homage to the NWS’s economic, historic, and cultural past. The name emerged because Syracuse, NY, was once a leader in salt commerce (Onondaga Citizen’s League, 2018). Funding of $74 million in new investments enabled the renovation and lease of once-abandoned warehouse space, of more than 350,000 square feet. The initiative attracted seven new employers to the area, including King & King Architects, WCNY television station, O’Brien & Gere, and ProLiteracy, an international literacy agency headquartered in Syracuse. This investment also gave the community 40 new households, dozens of artists, 308 new jobs, and La Casita, the city’s first Latino cultural center (Higgins, 2014).

This study utilized a single, qualitative-case study methodology that provides tools for researchers to study complex phenomena within their contexts (Baxter & Jack,
2010). According to Yin (2009), case study research aims to explore and depict a setting with a view to advance understanding. In the case of the NWS of Syracuse, it is to an advance understanding of the creative placemaking interventions on this community for stakeholders with an eye toward transferability.

Yin (2009) posited the need for case study research emanates from a desire to understand social phenomena. Moreover, a case study approach was applicable in this context because the research questions that guided the inquiry were descriptive and explanatory from its inception, beginning with What or How questions, respectively. Case methodology was pertinent because the case of the SALT District emphasized the study of a phenomenon of creative placemaking in a specific neighborhood, the NWS, and a specific time period, between 2006 and 2008, in a real-world context.

This case study’s design stakeholders were from a diverse group of participants who were part of, or had knowledge of, the arts and cultural strategies implemented by the NWSI. This case study incorporated six common sources of evidence, including direct observation, interviews, archival records, documents, participant observation, and physical artifacts (Yin, 2009).

1. Direct observations (e.g., human actions or a physical environment)
2. Interviews (e.g., open-ended conversations with key participants)
3. Archival records (e.g., student records)
4. Documents (e.g., newspaper articles, letters, and e-mails, reports)
5. Participant observation (e.g., being identified as a researcher but also filling a real-life role in the scene being studied)
6. Physical artifacts (e.g., computer downloads of employees’ work) (Levy, 2008)

According to Yin (2009), research methods can be determined by the research questions contained in the study. Case study research calls for an in-depth inquiry or examination (Stake, 1994, 1995). Consequently, case studies are pertinent when research addresses descriptive or explanatory questions such as “why” and “how” questions. Case studies are also emphasized when the study emerges from a real-world phenomenon in a real-world context and is derived in a natural setting (Yin, 2009).

Stake (1995) identified case studies as intrinsic, instrumental, or collective (Baxter & Jack, 2008). An intrinsic case study seeks to capture the depth, breadth, and complexity of a case. A researcher’s interest within intrinsic case study research is to understand the case in hand. It asks, “what is happening at this time and place, and in these circumstances?” (Cousin, 2005). An instrumental case study focuses on making and interpreting meaning from the stories and experiences that emerge from the data collected. Cousin (2005) also stated that an instrumental case study asks, “what is happening,?” and “what can it tell us about the case in general.” Moreover, an intrinsic case study aims to generalize within the case at hand, while an instrumental case study generalizes a specific instance from a case study (Cousin, 2005). The collective case study is the study of several cases in order to make an inquiry into a particular phenomenon (Zucker, 2009). It seeks representation by stating a hypothesis and testing that hypothesis across multiple cases (Cousin, 2005).

This research employed instrumental and intrinsic components. The instrumental component of the inquiry sought to understand what creative placemaking in the NWS of
Syracuse can tell us about creative placemaking as a mechanism for community revitalization in general. The intrinsic component of the research sought to understand the experiences of stakeholders within the NWS of Syracuse during the time of, and as a result of, the arts and cultural intervention strategy in the neighborhood being studied.

**Research Context**

Historically, at the turn of the 20th century, the NWS was a wealthy neighborhood. It was considered a vibrant Pre-World War II, Erie Canal neighborhood. At the dawn of the 21st century, dozens of homes and huge warehouses sat vacant, remnants of what once defined this neighborhood as an industrial giant was left to rot from age and years of neglect (Lundborg, 2009). Between 2006 and 2014 the NWS was considered one of the most impoverished neighborhoods in the United States (Jargowsky, 2015).

*Figure 3.1. SALT District of the NWS of Syracuse. Adapted from “Ambitious, Revitalizing Arts District Goes Green in Syracuse,” by A. Welch, 2011. Copyright 2011 by Kaid Benfield Archive 2007-2014.*
Research Participants

For the purposes of this study, the research participants included 12 NWS community stakeholders. These individuals included stakeholder groups neighborhood advocates and service providers, private business owners and entrepreneurs, residents, artists, educators, and past and present NWSI board members.

At the time of this research, all study participants were NWS community stakeholders who lived and or worked in the SALT District and who had firsthand experience, knowledge, and proximity to the creative placemaking interventions that took place in the NWS between 2006 and 2014. Gender representation in the study was split evenly, with six men and six women. Some of the stakeholders fell into more than one category. The racial makeup of the participants included six White participants, three Black participants, and two Latino participants. The participants spanned from the millennial to the baby boomer age categories. Some participants were identified through the SALT District website and newspaper articles about the SALT District. Four additional participants were recruited through snowballing referrals, wherein previously participants recommended other participants.

Instruments Used in Data Collection

A single qualitative case study of the SALT District employed the three-stage iterative processes of describing the experience, ascribing meaning, and analyzing the data (Zucker, 2009). With permission, via consent form, interviews were taped. A journal was kept for the researcher to record field notes and impressions from the interviews. Field notes and observations were kept of each interview, and they were coded by the researcher.
According to Stake (1995), case study research data collection and data analysis tend to proceed at the same time. This study incorporated the following data collection sources: archival documents, direct observations; face-to-face interviews with NWS community stakeholders; who detailed personal accounts; and session recordings that were used to produce the transcripts. Interviews took place in mutually agreed upon spaces that facilitated confidentiality. One participant was interviewed via Facetime.

**Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis**

In addition to face-to-face interviews, multiple data sources, including 990 filing documents (forms required by the IRS for nonprofit organizations), archival images, physical artifacts, and direct observations of participant demeanor and surroundings of stakeholder spaces, were utilized. Data were analyzed by seeking out what the data revealed. The data are organized by research questions and of themes.

Elements of the PolicyLink research and documentation framework was used to extrapolate questions for interviews with the participants. Additionally, this framework allowed for alignment with indices being developed by contributors, such as ArtPlace America, to measure creative placemaking’s overall effect on participating communities (Appendix B). The researcher analyzed data by listening deeply to the audio recordings multiple times, seeking out recurring words and ideas from all transcripts, uploading data transcripts into NVivo Software, and utilizing its software coding and query functions. Nodes were then created from the data, grouped into categories, and organized by themes.

A holistic coding approach to the data. According to Saldaña (2016), holistic coding grasps basic themes in the data by first absorbing them as a whole rather than line
by line. Words and sentiments expressed by multiple stakeholders became nodes. These nodes were then grouped thematically and categorized. This process denotes the first cycle of data analysis and findings in this research.

This research sought an understanding of creative placemaking within a specific setting, the SALT District of the NWS of Syracuse, NY. The study sought to mine the social phenomena stemming from a total of $80 million in investments into one of the most impoverished neighborhoods in the country between 2006 and 2014. The data from this study came from 12 NWS community stakeholders who shared their impressions and experience of the NWSI.

The design of this single, qualitative case study allowed for the exploration of the revitalization of the SALT District from multiple perspectives (Taylor, 2013). It sought to include detailed descriptions of the phenomenon of creative placemaking in the NWS through the lens of numerous community stakeholders of the NWS, past and present, and to include archival photos and documents. The interviews conducted in this research study were documented with the audio recording app, Voice Record. Journal entries recorded these research activities as well as to give impressions of place and participants immediately following the interviews.

**Confidentiality**

The protection of research participants is paramount. Through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative’s (CITI) basic course in Social & Behavioral Research, a Certificate of Completion was issued to the researcher to conduct this study. Researchers are required to take precautionary steps to keep the identity of the study participants identity private, confidential, and safely maintained to ensure confidentiality. This study
provided all the participants with a generic identifier. The identifier is New Westside Participant (NWSP) plus a number. The numbers were assigned in order of the interviews.

Confidentiality concerns and requirements are applied by the researcher and are there to ensure that study participants cannot be identified based on information that emerges from the data collection process within the study. All information collected from this study is kept confidential. Another way this researcher worked to ensure confidentiality is by storing all audio recordings of the interviews on a separate flash drive. The flash drive is locked and maintained in the researcher’s home. All confidential files will be deleted from the flash drive 3 years after publication of this research. Participant identities will not be shared for any reason. Once completed, this study will be publicly accessible through St. John Fisher College’s website for the study participants, as well as any other, who are interested in this subject matter.

Summary

This research used a single, qualitative-case study approach to advance an in-depth understanding of creative placemaking as a mechanism for community revitalization within a highly impoverished part of the United States, the NWS of Syracuse, NY. This study identifies the effects of the arts and culture interventions on 12 community stakeholders who had lived and/or worked in the NWS of Syracuse. Chapter 4 presents the findings and themes that emerged from the data. Implications for creative placemaking as a viable tool for community resurgence and well-being in other impoverished, postindustrial communities were also explored in the findings.
Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

At its best, creative placemaking improves public space, ignites civic discourse, promotes and realizes artistic and cultural beautification, engenders pride in community, connects neighbors and neighborhoods, supports community health and welfare, advances social justice, catalyzes community revitalization and economic development, promotes environmental sustainability, and nurtures a shared sense of place (Silberberg, Lorah, Disbrow, & Muessig, 2013). Creative placemaking strategies were used within the NWS to renovate warehouses, build new homes, and create resident workspaces for artists. These strategies also created jobs, increased homeownership opportunities, and developed beautiful public spaces for people who live and work in the neighborhood (Higgins, 2012).

Chapter 4 is a presentation of the findings and themes that emerged as a result of the qualitative data collection compiled and analyzed from 12 NWS community stakeholders. The interviews bring to light stakeholder experience and perceptions of the creative placemaking in the SALT District since the intervention strategy took place.

All interviews were recorded using the Voice Record Pro App. Data collection also included researcher observations; images retrieved from the Internet; archival material from the Syracuse Post Standard; and document data from existing SU Community Geography research study on demolitions, vacancy, and housing in Syracuse, NY, from 2000-2010; and presentations prepared by NWSI director Marilyn Higgins.
Images were obtained from the Internet, showing renovated SALT District buildings before and after the application of creative placemaking strategies. The 990 archived documents (forms required by the IRS for nonprofit organizations) were sought out to validate the findings. This chapter is organized into three sections, based on the three research questions.

**Research Questions**

The research questions that guided this case study are:

1. How do Near Westside stakeholders experiencing community transformation through creative placemaking strategies perceive the changes happening in their neighborhood?

2. What changes have occurred in the community as a result of the arts and cultural strategy implemented by the Near Westside Initiative, and has the initiative directly benefited or harmed low-income neighborhood residents or area businesses?

3. What can creative placemaking outcomes, and stakeholders in the SALT District of the Near Westside of Syracuse, tell us about creative placemaking as a mechanism for community revitalization in general?

These what and how questions attempted to uncover and explain the phenomenon of creative placemaking in the Near Westside of Syracuse, NY, and its effect on community stakeholders. Case studies are pertinent when research addresses a descriptive question, such as “What is happening or has happened?” or “How or why did something happen?” (Levy, 2008, p. 2).
Because creative placemaking is a relatively new concept, named in 2010, programmatic measurement tools have not been codified. Therefore, a framework was developed by PolicyLink to measure the impact of creative placemaking practices on communities that received support from ArtPlace. Elements of the community-development portion of this PolicyLink research and documentation framework were utilized as interview questions in this study to gather data from the participants. This study included a total of 12 subjects who each participated in separate hour-long interviews. To ensure anonymity, each participant was ascribed a study number, e.g. NWSP# (Near Westside Stakeholder Participant #). Table 4.1 presents the participant demographics.

Table 4.1

Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder (NWSP)</th>
<th>Resident</th>
<th>Organization Leader</th>
<th>Business Owner</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Funder</th>
<th>Educator</th>
<th>NWSI Board</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Analysis and Findings

McCarthy et al. (2001) conducted a meta-analysis to discover the value of the arts to society. They sought to understand the benefits of the arts in both public and private spheres. In a segment of the study, the researchers looked specifically at claims that the arts benefited communities by advancing economic growth and operating as a mechanism for urban revitalization. Their meta-analysis is offered as a conceptual framework by which the value of the arts and cultural strategies in the case of the SALT District may be viewed and discussed. Their framework, in turn, guides this discussion of the impacts experienced by NWSI that emerged from the data and of the potential value to the community.

Creative placemaking strategies were implemented in the SALT District within the NWS of Syracuse as a mechanism for community revitalization starting in 2006. Unlike many studies about creative placemaking initiatives that look at brick and mortar outcomes or quantitative spikes and declines in census data points, this study sought to understand the impacts of creative placemaking by speaking to community stakeholders who had a connection to the project.

Research Question 1. Certain words and concepts emerged from each interview. The interview questions (Table 4.2) were utilized with the participants in this study. The interview questions were derived from the ArtPlace/PolicyLink research and documentation framework(Appendix B) for community development programs.

Five themes (“The Five A’s” as seen in Table 4.3) emerged reliably from the interviews: attitudes, emotions, and perspectives; access; agency; the arts; and assets. These themes are congruent with findings in the McCarthy et al. (2001) study in varying
degrees. The NVivo codes in Table 4.3 refer to the words used, and concepts referred to, by the participants.

Table 4.2

*Summary of Interview Questions in Relationship to Research Questions: Category 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What changes are happening in the community, intended or unintended, as a result of the arts and cultural strategies?</td>
<td>1. How do Near Westside stakeholders, experiencing community transformation through creative placemaking strategies, perceive of the changes happening in their neighborhood?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What stated community development outcomes are the arts and cultural strategies intended to support, and how are they contributing to results?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3

*NVivo Codes Used by the Research Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes, emotions, and perceptions</td>
<td>The Five A’s</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access, opportunity, The Open Door</td>
<td>The Five A’s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency, voice, empowerment</td>
<td>The Five A’s</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>The Five A’s</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assets; human and financial resources</td>
<td>The Five A’s</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4</td>
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</table>

*Attitudes and perceptions.* While the participants did not use the words *attitudes*, *emotions*, or *perceptions* (the first of the Five A’s), specifically, all 12 participants had very strong opinions about the initiative, past, and present. Of the 12 participants, seven exhibited and shared their passion for the project. Each shared their initial sense of excitement about the project or their (or other members of the community) reluctance to
participate. There was also a degree of emotion that surfaced when the participants talked about aspects of their participation and memories of the waning years of placemaking under SU’s stewardship of the NWSI in SALT District for various reasons. NWSP 6 commented that she felt noticed and that someone cared about her circumstance after 49 years in the neighborhood. She explained her perspective:

I was thrilled because I’ve lived here [Near Westside] for a long time. I’ve lived here now, this May, it will be 49 years. So I’ve lived here through a lot. The neighborhood has seen changes as far as physical houses; the makeup of the people has changed tremendously. It has always been considered a poor neighborhood, but it’s become poorer, of course, over the years, sadly. So when this all exploded, I remember there was negative stuff about well “why would anybody invest money in that neighborhood,” kind of thing. And I’m thinking, “hallelujah. I’m living in the right place at the right time,” you know? It had just seemed like nobody cared about us. And we were just this forgotten pocket. We began to feel like someone noticed us and cared. (NWSP 6)

Unlike the findings in the McCarthy et al. (2004) study, which focused on attitudes and behaviors of children as a result of exposure and involvement in the arts, the attitudes and perceptions noted in this study focused on adult participants. At the outset, the participants’ emotions varied. Some participants revealed feelings of excitement, optimism, and hope about the investments in their community. As a result of this excitement, as one participant stated, “I went all in,” which resulted in the participant getting involved and advancing the economic goals of the project.
Moreover, even though one-third of the participants expressed feelings of cautious optimism and spoke openly about feelings of fear of gentrification, as well as distrust and disappointment, they all became involved in the initiative at some level; thus, their emotions ignited their behavior. Of the 12 participants, eight became actively involved in the NWSI, serving as employees, active volunteers, and board members to advance the project. Service at every level was essential to the success of the initiative. One business owner, who chose not to serve on the board or attend meetings, was pivotal to the process. He participated by selling critical pieces of property to the initiative to advance the NWSI’s targeted revitalization aims. This is consistent with McCarthy et al. (2004) findings that the arts, at the community level, enhance conditions for building community capacity for mobilization and community revitalization. The second of the Five A’s used by the participants was access. Access is used here to suggest entry into spaces that may have been closed off or shuttered.

**Access.** According to McCarthy et al. (2004), bridges are social links that create access across social divides. Their research links these connections to building social capital and thereby building the capacity for collective action. The NWSI stakeholders further noted the importance of having access to services, resources, opportunities, and people of influence. Five NWSPs used the word access when sharing their experiences. NWSP3 used the word access eight times during the interview, the emphasis coming, perhaps, from the perspective that access to these amenities were not available to people in the neighborhood in the fairly recent past:

The first change for me, it is obvious, is access. It’s providing a community that didn’t have access to what they considered as art, actually to have access to that.
The Near Westside has a very long history. What I’m thinking about right now, when I’m talking about access, is a community has access to a performance theater that can be used for whatever their imaginations might be, even if it’s something as simple as a baby shower. (NWSP3)

NWSP8 spoke of being able to access services and home-improvement opportunities. She also spoke of the initiative providing opportunities to build relationships with community leaders and elected officials:

Home Headquarters came in and wanted to do things, physical things, like tear down blighted houses that were not “renovate-able,” if that’s a word. They would take them down so that it would begin to look better. And I had, over the years, been able to access what Home Headquarters had to offer. I was able to get a home improvement loan. And they were always wonderful. They treated you with great respect and kindness. So, I was thrilled that they were coming on board and really wanting to make a difference. And I met Nancy Cantor early on. And she was so excited about what was happening here. She came to St. Lucy's, which is where my parish is. She came once in a great while. She would come to mass there, and you know, just to make her presence known. She would show up at neighborhood events. I mean, years ago, we didn’t even have a mayor that showed up. (NWSP6)

The NWSI created access points for people and services in the community. Relationships started to form between people in the community and public, civic, and university leaders. In some cases, these connections formed across socioeconomic divides. According to McCarthy et al. (2004), this type of access builds social capacity,
which, in turn, eliminates barriers of collective action to achieve community goals. The third of the Five A’s mentioned by the participants was assets.

Assets. Moreover, social capital and links created by association with the NWSI were noted as among the most important in a community’s bank of assets (Borrup, 2016). The assets that accrued from creative placemaking in the NWS and the social capital it cultivated included over 11 million dollars in assets, $6.5 million of which were unencumbered. The holdings were newly renovated properties that provided over $400,000 in rental income annually. Four NWSPs used the word assets during interview sessions:

I think the formula that was put in place was powerful. And it’s not that there aren’t lasting effects that are residual. You have an entity that is owned by a, not for profit, not SU, that probably has a balance sheet with 10 million dollars on it. There is debt against it, but at some point, they will have a powerful balance sheet with equity and cash flow. (NWSP5)

Another stakeholder posed the questions the NWSI, post SU, had pondered and grappled with to reinvent themselves and decide how best use their resources:

This small grassroots organization has $11 million worth of assets in that community. Now, what do we do with those assets? We use them to benefit the community. We have commercial tenants. We have residential tenants. What exactly does this look like for the future? (NWSP3)

These statements of resources are backed up by the NWSI 990 forms (2016) found on GuideStar.org website. The 990 forms from 2016 show over $6,600,000 in unencumbered net assets and total assets of $11,209,844. The unencumbered net assets
no longer have debt against them, thus the income derived from the lease payments can support the mission of the agency. The assets were also discussed in terms of community resources, such as nonprofit organizations. NWSP10 made the following statement: “This [the Near Westside] is a very service-rich community. You have 40 agencies in a 20-block area, including the Spanish Action League and Syracuse Area Latinos United against Disparities (SALUD) Inc.” NWSP12 also noted that the areas for nonprofits were an asset to the NWS community because their collaborations have rendered her organization more effective by carrying out aspects of their community programming:

The work that we do with community partner organizations, like La Liga, Peace Inc., La Joven Guardia del Teatro Latino, Inc.—through those partnerships—is a more effective way to participate in community events; and when we have the big events, they all come out. (NWSP12)

According to Silberberg et al. (2013) the important transformation happens first, in the minds of participants, nourishing the community and empowering the people. Thus, the fourth of the Five A’s the participants used was agency, meaning empowerment and the ability to produce an action or effect.

Agency. The themes agency, empowerment, and finding voice emerged from the data from seven participants. Agency is consistent with the McCarthy et al. (2001) findings of self-efficacy, which indicates that this trait is one that is beneficial to individuals on a continuum in both public and private spheres. For example, an empowered community saved the Blodgett School in the NWS. Moreover, the data revealed that a service provider collaboratively came into being so that the community
voices could thereafter drive and address pressing neighborhood concerns. NWSP5 stated:

Some residents were actually getting a voice. Blodgett School would not have been open today. The residents were able to channel the ability to get a voice at the table that they would never have done. Not that everything should be given to people, but their voice needs to be respected. Yes. And they need to feel that it has a chance of going somewhere when they put their time and effort and their voice out there. (NWSP5)

Likewise, NWSP10 noted:

Every step of the way, the Near Westside initiative has been kind of like, “How do we support resident voices?” “How do we amplify resident voices?” “How do we improve the built environment here through property development in a way that makes people see that there's change happening?” Because people need to see the change. How do we beautify the neighborhood and give people things of value that says like I’m “worth this?” (NWSP10)

These stakeholders wished to meet community needs, create access to jobs, and continue to advance artist resident workspaces. They wanted their cultural spaces to celebrate the heritage of the people of the NWS, and to advance workforce development initiatives that turned passions into employment and income-generating opportunities. This is consistent with Borrup’s (2016) assertion that creative placemaking strengthens relationships between people and place, as well as between and among people, and it builds community stewardship of one another and place. And, the last of the Five A’s is the arts.
**Arts.** The arts, as an emerging theme in the data, revealed that 11 of the 12 community stakeholders believed that the arts and culture can, indeed, serve as a mechanism for community revitalization. Archival data from local news stories showed that one goal of creative placemaking in the NWS was to attract artists and creatives to the community by building resident workspaces for artists, and by creating spaces for cultural engagement. NWSP3 shared the existing arts ecology (Stern & Seiftert, 2013) of the NWS:

I believe the Near Westside is probably the arts center of Syracuse. I feel that, anyway. Just look at the Gear Factory. Look at the NWSI and what they are doing. There is a big ceramic facility [Clay Scapes] on the Near Westside, The Delevan Center. There is just a lot of artsy stuff going on here. I’ve always thought of us being an artsy side of town. (NWSP3)

According to Zitcer, Hawkins, and Vakharia (2016), the value of the arts and culture to a community is their intrinsic effect that grounds the arts as central and vital to the human experience. NWSP10 shared her hopes for the growth of the performing arts in the NWS as the result of SALT Space, a multi-arts center, which was open and available to the community.

One of the strategies the Near Westside Initiative is employing to improve life here [by] building a culture of the arts, and making people here feel like the arts are for you. The arts are for everyone. And you are not exempt from them because you are poor and live on the west side. And also, we are getting community groups into SALT Space that are either from the community or deeply committed to providing arts training to community members. (NWSP10)
Table 4.4 outlines the themes that emerged in response to the Research Question 1.

Table 4.4

*Summary of Category, Themes, and Descriptions: Research Question 1*

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Five A’s</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>Emotion, Feeling, Perceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Open the door to opportunities: human, financial, and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Relationships with Power Brokers &amp; Influencers</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Assets</td>
<td>Community – Know thy neighbor</td>
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<tr>
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<td>People – Entrepreneurs</td>
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<td>Homesteaders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td></td>
<td>Finding &amp; Using Voice: Empowerment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Artists, Public Art, Gere Factory, Delevan Center, Ceramics Facility, Salt Space</td>
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</table>

The second section of the findings, under Research Question 2, is categorized with an eye to the vision, intention, and consequences of the NWSI in what was deemed the SALT District. This section also reveals data on what remained as a result of the initiative, its incomplete results, and the benefits and harm perceived when the NWSI’s initiators significantly defunded the project. This category incorporates five themes: benefits, harm, ghosting, remnants, and results.

**Research Question 2.** The second research question (Table 4.5), “What changes have occurred in the community as a result of the arts and cultural strategy implemented by the Near Westside Initiative, and has the initiative directly benefited or harmed low-income neighborhood residents or area businesses?” revealed the themes of trust, benefits, harm, ghosting, remnants, and incomplete results. The data that emerged from interviews are listed in Table 4.6.
Table 4.5

Summary of Interview Questions in Relationship to the Research Questions: Category 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Are there other unexpected or unintended outcomes in the community (positive or negative) as a result of the arts and cultural strategies?</td>
<td>2. What changes have occurred in the community as a result of the arts and cultural strategy implemented by the Near Westside Initiative, and has the initiative directly benefited or harmed low-income neighborhood residents or area businesses?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How can the arts and cultural strategies reinforce, enhance, or help to preserve existing community identities?</td>
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Table 4.6

Participant Code Usage in response to Research Question 2

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<td>X</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intention &amp; Consequences</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remnants</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Ghosting/About Face/Left</td>
<td>Intention &amp; Consequences</td>
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Varying accounts of the mission, vision, and intent of the NWSI emerged from the data. The mission of the NWSI from 2006-2014, according to Higgins (2012), was to “Combine the power of art, technology, and innovation with neighborhood values and culture to revitalize Syracuse’s Near Westside” (Higgins, 2012, p. 14). The mission (NWSI, 2006) advanced the following stated vision:

The revitalization will be fueled by interdisciplinary scholarship, international connections, and the seed capital and commitment of Syracuse University. It will be sustained by the residents, businesses, foundations, and the local government
of Syracuse. It will infuse arts and innovation, renovate, and build new homes, [it] and will create jobs, homeownership opportunities, and beautiful public spaces for the people who live in the neighborhood. (p. 14)

Other accounts of the stakeholder perceptions of the NWSI intentions are listed below. The first remarks appeared in the Syracuse Post Standard in 2017, and it is attributed to the last NWSI director Maarten Jacobs:

The work of rebuilding the Near Westside was in small bites, stabilizing one piece of the neighborhood completely before moving on to the next. The first slice was the heart of the Near Westside - bounded by Geddes Street on the west, West Street on the east, West Fayette to the south, and Gifford Street to the north. It has a perfect urban design. There are a school and a park in the middle, surrounded by a horseshoe of houses and commercial development on the edges (Eisenstadt, 2017).

NWSP5 reflected on the process:

The first phase was to reattach the anchor of the neighborhood. There was a three-block strategy that happened. Salt Quarters was the anchor project, that is very real. The fourth block, that piece, clearly happened. The horseshoe— was intended to grow. We never got past the first stages. (NWSP5)

In remembering, also, NSWP3 stated:

In the beginning, I think the intention was to support or add value to academics for SU students. As your students will come up the hill on a regular basis and do all different types of things, work with community members, but [it] wasn’t working with them, more like using them, and then going back on the hill, but
never really left anything sustainable here for the community to work with. So, I think that was the intention, and when things shifted, the Westside Initiative, as an organization, had to figure out whether they were going to be able to stand alone as an organization that had no staff. All the people that ran the initiative were SU employees and paid by SU. So as an organization, we had to figure out what do we do? (NWSP3)

NWSP11 also spoke of the NWSI:

It’s hard for me to speak on what was going on with [the] initiative because I was so focused on my own stuff. I didn’t even know what was going on, to be honest with you. I used to walk the neighborhood, and when I walk over here, I’d see the buildings, I didn’t know who was doing it. So, I would say there was a lot of disconnect from the neighborhood and the organization. There were some that knew what was going on. But they were only [the] ones that they were touching directly, you know, so it was like it was really mostly in this horseshoe around the Skiddy Park, The Projects, and Blodgett School. I feel like people in this area were a little more aware of what’s going on. But, like the side of the west side that I grew up on, over near Kellogg near Main Street and the other side, near Hearts and Elliot, there was no connection at all. (NWSP11)

Themes that emerged in the data under the category vision, intention, and consequences included the themes of trust, benefits, harm, and ghosting.

Trust. According to McCarthy et al. (2001), the roots of trust that develop to support collective action to advance community development goals are formed either through repeated personal interaction or through knowledge of common interest. Trust
based on generalized ties forms quickly, but they are less resilient. The bonds of trust that were created to build the social capital necessary to realize the NWS community revitalization goals were breached for some stakeholders as a result of SU’s diminishing role in the initiative. NWSP8 stated, “Lack of trust is created by a lot of things, but I don't think it helps that promises like SU’s are broken without consequences on their end.”

**Benefits.** All stakeholders weighed in on NWSI benefits to the community. The participants and sentiments expressed in archival data from area newspapers will be shared to illuminate what stakeholders felt were examples of the benefits of creative placemaking in the SALT District. Some of the benefits shared were personal; other benefits were community focused. “The Near Westside, just west of downtown, benefited from Syracuse University’s investment. In 2012, SU’s NWS Initiative and its partners renovated the Case Supply Warehouse into headquarters for WCNY television station) and ProLiteracy” (Moraelli, 2020, p. 4). NSWP1 gave an opinion about the NWSI:

I think the changes, brought about not only by the NWSI but other people moving into the area, have been very beneficial. There are two kinds of changes: one is the effects of fixing buildings up, which makes the area better. The other is the knock-on effect of, for example, when they were fixing up WCNY. While they were fixing it up, I looked at our building and thought, this looks pretty bad, so I called in some painters and did an extensive painting job so that it would be brought up to a better standard than dilapidated. It is a pretty good standard. If you take a look at it, you can see our steel frame windows, those have been painted and are now in good shape, and so it has been beneficial not simply because of the money that went into that city block, but it spurred us to do

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cosmetic things we might not otherwise have done. I may, instead of spending it on cosmetics, I might have spent that money on some kind of system within the building, but you don’t see that. So I wanted to get the cosmetic done, and it looks nice. (NWSP1)

NWSP4 also gave input:

There’s a lot of new people that live in the neighborhood. But it’s almost 100% in-fill projects or rehab projects. When we moved there, you could log burned house, made up house, paint your house, crappy house, nice house. It was really, really bad. A lot of those houses got torn down, or they got rehabbed, that were not being occupied. I don’t know how many new people live here. I’d probably say, hopefully, over 100, but that’s still like over like 10 years. It’s not a ton of new people. I think things feel safer. (NWSP4)

According to a study on demolitions, vacancy and housing in Syracuse, NY conducted in 2013 by SU’s Community Geography Department, the presence of I-81 had had a negative impact. There is a clear division between the east and west sides of the highway, in terms of vacancy, demolitions, housing tenure, and housing age. NWS was one of the most blighted areas of the city. Demolitions have exceeded 100 since 2002. This figure is over 10 times larger than other areas of Syracuse (Oberle, Frasier, Sonnenschein, & Stein, 2013).

NWSP 7 noted that he was better able to weather the Great Recession after selling properties to the NWSI to realize their three-block strategy, which was a personal benefit. The reps came in from the Westside Initiative, they wanted to buy the building, for whatever their overall plans were, and we talked for a long time about what
impact it would have on the company. And we felt that we couldn’t move for the money. Because at the time, we were really just getting by. We’d have to find another place to move into. We’d have to pull the equipment down again, move it all again, which we did ourselves. We just said we just couldn’t do it.

This was a conversation that went on for a little bit. And we ultimately decided that the best thing was for us to stay here. How could we stay here? What could we do as a group to have us stay here, and they get what they wanted or some of what they wanted, so they did the division of the building property. I basically sold them everything except for what we have now, which is this building, the portion behind this building, and the portion toward West Street. Now, as it goes, it was very fortuitous, would be the correct word. Because in 2008, when the bottom fell out, the income that we got from the sale of the building, we redid a lot of things; we put in a powder booth that we had a makeshift room before; we redid the electrical over here. We configured the conveyor line. So, it took about 3 months to change over, which was another loss of income, but we got enough from them, so they can fix the place up a little bit. And we had some money set aside, and that helped us weather 2008 and 2009 because it was, it was really tough. And we didn’t want to let any of our people go. (NWSP7)

NWSP8 also stated:

On a personal note, I did find my house in this community because of the Near Westside Initiative, which has been entirely positive. It was something initiated by them that I was able even to get a foot in the door. I was coming from New
York City, as a single mom, living with my mom in a temporary situation. I was trying to get on my feet. I was initially looking into the $1 home program, but I didn’t know that had been discontinued, so I was led to Home Headquarters. I never, in a million years, thought I would qualify to buy a house. They worked with me over a year, so that I could qualify and gain the stability to buy the home that I’m still in. It took a lot for me to become a resident of this community and to be an artist because of the cost of living. It is affordable for me, which wouldn’t be the case if I was paying rent somewhere or living in a different area. So, I’m forever grateful for that. I’ve been able to establish roots, build trust, and do some amazing collaborative projects with other people from the community. (NWSP8)

NWSP7 spoke of hope for the NWS:

During the good weather months, you know, I see them having events in the park. There are also schools. You can go around and see some of the new housing that they’re building. They had a couple early on; they had some architectural students, I guess, built some new-age homes kind of thing. So, it’s sort of kind of working. It has definitely worked for us. And I look around, just from my point of view, and I just, you know, I see the folks are doing fairly well. The pharmaceutical people put a lot of money into it. And I was speaking with someone right across the street. They’re still putting money into the building in the millions of dollars. (NWSP7)

NWSP 9 also spoke of hope:

I want you to know what the Near Westside has done. The Westside initiative produced me sitting here talking to you with all these beautiful paintings with
more to come to a place in this building right here. I’m bringing my imagination
to the table and making it a reality, allowing people to touch what I think.

(NWSP9)

The participants noted their experiences of both intended and unintended
consequences of creative placemaking in their neighborhood. The results to the
individuals were impactful from the ability to purchase their first home, surviving the
financial crisis of 2008, to living a dream of being a resident artist. The NWS study
participants also discussed impacts that were harmful to individuals and the community
as a result of creative placemaking.

**Harm.** The participants identified hurtful experiences that were tied to the NWSI.
The talked about the difficulty in gaining stability after losing employment when the
funding resources dried up or SU pulled out of the initiative. A few people spoke about
the loss of Nojaims, a community grocery store that had been in the area for 98 years.
Two stakeholders identified the impact of losing Nojaims as harmful to the community.
NWSP12 noted,

Nojaims was a big part of these initiatives at one point. It was sad to see that
business close. There’s nothing around here to replace it. And this is where a lot
of people in this neighborhood that don’t have easy access to transportation used
to food shop. So this is something that we are all still lamenting. (NWSP12)

NWSP1 spoke of losses:

I have long said that there were two pillars of the community on the Near
Westside, and then there was one. One of which was Saint Lucy’s Church, and
the other was Paul Nojaims. When I heard that he was closing and the need that
arose all over the area, I thought, “how awful.” Yes, because of Price Rite, maybe, a nice store. I don’t think I’ve been in it yet. But it’s close to a mile away, whereas Nojaim Bros. was really central. I’ve heard that he was very generous in terms of allowing people to put things on credit and always put forth a great effort on behalf of the community. (NWSP1)

It was a blow to the neighborhood when Nojaim Bros. Supermarket closed in 2017 after 98 years in business. Poverty remained stubbornly deep, a reminder that progress has not touched every part of the city (Morelli, 2019). NWSP8 talked about the harm:

I was working at 601 Tully, which was being supported by Syracuse University under the Near Westside Initiative umbrella. When the new chancellor came in, and all these changes happened, I was given 1 month, and my job disappeared, which had personal consequences. It was very difficult for me to find stability after that. Just witnessing what I have since then seems to be a cycle of broken promises and trust issues that have been kind of prevalent. Even in the work that I do under the Near Westside Initiative umbrella, it takes me a very long time to gain trust in this community, even though I’ve lived here for years. I don’t know if it’s specific to the Near Westside Initiative, the fact that I’m representing them, or if it’s because I’m White and not from the community. It was tangible, gaining trust, even with the people that I work with, [it] took some time. I had to prove that I had the right intentions and that we had more in common than difference. Lack of trust is created by a lot of things, but I don’t think it helps that promises like SU’s are broken without consequences on their end. (NWSP8)
NWSP9 also reflected:

I was hired by ProLiteracy. The Gifford Foundation paid for me to work for them. It went south because, when it was all said and done, the new CEO decided that they were never about community. So, they didn’t want to continue being about community after they used me for 3 years. At the end of the day, they got the monetary resources. Why play with us over here, that’s what we don’t want. That’ll make the community back up. Yeah. But a person like me? I used that anger about that situation; I used that as a learning tool to toughen me a little bit more. It’s not a heart thing. It’s about money. It’s not a heartbeat. I got to see the man behind the curtain by being an employee. (NWSP9)

Although SU never promised they would invest in the NWSI indefinitely, everyone interviewed who was involved in the project during Chancellor Nancy Cantor’s years seemed blindsided by her departure, specifically, and the scaling down of SU’s human and financial resources, in particular. Shortly after the new Chancellor of SU arrived, investment in the initiative began to phase out. Many of the people who had served on the board finished their terms and rotated off the board. Many stakeholders attested to a loss of momentum. The data reveal terms such as an about-face, ghosting, and they just left. Themes that emerged in the data under the category of vision, intention, and consequences included the themes benefits, harm, and ghosting.

**Ghosting.** When the NWSI was founded in 2006, SU played a large role financially and administratively. “Now, SU was pulling its support from the cooperative revitalization effort and taking its funding with it” (Moore, 2017, p. 1). Many participants gave input in this regard. NWSP5 said,
They do still pay for La Casita’s lease, which is important and a very good community program. So, they would tell you they are still involved, and they are. But they are certainly not the placemaking anchor institution that they were for 10 years. It wasn’t even 10 years because the last few years were diminishing returns. Whenever Nancy resigned, it changed.

This is my perception: before us, there was the South Side Innovation Center. The Shaw years included some reach out to that community. And I think that community felt like—ya, ditched us, although they ghosted them too. I think the same thing has happened to the Near Westside. “They ghosted us.” Like they did the Southside. (NWSP5)

NWSP12 reflected with, “I was here when it was happening, then through the change of administration, where that vision, that whole push that Nancy Cantor promoted and supported and led became an about-face, almost.” In the same way, NWSP4 lamented, but with positivity:

It’s the same thing as having kids. The best and worst day of your life is going to be when your kids don’t need you anymore. Right. So, if you work your job like that every day, you know, that’s the best thing that can happen. So, whether the Near Westside, for the most part, went away. It’s still here, but it’s only a fraction of what it was before. So, what happened, it seems like most things stayed pretty good. It didn’t just collapse back on itself. There was no end of the world and like people screaming and running all this, you know. It was just things are pretty much staying nice, and I think you got a good base of people there that are helping keep things nice, and, you know, something I don’t think bad things are
allowed to happen. Not only that, I mean, like the community, and people are working together to make sure that those things don’t infiltrate back into the community. (NWSP4)

Data uncovered in the NWSI 990 form from 2016 reveals a $1,000,000 cut in funding in 2013 and an additional $300,000 funding cut in 2014, hollowing out nearly 80% of the operating resources for the initiative, a shadow of what was once $1,634,836, diminished to $333,291. Funding levels in 2014 were approximately 20% of 2012 levels, which is substantiated by Figure 4.1.


Remnants and incomplete results. Creative placemaking in the NWS included the removal of hundreds of blighted and dilapidated structures, the creation of 60 new rental properties, and 100 home acquisitions for the purpose of restoration. It also included the restoration of several structures. The completed renovations are captured in
Figures Appendix C1-C4 (Appendix C). Some of the remnants include parts of the neighborhood that was left undone. All the participants expressed that much of the vision was not realized.

**Incomplete results.** Many stakeholders spoke of the initiative in terms of before and after SU left the initiative. Of the 12 stakeholders, 11 spoke of creative placemaking strategies in the NWS falling short of its promise, not going far enough into the community, or leaving much to do, undone. One participant felt that although SU never intended to stay on indefinitely, they did not prepare the initiative for new leadership.

I don’t think it’s reaching enough into the community. You notice that those organizations are kind of all clustered together. I’ve lived here for 30 years. I live one block away from right here. Just go right behind my house on Fitch Street. Just look at it. It lacks investment. I mean, the Near Westside still lacks a lot of attention, which I call investment. We could use a lot more. I don’t think it’s affecting the Near Westside in the way that it should. I think there is a lot more work to be done, especially in the Latino community. There’s still a lot distressed.

(NWSP 2)

NWSP 4 also spoke of before and after the NWSI:

So, before the near Westside initiative ever happened, right? I looked at all the tax records for houses up and down the streets, and they were, like, $20,000 was the regular tax assessment. And it was the same on the other side of the street right now. Right? If you took the whole Near Westside, and you drew a line right down the middle of it, which is Gifford Street. Right? You did all these things here. And you did none of these things here. This side of the street is vastly different. It has
changed in positive ways. This side of the street is basically the same as it was.

It’s kind of a messed-up way to think about using the neighborhood as, as, like, a social experiment. Nobody did this intentionally but, basically, it is what happened. Right? You took one neighborhood, and you did all the stuff to half the neighborhood. It was a lot of different organizations, focused on positive change. This happened to this half of the neighborhood but not to this half the neighborhood. You can get a lot of statistical data on crime rates. Down here. Same here. Poverty, I don’t know. It probably went down. I know that a bunch of rich people didn’t move in. Most people that moved in are just normal people.

(NWSP 4)

NWSP 6 spoke of the geographic boundaries established to create an impact, and the initial hope of moving beyond those boundaries.

They chose to put boundaries because they wanted to make an impact. You can’t just go into a whole wide neighborhood and then try to spread this money around. They wanted to make a specific impact and make changes, and they did. And if you ever were here before, and you drove up and down, like, Otisco Street. It’s so different now because we have Home Headquarter homes. We have those homes that were part of that architecture contest, and they’re occupied. They are owner-occupied. Yes, so, the impact has been great except for the people who are on the outside edges. Why isn’t it coming here, and why are we not getting anything? The hope was that after this impact, that we would spread out, and then Nancy Cantor left. (NWSP 6)
Some participants, while they acknowledged the positive changes to the NWS, they moderated their comments by pointing out that there continued to be a compelling need for increased investment in the area, and they seemingly lamented about what might have been. Most of the stakeholders spoke of the changes that resulted from creative placemaking in their community in a positive light. The first phase of building improvements, which included concentrated enhancements, also included the removal of dilapidated buildings and blight. New construction, such as the development of a new community black-box theater and home rehabilitation, were also completed project achievements. Table 4.7 summarizes the themes that emerged from Research Question 2.

Table 4.7

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<td>Consequences</td>
<td>Ghosting</td>
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<td>Accomplishments</td>
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<td>Incomplete Results</td>
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Research Question 3. The third research question, “What can creative placemaking outcomes and stakeholders in the SALT District of the Near Westside of Syracuse tell us about creative placemaking as a mechanism for community revitalization in general?” This inquiry revealed the themes of leadership change, reduction in crime, the cyclical nature of investment in impoverished areas, and ground-up place makers (Table 4.8).
Table 4.8

*Participant Code Usage in Response to Research Question 3*

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<td>Cycle, Cyclical</td>
<td>Representation &amp; Change</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interview questions listed in Table 4.9 were utilized to obtain the data in this study. The interview questions were derived from the ArtPlace/PolicyLink research and documentation framework for community development programs.

Table 4.9

*Summary of Interview Questions and the Relationship to the Research Questions:*

**Category 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How does the overall narrative of the place(s) or of the development processes change as a result of the arts and cultural strategies?</td>
<td>3. What can creative placemaking outcomes and stakeholders in the SALT District of the Near Westside of Syracuse tell us about creative placemaking as a mechanism for community revitalization in general?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How does the community’s social agency, power, or self-determination, vis-à-vis economic, political, or social transformation, change as a result of the arts and cultural strategies?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How does the community’s perception of the role of the arts or artists in economic or social transformation change as a result of the arts and cultural strategies?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Leadership change. Seven community stakeholders broached the topic of leadership. Leadership change emerged as a strong theme in the data. At the outset of this endeavor, Boll (2017) described the NWSI, in part, as “a towering visual testimony to a leadership legacy” (p. 23). The participant stakeholders spoke of leaders in terms of their power, influence, commitment, and presence. The stakeholders spoke about the need for leadership that was representative of the people that lived, worked, and slept in their community. McCarthy et al. (2001) also posited that organizational leadership skills are necessary to build community coalitions and other successful community coalitions to advance arts-related urban revitalization strategies. NWSP 3 described the change:

What happened is leadership change. Right? And so when you’re talking about these types of programs and projects, even if you look back in history, leadership is key. WCNY is a great example of that. They moved into the neighborhood but haven’t really done anything with the neighborhood. They bus kids from all the school districts, never really opened the door to the people who live across the street and Syracuse Housing Authority. Now they have a new leader who is opening up the door.

So, I mean, leadership, you can be plugged in and commit anything, all you want to, but if the leader doesn’t see the community adding value to their work, they’re just not going to do it.

The initial goal was to create this initiative and then give it to the community. Okay, but the community wasn’t prepared to take it. Right? There was no preparation of leadership-capacity building, leadership development, none
of that happened for the residents to be, like, “okay, we’re ready. We’re going to take this on now.” (NWSP 3)

NWSP 9 also spoke of leadership:

We need young energy. We need energy that thinks and has ideas; we need young energy that is open to not just his own thoughts and theories, but others. We need young people who are eager to help people. (NWSP 9)

The contributions of the early Near Westside leadership, like Maarten, bringing everyone to the table, including people’s voices, facilitating in silence, and kind of sitting back and making sure that everyone had a place to be heard, all service providers and residents. And then the other problem of the campaign we decided to address that disconnect between providers and the community. (NWSP 9)

NWSP 10 spoke of the leadership or lack thereof:

In the interim period, we [NWSI] were without a director for 2 years. And, so, during those 2 years, it was really tough. I know that half their board members rolled off and were walking away from that project. They have poured tons and tons of money into developing this neighborhood, and then there was just like a little bit of a crisis. Sheena Solomon, like, held that ship together through that storm and was able to get new board members to recommit. (NWSP 10)

According to Nowak (2007), a community is a fluid process. It is not a static entity. There are flows of people, capital resources, and information that is necessary for the regeneration of distressed communities. This statement is true in the case of the former SALT District of the NWS of Syracuse. From 2006 until the time of this study,
leadership transitions and change were mentioned and discussed by all but one stakeholder. There was a change in leadership at the helm of WCNY, there were transitions at the helm of the Gifford Foundation during the period in question. The most impactful changes to the creative placemaking initiatives in the NWS came as a result of transitions in leadership at SU. In September of 2018, the community embraced one of its own in the role of Executive Director of the NWSI, providing not only new leadership but representation. His role is important because the data reveal that resident leadership development is a major thrust of the provider collaborative, which is a collective of the area nonprofit leaders.

**Reduction in crime.** Crime emerged as a significant and common theme. NWSP 4 stated that crime went down significantly. Six stakeholders, in total, felt that a benefit to the community as a result of the arts and cultural leadership strategies was the reduction in crime in the area, which is shown by Table 4.10. Data from the Onondaga Crime Analysis Center supports the stakeholders’ feelings regarding crime in the area going down. A compilation of crime statistics from the Onondaga Crime Analysis Center for the NWS from 2012, 2018, and part of 2019 show crime in the area, in many instances, was cut in half.

Table 4.10

*Archival Data from the Onondaga County, NY, Crime Analysis Center*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Near Westside</th>
<th>Murder</th>
<th>Robbery</th>
<th>Aggravated Assault</th>
<th>Burglary</th>
<th>Larceny</th>
<th>Vehicular Larceny</th>
<th>Motor Vehicle Theft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NWSP 5 spoke of crime reduction: “I think, surely, it was changing the image and that crime rates were going down, that was real numbers.” NWSP 4 also reflected regarding crime:

It’s better than it was 10 years ago, because you can have, like, the whole, like, across the street, not feeling like it’s for you, but are you benefiting from in any way. Maybe you don’t make more money now because I’ve moved it across the street. Maybe you don’t have a new car, but maybe you feel safer walking back and forth from your house to downtown. (NWSP 4)

NWSP 8 stated,

I learned that, as I got to know people. I never personally felt unsafe; it was about so many other factors. The violence that does occur is deep-seated in poverty, and it’s really about personal relationships. People don’t understand that, and they won’t be able to help if they are judging. If those perceptions continue, there will always be a divide. (NWSP 8)

**Cyclical nature of creative placemaking.** A total of five stakeholders characterized creative placemaking as cyclical. Thus, the cyclical nature of creative placemaking emerged as a common assertion in the data. The public and private investments to the area were deemed as cyclical and a *once in a lifetime opportunity.* When that period ended, the NWSI had a crisis before reestablishing footing and advancing a new mission. According to Silberberg (2013), places and their communities are not linear, but cyclical.

A new cycle begins once the initial “making” is finished—a community might come together to ensure the place is properly maintained, or to create a calendar
of cultural events to enliven the place on an ongoing basis. The place is never truly finished, nor is the community. This mutual influence of community and place is what we call the virtuous cycle of placemaking. Mutual stewardship grows from this cycle, which allows for multiple entry points into the placemaking process (Silberberg et al., 2013, p. 11)

NWSP 2 understood the cycles by saying,

I’ve lived here for 29 years. I’ve seen the neighborhood go up and down, but in different cycles, which is interesting. The investment comes in, some private investment, too, and then you start feeling hopeful that things are going to change. And then, it’s kind of crashes again. It goes back down. I’ve seen it go through its cycle like that a couple of times. Where a lot of people move in here and back here, and then they move out again. And I’m not sure if it’s because of crime. I’m not sure if it has something to do with drugs or schools or property values. Maybe people don’t see the city as wanting to invest in this neighborhood. So they move out. (NWSP 2)

NWSP 5 offered:

When I found out that they were even considering doing this, I did some initial homework. I felt like it was a once in a lifetime opportunity for a neighborhood like that. What did we have to lose? This community, clearly the poorest census tract, not just locally, but statewide and even nationally. Having been there my whole life, I had seen the businesses and everything just kind of decline and leave. So, for me, this was a great global way to create pathways out of poverty. So, I went all in. (NWSP 5)
Silberberg et al. (2013) also noted that cycles in placemaking being subject to the whims and personalities of potent initiators, such as politicians, funders, and community leaders—who change their minds about an initiative or reach the end of their attention spans, or perhaps resources, before the placemaking cycle ends.

Attracting artists and homesteaders interested in joining community building from the ground up emerged as another finding in the data. The theoretical basis of this research was Florida’s (2003) creative capital theory. Florida’s theory asserts that geographic location choices of creative people drive creative capital. He held further that competitive advantage stems from creativity, initiative, design, technological skills, and the ability to be nimble and responsive to change (Florida, 2003). Florida’s (2003) creative class theory advances the role of place as an incubator of innovation and creativity.

Early goals of creative placemaking in the NWS of Syracuse included marketing the area to artists across the country. The NWSI created artist resident workspaces and initially sold homes for one dollar to attract artists to the area. The aim was to turn the area into a place where people would want to do business and spend time. The NWSI was successful in this regard. The types of people the initiative attracted were people who wanted to help build a community from the ground up. NWSP 7 was one of the people attracted:

It was appealing to me because I am an artist and a musician. Coming from New York, I wanted to live in a diverse environment. I didn’t want to live in a suburb. But I recognize that I had a choice. A lot of people don’t. I wanted to be here. I
wanted to make an impact through the arts, which seemed to be the promise at the time. (NWSP 7)

NWSP 5 noted that one of his neighbors from Otisco Street said it best,

He went around the world to different arts destinations because they were cool, and it mattered to be there and to be a part of something. The reason he chose to come to the Near Westside was that it had not already been done for them. This was a chance to build it yourself and be a part of it, from the ground up. (NWSP 5)

According to McCarthy et al. (2001), ground- or bottom-up community action stems from a rising dissatisfaction with top-down edicts from governments or policymakers. Redaelli (2018) also considered creative placemaking a bottom-up cultural policy and a new paradigm in the arts and cultural revitalization strategies. Redaelli (2018), posited:

Creative placemaking policy is reframing what artists can do and where they produce their work, giving them a leading role in the community. According to Bonin-Rodriguez (2015), “Art is not merely about its representation of lives, but also about its direct engagement with various publics and public issues.” Artists present as entrepreneurs who can creatively contribute to the issues of the community instead of as a starving group longing for public funding (Guo, 2015). Creative placemaking projects bring artists to the center of their community, highlighting their creative mindsets as great potential for the larger benefit of their place. (pp. 404)
The NWSI stakeholders interviewed in this study included individuals who answered the aforementioned call to artists and entrepreneurs to relocate to the area. They purchased dollar homes or newly renovated homes in the area. They continued to share great pride in place, with neighbors who have lived or owned businesses in the area for decades. These stakeholders, artists and non-artists among them, have taken on the mantle of rebuilding their neighborhood from the ground up. They are contributing by addressing issues in the community as leaders and, in some cases, they are active participants in the revitalization of the area. Table 4.11 outlines the themes that emerged in response to the Research Question 3.

Table 4.11

**Summary of Category, Themes, and Descriptions: Research Question 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Representation and Change</td>
<td>Leadership change</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduction of crime</td>
<td>Safer neighborhoods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The cyclical nature of investment in</td>
<td>Community transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>impoverished areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ground-up place makers</td>
<td>Transformational investment is cyclical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Place makers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of Results**

According to Borrup (2016), creative placemaking brings community stakeholders together to create better lives for those sharing a geographically defined area. This chapter examined the application of creative placemaking strategies for community revitalization in the NWS community. Each participant shared his or her experience of creative placemaking from their lived experience.
The arts and cultural strategies in the NWS of Syracuse began with the initiating visionary leadership of SU’s 11th Chancellor, Nancy Cantor, and continued with the NWSI organization she created. The NWSI adopted creative placemaking strategies that, according to all the NWSP stakeholders, made impactful brick-and-mortar changes to a section of the NWS of Syracuse.

The initiative brought tens of millions of dollars in investments to one of the most impoverished census tracts in the nation, a neighborhood that had not seen government investment since the urban renewal investments in 1965, over 50 years. This research asked 12 community stakeholders, who engaged with the initiative either directly or indirectly, to bear witness to their experience of this arts and cultural revitalization strategy. They all had opinions and poignant stories to tell about how the initiative touched their lives and transformed their community. They shared the intentional and unintentional consequences of the initiative from their points of view. Several common words and sentiments emerged that were coded and organized under themes, attitudes, and perceptions, creating access, assets, agency, and increased arts programming.

In addition to renovating warehouses and creating resident workspace for artists, the inquiry revealed that the initiative has created access to people and services, and it has created income-producing assets. This is consistent with other research on the benefits of the arts, agency, self-efficacy, and empowerment, and this positive outcome emerged as a significant finding in the data. Arts participation and engagement, and representative leadership emerged, while crime, as a result of the creative placemaking, decreased.

Each participant felt that the initiative constructively impacted the area and successfully completed its first phase. All of the participants, however, felt that the
initiative fell short of its promise. In the wake of SU’s departure, nearly 11 million dollars in real property assets remain.

The data also clearly pointed to a newly branded mission and vision that focused squarely on the needs of the people of the Westside of Syracuse, in its entirety. The new mission expands its boundaries beyond what was at the time of this study, formally known as, the SALT District. Moreover, a thread that united much of the dialogue was that the NWSI awakened a sleeping giant and the voices of its people. Voices no longer silenced are actively seeking ways to influence the future of their community, first, from the ground up. An analysis suggesting the implications of the data collected in this study, along with limitations and recommendations that emanated from the research, are presented in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

Creative placemaking, an evolving practice (Nicodemus, 2013), builds upon a community’s human, cultural, and physical assets to improve the social and civic fabric of a place. This process is nurtured in community as participants actively seek to create change for people through the transformation of their physical environment.

The arts and cultural strategies can be critical vehicles for planning to achieve social, economic, and community development goals (Levine-Daniel & Kim, 2019). According to Nowak (2007), community development is directed toward older, economically disadvantaged areas to increase economic opportunity aimed at improving the quality of public amenities and assuring the flow of capital investment into the built environment.

Creative placemaking happened in the NWS of Syracuse, NY, from 2006 through 2014. The undertaking was implemented with a commitment to social equity using partnership strategies to improve the lives of residents and create a strong economic base for the area (Borrup, 2016).

In 2006, the NWS of Syracuse was the ninth most-impoverished neighborhood in the United States. Over the last half-century, 1960-2006, the community saw both population and home values decline. The area was beset with a shrinking tax base, high crime, profound disinvestment, and low-performing schools. The homeowner occupancy rate was as low as 16%, and the area was home to 200 vacant parcels of land; hollowed-
out industrial, residential, and commercial buildings; 83 vacant and boarded-up residential structures (15%); and over 500,000 square feet of abandoned warehouse and manufacturing facilities. The 2000 U.S. Census captured median household income at $12,428, and the neighborhood’s poverty rate was at 52% (Short, 2013).

The NWSI tackled these issues utilizing the arts and cultural strategies and investments of $80 million. The city has realized incremental progress. Demolishing abandoned homes and revitalizing abandoned warehouses advanced the effort. At the time of this writing, the median household income is on the rise in the area, while the poverty rate in the neighborhood shows an increase to 58%.

This study examined the case of the SALT District in the NWS of Syracuse, where the flows of capital into the building environment were used as a mechanism for revitalization. The purpose of this research was to identify the effects of creative placemaking interventions on the stakeholders of the SALT District in Syracuse, NY, and to explore how creative placemaking may revitalize other economically and socially blighted communities. As in most case study research, there was a desire to unearth a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of creative placemaking in the SALT District. Specifically, the study looked at the effect of creative placemaking on the people living in the area.

The objectives of this study were accomplished. The study participants, 12 stakeholders, shared their recollections of the creative placemaking strategies that took place, and they shared their thoughts about the efficacy of the endeavor, which captured the essence of the inquiry. This chapter explores the implications of the findings in terms of professional practice and the Five A’s decision-making concerning the mission, vision, and intention of the NWSI, theory, and the category of representation and change. This
chapter also shares the study limitations and offers recommendations for improved practice, policy development, and future research.

A single qualitative case study approach was implemented to conduct this research to explore the following research questions:

1. How do Near Westside stakeholders experiencing community transformation through creative placemaking strategies perceive the changes happening in their neighborhood?
2. What changes have occurred in the community as a result of the arts and cultural strategies implemented by the Near Westside Initiative, and has the initiative directly benefited or harmed low-income neighborhood residents or area businesses?
3. What can creative placemaking outcomes and stakeholders in the SALT District of the Near Westside of Syracuse tell us about creative placemaking as a mechanism for community revitalization in general?

The research findings were disclosed through face-to-face interviews with 12 NWS stakeholders. At the time of this study, all stakeholder participants were connected to the initiative in some way. Each stakeholder spoke about how creative placemaking, from their lived experiences, impacted their community.

**Implications of Findings**

**Professional practice and the five A’s.** During the President Barack Obama administration (2008-2016), the leadership at the helm of the NEA funded initiatives that imbedded the arts into neighborhoods to foster community revitalization and to stabilize communities, increase community prosperity, promote public safety, and foster
community well-being. The NEA funded projects like the NWSI, which was based on the scholarship of Stern and Seifert (1998, 2007, 2008) and suggested, empirically, that the arts produce jobs, business income, improve quality of life, increase public safety, and enhance diversity (Courage & McKeown, 2018). Though recent research studies have been implemented on the impact of creative placemaking; to date, research regarding how creative placemaking strategies are directly impacting people, from their perspective, are lesser known. This study will contribute to the body of research offering NWS stakeholder perceptions of placemaking practices adopted and implemented in their neighborhood.

**Research Question 1.** How do Near Westside stakeholders experiencing community transformation through creative placemaking strategies perceive the changes happening in their neighborhood? Whether directly or indirectly involved in the NWSI, the stakeholders recalled their feelings and emotions regarding the project. When queried about their beliefs about what the arts and cultural strategies brought to the neighborhood, five themes emerged from their responses: attitudes and perspectives, access, assets, agency, and the arts.

**Attitudes and perceptions.** At the outset, the participants’ emotions were mixed. Their opinions about the project spanned emotions, ranging from skeptical or cautious optimism to thrilled. NWSP 9 became involved in the project in the early years of the initiative, and she continued to be connected at the time of this study. She offered her perception of the NWSI from two different vantage points.

It has made a lot of people over here in the Westside feel like they were worth being around. At the same time, while living in the projects. In this loft, I feel like
I’m in another world. But when I go across the street, I feel like that’s a different world, not a lesser world, but just a different world. And then I can appreciate the fact that I came from that world. (NWSP 9)

The skeptical point of view, more often than not, came from the participants with diverse backgrounds. Their skepticism was not without cause. Creative placemaking initiatives, like the NWSI, have the potential to attract developers that wish to gentrify neighborhoods and, in so doing, displace long-time, lower-income residents and the commercial activities that serve them. According to Nicodemus and Markusen (2019), two ongoing challenges of creative placemaking are diversity and displacement.

Communities of color are concerned, and rightfully so, about the displacement of low-income residents and small businesses. NWSP 12 articulated this concern. She shared that the community she served took time to warm up to her organization’s presence within the community, because of the community’s belief that this would end with: *out with the old and in with the new*, by stating,

> It’s the politics of it. Getting into these spaces from the community’s perspective was the first stage of the gentrification process —and that they would eventually be displaced. This was articulated very clearly. They were not welcoming these programs with open arms at first. It was the youth in the community, I think. The kids started participating in the programming, and then the parents started to see that this is really wonderful for the kids—so, little by little. But at first, they were not so keen on SU building all these cool things around here and opening art galleries. (NWSP 12)
While some scholars argue creative placemaking initiatives have worsened living conditions for lower-income residents and renters, negatively affecting the integrity of local cultures, undercutting their viability (Courage & McKeown, 2019). This researcher does not believe the practice of creative placemaking in the NWSI displaced existing tenants. Admittedly, it did not improve housing conditions for public housing residents. The case study of the NWSI revealed the practice of creative placemaking strategies in the community that was rendered access to the stakeholders and assets for the neighborhood.

Access. The NWSI created access points to people and services in the community. Relationships started to form with public and elected officials and university leaders with people in the community. These relationships helped build social capital and bridge social divides. It was a socially engaged process that encouraged and got public participation. NWSP 7 characterized access as the open door. It is also was used to refer to the ability to make things welcoming or approachable.

I think it [arts and cultural strategies] opens a door. At least for me, it opened a door. And possibly for tourists to feel more comfortable. If invited, and there is something there for them to be a part of. I think art can open that door. I have experienced a lot of fear. A lot of people from outside the community warned me not to go there. Even the UPS guy said to me, “Why are you here?” – at my home, at 601 Tully. I saw it as a great opportunity. (NWSP 8)

Working in partnership and being in relationship with people of influence and power to effect change in their community opened the door to opportunity for the stakeholders. Access came up in conversations several times, and it appeared affirming to
the participants, resulting in social capital and community building. According to Silberberg et al. (2013), “Communities build powerful connections around the shared experience of making a vision for the future together. The process nurtures our communities and feeds our social lives” (p. 3).

**Assets.** Success in urban regeneration projects is often judged in economic terms (Kim & Yates, 2019). In the wake of SU’s departure, a tremendous gift remained, a nonprofit organization with over 11 million dollars in assets, 6.5 million of which was unencumbered. The holdings were newly renovated properties that provided over $400,000 in rental income annually. Under new leadership, these resources will be directed toward universally agreed-upon community goals that will be essential for a thriving community. Assets are not an easy matter to appraise. Creative placemaking allows for the affirmation and the engagement of urban imagination in service of creating a more just and livable community (Kim & Yates, 2018).

**Agency.** Arts-led community revitalization strategies in the NWS of Syracuse were a socially engaged process that encouraged public participation in developing agency among its stakeholders. As a result, a few study participants felt the initiative was empowering for residents. It gave them a seat at the table, and in so doing, helped some members of the community find and utilize their voices.

The empowerment of the NWS’s engaged, connected, and committed neighbors has propagated an interest in advancing a future that intentionally seeks to place representative neighborhood members in seats of power on local nonprofit boards. The goal is to become part of the decision-making to lift their friends, family, and community
members out of poverty. They wish to meet community needs, create access to jobs, and continue to advance artist resident workspaces.

These stakeholders want their cultural spaces to celebrate the heritage of the people of the NWS and to advance workforce development initiatives that turn passions into employment and create income-generating opportunities. As Kim and Yates (2018) suggested, agency speaks to the most fundamental need of individuals to have a place in the world, one that supports the development of their potential and encourages creative activities that make self-actualization possible.

Under an empowered constituency, the community has taken back its name. Naming, in the case of the SALT District, the moniker SALT, considered imposed by SU, is no longer. The community is once again calling itself, the Near Westside, for the time being. The newly empowered community seeks to reunify the entire Westside, reversing the division imposed over 50 years ago with the building of Interstate 81.

Significantly, the practice of creative placemaking in the NWSI forged a process so compelling that volunteer board members continued their stewardship of the initiative and its mission after its creative initiator, SU Chancellor, Nancy Cantor, and her resources from SU, left the project. As a result, the neighborhood was then able to realize SALT Space, a multi-use performing arts center, and Performance Park, an outdoor arts space, in 2019.

Arts. Under the umbrella of creative placemaking, there is an open invitation to artists and arts organizations to use their creativity for the good of communities. The NWSI directors advanced these ideals, as suggested, in a 2009 article that appeared in the Syracuse Post Standard. The NWSI created programs “to lure artists to the neighborhood.
Steeply discounted rents were offered to artists who wanted to live and work in the NWS community” (Lundborg, 2009, p. 1). Artists did come to the area. They purchased homes. Many got involved in community agencies, as well as the NWSI. According to NWSP 6 this aspect of the initiative was really successful.

**Decision making and vision, intention, and consequences.** Along this journey of placemaking in the SALT District, many decisions were made to advance a particular vision for the NWS. That vision was to infuse the arts and innovation and renovate and build new homes, which would create jobs, homeownership opportunities, and beautify public spaces for the people who lived in the neighborhood.

The first decision was made by Nancy Cantor to bring the SU School of Design downtown. She invested $7 million in renovating an abandoned warehouse to get it done. Decisions followed to divert additional resources to leverage support to purchase and renovate abandoned warehouses. Decisions were then made by funders and the state and city governments to invest. Decisions were made by King and King Architects, WCNY radio station, ProLiteracy and Obrien, and Gere to relocate their offices into one of the poorest census tracts in the nation.

Moreover, decisions were made by a business owner to sell some of his property to the initiative. Then artists, civic leaders, and community members decided to get involved. Other decisions were made by artists to relocate to Central New York to take advantage of discounted housing stock and/or the opportunity to purchase a home for one dollar and be part of rebuilding a new community from the ground up.

Consequently, a decision was made by Nancy Cantor’s successor, Ken Syverud (2016), to end SU’s role in the NWSI. The Nojaim family decided to close its
supermarket business in the area after 98 years of service to the community. At the same
time, stakeholders decided to continue the work of the NWSI beyond the tenure of its
founders. Further, the NWSI board decided to hire a young, representative leader from
the neighborhood to lead the NWSI into the future.

**Research Question 2.** What changes have occurred in the community, as a result
of the arts and cultural strategy implemented by the Near Westside Initiative, and has the
initiative directly benefited or harmed low-income neighborhood residents or area
businesses? The changes that occurred included SU creating a presence in downtown
Syracuse. At the time of this study, over 800 students per day took classes in the Nancy
Cantor Warehouse. The NSWI set about knocking down 100 blighted structures in the
area. Businesses and artists relocated to the area, creating 300 new jobs. Homes and
warehouses were renovated. Existing property owners took advantage of the
opportunities and services to renovate their properties. NWSP 1 deemed this the *knock-on
effect*. All of these decisions resulted in transformational changes to the NWS. Seven
themes emerged from the participants’ responses to Research Question 2: trust, benefits,
harm, ghosting, remnants, incomplete results, and theory.

**Trust.** The trust and social capital acquired to amass the level of collaboration of
neighborhood support, to include service providers, private businesses and entrepreneurs,
neighborhood institutions, residents, and community and economic development leaders,
was a monumental task. That trust was earned and, in some cases, broken.

**Benefits.** In the case of the SALT District, the benefits included the revitalization
of existing housing and warehouses, the creation of 300 jobs; several stakeholders spoke
of a noticeable decrease in crime. NWSP 7 shared that she benefited from the initiative by being able to purchase a home.

*Harm.* People lost jobs and stability when funding for the project ended. Indirectly, the community lost business in the area that had served the community for 98 years. Stakeholders described the loss of this business as a blow to the community. Areas of the neighborhood near the renovated structures were left out of the process. NWSP 4 called it an unintended but messed up social experiment to do all these cool things to one side of the street and to leave the other side of the street in disrepair.

*Ghosting.* NWSP 5 characterized SU’s departure from the project as ghosting. Their decision to leave the project left many stakeholders feeling abandoned. Financial contributions to the initiative, at the time of this publication, is a fraction of what it once was.

*Remnants.* Project remnants include the Salt Quarters, a Latino Cultural Center, Multicultural Arts Center, and Performance Park. These areas were vacant and blighted properties for over 50 years.

*Incomplete results.* Stakeholders lamented that the work that was left undone. NWSP 4 alluded to the incomplete nature of the initiative as an unintended messed-up social experiment. The unfortunate discontinuance of support arose as a thread through each conversation.

*Theory.* The theory that undergirded this research and the implementation of the NWSI was Florida’s (2003) creative capital theory. Creative capital theory essentially posits that regional economic growth is driven by the geographic location choices of creative people who are the holders of the creative capital. The researcher held further
that competitive advantage stems from creativity, initiative, design, technological skills, and the ability to be nimble and responsive to change (Florida, 2002).

Many city municipalities and place makers gravitated to and acted upon these theoretical assertions in the early 2000s, including Nancy Cantor. It is interesting to note, however, a significant paradigm shift in thinking, including that of the author (Florida, 2017) away from this assertion. The change of thinking by scholars of creative placemaking is toward a framework called urban thriving, developed within the Thriving Cities Project.

The framework of urban thriving stems from a 5-year research project and practice called the Thriving Cities Project. The Thriving Cities Project embraced and adopted six concepts of human ecology—the realm of human knowledge, the realm of economic, the realm of social mores and ethics, the realm of political and civic life, the realm of creativity and aesthetics, and the realm of natural and physical health (Kim & Yates, 2019). In essence, this new paradigm promotes thriving cities, which is far away from an emphasis on responding to scarcity. This paradigm focuses on an abundance of knowledge and research on what it means to thrive, what does it take to thrive, and what makes thriving possible, equitable, and sustainable (Kim & Yates, 2019).

Research Question 3. What can creative placemaking outcomes and stakeholders in the SALT District of the Near Westside of Syracuse tell us about creative placemaking as a mechanism for community revitalization in general? While pondering the research question, the themes that emerged were leadership change, reduction of crime, the cyclical nature of investments, and ground-up place makers. These themes are organized under the category of representation and change. These themes take on new meaning
under a thriving paradigm, such as urban thriving, as opposed to one borne out of scarcity.

*Representation and change.* In response to the third research question, stakeholders talked about the importance of leadership and representation. They spoke of leaders in terms of their power, influence, commitment, and presence. They also spoke about the need for leadership that is representative of the people that live, work, and sleep in their community. Moreover, the stakeholders spoke of multiple changes in leadership while creative placemaking was happening in their community.

*Leadership.* New thinking about the type of leadership that was necessary to implement creative placemaking initiatives emerged. Courage and McKeown (2019) posited that dynamic leadership professionals, with diverse and complex expertise, skill sets, and knowledge of social and environmental justice, are needed to lead creative placemaking initiatives. They suggested that these leaders must be trustworthy, have excellent communication skills, and they should be well informed. According to Kim and Yates (2019), leaders (institutions, initiatives, and decision-makers) under an urban or thriving cities paradigm must recognize the contributions of the arts as a public good and prioritize them in society.

*Representation.* The whole idea of representative leadership and representation was essential to several participants. NWSP 12 spoke as to why representation, seeing people that share social and cultural identities and that look like them, is vital to people in the NWS.

I think that the people in the community respond well to the fact that this is about them. They come here, and what they see on these walls are things they recognize
themselves. And why is that important? Why should that even matter. When you sit in an art space or a gallery, whether you recognize yourself or not? You are there to encounter a work of art or photography. Why should that have anything to do with you? I think there are so many people in this community that crave validation, that recognition, of the value in their lives, of the value in their person. Because they don’t see it represented anywhere else; it’s nowhere else; it’s invisible in art spaces, in the schools that they go to, the universities they attend. This has their faces all over, and that’s why this has an impact on the community.

(NWSP 12)

According to Kim and Yates (2019), in the realm of the beautiful under the thriving cities paradigm, the arts have the potential to bring together and transform diverse constituencies, bridging disparate groups of differing economic, social, and political divides. Representation in this context also speaks to notions of belonging, dis-belonging, and diversity, which were concepts of concern for the interviewed practitioners of creative placemaking, and they were making those concerns known to the field.

*Decrease in crime.* Many stakeholders felt that a benefit to the community as a result of the arts and cultural leadership strategies was that crime went down. Data from the Onondaga Crime Analysis Center (2012-2019) supported the stakeholders’ feelings regarding crime in the area going down. The compilation of crime statistics for the NWS from 2012, 2018, and part of 2019 showed crime in the area, in many instances, cut in half.
Other new thinking around creative placemaking, as it enters its second decade, is that art and artists in the public sphere are often employed as change agents. This characterization should not be carrying the expectation of saving the world. Engaging in societal issues outside of the world of art, in the face of long-standing societal inequities such as creating jobs and reducing crime and poverty, is becoming a matter of concern due to power dynamics and equity concerns (Courage & McKeown, 2019).

Creative placemaking is cyclical. According to Kim and Yates (2019), there are ample remarkable, but temporal, examples of the power of arts-based intervention strategies in communities. This temporal nature that emerged in this research under the term cyclical. The public/private investments to the area were deemed as cyclical and a once in a lifetime opportunity. When that period ended, the NWSI had a bit of a crisis before reestablishing new footing. Once centered, the initiative advanced a new mission, one that encompasses the betterment of the entire community, not just the horseshoe of development that defined the first phase of NWS capital improvements.

Attracting artists and ground-up homesteaders. The theoretical basis of this research was Florida’s (2003) creative capital theory. Florida’s (2003) theory asserts that regional economic growth is driven by the geographic location choices of creative people who are the holders of creative capital. He held, further, that competitive advantage stems from creativity, initiative, design, technological skills, and the ability to be nimble and responsive to change (Florida, 2002).

One of the early goals of creative placemaking in the NWS of Syracuse was to market the area to artists. The NWSI created artist resident workspaces. Initially, it sold homes for one dollar to attract artists to the area and to turn it into a place where people
wanted to do business and spend time. They were successful in this regard. The types of people it attracted were people who wanted to help build a community from the ground up.

The data in this study are consistent with the research to date, suggesting that creative placemaking is attractive to artists and entrepreneurs who are interested in being part of neighborhoods that they can be part of from the ground up. The stakeholders in this study were attracted to the project for this reason. Of the 12 participants, six identified as grassroots organizers. It is important to note, however, that new thinking on the subject suggests an inside-out approach, rejecting both top-down and bottom-up narratives. According to (Kim & Yates, 2019),

A range of scholars and artist-scholars present socially practiced, co-produced and citizen-led place-makings as an inside-out response rather than simply a bottom-up need or desire or top-down imposition, with artists, participants and a range of creatives and other professions forming ecologies of practice. (p. 18)

Limitations

At the outset, this study was centered on the potential for transformational change from the investment of millions of dollars into the NWS, one of the most impoverished census tracts in the nation. The gaze was narrowly focused on the beautification of buildings, streetscapes, the arts, and cultural strategies infused to improve livability. There was also a specific interest if their new corporate neighbors would employ any people from the neighborhood. There was an unintended blind spot regarding the level of crime that existed in the area that nearly all respondents addressed.
This study considered the perspectives of residents, business owners, entrepreneurs, directors of neighborhood institutions, and a philanthropic organization, many of whom were or are presently actively involved in the community. These community stakeholders did not include current residents of the James Geddes Project because of time constraints. One former community organizer who agreed to participate in the study suffered a stroke before the interviews: her health negated participation. Input from this stakeholder may have addressed the voices of the people of the James Geddes Project, limited in this study.

**Recommendations**

**Recommendations for practice.** Creative placemaking initiatives, a long-term strategy, according to Borrup (2016), may have time limitations, given the temporal and cyclical nature of placemaking and due to leadership changes. Given the new thinking around desired skill sets, the first recommendation project leaders should consider is succession planning. According to (Courage & McKeown, 2019), the field is seeking practitioners with complex expertise in several areas. This may require developing candidates with those particular skill sets from within the organization.

Moreover, given the fluidity of leadership change and the sometimes cavalier changes to budgets, leaders should consider ways to endow project resources at the outset of a major initiative. Seeking ways to perpetuate funding may help save a worthwhile creative placemaking initiative and help it endure the test of time and attrition, enabling projects to ride out inevitable leadership change.

Creative placemaking may offer a solution to revitalizing other impoverished areas. Establishing project endowments may be essential to sustained funding. Also,
intentional collaborations between and among state and local governments, and a consortium of area colleges and universities, is warranted and prudent. Community residents and artists can forge this type of partnership in other communities. A growing number of case studies exist where creative placemaking to advance community revitalization efforts have engineered positive outcomes using these efforts.

**Recommendations for policy development.** Recommendations for policy development in the case of the SALT District involves an opportunity to right a devastating wrong in Syracuse, NY. The Urban Renewal Project of the 1960s that decimated Syracuse’s African American community over 50 years ago is being revisited this decade. Economically impoverished communities in Syracuse are going to be affected, again, because of the removal or reconstruction of Interstate 81. The highway is past its lifecycle and is crumbling. Decisions to rebuild Interstate 81 are being deliberated in real-time, coincidentally, by the grandson of Mayor William Francis Walsh (1962-1969) who presided over urban renewal in Syracuse in the 1960s.

The devastation that the urban renewal project caused to communities of color, and the legacy of poverty that remains as a result of it, can be revisited and should not be repeated. Lessons learned should serve to help city planners and stakeholders make choices that change the trajectory of impoverished neighborhoods like the NWS of Syracuse for the better, instead of dooming it to perpetual poverty. Therefore, advancing social justice as a value, as Markusen and Gadwa (2010a) suggested, is paramount to reversing this longstanding wrong.

Moreover, creative placemaking practitioners should consider adopting the new thinking that advances a thriving cities paradigm and an emphasis on action to advance
and sustain thriving in cities. This shift moves away from the current focus on filling voids and responding to scarcity. This paradigm shift embraces an ecological view of wealth and well-being that fosters opportunity and investments in cities from an ideological perspective of strength.

**Recommendations for future research.** This research can be enhanced with the inclusion of voices from additional segments of the NWS community. Further research would encompass voices from stakeholders’ groups from faith communities, a larger segment of artists, educators, police, and more representation from the James Geddes Project and other public housing in the area. Project initiators and perspectives from a wider swath of businesses can further the study. Future research addressing creative placemaking initiatives that embrace the thriving cities framework, advanced by Kim and Yates (2019), is of interest and potentially promising for the future of creative placemaking. Research on creative placemaking initiatives in cities in a post-COVID-19 world may be a window into the sustainability of this framework as a national cultural policy.

**Conclusion**

Creative placemaking as a mechanism for community revitalization, a case study of the SALT District in the NWS of Syracuse, NY is about a neighborhood in an impoverished postindustrial city that received investments totaling $80 million to advance community development projects between 2006 and 2014, using the arts and cultural strategies. These investments took place after 50 years of disinvestment dating back to the mid-1960s. The 1960s brought a massive urban renewal initiative to Syracuse, the construction of Interstate 81. The interstate was built straight through once-
bustling neighborhoods. Further, redlining practices exacerbated and gave rise to generational poverty in areas splintered by the interstate. The NWS was one of those neighborhoods.

Then, creative placemaking happened in the NWS of Syracuse, between 2006 and 2014, under the leadership and direction of SU. The initiative was inspired by a creative initiator, Nancy Cantor, the 11th Chancellor of SU. Cantor used her platform to build public and private partnerships, mobilize public will, and secure governmental, private, and community support to realize a particular vision, namely, to rewrite the future of the NWS.

The NWSI collaborators included the Gifford Foundation, Home Headquarters, Inc., the Syracuse Center of Excellence in Energy and Environmental Systems (COE), and a coalition of neighborhood residents and business partners. The mission of the NWSI at that time was to use the power of art, technology, and innovation, together with neighborhood values and culture, to improve the quality of life for the residents of the area (Higgins 2014).

Nancy Cantor and the leaders of the NWSI who succeeded her spent nearly 9 years implementing arts and cultural strategies in what they deemed the SALT District. What started as a SU scholarship in action initiative, and the location of the design school in downtown Syracuse led to a multimillion-dollar revitalization effort in one of the most impoverished neighborhoods in America.

This researcher asked 12 community stakeholders, who engaged with the initiative either directly or indirectly, to bear witness to their experience of this arts and cultural revitalization strategy in their neighborhood. They all had opinions and poignant
stories to tell about how the initiative impacted them personally. The inquiry revealed that the effort created access to people and services, building bridges, social capital, as well as income-producing assets. Consistent with other research on the benefits of the arts, agency, self-efficacy, and empowerment, the NWS neighbors emerged as a significant finding in the data. Also, participation and engagement of the arts, and representative leadership emerged while crime, as a result of creative placemaking, decreased.

Each stakeholder shared the intentional and unintentional consequences of their interactions. All 12 participants felt the initiative constructively impacted the area in some way. However, all of the participants thought it fell short of its promise in the wake of SU’s seemingly premature departure from the initiative.

Remnants from the initiative included $11 million in income-producing commercial and residential real estate assets, a decrease in crime, and the removal of over 200 dilapidated buildings. A thread that united much of the dialogue was that the NWSI awakened a sleeping giant and the voices of the people. Members of the NWS community are now seeking ways to influence the future of their community, from the ground up.

The participant stakeholders possessed a solid connection to the NWS. The community connection is consistent with prior studies on creative placemaking, such as Androutsopoulos and Scholz (2003). They attested that using creative placemaking strategies can cultivate meaning in places from neighborhoods to regions engendering strong feelings of connection among its citizenry within a particular location, having positive effects on their perception of that place.
Brick and mortar remnants of creative placemaking in the SALT District include SALT Space, a community black box theater and rehearsal space; Performance Park, an outdoor performance space; SALT Quarters; and La Casita, a Latino Cultural Center. The initiative also created scores of artists’ resident workspaces and artist-occupied homes, a decrease in crime, and an incremental improvement in the poverty rate from the ninth most-impoverished city in the nation to the 18th.

If managed successfully, these resources and cultural spaces may ensure more just systems and a bridge out of generational poverty in the future for the NWS and other postindustrial cities. The efficacy of advancing creative placemaking in other impoverished neighborhoods in cities is possible. It may be dependent, however, on finding a champion or, as Markusen and Gadwa, (2010a) suggested, a creative initiator with influence and the human and financial resources to rally state and local government officials and funders, such a Nancy Cantor.

Moreover, according to Markusen and Gadwa (2010b), projects that build upon existing distinctions of place are key. Other key components to successful creative placemaking efforts should include considerable public and private support, community engagement of artists, and strong partnerships among creative initiators, civic leaders, artists, business leaders, and arts organizations. The SALT District had these elements for a moment in time.

Creative placemaking is entering its second decade in a post-COVID 19 world. Economically, this pandemic may usher in a second great depression. Like the Works Progress Administration, in 1935, which President Franklin Delano Roosevelt championed to help artists work during the Depression, and the City Beautiful movement,
which flourished between the late 19th and early 20th century, champions of the revitalization of cities have placed the arts and culture as a centerpiece to rebirth cities. The use of the arts and culture deemed as creative placemaking can saturate once derelict environments with beauty, culture, art, and well-being. These movements were only for a moment in time, but their impacts have endured.
References


ScholarlyCommons. (n.d.). Social impact of the arts project. Retrieved from https://repository.upenn.edu/siap/


Appendix A

Alignment of Interview Questions and Research Questions

Research Questions:
1. How do Near Westside stakeholders experiencing community transformation through creative placemaking strategies perceive the changes happening in their neighborhood?
2. What changes have occurred in the community, as a result of the arts and cultural strategy implemented by the Near Westside Initiative, and has the initiative directly benefited or harmed low-income neighborhood residents or area businesses?
3. What can creative placemaking outcomes, and stakeholders in the SALT District of the Near Westside of Syracuse, tell us about creative placemaking as a mechanism for community revitalization in general?

Interview Questions
ArtPlace PolicyLink
RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION FRAMEWORK
for ArtPlace America’s Community Development Investments (CDI) Program
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

Probing Questions

What changes are happening in the community, intended or unintended, as a result of the arts and cultural strategies?

What do you think about the changes happening and that have happened in the Near Westside?

How do you feel about the Westside’s newly banded identity, namely The SALT District?

How have the Near Westside Initiative’s arts and cultural economic strategies within the SALT District posed viable or transformational solutions to addressing systemic poverty. If you believe this is true, how so. If you do not believe this is a true statement, why not?

How have these initiatives affected you, your business or organization personally?
Research Questions:
1. How do Near Westside stakeholders experiencing community transformation through creative placemaking strategies perceive the changes happening in their neighborhood?
2. What changes have occurred in the community, as a result of the arts and cultural strategy implemented by the Near Westside Initiative, and has the initiative directly benefited or harmed low-income neighborhood residents or area businesses?
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What stated community development outcomes are the arts and cultural strategies intended to support, and how are they contributing to results?

Maarten Jacobs, the second director of the Near Westside initiative was quoted as saying the following regarding the renovation of SALT Quarters, “The concept for SALT Quarters was formed based on a need for more spaces and opportunities for artists to live, gather, and create their work in a setting that encourages collaboration. Additionally, the concept is to use the power of arts to reinvigorate our public spaces by identifying artists, locally, and nationally that have a passion for community-based public art. To stay true to these ideas, the SALT District is working hard to design a space that meets all of those conceptual criteria while also sticking to our mission to create aesthetically pleasing space that are true to the social and cultural values of our residents.

The SALT Quarters renovation was completed a few years ago.

In your estimation, what have been the results, and does it align with the original intent?

Are there other unexpected or unintended outcomes in the community (positive or negative) as a result of the arts and cultural strategies?

Some of the success the Near Westside Initiative claims include, the renovations of: The Lincoln Building and the Case Supply Building, SALT Quarters, SALT Space; major companies moving into the area, new homes and apartments renovated and 80 million dollars in investment coming to the area?

How has creative placemaking directly affect low-income residents that live and work in the neighborhood?

Creative placemaking initiatives in other cities have led to gentrification in some instances. What changes have occurred in the Near Westside community, as a result of the arts and cultural strategy implemented by the Near Westside Initiative, positive or negative?
### Research Questions:

1. How do Near Westside stakeholders, experiencing community transformation through creative placemaking strategies, perceive the changes happening in their neighborhood?
2. What changes have occurred in the community as a result of the arts and cultural strategy implemented by the Near Westside Initiative, and has the initiative directly benefited or harmed low-income neighborhood residents or area businesses?
3. What can creative placemaking outcomes and stakeholders in the SALT District of the Near Westside of Syracuse tell us about creative placemaking as a mechanism for community revitalization in general?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How can arts and cultural strategies reinforce, enhance, or help to preserve existing community identities?</th>
<th>One of the first Near Westside projects realized was the renovation of the Lincoln building, with it came LA Casita. How has this cultural center, in your estimation reinforced, enhanced, or preserved existing community identities?</th>
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<tr>
<td>How do arts and cultural strategies support the expression or representation of more than one cultural identity within a community or place?</td>
<td>The SALT District can now boast a number of arts and cultural venues: La Casita, SALT Quarters and SALT Space. How do these venues support expression or representation of more than one cultural identity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can community developers employ arts and cultural strategies to advance the integration of new demographic groups within a community?</td>
<td>If new resources are realized for the project how can developers do to cultivate new demographic groups moving in or visiting the neighborhood?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do arts and cultural strategies bridge community or demographic divides to create a shared sense of community identity?</th>
<th>What have been some of the community divides, past and present?</th>
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<tr>
<td>How have cultural strategies changed or enhanced these divides?</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>How can arts and cultural strategies contribute to new perceptions or realities, for residents and visitors, in neighborhoods that need reinvestment and revitalization, or that are facing pressures for economic or social transformation</th>
<th>How can arts and cultural strategies contribute to new perceptions or realities in the Near Westside of Syracuse going forward, for residents, workers and visitors, in the neighborhood?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How has the community rallied or pressured community or civic leaders for continued reinvestment in community revitalization of the area?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>How does the overall narrative of the place(s) or of the development processes change as a result of arts and cultural strategies?</th>
<th>There is a scholar that essentially says To a community or neighborhoods reputation can be elevated by reimagining and rebranding (Rich, 2018). The Near Westside was rebranded the SALT District.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do you believe the overall narrative of the Near Westside has changed as a result of the rebranding or the development projects in general and those that have incorporated arts and culture?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>How does the community's social agency, power, or self-determination vis a vis economic, political or social transformation change as a result of arts and cultural strategies?</th>
<th>Research suggests that arts &amp; culture in a community increases civic involvement— economically, socially and politically—among residents.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you seen examples of increased civic involvement in the Near Westside since the revitalization efforts occurred?</td>
<td>Can you offer any examples?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Research Questions:**

1. How do Near Westside stakeholders, experiencing community transformation through creative placemaking strategies, perceive the changes happening in their neighborhood?
2. What changes have occurred in the community as a result of the arts and cultural strategy implemented by the Near Westside Initiative, and has the initiative directly benefited or harmed low-income neighborhood residents or area businesses?
3. What can creative placemaking outcomes and stakeholders in the SALT District of the Near Westside of Syracuse tell us about creative placemaking as a mechanism for community revitalization in general?

| How does the community’s perception of the role of the arts or artists in economic or social transformation change as a result of arts and cultural strategies? | What is your perception of arts or artists in transformation of community? Do you believe the creative placemaking processes implemented by the Near Westside initiative can be applied to other depressed neighborhoods? Do you believe arts and cultural strategies can be applied in other areas within the City of Syracuse? |
Appendix B

Art Place | PolicyLink Research and Documentation Framework

Updated August 2017 1 of 4

RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION FRAMEWORK
for ArtPlace America’s Community Development Investments (CDI) Program

INTRODUCTION

The grantee organizations supported by the Community Development Investments initiative are each experienced leaders in their core fields, such as building and managing affordable housing, supporting the healthy growth and development of young people, providing comprehensive health and social services in a neighborhood setting, or providing stewardship for the parks of a major city. The CDI support will enable them to complete important projects which advance those core priorities, and while it will be important to measure the progress and immediate outcomes and impacts of those projects, the central questions for this research endeavor are about the consequences of incorporating arts and culture strategies: to specify, track, analyze and understand what difference their new engagement with the arts has made.

The findings from the research will be valuable to the individual organizations and the leadership of the CDI Initiative, but perhaps most importantly to the various practitioners which comprise and support the fields of creative placemaking and community development.

The CDI Research and Documentation framework is organized around three thematic areas. For each area, several broad questions, common to more than one site, emerged after roughly a year of activity by the grantee organizations and extensive discussion with their leaders. During that first year, it became clear that the new practices and attitudes emerging within each organization are going to be extensive and influential well beyond the immediate execution of arts-related activities. It was also evident that even though all the grantee groups were experienced at building and managing partnerships, their collaborations with cultural practitioners are going to take on different qualities and operate in some new ways. And finally, the CDI participants recognized that the intended and unexpected outcomes of the arts and culture strategies on their communities would need to be understood and documented with methods and measurements that take account of their unique approaches.

Given these observations, the three thematic areas under which questions are grouped are Organizational Evolution, Collaborative Practice, and Community Development Outcomes. For each of these, an introduction is followed by the first level of question, followed by more specific questions tied to that topic. In separate documents, the six grantee organizations and PolicyLink have developed “learning agendas” which include, for each theme, a third level of questions customized by and for each site, highlighting their unique context, issues, and interests.

In all of these inquiries, a “baseline” of how the organization operated close to the start of the CDI program has been established to enable the tracking of changes over time in practices, attitudes, relationships, and community conditions. Updated August 2017 2 of 4
ORGANIZATIONAL EVOLUTION

Organizational evolution is focused on how the CDI organizations may have changed – or identified a need to change – their values, priorities, community partnerships, staffing, or approaches to their work as a result of these ventures into creative placemaking. All the groups are responding to the CDI opportunity in ways that have begun to alter their practices and organizational structure, but from different starting points and in different contexts. They may, for example, be discovering or reinvigorating a set of values that had previously been difficult to bring into everyday practice; or reexamining their organization’s relationship to their community and its residents. They are all using the CDI opportunity to make significant changes in how they conduct their internal and external operations.

1. What internal changes are required for an established community development organization, with a proven track record in its traditional line of work, to deeply incorporate arts and cultural strategies?

- How do community development organizations create internal buy-in for arts and cultural work?
- What personnel shifts or training are required for a community development organization to carry out arts and cultural work?
- Which departments/lines of work at a community development organization engage in arts and cultural work, and to what degree?
- What organizational processes and allocations of resources need to be adapted or modified to accommodate arts and cultural work?

2. How can the incorporation of arts and cultural strategies impact the overall future direction of a community development organization?

- How does engaging in arts and cultural work influence a community development organization’s execution of its overall priorities or its organizational culture?
- How does engaging in arts and cultural work impact an organization's capacity and desire for risk and experimentation?
- How does the organization expand its definition and measurement of success in new ways as a result of engaging in arts and cultural work?
- How does the organization tell its own story in new ways as a result of engaging in arts and cultural work?

3. How can the incorporation of arts and cultural strategies impact the organization’s interactions with community members, partners and stakeholders?

- How does engaging in arts and cultural work enhance an organization’s understanding of the community and its needs? Updated August 2017
- How does engaging in arts and cultural work impact an organization’s approach to working with community members?
- How does engaging in arts and cultural work lead to new partnerships or coalitions for the organization?
- How does engaging in arts and cultural work impact a community’s understanding or perception of the organization?
COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE

Collaborative Practice is focused on the lessons to be learned from innovative working relationships and activities between artists, and arts and culture groups, and community revitalization practitioners. The CDI initiative began with commitments to the participating organizations rather than with their specific plans for projects, and the first year saw each of them engage in a distinct process for mapping cultural assets and identifying issues, sites, constituents, resources, and potential partners. As the initiative progresses, each organization is establishing active partnerships, collaborations, contracts and other relationships with arts and cultural practitioners and advisors on a range of projects and activities. These relationships may be qualitatively distinct from the other kinds of partnerships with which these community development groups are familiar.

4. How can community development organizations establish productive relationships with artists and arts organizations?

- How does a community development organization learn about and build connections within the arts community?
- What are the approaches to selecting and incorporating artists and arts and cultural organizations as strategic partners in community development work?
- To what extent does a community development organization’s support of artists or arts and cultural organizations outside of the collaboration (i.e., capacity building, training) strengthen the collaboration?

5. What are the ways that artists and arts organizations collaborate on the identification, planning and implementation of community development projects?

- How are collaborative goals determined, and who is responsible (community, organization, or artist/arts partner) for conceptualizing projects?
- What phases or portions of a project, from start to completion and afterward, is the artist or arts partner contributing to, and why?

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

In a range of different circumstances across the six CDI communities, arts and culture strategies are being used to create or preserve neighborhood or group identity, empower residents, and to build healthy communities of opportunity. Some of the communities are facing intense pressure from the real estate market that threaten the composition and cultural character of their neighborhoods, and others are struggling to attract reinvestment in a way that will equitably benefit existing residents. Some are seeking to integrate newcomers into the cultural, social and political community fabric, and others are seeking to preserve and enhance cultural traditions that are at the core of their identity. The domain of Community Development Outcomes is focused on whether and how arts and cultural strategies have become key elements in the organizations’ efforts to realize their community’s aspirations; and what role arts and cultural strategies play in responding to forces of demographic, economic, or social change.
6. What changes are happening in the community, intended or unintended, as a result of the arts and cultural strategies?

- What stated community development outcomes are the arts and cultural strategies intended to support, and how are they contributing to results?
- Are there other unexpected or unintended outcomes in the community (positive or negative) as a result of the arts and cultural strategies?

7. How can arts and cultural strategies reinforce, enhance, or help to preserve existing community identities?

- How do arts and cultural strategies support a community development organization’s ability to preserve the cultural identity and fabric of communities with specific racial or ethnic histories?

8. How can community developers employ arts and cultural strategies to advance the integration of new demographic groups within a community?

- How do arts and cultural strategies support the expression or representation of more than one cultural identity within a community or place?
- How do arts and cultural strategies bridge community or demographic divides to create a shared sense of community identity?

9. How can arts and cultural strategies contribute to new perceptions or realities, for residents and visitors, in neighborhoods that need reinvestment and revitalization, or that are facing pressures for economic or social transformation?

- How does the overall narrative of the place(s) or of the development processes change as a result of arts and cultural strategies?
- How does the community's social agency, power, or self-determination vis-a-vis economic, political or social transformation change as a result of arts and cultural strategies?
- How does the community’s perception of the role of the arts or artists in economic or social transformation change as a result of arts and cultural strategies?
Appendix C

Images: Near Westside Initiative Buildings

Figure Appendix C1. ProLiteracy

Figure Appendix C2. WCNY television station, Interior and Exterior

Figure Appendix C3. The Lincoln Building
Figure Appendix C4. SALT Quarters

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