

A CITY FOR ALL

**Contested narratives of participatory reforms,
placemaking practices,
and ‘good’ city-building**

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the progressive visions, participatory priorities, and cultural strategies enacted by citizen-engaged planning in Ottawa, Ontario. With more inclusive participation and more diverse representation, formal urban planning processes set up by the City of Ottawa establish participatory placemaking as a principle of ‘good’ city-building and as a route towards social and spatial justice. In the context of persistent urban inequities and renewed urban social movements, this research builds on the work of many scholars and community activists who raise concerns about the ongoing social, spatial, and economic marginalization of difference through progressive reforms. It examines the alignment between the claims and substance of participatory placemaking, with specific attention to performance, performativity, and counter-narratives. Three inter-related questions structure the investigation: 1) How do the actors perform participatory placemaking through grand narratives of ‘good’ city-building? 2) How do performances of progressive narratives, group identities, and normative values reproduce oppressive systems and logics? 3) What strategies, critical performances, and refusals do marginalized and/or alternative groups exercise in their struggle for space in the city?

A site study of planning in Ottawa and three case studies shed light on the development and evolution of participatory placemaking in Ottawa between 2006 and 2018. The three cases are: the development of the Ottawa Music Strategy and safe space policies as part of the cultural revitalization of the arts and entertainment district; the construction of the Charlie Bowins Skatepark as part of the rehabilitation of McNabb Park; and the official designation of Le/The Village during the rehabilitation of the Bank Street mainstreet. Additional stories of people and place, planning policy, and site-based public and subcultural histories thicken the narratives of each case. Performative narrative analysis identifies and assesses alignments between each of the cases with common urban narratives, normative values and visions of the ‘good’ city, and enacted group identities. This research then engages with theories of social reproduction, systems of oppression, performativity, and non-reformist reforms to develop critical narrative-based frameworks for spatial justice analyses across the different groups and stories. Critical autoethnography positions punk subculture and scenes in tension with prevailing planning, placemaking, community, and social justice narratives. First-person storytelling, song writing,

and zine making based on the author's participation in the Ottawa punk scene are included as critical re-readings and radical counter-narratives.

As this research shows, participatory placemaking can be read as having made space for some previously excluded groups in formal city planning; contributing to greater representations of diversity in public places; and acting as a catalyst for cultural and economic revitalization. Yet, the production of some good for some groups is not a sufficient base to conclude that participatory placemaking is transforming our cities into inclusive, equitable, and prosperous places for all. The contested evaluations and critical re-readings in this dissertation point to performative narratives of progressive values as also working to obscure structural inequities, reproduce harm, and efface places of difference while maintaining the social order and hierarchies of privileged interests and oppressive systems. The research also shows that when burdened by normative structures, restrictive processes, and oppressive systems, marginalized and/or alternative groups demonstrate an aptitude for spatial, cultural, and political interventions. Strategic, critical, and radical acts of survival, resistance, and refusal reveal the limitations of official city plans and processes, respond to group needs and aspirations, and enact their claim the right to the city.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse examine les visions progressistes, les priorités en matière de participation et les stratégies culturelles adoptées dans la planification citoyenne à Ottawa, en Ontario. Avec une participation plus inclusive et une représentation plus diversifiée, les processus formels d'urbanisme mis en place par la Ville d'Ottawa établissent le « *placemaking* » participatif comme un principe de « bonne » construction de la ville et comme une voie vers la justice sociale et spatiale. Dans le cadre d'iniquités urbaines persistantes et de mouvements sociaux urbains renouvelés, cette recherche s'appuie sur le travail de nombreux universitaires et militants communautaires qui s'inquiètent de la marginalisation sociale, spatiale et économique continue de la différence par les réformes progressives. Elle examine l'alignement entre les revendications et la substance du « *placemaking* » participatif (la conception de lieux collectifs dans des processus inclusifs), en accordant une attention particulière à la performance, à la performativité et aux contre-récits. Trois questions interdépendantes structurent l'enquête : 1) Comment les acteurs réalisent-ils le « *placemaking* » participatif à travers de grands récits de la « bonne » construction de la ville ? 2) Comment les représentations de récits progressistes, d'identités de groupe et de valeurs normatives reproduisent-elles des logiques et des systèmes oppressifs ? 3) Quelles stratégies, performances critiques et refus les groupes marginalisés ou alternatifs exercent-ils pour affirmer leur droit à la ville ?

Une étude de site sur l'aménagement urbain à Ottawa et trois études de cas ont mis en lumière le développement et l'évolution du « *placemaking* » participatif à Ottawa entre 2006 et 2018. Les trois cas sont : l'élaboration de la Stratégie musicale d'Ottawa et des politiques sur les espaces sécuritaires dans le cadre de la revitalisation culturelle du quartier des arts et spectacles ; la construction du Charlie Bowins Skatepark dans le cadre de la réhabilitation du McNabb Park ; et la désignation officielle de Le/The Village lors de la réfection de la rue principale de la rue Bank. Des récits supplémentaires de personnes et de lieux, de politiques d'aménagement et d'histoires publiques et sous-culturelles des sites enrichissent les récits de chaque cas. L'analyse narrative performative identifie et évalue les alignements entre chacun des cas et des récits urbains communs, des valeurs normatives et des visions de la « bonne » ville, et des identités de groupe en vigueur. Cette recherche aborde ensuite les théories de la reproduction sociale, les systèmes d'oppression, la performativité et les réformes non réformistes pour développer des

cadres narratifs critiques pour les analyses de la justice spatiale pour les différents groupes et histoires. L'autoethnographie critique place la sous-culture et les scènes punk en tension avec les récits dominants de planification, de création de lieux, de communauté et de justice sociale. La narration à la première personne, l'écriture de chansons et la création de « zines » basées sur la participation de l'auteur à la scène punk d'Ottawa sont incluses en tant que relectures critiques et contre-récits radicaux.

Comme le montre cette recherche, le « *placemaking* » participatif peut être interprété comme ayant donné une place à certains groupes qui étaient auparavant exclus de la planification urbaine formelle, comme ayant contribué à une plus grande représentation de la diversité dans les lieux publics et comme ayant servi de catalyseur à la revitalisation culturelle et économique. Cependant, la production d'un certain bien pour certains groupes n'est pas une base suffisante pour conclure que le « *placemaking* » participatif transforme nos villes en lieux inclusifs, équitables et prospères pour tous. Les évaluations contestées et les relectures critiques de cette thèse indiquent que les récits performatifs des valeurs progressistes travaillent également à masquer les inégalités structurelles, à reproduire les dommages et à effacer les lieux de différence tout en maintenant l'ordre social et les hiérarchies des intérêts privilégiés et des systèmes oppressifs. La recherche montre également que lorsqu'ils sont accablés par des structures normatives, des processus restrictifs et des systèmes oppressifs, les groupes marginalisés et/ou alternatifs font preuve d'une aptitude à effectuer des interventions spatiales, culturelles et politiques. Des actes stratégiques, critiques et radicaux de survie, de résistance et de refus révèlent les limites des plans et processus officiels de la ville, répondent aux besoins et aux aspirations des groupes et mettent en œuvre leur revendication du droit à la ville.

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It is perhaps appropriate that a thesis examining the tensions between institutions and community, between the formal and informal, between structures and relations, was deeply and meaningfully nurtured through different spaces, communities, and relationships.

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CONTRIBUTIONS TO ORIGINAL KNOWLEDGE

This dissertation was researched and written by the author with no co-authors. All of the empirical research, analysis of findings, artistic productions, and critical discussions are considered original scholarship and distinct contributions to knowledge.

“PRE-CHORUS”

*"I heard you're doing a PhD in urban planning.
What's your research about?"*

*"I look at alternative and marginalized groups in
the city and the ways that urban planning, because
it plans in the public interest, frequently plans
against different uses and users of space."*

I don't really mind the question. I've rehearsed the answer enough
that it comes without much thought. I anticipate the next question and
respond:

"I work with punk, skateboard, and queer spaces."

*"Punk? Interesting. Are you a punk?
You don't look like a punk."*

After a couple years of speaking about this research I recognize that
others struggle to place me within it. I'm like the punk house next
door that you don't know is a punk house because it passes for normal.

"People say that when they find out I'm Jewish, too."

The familiar progression of the conversation continues as I explain
that I decided to move back to Ottawa because of my connection to the
punk scene here. Whether they are from Ottawa or not, most are also
surprised to learn that there is a punk scene in Ottawa.

*"I don't think I've ever seen any punks in Ottawa.
Where do punks hang out?"*

I give a half sarcastic, half intentionally coded, but very meaningful
response.

"Ask a punk."

"You going to the show tonight? Do you know where it is? Should we 'ask a punk'?"

"You just did."

As I see the words written out on the screen in front of me, I feel a bit strange. Am I a punk? Do I have claim to that title? I let the feeling pass. It's a feeling I've felt before. A feeling that I will probably never resolve.

Later that night as I stand next to my bike outside my friend's apartment, I pull out my phone to see if he had texted to say he was late. He's notoriously on punk time. The words "ask a punk" reappear as I catch glimpse of him walking towards me. We hop on our bikes. Riding down the street side by side as I lead the way to funeral home, he shouts:

"Sorry, I didn't mean to imply you weren't punk."

I get it. He was the one who brought me to my first punk show. We lock up our bikes in front of a house. There are no lights on. The house looks completely "normal" like every other house on the mixed commercial residential street. He follows as I walk off to the side of the house, following the row of bushes, through the small clearing. We pause in front of the closed side door. I listen for the muffled sounds of a band playing in the basement. Nothing. The show is obviously also running on punk time.

I lead us down the unlit path towards the backyard where everyone is hanging out, smoking, and drinking tall boys. I feel reassured about my punkness, having not only successfully led us to the correct house but in knowing the secret codes of navigating the space.

1 INTRODUCTION

The capital city of Canada began the 21st century with a civic journey and challenge of reconciling eleven municipalities and one regional government into the new City of Ottawa. Following amalgamation in 2001, the City initiated a two-year planning process to set a “vision for future growth of the city.”¹ The Ottawa 20/20 process led to the production of the *Ottawa 2020 Growth Management Strategy* and Five Growth Management Plans to “provide long-term strategic direction and form a comprehensive blueprint for the future of Ottawa and its communities.”² As in many North American cities, the urban core in Ottawa was targeted for revitalization by the *Official Plan*. The once vibrant heritage mainstreets, parks, and cultural centres were identified as strategic priorities for revitalization and sustainable development, “a strategy that requires the integration of economic growth, social equity, and environmental management.”³ Seven Guiding Principles set out in *Ottawa 2020* establish a value-based framework for directing public policy and decision-making towards the goal of “ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come.”⁴ These revitalization and diversity priorities made space for new productions of space in the city and more inclusive participation in the official city-building project. *Ottawa 2020* set a vision of future public growth in Ottawa as a progressive vision for building a city for all.

Growing public interest in equity, diversity, and inclusion centred inclusive participation and diverse representation as integral to the progressive reform of city-building practices and outcomes. The progressive vision, participatory priorities, and culturally-oriented strategies of *Ottawa 2020* made space for diverse groups traditionally excluded from, marginalized by, or non-participant in formal city planning. Motivated by different needs, experiences, and histories, these diverse marginalized and/or alternative groups (M/AG) mobilized around these new opportunities to secure group needs and to claim their right to the city. Connected to the legacy of spaces and battles for space of previous generations, these contemporary initiatives work

¹ City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan*. 1.1

² Ibid. 1.3

³ Ibid. 1.3

⁴ Ibid. 1.3

strategically to secure space in public places and public process; to be included and represented in the city-building project. This dissertation examines three such case stories. In 2018, the Ottawa Music Strategy was released as part of the *Renewed Action Plan for Arts, Heritage and Culture in Ottawa* linking cultural and city planning for a music-friendly city, after members of an artist collective call-out unsafe and non-inclusive music spaces. The Charlie Bowins Skatepark, opened as part of the rehabilitation of McNabb Park in 2015 after members of the skateboard community overthrew the public consultation and launched a crowdfunding campaign. In 2011, members of the LGBT community succeed in their six-year battle to gain recognition from the city and support from local businesses to officially designate six blocks of the reconstructed Bank Street mainstreet as Le/The Village.⁵

These three cases tell persuasive and engaging stories of community-led placemaking initiatives and inclusive public process that united stakeholders to work collaboratively towards improving the social diversity, material quality, and economic prosperity of key social and cultural spaces in the urban core. Engaged M/AGs mobilized around renewed participatory placemaking and urban social justice movements to claim space in the city. By organizing community and public support around these initiatives, the engaged groups worked towards reforming public misperceptions, and long-standing inequities and exclusions in public spaces and processes. Overall, these stories of participatory placemaking and cultural revitalization cast a positive reflection of how Ottawa imagines itself and how it wants to be seen. As expressed by Mayor Jim Watson at the ceremony to reveal the official designation of The/Le Village: “It shows how inclusive and open our society is and I think the signs look great.”⁶ Ottawa—the city, the people, and previously excluded groups—present themselves as a progressive and unified Capital City committed to the growth and renewal of a prosperous and liveable city for all.

Though these three examples from Ottawa evoke the social disruption narratives of radical grassroots action and spatial justice, the mainstreaming of community placemaking into the city-building project via planning seems to be increasingly repackaged by formal democratic participation. By integrating placemaking with growth management strategies and planning

⁵ The cases are presented in reverse chronological order so as to present the music strategy first as the example most thoroughly examined with the introduction of the punk autoethnography. McNabb and Le/The Village provide comparative projects for assessing contemporary participatory placemaking initiatives in Ottawa.

⁶ Mayor Jim Watson as quoted in Fagan, *UPDATE: Village signs get mayoral approval*.

processes, participatory placemaking performs good stories of ‘good’ city-building. Yet, the production of some good for some previously excluded people in each of these examples has also contributed to gentrification and displacement, the implementation of further restrictions and policing, and further marginalizes other M/AGs. Inequitable conditions for inclusion, control of process, and the re-direction of outcomes towards public ‘good’ reproduce long histories implicating planning in the production of social and spatial injustices. Other non-conforming, non-participant, or otherwise ‘undesirable’ M/AGs face ongoing marginalization through displacement, disbelonging, and destabilization of group practices and claims to the city. There is need for critical consideration of the extent to which performance of ‘good’ city-building through inclusive participation and diverse representation, though directed towards improved prosperity and liveability for all, also works to obscure structural inequities, reproduce violent systems of oppression, and efface places of difference in the city.

Participatory reforms and placemaking as ‘good’ city-building

For well over half a century, progressive planning reforms have sought to address social and spatial urban inequities by improving the structural processes of planning to make space for more inclusive participation, diverse representation, and engaged community action by all. Planning reform movements have sought more equitable social and material outcomes by arguing for greater representation and participation in planning process.⁷ Public decision-making in planning, not simply decision-making by experts in the public interest, shifted the profession towards decision-making *with* the public and *by* the public. Progressive critiques and reforms to planning process have had a notable impact on expanding democratic participation and improving quality of life and the built environment. Public accountability and engagement have been largely integrated into standards of good planning practice. Rights, recognition, and access have been extended to many previously excluded groups.

⁷ Arnstein, 'A ladder of citizen participation'.; Davidoff, *Advocacy and pluralism in planning*.

Community-led action, grassroots urban social movements, and academic scholarship have long histories of challenging traditional planning and the authority of the planner.⁸ They criticize the technical rationality of the plan and authoritative expertise of traditional planning as leaving people out of plans and out of decision-making, producing unlivable cities, and reproducing social injustices especially among the most marginalized. The spatial and cultural turns in postmodern thought and critical urban theory further challenged planning practice and process, directing attention towards thinking more closely on the role of people and place in the city. As a growing popular movement and emerging form of spatial justice movements, contemporary placemaking is embraced for its potential to empower more citizens to participate in shaping their neighbourhoods and cities directly through their own actions.⁹ Strategic interventions in the spatial realm are intended to disrupt the economic and political status quo. At the same time, they centre and celebrate creativity, community, and collective memory that are expressed and experienced through the cultural production of space. The direct action of residents on the ordinary landscapes and everyday lives in the city become critical processes of city-making.

Over the past two decades, cities and publics around the world have increasingly embraced placemaking as a strategy for integrating both structural and social progressive reforms into formal planning practice. As an increasingly popular policy direction, creative placemaking reorients planning from strict land-use regulation and top-down approaches towards strategic small-scale, incremental place-based cultural initiatives that engage local communities to participate directly in the city-building project. Parklets, street art, pop-up shops and festivals, and guerrilla gardens have enabled everyday citizens to participate in and connect with the spaces and people of the city through direct engagement and action. Creative placemaking and cultural planning as planning reform shift the city-building project away from grand plans towards everyday experiences and offer new frameworks for inclusive participation and diverse representation to realign with democratic decision-making and progressive goals of planning.

⁸ Castells, *The city and the grassroots: a cross-cultural theory of urban social movements.*; Jacobs, *The death and life of great American cities.*; Gans, *People and plans; essays on urban problems and solutions.*; Glass, *The evaluation of planning: some sociological considerations.*

⁹ Markusen and Gadwa, *Creative Placemaking.*; Lydon and Garcia, *Tactical Urbanism: Short-term Action for Long-term Change*

Inspired by urban social movements,¹⁰ contemporary placemaking has renewed a social justice consciousness grounded in the right to the city and collective community organizing.¹¹ Urban scholars see placemaking as: a challenge to traditional planning roles of who makes plans for public spaces and whose interests are served by those plans; a social action of community care that provides for material needs and contributes to the socio-cultural production of place-based meaning and identity; and a political action of reclaiming space, expertise, and power.¹²

New reproductions of social and spatial injustices

Participation and placemaking reflect both the advances in democratisation of planning and limits to such reforms. Scholarship on creative placemaking increasingly questions the extent to which culturally-oriented participatory approaches produce meaningful social or spatial change. Like previous generations of planning critics and reformists, these scholars and community organizers point to the continued production of spatial injustices through displacement, inequitable distribution of wealth and decision-making power, and revived rhetoric of desirable versus undesirable public use and users.¹³ There are growing concerns that progressive language, the popularity of placemaking, and the inclusion of diverse representations are increasingly mobilized as both performative practices and as marketing strategy to secure investors, buyers, and consumers.¹⁴ Scholars and community activists alike raise concerns about the ongoing physical and cultural displacement of equity-seeking groups and their further social, economic, and political marginalization.¹⁵ They raise concerns that placemaking and social justice movements are co-opted, with efforts redirected to benefit privileged interests. This process is

¹⁰ See Castells, *The city and the grassroots: a cross-cultural theory of urban social movements*.

¹¹ Wortham-Galvin, 'An Anthropology of Urbanism: How People Make Places (and What Designers and Planners Might Learn from It)'.

¹² Markusen and Gadwa, *Creative Placemaking*.; Hayden, *The power of place: Urban landscapes as public history*.; Wortham-Galvin, 'An Anthropology of Urbanism: How People Make Places (and What Designers and Planners Might Learn from It)'.; Lydon and Garcia, *Tactical Urbanism: Short-term Action for Long-term Change*

¹³ See literature review 2.2

¹⁴ Sorkin, *Variations on a theme park : the new American city and the end of public space*.; Loh et al., 'Our Diversity Is Our Strength Explaining Variation in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Emphasis in Municipal Arts and Cultural Plans'.

¹⁵ Summers, *Black in place : the spatial aesthetics of race in a post-Chocolate City*.; Pitter, *A Call to Courage: An Open Letter to Canadian Urbanists*.

known by a variety of names depending on the co-opted cause, for example, pinkwashing, artwashing, or wokewashing.¹⁶ The political connections and economic power of traditionally well-represented interests, i.e., developers, investors, corporations, and landowners, continue to be better positioned within the structural and social framework of planning process, rationales, and growth objectives.

Despite the popular enthusiasm for placemaking and other forms of participatory urbanisms, the potential of these movements, like many before, seem to be falling short of their transformational goals and promises of social justice. Marginalized, alternative, subcultural, and/or other diverse groups must operate within contemporary social and political contexts, responding to neoliberal market logics, associated urban governance structures, and multiple oppressive systems, many of which seem to have adapted to past reforms. Gay villages and skateboard parks, for example, are increasingly subject to the marketing and consumption of marginalized cultural spaces and the encouraged governmentality and entrepreneurialism of marginalized subjects.¹⁷ Integrating community-based practices into public policy raises concerns about the privileging of mainstream public desires and prioritization of the placemaking projects that are consistent with, and desirable to, mainstream public interests over correcting spatial injustices.

Nominal attempts to reform public processes to conform to progressive values of equity, diversity, and inclusion are not only critiqued as performative and tokenistic but also as co-opted tools that depoliticize their use by equity-seeking groups.¹⁸ There is growing desire to see the collective city-building project move beyond non-reformist reforms towards more meaningful recognitions of people and place, renewing calls for deeply transformative spatial justice. Feminist, Queer, Black and Indigenous scholars are increasingly drawing attention to the many

¹⁶ Kanai and Gill, 'Woke? Affect, neoliberalism, marginalised identities and consumer culture'.; Pritchard, *The Artwashing of Gentrification and Social Cleansing*.; Hartal, 'Touring and obscuring: how sensual, embodied and haptic gay touristic practices construct the geopolitics of pinkwashing'.

¹⁷ Bell and Binnie, 'Authenticating queer space: citizenship, urbanism and governance'.; Lewis, 'Ottawa's Le/The Village: Creating a gaybourhood amidst the 'death of the village''.; Stratford, 'On the edge: a tale of skaters and urban governance'.; Howell, 'Skatepark as neoliberal playground: Urban governance, recreation space, and the cultivation of personal responsibility'.

¹⁸ Summers, *Black in place : the spatial aesthetics of race in a post-Chocolate City*.; Burns and Berbary, 'Placemaking as Unmaking: Settler Colonialism, Gentrification, and the Myth of "Revitalized" Urban Spaces'.; Pitter, *A Call to Courage: An Open Letter to Canadian Urbanists*.

ways in which mainstreamed placemaking is complicit in systems of oppression including racial capitalism, settler colonialism, and cisheteropatriarchy. Simultaneously, many groups are using this moment to call attention to the long histories and traditions of ways oppressed, marginalized, and excluded groups show up for and care for community and ways they connect to and through place.¹⁹

From my punk perspective and experience, I see how prosperity, inclusion, and liveability in the city for all—or at least a particular performance thereof—are increasingly mobilized by the most privileged in our cities. Urban revitalization plans promise safety, community, and improved quality of life, often by threatening the safety, community, and lives of urban ‘undesirables.’ Punks are among the many urban groups who have experienced neighbourhood renewal as the removal of their presence and inclusion as the assimilation or appropriation of their existing character. Beyond the progressive inclusive narrative of positive environmental, social, health, and economic impacts, there appear to be clear patterns of who the City listens to, whose projects move forward with City support, and whose tastes and lifestyle they appeal to and accommodate. Part of this story is the power of planning to shape and control the public and what happens to those who are not included in the future it projects and systems it upholds. The other part of the story is the counter-narrative—the story of how punks de-code the dominant narrative and values encoded into their environment and how they re-code and re-shape space through radical acts of refusal.

Places of narrative and story

Narratives and storytelling play an important role in both planning and placemaking.²⁰ As a major setting for human life and cultural exchange, the city frequently features as setting, as subject, and as a character in public stories and academic studies of place. Through meaning-making and knowledge sharing, storytelling and placemaking share the capacity of connecting people and place. They influence the ways we shape the city, the ways we inhabit the city, and the ways we know the city. Leonie Sandercock argues that: “the way we narrate the city becomes

¹⁹ ---, *Engaging Black People and Power: A Public Engagement and Urban Policy Primer*.; Dorries and Harjo, 'Beyond Safety: Refusing Colonial Violence Through Indigenous Feminist Planning'.

²⁰ Sandercock, 'Out of the Closet: The Importance of Stories and Storytelling in Planning Practice'.

constitutive of urban reality, affecting the choices we make, the ways we then might act.”²¹ She argues that “story is an all-pervasive, yet largely unrecognized force in planning practice”²² and that “[w]e need to understand the work that stories do, or rather that we ask them to do, in deploying them.”²³ To understand “the work that stories do,” Sandercock adds that we also need “to recognize the moral ordering involved in the conscious and unconscious use of certain plots and character types.”²⁴ By thinking through ways that “planning is *performed* through story,”²⁵ which stories are performed, and the values embedded in common urban narratives, perhaps we can better interrogate the troubled and ongoing history of reproducing social and spatial inequities through progressive reforms, practices, and intentions.

Sandercock argues that the story planning consciously and unconsciously deploys through planning history is: “presented as a heroic, progressive narrative, [...] part of the rise of liberal democracy with its belief in progress through science and technology and faith that ‘the rational planning of ideal social orders’ can achieve equality, liberty, and justice.” She continues that “It is assumed that planning is a ‘good thing’.”²⁶ Shaped by modern, liberal, democratic, values and rational-scientific processes, urban planning traditionally operated through “future-oriented, public decision-making directed toward attaining specific goals [in the public interest].”²⁷ Planning practice places faith in the idea that better designed and better managed cities better serve the public interest. Yet, even with all its stated good intentions to address the needs of marginalized and excluded groups, the production of some good for some previously excluded groups, continues to fail to achieve its most foundational cause: “securing good living conditions and preserving the life, health, and well-being of all citizens.”²⁸ The progressive

²¹ Ibid. 12

²² Ibid. 12

²³ Ibid. 12

²⁴ Ibid. 12

²⁵ Ibid. 12 [emphasis in original]

²⁶ Sandercock, *Making the invisible visible: A multicultural planning history*. 3-4

²⁷ Fainstein and Fainstein, 'City planning and political values'. 341

²⁸ This statement is introduced in the dedication of the canonical 1909 book, *An Introduction to city planning : democracy's challenge to the American city*. by Benjamin Marsh. The statement echoes those of *Ottawa 2020* introduced above and explored further in Chapter 3.

practice that planning performs through story are insufficient for attaining the future goal of an inclusive and just city.

James Throgmorton argues that “good planning might, in itself, be a matter of persuasive storytelling about the future.”²⁹ By highlighting the persuasiveness of stories, Throgmorton also draws attention to the power and influence of stories and differences in power between different actors and audiences. He writes:

Powerful actors will strive to eliminate or marginalize competing stories, and hence will induce some planners to devise plans (stories about the future) that are designed to persuade only the audiences that most matter to them.³⁰

In the process of planning, managing, and designing the built environment, urban planning imposes structures and limits on the form and function of cities, and by extension on people and their everyday lives. Complex relationships between the social, spatial, and political are embedded within the ideological constitution, institutional forces, and normative expectations of urban plans. The danger of persuasive stories, however, is their ability to control the narrative, to normalize and reify dominant stories, desires, and interests in order to control—and maintain control over—meaning, decisions, actions, and identity.

It is important to remember that city-building is only partially the result of urban planning. The story of the city is only partially narrated by urban planners and the publics for whom they plan. Critical and radical interventions take place rooted in the experiences and practices of different marginalized and/or subcultural urban groups. These groups are left out of, have opted out of, or have frequently conflicted with the ‘public interest’ that underlies the normative city-building project of traditional urban planning. To overcome the controlling structures, logics, and systems of the city-building project, M/AGs deploy a variety of strategies and practices to claim space in the city and to claim authority over their own stories and representations in other stories. Beyond the planners and beyond the public, a variety of dissident and dissonant voices, experiences, and actions exist and participate in making and remaking the city. Leaving place for these stories to take place works to make visible and unsettle the normative logics and oppressive systems through which urban planning and public policy

²⁹ Throgmorton, 'Planning as Persuasive Storytelling in a Global-Scale Web of Relationships'. 126

³⁰ Ibid. 127

continue to exclude, exploit, and burden difference. Through the struggle to find ways to claim both space and place, non-publics develop alternative relationships between people and space, and cultivate alternative approaches to claiming space based in different ways of knowing and different ways of being in the city.

It is therefore through the retelling and analysis of the stories that surround different urban initiatives that this dissertation interrogates the ‘good’ of progressive city-building, the social reproduction of spatial injustices, and the counter-narratives taking place beyond public interest and public process.

Key arguments and contributions

I argue that the positive reception of the three Ottawa case stories as successful examples of community-led and city-supported placemaking initiatives reflects the extent to which they successfully perform progressive narratives of ‘good’ city-building. I argue that the case stories reproduce normative values, enact desirable group identities, and deploy progressive narratives of future public growth and the city for all reflected in the visions, principles, and priorities of the *Ottawa 2020 Growth Management Strategy*. While these M/AG initiatives were successful in producing some good outcomes for some previously excluded or marginalized groups, they do not transform the structure, logics, or values of traditional planning or the city. Improved inclusion in public process and diversity in public projects, do not address the ongoing spatial injustices and, to one extent or other, reproduce social and spatial inequities.

In contrast to the city for all narrative, which positions participatory placemaking as a universally ‘good’ process with universally ‘good’ outcomes, I evaluate how performances of participatory placemaking benefits and burdens different people differently. As a public process subject to value systems, institutional logics, and systems of oppression, participatory placemaking engages in social reproduction rooted in cultural and political contexts and hierarchies. In this dissertation, I show that participatory placemaking is a non-reformist reform, controlled by oppressive systems, and translated through neoliberal market logics to reproduce social, spatial, and structural inequities. However, in the face of oppressive systems and the power of privileged groups, a variety of diverse, marginalized, alternative, and subcultural groups strategically navigate public processes, fight for public recognition, make visible and

decentre dominant narratives, and refuse inequitable terms of inclusion. The documented diversity of spatial traditions and practices of M/AGs exist as necessary acts of survival, critical practices of resistance, and as spaces for radical difference and solidarity.

The rhetorical question of this dissertation—“*Is the good performed and produced by progressive city-building good enough?*”—becomes key to reimagining and complicating the participatory placemaking model beyond common narratives and theories of progressive city-building.³¹ The question draws attention to how “planning is *performed* through story,” which stories it performs, what the prevailing expectations and evaluations are of the work they do, and what urban realities and identities they reproduce. Engaging with contested evaluations of the ‘good’ that may be performed or produced by participatory placemaking offers a conceptual framework to organize existing narratives, theories, and critiques of the values, visions, and processes of ‘good’ city-building. Taking space for autoethnographic stories from the Ottawa punk scene and leaving space for other stories, those not included in prevailing planning practices and theory, offer the possibility of other ways of being, knowing, and sharing in the city and other understandings of place, identity, and justice.

This dissertation contributes to the intersecting bodies of literature it draws upon, including planning literature on creative placemaking, community planning, and participatory planning reforms; critical literature on spatial justice, performativity, social reproduction, and non-reformist reforms; and radical anti-oppression praxis. The findings and critical discussions have impact on policy analysis and development in areas of community planning and participation; EDI (equity, diversity, and inclusion) policies; and official city plans and community plans. Through this work, I aim to learn alongside and build radical solidarity of mutual recognition among different marginalized, alternative, subcultural, and equity-seeking groups whose ways of being, ways of making, and ways of knowing the city are marginalized, misrepresented, threatened, and erased by prevailing planning theory and planning practice. This dissertation contributes to a collective project of caring for people and place.

³¹ Specific research questions are formulated to respond to these key arguments and rhetorical question in Chapter 3.

Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation is structured into ten chapters, divided into three broad parts: Part 1 sets the stage, with the preface, this introduction (Ch. 1), a literature review (Ch. 2), and the research design (Ch. 3); Part 2 presents empirical case studies, planning context, intersecting stories, and critical autoethnography (Ch. 4-7); and Part 3 contains the analyses (Ch. 8), discussions (Ch. 9) and conclusions (Ch. 10). Details follow.

The preface and chapter 1 introduce the reader to the positionality of the author, the real-world and theoretical dilemmas addressed in this dissertation, the key arguments advanced and the structure of the manuscript.

Chapter 2 reviews literature on city-building as the intersection of professional planning and participatory placemaking in the public production of space. The review offers operational definitions of the progressive narrative of ‘good’ city-building as the planning of socio-spatial order through democratic participation and social reproduction of cultural values and civic identities. Literature on the reproduction of spatial and social inequities, and on systemic forms of oppression, help situate the displacement, dispossession, and co-optation debates surrounding contemporary placemaking. Likewise, counter movements document how different theorists address reimagining, resisting, and refusing dominant narratives. Chapter 3 outlines the research design. Storytelling and narrative analysis provide a theoretical and methodological approach to the study of contemporary stories of participatory placemaking in Ottawa. This chapter includes research questions and objectives, and outlines: the rationale for the setting and selection of the three empirical case stories; research methods and analytical frameworks; data generation and sources; and ethical considerations and challenges.

Chapters 4 through 7 present the empirical studies. Chapter 4 describes the planning and policy context, with an overview of the City of Ottawa, a history of planning for the National Capital Region, and a discussion of the *Ottawa 2020 Growth Management Strategy* as the contemporary planning policy structure guiding planning decision-making and process throughout the time frame of the three case stories. The chapter concludes with researcher participant observations from fieldwork engagements in public participation forums in Ottawa (2017-2019). Chapter 5 presents narrative reconstructions of the three case stories, starting with a

description of the spatial-material presence of each site, followed by the story of realizing the respective placemaking initiatives. The three case stories are (5.1) Punk and/or safe space: the development of the Ottawa Music Strategy and safe space policies for music venues and cultural district revitalization; (5.2) A skate in the park: the construction of the Charlie Bowins Skateboard Park in the McNabb Park rehabilitation; (5.3) Mainstreeting Le/The Village: the formal recognition of Le/The Village along the Bank Street mainstreet. Chapter 6 presents intersecting stories of cultural centres, parks, and mainstreets that relate the case stories to planning policy contexts; site-based histories; local M/AG histories; and related M/AG spatial claims and practices. My critical autoethnography in Chapter 7 includes a literature-based discussion to position punk subculture and scenes within planning, placemaking, community, and social justice. Finally, original artistic productions are presented as critical re-readings and radical counter-narratives to ‘good’ city-building.

Chapter 8 provides narrative and performative analyses of the cases. A thematic analysis of the structural story elements provides a comparative framework for identifying and analysing common urban narratives, normative values and visions, enacted group identities, and grand narratives of ‘good’ city-building. Critical re-readings and counter-narrative outline the strategic actions, critical performances, and radical refusals observed through the case stories, intersecting stories, and autoethnography. Chapter 9 discusses the findings and draws connections to the reviewed literature to make visible the progressive and oppressive reproductions of ‘good’ city-building and the counter-narratives that take place in different stories of the city. Concluding thoughts are presented in Chapter 10.

Three autoethnographic sections – labelled pre-chorus, key change, and outro—are included at beginning, middle and end of the dissertation, punctuating the academic performance of the researcher with alternative, punk performances of knowledge-making and meaning-making.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a backdrop to the dissertation by reviewing literature related to progressive planning reforms, creative placemaking and cultural planning. The scope of the review is broad, with an intent to cover diverse bodies of scholarships that can inform the dissertation research, to document and critically examine how city government has approached and packaged (performed) progressive planning reforms and how other actors, particularly residents and M/AGs have engaged (or not) with the resulting creative placemaking and cultural planning initiatives. Specifically, selections from the academic literature on planning history, planning theory, urban social movements, feminist theories of social reproduction, critical theories of power and spatial justice, and transformative justice are used to (a) situate the research within wider socio-spatial debates, (b) define key concepts and, importantly, (c) establish analytical frameworks to be used throughout the dissertation. The literature, as such, provides a basis for the approach used to documenting case studies in Part 2 and for the multiple lenses used in Part 3 to interrogate the performance of progressive placemaking and the reproduction of socio-spatial inequities within the progressive city-building project.

The starting point for the review is the crisis within the planning professional that occurred in the late 1950s and the 1960s. Planning in the early twentieth century reflected a “traditional focus on the physical order of the American city.”¹ Modern urban designers frequently promoted utopian visions where the natural order and status quo of the industrial city filled with disease and social disorganization was to be replaced by a rationally designed order of man-made environments, the result of human ingenuity and scientific innovation.² The physical city was understood as containing knowable problems and standardizable solutions. Planners were to tackle urban challenges comprehensively, using a series of scientific methods known as the rational-comprehensive model of planning, to produce the best possible outcomes.³ Planning operated through the implementation of official regulations, and prescriptive, formulaic codes

¹ Boyer, *Dreaming the rational city: The myth of American city planning*.

² Hancock, 'Planners in The Changing American City, 1900-1940'.; Foglesong, *Planning the capitalist city : the colonial era to the 1920s*.

³ Alexander, *What and how? Planning definitions and process*.; Adams, *Provincial Planning and Development Legislation*.

and schemes to control and construct the physical city.⁴ Fainstein and Fainstein summarize: “Traditional planning assumes that its goal of orderly development of the environment is in the general public interest and that planners are in the best position of any group to determine the plan’s intermediate goals.”⁵ This approach has been linked to the positivist and scientific zeitgeist of modernity as well as the architectural and engineering heritage of the planning profession.⁶

In the late 1950s, the dominant rational-comprehensive model of planning came under attack. Successive failures of large development and urban renewal projects, citizen protests, and internal critique pointed to an inability of planners, as experts, to gather sufficient information, assess objectively, determine the public interest, and identify the best route to plan for that interest.⁷ As Robert Fishman argues: “The ideal of the planner as the scientific manager of the environment, grandly bestowing urban form and social welfare from above, is a false and dangerous delusion.”⁸ Critics pointed to the notion of universal problems and solutions, and underlying ideological perspective, that ignored the particularities of place, imagining them as neutral space or tabula rasa upon which a place of rational order could be constructed.⁹ They called for a softening of the traditional technocratic utopianism of planning, specifically to bring the people back into the city-building project. Indeed, one of the most important consequences of the crisis in planning was a burgeoning of interest – in theory and practice – as to how to involve the public in planning.

This literature review takes this crisis moment and call for engagement with citizens as its departure point. I trace four strands of literature and explore implications for my study and analysis of contemporary placemaking dynamics. Specific attention is given to how the literature lends support to the following arguments. 1) The expansion of citizen participation in planning, a

⁴ Le Corbusier, *The city of to-morrow and its planning*.; Gallion and Eisner, *The urban pattern; city planning and design*.; Howard, *Garden cities of to-morrow*.; Lynch, *The image of the city*.

⁵ Fainstein and Fainstein, 'City planning and political values'. 343

⁶ Fishman, *Urban utopias in the twentieth century : Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier*.

⁷ Boyer, *Dreaming the rational city: The myth of American city planning*.

⁸ Fishman, *The anti-planners: the contemporary revolt against planning and its significance for planning history*. 247

⁹ Fischler, 'Toward a genealogy of planning: zoning and the Welfare State'.

tendency rooted in citizen movements, planning theory, and planning practice, has been accompanied by the emergence, in recent decades, of democratic reforms and approaches to placemaking. Such reforms and culturally-oriented participatory approaches have created opportunities for citizen input. 2) Literature suggests that they have not, however, fulfilled their promise: conceptions of the ‘good’ city represent specific interests and visions, resulting plans may deepen spatial and social hardships for some groups, and participatory dynamics may sideline those who question neoliberal urban priorities. 3) Urban spatial and social inequities persist, even with participatory planning and placemaking. Within the rich literature, with its multiple strands of argumentation, as to why this occurs, I draw on theorists of neoliberal city-building, participation, and social reproduction, among others. 4) Counter-movements are possible and already exist. Post-political, feminist, Indigenous, and radical writers document the tension between the promise and practice of planning reform, directing attention to the need to draw on diverse types of data and analyse urban processes at multiple levels.

The chapter is organised in four sections: an overview of theories and trajectories of participatory planning and progressive planning reform (section 2.1); critiques and limitations of placemaking (2.2); critical urban and feminist theory and the reproduction of spatial inequities (section 2.3); and, reimagining, resisting, and refusing dominant narratives (section 2.4).

2.1 Making place for people: From social movements to participatory urbanisms

The following section reviews literature from the past half century on tendencies towards democratisation of planning, from pressures emerging from outside planning such as urban social movements to the planning reforms that have culminated in contemporary participatory urbanisms. The departure point for the review is the 1960s recognition by planners and scholars that the engineering-oriented, rational comprehensive planning model had fundamental weaknesses.¹⁰ Among them was the critique that traditional planning’s reliance on authoritative experts left people out of decision-making, contributing to the production of social injustices and unlivable cities. Resulting reforms focused on expanding representation, whether through advocates or direct participation in planning, as an important component in tackling persistent

¹⁰ Alexander, 'After Rationality, What? A Review of Responses to Paradigm Breakdown'.

urban challenges, countering inequities and neglect, and producing ‘good’, or at least better, urban outcomes.¹¹ Literature on social movements, the role of citizens in planning, the right to the city, participatory placemaking, and cultural planning are used to show how the profession has shifted away from expert decision-making in the public interest towards decision-making *with* or *by* the public.

2.1.1 Urban social movements

A key moment in the expansion of democratic practice in planning was the community-led action and grassroots urban social movements of the 1960s and 1970s.¹² In the context of the civil rights movement, citizens and community groups began to self-organize and claim agency in the city-building project through direct action and protest. These groups challenged the technical rationality of traditional planning and the authority of the planner, arguing that the public is best able to decide what is in the public interest. They point to massive freeway and infrastructure projects, and the expropriation of land through the poorest neighbourhoods under the banner of slum clearance and urban renewal, to demonstrate that the most vulnerable city-dwellers were disproportionately forced to bear the cost of planning endeavours.¹³ Planning and planners were criticized for being inattentive to human experience, social inequities, differences in needs of different people, and the truly significant problems plaguing the city.¹⁴ Following from the insights of community organizing and protest movements, such as the those captured in the work of Jane Jacobs, planners have acknowledged that the traditional expertise of the planner was rooted in a privileged and singular point of view, far removed from the complexity and diversity of the city.¹⁵ Expertise came to be viewed as both anti-democratic and anti-social.¹⁶ The

¹¹ Arnstein, 'A ladder of citizen participation'.; Davidoff, *Advocacy and pluralism in planning*.

¹² Castells, *The city and the grassroots: a cross-cultural theory of urban social movements*.; Jacobs, *The death and life of great American cities*.; Gans, *People and plans; essays on urban problems and solutions*.; Glass, *The evaluation of planning: some sociological considerations*.

¹³ Jacobs, *The death and life of great American cities*.; Mumford, *The highway and the city*.; Rein, 'Social planning: The search for legitimacy'.

¹⁴ Fishman, *The anti-planners: the contemporary revolt against planning and its significance for planning history*.

¹⁵ Jacobs, *The death and life of great American cities*.

¹⁶ Krumholz and Forester, *Making equity planning work : leadership in the public sector*.

people of the city, who represented multiple perspectives and could draw on diverse experiences on the ground, needed a strong role in urban development decisions.

Manuel Castells placed such movements in theoretical and comparative geographical context, in his cross-cultural study of collective action and grassroots urban social movements. Castells considers cities “the result of endless historical struggle over definitions of urban meaning” and offers the following operational definition of urban social movements as “collective actions consciously aimed at the transformation of the social interests and values embedded in the forms and functions of a historically given city.”¹⁷ Inter-relationships between “people and the state, economy and society, cities and citizens” becomes evident when studying the mobilization of people seeking to effect change during moments of urban crisis. He continues:

In spite of their obvious diversity, all these movements have proposed a new relationship between space and society. And they have all challenged prevailing cultural values and political institutions, by refusing some spatial forms, by asking for public services, and by exploring new social meanings for cities.¹⁸

In developing a cross-cultural theory of urban social change Castells argues that urban social movements are “aimed at transforming the meaning of the city without being able to transform society,” but also warns that if the institutions remain unchanged and the projected hopes for society are unmet, urban movements may return “as urban shadows eager to destroy the closed walls of their captive city.”¹⁹

2.1.2 Participatory turn: from advocacy to communicative planning

While social movements had the potential to lessen socio-spatial inequities, challenge existing values and institutions, and demand voice for ordinary citizens in city development, social activism sidelined the planner and demanded inputs of time, resources, and knowledge that many residents lacked. These same shortfalls meant that marginalised groups could poorly participate in the types of interest-group lobbying and expert-led planning that accompanied official

¹⁷ Castells, *The city and the grassroots: a cross-cultural theory of urban social movements*. xvi

¹⁸ Ibid. 335; xv

¹⁹ Ibid. 327

channels of urban decision-making. Some concerned planners turned to what they called advocacy planning.²⁰ With the assistance of the expertise of the planner, different interest groups could advocate for their needs in the planning process. The pairing of advocacy and pluralism marked a shift from planning as a scientific to a political endeavor, and a shift away from justification based on universal public interest to acknowledgment of conflicting needs from different interest groups. The representation and active participation of multiple interest groups to advocate in a political planning process was an attempt to realign planning with democratic values, while returning a degree of agency to the planner to act based on values.

Democratic participation alone, however, is not sufficient to account for difference in power and interest among groups that might lead to inequities. Sherry Arnstein provocatively argued that “citizen participation is citizen power [...] it is the redistribution of power that enables the have not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future.”²¹ Arnstein’s ladder of citizen participation offers a typology of participatory methods organized hierarchically and based on a measure of the power distributed to the citizen. Arnstein contends that “real power” comes from the ability to “affect the outcome of the process” and that we must be vigilant in distinguishing it from “the empty ritual of participation.”²² The ladder can simultaneously be read as the trade-off of power between existing government agencies including planners and citizens. In this model, as citizen power increases with each rung of the ladder, the power of the state, and planners as public officials, decreases. Arnstein conceptualizes this redistribution of power and agency as a fundamental practice of democracy and therefore essential to good public governance. She argues: “Participation of the governed in their government is, in theory, the cornerstone of democracy—a revered idea that is vigorously applauded by virtually everyone.”²³

Similar observations are advanced two decades later with expanded attention to communicative processes when planning theorist John Forester, drawing on Habermas, examines how artificial distortions in planning communications reproduce dominant power structures.

²⁰ Davidoff, *Advocacy and pluralism in planning*.

²¹ Arnstein, 'A ladder of citizen participation'. 216

²² Ibid. 216

²³ Ibid. 219

With a concern to advance democratic decision-making, counter the structural exclusion of particular groups, and build consensus, he imagined a new role for planners as judicious and interested negotiators who shape the attention of the public and decision-makers towards equitable and practical future action.²⁴ Planners become responsible for managing and facilitating communication with particular emphasis on listening to participants, respecting difference, and redressing power imbalances. Other theorists are less sanguine about the prospects of planners resolving power differentials and reducing insincere, manipulative, or cooptative engagement. For instance, Patsy Healey observes that democratic participation methods for resolving difference rely on adversarial conflict and suspicion that obscure, rather than reveal, power relations. Likewise, the “‘science’ of decision-making” tames complex issues into measurable indicators and performance criteria.²⁵

The institutionalist approach suggested by Healey, like other participatory planning reforms emerging out of sociological research in the mid-1990s, emphasized the need to understand the complexity of the city, its people, and its structure as constituted through multiple systems of meaning. Giddens, for instance, used the formulation that “*active agency* interacts with *constraining structures*,” social dynamics, and social relations.²⁶ Healey argues for “a new form of planning through inter-discursive communication, a way of ‘living together differently through struggling to make sense together.’”²⁷ The form of planning proposed by Healey emphasizes a collective decision but, unlike Forester, not necessarily one based on consensus. Instead, Healey draws on discursive practices that engage in difference and develop mutual understanding. This approach builds “institutional capacity to collaborate and co-ordinate” and “institutional coherence” for collectively addressing shared problems.²⁸ Healey calls for a shift of attention away from the planner and back towards the relationship between people and place. Healey states that by:

²⁴ Forester, 'Planning in the Face of Power'.

²⁵ Healey, *Collaborative planning: Shaping places in fragmented societies*. 33

²⁶ Ibid. 35

²⁷ Healey, 'Planning through debate: the communicative turn in planning theory'. 152

²⁸ ---, *Collaborative planning: Shaping places in fragmented societies*. 33

‘Bringing in’ space, co-ordinating through ‘thinking together’ and focusing on long-term impacts on places and people [...] many contemporary pressures are leading to a re-emphasis on spatial relations and the qualities of places.²⁹

The emphasis on the “qualities of places” picks up on the culture of place and the production of space as processes of not only city and citizen-building but also community-building. Drawing on postmodern theories of the city, these new participatory planning reforms once again attempt to reconcile the governing role of the planner with social, democratic, and justice imperatives for good city-building by making space for difference and diversity and offering means for resolving conflict.

2.1.3 Practice of place and right to the city

Sociological perspectives also informed post-positivist re-theorisation of place as a product of human use and meaning, an important expansion of understanding of citizen’s participation in city-building. In Michel de Certeau’s conception of place as a practiced space,³⁰ one of the most cited intellectual origins for contemporary placemaking, place is conceived of as the transformation of space through human use and experience; similar concepts include those developed by Henri Lefebvre as the production of space and by Christian Norberg-Schulz as the phenomenon of place.³¹ Following from these arguments, place is not just a material construct. Rather, space is transformed into place through a broad range of human activities and interactions. As post-positivist theory, the spatial turn makes arguments in favour of integrating phenomenological, experiential, emotional, and non-rational subjectivity as features of good city-building. Understanding of participation in the city is reconceived through this focus on people’s everyday practices of space, the significance they attribute to it, and the social relations that are there harboured.

²⁹ Ibid. 34

³⁰ de Certeau, *The practice of everyday life*. 117. Note that the direct quote from this translation is "space is a practiced place" which is the inverse of the terminology as it becomes applied to placemaking.

³¹ Lefebvre, *The production of space*.; Norberg-Schulz, *The phenomenon of place*.

People, place, and experience are renewed as critical categories of analysis and of inspiration to critics and reformers of planning. Robert Beauregard, for example, asserts the need for the city-building project to bring the city back in by bringing the people back in. He writes:

People, for the most part, actively engage their immediate surroundings, selecting and modifying them in ways that further individual and collective interests and provide material benefits and symbolic satisfaction. City building, in turn, incorporates the dynamics of race, class, and gender and the burdens or benefits of being relatively positioned in these categories.

[...] Only by bringing the city back in, and only by reasserting a moral perspective, can planners establish themselves as effective participants in democratic quests for a better society.³²

Beauregard calls upon the legacy of ongoing struggle to align planning and the role of the planner to the socio-political structure and traditional grounding by calling on both democracy and morality. The city-building project therefore opens new approaches to planning reform that attempt to recognize different planning and placemaking efforts to develop new frameworks for collaborations between public placemaking and public planning.

Central to these post-positivist perspectives on place are novel ideas of spatial justice and the ‘good’ city. This link is most clearly apparent in the literature on the right to the city, both as articulated by Henri Lefebvre and interpreted by planning theorist Peter Marcuse. Marcuse defines the “right to the city” as:

an exigent demand by those deprived of basic material and existing legal rights, and an aspiration for the future by those discontented with life as they see it around them, perceived as limiting their own potentials for growth and creativity.³³

Marcuse sees the implementation of the right to the city as “the ultimate purpose of critical urban theory,”³⁴ observing that it “is a moral claim, founded on fundamental principles of justice, of ethics, of morality, of virtue, of the good.”³⁵ Lefebvre draws upon principles that “include

³² Beauregard, 'Bringing the city back in'. 212-3

³³ Marcuse, 'From critical urban theory to the right to the city'. 190

³⁴ Lefebvre, *The Right to the City*.; Marcuse, 'From critical urban theory to the right to the city'. 185

³⁵ ---, 'From critical urban theory to the right to the city'. 192

concepts such as justice, equity, democracy, the full development of human potentials or capabilities, [...] the recognition of human differences.”³⁶ In his analysis, Marcuse draws the connection not only to humanist foundations and structures of planning, but also its future-orientation, and potential for social change. He writes: “it is not the right to the existing city that is demanded, but the right to a future city.”³⁷ As a critical concept, the right to the city continues the development of theoretical arguments and normative frameworks for addressing urban inequalities and conflicts in planning theory and directed towards the production of just and good cities.

Within planning, theorists focus on how residents construct place at a local level, drawing on their own initiatives, everyday experiences, and understandings. In *The Power of Place*, Dolores Hayden notes that “impatient citizen groups” traditionally left out of public memory, and for whom public efforts at inclusion have been too slow, increasingly move their own projects forward to represent their own communities and their own stories in place. Similar to Jacobs, Hayden redirects attention from grand plans of planning towards the everyday lives of people. She writes: “The places of everyday urban life are, by their nature, mundane, ordinary, and constantly reused, and their social and political meaning are often not obvious.”³⁸ Hayden argues that the place-specific memory of ordinary urban landscapes “nurture citizens’ public memory, to encompass shared time in the form of shared territory.”³⁹ Focused on creative urban history projects and the preservation of place-specific memory through placemaking, Hayden speaks to the transformation of roles and expectations of undertaking public urban projects and searching for an appropriate public process.

This approach gives primary importance to the political and social narratives of the neighbourhood, and to the everyday lives of working people. It assumes that every inhabitant in the making of the city, not just one hero-designer. It is rooted in an aesthetic of nurturing and connection.⁴⁰

³⁶ Ibid. 193

³⁷ Ibid. 193

³⁸ Hayden, *The power of place: Urban landscapes as public history*. 227

³⁹ Ibid. 9

⁴⁰ Ibid. 235-6

Hayden acknowledges community process may need to connect with urban planning and that planning departments may offer useful resources. She remains critical, however, of the top-down thinking of urban design and grand-scale redevelopment, and the top-down process that privileges aesthetics of design over social and political issues.⁴¹

2.1.4 Placemaking, tactical urbanism, and participatory urbanisms

Hayden's attention to local actions, collective memory, and stories in placemaking was indicative of emerging practices occurring outside or alongside state-sponsored participatory planning.⁴² For instance, tactical urbanism emerges in the early 2000s to become perhaps the most popularized form of contemporary placemaking. The Park(ing) Day project by design firm Rebar in 2005 is commonly cited as the origins of tactical urbanism.⁴³ Park(ing) Day transforms parking spaces into temporary parks and guidebooks released under Creative Commons licensing encourage other groups in cities around the world to participate in the annual project. These and other tactical urbanism initiative directly link empowerment of ordinary people with the process of reclaiming public space (including determining access, use, and design). Community efforts to reclaim space—whether to meet the needs of underserved communities, attend to overlooked cultural practices, act as a form of socio-political protest, or simply generate questions about who allocates land for different functions—begin to be grouped together as unsanctioned temporary creative urban interventions. B.D. Wortham-Galvin refers to these practices as 'participatory urbanisms' defined as:

urban action that is small and/or incremental, it responds to immediate needs that engage discourses of publicness, it stewards change that is wanted (defined by a specific group of people), and it can be implemented relatively quickly with low initial investment.⁴⁴

As forms of community-led protest, resistance, and reclaiming power and agency for people, Wortham-Galvin notes that contemporary placemaking practice are inspired by the urban social

⁴¹ Ibid. 234-5

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Endres et al., 'Not Just a Place to Park Your Car: Park(Ing) as Spatial Argument'.

⁴⁴ Wortham-Galvin, 'An Anthropology of Urbanism: How People Make Places (and What Designers and Planners Might Learn from It)'. 24

movements of the 1960s and 1970s. However, she also contends that they are a uniquely 21st century practice, one framed by the Occupy movement to focus action on the “perceived publicness of space.”⁴⁵ Parklets, street art, pop-up shops and festivals, and guerrilla gardens are celebrated for connecting neighbours with the spaces and people of the city in direct ways and renewing civic commitment to improving the material and social conditions of the public realm.

In their book on tactical urbanism, Lydon and Garcia refer to the “open and iterative development process” as unleashing the creative potential of social interaction that allows for “making plans without the usual preponderance of planning.”⁴⁶ Lydon and Garcia frame tactical urbanism as empowering citizens to take direct, immediate action while also opening space for urban and design professionals to apply their expertise more readily with and as part of the community, thereby operating beyond the traditional boundaries of planning and architecture. With the city recast as a “laboratory for testing” and “huge reservoir of space yet untapped by imagination,” Lydon and Garcia frame the benefits of tactical urbanism for “forward-thinking” and “civic-minded” developers and entrepreneurs, advocacy organizations, governments, and citizens.⁴⁷ As “a tool for public involvement” they argue that tactical urbanism helps to “bridge the gap between cities and developers and citizens in the urban development process.”⁴⁸ However, in engaging with officials and the private sector, the bottom-up and unsanctioned framing of do-it-yourself urban placemaking is disrupted. Lydon and Garcia, therefore, conceptualise tactical urbanism as situated along two axes, the first from unsanctioned to sanctioned—and “often becoming sanctioned over time”, and the second from citizen-driven to expert-based decision-making, a spectrum including “from the bottom up, the top down and everything in between.”⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Ibid. 27

⁴⁶ Lydon and Garcia, *Tactical Urbanism: Short-term Action for Long-term Change* 2-3

⁴⁷ Ibid. 6

⁴⁸ Ibid. 14

⁴⁹ Ibid. 9; 11

2.1.5 Creative placemaking and cultural planning

The integration of placemaking into contemporary planning practices, can be seen as a departure from earlier practices in its emphasis on cultural aspects of the city. Placemaking as cultural planning also differs from previous arts and culture policies in its focus on those arts and cultural activities that coincide with urban planning issues of economic development, cultural tourism, commercial arts and creative industries, and cultural districts.⁵⁰ Such a focus reflects the intellectual origins of placemaking: among others, the 1980s and 1990s studies of the creative class⁵¹ and cultural sectors as economic drivers in deindustrialised regions; and academic attention to the image-making of entrepreneurial city managers.⁵² Creative placemaking and cultural planning, as currently practiced, aim to link the social production of creating liveable places for people with planning strategies to encourage property development particularly in declining urban core neighbourhoods.

Carl Grodach argues that creative placemaking focuses “on place image through attention to cultural amenities, urban design, and consumption.”⁵³ He argues that this shift is not a new form of public policy but a continuation along the path set by creative city policy. In their whitepaper on creative placemaking, Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa also note growing interest in Richard Florida’s *The Rise of the Creative Class* by media and public officials as further entrenching the economic opportunity of engaging creative skills of the cultural sector to partner with both public and private stakeholders as a strategy for urban revitalization.⁵⁴ Creative city policy recognized knowledge, arts, and culture as human capital inherent to cities that can be mobilized to compensate for declining industries.

Unlike previous creative city policies focused on large scale developments, most famously the Guggenheim Bilbao, creative placemaking “aspires to be more directly community-

⁵⁰ Gerhard et al., *Introduction. Inequalities in the Creative City: A New Perspective on an Old Phenomenon*. 7; Kovacs, 'Cultural planning in Ontario, Canada: arts policy or more?'. 82.

⁵¹ Markusen and Gadwa, *Creative Placemaking*.; Grodach, 'Cultural economy planning in creative cities: Discourse and practice'.

⁵² ---, 'Cultural economy planning in creative cities: Discourse and practice'. 82.; Sorkin, *Variations on a theme park : the new American city and the end of public space*. Kearns and Philo, *Selling places : the city as cultural capital, past and present*.

⁵³ Grodach, 'Cultural economy planning in creative cities: Discourse and practice'. 82

⁵⁴ Markusen and Gadwa, *Creative Placemaking*. 14

oriented and arts-based,” drawing on the rediscovery of “people-centered and community-driven urban design” from the work of Jane Jacobs and William Whyte.⁵⁵ Cultural and economic opportunities worked together to establish creative placemaking as a notable cultural policy shift towards planning interests in “revitalization by creative initiatives that animate places and spark economic development” and “serves livability, diversity, and economic development goals.”⁵⁶ Cultural policy comes into alignment with the spatial and economic interests of planning, enabling a collaborative process between planners, industries, and people. Cultural planning and creative placemaking are often framed as a novel “cultural approach” and “ethical corrective” to traditional planning, an intriguing reference to the social good produced, by integrating socio-cultural concerns and community engagement into planning praxis.⁵⁷ Loh et.al. found that plans that incorporated public participation processes were most likely to offer specific descriptions of diversity, emphasize inclusive processes, and establish actionable steps towards increasing equity.⁵⁸ They also note that arts and cultural planning are increasingly responding to social justice movements, including recent calls from Black Lives Matter movements, and expressing their commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion goals.

2.2 Persistence of spatial inequities and co-opted movements

Documentation of participatory tendencies in planning and theorization of their significance, as presented in the previous section, establishes the promise of participation in planning generally and creative placemaking specifically. Yet recent literature suggests that the promise often is not realized. Conflicts surrounding creative placemaking projects are prompting intense debate about diversity and displacement, systemic inequities, and the need for anti-oppressive and intersectional evaluations of outcomes.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Grodach, 'Cultural economy planning in creative cities: Discourse and practice'. 87

⁵⁶ Markusen and Gadwa, *Creative Placemaking*. 3; 5

⁵⁷ Kovacs, 'Cultural planning in Ontario, Canada: arts policy or more?'. 8

⁵⁸ Loh et al., 'Our Diversity Is Our Strength Explaining Variation in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Emphasis in Municipal Arts and Cultural Plans'.

⁵⁹ Burns and Barbary, 'Placemaking as Unmaking: Settler Colonialism, Gentrification, and the Myth of “Revitalized” Urban Spaces’.; Pritchard, *Place guarding: Activist art against gentrification*.; Sarmiento, 'Not diverse enough? Displacement, diversity discourse, and commercial gentrification in Santa Ana, California, a majority-Mexican city'.; Summers, *Black in place : the spatial aesthetics of race in a post-Chocolate City*.

A decade after the publication of their whitepaper on creative placemaking, Markusen and Gadwa Nicodemus re-evaluated the optimistic arguments of their initial study and the debates about placemaking that have emerged since.⁶⁰ They note that the public embrace of placemaking practices and appreciation for the capacity of the arts to contribute to community stabilization and cultural engagement are indicators of success and continued optimism. While creative placemaking normatively celebrates cultural diversity and community, formalized policies often fail to reflect the diversity of place-embedded initiatives or to recognize existing histories of practices used by a variety of equity-seeking groups. Affected communities are expressing how the integrity of existing local culture and community bonds are negatively affected in the process. While some previously marginalized uses of space are supported and celebrated by cities, other uses and users continue to be controlled, restricted, pushed out, or destroyed in pursuit of revitalization. Concerns about cultural appropriation and displacement, in considering who is affected, provide a critical frameworks for understanding the role of placemaking and cultural policy in gentrification, neighbourhood change, and disparities in economic and social impacts.

The following section reviews emerging scholarship challenging the transformational potential of creative placemaking and by making visible the negative outcomes of participatory urbanisms on various marginalized and equity-seeking groups, the cultural and physical displacement experienced as part of neighbourhood change, and the limitations and struggles faced by those pursuing participatory reforms and alternative placemaking practices, particularly as such efforts intersect with dominant powers, structural barriers, and systemic oppression.

2.2.1 Revitalized displacement and dispossession

The explicit aspirations of many placemaking policies towards economic development, and the embedded law and logic of capitalist urban development have linked placemaking to gentrification and displacement. The power to reimagine and rebuild whole neighbourhoods have traditionally been narrated within the history of urban planning as heroic acts of creative destruction. For the marginalized and alternative groups most often displaced by urban renewal,

⁶⁰ Markusen and Gadwa Nicodemus, *Creative Placemaking: Reflections on a 21st-century American arts policy initiative*.

revitalization, and regeneration, these are traumatic acts. Both traditional and recent approaches to gentrification are helpful in understanding placemaking.

Classic theories of gentrification and displacement relate these experiences of inequalities and injustices to capitalist land markets and paternalistic planning policies.⁶¹ Neil Smith argues that gentrification as “a new frontier” is bound up with “national optimism, race and class superiority” and the making of place, the future, and economic opportunity. He continues:

The gentrification frontier absorbs and retransmits the distilled optimism of a new city, the promise of economic opportunity, the twin thrills of romance and rapacity; it is the place where the future will be made. This cultural resonance comes to make the place but the place is made available as a frontier by the existence of a very sharp economic line in the landscape.⁶²

Markusen and Gadwa Nicodemus insist displacement is not an inevitable outcome of creative placemaking and that various political tools can be put in play to stop displacement. Grodach argues that creative placemaking offers the potential to “react to rather than support gentrification and the commodification of culture and urban space,” and contribute to addressing urban inequality.⁶³ Both argue that further empirical research is needed to assess the broad social and economic impacts of creative placemaking projects across a variety of contexts and communities. Indeed, not all critics of placemaking are as optimistic about its potential to centre community needs, particularly for marginalized and equity-seeking communities.

Recent approaches to gentrification and displacement also highlight how commodification associated with placemaking unevenly affects different groups. Alongside the shift from high arts and culture as social good there has been a notable shift towards forms of cultural production that are more readily commercialized. The intersection of capitalist consumption, economic models, and race re-emerges in contemporary analyses of inner-city gentrification.⁶⁴ Leslie Kern notes that contemporary studies of the process of gentrification need

⁶¹ Glass, *The evaluation of planning: some sociological considerations*.

⁶² Smith, *The new urban frontier: gentrification and the revanchist city*. 186

⁶³ Grodach, 'Cultural economy planning in creative cities: Discourse and practice'. 89

⁶⁴ Bondi, 'Gender, class, and gentrification: enriching the debate'.; Kern, 'All aboard? Women working the spaces of gentrification in Toronto's Junction'.; Jupp, 'Women, Communities, Neighbourhoods: Approaching Gender and Feminism within UK Urban Policy'.

to recognize “a wide variety of ways in which diverse urban spaces are primed for, and colonized by, the middle classes, urban elites and investment capital.”⁶⁵ Feminist urban scholars have long debated how the inner-city neighbourhoods linked to gentrification may positively contribute to residents “actively forging distinctive gender identities,” and also the creation of “feminized consumption landscapes.”⁶⁶ Kern speaks to the precarity of the commodification of social reproduction of neighbourhoods that positions participants between securing their economic survival and contributing to the community transformation that threaten to displace them.

Brandi Thompson Summers argues that in addition to popular definitions of gentrification and displacement as the replacement of working-class and racialized residents with middle-class and white residents, revitalization and reinvestment strategies must also consider feelings of neighbourhood change. Debates regarding the extent of physical displacement correlated to gentrifying neighbourhood fail to acknowledge the cultural displacement resulting from the devaluation and revaluation of community assets through capital investment, aesthetic recoding, and commodification of space. She writes that “gentrification is about struggles over land use—how people use space and create space,” impacting sense of community and community identity.⁶⁷ Through her case study of the gentrification of H Street corridor in D.C., Summers argues that placemaking as revitalization policy and strategy are bound to privilege and power. She writes:

Placemaking is imagined as a collective and community-based practice used to transform public space; however, in gentrifying areas, placemaking involves aesthetic upgrades to the streetscape that catalyze economic and cultural displacement. Placemaking is also driven by those who have the most power the shape the tastes that are reflected in the built environment. These actors organize public spaces according to their desires and modes of living.⁶⁸

Making place, promotes particular spatial identities and desires that Summers links to long histories of the racialization of space and production of urban inequities. She contends that, despite invocations of diversity and community, placemaking generates displacement that is just

⁶⁵ Kern, 'All aboard? Women working the spaces of gentrification in Toronto's Junction'. 512

⁶⁶ Bondi and Christie, *Working out the urban: gender relations and the city*. 299

⁶⁷ Summers, *Black in place : the spatial aesthetics of race in a post-Chocolate City*. 16

⁶⁸ Ibid. 12

as “racially inflected as the racialized geographies of segregated communities, and divested urban cores of the Jim Crow through post-Civil Rights eras.”⁶⁹ Carolina Sarmiento argues that diversity discourse facilitates a “liberal and inclusive form of gentrification” as a “spatial strategy meant to manage diversity.”⁷⁰

Robyn Burns and Lisabeth Berbary link revitalization, placemaking, and settler colonialism, contending that the treatment of space as empty, underused, and “ready to be made more meaningful through placemaking” renders “placemaking inextricable from the historical and pervasive violence of settler colonialism and gentrification.”⁷¹ They point to placemaking as practices of unmaking, observing that the “myths of placemaking [...] inappropriately celebrate the coming-together of diverse stakeholders without scrutinizing the power dynamics involved in holding a stake.”⁷² They call on those engaged in placemaking and its study to recognize “placemaking’s complicated complicity in problematic processes of erasure, displacement, destruction, and targeting of Black, Brown, Indigenous, and under-waged peoples.”⁷³ Far from being an unfortunate side effects of placemaking and revitalization, the above authors argue that cultural and economic displacement are systemic within the racist and colonial production of place.

2.2.2 Neoliberal translations of cultural production

Participatory tools and methods have been promoted as practical and accessible means of mediating and bridging the role of planner with the role of citizens to redistribute power and better engage in public decision-making. The potential value of these methods is generally accepted but, as with many participatory methods explored over the past fifty years, there is a dilemma of distinguishing the potential good, the good actually produced, and who truly benefits.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 15

⁷⁰ Sarmiento, 'Not diverse enough? Displacement, diversity discourse, and commercial gentrification in Santa Ana, California, a majority-Mexican city'. 12

⁷¹ Burns and Berbary, 'Placemaking as Unmaking: Settler Colonialism, Gentrification, and the Myth of “Revitalized” Urban Spaces'. 3

⁷² Ibid. 3

⁷³ Ibid. 3

Eleonora Redaelli notes that creative placemaking involves a variety of organically emerging practices. Framing placemaking through cultural policy, thus presents a challenge in identifying the specific role of government or private actors.⁷⁴ Greg Crysler, through his critical mapping of the structure, power, actors, and forces at play both in traditional planning, critical planning theory, and design activism, reveals a key dilemma about planning reforms that integrate placemaking practices. He argues:

[...] the basis of design activism needs to be re-conceptualized in relation to the radically different forces that shape the production and use of the built environment today [...] this involves much more than simply ‘trusting the local,’ and replacing ‘experts’ with ‘communities,’ while leaving modes of understanding unchanged.⁷⁵

Alternative practices that intend to destabilize and reform dominant structures get absorbed into the mainstream often transforming design activism “into the ways of thinking it initially sought to challenge.”⁷⁶

In a case study of Cleveland, Michael McQuarrie observes that “participation is still automatically associated with democratization, and community with authenticity and solidarity,” but that participatory technologies and community-based organizations “have been transformed from tools of democratization into tools of elite authority.”⁷⁷ He contends that rather than tools for programmatic effectiveness or substantive change, “participation is a flexible signifier, the content of which is fought over for political gain.”⁷⁸ In their study of geo-informational tools in participatory spatial planning, McCall and Dunn, similarly, say:

Whatever technology is being introduced, the kind of social dynamics in which it operates will determine whether it will empower or further marginalize poor communities; like the doublesided coin of accessibility and exclusion.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Redaelli, *Creative Placemaking: Leading Social Change with the Arts*. 172

⁷⁵ Crysler, 'The Paradoxes of Design Activism: Expertise, Scale and Exchange'.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ McQuarrie, 'No contest: participatory technologies and the transformation of urban authority'. 143

⁷⁸ Ibid. 145

⁷⁹ McCall and Dunn, 'Geo-information tools for participatory spatial planning: Fulfilling the criteria for good governance?'. 93

The valorization of community and participation often overshadows ways in which these methods might be and have been reproducing dominant power structures and inequitable conditions. In her study of community-based initiatives B.D. Wortham-Galvin acknowledges the contributions of participatory urbanism while reiterating a growing concern for vigilance around the issues of agency and structure, especially given the economic crisis, occupy movement, technology, and neoliberalism.⁸⁰

Initially, progressive policies that invoked the right to the city, diversity, and inclusion raised hopes of reversing the neoliberal trend in urban governance, they were to bring value to the public realm and reinstate the intrinsic value, dignity, and rights of all. In the 1990s, Healey argued that the shift in focus towards people and place “flies in the face of neoliberal philosophy and its underpinning aspatial economics.”⁸¹ Contemporary critics and scholars increasingly understand the integration of participatory urbanism and creative placemaking into public policy, adding them to the repertoire of neoliberal strategies. For instance, Grodach traces these urban policy trends to the 1980s and argues that they emerged in response to the context of “economic restructuring and urban decline, neoliberal governance, and changing demographic and social trends.”⁸² Gerhard et. al. say that “in current neoliberal, informational, and global times the push to manufacture creative cities generates a host of outcomes in need of excavation.”⁸³

The ease with which so many cities have implemented policies and projects based on or inspired by placemaking theory and practice points to how readily placemaking can be absorbed into top-down neoliberal smart growth narratives that promote urban branding, urban revitalization, and the economic development, of innovative creative cities. Markusen and Gadwa Nicodemus remark how “creative placemaking deliberately conflated the creative class approach of Florida with decades of progressive community-culture-based placemaking.”⁸⁴ This sort of conflation is commonly noted about the capacity and resilience of neoliberalism. For

⁸⁰ Wortham-Galvin, 'An Anthropology of Urbanism: How People Make Places (and What Designers and Planners Might Learn from It)'.

⁸¹ Healey, *Collaborative planning : shaping places in fragmented societies*. 34

⁸² Grodach, 'Cultural economy planning in creative cities: Discourse and practice'. 82

⁸³ Gerhard et al., *Introduction. Inequalities in the Creative City: A New Perspective on an Old Phenomenon*. 4

⁸⁴ Markusen and Gadwa Nicodemus, *Creative Placemaking: Reflections on a 21st-century American arts policy initiative*. 12

example, Roberta Bedoya points to this conflation of aspirational ideas around culture and community with speculative growth and development as mediated by neoliberal rationality:

The blind love of Creative Placemaking that is tied to the allure of speculation culture and its economic thinking of “build it and they will come” is suffocating and unethical, and supports a politics of dis-belonging employed to manufacture a “place.”⁸⁵

Bedoya goes on to argue that “a troubling tenor of Creative Placemaking discourse is the avoidance of addressing social and racial injustices at work in society and how they intersect with Creative Placemaking projects.”⁸⁶ Critically, the neoliberal co-opting of community-led practice depoliticizes placemaking as a form of community activism.

Gerhard et. al. observe that “the current trend toward creative city policies does not reduce, but rather hides existing inequalities and even births new ones.”⁸⁷ They show that creative city policies and governance revolve around the production of new neoliberal subjects and an “ambivalent relationship between creativity and inequality” that has deepened the “demarcation between two kinds of urban residents—the important and needed versus the dependent and problematic.”⁸⁸ As Brandi Thompson Summers notes, these neoliberal co-opted logics of placemaking contribute to the reproduction of systemic urban inequities even in the policies meant to alleviate them. She writes:

Neoliberal discourse has reconstituted and radically inverted concepts of justice, agency, and self-reliance in ways that hold people responsible for their circumstances rather than recognizing these conditions as the result of greater structural forces, like racial and economic inequity.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Bedoya, 'Placemaking and the Politics of Belonging and Dis-belonging'.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Gerhard et al., *Introduction. Inequalities in the Creative City: A New Perspective on an Old Phenomenon*. 4

⁸⁸ Ibid. 8

⁸⁹ Summers, *Black in place : the spatial aesthetics of race in a post-Chocolate City*. 5

Carolina Sarmiento remarks how neoliberal strategies “transform diversity into a brand and multicultural amenity instead of a social justice ethic” and perpetuates “‘raceless’ explanations for race-related affairs.”⁹⁰

The enactment of diverse representation and inclusive participation as democratic consensus-building under the assumed logics of socially progressive reforms can be read critically as part of what Wendy Brown describes as the neoliberal “mutation of traditional liberal projects.”⁹¹ Diversity expands the market of alternatives, and inclusion provides additional input into the decision-making process that mobilizes rational self-interested actors through the political marketplace to produce public benefit. Brown argues that neoliberal governance creates a “new politics” of participation and decision-making that is “networked, integrated, cooperative, partnered, disseminated.”⁹² Although these concepts contribute to progressive narratives of collective decision-making, she suggests we must remain mindful of the ways governance “disavows the powers it circulates, the norms it advances, the conflicts it suppresses or dispatches.”⁹³ Participatory processes promoted as democratic reforms responsabilize and integrate individuals effectively eroding the foundation for collective citizenship “concerned with public things and the common good.”⁹⁴ Brown argues that neoliberalism is a “relentless attack on publics” that “has dismantled public institutions and political spaces” and “alters the principle of ‘inclusion of all.’”⁹⁵ As neoliberal subjects, we have lost our imagined communities and our collective political agency. We have been recast as responsabilized individual capital. We are expected to speculate, risk, invest, and compete, in order to enhance future value that is neither communal nor individual.

⁹⁰ Sarmiento, 'Not diverse enough? Displacement, diversity discourse, and commercial gentrification in Santa Ana, California, a majority-Mexican city'. 4; 12

⁹¹ Brown, *Undoing the demos : neoliberalism's stealth revolution*. 61

⁹² Ibid. 123

⁹³ Ibid. 130

⁹⁴ Ibid. 39

⁹⁵ Ibid. 72

2.3 Non-reformist reforms and social reproductions of oppressive systems

Like past challenges to planning reforms, emerging research challenges whether placemaking tactics have or can lead to transformative change or whether they continue to merely reproduce the status quo. Critical urban scholarship reveals ways that different people have been excluded from public process and spaces. Responding to the critiques to push beyond environmental determinism and rational-scientific positivism, planning theory increasingly addresses how political and economic factors and various actors have a significant impact and cannot be isolated from either the social or the material conditions of the city.⁹⁶ Gendered analysis and feminist theory further argue that patriarchal definitions of public and private are mapped onto both spaces and people and privileges and burdens different groups differently. Contributing to the role professional planning plays in producing and reproducing inequitable conditions, feminist scholarship points to intersections between patriarchy and other dominant ideological systems: the rational-scientific knowledge system, the liberal democratic system, and the capitalist system. The history of planning is filled with examples of potentially transformative reforms intended to address inequitable systems that only continue to reproduce the hegemonic order and spatial injustices. The argument is not so much, or necessarily, a critique of the intentions of planners and the planning profession. It may be, however, that traditional and contemporary definitions of the role of planning are fated to fail when the socially progressive motivations of the planner conflict with structural power embedded in planning.

This section reviews critical urban and feminist theory of how planning participates in structural inequities and power; how planning has historically concretized social, political, and economic structures in the spaces and processes of city-building; and how progressive reforms intended to improve the city for everyone continue the reproduction of spatial inequities and injustices.

2.3.1 Insufficiency of structural participatory reforms

Given that the professionalization of planning and roles of the planner were solidified at a particular time, in a particular context, it is important to question in what ways planning has been

⁹⁶ Harvey, 'From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: the transformation in urban governance in late capitalism'.; Brenner and Theodore, 'Cities and the geographies of 'actually existing neoliberalism'.

structured to reproduce particular values and priorities. While generations of activists, academics, and planners generally agreed there are social justice problems with planning, it remains unclear whether the problem is with planning itself and the agency of expert planners, or with the inherent biases and reproduction of power somewhere within the capitalist liberal democratic structure. As Ruth Glass explained in the 1960s, “[b]y virtue of becoming an established institution and an established profession respectively, both [the system and profession of planning] have acquired vested interests in maintaining themselves unchanged—vested interests which reinforce one another.”⁹⁷ As Rittel and Webber suggested not long after, this presents a dilemma when the problem solver is subject to reproducing the problem.⁹⁸

Reform movements are not immune from such questioning. Lisa Peattie notes that advocacy planning, even with the best of socially oriented intentions, in practice likely benefits those already best-served by the socio-political structure. By adopting universalist principles of equality within the redefined role of the planner and public, advocacy planning fails to account for the disproportionate burden or outright definitional exclusion of particular groups or individuals. As Peattie explains:

The people ‘at the bottom’ are likely to be the slowest to become organized. Therefore, a preference for groups which are more ‘representative’ in the sense of having more members or a higher ratio of members, might well mean aiding the mainly middle-class groups.⁹⁹

The “very different interests of those very different sorts of people” that are more commonly found in the poorest and racialized neighbourhoods continue to be excluded from the process and their needs continue to be unmet.¹⁰⁰ Advocacy planning failed to acknowledge the existence of structural inequality that might prevent actual equal participation or representation of different interest groups. The model continued to rely on idealized concepts of democracy and failed to place actors within the structures that enable and constrain different groups of people differently.

⁹⁷ Glass, *The evaluation of planning: some sociological considerations*. 52

⁹⁸ Rittel and Webber, 'Dilemmas in a general theory of planning'.

⁹⁹ Peattie, 'Reflections on advocacy planning'. 83.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 83.

Critiques of the structural and ideological constitution of planning, grounded in historic analysis of professional practice, question whether the taken-for-granted modern frameworks of planning can affect change in a postmodern world. For instance, critics of communicative planning identify as problematic uncritical faith in the rational framework underlying the traditional image of planning that, in their view, risks reproducing rather than challenging power structures.¹⁰¹ The Habermasian model that informed communicative planning, places faith in the ability to arrive rationally at consensus through intersubjective communication. However, as postmodern critics observe, scientific rationalism, though not an invalid system of meaning, is problematic insofar as it has “dominated and crowded out all other systems of meanings.”¹⁰² Healey, in this regard, points to progress, scientific inquiry, technological invention, and their translation into governance institutions as having “generated new bastions of power and new ways in which people are made unequal.”¹⁰³ While Healey acknowledges the important contributions of Habermasian structural rationalism, she identifies a key flaw in its failure to come to terms with our experience of the messiness of actual existing context. She argues that the complexity of global financial and economic structures and postmodern recognition of living in culturally pluralist societies have rendered “the structural struggles” faced by planning even “less clear-cut and less visible.”¹⁰⁴

Participatory reforms such as advocacy and communicative planning have largely focused on strategies for conflict resolution as key to resolving social and spatial inequities. In Fainstein & Fainstein’s planning typology, the assumed progress of traditional liberal theory relies on the “invisible hand to produce orderly progress towards social goals.”¹⁰⁵ The reform of the role of planning to that of managing the participatory democratic and orderly co-production of space, depoliticizes and obfuscates the control it yields and the interests it upholds. The political will and justification for social liberal democratic planning to progress towards more inclusive, diverse, and representative city-building remains structured by the prevailing social

¹⁰¹ Beauregard, 'Edge Critics'; Fischler, 'Communicative planning theory: a Foucauldian assessment'; ---; Huxley and Yiftachel, 'New paradigm or old myopia? Unsettling the communicative turn in planning theory'.

¹⁰² Healey, 'Planning through debate: the communicative turn in planning theory'. 152

¹⁰³ ---, *Collaborative planning : shaping places in fragmented societies*. 39

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 32

¹⁰⁵ Fainstein and Fainstein, 'City planning and political values'. 348

order. Neither expertise, participation, nor good intentions appear to be sufficient conditions for planning “to alleviate the most pressing problems of its citizenry;” in many instances, planning reform efforts “ended with policies tending in quite the opposite direction.”¹⁰⁶

The concern with structural constraints is echoed by other theorists. Marcuse identifies a key theoretical flaw in the reliance on governmental agency in the early American planning movement as the “implicit theory of a benevolent state, holding that government in the long run will act to alleviate the most pressing problems of its citizenry.”¹⁰⁷ From her gendered and racialized analysis of law Kimberle Crenshaw revealed the critical point that political will to serve public interest may be insufficient if the normative structure, perspective, and process remain fixed and persist in the reproduction of dominant forces through which public institutions such as planning operate.¹⁰⁸ Not only is political will insufficient but its very structure discriminates and burdens vulnerable groups further through persistence of those blind spots and reinforcement of the status quo through its normative values and logics. Marcuse’s essential challenge for planning is to consider whose interest planning should serve and whether the action of planners “contribute to maintaining or to challenging those features of the social system that are judged ethically undesirable.”¹⁰⁹

The integration of placemaking and cultural policy into planning can be framed as what Susan Fainstein describes as nonreformist reforms. Citing Nancy Fraser, Fainstein argues for nonreformist reforms as practical ways to work within the existing structure but that also “set in motion a trajectory of change in which more radical reforms become practicable over time.”¹¹⁰ Evidence of continued spatial and social inequities produced through nonreformist reforms, however, point to the reproduction and entrenchment of dominant and oppressive economic, political, and social systems. Tension exists between the transformative potential and

¹⁰⁶ Marcuse, *Housing policy and city planning: The puzzling split in the United States, 1893-1931*. 51

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 51

¹⁰⁸ Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics'.

¹⁰⁹ Marcuse, 'Professional ethics and beyond: values in planning'. 273

¹¹⁰ As cited in: Fainstein, *The just city*. 18

reproductive power of planning reforms. The progressive narrative arc of good city-building is caught in social reproduction loop of dominant systems and structures it conforms itself to.

2.3.2 Feminist readings of social reproduction and control

In dialogue with both the rising “attack on planning” and radical feminism, gendered critiques on planning that began to take shape in the 1970s focused primarily on exposing ways in which planning policies and the built-environment prioritize the needs and interests of men often at the expense of women’s needs and the needs of other marginalized or non-normative groups.¹¹¹ Two critical questions lead this gendered analysis: How do planning practice and policy intentionally or unintentionally discriminate against women and favour men; and who has power over planning agenda and decision-making? Feminist planning scholars increasingly called upon feminist theory and praxis to reveals how planning contributes to deep systemic reproductions of the liberal democratic order and also its intersection with patriarchy and capitalism.¹¹²

Mainstream ideological foundations around the public and private are shown to enable and constrain different people differently, reproducing both power and vulnerability through exclusionary and exploitative practices, pedagogy, laws, and policies. Through a gendered lens, feminist literature played a critical role in revealing ways in which planning, despite its progressive and reformist intentions, reproduces and protects the status quo.

In one of the earliest reviews of women, architecture and urban planning, Dolores Hayden and Gwendolyn Wright organize the existing literature and studies into two categories; First, the impact of women on the built environment primarily through their various roles within the design professions; and, second, the impact of the built environment on the lives of women.¹¹³ They trace the spatial inequities experienced by women to the biases of the almost exclusively male profession but also to the structural reproduction of the many social, political, and economic forces and institutions constitutive to both planning and the public. They found

¹¹¹ Hayden, 'What would a non-sexist city be like? Speculations on housing, urban design, and human work'.; Markusen, 'City spatial structure, women's household work, and national urban policy',---; Wekerle, 'Women in the urban environment',---

¹¹² Sandercock and Forsyth, 'A gender agenda: new directions for planning theory'.; McDowell, 'Doing Gender: Feminism, Feminists and Research Methods in Human Geography'.; ---, 'Space, place and gender relations: Part I. Feminist empiricism and the geography of social relations'.

¹¹³ Hayden and Wright, 'Architecture and urban planning'.

that women were explicitly and implicitly excluded from the production of the city by the public-private dichotomy that positions their reproductive role and labour in the private domestic realm separate from the public realm. The logic of this dichotomy is reproduced in the spatial ordering of cities and the production of the public realm as distinct from domestic sphere.¹¹⁴ Early scholarship, as reviewed by Wekerle, points to the connection between patriarchy, capitalism, and the spatial segregation of women through suburbanization.¹¹⁵

Ann Markusen's work further investigated gender and suburbanization. She contends that "social reproduction, organized within the patriarchal household where an unequal internal division of labour favours men, profoundly affects and explains the use of urban space."¹¹⁶ The division of labour and promotion of the private domain through "the dominance of the single-family detached dwelling" was a negotiated compromise between capitalist employers, the state, and male waged labour. This compromise ensured a docile and productive male workforce in exchange for the promise of male dominion in his home and effectively leads to the separation of productive labour performed by men in the workplace from the reproductive labour of women in the home. Markusen points to ways in which the economic benefits of planning reforms continued to prioritize capitalist and male interests even when rhetorically intended to improve the lives of women. Dolores Hayden is among the authors who critique policy-solutions and aids from both public and private sector.¹¹⁷ Though potentially well intended to ease the domestic responsibilities of women, she argues they continue to operate within the defined realm of the single-family home. The outcome, she notes, frequently increased expectations and even greater demand on women's time and labour in the home. The ordering of the physical spaces of the city aligned with the social order to further exclude and marginalize women from the male-dominated public spaces of the city. The exclusion and separation of women from the public was an exertion of patriarchal control and extraction of their reproduction labour for capitalist interests.

¹¹⁴ Hayden, 'What would a non-sexist city be like? Speculations on housing, urban design, and human work'.; Wekerle, 'Women in the urban environment'.

¹¹⁵ ---, 'Women in the urban environment'.

¹¹⁶ Markusen, 'City spatial structure, women's household work, and national urban policy'.

¹¹⁷ Hayden, 'What would a non-sexist city be like? Speculations on housing, urban design, and human work'.

The categorization of women under private in the public-private dichotomy is additionally problematic under the liberal political system where the private is judged as beyond the domain of the state and therefore not contained within the concept of public interest. As Susan Fainstein notes, “household affairs were largely considered private matters, inappropriate for public oversight.”¹¹⁸ Fainstein follows MacKinnon in identifying the gender bias in Lockean and Rousseauian conceptions of the public interest and the use of the public-private dichotomy to reproduce logics that excluded women from the public political realm by assigning them to the space of the private domestic realm. Revealing the capitalist-patriarchal roots of the public-private dichotomy opened a space to challenge the definition of state jurisdiction and responsibility as limited to the public. Gender-based analysis and reforms echoed arguments for participatory planning, aiming for greater participation and representation of women.¹¹⁹ Gendered accounts of everyday life in the city brought visibility to gender issues and have resulted in measurable change. The empirically defined gains made by women over the past half century hint towards increasingly egalitarian sharing of space. Time-use studies from as early as the 1970s and 80s began to show statistical improvement in the inclusion of women in the public realm, primarily measured through economic activity of women, and increased participation of men in household work.¹²⁰

Increased participation of women in the workplace, increased consumer power, and reconfiguration and multiplication of types of household forms are recognized advancements of the gender agenda.¹²¹ While many see this as a sign of successful reform, and optimistic that this progressive trajectory will continue, many feminist advise vigilance. They do so based on lessons learned regarding the adaptability of dominant structures and reproductive power of the status quo.¹²² Linda McDowell argues that what statistically appear as radical changes to the labour market and economic condition of women in the city is misleading.¹²³ She argues that the commonly observed and measured changes are a continuation rather than a transformation of

¹¹⁸ Fainstein, 'Planning theory and the city'. ¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Healey, 'Planning through debate: the communicative turn in planning theory'.

¹²⁰ Michelson, *The place of time in the longitudinal evaluation of spatial structures by women*.

¹²¹ McDowell, *Working bodies : interactive service employment and workplace identities..*

¹²² Saegert, 'Masculine Cities and Feminine Suburbs: Polarized Ideas, Contradictory Realities'.

¹²³ McDowell, *Working bodies : interactive service employment and workplace identities*.

certain kinds of gendered social reproductive work. Eleanor Jupp relates new forms of gendering labour and social reproduction to contemporary urban policy and governance. She shows that many investments by the state in socially progressive policies rely on neoliberal market rationality of “consumption and labour-market participation.”¹²⁴ Social support programs are increasingly downloaded onto community through “new alliances between forms of activism and organising and governance regimes.”¹²⁵ In this sense, community-based policies are austerity strategies that reproduce gendered networks of care.

2.3.3 The dark side of progressive public narratives

Oren Yiftachel makes the link between progressive planning activities and the simultaneous advancement of regressive goals through mechanisms of control and oppression. This “dark side of planning” is often obscured by the public benefits and progressive changes that are promised and produced through planning practice. The control over the production of space and the power exerted by planning practice, backed by state mechanisms and interests, is generally tolerated in liberal social democracies as a means for the rational production and utilitarian maximization of public good. In addition to the production of new public good, these reforms may also be new mechanisms “to control, to contain, to oppress, and to marginalize elements of the society that threaten to destabilize [the prevailing] order.”¹²⁶ Yiftachel observes a tension between progressive reform and oppression. Social control is subject to systemic forms of oppression and prevailing political and economic structures that disproportionately impact marginalized communities. Planning reforms that redistribute participation as a proxy for control but do not fundamentally decentralize control, may simultaneously produce progressive change and reproduce oppressive status quo.

Forester argues, “progressive planning—structurally critical yet hardly fatalistic—is at once a democratizing and practical organizing process.”¹²⁷ However, structural and procedural reforms that place “an emphasis on enabling participation” must be combined “with a

¹²⁴ Jupp, 'Women, Communities, Neighbourhoods: Approaching Gender and Feminism within UK Urban Policy'. 1311

¹²⁵ Ibid. 1313

¹²⁶ Yiftachel, 'Planning and social control: Exploring the dark side'. 400

¹²⁷ Forester, 'Planning in the Face of Power'. 77

recognition that there are systemic obstacles threatening such actions.”¹²⁸ Traditional theory assumes that democratic participation relies principally on opening opportunity to speak and be heard. Feminist theory reveals how various forces and systems enable and constrain different participants differently, including the privileging of certain forms of communication and language, uneven access to education, and socialization of women to “believe they have nothing valuable to say.”¹²⁹ In particular, it questions the privileging of scientific and technical knowledge in planning that, as in other professions and disciplines in the academy, limits which voices and knowledge are accepted as part of public participation and which the types of knowledge that are accessible and used within practice and scholarship.

By re-examining the conditions of the built environment and the impact of planning on the lives of women, gendered analysis and feminist theory expose the limitations and the moral contradictions of the modernist conception of the public and challenge the a priori dominance of public interest in shaping our shared environment and in controlling our use of it. Gendered analysis reveals how the supposed efficiencies and improvements made in the public interest through planning not only regularly fail to meet the needs of women but also create inefficiency, dependencies, and additional burdens in their daily lives. While earlier scholars aimed to make gender visible as a category of analysis and fight for greater inclusion of women, feminist critique through the late-1980s and 1990s self-consciously turned in on itself to question whether greater inclusion of women in the public had improved the lives of all women. As Healey argues:

The liberating power of the idea that we are all 'free and equal', and that, by the application of scientific inquiry and technological invention, we can improve the material circumstances of everyone's lives, has been translated into governance institutions which have generated new bastions of power and new ways in which people are made unequal.¹³⁰

The modern city-building project that assumed the universality of citizenship and the progressive assumption of more inclusive citizenship both fail to ensure that the public benefits of planning are shared by everyone.

¹²⁸ Ibid. 69

¹²⁹ Sandercock and Forsyth, 'A gender agenda: new directions for planning theory'.

¹³⁰ Healey, *Collaborative planning : shaping places in fragmented societies*. 39

It is important to note the divergence and contradictions between the ideal of universal and equal citizenship and the reality in which the entrenched values and hidden biases of modernity have led to systematic reinforcement of the burden placed on those discriminated against on the basis on class, gender, ethnicity, etc.¹³¹ As Iris Marion Young notes, recognizing ways in which we shape public identity through citizenship, both individual and group, has significant political and personal implications:

Citizenship for everyone, and everyone the same qua citizenship. Modern political thought generally assumed that the universality of citizenship in the sense of citizenship for all implies a universality of citizenship in the sense that citizenship status transcends particularity and difference.¹³²

When the public is imagined in utopian universal terms, what is good for the public interest is understood as beneficial to all. Young acknowledges the vital role universalist ideology played in countering the use of difference to justify denying rights and excluding particular groups and individuals from the socio-political realm. However, once “social consensus is [reached] that all are of equal moral worth and deserve equal citizenship,” the application of universalist ideology risks switching from a strategy of social justice to one of continued oppression. Through application of the universalist ideology, planning in the public interest risks reinforcing inequitable structures. Young continues that: “rights and rules that are universally formulated and thus blind to difference of race, culture, gender, age, or disability, perpetuate rather than undermine oppression.”¹³³

Publics and planning regularly position spatial practices that do not centre on the public interest as contrary to and therefore potential threats against the public interest. Deviant, non-conforming, non-public uses of public space have regularly been framed as threat to public safety, health, and wellbeing, which is then used to justify public intervention and control. Planning assumes the right and necessity of controlling non-public use and users to protect the

¹³¹ Sandercock, *Making the invisible visible: A multicultural planning history*.; Young, 'Polity and group difference: a critique of the ideal of universal citizenship'.; ---, *Justice and the politics of difference*.

¹³² ---, 'Polity and group difference: a critique of the ideal of universal citizenship'. 250

¹³³ Ibid. 267

public and the governing logics of the state.¹³⁴ Based on the underlying governing structural logics of the private-public binary, planning mediates public and private conflicts, and to direct outcomes towards the public good and maintenance of the social order. The interest of planning in managing conflict is therefore not merely a concern for “securing good living conditions and preserving the life, health, and well-being of all citizens.”¹³⁵ Planning is tasked with managing the ontological threat to the dominant social and governing orders, and by extension an ontological threat to the political formulation of planning and the public.

Davina Cooper argues that public governance construes spatial-material interventions in the public realm by minority groups as posing a fundamental threat to the public. Any public allowance for minority presence and visibility threatens the social contract that governs public space, and thus presents a threat to dominant socio-political systems and socio-cultural values. Cooper characterizes four ways that minority presence constitutes a threat to social order and harmony: the privatization of space and territorial claims; the public expression of minority beliefs; competing governance; and the challenge to cultural nationalist essentialism of Anglo-Christian heritage.¹³⁶ These threats speak directly to the assumed primacy of the modern liberal social contract, a contract that structures and legitimizes planning authority and practice. Planning has, in Cooper’s view, a long history of mitigating and controlling this threat by excluding minority groups and categorizing their interests as private ones, by regulating their uses of spaces to preserve public interests, or by incorporating minorities into the majority public. Although this progression of approaches is often framed alongside the advancement of progressive reforms, these approaches to managing difference share the underlying rationale of public interest and public benefit through social order.

2.4 Spaces of struggle, difference, and refusal

Despite seemingly noble intentions to act in the public interest, planning has not been able to realize the progressive city-building project of producing good for all citizens. Those excluded

¹³⁴ I employ the term “non-public” as distinct concept from the assumed binary of public and private, that anything not part of the public is private.

¹³⁵ Marsh, *An Introduction to city planning : democracy's challenge to the American city*. Dedication.

¹³⁶ Cooper, *Governing out of order : space, law, and the politics of belonging*.

from public process, from access to public resources, and from equal distribution of public benefits have met plans and projects with criticism, resistance, social mobilization, and legal challenges. They have sought, together with many researchers, to reveal the inequities reproduced and represented by normative public planning narratives. And they document how the professionalized practice of planning, in trying to conform, reform, and reconcile the role of the planner with structural constraints, privileges particular ways of being and knowing. In sum, contemporary scholarship, of which a sample is reviewed below, is interrogating how urban inequities are reproduced through intersecting systems of oppression, examining the logics, values, and structures that are used to control and order people, to control and order place, and to extract benefit from both people and place.

Particular attention is directed here to scholarship from and with marginalized, alternative, and/or equity-seeking groups. Marginalized and/or alternative groups offer important place-based narratives and counter-narratives to widespread embrace of creative city-building. Their work makes visible radical practices and explores the transformative potential of reimagining, resisting, and refusing planning norms as well as wider social, political, and economic systems. Given the variety of underlying causes, and the very broad common goals of destabilizing the status quo and transformative action towards more equitable possibilities, different authors and groups have distinct conceptualizations of goals, diagnoses of problems, and proposals for interventions. In addition, critical analyses offered through lenses of gender, race, class, settler colonialism, and sexual identity help shed light on the various systems, logics, and values of mainstream publics, planning, and placemaking as they affect non-normative, marginalized, alternative, and/or subculture groups. These critical analyses also point to the importance of representation, narration, and performance, which are further explored in Chapter 3, Research design. The little existing literature on punk and planning is presented as part of the autoethnographic exploration of punk (see Chapter 7), where I draw parallels, between the groups addressed in this literature and those at the centre of the Ottawa cases I study (punks, skateboarders, and LBGTQ+).

The discussion below is organized around three themes: representation and structural bias around gender (drawing on feminist scholarship); narratives of cosmopolitan multiculturalism and the commodification of culture (drawing on queer and radical studies of urban districts and

gay villages); and refusals of inclusion in performative participation (drawing on Indigenous, radical, and critical race scholarship on the city).

2.4.1 Representation and structural bias

Feminist scholarship has sought to identify both the practical and theoretical roots of gender inequities in planning, and how and why planning is able to propagate conditions that are so apparently against the interest of women while continuing to legitimate its fundamental duty to act in the public interest. Feminist readings of spatial inequities and planning practice make visible the dominant structures and institutions that shaped professional planning, attempt to destabilize them, and reimagine different priorities, forms, processes, and relationships. Drawing from the larger body of feminist literature and movement, feminist planners identify various tactics and strategies for change, among them challenging prevailing patterns of representation. Question of representation are often central to feminist strategies because they point to the related, but often confounded, issues of unequal representation of women in the history of planning, the unequal representation of women in the profession, the unequal representation of women's needs in planning practice, and the social reproduction of gender.¹³⁷

Efforts to contest and destabilize prevailing representations are many. Feminist scholars, for instance, aimed to raise public consciousness of spatial injustice by making visible ways that women have been left out of dominant narratives of the city; they challenge the canon of urban planning history by including the contributions of more women to the profession and recognizing ways, beyond the historically limited definition of the profession, in which women have contributed to the development of cities. In *The Sphinx in the City* Elizabeth Wilson presents an evocative portrayal of an alternative perspective of women in the city. She frames their experience such that it counters the narrative of women as victims of systems of male domination and repositions women as protagonists of the city.¹³⁸ Daphne Spain's revisionist history of Chicago circa the World's Columbian Exposition contrasts the dominant canonical narrative of Daniel Burnham's City Beautiful master plan against the less grand but more

¹³⁷ Leavitt, 'The History, Status, and Concerns of Woman Planners'.

¹³⁸ Wilson, *The sphinx in the city: Urban life, the control of disorder, and women*. 8

grounded plans and social programs of Woman's Club, Jane Addams, and Hull House.¹³⁹ Her history simultaneously reframes and destabilizes the dominant modernizing success story of the fair and raises the profile of the public contributions made by women through other, more socially impactful, approaches to city building. In this narrative, women relied on community-based action rather than grand plans of the genius planner. In contrast to bringing rational order and beauty to meet the imagined needs of an idealized universal public, these women affirmed the public import of an ethics of care and prioritized the social needs of the most marginalized. Feminist ethics of care continues to be presented as a radical alternative to liberal models of state supported welfare and environmental determinism.¹⁴⁰

Despite measurable gains made by women as a result, feminist scholars remain vigilant of ways that women remain susceptible to the dominant structures and may become active participants in the social reproduction of inequities. In particular, the correlations between women's economic advancement, gentrification, and neoliberal policies calls for continued commitment to developing more refined gendered and intersectional analysis. Peake and Rieker express concerns that neoliberal rationality accommodates "the co-optation of feminists into fundable and manageable projects."¹⁴¹ They note how the responsabilization of community to provide social support and wellbeing re-privatizes the issue of care and depoliticizes feminist action. The increased visibility of women and especially women of colour as community participants maintains gendered responsibility and often free gendered labour for social reproduction in city building. Jupp critiques neoliberal strategies that prioritizes individual agency and social-economic advancement, noting that they fail to account for the social-economic impact on more marginalized individual or groups and gloss over ways in which different people are constrained or enabled to act.¹⁴² Lacey et al. argue that this is in part a result of gender mainstreaming's tendency to create technocratic tools for rational and seemingly equity-driven decision-making.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Spain, *How women saved the city*.

¹⁴⁰ Gilligan, *Moral orientation and moral development*.; Held, *Justice and care: Essential readings in feminist ethics*.; Friedman, 'Beyond caring: The de-moralization of gender'.

¹⁴¹ Peake and Rieker, *Rethinking feminist interventions into the urban*.

¹⁴² Jupp, 'Women, Communities, Neighbourhoods: Approaching Gender and Feminism within UK Urban Policy'.

¹⁴³ Lacey et al., *From gender mainstreaming to intersectionality*.

Feminist critics call for better recognition of the inherent systemic biases and inequities that perpetuate structural barriers to more equitable planning practices and built environments.¹⁴⁴ They observe, for instance, that a distinction must be drawn between gender as it applies to forms of power and as it is ascribed to an individual.¹⁴⁵ This distinction is a subtlety that Sandercock and Forsyth see Hayden addressing when she speaks first to the structural forms of power that impact women and, second, to how the resulting urban forms and policies affect different women differently.¹⁴⁶ Lacey et al. join many others to argue for the application of intersectionality as a conceptual and methodological tool that “deliberately and explicitly works with complex, multilayered and intersecting points of analysis” and “offers a framework for considering gender as part of a complex and dynamic series of social divisions, identities and structures that shape individuals’ singular and collective experiences.”¹⁴⁷ Intersectionality is increasingly invoked as a critical framework necessary for reengaging with analyses of race, class, age, ability, and other identity markers and the different ways they intersect with gender. Intersectional approaches allow navigation of the needs of women as a group while still accounting for difference and diversity, and where they intersect with different systems of power, oppression, and control.¹⁴⁸

2.4.2 Cosmopolitan multiculturalism and the commodification of culture

Diversity has become a key cultural asset for the cosmopolitan city. Within the context of cultural planning and creative placemaking, celebrating diverse cultures becomes an opportunity for commodification and economic growth. As part of the strategy for attracting more investment

¹⁴⁴ Benschop and Verloo, 'Sisyphus' Sisters: Can Gender Mainstreaming Escape the Genderedness of Organizations?'; Jupp, 'Women, Communities, Neighbourhoods: Approaching Gender and Feminism within UK Urban Policy'; Larsson, 'From equal opportunities to gender awareness in strategic spatial planning: Reflections based on Swedish experiences'; Staeheli, 'Mobilizing women, mobilizing gender: is it mobilizing difference?'; Whitzman, 'Stuck at the front door: gender, fear of crime and the challenge of creating safer space'.

¹⁴⁵ Brown, 'Finding the Man in the State'; McDowell, 'Doing Gender: Feminism, Feminists and Research Methods in Human Geography'.

¹⁴⁶ Sandercock and Forsyth, 'A gender agenda: new directions for planning theory'.

¹⁴⁷ Lacey et al., *From gender mainstreaming to intersectionality*.

¹⁴⁸ Dietz, 'Citizenship with a feminist face: the problem with maternal thinking'; Young, 'Gender as seriality: Thinking about women as a social collective'.

and residents, the presence of cultural diversity needs to be made visible and desirable.¹⁴⁹ Literature on gay villages presents the recurring tension between the sub/counter-cultural significance of spaces of and for difference, and the cooptation of them as neoliberal spaces of commodification and governance.¹⁵⁰

Scholars observe that the commodification of subculture collapses alternative experiences of the city into a desirable and marketable urban lifestyle. Bell and Binnie, for instance, discuss how global cities and cosmopolitanism participate in reshaping and defining residents and potential residents through consumer citizenship, which has also entailed reshaping sexual citizenship. They note that “matching gay pride to civic pride means that cities have to respond positively to gay culture in order to maintain their competitive edge.”¹⁵¹ They argue that not only do we need to consider “what is consumed by the ‘new’ consumer citizen,” we need to “pay more attention to labour in the production of consumption spaces” to understand “who’s consuming whom?”¹⁵² The selective targeted consumer to whom the cosmopolitan lifestyle is marketed are neither the original producers of local culture nor necessarily the participants for whom it was produced. Positive representation plays a part in how, as Bell and Binnie express it, “‘others’ are conscripted into the process of urban transformation,” that eventually push out their more “edgy” and undesirable activities, businesses, and individuals. This transformation from subcultural placemaking to civic mainstreaming has “profound implications for the sustainability of sexual practices and cultures, as for other ‘alternative’ uses of city-space.”¹⁵³ In their study of diversity, equity, and inclusion in municipal and cultural plans Loh et al. found that: “often the people who make up those ‘diverse’ cities are erased from the narrative or are minor players at best.”¹⁵⁴ Attention to the stories told about placemaking may reveal this erasure.

¹⁴⁹ Loh et al., 'Our Diversity Is Our Strength Explaining Variation in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Emphasis in Municipal Arts and Cultural Plans'.

¹⁵⁰ Lewis, 'Gay in a 'government town': the settlement and regulation of gay-identified men in Ottawa, Canada'.; ---, 'Ottawa's Le/The Village: Creating a gaybourhood amidst the 'death of the village''.; Binnie and Skeggs, 'Cosmopolitan knowledge and the production and consumption of sexualized space: Manchester's gay village'.; Bell and Binnie, 'Authenticating queer space: citizenship, urbanism and governance'.

¹⁵¹ ---, 'Authenticating queer space: citizenship, urbanism and governance'. 1814

¹⁵² Ibid. 1809

¹⁵³ Ibid. 1815

¹⁵⁴ Loh et al., 'Our Diversity Is Our Strength Explaining Variation in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Emphasis in Municipal Arts and Cultural Plans'. 201

The shift towards positive representation and the vulnerability created through its direction towards a particular consumer market has impacted how subcultural scenes view themselves and how they engage with the city. As Straw observes:

A quarter century or more ago, it was easy to imagine scenes as territories of effervescent, fragile cultural activity whose commitment to invention and change stood in contrast to the unchanging permanence of a city's architecture and social relations. Increasingly, it seems, scenes are cherished for their decelerative properties, for their role as repositories of practices, meanings and feelings threatened by the processes of gentrification and commodification.¹⁵⁵

There is a shift from a fight for recognition to a fight to preserve difference. Straw argues that “the resistance to further gentrification may be expressed in a more noble form as a commitment to protecting the cultural space fought for by authentic cultural producers.”¹⁵⁶ Sarmiento notes how the urban transformation is shaped by neoliberal strategies that exploit both the market opportunity of past policies of disinvestment and contemporary branding of diversity. She writes:

market-based approaches can take advantage of the years of disinvestment of low-income communities of colour, seizing on the ‘local’ and ‘authentic’ while exploiting the ‘rent gap’ between current and potential land values [...] These neoliberal strategies transform diversity into a brand and multicultural amenity instead of a social justice ethic.¹⁵⁷

Protecting the authenticity of cultural production is not enough to protect difference from being appropriated and commodified, nor is the celebration of diversity enough in the fight for social justice.

The narrative of cosmopolitan multiculturalism and diversity, as represented by gay villages, is further challenged by considering ways in which gay villages are also spaces of continued exclusion that do not cater to, and further obscure, the spatiality of more marginalized queer identities and practices.¹⁵⁸ Hartal analyzes how diverse understandings of queer spaces

¹⁵⁵ Straw, 'Some Things a Scene Might Be'. 482

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. 481

¹⁵⁷ Sarmiento, 'Not diverse enough? Displacement, diversity discourse, and commercial gentrification in Santa Ana, California, a majority-Mexican city'. 4

¹⁵⁸ Podmore, 'Gone ‘underground’? Lesbian visibility and the consolidation of queer space in Montréal'.

inform different approaches to creating safe(r) spaces by and for LGBT subjects. Hartal argues that in addition to major contradictions between LGBT activist groups and how they conceive and construct safe spaces, case studies show how liberal logics of personal identity and representational politics of inclusion have “established queer subjectivities as fragile, weak subjects, in constant need of protection from unsafe spaces.”¹⁵⁹ She calls for further scrutiny of both internal power relations and how “queer subjectivities produce/are produced through safe space and its discourse.”¹⁶⁰ Queer planning literature, in increasingly addressing the heteronormativity of planning, intersecting identities of gender, sexuality, class, and race, and broader geopolitical systems including settler colonialism, capitalism, and globalization,¹⁶¹ has broadened its scope to actively extend into “queering planning,” with inquiries and research beyond those of queer space.¹⁶²

Despite growing ambivalence and criticism towards gay villages as ‘authentic’ queer spaces, there is increased interest in the role their emergence plays in “developing a unique culture by socializing individuals” and in “shaping queer urban social movements and political activism.”¹⁶³ By examining differences in radical queer activism and queer urban politics as pursued through systemic challenges and spatial claims, Goh reveals underlying unjust systemic conditions encountered when opposing normative structures and institutional frameworks as well as differences in strategic approaches.¹⁶⁴ Goh concludes that “making queer safe spaces through spatial-political organizing is not simply about an appeal to queer identity.”¹⁶⁵ Rather than evaluate the success of various queer spaces, Goh points to ongoing struggles and the possibility of “alternative social-spatial relations” and of “continued difference in the city,” as documented by different case studies.

¹⁵⁹ Hartal, 'Fragile subjectivities: constructing queer safe spaces',---. 3

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. 6

¹⁶¹ Oswin, 'Critical geographies and the uses of sexuality: deconstructing queer space'.

¹⁶² Doan, *Why Question Planning Assumptions and Practices about Queer Space.*; Forsyth, *Queering Planning Practice: Understanding Non-Conformist Populations*---

¹⁶³ Misgav and Hartal, 'Queer Urban Movements from the Margin(s)—Activism, Politics, Space: An Editorial Introduction'. 3

¹⁶⁴ Goh, 'Safe Cities and Queer Spaces: The Urban Politics of Radical LGBT Activism'.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. 474

Furthering calls to research the politics and spatial dimensions of queer social movements and to do so from the margins, recent scholarship is also turning its attention to the queering of seemingly progressive participatory processes and cultural policies. Participation is regularly invoked by both queer organizations and progressive government organizations in their diversity and inclusion strategies and organizational principles. Broto cautions, however, that despite a “vibrant queer critique of development” and its potential to “shift heteronormative assumptions in development studies,”¹⁶⁶ queer theory has largely failed to translate into queer engagement in the practices of participatory planning. Broto identifies a series of barriers to the queering of participatory planning and to radical democratization. “Queering participatory planning,” she continues “challenges fixed identity categories and raises more comprehensive questions about the kinds of communities that support everyone’s material, social and emotional needs.”¹⁶⁷ Social and spatial justice depend on moving beyond participatory inclusion based in representation of diverse identities.

2.4.3 Participatory performances and refusals of inclusion

Participatory planning comes with the responsibility to organize and actively represent one’s needs through democratic process, a responsibility that can be burdensome for disadvantaged residents of the city.¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, this form of participation often resulted in further vilification of already marginalized people in the city. As Peattie notes, the structure of participation lent itself to blaming the “problematic poor” for nonparticipation, framing it as a matter of choice not to perform their civic duty and thereby rendering them less deserving of having their needs met by society. As Libby Porter and Janice Barry argue:

the notion that political decisions can be reached on the basis of deliberation between free and equal deliberative citizens ignores the reality of power and hegemony. Any kind of social order, including a deliberative ‘order’ of

¹⁶⁶ Broto, 'Queering participatory planning'. 2

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. 12

¹⁶⁸ Fraser, 'Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy'.; Young, *Inclusion and democracy*.

democratic actors taking political decisions in the name of a public good is an expression of hegemonic power.¹⁶⁹

In this sense, formal processes for inclusion in public participation and public placemaking fail to resolve the contradictions between planning and democracy, or the inherent structural logics that reproduce systemic inequities. As Chantal Mouffe contends, the democratic processes of decision-making that are directed towards stabilizing public identity and securing public benefits asserts authority and denies space for radical negativity and agonistic practices. By “distinguishing between ‘antagonism’ and ‘agonism,’” she writes that “it is possible to visualize a form of democracy” where “the availability of a rational solution to political conflicts” does not require an “authoritarian solution.”¹⁷⁰ What Mouffe defines as the critical role of the agonizer, as distinguished from antagonistic competition or pursuit of a flattened fiction of all-inclusive rational consensus building, is particularly appropriate to research on the radical negativity of punk. She argues that the critical dimension of “those who foster the creation of agonistic public spaces” consists “in making visible what the dominant consensus tends to obscure and obliterate, in giving voice to all those who are silenced within the framework of the existing hegemony.”¹⁷¹

Other research directs attention to ways dominant approaches to placemaking neglect and mask systemic violence towards Indigenous peoples. Heather Dorries, for instance contends that systemic racism and institutionalized racial violence against Indigenous people are intentionally produced by settler colonial governance, and the creation of “settler colonial space through the legal and physical elimination of Indigenous peoples.”¹⁷² She continues that:

the designation of the city as settler colonial space [...] allows urban space to represent the political and moral coherence of the settler polity. The maintenance of a moral order grants settler colonialism a degree of legitimacy by allowing its inherent violence to appear as a force that restores order rather than one that destroys it.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ Porter and Barry, *'We Are All Here to Stay': A Meditation on Discomfort*. 26

¹⁷⁰ Mouffe, *Agonistics : thinking the world politically*. 9

¹⁷¹ Ibid. 80

¹⁷² Dorries, *"Welcome to Winnipeg" Making Settler Colonial Urban Space in "Canada's Most Racist City"*. 28

¹⁷³ Ibid. 30-31

Dorries specifically demonstrates how media representations and public responses to urban violence and inequities against Indigenous people restore settler colonial logics, order, and identity. Dorries writes that “our shame shows that we mean well,” enabling “the city to perform contrition.” This performance of progressive identity, however, forecloses discussion of the socio-economic processes of uneven development, the systemic production of racism, and affirmations of settler sovereignty that render “Indigenous life vulnerable and [fail] to offer solutions that foreground the flourishing of Indigenous life.”¹⁷⁴

Dorries argues that to achieve an anti-oppressive city, we must move beyond inclusive and participatory planning reforms that fail to challenge the underlying logics of settler colonialism. She writes:

As an alternative to a politics of urban inclusion that fails to fundamentally transform the murderous logic of settler colonialism, recasting the city as an anti-racist and anti-colonial space in both discourse and policy requires understanding the city as a space where Indigenous life can flourish and subverting the logics that underlie settler colonial place making.¹⁷⁵

In focusing on Indigenous community activism and organizing, Dorries and Harjo look beyond state-led processes, formal planning frameworks, and the damage-centred narratives that replicate settler colonial violence.¹⁷⁶ They argue that through these practices “Indigenous women and girls theorize and enact resistance” that refuse settler colonial violence, inform anti-colonial practices, support the flourishing of Indigenous communities, and make envisioning other worlds possible.¹⁷⁷

In her writings on insurgent planning, Faranak Miraftab speaks to this intersection of the control of dominant forces and capacity of counter-hegemonic movements to destabilize order:

Although in low-density democracies neoliberal governance legitimizes its dominance, by creating sanctioned spaces of participation, the process also creates a disjunction that insurgent movements are able to take advantage of. Symbolic inclusion does not necessarily entail material re-distribution. Counter-hegemonic

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. 38

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. 41

¹⁷⁶ Dorries and Harjo, 'Beyond Safety: Refusing Colonial Violence Through Indigenous Feminist Planning'.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. 217

movements may use such contradictory conditions to destabilize the neoliberal hegemonic order.¹⁷⁸

The subaltern conceptualizations of cities—including those of the alternative and marginal groups at the centre of this dissertation—“stimulate historical collective memories and historicize the problems” as resistance.¹⁷⁹ Miraftab sees insurgent planning as transgressive, counter-hegemonic, and imaginative, noting that “[a]bove all, insurgent planning holds stubbornly to its ideal of justice.”¹⁸⁰ Her work on insurgent planning and the Global South reveals the reach of Western planning and seeks to unsettle associated Western and Northern ideologies of space, property, rationality, and rights.¹⁸¹ She contends that the Global South is not just defined as a geographic location but a relation to power and one that offers solidarities with other counter-hegemonic movements, scholarship, traditions, and practices.

Abolition geography explores similar counter-hegemonic role with respect to spatial justice. Ruth Wilson Gilmore writes:

the point is not only to identify central contradictions—inherent vices—in regimes of dispossession, but also, urgently, to show how radical consciousness in action resolves into liberated life-ways, however provisional, present and past.¹⁸²

Wilson Gilmore proposes that “abolition geography starts from the homely premise that freedom is a place.” She continues that placemaking is fundamentally about “our social capacity to organize ourselves in a variety of ways,” entailing figuring out “how to combine people, and land, and other resources.”¹⁸³ In order to control and “enhance their ability to extract value from labour and land,” she observes that “elites fashion political, economic, and cultural institutions.”¹⁸⁴ While the elites shape ideology and methods to serve their interest, so too do

¹⁷⁸ Miraftab, 'Insurgent planning: Situating radical planning in the global south'. 34

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. 45

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. 46

¹⁸¹ Roy, 'Urban informality: Toward an epistemology of planning'; Peake and Rieker, *Rethinking feminist interventions into the urban*.; Watson, 'Seeing from the South: Refocusing Urban Planning on the Globe's Central Urban Issues'; Yiftachel, 'Re-engaging Planning Theory? Towards 'South-Eastern' Perspectives'; Simone, *For the city yet to come*.

¹⁸² Wilson Gilmore, *Abolition Geography and the Problem of Innocence*. 227

¹⁸³ Ibid. 227

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. 231-2

ordinary people. With growing public attention to urban inequities and the disproportionate impacts on communities of colour during the Covid-19 pandemic, Black placemakers, urbanists, and activists are continuing the work to bring attention to these inequities but also to Black excellence, power, and place-based stories. The collaborative publication *Engaging Black People and Power: A Public Engagement and Urban Policy Primer* explores alternative ways to “use urban policy to address anti-black racism in cities.”¹⁸⁵ The report exposes “the blunt force of policy across hostile urban landscapes” that exclude and oppress equity-seeking groups but also centres Black place-based expertise and wisdom through case studies to create an action-oriented resource for addressing anti-black racism in cities.

¹⁸⁵ Pitter, *Engaging Black People and Power: A Public Engagement and Urban Policy Primer*. 8

3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The history of critical and social theory in planning, the action of social movements and protests over the past sixty years, along with the contemporary practices and research have made significant contribution to our understanding of the complex and contested ways in which city-building is an intersection of people, places, and power. Over fifty years of progressive planning reforms have aimed to better perform democracy and to better serve the public. Radical calls to challenge oppressive systems that shape institutionalized planning values and processes continue to be marginalized. Popular depictions of placemaking rarely acknowledge what critical perspective address: the intersecting socio-cultural and socio-political positions of different people; the production and reproduction of inequities; and the narratives and performances of those who are included in the making of place, including of those whose practices and claims to space are conditional, controlled, and co-opted. Still largely missing from public discourse and planning literature on participatory urbanism is how inclusive participation and creative placemaking only partially disrupt the authority of the public and the authority of planning to decide who is to be included, under what conditions, and directed towards what ends. Such observations suggest the need for multiple analytic lenses in documenting how creative placemaking and participatory urbanisms function.

One axis for study that emerges from the literature review above is to investigate substantive versus performative aspects of ‘good’ city-building. This chapter outlines the research design including methodological frameworks of narrative-based methodologies (3.1), research objectives and questions (3.2), rationale for case and site selections (3.3), an outline of the methods and analytical frameworks applied (3.4), details of the data generation (3.5), and discussion of ethical considerations (3.6).

3.1 Narrative-based methodologies

Narrative approaches and methodologies can bring new insights to placemaking, and specifically to the ongoing reproduction of social and spatial inequities through progressive reforms, practices, and intentions of ‘good’ city-building. Narrative theories emphasize the multiple, simultaneous, and interlinked realities and cultural-historic contexts, examining the polemical,

phenomenological, subjective, and interactive nature of social relations and social constructions.¹ Though derived primarily from literature and drama studies, narrative-based methodologies have been adapted by many disciplines including history, geography, sociology, psychology, and philosophy; within planning, early influences came from Irving Goffman and Richard Sennett.² Narratives and storytelling simultaneously act as research subject, data generation, data analysis, and data representation. The research approach of this dissertation, detailed below, is inspired by the work of Peter Burke who acknowledges the interest of historian in “writing narratives themselves” and the recognition by historians of “sources as stories told by particular people rather than as objective reflections of the past.”³

This dissertation critically engages in thinking through ways that contemporary participatory placemaking is “*performed* through story” and the work that these stories do in being deployed.⁴ Approaching planning documents and planning processes as social narratives directs attention to how they themselves are produced by and reproduced in larger social narratives. This relates to broader claims about stories in the social sciences. Law and Urry write that “social science is performative. It produces realities [...]” They continue that “certain kinds of social realities are performed into being in social science, and this does not make them any less real.”⁵ Once planning is framed as performances and productions of certain realities, we can position participants as performers acting their parts within social structures, socially constructed identities, and norms. For example, Judith Butler argues that gender is “an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*,” and on that basis, develops a philosophical argument that identity is performative rather than substantive, performed as acts of social reproduction.⁶ Performative analysis works to reveal how actors and audience are both implicated in enacting

¹ Barry and Elmes, 'Strategy Retold: Toward a Narrative View of Strategic Discourse'.; Allmendinger, *The Post-Positivist Landscape of Planning Theory*.

² Goffman, *Frame analysis; an essay on the organization of experience*.; Sennett, *The uses of disorder: personal identity & city life*.

³ Burke, *New perspectives on historical writing*. 284-5

⁴ Sandercock, 'Out of the Closet: The Importance of Stories and Storytelling in Planning Practice'. 12 [emphasis in original]

⁵ Law and Urry, 'Enacting the social'. (emphasis in original). 395

⁶ Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory'. 519

their identities and involved in the reproduction or disruption of normative values through performance.

Although performative analysis originated in identity studies and presentations of the self, Catherine Kohler Riessman applies it more broadly to comparative analysis of case studies, observing that “group narratives take the form of performance pieces—spontaneous dramatic re-enactments of key moments in the group's life, performed for (and with) an audience that includes the investigator.”⁷ Performative analysis works to critically identify the social and cultural narratives being performed by whom, for whom, and why. Riessman argues that “narratives represent storied ways of knowing and communicating,” and that “storytellers interpret the world and experience in it; they sometimes create moral tales – how the world should be.”⁸ She argues that stories are particularly useful for theorizing across case studies because:

Stories are social artifacts, telling us as much about society and culture as they do about a person or group. How do these contexts enter into storytelling? How is a story coproduced in a complex choreography—in spaces between teller and listener, speaker and setting, text and reader, and history and culture?.⁹

As social artifacts, stories contain multiple narratives that can reveal truths about collective group experiences, identity, and agency within historical, social, and political context and structures.

Gary Fine argues that stories are deployed to shape identity and belonging through for meaning-making but also as powerful persuasive tools for directing action and decision-making. He argues that:

stories bind individuals to each other as they recognize that they have common experiences that shape their identity and their linked futures. As a result, this perspective is both retrospective and prospective. Stories contain explicit or implicit morals that are to be taken as guides for actions.¹⁰

⁷ Riessman, *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. 123

⁸ ---, *Narrative Analysis*. 1

⁹ ---, *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. 105

¹⁰ Fine, *The Storied Group: Social Movements as "Bundles of Narratives"*. 238

The power of stories suggests further critical analyses of power structures and agency across these narratives that echoes criticism of communicative planning. As Patsy Healey says, “we are culturally made or socially constructed, and at the same time makers of cultures and social structures.”¹¹ Applied to planning, narrative and storytelling can work to decentre the foundational mythologies of material progress and scientific rationality, and instead work to reground the discipline in the subjective realities and lived experiences of the political and the personal.¹² Through multiple subjective lenses, we can gain access and insight into power and structural forces, agency, embodied human experiences, motivation, and meaning.¹³ Drawing from multiple intersecting influences including feminist theory, radical Black theory, and Indigenous thought, these methodologies raise epistemic challenges to positivism, essentialism, empiricism, and modern basis of scientific knowledge by prioritizing critical consciousness, reflexivity, and positionality.¹⁴

The primacy, messiness, persuasiveness, and multiplicity of stories present obstacles to uncovering objective truth but are powerful tools in understanding subjective realities. Law and Urry argue that traditional social science methods based in “nineteenth century realities” deal poorly with the fleeting, the distributed, the multiple, the non-causal, the sensory, the emotional, and the kinesthetic.¹⁵ In order to understand the relationship between people and space, the relationship between centre and periphery, the relationship between public and non-public, and the relationship between desirable and undesirable, scholarship needs to make space for emotion, intuition, wisdom, aesthetics, and multiple perspectives. These subjective human experiences and qualities necessarily complicate research process and findings. For example, postmodern

¹¹ Healey, *Collaborative planning : shaping places in fragmented societies*. 46

¹² Allmendinger, *The Post-Positivist Landscape of Planning Theory*.

¹³ “data, theories and disciplines themselves began to be understood as belonging to larger social and historical contexts in which they were applied, changed and developed the socio-political systems, historic context, economic conditions, and other forces and actors [...]” *ibid.* 5

¹⁴ See for example England, 'Getting personal: Reflexivity, positionality, and feminist research*'; Ettlinger, 'Delivering on Poststructural Ontologies: Epistemological Challenges and Strategies'; Haraway, 'Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective'; Haslanger, 'Ontology and social construction'; Longino, *Subjects, power, and knowledge: Description and prescription in feminist philosophies of science*; McDowell, 'Space, place and gender relations: Part I. Feminist empiricism and the geography of social relations'; Weeks, *Subject for a feminist standpoint*.

¹⁵ Law and Urry, 'Enacting the social'. 403. See also Sandercock, 'Out of the Closet: The Importance of Stories and Storytelling in Planning Practice': “an implicit epistemology of the city, a distinctly feminist epistemology” “It outlines a way of knowing the city through the senses and emotions rather than through (Marxist) theory.” 11-12

methodologies, and narratives and storytelling methods within them, present issues about incommensurability, relativism, and contextual knowledge. However, as Almendinger maintains, “there is no theory-neutral way of understanding theory in planning” and “appeals to methodological rigour, empirical proof or deductive reasoning cannot be counted on.”¹⁶ Situated knowledge, storytelling, and other forms of connected knowing call attention to the power structures and oppressive systems that legitimize ‘good’ knowledge-building (i.e., academic and professional institutionalized knowledge), an interesting echo of the struggle over definitions of ‘good’ city-building.¹⁷

3.2 Research objectives and questions

As a comparative analysis of contemporary participatory placemaking initiatives by different marginalized and/or alternative groups within the same planning and local context, this dissertation draws connections between what are often disparate bodies of literature by grounding the analysis in a spatial justice and anti-oppression framework. Narratives, critical readings, and counter-narratives of ‘good’ city-building follow stories of different groups navigating planning process and public opinion, struggles for equitable representation and participation, and radical practices of taking place and taking care. Place-based storytelling and narrative is deployed in the methodological and analytical approaches of this dissertation as practices of placemaking and knowledge-making that make do, make visible, decentre, and claim authority across multiple intersecting and diverging stories. By making distinctions between and drawing connections across popular, strategic, and radical placemaking and place-based narratives, I aim to reveal the hidden logics of and oppressive systems operating within progressive narratives of ‘good’ city building and leave space for alternatives and sometimes conflicting place-based practices.

¹⁶ Ibid. ---, 'Out of the Closet: The Importance of Stories and Storytelling in Planning Practice'. 10; 12

¹⁷ Haraway, 'Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective'.; Harding, *The science question in feminism.*; Haslanger, 'Ontology and social construction'.

The objectives of the research are, therefore, to:

- a) Reconstruct layered and intersecting place-based stories of making space for and with the City, the public, and marginalized and/or alternative groups;
- b) Analyse how the case stories align with normative values and vision of the ‘good city,’ performative value of participating in good processes, and grand narratives of ‘good’ city-building;
- c) Make visible social, political, and market factors that structure, legitimate, and restrict the public realm, public process, and public narratives to reproduce social and spatial inequities;
- d) Share radical counter-narratives of non-public taking place and taking care;
- e) Argue for radical recognitions of difference and solidarity as part of spatial justice; and
- f) Critically perform ‘good’ academic practices and writing while struggling to leave space for alternative methods, knowledge, and meaning to take place.

The following research questions focus the research and structure this dissertation:

Q1: How do the case stories perform participatory placemaking through grand narratives of ‘good’ city-building?

- a. What common urban narratives structure the performance?
- b. What normative values and visions of the city are reproduced?
- c. How are different groups implicated in performances of ‘good’ city-building? What group identities are enacted?

Q2: How do performances of progressive narratives, group identities, and normative values in the case stories also reproduce oppressive systems and logics?

- a. What social, spatial, and structural inequities are reproduced?
- b. How are different social, political, and economic forces implicated in inequitable processes and outcomes of ‘good’ city-building?
- c. What subnarratives of spatial injustice are reproduced?

Q3: What strategies, critical performances, and refusals do M/AGs exercise in their struggle for space in the city?

- a. How do M/AGs strategically participate in public process and public spaces to secure incremental, immediate group needs?

- b. How to M/AGs critically perform their role in participatory placemaking to secure public recognition of their claim to space?
- c. How do radical refusals of public participation and ‘good’ city-building narratives take space for alternative ways of being together in the city?

3.3 Case and site selection

The three cases selected for narrative reconstruction and comparative analysis are examples of contemporary placemaking projects in the downtown core of Ottawa. These projects were each initiated by a M/AG and involved negotiation with both formal city processes and public opinion. These studies give insights into the role and authority of planning; the influence of dominant socio-cultural and socio-political forces and structures; and the capacity and strategies of M/AGs to exercise their right to participate in city-building and to claim space in the city.

The three cases, examined from most recent to earliest implemented, are:

- Punk and/or safe space: (sub)cultural music venues in the Downtown Core
The development of the Ottawa Music Strategy and safe space policies for music venues and festivals led by Babely Shades and the Ottawa Music Industry Coalition (2015-2018)
- A skate in the park: The Charlie Bowins Skatepark at McNabb Park
The construction of the Charlie Bowins Skateboard Park in the McNabb Park rehabilitation led by the Ottawa Skateboard Community Association (2012-2015)
- Mainstreeting Le/The Village: Ottawa’s LGBT Village on Bank Street¹⁸
The official designation of Le/The Village along the Bank Street mainstreet led by the Village Committee (2006-2011)

These three cases offer contested claims to three different types of urban spaces that fall under the traditional authority of planning as part of the public realm: i.e., cultural districts, parks, and mainstreets (see Appendix A: maps). The cases also represent a variety of symbolic, spatial-material, and functional claims to space: i.e., policy development, purpose-built construction, and branded designation. The timeframe of the three placemaking projects correspond with

¹⁸ LGBT is used in the case stories as the acronym most commonly applied during the timeframe examined. At the time of writing, 2SLGBTQ+ is more widely accepted.

contemporary narratives of urban social justice movements and activism, such as the Occupy Movement, Tactical Urbanism, Woman's March, #BlackLivesMatter, and the #MeToo Movement (see Appendix B: timeline). From a planning timeframe, the cases also all correspond to the purview and vision of the *Ottawa 2020 Growth Management Strategy* and Plans (see Chapter 4).¹⁹

Each of the three placemaking projects was initiated with the explicit intention to serve the needs and interests of members of a subculture or alternative scene and was led by members of the punk and local music, skate, and LGBT communities, respectively. Care must be taken not to conflate identity that may be shared by group members with the actions and self-organization of the group as defining group identity.²⁰ The identification of M/AGs in these case follows Young's conceptualization of group differentiation as being defined relationally rather than substantially. This diverges from commonly employed practice of classifying marginalized identities along identity categories such as gender, class, or ethnicity. As Young explains: "Those who reduce group difference to identity implicitly use a logic of substance to conceptualize groups. Under this logic a group is defined by a set of essential attributes that constitute its identity as a group. Individuals are said to belong to the group in so far as they have the requisite attributes."²¹ By contrast, a group that is defined relationally is "a collective of individuals who stand in determinate relations with one another because of the actions and interactions [...] both to one-another and to non-members."²² Relationally defined groups avoid the essentialist tendency of "fixing or reifying groups" by defining groups by identity, and curtails many related critiques of "identity politics."²³

The initiating groups in the case stories are therefore primarily defined through the actions and interactions that emerge throughout the selected placemaking initiative. Yet, substantial identities as "gay," "skate," or "punk" do come into play in defining these groups.

¹⁹ A unique overarching planning structure that includes the 2003 *Official Plan*, described in detail in section 3.2.3.

²⁰ Young argues that "the tendency to conceive group difference as the basis of a common identity which can assert itself in politics implies for many that group members all have the same interests and agree on the values, strategies, and policies that will promote those interests" Young, *Inclusion and democracy*. 88

²¹ Ibid. 87

²² Ibid. 89

²³ Ibid.89

Part of the study will engage with how normative substantial identity categories are sometimes challenged but are also reproduced in each case.²⁴ There is also overlap and tensions over time, both locally and transnationally, between the engaged M/AG and the broader subculture and scenes with which they associate. The longer history and context of each of the respective scenes, their place in the city, and legacies of activism are therefore included in the intersecting stories. Membership shifts over time as events unfold and new relationships form. Group membership in each of the three selected cases is therefore contested and difficult, if not impossible, to categorically define. The discussion of punk in the city, in Chapter 7, draws on academic literature and autoethnographic reflections to grapple with the complexity of relational identity.

The setting for this research is Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Urban research in Canada tends to focus on the three largest cities of Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal. However, the cosmopolitan or “world-class” character of these cities tends to overshadow their local character and context. Cases set in these cities are therefore more likely to lead to comparisons with other global cities than with mid-sized Canadian cities or mid-sized cities around the world. They are exceptional cases and arguably far from representative of the Canadian urban experience. Similarly, marginalized and alternative groups, especially those linked to subculture, are most frequently studied in large cultural capitals. Because these groups have greater visibility in these metropolises, the experience of their counterparts in mid-sized or smaller cities, suburbs, or rural areas is rarely accounted for in academic literature. The less established and less recognized presence of these scenes in a context such as Ottawa, arguably better aligns with the intentions of this research precisely because they have not been integrated into the public image of the city.

The socio-political systems, historic context, economic conditions, and other forces and actors impacting both urban development and culture of Ottawa have more in common with those of other Canadian urban centres than with those of the nation’s three largest metropolises. The call to diversify Canadian urban studies to be more representative mid-sized and smaller

²⁴ Here I draw most notably from queer scholars and suggest these demographic identities are either part of the misrepresentations imposed by mainstream perspectives or common mainstream demographic biases that are reproduced within alternative groups. For example, see Halberstam, 'What's that smell? Queer temporalities and subcultural lives'; Oswin, 'Critical geographies and the uses of sexuality: deconstructing queer space'; Cohen, 'Bulldaggers, Punks and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?'; McRobbie, *Settling accounts with subculture: A feminist critique*.

cities is gaining momentum. However, Ottawa does offer an intriguing particularity that further complicates comparative analysis based on population size. The most prevalent exception to the generalizability of Ottawa to other cities is, of course, its role as the National Capital. Frequently described as a city constantly torn between the interests of “town and crown,” Ottawa is complicated by the multiple jurisdiction and governmental agencies charged with the development and planning of the city. As the national capital city, Ottawa assumes a responsibility to symbolically represent all Canadian culture and all Canadians: “This is a city, but it is so much more than just a city - it is the capital of a nation.”²⁵ The image of the city as the federal capital and the concentrated presence of Canadian national culture through the museums, libraries, and art centres can make it difficult to recognize the local culture as local. At the same time, the burden of performing the national narrative is deeply intertwined and frequently constitutive of local identity.

As a geographically large region, the post-amalgamation City of Ottawa encompasses a variety of urban, periurban, suburban, and rural areas. The impacts of amalgamation are briefly examined in the origins of Ottawa urban planning and plans. However, this dissertation focuses on the traditional urban core, primarily Centretown and the ByWard Market. Urban researchers are increasingly challenging the privilege given to urban cores in the study of cities and the artificial distinctions drawn between city and suburb. Similarly, urban cultural studies continue to complicate assumptions about urban and suburban culture and their respective demographics. The site selection reflects the traditional planning codification of the urban core as the cultural heart of the city and because the sites are identified in the Official Plan and targeted by community design plans for revitalization that align with creative placemaking and cultural planning principles.

Finally, I selected Ottawa as the urban centre of interest for this research for a combination of practical, logistical, and ethical reasons. These reasons are primarily a factor of my familiarity with the city, its urban development, and my professional and personal connections as a long-time resident. Of particular importance to this research is my existing relationship to the punk scene and its intersections with other marginalized and/or alternative scenes. This connection facilitates the degree of trust and insider knowledge necessary for the

²⁵ National Capital Commission, *Canada's Capital Core Area Sector Plan*.

kind of socio-cultural work undertaken. My point-of-view as participant-researcher is discussed in greater detail below.

3.4 Methods

I develop this research primarily through mixed methods derived from narrative-based methodologies that include narrative reconstruction, intersecting stories, researcher-participant observation, and critical autoethnography. Narrative and performative analysis methods are used in the comparative analysis of the case stories; critical re-readings and radical counter-narratives inform the socio-political and socio-cultural analysis. Consistent with the approach of narrative-based methodologies, the following description of methods is a reflection on the tactics, strategies, and rationales that emerged through and guided the research process. This approach rejects positivist framing of methods as a set of predefined rules that were followed to produce the research or that could be followed to reproduce its findings. Data collection, data analysis, and representation are interconnected processes that were pursued concurrently.

3.4.1 Narrative reconstruction

Narrative reconstruction offers a way of gathering, organizing, representing, and analysing the multiple and intersecting perspectives, information, interpretations, and details about the site, its uses, its users, its meaning, its past/present/future, and the placemaking process of a specific contemporary initiative. Based on film studies and the work of Ruth Finnegan, Sandercock outlines five key properties of stories: (1) “a temporal or sequential framework;” (2) “an element of explanation or coherence, rather than a catalogue of one thing after another;” (3) “potential for generalizability;” (4) “a plot structure and protagonists;” and (5) “moral tension.”²⁶ The purpose of narrative reconstruction in this research is to replot multiple storied accounts into composite public histories of M/AG engagements in participatory placemaking in Ottawa. The three case stories of place and placemaking in Ottawa in Chapter 4 include past, contemporary, and future-

²⁶ Sandercock, 'Out of the Closet: The Importance of Stories and Storytelling in Planning Practice'. 13

oriented storied accounts, told from multiple points-of-view of the public, the City, M/AGs, and my own as researcher-participant.²⁷

The three narrative reconstructions of the placemaking case stories rely on the subjective retelling of events and the subjective interpretations of context, first by the multiple authors of the source materials, their sources, and then by me, as researcher-participant. Multiple points-of-view are included through layering of historical documents, planning documents, media accounts (mainstream, alternative, and social), collections (zines, music, posters, promotional material, websites, etc.), other published accounts, and readings of the sites themselves. Some sources present events as plotted storied narratives, other sources provided details of an individual or subsets of episodes. Sources are publicly accessible documentation, and researcher-participant observation and documentation of space. The ethical and strategic considerations for not including non-public sources such as interviews or private conversations is discussed below in section 3.6. In addition to these ethical considerations, it should be noted that these narrative reconstructions are not intended as anthropological or ethnographic studies of the internal and individual experiences, politics, values, and dynamics of the individual M/AGs. To deepen these case stories into ethnographic studies would require additional methods (such as interviews, surveys) to solicit reflections, clarifications, or additional input from involved parties. These remain beyond the scope and purpose of the present research.

The narrative of each case study is reconstructed in two parts: the spatial-material presence; and the placemaking process.

Spatial-material presence: A brief but descriptive, embodied account of the case study site, relationship to surroundings, and changing uses. The narrative consists of an orientation to the geographic location and surrounding context, a description of the visual and material condition of the site and captures the embodied experience of passing by and being on site, and how it engages the senses. This narrative reconstruction attempts to convey a relatively common experience of, and orientation to the site. In referencing my own multiple experience, observations, and encounters with the site, it conveys a familiarity and layered appreciation of the present condition in relationship to nearly twenty-years of personal knowledge of the site.

²⁷ On storied accounts, see Barry and Elmes, 'Strategy Retold: Toward a Narrative View of Strategic Discourse'. 431

The description, for that reason, can neither capture the immediacy of a first-time encounter, nor the depth of inherited knowledge of those with intergenerational connection to this space. It is also important to note that this narrative offers an account of a white, female, able-bodied experience. The spatial-material account captures changes to the site and changing reception of the site since the implemented placemaking.

City:M/AG placemaking process: A plotted storied account of a M/AG placemaking initiative and its interaction with public opinion and city processes. This narrative outlines the placemaking vision of the M/AG and the approach and channels they pursued, both formal and informal, to realize the vision. The narrative identifies key barriers and opportunities; explores the evolving relationships among the M/AG, the public, and the City; and concludes with the final resolution of the placemaking initiative and ongoing outcomes. Here too, the narrative is reconstructed from publicly accessible documentation. This reconstruction involves representing and also attempting to reconcile how the story was told and shifted at different points throughout the process, by different sources, and from different perspectives. In the several instances when the narratives diverge greatly, the reconstructed narrative privileges the publicised perspective of the members of the M/AG actively engaged in realizing the placemaking initiative.

3.4.2 Ottawa research and fieldwork

The Ottawa fieldwork, conducted between September 2017 and December 2019, involved grounded observational study of public city-building and community placemaking meetings and events, and punk/alternative music shows and performances. The purpose of attending and observing these events is to gain insight into common recurrent norms, narratives, and trends, as well as insights into who participates, with what stated objectives and intentions, and how they chose to, or are allowed to, engage. General event details are recorded in a master datasheet (see Appendix D and E). Detailed field notes are not part of this process. Findings are based in casual observations, cumulative pattern recognition, and general impressions based in intuition, emotion, tone, atmosphere, etc. Data are collected and recollected through reflective and reiterative storytelling shared throughout the course of the fieldwork both in formal conference papers and casual conversations with other researchers and community members.

History of planning in Ottawa and policy analysis of Ottawa 2020 Growth Management Strategy: A close reading of the five *Ottawa 2020 Growth Management Strategy* plans identifies the strategic priorities and guiding principles as key tools for developing a critical narrative analysis of the case stories. These are contextualized within a brief history of the urban development of Ottawa and the political and jurisdictional structures that oversee planning in Ottawa. Research was conducted through historic accounts and city archival documents accessed through the Ottawa Room at the Ottawa Public Library.

Public city-building and community placemaking meetings and events: This broad grounded observational study expands the focus of the three case studies to consider the political and popular culture of city-building and placemaking in Ottawa. The 114 events attended throughout the study represent a cross-section of organizers, place-based practices and interests, and identity/interest groups.²⁸ Priority was given to events and meetings located within and concerning the urban core. All events and meetings were opened to the public and announced via public notice.²⁹ Findings from these events assist in contextualizing and analysing the experiences and findings of the three case studies.

Punk shows and performances: This targeted grounded observational study focuses attention on the third case study M/AG and the placemaking practices of the local punk scene beyond its interaction with the public and the city. The majority of the 148 shows attended during the study were punk and in Ottawa but also include a sampling of alternative genres and cities. Notice of events were largely announced through publicly accessible forums but were occasionally discovered by word-of-mouth or accidental encounters. During the term of my field work, friends approached me and encouraged me to begin performing and the study grew to include my own band experiences.

As discussed above, this research does not include interviews, surveys, or other methods to solicit reflections, clarifications, or additional information from involved parties. These private

²⁸ Organizers include the City of Ottawa, National Capital Commission, Business Improvement Areas, not-for-profit organizations, community associations, community groups, cultural institutions, academic institutions, local businesses, local artists and activists, etc.

²⁹ Event notices were gathered through publicly accessible sources including City of Ottawa public engagement website and mailing list, city councillor mailing lists, facebook, twitter, community event calendars, mailed notices, blogs, etc.

stories fall beyond the purpose and scope of fieldwork as grounded context for the case stories as public histories of M/AG placemaking in the public realm. Findings from this field work contribute to the autoethnography and counter-narrative.

3.4.3 Intersecting stories

In addition to plotted storied narratives, the three case stories also invoke unplotted discourse, including references to “known stories.” Common themes and references from known stories create resonance with previous experience and existing knowledge. Gary Allen Fine argues that these help to create “bundles of narratives” and that these references to known stories can act as shortcuts in storytelling.³⁰ Resonance between stories assists audiences to interpret and accept the plot and meaning of a new story as part of established culturally significant plots and meaning. Although the events and outcomes of known stories may be external to the plot of the story being told, references to them link the present story to known culture, ideas, and practices.³¹ Known endings from these known stories also offer foreshadowed future outcomes, some of which have already begun to materialize. While these intersecting stories provide additional context to the case stories, they also “thicken narratives” by telling the same story in different ways, from different viewpoints and different approaches.³²

In this research, intersecting stories are reconstructed to present known stories and to connect the narrative reconstructions to key historic background, circumstances, conflicts, actions, and outcomes. Some of these known stories are invoked directly within the source materials, while other known stories are suggested as relevant by me, as researcher. Additional representations of the site, its uses, and its users include historic documentation, contemporary accounts of both the past and the present, and future visions. These intersecting stories also addresses how the site may be modelled on and reflect broader typologies (i.e., cultural spaces, parks, and mainstreets), and how its relationship to those typologies is expressed. These intersecting stories, as presented in and by multiple sources, thicken accounts of the use of the space/place and its meaning to different users over time. Four intersecting stories are offered in

³⁰ Fine, *The Storied Group: Social Movements as "Bundles of Narratives"*. 238

³¹ Ibid. 233

³² See Burke, *New perspectives on historical writing*.

relation to each of the placemaking initiatives to thicken the representations of people, place, and actions for each of the case stories.

Land-use policy analysis thickens the characterization of the placemaking initiative in relation to designated land-use and development priorities. These stories are reconstructed through planning documents and municipal records.

Local site history thickens the characterization of the setting through public history of the site and its surrounding neighbourhood. These stories are reconstructed through mainstream media and published histories.

Local M/AG history thickens the characterization of group participants, their position as marginalized and/or alternative, and their relationship to the public, to the City, and to the site. These stories are reconstructed through alternative media and published accounts.

Related known stories thicken the narrative of local groups as part of broader group histories of identity-based urban social movements and as part of broader claims to the right to the city across time and geography. These stories are reconstructed through histories and literature on related urban social movements.

3.4.4 Critical autoethnography and counter-narratives

To enrich, complicate, and enact this research, critical auto-ethnography is included as counter-method.³³ Critical autoethnography is an emerging method/ology but it participates in much longer traditions of knowledge-making and world-making through storytelling. Holman Jones defines critical ethnography through its goals and commitments, rather than through specific methods. She proposes that the three goals of critical autoethnography are: “to examine systems, discourses, and relations of privilege and subjugation, put theory into action through storytelling, and build new systems in order to stimulate new ways of being and acting together in the world.”³⁴ The five intersecting commitments are: “focusing on embodiment, valuing diverse forms of knowledge, creating relationships, highlighting the affective and emotional in narratives

³³ Feyerabend makes the argument for counterinduction “prejudices are found by contrast, not by analysis” “we need a set of alternative assumptions” Feyerabend, *Against method*.15

³⁴ Holman Jones, *Creative selves/creative cultures*. 11-12

of experience, and seeking change.”³⁵ These goals and commitments are not only achieved in and through the research as it is presented here in dissertation format, but also actively enacted in multiple contexts beyond, not least of which being within the context of my continued participation in the Ottawa punk scene.

This counter-narrative and critical autoethnography further contributes to the narrative-based approach of this research. The multiple-method research and multiple-genre descriptive documentation is an example of Ellingson’s crystallization as an “explicit goal of revealing multiple realities and engaging the divergences.”³⁶ This stands in contrast to conventional triangulation that may also use multiple methods but does so with the intention of arriving at a singular truth. As Klodawsky argues: “heretofore straightforward assumptions about allies and foes, principled options, and dangerous strategies have become destabilized.”³⁷ Counter-narrative works against the totalizing or essentialist temptation of narrative. By engaging power relations through research practices, critical autoethnography also overlaps with methods such as participatory action research³⁸ that unfold through political “mess,” become intentionally politicized, and seeks to improve the lives of community collaborators.³⁹ As researcher, my own conflicting interests and commitments contribute to the messiness. Challenging the premises of conventional research, including its expectations of rigour and legitimacy, and how these may conflict with community needs and experience is considered a critical component of these methods.⁴⁰

This autoethnography brings lived experience and reflections from Ottawa punk scene. Through the critical reflectivity of the method, I draw upon other scholars whose work is

³⁵ Ibid.8

³⁶ As described in Ettlinger, 'Delivering on Poststructural Ontologies: Epistemological Challenges and Strategies'. 593-4

³⁷ Klodawsky, 'Choosing' participatory research: partnerships in space-time'. 2846

³⁸ See Kindon et al., *Participatory action research approaches and methods: Connecting people, participation and place.*; Fraser and Weninger, 'Modes of engagement for urban research: enacting a politics of possibility'.; Klodawsky, 'Choosing' participatory research: partnerships in space-time'.

³⁹ ---, 'Choosing' participatory research: partnerships in space-time'. It should be noted that while this research engages within community context, there are no explicit community collaborators. Rather, researcher is positioned as participant. This therefore differs significantly in practice from PAR. However, PAR could prove to be a productive model for future research.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

similarly grounded in particular subculture scenes and who offer critical perspectives on, and radical alternative to, oppressive systems. Holman Jones argues that autoethnography is a queer method and grounded in queer methods. She notes: “critical autoethnography is a particularly agile approach for understanding and transforming the lived experience of selves and cultures as they are encountered and lived within systems and discourses of power, oppression, and privilege.”⁴¹ And so, while this method is mobilized in this dissertation to focus attention and reveal additional stories from only one of the three case stories, its critical function is to deepen the study of oppressive systems while creating space for my own lived experience and leaving space for others. It is intended to queer the straight reading of progressive narratives.⁴²

This critical autoethnography appears as narrative interludes, song lyrics, and zines with the intention to disrupt, disturb, unsettle, and complicate the emerging narratives and analysis offered by the three cases. These interludes offer experiences, contexts, and knowledge that are not shared with or accessible to the public, they correct misrepresentations of place and mischaracterisations of people, and they reopen the complexity of the broader subculture/scene that have been collapsed into the interests of the actions and interactions of a particular subgroup.

3.4.5 Narrative, performative, and critical analyses

Narrative and critical analysis methods are used to understand what progressive narratives are deployed in participatory placemaking initiatives, what work they do, how different groups are implicated in performances of ‘good’ city-building, and how oppressive systems and neoliberal logics intersect in these performances to reproduce social and spatial inequities (see Chapter 2).

A comparative analysis of the three case stories begins with a thematic and structural narrative analysis of the common descriptive elements of story structure, i.e., setting, character, conflict, resolution, and plot. This analysis works across a complex intersection of storied accounts and points-of-view within each case narrative reconstruction and across the three cases, to identify thematic, structural, and interactional patterns, continuities, discontinuities, conflicts, contradictions, alliances, etc. This thematic structural narrative analysis produces collective descriptions of where, when, who, what, and how for the case stories. In addition to thematic

⁴¹ Holman Jones, *Creative selves/creative cultures*. 4

⁴² See section 7.1 for additional discussion of the intersections between punk and queer.

content, this analysis considers the narrative structure and “how a teller by selecting particular narrative devices makes a story persuasive.”⁴³ This may include both the form and flow of the story structure, as well as socio-linguistic deconstruction of the choice and use of language. Performative narrative analysis considers not only more traditional thematic, structural, and interactional elements of narrative, but also deepen the analysis into the function and consequences of the narratives as performance. The analysis considers not only the content of the narrative but also the role of the authors, characters, and audience: “how narrators want to be known, and precisely how they involve the audience in “doing” their identities [and] how audiences are implicated in the art of narrative performance.”⁴⁴ This “doing” closely relates to the many forms of “making” that storytelling participates in, i.e., meaning-making, knowledge-making, and decision-making.⁴⁵ Performative narrative analysis analyses the three case stories as conscious and unconscious performances of common urban narratives, normative values and visions, and enacted identities implicated in city-building, urban planning, and placemaking.

To understand which progressive narratives of ‘good’ city-building are invoked and deployed, the analysis draws connections between socio-cultural narratives and urban planning theory, i.e., common urban narratives.⁴⁶ Burke argues that holding the tension between ‘micronarratives’ i.e., “the telling of a story about ordinary people in their local setting” and “Grand Narrative” addresses the limitations of narrative analysis; one can then frame specific locally anchored performances as participating in broader social metanarratives.⁴⁷ Grand narratives are culturally significant recurring plots, stories that are retold containing known meanings, implicit values, and norms. Performative analysis draws on the “thickened narratives” of the intersecting stories to facilitate an analysis of why different narratives are invoked, what values and visions they represent, and how different groups are implicated in the performance of ‘good’ city-building narratives. The identification of these metanarratives, and the framing of

⁴³ Riessman, *Narrative Analysis*. 4

⁴⁴ Ibid. 5

⁴⁵ See Fenton and Langley, 'Strategy as Practice and the Narrative Turn'; Gamson and Modigliani, 'Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach'; McLeod and Hertog, 'The manufacture of 'public opinion' by reporters: informal cues for public perceptions of protest groups'; O'Connor, *Telling decisions: The role of narrative in organizational decision making*; Riessman, *Narrative Analysis*.

⁴⁶ Finnegan, *Tales of the city: a study of narrative and urban life*.

⁴⁷ Burke, *New perspectives on historical writing*. 292

these case stories as examples of performances of them, provides an analytical base for the critical discussion of placemaking and the function of placemaking stories in mainstream narratives.

Outside of literature and drama, narrative analysis is commonly applied in fields such as psychology and behavioural sciences, with attention to the personal experiences, identity construction, actions, and intentions of individuals or groups of individuals. Riessman describes thematic analysis as “useful for theorising across a number of cases” and thus useful for constructing typologies for developing theory.⁴⁸ Narrative analysis offers an academically rigorous and sensitive approach to interpret not only the sequence of events, but how those events and actions are set within time and place, how they are performed by actors who respond to conflict, and how they move towards resolutions that satisfy and reinforce world views.

In addition to being analysed through comparative narrative analysis, the three case narratives are analysed through their intersections with relevant critical frameworks and discourse drawn from the literature review and critical autoethnography. Discursive and observational analysis provide critical insights on how the narrative is performed and, consequently, how it is implicated in “doing” and “making.”⁴⁹ These include intersections with contemporary narratives in planning and community-based placemaking; with contemporary socio-political forces; with intellectual narratives and traditions from historic M/AGs; and among other M/AGs operating in the same space. Observations from fieldwork attendance at public meetings and events (detailed above) are used to check for parallels in, and the prominence of, broader recurrent themes and narratives in public placemaking in Ottawa. Peter Burke argues that the historian/researcher must be mindful of reintroducing the social and political frameworks that may not be included in the telling of stories. He argues that we should make “a narrative thick enough to deal not only with the sequence of events and the conscious intentions of the actors in the events, but also with structures — institutions, modes of thought, and so on — whether these structures act as a brake on events or as an accelerator.”⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Riessman, *Narrative Analysis*. 3

⁴⁹ O'Connor, 'Paradoxes of Participation: Textual Analysis and Organizational Change'. 774 Note that in this context, structural analysis refers to literary structure rather than social structure.

⁵⁰ Burke, *New perspectives on historical writing*. 291

Alternative and subnarratives work to reveal a non-totalizing, non-relativist narrative of City:M/AG placemaking that exists amongst different contemporary M/AG placemaking initiatives; amongst different people and different spaces; and amongst different representations of the same events, people, and spaces. Such interactional analysis considers the dialogical relationship between the multiple authors and audiences, including but not limited to conventional linear analyses of structure of action/agency, and helps to deconstruct hegemonic power relations.⁵¹ The identified grand narratives inform social, spatial, and political understanding of how systems, structures, and forces enable or constrain action; privilege or disadvantage actors differently; and legitimize or dismiss people, place, and process.

3.5 Data Generation

Data for the Ottawa cases are generated through (1) the collection and close-readings of publicly accessible documentation, (2) fieldwork consisting of researcher-participant observation and documentation of places and events, and (3) creative outputs produced through critical autoethnography.

3.5.1 Publicly accessible documentation

In order to determine how each data source contributes to the narrative reconstruction of public histories of each of the case stories and intersecting stories, attention is given to identifying the point-of-view expressed or represented in the source, i.e., public, city, M/AG, and researcher-participant point-of-view.

Public point-of-view: News media and public history sources are used as proxy sources to frame the public point-of-view in the narrative reconstruction.⁵² New media includes mainstream

⁵¹ Law and Urry, 'Enacting the social'. also engages in messy non-totalizing, non-essentialist, and non-relativist complexity

⁵² There is a complex relationship between media, public opinion, and public point-of-view; the influence between them and the extent to which they are co-constructed. "General audience media, then, are only some of the forums for public discourse on an issue [...] But if one is interested in public opinion, then media discourse dominates the larger issue culture, both reflecting it and contributing to its creation." Gamson and Modigliani, 'Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach'. 3. See also McLeod and Hertog, 'The manufacture of 'public opinion' by reporters: informal cues for public perceptions of protest groups'; Cissel, 'Media Framing: a comparative content analysis on mainstream and alternative news coverage of Occupy Wall Street'.

professional sources such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), the Ottawa Citizen, the Ottawa Journal, and the Ottawa Sun. Local community newspapers such as the Centretown News and Centretown Buzz, as well as university student papers and radio such as the Charlatan and CKCU, are also regularly sourced. News media are primarily accessed through online archives. Public history sources such as maps, records, images, and published histories of Ottawa are primarily accessed through the city of Ottawa website, city of Ottawa archives, the Ottawa Room collection at the Ottawa Public Library, Carleton University Library, and Heritage Ottawa website.

City point-of-view: The primary source of data for reconstructing the City point-of-view is the *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan*, including various amendments relative to the selected cases and their respective timelines, and the other four plans of the five *Ottawa 2020 Growth Management Strategy: Arts and Heritage Plan; Economic Strategy; Environmental Strategy; and Human Services Plan*. Additional supporting planning documents, reports, and records were gathered and analysed. These sources generally focus on the Ottawa urban core, the specific locations of the three case studies, and relevant issues and themes. Historic City of Ottawa and regional planning documents along with plans and reports from other departments and special committees are also referenced. Both contemporary and historic planning documents from the National Capital Commission also contribute to reconstructing the City point-of-view. Sources are accessed through the city of Ottawa website, city of Ottawa archives, the Ottawa Room collection at the Ottawa Public Library, Carleton University Library, National Capital Commission website, and Heritage Ottawa website.

Marginalized and/or Alternative Group point-of-view: The mainstream and community news sources listed above under public point-of-view also contributed to the reconstruction of the M/AG narrative.⁵³ Several articles include interviews with members of the M/AG, and a few articles were authored by members of the M/AG, particularly in community newspapers. Additionally, a few specialty and alternative newspapers, publications, social media, and weblogs relevant to the M/AG are referenced, including Apt613, Ottawa Showbox, Daily/Ottawa

⁵³ As discussed above under case selection, there is overlap between M/AG and subculture/scene narratives. These sources at times reveal shared point-of-view particular with regard to shared scene histories. As the narrative reconstruction shifts towards the *Public:City:M/AG placemaking process*, these sources tend to reflect (and help to construct) the M/AG point-of-view that may or may not be shared by the broader subculture/scene.

Xtra, Exclaim! Magazine, mudozine, Maximum Rocknroll. Several subculture heritage projects are invaluable contributing sources. The Village Legacy Project is a web-based archive and self-guided walking tour phone application documenting the history of Ottawa's LGBT community.⁵⁴ In recent years, there is also growing interest in documenting and archiving Ottawa's punk landscape and heritage. This documentation includes published personal accounts by their authors and/or interviewees; audio recordings; collections of zines, posters, artwork, and other memorabilia; lists of bands, shows, and venues.⁵⁵

Researcher-participant point-of-view: In addition to the collection of publicly available documentation, this research includes personal perspectives, and my grounded observational studies of placemaking and community building in the Ottawa context. My personal perspective is based in critical reflection of nearly twenty years living in Ottawa, my community connections, my knowledge of urban development and landscape through past research and studies, and my activist engagement in community development and architectural heritage. I moved to Ottawa in September 2001 to begin my studies at Carleton University School of Architecture. I lived in several neighbourhoods across the city—Old Ottawa South, Centretown, the Glebe, Nepean, Heron Park, and back to Centretown—until moving to Montreal in July 2014. After completing my doctoral residency years at McGill in July 2017, I moved back to Ottawa, specifically to Centretown to begin field work.

3.5.2 Creative productions

To gather and assemble stories, I use song writing and zine making as engaged arts-based critical storytelling, analysis, and meaning-making.⁵⁶ As critical and auto-ethnographic tools, these productions work through and translate my own experiences as researcher, researcher-

⁵⁴ The village legacy project was commissioned by the Village Committee and Bank Street BIA, launched in 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.villagelegacy.ca/>

⁵⁵ Major sources include: Pine, 'Cold Press: Early Punk Fanzines in Canada's Capital'; Frenken, *No Cause for Concern fanzine the website.*; Stewart, *Ottawa punk history 101: Rideau Hall is burning.*; Sutherland, *Perfect youth : the birth of Canadian punk.*; Davidge, *She Wants an Output.*; Milks, *The First 25 Years Of Punk In Ottawa 1978-2002: A Gigography.*

⁵⁶ Biagioli et al., *The zine method as a form of qualitative analysis.*; Duncombe, *Notes from underground : zines and the politics of alternative culture.*; Ketchum, *Engage in public scholarship! : a guidebook on feminist and accessible communication.*; Poletti, *Zines.*; Velasco et al., 'Imagining Environmental Justice "Across the Street": Zine-making as Creative Feminist Geographic Method'.

participant, and member of intersecting M/AGs. Through the process of storytelling, song writing and zine making, I draw connection from shared knowledge, making space for personal intuition, impressions, and expression, abstractions, exclusions, translations, literal and non-literal articulations, non-articulated meaning, and tension between intended and interpreted meanings. Although the songs and zines incorporate text, they do not centre on the authority of the written word. The songs and zines resonate with and communicate through auditory and visual aesthetics and embodied experiences that are integral parts of many storytelling traditions. I offer access to different layers of meaning through different levels of intelligibility and culturally coded meaning. Some of these meanings are translated and reorganized into academic text-based discussions. Some meanings are left to be read and interpreted differently by different audiences. I offer these place-based stories as meaningful disruptions and reflections for and from myself, my colleagues, my friends, and my co-conspirators.

3.6 Ethical considerations and challenges

The research methods included in this dissertation received Research Ethics Board I Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans.⁵⁷ Engaging with the limited definitions of ethics and rigid approval process was one of many messy experiences of this research. Parallels between my case stories and my own strategic engagements with an institutionalized process of decision-making designed to normatively protect the public were intensely felt. The confidentiality of the process prevents a detailed account of the barriers encountered while trying to demand recognition for methodological and ethical approaches. The theoretical-methodological groundings and alternative-radical intentions of this dissertation, give rise to additional ethical considerations about the production of knowledge; my positionality as researcher-participant; the responsibilities of care for the stories I share and the people in them; and disruptions to the reproduction of dominant ways of knowing and ways of participating in the city and in urban scholarship. These ethical considerations required constant self-reflexivity and working through by checking in with a community of colleagues who engage with these lines of ethical concerns. I am grateful for their insight and support. Below, I briefly discuss the

⁵⁷ REB File# 295-1217

application and consideration of ethics-based approaches towards situated knowledge and positionality, and punk ethos.

3.6.1 Situated knowledge and positionality as researcher-participant

I participate, throughout this research, as a community member, activist, artist, and a researcher. Situating the work in a city where I have over twenty years of experiences in, and scenes that I have intimate knowledge of and relationships within, allows me to speak from place not just about place, and to speak from communities not just about communities. I critically draw on “feminist-inspired notions of doing research ‘with’ or ‘for’ rather than ‘about.’”⁵⁸ My experiences and involvements ground myself and my research in subjective but situated embodied knowledges. Situated knowledge is positional, limited, and sensitive to the dynamics of power that shape positionality and relationships.⁵⁹ This is not to say that this research approach is not subject to and reliant on the embedded power relations and other social reproductive forces that it works to decentre. To the contrary, scholars engaged with these frameworks frequently and explicitly attempt to acknowledge the limits of the knowledge they produce and the context within which that knowledge is produced. The differing degree of my connection to each of these groups translates into more or less intimate, subjective, and privileged accounts both as a reflection of what information might be shared with me and reflection of my own presence as researcher-participant.

Situating my research in spaces that I have connections with and re-situating myself as researcher with people with whom I have other, non-research, relationships has been challenging. I recognize the experiences expressed by McDowell, finding myself “in situations of inauthenticity, dissimilitude, and potential, perhaps inevitable betrayal, situations that I now believe are inherent in the fieldwork method”⁶⁰ To gain the same level of access in another city could easily have taken years and raises other ethical concerns. At the same time, by drawing from pre-existing knowledge and relationships, even when sensitively and reflexively situated, I must acknowledge that the “adoption of qualitative or ethnographic methods alone does not

⁵⁸ McDowell, 'Doing Gender: Feminism, Feminists and Research Methods in Human Geography'. 407

⁵⁹ Haraway, 'Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective'. "

⁶⁰ McDowell, 'Doing Gender: Feminism, Feminists and Research Methods in Human Geography'. 408

release the scholar from exploitative relations, or even the betrayal of her subjects.”⁶¹ Practices of self-reflexivity did not entirely resolve conflicts of how I presented myself or moved through spaces in this work. For example, I felt formally presenting myself as a researcher would be an inauthentic presentation of myself, my role, and my position in these group settings and risked compromising my existing relationships and position in these spaces.

In disclosing my research affiliation and motivations, it was important to also acknowledge my personal and group-based affiliations and responsibilities, and the interests motivating my engagements in these spaces. In conversations with M/AG members who have negative associations with institutions (e.g., academia), I have aimed to be explicit about how this research works with, where it comes from, and what it gives back to the scene to re-ground our relationship in trust and mutual respect. Similarly, I position myself as someone whose inherited, chosen, intersecting, and shifting identities benefit from but are also subject to oppressive systems of cisheteropatriarchy, racial capitalism, and settler colonialism. My theoretical and methodological approaches are also grounded in multiple points of intersection between radical traditions and theories of the city and the variety of tactics they offer for accessing knowledge and experiences of the city by non-publics. I position this research in relationship with their alternative epistemological, ethical, and political approaches.⁶² I take care to be reflexive of my relative power and privilege throughout the many contexts of this research. While I encountered frequent conflicts and a sense of disbelonging, this has unquestionably been part of the work of making visible and leaving space for different kinds of knowledge and stories that are conventionally excluded from traditional planning and traditional social science research.

3.6.2 Punk ethics

My ethical positioning and practices within this dissertation are also inspired by punk ethics of production, distribution, and disruption of knowledge. The Y in DIY “Do-It-Yourself” works

⁶¹ Ibid. 407

⁶² Harney and Moten, *The undercommons: Fugitive planning & black study*.; Haraway, 'Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective'.; McDowell, 'Doing Gender: Feminism, Feminists and Research Methods in Human Geography'.; Weeks, *Subject for a feminist standpoint*.; Mirafab, 'Insurgent planning: Situating radical planning in the global south'.; Yiftachel, 'Re-engaging Planning Theory? Towards 'South-Eastern' Perspectives'.; Dorries and Harjo, 'Beyond Safety: Refusing Colonial Violence Through Indigenous Feminist Planning'.

both to claim authority of the individual and the capacity of mutual aid and co-production. Doing it yourself, or ourselves, more critically refers to resisting dependence on privileged institutionalized and commodified forms of production. In this dissertation I claim my own authority with respect to different capacities, knowledge, and values. I recognize that these have been nurtured and co-constructed through grounded experiences and relationships both inside and beyond the academy. Jeremy Milks reflects on punk ethos explaining his methodology as: “If you’re even reading this, you probably get the drift. There’s no defining principle to draw the line, so I bent it wherever I saw fit.”⁶³ The approach is also activated through narrative theory and methodologies where, as Riessman explains, “The investigator becomes an active presence in the text. As a kind of hybrid form, the approach pushes the boundaries of what is and is not included in narrative analysis.”⁶⁴ I claim space in this dissertation by taking place for myself and leaving space for others. I position myself as one of many authors and many readers of narrative through my participation in community, public, and M/AG spaces; my collection and reconstruction of case stories; my narrative and performative analyses; my engagement in critical discourse; and my autoethnographic punk interludes. I leave space for other stories and for different audiences to derive different levels of understanding, meaning, and (dis)comfort.

For whatever messiness there is in the making of this dissertation, the ethical decisions remain guided by trying to enact anti-oppressive realities. “If methods help to make the realities they describe,” as Law and Urry argue “then we are faced with the question: which realities might we try to enact?”⁶⁵ As Pine remarks about punk practices of zine making: “Zines, it seems to me, were never about ‘facts’ or even about ‘truth,’ but about creating your own ‘realities,’ fantasies and ethical boundaries, and gluing together whatever stuff you found lying around that interested you.”⁶⁶ The observation does not mean that zines and this dissertation do not contain facts and truths only that they prioritize the realities they enact in the making. For example, the decision to ground data gathering in publicly accessible documents and participation in publicly accessible events is, in part, an ethical reflection of the potential exploitative relation between researcher

⁶³ Milks, *The First 25 Years Of Punk In Ottawa 1978-2002: A Gigography*.

⁶⁴ Riessman, *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. 105

⁶⁵ Law and Urry, 'Enacting the social'. 396

⁶⁶ Pine, 'Cold Press: Early Punk Fanzines in Canada's Capital'. 41

and participant and the dilemma of including non-public information. I acknowledge that, as a result, data employed are limited to the information that groups have elected to offer to the public, which in turn, is affected by power differentials in the material's production, distribution, and access as public information.

Given ethical considerations about who is entitled to what knowledge and relative power to use knowledge, I prioritized recognition of M/AG authority to decide what knowledge is available to the public rather than extracting or requesting knowledge through interviews. I work from the information that groups and individuals involved “feel ready to be made public,” separate from my need for information.⁶⁷ Mullenite argues that though limited, this approach is critical in mitigating the vulnerability and precarity of insurrectionary spaces and practices and respecting their need and desire to remain out of the public. In navigating decisions about what knowledge and experience I chose to make public and about who is entitled to what knowledge, I make judgments about what information to include, how it is represented, and when some knowledge should remain non-public.

⁶⁷ Mullenite, 'Towards Broader Anarchist Geographies: Space/Place, Nation/State, and Anarchist Scholarship'. 207

4 PLANNING IN OTTAWA

This chapter provides background context about planning in Ottawa, Ontario as a public process directed at producing specific versions of a ‘good city.’ This chapter is organized into three sections: a brief review of Ottawa’s role as a city and changing views of its desired character (4.1), an introduction to the political and jurisdictional structures that oversee planning in Ottawa (4.2); an overview of the current policy framework for urban development, the *Ottawa 2020 Growth Management Strategy* (4.3); and findings on contemporary participatory urbanism gathered through fieldwork from 2017-2020 (4.4).

4.1 Building a city in the National Capital: visions, development, and actors

The City of Ottawa and the National Capital Region sit on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe people. As the national capital, Ottawa is subject to both municipal and federal governments,¹ each with their own vision for the city and shifting authority.² That vision, though modified over time, has reflected tensions between the city as a national entity and a locality in which people live, work, and recreate. Its development, similarly, has been shaped by a series of plans advanced by different jurisdictional authorities.

Originally named Bytown, Ottawa was established as a planned town in 1826. The remaking of the city into a capital city largely transferred planning power to federal plans, bolstered by private development. In 1859, the city was named the seat of government of the Province of Canada, and upon Confederation in 1867 became the capital of the Dominion of Canada. The federal presence in Ottawa has a strange impact on the local, both in terms of politics, identity, and urban form. In the 1970s, the National Capital Region redefined a new boundary to include the urban areas on the Quebec sides of the Ottawa River, and the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton established land use plans for the growing suburban growth beyond city limits. It took over a century for the City of Ottawa to produce its own official plan and gain control over the planning and development of the city. In 2001, the boundaries of the

¹ The municipal governments in Ontario are infamously also a “creature of the province.”

² Taylor, ‘City form and capital culture: Remaking Ottawa’; Andrew, *Trying to be world-class: Ottawa and the presentation of self*; Gordon, *Town and Crown: An Illustrated History of Canada's Capital*.

City of Ottawa expanded through the amalgamation of eleven urban and rural municipalities and the regional government of Ottawa-Carleton (see Appendix A: maps). On a planning scale, Ottawa is now geographically one of the largest municipalities in Canada, representing the interests of a vast rural, suburban, and urban population. In June 2019, the population of Ottawa reached one million.

Through their respective roles and authority for planning the country's Capital, the National Capital Commission (NCC) and the City of Ottawa both reflect, reinforce, and help to construct a national identity represented in built form of Ottawa and the National Capital Region. The legacy of planning documents from both institutions are important cultural artefacts that boldly proclaim their vision for the city and reflect an idealized self-image that is frequently symbolic not just of the city but of the entire country:

Canada's Capital is a symbol of our country's history and diversity, a true reflection of our democratic values and our commitment to a flourishing and sustainable future.³

The city shines as both a national capital and as a great place to call home.⁴

These planning documents also contain deeper embedded logics, values, and privileges. In addition to growth management, land use, services, and physical development, planning in Ottawa has always been a strategic political and social practice in placemaking, city-building, capital-building, and nation-building.

Beyond the formal and grand plans, Ottawa and Ottawans struggle with their self-image. Despite being the national capital, Ottawa frequently finds itself in the shadow of Canada's economic and cultural centres—Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver—and comparing itself to “world-class” capitals of Paris, London, Washington, or Berlin. Ottawans are frustrated by the shorthand use of “Ottawa” by media to refer to the federal government and not to the city or its residents; meaning the image presented to and held in the minds of the rest of the country is rarely about local culture. There are some who lean into the comfort and stability of being a

³ National Capital Commission, *The Plan for Canada's Capital 2017–2067*. 20

⁴ City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan*. Prologue.

sleepy government town, and those who object to the moniker “the city that fun forgot.”⁵ Citizens, critics, and journalists often point to city planners and the NCC as responsible for preventing the city from becoming the kind of “world-class” and “cosmopolitan” city they believe it deserves to be.⁶ Ottawa also has a highly politically engaged population, many of whom are comfortable lodging their grievances through formal official processes, and seek change by participating on committees and in the many public consultation opportunities. There are still many more who do not see their experience of Ottawa, or their own identities reflected in the formal or the commonly held representations of the city. The diversity that is so frequently proclaimed as part of the official identity, is frequently tokenized or appropriated, and the conflicts and contradictions diversity present are too easily erased. What consistently emerges is a city that struggles between, and conflates the official formal federal and municipal images, histories, and interests, on the one hand, and the diverse vernacular experiences, stories, and needs, on the other.

4.2 History of planning authority in the National Capital

Ottawa began its life as a planned military outpost and as it grew into a capital city, was the subject of many subsequent grand master plans. Planning authority was formally assigned and defined, and then re-assigned and re-defined. Federal, provincial, and municipal authorities all plan, with recurrent tensions over who directs planning and can control Ottawa’s urban development. For example, federal lands fall outside of the City’s and Province’s control; the federal agencies that own large amounts of Capital lands have no legal obligation to provincial or municipal laws and are not bound to follow any official plan produced by those authorities.

⁵ “The town that fun forgot” became a popular phrase among Ottawans after it first appeared in a Mclean’s article “That was the town that was” by Allan Fotheringham, *That was the town that was*. The independently produced documentary “the City that fun forgot” by Amen Jafri, *The City That Fun Forgot*. The documentary explores the meme, and the diverse artistic and cultural scenes across the city.

⁶ An Ottawa Citizen article by Cohen, *Ottawa is the worst capital city in the G7*. is a particular infamous example of the recurring debate and counter-debate about Ottawa lagging behind. As Cohen writes: “Here, then, is why Ottawa is a sleepy place – shoddy planning, administrative lassitude, somnolent politicians. It explains a city that is the way it is. For its lack of ambition and absence of imagination, Ottawa is the worst capital in the G7.” He concludes: “As the world turns, Ottawa stands still, somewhere between not yet and not ever.” Within a few days, rebuttals were published by Denley, *Ottawa is, in fact, not as terrible as you think*. and Wells, *World-class whine: Why Ottawa haters are wrong*.

Planning at the local level only began recently; though dozens of federal planning proposals for Ottawa have been prepared over the past hundred and fifty years,

In 1950, the Gréber Master Plan for the National Capital Area, commissioned by the Federal Government, was published. The City of Ottawa, now emboldened to prepare its own plans, accepted the Gréber Plan in principle but, except for a few transportation-related proposals, the plan was never formally adopted as an official plan. Nonetheless, the Gréber Plan has had far reaching impact on the development of the Ottawa-Gatineau region. Notably, the Gréber Plan established the Parkway system, the Greenbelt, Gatineau Park, and decentralization of Federal Government buildings. In 1958, the National Capital Act was passed by the Parliament of Canada and established the National Capital Commission as a Crown corporation to “prepare plans for and assist in the development, conservation and improvement of the National Capital Region in order that the nature and character of the seat of the Government of Canada may be in accordance with its national significance.”⁷

The first official plan adopted by the City in 1960 through 1963 was the result of several studies and surveys produced in collaboration with the National Capital Commission, and therefore largely aligned the interests and approach of the municipality and federal department.⁸ Although the Province of Ontario had authority over municipal land-use under the City and Suburban Plan Act of 1912, its concerns were limited to road access and zoning of industrial uses. The Ontario Department of Planning and Development and the Community Planning Branch were only established in 1944,⁹ and it was not until the 1970s that the Planning Act of Ontario mandated municipal plans as part of an expanding definition of urban development policies and land-use planning regulations.¹⁰ At that time, the establishment of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa Carleton (RMOC) by the Province, shifted planning interests towards regional planning, further complicating inter-provincial jurisdictions responsibilities and

⁷ National Capital Commission, *The Plan for Canada's Capital 2017–2067*. 6

⁸ Ottawa Planning Branch, *Urban Renewal, Ottawa Ontario*.

⁹ Archives of Ontario, *Municipal Land Use Planning: 214 Research Guide*. 1

¹⁰ Gordon, *Town and Crown: An Illustrated History of Canada's Capital*. 265

escalating conflict with the NCC. Since then, the NCC has repositioned their mandate away from land-use planning of the capital towards public programming of nation-building.¹¹

As regional, provincial, and federal authorities continued to jockey over grand plans, the City of Ottawa Planning Branch shifted its attention to developing targeted neighbourhood plans such as the Centretown Neighbourhood Study in 1976. These neighbourhood plans increasingly reflected the influence of the heritage movement that pushed for the preservation of older neighbourhoods on the one hand, and economic and social development policies on the other. This combination of land-use and urban design content with economic development priorities—both aimed at reviving the downtown core—would set the foundations for the 1991 Ottawa *Official Plan*: “the first truly comprehensive plan for the entire municipality[...] the City of Ottawa finally had a strong vision of the future of its neighbourhoods and downtown, and fairly sophisticated policy instruments in place to protect it.”¹² Meanwhile, the growth of Ottawa’s high-tech industry through the 1990s was largely being supported by partnerships between the regional government and private sector through the Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation and Ottawa Tourism and Convention Authority. The 1997 RMOC official plan included economic development strategies based on fostering growth clusters around high-tech, tourism, and bioscience sectors.¹³ Perhaps as a statement on separating the region from its urban core, the plan made no reference to the government sector. The high-tech industry, largely located in suburban campuses, was championed for bringing stability and diversity to the region that what otherwise reliant on the urban, primarily a one-sector economy of the government.

Planning authority was once again repositioned by the Province through the mandated amalgamation of eleven urban and rural municipalities, including Ottawa and the RMOC into the new City of Ottawa in 2001. As a new city government, the City of Ottawa needed its own official plan, reconciling the existing plans and planning directions of the twelve former governments into a single vision. Additionally, the provincially mandated amalgamations were part of a broader program for downloading a vast portfolio of public services from the province onto municipalities. Following a two-year strategic planning process, in 2003, the City of Ottawa

¹¹ Ibid. 284-285

¹² Ibid. 295

¹³ Ibid. 289

had yet another “first” official plan.¹⁴ Branded as “*Ottawa 2020*”, the 2003 Official plan was also the first to include widespread community consultation in its conception and to establish policies on the requirements for community consultation. Along with several intervening amendments, the *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan* is the active plan governing land-use and development in the City of Ottawa. The City is currently conducting public consultations as it prepares to rewrite the *New Official Plan*. A draft plan was presented to Council and the public in Fall 2020 and is expected to be adopted by Fall 2021.¹⁵

4.3 The Ottawa 2020 Growth Management Strategy

The *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan* is one of five interconnected plans that form the *Ottawa 2020 Growth Management Strategy*. This atypical structure places the land-use planning of the *Official Plan* in a horizontal relationship with four other areas of municipal activities, linking them all to each other and to an overarching strategic planning framework. The five growth management plans are: *Official Plan*¹⁶; *Human Services Plan*; *Arts and Heritage Plan*; *Economic Strategy*; and *Environmental Strategy*. The latter four reflect the increase in City responsibility for human services, arts, heritage, economy, and environment that followed the structural provincial download of services onto municipalities. The focus here turns to the ways in which the new planning framework (a) contributed to continued differences in visions for the city and the means to realise them; and (b) conferred on the City the obligation to develop plans – for land use, arts, heritage, etc. – in consultation with residents. While the Plan is presented in some detail, the various levels (e.g., vision, objectives, growth management priorities), planning approaches, and oversights are important to understanding plan priorities and development context for the empirical cases of Part 2 of this dissertation.

¹⁴ The first sentence of the *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan*. claims: “The Ottawa Official Plan is the first plan of the City of Ottawa and its guide to the 21st century.” i

¹⁵ See Economic Development and Long Range Planning and City of Ottawa, *Report to Planning Committee and Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee: New Official Plan – High Level Policy Directions*.

¹⁶ The *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan* is further supported by three Master Plans in transportation, infrastructure, and greenspace.

4.3.1 Managing growth: Visions of the ‘Good City’ in the *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan*

The vision and strategy for the Official Plan for the amalgamated city of Ottawa reflected both prior work by other entities and prevailing approaches to planning, specifically a reliance on expert-led rational comprehensive planning (see Chapter 2). Economic and environmental planning had been part of the previous regional municipality mandate, and the RMOC produced studies, reports, and development strategies that would be incorporated into the new City of Ottawa plan. Many of the pre-amalgamation municipalities also included economic, cultural, and environmental policies in their official plans despite not strictly conforming to land-use planning concerns. In the process of reconciling and integrating the pre-amalgamation plans, the new City of Ottawa limited the *Official Plan* more strictly and consistently to the physical development of the city through land-use policies. Additional “non-land-use policies” and public services were categorized and included in the other four plans. Without specific guidance from the province on how to incorporate these policies and services into the municipal government structure, it is perhaps not surprising that the City of Ottawa modelled strategic planning in each of these areas on the comprehensive planning model it applied to land-use.

The vision of the ‘good city’ underlying the five plans is perhaps most apparent in the 2020 Growth Management Strategy’s Guiding Principles. The plans, and all their policies, are to be in line with Seven Guiding Principles:

- A Caring and Inclusive City
- A Creative City Rich in Heritage, Unique in Identity
- A Green and Environmentally-Sensitive City
- A City of Distinct, Liveable Communities
- An Innovative City Where Prosperity is Shared Among All
- A Responsible and Responsive City
- A Healthy and Active City

Each of the Guiding Principles are further defined through accompanying objectives.¹⁷

¹⁷ See Appendix C

The role of each of the five growth management plans is to “focus on the strategic priorities needed to turn these principles into more concrete policy directions that can guide staff and City Council in their decisions as they balance competing priorities.”¹⁸ Overall, the Growth Management Strategy is envisioned as, and described as, a structure that provides sound planning rationale for balanced decision-making. This rationale extends both backwards into the creation of the plans, and forwards into future planning decisions grounded in the plans:

In addition to guiding the preparation of all growth management plans within the City of Ottawa, these principles will also guide the municipality’s day-to-day decision-making. The seven principles and accompanying objectives are equally important and must be balanced when making decisions.¹⁹

Once again, the *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan* emphasizes the interconnected nature of the five plans and the seven Guiding Principles, noting that: “it is important to interpret this Plan in the context of the overall Ottawa 20/20 initiative, which provides a comprehensive framework for managing growth in the City.”²⁰

With strategies, principles, objectives, and plans defined, there is curiously only brief mention of what the Plan defines as its goal: “The goal of the Ottawa 20/20 initiative is sustainable development.”²¹ The equally brief discussion of this goal defines sustainable development as “a strategy that requires the integration of economic growth, social equity, and environmental management. It is about ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come.”²² Even more curiously absent from the preamble in any of the five plans is the top-level objective and strategy of “growth management”. The *Official Plan* is the only plan that makes use of this terminology in developing policies. After offering growth projections and outlining the “challenges ahead,” Section 2.1 outlines Strategic Directions in four areas “to meet the challenges of growth over the next 20 years.”²³ The four areas of Strategic Directions are: Managing Growth; Providing Infrastructure; Maintaining Environmental Integrity; and Creating

¹⁸ City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan*. 1.3

¹⁹ Ibid. 1.3

²⁰ Ibid. 1.4

²¹ Ibid. 1.3

²² Ibid. 1.3

²³ Ibid. 2.1

Liveable Communities. Section 2.2 elaborates on the first Strategic Direction—Managing Growth:

About 90 per cent of the growth in population, jobs and housing will be accommodated within areas designated within the urban boundary in this Plan. These are areas where services are already available or can be readily provided through the logical extension of existing services. This approach makes the best use of existing facilities and services and ensures that *new development can be provided with urban facilities and services in the most efficient manner possible. [...] This is the most cost-effective pattern for the provision of municipal services and infrastructure.* Within the designated urban area, *growth will be directed to locations with significant development potential.*²⁴

In summary, the *Official Plan* sets a growth management strategy for the cost-effective and efficient provision of facilities and services to new development by directing them to urban areas in order to minimize impact on environmental areas and support cleaner and healthier city through the provision of alternative transportation infrastructure. As such, Managing Growth addresses each of the other strategic directions and sets an agenda to identify urban areas with “significant development potential.” After defining the urban area boundary as the area “that already is serviced or may be serviced with major roads, transit and piped sewer and water services” and “represents a 20-year supply of urban land,”²⁵ Section 2.2. Managing Growth identifies six classifications for areas with “significant development potential” where growth will be directed: Central Area; Mixed-Use Centres; Employment Areas; Enterprise Areas; Developing Communities; and Mainstreets.²⁶ Within these urban areas with significant development potential, the Plan sets policies to promote and support compact, mixed-use development through intensification, infill, and high-density greenfield development.²⁷

In addition to its strategy for the cost-effective and efficient provision of services and facilities, the *Official Plan* notes that: “Ottawa will meet the challenge of this growth by managing it in ways that support liveable communities and healthy environments.” The Creating

²⁴ Ibid. 2.2 Managing Growth, emphasis added

²⁵ Ibid. 2.2.1

²⁶ Ibid. 2.2.3

²⁷ Ibid. 2.2.3

Liveable Communities strategic direction defines liveable communities as: “built on the basics: good housing, employment, ample greenspace, a sense of history and culture.”²⁸ Gesturing towards balancing economic strategies with the social and environmental priorities, the *Official Plan* continues that support for liveable and healthy communities “is a commitment that will be realized through a focus on community design and a concern for people and the quality of the spaces they occupy.”²⁹ Section 2.5 Building Liveable Communities therefore sets out people-centred strategies and policies for the provision of community facilities, the design of space, and finally, community involvement.³⁰ The Plan sets out a wide range of principles, objectives, and strategies with an assumption that if pursued together can achieve the vision of the ‘good city.’ As explained in each of the plans: “Taken together, the five growth management plans provide long-term strategic direction and form a comprehensive blueprint for the future of Ottawa and its communities.”³¹ *Ottawa 2020* and specifically, the principles, represents a first moment in a gradual process of formalizing citizen participation in Ottawa’s planning process and in telling a story about that participation to confer legitimacy on the resulting document.

4.3.2 Public consultation, community planning, and priority on people

The *Ottawa 2020 Growth Management Strategy* and its accompanying five plans are the first planning documents in Ottawa to incorporate and acknowledge significant community consultation and community planning.³² *Ottawa 2020: Charting a Course* was the community consultations component of the Ottawa 20/20 initiative. In spring 2002, focus groups, town hall sessions, and online-survey were used to “inform the public and gather input.” The public consultation primarily focused on debating the Guiding Principles—equilibrium, diversity,

²⁸ Ibid. 2.5

²⁹ Ibid. 2.1

³⁰ Ibid. 2.5.2 Affordable Housing; 2.5.3 Schools and Community Facilities; 2.5.4 A Strategy for Parks and Leisure Areas; 2.5.5 Cultural Heritage Resources; 2.5.7 Compatibility of Development; 2.5.6 A Design Strategy for Ottawa; Collaborative Community Building and Community Design Plans

³¹ Ibid. 1.1ibid.

³² The 1991 *City of Ottawa Official Plan* makes brief mention of public involvement as a Guiding Principle but does not establish any policies or further rationale. “The City of Ottawa, as a responsible municipal government, must be accessible and involve people in making decisions about their lives. To fulfil this principle, both early involvement and multi-stage involvement are seen as necessary indicators of the City's commitment to public participation.” City of Ottawa, *City of Ottawa Official Plan: A vision for Ottawa*. 2.3.16.

accessibility, and sustainability—put forward in the *Charting a Course* pamphlet based on the findings of the 2001 Smart Growth Summit held in June 2001. The five-day summit was organized into ten “town hall issue” sessions.³³ The Smart Growth Summit established the framework for the five-plan Growth Management Strategy and its preliminary Guiding Principles. The result of the public consultations was a reorganized and refined Seven Guiding Principles that were endorsed by City Council in June 2002 and became “the backbone of the Ottawa 20/20 initiative.”³⁴

Charting a Course emphasized the role of residents in the planning process leading up to the creation of the *Ottawa 2020 Growth Management Strategy*, including the *Official Plan*:

It is residents who will help direct this process. This is our city. We have a vital interest in determining its future. Taking a strong role in the upcoming consultations to determine Ottawa’s Official Plan and other growth plans is your opportunity to plan our journey and help us to arrive at a favourable destination.³⁵

The summary of findings of the *Charting a Course* consultations explain that the resulting seven strategic directions are largely a rewording and recategorizing of the subtopics from each of the preliminary four strategic directions proposed in the *Charting a Course* pamphlet.³⁶ Though framed as a “forum for public debate,” the Smart Growth Summit town hall sessions were primarily presentations by invited expert speakers and panelists, including Mike Harcourt and Richard Florida. The summary report of the Smart Growth Summit that set the preliminary four strategic directions and recommendations for the overall Growth Management Strategy framework, also predominantly focused on the expert presentations with minimal reflection on public input. However, perhaps the most significant finding of the *Charting a Course* consultations was a desire for further public consultation and greater transparency in planning

³³ Ten town hall themes: Canada's farm capital, sustaining rural & village life; Getting there, next generation transportation; Developing Ottawa's urban/suburban core; Striking a balance, Ottawa's social needs; Ottawa life, arts & culture in the new Ottawa; Economic growth in our smart capital; A place to call home, housing in Ottawa; Elements of the livable city; Building a sustainable community; Capital city, the role of the NCC & federal government

³⁴ City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan*. 1.3

³⁵ ---, *Ottawa 2020 Charting a Course*. 1.3

³⁶ ---, *Charting a Course Next Steps: Public Feedback and the Evolution of the December 2001 Charting a Course Principles*.

decision-making. This finding likely influenced the development and framing of community planning policies in the *Official Plan* and even more so in the *Human Services Plan*.

In the Official Plan, Section 2.5.7 on Collaborative Community Building and Community Design Plans most directly addresses public engagement rationale and opportunities:

[T]he Plan proposes an approach to collaborative community building that emphasises shared values and mutual obligation and builds trust and responsibility within the community. The objectives of collaborative community building will be to ensure that processes surrounding planning decisions are inclusive and creative and that they result in community plans that implement the policies of this Plan.³⁷

This statement supports the strategic directions of “a caring and inclusive city”, “a city of distinct liveable communities”, and “a responsible and responsive city.”³⁸ However, the specific policies in 2.5.7 are entirely directed at the creation and implementation of community design plans—a limited scope and mechanisms for public input and decision-making. Under Section 5 Implementation, the only policy that addresses public consultation is the addition of notification and consultation in advance of, and in addition to, the requirements for public meetings outlined in the Planning Act. However, there are no specific requirements or policies on what constitutes advance notification and consultation.

Within the *Ottawa 2020* plans, collaborative community building is most extensively elaborated upon in the *Human Services Plan*. Subtitled “Priority on People,” the *Human Services Plan* “create[s] the ‘people’ side to planning our city’s future.”³⁹

The new Ottawa is above all a community of communities. The amalgamated City is made up of many smaller communities, each defined variously by

³⁷ ---, *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan*. 2.5.7

³⁸ See *ibid.* Section 1.6 How the Guiding Principles are Addressed in the *Official Plan*: A Caring and Inclusive City: “Community design plans will be prepared for growth areas of the city using a collaborative planning approach that directly involves residents and other stakeholders.”; A City of Distinct and Liveable Communities “Community design plans provide specific criteria for areas identified for intensification and ensure planning policies respond to the specific needs and opportunities of those communities”; A Responsible and Responsive City: “The City uses the community design plan process and collaborative planning to both empower the community and achieve the objectives of the *Official Plan* at the local level.”

³⁹ City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 2020 Human Services Plan: Priority on People*. Preface

geography, identity and common interest. Consequently, the theme of community building needs to be central to long-term planning and development.⁴⁰

Charting a Course regularly refers to “the new Ottawa” as a “city of villages.” The *Human Services Plan* picks up on this necessary acknowledgement of the distinct identities of geographically defined communities within the now amalgamated urban neighbourhoods, suburbs and rural villages. Unlike the *Official Plan* that is concerned with physical development, the other *Ottawa 2020* plans were able to directly address more-than-spatial definitions, and the limitations of land-use planning. “Ottawa 20/20 called on the residents to look beyond material structures to the supports that influence the lives of its people,”⁴¹ as the following excerpt shows:

Most contemporary development plans begin with the idea of great land use design. And while this is clearly important, it is also true that effective human services are equally critical to achieving a high quality of life while moving toward sustainable growth.⁴²

The *Human Services Plan* is therefore able to introduce the concept of communities defined by “identity and common interest.”

To shift planning priorities towards people over cost-effective and efficient development, the *Human Services Plan* applies “quality of life” assessment to examine “not only the objective, but also the subjective lived experience of people.”⁴³ The *Human Services Plan* reasons that providing the material structures, facilities, community assets, and services, can build and strengthen the subjective experience of community. The *Human Services Plan* ultimately privileges the latter, noting that: “The specific purpose of a particular facility or community asset is less important than the role it plays in focusing community interaction.”⁴⁴ The *Human Services Plan* frames community interaction as collaboration, emphasizing collaboration as one of three

⁴⁰ Ibid. 15

⁴¹ Ibid. 7

⁴² Ibid. 19

⁴³ Ibid. 11 references the Quality of Life Reports by both the Ontario Social Development Council (Shookner, *The Quality of Life in Ontario Spring 1997*.) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (, *Quality of Life in Canadian Communities, Second Report*.) The latter was created in response to a 1996 study by the FCM on the impact on municipalities following changes to the funding structure of federal transfer payment and growing municipal responsibilities.

⁴⁴ City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 2020 Human Services Plan: Priority on People*. 16

“key considerations” in evaluating and planning for quality of life, along with sustainability and innovation/creativity.⁴⁵

Collaboration is expressed in three contexts throughout the plan: collaboration within a community; collaboration between communities; and collaboration between community partners and the City. The “commitment to collaborative community building” in the *Human Services Plan* “recognizes citizens are in the best position to define their own needs and priorities.”⁴⁶ This commitment also recognizes “the importance of working with social networks to strengthen the community,” and the importance of “connecting these communities to achieve community directed planning and growth.”⁴⁷ The *Human Services Plan* also recognizes the limitations of the City to implement plans and its dependence on community partners: “Many of the policies expressed in the Ottawa 20/20 plans will be implemented not by the City acting alone, but through collaboration with its community partners.”⁴⁸ The rationale offered by the *Human Services Plan* connecting quality of life, collaboration, human services and planning is somewhat tautological: Collaboration is necessary to improve quality of life, and an improved quality of life is necessary to foster collaboration. Provision of, and equitable access to community assets are necessary to build strong communities, and strong communities are necessary to planning of community assets.

Collaboration and community building continue as both goals and means through the *Human Services Plan*’s five Strategic Directions to improve quality of life in Ottawa:⁴⁹ Diversity and Inclusion; Access to the Basics; Safe and Healthy Communities; Focus on Prevention; and A Working City. Rather than distinct strategies, the rationale and policies presented under these five directions frequently overlap and interconnect. The two key issues under *Access to the Basics*, “including all citizens in community life and poverty reduction” substantially frame this strategy as an approach for fulfilling the aspirations of *Diversity and Inclusion*.⁵⁰ Similarly,

⁴⁵ Ibid. 12 “Quality of Life is the product of the interplay among social, health, economic and environmental conditions which affect human and social development.” 11

⁴⁶ Ibid. 9

⁴⁷ Ibid. 10; 15

⁴⁸ Ibid. 66

⁴⁹ Ibid. Section 2

⁵⁰ Ibid. 26

Focus on Prevention substantially supports the “complete communities” goals of “physical health, a sense of well-being, and the capacity to participate in the life of the City” set out under *Safe and Healthy Communities* by prioritizing prevention as “the most cost-effective and rewarding approach to service delivery for the City and for its residents.”⁵¹ Finally, *A Working City* proposes employment as the fundamental preventative strategy to ensure safe, healthy, accessible, and inclusive city. *A Working City* “targets employment as the surest route out of poverty and a basic condition of social inclusion,” and sets a roadmap so that “by the year 2020 Ottawa will be an Innovative City where prosperity is shared among all.”⁵²

The creation of the *Human Services Plan* is an acknowledgment of the limitations of the *Official City Plan*, operating within the parameters of the Planning Act of Ontario, to fulfill the Strategic Principles on its own. The *Human Services Plan* envisions expanding traditional planning from “from managing land use to citizen empowerment.”⁵³ Without the legislated authority of the *Official Plan*, however, the *Human Services Plan* was largely a rhetorical, aspirational document. Nonetheless, it provides critical insights into the rationale of the Strategic Principles and their more limited presence in the *Official Plan* and other supporting planning documents. The *Human Services Plan* connects the Strategic Principles through the concepts of quality of life and liveable cities and argues that these can be achieved through community empowerment, diversity and inclusion, and provision of social support.

4.4 Participatory urbanism in Ottawa, fieldwork observations (2017-2019)

Through my field work as a researcher-participant in a broad array of public consultations, organizing events, and community action, I have witnessed the continued trajectory of participatory practices in Ottawa and the accompanying progressive participatory narrative. My observations of the evident gaps between the substantive and performative inclusiveness of participation in Ottawa—both through personal experience and the histories and plans reviewed above—have prompted me to question how well characterizations of planning in Ottawa apply to different local participants and initiatives. The following reflections consider how different

⁵¹ Ibid. 39; 44

⁵² Ibid. 54

⁵³ Ibid. 7

groups perform their roles and how city officials respond to their participation. I begin with some reflections on how the City has shifted its own role with regards to and framing of public engagement in planning decisions.

The City of Ottawa continues to identify itself as a progressive city and to repeat statements that inclusion and participation are integral to municipal decision-making. Social justice, equity, and environmentalism increasingly are topics of debate surrounding policy decisions and their implementation. There are evident signs of the centrality of such concerns: in February 2018, council approved the City of Ottawa Reconciliation Action Plan; in December 2018, they approved municipal sponsorship of a Gender Equity Strategy and Women's Bureau; in April 2019, the City of Ottawa declared a climate emergency; in December 2019, the City committed to establishing an Anti-racism Secretariat, appointed the first elected Black city councillor as its liaison, and declared commitments from the city's first Black chief of police; and in January 2020, the City declared an affordable housing and homelessness emergency and crisis.

The City of Ottawa also has conferred value on and expanded its public engagement opportunities. In 2019, the City launched the Engage Ottawa online tool “that creates a space for meaningful participation with our broad and diverse community.”⁵⁴ The website notes the benefits of public engagement include: “Improving Council’s decision-making process by taking into account a greater range of perspectives, experience, and knowledge; Empowering participants to take ownership of programs and initiatives; Ensuring commitment and greater ownership of the final decision by the community.”⁵⁵ Through these opportunities for public engagement, the City: promotes accountability and openness as valuable to the planning process; recognizes special needs of diverse groups; and asserts its commitment to equity and inclusion in building a city for all.

Public consultations are announced through media outlets and, increasingly now, are the subject of media coverage. The use of technology in public consultations has, on the one hand, facilitated greater access and reached some demographics traditionally absent from public

⁵⁴ Retrieved from: <https://ottawa.ca/en/news/city-ottawa-launches-engage-ottawa-new-way-have-your-say-city-projects>

⁵⁵ Retrieved from: https://engage.ottawa.ca/why-engage?tool=quick_poll

meetings.⁵⁶ On the other hand, consultation mediated through technology has presented many problems. For instance, there is an overwhelming number of public consultations on city projects and for city approval of non-city-led projects. The public response to these consultations is similarly overwhelming. Much of the public feedback is aggregated into statistical data, trend analysis, keywords, and a couple selected representative quotes. Decisions are frequently based on these public consultation reports rather than direct consultation between decision-makers and the public. It is common for presentations to Council to report the number of people engaged in public consultation, but far less common for any details to be provided on the content of the consultation or if, and how, public consultation informed the outcome.

I have seen how well-publicized steps on social justice and the expansion of consultations have been accompanied by increased mobilization of public support and political pressure through social media campaigning. Groups may “take over” public consultations and flooding public discourse with particular demands and desired solutions. Likely further encouraged by the official declarations above and by the precedent of city support for community-led initiatives, activist groups continue to approach the city to implement meaningful action to improve living conditions, social support, and connectivity for those most impacted by settler colonialism, racism, sexism, and gender-based violence, climate change, and housing insecurity. Community groups continue to invest significant efforts into organizing and participating in formal municipal processes. They similarly aim to persuade official decision-makers of the value of their proposed initiatives; to present value-directed arguments based on data and lived experience; and to align their proposals with city policies and declarations.

It is, however, unclear how well such activism works for the most marginalized and vulnerable urban groups. Representatives of community-led activist groups in Ottawa are increasingly critical of what they see as the City’s refusal to support meaningful change, seeing recent municipal actions as simply ones of declarative support and token participation. City council and committees appear increasingly resistant to activist-led or activist-backed proposals and are increasingly hostile against and dismissive of activists who participate in formal

⁵⁶ It should be noted, that the increased reliance on technology has also created barriers for other demographics of the population.

processes.⁵⁷ Activist groups point to a variety of structural barriers, systemic oppression, and institutional racism in the political process as well as the privilege and bias of decision-makers, and political corruption.⁵⁸ Although opportunities for the public to voice opinions have increased, public confidence and trust that their voices are being heard by municipal decision-makers have decreased. Many citizens looking for community engagement are finding space for more direct action in a variety of activist organizations, community associations, not-for-profit organizations, and social enterprises. Many activist groups are also developing coalitions to demonstrate solidarity across those experiencing intersecting forms of oppression, and they are working to educate and develop allyship with more privileged community members. Some such strategies and tactics will be explored in the empirical cases in the next chapter.

Other dynamics, though rich for later research and evident in the dynamics of Ottawa's contemporary planning, do not get picked up in the case stories. The following observations inform the analysis and discussion by providing additional context through which to position M/AG engagements relative to differently positioned urban groups. For example, progressive urbanists are also advocating for alternative city planning priorities. Progressive urbanism advocacy groups push the city on issues such as density, bike infrastructure, public transportation, exclusionary zoning, local business supports, design excellence, and revitalized public places. They position these issues as innovative game changers for positive environmental, social, health, and economic local impacts to challenge the dominant status quo of contemporary North American cities including issues of car dependency, urban sprawl, and globalization. Progressive urbanists regularly back these claims with popular urbanism concepts such as creative cities, 8-80, cities for people, 15-minute cities, and new urbanism.

Progressive urbanism advocacy groups regularly organize through social and traditional media, neighbourhood community associations, and local interest groups and organizations. Campaigns for specific projects are not always successful or fully implemented to the

⁵⁷ Official reports and city officials have publicly accused activist groups of spreading misinformation and using tactics to overthrow democratic participation. Public delegations and public survey results have been dismissed as non-representative of public interest but of an organized "vocal minority."

⁵⁸ See for example: Horizon Ottawa, *Follow the Money: Developer donations and campaign finance reform in the City of Ottawa*.; Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership and City for All Women Initiative, *Addressing anti-black racism in Ottawa: Forum summary report*.; Herongate Tenant Coalition, *Systemic racism and inequality in Herongate*.

satisfaction of the urbanist group. Relations between these urbanism advocates and the City are often antagonistic. The City, nonetheless, does regularly implement changes to accommodate and incorporate urbanist improvements in municipal infrastructure projects and plans.⁵⁹

Although these progressive urbanist initiatives are alternatives to the existing urban condition, they are increasingly mainstream and popular. They tend to support a desirable urban lifestyle and liveability associated with the largely young, professional, middle-class urbanites who are also the predominant demographic of those participating in this form of progressive participatory city-building.⁶⁰

As the City increasingly commits to improving urban liveability and the regeneration of the urban core to respond to the interests of progressive urbanists, Business Improvement Areas (BIA) and developers are also deploying urbanism concepts and rhetoric. These private business interests frame their projects as contributing to the renaissance, rejuvenation, and evolution of urban living. They promote their innovative world-class design as needed investment in traditional core neighbourhoods to make them more attractive and to support economic growth. BIAs and developers position these urban core projects as socially progressive and in line with City priorities of improved liveability, affordability, sustainability, and reconciliation. They strategically apply this rhetoric to marketing campaigns to attract potential buyers and investors, to public relation campaigns to minimize the potential of public opposition, and to planning rationales submitted to the City for site plan approvals. The City has been receptive to progressive developers and development proposals despite the contestation by community-led activist groups that the progressive claims are often unsubstantiated, tokenistic, and divisive.⁶¹

⁵⁹ For example, the draft New Official Plan released for public feedback in fall 2020 incorporates the “15-minute neighbourhood” to improve pedestrian and cycling networks as one of the seven city-wide policies. In another example, although the exact configuration of cycling infrastructure or proportion of road use to be reassigned to pedestrian space is still contentious, both feature significantly in the ByWard Market Public Realm Plan approved in January 2021. City of Ottawa, *Ottawa Official Plan*. The Planning Partnership et al., *ByWard Market Public Realm Plan Recommendations Report*.

⁶⁰ Mayer, 'First world urban activism'.

⁶¹ See for example Kawatra, 'Settler colonialism a persevering injustice, the responsibility to contest it, and settler allies' use of media to disseminate a competing discourse: the case of Asinabka'; Sylvestre and Castleden, 'Asinabka in four transformation: how settler colonialism and racial capitalism sutured urbanization in Canada's capital to the plunder of Algonquin territory'.

5 STORIES OF PLACE AND PLACEMAKING IN OTTAWA: 2006-2018

The narrative reconstructions in this chapter present public histories of contemporary places and placemaking initiatives in Ottawa, Ontario through three case stories: Punk venues (5.1); Charlie Park (5.2); and Le/The Village (5.3). The narrative of each case study is reconstructed in two parts: a descriptive account of the spatial-material presence of place; and a plotted story of the placemaking process.

5.1 Punk and/or safe space



Figure 5.1 Local music venues Mavericks & Café Dekcuf on Rideau Street. Photo by Sarah Gelbard, April 19, 2020.

5.1.1 Punk venues in the urban core

It is usually a nondescript door; one you might pass by every day without notice. Unlike the surrounding storefronts and restaurants with their inviting window displays that advertise their wares, services, and ambiance, these windows, if there are any, are likely blacked-out. To many passersby it may appear to be vacant because it is rarely if ever open during regular business hours. But wander by after 9pm on most Friday or Saturday nights, and the occasional Wednesday, Thursday, or Sunday night, and you might have to push your way through the gathering of people on the sidewalk, likely all dressed in black and smoking. Look carefully and

you might notice an A-frame or show poster with the name of a band few people would recognize. Just inside the door, someone sits at a podium or a rickety table with a small metal box and \$10 scribbled in sharpie on a scrap piece of paper, and maybe a jar of earplugs. Inside, the room is dimly lit. It is loud. It smells like stale beer. The stage and the bar are the two dominant features. As the band starts to play, the crowd converges in front of the stage. Nearest the stage, a few people start to dance marching in circles, pumping their fists in the air, banging their heads, and bumping into others in “the pit.” As the pit starts to form, most of the audience take a few steps back, defining the boundaries of the pit. Between sets, the crowd splits-off to get another drink at the bar, to go smoke and get some air outside, or stumble to the bathroom.

Even in a relatively large city like Ottawa there does not seem to be enough demand from the punk scene for music venues or bars to be exclusively punk. Many venues also host other bands, mostly local and alternative, comedy shows, burlesque shows—basically any other use that calls for an open floor, stage, decent sound system, and attracts an audience who pay cover charge and preferably consume alcohol to supplement entry fee income. The larger venues do attract the occasional touring band, but Ottawa has always struggled to attract the big-name bands that are unlikely to stop between their shows in Toronto and Montreal. Few venues can accommodate more than a hundred people. Few shows are attended by more than fifty. In addition to more established and dedicated music venues and bars, there is an ever-changing network of small local businesses that are happy to fill their space on off hours or their separate event rooms as makeshift venues. Shows bring the possibility of new customers to their business, generating a bit of additional revenue from drink sales, and often are perceived as a good way to “give back” to the community. As venues, many of these local businesses come and go. Sometimes the business shuts down. Sometimes the noise complaints are too burdensome for the small business. Sometimes their experiment with live music works out and they move on to more popular bands and more mainstream genres.

There are, however, a few key venues for the punk scene in Ottawa. The Dominion Tavern is a dive bar established in 1996 in the ByWard Market on York Street and is affectionately known as “the Dom”. The Dom is likely the closest Ottawa has to a punk bar. It only hosts a few shows per month and rarely anything beyond local hardcore punk or metal bands. Zaphod Beeblebrox, another favoured punk venue in the Market next to the Dom, closed

in 2017 after nearly twenty-five years. After a failed attempt to continue under new ownership in 2016, it shut down for renovations and reopened as the much more mainstream 27 Club. Though 27 Club has shifted more towards DJ nights and dance parties, they have hosted a few major touring punk bands. BareFax Gentlemen's Club sits directly above the Dom and 27 Club. This cluster of "edgy" or "seedy" businesses is an unexpected, or at least an anachronistic, presence on the street. York Street has long been a night-time entertainment district—Ottawa's oldest tavern Chateau Lafayette is across the street. Today, however, York Street is more closely associated with its largely restored picture-perfect Edwardian buildings, the view of the Parliament Buildings beyond the York Street steps, and its function as the home of the Ottawa sign—where tourists pose for the quintessential Instagram photo since the sesquicentennial celebrations in 2017. Adjacent to the Dom and 27 Club are the trendy sushi bar Kinki Lounge, the upscale steakhouse Luxe to one side, and the popular first date cake café Oh So Good Desserts, Masala giftshop, and York Street Spa to the other.

On the edges of the ByWard Market, on Rideau Street a few blocks East of the Rideau Centre Shopping Mall, are two more landmark music venues that have contributed to the local punk scene, Mavericks and Café Dekcuf (Figure 5.1). Mavericks is a medium capacity venue on the street level and Dekcuf is a more intimate venue on the second floor. Though not exclusively punk venues, they both regularly host touring and local punk bands. Both share the century brick building, part of the vanishing traditional mainstreet vernacular. The surrounding streetscape is marked by the erasures and interventions of various generations of urban planning policies aimed to renew, modernize, and revitalize the urban core. Next door is a 1970s glass and steel office tower. Across the street are a pair of condo towers on the site of a former record store and various past music venues, that before them were the Convent of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and Rideau Convent Chapel (demolished in 1972). Construction of a mixed-use condo development is currently underway on the other side of Mavericks, which closed in 2019, shortly after the redevelopment was announced. Mavericks reopened under new management in 2020 and again after being closed through the Covid-19 pandemic, reformatting to feature tribute cover band acts and move away from original local music performances. With the revitalization of Rideau Street into the Arts, Fashion, and Theatre District, the local Downtown Rideau BIA has embraced the opportunity to market the area with banners that read "where culture lives/où vibre la culture (Figure 5.2)." Investment in and promotion of a vibrant Music City identity is

central to the *Ottawa Music Strategy* and cultural planning for the district. The revitalization of cultural venues that form part of the heritage of Rideau Street and the ByWard Market is framed as a catalyst for social, economic, and cultural development.



Figure 5.2 'Where culture lives' banner at Rideau Street and Nicholas Street, part of the Arts, Fashion, and Theatre Precinct. Photo by Sarah Gelbard, April 7, 2021.

Some venues manage to adapt with neighbourhood change, such as House of Targ on Bank Street in Old Ottawa South between the Rideau Canal and Rideau River. Targ originated as an underground informal venue, recording studio, and hangout in Old Ottawa East. In 2014, as conflicts with new condo developments across the road over noise and loitering complaints, and financial pressure due to rising property values in the area, Targ moved into a basement bar on Sunnyside and Bank Streets. They re-opened as a licensed pinball and pierogi bar. As you descend the stairs, you immediately notice the flashing-coloured lights and the electronic soundtracks from the pinball machines lining the side walls. The smell of stale beer, fried onions, and bacon in the air. On the weekends it is a popular place for family brunch. After 8pm, Targ flips formats from family-friendly arcade to a bar and music venue. Despite its origins as an

underground punk venue, it is never overly packed when punk bands are on the bill. By far, the crowds show up for Sunday brunch, or synth/DJ/cover nights. The history of punk spaces in the city has always been precarious and subject to changing cultural values and property values. The shifting landscape of the Ottawa punk scene and venues is part of its story.

5.1.2 Securing alternative cultural spaces

As introduced in Chapter 4, one of the seven Guiding Principles of *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan* is for Ottawa to be “a creative city rich in heritage, unique in identity.”¹ The Official Plan recognizes that being a capital city “brings us tourists, gives us the national cultural perspective and a window to the world;” that “local arts and heritage give us community vitality, a path to creativity and innovation, and a sense of who we are;” and that “culture is present in every community through libraries, local museums and archives, the preservation of our heritage buildings, opportunities for artistic expression, and places that present and connect local arts to people.”² As a guiding principle, “a creative city rich in heritage” places the *Official Plan* in direct conversation with the *Arts and Heritage Plan*, one of the other four 2020 GMS Plans. The *Arts and Heritage Plan* acknowledges this shift in city perspective on arts and heritage to integrate it as part of a city’s planning process, noting that: “cities are now driving local cultural development through a cultural planning process.”³

The *Renewed Action Plan for Arts, Heritage, and Culture* (RAPAHC) released in 2012 makes explicit reference to creative cities, creative place-making, and culture as the strategic link between economic development and liveability. It notes that “Ottawa is ripe with enormous cultural potential and opportunities.”⁴ The RAPAHC recommended strategies and actions direct the City to celebrate, develop, promote, and invest in Ottawa’s “unique cultural identity” and “creative places and spaces.”⁵ Placemaking enters the City’s cultural policy as a specific approach for linking cultural economic opportunity with place-based development:

¹ City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan*. 3

² Ibid.

³ City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 2020 Arts and Heritage Plan*. 11

⁴ ---, *A Renewed Action Plan for Arts, Heritage and Culture in Ottawa (2013-2018)*. 6

⁵ Ibid. 15-24

Place-making makes good economic sense, and smart cities develop communities in which people want to live, work and play. Creative talent chooses to live in places that are authentic and creative; businesses locate to places in which their employees have access to a rich menu of cultural opportunity; and tourists seek out unique cultural experiences.⁶

The plan offers the rationale that these cultural strategies not only “build access to culture for all,” they will generate the economic and social returns that are “key to Ottawa’s prosperity.” Noting the unique diverse cultural identity of Ottawa, the RAPAHC highlights the opportunity of recognizing and celebrating Ottawa’s cultural assets: “Access to cultural opportunities and cultural participation for the full diversity of Ottawa residents will encourage social cohesion, civic engagement and safer, healthier neighbourhoods.”⁷ Here, cultural assets include not only diverse cultural spaces that can be marketed but also a diverse creative class who can contribute to revitalizing those spaces: “Young, new, distinct, emerging and re-emerging cultural voices are vital. They balance, challenge and complement established expression, often ushering in rebirth and revival.”⁸

The cultural heritage of Ottawa music spaces, however, was increasingly a site for controversies about diversity and inclusion. In January 2016, Babely Shades, a queer and trans people of colour artist collective, released an online petition to pressure a local promoter to cancel the punk band the Queers from performing a show at Mavericks. Babely Shades argued that the band’s name reinforced homophobia in the punk scene and that a recent Facebook post by the band’s vocalist Joe Queer promoted racist attitudes. The local promoter cancelled the show. With support from queer and racially diverse members of the local punk scene including a member of the local opening band, the show was soon rebooked as a fundraiser for a local LGBTQ youth group.⁹ The group of friends, artists, and musicians originally formed the Babely Shades collective as a discussion group to advocate for greater diversity and inclusion in the Ottawa music scene. They first came to public attention in the Spring of 2015 when they

⁶ Ibid. 17

⁷ Ibid. 15

⁸ Ibid. 15

⁹ Saxberg, *Update: Queers concert, which had been cancelled amid controversy, is back on.; ---, For Shootin' Blanx, the Queers show must go on.*

requested that another punk venue, House of Targ, cancel a show featuring touring band Black Pussy from Portland. After an initial backlash from the venue (which promptly issued an apology), supporters of the newly opened venue, online fans of the band, Babely Shades, and their supporters organized a social media campaign and called for a boycott of House of Targ.

Though Babely Shades initiated the local public discourse and action against these bands playing in Ottawa, both the Queers and Black Pussy were targets of much larger international social justice and social media campaigns. Babely Shades were perhaps the most prominent group, along with Hollaback Ottawa, to initiate the safe space movement in Ottawa.¹⁰ By the Fall of 2017, when the #metoo hashtag went viral, bringing the discussion of safe space and callout culture to mainstream attention, Ottawa's alternative music scene was already deeply divided and struggling with how to move forward. With #metoo, the momentum grew as prominent figures in the local music scene were named, perhaps most notably the creative director of the popular Indie grassroots music festival Arboretum.¹¹ To a lesser extent, #metoo also impacted other local cultural sectors, such as chefs and restaurateurs.¹² Local culture and businesses were increasingly called out on social media for instances and incidents of harassment, sexism, racism, homophobia, and ableism.

Within less than a year of the Babely Shades callout of the punk scene for perpetuating unsafe and unequal music spaces in Ottawa, the fledgling Megaphono, "Ottawa's music industry conference,"¹³ focused its second edition on promoting Ottawa as being at the forefront of working through safe(r) space and inclusion. The Safer Space statement on the Megaphono website reads:

Attendees, performers, and event and venue staff are expected to act with respect for equity and inclusiveness, including but not limited to a zero tolerance for racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and ableism. The MEGAPHONO safer

¹⁰ Local Ottawa chapter of *Hollaback!* "a movement dedicated to ending street harassment using mobile technology." Retrieved from <https://ottawa.ihollaback.org/about/>

¹¹ Slingerland, *The Acorn's Rolf Klausener Targeted with #MeToo Poster Campaign*.

¹² Hum et al., *Harassment casts pall over local restaurants; Worker tells of being targeted by top chef Matthew Carmichael*.

¹³ "MEGAPHONO welcomes music industry professionals from the US, Canada and abroad for a festival celebrating emerging artists, with a focus on artists from the National Capital Region." Retrieved from: <http://megaphono.ca/about>

space policy is intended to make this event a supportive, nonthreatening environment [...] This policy is instated in recognition and rejection of broad systems of oppression- such as patriarchy, white supremacy, capitalism, homophobia, transphobia and colonialism.¹⁴

Megaphono included both a “Making Safer Spaces” panel and a keynote address by Jessica Hopper, author of *First Collection of Criticism by a Living Female Rock Critic*. In an interview with Lynn Saxberg of the Ottawa Citizen, Hopper offers “advice for cities working to bolster their music scenes in hopes of generating economic activity: Don’t alienate women, people of colour, teenagers and the queer community.”¹⁵ Many festivals, venues, and promoters—especially in the Indie and DIY music scenes quickly began to include “safe(r) space” statements and policies, and to work towards greater diverse representation in the bands being booked.

In addition to diverse representation, the safe(r) space discourse in the Ottawa music and festival scene has revolved around preventing sexual violence. The publication of an Ottawa-based study published in 2015 on *Characteristics associated with sexual assaults at mass gatherings*¹⁶ provided evidence-based safety concerns about music venues and festivals in Ottawa, and the call for action from the City and from within the music community. Project SoundCheck, founded by the Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women, offers “safe space” workshops. Also tied to Babely Shades members, Project SoundCheck is supported and funded through Crime Prevention Ottawa, a city-funded municipal board with the mission “To contribute to crime reduction and enhanced community safety in Ottawa through collaborative evidence-based crime prevention.”¹⁷ Many festivals and venues now offer Project SoundCheck Bystander Training to employees and volunteers. Project SoundCheck also produces safe space reports and resources. The Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival, for example, includes the Ending Sexual Violence at Mass Gatherings brochure produced by Project SoundCheck in their safer space resource package.

¹⁴ Retrieved from: <http://megaphono.ca/safer-spaces>

¹⁵ Saxberg, *Megaphono: A successful music scene includes everyone*, Jessica Hopper says.

¹⁶ Sampsel et al., 'Characteristics associated with sexual assaults at mass gatherings'.

¹⁷ Retrieved from: <https://www.crimepreventionottawa.ca/en/who-we-are/terms-of-reference>

Grassroots activism around reforming and improving the public spaces and public image of the broader music scene in Ottawa aligned with increasingly formalized community interest groups, strategies, policies, and industry partnerships with the City. The Music Industries Working Group formed in 2013 under the Cultural Development and Initiatives Department.¹⁸ In 2015, the group released the report *Connecting Ottawa Music: A profile of Ottawa's music industries*. The purpose of the report was to “identify the strengths and weaknesses of, and opportunities for, the local music industries,” and “provide recommendations to support the growth of Ottawa’s music industries.”¹⁹ The report concluded:

Ottawa has the potential to be a music city and one of Canada’s most important music hubs. It has a rich music history. [...] But Ottawa is missing infrastructure and knowledge to help it connect and develop its considerable music assets. The result is that Ottawa is failing to realize its potential as a music city and missing out on significant cultural and economic benefits in the process.²⁰

Following the recommendations of the *Connecting Ottawa Music* report, the Ottawa Music Industry Coalition (OMIC) was established to “work to grow the local music industry for the benefit of our members and the city as a whole.”²¹ OMIC incorporated in Fall 2015 as a member-based, not-for-profit organization. One of their first tasks was to assemble a task force of “local industry leaders,” facilitate consultations, and draft a strategy. In 2017, the 15-member Music Strategy Task Force met to create a vision for Ottawa as a music city. During the JUNO Music Awards hosted by the City of Ottawa in 2017, the mayor announced plans for the creation of an *Ottawa Music Strategy* (OMS) in partnership with OMIC.

The purpose of the OMS is “to develop a roadmap for how Ottawa can build on strengths and address challenges in a way that unleashes the potential of music to bring out the best in our community.”²² The OMS builds on other Music Cities reports to outline essential elements, key benefits, and strategies (Music Canada, 2015). Citing *The Mastering of a Music City* released by the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry and Music Canada, the OMS argues

¹⁸ City of Ottawa, *A Renewed Action Plan for Arts, Heritage and Culture in Ottawa (2013-2018)*.

¹⁹ Vincent and Swain, *Connecting Ottawa Music: A profile of Ottawa's music industries*. 5

²⁰ Ibid. 4

²¹ Retrieved from: <https://ottawamic.com/new-page-54>

²² City of Ottawa and Ottawa Music Industry Coalition, *Ottawa Music Strategy*. 3

that Music Cities create a sense of identity and strengthen the social fabric, as well as contribute to economic development through tourism, branding, and industry growth.²³ The OMS sets a vision for Ottawa as a Music City by the year 2030 by following eleven strategic goals and five guiding principles. Of particular interest are the following two goals:

Music is an undeniable part of the Ottawa brand: Our city is recognized across Canada and around the world as a hotbed for new music talent, as an exciting place to make a career in music, as a premiere destination for live music, and as a place where music is a key driver for city building

Ottawa is respected as the most inclusive music city in the world: Barriers have been removed to ensure equal opportunities for women, Indigenous peoples, new Canadians, people with disabilities, Francophones as well as racialized, queer, trans, and other previously marginalized communities.²⁴

The OMS guiding principles link cultural identity with inclusive participation and economic growth through the process of becoming a music city. Celebrating uniqueness and diversity, encouraging participation by breaking down barriers, and fostering collaborations are presented as key mechanisms for the production of a unique music identity for the city that “stands out on the global stage” and capitalizes on “music’s value as an economic engine and catalyst for growth.”²⁵

In support of music as part of the Ottawa brand, OMS recommends that the City “promote a music-friendly regulatory environment”²⁶ by establishing relationships for consultation and collaboration between City service departments and music industry and by “exploring opportunities to support music venues in a planning policy context.” In a related recommendation, OMS proposes that the City “integrate music into economic development and

²³ IFPI and Music Canada, *The Mastering of a Music City: Key elements, effective strategies, and why it's worth pursuing*.

²⁴ City of Ottawa and Ottawa Music Industry Coalition, *Ottawa Music Strategy*. 9. The remaining nine goals are: Music is an undeniable part of the Ottawa brand; Ottawa residents recognize and celebrate the value of music; Music is a great way to make a living; Music education is a part of everyday life; Ottawa is respected as the most inclusive music city in the world; Diverse media outlets work together to nurture Ottawa’s brand as a music city; Local music is a go-to resource for the business community; Ottawa’s capital city status is a difference maker; The City helps lead the way.

²⁵ Ibid. 10

²⁶ Ibid. Recommendation P1.R3, 13

tourism strategies,” arguing that “music scenes provide the type of authentic place-based experiences sought after by new generations of tourists.”²⁷ Meanwhile, in support of the lofty goal of becoming the “most inclusive music city in the world,” OMS focuses its attention specifically on safety with its recommendation to “promote safer music spaces.” The report suggests this be achieved through sexual assault training and venue certification, and that these should be developed “in consultation with subject matter experts such as Crime Prevention Ottawa, Project SoundCheck and OMIC.” From the music industry side, OMS only offers a vague recommendation that “OMIC should develop a long-term strategy to break down barriers for underrepresented communities.”²⁸ Developed in partnership with OMIC and stakeholder consultation, the OMS is an example of the City’s shift in its approach to cultural planning towards strategic partnerships and public engagement. Diverse representation and inclusive participation are repeatedly presented in city policies as connecting cultural assets with strategic opportunity.



Figure 5.3 Rideau Street reconstruction, looking east from William Street. The new Rideau Centre entrance and restored Ogilvie Department Store façade on the right. The new light rail transit station entrance in new Scotiabank building on the left. Photo by Sarah Gelbard, April 4, 2021.

²⁷ Ibid. Recommendation P1.R4, 14

²⁸ Ibid. Recommendation P1.R3, 17

As part of plans for the development of a Retail, Arts & Theatre Precinct, the Rideau Street Renewal project included major road reconstruction and beautification, beginning with the section from Dalhousie to Cummings Bridge completed from 2012-2015, and followed by Sussex to Dalhousie completed from 2016-2020 (Figure 5.3). The rebranding of the area as the Rideau Arts Precinct also coincides with three major developments. First was the expansion and renewal of the Rideau Shopping Centre, completed in 2016. Second was the expansion of the Ottawa Art Gallery at Arts Court, reopened in 2018. Third was Ottawa's new Light Rail Transit Confederation Line, opened in 2019, including a station on Rideau Street with an access point to the Rideau Centre. Although City plans and cultural policies celebrate how existing cultural venues add diversity to the precinct, the pressure placed on punk venues by surrounding development suggests that not all venues are to be recognized by the city as legitimate or desirable forms of diversity or culture. For those in the punk scene, myself included, the callouts challenged us to consider if punk in Ottawa was living up to our anti-normative and anti-oppressive ethos. At the same time, we felt the public response renewed common public mischaracterizations of punk as unsafe and non-inclusive that have long contributed to depoliticizing punk spaces and legacies of radical difference, and to the precarity of punk space in the city.

5.2 A skate in the park



Figure 5.4 Neighbourhood kids at Charlie Bowins Skateboard Park just after opening. Photo by Sarah Gelbard, July 5, 2015.

5.2.1 Charlie Bowins Skatepark

On most afternoons, except during winter months, the distinct sound of skateboard wheels spinning on concrete fills the street, muffled through the large century trees that line the Gladstone Avenue length of McNabb Park. On July 4, 2015 the skatepark at McNabb was officially opened and dedicated to the memory of Charlie Bowins, a member of the Ottawa skate community who was involved in the community action and fundraising to bring the first outdoor skatepark to the city core (Figure 5.4). The Charlie Bowins Skatepark, affectionately referred to as Charlie Park, sits on the western edge of McNabb Park on the former site of the Central Lawn Bowling Club.²⁹ The custom-designed, poured-in-place concrete skatepark, designed by New Line Skateparks, includes ledges, quarter pipes, flat banks, rails, hips, and manual pads—features

²⁹ Egan, *Darren Fleming's Clean Sweep: One man's fight to clean up his neighbourhood*.

used in performing various skateboarding tricks. A winding pathway through the park separates the footprint of the skatepark from the other functions of the park that include: a grassy field; a community ice rink in the winter and miniature soccer field in the summer; a playground and splash pad; a community garden; and an enclosed dog park. Concrete landscaping planters are incorporated into the outer edges of the skatepark, softening the visual continuity with the rest of the park and providing some sound barriers. As Ottawa's first outdoor urban skatepark, and one of only four of the City facilities designed and built by a professional skatepark company, Charlie Park is distinct from the suburban and indoor skateparks around the city.

As a relatively small district facility skateboard park of thirteen-thousand square feet, serving a large catchment area of over one-hundred thousand residents, Charlie Park is one of the most popular and most crowded in the city.³⁰ Given its location in Ottawa's most densely populated neighbourhood, Centretown, on the edge of neighbouring West Centretown and the Glebe, most of the park users arrive by foot, on bike, or on skateboard. Charlie Park has also become an attraction for tourists and business travellers staying in the downtown core, and a destination for skateboarder from across the city, the region, and the country. It is frequently featured in skateboard travel blog reviews. Ottawa's other two district facilities, Legacy and Innovation Skateboard Parks in the west-end suburbs of Nepean and Kanata, are both located next to and rely upon large parking lots and Ottawa's rapid-bus Transitway system stations. These parks are separated from the street, passing traffic, and what few pedestrian passersby there may be. Conversely, Charlie Park places the skateboard park and skateboarders on public display along the important north-south arterial Bronson Street edge of McNabb.

The design of Charlie Park is described by an online Canadian skatepark directory as: "A beginner park with intermediate features. All skill levels will find something to ride here."³¹ Early in the mornings, a somewhat older crew stop by the park to skate for a bit on their way to work. Some have been skateboarding since they were kids, but it is not uncommon to come across someone just learning to skate in their 30s or 40s. On weekends they might try to arrive before the park starts to fill with parents who have come to supervise and encourage their young children who are learning to skate. There is the expected afterschool crowd of teenagers.

³⁰ City of Ottawa, *Open Ottawa, Skateboard Parks*.

³¹ Retrieved from <https://skateparktour.ca/skateparks/charlie-bowins-skatepark-ottawa-on/>

Thursday nights are Girls+ Skate 613 when the skatepark is informally reserved for women only. Girls+ Skate 613 also runs a summer camp with the City to build “community, diversity and inclusion by providing a safe space for individuals of all ages, abilities and genders to skateboard in a comfortable, encouraging environment.”³² Bicycles and scooters are discouraged but can frequently be seen in the park. Without formal schedules and only a few informal rules, everyone tries to make space for each other and the different needs and users of the skateboard area. There has been a notable increase in the number of users of McNabb Park since the introduction of the skateboard park and a seeming increase in the diversity of parkgoers.

Despite a general disposition to share the space with each other, there are still occasional tensions with other parkgoers and neighbours, and ongoing attempts by the skate community to demonstrate their fit with the park and the broader neighbourhood. Charlie Park is, notably, free of graffiti, colour, or painted artwork. Graffiti and street art are usually associated with the visual character of skateparks. At Legacy Skateboard Park, for example, brightly coloured tags and murals cover not only the concrete and wooden features but also most available surrounding walls and surfaces. Any graffiti that appears at Charlie Park is quickly removed either by the City or, often, by members of the Ottawa Skateboard Association (OSA), who have actively promoted the park as a “graffiti free place”.³³ OSA also organizes a cleanup day every spring. OSA stated aims are to set an example to encourage everyone to be respectful and keep the park free of garbage. By and large, the surrounding community members recognize the skateboard park as fostering community interactions, both among skateboarders and between them and other users of the park. While such efforts as keeping the park free from graffiti and garbage aim to create visual continuity and social integration between the skatepark and the rest of McNabb, other design and visual elements serve to separate different uses and users.

The pathway that separates the skateboard park from the rest of McNabb opens onto a new entrance to the park on Bronson Avenue, marked by the sculptural black steel gateway *Sit for a While, In the Garden, and Watch the Parade* by Ottawa artist Tim desClouds (Figure 5.5).

³² In July 2016, Girls+ Skate 613 received the Mayor’s City Builder Award in recognition of “outstanding volunteerism or exemplary action, demonstrate[ing] an extraordinary commitment to making our city a better place today and for the future.” Retrieved from <https://jimwatsonottawa.ca/en/girls-skate-613-receives-mayors-city-builder-award/>

³³ Cole, *Citizens of Centretown: Impact a year after the opening of Charlie Bowins Skate Park*.

This artwork was commissioned through an open competition by Ottawa Public Art as part of the budget for capital expenditures for the renewal of Bronson Avenue, with support from the McNabb Park Redevelopment Program. Though the artwork was installed after the construction of the skateboard park, the commission was awarded in 2012 prior to any plans for the skateboard park and therefore makes no visual reference to the skateboard park or skateboarding.³⁴ The concept of sitting in a garden and watching a parade is in direct contrast to the active movements of the skateboarders, rolling across a concrete slab—unless of course they are the parade being watched. The plaque on the artwork describes how “[b]y integrating art and functional design—in this case fencing, seating and a gate—the artist creates gathering spaces for the purpose of fostering community interactions.” The gate is a gathering space but also a delineation between the park and the street, and between different users of the park.



Figure 5.5 McNabb Park Bronson Street gate ‘Sit for a While, In the Garden, and Watch the Parade’ by Tim desClouds. Photo by Sarah Gelbard, July 5, 2015.

³⁴ Akben-Marchand, *New Bronson Avenue public art unveiled---*.

In 2015, the City of Ottawa amended the Parks and Facilities By-law to prohibit smoking in public parks.³⁵ Perhaps ironically, this relocation of smokers from inside the park to the street has made the desClouds artwork the ideal place to *Sit for a While*, [outside] *the Garden*, [...] and have a cigarette. Many skateboarders feel that Charlie Park has come at a cost of restrictions being placed on skating outside the boundaries of designated skateboard parks. The City has implemented measures that restrict street skating in urban areas. The city, as the skaters note, is installing anti-skate guards on public fixtures, benches, ledges, and other surfaces to prevent skateboarders from using them to perform tricks. They also observe that the City has increased its enforcement of the city by-law against skateboarding on roadways, sidewalks,³⁶ or in parks outside of designated areas,³⁷ times of day³⁸ and times of year.³⁹ The enthusiasm of the skateboard community for Charlie Park, and their gratitude for the City facility, has been tempered by these increased prohibitions against street skating.

5.2.2 Overthrowing McNabb

An internal memo was distributed from the planning department in 2012 revealing a significant reserve budget from the Parkland Levy Program (i.e., cash-in-lieu of parkland). In Somerset Ward, 2.86 million dollars had been collected through the program intended for the expansion or acquisition of new parkland to serve the increase in demand from new development. Half the reserve was already directed to planned renovations in the ward at Primrose, Chaudière, and Jack Purcell Parks—only one of which is located in Centretown. Most of the developments paying into the program were in Centretown, where the cost and availability of potential parkland were prohibitive for the developers. Consequently, the City also struggled to find appropriate land on which to spend the levy. In an interview with Centretown News, Somerset Ward Councillor Diane Holmes, acknowledged the need to prioritize parkland in Centretown: “We have the least

³⁵ City of Ottawa, *Parks and Facilities By-law*, By-law No. 2004-276. Parks and facilities by-law City of Ottawa. Interestingly included as a subsection to section 12 “No person shall engage in any activity so as to interfere with or become a nuisance to the general public using the park.” The same prohibition came into effect under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act passed in 2018.

³⁶ ---, *By-law no. 2017-301: A by-law of the City of Ottawa regulating traffic and parking on highways*.

³⁷ ---, *Parks and Facilities By-law*, By-law No. 2004-276. section 5.1 and 6.2

³⁸ Ibid. section 3.1

³⁹ Use of a sports field, that includes skatepark, in municipal parks is prohibited between the 1st day of November and the 14th day of May. (ibid. section 5.2b)

amount of green spaces than any other ward. We certainly are short of children's playgrounds, so if we want to bring families downtown, we have to improve the quality and the number of our children's playgrounds.”⁴⁰ Holmes anticipated that most of the remaining Parkland Levy funds would be directed to planned upgrades at McNabb Park.⁴¹

McNabb Park is identified for “repair and upgrade” in the *Centretown Community Design Plan* and the subsequent *Centretown Secondary Plan* amendment to the *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan*.⁴² At the time of the McNabb Park proposal, planning in Centretown was still officially guided by the *Centretown Neighbourhood Study* from 1976; the *Centretown Community Design Plan* and *Official Plan* amendment were not approved until May 2013. The 1976 study prioritized addressing the deficiency of public open spaces with the creation of “miniature” and “street” parks, however, McNabb is also identified as a key opportunity for expanding “recreational and community health facilities.”⁴³ In addition to general rehabilitation and renovations, the redevelopment plan included the expansion of the park into the former Central Lawn Bowling Club, which had occupied the south-west corner of the block since the 1920s and closed in the early 2000s.⁴⁴ By March 2013, a preliminary concept plans for the redevelopment of McNabb Park was released and the first public meeting to review the plans was scheduled. The plan included a fenced-in dog park, community garden, play equipment upgrades, mini soccer field, and an outdoor skateboard park.

In conjunction with the public meeting, the Ottawa Skateboard Community Association (OSCA) organized *Operation Overthrow McNabb*. The “operation” was a rally of a hundred skateboarders at the local skateboard shop Antique on Flora Street. They then marched to the public meeting at McNabb Community Centre. Despite the allusion to forceful protest, OSCA

⁴⁰ As quoted in Beaulne-Stuebing, *Centretown parks to get \$3M in upgrades*.

⁴¹ Spalding, *Downtown needs more parks: Holmes; Councillor, citizens' group demand more green space.; Reevely, Ottawa's cash-for-parks fund overflowing; City can't spend developers' fees fast enough---*.

⁴² Amendment #117, 8 May 2013. Schedule H3 – Greening Centretown

⁴³ Ottawa Planning Branch, *The Centretown Neighbourhood Study*. 2.11.19

⁴⁴ Councillor Holmes' Neighbourhood Issues and Meeting Newsletter. 18 March 2013.

explicitly guided its rally invitees to use the event as an opportunity to demonstrate the initiative of local youth and their desire to be active participants in their community.⁴⁵

OSCA formed in 2011 to organize a response from local skateboarders regarding plans for the relocation of a skateboard park in the south-end Ottawa suburb of Barrhaven. Through their interactions with the City, OSCA expanded their mandate and began to campaign for more and better skateboard facilities across the city. The group undertook a survey of the distribution, use, and condition of the existing skateboard parks in Ottawa. The construction of a district skateboard park in the urban core quickly became OSCA's priority and chief objective.

Prior to *Operation Overthrow McNabb*, OSCA had already laid much of the groundwork needed to defend their support for a skateboard park at McNabb. In November 2012, the City approved the *Interim Strategy for Skateboard and BMX Parks*⁴⁶ submitted by the Community and Protective Services Committee and prepared in consultation with OSCA. The report prioritizes finding suitable opportunities for the development of a district skateboard park in the Central core, South end, and East end of Ottawa. The report also recommends “[d]esigning the layout and components of new skateboard parks in consultation with the Ottawa Skateboard Community Association, local host community associations and skateboard park users.” The funding model put forward by the report includes “strategic use of Cash in Lieu of Parkland funds.” A skateboard park at McNabb was ideally timed to leverage recommendations of the Centretown CDP, the *Interim Strategy for Skateboard and BMX Parks*, and the unspent surplus from the Parkland levy program.

In anticipation of the possible redevelopment of McNabb Park, OSCA also prepared a formal report and submitted their *Recreational Facility Proposal: McNabb Recreation Complex* to the City and to the ward councillor. The proposal makes the argument that “[t]he park is far underutilized, but has potential to become an exceptional recreational facility with the proper support and planning.”⁴⁷ Strongly relying upon a definition of parks as open spaces for recreation and leisure, rather than explicitly greenspaces, the proposal frames a skateboard park as an ideal

⁴⁵ Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/events/554813991218863/>

⁴⁶ Community and Protective Services Committee, *Skateboard and BMX parks - Interim strategy*.

⁴⁷ Ottawa Skateboard Community Association, *Recreational Facility Proposal: McNabb Recreation Complex*. 3

opportunity for the McNabb Park rehabilitation to provide “new sports and youth engagement” through “leisure, recreation and physical activity,” with “accessibility to all”. Critically, the proposal notes that the existing facilities at McNabb do not meet the current needs of the neighbourhood, because they have not adapted to a “changing culture and attitude towards urban parks.”⁴⁸ Specifically, the report argues that the old facilities and programs fail to serve or to understand youth in the neighbourhood:

[...] policy makers must make an effort to understand youth culture and the varied sub-cultures if they are to design sport development programs and policies which will be effective in empowering youth and result in positive social impacts in the community and broader society.

[...] Skateboarding and skateboard parks are a perfect fit to meet the changing youth culture in Ottawa. Sport has the potential to become a communal support site for youth in personal development. Therefore, sport managers and policy makers have to appreciate that they are involved in the processes of facilitating social and personal change.⁴⁹

Referencing several studies in youth activity, health, social habits, and development, OSCA’s proposal states that “issues with youth sport participation and physical activity”⁵⁰ are not only a public health issue, including the growing costs of obesity, but that declining participation in public space is a social issue facing the young generation. OSCA argues that parks and sport should be centres for youth development. They cite research that suggests skateboard parks are especially well positioned to serve this function because they “increase the number of available leisure choices” and “provide an important meeting place for individuals who share a common interest.”⁵¹ The proposal outlines the financial and cultural accessibility of skateboarding as compared to most team sports: “Every individual is welcome at a skateboard park. There is no way to regulate or refuse members of any particular sect of society to access a skateboard park.”⁵²

⁴⁸ Ibid. 6

⁴⁹ Ibid. 6

⁵⁰ Ibid. 4

⁵¹ Goldenberg and Shooter, 'Skateboard Park Participation: A Means-end Analysis'.

⁵² Ottawa Skateboard Community Association, *Recreational Facility Proposal: McNabb Recreation Complex*. 8

The proposal concludes with a section on “Why else is a skateboard park good for this ward?” that includes, as answers: fostering community connections and growth among Ottawa skateboarders; the “serious business” of “youth marketing” and positive spillover effects on local businesses; giving youth a safer place to skate than on the streets; and skateboard parks as tourist attractions and sporting facilities to attract international competitions and professional demonstrations.⁵³ In addition to the rare opportunity of a park expansion in Centretown thanks to the closed lawn bowling club, McNabb was a logical candidate for a skateboard park given that a hockey arena in the adjacent McNabb Community Centre was already seasonally converted into the city’s only indoor and only non-suburban skateboard facility. The makings of a community skateboarding hub were already present.

In contrast to the stereotypical perception of skateboarding as an antisocial behaviour, a waste of time, and related to drug use, the campaign by OSCA aimed to shift public perception towards the potential benefits skateboarding offers neighbourhood youth and specifically what could be gained in giving them their own space. OSCA portrayed skateboarding as a safe, productive, and community-building activity. Though both the *Recreational Facility Proposal* and *Operation Overthrow McNabb* suggest that OSCA was anticipating resistance from neighbours, and there were a few stated concerns over noise and loitering, there were no serious public objections to the proposed skateboard park. By far, neighbours were more concerned with a proposed removal of the baseball field and the proposed size and location of a fenced-in dog park.⁵⁴ The *McNabb Park Concept Redevelopment Plan*, released by the City following the March 2013 public meeting, included an area for skateboard park along Bronson Avenue.

While the City and neighbourhood agreed in principle, and OSCA was invited to consult with the City on developing the design, OSCA questioned the commitment of the City to the plan; OSCA noted that the allocated budget of \$300,000 for 13,000 sq.ft. fell significantly short of the standard recommended \$40/sq.ft.⁵⁵ The revised *McNabb Park Concept Redevelopment*

⁵³ Ibid. 8-10

⁵⁴ Underestimating the use (or desire for potential use) of the baseball diamond and the importance of the park for neighbours with dogs. “the baseball diamond behind the McNabb recreation facility today seldom has anyone using it for more than a place to walk dogs.” Ibid. 3

⁵⁵ van der Zalm + Associates, *The City of Calgary Skateboarding Amenities Strategy*.

*Plan*⁵⁶ proposed dividing the skateboard park construction into two phases. The new proposal reduced the square-footage for phase 1 to reflect the allotted budget and a reserve of land for future expansion. However, OSCA argued that dividing the design and construction of the skateboard park into two phases would seriously undermine the project. After further unsuccessful petitioning to the City, OSCA launched the *ISquareFoot* campaign in Fall 2013.



Figure 5.6 Charlie Bowins Skateboard Park under construction. Photo by Sarah Gelbard, May 2, 2015.

The *ISquareFoot* campaign sought to raise the \$200,000 in additional funds needed to build phase 2 in conjunction with phase 1. Though also seeking large sponsorship and donations, *ISquareFoot* was primarily a crowdfunding campaign. OSCA accepted online donations in the suggested amount of forty dollars representing the \$40/sq.ft. cost of building a skateboard park. The campaign piggybacked on the popular “buy local” campaign, partnering with and garnering support from local businesses through donation jars and via a series of special fundraising events at local galleries, music venues, and restaurants. Though off to a good start, receiving plenty of

⁵⁶ City of Ottawa, *McNabb Park Redevelopment*

both social and regular media attention, OSCA soon re-evaluated their fundraising goal, lowering it to \$100,000. In 2014, they submitted an application to the City of Ottawa Community Partnership Major Capital Program.⁵⁷ The campaign wrapped up in February 2015, having raised \$26,500 towards its goal. Despite falling significantly short of its fundraising goal, the demonstration of the support of nearby residents, businesses, and social enterprises was sufficiently persuasive to convince the City to contribute the outstanding amount.⁵⁸

With construction of the skateboard park underway, the skateboard community suffered a loss that would lead OSCA to rally its members for one further petition to the City of Ottawa. In March 2013, Charlie Bowins, a local professional skateboarder and instructor at the McNabb summer skateboarding camp, passed away unexpectedly in his sleep at the age of 27. Bowins had been involved in the campaign for McNabb. OSCA collected letters of support and submitted a formal nomination to the City to name the park in his honour. The new Somerset Ward Councillor Catherine McKenney brought the commemorative naming motion to council, where it passed unanimously in June. The Charlie Bowins Skateboard Park was officially opened July 4, 2015. OSCA, now renamed Ottawa Skateboard Association (OSA), continues its active involvement with the City as the primary consultant for ongoing and future skateboard park proposals. OSA founding member and owner of Antique and Birlings skate shops, Aaron Cayer, joined the City's Arts, Culture and Recreation Advisory Committee. OSA also regularly hosts fundraising events such as the annual *All Hands on Deck* silent auction of skateboard decks transformed into works of art by local artists. The money raised goes to OSA's *For Pivot Sake* program that collects and donates used equipment and offers instruction and mentorship to low-income communities.

⁵⁷ mudozine, *The genius of the crowd(funding)*.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*; see also <http://ottawaskateboard.ca/1squarefoot-wrap-party/>

5.3 Mainstreeting Le/The Village



Figure 5.7: Street sign blades for Le/The Village at the intersection of Bank Street and Somerset Street W. Photo by Sarah Gelbard, November 16, 2014.

5.3.1 Ottawa’s LGBT village on Bank

Downtown Bank Street, Ottawa’s Mainstreet, includes the six blocks of Le/The Village. These six blocks are largely integrated into and indistinguishable from the overarching landscape of Downtown Bank Street. Upon its designation in November 2011, The/Le Village was most clearly legible as cartographic delineations: Bank Street between James Street and Nepean Street, extending one block east to O’Connor Street and one block west to Kent Street (see Appendix A: maps). Six street sign blades with the words “Le/The Village” and an adapted rainbow-coloured city logo were unveiled to mark key intersections within these boundaries (Figure 5.7). Rainbow flags hang from the occasional storefront and apartment balcony; many of these flags predate designation and can similarly be found in other neighbourhoods. Five years after designation, in 2016, painted rainbow crosswalks were installed at Bank Street and Somerset Street West. Other than during Ottawa Capital Pride Festival Weekend, when the

rainbow colours come out in force, there is little to distinguish Le/The Village visually from either the pre-designated stretch of Bank Street it now occupies, or from the overall character of the larger stretch of Downtown Bank Street managed by the Bank Street Business Improvement Area (BIA). The inclusion of residential area on either side of the mainstreet contribute to reading the area as a village-type in identity, rather than a themed-street, but the visibility of any LGBT identity is even less present in the designated areas beyond Bank Street proper.

Unlike the nearby Chinatown or Little Italy that are marked by arched gateways, there is no distinct threshold that announces entry or exit from Le/The Village. South of James Street seems a consistent streetscape as in North of James Street. The integration of The/Le Village into the broader material identity of the street continues through the city-commissioned street improvements: the benches, lamp posts, tree planters, and bike racks. During the public consultations for the revitalization of Bank Street in 2006, the Village Committee identified these street fixtures as ideal opportunities for visual markers of a village designation. Unlike Chinatown or Little Italy, the street fixtures make no explicit thematic reference to the neighbourhood's identity. The resulting consistency of the street fixtures throughout the full jurisdiction of the Bank Street BIA further obscures any distinction of the subsumed Village.

Though not registered by most passersby, there are several conscious representations and visual depictions of LGBT presence and history within Le/The Village boundaries.⁵⁹ The most visible, but also least permanent identity marker on Bank Street, are the lamppost banners. Commissioned by the Bank Street BIA, the banners are clearly intended to brand Downtown Bank Street. Initially installed during the rebranding from "Bank Street Promenade" to the BIA logo "BANK", the banners have slowly evolved to incorporate reference more explicitly to Le/The Village identity. The initial banners with the four brand colours of the BIA logo alluded to a partial and muted rainbow. During Capital Pride Week in 2017, the banners were replaced with alternating rainbow-ified Bank Street BIA logo and Pride Rainbow flags. At the time of

⁵⁹ Recurrently during my field work, Ottawa residents would ask about my research and case studies. Many were surprised to learn that there was a gay village in Ottawa, and even more surprised to learn that it was located on Bank Street, explaining to me that they frequent the area regularly and had never noticed. One such encounter occurred while sitting at the James Street Pub at the corner of Bank Street and James Street. When I was asked where the Village was, I pointed out the window to the corner. "It starts across the street."

writing, within the Village boundaries, the banners currently feature “queer community heroes” portraits commissioned as part of the Ottawa Village Legacy Project.⁶⁰



Figure 5.8: Bank Street Diversity mural (left) and We Demand mural (right). Photos by Sarah Gelbard, November 16, 2014.

Two murals within the boundaries of Le/The Village incorporate LGBT presence and historical reference to local activism (Figure 5.8). The first, the “Bank Street Diversity Mural” commissioned by the Bank Street BIA in 2010 at the intersection of Nepean Street features a rainbow and a lesbian couple holding their baby amongst its representations of diversity, which also includes a man in a wheelchair, a woman with a seeing eye dog, and historic references to Irish immigrants.⁶¹ The lesbian couple, though positioned outside the frame of the central archival image of the historic mainstreet that is the focus of the mural, is meant to be included among the many diverse people, past and present, who frequent and shop along Bank Street. The second mural is the “We Demand” mural on Gilmour at the corner of Bank Street. Commissioned by the Village Committee in 2011 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the “We Demand” Demonstration on Parliament Hill in 1971, the mural is also based on an archival image and includes a list of ten demands for equal rights and protections.⁶² A third mural was present on Bank Street for a few months in 2015; the mural, done by Kalkidan Assefa during

⁶⁰ Retrieved from <https://www.villagelegacy.ca/> [last accessed: 16 April 2019]

⁶¹ Retrieved from <https://www.villagelegacy.ca/items/show/53> [last accessed: 16 April 2019]

⁶² Retrieved from <https://www.villagelegacy.ca/items/show/8> [last accessed: 16 April 2019]

Pride Week 2015 to honour murdered transgender women of colour, was reinstalled outside Le/The Village at McNabb Community Centre after being defaced on several occasions.⁶³

While there are a handful of queer-identified businesses and services within The/Le Village, they too are well integrated into the surrounding streetscape. In the past, Bank Street and the adjacent area have been home to several public and underground gay bars.⁶⁴ The only one remaining at the time of designation was the Centretown Pub, proudly promoting itself as the longest running gay bar in Ottawa, opened in 1984. In January 2017, an eviction notice was posted, and the business shut down. Soon after, T's Pub opened just down the street, notably branding itself "Ottawa's All-Welcoming Bar". Several others of the admittedly few pre-existing LGBT businesses and LGBT-owned businesses on Bank Street have closed, downsized, or merged since designation, often citing rising rents and neighbourhood change.⁶⁵ The role of local businesses in shaping the gay identity of the street today is visible primarily through the window decals distributed by the Village Committee. These decals do not mark specifically LGBT business, but rather they identify "gay-friendly" establishments and/or the businesses that supported the campaign for official city designation.

The typology of Ottawa's "traditional main street" and the character of the Centretown neighbourhood are consistently carried into and throughout Le/The Village. The/Le Village, in this respect, is no more of a "LGBT space" than any number of other spaces, both residential and commercial, urban and suburban, throughout Ottawa. Conscious visual markers have been added since designation as historical tributes and to bring public awareness to key events and key players of gay rights activism in Ottawa. Yet, there seems to be a depoliticization of Le/The Village and hesitancy towards considering it the appropriate space for resistance against ongoing present-day oppression particularly for people of colour and trans folk within the LGBT

⁶³ This is one of several examples of the racist tensions and actions in Ottawa taken against Black Lives Matter movement and trans people of colour protests against police presence at Pride. Like elsewhere, the popular narrative was that the kind of political action and disruption of BLM "does not belong at Pride" because Pride is about "celebration". It is significant that similarly, the kind of political depiction and message in Assefa's mural has no place in *The/Le Village*. CBC News, *Mural for murdered transgender women of colour gets new home at McNabb Community Centre*.

⁶⁴ Retrieved from <https://www.villagelegacy.ca/tours/show/2> [last accessed: 16 April 2019]

⁶⁵ For example the locally owned sex shop Wilde's, merged with the bookstore Stonewall in 2016. Both popular gay-owned stores occupied multiple locations on or just off of Bank street through the 1990s. The merger failed to save the businesses and the joint store ultimately closed in 2018.

community. With the addition of “Ottawa’s All-Welcoming Bar” and increasing number of businesses identifying as “gay-friendly” since designation, The/Le Village has also been seeing a decrease in explicitly gay and queer-owned businesses. Le/The Village is increasingly branding itself as a space of diversity and inclusion, and a space of historic significance, rather than a space intended to represent explicitly queer identities and contemporary struggles. Through the mixed identity and use of the main street and residential areas, the experience and public consciousness of Ottawa’s Le/The Village lack the visibility and spectacle that has become closely associated with the “traditional gay village.”

5.3.2 The battle for Le/The Village

Plans for major road reconstruction to replace sewers and watermain on Bank Street from the Ottawa River to the Rideau Canal presented the City with the opportunity to address the mainstreet revitalization strategies and recommendations of the *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan* and Downtown Ottawa Urban Design Strategy (Figure 5.9).⁶⁶ Though the *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan* recognized that “Mainstreets represent important areas for the preparation of community design plans,”⁶⁷ the overhaul of Ottawa’s “main mainstreet” was planned and completed before the *Centretown Community Design Plan*.⁶⁸ In lieu of a community design plan and the associated comprehensive community planning process to guide plans, the City hosted several public open houses beginning in 2005, first for the overall Bank Street Revitalization Project, and subsequently for each phase of construction. The City also worked in close consultation with the respective BIAs and convened Public Advisory Committees (PAC) of key stakeholders. However, without the extensive collaborative planning process of the community design plans, community input and guidance of the redesign were much less formal, comprehensive, or binding.

During a public consultation in February 2006 for Phase III of the Bank Street Revitalization project, hosted by Somerset Ward Councillor Diane Holmes, members of the local

⁶⁶ “In situations where the City is proposing public works within a Mainstreet, the City will consider the opportunities to improve the pedestrian and cycling environment and to enhance transit ridership in the area.” City of Ottawa, *Downtown Ottawa Urban Design Strategy 20/20*. Section 3.6.3.9

⁶⁷ Ibid. Section 3.6.3.4

⁶⁸ Urban Strategies Inc., *Ottawa Centretown: A Community Design Plan for the Heart of Centretown*.

gay community petitioned to have a representative sit on the PAC and argued for the inclusion of “symbols of diversity — like rainbow flags and street signs denoting the village” in street improvements, and formal designation of Bank Street as a “Rainbow Village.”⁶⁹ Media coverage following the meeting reported that the requests were well received. However, when the City released the final design for Phase III in 2008, there were no plans to include formal recognition of gay identity in the street rehabilitation.⁷⁰ The City was the initiator of the rehabilitation project and the public consultation process, and the management of street infrastructure was under City control. However, the City has delegated authority to the Business Improvement Areas (BIA) to define the street identity of commercial main streets and manage the funding, provided by the City, for the expression of that identity through the material design of physical improvements. Though the idea for the inclusion of “symbols of diversity” was entertained during the public meeting, implementing such a request was not within the purview of City plans for Bank Street; that request would have to be redirected to the Bank Street BIA.

In the summer of 2008, the board of the Bank Street BIA voted against supporting the gay village designation or representation in the physical improvements. Gerry LePage, the executive director of the Bank Street BIA at that time, explained that: “The board feels that the branding of a specific geographic area will naturally occur following the adoption of a specific theme by a growing number of individual businesses.”⁷¹ Despite the BIA’s mandate to define and promote a unique street identity, the board instead argued in support of “bottom-up branding” initiated by, or at least adopted by, individual businesses. Though many members of the gay community believed that Bank Street was the “emerging Gay Village,” and several sources had reported it as such since the 1990s, the board felt the identity was not one sufficiently supported by enough businesses to make it the appropriate predominant theme for the street. The BIA’s press release continued: “The massing of the subculture in a specific area must be in sufficient numbers so to be the predominant factor in both the physical and cultural

⁶⁹ McCann, *Now or never for gaybourhood: Gays scramble as redevelopment plans move up*.

⁷⁰ Smith, *Group wants 'Gay Village' along small section of Bank Street*.; Pearson, *Welcome to the 'gaybourhood'; Movement to designate six-block stretch of Bank Street as gay village gathering steam---*.; Kirkby, *Ottawa gays 'betrayed' by Bank St process*.

⁷¹ Deschamps, *Bank St BIA says no to Village proposal---*.

landscape of designated or targeted area.”⁷² The board essentially argued that those who were petitioning for the inclusion of “symbols of diversity” had failed to demonstrate the presence of a pre-existing visible, predominant identity or the support of local businesses to adopt a particular brand representing that identity. Curiously, the conclusion by the board was that “symbols of diversity” were too exclusive and that the BIA had a responsibility to represent everybody: “[The board] feel they needed a policy that would not convey any special status or treatment or benefit of one group over another [...] The board is simply trying to be fair and equitable to everybody here.”⁷³



Figure 5.9: Bank Street Phase II reconstruction, looking North from Somerset Street West. Photo by Charles Akben-Marchand, September 2008. Reproduced with permission.

Denied the opportunity to take advantage of the Bank Street Rehabilitation to brand part of Bank Street as the Gay Village by both the City and the Bank Street BIA, several local LGBT business owners and community members took on the call for “bottom-up branding” while

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Pearson, *Welcome to the 'gaybourhood': Movement to designate six-block stretch of Bank Street as gay village gathering steam.*

others agreed that Bank Street had not yet sufficiently emerged organically as the Village.⁷⁴ Rainbow flags were hung, community events were organized, and public debates and media around the relocation of Capital Pride parade and celebration all increased visibility of an LGBT claim to Bank Street. In 2008, Glen Crawford, who sat on the City's PAC for Phase III, formed the Village Committee. The Village Committee was a not-for-profit grassroots organization with the goal of garnering support from local businesses and residents and formally campaigning the City for official designation.

The Village Committee took the approach of promoting the narrative of the Village as a pre-existing identity that, if supported, could be a catalyst for revitalization. This narrative depended upon reinforcing the narrative of Bank Street as being in a state of decline and indicating that a Village designation could act specifically as an economic revitalizer, not just a cultural one. The Village Committee argued that the Bank Street BIA had failed to define a clearly visible and unique brand for the street but that an existing identity was already present, just hidden and waiting to be exposed and promoted: "This is a rundown neighborhood. That kind of injection from the [gay] community can only be a boon to the area. There are no losers."⁷⁵ This quote by Gareth Kirkby, associate publisher of Capital Xtra, is representative of an often-repeated trope by many of those petitioning for official designation. In his 1996 article *The Village People: Gay community breathes new life into seedy section of Centretown*, Randy Boswell writes: "It's Ottawa's seediest intersection, but the corner of Bank and Gilmour streets is the hub of an emerging 'gay village' that could rejuvenate the downcast district."⁷⁶ Another advocate for establishing the village, Jeremy Dias, wrote: "We have an opportunity to give Bank Street an identity, finally. The city is rejecting our proposal and again choosing mediocrity."⁷⁷ Connecting the narrative of a declining area, an emerging gay village, and the potential of the latter to ultimately reverse the decline of the former, was not new to Ottawa and not a new idea

⁷⁴ For example, David Rimmer, owner of the Bank Street bookstore After Stonewall told the Ottawa Citizen: "I think it's a worthy idea, but I think these things require a critical mass [...W]hen you stop to think of it, a bookstore, a pride shop, a bathhouse and a restaurant do not a Village make." Meanwhile, Jeremy Dias who founded the group Jer's Vision (now known as the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity) that organized several demonstrations in support of the Village is quoted in the same story, saying "If the city won't put up rainbow flags on Bank Street, we will." Smith, *Group wants 'Gay Village' along small section of Bank Street*.

⁷⁵ McCann, *Now or never for gaybourhood: Gays scramble as redevelopment plans move up*.

⁷⁶ Boswell, *The Village People: Gay community breathes new life into seedy section of Centretown*.

⁷⁷ As quoted in Smith, *Group wants 'Gay Village' along small section of Bank Street*..

about gay villages. Connecting this narrative to the specific mandate in the *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan* and the *Downtown Ottawa Urban Design Strategy* (DOUDS) to give Bank Street a unique brand and identity as a mainstreet, firmly placed the responsibility of recognizing the opportunity back in the hands of the City.

As a strategy to petition the City for official recognition and designation, the Village Committee first needed to demonstrate that a gay village identity existed along Bank Street and that it was an identity sufficiently supported by local businesses and residents. Second, they needed to render that identity and support visible to the general public and city officials. Crawford explained “we recognize that we'll have more credibility, more authority, when we create that visibility.”⁷⁸ In 2008, the Village Committee began a door-to-door campaign with the businesses along Bank Street. They distributed their brochure “Why the Village is Good Business” and asked businesses to display a purple window decal with the words “proud to support/fiers de soutenir le/the Village” on their doors. By the end of the year, 25 of the 100 businesses visited were displaying the decal.⁷⁹ This kind of numerical display of support became an important goal for the Village Committee. Meanwhile, two surveys distributed by the Bank Street BIA in 2008 were used to justify their original decision to decline designation. The first survey reported that 75 percent of businesses were opposed to designation and the second survey showing 73 percent in support. Full details of the surveys were not released to the public.⁸⁰ A third, supposedly more “scientific and bulletproof” survey released by the Bank Street BIA in 2011 concluded that of the 190 businesses on Bank Street, 39 businesses were opposed, 14 in support, and 23 neutral.⁸¹

Councillor Diane Holmes, who also sat on the BIA, decided it was time to initiate a questionnaire for residents. In part challenging the authority of the Bank Street BIA and businesses alone to determine support for the designation and branding of the street, Councillor Holmes argued that “This is a public street owned by the public and so the public should

⁷⁸ Glen Crawford, as quoted in Drudi, *Section of Bank Street becoming gay village, decree or no decree---*.

⁷⁹ Pearson, *Welcome to the 'gaybourhood'; Movement to designate six-block stretch of Bank Street as gay village gathering steam*.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ McKinnon, *39 Bank St businesses oppose rainbow designation: BIA.; Denley, Bank St. BIA balks at Village designation*.

decide.”⁸² Of the 1,400 questionnaires distributed through her office, 181 were returned of which 115 were in favour of the designation and 66 opposed. Including non-response and neutral responses, and despite their alternating results between support and opposition, all the surveys would seem to suggest a more conservative interpretation of the results, namely that the community tended more towards indifference than active support or opposition. Though unclear exactly what level of support they had, and at times confrontational, in all its actions towards official designation, the Village Committee worked towards demonstrating a strong commitment to a visible and engaged sense of community, both within the gay community, and with the local business community and broader community. As Crawford expressed: “We have proven that there is a community that exists here.”⁸³

Six years after the battle for a village began, the newly elected municipal government granted official designation and recognition in November 2011. Following the unveiling of the street blades that marked the boundaries of Le/The Village, Mayor Jim Watson told Xtra: “This was something in the campaign that I was asked if I would support, putting up the signs. I gave that commitment that I would; I thought it was a great idea. It shows how inclusive and open our society is, and I think the signs look great.” The recurring message of news coverage of the designation revolved around the great pride that the emerging gay-village identity was also an identity more broadly shared by Ottawans: an identity of diversity and inclusion. As a further, though curious, act of inclusion and reconciliation, the Village Committee was “absorbed” by the Bank Street BIA in April 2013.⁸⁴ The BIA’s website now proudly declares: “We’re the proud home of Ottawa’s Village!”⁸⁵

⁸² As quoted in ---, *Bank St. BIA balks at Village designation*.

⁸³ Fagan, *UPDATE: Village signs get mayoral approval*.

⁸⁴ Turcotte, *Village absorbed by Bank Street BIA*---

⁸⁵ Retrieved from <https://www.bankstreet.ca/thingstodo>

6 INTERSECTING PUBLIC STORIES OF PEOPLE AND PLACE

In addition to the background context of planning in Ottawa, the case stories presented in Chapter 5 can be further contextualized in relation to representations of people and place and other known stories. This chapter presents intersecting stories for each of the three case stories organized relative to land-use of cultural centres (6.1); parks (6.2); and mainstreets (6.3). Each section provides stories told through the lenses of: planning policy; site-based histories; local M/AG histories; and related M/AG spatial claims and practices.

6.1 Stories of cultural centres

6.1.1 Creative revitalization of the economic and cultural heart of the city

The ByWard Market and Rideau Street are two distinct sub-area of Ottawa's central area defined in the *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan* as “the economic and cultural heart of the city and the symbolic heart of the nation, based on its unique combination of employment, government, retail, housing, entertainment and cultural activities.”¹ The ByWard Market is highlighted as “one of the main civic images for the city of Ottawa.”² York Street, one of the Market's distinctive heritage streets, serves as the “entrance to, and promenade through the ByWard Market.”³ Rideau Street is defined as a key pedestrian environment and vibrant shopping street that contributes to the Central Business District.⁴ The *Central Area Secondary Plan*, further elaborates on the existing character and policies for both the ByWard Market and Rideau/Congress Centre: “The entire ByWard Market area will continue to function as one of Ottawa's favourite meeting places as it has since the nineteenth century.”⁵ Meanwhile, “Rideau Street will establish itself as the main street spine for the Central Area east of the Canal.”⁶

¹ City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan*. 3.6.6

² ---, *Downtown Ottawa Urban Design Strategy 20/20*. 3 ByWard

³ ---, *City of Ottawa Official Plan. Vol.2A - Secondary Plans. 1.0 Central Area*. 1.5.3(l)

⁴ ---, *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan*. 3.6.6

⁵ ---, *City of Ottawa Official Plan. Vol.2A - Secondary Plans. 1.0 Central Area*. 1.5

⁶ Ibid. 1.12.1

Strategic direction for both the ByWard Market District and the Retail, Arts and Theatre District are provided by *the Downtown Ottawa Urban Design Strategy* (DOUDS).⁷ Though the DOUDS acknowledges that “[t]his area provides authentic urban shopping, entertainment, leisure and residential experiences that are greatly valued by both residents and visitors,”⁸ it also remarks that “a more high profile and visible Market ‘brand’[...] would improve the overall appearance and create more aesthetic and special environment for the core Market area,”⁹ and that “the Retail, Arts & Theatre Precinct lacks a strong and coherent identity.”¹⁰ The *Official Plan*, Central Area Secondary Plan, and DOUDS target Rideau Street area for rebranding as the Retail, Arts & Theatre Precinct as both a revitalization strategy and economic development opportunity.¹¹ As part of the “economic and cultural heart” of the city, the branding and theming strategies for both areas rely heavily upon arts and entertainment, nightlife, tourism, and a visual identity derived from architecture and urban design. The National Capital Commission shares an interest in both these districts, as parts of the “symbolic heart of the nation,” and address them both in the Core Sector Report with policies to “support the City of Ottawa in its efforts to enhance the liveability, residential development, artistic character and tourist appeal;” “enhance use, enjoyment, animation and safety;” and “support the promotion of the Area as a destination for local arts and culture within the City of Ottawa.”¹²

The *Arts and Heritage Plan* strategy, to revitalize public spaces through focus on arts in community cores, connects the development and branding of a Central Arts and Theatre District: “The City will spark and sustain urban and neighbourhood revitalization through the partnered

⁷ City of Ottawa, *Downtown Ottawa Urban Design Strategy* 20/20. 3 and 4. Note that the Retail, Arts and Theatre District is roughly equivalent to the area defined by the Secondary Plan “Rideau/Congress Centre”

⁸ Ibid. 3

⁹ Ibid. 3, targeted precinct strategy 15; “ByWard Market Branding and Theming - in partnership with the ByWard Market BIA, ByWard Market Management Group and other stakeholders, the development of a more high profile and visible ByWard Market brand/theme to improve the area’s overall appearance while maintaining its informal ambience and vernacular character” City of Ottawa, *City of Ottawa Official Plan. Vol.2A - Secondary Plans. 1.0 Central Area*. 1.5.3 (r)ii

¹⁰ ---, *Downtown Ottawa Urban Design Strategy* 20/20. 4

¹¹ Partnerships for Prosperity – Ottawa’s economic strategy focuses on international competitiveness, brand and market development, and City leadership in shaping economic directions. It seeks to balance business prosperity with social equity, environmental responsibility, and cultural expression. ---, *City of Ottawa Official Plan - Consolidation*. Section 1.4

¹² National Capital Commission, *Canada’s Capital Core Area Sector Plan*. 121; 116

development and nurturing of arts and cultural districts.”¹³ In one big gesture, a Central Arts and Theatre District directly addresses the *Arts and Heritage Plan*’s “three key strategies that will unlock Ottawa’s development as a creative city”: “invest and spark investment in the local arts; increase access for artist, audience and community to new and improved space and place; and get the word out.”¹⁴ Furthermore, the plan highlights the additional economic benefits:

Arts districts, however, do more than provide new spaces in which artists may produce their work and citizens may enjoy cultural activities. Arts districts spur economic activity, resulting in a significant number of new jobs, an enhanced tax base, increased tourism, enhanced property values, and increased business interaction in the area.¹⁵

The DOUDS makes the case that Rideau Street area surrounding the Convention Centre, Rideau Centre, and Arts Court presents an ideal opportunity to support the vision of the *Arts and Heritage Plan* to nurture the development of cultural facilities. The DOUDS notes that existing cultural venues “add diversity to the downtown and fill a gap in the provision of services for both residents and tourists.”¹⁶ The DOUDS also identifies an opportunity for growth of the arts and culture sector in the economically declined area, because of the existing affordable commercial space and artist spaces available to cultural entrepreneurs.

Music venues have an established presence and legacy of cultural entrepreneurship in the ByWard Market and along Rideau Street. As primarily private enterprises, music venues are frequently invisible in planning documents. Although music is briefly mentioned, the *Arts and Heritage Plan* addresses theatrical performing arts and visual arts facilities, especially public facilities, but not musical performance space. In the ByWard Market and Rideau Street, policies surrounding music venues are additionally complicated by heritage. The DOUDS recommends that the City “maintain the traditional ByWard Market area as a tourist and entertainment focus.”¹⁷ As the National Capital Commission (NCC) notes: “the heritage character of the Area

¹³ Ibid. 29

¹⁴ Ibid. iii

¹⁵ Ibid. 42

¹⁶ City of Ottawa, *Downtown Ottawa Urban Design Strategy 20/20*. 4

¹⁷ Ibid. 3

and the historic ByWard Market has helped to establish a major tourist destination.”¹⁸ The built heritage of the ByWard Market and Rideau Street are directly addressed as assets to be preserved. For example:

The By Ward Market’s exceptional heritage character will be protected through its designation as a heritage conservation district and through guidelines that ensure sensitive infill and alterations[;]¹⁹

and

City Council shall ensure the protection, conservation and enhancement of heritage resources on Rideau Street, and shall ensure that the design of development respects, and is sensitive to, such heritage features.²⁰

The protection of built heritage and the infusion of an arts’ focus to these downtown areas are framed in the *Arts and Heritage Plan* as means for revitalization: “The arts and heritage contribute to a city’s overall liveability and compensate for perceived or actual weaknesses in the quality of place.”²¹ Revitalization through Creative City strategies are also promoted for increasing safety and health: “Safe and healthy neighbourhoods grow through access to creativity, heritage and culture.”²²

The City refrains from addressing issues of decline in the ByWard Market and Rideau Street as directly as the NCC, which notes: “Though Rideau Street is perceived as an undesirable destination for many people, it has the potential to be transformed into a more pleasant ‘main street’;”²³ and “There are issues of safety and security in the Market area.”²⁴ However, the City frequently returns to revitalization and beautification strategies for these “under-performing” areas:

¹⁸ National Capital Commission, *Canada’s Capital Core Area Sector Plan*. 120

¹⁹ City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan*. 3.6.6

²⁰ ---, *City of Ottawa Official Plan. Vol.2A - Secondary Plans. 1.0 Central Area*. 1.12.3

²¹ ---, *Ottawa 2020 Arts and Heritage Plan*. 15. See also ---, *Ottawa 2020 Human Services Plan: Priority on People*. “The arts often are employed as a mechanism for community revitalization and urban redevelopment through inner-city redevelopment, building community pride.” 40

²² ---, *Ottawa 2020 Human Services Plan: Priority on People*. 40

²³ National Capital Commission, *Canada’s Capital Core Area Sector Plan*. 115

²⁴ *Ibid.* 121

The coming years will see the continued but accelerated evolution of Rideau Street and the realization of the potential of this area as a vital part of Ottawa's Central Business District through a variety of public and private initiatives.

At street level, this will be reflected by the revitalization of the street, and its reinstatement as both an east-west transportation artery and a dynamic pedestrian shopping street [...] and the creation of an identifiable streetscape theme [...]²⁵

Rideau Street is targeted by City plans with a major renewal project in conjunction with the construction of Light Rail Transit Confederation Line. The project includes a targeted street beautification strategy,²⁶ infrastructure and road repair, the Ottawa Art Gallery expansion and Arts Court redevelopment, and a partnership with the private redevelopment of the Rideau Centre by Cadillac Fairview. With the renewal of the Rideau Centre, B+H architects refer to the project as “renewal within an urban core” and “[h]elping to drive the renaissance of downtown Ottawa, to expand and renew the Rideau Centre to enforce its position as a main tourist attraction and Ottawa's leading shopping destination.”²⁷

6.1.2 Cultural heritage of conflict and commerce

Rideau Street was first laid out in 1826 during the establishment of the township of Bytown as the headquarters for Colonel By at what would become the Northern terminus of the Rideau Canal (1826-1832) and its connection to the Ottawa River. Rideau Street was established as the base line road east of the canal site, running through Lower Town and connecting the Rideau Canal to the Rideau River. York, George, and King Edward streets were laid-out to define the major lots of Lower Town, including the central site of the farmer's market, the ByWard Market.²⁸ Lower Town was built on swamp land and was much less desirable than Upper Town. The Protestant, Anglo-Scottish elite soon established themselves in Upper Town, leaving Lower Town to the Catholic French and Irish labourers.²⁹ This social and economic division was a

²⁵ City of Ottawa, *City of Ottawa Official Plan. Vol.2A - Secondary Plans. 1.0 Central Area*. 1.12.1

²⁶ Ibid. 1.12.3

²⁷ Retrieved from <https://bharchitects.com/en/project/rideau-centre-expansion-and-renewal/> The Rideau Centre renewal also involved expansion into the fully reconstructed heritage Ogilvie department store.

²⁸ Gordon, *Town and Crown: An Illustrated History of Canada's Capital*. 41

²⁹ Ibid. 49

source of regular conflict:³⁰ “Bytown slid towards anarchy. The settlement had always been rowdy and drunken fights in Lower Town were not unusual.”³¹ These early rough lumber town roots of the ByWard Market continued to influence the area as Bytown became Ottawa. The historic image of the ByWard Market was also a history the city would try to rewrite as it worked to become the National Capital and preserve its heritage.

During the 1960s, “while most of downtown Ottawa and Hull were scheduled for cataclysmic transformations,” the ByWard Market was one of the few core neighbourhoods not targeted for urban renewal. The National Capital Commission (NCC) and city planners “simply left the area alone to evolve in its own way.”³² Though not motivated by heritage conservation, per se, the move to do nothing is credited with saving the heritage buildings throughout the district. Like most North American urban cores, the shopping district of the ByWard Market was declining by the 1970s. Throughout the early twentieth century, department stores had established themselves along Rideau Street, occupying most of the strip between Sussex and Dalhousie streets and the Market was one of Ottawa’s premier shopping destinations. With the construction of suburban malls, however, the Rideau Street strip was losing customers. The NCC began developing plans for a Rideau Mall Galleria, enclosing the street with an arcade inspired by Milan and Naples and connecting the various department stores. After conflicts with the City’s planners and mayor, the NCC scaled back the Rideau Street project to a transit-mall and the installation of canopied shelters over the sidewalks. The project is infamously credited with killing what remained of Rideau Street businesses and “attracted vandalism and homeless citizens.”³³ In 1983, the Rideau Centre shopping mall opened behind the Rideau Street façade, turning its back to Rideau Street and integrated into a self-contained conference centre and hotel complex.³⁴

Through the mid-1980s and 1990s, the ByWard Market and Rideau Street were increasingly seen by the public as part of the declining urban core and the centre of

³⁰ Ibid. 55-61

³¹ Ibid. 57

³² Ibid. 243

³³ Ibid. 264

³⁴ Ibid. 262-265

homelessness, drug use, panhandling, prostitution, gangs, street kids, and punks.³⁵ While the Market and Rideau were commonly viewed as unpleasant, dirty, and unsafe, the media took an interest in street kids, squeegee kids, and punks (often used interchangeably). Media coverage was quick to identify when “punks” were involved in incidents, and ran cautionary tales and advice to parents,³⁶ but punks and life-on-the-streets also became a fascination for human interest profiles exposés.³⁷ By in large, identified problems were handled through a combination of social services and policing. Homelessness was not a new phenomenon in Lower Town. The Salvation Army had operated a men’s hostel in the Market since 1908, with its current location on George Street since 1948. The Ottawa Mission shelter was established in 1906 on George Street and moved to its present location on Waller Street just south of Rideau Street in 1911. From a criminal-justice perspective, police presence and enforcement were increased, and somewhat infamously in December 1999, the Province of Ontario passed the Safe Streets Act aimed at stopping squeegee kids, and cleaning up the streets, namely from discarded needles, syringes, and condoms.³⁸

Addressing the decline of the ByWard Market also became a city planning and heritage concern and strategy. The heritage value of the ByWard Market was not officially recognized until designated as a Heritage Conservation District in 1991.³⁹ Although some food vendors, who had defined the character and use of the area since it was established, are still present, the areas surrounding the ByWard Market building predominantly shifted towards tourism and entertainment since the 1991 designation. It would take another few decades for the City to address the decline of Rideau Street, but a similar shift in character is already present.

6.1.3 A migrating scene and unwelcoming spaces

From its earliest days in Ottawa, the punk scene has been an ever-shifting landscape of “places your mother doesn’t want you to go.” The Carleton University student paper, *The Charlatan*, ran

³⁵ Pynn, *Capital Crime: Ottawa's seamier side gets low media profile*.

³⁶ Benet, *Experts Differ About Danger of Teenagers' Infatuation with Punk Culture*.

³⁷ Peritz, *No future, no hope: Rebellious teens turn to punk world: Montreal punks say most have 'suffered a lot in the past'---*; Shulgan, *The Squeegee Life---*.

³⁸ Safe Streets Act, 1999, S.O. 1999, c. 8

³⁹ Passed by Ottawa City Council in 1991, By-law (60-91) under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act

a cover story with this title in August 1979. Topping their list—before the gay bars, feminist coffee house, radical bookstores, and strip clubs—was The Rotters Club, a.k.a. Rotters. Ottawa’s first real punk bar offered “an innovative musical alternative, and that means punk and New Wave, which to ears unattuned means a harsh discordant blare.”⁴⁰ Few venues survived more than a few years but with each one that closed, another soon appeared to fill the gap. As is common to most punk scenes, venues were generally in edgier, declining parts of the urban core. Since the late 1970s, the punk scene has maintained a steady, though always marginal presence, in Ottawa’s music scene. Although the punk scene has never been completely centralized, with venues scattered around town, at any given period, the scene would anchor around a few key neighbouring venues. As the character of different neighbourhoods shifted over the decades, Ottawa’s core punk scene migrated from Bank Street to Carleton University to the ByWard Market to (West) Centretown. In the past few years, a few venues have even opened in suburban and deindustrializing areas of the city. Several venues across the river in Hull and Gatineau, Quebec have contributed to the scene since the earliest appearance of punk in the region. For those who joined the scene years or even decades later, the names and geography of past venues stay alive through stories told over and over.

In his article “Rideau Hall is Burning! How the punk revolution came to Ottawa,” local punk Tom Stewart describes the emergence of Ottawa’s punk scene:

Like cities all over North America, alternative culture came to Ottawa in fits and starts – a small music scene that developed organically under the radar of the popular media and out of sight of the majority of the population. Punk came to Ottawa by way of kids forming ‘weird’ bands, publishing fanzines, and slowly invading college radio. But the real thin edge of the punk rock wedge was the alternative gigs promoted in “holeinthewallbars” and nonstandard venues.⁴¹

Frequently referred to as Ottawa’s CBGB, Rotters opened in 1977 in the basement of Volaré’s Lebanese restaurant at Bank and Frank Streets taking over the former Coyote Den folk club. Unlike most music venues at the time that featured cover bands, Rotters featured original music and eventually focussed on punk and “new wave”. The club was an oddity and complete

⁴⁰ Shaw and Chinneck, *Places your mother doesn't want you to go*.

⁴¹ Stewart, *ottawa punk history 101: Rideau Hall is burning*.

departure from anywhere else in Ottawa. As one reporter described in 1979: “[Rotters] is a juxtaposition of trends. It’s confused [...] a sort of befuddled accumulation of youngsters,” noting that “Rotters club language is blue, rotten blue.”⁴² For those who frequented Rotters, Ottawa was “a place starvin’ for it.”⁴³ According to an article in *The Charlatan*, Rotters was an “alternative to the city’s musical wasteland,” and “the excitement of hearing new bands playing creative and original music in a close and intense atmosphere was something new for Ottawa.”⁴⁴ The focus on original music, however, curiously brought the club and the bands who played there into regular conflict with the local musician unions. Stuart Smith, one of the owners⁴⁵ recounts: “No punk band could find a bar to hire them at a bloated union rate, even if they could have afforded to pay dues in the first place [...] We simply told the union, ‘Go fuck yourselves.’”⁴⁶ Rotters imagined itself as more of a clubhouse than as a business. Rotters was not only key to the establishment of the Ottawa punk scene. By fostering a culture of local bands to create and perform original music, Rotters set the stage for a cultural shift in Ottawa’s music scene.

The musician unions were only one of many obstacles that prevented punk bands from getting booked at ‘legit’ venues and being relegated to other spaces. Bands, music lovers, and promoters began to experiment with creating alternative venues. The public was both fascinated by, and apprehensive of, the influx of punk in the city. After only two years, the owners of Rotters decided to shut down claiming that: “the club soon became a ‘tourist attraction’ and somewhat of a media event.”⁴⁷

The very name 'Rotters', in the minds of many, generates the spectre of the leather-clad, safety-pin pierced, green haired monster, spitting and blaspheming without provocation. That imagery is surely an anachronism, although society always has member who tend to live in the past.⁴⁸

⁴² Stewart, *Punk*.

⁴³ Ashford, *Get Ready: Here Comes Ottawa Punk*.

⁴⁴ Stewart, *The Rise and Fall and Rise of Punk in Ottawa*. 10

⁴⁵ Smith’s partners were Carl Schulz and the famous Canadian comedian Michael MacDonald

⁴⁶ Sutherland, *Perfect youth : the birth of Canadian punk*. 303

⁴⁷ Stewart, *The Rise and Fall and Rise of Punk in Ottawa*. 10

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 11

Later that year, the owners of Rotters moved up Banks Street to the corner of Gilmour and opened the Eighties Club. The “spectre” followed. Reports in *The Citizen* about the Teenage Head show at Carleton Unicentre in September 1979 gave the impression that a “punk rock riot” broke out. Reports in the *Charlatan* offers the counter-explanation that counterfeit tickets led to the show being over capacity.⁴⁹ As for the punks “sporting orange hair and safety pins,” the show promoted attendees to dress like punks as part of a costume contest. Regardless, the impact of the *Citizen* article and “the unwarranted and misleading publicity” led the landlords to give the Eighties Club “a one-month probationary period in which to prove it is not a dangerous and violent ‘punk’ venue.”⁵⁰ The Eighties Club opened and folded within months. The move to a bigger and more legitimate venue, came with increased formal business demands and became a real “job” that the owners were less interested in pursuing. The Jungle Club took over the lease a year or two later and is remembered most fondly for the Ramones show in 1983.

The search for cheap rent left fledgling Ottawa punk clubs vulnerable to shifting real estate. The decline of downtown commercial spaces through the 1970s and 1980s, along Bank Street and throughout the ByWard Market, offered many affordable options, less picky landlords, and tolerant, or at least indifferent neighbours. Though otherwise promising ventures, many of Ottawa’s punk or punk-friendly venues were short-lived, not for lack of success but often because of short-term leases, or the sale or demolition of the building. The Underground Club on Rideau and Friel, is perhaps the most legendary example. After the six-month lease expired, and a short extension, the club was closed. The owner Eugene Haslam then opened another club in a space in the same building. Once the lease on that space expired two years later, the building was demolished. That club was the original Zaphod Beeblebrox. Haslam then moved the club to the middle of the ByWard Market on York Street. Haslam then moved Zaphod’s to York Street, where it continued for nearly twenty years.⁵¹

In some cases, however, depressed neighbourhoods meant new venues were able to establish themselves in exceptional buildings. A few doors up Bank Street from Rotters, Barrymore’s Music Hall opened in 1978 in the old Imperial Theatre. Now considered an Ottawa

⁴⁹ Ibid. 11; *Charlatan*, *Teenage rampage: More fans than tickets---*..

⁵⁰ Stewart, *The Rise and Fall and Rise of Punk in Ottawa*. 11

⁵¹ Stewart, *Ottawa punk history 101: Rideau Hall is burning*.

music scene institution, Barrymore's is one of the few venues from this era still in operation. Barrymore's booked its first punk band in 1979 and was a key venue for the punk scene through the 1980s and 1990s, booking bands such as the Sex Pistols, Iggy Pop, Motorhead, D.O.A., and many more.⁵² Though it survived the shifting real estate trends that eventually priced-out most other venues and surrounding business, Barrymore's has arguably done so by reinventing itself several times. For the past decade Barrymore's rarely books live bands and is instead known for themed DJ and dance nights.⁵³

With still few mainstream music clubs willing to book punk bands and few punk clubs able to survive more than a year or two, the "strategy of booking subculture bands into non-standard venues" continued through the 1980s and still until today.⁵⁴ Shows were held at an eclectic mix of spaces such as the Riverside Hotel, Beacon Arms Hotel, Ottawa Boys and Girls Club, Somerset and Glebe Community Centres, SAW Gallery, Dom Polski Community Centre, high schools, and spaces at both University of Ottawa and Carleton University. In a "scene update" submitted to Maximum Rocknroll in 1987, Micheal Leech reports that: "Overall our scene is healthy, but smaller groups need more places to play, and shows seem to be few and far between[...] Ottawa has a great network of alternative record shops and our local 'alternative' radio station, CKCU, is very supportive of the punk subculture."⁵⁵ CKCU is the Carleton University radio station and when it launched in 1974, CKCU became the first campus-based community radio station in Canada.⁵⁶ With the vision of being alternative to commercial radio and the CBC, and its programming philosophy of promoting local talent, CKCU was well timed and well positioned to support and align with the Ottawa punk scene. With restrictions imposed on CKCU by the CRTC regarding advertising format, a concert became the star event of the

⁵² Milks, *The First 25 Years Of Punk In Ottawa 1978-2002: A Gigography*.

⁵³ At time of submission the future of Barrymore's is uncertain. In summer 2020, during the covid-19 pandemic, an eviction notice was posted on the door.

⁵⁴ Stewart, *Ottawa punk history 101: Rideau Hall is burning*.

⁵⁵ Leach, *Ottawa Scene Update*.

⁵⁶ Retrieved from <https://www.ckcufm.com/about/>, see also Birt and Hewitt, *CKCU FM: Bringing back the heyday of radio*.

annual fundraising drive.⁵⁷ Punk bands were regularly featured, including the November 1987 concert with D.O.A., NoMeansNo, Groovy Religion, and local band Grave Concern.⁵⁸

Alternatives to commercial venues have also been a strong part of growing the scene in Ottawa. In the early 1980s, a DIY (do-it-yourself) collective known to members as “No pigs” formed as a club and communal house downtown. No Pigs was primarily a group of high school punks. As an unregistered, unlicensed, uncontrolled venue, No Pigs and other punk houses were able to welcome “under-aged” punks whereas punk bars are reliant on alcohol sales and liquor licence controls. House shows are more accessible to youth and low/no-income community members. Generally adopting a pay-what-you-can cover policy and with significantly lower overhead expenses, house shows help generate money that goes directly back into the house and the community. As a collective, No Pigs also established themselves more publicly as Youth Culture Production in order to book venues for shows to showcase local bands or to raise money for a variety of causes.⁵⁹ Another formative punk cooperative in the Ottawa scene ran out of 5 Arlington Street in the early 1990s.⁶⁰ No Pigs and 5 Arlington are just two of an ever-changing network of punk houses and collectives across the city. Recognizing the important role youth played in the scene, several attempts were made through the 1980s to build legit all-age venues. In 1986, One Step Beyond opened on Rideau and Dalhousie. Though a popular spot that supported local bands and attracted touring bands such as UK Subs and Dead Milkmen, the club closed in 1988 because, without liquor sales or higher cover charge, it could not cover costs or guarantee the kind of revenue needed to attract bigger acts.⁶¹

There is still an active house show scene in the city. These shows are usually in one of a rotating cast of set host punk houses with nicknames used to advertise shows without disclosing the precise location to outsiders or the police and bylaw officers. Depending on the configuration

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Leech, *Ottawa Scene Update*.

⁵⁹ Pine, 'Cold Press: Early Punk Fanzines in Canada's Capital'. 33; see also Nesdoly and Kinsella, *Subcultures: The politics of boredom*.

⁶⁰ Stewart, *Ottawa punk history 101: Rideau Hall is burning*.

⁶¹ Ottawa Citizen, *One Step Beyond shuts its doors*. See also Erskine, *Two young veterans of punk rock scene help book acts---*. The owner of One Step Beyond, Jeff Cohen, now owns two of Toronto's most famous live venues – the legendary Horseshoe Tavern and Lee's Palace. See Stewart, *Ottawa punk history 101: Rideau Hall is burning*.

of the host house, the show is either held in the front-room, the backyard in summer, or unfinished basement. The former two of course are traditionally the most public domestic spaces where you welcome guests into your house. The cellar of course has a long tradition of being a space for hiding illicit activities. A variety of non-residential spaces are also “adaptively re-used” to facilitate underground venues for shows, rehearsal spaces, recording studios and general hangout club space. This includes industrial and commercial spaces, frequently in under-used parts of town with low rent. Rented community spaces such as Legion Halls, artist-run centres, curling clubs, or permitted-use of public parks and street parties are also part of the show network in Ottawa. These are often the site for informal micro-music festivals, for example, the now defunct Ottawa Explosion Weekend (OXW) and its predecessors Gaga Weekend and Rock ‘n’ Roll Pizza Party. More recently, Sitting on the Outside (SOTO) fest describes itself as “underground punk, hardcore, rock in Ottawa by punks and weirdo’s, for punks and weirdo’s.”⁶²

Around the city, the punk scene also has a material presence through show posters and band stickers. Though online platforms largely fulfill the promotional function of announcing shows, posterizing remains a relatively common practice. Most shows continue the tradition of designing show posters, often still employing the DIY and zine-aesthetic as well as similar illustration styles of early punk posters. Whether scrolled across the bottom of a poster or bottom of a Facebook post, show ads frequently employ punk lingo such as: “Ask a punk;” “PWYC;” “Respect the space. Respect each other.” When asked about how to find shows, long-time scene members will reminisce fondly about Ottawa’s now obsolete punk hotline 234-PUNX and later punkottawa.com listings.

6.1.4 Punk resistance and creative renaissance playing safe

Despite its hyperbole and ambition, the stated goal in the Ottawa Music Strategy that by 2030 “Ottawa is respected as the most inclusive music city in the world” is a critique of the contemporary status quo of the music scene. Both the perceived and measured lack of representation of women, people of colour, queer folk, and other marginalized groups point to a systematic failure in Ottawa music production, performance, and promotion. Groups such as Babely Shades and the Ottawa Music Industry Coalition frame these exclusions as serious

⁶² Retrieved from: <https://www.facebook.com/sotofestottawa/>

problems that must be resolved because they represent both a social injustice and a missed opportunity to recognize and diversify the voices, styles, and messages of Ottawa's music-based culture. The Ottawa Music Strategy proposes a strategic approach for implementing the necessary cultural shift to reform these spaces. In relatively short time, many music venues and festivals, including some punk, are showing signs of following the narrative trends of the Ottawa Music Strategy and are increasingly adopting language and policies of "safe" and "inclusive" spaces. However, many Ottawa punk venues, events, promoters, and participants are reluctant to participate, or straight out resist the trend.

It is both appropriate and curious that many threads of the Ottawa Music Strategy lead back to critiques of Ottawa punk venues. Some interpret the resistance of the punk scene towards incorporating "safe space" policies as further demonstration of punk ignorance or indifference. For those within the scene, their resistance is not against the social justice concerns but against the popular strategy based on liberal forms of inclusion and what they see as capitalist interests in supporting the music industry. As Dylan Clark explains: "Being punk is a way of critiquing privileges and challenging social hierarchies [...] a way of life in favor of egalitarianism and environmentalism and against sexism, racism, and corporate domination."⁶³ Looking inward towards its own legacies of fostering spaces and events that are anti-oppression, many punks are working through similar social equity concerns as Babely Shades and Ottawa Music Industry Coalition but in different ways. Rather than a solution-based narrative focused on inclusion, punk has tended to frame its critique of the status quo through narratives of exclusion and radical negativity. From its beginning, punk "insisted there was something wrong with society (exactly what was left hazy) and therefore the only ethical posture was that of an outsider."⁶⁴

As an outsider, punk is regularly and equally criticized both for failing to live up to social norms and failing to live up to punk ideals. Reflecting on her participation in the Ottawa punk collective 5 Arlington in the 1990s, Jennifer Wicks notes how "[t]he punk scene is often

⁶³ Clark, 'The raw and the rotten: Punk cuisine'. 19

⁶⁴ Duncombe and Tremblay, *White riot: Punk rock and the politics of race*. 3. This is not to imply that punk has been successful at resolving social inequities, only that challenging them and struggling to work through them is considered fundamental attributes of punk. "Insisting that punk was more important than race didn't change the still-sizable degree of privilege Whites derived in mainstream and punk culture as a result of their skin color, language, and so forth." 11

criticized for having been navel-gazing in its approach to politics, insular in its approach to community, and the byproduct of a white middle-class privilege that it could never really shake off.” She continues, “while a space like the 5 revealed these problems, it also held enormous promise. It offered a space that encouraged discussion and asked people to consider how their actions and choices affected the society they were hoping to opt out of.”⁶⁵ Punk and other subculture scenes are not entirely separate or immune from the influences and realities of the dominant culture. Quite to the contrary, manifestation of societal ills and tensions are frequently amplified in M/AG spaces. This observation can either be interpreted as inherent to the space and people, or as further demonstration of the disproportionate negative impacts of oppressive systems on M/AGs. For many participants in the punk scene, punk is an exclusive place of inclusion for the excluded. As a result, belonging and conflict are two sides of the regular encounters with different forms of difference one experiences in the punk scene.

The boycotts instigated by Babely Shades seem at first to participate in the punk practices of internal critique and conflict. When the critique moves into public discourse, however, it is recast as contemporary social justice intervention, quickly gaining popular support for its call to action. The narrative of privilege, discrimination, and security extend to acknowledge the prevalence and impact of these issues across mainstream music venues and events. Ottawa Music Industry Coalition and the City acknowledge the work ahead as they shift focus towards reforming the music scene in Ottawa generally, with strategies for and aspirations of Ottawa becoming “respected as the most inclusive music city in the world.” Music spaces are targeted for reform and set up to emerge as catalysts for cultural transformation that will redefine the city. To optimize the cultural and economic benefits of these creative spaces, the Ottawa Music Strategy suggests implementing multiple policies, certifications, programs, and regulations. Safety and inclusion are identified as key challenges to Ottawa musical industries that needs to be fixed to ensure success, competitiveness, and respectability.

Arts, culture, and heritage are promoted in the *Ottawa 2020* plans as community-building and as attractions for both tourists and potential residents. Although the *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan* celebrates that “cultural venues add diversity to the downtown,” the disregard for the impact of development on venues such as Mavericks suggests that old-school punk venues are

⁶⁵ Jennifer Wicks as quoted in Millar, '5ARLINGTON'.

not legitimated by the City as cultural venues. Punk venues, and the punk scene in general, continued to be targeted and used as examples of the kind of unsafe and non-inclusive spaces that Babely Shades, OMIC, and OMS are working to change. They are, instead, categorized as part of what makes the downtown an “undesirable destination” with “issues of safety and security.” The spaces old-school punks occupy and their resistance to reform stand in the way of presenting a respectable music city. Meanwhile, the diversity represented by Babely Shades, along with their social justice approach to callout culture and safe space practices, are easily incorporated into city planning and public discourse. Not only are the inclusion-based strategies expected to ensure diversity and safety for all, these strategies, and the creative spaces they support, are framed as fundamental to the growth and success of Ottawa music industries and the city as a whole.

Both excluded from, and not entirely convinced of the popularized directions of the safe space movement, many punk venues and promoters began work on alternative processes. These focussed on opening dialogue, beginning processes of reparations, and co-constructing ways forward while also recognizing and rooting the foundations of anti-oppressive values in punk history and ethos. In a Facebook post from 2015, one of the owners of House of Targ wrote:

I have always thought of TARG as a safe and inclusive space. There has been much discussion of late on what that actually means. I have learned that part of my responsibility as an owner/booker at TARG is to listen to the voices in our community and ALWAYS work on helping/improving our space in anyway possible.⁶⁶

On their website, House of Targ opted not to include a “safe space” statement, offering instead a statement on “Wizard Social Responsibility.”⁶⁷

The heartbeat of TARG is to serve our community and we will always be committed to that. We aren’t exactly Bill Gates when it comes to philanthropy, but we strive to do what we can to make our limited resources available to friends, organizations & initiatives we believe in.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ House of Targ, *re Safe Space*.

⁶⁷ Staff at House of Targ are referred to as “wizards”

⁶⁸ The page also includes a list of the charities and partners House of Targ worked with in their first year and a list of charitable events and benefit shows. The list of charities includes Targeted Engagement and Diversion; Special Care

During its 2019 edition, SOTO fest intended to host a community discussion entitled: *How to Build a Safer & More Inclusive Punk Community*. Unfortunately, due to travel conflicts for the hosts from Montreal's Not Your Babe Fest, the event was indefinitely postponed. However, based on the event description, SOTO presented a much different, more introspective, and co-constructed approach to safe space than initiatives such as Project SoundCheck workshops. From the SOTO event description:

This workshop has been built to open a dialogue and question ourselves on the inclusivity of the punk community and toxic behaviours that can directly affect the security of the people in it. Can we really say that we are a safer space?

This is not a meeting organized by one profiteering individual selling a magic formula for transformative justice, but rather an occasion to talk communally about our experiences, criticisms and how to improve our community together.⁶⁹

The discussion of safe space was to be organized around three key issues: sexual violence, diversity, and intoxication culture. SOTO, who also promote shows beyond the festival, include the following statement in the event description of all their event postings on Facebook:

Sitting On The Outside is fundamentally opposed to sexism, racism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia and any forms of oppression. Disrespectful or oppressive behaviour towards the people attending the fest, or towards the venues won't be tolerated.

Within the punk scene, similar anti-oppression statements have adorned venue doorways and posters and repeated in songs and conversations as quintessential punk utterances and part of punk ethos for fifty years. Though committed to anti-oppression and while acknowledging the continued presence of toxic behaviour, the punk scene remains sceptical of and resistant to standards, policies, certifications, or enforcement as safety strategies.

Unit for Women; Friendly Giants Dog Rescue; Daisy's Drop-In; Project Tembo; Ticket Defense Program; Right to Play Canada; Ottawa Food Bank; Canadian Legion Branch No 462; Unshaven Mavens; Ottawa Rock Camp for Girls; The Door Youth Centre; The Campaign for Safer Consumption Sites. Retrieved from: <http://www.houseoftarg.com/community>

⁶⁹ Retrieved from: <https://www.facebook.com/events/583368012184834/>

6.2 Stories of community parks

6.2.1 Renewed investment in community health and safety

The Prologue of the *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan* recognizes the “green and open character” of Ottawa as one of the “qualities of the city most valued by its residents.”⁷⁰ However, the *Official Plan* only briefly addresses greenspace directly, burying it within the overall strategic direction of *Maintaining Environmental Integrity*.⁷¹ This subsection on greenspace reflects the privileged position of greenspace in the city, committing the City to undertake a separate *Greenspace Master Plan*. The *Greenspace Master Plan* is tasked with characterizing and identifying all greenspaces in the city, establishing targets, evaluating connectivity, and developing strategies for the acquisition and management of city greenspace as “a basis for organizing the physical development pattern of the city.”⁷² Similarly, open spaces such as parks are given only passing mention in the *Official Plan* as part of the strategic direction of *Building Liveable Communities*. The *Official Plan* introduces parks and leisure areas as “the playgrounds, parks and sport fields that provide people with their most frequent and immediate contact with greenspace,” reiterating verbatim the rationale for the inclusion of a *Park and Leisure Area Strategy* under the proposed *Greenspace Master Plan*.⁷³

Given this double mission, the *Greenspace Master Plan*, introduced in 2006, characterizes greenspace as “land that serves one of two purposes”: the “provision of recreation and leisure opportunities for the use and benefit of the public;” and the “preservation of the natural environment and environmental systems.”⁷⁴ The inventory process undertaken by the *Greenspace Master Plan* accordingly categorized all greenspace lands by assigning either a recreational or an environmental function and therefore evaluate them against their potential to contribute to one of two of the seven Guiding Principles of the *Official Plan*: “a healthy and

⁷⁰ The other two qualities listed are the city’s “distinctly liveable communities” and its extremely vague “unique characteristics”. City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan*. i

⁷¹ Ibid. 2.4

⁷² Ibid. 2.4.5

⁷³ Ibid. 2.4.5. and 2.5.4

⁷⁴ City of Ottawa, *Greenspace Master Plan: Strategies for Ottawa's Urban Greenspaces*. 3

active city” or “a green and environmentally-sensitive city.”⁷⁵ This inventory process frames the recreational and environmental qualities and land use of greenspace as categorically distinct. However, city plans, policies, and public perception frequently conflate and intertwine these functions of greenspace, particularly in core urban areas. This is likely because the inner-city area is the only region of the city that falls short of the city target of 4.0 ha of total greenspace for every 1000 residents. At less than 2.0 ha for every 1000 residents, the amount of total greenspace within the inner city area does not even meet the target for park and leisure land.⁷⁶ “This lack of green space requires significant actions to increase and enhance the amount and quality of urban open space in the Downtown.”⁷⁷

The *Centretown Community Design Plan* continues the narrative of privileging greenspace as “contribut[ing] strongly to creating an impression of the neighbourhood as a green and livable community.”⁷⁸ Though Centretown benefits from “the impressive system of regional parks, trails and waterways” owned by the Federal Government, the *Centretown Community Design Plan* notes that “there is a deficiency of smaller and more usable and flexible urban open spaces to serve the Centretown community.”⁷⁹ As one of the key objectives of the plan, parks and greenspace are given their own dedicated chapter. *Chapter 5: Greening Centretown*, puts forward an approach to “re-green” the neighbourhood through a “well-planned and comprehensive programme of open space acquisition” but also acknowledges both the high cost of attaining, and the restricted amount of available lands for new open spaces.⁸⁰ Section 5.1 of the *Centretown Community Design Plan* shifts strategies from addressing the under-provision of park lands towards the under-performance of existing park lands through a programme of “park

⁷⁵ Ibid. proposes that all seven of the guiding principles of the 20/20 plan “can be filtered through a green lens.” 6

⁷⁶ Ibid.3.2.1

⁷⁷ City of Ottawa, *Downtown Ottawa Urban Design Strategy 20/20*. Note that the DOUDS only includes Centretown East district that does not extend as far as McNabb Park. The insufficient supply of open space was already noted in the *Centretown Neighbourhood Study*. “There is a serious shortage of public open space in Centretown even if one includes the areas occupied by school properties.” (2.11.19)

⁷⁸ Urban Strategies Inc., *Ottawa Centretown: A Community Design Plan for the Heart of Centretown*. 5.0

⁷⁹ Ibid. 5.0

⁸⁰ City of Ottawa, *Greenspace Master Plan: Strategies for Ottawa's Urban Greenspaces*. This plan makes specific recommendations with regards to the opportunity of maintaining school grounds as community facilities when a school is closed. (p33) However, in Centretown, two of the three recreational parks are already school grounds with existing arrangements for shared use between the City of Ottawa and the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.

repair and upgrade.” Accordingly, the *Centretown Secondary Plan* lists as its first two objectives to “enhance the public realm” and “increase the overall supply of parkland in Centretown,” and “improve the quality and functionality of existing parks and open spaces.”⁸¹

Inner-city area parks and playgrounds represent some of the city’s earliest land use planning and are an integral part of Ottawa’s green heritage. As is expressed in the *Greenspace Master Plan*, “these greenspaces are the legacy of visionary community builders in the past.”⁸² The *Centretown Community Design Plan* identifies McNabb, Jack Purcell, and St. Luke’s Parks as Centretown’s “active/recreational park spaces.” By contrast, the other two municipal parks, Minto and Dundonald, are identified as “passive spaces that reinforce their heritage context.”⁸³ Although the *Greenspace Master Plan* classifies all these greenspaces as park and leisure lands, the plan further subdivides the category as active-recreational or passive-aesthetic. The *Centretown Community Design Plan* does not make any recommendations with regards to the latter. Like many other aspects of Centretown, the celebration of heritage value is paired with a narrative of decline, misuse, or under-performance and with it, a call for rehabilitation. The plan notes that “due to the demands placed on the parks by their many users, many of Centretown’s park spaces are looking ‘tired’ and would benefit from renewed investment.”⁸⁴ However, by the time the *Centretown Community Design Plan* was released, improvements to Jack Purcell and Saint Luke’s Parks were already underway. McNabb was the only remaining recreational park whose rehabilitation could be influenced by the plan.

The “tired” look of parks, i.e., faded and broken play structures and furniture, unkept planters, graffiti, and litter, becomes closely associated with safety concerns over the physical conditions and potential hazards but also with regards to potential criminal activity. Park rehabilitation strategies therefore frequently rely upon the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPED) endorsed by the *Official Plan*.⁸⁵ CPED is “based on the philosophy that the physical environment can be designed and managed to reduce the incidence

⁸¹ ---, *City of Ottawa Official Plan. Vol.2A - Secondary Plans. 3.0 Centretown. 3.4.5*

⁸² ---, *Greenspace Master Plan: Strategies for Ottawa's Urban Greenspaces. piii*

⁸³ Urban Strategies Inc., *Ottawa Centretown: A Community Design Plan for the Heart of Centretown. 5.1*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 5.1

⁸⁵ City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan. 4.8.9*

of crime and fear of crime.”⁸⁶ Crime Prevention Ottawa’s 2013 *Community Solutions* report, *Beautification today, Safer tomorrow*, also promotes CPED principles. The report shares solutions such as the City’s *Graffiti Management Strategy* that “promotes a clean, safe and beautiful city by reducing visible graffiti. This, in turn, creates greater community pride and economic prosperity for residents and businesses.”⁸⁷ Dundonald Park, located a few blocks north of McNabb, is featured in *Beautification today, Safer tomorrow*. By creating “a vision and cultivat[ing] a culture of community participation,” Dundonald reportedly exemplifies how volunteers and community-run programs “inspire people to take action by transforming under-used neighbourhood places into vibrant, inclusive, welcoming and safe areas.”⁸⁸

Although McNabb Park had already gone through a major expansion and renovation in the late 1960s, the 1976 Centretown Neighbourhood Study recommended further expansion to meet community needs as one of three “major community focal points in Centretown.” The Study suggests that: “the facilities at McNabb Community Centre may have to be expanded to include certain recreational and community health facilities.”⁸⁹ In addition to their recreational and greening functions, as “community focal points,” parks are framed as prime locations for other community facilities and services. The *Ottawa 2020 Human Services Plan* identifies parks as one of the city services that “involve all citizens in community life,” and are “vital to our local quality of life,” noting that these services are:

fundamental building blocks of a city where citizens feel safe and secure and have a range of opportunities for participation, physical activity, self-expression and lifelong learning.

The focus here is in linking City services and programs to a population that wishes to be engaged, to maintain health, to be safe, to be physically and intellectually active and to participate in civic life.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Ibid. 4.8.9

⁸⁷ Crime Prevention Ottawa, *Beautification Today, Safer Tomorrow: How to create safe and caring communities, a project book for your neighbourhood*. 9

⁸⁸ Ibid.10

⁸⁹ Ottawa Planning Branch, *The Centretown Neighbourhood Study*. 2.11.19

⁹⁰ City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 2020 Human Services Plan: Priority on People*. 26

Furthermore, parks as community assets provide not only personal benefits to local residents but also community and city-wide benefits. The *Centretown Community Design Plan* notes that:

Parks and open spaces are essential neighbourhood amenities that support a diversity of formal and informal recreational uses. However, not only are parks important for beauty, image and activity, but they are also important for helping to attract new investment, adding value to existing buildings and bringing visitors and new residents to an area.⁹¹

The role of parks is further expanded beyond recreation and greening benefits to reflect the full assumed needs of participation in civic life and a prosperous city, including health, safety, culture, education, tourism, and economic development.

6.2.2 Securing places for play and community

Gladstone Avenue Playground, later to be renamed McNabb Park, was inspired by the playground movement and championed by the National Council of Women in Canada and the local Ottawa chapter.⁹² In 1898, Ottawa City Council agreed to “set aside 11 lots to be used as a recreation ground, to be known as the Ottawa Ward Playground.”⁹³ With continued pressure on the City from the Ottawa Council of Women, the park was finally established by in 1912.⁹⁴ However, City Council would not assume responsibility for parks and playgrounds until 1919. During the interim, the Playground Association, a subcommittee of the Council of Women, oversaw the operation of playgrounds and the expansion of the playground programme in Ottawa. The Central Lawn Bowling Club, moved onto the western edge of the park in the 1920s.

In the 1960s, the City Department of Recreation and Parks proposed an expansion of McNabb Park and construction of a community centre. This plan required the closure of Florence Street and expropriation of the twenty-six residential lots between Florence and James Streets. Around the same time, the City of Ottawa Public School Board was looking to relocate

⁹¹ Urban Strategies Inc., *Ottawa Centretown: A Community Design Plan for the Heart of Centretown*. 5.0

⁹² “The playground movement in Canada arose from a need in the more crowded areas of the cities where park areas were almost non-existent, and from a recognition that children required encouragement to express themselves through play. Given such encouragement, the playground became a laboratory where habits of health and social custom could be taught in a play atmosphere.” McFarland, *The Development of Supervised Playgrounds*. 492

⁹³ City of Ottawa, *Minutes of the Corporation of the City of Ottawa*.

⁹⁴ ---, *Minutes of the Corporation of the City of Ottawa*.

the Percy Street Elementary School. The two proposals were merged and in 1968, the McNabb Park School and Community Centre were opened. The school closed in 1999. Today, McNabb is one of the six parks currently servicing the Centretown neighbourhood. The Park serves both as a school yard for Richard Plaff Alternative School, the McNabb Community Centre, and as a local park. The Park is one of the largest greenspaces in Centretown and is well-used primarily by neighbouring residents—especially young children and dogs. It offers a wading pool, play structure, soccer fields in the summer, a hockey rink in the winter, and the former baseball diamonds were recently converted into a fenced-off dog park. Every year McNabb Park hosts the popular Labour Day picnic as the terminus of the Labour Day March from City Hall.

The neighbouring streets have until very recently been, and still to a lesser extent continue to be, characterized by drugs, prostitution, pawn shops, and homeless population. McNabb is not noted as a “drug park” *per se*; Dundonald Park a few blocks north has the misfortune of that reputation.⁹⁵ Like many urban-core neighbourhoods, Centretown has been the focus of rehabilitation, revitalization, and gentrification. With the large-scale Bank Street North Rehabilitation project, started in 2006, the City took advantage of the replacement of water and sewer infrastructure to embark on mainstreet revitalization of the Bank Street Promenade. This revitalization and rebranding are both contributing factors to and precursors of the considerable condo and infill development in the area over the past ten years. The Bronson Street Rehabilitation project, in contrast, was more directly a replacement of roadwork infrastructure but did include some street beautification.

6.2.3 Skateparks on the move

The City of Ottawa currently manages a total of nineteen skateboard parks. Charlie Park is one of three of Ottawa’s “district” skateboard facilities, serving populations of over 100,000, and was

⁹⁵ As noted in *Make a Place for People: Dundonald Park*: “Unfortunately, the park isn’t living up to its potential as a vibrant hub of recreation and social interaction. poor maintenance and neglect is evidenced by broken and outdated infrastructure. in addition, by mid to late afternoon the park is often used by individuals with substance abuse issues who can be disruptive. Many people 8-80 Cities talked to during the project felt that the park was uninviting and unsafe, and did not use the park as a result.” 8-80 Cities, *Make a Place for People: Dundonald Park, Ottawa Ontario*. 7

the first permanent skateboard park in the urban core.⁹⁶ While there is still a large presence of skateboarding in the suburbs where the majority of skateboarding facilities are located, skateboarding in the urban core is vastly underestimated and underserved. Prior to the opening of Charlie Park, the only City-run facility was the seasonal skateboarding park and camp that ran May through August at the McNabb Community Centre. Despite the lack of public facilities, the core is well supported by a number of community services and retail outlets. Notably, the majority of the independent skateboarding retail outlets in Ottawa are located in the urban core. During the return of skateboarding trend in the 1980s, Boardwalk and Windsurfing were popular shops on Somerset Street.⁹⁷ Birlings, formerly Antique Skateshop, is a centre of the skateboarding community and hosts the Ottawa Skateboard Association (OSA)⁹⁸ as well as For Pivot Sake—a community-based charity that refurbishes and distributes used equipment to low-income communities. A few blocks south of Charlie Park on Bronson is Surf Side, a 35-year-old local board sports store where many of the neighbourhood's skate veterans fondly remember buying their first board. In Spring 2018, Top of the World, another established Ottawa skateboarding shop, moved from the ByWard Market to the north-end of the Glebe not far from Charlie Park.

According to OSA, only four of the City's nineteen skateboard parks were “professionally built facilities with direct community involvement and/or consultation.”⁹⁹ Prior to the construction of Charlie Park, there were fourteen parks, only one of which was professionally built. OSA has been a key advocate for skateboard parks in Ottawa and regularly reports on the “ineffectiveness of skate park management within the City of Ottawa,”¹⁰⁰ including the general deficiency in the quantity, distribution, location, and quality of skateboard parks across Ottawa. Chief among OSA's complaints is the City's propensity for installing modular, prefabricated skateboard parks. The prefabricated features are often installed without

⁹⁶ The remaining parks are four “Community: mid size facility to service population of 40,000 plus,” and twelve “Neighbourhood: smaller size facility to service population of 10,000 or less.” City of Ottawa, *Open Ottawa, Skateboard Parks*.

⁹⁷ McIlroy, *They're back for third time in two decades*.

⁹⁸ Formerly known as Ottawa Skateboard Community Association (OSCA)

⁹⁹ Ottawa Skateboard Association, *Isquarefoot - Ottawa Skateparks*.

¹⁰⁰ Ottawa Skateboard Community Association, *Recommendations to the City of Ottawa Re: Skateboard Park Construction and Management*.

consideration or knowledge of how skaters use them. They are frequently mis-arranged and do not provide sufficient straight-away space or flow between them, rendering them essentially useless and even dangerous. OSA strongly advocates for direct community consultation with skateboarders to ensure that all future skateboard parks are “built with the needs and wants of skateboarders in mind.”¹⁰¹

Unlike standardized design and specifications of a soccer field, baseball diamond, or basketball court, the rich landscape of obstacles and features in a skateboard park requires an intimate knowledge of ever-changing and varied skateboarding styles and techniques. Recognition of the expertise of skateboarders goes beyond their inclusion in the design process of a new park. Many features found in both prefabricated catalogues and professional designs are based on those designed, built, and perfected by skateboarders themselves. There is a strong tradition of Do-It-Yourself (DIY) skateboarding environments, from minor interventions such as leaning a plank of wood against a curb, to the construction of moveable ramps, to full-scale cast-in-place parks. Perhaps the most notable example of a full-scale DIY park is the Burnside Project in Portland Oregon. The project started as a formal city-initiated process that included skaters on the committee. However, after neighbours pushed back against all the proposed sites, the skaters abandoned the project and took over a site under the Burnside Bridge and began construction of a series of bowls and runs largely using scavenged and, eventually, donated materials. The Burnside Project has long been recognized as “one of, if not the, best skate facility in the United States.”¹⁰²

In Ottawa, not all skateboard parks are built by or operated by the City, either. During the rise in popularity of skateboarding in the 1980s, several parks were established by entrepreneurial individuals working with volunteer organizations. Ottawa’s “first public skateboard park” was built in 1986 “without permit or licence from the City” by Mike Read and Mark Carrothers. The partners built two plywood ramps on a vacant lot on Bell Street South, just a couple blocks from McNabb. “They built the park to give skateboarders a safe place to practise

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Jones and Graves, 'Power Plays in Public Space: Skateboard Parks as Battlegrounds, Gifts, and Expressions of Self'. 138

their sport. They charge users \$3 for three hours and a \$35 yearly membership fee.”¹⁰³ When the City shut down the Bell Street South skatepark in 1987, the ramps were sold to Rampage Skate Park. This new park was the idea of two students, Andrew O’Neil and Mike Friedman, who were “scrambling to pay for tuition fees” and opened the skatepark, offering skate schools, group and private lessons in addition to access via a membership fee, which functioned to finance the venture. Unlike their predecessors, O’Neil and Friedman worked with the City planning department. The City leased the section of the park to the project in exchange for donation of the skatepark to the adjacent Brewer Park Community Centre for six hours per week.¹⁰⁴

After the City shut down the Rampage Skate Park for failing to meet “minimum requirements”, the City also rejected a proposal to open a city facility in the suburb of Orleans. The Orleans Skateboard Park was instead operated by volunteer organizations, the Orleans Recreation Centre Board and the Orleans Recreation Association, and was funded primarily through the sale of seasonal passes.¹⁰⁵ In 1994, the City opened a seasonal skateboard and in-line skate facility targeted to teens called SK8 City in the Curl-O-Drome at Lansdowne, Ottawa’s exhibition grounds on Bank Street in the Glebe.¹⁰⁶ The Curl-O-Drome was demolished in 1995 after SK8 City’s second season.¹⁰⁷ More recently, following the closure of the indoor skateboard park at the McNabb community centre, the Yard opened in March 2019 as Ottawa’s only year-round indoor bike and skateboard park. As a private initiative, the Yard was financed by raising over \$100,000 with 585 backers through the crowd-funding service Kickstarter.¹⁰⁸

The purpose-built features of a skatepark are almost all analogues of found-conditions in the built-environment. Skateboarders can practice and perfect their skills by isolating, abstracting, condensing, and choreographing the arrangement of features. There is an important differentiation between the traditional purpose-built “transition” skateboard parks of the 1970s

¹⁰³ Rusnell, *Alderman seeks to close skateboard park*.

¹⁰⁴ Woloshen, *Students open skateboard park to earn next year's tuition*.

¹⁰⁵ Rogers, *Orleans skateboard park to open its ramps May 20---*.

¹⁰⁶ In the 1960s, the Curl-O-Drome was the seasonal transformation of the General Purpose Building into a public curling rink.

¹⁰⁷ Assabgui, *Skateboard Park Re-opens May 26*.

¹⁰⁸ Cormier, *The Yard, Ottawa’s only indoor bike and skateboard park, is looking for backers*.

through 1990s, and the current trend towards “street style” design.¹⁰⁹ This shift in design trends reflects not only an evolution, but also a geography, of skateboarding. Skateboarding originated largely in suburban areas. The bowl and pike features commonly found in “transition” skateparks stand-in for the empty swimming pools and watermainns found in suburban landscapes.¹¹⁰ As skateboarding moved into urban areas, new skills and tricks developed in response to the different surrounding landscape. “Street style” designs imitate the urban forms popular among urban skateboarders, such as curbs, railings, planters, and benches.

There is still a very strong commitment in skate culture to the purity and roots of street skating. During a Jane’s Walk of Charlie Park, one of the users of the park explained how the artificial designed features of a skatepark never compare with the reality of found surfaces and obstacles of street skating. “The streets is where skateboarding started and will always be where real skateboarding happens.” He described skateparks as a place to practice and develop skills, and also a social place to congregate with other skateboarders, learn from each other and encourage each other, but ultimately “you won’t be taken seriously unless it’s on the street.”¹¹¹ In their analysis of six skateboard parks in California, Jones and Graves mark “the distinction between skateparks that are merely athletic facilities [...] and facilities that truly serve as community open spaces that serve the needs of a highly underserved population within all cities and towns.”¹¹² Skateboard parks contribute an important space for skateboarders; they are a controlled and contained environment in which to practice their skills, and a more centralized social environment in which to gather. However, skateboarders and researchers alike cautioned against thinking of skateparks as facilities that fulfill the needs of skateboarders or of youth more generally. Both frequently take note that when cities provide skateboard parks, the designated and legitimate space to skate serves a double function of reinforcing negative perception and restrictions against skateboarding beyond park boundaries.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Borden, *Skateboarding, space and the city : architecture and the body*.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Jane’s Walk Ottawa 2019. “Tour of Charlie Bowins Skateboard Park” Adam Wawrzynczak

¹¹² Jones and Graves, 'Power Plays in Public Space: Skateboard Parks as Battlegrounds, Gifts, and Expressions of Self'. p 137. The “underserved population” referred to here are adolescents.

¹¹³ Stratford, 'On the edge: a tale of skaters and urban governance'.; Owens, 'Recreation and Restrictions: Community Skateboard Parks in the United States'.; Howell, 'Skatepark as neoliberal playground: Urban

Skateboard parks are opportunities to help reverse negative public perceptions of skateboarding by placing skateboarding and skateboarders in the public realm, but also in a controlled and designated space. Skateboarding is commonly thought to be a physically dangerous sport, although some studies suggest it results in far fewer severe injuries than other popular team sporting activities.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, skateboarding comes with the stereotype of reinforcing and celebrating anti-social, troublemaking, and even criminal behaviour among youth. Finally, skateboarding is seen as a public hazard, a threat to the personal safety of other users of the space and leads to the destruction of public and private property. However, the positive shift in public perception towards skateboarding achieved by skateboard parks is dependent upon the control, restriction, and high visibility of the park compared to more anonymous, dispersed, and open spaces of the street.¹¹⁵

Many skateboarders appreciate the increased safety afforded by the maintained, controlled, and supervised (whether formally or not) space of a skateboard park compared to the street. There is a demand for safe spaces to skate. This is especially important for those learning to skate and those who are generally more vulnerable in public spaces. The safety of skateboard parks is equally desired by skateboarders as spaces where they are safe from being harassed and fined by authorities. The increased safety provided by skateparks positively impacts public perception and increases accessibility and comfort for the skaters. However, skaters remain mindful of the ways that these parks conversely reinforce the negative stereotypes and perceived dangers of skateboarding in other public spaces.

6.2.4 Skateparks and planting seeds for citizenship

Charlie Park is a gathering place for skaters, who are on full display in the heart of the city. Like the skater able to re-imagine an abandoned pool or park bench as a launch pad for their board, the story of Charlie Park taps into skater innovation and ability to imagine space beyond its

governance, recreation space, and the cultivation of personal responsibility'.; Jones and Graves, 'Power Plays in Public Space: Skateboard Parks as Battlegrounds, Gifts, and Expressions of Self'.

¹¹⁴ Ottawa Skateboard Community Association, *Recommendations to the City of Ottawa Re: Skateboard Park Construction and Management*.

¹¹⁵ Owens, 'Recreation and Restrictions: Community Skateboard Parks in the United States'. 794; Jones and Graves, 'Power Plays in Public Space: Skateboard Parks as Battlegrounds, Gifts, and Expressions of Self'. 137

expected and normal use. There is a long history of skaters expressing a claim to the city in a variety of ways; from unofficial appropriations of neglected or abandoned marginal spaces, to adaptive uses of everyday public space, and increasingly towards purpose-build facilities in underused parks such as McNabb. When Ottawa Skateboard Association requested that the City officially sanction and provide designated space for skateboarding, an activity which already occurred in and around the park, they also aimed to change public perception towards both the park and its users. Charlie Park succeeds at integrating skateboarding into the official vision of the neighbourhood as a positive force for both the skateboard and local community. As part of a contemporary trend in city-sanctioned skateparks initiated through grassroots skate community, Charlie Park is a story of an interesting shift in the conventionally radical outsider skate community (or some subset therein) who seem increasingly willing to and competent at participating in official city processes.

The rehabilitation of McNabb Park replays many of its inherited legacies from the Playground Movement of the early twentieth century that influenced the institution of public parks in inner urban areas. Closely linked to the beautifying impacts of greenspace and provision of public community space, the rationale for parks continues to be imagined as an opportunity to rehabilitate underused space for underserved residents, and to reclaim derelict space from delinquent users.¹¹⁶ Greenspace and nature are integral to the popular image of Canada: from its wide expanses of wilderness; to nature reserves and greenbelts; to suburban lawns and large parks. The inner urban park is something else. Historically, it is presented as an imperfect but critical analogue to nature that has the power to remedy the deficiencies of urban life and the urban disconnect from more natural and wholesome lifestyles. As McFarland explains: “The concern of citizens for those who lived in over-crowded squalor, with resultant high incidence of crime, disease and drunkenness led to the establishment of supervised playgrounds for children [...]”¹¹⁷ Both the Parks Movement and subsequent park rationales express a particular concern for youth. Charlie Park and other contemporary examples take it one step further. Beyond the park

¹¹⁶ “Throughout the early literature expressing the 'why' of playgrounds there appear to be two streams of thought, those who saw the programme as preventing social disorders such as delinquency and drunkenness, and those who saw opportunities for wholesome recreation as an individual's right.” McFarland, *The Development of Supervised Playgrounds*. 293

¹¹⁷ Ibid. 273

as a refuge from delinquency, and access to healthy recreation, both Ottawa Skateboard Association and the City link participation in public physical activity to community-building and fuller participation in all aspects of civic life.

In its report to the City, Ottawa Skateboard Association somewhat mistakenly says that the City does not recognize the citizenship potential of parks: “From a management perspective, what seems to be missing at this stage is a clear understanding of the patterns, trends and the potentially unique and beneficial role of regular, structured sport participation in the lives of today’s adolescents.”¹¹⁸ However, City of Ottawa documents, historically and continually, acknowledge this benefit of greenspace, but only generally. Convincing city managers of its application to skateboarders would prove to be the pivotal task for Ottawa Skateboard Association. Changing city managers’ perception of skateboarding also meant a campaign to reform the image of skateboarders among the general public who commonly, as Stratford notes, “constitute skating as jeopardizing the civic and commercial virtues of urban spaces and the rights of other users of those spaces.”¹¹⁹ Commonly held public images of skateboarders as not deserving of public facilities, as beyond rehabilitation, or as a risk to public facilities constituted a risk, contributing to the exclusion of the skatepark from the general narrative of public youth sporting facilities.

Throughout its campaign for Charlie Park, Ottawa Skateboard Association succeeded at presenting a different understanding of skateboarding to the public. The common perception of skateboarding and skateboarders as antisocial loners and undisciplined troublemakers was reversed to present a skate community that is highly structured, disciplined, and committed to improving the neighbourhood for all residents. This reformed perception was reinforced by the support of local fundraising and partnerships, the professional interactions of Ottawa Skateboard Association members with city managers, their rational presentation of data-driven evidence, and ongoing respectful and considerate use of the skatepark. Although they dispelled certain misrepresentations, Ottawa Skateboard Association can be criticized for excluding those skaters and forms of skateboarding that were seen as less desirable. Ottawa Skateboard Association carefully and consciously framed skateboarding as recreational, with particular focus on youth

¹¹⁸ Ottawa Skateboard Community Association, *Recreational Facility Proposal: McNabb Recreation Complex*. 4

¹¹⁹ Stratford, 'On the edge: a tale of skaters and urban governance'. 193

and inclusion. They overlooked many skaters, their needs and motivations, and ties to skate subculture. Many users of Charlie Park, and those who choose not to skate there, have argued that although park skating is valuable to the skate community, it is insufficient and cannot replace street skating. The purpose-built fabrication of space and community is, according to many skateboarders, less than authentic; they risk reducing skate to an athletic or leisure pursuit to be performed within the confines of a skatepark. Instead, they see the skatepark as practice space, not the real space of skate. Skateparks lack the dynamic and changing interactions of street skating, not to mention the lack of connection to renegade legacies of skating.

In *Skatepark as Neoliberal Playground*, Howell describes how skateparks in the past decade or two have increasingly been supported in the cadres of “encouraging specific character traits in young people, principally personal responsibility, self-sufficiency, and entrepreneurialism.”¹²⁰ Although there continues to be many forms and spaces of both sanctioned and illicit skateboarding across the city, Charlie Park and Ottawa Skateboard Association have become model examples of youth leadership and representatives of Ottawa skateboarding. As city staff note in a report on Skateboard and BMX parks to Community and Protective Services Committee: “Aside from the specifics of the park relocation, the skateboarders demonstrated a willingness to work with the City to provide expertise on the broader need for skateboard parks across the City.”¹²¹ As a result of such demonstrations, Ottawa Skateboard Association has secured a place at the planning table for nearly all public skateparks in Ottawa, not only as key participants through public consultation processes but as expert consultants. As Ottawa Skateboard Association sets its sight on legitimating other forms of skateboarding in the city, it remains to be seen to what extent its past strategies have fenced-in their public acceptance to fenced-in skateboarding or opened future possibilities of extending the right for skateboarders to use all kinds of public space.

¹²⁰ Howell, 'Skatepark as neoliberal playground: Urban governance, recreation space, and the cultivation of personal responsibility'. 476

¹²¹ Community and Protective Services Committee, *Skateboard and BMX parks - Interim strategy*.

6.3 Stories of mainstreet

6.3.1 Renewal of the urban mainstreet village character

Mainstreets are one of the seven urban land-use designations defined in the *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan*. The attention to mainstreets in the Plan reflects the overarching “Smart Growth” narrative found throughout the 2003 plan in the ways that it identifies opportunities to promote economic development, intensification, and “priority on people”:¹²²

The Mainstreet designation in the Plan identifies streets that offer some of the most significant opportunities in the city for renewal through more concentrated forms of development, a lively mix of uses and adherence to a more design-oriented approach to planning.¹²³

The mainstreet character and opportunity of Bank Street is given additional specific attention in the Central Area Secondary Plans. The vision for Bank Street to continue as “‘Main Street’ Ottawa” is immediately framed in the Plan both as a “revitalization” and “restoration” project, and as a design-oriented development:

A sense of "Old is New Again" will be conveyed as the Bank Street streetscape is revitalized, with the protection and enhancement of heritage buildings, the restoration of the original character of, and continuity between building facades, and the introduction of a consistent, vibrant streetscape treatment. Development will reflect a high quality of design, and contribute to a sense of human scale, resulting in a street level environment which is visually enjoyable. [...] The image and identity of the Core will be significantly enhanced through an urban design renaissance.¹²⁴

The narrative of the decline of Bank Street and the need for its revitalization can be traced through various city documents, proposals, and studies. The 1976 *Centretown Neighbourhood*

¹²² Andrew, *Trying to be world-class: Ottawa and the presentation of self*.

¹²³ The Mainstreet section of the Plan (3.6.3) was amended in July 2005. “The Mainstreet designation in this Plan identifies streets that offer some of the most significant opportunities in the city for intensification through more compact forms of development, a lively mix of uses and a pedestrian-friendly environment.” notably removing the “adherence to a more design-oriented planning approach to planning.” Note the shift in terminology from “renewal” to “intensification” and the replacement of “design-oriented approach to planning” with “a pedestrian-friendly environment”.

¹²⁴ City of Ottawa, *City of Ottawa Official Plan. Vol.2A - Secondary Plans. 1.0 Central Area*. section 1.14.1

*Study*¹²⁵ provides important precedence for how Downtown Bank Street was viewed prior to the 2020 Plan:

The declining urban quality of the [Bank Street Shopping] Promenade which has been permitted to occur progressively over the last number of years, seems to have been stabilized somewhat through the on-going efforts of the merchants and local federal government bodies. In many respects, the future of Centretown, as a viable residential community, hinges to some degree on the continued rejuvenation of its commercial vitality.¹²⁶

The deterioration of Bank Street as an urban mainstreet echoes that found in many urban centres across North America and is a central narrative to various proposed interventions such as those found in the *Report of the Task Force on Central Area Development* (1987), and *Revitalizing the Bank Street Corridor* (1995) prepared by Leaning & Associates, architects and planners.

A further important link connecting deterioration and revitalization comes from the designation of Bank Street between Gloucester and Catherine as part of the Centretown Heritage Conservation District in 1997.¹²⁷ The revitalization and restoration of a “traditional mainstreet”¹²⁸ becomes intertwined with a future vision for “commercial vitality” and “viable residential community”—where “Old is New Again”—or, as the *Downtown Ottawa Urban Design Strategy* (DOUDS) phrases it: “To recapture the rich history and past dignity of the street, Bank Street demands special focused attention. It must continue to be treated as a Main Street.”¹²⁹

The treatment of Bank Street as a Main Street is largely addressed through design-oriented approaches and improvements to the quality of the public realm. Beautification tops the

¹²⁵ The consultation process for the current CDP was not initiated until summer 2010 and not published until winter of 2013. Urban Strategies Inc., *Ottawa Centretown: A Community Design Plan for the Heart of Centretown*.

¹²⁶ Ottawa Planning Branch, *The Centretown Neighbourhood Study*. section 2.4

¹²⁷ designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act in 1997 (By-law 269-97)

¹²⁸ The plan distinguishes between two typologies of Mainstreets. Initially referred to as being of either “pre-war vintage” or “post-war vintage” (2003), the terminology was amended in 2005 to “Traditional Mainstreets” (i.e. “generally developed prior to 1945”) and “Arterial Mainstreets” (i.e. “generally developed after 1945”) City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan*. Section 3.6.3

¹²⁹ ---, *Downtown Ottawa Urban Design Strategy 20/20*. 8 General Precinct Strategies

DOUDS' Targeted Precinct Strategies for the Bank Street Corridor, followed by an intensification programme and urban open space programme:

Bank Street needs to be protected from further deterioration. At present, it is looking tired, fragmented and overly cluttered. As one of the most important and high profile shopping destinations in the downtown, it is critical that the quality of Bank Street be raised to a standard demanded by a regional shopping experience [...]

The quality and style of streetscaping and public realm improvements, including planting and landscaping, paving and street furniture, should transition seamlessly from the Capital to the Civic Realm [...]

By creating a better quality public realm and shopping environment along Bank Street, it will become more appealing for private investment and help to attract new businesses to the area.¹³⁰

This attention to material interventions as a strategy for renewal points to the general branding strategies found through the *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan* and secondary plans.¹³¹ The DOUDS recommends that a “Main Street theme” be promoted “in co-operation with Bank Street interests” and “that this theme is reflected by development within this area.”¹³² This strategy, curiously, entails thematizing and promoting the existing character—a mainstreet village—while simultaneously transforming public and potential investors’ perception of the street, from viewing it as a declining mainstreet to a revitalized one. In retrospect, it is hard to not stumble on the ambiguity of the word “village” in the DOUDS, for example, when it notes that “The village character at the intersection of Bank and Somerset Streets is very strong and will likely continue to evolve as a successful downtown meeting place.” There is clarification that this is an “urban village” in reference to the Somerset Village branding: “Promote Somerset Village as an urban village and a unique downtown entertainment node.”¹³³

¹³⁰ *ibid.* 8.39 Bank Street Beautification

¹³¹ Andrew, *Trying to be world-class: Ottawa and the presentation of self*.

¹³² City of Ottawa, *Downtown Ottawa Urban Design Strategy 20/20*. 1.14.3.b

¹³³ *ibid.* Section 8.

6.3.2 Ottawa's main mainstreet

Bank Street is Ottawa's main mainstreet. Counter to expectation, Bank Street is not named for a presence of major banking institutions, though the Bank of Canada Headquarters was built on its northern end by the early twentieth century. The street received its name from its historical geographic relationship, connecting the banks of the Ottawa River and the Rideau River. For many Ottawa neighbourhoods that intersect with the street, Bank Street is a principal commercial spine. As the north-south streetcar line of the Ottawa Electric Railway Company (1893-1959), Bank Street played an important role in the urban morphology of the city. The neighbourhoods of the Glebe and Old Ottawa South quickly evolved around the street as streetcar suburbs. As the former Highway 31, the roadway eventually stretched 75 kilometers South all the way to the Saint Lawrence River and the Canada-United States International Border. However, only the northern-most 40 kilometers of the roadway is referred to as Bank Street, where it terminates at the Ottawa city-limit at Belmeade Road.

Functionally and symbolically, the Downtown section of Bank Street occupies a zone of extreme and important transition between the federal and municipal function and identity of the city: with the Parliament Buildings, Supreme Court, Bank of Canada, Library and Archives Canada, Confederation Boulevard, etc. to the north; and the city that branches out almost symmetrically to the east, south, and west (see Appendix A: maps). The slogan on the homepage of the Bank Street BIA website asserts the significance of this: “#downtownbank at the intersection of everything: from Parliament to the 417 and everything in between.”¹³⁴ Downtown Bank falls between the formal and polished public image of the capital city and the more functional day-to-day residential and local life of the city.

Though many sections of Bank Street operate as commercial spines and principal transportation corridors, the traditional mainstreet typology is most clearly expressed in Centretown (from Wellington Street to the Queensway) and through the Glebe (from the Queensway to the Rideau Canal). The character of these two sections of Bank Street has reflected the different demographics of the surrounding residential area: the Glebe being higher income with a larger proportion of home ownership, and Centretown as more mixed-income with

¹³⁴ Retrieved from <https://www.bankstreet.ca/> [26 November 2018]

a high percentage of rental. The Glebe features mostly upper-end clothing and gift boutiques and conventional fine dining restaurants. Through Centretown, Bank Street offers a still relatively diverse mix of small retail and a lot of casual dining restaurants, largely targeted at lunch crowds from the central business district, and pubs and pizza-by-the-slice joints targeted at the late-night crowd.

Unlike many struggling traditional mainstreets, both the Glebe and Centretown Bank Street continue to operate as important daily shopping destinations for local residents, likely supported by the presence of large grocery stores. Though both sections have experienced periods of decline, particularly through the 1970s and 1980s, in recent years the Glebe has been seeing an influx of corporate chain and franchise businesses, largely within new-build development.¹³⁵ Meanwhile in Centretown, there has been an influx of trendy artisanal entrepreneurial restaurants, largely taking over from long-running and iconic businesses that have closed in recent years.¹³⁶

6.3.3 The street as spaces of activism and representation

Located between Toronto and Montreal, the country's two most prominent cities and cultural-economic centres both of which have active LGBT communities and well-recognized gay villages, Ottawa is often left in the shadow of these two cities. However, as the capital city, Ottawa is often used as a proxy to represent the governmental and judicial actions and values of the nation. As such, Ottawa is a place of great importance to the gay rights movement in Canada. The site of both the Parliament and the Supreme Court, Ottawa serves the symbolic and commemorative function of representing the advancement of gay rights in Canada including decriminalization of same-sex sexual activity in 1969, the guarantee of equal rights free of discrimination under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom in 1982, extension of

¹³⁵ e.g. Boston Pizza, Popeye's Chicken, Whole Foods, McDonald's, Shoppers' Drugmart

¹³⁶ e.g. Gongfu Bao (taking over the iconic corner shop Aziz and Company, opened in 1964 and closed in 2017), Meow That's Hot, Moo Shu Ice Cream,

common-law couple rights and benefits to same-sex couples in 2000, and nationwide sanction of same-sex marriage in 2005.¹³⁷

The lack of a recognizable and tangible gay village, therefore, seemed ironically “queer” for the capital city of a country so distinguished by its advancement of gay rights, social acceptance of diversity, visible gay community, and liberal ideals. Formal recognition and material manifestation of this symbolic and historic importance—not only to the LGBT community in Ottawa and across Canada, but also to Canadian identity more broadly—was pivotal to the narrative repeated throughout the campaign for official municipal recognition of The/Le Village.¹³⁸ The models of the gay village as significant material LGBT places in cities around the world were highly influential to the placemaking efforts for the Ottawa LGBT activists. The fit of Bank Street with various precedents and typologies of gay villages elsewhere, however, was not entirely consistent. Perhaps the two most recognizable and iconic villages, the Castro District in San Francisco and Greenwich Village in New York City, concretized their identity as gay villages around the site of significant protests, riots, and raids. Both of these villages also overlap with the village typologies (e.g., liminal neighbourhood and quasi-ethnic) found in many other gay villages around the world where the “village” identity emerges from a concentration of residents, businesses, and services.¹³⁹ In Ottawa, the challenge remained of connecting its dispersed community and its activist history to a concentrated material presence on the street today.

The Ottawa LGBT community connection to “the street” also represents a connection to both the narrative of broader gay rights movements and to the narrative of protest that is formative to many gay villages around the world. Because of its proximity to federal institutions, gay activists organizing in Ottawa largely evolved around gay rights-seeking and equality agendas. For example, EGALE (Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere) was established in

¹³⁷ Although this commonly propagated narrative is strongly resisted by some contemporary gay activists and scholars such as the Anti-69 movement that aims to debunk the “decriminalization” mythology. See <https://anti-69.ca/>

¹³⁸ Following the designation, Glen Crawford, the chair of the Village Committee said: “Ottawa now joins other world capital cities in having a GLBT-friendly village. This is long overdue considering how progressive a country we live in [...]” As quoted in: Fagan, *UPDATE: Village signs get mayoral approval*.

¹³⁹ Many gay villages were previously occupied by and identified with various marginal ethnic groups, eg) Le Marais was formerly a Jewish district, The Castro was known as Little Scandinavia

1986 by a group of lawyers, trade union activists, and public servants in Ottawa in order to fight for gay equality rights under the recently enacted Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982. This kind of organizing is distinct in approach and membership from more locally-oriented LGBT organizing in large cities elsewhere in Canada, which tended to be oriented more towards the provision of social programs and support.¹⁴⁰ As such, the gay rights movement in Ottawa was much more connected to litigious battles in courts and petitions to government than it was to public manifestation on the streets. In Le/The Village, the connection to political activism is brought to Bank Street largely through commemoration of historic narratives of protests and demonstrations, and to important individual figures in the movement. In most instances they are not specifically connected to the street itself but to Ottawa more generally.

The connection to the street is also largely expressed, again, with reference to other gay villages around the world, through the narrative of The/Le Village being anchored along a mainstreet with businesses owned by and that serve the LGBT community. In 1996 rainbow flags were installed at the corner of Bank and Gilmour by Wilde's erotica, PRIDE disco, and Camp B tavern, and discourse of a gay village in Ottawa began to emerge around this intersection of Bank. On the northern boundary of Le/The Village is the site of the last and longest-lived location of the GO (Gays of Ottawa) Centre, a significant, meaningful anchor in collective geography, situated locally at the intersection of Lisgar and Bank Streets (1985-1995). However, similar to the residential distribution of the gay community in Ottawa, LGBT services and businesses are spread throughout the fabric of the city. Several other possible locations could equally have argued their importance to the LGBT community. The bars and restaurants on Elgin Street, for example, were more commonly acknowledged as a hub of gay social life.¹⁴¹

Linked to both the street as place of demonstration and a main corridor, Pride parades also play an important role in the public recognition of LGBT place in the city. Interestingly,

¹⁴⁰ See Kinsman, *Queer Resistance and Regulation in the 1970s.*; Smith, 'Resisting and reinforcing neoliberalism: lesbian and gay organising at the federal and local levels in Canada'.; Lewis, 'Gay in a 'government town': the settlement and regulation of gay-identified men in Ottawa, Canada'.; ---, 'Ottawa's Le/The Village: Creating a gaybourhood amidst the 'death of the village''. Smith highlights these distinctions between local and federal gay organizing but also challenges the recognition/redistribution and identity/material binaries as ways of defining contemporary collective action. "The political opportunity structure shapes social movement activism by creating institutional and policy incentives for certain types of organizing." (78)

¹⁴¹ Boswell, *The Village People: Gay community breathes new life into seedy section of Centretown.*

Capital Pride traces its roots to a picnic at Strathcona Park in 1986. Since its first parade in 1989, Capital Pride has varied in scale and routes, rarely intersecting with much if any on Bank Street within the boundaries of Le/The Village even since designation. In 2018, the parade route only ran along 3 of the 6 blocks of the Bank Street village. Instead of proceeding primarily along the mainstreet of Le/The Village¹⁴², the parade route runs ten blocks along Kent Street a block West of Bank Street, turning onto Laurier to begin its decent along Bank Street two blocks North of The/Le Village and terminating at Somerset Street West, South of which is the five-block Bank Street Fair. Though the street fair coincides with Capital Pride celebrations, the street fair is explicitly branded as, and for the benefit of, the Bank Street BIA businesses.¹⁴³

While Le/The Village clearly draws from village typologies elsewhere, it is difficult to pinpoint the rationale for its specific geographic boundaries in Ottawa. Its connection to Bank Street seems somewhat tentative and partially contrived, falling far from conforming to the liminal neighbourhood typology, at least in the sense of geographic marginality or location outside the centre.¹⁴⁴ Rather than occupying more a liminal space in the city and evolving through organic necessity to serve the community, The/Le Village occupies Ottawa's main mainstreet through self-conscious branding. The discourse to centralize, recognize, and publicize LGBT community in Ottawa through the creation and designation of a gay village began to emerge, at least publicly, in the mid-1990s. Though neither uncontested nor immediately bought into a "gay village" matched the call for a "Main Street theme" with the additional benefits of representing a space of diversity, heritage, and offered potential for economic development and revitalization. Bank Street, among the contenders of possible locations to be designated Ottawa's "gay village", benefited from possible alignment with municipal planning strategies and the planned Bank Street Revitalization project.

¹⁴² By comparison, both the Santa Claus Parade and the Saint Patrick's Day Parade routes runs from City Hall, West on Laurier to Bank Street where it runs South on Bank Street for twenty-six blocks, through Centretown (including Le/The Village) and the full length of the Glebe. Ottawa Aboriginal Day Parade 2018 circled the Central Business Area with a police escort rather than road closures.

¹⁴³ The status of the street fair as not being explicitly part of Capital Pride, though considered by many as integral to Pride celebration, was brought to light in 2010 when the Bank Street BIA first changed the weekend of the fair to the week before Pride and then cancelled it all together. Capital Pride had for several years strategically offset the cost of hosting their own street fair by strategically "hooking onto the business association's celebration". Nease, *Bank Street gay village still sparring with group; Business community throws gay pride plans in lurch -- again*.

¹⁴⁴ See for example Collins, 'Sexual dissidence, enterprise and assimilation: Bedfellows in urban regeneration'.

6.3.4 Mainstreeting diversity: Gaybourhoods and mainstreaming revitalization

The battle for official designation of Ottawa's Le/The Village is framed as a battle for recognition, to visibly represent the LGBT community's right to space, specifically space that celebrates diversity and demonstrates the political and economic strength of the community. With recurring references to gay rights activism in Ottawa, the Village Committee regularly invokes the history and typology of a "traditional gay village" and positions itself within the legacies of Stonewall and the Castro. Activism is portrayed both through the organizing actions of the Village Committee but also through the commemoration of longer histories of gay activism in the city. The simultaneous campaign for symbolic recognition may be framed as the kind of alternative grassroots history and preservation movement that Gail Dubrow describes in *Lavender Landmarks Revisited*.¹⁴⁵ LGBT communities have been excluded not just from spatial-material presence in the city, but also from mainstream histories of the city. As a result, Dubrow notes how LGBT communities are increasingly working to claim their right to the city through grassroots projects to preserve and interpret their own history in the city, and not just a claim to physical space.

In addition to being a place to recognize a heritage of activism, Le/The Village is also frequently framed as a claim to recognize a legitimate urban territory and therefore legitimate place of belonging for the LGBT community. When reformulated around issues of identity and community, many "gaybourhoods" are conceived of as, and compared to, ethnic enclaves. These "quasi-ethnic community models" link structural similarities of gaybourhoods to ethnic enclaves.¹⁴⁶ In these models, spatial constitution emerges out of needs of a M/AG to provide specialized services and common gathering spaces.¹⁴⁷ Many such enclaves therefore become centred on commercial mainstreets similar to The/Le Village. From the perspective of the public gaze, these ethnic mainstreets link the visibility of a marginalized identity to commercial enterprise. For M/AGs, these mainstreets not only provide them with specialized services and

¹⁴⁵ Dubrow and Goodman, *Restoring women's history through historic preservation*.

¹⁴⁶ See for example: Murray, 'The institutional elaboration of a quasi-ethnic community'; Epstein, 'Gay politics, ethnic identity: the limits of social constructionism'.

¹⁴⁷ "Factors examined included having a concentration of residences of the group, a fairly complete array of commercial enterprises and services, collective action, a sense of history of the group, shared norms, conflict management." Forsyth, *Queering Planning Practice: Understanding Non-Conformist Populations*. 30

make their identity visible on the street, but also proclaim the rights and economic strength of the group within the city.

There is a notable difference, however, between Le/The Village and Ottawa's nearby Chinatown or Little Italy. The latter two evolved over the latter half of the twentieth century, just beyond the historic core of the city along secondary mainstreets of Somerset and Preston. The authenticity of The/Le Village is frequently challenged for consciously fabricating a mainstreet presence by branding an identity onto a mainstreet, Ottawa's main mainstreet, no less. Though missing the slow evolution and historic claim to Bank Street, Le/The Village clearly participates in the kind of contemporary material claims, also adopted by the BIAs of Chinatown and Little Italy, to self-consciously brand the street with legible markers—especially street furniture, murals, and street blades—that reinforce a specific cultural-commercial identity. Perhaps the key difference is that Le/The Village was able to mobilize the political and economic strength of the community to establish a neighbourhood. Conversely, in the traditional ethnic enclave model, particularly as it relates to new immigrant residents, political and economic strength emerge over time from the community-building capacity of the neighbourhood.

Like ethnic enclaves, gaybourhoods are generally located in more marginal areas of the city, beyond the public eye, where difference and sexuality were less regulated, and where property values were low.¹⁴⁸ Although Bank Street was showing signs of decline, it was still very much within the mainstream public geography of the city as Ottawa's main mainstreet, making it a curious site for Le/The Village when compared to iconic gaybourhoods elsewhere invoked by the Village Committee. Furthermore, despite its clear and conscious branding, Le/The Village seems to exhibit a kind of visibility hidden in plain sight. Looking instead to Canadian and queer examples, perhaps The/Le Village is not as unusual as it may seem. Julie Podmore describes Montreal's Boulevard St-Laurent as an important lesbian space where the mainstreet condition lends itself to being a space of multiple diversity.¹⁴⁹ Rather than explicitly branded single-use, single-identity space (whether mainstream or marginalized/alternative), mainstreets can instead be described as, and recognized as, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, mixed-income, multi-generational spaces. These different identities and uses are legible at different times to different

¹⁴⁸ Collins in Lewis, 'Ottawa's Le/The Village: Creating a gaybourhood amidst the 'death of the village''. 234

¹⁴⁹ Podmore, 'Lesbians in the crowd: gender, sexuality and visibility along Montréal's Boul. St-Laurent'.

people. Though not historically recognized as a gay street, Bank Street clearly has a layered history that includes many important sites and meanings for the LGBT community.

While performing its many symbolic and practical functions for Ottawa's LGBT community, Le/The Village also suggests the form of cosmopolitan urban landscape. Lewis argues that the gay community of Ottawa is integrated as one of many identities throughout the city; similarly, Le/The Village can be viewed as constituting one of many layers of identity and difference on Bank Street.¹⁵⁰ Rather than a place to be safe to pursue and express a singular non-normative lifestyle and identity, Le/The Village offers a space of inclusion based on full participation in the norms of mainstreet life. In this sense, The/Le Village is, perhaps, more often experienced as a diversity Village than as an explicitly LGBT Village. Most often, to most people, it is experienced simply as a commercial mainstreet. The popular defining aspect of the place and people, is perhaps most accurately reflected in the comment by Mayor Jim Watson, cited in the introduction to this dissertation, that The Village "shows how inclusive and open our society is." In the end, The/Le Village supports the *Ottawa 2020 Official Plans* strategies for: beautification, improvement, and revitalization; diversity and inclusion; and all closely tied to "Why the Village is good business."¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Lewis, 'Ottawa's Le/The Village: Creating a gaybourhood amidst the 'death of the village'.

¹⁵¹ The title of the brochure distributed by the Village Committee to Bank Street businesses

7 PUNK COUNTER-NARRATIVES

To consider non-public experiences of M/AG placemaking, this chapter presents stories from my own experiences in the Ottawa punk scene through zines, songwriting, and counter-narratives. To understand how I am critically positioning this auto-ethnography within narratives of planning, placemaking, community, and social justice, this chapter begins with a literature review on punk identity, subcultural scenes, and practices.

7.1 Place of punk in and against the city

Punk is notoriously resistant to defining what it is and who we are, more likely to declare something not punk than to identify something as punk. The question “what is punk?” is meant to destabilize and point out prejudices, expectations, and social codes about what is normal. Punk can be used as an adjective such as punk scenes, punk music, punk fashion, or punk culture. As a noun, punk may refer to an individual or to any or all of punk. Punk is often used colloquially as a derogatory term for a delinquent, antisocial troublemaker, whether the individual has any connection to punk subculture or not. While participation in certain punk activities may, in some instances, be considered a hobby or lifestyle choice, being punk is not. For many, being in a punk band, wearing punk clothes, or having a punk hairstyle are ways of being in community, but none are mandatory or sufficient qualifications for being punk. For punks in academia and academics studying punk, we lean into and work with the messiness of the ill-defined term that frustrates reviewers. Zack Furness explains that this non definition “isn’t out of laziness [...]” but rather because:

punk is neither a homogenous ‘thing’ nor is it reducible to a specific time, location, sound or a select number of vinyl records and live performances. Its various meanings, as any self-respecting punk knows all too well, are subject to wild fluctuation and widespread debate.¹

Resistance against punk as a definable subject—whether through its origins, demographic profiles, key events, or actors—is a resistance against predetermined authoritative categories of belonging that decide what punk is or was, or who gets to be punk. Furness argues that “what

¹ Furness, *Introduction: Attempted education and righteous accusations*. 10

gets missed” by trying to define what punk is, “[...] are the everyday practice, processes, struggles, ruptures, and people that make it so interesting in the first place.”²

Narratives about the origins and originators of punk tend to present two stories of disenfranchised youth, one born from the “nameless housing estates, anonymous dole queues, slums-in-the-abstract”³ in the United Kingdom, and the other found amongst bored middleclass suburban teenagers in North America.⁴ Despite the commonly highlighted differences, both British and American punk’s post-war origins make the link between the socio-economic status of punks with their built environment and political context. Youth subculture emerges as “collective reaction to structural changes,” and “centred around an ongoing ‘hegemonic’ struggle.”⁵ With its rejection of social norms, punk as youth subculture is read as both resistance and delinquency. As with other forms of youth subculture, the dismissal of punk as a rebellious and antisocial adolescent phase is a means to depoliticize the disruptions its counterculture poses to the status quo. The effectiveness and authenticity of punk as subculture is famously challenged by the phrase ‘punk is dead.’ Punk subculture quickly became seen as a sell-out, easily sanitized and normalized into mainstream pop culture. Rebellion through style and spectacle were not only subject to dismissal but also “amenable to commodification.”⁶

Though they tell compelling stories tailored to their respective contexts, these two common narrative of punk have been refuted.⁷ Many scholars of punk, and many punks themselves, have argued that the public history of punk and the public characterization of punk privilege the stories and presence of its white male participants. Popular representations of punk as an aggressive white male youth subculture have frequently coded punk as non-inclusive of women, queer, and BIPOC folk. Within punk, these male-centric narratives have been criticized

² Ibid. 18

³ Hebdige, *Subculture, the meaning of style*. 65

⁴ Sutherland, *Perfect youth : the birth of Canadian punk*.; Duncombe and Tremblay, *White riot: Punk rock and the politics of race*.

⁵ Bennett and Kahn-Harris, *After subculture : critical studies in contemporary youth culture*. 5

⁶ Clark, 'The death and life of punk, the last subculture'. 224

⁷ Hebdige, *Subculture, the meaning of style*.; Duncombe and Tremblay, *White riot: Punk rock and the politics of race*.; Wadkins, “‘Freakin’ Out’: Remaking Masculinity through Punk Rock in Detroit’.

for erasing punk's feminist, queer, and anti-racist presence, legacies, and struggles.⁸ Griffin argues that “while punk rock has been made famous, by and large, by white men, it was copiously influenced, expanded, and built upon in meaningful ways by Black men.”⁹ In her work on subculture, Angela McRobbie challenges the presumed non-participation of girls in youth subculture by distinguishing between their presence and their visibility.¹⁰ She argues that visibility, especially visibility in popular representations, may “reflect the more general social subordination of women in mainstream culture” rather than the actual experience of their participation and contributions.¹¹ McRobbie's challenge to think about presence and visibility leads to key considerations about inclusion and participation in punk spaces, how they contribute to belonging and identity in the scene, and about whose participation is made visible and to whom.

By challenging the mainstream cis hetero male representations of punk from the outside and its presence in punk from the inside, counter-narratives emerge where “the affinities between lesbian, feminist, trans, and gay people and the punk subculture was immediate, definitive, and far more enduring.”¹² Speaking from their own experiences at the intersections of punk and queer, a few scholars point to punk as queer space, as queer performance, as queer theory, as queer temporality.¹³ These counter-narratives celebrate ways that women, queer folk, and people of colour have shaped and been shaped by punk. Nault explains that contrary to commonly assumed contention between the two subcultures, “punk inspires queer, and queer arouses punk.”¹⁴ This literature does not deny that conflict, hostility, discrimination, or systemic oppression are present in punk scenes. It does question whether conflicts are any more acute than

⁸ Duncombe and Tremblay, *White riot: Punk rock and the politics of race.*; Gonzales, *Spitboy Rule: Tales of a Xicana in a Female Punk Band.*; Reddington, *The Lost Women of Rock Music: Female Musicians of the Punk Era.*; Way, 'Punk is just a state of mind: Exploring what punk means to older punk women'.

⁹ Wadkins, “‘Freakin’ Out’: Remaking Masculinity through Punk Rock in Detroit’. 240

¹⁰ McRobbie, *Settling accounts with subculture: A feminist critique.*

¹¹ Ibid. 14

¹² Sharp and Nilan, 'Floorgasm: Queer(s), solidarity and resilience in punk'.; Nyong'o, 'Do you want queer theory (or do you want the truth)? Intersections of punk and queer in the 1970s'. 108

¹³ Halberstam, 'What's that smell? Queer temporalities and subcultural lives'.; Muñoz, *Queers, Punks and the Utopian Performative.*; Nyong'o, 'Do you want queer theory (or do you want the truth)? Intersections of punk and queer in the 1970s'.

¹⁴ Nault, *Queercore : queer punk media subculture.* 16

in mainstream spaces. The argument this literature does often make is that punk offers alternative relationships to difference, conflict, and power, ones where injustice can be confronted more readily and more directly by those affected.¹⁵

Perhaps the most uncontested approach defining punk describes it in term of the punk ethos—a still messy concept that combines politics, philosophy, and practices of punk subculture. Once again defined more in terms of what it is not, punk ethos is positioned as anti-authoritarian and anti-establishment. Punk ethos includes practices of resistance and difference that “reject oppressive and exclusive aspects of mainstream society.”¹⁶ Punk frequently aligns with social causes and movements, including veganism, tenant and worker unions, anti-capitalism, anti-racism, anti-war and liberation movements, land back, abolition, feminist and queer movements, and animal rights. As anti-establishment, punk practices its politics through direct action approaches of grassroots, anarchism, and Do-It-Yourself (DIY). There is disagreement about the definition or authenticity of these terms as they apply to punk. Dunn notes: “resistance to applying a universal definition of anarchy. A familiar refrain was ‘Anarchy, to me, means ...’ thus embracing the subjectivity of any conceptualization of the term.”¹⁷ Dunn goes on to say that “many punks use the term anarchism more as a catchphrase to show their punk ‘credibility’ than to express any affinity to the political philosophies behind it.”¹⁸ For many others, the punk ethos, and its grassroots and DIY proclivities, are “not just creative practice but a sociopolitical lifeline for women, queers, people of color, and all those that dominant forces attempt to keep disenfranchised, unproductive and off-scene.”¹⁹

The dissonance that many authors observe between “punk’s nebulous political ideology and the complexity of how this plays out in practice,”²⁰ leaves space for difference and disagreement. As Wadkin writes, “punk may be a conversation between cultures, an amalgamation of symbols, styles, and sounds that has consistently crossed borders and social

¹⁵ Duncombe and Tremblay, *White riot: Punk rock and the politics of race.*; Avery-Natale, *Ethics, politics, and Anarcho-punk identifications: Punk and anarchy in Philadelphia.*

¹⁶ Griffin, *Gendered Performance Performing Gender in the DIY Punk and Hardcore Music Scene.* 67

¹⁷ Dunn, 'Anarcho-punk and resistance in everyday life'. 205

¹⁸ Ibid. 215

¹⁹ Nault, *Queercore : queer punk media subculture.* 15

²⁰ Griffin, *Gendered Performance Performing Gender in the DIY Punk and Hardcore Music Scene.* 74

categories.”²¹ Clark argues that contemporary punk subcultures tend to forego the “performances of anarchy” and regroup around the “practice of anarchism.” Punk as practice is not only a rejection of dominant culture but is also more resistant to being neutralized through appropriation than were the performative and stylistic confrontations of its early forms. He finds that “contemporary punk subcultures, may therefore choose to avoid spectacle-based interaction with dominant culture.”²² Yet it is difficult not to relate punk to spectacle, most literally through its frequent categorization as a “scene” and the theatrical origins of the term. The academic use of scene attempts to capture elements not entirely satisfied by subculture theory. In his reflections on “some things a scene might be,” Straw proposed to think of them as “*ethical worlds* shaped by the working out and maintenance of behavioural protocols” and as “*spaces of mediation* which regulate the visibility and invisibility of cultural life and the extent of its intelligibility to others.”²³

Both the efforts to describe punk as subculture or scene link the community of practice with the spaces of practice. Griffin makes the argument that punk may be thought of in terms of Benedict Anderson’s imagined communities with its fluid “temporal, spatial, and cultural boundaries.”²⁴ The sparse but intriguing scholarship on punk space—from restaurants, to squats, to zines, to everyday spaces and the urban underground—similarly describe the practices of punk space as political resistance and normative refusals, as aesthetically differentiated, and as spaces of mutual aid and community care.²⁵ Punk is practiced in spaces of difference where it is possible to practice alternative worlds and ways of being by performing resistance, refusing norms, and negotiating difference. Attempts to define punk and other subculture scenes through visible normative categories of identity undermine the radical potential of these communities, as Cohen argues, in “determining one’s political comrades” through “one’s relation to power.”²⁶ The rejection of a unified or unifying movement, politics, or identity leaves space for “a

²¹ Wadkins, “‘Freakin’ Out’: Remaking Masculinity through Punk Rock in Detroit’. 241

²² Clark, ‘The death and life of punk, the last subculture’. 232

²³ Straw, ‘Some Things a Scene Might Be’. 477 (emphasis in original)

²⁴ Griffin, *Gendered Performance Performing Gender in the DIY Punk and Hardcore Music Scene*. 68-69

²⁵ Clark, ‘The raw and the rotten: Punk cuisine’.; Lohman, *Punk Lives On: Generations of Punk and Squatting in the Netherlands*.; Pine, ‘Cold Press: Early Punk Fanzines in Canada’s Capital’.; Sonnichsen, *Capitals of Punk : DC, Paris, and circulation in the urban underground*.

²⁶ Cohen, ‘Bulldaggers, Punks and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?’. 438

perpetual process grounded in the praxis of everyday life more than a utopian end-point created by the political imagination.”²⁷ In stark contrast to planning and progressive city-building, “one frequent criticism [of punk] is that there is both a lack of consensus and no common plan for the future.”²⁸ This disorderly punk production of space and identity, or perhaps of non-place and non-identity, presents and represents conflict to the desired orderly production of public space.

²⁷ Dunn, 'Anarcho-punk and resistance in everyday life'. 216

²⁸ Ibid. 215

“KEY CHANGE”

"Jam's over. We're going to the Monkey for a drink. You should come."

It's late and rainy and cold. Just a little too far to walk, a little too cold to bike. My friend rejects my excuses.

"Take a taxi, I'll cover your drinks."

I hate taking taxis but maybe just this once. I get dressed, walk to the corner, and hail a cab.

"Hi, I'm going to the Orange Monkey at City Centre."

"Where's that? What street?"

"Uhm, City Centre Drive?"

The Orange Monkey is a dive bar and poolhall at City Centre, a 1960s warehouse building and complex off an old rail line on the edge of the downtown core. It was once voted 'Ottawa's greatest eyesore.' Capital Recording Studios, where my band and many of my friends' bands have jam space had recently moved in upstairs and a new underground venue was hosting shows.

I give directions to the taxi driver. We pull up outside the Monkey.

"Here?" he says in disbelief.

"Yes."

"I can't let you out here, miss. I don't think it's safe."

I saw what he saw. The expansive parking lot with more potholes than cars. The sad crumbling concrete garage bays that look even sketchier in the rain. I know to him this unfamiliar decrepit space codes this space as 'not safe.' But I know this space. I've been here many times. I know this bar. I have friends inside. It's ugly but that is part of what coded this space as punk.

Now, about eight years later, the garage bays are inhabited by a popular bakery, microbrewery, makerspace, bike shop, crossfit gym, axe throwing space, art gallery, and other trendy businesses. The new light rail transit station at the end of the street and planned transit-oriented-development that will include two of the tallest towers in Ottawa is set to become a 'community hub.'

Many still get lost as they try to find this mystery space just outside common knowledge of the city, but the visibility, accessibility, and attractiveness of a rehabilitated City Centre are rapidly changing in ways that we know won't leave much space for punk space.

What is punk? Does Ottawa even have a punk scene?

Is it safe?

Do I belong?

Yes, buried beneath the carefully curated and manicured image of the National Capital, the punk scene hides in plain sight. What about our image of punk and our image of Ottawa make their coexistence in the same space so unimaginable? Perhaps more importantly, from whose perspective and for whose ends are those images constructed? While the planning interests of "town and crown" notoriously and continually conflict, they are allowed to coexist and together form and reinforce the city's identity. Perhaps it is because both town and crown agree that the National Capital ought to uphold the Great Canadian myth of multiculturalism and neoliberal democratic expectations of a safe, inclusive, and accessible city. The boundaries of the category of punk are ill-defined, fluid, contextual, and occasionally come into conflict with our other identities and ways of identifying ourselves and others.

7.2 Otta-woke: So progressively unprogressive

in the dark on empty streets
 deserted parks and alleys
 see em there lurkin schemin
 hidden threats to your safety
 avert your eyes avoid the area
 clean it up tear it down
 repackage for your comfort

 everybody welcome, a city for all
 vous etes bienvenue, une ville pour tous

 a little too otta-woke
 a little too beaucoup

 rebrand revitalize gentrify yimbyfy
 nothing overly complicated
 just good ol fashioned free range
 crowdsource artisanal sustainable innovative
 so progressively unprogressive

 a little too otta-woke

 offensive defenseless lives get upended
 glitter bombs and insta callouts
 letters to your councillor
 post it to social media
 mazel tov you saved the world
 save us your moral outrage

 a little too otta-broke
 a little too otta-joke
 a little too otta-woke²⁹

²⁹ Bad Missionary, *Ottawoke*. Demo Recording. Written by Sarah Gelbard. Performed by Bad Missionary. Ottawa

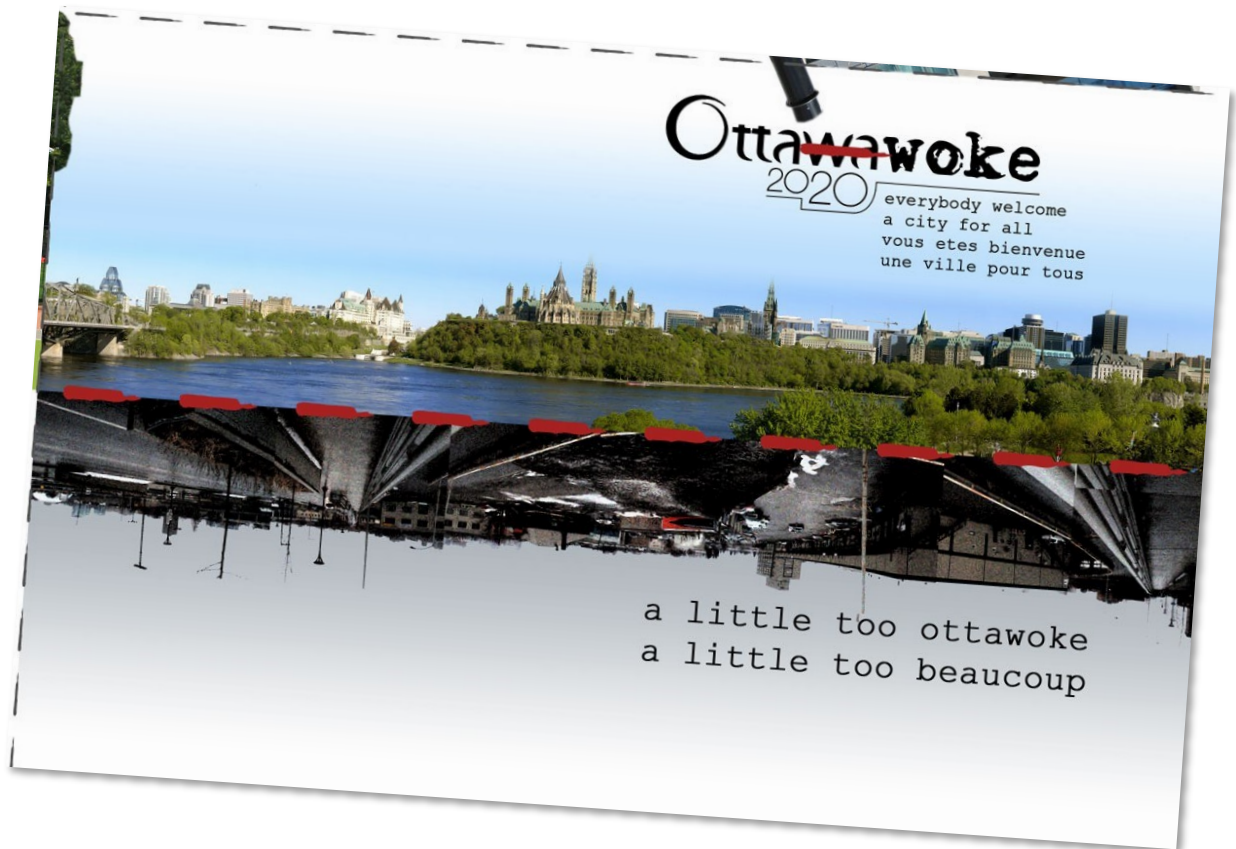


Figure 7.1 *Ottawoke* zine, front (right side) and back (left side) cover spread. By author. June 2021.

In what I imagine as a cover remix of the classic song of planning, the three verses of *Ottawoke* repeat the urban narrative that lead the city through a history of decline, modern renewal, contemporary urbanist embraces of creative revitalization, activism, and the conflicting gentrified futures projected for both punks and developers. *Ottawoke* speaks to the “woke” performance of participatory placemaking by planning and the public in Ottawa.³⁰ The popular and official embrace of creative, inclusive, participatory placemaking is presented as rebranded, reformulated narratives of urban renewal reenergized by neoliberalism, localism, and activism. *Ottawoke* repeats and undermines the foundational narrative of planning and public placemaking as future public growth for “a city for all/une ville pour tous.”

In the *Ottawoke* zine, the upper half of the page layouts represent the “woke” narrative of participatory placemaking as positively contributing to good city-building that is forward-

³⁰ Kanai and Gill, 'Woke? Affect, neoliberalism, marginalised identities and consumer culture'.

looking, civically minded, and improves the quality of life (Figure 7.1). Future public growth directs the logical progress of the city from decline, inequity, and potential towards renewal, inclusion, and prosperity. Throughout the pages of the zine, photos of the Arts, Fashion and Theatre District on Rideau Street, Le/The Village on Bank Street, and McNabb Park illustrate the material presence of the values promoted through public documents and official statements. Juxtaposed critical images, reflections, and frameworks in the lower half of the layouts, represent participatory placemaking as performative “woke-washing” used to legitimize the dominant socio-political order and perpetuating systems of oppression. By making visible the erased experiences and obscured knowledge about the process and outcomes of city-building by marginalized and/or alternative groups, the critical voices discussed in 6.2 help to re-author the narratives to include the logics, expectations, and that underwrite the dominant and dominating narratives.

The subnarratives of *Ottawoke* demand the revision of the thematic place-based plots reproduced in the three case stories to include additional critical clauses examined in each of the three page spreads of the zine.

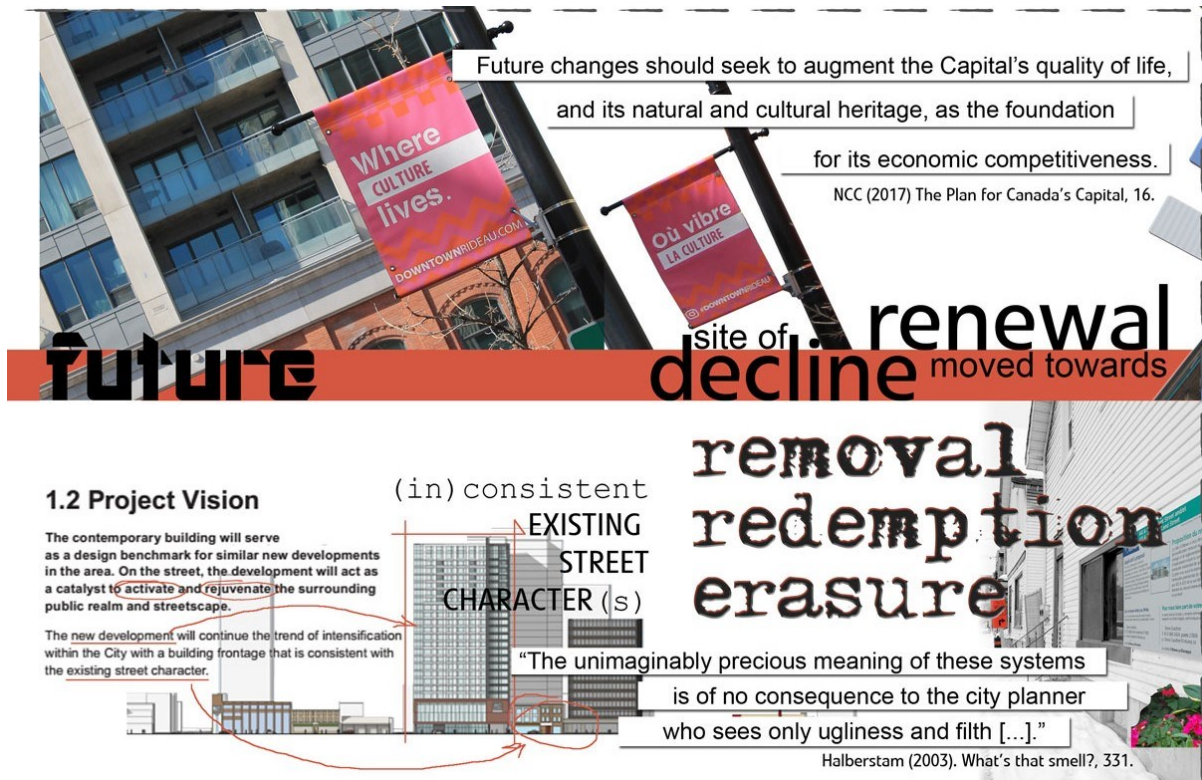


Figure 7.2: "Future." Ottawoke zine, pages 1 & 2

The dangerous city in decline moved towards renewal is also moved towards removal (Figure 7.2): The decline-renewal narrative centres the future on the comfort, desires, and interests of the public by resolving unsafe, undesirable, and underperforming people and places. The work to guarantee a prosperous future and improved quality of life for all, obscures the inequitable present circumstances of life and different experiences of the existing character of communities and neighbourhoods. Material improvements and investments redirect the future benefits away from existing undesirable uses and users towards those more desirable. This redirection may remove the undesirable to make place for the desirable, reform the undesirable into desirable, or erase the past or present of the undesirable.



Figure 7.3: "Public." Ottawoke zine, pages 3 & 4

The city as site of injustice moved towards inclusion is also moved towards integration (Figure 7.3): The injustice-inclusion narrative centres the public in claims of access and ownership of people and place by integrating previously excluded people and places under public conditions of citizenship and property. Inclusion works to publicize the social benefits and privatize the economic benefits of the cultural capital and production of previously excluded subculture. Processes of approval, assimilation, and appropriation redirect the exclusive community group benefits of cultural reproduction away from subculture towards public values and private profits. This redirection may normalize, institutionalize, or commodify difference and diversity into a public good and public experience.



Figure 7.4: "Growth." Ottawoke zine, pages 5 & 6

The city as site of potential moved towards prosperity is also moved towards precarity (Figure 7.4): The potential-prosperity narrative centres growth on maximizing the productivity of work and resources to create public value. Investment logics depend on the extraction of value from human capital and material resources and the expectation of creating surplus value in the form of improved liveability and prosperity. Character and culture are branded and commodified as an impetus for revitalization and economic development. The naturalization of growth as progress demands strategic management to maximize gains and redirect risk. The responsibilization and economization of social engagement by neoliberal logics redirects both work and material resources away from responsibly and responsively providing the basics of community care towards the most efficient production and extraction of capital wealth.

7.3 Not my city: Non-public punk placemaking

when i left you behind
 didn't expect you'd ever change
 but everytime i come to town
 feels the same. somehow strange

hundred reasons to go
 not enough to make me stay
 but then i fall under your spell
 wonder why i ever left

not my city not my city
 not my city anymore

walk the streets at night can't find my way home
 changing skylines old landmarks fade away
 been here before can never go back

cold at first never let me in
 waited for a spring it never came
 mountain was too high to climb
 gave up everything i though i ever wanted

so i left you behind
 no regret no fear
 but i'll always love you dear
 just not my city anymore

walk the streets at night can't find my way home
 changing skylines old landmarks fade away
 been here before can never go back
 can never go back
 can never go back³¹

³¹ Bad Missionary, *Not my city*. Demo released May 2019. Written by Sarah Gelbard. Performed by Bad Missionary.

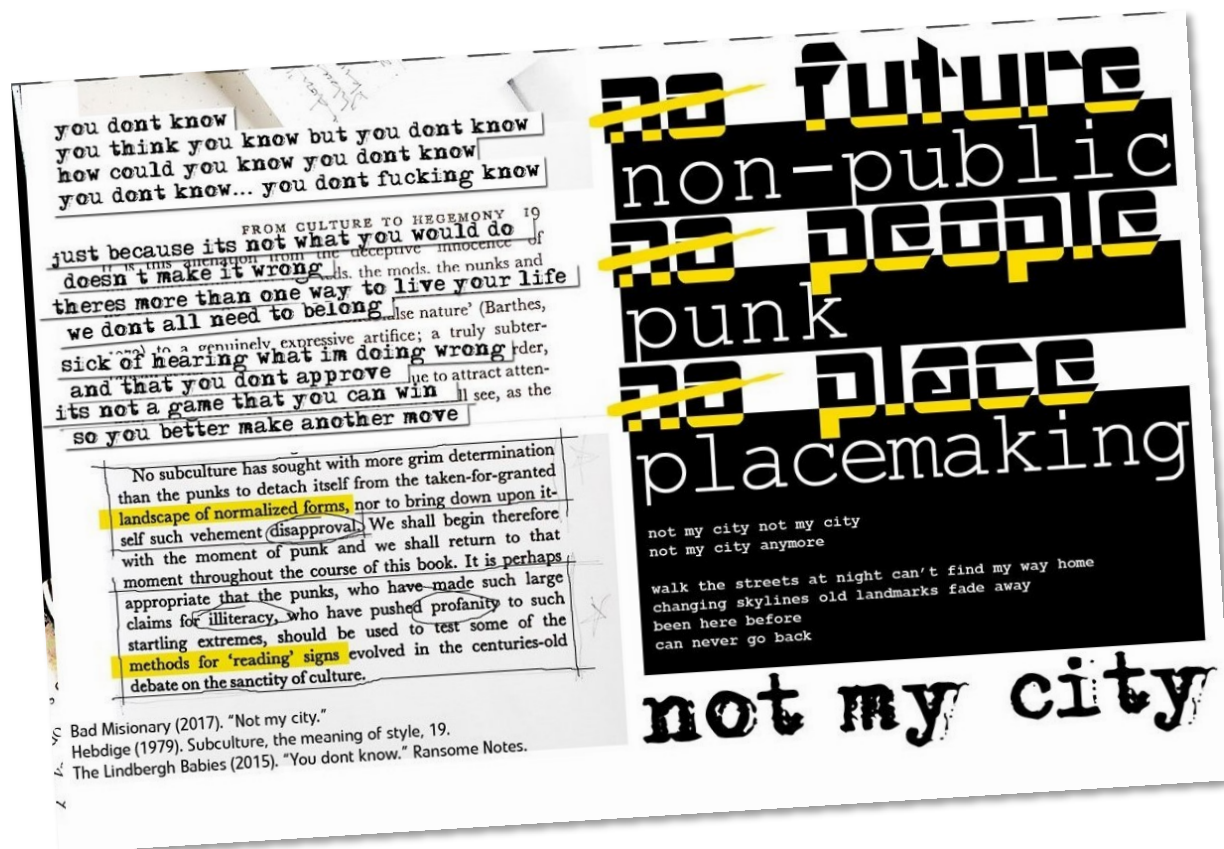


Figure 7.5: *not my city* zine, front (right side) and back (left side) cover spread. By author. June 2021.

In what I imagine as a break-up song with the city I love but can no longer love, *not my city* reflects on non-linear temporality, disconnected belonging, and displacement. *not my city* speaks to the intimate connections and bonds I have made and broken with both people and places in cities, the struggle to move forward while lamenting change, the struggle to belong, and the sometimes misguided pursuit of desires that failed to see what was always there and what I really wanted. *not my city* holds multiple realities of multiple cities and multiple experiences together. The song struggles with knowing the city as I know it is not the city others see. It is not the city I see represented in the projects I witness being built or in the plans I see for its future. I struggle to see myself or my city in those plans. *not my city* struggles with the experience where the city I am in both is and is not my city.

On the front cover of the *not my city* zine, the strike-through of the “no’s” before “future, people, and place” is a refusal of the narratives that frame the punk scene as the antithesis of the good city (Figure 7.5). This negation of the negative deploys radical negativity of punk as non-

public to undermine the narrative of participatory placemaking, marking place for the punk counter-narrative to take place. The three inside page layouts present radical negativity of resistance and refusal as punk reactions against oppressive narratives and systems that participate in productions of future, people, and place that threaten to remove, assimilate, and displace divergent ways of being and dissenting claims to and about the city. The zine collects and assembles fragments of academic texts, photos of punk spaces, and punk song lyrics to offer counter-narratives, counter-temporalities, counter-cultures, and counter-geographies. Finally, the back cover challenges the non-punk reader to challenge their “methods for ‘reading’ signs” once they have been detached from “the taken-for-granted landscape of normalized forms.”³² In the non-public not-for-public punk space of this zine, be warned: “you think you know but you don’t know / how could you now.”³³ The counter-narratives of *not my city* refuse participatory placemaking with the following counter logics, values, and processes for future people places.



Figure 7.6: “No future.” *not my city* zine, pages 1 & 2

³² Hebdige, *Subculture, the meaning of style*. 19.

³³ The Lindbergh Babies, *You don't know*.

Punk refusals of progressive utopias by taking-place in the apocalyptic present (Figure 7.6): Punks know that the utopia that is desired and being produced by planning and the public moves towards renewal by removing any threat to the social order. Undesirables are at risk of assimilation or annihilation. Punks reject the utopian alternatives of redemption or punishment offered by the “civilizing” social order of the “planner’s dreams.” With “no foreseeable future” for deviant desires, punks refuse the conditions of their inclusion in utopia and ground themselves in the apocalyptic present. Our refusal does not mean punk is without future. Punk participates in radical counter-temporalities that move against linear progressive narratives that work to guarantee the future is nothing more than a reproduction of the present status quo. Punks do not want to renew, revitalize, or rejuvenate the material order if it leaves the rotten and rotting social order unchanged. Denied place in the future civilized order, punk takes place to “[let] young punks imagine a time and place where their desires are not toxic.”³⁴

I frame this radical act of “taking-place” both in its connotation of taking over space but also in the sense of that which is happening in the present. Punk practices of material presence through graffiti, posters, stickers become radical ways of marking a present claim to place and marking our presence in that place at this time. These acts of taking-place by place-marking are refusals to recognize the property rights or propriety standards used to order and control space. This counter-logic is also practiced in punk squatting and tendency to locate punk scenes in undesirable neighbourhoods. Taking-place is not a claim of entitlement to property or taking place from others. These are practices of taking-place that has been discarded or disregarded as no-longer or not-yet valuable. The act of marking brings new and openly contested layered meaning to the spaces without necessarily erasing the past or alternate meanings.

³⁴ Muñoz, *Queers, Punks and the Utopian Performative*. 14

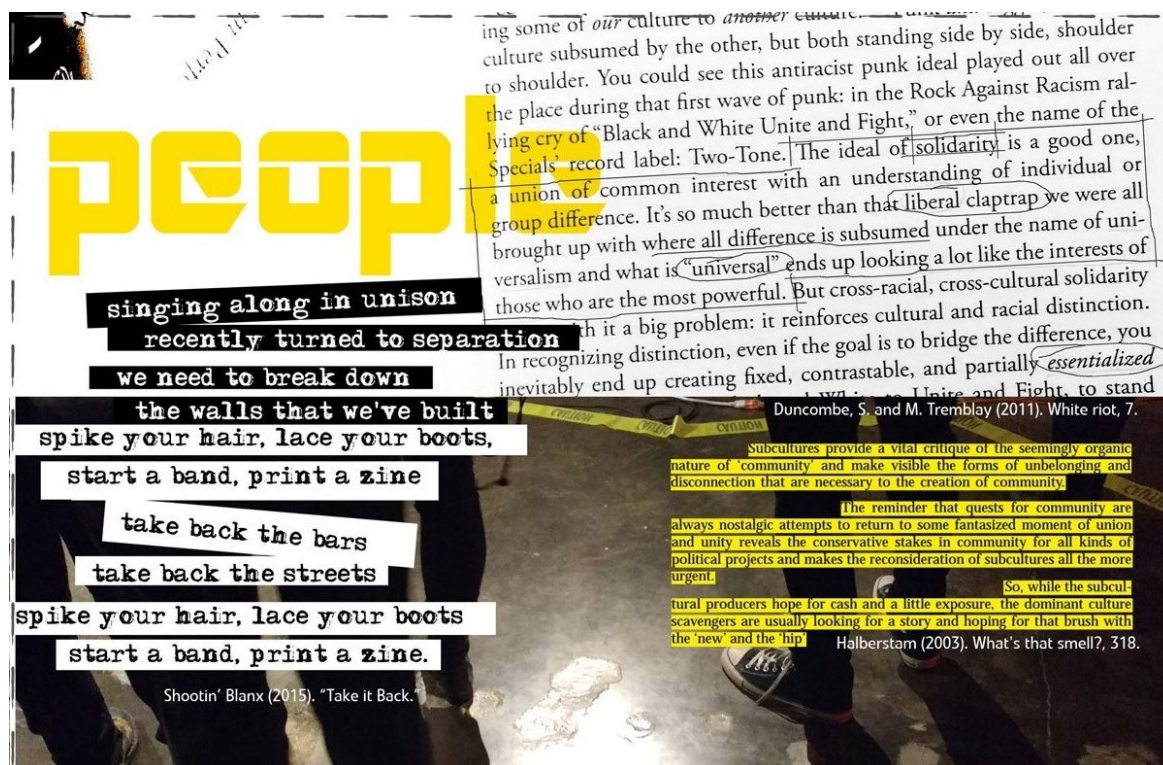


Figure 7.7: "No people." not my city zine, pages 3 & 4

Punk refusals of public inclusion by participating in anti-social belonging and radical solidarity (Figure 7.7): Punks know the city for all is "liberal claptrap" for "universalism" and monoculture "where all difference is subsumed [...] and ends up looking a lot like the interests of those who are most powerful."³⁵ The terms for public inclusion and participation work to move difference as conflict towards greater social coherence and social order. Unison in the name of social order is nothing more than coercion and social control. The anti-social characterization of punk imposed by the mainstream denies punks social standing and belonging in the public realm. In the punk scene, social standing, belonging, and sense of community are granted to those who refuse to conform to the norms of the controlling social order. The embrace of our unbelonging and disconnection to the public brings our community closer to each other and to other communities denied public recognition. The public sees punk as anti-social non-participants and a threat to public values. Punk subculture intends to be a threat to the public orders which we see as sources of injustice. Punk denial of social orders is anti-social but not misanthropic. Punk participates in radical counterculture that moves against "some fantasized

³⁵ Duncombe and Tremblay, *White riot: Punk rock and the politics of race*. 7

moment of union and unity,” “the conservative stakes in community for all kinds of political projects,” and “dominant culture scavengers.”³⁶ Punks deny the need for public approval and see the threat of participation in public order. The punk scene does “just fine with or without” the public, usually better without. Punks resist their assimilation into the public by their defiant appearance: “spike your hair, lace your boots.” Punks refuse to let appropriations by the public go unchallenged by their defiant action: “take back the bars / take back the street.”³⁷

With this radical negativity of the punk scene, I position punks as “non-publics” and punk space as “not-for-public.” The non-public and not-for-public punk scene is a radical space of anti-social belonging that is welcoming to those who remain unwelcomed by the dominant progressive society. These anti-social scenes are exclusive spaces for the excluded, safe from the control of social norms that code their behaviour and being as deviant. Not-for-public is a shared experience upon which punk can build radical solidarities with other non-publics through mutual recognition. Non-public belonging and solidarity disrupt the assumed good of inclusion and democratic processes. The “antiracist punk ideal” knows that oppressive social orders cannot be dismantled through universal unity and consensus that centre and concede to these orders. With radical mutual recognition and solidarity, co-existence is possible without unifying social order, and consent can be attained without consensus.

³⁶ Halberstam, 'What's that smell? Queer temporalities and subcultural lives'. 315 & 318

³⁷ Shootin' blanx, *Take it back*.

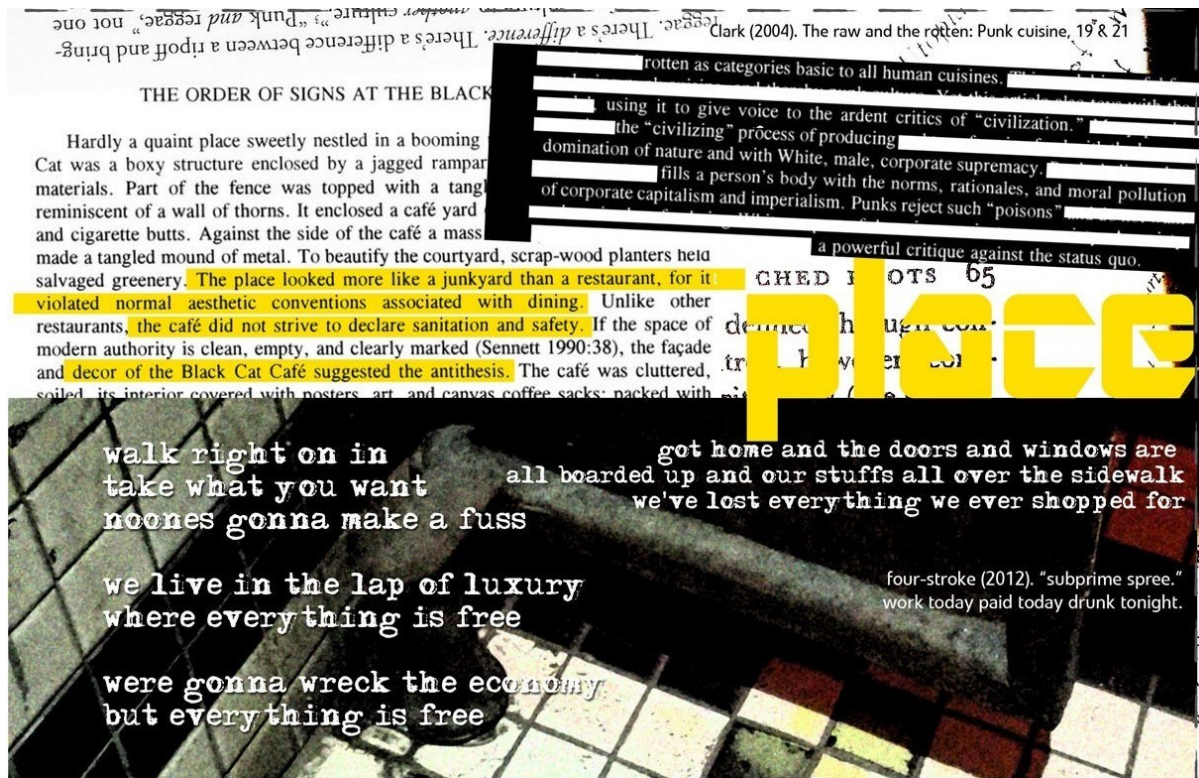


Figure 7.8: "No place." not my city zine, pages 5 & 6

Punk refusal of material prosperity by taking care of people to thrive in place (Figure 7.8): Punks know that a quality of life measured by growth and prosperity is moved towards unjust exploitation of human labour and unsustainable extraction of material resources. The pursuit of perpetual growth and prosperity threaten group structures of care and security, and they threaten the environment and capacity of natural resources to continue to provide for our essential needs. More people and places move towards precarity than prosperity. The homogenized, marketable, monoculture of material prosperity is "a synthetic destroyer of locality and diversity."³⁸ Punks refuse productive materialist agendas of success, competition, and respectability. Punk spaces "violat[e] normal aesthetic conventions." The aesthetic refusal is loud, discordant, pungent, filthy, disorderly, aggressive, and dark; "a powerful critique against the status quo." These spaces repulse the sensible public eye, not to mention the public ear and public nose. Meanwhile, those who are repulsed by social norms and order find comfort and security in antithetical places that reject the "civilizing" processes and material markers of prosperity. These counter-aesthetics offer antidotes to and protection from the rotten and rotting

³⁸ Clark, 'The raw and the rotten: Punk cuisine'. 25

moral pollution of socio-political and economic systems that “walk right on in / take what you want” in the name of luxury and entitlement.³⁹

These radical counter-aesthetics of place deny the corrupted productive logics of economized growth based on taking from people and nature. Quality of life is not a measurement of growth, prosperity, or wealth. Punk quality of life is a quality of taking care of each other and thriving in place. Punks are not simply rejecting and subverting the normative quality codes but may also come to read those codes with inverted values leading us to feel unsafe and disgusted in spaces marked by mainstream codes that connote gendered, racialized, and class privilege. The privileged desirable aesthetics of urban liveability are traded in for the ethics of securing the ability to live. Instead of relying on the responsabilization of citizens through civic duty to be productive, punk scenes foster mutual responsibility and responsiveness to people and place through a radical ethics of care.

³⁹ four-stroke, *Subprime spree*.

8 NARRATIVE ANALYSES

The “heroic, progressive narrative” of urban planning assumes that “planning is a ‘good thing’.”¹ As reviewed in the literature, participatory reforms have added to this story by carving out a more active role for citizens in decision-making. Meanwhile, placemaking offers a new “cultural approach” and “ethical corrective” to traditional planning through direct community action.² Narratives and reforms of ‘good’ city-building structure the connection between action, norms, conflict and resolutions, with the implication that this process will lead to the materialization of the vision of the ‘good’ city. This chapter analyses the case stories as performances of these grand narratives of ‘good’ city-building. Grand narratives, as defined by Peter Burke, connect norms, conflict, and the storied journey to desirable outcomes. They connect stories of “ordinary people in their local setting” to broader historical, social, and political meaning.³

In the case stories, these grand narratives structure the co-production of place and the normative values that are upheld in positive evaluations of good performances of ‘good’ city-building. Performing these narratives allow different actors to imagine themselves as protagonist in their own reproductions of the story. In the case stories, City officials establish the challenge of managing growth and difference, while securing the reputation of the city as a good place to reside, work, invest and govern, as core to their placemaking story. The M/AGs establish the challenge of claiming their right to the city as an ethical corrective to past exclusions by demonstrating the good their participation and diversity offer to the city. Meanwhile, the punk subnarratives offered through critical autoethnography in Chapter 7 contest the ‘good’ produced by participatory placemaking, re-reading ‘good’ city-building as reproducing the same old story of spatial and social inequities and displacement.

The grand narratives of ‘good’ city-building invite the critical questions that other grand narratives do: who else is implicated or excluded in the performance, the production, and the evaluation of these case stories? If the City planning grand narrative and the M/AG grand narratives, when seen together, imply a socially constructed grand narrative that is a composite

¹ Sandercock, *Making the invisible visible: A multicultural planning history*. 3-4

² Kovacs, 'Cultural planning in Ontario, Canada: arts policy or more?'.

³ Burke, *New perspectives on historical writing*. 292

of both, what happens when we apply the same critical questions? This critical re-reading prompts an analysis of how participatory placemaking, read as performances of these grand narratives, reproduces social, cultural, and political norms and values of ‘good’ city-building. The narrative analysis in this chapter, therefore, directly responds to the first research question about how the case stories perform progressive narratives of ‘good’ city-building.

Section 8.1 begins by introducing grand narratives of ‘future public growth’ and the ‘city for all,’ presented as grounds for contested evaluations of the ‘good’ produced by ‘good’ city-building in Chapter 7. It then turns to an analysis and discussion about: what known stories are deployed (section 8.2); what values and visions of ‘good’ city-building are invoked (section 8.4); and how different groups are implicated and what group identities are performed (section 8.5). The story arcs and elements analysed here set a critical framework for the discussion of (a) the reproduction of social and spatial inequities, and (b) M/AG counter-narratives that will be taken up in Chapter 9.

8.1 Grand narratives of ‘good’ city-building

Grand narratives help to guide actions and decisions, shape identities, and assert collective values. They become an insightful tool for drawing out commonalities between distinct stories and groups and situate them within larger narratives and histories such as progress, growth, democracy, and identity. They assist in understanding the prevailing characterization and evaluation of participatory placemaking as ‘good’ city-building through ‘good’ performances of progressive processes, identities, outcomes, and values. Although there are many examples of participatory placemaking in Ottawa, the three case stories are particularly provocative and intriguing stories. Conflict plays out through themes of historic legacies of social and spatial exclusion; the confrontational nature of planning and expectations to resolve problems; dissonances among between M/AGs, the public, and the City regarding needs and expectations of public space; and the struggle to maintain authentic identity. Each case exhibits its own circumstances, barriers, and obstacles to which actors devise responses to move the placemaking process forward. The following analysis highlights select examples from the three Ottawa cases and fieldwork, to demonstrate how the opportunities presented, the actions taken, the conflicts

encountered, and the resolutions pursued respond to the expectations and assumption of the grand narratives of ‘future public growth,’ and the ‘city for all.’

8.1.1 Future public growth: socio-spatial revitalization and optimization

The case stories invoke grand narratives of future public growth. The stories accept the premise that the most desirable outcome of the planning process is a (future) prosperous Ottawa, fulfilling its role as a world-class capital city. Within the stories, underused and undervalued spaces are identified as smart opportunities for new investment and expanded use, just as the Growth Management Strategy recognizes the potential for surplus return on particular social, cultural, and material investments and their ability to attract new private investment. They reiterate the trope that renewal salvages space from further decline with a resulting improvement in use, appearance, safety, social connectivity, and value. Creative production and cultural heritage bring new life to declining spaces to and elevate the cultural experience through rebranding. The progressive narrative of future public growth represents the goal of improved quality of life and prosperity as the public enjoyment of social connectivity, cultural experiences, and renewed spatial-material conditions of public spaces.

One of the clearest places to see the problematic dynamic of the grand narrative is in how the ideal city is described in terms of economic growth. All levels of the Grand Narrative (the City’s Strategy, the M/AG’s participation in the process and the narrative implied by casting that participation as a success) prioritize economic development. Through the economization of socio-cultural capital, the socio-cultural production of marginalized groups is transformed into material public good available for public consumption and commodification. The logics of strategic investments obscure how calculated and biased evaluations of public good are used to secure the most attractive and profitable future rather than one providing the most social stability. Future public growth obscures the value of non-public enjoyment, qualities, and use of space. The normative assumptions of improving the attractiveness, profitability, and security of place through ‘good’ city-building reproduces an inequitable distribution of outcomes that contributes to displacement and disbelonging for those whose presence is not deemed to have strategic value, or who are deemed to actively present a risk to the expected return on investment. Prosperity and livability are improved for some, but not for all. The celebration of the capacity for participatory placemaking to produce ‘good’ outcomes effaces the uneven

distribution of benefits among participants and frequently ignores the harms produced for non-participant, undesirable groups.

Throughout the case stories, publicly engaged marginalized and/or alternative groups moved their placemaking initiatives towards the desirable social goals outlined by the Ottawa 2020 Guiding Principles and Strategic Directions. They succeeded in shifting public perception towards recognition of the value and future potential of their proposed initiatives. Mainstreets, parks, and cultural centres are recognized as key strategic sites of both cultural and economic potential. Bank Street, McNabb Park, Rideau Street and the ByWard Market are identified as underperforming resources. Through the Ottawa 2020 Strategic Directions the City prioritized the opportunity to boost the public realm image and jump start socio-cultural production to facilitate greater economic growth and greater social engagement. In each of the case stories, the groups worked to correct common undesirable misrepresentations of their group to redefine their initiative as producing a legitimate and beneficial public space. In some instances, the M/AGs were able to correct negative mischaracterizations. They reframed previously undesirable characteristics as publicly beneficial and distanced themselves from undesirable behaviours and attitudes that were perceived to exist among the broader group. In other cases, gaining public support would require disassociating themselves from the more ‘antisocial’ subgroups and behaviours within the M/AG more broadly, distinguishing themselves instead as engaged citizens. During each of the case stories, the storied marginalized and/or alternative groups strategically reframed the value of their projects as having value for the public.

However, in some cases, the actions taken to realign group and spatial practices with public values further marginalized and reinforced public bias against non-conforming members and practices. Designation and branding of Bank Street as an LGBT village increased the visibility and desirability of inclusive gay-friendly businesses but has, seemingly, contributed to the displacement of many LGBT-owned businesses and LGBT services, especially those deemed not public-friendly enough or sufficiently “good for business. In other instances, the placemaking initiatives improved the City’s capacity to implement further restrictions on undesirable activities such as the increased enforcement against street skating. Meanwhile, safe space and inclusive cultural policies are transforming the character of the local music industry, but neighbourhood change is placing increased pressure on the existing users of the space, many of whom rely on

these publicly undesirable spaces as spaces of difference. Although many marginalized community activist groups observed during field work were able to argue for the social public values of their initiatives, they frequently struggled to secure public or city approval. Marginalized community activists proposing safe injection sites, for example, may draw on values of public health and community care but struggle to overcome common public opinion that see the behaviour as deviant and their presence as a threat to public safety.

The actions of the engaged M/AG and their placemaking initiatives often created or exacerbated existing conflicts and disparities with other members of the broader M/AG community. Nonetheless, the grand narrative of improved liveability and prosperity supports the assessment that conflicts between M/AGs and other stakeholders can successfully be resolved by participatory placemaking in a way that creates improved liveability for everyone.

8.1.2 City for all: inclusive participation and diverse representation

In a similar manner, the case stories re-enact the narrative ideal city as a city for all, in which cities are social places with a collective civic responsibility to care for all residents. This narrative ideal stems from democratic values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, which are seen to be at work in participatory processes of ‘good’ city-building and then made present in public spaces. The ideal is based on the way that the democratic process is comprised of two principal roles: responsible governance by the City and engaged participation by residents. The city recognizes that people have the right to access the basic material necessities of life, the right to enjoy the city safely, and the opportunity to participate fully in their community. Residents recognize their responsibility for contributing to their communities through engaged citizenship and collaboration. To address disparities, previously excluded groups are welcomed to participate in democratic processes of city-building, engage with community to exercise their right to the city, and co-produce welcoming places that invite a diversity of uses and users. The progressive narrative of inclusive participation represents everyone as having the opportunity to participate fully and responsibly, to contribute equally to the improvement of the city for all.

Similarly, diverse representation contributes to the ideal of the city for all by. The diverse history and culture of Canadians is presented as foundational to shared Canadian identity and civic pride. The celebration of diversity is presented as fostering greater creativity, innovation,

and inclusiveness that improve liveability and economic activity for all. When we look closely, however, we can see that this narrative ignores the fact that many marginalized communities continue to be excluded. Participatory placemaking remains governed by the municipal government and its departmental networks, including planning, and further governed by popular opinion and social networks. Moreover, by providing the opportunity of inclusion in public process, and by framing collaboration as an investment in marginalized and/or alternative placemaking, the City makes individuals and groups responsible for growing their own social capital, not only for their own group interests but also responsible for providing sufficient public returns. The normative assumptions of participation in ‘good’ democratic decision-making obscures the ongoing burden and barriers to equitable, meaningful participation and maintains authoritative structures of public process, public approval, and public interests.

Opportunities for public engagement for public revitalization projects, though often convened and organized by city officials, present a unique platform for M/AGs to organize action and claim space in the city. Furthermore, inclusion and diversity present strategic opportunities to align smart growth goals with the socially progressive narrative of the city for all. The placemaking initiatives in each of the case stories not only bring diverse interests together to find mutually beneficial solutions, the projects also represent and celebrate cultural diversity, revitalizing important public spaces. From a perspective of ‘good’ urban governance, the City adopts participatory placemaking as a strategy to manage diverse needs and conflicting interests. Through the “Priority on People” in the *Human Services Plan*, the City acknowledges its responsibility to improve representation of diversity and participation of marginalized groups in city projects. Inclusive public participation is recognized as a central tenet of democratic decision-making process necessary for the just production of space and recognize the cultural value of celebrating diversity. “What counts,” according to the *Human Services Plan*, “is the ability of people to build social networks together—to socialize, to discuss and solve problems and to take action to address community concerns and achieve social coherence.”⁴ The “Priority on People” conceptually links the socio-cultural growth of the city to its spatial-material and economic development.

⁴ City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 2020 Human Services Plan: Priority on People*. 16

For M/AGs leading the initiatives, the grand narrative of the city for all can be read in the strategic shift towards performing the role of productive citizens and community members, and the reframing of their initiatives. In addition to various grassroots actions, they adapt their approach with the public, changing from claiming the right to conflicting interests and different spaces in the city towards forming alliances and negotiating mutually beneficial claims with public stakeholders. They persuasively argue that, with strategic investment and support, their initiatives can produce positive economic, social, health, and environmental outcomes for the city as a whole. For example, *The Ottawa Music Strategy* sets a vision to be recognized as the most diverse music city in the world and seeks to improve the safety and inclusiveness of music spaces with standardized policies and training certification. Meanwhile, OSCA reframes skateboarding as a social cultural activity and takes efforts to establish welcoming spaces by organizing girls+ nights and community cleanup nights. The/Le Village frames being inclusive as a matter of civic pride and identity, enhancing the representation of diversity and visibility of local LGBT history through various public art and branding. These appeals to public interests, civic identity, and political concerns about improving diversity, equity, and inclusion, contribute to the successful reception of each of the initiatives.

In my field work, however, I encountered other M/AGs who struggled to similarly position their group needs within public interests and continue to struggle to gain approval from either the public or the City. Despite commitment to engaging in public processes, they face difficulties effectively translating their lived experience and community expertise into arguments that persuade city officials or the public. The celebration of the capacity for marginalized and/or alternative groups to participate in ‘good’ processes of city-building frequently ignores the inequitable structural and social barriers to meaningful participation and effaces differences in the attempt to reconcile diversity with a unified city image. Meanwhile, more privileged participants benefitted from being better positioned to readily take full advantage of participatory processes to advance their interests. For example, developers had access to expertise and professionally trained planning consultants to prepare planning rationales and design briefs. Formal processes of participatory democracy, bureaucratic policy directions, and the role of economic interests lead many to see inclusion and diversity as performative rather than transformative reforms. This creates tension between “selling-out” and continued exclusion from the public realm. In the three cases, the M/AGs each pursue a double approach. At risk of

selling-out or merely conforming to the status quo, each of the M/AGs respond by drawing upon the activist legacies of grassroots community organizing to confront injustices and demonstrate their right to city. At risk of continued exclusion, M/AGs respond by reconstructing their placemaking initiatives as contributing to mutually beneficial and desirable outcomes through their engaged participant in public process.

In the case stories, the grand narrative of the city for all allows participatory placemaking to be framed as an opportunity to negotiate belonging and entitlement to space in the city, reframing previously marginalized or disenfranchised groups as engaged citizens with valuable contributions to make. Ultimately all participants are expected to conform to and perform proper public process and demonstrate shared public values. Inclusive participation and diverse representation are granted to some but not to all.

8.1.3 Critical re-readings and counter-narratives

The literature, zines, and songs from the critical autoethnography in chapter 7 form the basis for the following critical re-reading and counter-analysis of these two grand narratives. *Ottawoke* takes decline, one of the key tropes of the progressive grand narrative, and repositions it. Material and social decline, the exclusion of people or exclusive use of space, and the inefficient and unproductive use of space and resources are not cast as problems that need to be solved but as symptoms of rotten systems. As highlighted in the zine, public stories of future public growth move spaces and people toward renewal, inclusion, and prosperity. Critical re-readings see spaces and people being toward removal, integration, and destabilization. The punk counternarrative points to the way in which good intentions and values of progressive, democratic, and neoliberal logics are underwritten by oppressive, exploitative, and inequitable logics that validate prejudice, entitlement, and property. For example, in the zine, the stories of future public growth are re-narrated to show how they produce good for some but still reproduce harm for others. The public problems that planning seeks to solve, and the public solutions it proposes, are re-narrated as self-referential reproductions of the same underlying logics, values, and biases that centre and privilege the desirable production of space for desirable publics.

The redemption of undesirables becomes part of the heroic tale of a benevolent public. Those who refuse the authority of the controlling public social order are cast as deviant

antagonists, as against the public good, as problems to be solved or removed. Dissenting voices exist but do not participate in the public discourse. Punks are among the marginalized and/or alternative groups who recognize there is no place for them in public narratives and systems because their alternative ways of being together in place undermine the logics, order, and desires of the public. Punks recognize that stories and norms of good city-building are deployed against all deviance from the norm to deny them their place in the city and to deny their stories of the city. Divergent experiences, observations, and value assessments that call upon other known stories of assimilation, appropriation, gentrification, and displacement are conveniently left out of the public discourse and evaluations.

Through the grand narrative of future public growth, planners and the public recognize the material and cultural capital produced by M/AGs as valuable to the public production and enjoyment of the city. Within this dynamic, the extraction of group benefits produced through group direct action and labour can rationally be extracted for public interests. By redirecting group placemaking initiatives towards the production of public access and enjoyment, the logics of future public growth obscures the systemic extraction of labour and transfer of capital. They do not recognize the intrinsic non-public value of group production or sovereign control to direct the benefits of group production. Through progressive narratives of future public growth, participatory placemaking as planning reform reproduces settler colonialism and racial capitalism, operating through logics of public entitlement and property as the authority to take over places and productions deemed to serve the public interest, and asserting the right to extract public value from non-public labour and resources. Securing and maximizing the production of future public good through neoliberal logics of strategic investment and economization reproduces inequitable outcomes including displacement, dispossession, appropriation, and increased regulation and enforcement against other marginalized and/or alternative uses and users.

Meanwhile, the grand narrative of the city for all assumes that by reconciling conflicting interests of M/AGs and the public, inclusive participation and diverse representation can resolve disparities. Through this logic, diverse group interests and special accommodations that cannot be reconciled with mainstream public interests are portrayed as being excluded from public concern through a rational process. To be included in public process, M/AGs need to make their

interests public interests. To be included in public places, M/AGs need to make their uses of space of use to the public. Through inclusion, the public makes space for M/AGs and M/AG places that can persuasively be realigned with public values and that are beneficial to the public. Public processes under the management of institutional and professional authorities controls the terms for and approval of M/AG initiatives. Public recognition of difference directed toward integrating difference as part of a shared identity does not recognize claims to difference, different claims to space, or the sovereign control over different futures. Planning maintains its authority to restrict, regulate, and reject the claims and futures that do not have public value or go against public value. Controlling the structure and authority of ‘good’ democratic process through professional and institutional logics of ‘good’ public management reproduces inequitable processes including responsabilization, assimilation, and the ongoing marginalization and invalidation of the voices, experiences, and labour of unrecognized participants.

As a critical autoethnographic counter-narrative, *not my city* offers counter-publics, counter-geographies, and counter-temporalities of being together in place and time that refuse the organizing logics of future public growth. Radical practices of taking-place mark our presence in place and time. Through the people and places we engage with, and the stories we take part in, we begin to construct a sense of identity. We remember our past and fight for our future but ultimately and radically we take place in our present by taking-care. Taking-care recognizes our responsibility and capacity to care for each other in the space of a failed social order that threatens our ability to live and thrive. By leaving-space for other stories to take place and other groups to mark their place, radical practices of taking-place and leaving-space refuses the exclusive privileged claims to territory and authoritative claims of place-based stories that are deployed to deny the presence, place, and future of others. In recognizing the co-existent taking-place of others in the space, we come to recognize the authority of difference people and different stories. Through mutual recognition, radical solidarities form around the space and struggles different groups share responsibility for and connections to. By also leaving space for conflict, dissonance, and difference, radical solidarity can move us towards consent with or without resolution, unification, or inclusion. Radical solidarity refuses the need for approval or consensus to continue authoring our own stories of taking-place and taking-care.

8.2 Known stories from common urban narratives

In order to perform the grand narratives of ‘good’ city-building, each of the three case stories participate in a variety of recurrent themes and plots. These themes and plots link—through situational context and denouement—the three cases to each other, and to other examples of city-building from elsewhere. I am specifically interested in the thematic characterization of the existing local material and social conditions. Once characterized, the narrative can be analyzed as presenting the urban setting as either a problem or an opportunity. This re-plotting of the public discourse surrounding the three case stories evokes several common urban narratives found in urban planning literature. For example, these plots align with three of the five common urban narratives defined by Throgmorton: the city as nightmare; the city as a site of opportunity and excitement; and the city as a site of injustice, oppression, and exclusion.⁵ Throgmorton, however, bases his common urban narratives on descriptions of setting and does not include an analysis of the how these characterizations of place direct action toward common future-oriented goals. Renewal, inclusion, and growth are examined below; each appears in the three case stories as a desired outcome in response to characterization of sites as ones of decline, injustice, and unused potential.

8.2.1 The dangerous city in decline, moved towards renewal

Each of the case stories frame their initiative as contributions to renewing the declining social, material, and economic conditions of the site by finding strategic opportunities in the revitalization of Rideau Street and the ByWard Market, the rehabilitation of McNabb Park, and plans for the reconstruction of Bank Street. The urban decline narrative tends to present both the material markers of spatial decline from unsightly to unsafe, and the decline of social character of urban residents from disengagement to delinquency. The narrative reinforces the conceptual link between people and place by proposing a reversible causal relationship. A decline in material spatial conditions can bring about a decline in social order. Conversely, a decline in social character can lead to the decline of the urban landscape. Therefore, the perceived negative conditions and realities of urban life itself—e.g., aging infrastructure, poverty, social disconnection, substance use—are portrayed as perpetuating further decline. Within this

⁵ Throgmorton, 'Planning as Persuasive Storytelling in a Global-Scale Web of Relationships'.

narrative, the indicators of decline are not merely characterised as undesirable qualities of urban life, they are also framed as dangerous threats to the safety of residents and to the economic stability of the city.

The repetition of urban decline narratives in public discourse prompts us to imagine two future trajectories: continued entropy and decline, or intervention and renewal. The narrative presumes that, as rational readers, we ought to decide to pursue the latter. Renewal functions as the perfect foil to the conditions of our declining urban environment in the case stories. The declining city is chaotic, hostile, dangerous, ugly, empty, and disconnected from community and nature. The renewed city is efficient, coherent, clean, welcoming, safe, and vibrant. It evokes belonging, nature, and beauty.⁶ The narrative arc of decline and renewal mobilizes the persuasive impulse of nostalgia, attributing desired qualities to the natural status quo of a lost past. The interventions pursued in the case studies also involve actual re-investment in and re-commitment to the material and economic conditions of the space. Each initiative studied is tied to broader rehabilitation and revitalization projects and plans, each with the assumption that these interventions will precipitate improved liveability, sociability, and economic prosperity. In various iterations of decline-renewal, the target for renewal easily shifts between the private and public realm; renewal presumes re-investment in strong private life will prop up public life or vice-versa. Accountability and responsibility, therefore, alternate between personal and public. To realize the proposed long-term strategies of reinvestment, recognition of the present undesirable realities of the declined city persuades the public of the need for immediate interventions and protection from the dangers of the declined city, characterized by dangerous people and dangerous places.

8.2.2 The city as site of injustice, moved towards inclusion

Cities have participated in the unjust exclusion of difference through spatial segregation and other forms of regulation designed to restrict or confine access. With a history of being excluded from the public realm, each of the three M/AG groups in the case stories seeks to claim space in public and participation in public life of the city. Motivated by a progressive narrative which

⁶ There are of course exceptions and variations in the desired qualities. Nonetheless, these qualities persist and regularly return to the forefront of the city in decline narrative.

recognizes past injustices and the need to redress them, the city and the public seek to include the historically disenfranchised. The modern city is meant to be a space of diversity. An enlightened and compassionate modern city, the narrative suggests, has an obligation to take on the responsibility to care for all citizens and to break down the barriers that prevent full access and full participation.⁷

A progressive city recognizes the irrational fear that works to exclude strangers and difference as a failure to recognize their shared humanity, or the contributions they offer to improving the city. We can see this dynamic in the case stories, where diversity is reframed as an asset and untapped resource, an opportunity for revitalization, a potential benefit to the whole. In the case stories, diversity offers not only new opportunities but new perspectives for recognizing and realizing overlooked opportunities. Whereas diversity as difference complicates the urban narrative, inclusion of diversity reconciles difference back into the collective whole and collective benefit of the city for all. Both urban revitalization and urban growth are framed as benefiting from the inclusion of diversity.

8.2.3 The city as site of potential, moved towards growth and prosperity

While each of the M/AGs act on the strategic opportunity to align their initiatives with renewal plans, they also seek to tactfully persuade the City and public to recognize their initiatives and their group as creative, innovative, and progressive opportunities for growth and change. A major draw of urban life is the promise of potential and of opportunity. The city and city-building evoke the potential for material and economic growth, the potential for social development, and the potential for cultural exchange and creation. As in the “dangerous city in decline,” the narrative here too links the qualities of the space with the qualities of the people. To recognize and realize its potential, the city must attract and support innovative, resourceful, collaborative, and cunning individuals. The city rewards those who can transform opportunity into prosperity. In their search for opportunity, residents and visitors in turn become opportunities for the city.

⁷ Fainstein, 'Planning theory and the city'.

Though an inherent quality of the city, opportunity is also presented as a limited resource, which must be properly controlled in order to supply us all indefinitely. There is a potential for conflict over that scarce resource. The city must weigh present needs over future benefits, as well as public versus private benefit. To ensure that the opportunity is not squandered, that greed is tempered, and that benefits are distributed fairly, the City must intervene and control its opportunities. As in urban renewal, investment in both spatial and social opportunities is presented as key in strategies for ensuring a better future. Moreover, since other cities may also offer opportunity and potential for growth, cities are framed as competing agents. Ottawa therefore rationalizes the need to optimize and grow its own potential. Within this narrative, not only should the City be able to provide sufficient resources to support its residents, now and into the future, it should seek growth as a protection against its competitors. The city is a “growth machine” that must be managed.⁸

8.3 Normative values and visions of the city

In order to evaluate the ‘good’ produced by city-building, the normative values and visions of the city must be established and recognized. The following analysis considers how the values and visions of the city are reproduced, performed, and represented across the case stories to shape the moral assessment of their performance as good stories of ‘good’ city-building. I argue that the Vision, Guiding Principles, and Strategic Directions of the *Ottawa 2020 Growth Management Strategy* are invoked and reproduced across the three case stories to set normative expectations for and evaluations of ‘good’ city-building in Ottawa. The Guiding Principles not only informed the “long-term strategic direction” and “comprehensive blueprint” of the five Growth Management Plans, but these principles are also intended to “guide the municipality’s day-to-day decision-making.”⁹ These principles link: strategic directions and policies such as revitalization and rehabilitation; guidelines for participation and decision-making; material aesthetic and land-use values; and desirable economic, social, and environmental outcomes.

⁸ Molotch, 'The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place'.

⁹ City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan*. Section 1.3

8.3.1 Cultural growth and prosperity

Amalgamation forced the former city of Ottawa to reimagine itself as the urban core within the narrative of the “New City of Ottawa.” Whereas the former city of Ottawa was primarily a public-sector economy with the Federal Government as the principal employer and a supporting service economy, amalgamation shifted the City toward planning for a multi-sector, combined private and public economy. The *Ottawa 2020 Growth Management Plans* and its original Guiding Principles reflect this shift in socio-economic context and broader connections to neoliberal governance, austerity, and growth management. Consistent with this goal, the *Ottawa 2020* Guiding Principles are framed as a set of contributing economic, social, and environmental priorities, values, and desires for the City of Ottawa. The case stories reproduce, in particular, the Guiding Principles of “An Innovative City Where Prosperity is Shared Among All,” and “A Creative City Rich in Heritage, Unique in Identity” through cultural and material revitalization.

As progressive tales, the case stories move heroically towards visions of a better city. They are journeys of becoming, of change, and of transformation. As contemporary versions of this tale, the case stories promote innovation and entrepreneurial drive to discover, to reimagine, and to bring out hidden value of space. From the perspective of progress, undesirable or under-performing areas of city life are seen as opportunities for growth. Progress is achieved through the production of desirable places through material improvement. The resulting improved liveability is projected as a strategy to stimulate growth and prosperity. The rhetoric of the creative city, for example, recognizes the strategic opportunity of catering these improvements to the creative class and reframes creativity, diversity, and cultural value from inherent value into cultural capital and catalyst for further growth.

The attachment to where we are growing from introduces an allowance for nostalgic return within these progressive tales. Throughout the planning documents analysed here, revitalization, rehabilitation, and renewal express a nostalgic impulse to both preserve heritage and reimagine it through a progressive vision of transformation. In the case stories, the desire to recover something that has been lost or to save something in danger of being lost make the progressive connection between the past and the opportunity for the future. In part this is motivated by the social reproduction value of heritage and the cultural imperative to preserve the past for the future. However, here too the contemporary progressive impulse is to transform

cultural value into material value, and ideally increased value. In the case studies, this takes the form of materializing heritage, as in the representation of LGBT heritage in the street improvements of The/Le Village. It also takes the form of the preservation of the material heritage of the ByWard Market and “traditional mainstreets” that are strategically framed as opportunities to transform the socio-economic heritage of the neighbourhood through economic revitalization.

8.3.2 Rational democratic planning

The case stories reproduce, in particular, the Ottawa 2020 Guiding Principle of “A Responsible and Responsive City” through processes of rational democratic planning and decision making. Both city-building and placemaking emphasize the value of practice, not just the construction of the material form of public spaces but as processes for embedding shared value in space and strengthening community. Public places are commonly valued as representations of democracy in action. As the primary spaces for encountering difference in the city, public places are frequently sites of conflicting claims and diverse uses but also opportunities to resolve conflict by coming together. Democratic community planning is seen as part of the accountability process for sound governance and planning, and validating the outcomes with the expectation that it can produce both material good and reproduce socio-political good. The *Human Services Plan* and the *Arts and Heritage Plan* introduced new approaches to “community building initiative” focusing their “priority on people.” In his report on the Smart Growth Summit that initiated public discourse for the Ottawa 2020 plans, Gilles Paquet notes that: “This is a very special moment of social learning in Ottawa.”¹⁰ Citizen engagement helped to shape the Ottawa 2020 plans. The plans, in turn helped to reinforce public expectations of being engaged and having a role in municipal decision-making.

In the case stories M/AGs strategically perform democracy both as formal structure and tactical practice. First, they move placemaking initiatives forward through formal planning channels. These channels are expected to operate on democratic principles of rational, deliberative, and representational decision-making in the public interest. Second, as organized group action, the placemaking initiatives embody the democratic spirit as demonstrations of

¹⁰ Paquet, *Ottawa 20/20 and Baroque Governance: A Report on the Smart Growth Summit of June 2001*.

public ownership through direct public action and good citizenship. The M/AGs reframe their interests and claims to space not as divergent from but parallel to public interests. Within the public forum of city planning, they largely achieve this through rhetorical strategies that transform conflicts of difference into opportunities through the Guiding Principles of the Official City Plan, producing rationales for sound planning decisions. Within the forum of public opinion, the M/AGs work to reform public perceptions about M/AGs and M/AG places, correcting misperceptions of difference as deviance and delinquency. They then align interests and mobilize resources through community partnerships. Democratic community planning and placemaking offers democratic resolution to potentially conflicting claims and use of public space by promoting practices of good citizenship.

8.3.3 Diversity and inclusion

Finally, the case stories reproduce normative values embedded in the Guiding Principle of “A Caring and Inclusive City” through making space for greater participation and celebration of diversity and promotion of “cultural identity [that is] creative, rich in heritage and unique.”¹¹ Both of the progressive and procedural values draw on the morality of inclusion, the social responsibility of care for all, and a sense of shared belonging and identity. As Capital City, Ottawa is expected to, and expects itself, to uphold Canadian values and Canadian identity. As a progressive social democracy, Canada defines itself politically through equal protection and representation of all. This normative cultural diversity is not only a recognition that the country is comprised of diverse populations, but collectively is a united population who welcomes and celebrates this diversity. Diversity and inclusion are seen as opportunities to resolve conflicts of difference. Placemaking as a process for inclusion is valued as a meaningful and meaning making shared experience that can unify community by linking the futures of individuals and groups in shared space and shared practice. Inclusive placemaking link the moral orientation, process, and outcomes. Participatory placemaking also reframes diversity and inclusion from being just normative outcomes of planning, towards also being strategic untapped resources for achieving broad planning goals.

By applying the norms of diversity and inclusion to planning, the city positions itself as welcoming and accommodating difference. For M/AGs, the moral norms of inclusion and diversity open space for their search for legitimacy, recognition, and identity in relationship to place in the face of competing claims and traumatic legacies of exclusion. M/AG strategic use of Guiding Principles can be understood as practical approach to navigating formal processes by demonstrating their ability to align with and contribute to shared public values. It can also be understood as an aspiration to reconcile difference, to publicly make space for themselves, through both authentic and rhetorical performance of diverse identities and belonging.

8.4 Enacted group identities

The repeated thematic plots of placemaking and place-based stories provide context within which the city, planning, and M/AGs each perform critical functions of their respective social identities. Judith Butler argues that social identities are constructed and maintained, through performance of “regulatory fictions” and identity-referent norms.¹² Riessman argues, performative narrative analysis reveals how actors (or actor groups) are “involved in ‘doing’ their identities.”¹³ Furthermore, Gary Allan Fine refers to “the storied group” as a group that is not only represented within “bundles of narratives” but formed through the telling of their stories. These stories can “come to characterize the group and constitute the group culture or ‘idioculture.’”¹⁴ In addition to being shorthand characterizations of the role to be played by each of the storied groups, these regulatory fictions establish specific expectations and structures for their performance. To understand how different participants are implicated in ‘good’ city-building, we need to understand what desirable group identities they enact. Throughout the case stories, each of the storied groups perform versions of their respective social identities reconstituted through their actions, interactions, and social relationships. Their respective regulatory fictions establish norms of motivation, approaches, and meaning. For each of the

¹² Judith Butler develops this argument about gendered and sexual identities. The concept of performative identities has been widely applied to other forms of socially constructed and maintained identities. See Butler, *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*.

¹³ Riessman, *Narrative Analysis*. 5

¹⁴ Fine, *The Storied Group: Social Movements as "Bundles of Narratives"*. 229

storied groups, their social identities stem from how they are perceived by others and by themselves, as well as how they wish to be perceived.

In addition to these broad social identities, each of the storied groups' performances also draw upon foundational stories that relate their role within the present narratives to heroic origins and utopian aspirations. The foundational stories function as rallying calls to action and allow the groups to position themselves and their goals as part of larger journeys, narratives, and struggles. The following analysis identifies three enacted group identities and follows with an analysis of how: each of the storied groups position themselves relative to their foundational stories; how they position their placemaking initiatives relative to these stories; and how these performances of identity norms structure the merit and legitimacy of their group claims to identity, space, and belonging.

8.4.1 Public performances of Canadian values and citizenship

Although the National Capital Commission is officially charged with the physical planning of federal lands and landmarks in the National Capital Region, the City of Ottawa self-consciously considers its responsibility to represent all Canadians and all Canadian places in its plans. As a capital city, city-building in Ottawa is imagined as nation and identity building.¹⁵ Day-to-day life and spaces of the city become opportunities to further reinforce and reflect the official federal character. The capital city calls upon itself to model Canadian values, to further unify the nation through legible coherent expressions of shared national identity in city form.¹⁶ Whereas, for example, stability, beauty, prosperity, and defense readily translate into material form, the conceptual values of the modern state must be translated into form through a combination of procedure and metaphor. For Ottawa, the foundational Canadian values of democracy and diversity present a challenge in reconciling the role of the state, the desired image of a unified nation, and the diversity and agency of its citizens.¹⁷ Perhaps even more important than the

¹⁵ In his elaborations on "capital form" John Taylor argues that capital cities serve a metaphoric role for the nation—imagined to be the realization of "the prevailing Utopian vision of the civilization in which it operates." Taylor, 'City form and capital culture: Remaking Ottawa'. 81

¹⁶ "to impose or transmit contrived cultural codes" *ibid.* 79

¹⁷ It should be noted that while commonly presented as a foundational value, diversity is a contemporary addition to the myth-making of the nation, closely tied to the passing of the Charter of Rights and Freedom and Multiculturalism Act.

material forms it attributes to Canadian identity, Ottawa sets about to perform Canadian values through process. The production of coherent shared public space becomes a performance of unity and diversity.

Across the case stories, good citizenship is performed through democratic participation and representation. The people of Ottawa participate in urban community life, in social reproduction, and political process. For the diverse population to resolve conflict fairly, they rely on participation in democratic systems for collective decision-making. Ottawa and Ottawans imagine participation in these processes as a way for them to perform progressive care-based governance and citizenship. As social progressives, Ottawans are expected to approach the process with openness to new ideas and openness to welcoming diversity. Upon finding their common ground, public and private stakeholders can work collaboratively towards mutually beneficial outcomes. The public acceptance of M/AG placemaking initiatives demonstrates the openness of the public to diverse ideas and its ability to reconcile differences through common values and priorities.

8.4.2 Professional performances of responsible governance

Within this framework, planning also becomes a progressive hero of liberal democracy with a responsibility to protect and produce “equality, liberty, and justice.” Whereas the capital city imagines itself as a political and cultural embodiment of these values, planning imagines itself as the rational and scientific, i.e., professional, embodiment of them. For progressive democratic city-builders, city-building offers conceptual links between orderly society, orderly production, and orderly environments. Operating primarily through their professional boundaries of land-use, planners work to order the production of environments with the expectation that those environments will be orderly as a result and will in turn produce an orderly society. Early planners performed this role more directly by designing orderly urban environments. They democratized space through material and symbolic form. As planning formalizes into departments of democratic government, its role shifts from designing to governing the production of space. Planners govern the production of urban environments with the production of orderly regulations. Within contemporary practice, the role of the planner shifts again towards managing growth and development through frameworks, principles, and strategies that guide

process and outcomes. Planners now perform their role by democratizing urban environments as managers of the democratic process for the production of public space.

Across the case stories, capital city planning is performed through ‘good’ governance. The City of Ottawa manages urban growth through future-oriented rational democratic decision-making in the public interest. The City proceeds by establishing the Guiding Principles and strategic directions of the official plan to ensure that social equity and environmental sustainability are integrated into plans for economic growth and development. Planning invites public participation as part of its democratic responsibility to represent the public interest through the public production of space. As managers of the public process, planners facilitate sound decision-making by providing rational data-driven and value-directed terms for resolving competing interests. By engaging marginalized and/or alternative groups to participate in city process, the city works to expand its understanding of underrepresented and underserved groups and to better position their interests within the Guiding Principles and strategic directions of the plan. By recognizing the value of diverse people and alternative places, the City is better able to mobilize that value towards collective public benefit.

8.4.3 M/AG performances of engaged urban social movement

Although the City works to achieve greater diversity, it is not, in fact, welcoming to all. Groups and individuals continue to be marginalized when their difference is considered too alternative to be reconciled under a unifying civic identity. When difference, and those who embody it, are perceived of as a threat to public safety and social order, the public justifies its right to marginalize by exclusions, restrictions, and regulations. For the storied groups, their marginalization is a reality produced by these handed-down perceptions and oppressions by mainstream society. Their alterity, however, is also an identity they construct and reproduce for themselves. They celebrate and embrace their difference. They unite with others through shared experiences and traumas of being marginalized, to refuse the top-down constructed identities of anti-social deviance, delinquency, or malice. On the one hand, the fight to thrive unites M/AGs under a rallying call to organize and make demands for their rights and material needs, assert

identity and belonging in place, and desire to transform urban structures.¹⁸ On the other hand, they continue the work to build community in part through the unifying struggle of making space for themselves, to move from making do to thriving.

Gay movements, skateboarding, and punk each have ties to the urban social movements of the 1970s. The stories of these momentous roots, glorified by both M/AGs and broader public, play prominent roles in the collective storytelling and identity formation for the three storied groups in the case stories. The case stories also link present action to foundational local spaces and actions in Ottawa. These movements mark a radical shift for M/AGs to reposition themselves from being oppressed from above to pushing back from below. Push back took socio-political form with protests on the streets, and battles in the courts. Counterculture pushed back against mainstream by loudly taking up space and increasing visibility in the public eye.

Across the case stories social and spatial change is performed through community organizing and infiltrating the system. The storied groups in Ottawa fight for change by organizing in response to immediate unmet needs within their group and strategic opportunities within the city. They recognize the opportunity to participate in public process as a path to demonstrate their equal right and value to the city. They proceed by strategically navigating formal systems and reforming public opinion. These groups claim their right to city as a right to be included in public spaces and public process, but also a right to organize and secure the needs of their community. The fight for recognition, representation, and full participation in the city is a fight to move their position out of exclusion and misrepresentation. Participation in public process is also an act of using the tools of the system to benefit groups who are traditionally ignored by or negatively impacted by those processes and tools. The storied groups recognize the tactical opportunity to reform public perception and to recast themselves as desirables by demonstrating responsible and engaged citizenship, and by distancing themselves from anti-social or deviant characterizations.

The storied groups simultaneously lead their own actions to claim space in the city and to fulfill a need for their community. Groups initiate public placemaking to secure their future in

¹⁸ Castells hypothesizes that “urban protest movements develop around:” demands for “collective consumption;” “defense of cultural identity;” and “political mobilization” Castells, *The city and the grassroots: a cross-cultural theory of urban social movements*. xviii

the city, their continued presence in space and use of space, and their continued authentic expression of their alternative subcultures. To claim their legitimate right to the city, to fight their oppression, and to strengthen group cohesion through collective action, they demand space, and they demand to be heard and seen. From claiming their legitimate right to the city, to working to gain public recognition of that right, they attempt to strategically respond to the imposed system that controls access to space and access to opportunity. They work with and against the system of control, struggling to carve out space to meet their own needs and potentially undermining or disrupting the system in the process. Their actions are a self-recognition of the capacity of their community to care for itself, to come together, and to make space for itself.

9 DISCUSSION

Following from Leonie Sandercock's provocation that "planning is *performed* through story," this dissertation questions what stories are performed through participatory placemaking in Ottawa and what work they do, consciously and unconsciously. In this chapter, the performances of participatory placemaking are discussed first as persuasive stories of 'good' city-building (9.1). The three case stories are read as successful performances of normative values, enacted group identities, and grand narratives supported by the vision, guiding principles, and strategic directions of the *Ottawa 2020 Growth Management Strategy* and the progressive narrative of the modernist planning project. This is followed by a discussion informed by literature on the critique of participatory reforms and creative placemaking as reproducing social, spatial, and systemic inequities (9.2). A critical re-reading relates the limitations, barriers, and failures of participatory placemaking in realizing transformative change and spatial justice to literature on social reproduction, structural power, and systems of oppression. The mutations of social and cultural values through neoliberal market logics are discussed as a particular stylized repetition of the progressive narrative. Finally, additional reflections based in the critical autoethnography consider some of the necessary acts of survival, critical practices of resistance, and radical spaces of difference that emerge as spaces of struggle, difference, and refusal within and beyond normative narratives and performances of 'good' city-building (9.3).

9.1 Persuasive stories of 'good' city-building

Read together, the co-production of the Ottawa Music Strategy, the construction of Charlie Park, and the designation of Le/The Village tell persuasive stories of participatory placemaking as progressive city-building. Though filled with conflict and drama, the case stories all present processes to unite multiple urban stakeholders despite their conflicting interests, diversity of experiences, and divergent claims to space. Through the management of, and engagement with democratic participation, different stakeholders work together to resolve conflict and find mutually beneficial resolutions. As examples of successful community-led initiatives, supported by sound planning decision-making and public opinion, these stories validate process, identity, and outcomes for each of the storied groups. They cast a positive reflection and projection of how Ottawa imagines itself, as a progressive and unified Capital City committed to the growth

and renewal of an inclusive, prosperous, and liveable city through “a concern for people and the quality of the spaces they occupy.”¹ These stories represent the realization of contemporary cosmopolitan ideal of diverse cultural identity in a liveable and creative city, and the progressive liberal democratic ideal of inclusive participation by an engaged citizenry.

Each of the case stories begins with an initial disconnect between the public, the City, and a marginalized and/or alternative group over the use, regulation, and vision for public spaces in the city. Members of a marginalized and/or alternative group identify a strategic opportunity in city plans to claim and make space for their group. Motivated by their different experiences, perspectives, and needs, the groups pursue their placemaking initiatives through community-led action to advance their claim to space. Struggles to thrive through past experiences of social and spatial exclusion unite the group under a rallying call to organize and make demands for their rights and material needs, assert identity and belonging in place, and work to transform public spaces and public structures. They proceed by engaging in formal public consultation processes with the City and by mounting public campaigns to reform or correct negative public perceptions of their group. Through persuasive data-driven and value-aligned arguments, and through demonstrative actions of responsible and cooperative citizenship, each of the groups is successful not only in achieving its goals but in providing additional value to the public realm.

The case stories follow common thematic place-based plots of the city being moved by participatory placemaking from conflict, problem, and opportunity towards mutually beneficial progressive and future-oriented goals. The three case stories all move the city from being characterizations of decline, injustice, and potential towards renewal, inclusion, and growth. The plot is moved collectively forward by the city, the public, and engaged urban groups through democratic decision-making and participatory action, towards the visions of a prosperous city for all. The storied groups direct actions towards resolving conflict, seizing opportunity, and correcting injustice through the production of material, practical, and moral outcomes. Normative values and visions of cultural growth and prosperity, rational democratic planning, and a city unified through inclusion are deployed to define good goals, good processes, and good outcomes. For the people of Ottawa, the City of Ottawa, and M/AGs in Ottawa, participation in good city-building demonstrates their alignment with and commitment to the guiding principles

¹ City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan*. 15

of *Ottawa 2020*. By performing their respective roles of participation, governance, and community, each of the storied groups enact desirable social identities that communicate known group values. Invocations of group histories of place and practice guide actions and decision-making in the present, and project meaning and value into the future. As compelling and persuasive stories of good city-building, the three case stories position the City, the public, and M/AGs as protagonists in positive process, frame their initiatives as noble quests, and present the outcomes they attain as happy endings.

Read as successful examples of informal community-led placemaking implemented through formal city planning, the three case stories offer a contemporary interpretation of ‘good’ city-building as ‘good’ processes moving towards ‘good’ outcomes. Returning to the operational definitions offered in the literature review, we can see how the complementary nature of planning and placemaking makes possible some congruence on motives and ends, on what initiatives are moved by and what they move toward. Fainstein and Fainstein define traditional planning as “future-oriented, public decision-making directed toward attaining specific goals [in the public interest].”² Wortham-Galvin defines community-led placemaking as “urban action that is small and/or incremental, it responds to immediate needs that engage discourses of publicness, it stewards change that is wanted (defined by a specific group of people).”³ The case stories satisfy both definitions weaving together stories of democratic participation in planning process and active participation in community-led placemaking.

The three initiatives are *moved by* both democratic decision-making and participatory action. Democratic decision-making is represented as rational and caring in its capacity to define common interests and identify mutually beneficial solutions through principled strategies that are both data-driven and value-directed. Participatory action is represented as unifying and supportive where engaged public participation resolves differences and rallies support through persuasive tactics of community-led action and collaborative partnerships. Similarly, the initiatives are *moved towards* both immediate needs and progressive future-oriented goals. Social and spatial improvements are represented as inclusive: processes and outcomes can bring people

² Fainstein and Fainstein, 'City planning and political values'. 341

³ Wortham-Galvin, 'An Anthropology of Urbanism: How People Make Places (and What Designers and Planners Might Learn from It)'. 24

together and celebrate difference by finding common ground for a shared sense of place and belonging. Economic prosperity is represented as a collective opportunity and goal, achieved by taking advantage of underused resources and using the potential of place and people to produce collective benefits.

The rhetorical link made between inclusion, diversity, and social justice in *Ottawa 2020 Guiding Principles* opened new strategies and a sound planning rationale for a variety of projects making space for previously excluded groups in public processes and spaces. In the case stories, the engaged storied groups set their placemaking initiatives in this framework to achieve both material and social goals and at least partially correct past injustices, ongoing misrepresentations, and exclusions in the city. As an additional benefit, these groups gained respect and legitimacy as engaged citizens from city officials, other interest groups including BIAs, and their neighbours making it easier to secure support for further initiatives. The placemaking initiatives in the three case stories demonstrate, despite their modest scope, the capacity of planning and the public to make space for diverse spatial practices and interests. The inclusion of previously excluded participants of unconventional spaces fulfills a socially progressive moral imperative as it fosters both opportunities for economic growth and the reconciliation of difference. Participatory placemaking moves the city closer to collective goals of improved liveability, diversity, and prosperity through revitalization, growth, and inclusion.

The common public evaluation of the three case stories as persuasive stories of successful progressive city-building, i.e., of the public good produced through good public process, echoes popular enthusiasm for placemaking as a productive form of participatory urbanism, at the intersection of community-led action and planning decision-making processes. The production of diverse cultural places is upheld as a special and critical performance of democracy and offers legitimacy to community-led initiatives. Making space for more inclusive democratic participation, diverse representation, and engaged community action is presented as helping to bring about more equitable social and material outcomes. The practices also help to address some of the past inequities of planning by making space for previously excluded groups in processes of decision-making and the framing of the public interest. As both a strategy for social mobilization and an opportunity for inclusive growth management, participatory placemaking reinforces the narratives, roles, and goals that a city made by all is a city for all.

9.2 Performative reproductions of social, spatial, and systemic inequities

As observed during fieldwork, despite good intentions, not all marginalized or alternative people are included in the process and not all inclusions of marginalized or alternative people result in public support for their claims to space. Not all differences are reconciled through appeals to inclusion and diversity. Not all conflicts are resolved through rational consensus building. In many instances, improved liveability and prosperity are secured for some M/AG members while inequities and threats to the ability to live and thrive in place are generated for others. In addition to the good performed and the good produced, the case stories also reproduce many of the of the inequities in process and outcomes identified in the literature and described by M/AGs who continue to be marginalized, excluded, and exploited.

Attempts to reconcile difference under a unified vision of the good city and narrative of good city-building privileges those who are best able and willing to perform their expected role and disadvantages those who are less able or willing to do so. Inclusion and success are shown to be dependent on the capacity, relative privilege, and persuasiveness of aligning one's needs, interests, and practices with the normative narrative. The opportunity, capacity, and barriers to participate faced by differently positioned groups vary in part depending on the relative privilege and value given to the group within existing inequitable structures. These observations and analyses drawn across multiple bodies of literature and experience⁴ challenge the assumption of participatory placemaking that reforming planning practice by integrating socio-cultural factors, and aiming for more socially diverse places, deserves scrutiny.

Critical theory and findings from the case stories suggest that “the dark side of planning”⁵ is also performed through these stories. Participatory placemaking is a non-reformist reform directed at “correct[ing] inequitable outcomes [but] without disturbing the underlying social structure,” or political framework.⁶ Participatory placemaking fails to transform oppressive systems that underwrite “the social interests and values embedded in the forms and function of a historically given city.”⁷ Meanwhile, the observed responsabilization of marginalized and/or

⁴ As reviewed in Chapter 2

⁵ Yiftachel, 'Planning and social control: Exploring the dark side'.

⁶ Fainstein, *The just city*.18

⁷ Castells, *The city and the grassroots: a cross-cultural theory of urban social movements*. xvi

alternative groups and economization of their cultural production suggests that participatory placemaking does translate social interests and values of ‘good’ city-building through neoliberal market logics.⁸ The power and persuasiveness of a good story can make us overlook, minimize, or efface the structural biases and systemic inequities embedded in the expectations of a good performance. Critiques of placemaking and participatory planning reforms in the literature, alongside my critical autoethnography, begin the work of making visible the simultaneous subnarratives that are also deployed across the case stories and understanding the work that they do in reproducing social and spatial inequities.

9.2.1 Inclusion (and control) through democratic participation

The socially progressive future imagined by *Ottawa 2020* guides the growth management strategy towards inclusion and improved quality of life. The plan assumes that liberal-democratic participation directed towards socially progressive goals can produce a liveable prosperous city for all. Participatory placemaking allows Ottawa to perform its role as capital city, allows planners to perform a reformed role as public managers of the democratic production of space, and invites diverse groups of engaged citizens to participate in a collective city-building project and production of public good. The integration of community-led placemaking into the ‘good’ city-building project expands democratic participation beyond representation to include socially engaged participatory action. Participatory placemaking is perceived as an opportunity for previously excluded groups to advance their own spatial-material and socio-cultural needs and interests while simultaneously broadening the range of alternative approaches and strategies available to produce broader public benefit. The reformed public process is one in which diverse groups can claim space for themselves within formal planning and public discourse. Participatory placemaking clearly opened opportunities for the engaged groups in each of the case stories. Through strategic alignment with prevailing values as represented by *Ottawa 2020* and persuasive performances of engaged civic action, groups moved their marginalized and/or alternative spatial practices and communities into the public realm, providing beneficial outcomes for both themselves and the public.

⁸ Brenner and Theodore, ‘Cities and the geographies of ‘actually existing neoliberalism’’; Kearns and Philo, *Selling places : the city as cultural capital, past and present*.

Still, the participation of the engaged storied groups in public processes remained subject to public control. This control was most clearly activated in the decision-making processes that established whose actions were legitimate and whose goals were desirable. M/AG actions and behaviour can be read as disciplined by particular performances of good participation towards particular public expectations of good city-building. Inclusive participation of M/AGs in public placemaking redirected M/AG actions and M/AG outcomes to better conform to planning process and to better persuade public opinion. Inclusion, participation, and success were conditional, dependent on specific notions of good planning public values. Inclusive participation does not necessarily redistribute power or benefits to M/AGs and do not necessarily depend on the recognition of the validity of M/AG claims to space or their right to the city.

The progressive narrative of participatory placemaking complicates traditional models to top-down versus bottom-up participation, including the “Ladder of Citizen Participation” by Sherry Arnstein.⁹ Arnstein argues that citizen participation “is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future.”¹⁰ The extent of citizens power in participatory placemaking cannot easily be plotted as a single point on the ladder.¹¹ M/AG participants may be simultaneously enabled and controlled by participatory placemaking. As a “means by which [enabled have-not citizens] can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society,”¹² participatory placemaking can be a path of action and agency that includes “have-not” groups and can make space for increased diversity of spaces in the city. However, participatory placemaking does not strictly effect a redistribution of power. It offers an increased access to participation in process. In the three case stories, the success of participatory placemaking rests at least in part on the ability of each of the M/AGs (a) to use public process and tools to define their initiative as producing a legitimate and beneficial space, and (b) to shift public perception sufficiently to be included as a legitimate and beneficial

⁹ Arnstein, "A ladder of citizen participation."

¹⁰ Arnstein, "A ladder of citizen participation." 216

¹¹ Ibid. 215

¹² Arnstein, 'A ladder of citizen participation'. 216

participant. Elements of nonparticipation and tokenism remain present through control of process and decision-making.

Participatory planning reforms assume that the inequities produced through spatial, social, and procedural exclusion from the public can be sufficiently corrected by including M/AGs. Intersection between the case stories and field work with reflections through critical urban theory and critical analyses reveal dark sides to the assumed good of inclusive empowered participation and its assumed unifying goals. Participatory reforms assume that past inequities are the product of misdirected performances of their foundational political values rather than inherent products of the governing logics of planning, with its set of values, distributions of roles, and socio-political constitution of the public. The participatory process works to reconcile conflicts of difference by redirecting conflicting group interests towards public interests. This consensus-building is controlled by the imposition of ‘good’ city-building and the actually existing structural inequities that still exist in planning processes and rational decision-making. Equitable outcomes are framed as resulting from a mutual adjustment towards finding synergetic and/or shared benefits, which may or may not advance spatial justice goals.

By centralizing control and redirecting value and capacity towards the production of future public growth, participatory placemaking does not empower marginalized and/or alternative groups but recruits their participation in systems that increase their responsibility to produce for the public and extracts value from their socio-cultural production as the conditions of inclusion. The public terms of participation make space for reconciling special group interests with public interests but continue to control, constrain, and deny different group needs, interests, and uses of space that do not align with public values or provide clear public benefit. Participatory placemaking does not “allow people to play a real part in shaping their own futures”¹³ as articulated in the *Ottawa 2020 Human Services Plan*. The City and public control over the conditions for inclusion, and their control over whose goals are privileged, i.e., recognized as legitimate and desirable; fosters performances structured by prevailing political, economic, and social values, processes, and interests; and redirects progressive reforms and outcomes towards the continued reproductions of urban inequities.

¹³ City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 2020 Human Services Plan: Priority on People*. 15

Participatory placemaking takes control of community-based placemaking and integrates it into the foundational narrative of planning as democratic, future-oriented decision-making in the public interest. Participatory placemaking, like many other planning reforms directed at forms of participation, enables the participation of “have-not citizens” in political, economic, and social processes but does not redistribute power within them. Evaluated against the purpose of urban social movements as “collective actions consciously aimed at the transformation of the social interests and values embedded in the forms and functions of a historically given city,”¹⁴ participatory placemaking makes space for collective action but only within the embedded values and limited forms of the prevailing narratives of ‘good’ city-building.

9.2.2 Social unity (and assimilation) through diverse cultural representation

Through tools such as the *Ottawa 2020 Growth Management Strategy* and Guiding Principles, or the Equity and Inclusion Lens Handbook, Ottawa makes many rhetorical and substantive value claims of progressiveness through narratives of diversity. Rooted in Canadian identity as a celebration of diversity, these claims raise the dilemma of reconciling pluralism with a unified civic identity and social order.¹⁵ While cultural diversity is upheld as a value, unreconciled differences threaten the effective governance of a diverse population. The communicative and cultural shifts in planning reform sought to address these failings through greater visibility and appreciation of the value of diversity, and by reforming approaches for the representation and governance of diverse participants.¹⁶ In that sense, placemaking helps to disrupt the purely technocratic political production of space to make more space for socio-cultural co-production of place. The three case stories show how different groups put forward different aspirational visions for the future of the city. M/AGs successfully integrated their group stories into the common urban narratives, as in line with the vision and principles of *Ottawa 2020*.

Given the orientation of planning towards operating in the public interest, it is important to understand the socio-political constitution of the citizen, its reliance on the division between public and private, and how these definitions impact the role of both the planner and the citizen

¹⁴ Castells, *The city and the grassroots: a cross-cultural theory of urban social movements*. xvi

¹⁵ Taylor identifies this challenge as the contradictions of “control and participation,” and “unity and pluralism.” See Taylor, “City form and capital culture: Remaking Ottawa.” 81

¹⁶ Arnstein, ‘A ladder of citizen participation’.; Peattie, ‘Reflections on advocacy planning’.

in shaping the city.¹⁷ The socially progressive agenda of traditional planning to secure good living conditions and well-being of all citizens depends on the political rationale that recognizes public process and public resources can and should benefit the public. The public space and public life of the city that have been shaped by modernist planning through public policy and in the public interest reproduce an ideal of universal citizenship that represent a particular desired social order of desired citizens.¹⁸ Planning assumes that the public “share broadly common interests, while arguing over the details of pluralistic interest conflicts.”¹⁹ To uphold the values of the city for all, progressive planning reforms look to participation and representation as strategies for representing diversity. However, planning also works to reconcile particularity and difference of diverse citizens within a unified social order with expectations of solidifying a collective sense of citizenship under the narrative of the city for all.

Feminist theory, as outlined in the literature review, argues that the public called into being through progressive universalist constructs of public citizenship privileges and burdens different people differently. Susan Fainstein argues, the concept of public interest “obfuscated the real (white, male, capitalist, western) interests that it defended while purporting to represent all.”²⁰ Embedded within the logics of modern social liberal democracy, diverse participation and representation are directed towards recognizing difference to reconcile differences through rationale deliberation and consensus building. Consensus is not co-produced but is manufactured by a controlled public process that excludes participants and outcomes deemed outside of public interest. Progressive assumptions of inclusive citizenship fail to acknowledge particularity and difference that cannot be reconciled and integrated with the existing citizenship. Irreconcilable differences are framed as a deviant, anti-social, threat to social order. The inherent right to difference claims to space are not recognized unless difference can be consolidated with the dominant use and users of space.

¹⁷ Fainstein and Fainstein, 'City planning and political values'; Friedmann, *Planning in the public domain: From knowledge to action*.

¹⁸ Fraser, 'Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy'.

¹⁹ Healey, *Collaborative planning: Shaping places in fragmented societies*. 25

²⁰ Fainstein, 'Planning theory and the city'. 123

Difference has traditionally represented disorder within the normative city-building project. Alternative practices and use of space are viewed as threats to the coherent production of space and public identity. As Richard Sennett notes: “Conflict is conceived as a threat to some ‘better,’ conflict-free city life.”²¹ He argues that “progressive notions of city planning” view “conflict and pain between the parts of the human city [...] as qualities to be eliminated.”²² The control that planning assumes in the public interest has taken the form of segregating non-public users and uses from the public realm; criminalizing and restricting non-public users and uses of space; and redirecting and optimizing non-public users and uses to produce benefits for the public. Conversely, assimilation and appropriation integrate M/AG cultural labour and practices, their resources and resourcefulness, with the public through strategies to reform public policy to make diversity visible and valuable for the public as catalysts for growth. Participatory placemaking recognizes and invites the participation of traditionally excluded groups to reconcile their non-public users and uses with public interests. “The doublesided coin of accessibility and exclusion”²³ empowers some groups and further marginalizes others. Planning calls the public into being equally by who it plans for and with, as who it plans against and without.

The capacity of placemaking to call communities into being and to strengthen their sense of agency and belonging makes placemaking both a potential threat to and opportunity for the unifying city-building project of the city for all. Diverse representation in public process and public space, is not a sufficient counteraction to the inequities experienced through exclusion. Like participation, representation in public process maintains normative values embedded in the narrative of the city for all, to represent and celebrate diversity as the inclusion of M/AGs without recognition of different needs, experiences, or values that exist beyond or in conflict with a unified civic identity.

²¹ Sennett, *The uses of disorder: personal identity & city life*. 97

²² Ibid. 96-7

²³ McCall and Dunn, 'Geo-information tools for participatory spatial planning: Fulfilling the criteria for good governance?'. 93

9.2.3 Market logics of responsibilized participation and cultural capital

As seen through the analysis of planning documents and their impact in directing the case stories, the principle of inclusion acts as shorthand for democracy, equity, diversity, and safety with the implicit intention of fostering a sense of belonging to and participation in the city for all.

Ultimately under neoliberal rationality, these values are all weighed against their service to economic growth and productivity. As Wendy Brown argues, under neoliberalism there is no intrinsic value given to human beings and our membership in society is not as members of the public but as economic actors. Brown writes:

Governance has become neoliberalism's primary administrative form, the political modality through which it creates environments, structures constraints and incentives, and hence conducts subjects. [...] It is also key to securing accession to the 'economization' of all areas of life.²⁴

Neoliberal market logics define public good and social order as consequential outcomes of the optimization of economic growth to produce surplus benefits shared by all. Under neoliberalism "economic growth is the state's social policy."²⁵ Rather than conceiving of the need for social policy to compensate for economic disparities and structural inequities, competition and market rationality transform the social contract and transfer social responsibilities of the state to individuals.

In each of the case stories, approval depended on the capacity of the engaged group to bootstrap their initiatives and demonstrate sufficient cost-effectiveness and value production. The M/AGs in the case stories position their entrepreneurialism and social enterprise as contemporary urban social movement or at least as socially oriented. Invoking forms of community building that rejects aid from above, DIY ethos and mutual aid are repackaged as entrepreneurial spirit. Strategies of bootstrapping and social networks become new forms of doing it themselves. Their valued autonomy expressed through self-management, not only cares for their own community but through civic engagement can offer mutual benefits to the whole city. Read critically, the value of individuals or groups comes not from recognition of their rights

²⁴ Brown, *Undoing the demos : neoliberalism's stealth revolution*. 122

²⁵ Ibid. 63-4

or place in society but from their competitive contribution to economic growth. As Brown explains:

the idea and the practice of responsabilization—forcing the subject to become a responsible self-investor and self-provider—reconfigures the correct comportment of the subject from one naturally driven by satisfying interests to one forced to engage in a particular form of self-sustenance that meshes with the morality of the state and the health of the economy.²⁶

Public acceptance is therefore not only conditional on alignment with normative standard of good citizenship, as previously argued, but also fought for as entrepreneurs in competition with other entrepreneurs. Public support is not provided as social support but rationalized and won as a strategic calculated investment.

Through participatory placemaking, community placemaking is integrated into public planning as social entrepreneurialism, translating public participation into responsabilized citizenship that provides care and produces surplus value through economic growth. Governments download responsibility for social programs to the community, re-defining social supports as community practices of neighbourliness. As discussed in the literature review, this process of responsabilization is a consequence of neoliberal austerity and defunding of public programs. Similar to Eleanor Jupp's reading of neoliberal austerity which highlights the burden placed upon women and "gendered networks of care," this reading of participatory placemaking highlights the downloading of public responsibility to secure quality of life, health, and well-being onto local groups and the appeal to their resourcefulness.²⁷ Rather than lessening the burden on marginalized and/or alternative groups traditionally excluded from the public realm, responsabilization increases the burden on them to not only continue to provide care for their underserved community but also to promise surplus public benefits.

In each of the case stories, engaged groups also make the persuasive argument that their placemaking initiatives contribute to a desirable city image and economic growth by drawing on the cultural capital of diversity and the economic benefit of creativity and difference. Recognition of the value of difference as social and economic capital stands in for the

²⁶ Ibid. 84

²⁷ Jupp, 'Women, Communities, Neighbourhoods: Approaching Gender and Feminism within UK Urban Policy'.

recognition of difference through the right to the city. Despite the rhetorical reliance on notions of the public, values of equity, and grand narratives of the city for all, the *Ottawa 2020* city-building project is an exercise in strategic growth management guided by neoliberal market logics. Under neoliberal governance, integration and redirection of human capital work to make individuals and groups “responsible for themselves while binding them to the powers and project of the whole.”²⁸ Rather than a narrative of collaboration and rational decision-making that is deployed through participatory placemaking, the case stories can be read critically as deploying market logics of cost-benefit analysis and strategic investment.

Healey warns that market rationality in public decision-making “teaches people to treat issues in terms of rule-adherence, rather than identifying the actual impacts of a project on people and environments.”²⁹ Participatory placemaking performatively reproduces the sense of mutual benefits and conflict resolution through “partisan mutual adjustment” that Healey argues repeats the instrumental rationality of “market adjustment.”³⁰ Participation and decision-making through market logics ultimately sidestep the messier real collective project of moral reflection, deliberation, agency, and association making. Market consensus replaces political contestation and demands for justice. Brown argues that neoliberalism is “the language of democracy used against the demos,”³¹ and that “neoliberal law is the opposite of planning.”³² Participatory placemaking can be critically read as also reproducing these logics, translating the grand narratives of future public growth and the city for all through neoliberal narratives of entrepreneurship as responsibilized democratic participation and strategic cultural capital as commodified diversity. These translations strategically redirect participation, responsibility, and decision-making towards the production of economic growth while using the language of responsibility, inclusion, and cultural diversity against itself.

²⁸ Brown, *Undoing the demos : neoliberalism's stealth revolution*. 129

²⁹ Healey, *Collaborative planning: Shaping places in fragmented societies*. 33

³⁰ Ibid. 24

³¹ Brown, *Undoing the demos : neoliberalism's stealth revolution*. 128

³² Ibid. 67

9.3 Counter-narratives, counter-culture, and counter-hegemony

Even when burdened by normative structures and restrictive processes, a variety of M/AGs demonstrate an aptitude for spatial, cultural, and political interventions that adaptively respond to group needs and aspirations, reveal the limitations and biases of official city plans and processes, and refuse the oppressive logics and systems to claim authority and space in the city. As Yiftachel writes, “a realistic understanding of planning acknowledges the possibility that spatial control policies trigger resistance, compliance, and any combination of these, depending on the spatial and temporal circumstances.”³³ At the intersection of structure, agency, and group identity M/AGs work through ways in which they are enabled and constrained, both externally and internally, and pursue various strategies, performances, and refusals. Their interventions and practices may be both materially necessary and symbolically meaningful to the well-being and cohesion of these groups. Beyond the material and cultural needs, at times these interventions and practices also serve political or counter-political functions to destabilize the narratives deployed against them.

9.3.1 Making do in spaces made for difference

Planning reforms directed at engaging and including more diversity in public processes are authoritative practices that both assume and re-assert public authority over the space. The participation of previously excluded M/AGs in mainstream planning processes and stories does not represent a redistribution of power because their inclusion is not a recognition of their authority. Although participation and inclusion are not transformational changes of inequitable and oppressive systems, M/AGs are able to mobilize planning reforms to make do in the space made for them. Public interest in inclusion and diversity presented strategic opportunities for the three M/AG storied groups to pursue their placemaking initiatives and secure particular group interests. Through their strategic interactions with other participants, they were able to establish productive relationships with neighbours and City officials to anticipate and diffuse conflicts over their proposed use of public space. Performative and rhetorical alignments between group

³³ Yiftachel, 'Planning and social control: Exploring the dark side'. 401

needs and the normative values of ‘good’ city-building helped them to persuade the public and the City to recognize the value of diverse placemaking initiatives.

Engagements with dominant systems and practices are shown to be productive tactics for securing group needs and the group’s place in the city, taking advantage of public spaces, processes, and infrastructure. As Elizabeth Gross writes: “In order to challenge and move beyond patriarchal models, feminists must be able to use whatever means are at hand, including those of the very system it challenges.”³⁴ The three storied groups recognized the strategic opportunity of participating in the public process and the tactical necessity of aligning their performance to the rules of the game. Speaking from and acting with their marginalized and/or alternative communities, each of the storied groups imagined their placemaking initiatives as partially correcting the injustice of their exclusion from the public realm as a result of misrepresentation, discrimination, and marginalization. Through placemaking, they aimed to address specific material-spatial conditions that have contributed to their exclusion such as lack of visibility in the public realm, lack of appropriate amenities, and lack of appropriate policy and financial support.

By playing the game, M/AG are not necessarily inauthentic in their performances of participatory placemaking. As Riessman notes, “to emphasize the performative is not to suggest that identities are inauthentic [...] but only that identities are situated and accomplished with audience in mind.”³⁵ My research shows that the engaged storied groups develop layered performances of their marginalized and/or alternative identities to demand inclusion as a stylized form of grassroots action, allowing each of the groups to perform their own stories and identities while simultaneously performing the normative role of engaged citizen and cultural resource. They assert agency within the dominant system and find ways to participate to take care of the immediate needs of their group. Participation in these spaces of participatory placemaking, however, does not necessarily bring empowerment. The groups make do with non-reformist reforms as they seek to correct inequitable exclusions within the limits of existing social structure. The final form of the three M/AG initiated placemaking projects remains controlled by

³⁴ Pateman and Gross, *Feminist challenges : social and political theory*. 197

³⁵ Riessman, *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. 106

the planning process, conditional on public approval and clear demonstration of public value, and subject to appropriation and assimilation.

With or without their needs directly in mind, with or without their participation, M/AGs can be unintended, secondary, or coincidental beneficiaries of progressive planning that plans in the public interests. As discussed in the literature review, feminist planning scholars have emphasized ways in which the city, though admittedly patriarchal in its interests and formation of the public realm, not only made spaces for women but unintentionally enabled women to organize and use public spaces as a catalyst for change.³⁶ Even if the space is made for them through public institutions and oppressive systems, M/AGs can under certain circumstances use that space for participation and performances that bring about some material and symbolic improvements. They continue to face significant burdens and additional barriers in overcoming systemic disparities and exclusions. 'Making do' with participatory placemaking is a tactic to meet certain group needs and reshape public opinion.

9.3.2 Representations and recognition of difference

Planning reforms that make space for diverse representation in public places and public process continue to assert public authority over the urban narrative. Diversity is recognized as valuable when it can be reconciled with the grand narratives of future public growth in the city for all. Its recognition is not the mutual recognition of difference nor the recognition of intrinsic cultural value. Still, M/AGs can make themselves meaningfully visible in the spaces made for diverse representation. In addition to material representations, such as street signs and rainbow flags, they can show how they have been misrepresented in narratives of good city-building and public opinion and demonstrate the value of their presence and identity. As discussed in the literature, making visible finds its roots in the feminist methods of consciousness raising, storytelling, and alternative histories.³⁷ Making visible is not only a tactic for making difference visible. When seen critically, making visible works to make visible the invisible and unconscious privileges, biases, and practices that have marginalized, disempowered, and threatened difference. Place-

³⁶ For example, see Spain, *How women saved the city*.

³⁷ For examples, see MacKinnon, *Consciousness Raising*.; Dubrow and Sies, 'Letting our guard down: Race, class, gender, and sexuality in planning history'.; Sandercock, *Making the invisible visible: A multicultural planning history*.; Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience'.

based storytelling is a medium for making visible the experiences of intersecting socio-political systems and structures in space that participate in creating disbelonging, displacement, and erasure.³⁸ As deployed by the M/AG storied groups, this tactic of making visible selectively made visible the differences that could be made valuable for the public in the space made for their public representation. Representation does matter and although specific approaches, strategies, and theories may be contested, they do important work towards revealing dilemmas, destabilizing the status quo, and improving the social and economic status of marginalized and/or alternative groups and their daily experience of the city.

The assumed common interests and desired unified identity of ‘the public’ make tactics of making-do, making-visible, and making-valuable vulnerable to public control, assimilation, and appropriation. The public struggles to leave space for diversity beyond public interests—spaces for other authors and other audiences, spaces where the urban landscape contains memories of different users and uses of place, traces of past belonging, and potential transformative futures by, for, or with others. The grand narrative of the city asserts the public’s entitlement to the production of space, to the stories, resources, experiences, and spaces of the city, the right to govern and the right to extract value on behalf of the public. As Audra Simpson argues, inclusion, participation, and recognition—“the much sought after and presumed ‘good’ of multicultural politics”—are dependent upon the authority of those in the position of including and recognizing.³⁹ Recognition of value for the city is not a recognition of right to the city. Inclusive participatory reforms recruit participants into oppressive systems through the promise of future public growth in the city for all. Making do, making visible, and making valuable are important and often necessary tactics for M/AG survival. Improved access to public processes and public support can improve their quality of life and sense of belonging but fails to transform the logics and systems that threaten their survival and limit their autonomy and rights.

9.3.3 Taking place: Performing our own stories of people and place

Making space to include M/AGs in the planning story maintains them in defined roles whether as the deviant in need of rehabilitation; the have-not in need of public benevolence or

³⁸ Hayden, *The power of place: Urban landscapes as public history*.

³⁹ Simpson, *Mohawk interruptus : political life across the borders of settler states*. 11

empowerment; or the undervalued asset in need of opportunity. Strategies of inclusion to bring M/AGs in from the edge refuse to acknowledge the role planning has played in pushing them to the edge or the systems and values that have defined where ‘the edge’ is. Strategy of welcoming M/AGs ‘back in’ are adopted without acknowledging that inclusion is not welcomed by all M/AGs because “the edge is a valued space for them.”⁴⁰ The grand narratives of future public growth and the city for all struggle to recognize the autonomy and intrinsic value of difference when in does not participate in, does not represent, and does not wish to be integrated into the prevailing social order. Claims from the edge undermine the normative value claims and assumed logics of ‘good’ city building and reject the roles M/AGs are asked to play in order to belong.

Punk claims to space are not absolute, stable, unified, or uncontested. They remain subject to dominant social, political, and economic systems that control property and define its value. When plans are deployed to shift the desirability of different spaces throughout the city, pressure is placed on users and uses that threaten the desired quality of life and promised potential prosperity of the space. Revitalization, renewal, and growth perpetually forces punks and other ‘undesirables’ to adapt and integrate or be displaced, forced to take place in increasingly marginal parts of the city often correlating with declining areas. Rather than sharing in the prosperity of future public growth, M/AGs perpetually face displacement, heightened policing, and further social, economic, and spatial marginalization. Improvements to public liveability threaten the ability to live and ability to thrive in place for non-public subjects.

M/AGs claims authorship of their own stories and the authority to use, move through, care for, and transform space to shape place-based meaning beyond public authority, regulatory structures, and normative standards. The critical autoethnography of punk scenes that I offer supports such claim to place-based group authority and the refutation of the public casting of M/AGs as antagonists and antitheses of good city-building. Telling our stories refuses the conditions for inclusion and legitimacy set by the public, the state, or the market. We may refuse inclusion in imposed social orders and grand narratives. Rather than try to reform public opinion and correct mischaracterizations by making M/AG identity visible and valuable for the public, punks may refuse to be cast in any role, whether as undesirable, unfortunate, undervalued, or

⁴⁰ Stratford, 'On the edge: a tale of skaters and urban governance'. 202

misunderstood. Punk scenes are place-based group practices that take place in marginalized and/or alternative spaces of struggle, conflict, and difference. They do just fine with or without public participation (often better without).

The seeming antagonism of the punk scene is directed not against good but against the social order that controls the narrative about what is good for the public. Punks practices of anarchism, distinct from our performances of anarchy, recasts ourselves as agonists.⁴¹ Rather than depending upon an antagonistic competition based on difference, rebellion against ‘the man,’ or on a flattened fiction of all-inclusive rational consensus building, I position punk within what Chantal Mouffe sees as the critical role of using the political power of their radical negativity.⁴² The explicit political and ethical stance of refused roles, norms, and grand narratives similarly echoes how Audra Simpson sees refusal: “as a political and ethical stance that stands in stark contrast to the desire to have one’s distinctiveness as a culture, as a people, recognized.”⁴³ Refusal is a claim of authority for oneself (and/or one’s group) and re-grounding the terms of meaningful engagement and belonging in community. Radical refusal is a choice to be non-participant in public stories that claim power to remove, approve, and destabilize difference. Those who refuse to participate in public stories do not require inclusion, recognition, and empowerment from the public. They do, however, demand to have their “political sovereignty acknowledged and upheld.”⁴⁴

Punk counter-narratives of the city are perhaps a “different sort of repeating” that Butler calls for, filled with counter-temporalities, counter-aesthetics, and counter-ethics that break and subvert the stylized repetition of the good city narratives and non-reformist reforms. An interest in M/AGs and subculture is, as Hebdige writes, an interest in “the expressive forms and rituals of those subordinate groups. . . who are alternately dismissed, denounced and canonized; treated at different times as threats to public order and as harmless buffoons.”⁴⁵ Perhaps punks and punk ways of being and ways of knowing the city are irreconcilable with the public and the future that

⁴¹ Dunn, ‘Anarcho-punk and resistance in everyday life’.

⁴² Mouffe, *Agonistics : thinking the world politically*.

⁴³ Simpson, *Mohawk interruptus : political life across the borders of settler states*.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 11

⁴⁵ Hebdige, *Subculture, the meaning of style*. 2

planning plans for. Punks hold up a sometimes brutally honest mirror to the city and questions why it tries so hard to renew, include, and grow, and for whom. Maybe punks have no place in future public growth and will never be included in the city for all. Perhaps we do not need to be. Perhaps we do not want to be. Perhaps punks and other marginalized and/or alternative groups are critical agonists who will force planning to face its implicit logics and normative values.

10 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

By considering whether the good performed and produced by progressive city-building is good enough, this dissertation questions the extent to which creative placemaking—as a dominant form of Canadian citizen-engaged planning—can serve as a route to spatial and social justice. How well does it function as a meaningful, inclusive forum for democratic practice? In seeking answers to such questions, this dissertation examines official plans and creative placemaking initiatives in Ottawa. It does so with a distinctive lens. While many critiques of participatory urbanism address the limits to participation or the fast-tracking of projects that appear profit-generating, this dissertation adds a meta-level of analysis, namely documenting and analyzing community-led placemaking initiatives that engage in public processes as captured in the stories that government officials, urban promoters, and residents. These stories matter. They are performative, an abstraction of the practice of planning that helps propel forward specific planning approaches and practices or, alternatively, question and destabilize them. City performances of placemaking in Ottawa—the stories told about how initiatives have developed, how they have been implemented, how they have affected urban space and living, and why that matters—have reinforced core narratives about the effectiveness of planning in fostering quality urban spaces, multicultural harmony, and progressive and inclusiveness governance. Quite different messages are presented in the experiences, performances, and counter-narratives of many marginalized and/or alternative subculture groups (M/AGs).

In the three Ottawa case stories examined in this dissertation, the City and the M/AGs both deployed common urban narratives of cultural revitalization and participatory reform to tell persuasive stories of ‘good’ city-building. The official plan, *Ottawa 2020*, aims to ensure “a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come.”¹ New forms of planning highlight local culture. New forms of civic engagement constitute an expansion of opportunities to participate in urban deliberations. The progressive civic values and aspirations of inclusion, responsibility, and prosperity embedded in official plans, planning approaches, and participatory avenues have helped improve the public realm. Yet, even after twenty years of urban and cultural development informed by *Ottawa 2020*, the critique offered by Taylor in 1989 appears to hold

¹ City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan*. 1.3

true: “The reality of the capital, in Ottawa as elsewhere, is one of control and order masquerading as unified national pride, public service and aesthetic delight.”²

Members of marginalized communities, advocates, and critical planners make visible the failure of the modernist planning project to achieve equality, liberty, and justice. Urban initiatives often privilege prevailing interests; they dismantle spaces and sideline activities that fall outside the official vision for the ‘good city.’ Additional burdens—in the form of displacement, dis-belonging, criminalization of certain activities or other ills not addressed in the research—then fall on those already marginalized, racialized, or otherwise deemed alternative. Of particular importance, inequitable and harmful outcomes are masked behind the heralded proclamations and claims of Ottawa’s ‘good’ city-building. In this sense, as the dissertation explores, performative stories of inclusion and diversity can play a part in the reproduction of social and spatial inequities. Engaging with contested evaluations of the ‘good’ that may be performed or produced by participatory placemaking offers a conceptual framework to organize existing narratives, theories, and critiques of the values, visions, and processes of ‘good’ city-building.

The observation that the promise of plans and projects is unmet is not new. Likewise, the production of some good for some previously excluded people is not a sufficient base to conclude that progressive participatory city-building and placemaking practices are transforming our cities into inclusive, equitable, and prosperous places for all. What is needed is detailed examination of how recent projects are developed, pursued, and evaluated with specific attention on those who have been excluded and/or marginalized. Moreover, this demands attention to how the development and evaluation of city-building projects fit into prevailing visions, structures, and logics of local and contemporary civic institutions and social movements. My work took up these challenges, with the main emphasis on the narrative dynamics and how participatory placemaking is “*performed* through stories”—what stories they deploy, and what work they do within the city-building project, and beyond. In this dissertation, I examined the alignment between the claims and substance of progressive planning reforms and community-led

² Taylor, ‘City form and capital culture: Remaking Ottawa’. 103

placemaking through the performance, performativity, and counter-narratives of ‘good’ city-building.

In this dissertation, the Ottawa case stories are deployed to examine how “the way we narrate the city”—through performances of participatory placemaking as ‘good’ city-building—“becomes constitutive of urban reality, affecting the choices we make, the ways we then might act.”³ The methodology entailed documenting what different people have written, designed, said, or shown (through song, play, action, etc.) to build rich and distinct narratives of specific urban initiatives, and to analyse the fit with normative values and vision of the ‘good city,’ performative value of participating in good processes, and grand narratives of ‘good’ city-building. The narrative reconstruction of the three Ottawa cases, layered with intersecting stories of people and place, provides narratives that are “thick enough...to deal not only with the sequence of events and the conscious intentions of the actors in the events, but also with structures — institutions, modes of thought, and so on.”⁴ Re-readings of ‘good’ case stories of ‘good’ city-building—drawing on structural, thematic, critical, and radical perspectives—generate insights into: the reproduction of spatial inequities, implication of social, political, and economic forces therein, and oppressive subnarratives; and the agency, capacity, struggles, and tactics of marginalized and/or alternative groups to resist, refuse, and claim space in the city.

This Chapter summarizes key findings as they relate to the research questions set out in Chapter 3 and details contributions to theory and practice.

Key Findings

The positive reception of the three Ottawa case stories as successful examples of participatory placemaking reflects the extent to which they successfully reproduced normative visions of the ‘good city’, enacted desirable group identities, and perform grand narratives of ‘good’ city-building.

The narrative reconstructions of the three case stories point to the potential of participatory placemaking and the capacity of previously excluded M/AGs to contribute to a shared city-

³ Sandercock, 'Out of the Closet: The Importance of Stories and Storytelling in Planning Practice'. 12

⁴ Burke, *New perspectives on historical writing*. 291

building project. Participatory placemaking is presented as bringing about new forms and strategies for making space through meaningful participation, connecting diverse cultural spatial practices to the broader public project of city-building. Through comparative narrative and performative analysis (see Chapter 8), I show how the case stories (described in Chapters 5 and 6) reproduce ‘good’ process and ‘good’ outcomes that correlate with: the Guiding Principles and Strategic Directions of the *Ottawa 2020 Growth Management Strategy*; prevailing public interests in placemaking as empowering community action and engagement; histories of urban social movements and struggles to claim space; and participatory reforms in planning practice.

The case stories suggest that participatory placemaking at least partially reform traditional planning, expanding public participation in decision-making and the production of improved quality of life, belonging, unity, and prosperity. As part of a progressive vision of future public growth in the city for all, the measures to foster inclusive participation make some space for diverse representation to enhance cultural value and economic prosperity of place. This reform occurs, however, with an important proviso, as summarized in the next section, that expanded representation occurs within the normative and structural confines of common urban narratives and processes.

The reproduction of social and spatial inequities in the Ottawa cases of participatory placemaking is shaped by structural limitations of non-reformist reforms; the disparities embedded in prevailing social, political, and economic forces; and the commodification of cultural diversity and austerity measures of neoliberalism.

In revitalized neighbourhoods, noise and loitering complaints, rising rents, and competition with more profitable enterprises continue to force punk and other subcultural spaces to close or relocate. Though many punk spaces are working to address safety, accessibility, and inclusion concerns, they see many ‘safe space’ policies, certifications, or enforcement as control over M/AG spaces and performative rather than sincere attempts to address social inequities. In the case of Le/The Village, concerns about ‘pinkwashing’ suggest that commercial interests of the BIA have appropriated gay-friendly branding for profit rather than any substantial improvement to the day-to-day life of LGBT folk in the city. Street skateboarders note the heightened restriction against skateboarding in other public spaces, for example, skateguards on ledges, ‘no

skateboarding’ signs in public spaces, or policing of street skating. Identifying the ordering logics, values, and structures at work in progressive narratives of the city for all and future public growth offers critical insight that make visible the barriers, inequities, burdens, and harm that is reproduced in ‘good’ performance of ‘good’ city-building.

The stories of ‘good’ city-building examined here depict difference and disorder as conflicts to be resolved through their inclusion in a unified social and spatial order. ‘Good’ participation is read as promoting community organizing, stakeholder negotiation, and consensus-building by pitching and promoting mutually beneficial outcomes. The difficulty is that the case stories (see Chapter 6) and critical autoethnography (see Chapter 7) point to how the planning process—via, for example, normative values—entrench and reproduce social hierarchies, a dynamic also documented in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. In Ottawa’s placemaking initiatives, public narratives and values are deployed performatively to legitimize the institutionalized authority of planning to control public decision-making and participation, to download responsibilities of care to M/AGs, and to extract value from their labour and (sub)cultural capital.

Critical re-readings through feminist, intersectional, and anti-oppression lens, as conducted in Chapter 8 and 9, offer at least partial explanations for how participatory placemaking reproduces social, spatial, and structural inequities. Mainstreamed placemaking, though drawing on the social disruption narratives of radical grassroots action, repackages community action into normative performances of neoliberal capitalist projections of future public growth. The progressive planning narrative of the city for everyone translates diversity into a commodity and inclusion into responsibilized participation. Participatory placemaking and cultural planning, in these respects, constitute non-reformist reforms that operate through oppressive systems that follow the market logic of neoliberalism. Despite producing some good outcomes for some M/AG members, and positively contributing to the vision of *Ottawa 2020*, the placemaking and cultural planning initiatives fail to meaningfully transform “the social interests and values embedded in the forms and functions”⁵ of traditional planning or the city of Ottawa.

⁵ Castells, *The city and the grassroots: a cross-cultural theory of urban social movements*. xvi

M/AGs put forward counter-narratives of survival, resistance, and refusal that suggest that strategies to secure incremental group needs; critical performances in public process and spaces; and radical refusal and solidarity are important arenas for struggles over city-building and pursuing transformative spatial justice.

The dissertation documents values, visions, identities, and narratives that are deployed within, excluded from, and exist beyond the ‘good’ city-building project. In this dissertation, I draw on a diversity of spatial traditions and community practices of M/AGs, with a focus on documenting some of my own punk experiences. The dissertation details how, in the face of oppressive systems and the power of privileged groups, a variety of diverse, marginalized, alternative, and subcultural groups strategically participated in public processes, critiqued ongoing social and spatial injustices, and refused inequitable terms of inclusion.

The M/AGs in the case stories drew upon the public enthusiasm for placemaking and social movements. Rather than merely projecting positive outcomes on speculative proposals, M/AGs draw on a wealth of successful projects shared across networks. Ottawa Skateboard Association and Ottawa Music Industries Coalition draw heavily on best practices and case studies in preparing their reports and strategies for the City. Each of the M/AGs were also able to frame their initiatives as contributing to civic improvements for the neighbourhood and city. Alignment with small businesses and the popular “Shop Local. Support Local.” campaigns, for example, were particularly productive. Local legacies of M/AG social movements brought visibility to past and ongoing injustices and community organizing. For example, the “We Demand” mural and Village Legacy project invoke the presence of past gay rights actions and leaders by giving them material presence on Bank Street. “Operation Overthrow McNabb” harkens back to similar rallies and infiltration of public meetings by Ottawa skateboarders in the 1990s. There are also many stories of preserving group practices that do not fit with prevailing visions or public interests, that are not-for-public.

In analyzing these stories, I found that strategic, critical, and radical performances and counter-performances could be categorized as: (a) necessary acts of making do to meet immediate group needs; (b) struggles for recognition by making visible and making valuable; and (c) radical refusals and acts of solidarity taking place and taking care beyond public space and practice. The relative degree and intersections of precarity and constraints, whether placed

upon or chosen by different marginalized and/or alternative groups, lead to different and often conflicting conceptualizations of the relationship between people and place. The stories performed (or not), repeated (or not), documented (or not), present a plurality of visions, values, and desired outcomes for the ‘good city.’ M/AG struggles for space are struggles to make do, to make valuable, and to make visible. Their stories represent efforts to counter attacks on their difference, attacks that occur through both exclusion and inclusion, and that threaten to erase, reform, assimilate, or appropriate their difference for the public good. Counter-narratives of M/AGs’ capacities to take place and take care beyond the confines, rules, and definitions of the public point to the power and wealth of meaningful alternative ways of being together and being in the city.

Contributions to theory

The main theoretical and methodological contribution of the dissertation is to demonstrate how attention to the performance of planning, and the stories through which that performance is expressed, can help parse out how it operates to privilege specific versions of the ‘good’ city and ‘good’ planning practice. The following section highlights key engagements with and contributions to the literature in each of the four strands reviewed in Chapter 2 as well as the literature included in narrative-based methodologies in Chapter 3.

Making place for people (2.1), and *persistent social and spatial inequities* (2.2): Planning reform movements such as the advocacy and communicative planning can be seen as critical responses that aim to shift from a model of ‘planning for’ to ‘planning with’. For decades, progressive planning reforms have aimed to reconcile the public good of planning with the harm caused by the social and spatial power imbalances. Creative placemaking and cultural planning policies similarly assume that alternative use or design of public space can radically transform the city. Participatory placemaking assumed that enabling agency and sense of collective responsibility will encourage participants to draw on personal and community assets to resolve conflict towards mutual benefit, producing the desired progressive goals. It is also further assumed that diverse representation in public places and inclusive public processes can correct

social inequities. These pervasive narratives follow similar assumptions of traditional planning that “‘the rational planning of ideal social orders’ can achieve equality, liberty, and justice.”⁶

Although participatory placemaking is shown to engage with socially progressive cultural values and identities, the shift of planning practice towards growth management and urban governance found throughout *Ottawa 2020* plans, guiding principles, and strategic directions, reflect the literature on neoliberal market logics of responsabilization, privatization, and economization of human capital.⁷ Critical re-readings reframe the prevailing narrative of the production of public good, not as the collective making of something out of nothing, but as further neoliberal mutations of democracy “used against itself.” Documentation and critical analysis of the case stories and *Ottawa 2020 Growth Management Strategy*, therefore, contribute to the literature on the commodification of human and cultural capital,⁸ and, in particular, literature on the appropriations of equity, diversity, and inclusion by market logics, and consequences for M/AGs.⁹

Non-reformist reforms and social reproductions (2.3): Social movements and critical theories forced planning to confront the technocratic foundations of the profession. The recurring attention to the definition and redefinition of the role of the planner as outlined in the literature review reveal the dilemma of the production-reproduction ouroboros that exists between ideology, structure, agency, and reform. Despite the assumed neutrality and progressiveness of liberal building blocks of universal inclusion, democratic participation, and rights, both good and oppressive assumptions are structured into and performed through narratives of good city-building. Throughout this dissertation, I point to the ongoing reproduction of social and spatial inequities through participatory placemaking—including barriers to meaningful participation, displacement and dispossession, assimilation, and appropriation—as an argument for reading

⁶ Sandercock, *Making the invisible visible: A multicultural planning history*. 3

⁷ Brown, *Undoing the demos : neoliberalism's stealth revolution.*; Brenner and Theodore, 'Cities and the geographies of 'actually existing neoliberalism''.; Harvey, 'From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: the transformation in urban governance in late capitalism'.

⁸ Sorkin, *Variations on a theme park : the new American city and the end of public space.*; Kearns and Philo, *Selling places : the city as cultural capital, past and present.*;

⁹ Sarmiento, 'Not diverse enough? Displacement, diversity discourse, and commercial gentrification in Santa Ana, California, a majority-Mexican city'.; Loh et al., 'Our Diversity Is Our Strength Explaining Variation in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Emphasis in Municipal Arts and Cultural Plans'.; Summers, *Black in place : the spatial aesthetics of race in a post-Chocolate City*.

participatory placemaking as yet another “non-reformist reform”¹⁰ of institutionalized professional planning. This dissertation argues that structural and ideological reforms of planning fail to address systemic forms of oppression and obscure the harms and injustices reproduced. Reforms directed at making planning perform its assumptions better fail to acknowledge the inequitable structures and oppressive systems that underwrite foundational socio-political, socio-cultural, and economic logics of public good.

The structural, critical, and radical dimensions of this dissertation provide multiple intersecting frameworks for interrogating progressive planning reforms and stories of good city-building. These stories, analyses, observations, theories, intuitions, and experiences reveal not only the structural authority and positional agency of planning, the public, and marginalized and/or alternative groups. Through constrained and controlled perceptions of the good city and good city-building, planning reproduces systems of power that approve, privilege, and validate some users and outcomes while also controlling, oppressing, and invalidating others. Rather than resolving social and spatial problems in the city, a half-century of progressive planning reforms that fail to address the spatial and social injustices of traditional planning and continue to reproduce authoritative systems and oppressive practices.

Spaces of struggle, difference, and refusal (2.4): This dissertation contributes to the emerging and re-emerging radical literature consider alternative values, roles, and practices of the many and multiply marginalized and/or alternative groups who continue to be excluded from mainstream and dominant narratives and practices of planning. It draws inspiration from the “double work” of feminist scholarship and activism in navigating conflicts between the strategies used to destabilize the dominant system, the strategies to implement meaningful change in the immediate need to better accommodate women in their gendered reality of daily life, and long-term goal to actively challenge and change dominant roles and social structures. In recognizing how planning is informed by and reproduces social structures and norms, these theories and practices aim to account for how those norms enable and constrain different groups and individuals differently. The intersectional lens, for example, has brought attention to specific

¹⁰ Fainstein, *The just city*.

ways in which both gentrification and neoliberalism have disproportionate negative impact on the lives of many women even in situations where it may seem to have enabled other women.

These bodies of literature also intersect with scholarship pertaining to planning in the Global South, queer space, diasporas, counterpublics, critical Black geographies, and insurgent planning.¹¹ This literature argues that normative socio-cultural and socio-political values that structure and legitimate ‘good’ public process and ‘good’ public outcomes (i.e. progress, democracy, justice) intersect with and operate through oppressive systems of settler colonialism, racial capitalism, and cisheteropatriarchy to reproduce social and spatial injustices. The critical autoethnography and exploration of other M/AG counternarratives and claims to space referenced in this dissertation draw from the literature on agonism, radical negativity, anarchism, and refusal. Rather than seeking further participatory reforms, this work contributes to practices of M/AGs who refuse to have their “struggle for coexistence reduced to a struggle for inclusion.”¹² This is explored as refusals to play an ongoing part in the continued marginalization of others, and instead working towards mutual recognition and radical solidarities based in systems of care instead of systems of oppression.

The place of story and narrative in the city (3.1): The case stories document different roles participants play in shaping space in the city, and the role that different spaces play in shaping identity, culture, and community. The reconstructed narratives outline the processes, strategies, and tactics the groups work through toward the resolution of conflict, the production of space, and the realization of desired outcomes. It also documents different encountered struggles, barriers, and conflicts that complicate their course of action. The case stories provide an orientation to the existing circumstances, the sequences of events, and consequences of action. Through the narrative reconstructions and analysis, this dissertation contributes to knowledge about who performs these stories, and we learn more about who they are, where they are coming from, and where they want to go through these stories. We learn about the relationships that

¹¹ Harney and Moten, *The undercommons: Fugitive planning & black study*.; Roy, 'Urban informality: Toward an epistemology of planning'.; Miraftab, 'Insurgent planning: Situating radical planning in the global south'.; Fraser and Weninger, 'Modes of engagement for urban research: enacting a politics of possibility'.; Keenan, 'Subversive property: Reshaping malleable spaces of belonging'.

¹² Porter and Barry, *'We Are All Here to Stay': A 'Meditation on Discomfort'*. 20

form, what actions are taken, and what decision are made. We learn about the places they want to make in the city, and we learn about the values that shape those desires.

Gary Fine argues that 'known stories' and 'bundles of narratives' facilitate the meaning-making and decision-making of novel circumstances and unique actors by relating them to stories that hold value and that prefigure outcomes. Stories are, therefore, able to assist participants to direct action towards desired outcomes and deepen our understanding of the values that inform decision-making.¹³ Fainstein and Fainstein argue that the political process of planning can be assessed relative to the "location of authoritative decision-making."¹⁴ Connecting this concept to Fine's, I use narrative and performative analysis to demonstrate how local and particular stories of 'good' city-building can be assessed relative to the location of authoritative storytelling and bundles of narratives. Once we understand which stories are being performed through participatory placemaking and what progressive work they do in being deployed, we can interrogate how these stories and performances might also be implicated in the social reproduction of oppressive systems and spatial injustices. Recognition of the "moral ordering involved in the conscious and unconscious use of certain plots and character types,"¹⁵ that Sandercock calls for, opens space for a recognition of the socio-political logics and systems that structure performances of city-building and underwrite moral assessments of produced value.

Finally, Sandercock urges us to consider the power of story as opening new possibilities. She writes: "Let us get this out of the closet. Let us liberate and celebrate and think about the power of story. Let us appreciate its importance to the 21st century multicultural planning project, as a way of bringing people together to learn about each other through the telling of stories."¹⁶ By placing the competing and diverging stories of different groups in meaningful dialog with each other and with common public stories, this dissertation contributes to the understanding of what values, desires, and structures propell participatory reforms and placemaking and towards what other outcomes they are moved. Critical re-readings further contribute to making visible the

¹³ Fine, *The Storied Group: Social Movements as "Bundles of Narratives"*. 238

¹⁴ Fainstein and Fainstein, 'City planning and political values'. 341

¹⁵ Sandercock, 'Out of the Closet: The Importance of Stories and Storytelling in Planning Practice'. 12

¹⁶ ---, *Making the invisible visible: A multicultural planning history*. 12-13

logics of oppression that, though frequently obscured in the telling of a good story, underwrite the progressive narrative of good city-building.¹⁷

Contributions to the practice of planning and placemaking

The research here is a cautionary one for planners and others involved in placemaking. The traditional heroic story of good city-building, one driven by democratic decision-making and participatory action towards publicly beneficial, progressive, and future-oriented goals, obscures the harms produced, among them the marginalization of alternative experiences, desires, and ways of being in the city. Although placemaking initiatives extend the boundaries of who may participate in the collective project of city-building, they do not challenge the authority of those positioned to decide who is to be included, under what conditions, and to what ends. As shown in the dissertation, enabled participation through an inclusive planning process does not equate to a substantive reform of process; it does not necessarily effect a redistribution of power or advance spatial justice goals. Representation of diversity focuses on showcasing culture as a commodity and downloading responsibilities of care. Such approaches fail to recognize or respect the inherent value of M/AGs or their inherent right to the city. Without equitable distribution of power, work, and benefits—without space for divergent city stories, divergent city users, and divergent values—the ‘city for all’ remains a city for some.

In evaluating the success of participatory placemaking, we must consider if the good produced by progressive city-building is good enough. Stories of good city-building need to be evaluated not for how well they perform and align with progressive social liberal democracy but how well they counter the assumptions embedded in the institutionalized professional practice of planning that reproduce social and spatial inequities. The case stories showed how progressive planning reforms made space for greater participation without reforming the logics and desires of the public that are at the centre of its normative ideologies. As such, the reforms of placemaking ultimately work to maintain control and authority. Narratives of ‘good’ city-building, as mutated through these systems, continue to reproduce urban inequities. By recognizing participatory placemaking as a public political process and normative cultural project, we can question how it

¹⁷ Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory'. 520

benefits and burdens different people differently. We must also question how it normalizes and promotes certain normative values and the logics of oppressive systems to accept some alternative forms and styles of placemaking while continuing to displace, marginalize, or restrict other practices at the margins.

Critical evaluations in this dissertation point to a need to disaggregate public participation to recognize how different groups are enabled by and burdened by different socio-cultural and socio-political factors that produce, structure, legitimate, and restrict the public realm to reproduce social and spatial inequities. Additionally, neoliberal assumptions embedded in the *Ottawa 2020 Growth Management Strategy* and echoed in the New Official Plan approved in November 2022¹⁸ are challenged throughout this dissertation, suggesting the need to consider whether “the integration of economic growth [and] social equity”¹⁹ is possible or whether economic interests, as currently mobilized, are irreconcilable with transformative spatial justice.

Lessons in punk and in radical solidarity with other non-publics

In the struggle for space in the city, marginalized and/or alternative groups regularly come into conflict not only with mainstream publics and governing bodies, but also with each other and with themselves. This dissertation does not offer a resolution to the tension between competing claims, or the divisions between authenticity and selling out. I leave space for M/AGs who (a) strategically perform roles within the normative confines of ‘good’ city-building and work within mainstream social order and institutions to secure group needs, gain recognition, and claim space; (b) confront, critiques, and resist social hierarchies and spatial injustices; and (c) refuse to play an assigned role in oppressive systems and perform their own place-based stories and identities. Given the reality of urban inequities perpetuated by dominant ideologies, normative cultural-political social orders, and oppressive systems, we can make critical judgments of who acts how, towards whose vision, with what authority or privilege, and with what outcomes, good or bad. We can leave more space for the stories of M/AGs who have more to *muddle through* and less to *make do* with. The challenge is not to allow recognition of whatever good is produced

¹⁸ Final approval of the City’s New Official Plan by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing was issued November 4, 2022, just weeks before the submission of this dissertation.

¹⁹ City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 2020 Official Plan*. 1.3

to lead to complacency and acceptance of structural inequalities, nor to allow actions and performances in pursuing group benefits to exacerbate inequities or offload them onto more vulnerable populations.

Counter-narratives in city-building and in urban research, such as the critical autoethnography of my experience and knowledge of punk, offer examples of resisting assimilation, oppression, and exploitation by remaining undesirable, by staying underground, by taking care of each other, and keeping each other safe. Sub-public, counter-public, non-public, not-for-public, and more-than-public stories of the city are not presented here as opportunities for planning reform, to empower the public, or to resolve conflicts of difference. They can, however, be deployed to unsettle the normative 'good' of progressive city-building, participatory reforms, and placemaking. To figure out who the city for all is really being built for, what other cities it denies and displaces, and what other cities are possible, we need these different sorts of repeating. In sharing a critical autoethnography, I take place for stories from my scene and leave space for other place-based narratives and counter-narratives of the city. From my punk perspective, transformative spatial justice is possible (but messy) through radical recognitions of the right to the city as including radical recognitions of difference and solidarity. Radical mutual recognition and solidarity leave space for difference where difference is recognized not as a problem to be managed or as an opportunity to be seized, but as a radical recognition of the Other, a recognition of different sovereign authorities, and the possibility of building cities meaningfully together.

“OUTRO”

As usually happens on a Saturday night when there are no shows worth going to, I meet my punk friends at our regular bar to hang out over a few, or maybe more than a few beer. From the other end of the bar, cutting through all the other conversations: *"Did you hear? Mavericks is closing."* The bar goes silent as the shock sets in. Mavericks is one of only three or four venues left for punk shows in the city. Punk venues in Ottawa or at least live music venues that will book punk bands are rarely long-lasting businesses. But Mavericks has been around at least as long as I've been in Ottawa, now over twenty years. We already knew the beer store next to Mavericks had been bought and closed by a developer and that the City and local Business Improvement Area were leaning hard into revitalizing the area as the Retail, Arts and Theatre District.

We were still mourning the loss of Zaphod Beeblebrox, resentful of the trendy 27 Club that took its place. Sure, I guess the sightlines are better, the layout does make more sense, and they finally cleaned the bathrooms. But it's not the same. The renovations and new management have attracted some old school touring punk bands who usually skip Ottawa. And yet, none of the old regulars want to go to shows there. Ironically, it seems to have pushed more local punk shows back to Mavericks. All that to say, we've been down this road before. We were sad but not surprised at the news that Mavericks would be closing. While scepticism and denial are regularly included as caveats, the rumours spread. Regular updates flowed from attempts to confirm the rumours and to get more details from people who work there or know the owners.

A few weeks later I was walking to Mavericks for a show and there it was, the official notice of development proposal. At first glance, I was relieved to learn that the proposed development does not include the

demolition of Mavericks. The proposal is for a mixed-use residential development on the three adjacent lots to the West of the property. As a Ph.D. candidate, I went home to download the Design Brief filed by the developer with the City. What does it tell us about how the developer, how the planning department, and how the public they hope to persuade, read the existing environment and the proposed development? How do they see the present and the future of the site? As a punk, I wrote a song about revitalization, gentrification, and the never-ending chorus of progressive urban growth.

As I read through the design briefs and planning documents, the disconnect strikes me between the official formal news about what is planned and approved for the future of Rideau Street and what is being said and projected by rumours and the informal knowledge network. Just because what punks are saying isn't the official plan, doesn't mean there isn't truth to the rumours. Just because a rationale has been formally submitted in a report and approved by the city, doesn't mean plans represent the true past or future of the site. We know even without specific plans to shut down Mavericks, there is no real future for Mavericks as it is where it is in the shadow of the new revitalized "Market-style lifestyle" promised by the new development and desired by prospective new residents and visitors.

The BIA says Downtown Rideau is:

"Where culture lives."

Punks know it is where culture dies.

But our punk perspective on the future, and the future of our place in the city is not all pessimism. While lamenting the almost inevitable death of Mavericks, and equally probable demise of many other venues, our conversations over the following months equally leaned towards

speculative futures of possible new re-incarnations, as well as reminiscing about past dead venues. A "new Mavericks" may not have the same owners, or the same name, or look the same, but it may serve the same function, attract the same bands and audience and have a similar character. By the same nomenclature as "new Mavericks", whatever future occupies the present site of Mavericks (probably a Starbucks or Whole Foods) will likely be referred to as "not-Mavericks." "Old-Mavericks" will be mythologized and live on through stories and through ephemera such as posters and zines.

A little over a year after the initial rumour, shows that were booked at Mavericks for Spring 2020 began to be rebooked at other venues around the city. The rumour was finally confirmed in early March when we gathered at the Dom for the last show that we didn't know would be our last show before the Coronavirus Pandemic shut down live music and just about everything else. Mavericks was already closed. While most other live music venues were increasingly the subject of further rumoured closings exacerbated by the pandemic, rumours of a new owner renovating Mavericks began to spread. The owners of a heavy metal-themed restaurant and local metal promoters had taken over Mavericks. With ongoing pressures of pandemic closures and restrictions, with the impending construction of the new development next door and down the block, the future of "new Mavericks" and the place of punks on Rideau Street remains tentative.

Gentrification kills punk.

But punk always comes back,

finds new places,

haunts old sites,

and remembers its past.

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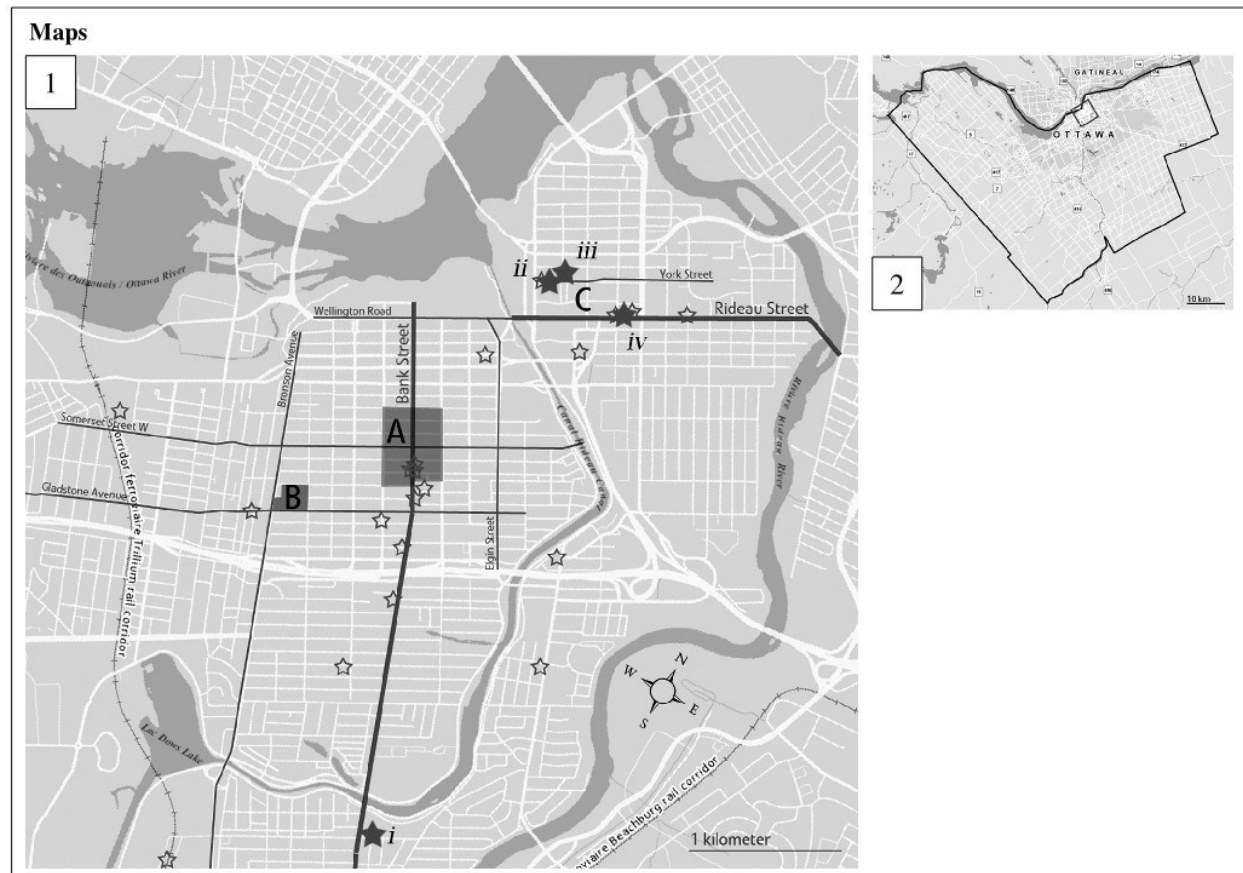
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APPENDIX A: MAPS OF OTTAWA

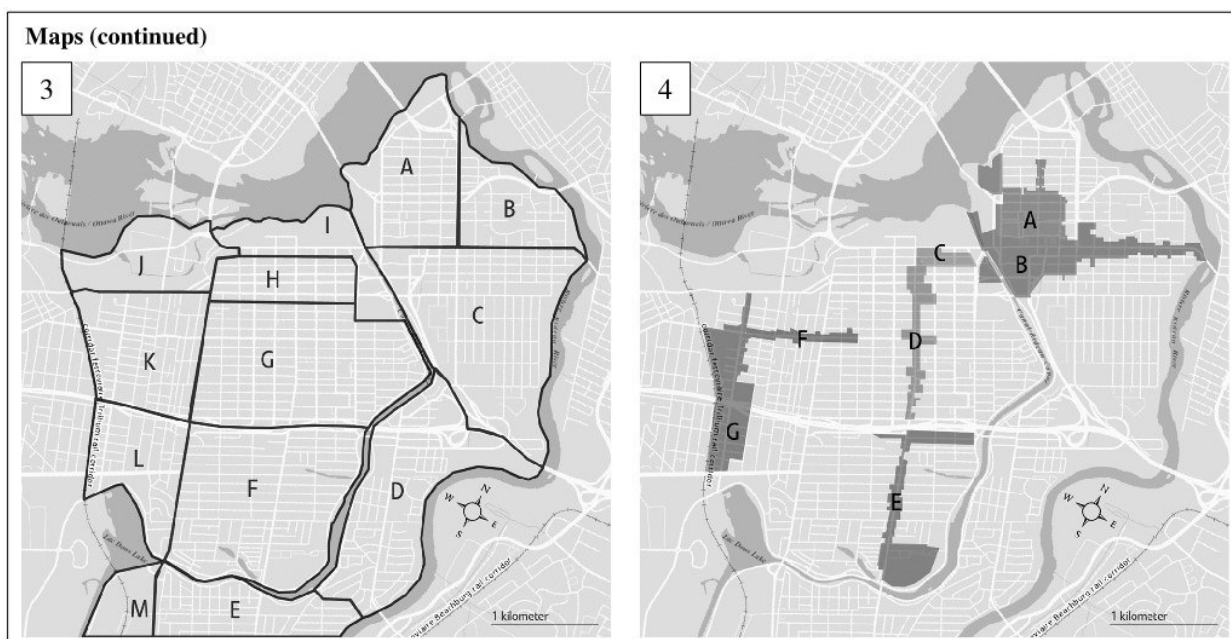


1. Ottawa case stories map

*A. Le/The Village on Bank Street; B. Charlie Bowins Skateboard Park and McNabb Park; C. Music Venues and the Rideau Arts and Theatre District (i) House of Targ, (ii) 27 Club, (iii) Dominion Tavern, (iv) Mavericks and Café Dekcuf, (*star outlines signify closed venues referenced in case stories)*

2. Ottawa city limits, post amalgamation

Inner square demarks the Ottawa Central Area presented in figs 1, 3 & 4



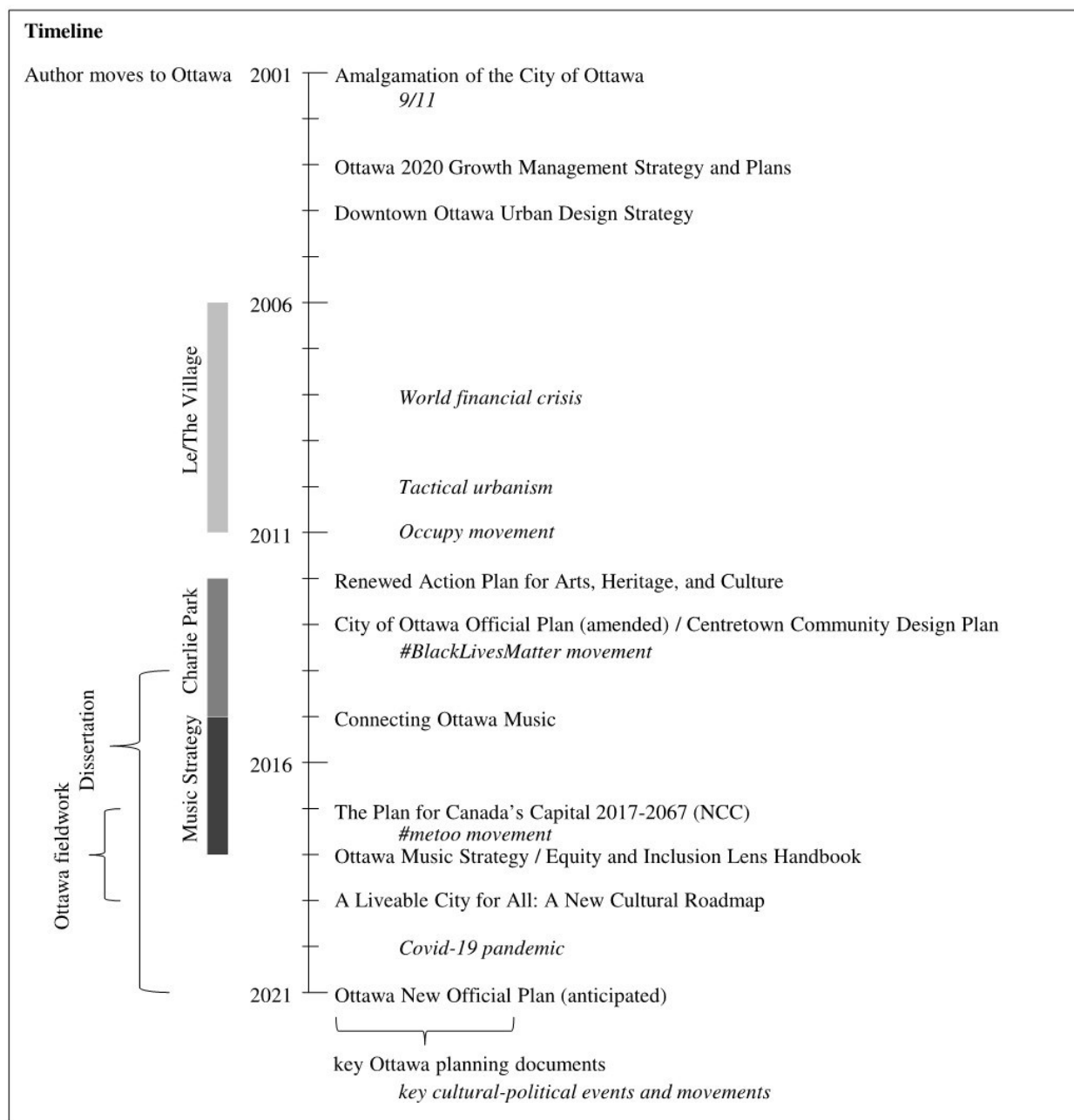
3. Ottawa central area neighbourhoods

A. ByWard Market; B. Lowertown; C. Sandy Hill; D. Old Ottawa East; E. Old Ottawa South; F. The Glebe; G. Centretown; H. Central Business District; I. Parliamentary District; J. LeBreton Flats; K. Centretown West; L. Glebe Annexe; M. Carleton University

4. Ottawa central area Business Improvement Areas (BIAs)

A. ByWard Market BIA; B. Downtown Rideau BIA; C. Sparks Street Mall BIA; D. Bank Street BIA; E. Glebe BIA; F. Somerset-Chinatown BIA; G. Preston Street BIA (Little Italy)

APPENDIX B: OTTAWA TIMELINE (2001-2021)



APPENDIX C: THE OTTAWA 2020 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Copied from: City of Ottawa. 2003. Ottawa 2020 Official Plan. Section 1.3.

A Caring and Inclusive City

- Personal Safety and Security – All people feel safe in their homes and communities.
- Access to the Basics – All people have access to adequate income, food, clothing, housing, transportation, health services and recreation.
- Citizen Engagement – Everyone has the opportunity to fully participate in the life of their community.
- Diversity – The people of Ottawa respect and celebrate cultural and social diversity, and have access to services that are responsive to special and differing needs.
- Seniors – Seniors have access to community services that respond to their needs.

A Creative City Rich in Heritage, Unique in Identity

- A Proud City – The people of Ottawa are proud of their city and treasure its identity as a wonderful place to live.
- A Capital City – We cherish the city's amenities, recognizing that as Canada's capital city, we have a rich variety of things to do. Being the nation's capital brings us tourists, gives us the national cultural perspective and a window to the world.
- Vibrant Local Arts and Heritage – Local arts and heritage give us community vitality; a path to creativity and innovation; and a sense of who we are.
- Culture in Every Community – Culture is present in every community through libraries, local museums and archives, the preservation of our heritage buildings, opportunities for artistic expression, and places that present and connect local arts to people.
- Distinct Rural Countryside – Ottawa's rural areas are distinct from the urban areas – its rural landscapes, Villages and heritage are valued by all.

A Green and Environmentally-Sensitive City

- A Green City – Ottawa preserves natural habitats and has a network of green spaces. Trees are an important way of maintaining environmental integrity.
- Development in Harmony with the Environment – Using land wisely, development builds within the current urban boundary and avoids outward sprawl.
- A Focus on Walking, Cycling and Transit – Ottawa implements policies that favour walking, cycling and public transit over the use of private motor vehicles, thereby facilitating the use of modes of transportation that are socially accessible, environmentally healthy and economically feasible.
- Clean Air, Water and Earth – All people work to improve the quality of the natural environment; limit noise and light pollution; and protect natural resources and agricultural lands.

A City of Distinct, Liveable Communities

- A Sense of Community – All communities look right and feel right. They have an identity that defines them and fosters pride and belonging among residents.
- Complete Communities – Ottawa's communities have a variety of housing choices, employment, parks and a wide range of services and facilities accessible by walking, cycling and transit.
- Easy Mobility – Communities are easy to get around and barrier-free for the disabled. There are wide sidewalks and recreational pathways; there is frequent, accessible transit service.
- Beauty – Ottawa's communities are pleasing to the eye. They are interesting, clean, and benefit from an abundance of trees.

An Innovative City Where Prosperity is Shared Among All

- Strong Export-Based Economic Generators – Ottawa develops and supports local innovators to create a critical mass of knowledge and experience that attracts venture capital, more talent, and spins off new companies.

- Strong Local Business – Ottawa’s local businesses thrive in an environment that provides opportunities for entrepreneurship, tourism and commerce.
- Strong Rural Economy – All people recognize and support the special role of agriculture, rural businesses and tourism in our economy.
- Connecting People to Opportunities – Citizens have access to quality training, information, education and community services that provide support to overcome barriers; increase employment; reduce poverty; and create opportunities to participate in the community.
- Connecting Businesses to a Skilled Workforce – Ottawa’s skilled workforce attracts businesses to our city that in turn provide quality jobs.

A Responsible and Responsive City

- Accountability – The City demonstrates leadership by following through and sticking to its decisions and by conducting on-going strategic monitoring and making appropriate adjustments.
- Fiscal Responsibility – The City does not spend more than it can afford. It looks for innovative ways to fund and deliver services and makes efficient use of its infrastructure and resources.
- Conduct an Open and Participatory Process – The City conducts business in a broad and open way that makes it easy for everyone to participate and collaborate.
- Partnerships – The City works with other levels of government, the private sector and community based organizations to achieve objectives.
- Public Awareness – The City educates the public about important issues in order to raise awareness and understanding to enable the public to make knowledgeable choices.

A Healthy and Active City

- Recreation and Sport – Citizens have the opportunity to participate in a broad range of recreational pursuits, personal fitness and sport activities.

- Community Facilities – Recreation, arts and heritage facilities are provided to meet both local and city-wide needs.
- Accessibility – Citizens have access to affordable and barrier-free facilities, programs and services.
- Health Protection and Promotion – Citizens have access to community-based social and health promotion services.

APPENDIX D: FIELDWORK LIST OF COMMUNITY AND CITY-BUILDING EVENTS

Full record of community and city events attended during field work: 2017.09.01 to 2019.12.31 (date, event, venue, city).

2017.09.06, Opening of Marc Adornato's Little Boxes & Leftovers, Hintonburg Public House, Ottawa

2017.09.28, Cultural Memory Workshop, Elgin Street, Ottawa

2017.09.30, The Punk Ottawa Flea Market, MakerSpace North, Ottawa

2017.10.05, She Wants an Output: Reception and discussion in MacOdrum, "MacOdrum Library, Carleton University", Ottawa

2017.10.21, Screening Party - The Secret Lives of Public Servants, Impact Hub Ottawa, Ottawa

2017.10.26, Ask Women Anything - Beyond the 150, Bar Robo, Ottawa

2017.10.31, Halloween Krooked Karnival, House of Targ, Ottawa

2017.11.13, RIA salon: BAK Summer School Art in a Time of Interregnum, RIA, Ottawa

2017.11.22, Community Forum on Ending Homelessness, RA Center, Ottawa

2017.11.23, Cultural Memory Workshop, Museum of Science and Technology, Ottawa

2017.11.27, CU in the City: A Bigger Jail or Community Alternatives, Main Library, Ottawa

2018.01.13, Mayor's Town Hall, the Future of Sparks Street, City Hall, Ottawa

2018.01.17, Synapcity Kichissippi Talks, Causeway, Ottawa

2018.01.23, Planning Committee, City Hall, Ottawa

2018.01.24, Synapcity Kichissippi Talks, Causeway, Ottawa

2018.01.25, National Capital Commission Board of Directors Meeting, National Capital Commission, Ottawa

2018.02.03, Getting It Together: Organizing Collectives for the Real World, Jack Purcell Community Centre, Ottawa

2018.02.23, Future Cities Forum: Public Keynote, Horticulture Building, Ottawa

2018.02.24, "Future Cities Forum: Youth Leaders, Students & Young Professionals", Horticulture Building, Ottawa

2018.03.03, Past-forward Place-Making: (un)learning place, Arts Court, Ottawa

2018.03.10, Hyper/normal - Un/familiar: (un)learning gentrification and normalization, Arts Court, Ottawa

2018.03.21, Addressing Anti-Black Racism - A Town Hall, City Hall, Ottawa

2018.03.23, "A Day of Reflection: Resting, Walking, Place-Making", Art Hive McGill, Montreal

2018.03.26, Planning Committee, City Hall, Ottawa

- 2018.03.28, Urbanism Lab: Canadian Design as a Cultural Export, National Capital Commission, Ottawa
- 2018.04.07, Creative Direct Action and Coalition Building Workshop, Robertson Hall, Carleton University, Ottawa
- 2018.04.19, National Capital Commission Board of Directors Meeting, National Capital Commission, Ottawa
- 2018.04.20, Graffiti Walking Tour Downtown Ottawa, Ottawa
- 2018.04.30, Building Community Together Local Housing Forum, Chinese Alliance Church, Ottawa
- 2018.05.08, Planning Committee, City Hall, Ottawa
- 2018.05.10, Nature: The Disconnect Between Infinite Growth & Finite Resources, Makerspace North, Ottawa
- 2018.05.10, Ottawa Cultural Development Feasibility Study: Community Feedback Session, Impact Hub, Ottawa
- 2018.05.12, Ottawa's First Poverty Challenge for Civic Leaders, University of Ottawa, Ottawa
- 2018.05.17, Heritage Ottawa Walking Tour Launch, St Brigid's, Ottawa
- 2018.05.18, Pouzza fest panel: Les femmes de la scène / Women in music, Club Soda, Montreal
- 2018.05.25, CreativeMornings Ottawa with Tania Carrière, Westin 22, Ottawa
- 2018.05.28, 2nd National Bike Summit: Reception, SJAM building, Ottawa
- 2018.06.01, Safety for Women in Canada, Canadian Tribute to Human Rights Monument, Ottawa
- 2018.06.02, Doors Open Ottawa, various, Ottawa
- 2018.06.02, 100in1 Ottawa, various, Ottawa
- 2018.06.03, Action Sandy Hill Re-Imagining the Bunkhouse Charrette, Sandy Hill Community Centre, Ottawa
- 2018.06.06, The National Housing Strategy: Research & Innovation Initiatives, video conference
- 2018.06.09, Panel Discussion: Cross Community Collaboration, Tom Brown Arena, Ottawa
- 2018.06.10, Public Art Bike Tour | Visite d'art public à vélo, various, Ottawa
- 2018.06.11, OXW Bystander Intervention Training, SAW video, Ottawa
- 2018.06.12, Celebrating Ottawa's Rich History and Heritage: a Zibi Case-study, Zibi 6 Booth St., Ottawa
- 2018.06.13, 613 Day, Bar Robo, Ottawa
- 2018.06.14, Labor: Bridging the Disconnect Between Work and Purpose, Impact Hub, Ottawa
- 2018.06.16, Forum Francophone des Parcs, CoWorkly, Ottawa
- 2018.06.17, 2018 Ottawa Aboriginal Day Parade, Downtown, Ottawa

- 2018.06.20, RIA Our Call To Action: to Collaborate, Gallery 101, Ottawa
- 2018.06.20-21, Building a Better City, Westin, Ottawa
- 2018.06.22, BeEngaging, Birling, Ottawa
- 2018.06.23, Ottawa Summer Solstice Indigenous Festival and Pow Wow, Vincent Massey Park, Ottawa
- 2018.07.12, Vernissage: René Price – The Art of City Building, Karsh Mason Gallery, Ottawa
- 2018.07.22, Punk Rock Flea Market London: Punks For Pride, Call the Office, Ottawa
- 2018.07.27, Ottawa Asian Night Market 2018 - Chinatown, Chinatown, Ottawa
- 2018.08.16-19, Summer Feminist Festival / Festival Féministe d'Été: Transgresser les Frontières Féministes, L'Atelier d'innovation sociale Mauril-Bélanger Social Innovation Workshop, Ottawa
- 2018.08.19, René Price - Artist talk | Causerie avec l'artiste, Karsh Mason Gallery, Ottawa
- 2018.08.21, De-layering the City | Dé-stratifier la ville, Ottawa Art Gallery, Ottawa
- 2018.08.24, Symposium: Grassroots / Global Routes: Rethinking Place through Cultural Practice., Ottawa Art Gallery, Ottawa
- 2018.08.26, Street Fair & Bank Street Stage, Bank Street, Ottawa
- 2018.08.26, Capital Pride Parade, Bank Street, Ottawa
- 2018.09.14, "Ottawa Architecture Week: Gimme Shelter, Powered by PechaKucha", Ottawa Art Gallery, Ottawa
- 2018.09.06, Gender Inclusive Cities / Des Villes soucieuses de l'égalité des genres, City Hall, Ottawa
- 2018.09.14, Ottawa Architecture Week Living Together on Metcalfe, Metcalfe St, Ottawa
- 2018.09.25, The Making of the Neoliberal Queer with Gary Kinsman, Venus Envy, Ottawa
- 2018.09.27, Flora Hall Brewing: Crafting the Future of a Derelict Building, Main Library, Ottawa
- 2018.10.31, The TARG Halloween Krooked Karnival 2018, House of Targ, Ottawa
- 2018.11.05, Off-Script: Technologies and Tactics of Feminist Errancy, McGill, Montreal
- 2018.11.13, Accountability After #MeToo: Creating a Community Knowledge Base, Pinecrest Queensway CHC, Ottawa
- 2018.11.22, "Displacing Blackness Book Launch, Ted Rutland", 25One Community, Ottawa
- 2018.12.01, Blackfriars Bridge Grand Opening, Blackfriars Bridge, London
- 2018.11.22, Counting on Culture Symposium, University of Ottawa, Ottawa
- 2018.12.09, GABBA HEY Garage Sale, Capital Rehearsal Studio, Ottawa
- 2018.12.21, CreativeMornings Ottawa with Jaime Koebel, Ottawa Art Gallery, Ottawa

- 2019.01.23, What Is Democracy? - w/ Silvia Federici & director Astra Taylor!, Cinema Politica Concordia, Montreal
- 2019.01.23, "Astra Taylor on Technology, Publishing, and Power", McGill University, Montreal
- 2019.02.01, Once: Africville Stories, Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau
- 2019.05.04, Jane's Walk Ottawa-Gatineau: Charlie Bowins Skateboard park, Ottawa
- 2019.05.04, Jane's Walk Ottawa-Gatineau: In Plain Sight: The Dynamic Mixed-Use Neighbourhood of Lower Bank Street, Ottawa
- 2019.05.04, Jane's Walk Ottawa-Gatineau: Booth St. District Redevelopment, Ottawa
- 2019.05.05, Jane's Walk Ottawa-Gatineau: Bike Tour: Buildings by John W.H. Watts Architect, Ottawa
- 2019.01.10, Urbanism Lab: Metropolitan Governance and Big Data, National Capital Commission, Ottawa
- 2019.01.17-18, Ottawa Cultural Summit, Ottawa Art Gallery, Ottawa
- 2019.02.01, Mass Culture Digital Discussion: Cultural City Planning, online, Ottawa
- 2019.02.14, Urbanism Lab: Reuse and Renewal: Designing Futures for Historic Places, National Capital Commission, Ottawa
- 2019.02.15, Urbanism Lab: Ideas forum on adaptive reuse, National Capital Commission, Ottawa
- 2019.03.04, Official Plan Open House, Ottawa City Hall, Ottawa
- 2019.03.13, Capital Research Day: Thinking for the future, Dominion Chalmers, Ottawa
- 2019.03.23, Anti-69: Against the mythologies of the 1969 Criminal Code reform, Carleton University, Ottawa
- 2019.03.28, Gendered Futures, Arlington Five, Ottawa
- 2019.05.04, Jane's Walk Ottawa, various, Ottawa
- 2019.05.28, Cultured Futures Workshop, Ottawa City Hall, Ottawa
- 2019.06.01, Doors Open Ottawa, various, Ottawa
- 2019.06.09, Westfest, Tom Brown Arena and Park, Ottawa
- 2019.06.18, LeBreton: Public consultation, Canada War Museum, Ottawa
- 2019.06.23, Summer Solstice Indigenous Festival, Vincent Massey Park, Ottawa
- 2019.06.27, Powwow Workout Class, NAC, Ottawa
- 2019.06.29, Immigrant Heritage Walking Tour: Chinatown, Chinatown, Ottawa
- 2019.07.17, Scaling up Affordable and Social Housing through Partnerships and Planning Tools, University of Ottawa, Ottawa
- 2019.07.19, Creative Mornings with Jessica Hay, Ottawa Art Gallery, Ottawa
- 2019.07.20, Crafts and Drafts, Beyond the Pale, Ottawa

- 2019.07.20, ByWard Beer Market, 73 York Street, Ottawa
- 2019.07.25, Ingenium Big Move: Canada's rail history takes to the tracks, Canada Museum of Science and Technology, Ottawa
- 2019.07.27, Club Saw Outdoor Double Bill - Hot Knives and Harry Knuckles, Club SAW, Ottawa
- 2019.07.28, Ottawa Asian Fest Night Market, Chinatown, Ottawa
- 2019.08.29, Making the Web Weird... AGAIN!, SAW Gallery, Ottawa
- 2019.09.05, Jewish Kitchen Party, AIDS Committee of Ottawa, Ottawa
- 2019.09.14, Ottawa LRT Grand Opening, Ottawa
- 2019.09.29, Jacques-Cartier under water walking tour, rue Jacques Cartier, Gatineau
- 2019.10.13, Brutalisme au Centre-ville d'Ottawa, Heritage Ottawa, Ottawa
- 2019.11.12, Bicycle Film Festival, National Arts Centre, Ottawa
- 2019.11.28, Settler City Limits book launch, CUAG, Ottawa

APPENDIX E: FIELDWORK LIST OF PUNK SHOWS AND MUSIC EVENTS

- Full record of punk shows and music events attended during field work: 2017.09.01 to 2019.12.31 (date, venue, city | bands and/or performers).
- 2017.09.01, Dominion Tavern, Ottawa | Outtacontroller, First Base, Neck
- 2017.09.09, McCrank's Cycles, Ottawa | Patrick Shanks
- 2017.09.09, House of Targ, Ottawa | Glass Apple Bonzai, Douce Angoisie (Paris/MTL), Pecora Pecora, RAA
- 2017.09.14, Sidecar, Barcelona | Desert Mountain Tribe, Vete Vete
- 2017.09.16, Werk 21, Zurich | Deluminator, Wolfpack, Words of Revolt, Deconvolution, Hood Brawl, Vile
- 2017.10.05, House of Targ, Ottawa | Slim and Popular, NECK, Boom Creek
- 2017.10.12, Bar Bar, Denver | Swamp Ritual, Disenchanter, Stone Disciple
- 2017.10.13, Tooey's Off Colfax, Denver | URN, Bandits, Matriarch
- 2017.10.13, Streets of London Pub, Denver | Alexander and The Big Sleep, Averages, Decatur
- 2017.10.17, House of Targ, Ottawa | The Nils, Steve Adamyk Band, Dead Weights, G.A.S. Drummer
- 2017.10.20, The 27 Club, Ottawa | D.O.A., Cúlturál Treåson, The Dreaded Rebels
- 2017.10.27, Funeral Home, Ottawa | PigBait, Big Guy, Ataxia, Sick Nurse, Aint No Grave, Dumb and Homely Band
- 2017.10.29, The Brass Monkey, Ottawa | Dead Boys, Pok Gai, Flaws
- 2017.11.03, Dominion Tavern, Ottawa | Last Agony, Robot, Asile, Vomiir
- 2017.11.11, Mavericks, Ottawa | The Creepshow, The Penske File, Sidelines, Alanna Sterling, Lindbergh Babies, Quinnzelle
- 2017.11.25, McCrank's Cycles, Ottawa | Patrick Shanks, Shadowhand
- 2017.11.25, House of Targ, Ottawa | B.A. Johnston, Thünderkok, Lee Reed , Neck
- 2017.12.08, M Telus (Metropolis), Montreal | The National
- 2017.12.09, House of Targ, Ottawa | The Creeps, Wasted Potential, The New Calling
- 2018.01.06, House of Targ, Ottawa | Elementals, Big Lonely, Oh Geronimo
- 2018.01.20, House of Targ, Ottawa | Gutter Demons, Goat, Dreaded Rebels, Wire Cuffs
- 2018.01.27, McCrank's Cycles, Ottawa | Chris Page and John Higney, Patrick Shanks
- 2018.01.27, House of Targ, Ottawa | Lemmy re-revisited
- 2018.01.30, Petit Campus, Montreal | Kalmunity Jazz Collective
- 2018.02.09, UCLA Ackerman Grand Ballroom, Los Angeles CA | Alice Bag, Mike Watt And The Missingmen, Sister Mantos

- 2018.02.13, 5 Star Bar, Los Angeles CA | Camp Counsellor, Holy Fawn , Blood Candy , Jerkagram
- 2018.02.16, Space, San Diego CA | Marriage Material, Clown Sound, The Trashies, Toy Zoo, Typsetter, The Luck Eejits
- 2018.02.16, Space, San Diego CA | Civil Was Rust, Western Settings
- 2018.02.16, Soda Bar, San Diego CA | Night Dangers, Allweather, Se Vende, Muscle Dungeon, Kira Jari, DFMK
- 2018.02.16, Soda Bar, San Diego CA | Horror Squad, Dead to Me
- 2018.02.17, Red Brontosoraus Records, San Diego CA | International Dipshit, Mike Eckel, Needles//Pins, Miski Dee / City Mouse, The Chinchees
- 2018.02.17, The Office, San Diego CA | The Bigger Empty, Reunions, Black Paw, Shallow Cuts, Needles//Pins
- 2018.02.17, The Office, San Diego CA | Decent Criminal, Bad Cop / Bad Cop
- 2018.02.17, Bar Pink, San Diego CA | Kid Coast, Justus Proffit, The Pretty Flowers, Cringeworthy, Evil Livin' , Fleshies
- 2018.02.17, Space, San Diego CA | Cruz Radical, Signalman, Canadian Rifle, Sciatic Nerve, Form Rank
- 2018.02.17, Space, San Diego CA | The Shell Corporation, Nothington
- 2018.02.17, Soda Bar, San Diego CA | The Mission Creeps, Rad, Squishers, Dimber, Snuggle!
- 2018.02.17, Soda Bar, San Diego CA | The Globbs, Toys That Kill
- 2018.02.18, Red Brontosoraus Records, San Diego CA | DJ Soso, Nato Coles, Evil Livin' / TBIAPB, Garrett Dale / Red City Radi
- 2018.02.18, The Office, San Diego CA | The Dodges, The Drowns, Maniac, Chagrin, The Chinchees
- 2018.02.18, The Office, San Diego CA | Turkish Techno, Iron Chic
- 2018.02.23, House of Targ, Ottawa | The Riptides, NECK, Johnny Terrien and the Bad Lieutenants (London ON), GOAT
- 2018.03.03, Diefenbunker Cold War Museum, Ottawa | Punk and Zine Night at the Diefenbunker, Nightshades, Doxx, Bonnie Doon
- 2018.03.09, House of Targ, Ottawa | Punk Rock Cover Night #14
- 2018.03.11, McCrank's Cycles, Ottawa | Jon Hynes, Brendan McNally, Patrick Shanks
- 2018.03.15, House of Targ, Ottawa | Punk Rock Cover Night #15
- 2018.03.23, Quai des Brumes, Montreal | Chârogne, Capitaine Salaud, Bats in the Belfry
- 2018.03.24, House of Targ, Ottawa | Fucking Machines, Asile, Doxx, Wire Cuffs
- 2018.03.28, House of Targ, Ottawa | Neighbourhood Watch, Slumlord, Tightlip

- 2018.04.06, House of Targ, Ottawa | Jon Creeden & The Flying Hellfish , The Creeps , Finderskeepers, Joe Vickers
- 2018.04.10, Three Muses, New Orleans | Josh Gouzy
- 2018.04.11, Circle Bar, New Orleans | Rixe, Enoch Ramone, Trampoline Team, Eyejammy, Judy & The Jerks, DJ Howie & Penetrol
- 2018.04.13, French Quarter Festival, New Orleans | Mia Borders, Party Gators, New Orleans Nightcrawlers
- 2018.04.13, Vaso, New Orleans | Jason Neville Funky Soul Band, Ed Wills & Blues 4 Sale
- 2018.04.13, Three Muses, New Orleans | Doro Wat Jazz Band
- 2018.04.15, Music Box, New Orleans | Valerie Sassyfras
- 2018.04.16, d.b.a, New Orleans | Funk Monkey
- 2018.04.16, The Maison, New Orleans | Sierra Green & The Soul Machine
- 2018.04.16, Dragon's Den, New Orleans | Neela & Tuba Skinny
- 2018.04.21, Café Dekcuf, Ottawa | The Living Deads, The Lab Ratz, Goat!, Cúlturål Treåson, ,
- 2018.05.03, Brass Monkey, Ottawa | Mute City, Pop Fiction, High Maintenance
- 2018.05.05, Wortley Road House | London ON, Funk Et Al
- 2018.05.12, Mavericks, Ottawa | Lydia Lunch Retrovirus, The Lindbergh Babies, Omerta, Doctor Mom, Stoby
- 2018.05.13, Meow! That's Hot | Ottawa, Slo Tom, Patrick Shanks
- 2018.05.18, Coop Katacombes, Montreal | Laureate, Motherhood, Bobby's Oar, Mike Frazier, Frankie Stubbs, City Mouse
- 2018.05.18, Coop Katacombes, Montreal | Empty Lungs, Dead Fucking Last, The Riptides, Boids, The Murderburgers
- 2018.05.18, Jardin des bières, Montreal | 2 Stone 2 Skank, Brutal Chérie, The Beatdown, MU330, War on Women, Anti-Flag
- 2018.05.19, Foufounes Electrique, Montreal | The Anti-Queens, Debt Neglector, Bhatt, Ellen and the Degenerates, Deadends, The Mad Murdocks
- 2018.05.19, Foufounes Electrique, Montreal | School Damage, Get Dead, Brutal Youth, Barn Burner, Dead Fucking Last
- 2018.05.19, Foufs 2.0, Montreal | Stay Inside, Attic Salt , Stuck Lucky, The Filthy Radicals, Hospital Job, Typesetter
- 2018.05.19, Foufs 2.0, Montreal | Audio Visceral, Wasted Potential, The Creeps
- 2018.05.19, Jardin des bières, Montreal | Lost Love, Chixdiggit!, The Creepshow, Reel Big Fish
- 2018.05.21, Black Squirrel Books & Espresso Bar, Ottawa | City Mouse, Handsome Scoundrels, Ultra Centaur

- 2018.05.26, Dominion Tavern, Ottawa | Leather Jacuzzi, Doxx, The Fucking Machines, Power of Fear
- 2018.05.27, McCrank Cycles, Ottawa | Patrick Shanks, Clear
- 2018.06.09, Tom Brown Arena, Ottawa | Westfest
- 2018.06.09, Mavericks, Ottawa | Gutter Demons, Goat!, Cultural Treason, Warfair, Destroyer Scene
- 2018.06.15, Dominion Tavern, Ottawa | Bleu Nuit, Radiation Risks, Doxx, Leather Jacuzzi, Tightlip
- 2018.06.18, Mavericks, Ottawa | Brujeria, Dayglo Abortions, Incite, Wire Cuffs, Fumigation,
- 2018.07.13, Spiderfest, Campbellford | Whiskey Shits, Ele , Sick Of Shit , Beaver Slap , Bare Bones , Hotel Murder
- 2018.07.14, Spiderfest, Campbellford | Oppressed Logic, Dirty Bird , Random Killing , Punch Drunk, Gag Order , Three Easy Payments
- 2018.07.14, Spiderfest, Campbellford | Jack Spades , Union Thugs , Shit Tax , Slim And Popular , Lindbergh Babies, Stegadeth
- 2018.07.22, Call the Office, London ON | Dboy , Ricky Rat Pack , The Un-Teens
- 2018.07.27, Black Squirrel Books & Espresso Bar, Ottawa | Pure Pressure , Tightlip , Torpor , Dogma , Power of Fear
- 2018.07.28, Dominion Tavern, Ottawa | TV Freaks, Uncontrollable Urge, DOXX
- 2018.07.29, McCrank Cycles, Ottawa | Claude Munson, Patrick Shanks
- 2018.08.02, House of Targ, Ottawa | Disterror, Slim And Popular, Deathnap, Contempt
- 2018.08.10, Dominion Tavern, Ottawa | High Command, World War 4, Spell Runner
- 2018.08.11, Funeral Home, Ottawa | Desperate Times, Ataxia!, Dogma, Demoxide
- 2018.08.17, House of Targ, Ottawa | Cross Dog , Quiet Crimes , Deathsticks , Wire Cuffs
- 2018.09.02, Black Squirrel Books & Espresso Bar, Ottawa | Radiation Risks, DOXX, Wire Cuffs, Bug Bites
- 2018.09.02, Mavericks, Ottawa | Powerglove, Excrementory Grindfuckers, Lycanthro, Scepter, The Aphelion, Thunderdome
- 2018.09.06, House of Targ, Ottawa | Soul Mates, The Lindbergh Babies, Cardiff Giant, Slim and Popular
- 2018.09.22, Beau's All Natural Brewing Co., Vanleek Hill | Give Up, Mental Fix, Ship of Fools, Neck, The Stand GT, Laureate
- 2018.09.22, Beau's All Natural Brewing Co., Vanleek Hill | Audio Visceral, The Trapt, Anti-Queens, Barrasso
- 2018.09.28, Irene's, Ottawa | Ommie Jane, No Problem Situation, Slo Tom
- 2018.10.05, Mavericks, Ottawa | Fatum, Tightlip, Warkrusher, The Nailbiters

- 2018.10.13, Colombia Metal Garage, Bogotá | Damn Nation, Licanthropia, Evil Death, Wild-Fox, Ärkhanon, Therrorder
- 2018.10.17, Museo Nacional, Bogotá | Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá
- 2018.10.20, Record Centre, Ottawa | Casati
- 2018.10.20, Avant-Garde Bar, Ottawa | Casati
- 2018.10.21, McCranks, Ottawa | Banditas, David Haddad, Patrick Shanks
- 2018.11.03, 27 Club, Ottawa | Fucked Up , Mil-Spec
- 2018.11.10, Mavericks, Ottawa | Dayglo Abortions, The Nasties, Wire Cuffs, Lindbergh Babies, Total Garbage
- 2018.11.16, 27 Club, Ottawa | Stiff Little Fingers, The Mahones
- 2018.11.23, House of Targ, Ottawa | Double Pumpers, Banditas, Andrew Vincent and The Pirates , Slo Tom and The Handsome Devils, Garaga, Boom Creek, Slim and Popular, Thunderuncle X
- 2018.12.07, 27 Club, Ottawa | Lisa Leblanc, Laura Sauvage
- 2018.12.18, House of Targ, Ottawa | Neck, School Damage, Muffler Crunch, Wire Cuffs
- 2018.12.19, Meow! That's Hot, Ottawa | Tenvolt For The Holidays Jamboree
- 2018.12.21, House of Targ, Ottawa | Thunderkok, Chemical Way, World War 4
- 2019.01.11, Black Squirrel Books & Espresso Bar, Ottawa | Laureate, SOLD, Fresh Hell , Laniard
- 2019.01.18, Dominion Tavern, Ottawa | Out of Order, Uncooperatives, The Nailbiters
- 2019.01.26, Montgomery Legion, Ottawa | Ain't No Grave, Tightplip, Dogma
- 2019.02.08, Dominion Tavern, Ottawa | Bad Waitress, Doxx, Liquid Assets
- 2019.02.16, Queen Street Fare, Ottawa | Retrogrades
- 2019.03.02, Dominion Tavern, Ottawa | Loviatar, Lycanthro
- 2019.03.09, House of Targ, Ottawa | The Raymonds: A Ramones Experience, Rent-A-Cops - a tribute to The Police, Marki Teardrop - Suicide Tribute
- 2019.03.16, House of Targ, Ottawa | Punk Rock Cover Night #16
- 2019.03.21, 27 Club, Ottawa | Masked Intruder, Positive Charge, Cultural Treason
- 2019.03.29, House of Targ, Ottawa | Plastic Heads, Cellphone, World War 4
- 2019.03.31, McCranks, Ottawa | Ladies & Escorts, Jonathan Pearce, Dave Bignell, Russell Levia, Slo' Tom, Shanker & Romps
- 2019.04.06, Rock & Roll Hotel, Washington DC | Tommy and the Commies, Les Lullies , Teen Cobra
- 2019.04.13, House of Targ, Ottawa | Punk Rock Cover Night #17
- 2019.04.25, House of Targ, Ottawa | MotherFuckers, Whiskey Shits, The Lindbergh Babies

2019.04.27, Dominion Tavern, Ottawa | Neck, Flying Fortress, School Damage

2019.05.04, The Record Centre, Ottawa | FET.NAT Live

2019.05.10, Cafe Dekcuf, Ottawa | Ogikubo Station, Dead Bars, Wire Cuffs, Ship of Fools, Social Suicide

2019.05.17, Pressed, Ottawa | Deathsticks, Torpor, Death Ex, Nailbiters

2019.06.01, Parkdale Park, Ottawa | Slo Tom and the Handsome Devils

2019.06.06, House of Targ, Ottawa | Spell Runner, The Pretzles, The Nailbiters, Get Off the Cop, Charogne, Bug Bites

2019.06.06, Montgomery Legion, Ottawa | Decision, Church Clothes, Grave Infestation, Cell, Occult Burial, Torpor, Dogma

2019.06.09, McCranks, Ottawa | Shadowhand, Patrick Shanks

2019.06.17, Pour Boy, Ottawa | Dogma, Slim and Popular, Bad Missionary

2019.07.05, House of Targ, Ottawa | Violent Femmes by Permanent Record, Billy Idol by Wire Cuffs

2019.07.12, Spiderfest, Cambellford | Antixx, Sick of Shit, Lindbergh Babies, Bendecos

2019.07.13, Spiderfest, Cambellford | High Anxiety, Punching nuns, Slim and Popular, Existench, Metalian

2019.07.20, Soul City Music Fest at Laroche Park, Ottawa

2019.07.25, House of Targ, Ottawa | Steve Adamyk Band, Sad Baxter, The Offers, Stoby

2019.09.07, McCranks at Ottawa Porchfest, Ottawa | Elizabeth McDermott, Flecton Big Sky, Jason Anderson, Slo' Tom Stewart, Tom Fagan, Bad Missionary, Patrick Shanks

2019.09.19, Cafe Dekcuf, Ottawa | The Lackeys, Bad Missionary

2019.10.05, Trinosophes, Detroit | The Vizitors

2019.10.19, Cinqhole, Ottawa | The Creeps, Phil a.k.a. Robots!Everywhere!!

2019.10.27, Bar 529, Atlanta | Überyou, Hell & Back, Forever Unclean, Reconciler, Hunger Anthem, Spray Tan

2019.11.10, The Dominion Tavern, Ottawa | Pale Lips, The Lindbergh Babies

2019.11.16, Hemisphere Gauche, Montreal | Big Vein, Simonak, Junk Science, Bad Missionary

2019.11.23, House of Targ, Ottawa | Rich Aucoin, Petra Glynt, Townes

2019.12.20, Meow! That's Hot., Ottawa | SLO Tom, Teen Hanks, 86IT, Police & Thieves, Slim & Popular, Patrick Shanks, Bad Missionary, Lindbergh Babies, Wire Cuffs

2019.12.28, House of Targ, Ottawa | Leather up your ass, Swarm of Spheres, Slim and Popular