Building Pentimento:

A Framework for Maintaining Cultural Identity in Urban Development

By: Brandon C. Jones

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Capstone Committee:
Roxanne J. Kymaani, Ph.D.
Susan Eleuterio
Elke Davidson

Goucher College

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Abstract

This paper examines the theoretical frameworks of cultural identity in the context of urban developmental applications in Atlanta, Georgia. By providing a brief historical overview of urban development practices in the city and connecting those practices to impacts on individual and collective identities, the goal of this paper is to bridge theoretical scholarship with practical application. This is done by examining identity construction, place, neighborhood change theories, and national and international models for culturally sustainable development. This paper will provide a foundation for conceptualizing the strategic tools and processes that integrate cultural identity into operational aspects of local urban development frameworks.

Prologue

Old paint on canvas, as it ages, sometimes becomes transparent. When that happens it is possible, in some pictures, to see the original lines: a tree will show through a woman's dress, a child makes way for a dog, a large boat is no longer on an open sea. That is called **pentimento** *because the painter "repented," changed his mind. Perhaps it would be as well to say that the old conception, replaced by a later choice, is a way of seeing and then seeing again.*

- Lillian Hellman, Pentimento

When the concept of "pentimento" or pentimenti (Italian for "repent") was first presented to me by my capstone committee member, Elke Davison, I was immediately fascinated. Elke shared this sentiment and recalled being introduced to the word and its meaning in the Lillian Hellman novel of the same name. Unsure if the term held much- if any- correlation to the academic grounds of my capstone topic, I could not dismiss it as a reoccurring motif throughout my research. Slowly, the concept has now painted the lens in which I view my work as a scholar, practitioner, and conscious observer of place and identity.

Primarily referenced in the arts sector by conservators, curators, and historians, pentimento refers to the reappearance of an original drawn or painted element in a painting, which was eventually painted over by the artist.[1] Pablo Picasso's "Blue Period" (1901-1904) provides ample examples for spectators to witness this artistic repentance. During that period Picasso's funds for supplies were limited, and he was often forced to repurpose canvases. In the immensely well-known painting *The Old Guitarist*, Picasso depicts, in deep blue hues, an image

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[1] http://www.studiointernational.com/index.php/godwin-bradbeer-pentimenti

of an elderly man curled over a guitar--presumably mid song. Yet, at closer inspection, an outline of a woman nursing a small child- accompanied by a bull and a sheep is revealed. Picasso's *The Blue Room*, from the same series, depicts an image of a woman washing herself alone in a room, yet bleeding through is the silhouette of a bearded man adorned with jewelry.

By applying pentimento to this capstone, which explores cultural identity and the built environment, three distinctions arise as a mode of articulating the theories and applications discussed in the following text. The first mode is the bleeding through of that which is original. This resilience, as it can certainly be described, is not only evident in the canvas of Pablo Picasso and other artists, but also in communities, cities, and neighborhoods around the world. It is the small church house, protected by historic preservation policies, that now sits in between two luxury high rise condominiums in Atlanta. It is the previously abandoned parking lot, now a converted courtyard for business offices, that remains an informal skate park for teens- regardless of the "no skateboarding" signs and police interference in Chicago. It's the brightly colored lanterns and awnings in San Francisco's China Town, even when Asian residents can no longer afford to reside there. Pentimento acknowledges the existence of life, cultural practices, and identities seeping through a newly dominant paradigm, fighting not to be forgotten.

The second attribute of pentimento that draws my attention is the characteristic of repentance. It implies some moral grappling with decisions made, and deep regret in the outcomes. Conscious of each brush stroke, an artist discerns what is right and/or wrong with the picture at large. He/She/They make the choice of what is to stay and what is to be painted over; which stories get told and which are silenced. I argue the same is true of professionals in planning departments, offices of cultural affairs, and public/private developers. The city is a canvas, layered with paint, and each new brush stroke should be deeply considered and well

informed. Therefore, with pentimento in mind, the sustainability of cultural identity in the midst of urban development and change provokes not only tangible community economic development implications, but also intrinsically ethical and moral obligations as well.

Lastly, pentimento frames a painting as a living, ever evolving object, with new discoveries taking shape and transforming over time. Certainly, the same is unquestionably true of communities and cities. Taking into account the effects of rapid and/or slow, gradual change in the social, political, and geographical landscape of a community, remnants of the past often persist. Although these traces of the past are often limited to the collective memory of former stakeholders (residents, students, patrons, et cetera), deliberate planning, policies, and implantation practices of professionals can (and perhaps should) direct the changing and evolution of a "place"; thus, addressing the tension among what currently is and what will be, while always affirming what once was, as is often the case in gentrified neighborhoods.

This capstone examines this tension between change and preservation through the lens of cultural identity and place. I conducted a literature review as well as informally interviewed practitioners involved in urban change and development to create a framework for the ultimate development of a tool kit for all city artists (metaphorically speaking) to validate, maintain, and build pentimento in urban development.

A Note from the Author

While a number of the theoretical frameworks and practical application strategies discussed throughout this thesis capstone draw from cultural sustainability, planning, and developmental challenges on a national and international scale, I focus on urban development and community change in Atlanta, Georgia. The speed of population growth and economic development in the region, which I will expand upon later in this paper, makes Atlanta an ideal site to explore for this topic. As an Atlanta resident, I am able to leverage my professional network, lived experience, and access to specialized data sets. Explicitly stating my positionality to the geographical area, I seek to acknowledge any/all bias that may arise in my work and affirm limitations that may exist in applying my ideas beyond my current city. However, this closeness to place- geographically and emotionally- arguably strengthens my case for cultural identity in the city. I have, colloquially speaking, "skin in the game".

Chapter One: Introduction

It is without question that culture matters. It is intrinsically rooted in every aspect of human function and survival. Australian Cultural Analyst, Jon Hawkes, states that culture is "both the medium and the message- the inherent values *and* the means and results of social expression…[culture] is not the decoration added after a society has dealt with its basic needs, Culture *is* the basic need-it is the bedrock of society."[2] In the book *Conserving Culture*, the acclaimed scholar and ethnographer Mary Hufford cites Patricia Parker and Thomas King to define culture as "a system of behaviors, values, ideologies, and social arrangements. These features, in addition to tools and expressive elements such as graphic arts, help humans interpret their universe as well as deal with features of their environments, natural and social."[3]

This definition is integral to the concepts I explore in this paper because it frames culture as both a practice and/or 'system' of identity in addition to tools and byproducts such as art. Far too often culture is exclusively read through a production and consumption-based lens. This mode of thought limits the value of culture to what can be tangibly seen, commodified, and experienced. As a result, public art is often employed in development projects to satiate any cultural request yet fails to comprehensively address the wholeness of cultural identity. Thus, throughout this paper, culture and cultural identity refers to the magnitude of systems, ideologies, and social arrangements of a group of people, and explicitly not products of culture (art, fashion, food, etc.).

Rapid globalization and urbanization introduce an assortment of tensions and complications—economic, political, environmental and social—in cities around the world and

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[2] Jon Hawkes, The fourth pillar of sustainability: Culture's essential role in public planning, 2001
[3] Hufford, Mary (ed.) 1994. Conserving Culture: A New Discourse on Heritage, University of Illinois Press, Chicago.

strain tactics for integrating culture into sustainable urban development. Localized frameworks to employ culture as a principle and tool have often been misunderstood, undervalued, under-resourced and/or excluded entirely.[4] The Atlanta region is full of beautifully diverse and culturally distinct neighborhoods and communities. This paper argues the importance of maintaining the cultural identities of areas in Atlanta that are undergoing a revitalization process. Specifically, I argue that operationalizing cultural integration into current sustainable development practices is vital to protecting the communities in the city.

Sustainable development was first introduced in the early 1980s by the United Nations World Commission on Environment in the report, *Our Common Future,* often referred to as the "Brundtland Commission." In this report, sustainable development is defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."[5] Some thirty years later, planners and practitioners alike still adhere to this working definition of sustainable development. However, the Brundtland Commission focused primarily on health and income gaps and failed to explicitly name culture as a key element of sustainable development.

In the decades since, some global narratives have begun to evolve connecting culture and development. In 1996, the United Nations Conference on "Sustainable Human Settlements in an Urbanizing World" elevated culture as an integral part of local development. International leaders committed themselves to "provide all people, in particular those belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, equal opportunities for a healthy, safe, and productive life in harmony

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[4] Duxbury, N., Hosagrahar, J., & Pascual, J. (2016). Why must culture be at the heart of sustainable urban development? Barcelona: United Cities and Local Governments.
[5] Brundtland Commission (1987). "Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development". United Nations.

with nature and their cultural heritage, and their spiritual and cultural values […] thereby contributing to the achievement of national sustainable development."[6] However, it is unclear what, if any, quantifiable next steps were initiated following that session.

Discourse regarding culture and urban development has continued to gain traction on the international level, often urging scholars, planners, practitioners, and policy makers to take action locally. In 2013, the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments worked together to advocate for change in international policy processes, addressing the need to explicitly include culture in the paradigm of sustainable urban development. The taskforce concluded the following:

> Culture will be key in the success of sustainable development policies, as driver and enabler of development and people-centered societies. A holistic and integrated approach to development needs to take creativity, heritage, knowledge and diversity into account. Poverty is not just a question of material conditions and income, but also of lack of capabilities and opportunities, including in cultural terms.[7]

Hawke's 2001 text, *The Forth Pillar of Sustainability: Culture's Essential Role in Public Planning*, provides groundbreaking insights into sustainable development through the lens of culture. This seminal text examines how culture can be imbedded into and enhance planning paradigms and offers specific strategies to do so. Hawkes proposes four equal elements of society which require specific measures to fully be incorporated into policy: responsibility for the environment, economic health, social justice, and cultural vitality[8]. Many of Hawke's recommendations, which I will discuss further in Chapter Four, can be applicable to planning

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[6] parag. 42, Habitat II Agenda
[7] Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, 2014, p. 3
[8] Jon Hawkes, The fourth pillar of sustainability: Culture's essential role in public planning, 2001

procedures in the United States and Atlanta. However, a tool kit to advance his theories on a local level with consideration of local planning practices is still required.

Independent of international efforts, the role and importance of culture has yet to be fully operationalized in the context of urban development policy and local planning. A multitude of scholars have expressed the need for tangible operational methodologies to incorporate cultural identity and equity into a holistic urban planning and development model, yet to my knowledge no such systems exist locally. Renowned scholar and professor Ann Markusen writes extensively about cultural planning and policy. In the paper, *Cultural Planning and the Creative City,* Markusen points out the disconnect between theoretical understandings of culture and practical application on a local level. Regarding what Markusen refers to as cultivating "creative cities", she explains:

> Despite the fact that the creative city has the potential to tie urban planning, economic development and arts and cultural policy efforts together, this has for the most part not happened in most American cities [. . .] the theoretical and institutional underpinnings for such a synthetic effort have not been well explored [. . .] Although the "creative city/creative region" vision provides impetus for significance gains for the cultural sector, the institutional configuration of capabilities at the state and local level make it difficult to realize them [. . .] Few cities large or small have the expertise to bridge current balkanized bureaucratic structures, and few know how to work with multiple constituencies for cultural policy to develop an agenda that works.[9]

This paper serves as a first step to conceiving a comprehensive framework for planners, developers, and cultural leaders to better integrate cultural identity into an urban development model. I will examine the complexities of identity formation within the individual, social and collective identity development frameworks, as well as identity's relationship to both the built environment and the process of community change. With this work, I aim to bridge the divide

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[9] Markusen, A. 'Cultural planning and the creative city'. *Paper presented at the annual American Collegiate Schools of Planning meetings*. 2006a, 11, 12, Fort Worth, Texas

that exists between academic discussions of cultural identity and urban development and local development practices. In order to successfully operationalize culturally integrated and competent planning and development, key elements of the lived experience of incumbent residents must be recognized, planning challenges validated, and seemingly contradictory modes of thought across sectors translated. On the continuum from an academic understanding of cultural sustainability to current methodologies of development professionals, my research attempts to lay the conceptual foundation for the later development of Cultural Sustainability Tool Kit strategically offering practical applications for culturally intergraded urban development. The development of the Tool Kit is beyond the scope of this Capstone project, and additional work will be needed to operationalize the framework presented in this paper.

Research Aim:

In order to connect the academic understanding of the role of culture in urban development and change to the practical applications of planning and development strategies, three significant research inquiries were addressed:

1. In what ways can urban development support and reflect, and/or stifle and eradicate cultural values and expressions in communities?

2. How can cultural criteria, indicators, and variables best be interpreted by planning and development practice?

3. What are the benefits of culturally informed urban development initiatives?

Methodology and Thesis Outline

To address the questions posed above, I reviewed national and international policy and scholarly works to present an interpretation of theory and practical applications. I identified three primary areas of further research: Identity, Place, and Community Change. My research is

comprised of open source articles, quantitative census data, academic publications, and informal discussions with professionals in the field of real estate planning and development.

In Chapter Two, I will apply some of the international conversation about the role of culture in sustainable urban development to Atlanta by providing a brief history of culture and development practices in the city. Chapter Three reviews existing research to build a theoretical foundation for culturally competent development and identify gaps in in the literature. This information helped catalyze the framing of my research inquiries. Chapter Four examines preexisting practical models for planning, policy and development regarding cultural identity and sustainability. Chapter Five outlines potential recommendations for both additional academic research and the development of an actionable Toolkit.

Chapter Two: Understanding the Atlanta Canvas

The First Coat of Paint: History and Context

Not unlike most other major metropolitan regions in the United States, Atlanta in 2018 is vastly different from the city it was 50, 30, and even 10 years ago.[10] As the third most rapidly growing region in the nation, a projected growth of 8.6 million people by the year 2046 is estimated for metro Atlanta[11], which would make it the sixth largest metropolitan area in the country. Examining just the last eight years alone, the city of Atlanta has grown by more than 8.3 percent.[12]

From an economic development standpoint, there are key drivers that stimulate population growth for urban areas. Atlanta ranks third in the nation for the number of Fortune 500 corporate headquarters (such as The Home Depot #23, United Parcel Service #46, The Coca-Cola Company #64, and Delta Air Lines, Inc. #71).[13] It is home to the largest and busiest airport in the world, Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport[14], and is number one in the country for film and television production.[15] Yet, while the size and rate of economic growth has generated significant economic interest in the Atlanta region, numerous social, environmental and economic challenges have become pressing as well. Meeting the needs of a changing population requires a built environment and supportive infrastructure that allows these individuals to be independent, active, and culturally thriving.

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[10] http://documents.atlantaregional.com/plan2040/docs/lu_plan2040_framework_0711.pdf
[11] http://www.usmayors.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Metro-Economies-Past-and-Future-Employment-12.pdf
[12] https://www.ajc.com/news/local-govt--politics/arc-atlanta-area-adds-nearly-000-past-year/OUpRQWXIddN2kExsR6xhbL/
[13] https://www.metroatlantachamber.com/resources/most-popular/fortune-500-fortune-1000-in-metro-atlanta
[14] https://www.internationalairportreview.com/article/32311/top-20-largest-airports-passenger-number/
[15] https://www.bizjournals.com/atlanta/news/2017/05/24/georgia-no-1-in-feature-film-productions.html

In 2017, the Atlanta Regional Commission—a regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for the metro Atlanta area—commissioned a report to analyze the economic competitiveness of the city. Race and ethnicity were lifted up as key factors to address in Atlanta's shifting landscape. The report notes that the city can be characterized by significant differences in quality of life among racial groups. This alarming trend is particularly evident when considering poverty levels. Both Black/African-American and Hispanic residents of metro Atlanta are more than three times as likely to live in poverty relative to their White, Non-Hispanic counterparts. Less than 8% of the White, Non- Hispanic population in metro Atlanta live in poverty. More than 27% of metro Atlanta's Black/African- American population lives in poverty, and more than 25% of metro Atlanta's Hispanic population lives in poverty. No comparative region has a greater discrepancy in the poverty rates of White, Non-Hispanic residents relative to Black/African-American or Hispanic residents.[16]

Inequity among residents in Atlanta is not a new occurrence. According to research conducted by the Brookings Institute, Atlanta has been in the top 3 of most inequitable cities in the country since 2012- ranking #1 for 3 consecutive years.[17] In 2016, City Data reported that while the average median income (AMI) in Atlanta was $53,843, white residents held an AMI of $88,226 while the AMI of black residents was $29,107.[18] The income at the 95th percentile in Atlanta is placed at $281,653 and $16,057 at the 20th percentile. In other words, the top 5% of households in the city earn 17.5 times the income of the bottom 5%.[19]

The inequity crisis is directly connected to Atlanta's deeply entrenched racial segregation, land use and transit disparities. The city can be divided north-south by a line that

[16] Regional Plan 2014
[17] https://www.brookings.edu/research/all-cities-are-not-created-unequal/
[18] http://www.city-data.com/income/income-Atlanta-Georgia.html
[19] https://saportareport.com/atlanta-ranks-3rd-in-income-inequality-top-tier-earns-17-5-times-more-than-bottom/

roughly parallels Interstate 20 as it moves through Fulton and Dekalb counties. 90% of all

Atlanta job centers are closely clustered in the northern part of the region and population is

shifting to exurban communities—mostly in the northern counties—creating a housing and

workforce opportunity imbalance.[20] The vast majority of the region's economically distressed

areas are in the vicinity south of I-20. The racial divide evident in Interstate 20, speaks to a long

and contentious overlap of urban planning, interstate development, and racial bias in Atlanta.

During the 1940s and 50s many planning studies were commissioned by affluent White

business leaders and their political allies to inform interstate construction and land use policy, as

a means of stewarding racial and economic divides. The Lochner Report, produced in 1946,

leveraged federal transportation policy to support a freeway plan that would respond to the

predicted 150% increase in traffic between the prewar years and 1965. The freeway, as detailed

in the report, was designed to maximize connectivity for suburbanites (implicitly White

residents) to and from the city's fast-growing outer areas to its still robust downtown core.[21]

At the same time, the Lochner report proposed the highway system as a design solution to

barricade the downtown core from neighborhoods the business elite deemed undesirable to their

economic vitality, explicitly using transportation infrastructure to perpetuate racial segregation.[22]

The plan meticulously detailed how the freeway could remove and separate low-income Black

residents from the central business district.

As a follow-up to the Lochner Report, the Metropolitan Planning Commission (the

precursor organization to the Atlanta Regional Commission) produced the 1952 "Up Ahead"

plan, which unambiguously suggested using urban renewal funding to remove nearby Black

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[20] https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/atlanta.pdf
[21] H.W. Lochner & Co. and De Leuw, Cather & Co., "Highway and Transportation Plan for Atlanta, Georgia,"
(1946)
[22] Bayor, "Roads to Racial Segregation."

residential districts in hopes to enhance the Central Business District. The report proposed the

clearing of "slum areas" like Auburn Avenue and surrounding neighborhoods—labeling them "a

definite menace to the health of the downtown area."[23]

Outraged, Black civic leaders organized to convince the Metropolitan Planning

Commission to delete any reference to clearing the Auburn Avenue district in its urban renewal

plan. On June 3, 1952, John Wesley Dobbs, a prominent Black political leader, testified before

the Metropolitan Planning Commission regarding the classification of the historic Black

neighborhood and business district of Sweet Auburn as a "slum" area to be cleared. Dobbs said:

> In every city of America where Negroes live in large numbers they eventually develop a main business street for Negroes. In Atlanta, Georgia, Auburn Avenue happens to be that symbol of our business progress and achievement. On Auburn Avenue between Courtland Street and North Boulevard, Negroes have erected churches, built brick buildings and substantial business houses all along the street. Negroes own at least 90 percent of the property on Auburn Avenue. Big Bethel A.M.E. Church, corner of Auburn and Butler, was built at the close of the Civil War when Atlanta was unpaved and open creeks were running through her streets. Big Bethel Church has done more to give a moral tone to this section of Atlanta than anything else in that section of the city. Big Bethel Church stands there today on the same corner as a moral Lighthouse for the welfare of the citizens in this part of Atlanta.
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> It is true that we are poor people, liberated only 85 years ago, without education or money; and yet in the last 50 years we have acquired property along Auburn Avenue, built businesses like the Atlanta Life Insurance Company, which now has more than $25 million in assets; the Citizens Trust Company, a member of the Federal Reserve Banking System, with more than $5 million in assets; Atlanta Mutual Building and Loan Association, with more than $1.5 million in assets; The Atlanta Daily World, the only Negro daily newspaper in America; a broadcasting station, WERD, 860 on your dial. These are some of the businesses along Auburn Avenue that we feel justly proud of today. It takes sugar to sweeten things and, as you know, it takes money to buy sugar. The acquisition of this kind of wealth along Auburn Avenue has caused us to call it 'Sweet Auburn,' a name now known among Negroes throughout America as a symbol of the development of Negro Business in Atlanta, Georgia. Your proposed plan would destroy this development of ours, which represents two generations of sweat and toil. This attempt, ladies and gentlemen, is fundamentally wrong and unsound.[24]

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[23] Metropolitan Planning Commission, "Up Ahead: A Regional Land Use Plan for Metropolitan A*tlanta,*" (1952).
[24] Gary Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets Sweet Auburn: The Saga of Two Families and the Making of Atlanta*, 1996, 189.

Yet, regardless of civic pressure by the Black community, the Up Ahead plan was implemented and completed in the early 1960s. This resulted in the construction of the freeway known as the Downtown Connector which ran directly through the Sweet Auburn business district, destroying historic buildings and gutting the economic center of Black Atlanta. Overall, the construction of interstates and other various development projects in Atlanta have resulted in the decimation of many Black and low-income White communities. Some estimates calculated the displacement of approximately 70,000 people between 1952 and 1965, approximately 95% of whom were Black.[25] Although required by the federal laws such as eminent domain, replacement housing was generally not provided. As planning and development projects as attractions for affluent Whites continued to distress and replace urban black communities throughout the 70s and 80s, a cycle of disinvestment, unemployment and crime followed as well.

The Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) was constructed in the early 1970s and is the region's single transit rail system, and its infrastructure has only perpetuated systematic racial exclusion. The two-rail line, geographically inaccessible to most of the region-quickly developed a reputation for serving high numbers of poor black residents. During its development the system became colloquially understood as "M.A.R.T.A: "moving Africans rapidly through Atlanta," highlighting the racial basis of white suburban resistance to MARTA expansion. As MARTA is the only transit system of its size in the nation that does not receive state operating funding, affluent (White) investors maintained developmental agency of expansion efforts that restricted or intentionally complicated connection of concentrated black populations and the white suburbs.

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[25] Larry Keating, *Atlanta: Race, Class, and Urban Expansion* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2001), Chapter 4

Atlanta's transit infrastructure propagates not only economic inequity, but also community engagement, geographic, and social inequity as well. Transportation policies are not conceived to address the diverse needs of stakeholders, and residents of color are actively excluded from the decision-making process. As MARTA currently only has two heavy rail lines, most residents in low income communities lack connection to the rail system—drastically restricting access to health facilities, food, quality education, and employment.

The development of transit systems in Atlanta has had transformative impacts on (unequal) community development and neighborhood retention of incumbent residents. Transportation and housing policies in the mid-1900s subsidized suburban growth for White homeowners, leaving the cities underfunded and crippling the ability of black families to build wealth. Alex Karner, a professor in the School of City and Regional Planning at Georgia Institute of Technology, refers to the generational effects of land use and transit planning as the "$120 billion head start" that allowed some communities to prosper and others to decline. Karner further describes the role that transportation has played in the development of the metro Atlanta region as a two-tiered system: highways for the largely white suburbs and a chronically underfunded public transit system for people of color and low-income people, many of whom can't afford to own and maintain cars.[26]

In order to fully understand the dynamics of neighborhood development, transit infrastructure, and racial inequity in the city of Atlanta, one needs to discuss the Atlanta Beltline. In 1999, Georgia Tech planning student, Ryan Gravel wrote this master's thesis on the reuse of a largely abandoned necklace of rail-road tracks that circled Atlanta, touching 45 neighborhoods and a number of industrial and commercial districts. His aim was to build a system of transit,

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[26] https://kinder.rice.edu/2017/02/08/new-study-examines-how-historic-racism-shaped-atlantas-transportation-network/#.WJsgFWQrLZs

trails, and green space that would increase density, promote alternative transportation, link the city's neighborhoods, increase Atlanta's greenspace, and catalyze investment in low-income areas. The thesis was read by then City-council President Cathy Woolard, a transportation advocate who decided that the Beltline should become a reality. After a comprehensive community education and engagement effort, the Atlanta Beltline became a real project in 2005. The Beltline is anticipated to be completed by 2030.[27]

Today, the Atlanta Beltline is planned to include 22 miles of modern streetcar (an expansion of the Atlanta Streetcar), 33 miles of multi-use trail, and 2,000 acres of parks. It will open in phases with an anticipated completion in 2030. As of 2018, the Atlanta Beltline has four completed and open trails and two under construction. The Beltline has completed seven parks and engaged in intensive planning for modern streetcar expansion. The project has triggered more than $3 billion in private economic redevelopment near completed trails. The Beltline also provides amenities like free fitness classes, an urban farm, and Art on the Beltline, the largest temporary public art exhibition in the south.[28]

And yet while the Beltline has brought revitalization and new economic investment to in-town Atlanta communities, this major development project has also had devasting effects on many of its surrounding neighborhoods. Private, often speculative investment has led to gentrification and long-time, low-income resident displacement. Property values within a half-mile radius of the Atlanta Beltline have risen between 17.9% and 26.6, according to sale prices. Predominately Black communities along the southwest segment of the Beltline have suffered the

[27] Larry Keating, "ATLANTA: Peoplestown--Resilience and Tenacity Versus Institutional Hostility." In *Rebuilding Urban Neighborhoods*, edited by W. Dennis Keating and Norman Krumholz(Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 1999): 39.

[28] https://Beltline.org/about/the-atlanta-Beltline-project/atlanta-Beltline-overview/

highest increase in median sale prices, rising 68% from 2011 to 2015. The southeast and northeastern segments rose 40% and the northwest area rose about 51% since 2010.[29]

Planners and city officials tried to anticipate these consequences early in the planning phase, drafting an ordinance which promised to construct 5,600 units of affordable housing by 2030. It also required that 15% of the proceeds from the Beltline Tax Allocation District bond be dedicated to affordable housing development through an Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The Tax Allocation District, the major funding mechanism for the Beltline, accounts for nearly 40% of the total funds needed to complete the project.[30]

Nearly a decade ago, Georgia State University scholar Miriam Konrad, warned that the Tax Allocation District itself as a funding structure would be problematic for communities because it relies on gentrification to be successful. Konard stated, "the Beltline's funding hinges on development raising property values in Tax Allocation Districts, (and) there is a great danger that, with the incentive of higher tax revenue, gentrification is ignored or even encouraged by the Atlanta Beltline, Inc. and the city government."[31] Now more than halfway through the 25-year project, less than 1000 units of affordable housing have been constructed. Atlanta's history of urban development planning and implementation is entrenched in racial segregation and economic disparities; land uses and zoning ordinances that reinforce and intensify economic disparities; and limited authentic community input regarding the built environment.

Today, however, Atlanta is experiencing an historic moment regarding local *and* state appetite for investment in transit infrastructure that could reshape the region for generations. The

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[29] Immergluck and Balan, "Sustainable for whom?," 5
[30] http://static1.squarespace.com/static/59da49b712abd904963589b6/t/59dedb75f7e0ab47a08224b5/1507777424592/Beltlining+Report+-+HJL+and+RA+Oct+9.pdf
[31] M. Konrad, *Transporting Atlanta: The Mode of Mobility under Construction*, (Albany, NY: SUNY Press), 19.

City of Atlanta recently passed two referenda that will bring billions of dollars in capital investment to transit infrastructure in the region, including funding for new Metropolitan Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) services and expansion of bus routes. As part of this expansion, the City has worked collaboratively with the Partnership for Southern Equity to ensure more inclusive community engagement in terms of race, income and geography. Additionally, a special-purpose local-option sales tax increase (T-SPLOST) was passed to fund the Atlanta Beltline, and several Mayor-sanctioned working groups have been activated to address affordable housing and displacement. If there is any time for the city to begin to rethink its approach to urban development and the accompanying impacts on communities, it is now.

The Second Coat of Paint: Community Distinction & Vulnerability

In 1971, Phyllis Garland, a staff writer for Ebony magazine, published an article entitled "Atlanta: Black Mecca of the South." The moniker, which has prevailed and become part of Atlanta's brand over the last several decades, reflected the distinctive cultural and economic advantages of black neighborhoods in the city when compared to Northern and Western metropolises in the country. In the article, Garland walks the reader through the streets of the city, highlighting significant landmarks and events of local and national impact. Garland states:

> [Auburn Avenue] …is a street haunted by history. Martin Luther King Jr. was born there and is enshrined there in a small park next to Ebenezer Baptist Church where he assisted his father as pastor. Other churches, fortress-like but not forbidding-venerable Big Bethel and Rev. Williams Border's famous Wheat Street Baptist-stand guard over a faith that continues to grip the city's black population…
>
> Further west, on Hunter Street, the new black businesses have made a home for themselves. They are smaller than the old guard firms, mostly retail shops, drug or liquor stores, real estate firms, restaurants and a popular nightclub owned by Donn Clendenon,

an Atlantean who now plays ball for the New York Mets. Along this bustling ribbon of black commerce, the beat, elite and discreet meet, most often at Paschal's, a motor hotel and dining establishment known for its fried chicken and La Carousel cocktail lounge. There politicians 'confer with their constituents' and bureaucrats voice their frustrations…

…Hunter Street passes by the campuses of colleges comprising the Atlanta University Center, skirts Dr. Vincent Harding's Institute of the Black World and leads towards the verdant neighborhoods that are the true pride and joy of the city's black citizenry. There are several of these black residential sections- Collier Heights, Cascade Road, Peyton Forest, etc.- where exquisitely designed and spacious modern homes are set far back from the street in protective nests of towering Georgia pines. Indeed, these homes are so fabulous and numerous that visitors have difficultly believing what they're seeing.[32]

There is no doubt that Atlanta has evolved tremendously since 1971. Not only has White population decline reversed since 1990, but Latinx and Asian communities have grown and cultivated cultural hubs in various neighborhoods. Buford Highway (BuHi) is an 8-mile corridor running east of the city that serves as an anchor for Atlanta's ever-growing immigrant populations. Branded the "International Corridor" by the Dekalb County Chamber of Commerce,[33] BuHi is comprised of multifamily, single-family, and commercial retail, and is home to over 1,000 immigrant-owned businesses.[34] The Buford Highway area has one of the highest concentrations of foreign-born residents in the country, including immigrants from China, Korea, Vietnam, Mexico, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Central America. BuHi is considered the epicenter of multiculturalism in Atlanta, offering residents and visitors an assortment of dining, shopping, public festivals, and entertainment at affordable prices.

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[32] Phyllis Garland, "Atlanta: Black Mecca of the South, "Ebony (August 1971), 152-57.
[33] "Visitor Information". *DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce.*
[34] "What Is Buford Highway?". Buford Highway Project. Archived from the original on July 8, 2011

However, the corridor's affordability- which has been critical to immigrants' ability to thrive - has begun to decline as large developers have become attracted to the area. In 2014, an Atlanta-based development firm called The Integral Group purchased the property of the former General Motors plant and began planning for what is now known as the Assembly Yards. The 145 acre, 10 million square foot development project is proposed to be a mix of commercial office space, retail, residential, hotel, a movie studio, and the new headquarters of Serta Simmons Bedding. In early 2017, DeKalb county commissioners agreed to provide $180 million for utilities and infrastructure improvements around the property. While developers assert that Assembly Yards will generate 500 jobs in the near future and upwards to 8,000 over the next 15 years,[35] little to no planning or policies have been put into place to protect affordability and prevent displacement of residents and their enterprises.

In March 2018, City Councilman, Joe Gebbia, whose district runs along Buford Highway, went on record with the Atlanta Journal-Constitution (AJC) discussing the challenges of maintaining the community's cultural and economic identity in the midst of a significant spur in development. Gebbia stated, "We're really wrestling with how to address this issue and how to be effective in doing it right. We haven't come up with the answer. This whole thing is just going to light up like a firecracker right here along Buford Highway."[36] With no explicit provisions in place, Buford Highway's cultural identity is certainly at risk.

In the book and Atlanta Art Now exhibition of the same name, *NoPlaceness: Art in a Post-Urban Landscape,* creatives speak directly about the city's fading historical identity and the growing absence of place distinction. The authors proclaim, *"Geography has failed. The logic of globalization continues to throw into question an endless number of paradigms the 20th century*

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[35] https://politics.myajc.com/news/local-govt--politics/doraville-plant-redevelopment-approved-with-jobs-the-way/
[36] https://www.myajc.com/news/buford-highway-development-threatens-atlanta-immigrant-corridor

taught us to love. Borders, stable identities and local languages all find themselves now under assault…All places threaten to become no place in particular."[37]

The Atlanta neighborhoods and districts that are nationally and/or locally recognized as historic each have distinctive architectural characteristics, cultural attributes, and differing demographic profiles. These are reflected in the various organizations, festivals, and amenities offered to residents and visitors. This study intends to catalyze a first line of defense for sustaining cultural identity.

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[37] Cullum, J., Fox, C., and Hicks, C., 2011 *NoPlaceness: Art in a Post-Urban Landscape,* Atlanta Art Now

Chapter Three: Literature Review and Theoretical Frameworks

Examining cultural identity and the broad, ever-evolving notion of community in relation to urban (re)development requires a deeper assessment of the various components of the lived experience of people residing there. To understand how one plans, builds, and programs initiatives that spur equitable and culturally-integrated community development in neighborhoods, one must first have a comprehensive understanding of the nuanced complexities of identity formation.

I began my research by examining the notion of "pentimento" as it relates to cultural spaces, real estate development and planning practice. Pentimento is defined as the reappearance of an original drawn or painted element in a painting which is eventually painted over by the artist.[38] For this study, I will use Pentimento as a metaphor to ask the following questions:

- Underneath the layers of paint comprising a city, whose image is just out of view?

- Whose story has descended into the background?

- Who are the people working in the high-rise office buildings, shopping in commercial centers, and recreating in the parks?

What is important to these people, and how has their sense of self been supported, reflected, or over-shadowed by the built environment around them? Fundamentally, this mode of questioning offers a framing of identity and identity construction from a psychological and sociological vantage point.

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[38] http://www.studiointernational.com/index.php/godwin-bradbeer-pentimenti

Identity

This section explores some of the literature on identity formation and development. Identity theory is complex and multi-dimensional. For the purpose of this project, I have narrowly focused on literature that examines the links between identity formation and urban development and planning. In this section I will introduce theories of identity with a review of definitions (Kymaani, Tatum, Markus); present an identity development model (Erikson); and conclude by assessing social and collective identity frameworks (Tajfel, Taylor, and Whittier).

Defining Identity:

Prior to the start of my research, I understood identity to be the congruent process of naming the 'self' or 'selves', and the performance of 'being' as reflected by the alignment and/or opposing tension to numerous internal and external factors. Yet, as I explored the literature on identity formation, I began to witness significant limitations to structuring identity through language. In her 2014 dissertation, *Beyond Biracial: The Complexity of Identity Construction for Women with One Black and One White Parent,* scholar Roxanne Kymaani, addresses the challenges of 'naming' the self in relation to the often-problematic restrictions of language. Kymaani declares, "In an ever-increasing globalized and culturally diverse world, it seems impossible to define one's self through pre-conceived categories of cultural, racial or ethnic boundaries - categories that are defined by the dominant discourse."[39] While refencing preexisting scholarly modes of ethnically and culturally grouping individuals, Kymaani goes on to say, "the current language used by observers to distinguish these categories is often not

[39] Kymaani, Roxanne. "Beyond Biracial: The Complexity of Identity Construction for Women with One Black and One White Parent." Doctor of Philosophy, University of San Diego, 2014. Page 5

inclusive of the lived realities of those being observed. The dominant discourse that has categorically defined our identities and our lived experience ironically limits the possibility of the emergence of a new language."[40]

Even with the acknowledgement that defining identity- especially in the context of academic research- poses implicit barriers for a comprehensive and inclusive understanding, there still remains a need to examine and articulate the parameters of identity. Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum, a prominent thinker in the field of race and racial identity, grapples with the notion of a monolithic definition of identity. Echoing my previously mentioned question set of the who's/what's/why's/how's of identity, Tatum asserts that the ability to answer the question of identity, first begins with such explicit questioning. Tatum opens *The Complexity of Identity: "Who Am I?"* by stating:

> The concept of identity is a complex one, shaped by individual characteristics, family dynamics, historical factors, and social and political contexts. Who am I? The answer depends in large part on who the world around me says I am. Who do my parents say I am? Who do my peers say I am? What message is reflected back to me in the faces and voices of my teachers, my neighbors, store clerks? What do I learn from the media about myself? How am I represented in the cultural images around me? Or am I missing from the picture altogether? As social scientist Charles Cooley pointed out long ago, other people are the mirror in which we see ourselves.[41]

Returning to my belief that identity is the both the process of naming and being, Tatum's approach to identity (and the inquiry required of its exploration) brings to light another insight: The naming and being of self-definition works in tandem with being named by others and one's response to this naming. Tatum suggests that identity is a collaboration between what the self

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[40] Kymaani, pg.6

[41] Tatum, B. D. (1999). "Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?" and other conversations about race. New York: BasicBooks.

creates and how that meaning is impacted by the perception of others and the physical environment.

It appears that identity is only partially a matter of personal choice. Hazel Rose Markus, a pioneer in the field of cultural psychology, articulates this very sentiment in the 2001 essay, *Who Am I?" Race, Ethnicity, and Identity*. Markus states, "A person cannot really answer the 'Who am I?' question without thinking about what other people think of her. Her identity is not just her project alone; what her identity ends up being depends also on how other people identify her. Identities are, in fact, group projects, and as such, 'you can't be a self by yourself.'"[42] Markus' assessment of identity aligns identity development with a host of unspecified external variables in a way that implies identity construction occurs unstructured.

Identity Development Theory:

Needing to approach identity from a structured and sequential perspective, I turned to one of the most influential scholars on the subject, Erik Erikson, a world renowned developmental psychologist who also affirms the dialectic process of identity development. In his 1968 work entitled, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis,* he coined the term "identity crisis," Erikson defines identity as what "the 'I' reflects on when contemplating the body, the personality, and the roles to which it is attached." Erikson further examines the intricate exchange of identity determinants and indicators, stating:

> We deal with a process "located" in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his communal culture [...] In psychological terms, identity formation employs a process of simultaneous reflection and observation, a process taking place on all levels of mental functioning, by which the individual judges himself in the light of what he perceives to be

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[42] Markus, H. R. (2010). Who am I? Race, ethnicity, and identity. In H. R. Markus & P. M. L. Moya (Eds.), *Doing race: 21 essays for the 21st century* (pp. 359–389). New York, NY: W.W. Norton.

the way in which others judge him in comparison to themselves and to a typology significant to them.[43]

Erikson's language here refers to a component of identity construction that is crucial to my examination of positionality of identity in relation to external conditions. At the same time, Markus directly addressed the notion of "where" and the role of place in identity. She explains,

> There are, in other words, spatial as well as temporal dimensions to identity. As is the case with buying real estate, the three rules of understanding identity are 'location, location, location.' Who you are at any given moment depends on where you happen to be and who else is there in that place with you [...] They [identities] are continually formed, expressed, changed, affirmed, and threatened in the course of everyday life. As a person moves from home, to the classroom, to the store, to the bank, to the university office, to the gym, or to the home of a friend, the different social worlds she is part of can all work to shuffle the various aspects of her identity.[44]

While I will expand further on the roles of place in identity formation later in this section, I want to also address the impacts of additional external factors in the development of identity.

Greatly influenced by Freud's theories and philosophies, Erikson embraced a deeper understanding of the role of culture, society, and social conditions in identity development. He states, "Individual and society are intricately woven, dynamically related in continual change."[45] As the first to conceptualize a life-span model of human development, Erikson reinforces social/cultural considerations at all of the eight stages he proposes. Erikson believed that overcoming a conflict or crisis- referred to as "not a threat of catastrophe, but a turning point, a crucial period of increased vulnerability and heightened potential" (1968) was required in order to proceed in development. Each stage of development poses the opportunity to cultivate both

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[43] Erikson, E. (1968). *Identity, youth, and crisis.* New York, NY: W.W. Norton.
[44] Markus, H. R. (2010). Who am I? Race, ethnicity, and identity. In H. R. Markus & P. M. L. Moya (Eds.), *Doing race: 21 essays for the 21st century* (pp. 364–365). New York, NY: W. W. Norton.
[45] Erikson, E. H. (1959). *Identity and the life cycle; Selected papers, with a historical introduction by David Rapaport.* New York: International University Press.

healthy and unhealthy senses of self, with successful or unsuccessful social outcomes. Erikson's eight stages of development include: (1) Trust vs. Mistrust; (2) Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt; (3) Initiative vs. Guilt; (4) Industry vs. Inferiority; (5) Identity vs. Role Confusion; (6) Intimacy vs. Isolation; (7) Generativity vs. Stagnation; and (8) Ego Integrity vs. Despair.

A substantial amount of Erikson's work pertains to what he deemed the adolescent stage (roughly stage five). This adolescent period is when social, cultural, and environmental factors have a heightened importance in the development of identity. Community, cultural linkages, and place continuity become key elements for psychological success. This period is important because it establishes the connection of meaningful self-concepts with contributing elements of the past, present, and future, both through the lens of time and place. This segment of development is particularly challenging in the cases in which the anchor of community and/or cultural traditions are severed and a clear pathway for them is uncertain in the future. It is very important to note in terms of the point of this paper, that substantial disadvantages to development can occur when social disruption no longer allows for previous generations to serve as role models for younger generations.

Erikson's eight stages of identity development emphasize that successful development is contingent upon- among other things-interaction (and/or the lack thereof) with others. From a community development perspective, a host of quality of life stressors (adequate housing, mobility, financial stability, access to healthy food, etc.) can influence the interpersonal exchanges among individuals. I particularly want to focus on how socialization, or the series of interactions among individuals, is named, prescribed value, and shapes the notion and experience of community.

Social Identity Theory:

Social identity theory can expand our understanding of how interactions within a group inform the construction of individual as well as community identity. Henri Tajfel introduced social identity theory in the early 1970's, defining it as "the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership."[46] Initially used as a means of analyzing discriminatory behavior and prejudice, this framework suggests that individuals categorize themselves and others into specific social groups and assign evaluative meaning to each category. Consider groupings such as race, political affiliation, or even- for the sake of this study- south vs. north siders in Atlanta. Moreover, Tajfel's specifies underlying principles at the core of social identity theory, two of which are particularly important to consider for community planning: social categorization and social comparison.

Social categorization refers to the human process of encoding and decoding data in order to make sense of the world. Tajfel argues that this process is crucial for cultivating and maintaining social relationships and identity development. He refers to this social categorization as, "tools that segment, classify, and order the social environment, and thus enable the individual to undertake many forms of social action. [. . .]. They create and define the individual's place in society."[47] This tool creates social structures that rely on in-group and out-group modes of thought. The binary framework, which groups and/or excludes, requires individuals to undergo depersonalization, not to be confused with the negative implication of the terms dehumanization or deindividualization. Depersonalization refers to a shift in identity from individual to group,

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[46] Tajfel, H. (1972). Social categorization. English manuscript of ''La categorisation sociale.'' In S. Moscovici (Ed.), Introduction a` la psychologie sociale (Vol. 1, pp. 272–302). Paris: Larousse.
[47] Tajfel, Henri and John C. Turner. 1979. "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict." Pp. 33-47 in The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations, edited by W.G. Austin and S. Worchel. Monterey: Brooks-Cole.

not a loss of identity entirely. Through social categorization, expressions of individuality are transformed into broader group behavior.[48]

Tajfel suggests that cultivating a healthy perception of identity is reliant on the social comparison process. An individual's need for a positive sense of self requires members of the identified "in-group" to evaluate the identified "out-group", and that value judgments be made that are favorable to the evaluators. Tajfel expounds on the significance of comparison and the need for positive assessments of self, by stating, "the re- interpretation of attributes and the engagement in social action…only acquire meaning in relation to, or in comparison with, other groups.' The characteristics of one's group as a whole (such as its status, its richness or poverty, its skin colour or its ability to reach its aims) achieve most of their significance in relation to perceived differences from other groups and the value connotations of these differences [. . .]" (1972). Social categorization, comparison, and even the notion of in/out-group perceptions are important in dissecting not only the policies that drove historical inequities among communities and out-groups (such as planners and developers), but also in addressing the disconnects that influence planning practices today.

Collective Identity Theory:

While there are a multitude of definitions framing collective identity, in many regards it can be described as the bridge between social identity theory and identity theory. Sociologists Verta Taylor and Nancy E. Whittier write extensively about collective identity and its influence in community social movements. They define collective identity as "the shared definition of a

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[48] Hogg, M. A.; & Grieve, P. (1999). Social identity theory and the crisis of confidence in social psychology: A commentary, and some research on uncertainty reduction. Asian Journal of Social Psychology.

group that derives from members' common interest, experiences and solidarity."[49] With this in mind, collective identity validates the links between individual identity theory, as well as the social categorization process (as in social identity theory), all of which constructs a complex and multidimensional identity framework. In the essay, "*An Organizing Framework for Collective Identity: Articulation and Significance of Multidimensionality*", authors Richard Ashmore, Kay Deaux and Tracy McLaughlin-Volpe describe collective identity as a "set of individual-level elements, facets, or dimensions" stating that "inconsistent terminology, strategies of management, variability, and the course of identity development" plagues the theoretical concept.[50]

Ashmore et al. developed a framework called the collective identity construct (CIC). CIC is a foundational model that helps articulate the various factors that may indicate the strength of an individual's collective identity. It is by no means presented as a theoretical identity framework itself. However, CIC does present correlations with social identity theory and identity theory and displays collective identity's departure with seven distinct dimensions. The seven dimensions of collective identity are: self-categorization, evaluation, importance, attachment and sense of interdependence, social embeddedness, behavior involvement, and content and meaning [see Figure 1].

In all of the theories presented regarding identity- individual, social, and collective- the emphasis on the dialectical nature of identity formation emerges as a central takeaway when considering community change and protection. Identity in all forms results from a continuous

[49] Taylor, V., & Whittier, N. E. (1992). Collective identity in social movement communities. In A. D. Morris & C. McClurg Mueller (Eds.), *Frontiers in social movement theory* (pp. 104-130). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
[50] Ashmore, R. D., Deaux, K., & McLaughlin-Volpe, T. (2004). An organizing framework for collective identity: Articulation and significance of multidimensionality. *Psychological Bulletin, 130*(1), 80-114. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.130.1.80

dialogue among the self, others, and the environment. Disruptions, tensions, and/or an absence of
any of those elements can have tremendous effects on the person and community.

Figure 1. *Collective Identity construct dimensions, adapted from Ashmore et al. (2004)*

Element	Definition
Self-categorization	**Identifying self as a member of, or categorizing self in terms of, a particular social grouping**
Placing self in social category	*Categorizing self in terms of a particular social grouping*
perceived similarity/ prototypicality	*A person's subjective assessment of the degree to which he or she is a prototypical member of the group*
Perceived certainty of self-identification	*The degree of certainty with which a person categorizes self in terms of a particular social grouping*
Evaluation	**The positive or negative attitude that a person has toward the social category in question**
Private regard	*Favorability judgments made by people about their own Identities*
Public regard	*Favorability judgments that one perceives others, such as the general public, to hold about one's social category*
Importance	**The degree of importance of a particular group membership to the individual's overall self-concept**
Explicit importance	*The individual's subjective appraisal of the degree to which a collective identity is important to her or his overall sense of self*
Implicit importance	*The placement of a particular group membership in the person's hierarchically organized self-system; the individual is not necessarily consciously aware of the hierarchical position of his or her collective identities*
Attachment and sense of interdependence	**The emotional involvement felt with a group (the degree to which the individual feels at one with the group)**
Interdependence/mutual fate	*Perception of the commonalities in the way group members are treated in society*
Attachment/affective commitment	*A sense of emotional involvement with or affiliative orientation toward the group*
Interconnection of self and others	*The degree to which people merge their sense of self and the group*
Social embeddedness	**The degree to which a particular collective identity is embedded in the person's everyday ongoing social relationships**
Behavioral involvement	**The degree to which the person engages in actions that directly implicate the collective identity category in question**
Content and meaning	
Self-attributed characteristics	*The extent to which traits and dispositions that are associated with a social category are endorsed as self-descriptive by a member of that category*
Ideology	*Beliefs about a group's experience, history, and position in society*
Narrative	*The internally represented story that the person has developed regarding self and the social category in question*
Collective identity story	

Group story	*The individual's mentally represented narrative of self as a member of a particular social category*
	The individual's mentally represented narrative of a particular social category of which he or she is a member

Place

As urban development and redevelopment initiatives are fundamentally about (re)shaping the built environment and remaking places, it is important to examine how humans express an emotional, spiritual or behavioral response to particular places, and how these responses impact identity formation. The objective of this section is to build a conceptual bridge between identity formation theory and urban development frameworks. To this end, this section provides an overview of select literature that works to define "place," articulates what is referred to as a "sense of place," addresses place attachment, and briefly discusses the loss of place.

Defining Place:

As was the case with concepts of identity, the notion of place is complicated and well debated in the academic community. Arefi suggests that much of the confusion regarding the understanding of place can be attributed to (1) variations in geographical dimensions, such as the size of a country, region and/or neighborhood, and (2) its meaning and purpose suggesting different things to different people. These complications are compounded further when considering the emotional, cultural, and/or historical value manifested in local, regional, and national identity. Significant here is the is awareness that place is contingent upon meaning.

The 1976 book, *Place and Placelessness* by "humanistic geographer" Edward Relph serves as a central source among scholars seeking to understand the notion and significance of

place. Space, in itself, can be conceived as abstract geometries, such as distance, direction, shape, volume, and size. This understanding of space is detached from individual or cultural interpretation.[51] Relph proposes that *spaces* are transformed into *places* once they are imbued with meaning by individuals, groups, and/or societies.[52]

Relph's longtime colleague Yi-Fu Tuan expanded on this theory in the 1977 publication, *Space and Place*. Tuan defines place as "centers of felt value"[53] constructed out of lived experience that gain meaning over time. These characteristics of place presented by both Relph and Tuan are widely accepted by practitioners in the field of sociology. The authors of *A Sense of Place within the Landscape in Cultural Settings* reference both scholars when providing a definition of place of their own. They define place as, "a space which is invested with understandings of behavioral appropriateness; social meaning and cultural expectation. A place is a repetitively visited site that affords safety, harmony and spiritual. Places are fusions of human and cultural landscape elements which centers on the immediate experience of the world."[54]

Drawing upon all of the definitions provided in the literature, one can conclude that place is defined by a physical environment constructed according to social dynamics, multiple expressions of identity, and all the behavior and activities that come with both. Places are intrinsically tied to the individuals that create them by subscribing meaning. Places are therefore perceived, felt, understood, narrated, and imagined. It is only through a deep understanding of the people's psychological connection to place that an assessment of the quality of place can be

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[51] Gieryn, T.F. (2000). *A Space for Place in Sociology*. Annu. Rev. Sociol. 26, 463–496
[52] Relph, E. (1976) *Place and Placelessness* (London, Pion).
[53] Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977.
[54] Mohammad, N. M. N., Saruwono, M., Said, S. Y.& Hariri, W. A. H. W. (2013). A Sense of Place within the Landscape in Cultural Settings. Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 105, 506-512.

possible. It is the psychological, coupled with the physical that forms a sense of place. Recalling Erikson's theory on the dialectical process of identity, place is therefore an outcome of a dialectical exchange among individual/collective identities and space.

Figure 2. Components of Place
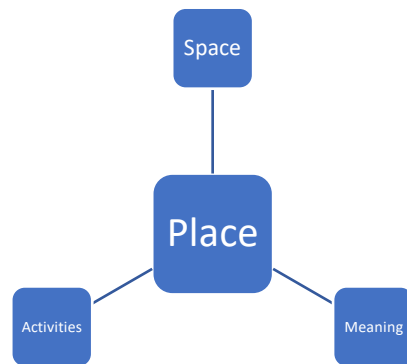
Consumption drives current development practices. Prioritizing the future consumer neglects the current resident. For instance, the rise of generic suburban forms has infiltrated unique urban landscapes and diminished the meaning of place.[55] This commodification and suburbanization of urban form compromises the connection between a physical environment and its place meaning that is felt far beyond the physical, cultural, and emotional context.[56]

In his 1999 paper, *Non-place and Placelessness as Narratives of Loss: Rethinking the Notion of Place*, Mahyar Arefi directly links this connectivity- or lack thereof- to urban development. Arefi states, "Cities and their neighborhoods as locations invariably reflect the

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[55] Aleya A.H. (2012). Culture, Quality of life, Globalization and Beyond. Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 50, 11-19.

[56] Ujang, N. & Zakariya, K. (2015). The Notion of Place, Place Meaning and Identity in Urban Regeneration, Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences, 170. p. 709

contemporary transformation of the urban landscape. Not only have these changes significantly altered the notion of place, but they have also developed a different set of criteria according to which urban environments come to be judged. Cities with more freeways and highways passing through their neighborhoods and localities are typically associated with abundance and prosperity. What counts is the number of connections rather than the quality of connections between locations."[57] While Arefe's view is informed by transit planning in Asia and may not directly translate to transit infrastructure in the U.S. where highway systems typically plague low income communities, similar thoughts associating prosperity to transit access seem to ring true. His points are particularly applicable when reviewing the effects of transit-oriented development in Atlanta.

Sense of Place:

Sense of place is yet another perplexing concept to try to define concisely. Scholars across various sectors approach the subject quite differently and utilize various indicators to assess how a sense of place is created. In many regards one can argue that there is no need for a universal articulation of sense of place. It is essentially just understood that people bring a whole set of cultural preconceptions to a place that shape the way one responds to it, and simultaneously shape the place to fit into those preconceptions.[58] In order to support this notion, I have reviewed definitions of sense of place from five different areas of study. The following by no means is meant to be an exhaustive list of possible definitions, but it does convey distinctions and commonalities worth noting.

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[57] Arefi, M. (1999). "Non-place and Placelessness as Narratives of Loss: Rethinking the Notion of Place", Journal of Urban Design, 4(2): 179-193.
[58] Cross, J. E. (2001). What is Sense of Place, Research on Place & Space

Environmental Psychology- In the 1981 text, *The Sense of Place*, Fritz Steele, categorizes sense of place into three distinct dimensions:

1. Sense of place: "the particular experience of a person in a particular setting (feeling stimulated, excited, joyous, expansive, and so forth)."

2. Spirit of place: "the combination of characteristics that gives some locations a special 'feel' or personality (such as a spirit of mystery or of identity with a person or group)."

3. Setting: "a person's immediate surroundings, including both physical and social elements." [59]

Geography- Tuan uses the word "topophilia" to describe the connection to place and people that may vary in intensity and modes of expression. Tuan states, *"Topophilia* is the affective bond between people and place or setting."[60]

Landscape Architecture/History- John Brinckerhoff Jackson was considered the "guru of the landscape"[61] and credited for broadening the perspective on vernacular design. In the book, *A Sense of Place, A Sense of Time*, he states, "A *sense of place* is something that we ourselves create in the course of time. It is the result of habit or custom.... A sense of place is reinforced by what might be called a sense of recurring events."[62]

Sociology- In the book, *Community Attachment: Local Sentiment and Sense of Place,* David Hummon states, "By sense of place, I mean people's subjective perceptions of their environments and their more or less conscious feelings about those environments. Sense of place is inevitably dual in nature, involving both an interpretive perspective *on* the environment and an

[59] Steele, Fritz. 1981. *The Sense of Place*. Boston: CBI Publishing Company, Inc.
[60] Tuan, Yi-Fu. 1974. *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values*. New York: Columbia University Press.
[61] https://www.nytimes.com/1996/08/31/arts/brinck-jackson-86-dies-was-guru-of-the-landscape.html
[62] Jackson, John Brinckerhoff. 1994. *A sense of place, a sense of time*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

emotional reaction *to* the environment.... Sense of place involves a personal *orientation* toward place, in which ones' understanding of place and one's feelings about place become fused in the context of environmental meaning."[63]

However, the anthropological framing of sense of place is the most aligned with the theories discussed in this paper because it fully connects cultural identity with the built environment. Anthropologist, Setha Low refers to sense of place as "attachment" in the book, Symbolic Ties that Bind: Place Attachments in the Plaza. Low defines place attachment as, "the symbolic relationship formed by people giving culturally shared emotional/affective meanings to a particular space or piece of land that provides the basis for the individual's and group's understanding of and relation to the environment.... Thus, place attachment is more than an emotional and cognitive experience and includes cultural beliefs and practices that link people to place."[64]

Again, while each field of practice offers a different definition of what is meant by a sense of place, there is still a shared sentiment that links the psychological bond a person has with a setting. What is interesting in the language among the scholars, particularly Hummon and Low, is the use of attachment to address sense of place. While certainly linked, I suggest that place attachment can be regarded as a separate environmental psychology framework entirely.

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[63] Hummon, David. 1992. "Community Attachment: Local Sentiment and Sense of Place." Pp. 253-278 in *Place Attachment*, edited by Irwin Altman and Setha Low. New York: Plenum.
[64] Low, Setha M. 1992. "Symbolic Ties that Bind: Place Attachment in the Plaza." Pp. 165-186 in *Place Attachment*, edited by Irwin Altman and Setha Low. New York: Plenum Press.

Place Attachment:

While research regarding place attachment often mirrors and overlaps with research on sense of place, I believe it is important to further examine the notion of attachment from an urban development perspective. In the article, *Place Attachment: Conceptual and Empirical Questions,* the authors refine the definition with subtle, yet important difference. Hidalgo and Hernandez define place attachment as, "the desire to maintain closeness to the object of attachment which also describes the special feeling towards a particular place."[65] In this framing, attachment appears removed from a sense of place, becoming the "desire to maintain closeness" to the object that embodies the sense of place.

From an urban development standpoint, understanding place attachment is imperative to safe guarding cultural identity. According to Relph, "Attachment to place is considered a fundamental human need (1976)." Current urban design, planning, and development practices are unable to satisfy this need due to a tendency towards spatial uniformity and increased mobility which can lead to a purely functional relationship with places.

This functionality can be directly attributed to urban design theory that primarily focuses on the characteristics and quality of elements in the built environment but falls short in understanding the psychological sense of place. Several key themes emerged throughout my literature review on place, and I explore them further below: place dependence and place identity. While these are only two of the range of place attachment frameworks I explored I believe they are critical to understanding the role of cultural identity in urban development.

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[65] Hidalgo, M.C.; Hernandez, B. (2001). "Place attachment: Conceptual and empirical question", *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 21, pp 273-281.

Place Identity and Place Dependence:

In the literature regarding place attachment, place identity and place dependence are primarily regarded as key measurement constructs.[66] Place identity is regarded both as the way place informs the identity of individuals inhabiting it, but also the physical features that composites it.[67] In urban environments, identity can be attributed to elements in the built/natural environment, and individual and collective activities and events. Place identity is also associated with items of symbolic significance that give meaning to and receive meaning from people. We recall the words of John Dobbs who while describing Auburn Avenue connected place identity with the collective emotional identity of the residents, states, "In Atlanta [. . .] Auburn Avenue happens to be that symbol of our business progress and achievement." He goes on to assign elements of the built environment meaning which in turn influences the identity of the residents: "Big Bethel A.M.E. Church (at the) corner of Auburn and Butler, was built at the close of the Civil War when Atlanta was unpaved and open creeks were running through her streets. Big Bethel Church has done more to give a moral tone to this section of Atlanta than anything else in that section of the city."[68]

Place dependence describes the way place provides key functions and conditions that enable individuals to achieve their desired goals and needs, such as housing, recreation, food access, and social interaction. Thus, the extent to which a person feels attached to or dependent

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[66] Williams, D.R., Patterson, M.E., Roggenbuck, J.W. & Watson, A.E. 1992. Beyond the commodity metaphor: examining emotional and symbolic attachment to place. *Leisure Sciences*, 14, 29-46

[67] Proshansky, H. M., Fabian A. K. and Kamikoff, R. (1995). Place identity: Physical World Socialization of the Self. (pp.87-113). In L. Groat (Ed.) Giving places meaning, Reading in Environmental Psychology.

[68] Pomerantz, Gary. Page 189.

on a place is a direct result of how well a person feels their needs and goals are adequately met in that place, and/or how positive the person feels about their experience of that place.

Consider again the immigrant residents of Buford Highway. It is fairly easy to project the possible emotional impact of having access to resources, merchandise, restaurants, and information that is directly aligned with their native cultures—without having to travel long distances. According to researchers David Smaldone, Charles Harris, and Nick Sanyal, "place dependence comes from a person's consideration of two things: (a) the quality of the current place and (b) the quality of other substitute places that are comparable to the current place. Place dependence concerns the functional and utilitarian aspects of place attachment. It connects to the functional quality of the physical elements and activities that are distinct from other places, which is central to urban design quality."[69] In many regards, place dependency is an important consideration for planners and practitioners to take into account when implementing projects. The importance of understanding 'who are the people', as stated earlier and explored in the identity section, means it is also important for planning professions to be keenly aware of how people connect with their environment. Place and identity are so interconnected in the construction of cultural identity that in order to fully create integrations into urban planning practices, one must first be clear on the role of the physical environment in people's lives.

Influencing Factors of Place Attachment:

In addition to place dependence and place identity, practitioners should reflect on a number of other factors that influence place attachment. In their essays, *The Notion of Place* and

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[69] Smaldone, D., Harris, C., & Sanyal, N. (2005). An exploration of place as a process: The case of Jackson Hole, WY. Journal of Environmental Psychology, 25, 397-414.

Place Meaning and Identity in Urban Regeneration, researchers Norsidah Ujang and Khalilah Zakariya argue for the importance of examining "the degree of influence that the attributes and characteristics of place affected by urban regeneration […] (have on) place attachment."[70] The authors suggest that familiarity, demographic characteristics, and culture are the three primary influencers of place attachment.

According to Ujang and Zakariya, familiarity can be divided into four dimensions: 1. location knowledge (to know where a place is); 2. visual recognition; 3. name recognition; and 4. interaction with the place. The varying degrees of familiarity can have a significant effect on people's perception to place and their attachment. The authors affirm the need - explored in this paper - to operationalize cultural identity into urban development protocol, stating, "The need to understand familiarity is strongly relevant to local and historical contexts because changing forms and actions of a place (e.g. historic streets) if not sensitively implemented, will disassociate the attached users from their familiar places. This scenario particularly applies to the need to upgrade and revitalize places within the urban areas that have held particular meanings… in the socio- cultural context."[71] This need raises the question of how exactly development professionals would begin to understand the changing forms of place and how might that information be incorporated into practices. Thus, there is a gap between literature and practical application.

Demographic characteristics as influencers of place attachment draw upon the theories of social identity previously discussed. Race, ethnicity and class identification play a role in

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[70] N. Ujang, K. Zakariya *The Notion of Place, Place Meaning and Identity in Urban Regeneration*
Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 170 (2015), pp. 713-717
[71] N. Ujang, K. Zakariya page 714

shaping place attachment. As explored in social identity development, individuals assign value and meaning to themselves, others, and the environment. The authors account for this by stating, "meanings be categorized based on the variation in the characteristics of the people. Therefore, there is a need to identify place attachment and place identity based on consensus from stratified user groups according to their roles and social, cultural characteristics."[72]

Lastly, urban development practitioners do, to some degree, take into consideration how individuals experience a place- both physically and psychologically (to an even lesser degree). Yet, closer attention must be paid to the various cultural aspects of a place that hold specific meaning and provide cultural activities in an assortment of forms. The attributes of an environment often directly reflect the complexities of the culture that distinguishes groups from one another. To this point, the authors share, "It is a way of life, symbols, meaning and cognition and survival strategies accepted as norms, significant and typical for a particular group of people. In the case of a pluralistic society, it is recognized that the cultural principles play an important role in defining group identity hence affecting the character and identity of the place they inhabited. An individual attachment is a subset of a culturally determined principle."[73] Their work re-emphasizes the dialectic relationship between people and place, identity and environment, and culture and space.

While it is important to consider the various modes, degrees, and impacts of place attachment in urban development, it is also important to consider the effects of injuring or

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[72] N. Ujang, K. Zakariya page 714
[73] N. Ujang, K. Zakariya page 715

severing the attachment. I will next briefly examine the notion of loss of place and the psychological ramifications on individuals and communities.

Loss of Place:

The transformation of buildings and spaces, and/or a change of functions within a space can have significant impact on place attachment development. As individual, collective, and place identities are interconnected, a loss of place identity often results in the disintegration of self and group identity. Ujang and Zakariya state that, "Sustaining the meanings and identity of the urban elements and icons (objects, structures and images) is important because they contribute to self-identity, sense of community and sense of place."[74]

Scholar Michael Galchinsky has written extensively on the importance of recognizing, honoring, and preserving cultural "icons" in communities. In his 2018 text, *Iconic Loss: Global Civil Society and the Destruction of Cultural Property*, Galchinsky draws upon the scholarship of Philip Smith and Bernhard Giesen to correlate the physical structures of iconic value to individual emotional. He states, "The cultural sociology of 'iconic power' affirms that any icon owes its success to the familiarity and density of its symbolic field, within the terms of reference of a given interpretive community…icons are embedded in the familiar symbolic universe of a social community... Their familiarity enables icons to be what Phillip Smith calls 'representative symbol[s]' that can 'compress and express whole fields of myth and meaning….' Iconic symbols are not only dense with meaning, but they trigger the type of emotions that require collective ritual expression."[75]

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[74] N. Ujang, K. Zakariya page 710
[75] Galchinsky, M. (2018), *Iconic Loss: Global Civil Society and the Destruction of Cultural Property.*

While Galchinsky refers to cultural icons in a more traditional sense (temples, statues, monuments etc.), I believe the same notion applies to elements in the urban built environment that have significant influence on collective identity. Physical structures in an urban environment not only shape individual identity, but also become vessels for articulating aspects of the collective identity as well. As Galchinsky notes, "although the icon is a tangible, material object, its meanings are still largely imaginary, in the sense that various interpretations and emotions are projected onto the object by different, historically situated viewers. These imaginary meanings do not dwell only in individual minds, but are widely shared, circulated among the community, and transmitted to future viewers, so that eventually they constitute a penumbra of narratives, values, and feelings hovering around the object [. . .]."[76]

In order to examine this notion of loss of place, I want to re-center this discussion back to Atlanta's shifting landscape. As previously discussed, urban development projects have had devastating effects on Atlanta communities. Recall the words of Dobbs as he argued for the importance of protecting neighborhoods from interstate plans, "It is true that we are poor people, liberated only 85 years ago, without education or money; and yet in the last 50 years we have acquired property along Auburn Avenue, built businesses like the Atlanta Life Insurance Company, which now has more than $25 million in assets…"[77] Also supporting this contemporary loss of significant places, Garland wrote about the same area, "Along this bustling ribbon of black commerce, the beat, elite and discreet meet, most often at Paschal's, a motor hotel and dining establishment known for its fried chicken [. . .]." Both the Atlanta Life Insurance Company building and Paschal's are currently vacant, dilapidated and boarded up in a

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[76] Galchinsky, M. page 4
[77] Pomerantz, Gary. Page 189.

community that is now buffeted by economic inequity and gentrification. Both buildings serve as icons from the past. To date there has not been adequate research in connecting the visual state of each structure and the loss of each business on the psychological state and place attachment of residents.

As icons in the built environment are destroyed and transformed, what aspects of identity linger or dissipate? Galchinsky addresses this question in a way that directly echoes my initial framing of pentimento. He states, "their traces show through the patina of later additions, perhaps dormant yet still available for subsequent viewers to revive. Perhaps the earlier meanings become amalgamated with later ones, perhaps they become syncretized, or synthesized, or perhaps, one day, the older meanings rise to the surface and predominate again. The icon's aura may outlast its material form [. . .]."[78]

Place attachment theory, particularly regarding loss and transformation, provokes a need to examine the process of community change and way it is measured. Let's explore literature directly related to the physical and psychological aspects of community change.

Community Change

Over the last 50 years, community development theory in the United States has evolved in response to neighborhood decline and deterioration in cities. Federal policies and programs have significantly influenced the shape and process around development projects on the local level.[79] In order to examine the role of place, sense of place, attachment, and loss in community

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[78] Galchinsky, M. page 4
[79] Pitkin, B, 2001, *Theories of neighborhood change: Implications for community development policy and practice*, (UCLA Advanced Policy Institute)

development planning, it is necessary to examine the theories, policies and practices that have framed neighborhood change in the United States thus far.

Urbanist scholar, John Metzer states in, *Planned Abandonment: The Neighborhood Life-Cycle Theory and National Policy*, that "Disparate patterns of metropolitan growth and decline in the United States are the legacy of economic racism, decisions on industrial locations, and the suburban bias of federal highway and housing programs."[80] Evidence to support Metzer's claim can be seen in the Urban Redevelopment Program, established by the Housing Act of 1949, which generated "slum" clearance and resident relocation as a policy of "Urban Renewal."[81] Many along with Metzer have criticized federal Urban Renewal programs for their restrictive planning approaches and reinforcement of social and economic inequities.

These "disparate patterns" continued throughout the decades, and in the 1970s and 80s most federal funding for neighborhood planning devolved to simple block grants, forcing local governments to secure private or philanthropic funding for neighborhood investment. In response to federal policies and funding restrictions, Community Development Corporations (CDCs), became the champions of neighborhood-level development planning and (in theory) were able to provide more inclusive community-based practices.[82] That said, CDCs were/are often very limited in their ability make significant improvements to local neighborhoods unless connected to broader coalitions and regional and/or federal programs. As previously discussed, the theme of dialectic relationships persists, even in community development planning. Local policy and practice are closely tied to national policy and discourse. In order to fully understand the local

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[80] Metzger, J. T. 2000. *Planned abandonment: The neighborhood life-cycle theory and national urban policy*. Housing Policy Debate, 11(1): 7–40
[81] Fainstein, Susan. 1990. *Neighborhood Planning: Limits and Potentials*. In Neighborhood Policy and Programmes, edited by Naomi Carmon. New York: St. Martin's Press.
[82] Fisher, Robert. 1994. *Let the People Decide: Neighborhood Organizing in America*. Boston: Twayne.

implications of national urban development planning and policies, one has to understand the theoretical frameworks regarding neighborhood change that spawned them.

In the paper, *Theories of Neighborhood Change: Implications for Community Development Policy and Practice,* Bill Pitkin asks, "Why do neighborhoods decline, improve, or remain stable over time?"[83] The question, answered by many urbanist and community economists that have shaped federal policy, is at the heart of urban community development. Pitkin offers three schools of thought that have informed neighborhood change theory: ecological, subcultural, and political economic. Each of the three have had varying levels of impact on urban development approaches and are culminative and connected in many ways.

The ecological approach substantially laid the foundation for early urban development policy; the subcultural approach evolved in response to the limits of the ecological theory and largely called for more decentralized decision making; and the political economy approach is currently most influential to shaping current development practices.

The Three Schools of Thought on Neighborhood Change:

Ecological

The ecological approach frames neighborhood change as a natural process based on economic choice and stems largely from the University of Chicago School of Sociology. In this approach, social and economic factors guide how, when, and which neighborhoods decline, improve, or remain consistent with very little direct human agency. Regarding the ecological school of thought Pitkin states, "Neighborhood residents [. . .] are largely at the mercy of larger social and economic forces and can do little to alter the trajectory of their neighborhoods."[84] This

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[83] Pitkin, B. page 2
[84] Pitkin, B. page 3

so-called natural and inevitable process has depended on ecologists to construct models for neighborhood change to inform policy considerations.

In his 1925 text, *The Growth of the City*, author Ernest Brugess pioneered the ecological school of thought by comparing neighborhood change to plant ecology and creating an invasion/succession model. According to Burgess, competition for space is the key driver in neighborhood change. He argues that the city is comprised of six rings. The central business district is in the center and is surrounded by the industrial sector, slum housing, working class housing, higher-status areas, and the commuter zone.[85] Essentially, Burgess suggests that as cities grow, pressure is placed on each of the rings to expand outward, often pushing low-income residents out in search of opportunity and affordable housing. Burgess believes that this expansion process is the reason for *natural* and *inevitable* neighborhood deterioration.

Real estate economist Homer Hoyt later built upon Bugress' approach by adding economic theory that counters the invasion/succession model. Hoyt suggests that new housing stock on the periphery of the circles, mixed with rising cost of property maintenance, is the reason for neighborhood decline and not as a result of an internal push.[86] This new perspective is called "the filtering mode" and it gave way to new theories of linear stages of growth. The Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), established by the Federal government, created a five-stage neighborhood life-cycle theory that was eventually adapted by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The stages were: 1. New resident construction, 2. Normal use and maintenance, 3. Age, obsolescence, and structural neglect, 4. Falling investment and rent values,

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[85] Burgess, E. 1925. *The Growth of the City*. In The City, edited by R. Park, E Burgess, and R. McKenzie. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
[86] Hoyt, Homer. 1933. *One Hundred Years of Land Values in Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

neglect of maintenance, and district-wide deterioration, and 5. Slum area with depreciated values, substandard housing, and social problems.[87]

Metzger argues that these theories on neighborhood change were used by Federal agencies to justify discriminatory policies and mortgage redlining. Metzger states, "Planners constrained by fiscal and political conditions have used this theory to encourage the 'deliberate dispersal' of the urban poor, followed by the eventual reuse of abandoned areas."[88]

The Real Estate Research Corporation (RERC), a powerful voice in the urban renewal program, later updated the neighborhood life-cycle theory with more explicit language and intention. The updated five stages were: (1) Heathy- Homogeneous housing and moderate to upper income, insurance and conventional financing available; (2) Incipient Decline- Aging housing, decline in income and education level, influx of middle-income minorities, fear of racial transition; (3) Clearly Declining- Higher density, visible deterioration, decrease in white in-movers, more minority children in schools, mostly rental housing, problems in securing insurance and financing; (4) Accelerating Decline- Increasing vacancies, predominantly low-income and minority tenants or elderly ethnics, high unemployment, fear of crime, no insurance or institutional financing available, declining public services, absentee-owned properties; and (5) Abandoned- Severe dilapidation, poverty and squatters, high crime and arson, negative cash flow from buildings.[89]

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[87] Homer Hoyt, "*Waverly: A Study in Neighborhood Conservation.* Arthur Goodwillie, " American Journal of Sociology 47, no. 5 (Mar., 1942): 787-788.
[88] Metzger, J. page 7
[89] Real Estate Research Corporation. 1975. *The Dynamics of Neighborhood Change.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research.

Economist Anthony Downs championed this theory on neighborhood change and developed the notion of "triage planning" as a means of allowing neighborhoods to be intentionally under resourced and left to abandonment. Regarding this approach Metzger states,

> Local planners could use the neighborhood life-cycle theory with triage planning to assemble land for redevelopment, an increasingly difficult task because of high land costs (an ongoing problem), federal funding cuts and municipal fiscal crises, and organized opposition to slum clearance. Instead of defining areas as already blighted and then acquiring land through eminent domain, redevelopment planners could use the life-cycle theory with triage to depress land values and accelerate the abandonment of privately owned property in neighborhoods marked for decline. Tax-delinquent property could be acquired by local government through tax foreclosure and then transferred to new owners for reuse.[90]

By eliminating any financial compensation to neighborhood property owners, triage planning allowed planners to avoid the cost and social controversy of relocating households and businesses. Elected officials were then able to redirect resources to moderate income neighborhoods to gain political support. This, as Metzger refers to it, "planned abandonment" made public discourse regarding redlining difficult to prove and define.

The final models of the ecological school of thought I would like to explore are *bid rent* and *border*. Both models group resident choice with the previously mentioned rings of a city, predicting that residents will move from smaller inner-city units to larger ones in suburban areas. According to the *bid rent* theory, residents in urban settings often choose to relocate to areas further from the city core due to higher cost of living in the city. Pitkin states, "Similar to other ecological models, the bid rent model helps explain the outward expansion of cities, positing a linear relationship between land costs and proximity to the center. As urban residents seek cheaper housing farther from the center, neighborhoods change naturally and evolve."[91] The

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[90] Metzger, J. page 20
[91] Pitkin, B. page 5

border model associates city expansion to the outer rings with social reasons beyond housing costs, such as race and ethnic groupings. Racial transition in neighborhoods greatly impacts residents' sense of place, as discussed previously, and additionally affect the residents' sense of place in surrounding neighborhoods, especially along the "borders" of racially transitioned neighborhoods.

Subculturalists

The subculture school of thought grew solely out of scholars' reaction to the ecological theories on neighborhood and community change. There are three fundamental points of criticism that subculturalists have regarding the ecological model, all of which draw upon concepts discussed in the "place" section of this text, although language among scholars may be different. The first is a rejection of the idea of economic determinism as the cause for neighborhood change. In his essay, *Sentiment and Symbolism as Ecological Variables*, Walter Firey protests that there are an assortment of variables not relating to economics that are important in determining how and why residents live in certain areas of a city, such as resident sentiment and symbolism.[92] Firey writes,

> It is reasonable to suggest, then, that the slum is much more than "an area of minimum choice. Beneath the surface phenomenon of declining population there may be differential rates of decline which require positive formulation in a systematic ecological theory. Such processes are apparently refractory to analysis in terms of competition for least impeditive location. A different order of concepts, corresponding to the valuative, meaningful aspect of spatial adaptation, must supplement the prevailing economic concepts of ecology.[93]

Essentially, Firey is referring to the notions of place meaning and place attachment theory examined earlier in this study. Subculturalist scholars Roger Ahlbrandt and James Cunningham

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[92] Firey, W. 1945. "Sentiment and Symbolism as Ecological Variables." *American Sociological Review* 80:140-48.
[93] Firey, W. page 148

echo this criticism of the ecological model. In their 1979 work, *A New Public Policy for Neighborhood Preservation*, Ahlbrandt and Cummingham state, "The ecological approach does not provide insights into the social fabric and social support networks of neighborhoods, and it does not relate differences in the internal dynamics of neighborhoods to their ability to retard or to assist the changes being observed."[94] As a result, they not only suggest that the ecological school of thought fails to acknowledge place meaning, but also notions of social and collective identity.

The second departure from the ecological school of thought that subculturalists suggest is that neighborhood change is not exclusively focused on exogenous forces. While ecologists believe that rational, economic decisions relating to real estate drive change, subculturalists provide endogenous justifications. The ecological model proposes that neighborhood change is natural and inevitable. Subculturalists contend that with internal social capital, neighborhoods can remain the same, and/or improve without demographic change. Ahlbrandt and Cunningham state, "neighborhoods are composed of people, and in the last analysis, it is the willingness of residents to remain in their neighborhood and to work to improve it that will determine the stability of the area."[95]

Finally, subcultural scholars grounded their theory in ethnographic research, and challenged ecological assumptions that neighborhoods were homogeneous. Scholars such as Gerald Suttles and Herbert Gans, wrote extensively against the ecological school of thought, advocating for attention to be paid to the many subcultures that comprise a neighborhood and the

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[94] Ahlbrandt, R. and Cunningham, J. 1979. *A New Public Policy for Neighborhood Preservation*. New York: Praeger.
[95] Ahlbrandt, R. and Cunningham, J. page 29

role of ethnic identity.[96] While ecologists had a propensity to generate complex models to define community change as an inevitability, subculturalists provided people-centered understandings of community and rallied that neighborhood decline did not have to be inevitable.[97] The most notable contributions to policy and practices from this school of thought are asset-mapping and asset-building planning strategies, along with comprehensive community initiatives. All of these leverage social networks, include facets of collective identity, and identify preexisting neighborhood strengths to stable neighborhoods and guide development.[98]

Political Economy

Political economy is arguably the most influential school of thought regarding neighborhood change over the last thirty years. Many scholars across sociology, geography, and political science relied on a Marxist framework to critique the ecological views which influenced early development practices. Urban theorist John Friedmann drew greatly on Neo-Marxists such as David Harvey and Manual Castells in his 1986 essay, *The World City Hypothesis*. Friedmann states "the city was no longer to be interpreted as a social ecology, subject to natural forces inherent in the dynamics of population and space; it came to be viewed instead as a product of specifically social forces set in motion by capitalist relations of production."[99]

Political economists validate the ecological interest in economic forces as a driver for neighborhood change but tend to place more emphasis on the social relations of production and growth. While urban development is a direct result of market equilibrium in the ecological school of thought, political economists argue it results from social, economic, and political

[96] Gans, H. 1962. *The Urban Villagers: Group and Class Life of Italian Americans*. New York: The Free Press.
[97] Suttles, G. 1972. *The Social Construction of Communities*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
[98] Pitkin, B. page 8
[99] Friedmann, John. 1986. "The World City Hypothesis." *Development and Change* 17 (1): 69- 84.

conflict.[100] This mode of thought led to an influential theory regarding neighborhood change

called urban *growth machines.*

The urban growth machines thesis suggests that coalitions of urban elites work to

withhold economic power by influencing real estate and population growth. This theory

challenges the ecological view that neighborhood change is *natural* and echoes the subculturalist

view of human agency as a driver of community change. However, in growth machine theory,

the distinction is that planning, real estate, and development professionals are the exploitative

drivers of neighborhood change and urban development.[101] Pitkin expounds on this dialectic

relationship among special interest groups, communities, and real estate planning by drawing on

the scholarship of John Logan and Harvey Molotch, stating:

> A fundamental component of the growth machine thesis in relation to neighborhood change is the distinction between exchange and use values. Logan and Molotch theorize place as a commodity, one that is socially constructed through competition between those who value the neighborhood for the "rent" they can gain from it (i.e. exchange value) and those who value it for non-economic reasons (i.e. use value) such as their attachment to it. For example, a real estate firm exhibits an exchange value toward a neighborhood in which it has holdings, while residents of that neighborhood are more concerned with its use value as a place to live, not simply to make money. Growth machines seek to maximize the exchange value of urban space, often leading to land speculation and the encouragement of population growth to drive up property values and, accordingly, their return on rent. Neighborhood residents often try to resist this by asserting their use values, based on their social networks, sense of trust, and common identity.[102]

The growth machine thesis calls attention to the exploitative nature of "behind the

scenes" development deals which have been key drivers for displacement of vulnerable

populations in neighborhoods and gentrification. This can explain many of the urban

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[100] Pitkin, B. page 9

[101] Rodgers, S. (2009). *Urban Growth Machine*. In R. Kitchin & N. Thrift (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of human geography* (pp. 40–45). Amsterdam: Elsevier.

[102] Pitkin, B. pages 9-10

development deals that have transpired in Atlanta over the last few decades. Initiatives such as the newly constructed Mercedes-Benz stadium in Vine City/English Avenue, two low income, predominately Black neighborhoods; and the development of Tyler Perry's film studio at the former army base, Fort McPherson, have both spawned from special interest negotiations among political officers and development elites without community protection policies. Both examples have had tremendously negative impacts on the surrounding communities and residents.

As initially stated, each of the three schools of thought regarding neighborhood change have had varying degrees of impact on urban development and planning processes. While the subculturalist view comes the closest to addressing cultural identity in the development process, each of the schools of thought still assume a degree of neighborhood homogeneity in their frameworks. None of the three truly take into account the nuanced complexities of collective identity and place meaning, as described previously.

My critique of these schools of thought is straightforward: neighborhood decline is not natural and inevitable (ecology), it is naive to suggest residents hold exclusive agency regarding neighborhood change (subcultural), and the transformations of communities cannot be simplified to mere transactions of the urban elite (political economy). While certainly all the schools of thought have merit, there is a need for a non-monolithic understanding of community change that fully integrates cultural identity. Finally, one more element of community change requires mentioning in any examination of urban planning and development practices: gentrification.

Gentrification:

Over the last couple of decades, Atlanta development has almost been synonymous with the often-controversial term *gentrification*. A simple Google search of *Atlanta* and *Gentrification*

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yields headlines such as, "How gentrification is reshaping housing and displacing residents", "Runaway Gentrification in the Path of Atlanta's Beltline", and "Developer: 'gentrification' necessary for Atlanta's future growth". The subject is certainly not new to Atlanta residents, nor is it for numerous residents across the country. However, what exactly is it, and how does it impact communities?

Research on gentrification and urban development produces an overwhelming amount of literature across multiple fields. it. Drawing upon prominent scholars on the subject, I propose to provide a baseline understanding of the term, its origins, and provide insights into its role in cultural identity.

In 1964, Ruth Glass, Director of Social Research at University College London, coined the term gentrification when linking housing and class struggles in London with accelerated rehabilitation of Victorian houses, tenurial transformation from renting to owning, property prices increases, and the displacement of the working-class occupants by middle-class incomers.[103] For Glass, the term was used to explicitly capture the class inequities and injustices created by a Capitalist urban land market and policies. Over the last fifty-plus years, there have been deliberate efforts to avoid gentrification language in the planning and development sector, or even at times, attempts to gentrify the word itself by placing positive connotations on it. In his 2002 text, *New Globalism*, *New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy,* Neil Smith advocates for retaining Glass' original intent of the word as a means of critiquing urban development practices. Smith states, "Precisely because the language of gentrification tells the

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[103] Slater, T. 2011. Gentrification of the city. In. *The new companion to the city, ed. G. Bridge and S. Watson,*, : 571–85. Oxford: Blackwell

truth about the class shift involved in the 'regeneration' of the city, it has become a dirty word to developers, politicians and financiers."[104]

Gentrification can commonly be witnessed in urban environments where previous disinvestment creates opportunities for profitable redevelopment. Often the needs and desires of business and policy professionals are achieved at the expense of urban residents who grapple with work instability, unemployment, stigmatizations, and limited resources.[105] Other scholars have expanded the definition of gentrification to include economic and social ramifications. In the essay, *Alternatives to orthodoxy: invitation to a debate,* Neil Smith and Peter Williams state:

> If we look back at the attempted definitions of gentrification, it should be clear that we are concerned with a process much broader than merely residential rehabilitation … [A]s the process has continued, it has become increasingly apparent that residential rehabilitation is only one facet … of a more profound economic, social, and spatial restructuring. In reality, residential gentrification is integrally linked to the redevelopment of urban waterfronts for recreational and other functions, the decline of remaining inner-city manufacturing facilities, the rise of hotel and convention complexes and central-city office developments, as well as the emergence of modern "trendy" retail and restaurant districts … Gentrification is a visible spatial component of this social transformation. A highly dynamic process, it is not amenable to overly restrictive definitions.[106]

Sociologist Saskia Sassen has built her career on examining gentrification internationally. In the book, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, Sassen echoes Smith and Williams by stating,

> Gentrification was initially understood as the rehabilitation of decaying and low-income housing by middle-class outsiders in central cities. In the late 1970s a broader conceptualization of the process began to emerge, and by the early 1980s new scholarship had developed a far broader meaning of gentrification, linking it with processes of spatial, economic and social restructuring.[107]

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[104] Smith, N. (2002) New globalism, new urbanism: gentrification as global urban strategy. Antipode 34 (3): 427–50.
[105] Slatter, T. page 572
[106] Smith, N., and Williams, P. (1986) Alternatives to orthodoxy: invitation to a debate. In Gentrification of the City, ed. N. Smith and P. Williams. London: Allen & Unwin, 1–10.
[107] Sassen, S. (1991) The Global City: New York, London and Tokyo. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Even with the expansion of gentrification to explicitly include social and economic implications, discourse regarding the subject is still positioned around two separate modes of thought. Scholars and practitioners inadvertently separate gentrification under the rubrics of production and consumption of property that is gentrified, versus the demographic structure and individual impacts. In the essay "Gentrification: Culture and Capital in the Urban Core" Sharon Zukin addresses this separation by framing gentrification as a supply and demand concept. Connecting the two modes of thought on gentrification, Zukin states, "In both cases, "supply-side" interpretations stress the economic and social factors that produce an attractive housing supply in the central city for middle-class individuals, and "demand-side" interpretations affirm a consumer preference, for demographic or cultural reasons, for the buildings and areas that become gentrified."[108]

Beyond how gentrification may be framed and defined, its roots can be traced back to early planning theories regarding neighborhood change, particularly triage planning efforts. Additionally, elements of current gentrification as seen in Atlanta reflect the political economy school of thought as well. Zukin affirms these connections by stating that:

> …local and national governments in both the United States and Western Europe shifted from supporting the demolition required by urban renewal to giving incentive grants for housing improvement. This facilitated the small-scale building rehabilitation on which gentrification depends. And though gentrification remains predominantly a privately financed action, a strong expression of local government support has generally been a precondition for the participation of lending institutions.[109]

Cultural identity in gentrification affects the gentrified (both physical structures and communities) and the gentrifiers (planners, developers, and new residents). However, it is important to state that displacement of residents is one of the most devastating repercussions of

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[108] Zukin, S. (1987) 'Gentrification: culture and capital in the urban core', Am. Rev. Sociology 13: 129-47
[109] Zukin, S. page 132

gentrification. Maintaining cultural identity in communities is directly connected to policies and practices that maintain affordability in neighborhoods in the midst of or vulnerable to potential gentrification.

As I have reviewed the various theories that frame neighborhood and community change, as well as covered gentrification as a mechanism of community change, I would now like to examine the tangible indicators of neighborhood change employed by planning and development practitioners.

I find that while community and neighborhood change are, in fact, inevitable, decline and gentrification do not have to be. There may be cyclical patterns in the housing market, but to assume that these patterns are predictable and can be applied generically to the planning and development of any/all neighborhoods is a fundamental flaw of development practitioners. This mode of thought is what behavioral economist Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky refer to as heuristic. In the 1971 essay, *Judgment Under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Bias*, the authors define heuristic as something that "reduces the complex tasks of assessing probabilities and predicting values to simpler judgmental operations."[110] Kahnerman and Tversky go on to add, "These heuristics are highly economical and usually effective, but they lead to systematic and predictable errors."[111] To put simply, these are mental shortcuts that prevent individuals from thinking closely about situations.

The trajectory of any neighborhood or community is the result of several factors specific to that particular community. Overarching generalizations, assumptions, and policies fail to recognize these nuanced complexities and dialectic processes. While there are certainly

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[110] Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1974). Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases. *Science*, 185, 1124–1130.
[111] Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. page 1131

measurable indicators one can employ to quantify neighborhood change, such as shifts in density, the percentage of renters vs. homeowners, and the transition of formal and informal spaces, neighborhood change trends are infinitely variable. Even looking at gentrification as a part of an inevitable neighborhood cycle makes the challenge of effectively dealing with neighborhood-level issues more difficult. Planners, developers, and also advocates should avoid simplistic assumptions regarding neighborhood cycles and analyze data that takes into account cultural identity neighborhood to neighborhood.

As a review, identity construction is the result of continuous exchanges between individuals and the environment, which create meaning; and place is the product of identity construction, meaning, and space. While the process of developing individual, collective and place identity that comprise a neighborhood, can be thought of as circular, neighborhood change is far too dynamic to accurately describe as a predictable cycle. Therefore, planning and executing urban development projects that reflect cultural identity (identity and place), poses challenges as development processes rely on concrete patterns.

There are some models that provide potential frameworks for examining identity, place, and community change in urban development. In the next section, I review national and international models that provide insight into cultural identity and urban development planning. Each are merely a step towards providing a toolkit for practical integration of cultural identity in Atlanta development.

Chapter Four: Current Models

At the start of this paper, I noted that localized frameworks that employ culture as a principle and tool of urban (re)development have often been misunderstood, undervalued, under-resourced and/or excluded entirely. While I stand by that assertion, particularly regarding local practices in Atlanta, it is important to recognize the best practice frameworks and strategies created by planning professionals nationally and internationally. In this chapter, I review two approaches that work to guide the integration of culture into a community development framework: The STAR Community Rating System and the public planning frameworks provided in John Hawkes' *The Four Pillars of Sustainability*. Both provide significant advice, strategies, and objectives that address cultural identity through the lens of development; it is my hope that I can use some of these as elements in the eventual formation of a toolkit.

The STAR Rating System helps local and regional governments quantify sustainability retrospectively, and Hawkes provides prescriptive recommendations for planning and projects. While both have strengths, neither have been fully championed locally in Atlanta. The following will provide an overview of their approaches, identify challenges in local implementation, and describe potential next steps for implementation.

The STAR Community Rating System

The STAR Community Rating System (STAR) is a national certification program for evaluating local sustainability performance measures; it is designed to provide for cities and regions what the LEED and Earth craft systems provide for individual buildings. Released in 2002, STAR allows local leaders, particularly those in city government, to assess sustainability projects, set targets, and measure progress. According to the STAR website, "The intent of the rating system is to help communities identify, validate, and support implementation of best

practices to improve sustainable community conditions […] Over time, the program will build a research model that includes spatial, temporal, and level of effort details to expand the evidence base about the degree to which various actions advance sustainability conditions community-wide. This rigor and differentiation will allow STAR to expand national learning and drive ongoing improvements to sustainable community governance."[112]

STAR is organized with seven goals for sustainable communities; each goal includes objectives and evaluation metrics. The goal areas include: built environment, climate & energy, economy & jobs, education, arts &community, equity & empowerment, health & safety, and natural systems. Each of the goals have six to seven identified objectives that are measured in three ways: community-level outcomes that are measurable; condition-level indicators; and completing local actions that drive community-level outcomes.

Applicants are able to accumulate points in the rating system through reaching objectives. Communities that reach a particular point level have the potential to achieve 3-STAR, 4-STAR, or 5-STAR certification. Of the seven goal areas that START outlines, I would like to focus on the two that most directly align with the subject matter of this paper: Built Environment and Education, Arts, and Community.

STAR frames the goal for the built environment as to "Achieve livability, choice, and access for all where people live, work, and play." The system evaluates this goal area by examining community development, design characteristics, and access for residents regardless of income. Each of the objectives considers indicators such as pedestrian-scaled mix-used

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[112] http://www.starcommunities.org/about/framework/

development near transit, housing affordability, transportation choice, green infrastructure, efficient land use, public spaces, and ambient noise and light (see Figure 3).

Objective Number	Objective Title and Purpose	Available Points
BE-1	**Ambient Noise & Light:** *Minimize and manage ambient noise and light levels to protect public health and the integrity of ecological systems*	10
BE-2	**Community Water Systems:** *Provide a clean and secure water supply for all local users through the management of potable water, wastewater, storm water, and other piped infrastructure*	15
BE-3	**Compact & Complete Communities:** *Concentrate development in compact, human-scaled, walkable centers and neighborhoods that connect to public transit, offer diverse uses and services, and provide housing options for families of all income levels*	20
BE-4	**Housing Affordability:** *Construct, preserve, and maintain an adequate and diverse supply of location-efficient and affordable housing options for all residents*	15
BE-5	**Infill & Redevelopment:** *Focus growth and redevelopment in infill areas to reduce sprawl and ensure existing infrastructure that supports the community is in satisfactory working condition*	10
BE-6	**Public Parkland:** *Create a system of well-used and enjoyable public parkland that feature equitable, convenient access for residents throughout the community*	15
BE-7	**Transportation Choices:** *Promote diverse transportation modes, including walking, biking, and public transit, that are safe, low-cost, and reduce vehicle miles traveled*	15
Total Points Available:		**100**

Figure 3.

The rating system provides measurable objectives for the built environment in order to achieve full or partial point credits. Some examples of the objective's community-level outcomes include:

- Demonstrating that daytime ambient noise levels do not exceed 60 dba in target residential areas;

- Demonstrating at least 90% of existing public infrastructure is in good or better condition; and
- Showing that the average total driving cost is 15% or less of the regional typical household income.

The local actions provided by STAR convey policy and code recommendations for community leaders to implement for point credits. Some of the local actions include:

- Construct or retrofit transportation infrastructure to meet standards in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Target local infrastructure improvements to underserved and blighted areas to revitalize redevelopment and catalyze private investment
- Establish water quality monitoring and public reporting systems

The Education, Arts & Community goal area encompasses to some degree what has been referred to as cultural identity in this paper. The purpose of the goal is to "Empower vibrant, educated, connected, and diverse communities." It aims to do so by requiring applicants to assess education equity, cultural diversity, historic preservation, and intergenerational interaction (See Figure 4). Community-level outcomes for this goal area include:

- Demonstrating at least 85% of third grade public school students meet or exceed reading proficiency standards;

- Demonstrating that historic preservation efforts have had a positive, measurable impact on the local economy; and

- Demonstrating that at least 30% of adult residents in the county or city attend a live performing arts event annually

While the built environment goal area provides policy and code recommendations, this section provides an assortment of programs and services that can be provided for point credits. A few of these include:

- Tracking participation and attendance at major community arts and cultural events, performances, festivals, and programs;
- Providing entrepreneurial and workforce development training programs that serve artists, writers, designers, and other creative industries professionals; and

- Protecting and maintaining local public artworks and cultural resources for future generations.

Objective Number	Objective Title and Purpose	Available Points
EAC-1	**Arts & Culture:** *Provide a broad range of arts and cultural resources and activities that encourage community member participation, creative self-expression, and community revitalization*	15
EAC-2	**Community Cohesion:** *Promote socially cohesive neighborhoods where residents are connected, have a sense of place, and feel committed to their community*	20
EAC-3	**Educational Opportunity & Attainment:** *Achieve equitable attainment of a quality education for individuals from birth to adulthood*	20
EAC-4	**Historic Preservation:** *Preserve and reuse historic structures and sites to retain local, regional, and national history and heritage, and reinforce community character*	15
EAC-5	**Social & Cultural Diversity:** *Celebrate, respect, and represent the diverse social and cultural backgrounds of the community and its members*	15
EAC-6	**Aging in the Community:** *Encourage active aging by optimizing opportunities for health, participation, and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age*	15
Total Points Available:		**100**

Figure 4.

While the STAR rating system can be an effective tool for assisting local leaders in examining their communities and celebrating sustainability solutions, there are a few fundamental weaknesses that restrict its ability to be used as a tool for integrating cultural identity in urban development. First, the STAR evaluation process takes a retroactive approach to planning and implementation practices. Local leaders seeking to obtain STAR certification are primarily measuring the impacts of development projects and programs after the planning and design stages. While this approach can certainly help guide local leaders towards a desired goal, it does not fully provide a framework for how to start the process, which may take years of partnership cultivation, community trust building, and resource generation. The retroactive measurement approach fails to connect the objectives to long-term impacts on residents, as communities change.

Another problematic element of the STAR Rating System is that it frames communities and goal areas as monolithic. It does not take into account the complexities of communities, the individual and collective identities of residents, and the significance of place meaning and attachment. Also, as the themes of dialectic relationships and layering (pentimento) have been key in this text, STAR's goals and objectives fail to acknowledge the interconnected nature of cultural identity and the built environment. By categorizing the various indicators separately, as is the case with the built environment and education, arts & community sections, STAR reinforces planning behavior that cherry picks outcomes without comprehensive integration across all areas.

Finally, as cities, communities, and neighborhoods are constructed around unique ecological systems defined by their own cultural and historical context, it is challenging and potentially damaging to curate a list of uniformed indicators and assessment measures and assign

points value to each, when there may be hundreds, or possibly thousands, of other indicators to

assess based on the specific community. This mode of thought perpetuates generic strategies and

processes that elevate quantitative victories that speak to sustainability yet fall short of truly

providing tailored solutions for communities and differences in culture.

The Four Pillars of Sustainability

In 2001, the Australian cultural analyst Jon Hawkes, wrote the book *The Fourth Pillar of*

Sustainability: Culture's Essential Role in Public Planning. The book incorporates four

interlinked dimensions in a sustainable development framework: economic health, social equity,

environmental responsibility, and cultural vitality. Hawkes directly addresses the need for a

cultural perspective in planning and policy on a local level and offers practical measures for the

integration of cultural identity. Hawkes' four-pillar model recognizes community vitality and

quality of life as intrinsically connected to the vitality and quality of its cultural engagement,

expression, and celebration. Since its release the model has been implemented into policy and

planning initiatives throughout Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Europe.

Hawkes' model effectively addresses many of the concepts examined throughout this

paper such as cultural identity, the notion of place, and identity construction. However, a more

substantial correlation is the validation that planning and policy directly affect and reflect the

value systems of individuals. As such, Hawkes states,

> I take it as self-evident that humans feel it necessary to make sense of their lives and to
> conduct themselves on the basis of that sense. This process and its results manifest
> themselves as a value system – a culture. The social dimensions of this activity are what
> constitutes a society's culture. One of the biggest issues any society has to face is the role
> of the state in the shaping of the values that inform both government, and more
> fundamentally, the values of the entire society. Public planning, at all tiers of
> government, is the crucible in which the relationship between state and community is
> refined and from which the most coherent expression of a society's aspirations may

emerge– if, that is, the planning processes are themselves imbued with the values of the society those processes serve.[113]

Another important aspect of the four-pillar model that Hawkes speaks to is the disconnect between theory and practice. He provides clear language that expands the definition of culture beyond the arts, allowing for more comprehensive planning and policy practices. As a result, he is able to propose clear and easily translatable strategies for integrating culture into policy. While acknowledging traditional cultural policy recommendations and successes, Hawkes suggests alternative practical mechanisms through which culture can be deliberately impact planning and development on the city-level. His proposed integration strategy calls for six functions to take place:

1. *Restructuring*- Hawkes suggest that it is important for institutions and departments to have structures in place before any implementation strategies are implemented to ensure successful execution in the long-run. Hawkes states,

   > For government to remain in touch with, and responsive to, the cultures of the communities it serves, it needs to identify the prime 'culture-making' social entities and to develop a relationship with these that is consciously 'cultural'. That is, to design, implement and evaluate programs and services that impact on these areas from a cultural perspective – a perspective that focuses on the fact that these are the sites in which, every day, our way of life is being celebrated, explored, passed on, threatened, tested, revisited, examined, developed, expanded, diminished, reinterpreted, reinvented, transformed and adapted – the core centers of vitality.[114]

   He goes on to provide six areas of focus that should be supported by these organizational structures: education and training, communication, constructed environments and public facilities, arts, history and heritage, recreation and leisure, and sports. Hawkes suggest

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[113] Hawkes, J. page 5
[114] Hawkes, J. page 28

that a city's Cultural Affairs Division would be ideally suited to oversee many of these areas.

2. *A Cultural Framework-* Hawkes advocates that culture should be applied to all policy decisions in the same way social, environment, and economic filters are stating, "Our public planning procedures need a standard method of assessing the cultural impact of all proposals.[115]" Under this framework, every city activity, program, development plan, and policy would be evaluated regarding its cultural impact. Additional measurement procedures would have to be developed alongside the cultural framework.

3. *Cultural Indicators-* Indicators must be developed in order to successfully implement the cultural framework. Hawkes states that these indicators must be developed in an inclusionary process with community members and should be focused on three aspects of culture:

   a. Content

      i. articulations of communities' identity, aspirations and/or history;
      ii. stimulation of community dialogue around quality of life, sustainability and respect for diversity issues;
      iii. raising the profile of universal human rights.

   b. Practice

      i. level of communities' fluency in cultural processes and mediums;
      ii. level of communities' access to cultural processes and mediums;
      iii. level and types of communities' action in cultural processes and mediums.

   c. Results

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[115] Hawkes, J. page 32

      i.   manifestations of community-initiated cultural action;

     ii.   public access to presented cultural activity;

    iii.   profile of cultural activity;

    iv.   range and type of public facilities available for cultural activities;

     v.   level and range of use of public facilities for cultural activities.[116]

4. *Specific Policy Development-* While Hawkes calls for a cultural framework that can be applied to all planning and policy matters across sectors, this does not remove the need for specific policies directly regarding cultural areas of focus. As much of Hawkes' text is quite critical of cultural polices, he does acknowledge their need stating, "there is an urgent need for education, communications, constructed environment, arts, history and heritage, recreation and leisure and sports policies that directly address the issues raised in this paper."[117]

5. *Instrumental Initiatives-* Again, while proposing an overarching cultural framework, Hawkes stressing the importance of maintaining traditional modes of operations regarding cultural practices and planning. He refers to specifically to the arts by stating, "It is certainly important to encourage the efforts of those who wish to devote their lives to artistic pursuits, particularly in ensuring that practices that are exploring new synergies are supported."[118] This means ensuring that cities still support, through resources and planning, art focused initiatives.

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[116] Hawkes, J. page 34
[117] Hawkes, J. page 35
[118] Hawkes, J. page 30

6. *Cultural Action*- Lastly, Hawkes suggests that in order for the integration of culture to be fully enacted, shifts need to occur that allow for inclusive interactions among policy makers and residents. According to Hawkes, residents must be a part of the process of shaping their community. He states, "The implementation of sustainability measures can only be successful if based on significant shifts in social behavior. These are dependent on enthusiastic community acceptance of values that are in apparent conflict with many of those in current circulation. This observation holds true for many of the issues that have gathered general in-principle acceptance in recent times: for example, inclusivity, civic engagement, community wellbeing and social cohesion."[119]

Of all my research conducted thus far, Hawkes' *The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: Culture's Essential Role in Public Planning* provides the most thorough case for the need to integrate culture into planning processes and application, as well as provides a comprehensive approach as to how to implement the integration on a practical level. While the majority of Hawkes' model is not specifically positioned around urban development, many of the proposed recommendations can be directly applied. As I begin to think further regarding the cultivation of a tool kit for development practitioners, Hawkes' ideas regarding cultural frameworks, cultural indicators, and cultural action seem to be the best platforms to build upon for considering development in Atlanta.

In the final chapter, I examine what additional actions will be required to move forward from the ideas I have documented through literature research.

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[119] Hawkes, J. page 37

Inquiries for Additional Research

While the material discussed in this paper provides a concerted foundation for examining cultural identity in urban development, there are a number of additional items that require future research. In order to effectively cultivate a tool kit to be used by urban development practitioners which integrates cultural identity into development applications, the following documents a brief list of inquiries. This is not a comprehensive list, and it is understood that many more items require analysis beyond what is stated below:

- What amendments to National Historic Tax Credits are required to expand beyond preserving architecturally significant buildings to a more inclusive vision of culture?
- As communities change or are displaced, how far back should consideration of past cultural identities go?
- How can UNESCO policies regarding intangible cultural heritage be aligned with development practices?
- If communities are not a monolith, what urban design strategies can be implemented to validate multiple subcultures?
- How does culturally-informed development look differently in relatively newly developing cities (Atlanta) compared to legacy cities (Rome)?
- Are there quantifiable indicators to measure cultural identity in urban development as is the case in other sustainable development lenses?
- Are there economic returns for developers that consider cultural identity in their projects, such as cultural tourism?
- How does culturally-integrated development acknowledge and protect informal spaces and colloquially recognized community icons?
- What are the conflicting needs of residents and how can policies address them comprehensively?
- What is the relationship of urban revitalization objectives and gentrification?

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The Final Coat of Paint

All of the research for this paper, including the literature review and examination of preexisting models, illuminates the themes of dialectic processes, interconnected variables, and layered policies that inform cultural identity in urban development. Cultural identity in many regards is a tapestry of individual and collective identities continuously exchanging meaning with a vast number of external variables. Place is created when a combination of those identities and meanings attach to the built and natural environment; all of those processes are nuanced and inform how communities inevitably change and evolve over time. As place (the built environment) and identity are already deeply connected, cultural identity can certainly be argued to be already intrinsically integrated into urban development. However, the challenge that emerges for urban development practitioners is cultivating policies and practical applications that validate the flux of cultural identity against the static nature of built infrastructure. Fortunately, models such as STAR and the *Four Pillars of Sustainability* provide some insight into better explicitly integrating the two.

As I have critiqued previously reviewed scholars and frameworks for holding monolithic views on communities, I must admit that my own work has been operating from the approach used by urban development practitioners. The field of urban development is comprised of a number of professionals such as, planners, city officials, developers, architects, and civic leaders, all of whom often work in silos. In order to build upon Hawkes' proposal for a cultural framework and cultural indicators, practical assessment of the practices and approaches from all of the individual facets must be addressed and tailored accordingly.

As was gleaned from examining the national policy frameworks that shaped urban environments based on problematic theories of neighborhood change, cultivating generalities and process solutions for complex communities of people can yield dangerous results. The same consideration applies to urban development practitioners. The following provides a brief assessment of the duties and practices of a few prominent professions that are crucial to integrating cultural identity into urban planning applications.

Urban Planners:

In many regards, urban planners lay the foundation for all developmental projects. Planners determine how land is used, protected, and developed by dictating zoning ordinances. As a result, there tends to be a concentrated focus on how spaces and structures interact with one another with very limited consideration to the identities of the individuals operating within them. Upon review of the Georgia Institute of Technology School of City and Regional Planning curriculum, planning students are offered classes in real estate development, finance, property management, construction marketing, and the legal aspects of real estate.[120] However, the highly accredited institution does not offer courses on community identity, cultural planning, or any of the aspects of place reviewed earlier in the text. This neglect of understanding city residents leads to planning professionals without a minimum understanding of how to best allocate land and space in matter that is aligned with the cultural needs of residents. Recalling Hawkes' assessment that an institutional framework must be in place before integration processes, education systems must rethink curriculums as to offer the next generation of planners a more well-rounded planning perspective.

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[120] https://planning.gatech.edu/undergraduate-certificate-and-courses

Real Estate Developers:

Real estate developers build upon the conditions and parameters set forth by planning departments. Often considered the orchestra conductor, developers purchase land and/or acquire property, then put in place a team (architects, engineers, contractors, investors, and legal advisor, etc.), overseeing all of the aspects of the development process. Developers operate within two distinct categories: residential, which includes anything housing structure from a single-family unit to a high-rese luxury condominium; and commercial, which encompasses retail, office, and industrial facilities. [121]

While there are several developers that operate on a mission-driven approach to their work, such as focusing on the construction of affordable housing or assisted living facilities, most development take a more capitalistic lens, weighing financial risk with monetary gain. As a result, there can be difficulties in cultivating frameworks that integrate cultural identity directly into this facet of the development process. However, I believe that additional research and the cultivation of educational tools regarding cultural identity may be impactful.

City Officials:

The major challenge for Atlanta, and certainly other large cities across the country, is that city officials with the capability to influence cultural identity in urban development are dispersed among three to four different departments. The planning department, community economic development, cultural affairs, and office of sustainability or resilience all have important roles to play in shaping a successful integration process. However, each operates with different resources, priorities, and decision-making powers. Returning to Hawkes' suggestion, it may be

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[121] https://www.allbusinessschools.com/real-estate/real-estate-development-professional/

important to establish a new department or employee position that can serve as a liaison across all of the departments.

Additionally, historic preservation regulations, which are also shared among departments, need to be integrate the role of cultural identity in local communities, expanding their purview beyond protecting the architectural integrity of structures and landmarks. This new mode of thought will allow historic preservation to affect broader elements of the community, as well as the collective signifiers. By expanding these policies to include individuals and communities, Atlanta can move towards preserving a broader representation of culture, not simply its property. Cultural identity should be alive in communities, not merely museums of past architecture.

Community Leaders:

It is imperative that community leaders are knowledgeable about the urban development processes and potential impact on all the various facets of resident life. Often it can be difficult to comprehend the enormity and complexity of a community's cultural identity from within. Community leaders should be supported in developing frameworks for cultural asset mapping and continuously update inventories of all the ways their collective identities are enacted in their community. Local leaders should be the drivers in developing the cultural indicators which support the creation of a city-wide cultural framework.

Philanthropy:

There are a number of considerations the philanthropic sector should examine in order to be impactful in the integration of cultural identity in urban development. It is essential that funders consider consistent funding support over a long period of time in communities and even

collaborate among additional funders in order to maximize the impact of limited philanthropic resources. Additionally, there is a lack of shared learning across funder's interest areas. There needs to be opportunities for funders to examine how all of their initiatives are in conversation with one another and identify more comprehensive strategies. Lastly, the philanthropy sector tends to drive language and issues areas on a local level, due to such limited development and cultural funding resources. If philanthropy as a sector was more vocal about the cultural identity in urban development, other practitioners would follow suite.

Cultural Sustainability Practitioners:

As a cultural sustainability practitioner, allow me to speak more reflexively regarding our role in integrating cultural identity into urban development processes. Early in my tenure as a graduate student in Goucher's Cultural Sustainability program, I defined cultural sustainability as the process of continually validating and making space for distinctions of individual and collective identities in relation to the wholeness of the human experience. As I prepare to enter the world with a mastery of the field, my redefinition feels even more true. As champions of cultural identity, it is imperative for all of us to approach our work from a more comprehensive lens. The field at large needs to consider the ramifications of cultural practices in healthcare, climate change, education, and urban planning and development. We provide a disservice to the communities we work with if we are not knowledgeable of the policies and practices that impact people beyond the traditional scope of culture. Cultural sustainability practitioners as well as community leaders will be charged with insisting new modes of thought are applied to urban development. We must acknowledge the dialectic processes and validate the layers of paint that construct our cities. By understanding identity, cultural expression, place, policy, and community change, we are the builders of pentimento.

A Closing Note from the Author

At the start of my research I was driven by the mission to bridge academic understandings of cultural identity with "on the ground" practices of urban development professionals. Complex language and theoretical frameworks regarding identity, place, and culture perpetuate the inaccessibility for professionals outside of the field of cultural sustainability to effectively employ integration. While in the contents of this paper I have intellectually examined some of these complexities, I am certainly no closer to making the information translatable and easy to digests beyond academia. I have grappled with the need to counter overly simplistic framings of multifaceted subject matters, while also re-presenting the material in the most conducive language for practitioners. it is important to validate and hold space for the nuance and intersectionality of identity, place, and culture. However, in doing so, this paper may be read as yet another scholarly examination, unserviceable to those seeking practical application. In the development of a toolkit, language will need to be a central consideration.

The toolkit itself, provides another example of personal confusion throughout the research and writing of this paper. I am no closer to understanding exactly a toolkit should be packaged, or if a toolkit in the traditional sense, with specific measurements and strategies is the most appropriate course of action to develop. Possibly a training curriculum or series of facilitated workshops could be more effective. However, what remains clear is the need for some new mode of thought and practice to be conceptualized to better integrate culture into urban development practices that is responsive and well informed.

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