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# People and Pride: A Qualitative Study of Place Attachment and Professional Placemakers

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People and Pride:

A Qualitative Study of Place Attachment and Professional Placemakers

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Place is a setting for everyday life. Through processes of meaning making that are rooted in experience and interaction, places become meaningful and structure much of everyday life. Place is simultaneously a physical construction that gives it material form. Place is an object that is envisioned, designed, organized, redesigned, and reorganized. Often, the (re)creation of places is entrusted to professional placemakers, a population with decision making power over processes of physical construction. This research broadly identifies professional placemakers as a population whose professional work can affect change onto the built environment. The literature of place attachment provides strong testimony to the meaningful relationships that people have to built environments and physical forms. For example, the meanings and emotions that residents and stakeholders attach to their homes, neighborhoods, cities, and communities. Professional placemakers hold a degree of power over the built environment and can drastically transform the attachments that people have to place. This research explores the interaction of the social and physical construction of place by considering how placemakers socially construct places in their professional work of physically constructing sites. I ask: how do professional placemakers form emotional bonds to the places they work to (re)create? And, what do those places mean to them? Primary data analysis of eight in-depth interviews with professional placemakers reveal that placemakers socially construct places they work to (re)create in different ways. The data revealed two interacting themes – ‘for the people’ and pride. Further analysis concluded that some professional placemakers see place as a social territory that is unique with history, people, and problems; while others see place as a piece of the built environment that is the successful

product of their professional work. While this research underscores the saliency of place attachment across populations by addressing a gap in the literature, these findings have implications for the professional field of placemaking in general. If placemakers are varied in the ways they socially construct the places they are charged to (re)create, what are the consequences for the places on which they work and the people who will live, work, or play in those places?

## CHAPTER 1:

### INTRODUCTION

I love going to the site. I love going out when construction is underway because you see your work that was like a year in the making, finally being built. Finally being installed. And I have a saying, which is: 'It's a good day for construction!' And I love it when it's a good day for construction!

*Sarah, Private Sector, Interior Designer*

Sarah is an interior designer for a private firm who has worked countless hours designing the complete interiors of two multistory residential buildings in a 12-city block redevelopment district. In this quote, Sarah has captured two elements that make up the core of this research - the physical and social construction of built environments. In reading the quote, we are left with the question of, why does Sarah love it when it is a good day for construction? What does the construction process mean for her that she can get so excited about it? This research will uncover if and how professional placemakers, such as Sarah, form emotional bonds to the places they work to (re)create. Moreover, it will uncover what these places mean to them.

My research on place attachment takes place within the larger framework of social constructionism. In this framework, the meanings of places are socially constructed by the layers of social interaction that take place within them by various people at various times (Tuan 1975, Altman and Low 1992, Milligan 1998, Stedman 2000, Gieryn 2000). While the study of place and place attachment is far from new, this study is innovative because it focuses on the relationships between places and those people who, by profession, affect changes onto the built environments in which other people live their daily lives. Professional placemakers, by trade,



create and recreate places. Yet, there is little research exploring the ways in which they form emotional bonds to the places they work to (re)create.

The existing literature, explored in the following section, shows that place attachment is a social phenomenon, involves complex processes of meaning and emotion, and is closely tied to personal and collective identities (Tuan 1974, Relph 1976, Proshansky et al. 1983, Urry 1995, Stedman 2003, Jones and Evans 2012). Much research has been conducted on the relationship between places and groups such as recreationists (Bricker and Kerstetter 2000, Kyle et al. 2003), pro-environmentalists (Raymond et. al. 2011), residents (Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001, Gustafson 2001, Manzo 2005, Devine-Wright 2012) or community stakeholders (Jones and Evans 2012, Depriest-Hricko and Prytherch 2013). This research adds to the space and place literature by considering professional placemakers as actors who have the knowledge and authority to change the nature of existing places, or create new ones.

### *The Physical and Social Constructions of Place*

My research is interested in the intersection of the social and physical construction of built environments and urban forms. Within the social constructionism framework, Milligan (1998) uses Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor to explain how the built environment becomes a stage on which social interaction takes place. These stages, Milligan writes, are both physically and socially constructed. Research that explores the relationships between people and places, more generally, has solidified the idea that social processes and the built environment are not mutually exclusive (Altman and Low 1992, Milligan 1998, Gieryn 2000, Dixon and Durrheim 2000, Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001, Manzo 2005, Lewicka 2011). All social interaction is contextualized by physical form and a built environment. Through social interaction, individuals

and groups ascribe to places certain values, meanings, and emotions which are then associated with the built environment (Milligan 1998). The built environment then reinforces those values, meanings, and emotions that have been ascribed to it by the individuals, groups, and communities whose daily lives are contextualized by it. The built environment takes on a degree of agency in fortifying the social realities of people as it is imbued with meaning through experience and interaction.

The physical construction of sites and the built environment is a process both separate from, and linked to, the social construction of sites. Milligan writes:

Social construction is itself partially constrained by physical construction, however in that these meanings are also shaped and constrained by the physical specifics of the site as they influence the interactions that transpire there. (Milligan 1998: 2)

Mehta (2007) similarly explores the link that exists between the built environment and the social interactions that take place there. However, Mehta's research focuses much more so on qualities of the built environment and how those influence social behaviors. His overall findings are a testament to the role that the built environment can take in inspiring some social interactions over others. He finds that certain elements of the street can influence the meaningfulness it has for people, and the range of social interactions and activities that can take place there (Mehta 2007). This speaks to the agency that the built environment can have in shaping social interactions.

In her article, Milligan (1998) mentions a group she calls "set designers" who have decision making power over the physical form of a site. These actors are responsible for the physical construction of sites in which social interactions take place. This group includes actors such as architects and property owners. My research will take a decidedly different angle on the study of place attachment by drawing attention to those "set designers", or placemakers, who design and build places such as the coffee shop studied by Milligan (1998).

After exploring the relevant literature, I analyze primary qualitative data on professional placemakers and their experience working to (re)create the built environments of either a historic neighborhood or a redevelopment district in a Florida city. My analysis works through the data to determine how professional placemakers form emotional bonds to the places in which they work, and to uncover what meanings those places have for them.

## **CHAPTER 2:**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Place and place attachment are the primary concepts driving my research. Place, I argue, must be discussed in order to reveal the underlying significance of emotion and meaning on which the concept rests. A colloquial understanding of place as an area bound by time and space is insufficient. It too easily overlooks the depths to which interactional processes are involved in place. A more interactionist conceptualization (Milligan 1998) of place explains why research that explores the relationship between people and places is important.

#### *Place*

The study of place in itself is a very broad field of inquiry. A review of the entire academic literature on place is not necessary for the limited scope of this study. However, it is important to note that the study of place has developed an understanding of the concept from basic space and time dimensions to include complex interrelated social dimensions (Gieryn 2000, Urry 2004). Gieryn's review of the literature conceptualizes place predominantly along three core features.

The first feature of place is that it is a "unique spot in the universe" (Gieryn 2000: 464). That is, it has a specific and identifiable *location* that is defined by real or imagined boundaries. These boundaries can be elastic and fluid, and include many different scales from micro to macro – i.e. they can range from a courtyard in a plaza to a region of the United States. Second, place can be examined as a *physical form* that is either natural or constructed. Place thus involves material and cultural products. That is, tangible objects, or "stuff", that are material products of

both natural and cultural processes. The physical form, or materiality, of place is consequential to the social processes that occur within it. The third and last feature of place is that it includes an investment of *social meaning and value*. Places very much depend on the people who use them and the intricate social processes and interactions. “Space is what place becomes when the unique gathering of things, meanings, and values are sucked out” (Gieryn 2000: 465). At the most abstract level, places would not exist without people who give it meaning. As placemakers experience the places they work to (re)create, they attach meanings through social processes and social interactions.

The most important feature of place for this proposed research is the dimension of place that is constructed through meaning (Tuan 1975, Milligan 1998, Stedman 2000, Gieryn 2000). Place is a social construction of meaning produced by experience (Tuan 1975, Milligan 1998, Manzo 2005), “strong visceral feelings”, and an “emotional commitment” (Tuan 1975: 152). Stedman (2000) similarly conceptualizes place as a “meaning based concept” and reinforces the idea that place is constructed through symbolic meanings attributed to the physical environment. Place takes an active role in the shaping of daily life as it embodies different individual and collective meanings (Proshansky et al. 1983, Dixon and Durrheim 2000, Gieryn 2000). This supports the focus of this research on the meanings that professional placemakers ascribe to the places they (re)create.

### *Place Attachment*

The research on place attachment often works with an interactionist approach to understanding how meanings, emotions, and values are constructed, given this intimate relationship to place and the active role of place in everyday life (Altman and Low 1992, Hidalgo and Hernandez

2001, Manzo 2005, Lewicka 2011). The relationship and dynamics between social processes and physical form is an intricate reinforcing system. Place is not a static, unchanging container in which social processes and interactions take place. Rather, place has a key role in these social processes and interactions (Gieryn 2000, Dixon and Durrheim 2000, Mehta 2007). Place attachment is a key concept in this proposed research because it provides the explanatory mechanism through which emotion and meaning are ascribed to places by the placemaker.

Certainly, as with many abstract concepts, place attachment has no one unifying, all-encompassing and accepted definition (Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001, Lewicka 2011). However, a basic definition relies on the idea that people associate emotions with the various physical forms in which their daily lives play out: “In general, place attachment is defined as an affective bond or link between people and specific places” (Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001: 274, Milligan 1998). Both Milligan (1998) and Manzo (2005) explain how the emotional bond between person and place is derived from the experiences and previous interactions in the place. The relationship between person and place is dependent on the growing complexity between lived experience and physical form (Manzo 2005). Milligan (1998), on the other hand, suggest that it is the meaningfulness of social interactions in a place that determine the strength of an emotional attachment. This echoes the importance of an “environmental past” that Proshansky et al. (1983) explain is the central component of the relationship between place and self-identity. This past, they write, is the “places, spaces and their properties which have served instrumentally in the satisfaction of the person’s biological, psychological, social, and cultural needs” (1983: 59).

Milligan (1998) conceptualizes place attachment as having an “interactional past”. The interactional past, Milligan writes, encompasses the experiences that were once lived in a built environment that were also meaningful interactions. The degree to which those interactions are

meaningful to the individual informs the strength of the attachment they have to that place (Milligan 1998: 2). These experiences, or memories, are one of two components that form an emotional link between people and places. The second component, that of an “interactional potential”, is what can be anticipated, expected, or imagined in a place. Interactional potential is informed by social relations and interactions that have occurred in, or in relation, to a place (Milligan 1998:2). Together, these two components form the mechanism by which people form emotional connections to places.

A critical response to the broad concept of place attachment is the concept of “place feelings” (Kusenbach 2013). It is argued that place attachment is a concept too narrowly focused on the positive emotional connections that people have to places. Rather, the study of place attachment should be mindful to include emotions across the entire spectrum of feeling (Manzo 2005, Kusenbach 2013), because negative emotions can be meaningful as well. This concept is useful for my research because it allows for all emotional connections to place to fall within the framework of analysis.

Overall, the literature surrounding the concepts of place and place attachment shows that there is a very close connection between person and place. Yet, rather than focusing on those whose everyday life is contextualized by place, my research is primarily concerned with those people who are professionals in the field of placemaking. My research examines the relationship between professional placemakers and the places they work to (re)create with the goal of discovering how they ascribe meanings to the physical landscape, and what those constructed meanings consist of. In the same way that interaction in everyday life in a place feeds the emotional bond between person and place (Milligan 1998, Manzo 2005), I argue that the

interactions between placemakers and place can foster an emotional connection as well. In this way, place as an interaction-based concept is of vital importance for my research.

### *Previous Research*

Previous research on place attachment is predominantly focused on residents (Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001, Gustafson 2001, Manzo 2005, Devine-Wright 2012). Other research has expanded the unit of analysis to include community stakeholders (Jones and Evans 2012, Depriest-Hricko and Prytherch 2013), which is a broad, catch-all term that may include residents and community leaders, business owners, or local government members and politicians. Finally, research on place attachment also tends to cluster on lifestyle groups such as outdoor recreationists (Bricker and Kerstetter 2000, Kyle et al. 2003), or pro-environmentalists (Raymond et. al. 2011). Overall, the research shows that place attachment is a salient concept across various populations.

While the emotional bonds and meaningfulness of place stays constant, the ways in which relationships between people and places form are different (Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001, Gustafson 2001, Manzo 2005). Place attachment is a “socio-political” (Manzo 2005) relationship that varies across social status, age, gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality (Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001, Manzo 2005). Gustafson’s research (2001) formulated a three-pole framework within which meanings attributed to places by people are often derived from the relationship between self, others, and the physical environment. Manzo (2005) supports much of the literature by finding that emotional bonding and meaning making derives from emotions and experiences of all kinds. This results in a variety of place meanings. Manzo (2005: 76) found that places can act as significant life event markers, bridges to the past, spaces for “privacy,



introspection, and reflection”, and spaces of “safety, threat, and belonging”. In short, the meanings and emotions that shape the relationship between people and places are dynamic and varied.

Previous research also explores place attachment and community engagement, or resident participation, in response to neighborhood changes (Manzo and Perkins 2006, Raymond et. al. 2011, Devine-Wright 2009, 2012). For example, Devine-Wright (2009) explores how place attachment, place identity, and place disruption intersect with ‘NIMBY’ (Not In My Back Yard) reactions from residents in response to changes in the built environment. He finds that changes that are perceived as negative by residents with a strong sense of place attachment tend to evoke the ‘NIMBY’ response. When changes are perceived as positive, the change is more easily welcomed. The implication here is that people who have the power to impose changes onto built environments must be wary of the meanings that places already have to people (Devine-Wright 2009). In his article, Devine-Wright (2009: 437) calls on policy makers and industrialists to be “mindful of the symbolic, emotional and evaluative aspects of place attachments and place identities”, and “to expect, rather than decry, emotional responses from local residents” in the wake of imposed changes to places.

Manzo and Perkins (2006) make a particularly strong case that calls for the professional field of urban and regional planning to adopt a multidisciplinary approach in order to understand people’s relationship to place. This includes an understanding of place attachment and the ways in which residents and communities connect with a place. They suggest that this could preserve, or “honor”, the values and meanings of a community undergoing redevelopment or planned changes, help planners understand why residents participate in planning efforts and why they resist or support changes, as well as promote public participation and consensus.

This research shows that the study of place attachment is valuable to professional placemakers working to (re)create places that are saturated with the values and meanings of residents. However, the questions of emotion and meaning have not yet been used to focus on those professional placemakers and how they relate to place. My research is a response to this specific gap in the literature.

### *The Mandate*

As argued, empirical research on place attachment has not yet been extended to the population of professional placemakers. Gieryn's (2000) review on the literature of place does, however, touch on what he calls *place-professionals*, which include architects, urban planners, cartographers, landscape architects, and public relations specialists. He writes:

The finished places that we see, inhabit, visit, and suffer are as much the consequences of decisions made by place-professionals as of the wishes of clients upon whom they depend for their livelihood. (2000: 470)

The analytical focus here is on the role of the place professional as a negotiator or mediator between various political, economic, or social interests, including their own. This view is important because it shows the professional placemaker as a technical expert with a résumé of services and skills that is sold to clients. At the same time, it also positions the professional placemaker as a powerful actor with decision making power over the future of places and their meanings to others. Nevertheless, in Gieryn's comments, there is no particular attention paid to the micro interactional processes that occur between the place and the placemaker. This reflects a gap in the literature that, I argue, should be explored.

My research moves away from the role of emotion and meaning for communities that are undergoing changes in place, and addresses the role of emotion and meaning for professional placemakers enacting those place-based changes. This line of inquiry must be pursued on the

premise that place professionals have authority over the built environments of existing communities. Their professional training and work involves the creation, organization, recreation, and reorganization of urban forms and built environments. This gives placemakers a degree of power over the built environment. These power dynamics can have profound effects on the meanings, attachments, and identities that residents develop in regards to place. A substantial change in the physical landscape, which is a common occurrence in redevelopment projects, can drastically change the meanings that residents have ascribed to a place and change the nature of these emotional relationships (Relph 1976, Urry 1995, Stedman 2003).

Furthermore, place is one anchor among many others that structure personal and collective identities (Proshansky et al. 1983, Dixon and Durrheim 2000). According to Proshansky and his colleagues, place is like “a potpourri of memories, conceptions, interpretations, ideas, and related feelings about specific physical settings as well as types of settings” (1983: 60). This “potpourri” contributes to the emotional bonds, meanings, and identities that people associate with the places in which their everyday lives are contextualized. Changes imposed on the physical landscape of a community by place professionals could alter the shared identities between individuals, communities, and place. As new physical forms and types of settings are introduced, new meanings and feelings are ascribed, and old ones lost. In conclusion, place professionals have a degree of power over the built environment, and people’s relationship to it, as they change existing places. This, I argue, must be explored.

After reviewing the relevant literature and finding a strong mandate, this research moves forward by asking: How do professional placemakers form emotional bonds to the places they work to (re)create? And, what do these places mean to them?

### **CHAPTER 3:**

#### **METHODS AND DATA**

To explore the relationship between professional placemakers and place, a qualitative research framework was devised. I conducted eight semi structured sit-down interviews and two walking interviews. A selective and snowballing sampling method was used to gain access to my particular sample of participants. Both the sit-down and walking interviews were recorded with an audio recording device. The interviews were then fully transcribed and used for data analysis. The sit-down interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes, while the duration of the walking interviews ranged between 45 minutes and 65 minutes. A total of eight professional placemakers participated in this study.

#### *Population and Sample*

Each participant's identity is concealed by pseudonyms, and any identifying information has been removed or obscured by the use of an alias. Appendix A outlines some demographic and professional information for each participant. Age and race/ethnicity were not directly asked about in the interview. This information was inferred, known through personal relationships with the participants, or explicitly stated during the interviews. All participants are college educated and have achieved at minimum a bachelor's degree, but not all participants studied to work in the profession of placemaking. Additionally, none of the participants are native to this Florida city. Each had moved into the area from elsewhere, though all were residing in the area at the time of the interview.

The definition of ‘professional placemaker’ was intentionally left broad to allow for discretion in selecting participants. If the professional work of a participant affected change in the built environment in any way, they were considered qualified to take part in the research. The placemaking roles that professionals embodied are varied. The professions included in this study contain community real estate developers that work for both nonprofit or government entities, an architect and an interior designer both of which work in the private sector, as well as a public-sector housing and community development professional. Appendix A shows the sector within which each professional placemaker works. Three sectors are identified: private, nonprofit, or public. Selected excerpts in the data analysis are followed by a pseudonym, the sector in which they work, and the participant’s profession.

The people included in this study influence or cause change in built environments or urban forms. The scale at which the professionals in this study work varied. Some work at a micro scale wherein minor changes to the built environment are made. Others work at a grander scale whereby an entire district is redeveloped. For example, the changes enacted onto the built environment by the professionals in this sample range from minor home repairs, murals, mailbox installations, and single family residential rehabilitations, to multistory building design, and comprehensive space design. Some professionals are more involved with the management side of projects than others. Their responsibilities include, for example, distributing funds to get projects started, or overseeing the redevelopment of an entire district.

This sample criteria called for the use of a selective sampling method which was then supplemented with a snowballing method. All professional placemakers in this sample worked in either a historic low-income neighborhood, or a large-scale mixed-use redevelopment district in a Florida city. This was integrated into the research design with the intent of exploring the idea

that the place itself can have some agency in the relationship that is formed between the placemaker and place.

The neighborhood is predominantly single-family housing with a concentration of duplex units. The housing stock is aging and consequently suffers from a dilapidated and blighted urban form. The neighborhood itself is stigmatized with real and/or perceived social problems such as extreme poverty, crime and drugs, youth delinquency, and health issues. The neighborhood itself is a mostly Black/African American demographic. In contrast, the urban redevelopment project is a 12-city block redevelopment effort led by a public-private partnership. The project is a mixed-income, mixed-use development that is being built from the ground up on a historic site. The area was once home to a rich and lively black cultural and commercial community that thrived during Jim Crow, was decimated by urban renewal policies, and then rebuilt with affordable public housing. The public housing has since been demolished, and the district is in the process of redevelopment. At the time of this research, three residential towers had been constructed and fully occupied.

Following data collection, this inquiry into the agentic role of place was set aside because the data did not allow for this research endeavor to be carefully explored. While some speculation about the role of place is pursued following the analysis below, I cannot draw any clear or confident conclusions.

Initial entry into this selective group of placemakers was facilitated by my own professional network. First contacts with potential participants were made through this network, either through recommendations or on my behalf. Each participant was asked to suggest additional possible contacts within their own network that fit the criteria of the sample. The snowball method of recruiting participants proved to be the most useful. Recommendations from

participants showed that the circle of professional placemakers in the two sites was smaller and tighter than originally anticipated.

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

Since the focal point of my research is the relationship between professional placemakers and place, a mixed methods of in-depth interviews and go-alongs (Kusenbach 2003) was initially integrated into the research design. Situating interviews in place and applying the principles of mobile methods have shown to reveal interesting dynamics between people and places (Elwood and Martin 2000, Kusenbach 2003, Anderson 2004, Evans and Jones 2011, Bergeron et. al 2015). Sit-down interviews alone are limiting because they rely on narratives that recall previous experiences, interpretations, emotions, or meanings. More so, interviews are often conducted in stationary positions in places that are selected for convenience. This limits the narrative because they are not context specific, a particularly crippling limitation for studies that are interested in connections to place (Kusenbach 2003). With a high degree of meaning and emotion attached to places, a more context specific interview can rely on the physical surroundings to heighten the connection between person and place from which participants can then speak (Jones and Evans 2012).

Data collection ultimately consisted primarily of traditional semi-structured sit-down interviews. Each sit-down interview was scheduled at a time and place most convenient for the participant. Coincidentally, almost all interviews were conducted in the participants' offices. Only one participant elected to meet for the interview at a local coffee shop, a few doors down from his office. This was not surprising since, in my introduction to participants, I invited them to talk with me about their work, and their work in a specific district or neighborhood. The interviews loosely followed an interview guide with a total of about thirteen questions (Appendix

B). The interviews were conducted informally and allowed for follow-up questions and exploration of different ideas and thoughts expressed by the participants.

In two cases, the sit-down interviews were supplemented with walking interviews. These interviews were scheduled following the first interview. A separate walking interview guide was kept on hand but was never much followed or needed (Appendix C). Initial design of the research required the walking interview from each participant. However, the research design was later amended to make the walking interview optional. Follow-up and scheduling of the second meeting proved to be arduous as participants often elected to remove themselves from the correspondence, or avoided commitment altogether. As a result, only two of the eight participants volunteered for the walking interview.

Both the sit-down and walking interviews were fully transcribed and used for data analysis. The transcriptions were openly coded for recurring ideas or themes that were consistently talked about throughout the interview (Neuman 2006). Attention was paid to the content of the interviews, more so than to the ways in which participants spoke about different topics. Two overarching themes were evident in the data that were further analyzed using “selective coding” (Neuman 2006: 464), and both revealed further differentiation. While I use the term ‘narrative’ often in the analysis below, this is not a narrative analysis. Rather, I am referring to the themes present in the narratives of the placemakers interviewed for this research.



## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

Overall, the data show that professional placemakers do form emotional bonds to the places in which they work. However, the meanings that are attached to those places show that those bonds can be different. Two overarching and unifying themes emerged from the analysis that are present in the interview data. The first theme, ‘for the people’, is a unifying theme that is consistent throughout the data with all participants. The second theme, pride, is similarly consistent in the data and discussed by all participants. In one way or another, all professional placemakers interviewed for this research talked about other people, as well as pride. I will expand on this momentarily.

Further analysis of the two intertwining themes revealed that different placemakers present talk of people, and pride, in different ways. For the purposes of analysis and discovery, I used this distinction to create a typology of ideal-type placemakers. The typology is based around distinctive talk about other people, and pride. The analysis revealed two different types of professional placemakers, each of which form emotional bonds to the places in which they work in a different way.

Here it is crucial to remember that the sample used in this research is conceptually broad, and does not factor in placemakers that work in various sectors or professions. Following analysis of the data, I will speculate on the ways in which sector and profession, as well as place, race, and gender, could influence the ways in which the types of placemakers attach meaning and emotion to the places they work to (re)create. Moreover, the creation of a typology does by no

means suggest that professional placemakers fall into either one type, or another. This would simplify the complex and nuanced differences that exist in social life. Rather, I suggest that the two themes are intertwined in the talk of *all* professional placemakers in this study. There are various factors that are not considered in this research which could influence the dominance of one theme over another. As such, this exploratory research cannot account for *why* there is distinct talk of people and pride between different placemakers, just that there is.

The placemakers in this study are unified with the ‘for the people’ theme. In one way or another, every respondent talks about the ways in which their work can affect the people living, or expected to live, in the places they are working to (re)create. This is consistent regardless of whether respondents work in the private or public sector, or with nonprofit organizations. This is one overarching theme that runs consistently through the data and acts as a unifying motif. It reveals that these professional placemakers recognize the strong relationship that exists between people and the built environment. Moreover, these professionals seem to be aware and cognizant of the work that they do as placemakers, and the influence that their work can have on people.

The work of each of the respondents, and the changes they make to the built environment, are very diverse. This includes everything from installing mailboxes and small home repairs, to rehabilitation of vacant homes, to 28-acre urban infill redevelopment projects. Consequently, the ways in which the respondents expect their work to affect people are varied. Some respondents talk about quality of life, while others talk about building safety, reducing crime, increasing private investment, increasing neighborhood connectivity, and creating hope. While the expected impacts are varied, there is a predominant and unifying narrative about the anticipated impacts that their work will have on the people that will inhabit or visit those places.

Despite the different types of work they are doing, all placemakers are, in some way, thinking about the people who will live in or use those places.

The secondary unifying theme consistent in the interviews with these professional placemakers is the presence of pride. All of the professional placemakers discuss feelings of pride in one way or another, although the discussion differs between the two types of placemakers. As will be shown in the following sections, the theme of pride is at times tied closely to the ‘for the people’ theme, while is at other times a very personal testimony of feelings and emotion related to the work. The analytical distinction between “Public Servants” and “Career Professionals” becomes evident in the ways in which these two themes emerge in their talk about people and pride. In the following sections, I discuss each type of placemaker and the ways in which each theme is manifest. I show how these themes work to diversify the meanings that professional placemakers associate with the places they work to (re)create. The types of placemakers are discussed separately for the analytical purpose of exploring social differences.

### *Public Servants*

The first type of placemaker tend to talk about their work in these places as if they are ‘public servants’. Overall, the interviews with public servants reveal codes such as ‘help’, ‘needs’, or ‘people’. The primary orientation of this type of professional placemaker is towards the people of a neighborhood or community. They often talk about working in order to change or improve the conditions of a neighborhood which will then inadvertently help the people living in that neighborhood. Public servants tend to be concerned about responding to the needs that people in a community may have, or helping the people or neighborhood as a whole. They are able to respond to these needs through their work with the built environment. Moreover, public servants’

talk of pride is often, but not always, directed externally toward other people. It is expressed as a hope that people in a place will feel pride as a result of their work. These characteristics, together, create a distinctive ‘public servant’ type.

Of the total sample, five of the eight professional placemakers predominantly used a ‘public servant’ rhetoric. Table I below shows the profession and sector in which these public servants work. None of the public servants in this sample work in the private sector, and most are involved with housing (re)development either in the public or nonprofit sectors. Two of the public servants work in the arts. For instance, Elizabeth works with an arts program targeting youth. The impact she has on the built environment in this line of work is through murals commissioned by the organization and created by the children involved. Joanne, on the other hand, works to manage, coordinate, and commission public art projects for the city’s public arts program.

My analysis below shows that the ‘for the people’ theme is dominant for public servants. The analysis will also show that the secondary theme of pride is tied closely to the dominant orientation that public servants have towards the people affected by their work.

<b>Table I: Public Servants</b>		
<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Profession</b>
David	Nonprofit	Community Real Estate Development
Elizabeth	Nonprofit	Youth & Arts
Barbara	Public	Housing & Community Development
James	Public	Community Real Estate Development
Joanne	Public	Public Art

*For the people.* The characterizing element of this theme is the enduring narrative led by both types of professional placemakers that recognizes the ways in which other people are

affected by their work on the built environment. This theme is dominant in the interviews with public servants. All of the professional placemakers that fall into this type are acutely aware, and oriented, to the people who will be interacting, engaging, and influenced by their work on the built environment. Moreover, rooted within this dominant theme are elements of compassion, fulfillment, and reward. These subthemes are expressed in public servant narratives, yet characteristically remain linked to the people who are affected by their work. Overall, public servants have a dominant orientation to other people whose lives they are able to influence. Any feelings, such as compassion or fulfillment, remain nestled within this focus.

The first example of the ‘for the people’ theme comes from an interview with James. Initially, he is not speaking directly about his work. Rather, he is discussing a recent move that their main offices had made from one part of the city to another. The main offices were initially located in an affordable housing complex, but relocated to a business district in another part of the city. He then transitions into speaking about the most recent development project undertaken by his organization:

We moved out of the public housing site and we moved into a business district. You’re the Housing Authority, you’re supposed to be in the poor neighborhoods... that’s the concept. From a sociology standpoint, we knew when we were in that building there the mindsets of people would change. And more importantly, the aspirations of their kids would change based on the environment. We build good community, good places, lots of great amenities that are not customary for a low-income community. The mindset and the awareness and the aspirations of people are different who live in a place like that. *James, Public Sector, Real Estate Development*

James is acutely aware of the influence that the built environment has on the people that not only visit their new offices, but for those people who live in the new redevelopment project as well. He talks about the ways in which this redevelopment venture will affect the mindset and aspirations of people. He goes on to say: “... you are trying to grow a healthier, happier, more vibrant community. And the people who live there, you want to experience better quality life,

right?” James is hoping that the work he is conducting will improve the overall quality of life for the residents that do, and will eventually, live in the development.

This second excerpt exemplifies the ‘for the people’ theme in a different way. Joanne works with a city public arts program. While the codes of ‘need’ or ‘help’ are not evident in the way she talks about her work, she still is a public servant because she displays an orientation to the people that are affected by her work. In our interview, I ask Joanne to talk about different art projects she has been involved with around the city, and the way it makes her feel when she drives past those public art pieces. In this first excerpt, she refers to a public park that is under development. The park will permanently exhibit several public art pieces which she is overseeing. She says:

It’s not done yet...so, but the community I hope to heck loves it. Because it’s going to be a wow factor. I mean, it’s big. And a big gateway. So hopefully... and certainly you cannot, you won’t be able to miss it. [Chuckles]. *Joanne, Public Sector, Public Art*

In her response to the question, Joanne expressed hope that the community in which the park is situated will love it, rather than turning that orientation inward to a feeling of self-satisfaction.

Joanne continues to say:

If it just makes people just feel good and they don’t know why it makes them [feel good], I don’t care that they don’t know why. But it certainly helps. It helps to make a space, an environment, in a city. *Joanne, Public Sector, Public Art*

Joanne is concerned about the way that people in the community will feel about her work first, before considering the way she herself feels about the project. Moreover, Joanne, as a placemaker, understands that her work with the built environment works to create an “identity” for people.

Elizabeth similarly works with art. The organization with which she is involved, however, uses art as a means through which to engage youth. During our interview we discuss a project that require the youth to enter into the neighborhood as part of a beautification project in

collaboration with other organizations. I mention to her that I had heard of this project some time ago, and tell her that I believe the project is having a positive influence on the neighborhood. In response, Elizabeth says:

I hope so. I know they are making an impact on our kids. And that's really all I can ask for. Hope that the kids get it. Everything else is just gravy. It's extra. *Elizabeth, Nonprofit Sector, Arts & youth*

Like other public servants, Elizabeth's orientation is wholly focused on the people that are impacted by her work. In this case, the youth. She is not so much concerned with the neighborhood improvements as a result of this project. Rather, she is more interested in knowing that the young people who are involved in the project are benefiting. Moreover, when asked about the best part of her average day working for this organization in this neighborhood, Elizabeth responds with:

The people. The students. The people. The neighbors. Everybody who walks through that gate is just amazing. I mean, really. They all genuinely care. *Elizabeth, Nonprofit Sector, Arts & youth*

As the excerpts show, the focus of our conversation is constantly being shifted back to the people and the youth who the work affects, rather than Elizabeth's work itself.

The excerpt below is a response from Barbara after I ask her to talk about what she enjoys most about her work. Her response is a clear example of the primacy that the 'for the people' theme has for public servants. Barbara holds an upper level management position with the city and is responsible for allocating funds to various community development projects. This includes housing development.

What I like best is making a meaningful difference in people's lives. Um, you know, we get to help people move the needle. So, we help people who have never owned a home, didn't think they could buy a home. ... So, it's a difference we get to make in people's lives that I enjoy most about the work. *Barbara, Public Sector, Community Development*

Her response exemplifies the public servant theme because she refers back to the people that she, as a professional, will be able to help. In this excerpt, we see that she hopes to ‘make a difference’ and ‘help’ people through her work. Public servants seem to have a reflexive orientation to the people who are affected by their work.

This ‘helping’ trend is similarly seen in the interview with David. David works in the nonprofit sector for a real estate development organization. He works closely with homeowners and tenants to improve the conditions of their homes through small home improvements and renovations. He explains that residents seem to find it easy to connect with him and often express deep emotion in his company, such as sadness. I then ask David to talk about how it makes him feel when the residents he works with open up to him in this way. He responds:

Well, um, if I am able within what is allowed, like, I do really try to make it work. Because, I... I kind of connect with certain people. And their stories. Like, you wanna be able to help them. And because I was in a position to make that happen, um, I kind of really try my best to provide that to them. *David, Nonprofit Sector, Real Estate Development*

Again, his response shows that he is interested in helping people by providing to them the services that he is able to offer in his professional position. This is something that David emphasizes. Because of his position in this organization, he is uniquely able to provide the assistance that residents in some neighborhoods need. He is able to respond to a need that people have with his work with the built environment, such as home improvements and repairs.

Elizabeth, who works in the arts and was introduced above, similarly echoes the public servant’s tendency to want to ‘help’ through their work. During the interview, I ask Elizabeth to tell me about anything she dislikes about her work, or about something she does not enjoy as much as she would like to. She responds with:

Um, I hate reporting. I wish I had to spend less time doing that. But I understand why we have to do that. And, I hate, I hate not being able to help. Like, there is not enough. Limited resources, I don’t like that. I would like the doors to be open every single day,



and everybody can come and we are constantly...but we can't do that. Because we have limited resources. *Elizabeth, Nonprofit Sector, Arts and Youth*

While many of professional placemakers in this study respond to this same question with an antipathy toward administrative tasks, Elizabeth's response also express her strong motive to want to help people with her work. Given limited resources, she is not able to help the young people involved with the organization to the extent that she would like.

The 'for the people' theme is unique to public servants in two other ways, besides the primary orientation to people, which have to do with the emotion that they express in their interviews. The first expression of emotion I found in the data is a sense of compassion that is evident in public servants' discussions of helping people. In the excerpt above, Elizabeth uses the word 'hate' when she describes the way she feels about being limited in the work she can accomplish. The use of this strong and emotionally charged word suggests that Elizabeth is feeling a strong desire to do her work because there is an underlying understanding that the work is needed in the community. The following excerpt clearly shows this understanding:

*Nina:* So, what did you know about the neighborhood before you began working here?

*Elizabeth:* From my son's friends I knew it was a tough neighborhood. You know, an economically tough neighborhood too. And, crime, drugs, things like that. But I also knew that these were great kids. So any place that great kids are coming out of, there are great families. Great kids don't just happen by accident. So, just one of those places that needs a hand. *Elizabeth, Nonprofit Sector, Arts and Youth*

Elizabeth explains that the neighborhood "needs a hand". In the interview, I ask her to talk about what she knew about the neighborhood prior to her work in it. She responds by framing the neighborhood around its real and/or perceived social problems. When we compare this to Elizabeth's emotionally charged response to the idea of not being able to help (previous excerpt), we can see that she feels a deep concern for the people. As a public servant, Elizabeth understands the 'needs' that people in certain neighborhoods have and works to address those

needs. This exemplifies a compassion that Elizabeth has for the people living in the neighborhood, and her want to work toward helping those people.

Likewise, David expresses a compassion that is evident in the narratives of other public servants as well:

I have personally had people, like, literally close the doors on my face. Um, not being interested in our program even though it is free and all of the benefits that come with it. And a lot of it is because these people feel that...they don't trust. There is a lack of trust because they feel forgotten. They feel like people don't do anything for them. Um, so, they are hesitant and they feel like everything is a scam. They also ask, like, 'what's the catch'? *David, Nonprofit Sector, Real Estate Development*

Here, David is showing compassion for the people that he is able to help through his work as a professional placemaker. He does so by seeking an understanding of their position and experiences, the result of which produces statements of compassion such as “they feel forgotten”, or “they feel like people don't do anything for them”. This consideration he has for the people who are influenced by his work as a placemaker, combined with self-less emotions such as compassion, makes him a quintessential public servant type.

A second expression of emotion nestled within the primary ‘for the people’ theme is love for work, discussed in terms of fulfillment and rewards. Public servants are uniquely distinct from career professionals, the second type of placemaker, in that they tend to describe their work as fulfilling or rewarding. In my interview with David, he describes some of the impacts his work has had on a particular neighborhood. He describes it as a “domino effect”. When I ask how he feels about this, he exclaims: “I love it!” Later, David explains:

You can't even believe that people are able to live under certain conditions. So the fact that we completely change that and provide them with a safer environment, I think that's very rewarding. *David, Nonprofit Sector, Real Estate Development*

Similarly, James expresses his love for the work and the sense of reward that he feels about his work.

I mean, it keeps me in love with my job. And in love with this place. It's hugely rewarding. Absolutely hugely rewarding. No other way to describe it. *James, Public Sector, Real Estate Development*

In both these excerpts, David and James root their expression of love for work, rewards, and fulfillment in the positive effects their work has for other people and their ability to 'help'.

Joanne also describes her work as rewarding. In this case, the theme emerges during our interview without my having to ask how she feels about her work. Here, she is talking about a specific project. The project is a series of large bronze panels with etchings that represent the neighborhood's rich history.

The work is really lovely. And we did it, again, because it speaks so much to the history of the site. And what was very rewarding about that as we went through the process is that people who lived there in the neighborhood, they would giggle when they walked by parts of it. They would point because they remembered things. And that was very, very rewarding. *Joanne, Public Sector, Public Art*

In this excerpt, Joanne is rooting the feeling of reward in the social value that her work is able to bring to people. While Joanne is not responding to a particular *need* for public art in a community, her work is rewarding precisely because it elicits a positive reaction from other people who will be interacting with it. In a way, the impact that her work has for the people of the community, in this case sentimental value, makes her work rewarding to her.

When both James and Barbara talk about feelings of fulfillment that result from their work, they root that narrative in an ideal that it is their duty, or responsibility, to help other people. There seems to be a spiritual component to their talk of the work being fulfilling or rewarding. Barbara refers to her work as a way to "serve God", while James labels his work as "ministry work". This sense of responsibility which seem to drive their work is evident in the following excerpt from Barbara, who is responding after I ask her how her work affects her personally. She says:

I consider what I do...it's more than just a job. It's my passion and it's my religion. So

some people preach, I do community development. You know, that's the way I serve God is through community development. *Barbara, Public Sector, Community Development*

In response to the same question, James responds:

*James:* Huge fulfillment. Like I said, it's ministry work. It's what makes you feel good doing it even if you're not getting a paycheck. This is what I would be doing. It's what drives you.

*Nina:* And where does that come from for you - ministry work? Was that always something that you felt motivated by?

*James:* Yea, I'd say in my faith. I've been given a lot. Y'know, 'to whom much is given, much is required'. So, you're always sort of trying to give back. That sort of fuels everything. Life. Really does. *James, Public Sector, Real Estate Development*

While both Barbara and James feel motivated by the need that people have for their work, they also expressed that their work is rewarding and fulfilling to them on a spiritual and emotional level. In response to the same question, they both relate those feelings of fulfillment to a faith or belief system. It is through "serv[ing] God" or "ministry work" that they help people, and by carrying out that service and work they feel fulfillment.

In sum, 'public servants' are professional placemakers that have a strong orientation toward the people who are influenced by their work. They have a strong understanding that their work on the built environment can change the day-to-day lived experiences of people. It seems that this understanding underpins their work because they express in their narratives a strong desire to want to 'help' and tend to 'needs' of other people. Their narratives overwhelmingly focus on the ways in which their work is needed by people and communities, and a concern for the ways in which their work can help those people. Rooted within this primary theme are several subthemes unique to public servants. They tend to show compassion as they speak about their work with other people, often expressing a deep understanding of the lived experiences and troubles of other people. Public servants also tend to characterize their work as fulfilling or rewarding which translates into a love for work. Characteristically, these feelings of fulfillment and reward are rooted in their overall orientation toward other people.

*Pride.* The secondary theme of pride remained particularly prevalent throughout the narrative of the public servant type. This secondary theme is closely related to the primary ‘for the people’ theme. The narratives of public servants, as presented in the data above, show that this type of professional placemaker is focused on the people that are affected by the work that they do on built environments. The pride theme in public servants runs parallel to this ‘for the people’ theme. Public servants do not talk about pride as something that they themselves feel about the work that they have accomplished in a place. Rather, they tend to refer to pride as something that they hope to instill in people, in neighborhoods and communities, through the work that they do. Pride is also something the public servants tend to allude to as a direct result of positive reactions and interactions that other people have with their work on the built environment.

The following excerpt from my interview with David exemplifies the way in which pride is characteristically discussed by public servants.

Then, slowly but surely, once we show them [resident] what we are all about and provide the services; how they are changing their attitude, and they become happier, and they become thankful, and they become more appreciative. Even, like, motivated to upkeep their homes, to maintain their homes. And to reintroduce themselves into their own neighborhood. And that’s a huge part of our program as well. Not just changing the home just to change them, hoping that we make the results. But hopefully instilling that community pride as well. *David, Nonprofit Sector, Real Estate Development*

Here, David is expressing a hope that the neighborhood in which he is working will be instilled with a sense of “community pride” as a result of the work that he and his organization are conducting, and the changes they are making to the built environment. David is categorized as a public servant since he often talks about helping people, tending to neighborhood needs, and improving deleterious conditions in the built environment. Continuing this theme, he externalizes pride as something that can be instilled or fostered in others through his work with the built environment.

Public servants tend to hope for a feeling of pride in those they are helping through their work. Barbara is another public servant who expresses a hope for pride in one neighborhood in which she works.

*Nina:* And what would be your ideal outcome for this neighborhood? And why?

*Barbara:* My ideal outcome would be that, like I said, we would get the new curb-gutters, sidewalks, increase the homeownership rate, the crime would go down. They would have a sense of, a stronger sense of community pride. Um. You'd have some nice businesses along the thoroughfares. That it would become a model for what could happen in other communities. *Barbara, Public Sector, Real Estate Development*

As with the other public servants in this sample, Barbara talks less about the pride she feels personally as a result of the work she has conducted, and more about the pride she hopes the community as a whole will feel. The 'for the people' theme is evident in this excerpt as well. Because Barbara understands that her work on the built environment has an effect on the daily lives of people, she expects that it should further culminate in a feeling of pride for the people interacting with that built environment.

Barbara does, at one point in the interview, refer to personal feelings of pride. However, as a characteristic public servant, her feeling of pride remains rooted in the dominant orientation to other people, and the way in which she can help through her work. The following excerpt shows that, for public servants, pride is a feeling very much interrelated with the 'for the people' theme. I had asked Barbara to talk about aspects of her work that she does not enjoy. She mentioned that her current position does not allow her to interact with the community to the extent that she would like, a sentiment repeated throughout the interview.

*Barbara:* I like going to community functions. I like just walking the streets in the neighborhood. I like knowing, you know, to be able to say 'HEY! I heard your son graduated and he's going to college, that's awesome!' Or, just being able to give people information to do different things. To have a plant giveaway and to help neighbors put flowers in. And then to walk down the street and go 'yup, I remember what it used to look like and now it looks better'. You know, and it's..you get that pride from knowin' I helped that homeowner get a house. I helped that child go to college. I helped that one go

get a job. I was here to make a difference and I made a difference. *Barbara, Public Sector, Community Development*

Here, Barbara is showing that her feeling of pride is embedded in her work as a placemaker because she is able to help people and “make a difference”. Barbara is feeling proud of the residents’ accomplishments, rather than her own work as a placemaker. That feeling of pride is even further reinforced when she is able to interact and engage with those people. Public servants’ feelings of pride are strongly coupled with their work and concern for other people.

Elizabeth is another public servant who expressed elements of pride in her narrative. The way she expresses pride is slightly different, and a little less direct than either David or Barbara, but exemplifies the ways in which public servants externalize their feelings of pride to other people. Elizabeth uses an analogy of the way she feel about the murals that she has had a hand in organizing.

*Nina:* What does it make you feel when you see the murals?

*Elizabeth:* Oh, I love them. I love them so much. ... I love telling people the stories of the teams that worked on them. And talking about how the kids came up with the concept for them. Like a proud parent. Really, that’s exactly how I feel. *Elizabeth, Nonprofit Sector, Arts and Youth*

While Elizabeth does say that she feels “like a proud parent”, the analogy directs that sense of pride outward to the kids. She is proud of the success of the kids that worked on the mural which she helped facilitate through her work. Because the kids were successful and benefited from the project, she feels proud.

This same sense of pride is expressed by Elizabeth again when she discusses the murals:

I think murals are a fabulous way to reach the community. And they have done study after study that shows if you have kids in a community come and work on a mural in that community, the mural doesn’t get tagged or destroyed or vandalized. Because the kids take a certain amount of pride in that piece of art. And if you’re smart, and you keep working with the kids, you can turn that pride and that one piece of art into pride in the community. And pride in themselves. *Elizabeth, Nonprofit Sector, Arts and Youth*

Here, her discussion of pride is a bit more explicit. The work she does with murals leave a long lasting impression on the built environment. After asking her what she thinks the murals mean for the kids who see it on the face of a building year after year, she explains that it facilitates a sense of pride for the children who were involved with that project. She goes on to say that the work, and the children's pride for it, can cultivate a greater sense of community pride as well.

Of the five public servants in this sample, Barbara, David, and Elizabeth are the three placemakers who explicitly talked about pride. The following excerpt is an example of where James expresses what could be interpreted as a sense of pride. Here, James is telling a story as an analogy to explain how a change in the built environment could have an impact on people. In this analogy, he is discussing the relocation of their offices out of a place that he describes as a "government-looking", "barrack-style" building.

So one of the things that give me a huge amount of...huge... I'll see a public housing resident or Section 8 resident, or resident period, coming in the front door with a little kid in tow. And the kid gets inside and they're sort of in awe. And they hear the water and feel the plants and they just sort of stop, and their soaking it in, right? Parents would take a camera, take a picture of the child in front of the...right? *James, Public Sector, Real Estate Development*

While he does not explicitly say that he feels pride or hopes to instill feelings of pride, the enthusiasm with which he tells the story of the excited parent and child in the new building alludes to a feeling similar to pride. Because he is witnessing a positive change in the demeanor of the people entering this new and improved building, he feels positively. He concludes the analogy by saying: "You want to create things that give people a sense of balance and peace, happiness. Let them aspire." This, to James, is the purpose of development projects with which he is involved.

Joanne is another public servant who never explicitly refers to pride, but expresses positive sentiment as a result of the ways in which people are affected by her work on the built



environment. In the following excerpt, she is responding to a question about how she feels when she sees some of the public art pieces with which she has been involved.

Some of the things that I see a lot of is that I'll see people taking their photos with it. I'll see people taking their wedding photos underneath it. Having their first kiss underneath it. Playing on.. whatever. And they don't have a clue that they are standing in or within public art. And that is so okay with me. Because it's built to space. That people are interacting and engaging. And making a memory. And it's just helped create a moment, an action, something. And that makes me feel really good. You know? So, that's very much it. I love it, seeing people. *Joanne, Public Sector, Public Art*

Joanne's response is centered on the engagement and interaction that people have to her work. As a result of their positive interactions with it, she feels positively about her work. As is the case with James, Joanne's positive feelings of what could be interpreted as pride or general feelings of satisfaction, is directly related to the people who are affected by the changes they have made to the built environment.

The theme of pride, and general feelings of work as rewarding or fulfilling discussed in the previous subsection, can easily be overlapped. It can be argued that because witnessing positive interactions and engagement with her work makes Joanne "feel really good", she feels rewarded or fulfilled in her work. As I argued above, those same positive feelings are a reflection of pride in her own work. That inferred pride is a result of the positive impact her work has had on people who are engaging and interacting with her work. This overlap between the two themes is further testament to the ways in which the dominant theme of 'for the people' and the secondary theme of pride are closely tied together. The theme of pride is rooted in the public servant's dominant orientation to the people affected by their work on the built environment. To public servants, whether stated explicitly or not, pride is something that is hoped for or felt predominantly in direct relation to the people who live, work, or play in the built environments they help to (re)create.

### *Career Professionals*

The themes of ‘for the people’ and pride are persistent in the narratives of career professionals, the second type of placemaker, as well. The way in which these themes emerge, however, are different here than in the narratives of public servants. Where public servants tend to be primarily oriented toward the people who are impacted by their work on the built environment, career professionals are more so oriented toward the profession itself, or their own personal career working in the profession. In the way that public servants enjoy their work as professional placemakers because they have the opportunity to help people, career professionals enjoy their work for the sake of their career or professional goals. Nevertheless, career professionals are also attuned to the ways in which other people are affected by their work on the built environment but in a different, more indirect way.

While the ‘for the people’ theme is still very much prevalent in this type of professional placemaker, it exists as an underlying, less dominant, narrative. Pride is also presented much differently for career professionals when contrasted with public servants. Whereas public servants externalize feelings of pride, or find a source of pride in other people’s accomplishments, career professionals feel pride as a result of the good work they are personally able to accomplish and carry out. The more personal motivations, and self-regard, that career professionals have for their work are what characterize this type of professional placemaker.

Of the eight place professionals who participated in this study, three presented narratives characteristic of the career professional type. Table II below shows the name, sector, and profession of each career professional. Both Thomas and Sarah work in the private sector for a private firm. Thomas is an architect and Sarah is a licensed interior designer. Both entered their respective professions at an early stage while studying at a university. Thomas changed majors from the medical field into architecture as an undergraduate student, while Sarah’s only declared

major was interior design. The third person in this category, John, works as a community real estate developer in the nonprofit sector, working for a community-based organization. Like Thomas and Sarah, he has been working in his field following completion of undergraduate and graduate study.

**Table II: Career Professionals**

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Profession</b>
John	Nonprofit	Community Real Estate Development
Thomas	Private	Architecture
Sarah	Private	Interior Design

In the following two subsections, I will show how the ‘for the people’ theme remains prevalent, albeit less dominant, in the career professional type, while the pride theme takes on a different form when compared with public servants.

*For the People.* In contrast to public servants, the career professional’s narrative is much more oriented to their own work and their experiences within the profession. Nevertheless, career professionals are also aware of the ways in which the built environment, and their work, can have an impact on the daily lives of the people who live, work, or play in those places. Whereas public servants have a dominant orientation toward the people who are affected by their work, career professionals’ portrayal of this theme takes on a secondary role. They do not talk about ‘helping’ people or responding to neighborhood ‘needs’. Rather, career professionals present a more matter-of-fact acknowledgement of the ways in which their work can affect other people. When compared to public servants, the ‘for the people’ theme is weaker, and is expressed as a secondary underlying theme, taking a back seat to the more dominant orientation to their own work as a professional.

The following excerpt is taken from my interview with Thomas, an architect in the private sector who is speaking about the work that he does at large. Thomas breaks from his discussion about the profession of architecture and its perceived focus on “doing really cool drawings on the computer”. He deviates momentarily to talk about the underlying significance of his work.

And at the end of the day we do have to do certain things. We need to make sure that we follow the code. We do need to make sure that we design it to where it’s aesthetically pleasing. But at the end of the day, it has to be safe for people to occupy, and to be able to come and go. *Thomas, Private Sector, Architect*

This underlying significance, it seems, is the safety that it provides for people. Thomas is not unaware of the impact his work with the built environment has for the people that live, work, or play in the buildings he or his firm design. While Thomas acknowledges the value that his work has for other people – in this case safety – it takes on a more auxiliary role to his work as a professional.

This auxiliary role of the ‘for the people’ theme is similarly present in my interview with John, a real estate developer in the nonprofit sector. I ask him to talk about the aspects of his work that he enjoys. His response is oriented toward the skills that he is able to exercise in his work. He begins by talking about his long-standing interest in real estate and construction. He continues by explaining that the job also appeals to some of his own skills:

I was always very entrepreneurial, very business minded and figuring out ways of increasing revenue, and that kind of thing. Um, so, that was something that I enjoyed. *John, Nonprofit Sector, Real Estate Development*

He continues: “And I saw the dilapidated house as a blank canvas that I could, um, that I could apply my artistic skills to, and turn it into a masterpiece.” In talking about his work, John is placing more emphasis on the personal aspects of the work, such as his skills and creativity,

and less on the people who are affected by his work with residential rehabilitations. This is characteristic of the career professional type.

In contrast to the responses of public servants, career professionals do not seem to have the people aspect of the work in the foreground of their minds. Rather, it tends to appear as an afterthought. For example, in the midst of John's explanation of what he enjoys about his work, he intermittently interjects vague ideas about “helping people achieve the so-called American Dream” or “affect[ing] people’s lives”. Such comments show that he is aware that housing, and his work with home rehabilitation, can act as a stepping stone to achieving cultural ideals of success – “the American Dream” – for people who will live in those homes. While the ‘for the people’ theme has not disappeared in John’s discussion, the work itself, and his work as a professional, has moved to the foreground. This is what makes John a career professional, rather than a public servant.

The submission of the ‘for the people’ theme to a dominant orientation to the work itself is also evident in the interview with Thomas. In our interview, he leads a conversation that focuses predominantly on the profession itself and the work that he, and his firm, has contributed to an urban redevelopment district. When Thomas does speak about the ways in which the work affects other people, his talk takes much more of a ‘public good’ approach. By this I mean that career professionals do recognize the ways in which their work contributes to a greater good for other people, but do not necessarily make this their first priority in talking about their work.

So I think you have to get up every morning and think that what I’m doing is for the public good and for, you know, public safety. If we don’t do our job right..- you know, there is a great opportunity for people to perish in a building that’s not designed properly. ... So if doctors don’t do their jobs, people die. If engineers and architects don’t do their jobs, people die. *Thomas, Private, Architecture*

This excerpt shows that Thomas is cognizant of the ways in which his work can affect other people. In this example, Thomas is drawing attention to the influence his work as an architect

can have on the safety of buildings for people. However, this is not the primary theme in his interview. He is not a professional in this field to ‘help’ people. His primary narrative is one that discusses his career and his profession, with a more muted acknowledgement of the impact his work has for other people.

Sarah’s interview similarly reveals this pattern:

Well I think ultimately the first goal is to make sure the client is happy. You always want to make sure that your client is happy. And a lot of the times the goal of the client jointly with the architect, um, or interior designer, is to create a building or renovate a space that will somehow be impactful. And if that impact is coming to the city, or coming to the neighborhood, or out of the client’s own personal wish to have kind of a show case building for themselves, you know, it’s that kind of impact that you want to achieve. So it’s really working with the client. *Sarah, Private, Interior Design*

Throughout the interview, she returns to the idea that the client is the ultimate authority in the process as an interior designer. However, she does make some points that draw attention to the ways in which her work can affect other people, besides the client. She makes the statement that the work can “somehow be impactful” to the city or neighborhood in which they are working. Here, she is acknowledging that her work can affect other people who will be engaging and interacting with her work. Nevertheless, she comes back to the significant role that the developer, or client, takes in her work with the built environment. Her work and the wishes of her client are the bottom line, and not so much other people in the neighborhood or city, who will also be engaging and interacting with the products of her work.

The following example further shows how career professionals have a dominant narrative that is oriented more toward the work itself, rather than the impact of the work for other people. The ‘for the people’ theme remains present, albeit much more indirect. In our interview, Thomas comments on a redevelopment project to which his firm contributed the final design of several buildings. He acknowledges the effect his work can have for other people by saying: “It gives a sense of identity. Versus just some haphazard, um, architectural piece.” He is able to harness a

historical and social identity of a place and build it into the built environment to create what he calls ‘a sense of place’. This, I argue, is an indirect expression of the underlying ‘for the people’ theme. His work is not aimed at ‘helping’ people to create a sense of place that they ‘need’. Rather, it is an underlying significance of his work as a professional in his field.

Thomas later continues to discuss the senior and affordable housing element of the development. In this excerpt, the more dominant narrative of career professionals is noticeable, but is intertwined with the underlying ‘for the people’ theme.

In that case it sort of like a double blessing because you’re not only getting to come up with a great design at a great place. At the end of the day, that housing has a lot more meaning than just a market-rate apartment or condominium project where it’s all about capital and how much money someone has. *Thomas, Private Sector, Architect*

As a career professional, Thomas is oriented to the work itself by saying: “...you’re not only getting to come up with a great design”. This is a nod to the success of his work. At the same time, there is a secondary orientation to the people who live in that place by acknowledging the social significance of building senior and affordable housing. This is visible in his statement that his work in designing this housing “has a lot more meaning” because of the opportunity it creates for seniors and low-income residents.

In the following example, Sarah is further exemplifying the dominant narrative of career professionals while showing a weaker, secondary ‘for the people’ theme. I had asked Sarah to talk about her favorite part of a project in which she contributed work. She responds by saying:

It’s really very satisfying when you see your design and your inspiration, along with the client’s inspiration, come to fruition. And you see the overall holistic package put together and built. That’s the best part. *Sarah, Private Sector, Interior Designer*

Sarah’s immediate response brings focus on her own work, the product of which is “the best part” of her work. This is different than the narrative of public servants because the work itself, the interior and exterior designs of the building that she worked to (re)create, is the source of

satisfaction. For public servants, the best part about their work is rooted in the people that they are ‘helping’ or having a positive influence on.

The underlying ‘for the people’ theme then comes to light as Sarah immediately continues to say:

And, not only that, but hearing...- like, I would watch the news and...the tenants are like ‘this place is so beautiful and I love it so much’. That’s so gratifying. Because you know that they are so appreciative and they love it. *Sarah, Private Sector, Interior Designer*

Sarah’s initial response to my question about the favorite part of her work on a project is supplemented with the ‘for the people’ theme. Here, she finds pleasure in seeing other people positively interact and engage with her work. While this is characteristic of the public servant narrative, Sarah’s first response was oriented to her work whereas her second response was oriented to other people. She has a very strong focus on the success of her own work which takes precedence over the people who will inhabit those places she works to (re)create. This is an underlying secondary presentation of the ‘for the people’ theme that is characteristic of career professionals.

Overall, the professional placemakers in this sample are cognizant of the ways in which their work will affect people and verbally expressed this during the interviews without being prompted. In contrast to public servants, however, career professionals are more career oriented rather than focused on the needs of people or conditions of a place. This does not mean, however, that they are not at all mindful of the relationship that people have to the built environment. On the contrary, career professionals can be vocal about the influence their work could have on people. The ‘for the people’ theme remains present in the narratives of career professionals, although is trumped by a focus on their own careers, skills, or products of their work.



*Pride.* The way in which the theme of pride emerges from the narratives of career professionals is distinct from public servants. We saw earlier that public servants' expression of pride is rooted in the 'for the people' theme. Public servants tend to express a hope that the people who are affected by their work with the built environment will feel pride. Public servants also tend to express a feeling of pride when those people have positive interactions and engagements with the built environments that they had a hand in (re)creating.

Career professionals are different in that their feelings of pride are not linked to the 'for the people' theme. Rather, it is distinct and is associated much more so toward their primary focus and concern, the success of their work in their profession. Career professionals tend to feel pride for the work that they have personally accomplished in a place. This is exemplified in the following excerpt from my interview with Sarah:

*Nina:* And when you see the finished product and everything is done and it's officially open - what does that make you feel?

*Sarah:* My usual reaction is this: 'damn I did a good job!' \*laughs\* Not to like stroke my own ego but it's like 'Phew, yepp, I was right. Alllllll this stuff worked out just like I knew it would.' ...And you see the whole finished product, that's when you're like 'yea, yea I knew it was gonna be like that'. So it feels good. It feels really good. You have that little pat yourself on the back moment. *Sarah, Private Sector, Interior Design*

Sarah is explaining that she feels a great deal of satisfaction and relief with the closing of a project. At the same time, she is also internally rewarding herself for the work she herself has successfully completed. By saying that she has a "little pat yourself on the back moment", she is rewarding herself with acknowledgement of a job well done. This is not associated to the way in which the people affected by her work feel about the end result of a project. Rather, because she feels that the project was successful as a result of her own efforts, she feels proud.

John is a career professional who never explicitly discusses feelings of pride. However, the following excerpt, a portion of which was discussed in the previous subsection, shows a sense of self-satisfaction that he feels as a result of his work.

Being able to take a vacant house that's dilapidated and needing a lot of work, and turning that into a work of art, you know, a masterpiece. Appeals to the artist in me, I guess. And I saw the dilapidated house as a blank canvas that I could, um, that I could apply my artistic skills to, and turn it into a masterpiece. *John, Nonprofit Sector, Real Estate Developer*

In this excerpt, John mentions that he enjoys most about his work the opportunity it affords him to engage his creative and "artistic skills". By engaging his artistic skills, he is able to transform those homes into "masterpiece[s]" or "work[s] of art" in the process of rehabilitating vacant homes. His choice of words cue a feeling of self-satisfaction that he has for his projects. Again, this expression of pride, or self-regard, is derived from the success of his work and the application of his creative skills as a professional in the field. Not, as is the case with public servants, from the positive interactions residents or community members have with his work.

To further understand the different way in which career professionals and public servants express feelings of pride, I draw a comparison between Sarah and Elizabeth. The following excerpt from my interview with Sarah is reminiscent of a comment by Elizabeth, a public servant, who said that she feels "like a proud parent" when thinking back to some of her work. To Elizabeth, this work is deeply engaged with youth who ultimately create works of art on the built environment. She feels proud because of the success of the youth, and the positive benefits they are able to reap as a result of this project. And also the sense of pride that they feel for their own work. The source of pride for Elizabeth is sourced from the people who are influenced by her work with the built environment; in this case the youth. This characteristic makes her a public servant.

In contrast, Sarah brings attention to the sense of ownership that career professionals feel over their work. Sarah speaks about the lasting effect that her work has on her:

And when you have a project that big it is like your baby. You didn't go through the pain of labor and contractions, but there are painful times going through a project that size.

And it's always yours. Whenever you pass it, no matter how many years it's been, it's always your project. You always point it out: 'That's my building. That's my project'. And you always remember. It leaves like a life imprint on you, forever. *Sarah, Private Sector, Interior Design*

For Sarah, the sense of ownership over her project comes from the hours of labor and skill that she put into the project that made it successful and long lasting. At another point in the interview Sarah discusses why she "loves it when it's a good for construction". She says:

When you go out there and you see everything. And people are cranking away and you know that it's coming to fruition. And you know that the thought, and the hours and hours of research and meetings and emails and phone calls back and forth to get final selections and final space plans and final everything, is looking good. *Sarah, Private Sector, Interior Design*

She feels a sense of ownership, accomplishment, and pride for her projects because of the "hours and hours" of work that has been committed to making it successful. This is the defining characteristic of how career professionals express feelings of pride as professional placemakers. Whereas Elizabeth feels pride because of the youth involved in the project, Sarah feels pride because of the work and skill *she* has committed to her projects. Sarah's pride is not linked to the 'for the people' theme as is the case with Elizabeth, whose feelings of pride are directly rooted in other people affected by her work.

The pride that career professionals feel does not necessarily have to be generated by skills or labor, as is the case with Sarah or John. In the following example, Thomas tells a personal anecdote that leads into his statement that "people should take pride in their work".

I still get to drive by and see projects. My dad, my sisters come down with my parents and their families. And my dad, I'll drive him past all the projects I've done in Orlando or here, wherever else. \*imitates his dad's voice\* 'Your brother worked on that job. Your brother's company did that job'. \*smiling\* Um, and that... that doesn't - I'm not like, 'hey, look at me!' But it is kind of cool to drive past a building and say, 'hey, we worked on that', or 'hey, I had a hand in that project'. *Thomas, Private Sector, Architecture*

In this anecdote, Thomas is feeling a sense of pride because he finds a degree of satisfaction from showing his completed projects to his family. He finds it rewarding to drive by and

showcase projects he has successfully completed in the past. While this feeling of pride does not mirror the expression of pride that Sarah or John present, it remains distinctly different from the way in which public servants talk about instilling a sense of pride for the people impacted by their work. In this example, Thomas' feelings of pride are linked to his own personal sphere – his family – rather than directed externally to people who will be living in or using the places he (re)creates. While his pride is people oriented, it is not oriented to the people who are impacted by his work on the built environment. Rather, it is focused on his own personal network. This keeps Thomas' expression of pride distinctly in the career professional type.

Overall, career professionals and public servants both express pride, although in different ways. Career professionals have a dominant focus on their own work in their profession, while acknowledging that their work has some social significance and can have a strong impact on the people who inhabit the places they work to (re)create. While the dominant rhetoric is not focused on other people, this is not to say that they are not concerned about the people who interact and engage with their work. For career professionals, the 'for the people' theme can be seen as an added bonus to the significance of their work, rather than the primary motivation as is the case with public servants. Finally, career professionals root their feelings of pride in the success of their work in the profession, as opposed to public servants who root feelings of pride in the 'for the people' theme.

### *Summary*

My analysis of ten interviews with eight professional placemakers revealed interesting ways in which professional placemakers relate to the places they work to (re)create. I uncovered two common unifying themes that were present in my interviews with every placemaker. The first theme, 'for the people', shows that professional placemakers are aware of the strong relationship

that exists between people and places. The placemakers spoke, in one way or another, about the way in which their work with the built environment could impact the daily lives of people. This ranged from creating safe structures, to reducing crime, instilling pride, and attracting private investment. While the ‘for the people’ theme is most dominant, it emerged differently for different placemakers. Further analysis of the data and the ‘for the people’ theme revealed that two ideal-types of placemakers can be distinguished based on their distinctive narratives. This typology was created for the purposes of analysis and discovery, and is not meant to suggest that there is no overlap between the types. It is likely that many factors not considered in this research can explain the dominance of one theme or another. I labeled the first type of placemaker ‘public servants’, and the second ‘career professionals’.

Professional placemakers who have a strong disposition toward helping people, or making a positive impact on the daily lives of people, present a dominant ‘for the people’ theme and are labeled ‘public servants’. They do the work they do because it has a social impact. In contrast, career professionals in this study led more overt conversations about their own interests in the field, their skills, and their career in their chosen profession. While the ‘for the people’ theme was much more dominant in the interviews with public servants, the theme is not absent from the interviews with career professionals. For this group, the theme takes on an auxiliary role. Career professionals are aware of the impact their work has on the daily lives of people, yet this is secondary to the dominant orientation, which is focused more so on the career of the professional and the products of their work.

The second unifying theme - pride - similarly emerged from the data and seems closely related to the typology of professional placemakers. Career professionals’ talk of pride is directed inward, while the public servants tend to direct the talk of pride outward. Career

professionals' orientation to the way in which other people are affected by their work on the built environment is secondary to their main focus on their own work and profession. This primary concern or interest on the success of their work as a professional placemaker becomes the foundation from which pride is felt. If the work is good, they feel proud. Conversely, public servants' feelings of pride are rooted in the dominant 'for the people' theme. Public servants feel pride when they see that people are having positive interactions and engagement with the products of their work on the built environment. Alternatively, some public servants also hope that pride is something that those people who are affected by the (re)creation of the built environment will feel as a result of the work. They hope that pride is something that will be seeded into the community as a result of the work they have done on the built environment.

## CHAPTER 5:

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The literature on place and place attachment has supported the notion that the built environment is as much socially constructed as it is a physical construction and material form. That is, that social processes and the built environment are not mutually exclusive or antipathetical (Altman and Low 1992, Milligan 1998, Gieryn 2000, Dixon and Durrheim 2000, Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001, Manzo 2005, Lewicka 2011). My research has sought to discover in what ways the built environment is socially constructed by the professional placemaker who engages in its physical construction. More specifically, I wanted to discover how professional placemakers form emotional bonds to the places that they work to (re)create, and what those places mean to them.

#### *Uncovering Meaning and Emotion*

Milligan's (1998) research into the concept of place attachment at a university coffee shop revealed two interacting components that work together to form place attachments - interactional past and interactional potential. In doing so, Milligan furthered the field's understanding that social interaction is the mechanism through which meanings and emotions are associated with built environments by individuals and groups. The interactions that professional placemakers have in the process of (re)creating built environments result in various meanings and emotions that are associated to that built environment. My research revealed that professional placemakers do have their own social constructions of the places they work to (re)create. That is, through their work they attach meaning to the built environment. This built environment becomes a place that

means something different for the professional placemaker than for the people who will live, work, or play in that place.

While all placemakers in this study exemplified the ‘for the people’ and pride themes, the conversations they led around those themes are different. For career professionals, the built environment is a source of pride, and a reflection of their work in the profession. For public servants, the built environment is a *stage* (Milligan 1998) on which people live, work, and play and which has direct repercussions on the daily lived experiences of those people. In sum, the data has shown that professional placemakers have thematic narratives that shape the emotions and meanings that are attached to the built environments on which they work. This, in turn, shapes the way in which the built environment is socially constructed by the professional placemaker.

Based on the analysis of the data, I argue that public servants and career professionals both have some degree of attachment to the places in which they work. However, consistent with the dichotomous typology that emerged from the data, they do so in distinctly different ways. I argue that public servants tend to have emotional bonds to places that are linked to the rewards and personal fulfillment of the work they are conducting to meet the needs of people. As they strive to help people through their work with the built environment, public servants become emotionally bonded to the place as a unique cluster of people, needs, and conditions that can be served by their position as professional placemakers. To borrow Milligan’s (1998) extension of Goffman’s dramaturgical metaphor, the built environment becomes less a product of their work as professional placemakers, and more an improved stage on which the people who inhabit that place can carry out their daily lives.

Public servants form emotional bonds to the more social aspects of the built environment.



Rather than relating to the physical form of a place, public servants connect to the people and conditions which make that place unique. In carrying out their work on the built environment, they feel a sense of reward or fulfillment because they are able to help meet the needs of people living in that place. Public servants often used strong words such as “love” or “hate” when they talked about their work, and always tied their discussion back to the way people are directly or indirectly helped by the work. This, I suggest, are examples of the “strong visceral feelings” and “emotional commitment” (Tuan 1975: 152) that produce the meanings that public servants attach to a place.

Career professionals form bonds to the places they work to (re)create in a different way. I argued that the bond career professionals have to a place is derived from that personal sense of pride that is rooted in the success of their professional work. They are emotionally bonded to a place, built environment, or physical form precisely because it is a successful product of their own work. While public servants emotionally bond to a place because it is a unique cluster of people, history, and conditions, career professionals bond to a place because it is a unique piece of the built environment that is the successful product of their work. For this type of professional placemaker, place is seen predominantly as a built environment. In Gieryn’s words, the product of their professional work remains a “unique spot in the universe” (Gieryn 2000: 464) that they etched into the built environment.

### *Accounting for Differences*

There are a number of factors to consider which may influence the tendency of placemakers to have stronger orientations toward one type or another. As stated previously, this research cannot confidently account for why there is distinctive talk about people and pride between different

placemakers. While the small sample size does not allow for any generalizable conclusions, some speculation is in order.

**Table III: Gender, Sector, Type**

	<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Sector</i>	<i>Type</i>
Women	Joanne	Public	Public Servant
	Sarah	Private	Career Professional
	Barbara	Public	Public Servant
	Elizabeth	Nonprofit	Public Servant
Men	John	Nonprofit	Career Professional
	David	Nonprofit	Public Servant
	Thomas	Private	Career Professional
	James	Public	Public Servant

**Table IV: Race, Sector, Type**

	<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Sector</i>	<i>Type</i>
Black	Barbara	Public	Public Servant
	James	Public	Public Servant
Latino	David	Nonprofit	Public Servant
Latino/White	John	Nonprofit	Career Professional
White	Elizabeth	Nonprofit	Public Servant
	Joanne	Public	Public Servant
	Sarah	Private	Career Professional
	Thomas	Private	Career Professional

Tables III and IV above show the placemakers categorized according to gender and race, respectively. In Table III we see that three of the four women interviewed presented dominant public servant type orientations, with Sarah being the only career professional. Sarah was also the only woman to work in the private sector. Two of the four men interviewed presented dominant public servant type orientations. In Table IV, the sample is divided along racial

identities. Two of the sample were identified as Black, both of whom worked in the public sector and have dominant public servant type orientations. Both Barbara and James presented talk of their work as fulfilling and rewarding in terms of their spirituality. James referred to his work as “ministry work”, while Barbara felt that she was “serv[ing] God”. David, identified as Latino, also presented a dominant public servant orientation and worked in the nonprofit sector. John, identified as mixed Latino/White, displayed dominant career professional orientations although worked in the nonprofit sector. Four participants were identified as White. Of those, two worked in the private sector and are career professional types. The remaining White placemakers were both public servant types, although one worked in the public sector, and the other in the nonprofit sector.

The sector in which placemakers work may be a defining factor influencing the patterns discovered in the data. It is likely that some sectors, more than others, are oriented toward public service, while it may be more likely for someone working in the private sector to be motivated by career interests and success. This is not to say that private sector placemakers are *not* oriented toward the public servant type, or public/nonprofit sector placemakers are *not* driven by career motivators. Overlap between the two types, constructed for the purposes of this research, is likely and perhaps more nuanced when sector, profession, and training are taken into account.

Table V below shows each placemaker and their type based on the sector in which they worked. There seems to be a clear demarcation between private sector placemakers, versus public and nonprofit sector placemakers. Both private sector placemakers presented dominant career professional orientations in their talk about people and pride. Of the six remaining placemakers working in the public and nonprofit sectors, five were dominant public servant types. This demarcation between placemaker types and sector seems to suggest that sector is a

strong factor that could account for the patterns discovered in this data. John, a nonprofit sector placemaker, seems to be an outlier because he presented a dominant career professional orientation. Such variation is to be expected and likely to be more prevalent in a larger sample. In fact, I suggest it speaks to the interrelatedness of the two themes and the nuanced differences that exist between public servants on one end of the spectrum, and career professionals on the other.

**Table V: Sector, Type**

	<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Type</i>
<b>Private Sector</b>	Thomas	Career Professional
	Sarah	Career Professional
<b>Public Sector</b>	Barbara	Public Servant
	James	Public Servant
	Joanne	Public Servant
<b>Nonprofit Sector</b>	John	Career Professional
	David	Public Servant
	Elizabeth	Public Servant

Finally, the agentic role of place in shaping the meaning a placemaker ascribes to that place could prove to be an exciting direction for future research. Table VI below shows the sample of placemakers by the place in which they worked. Since the urban redevelopment district is a public-private partnership, we can expect to find this mix of sectors in the sample. Looking at the table, it becomes apparent that the district itself takes on different meanings. Private sector placemakers working in the district construct it from a career professional orientation, while the public sector placemakers construct it from a public servant orientation. This seems to reinforce the idea that the sector in which placemakers work can influence the meanings they ascribe to different places. The neighborhood seems to be constructed mostly in

terms of the public servant type. However, it is important to caveat this by stating that my sampling procedures did not specifically seek out private sector placemakers who work in the neighborhood.

**Table VI: Place, Sector, and Type**

	<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Sector</i>	<i>Type</i>
<b>Historic, Low Income Neighborhood</b>	John	Nonprofit	Career Professional
	David	Nonprofit	Public Servant
	Elizabeth	Nonprofit	Public Servant
	Barbara	Public	Public Servant
<b>Urban Redevelopment District</b>	Thomas	Private	Career Professional
	Sarah	Private	Career Professional
	James	Public	Public Servant
	Joanne	Public	Public Servant

It seems, overall, that place does not take on a very agentic role in determining the relationship a placemaker may form to it. Rather, the sector in which the placemaker works seems to be a much more influential factor. This is not to say that place plays no role in the relationship. Rather, the data collected in this research does not allow for a vigorous exploration into that direction.

### *Implications*

I have uncovered, in this data, interesting and diverse ways in which professional placemakers form emotional bonds and attach meanings to the places they work to (re)create. This discovery is testament to the far-reaching applicability of place attachment as a concept, and as a social phenomenon. While the literature has thus far focused on social groups other than placemakers, this exploratory research has shown that professional placemakers are a group not immune to the

feelings and meanings that arise from social interaction, and which collectively work to produce attachments to places. As much as these *set designers* (Milligan 1998) are tasked with the physical construction of sites, they are equally involved in the social construction of sites as they work to create, or recreate, them.

Besides addressing a gap in the literature and further exploring the social construction of place, this research has implications for the professional field of placemaking in general. If the professionals who are tasked with (re)creating built environments are geared either more toward people or their own professional development, then this may have consequence for the places on which they work and the people who interact with those places. Earlier I cited Gieryn (2000) who comments on the role of the placemaker as a mediator between various different parties in the process of creating place. If the place itself has a meaning for the placemaker, how does this influence the vision they have for the place? Which orientation will take precedence? And, what are the consequences for the people whose daily lives are encapsulated by the places that are undergoing change as a result of the work of the professional placemaker? While my research and findings have not ventured near an answer to all of these questions, it is an exploratory first step that has set the precedent for social scientists and practicing placemakers to ask them while moving forward.

### *Future Research*

My findings have confirmed that there are emotional bonds between professional placemakers and the places they work to (re)create. While this is certainly interesting, there is more to be discovered. Future research should explore the agentic nature of place through an intensive narrative analysis of the way professional placemakers talk about the place they are working to

(re)create. How exactly do the meanings that placemakers associate with places, and the perceptions they have of those places, affect the way that place is (re)created, (re)designed, or (re)imagined? This is a fascinating line of inquiry, one which is bound to reveal interesting and dynamic relationships between placemakers, place, and the (re)creation of built environments.

Future research must explore the influence that profession and professional training has on the orientation displayed by different professional placemakers. Some placemaking professions, more so than others, may be driven to a greater extent by public servant or career professional orientations. This research did not account for this. It would be interesting to see if the typology teased out in this research remains consistent when the data is collected while holding constant the variable of profession.

Moreover, the sector in which professional placemakers work - nonprofit, public, or private - may affect the tendency of placemakers to gravitate toward public servant versus career professional type orientations. The sample used here was broad, and was collected by casting a wide net with an open definition of 'professional placemaker'. Future studies can be refined by focusing only on professional placemakers that work in the private, public, or nonprofit sectors. The very small sample size presents a considerable limitation to this endeavor. Additionally, the small sample size makes it difficult to confirm more nuanced differences between respondents of different age groups, sex and gender, racial and ethnic membership, or income groups. Previous research has shown that attachment to place varies along intersecting lines of identities (Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001, Manzo 2005).

Research on the ways in which professional placemakers form relationships to the places they work to (re)create can provide insights into the creation of built environments that are the stages of our everyday social interactions. Future research that seeks to reveal the complexity of

these relationships can contribute new knowledge to fields such as urban sociology, urban studies, urban planning, and community design. Thereby, adding to our understanding of how meaningful places are, or can be, created. The emergent themes I have discussed in this paper are only a sliver of the possible findings. Additional layers of analysis should uncover even more findings, revealing increasing complexity in the ways professional placemakers construct the places they (re)create through the meanings they associate with those places.



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**APPENDIX A:**  
**PARTICIPANT PROFILES**

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>
John	Nonprofit	Community Real Estate Development	Male	40s	White/Latino
David	Nonprofit	Community Real Estate Development	Male	30s	Latino
Elizabeth	Nonprofit	Arts Youth Learning	Female	40s	White
Barbara	Public	Housing and Community Development	Female	40s	Black
James	Public	Community Real Estate Development	Male	50s	Black
Joanne	Public	Public Art	Female	50s	White
Thomas	Private	Architecture	Male	40s	White
Sarah	Private	Interior Design	Female	30s	White

## APPENDIX B:

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### Meaning and Making in the Making of Places: A Qualitative Study of Urban Design, Planning, and Development Professionals

Pro # 00022766

*Interview Guide*

The purpose of this study is to explore the meanings and emotions that professional placemakers associate with the places in which they work. The following questions will help us get a better understanding of the affective relationships that exist between professional placemakers and the places they work to create. In this interview, we hope to hear about the experiences you have had while working in either [REDACTED] or the [REDACTED].

The following questions will ask about your personal experiences and feelings while working in one of those places. There are no right or wrong answers to questions in this interview, and you may skip any questions that you do not want to answer.

Your participation is voluntary. If at any point you wish to stop the interview, please let me know and we will terminate the interview immediately.

Your confidentiality and privacy will be protected by removing any identifying information from the transcriptions of this interview. This way the information you provide cannot be connected back to your participation in this study. The audio recordings will be permanently deleted once the transcription of the two interviews have been completed.

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#### Interview

1. Tell me about what you do. How did you get into this line of work? *Who do you work for [public vs. private]? What is your title?* What are your responsibilities? How long have you worked in this profession? ...in [REDACTED]? How long have you worked in [REDACTED]?
2. What do you like best about this work? *What is it about your work that makes you feel good?* How does it affect you personally? Does it, or has it, change(d) how you feel about [REDACTED]? How so?
3. What do you dislike about your work? *What about your work does not make you feel good?* Explain...
4. In your own words, how would you describe [REDACTED]? What kind of people live there? How do feel about [REDACTED] as a place?

5. What did you know about [REDACTED] before you began working in this place? How did you feel about [REDACTED] when you began work in this place? Why?
6. Can you tell me more about your work in [REDACTED]? What is your role specifically?
7. What is the best part of your average day at work in [REDACTED]? Do you like doing site visits? Why/why not?
8. Is there a particular (or favorite) memory that you have working in [REDACTED]? Can you tell me more about it?
9. Tell me about your favorite part of [REDACTED].
10. What do you want to accomplish with your work in [REDACTED]? What are some of your goals? What are some of the reasons for why you want to pursue these goals?
11. What would be your ideal outcome for this place? Explain.
12. How do you feel about [REDACTED] now that you have been working in it for X number of months/years (refer to question 1).
13. Do you live in [REDACTED]? Are you a [REDACTED] native? *How long have you lived in [REDACTED]? What brought you to [REDACTED]?* Do you feel “home” in [REDACTED]? What do you like/dislike about living in [REDACTED]?

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Thank you for your participation in this study.

For further information or questions regarding this study, you may contact the Principal Investigator, Wenonah M. Venter, at 941-685-6820 or [wventer@mail.usf.edu](mailto:wventer@mail.usf.edu)

## APPENDIX C:

### WALKING INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### Meaning and Making in the Making of Places: A Qualitative Study of Urban Design, Planning, and Development Professionals

Pro # 00022766

*Walking Interview Guide*

The purpose of this study is to explore the meanings and emotions that professional placemakers associate with the places in which they work. The following questions will help us get a better understanding of the affective relationships that exist between professional placemakers and the places they work to create. In this interview, we hope to hear about the experiences you have had while working in either [REDACTED] or the [REDACTED].

The following questions will ask about your personal experiences and feelings while working in one of those places. There are no right or wrong answers to questions in this interview, and you may skip any questions that you do not want to answer.

Your participation is voluntary. If at any point you wish to stop the interview, please let me know and we will terminate the interview immediately.

Your confidentiality and privacy will be protected by removing any identifying information from the transcriptions of this interview. This way the information you provide cannot be connected back to your participation in this study. The audio recordings will be permanently deleted once the transcription of the two interviews have been completed.

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#### Go-Along/Walking Interview

1. Can you tell me a story about [REDACTED]?
2. Could you show me your favorite part of [REDACTED]? What is it about this part of [REDACTED] that you like so much? How does it make you feel? Why? Was there a particular event that happened? *Can you tell me about it?*
3. Could you show me your least favorite part of [REDACTED]? What is it about this part [REDACTED] that you don't like? How does it make you feel? Why? Was there a particular event that happened? *Can you tell me about it?*
4. What are you feeling as we are driving/walking through [REDACTED]? Can you talk a little bit more about this?
5. Can you show me some other places that you like, or dislike, or are important to you?

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Thank you for your participation in this study.  
For further information or questions regarding this study, you may contact the Principal Investigator, Wenonah M. Venter, at 941-685-6820 or [wventer@mail.usf.edu](mailto:wventer@mail.usf.edu)



**APPENDIX D:**

**IRB LETTER OF APPROVAL**



RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE  
Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669  
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 • Tampa, FL 33612-4795  
(813) 974-5638 • FAX(813)974-7091

July 21, 2015

Wenonah Venter  
Sociology  
3600 E Fletcher Ave.  
Tampa, FL 33612

**RE: Expedited Approval for Initial Review**

IRB#: Pro00022766

Title: Meaning and Emotion in the Making of Places: A Qualitative Study of Urban Design, Planning, and Development Professionals

**Study Approval Period: 7/21/2015 to 7/21/2016**

Dear Ms. Venter:

On 7/21/2015, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above application and all documents contained within, including those outlined below.

**Approved Item(s):**

**Protocol Document(s):**

[Venter IRB Protocol, Version 2, 7.16.15.docx](#)

**Consent/Assent Document(s)\*:**

[Venter Minimal Risk Consent, Version 2, 7.16.2015.docx.pdf](#)

\*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent document(s) are only valid during the approval period indicated at the top of the form(s).

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:

- (6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.
- (7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval via an amendment. Additionally, all unanticipated problems must be reported to the USF IRB within five (5) calendar days.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,



John Schinka, Ph.D.,  
Chairperson USF Institutional  
Review Board