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Music Scenes, The Creative Economy, and Changing your Backyard

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The University of Southern Mississippi

Music Scenes, The Creative Economy, and Changing your Backyard

by

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A Thesis
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Abstract

City branding has become a popular tactic by cities looking to improve economic development, reputation, or attract tourists and businesses to move to its specific town or city especially with music branding. However, much of the research on city branding focuses on massive international cities.

This project focuses on how city branding can be implemented in a smaller setting, but more specifically how the uniqueness of a smaller town's music scene can be the catalyst to an effective city brand. To do this, data from the Levitt Foundation was analyzed to get a better grasp on what qualities a smaller city needs to be a music city, and a framework is offered for small cities as a guide to develop a music city brand.

The Levitt Foundation awards the Levitt AMP [Your City] Grant, which matches up to \$25,000, to help cities execute a 10-week music series. Through the analyzing of these applications, coupled with the literature review, nine themes became apparent that could lead to the implementation of a successful music-oriented city brand. This project uses these findings to suggest what qualities they should obtain to become a city.

Keywords: City Branding, Music, revitalization, small towns, placemaking, place marketing.

Dedication

To all those who enjoy live music and wish to see it grow and affect communities. To my family and friends who supported me through the whole writing process, especially to my best friend Morgan who was a constant encourager and supporter. To Dr. Blackwell who held me accountable and made sure I was doing my best work.

To The Avett Brothers – my favorite band and where my love for music began.

To God, who has blessed me beyond belief.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

City Branding

Over the past decade, cities have begun to introduce the concept of city branding to make cities more of a hub full of experiences, human capital, and opportunity rather than simply a residential location. Keith Dinnie (2011) states “as cities compete globally to attract tourism, investment and talent, as well as to achieve many other objectives, the concepts of brand strategy are increasingly adopted from the commercial world and applied in pursuit of urban development, regeneration and quality of life” (p. 3). To remain relevant, many cities are shifting their industries to become more attractive. Thus, cities have become motivated to shift to a competitor mindset and develop brands with the goal of attracting tourists, businesses, and residents who will invest in the city’s economy and culture.

City branding is far more than well-placed advertisements or Yelp reviews, though. The branding begins with policy makers and stakeholders. According to Dinnie “policy makers need to identify a clear set of brand attributes that the city possesses” (p. 5). From there, cities can develop sub-brands and an overall brand with which the city can be associated. There is no perfect strategy to best brand a city, which is logical because cities are attractive based on uniqueness, diversity, creativity, and differing opportunities whether in business or social avenues. In fact, Andrea Insch (2011), references a warning about ‘clone towns’, and how the development of major shopping areas or chain stores can damage the character of a city. There needs to be a focus on protecting the uniqueness and diversity that makes each town special and worthy of branding.

City branding encapsulates many interests of tourists, citizens, and industries. Although city branding is most often associated with external objectives such as tourist or business attractions, Insch states that residents are a key public to consider when crafting a city branding strategy. “Residents’ attitudes and attachment to the city where they live, work and play can influence the perceptions of tourists and visitors through their recommendations and complaints” (Insch, 2011, p. 8). According to Insch, residents are the city’s ambassadors, so it is vital to consider this group.

The success of city branding relies on multiple parties. Insch states that local business, local government, residents, and community groups all contribute to the effectiveness of the brand. Unlike a business that has direct investors or a product to sell, cities rely on people wanting to live there and therefore contribute based on what that city has to offer. Insch states the basic requirements of living are “affordable and accessible housing, transport, healthcare, education and training, retail outlets, leisure and recreation facilities, other public amenities, and opportunities for social interaction” (p. 10). If these are basic necessities, then cities must find something unique or attractive that influences people to pick that city over another.

Entertainment, Music, and City Branding

A great influencer of city brands is entertainment. Often, these smaller areas have a more niche entertainment audience. More specifically, these smaller cities serve as grassroots for music and art communities and can even be an initial ambassador for a specific music genre.

Jonathan Wynn and Ayse Yetis-Bayraktar (2016) state:

As the entertainment industry replaces manufacturing in many U.S. cities,

swapping steel mills and smokestacks for sports stadia and restaurant clusters, an increasing number of cities, regions, and countries, develop place branding to ‘reaffirm their identity/ies; attract and retain their share of cultural industries (and tourists); join the competitive city’s race and contribute to the design and adaptation to the public realm. (p. 204)

Wynn and Yetis-Bayraktar also suggest that music can be the catalyst to creating a cultural landscape (2016, p. 204). These landscapes encompass the the cultural experiences and sectors that eventually lead to the city brand. Therefore, music cities have begun to emerge because of music’s ability to create, bind, or solidify a community and its cultural products and experiences. In 2016, Andrea Jean Baker published an article in the *Journal of Popular Music Studies* noting her interest and authority in music scenes and branding. Baker states there are two ways a city can be classified as a music city: “by way of official accreditation or by self-proclamation” (p. 335). Cities are wanting to label themselves as music cities because they are recognizing that this is an attractive brand for residents and tourists alike.

Unsurprisingly, larger cities like San Francisco and Los Angeles have been the main focus during the introductory phases of city branding. Additionally, this concept has been globalized with cities such as Seoul and Budapest serving as great examples of city branding (Dinnie 2011). Unfortunately, city branding as a focus of study and theory has not reached far into smaller metropolitan areas. However, smaller cities can truly benefit from city branding just as larger cities can, and live music and entertainment can be the focal point for the branding process.

Although it is not a small city, Nashville is a leading example of a self-proclaiming music city as Baker notes: “Nashville was the first city in the United States to brand itself a ‘music

city,” (Baker 2016, p. 344). Nashville is an attractive city for musicians because the city connects the industry to technology, other entertainment industries (like film), and media. Nashville also has many venues through which musicians can perform and network. Baker (2016) applies Richard Florida’s concept of the three Ts, from his book *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2012), and suggests that cities like Nashville are attractive to “the Creative Class” because these cities possess talent, technology, and tolerance which are necessary for a city to be appealing and welcoming (p. 344). The Creative Class is necessary for the rebranding because they are creating much of what the city is trying to sell as the brand.

For the contributions of the Creative Class to be successful, the music scene has to be continually growing and relevant. Equally important is the authenticity of the music scenes. Connell and Gibson (2003), co-authors of *Sound Track: Popular Music, Identity and Place*, argue that “the link between music, tradition [and] ‘spatial identity’ is important in ‘fixing authenticity’ in the invention of music scenes” (p. 18). Therefore, authenticity during the branding stage is critical.

The benefits of city branding are vast, but the economic benefits are especially apparent. Because the music industry has many direct and indirect economic benefits, a thriving live music scene can be a propelling avenue to revitalize a city’s economic profile and cultural focus. Michael Raine (n.d.), author of *Putting music cities on the Map*, provides seven benefits of a music city: “economic impact; music tourism; city brand building; cultural development and artistic growth; attracting and retaining talent and investment outside of the music industry; strengthening the social fabric; and validating music as a respected and legitimate industry” (p. 10). For many cities the economic impact is the most significant benefit. According to Raine, Austin, Texas’ music tourism industry is responsible for \$800 million of its economy and \$38

million in tax revenue to the city. Most of the music tourism revenue is generated from ticket sales, production sales, and “music-related spending on such things as food, drink, accommodation, [and] transport” (p. 11). Promotion, graphic design, and music business industries, like management and publishing, are also contributing to the city’s economy.

Statement of Purpose

As stated, developing a city’s brand is more than advertisements and reviews, and the benefits of branding are more than a slogan; however, most city branding literature focuses on larger cities. Because the significance of branding a city is well-documented for large, international metropolitan cities, this research focuses on how city branding (specifically as it relates to music) can be scaled and applied to cities with populations of fewer than 400,000 and how music can truly create civic pride, ownership, and eventually catalyze the revitalization of a city and its brand.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

What is a Brand?

Before introducing city branding, it is important to explore the basic role of a brand and the art of branding. Winfield-Pfefferkorn (2005) conceptualizes branding as, “the idea that one product is made more valuable, [or] has more equity than an alternative because it is attached to a recognizable name and promise of authenticity” (p. 12). Branding is formed out of consumer choice, and it is in constant change based on target audiences. The main purpose of branding is to make your product, or in this case a city, more attractive or desirable to live in or visit. If a brand can further establish a product, company, or city as better or more attractive than the competition, consumers will be more willing to choose the branded product. Instead of trying to sell a singular product or loyalty to a company, city branding is “selling a lifestyle” (2005, p. 12). The brand invites its residents and visitors to be active stakeholders in the value and growth of the city.

City Branding and the Creative City

To begin the city branding process, local government and community leaders must first establish a brand they want to market. Many cities are beginning to recognize the benefits of introducing a creative city approach, which can lead to attracting highly educated and creative individuals to move and invest in the city’s culture and economy (Florida, 2012). This group of people, or as Richard Florida (2012) calls them, the Creative Class, can shift a city’s culture to a technology and entertainment focus versus a more traditional industry approach. In *Creative Cities, Cultural Clusters, and Local Economic Development*, Philip Cooke and Luciana Lazeretti (2008) describe a creative city as, “usually thought of in terms that combine the

cultural economy and the creative industries even though they usually occupy different ‘quarters’” (p. 3). The authors state the importance is to assign a focus on the creative industries thus developing a unique brand depending on what the creative market in a specific city looks like.

Creative City Models. First, what is creativity in terms of city? Originally, the creative city model, based on Richard Florida’s theory, highlights creativity as the main attribute to economic growth. Florida’s theory, as seen in Grodach (2013), encourages cities to focus on “attracting the highly educated and mobile Creative Class, which includes a wide spectrum of occupations ranging from software programmers to visual artists” (p. 1749). The model focuses on creating policies that attract the Creative Class with increased quality of life, redevelopment of historic neighborhoods, and investing in “vibrant arts scenes and outdoor activities” (p. 1749). The Creative Class theory has received criticism over potential socio-spatial injustices and gentrification (Grodach 2013, Ponzini and Rossi 2010), because the language suggests revitalizing cultural locations or providing cultural experiences to the Creative Class population and tourists while also making these locations more expensive to live in. This creates a separation between the cultural products and the populations who originally created them. Even with the criticism, Florida’s (2012) theory has been used in several cities.

To classify creative cities, Smith and Warfield (2008) provide two approaches: the cultural-centric orientation or an econo-centric orientation. According to the authors, the former places value on creative contributions to the city, which improves the quality of life of citizens while the econo-centric orientation prioritizes economic development and growth over the artistic/cultural values. The econo-centric orientation may increase quality of life for a city’s citizens due to increased investment or development because of more available funds, but this

approach is more product/profit focused. The culture-centric view regards the creative city as one with “flourishing arts and culture, creative and diverse expressions, and inclusivity, artistry and imagination. Creativity is conceived of as having some relations to identity, rights, beliefs and general social well-being” (p. 289). The culture-centric view assigns a heavy importance on creativity itself and not the tangible products creativity can create. Differently, the econo-centric utilizes the competitive cultural and creative industries as large contributors to the local economy. “According to the econo-centric conception, creativity is a means to achieve a foremost goal of local economic development, and as such, creative endeavors and ventures have some quantifiable value or measure” (p. 292). Florida (2012), an urban economist, popularized the idea of implementing a creative city approach, and his theory includes a symbiotic relationship with Smith and Warfield’s cultural and econo-centric concepts.

According to Florida (2012) “many say that we now live in an information economy or a knowledge economy. But what’s more fundamentally true is that for the first time, our economy is powered by creativity” (p. 6). Florida’s theory relies on economic success and cultural revitalization to create an attractive city for the Creative Class population. Basically, the theory states that using cultural hotspots and technology improvements could recruit people who are creative (or classified in the Creative Class) and who could potentially create or improve a creative economy. Florida defines the Creative Class as, “people in science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music, and entertainment whose economic function is to create new ideas, new technology, and new creative content” (p. 8). This desire for the Creative Class has motivated cities to implement some of Florida’s ideas in their city branding and city planning strategies.

For example, Ponzini and Rossi (2010) state that cities such as Copenhagen and Austin have implemented strategies based on Florida's theory. Florida highlights the benefits to attracting the Creative Class to revitalize urban development and introduce a cultural renaissance of sorts. However, Grodach (2013) summarizes four additional "Cultural Economy" models (p. 1748), along with Florida's Creative Class model, that can impact a city's cultural economy and overall growth and development.

Convention Model. The Convention Model focuses on attracting outside firms and investments, implementing city marketing campaigns and redevelopment projects, and highlighting arts and cultural activities. Grodach states "everything is considered as a tool to attract tourists and create a distinct image to stand out in a competitive marketplace" (Grodach, 2013, p. 1749).

Cultural Industries Model. The Cultural Industries Model focuses on "interlocking clusters of many specialized firms that rely on high levels of part-time and project-based employment in fields where rapid changes in design and consumer preferences are the norm" (Grodach, 2013). This approach places a focus on improving the industrial sector of the city. Labor markets, training opportunities, and promotion of cross-industry networking are factors of the Cultural Industries Model. This model is less focused on improving cultural sectors for the specific benefit of attracting new residents, but rather invests in city industries that can network with one another. The Cultural Industries can inherently attract new residents, but that is not the main focus.

Cultural Occupations Model. The Cultural Occupations Model "concentrates specifically on the characteristics and needs of artists (musicians, writers, and performing and visual artists), and to a lesser extent those of workers in design and media-related fields" (p.

1749). This model focuses more on the what people do (occupations) rather than what they produce. The model additionally places self-employment at high levels in various art sectors, which influences policies to supply resources towards the needs of these individual artists.

Cultural Planning Model. The Cultural Planning Model utilizes a “neighborhood-level development” that focuses on local arts, culture and heritage. This approach “focuses on identifying and developing community cultural resources in a structured and inclusive planning process, and building community capacity and social relationships within and between communities” (p. 1750). This model invests heavily in lower income areas by using informal or grassroots organizations and artists to create a partnership. Rather than investing in ‘cultural districts,’ this model concentrates on “neighborhood cultural clusters” (p. 1750). In his second article on cultural economies, Grodach (2017) further explains the Cultural Planning Model:

[The Cultural Planning Model] argued for an approach that blended community engagement with economic development. [Proponents] aimed to integrate the idea of culture as a way of life into the entire system of planning, arguing that cultural industries, craft, local heritage, and other ‘cultural resources’ functioned as a catalyst for development. (p. 84)

In this model, Grodach is suggesting a more fluid approach to where the cultural planning is focused on connecting communities and neighborhoods through natural planning that showed benefits of working together to create a community-based economic development strategy.

City Branding and Place Marketing

As explored later in this chapter, branding for smaller cities has a different set of challenges than branding for a larger city. For any city, but more importantly for a smaller city to

effectively brand itself, it is usually necessary to use a network strategy. Both Avraham and Daugherty (2009) and Dinnie (2011) highlight the ‘network approach’ that is necessary to creating a place marketing or city branding strategy. While Avraham and Daugherty (2009) do not specifically address city branding, their citing of Gold and Ward’s 1994 definition of place marketing is almost interchangeable to the overall concept of city branding, because at their basic levels, both are conceptually designed to make a place/city more attractive. Gold and Ward (1994), as cited in Avraham and Daugherty (2009), define place promotion as “‘the conscious use of publicity and marketing to communicate selective images of specific geographical localities or areas to a target audience’” (p. 332). One aspect of place marketing is the transformation of local government (policies and leadership) and the involvement of businesses within the community, thus reinforcing this idea of a support group, or network, to support the brand and promotion of the area. Well-established infrastructure, both in physical venues and private and public partnerships, create a network that can market the chosen brand with the most effective approach.

Dinnie (2011) summarizes city branding as transferring branding concepts and strategies from the commercial world and applying them towards urban development and increased quality of life, which is similar to Florida’s (2012) theory. According to Dinnie (2011), part of the “brand architecture” (p. 4) is the network approach, which “focuses on the need for a collaborative approach between public and private sector organizations and a *distributive* approach to the ownership of the city branding strategy” (p. 6).

Kavaratzis (n.d.) summarizes the culture city branding in a five-step process. According to him “in order for cities to be able to take advantage of their cultural offering and attract and keep creative people in their settings, they need to work on building the necessary infrastructure”

(p. 5). To build this infrastructure, the first step is “Beginnings” or idea generation (p. 5). This step is rooted in creativity and “examines the capacity of a city as a site for idea(s) generations” (p. 5).

Step two, “Production,” strives to “turn this ‘creativity’ into production” (p. 5).

Kavaratzis claims this step is still an analysis process because the city officials or partners have to assess what resources/populations they have and if they possess the capability to “aid the transformation of ideas into marketable products,” or in this case, a marketable brand.

Kavaratzis calls step three “Circulation.” This step includes assessing the quality of the “marketing agencies and promoters, distributors...” that help create the actual product or brand and being realistic about what support resources are available. Kavaratzis uses this step as an analysis of the infrastructure of the creation and distribution team (p. 5).

The fourth step, which is arguably the most important, is "Delivery." Kavaratzis writes that Delivery - venues, television cinema, shops - “are mechanisms that allow cultural product and services to be consumed and enjoyed; it is about the places in which they are seen, experienced and bought” (p. 5). This step is basically organizing the vehicles that are going to introduce and reinforce the created brand or cultural products.

The final step “Audiences,” is full of feedback. The brand or products will be critiqued, and an assessment of brand effectiveness can take place. Additionally, Kavaratzis recommends reviewing the reachability of the brand or cultural products within a given area. This last step will show cities and their partners the changes that need to be made in their branding strategy.

While branding a city through entertainment or other cultural variables can lead to economic success, this is not the most attractive quality of the city. Kavaratzis quotes Mommaas (2002) as saying “...economic functionality alone does not explain the attraction and popularity

of city branding. Its socio-cultural effect is also important. Brands derive their attraction largely from the fact that they introduce a certain order or coherence to the multiform reality around us” (p. 5-6). The branding itself introduces, disseminates, or more easily presents an already existing culture and norm for a set of people to a different set of people. The sharing of these cultures is assisted through the creation of the brand because as Kavatzis says “Brands enable us to more easily ‘read’ each other and our environment of places and products” (p. 6). The brands almost translate the environment or the city’s resources in a more acceptable or attractive format.

Dark Side of City Branding

The most highly critiqued model is the creative city model, due to it being the most well-researched. Ponzini and Rossi (2009) state that the Creative Class model is attractive at first because it showcases the potential of successfully “redesigning a more attractive urban realm” (p. 1037). However, the authors are more concerned with how the creative city model does not benefit, and rather further distances, less fortunate classes. Ponzini and Rossi (2009) state:

At the neighborhood level, a larger number of artists and cultural actors benefit from the cultural policies of revitalization, but [it is] the poorer long-term residents who are excluded from the benefits of a policy strategy that has the effect of increasing housing prices and improving the liveliness and attractiveness of the neighborhood, but appears not to be concerned with the issues of social inclusion and life-chance provision that are most relevant in socially deprived areas. (p. 1039)

Basically, the creative city model has the potential to benefit members of the Creative Class and more affluent residents and tourists who are interested in a cultural experience, but the model has

an equally dangerous potential of displacing poorer classes or creating more economic stress for those who actually live and influence these culturally rich areas.

According to Ponzini and Rossi (2009), this notion of a cultural-based economy started before Richard Florida's Creative Class theory (p. 1039). Policies of urban redevelopment and focusing on culture and creative economies stem from international changes. For example, Ponzini and Rossi (2009) state that "Recent years have witnessed a widespread 'cultural turn' in urban and regional policies. Policies of local economic development, urban regeneration and revitalization have been in the forefront of these developments" (p. 1039). The authors then suggest that more time for leisure and increased costs of entertainment are of this change in the global economy.

Therefore, having more time outside of work and home-life created the opportunity to explore other cultures and the tangible or intangible products of those cultures. The increased opportunity to explore these things like new music, food, technology, etc. is what Florida argues as the necessary factor to attract the Creative Class and thus introduce a more creative economy. However, issues arise when the products or *feel* of a peoples' culture is valued more than the people who embody that culture.

Accordingly, when choosing a model for a city branding strategy it is vital for cities and city partners to consider potential consequences of class displacement, gentrification, and monetized cultural appropriation. There has been no discovery of the perfect creative economy model, but a hybrid of sorts seems most appropriate. This hybrid relies very heavily on a city's stakeholders since each stakeholder has a role in developing the brand itself.

The City Brand and Place Identity

Even though city branding and place marketing conversations usually revolve around potential tourism earnings, there are many other stakeholders who are important contributors to creating the city brand as Kavaratzis (n.d.) states, “Crucial for city branding are two elements that connect it to culture. The first is the importance of the image of the city for city branding and its power to influence even the shaping of the city itself. The second is the heavy dependence of the city’s brand on the city’s identity” (p. 3).

As earlier discussed, residents play a crucial role in not only helping in creating the brand, but also enforcing and furthering the success of the brand. Insch (2011) states that “Undervaluing the stake that residents have in shaping and enhancing a city’s brand could undermine the aims and intentions of city’s original brand strategy” (p. 8). Insch posits that fulfilling every hope of a town’s residential population is unrealistic. However, residents are the front line of a branding strategy and everyday they can contribute to building or depleting the brand depending on their attitudes towards the city. Insch states that enhancing a residential living experience will increase the residents’ commitment to the city and eventually mold them to city ambassadors, and that “since residents are the lifeblood of the community they should be involved in determining the city’s long-term economic, social, and environmental direction. Articulating a shared vision for the city’s future is the starting point for crafting the city brand strategy” (p. 12).

As mentioned earlier, the stakeholder that cities often think of first is the tourist. According to Hospers (2011) “Competition between cities for tourists has intensified. Against this background, more and more cities invest in city branding” (p. 27). To cities, tourists bring an influx of capital with their shopping, eating, or engaging in experiences that the city offers.

However, the tourists have to be attracted to the city to visit, unless they are already passing through on the way to a different final destination. “The branding strategies employed are usually twofold: cities emphasize either material characteristics of the place such as buildings and events, or its immaterial aspects, for example, stories, slogans, and logos. In this way, cities hope to differentiate themselves from the competition and attract tourists” (Hospers, 2011, p. 27). Tourists want a new or different experience than what is offered where they live. “Take the example of New York: most visitors want to see the Statue of Liberty, Wall Street and Little Italy. As Tourists we usually look for different things in a place than its inhabitants; we adopt a ‘tourist gaze’” (p. 28).

As mentioned previously, to be successful in a brand implementation there usually needs be a network of partners. So partners are naturally a stakeholder in the city’s brand as well. Gelder (2011) demonstrates partners’ brand ownership stating that “City branding is different from traditional location and destination marketing and investment promotion in that it drives and inspires consistent and on-brand behavior by all of its stakeholders, rather than just those organizations responsible for sending out marketing messages” (p. 36). Gelder (2011) emphasizes the importance of communication, relationships, and shared vision between partners. Gelder stresses:

For city branding to be successful, it is necessary for its key stakeholder organizations to come together in partnership. This is not your usual public-private partnership or a committee of wise men and women. This is a formal or informal body in which key stakeholders jointly develop, create and lead on the implementation of the brand of the place, under shared responsibility. (p. 43)

Gelder plainly states that a successful brand requires these positive and effective stakeholder/partnership relationships.

Placemaking/Third Places

As seen earlier in the literature review, community and stakeholder engagement is important to creating a successful city brand. Therefore, this city engagement needs a gathering location for the engagement to take place. This is where Oldenburg's (1989) idea of "third places" comes in. In their article, Williams and Hipp (2018) summarize third places in Oldenburg's theory as, "conducive to social interaction and community outside of home and work," and that "third places are thought to be at the very heart of public life, as they foster sociability and provide the normative context for interaction between strangers" (p. 68).

Basically, these spaces are necessary and responsible for creating an environment for various population groups to interact and even develop relationships in a natural setting and approach.

Williams and Hipp (2018) provide brief criteria to meet this "third place" classification by writing:

Their activities tend to be unstructured and unscheduled, patrons do not act as formal hosts, [the places] do not require a formal membership or significant monetary spending to occupy the space, they are designed to facilitate conversation above all else, and they are temporally and spatially accessible. Further, third places are argued to be social levelers, in the sense that the social distance which is so determinant of formal associations has less bearing on the casual association of individuals in such spaces. (p. 69).

These third places are causal and informal and provide a level of comfort that may be harder to find in more formal or regulated structures. There is a natural sense of community and the place creates an inviting environment for people to socialize with one another. Notice the inclusivity language as well: “do not require membership or significant monetary spending.” The spaces do not block populations with a monetary gatekeeper. Gathering places are important to bridge cultural divides, encourage sociability, and provide opportunities for people groups to learn about and experience other lifestyles. Williams and Hipp state that “repeated social interactions in informal settings among neighborhood residents should increase social cohesion, and serve as a mechanism by which strangers come to personally know each other, at least by sight” (p. 71). The authors further advocate that this social interaction is more common in lower income neighborhoods.

Where is the Love for the Small Town?

A significant issue is that most city branding case studies or general literature about city branding centers on large or midsize metropolitan areas like New York, Los Angeles, Seoul, Nashville, or Austin. The purpose of this research is to develop a music branding strategy for a city with a population of fewer than 400,000. The population cap of 400,000 is the limit for the Levitt Amplify Music Places (AMP) Grant applicants, which will be discussed further in the Levitt Model subsection of the paper. However, many of the Levitt AMP applicants have far smaller populations. The inspiration stemmed from recognizing the unique roles smaller towns or cities can have in a cultural environment or niche music market. In fact, James et al. (2016) reiterate the missed opportunity of not studying smaller cities when they state that “smaller cities are under-theorized, with urban theories being largely developed with ‘exclusive focus on the

biggest cities’, which misses the full diversity of ‘urban form and function’” (p. 1163). Most small cities have a unique identity and feel, and the lack of focus on the smaller cities creates a missed opportunity on seeing how smaller towns create unique brands.

As mentioned in the introduction, cities are actively competing to increase city-brand recognition and human capital. According to Avraham and Daugherty (2009) “Countries, cities, towns and tourist destinations all around the globe have started competing much more intensively for high-class-residents, tourists, conventions, sporting events, entrepreneurs, investors, industries, business and global capital” (p. 331). A significant issue for smaller cities is the matter of cost for large marketing campaigns to which larger cities have easier access. In addition, smaller cities generally do not receive national media attention like Boston, Los Angeles or New York unless a negative event occurs (Avraham & Daugherty, 2009).

According to Norman (2013), small cities play an important role in the economy because they tend to have more diversified economic streams than larger cities. Norman introduces the concept of a *glocal* places. He defines a glocal place as “small cities and surrounding environs that look somewhat like major cities of the world but are not very large in terms of population” (p. 132). Norman states that glocal cities tend to have a wide range of education levels and jobs that match. In the same city, one could find a manufacturing industry and a university that help create the aforementioned diversified economy. Norman suggests that “levels of education, racial composition, and [place of origin] of a population are most closely tied to success for small cities rather than degree of openness to alternative lifestyles” (p. 141). Norman compares his findings to Florida’s theory of making cities attractive by making them more tolerant of differing lifestyles. However, one could argue that Norman’s findings could potentially lead to a more

openness to differing lifestyles, thus creating a more attractive environment solely based on the diversity and interactions that take place in the city.

What are small cities doing? There are some strategies that small cities can model from larger cities, but economic availability, population, geography, financial resources, and the place identity/culture need to be considered when transferring ideas to the smaller town. James et al. (2016), writes about a case study in Denmark and New Zealand where major metropolitan areas, Copenhagen and Auckland, were studied and compared to smaller cities with populations of 100,000 or fewer. Similar to Dinnie (2011) and Avraham and Daugherty (2009), James et al. (2016) found a collective effort was necessary for the town's success, and "the emergence of various new forms of proactive, collective action between a variety of private stakeholders and public local institutions is important" (p. 1164). An advantage for small cities is the ability to strongly explore their place identity, and local government can be the pioneers to reforming the town's development or planning based on the area's cultural identity (p. 1165). James et al. write, "one important recent shift has been towards a re-emphasis on 'place', particularly focused on place-making and place-shaping as legitimate pursuit of local authorities" (p. 1165). Thus, one of the beginning stages of the Invercargill's transformation was implementing the Local Government Act 2002. The act recalibrated the city council's focus on social, economic, environmental, and cultural aspects of the community. Before the act, there was not much intention towards the way the town was perceived.

Where does music come in? There are many different strategies available for a city to use as the hub of their city branding implementation. However, there is an incredible relationship between music and place and how music can not only represent a place, but also become a contributor to the identity and culture of the area. Hudson (2006) states that "both historically

and contemporarily there are strong links between music and senses of place and identities, both of people and places” (p. 626). A place where music is played, produced, and encouraged is one that creates a deep connection with the people who live there. Baker (2016) interviewed participants about what made Nashville and Austin such great music cities and found that “[Nashville and Austin] are natural environments for ‘authentic’ and ‘innovative’ local ‘music scenes’. . . [the cities] encapsulate a ‘sense of place’ and ‘love of place’” (p. 342).

In terms of identity, music lies somewhere between local cultural lagniappe and a vital joint of the consistent moving, shaking, and developing of the place. Some scholars disagree on music’s role because first the possible limitations of the place have to be discovered and defined. For example, Hudson (2006) said:

Places can be thought of as complex entities, ensembles of material objects, people, and systems of social relationships embodying distinct cultures and multiple meanings, identities and practices. As such, places are contested and continually in the process of becoming, rather than essentialized and fixed, open and porous to a variety of flows in and out rather than closed and hermetically sealed. (p. 627)

In short, places are constantly evolving and adapting in correlation with change in economies, populations, and even culture. One could argue that this shiftiness assigns an even deeper responsibility for music to essentially give a glimpse of a place and the possibility to serve as a tether to the roots and identity of the place. Kavaratzis (n.d.) states “most cities have possibilities and opportunities to emphasize their cultural offering in order to promote themselves” (p. 4). As music can become a representation of this culture, a live music scene can become an active participant in a city’s brand. An active participant is something that can adjust easily and represent the people easily. Very few things are as fluid as music.

Levitt Model

The Mortimer and Mimi Levitt Foundation was started in 1963 by Mortimer and Mimi Levitt to “support the arts, culture and education” (“Mortimer..,” 2019). What started with supporting youth music programs has become one of the largest private music grants in the country. The Levitts were driven to improve communities through the power of live music, so they sought to build community places where people could gather and artists could showcase their talent. The first Levitt Pavilion was completed in 1974 in Westport, Connecticut (“Mortimer..,” 2019). The Foundation now has two grant application opportunities. Cities can apply for a Levitt venue grant where a Levitt stage is built or apply for a Levitt AMP [Your City] Music Series grant, which awards matching grants of \$25,000 to up to 15 small to mid-sized towns in the United States (“How Levitt AMP works,” 2019).

The Levitt AMP Music Series grant can only be awarded to cities or towns with a population of 400,000 or fewer and emphasizes Amplify Music Places. The grants are filed by nonprofit organizations that serve these specific cities. The AMP grant funds a Music Series that includes 10 free outdoor concerts presented over 10 to 12 weeks. The Music Series features diverse lineups that change weekly and cities are provided with social media kits, sponsorship packets, sample artist contracts, and more resources to ensure success for the Music Series (“How it works,” 2019). After the applications are submitted, it is the community’s responsibility to spread awareness and prompt people to vote online to choose the top 25 finalists. The Levitt Foundation awards up to 15 cities from the top 25 (“Frequently Asked Questions,” 2018).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Because of the need for guidelines for smaller cities to develop as a music city, the original method for gathering data for this project was focused on studying cities' infrastructure, policies, and whether the city itself was already branding itself as a music city. However, most of this information was difficult to find and inconsistent, so the data gathering shifted to the Levitt Foundation AMP grant applications. With its proven commitment to developing music cities, this project used Levitt's model of grant funding to small cities and towns as a framework for what makes a strong music city for cities with a population of 400,000 or fewer. Using content

analysis, the top 25 cities from the past four years of grant applications were analyzed. Citizens of each town are responsible for getting their town into the top 25 with online voting. From there, the Levitt Foundation selects up to 15 cities to award the AMP grant.

As mentioned in the literature review, Levitt began the AMP [Your City] Grant in 2014 and has been awarding \$25,000 matching grants to cities all over the country ever since to help improve community places through music. Levitt has a successful record of creating and improving music and gathering places in smaller cities (“About the awards,” 2019). The AMP award can only be given to cities with populations of 400,000 or fewer, so that served as the limiting factor for “small city” or town for this project. Levitt has had great success in identifying smaller cities and towns with great music potential, which is why the Levitt data was appropriate for this project. The project reviewed multi-year grant recipients, non-recipients, and non-recipients that were later selected for the grant within the four-year time period.

The theme groupings were selected based on similar themes drawn from the literature review such as the Creative Class theory, placemaking, and economic development. Levitt’s applications kept consistency with their application questions for every year other than 2015. The years 2016-2019 asked three main questions: “How will your town or city benefit from the Levitt AMP [Your City] Music series?” “How will your proposed Levitt AMP [Your City] reflect the essence of the Levitt AMP Grant Awards?” and “Tell us about the site where the concerts will be held and how the Levitt AMP [Your City] Music Series will enliven the selected public space.” The 2015 applications asked these three questions, but also included: “Tell us about your experience, or your partner organization’s experience if applicable, presenting concerts and/or community events.” However, this additional question was not analyzed because 2015 was the only year to include it.

During the analysis and the theme groupings, language that directly addressed Levitt's values in the city's proposal was not gathered to try and accurately assess the city's genuine themes and not themes that were heavily influenced by Levitt's language. After the data was gathered, it was used to develop themes that can help smaller cities become more music friendly and then utilize their music scene(s) in their city branding plan. A list of the multi-year winners by theme can be found in Table 1. Additionally, non-recipient theme representation can be found in Appendix A and B. Lastly, a graph comparing grant recipient cities and non-recipient cities' theme representations can be found in Appendix C.

Chapter 4: Findings

Through the Levitt AMP [Your City] Music Series application content analysis conducted for this research, several themes emerged from the data. Data were gathered from multi-year grant recipients and non-recipients by year. Then, the grant recipients and non-recipients were cross analyzed to assess differences and commonalities. The multi-year recipients were cities that received a grant at least twice through the scope of the study (2015-2019). The non-recipients were cities that made it to the top 25, but were not selected for a grant.

For the multi-year grant recipients, there were 20 multi-year winners associated with nine themes represented within the applications. However, it is important to note that often during the application, a city may have represented a theme more than once especially since this section is a

multi-year analysis. It is also important to note that the supporting quotes were selected because they represented the specific themes and does not imply that one city represented this theme more than other cities in the same category.

Similarly to the grant recipients, a non-recipient analysis was completed from 2015-2019. Only cities that made it to the top 25 and then did not receive a grant were included. This means if a city applied in an earlier year and won, and then reapplied and lost, they were not included in the non-recipient category. A summary of findings for the multi-year winners by theme is provided in Table 1. A summary of the non-recipient cities by year and theme can be found in Appendix A. The percentages shown in each category were found by dividing the number of cities represented in that category by the total number of cities in its group (non-recipient group or grant recipient group).

Downtown Emphasis

A very common theme within the applications was Downtown Emphasis. Sixteen of the 20 multi-year grant recipients emphasize the importance of the music series to the downtown area. This was operationalized through the mention or reference of the city's downtown within their applications. However, the majority of these cities' music series revolved around their downtown area and were relying on their downtowns to be the starting part of the town's rejuvenation.

For example, Sheboygan's application stated that "[The series] will create a vibrant, public space in the downtown core in need of rejuvenation," or as Jacksonville's application stated "Since downtown revitalization is not a project with a beginning and an end, but a continual process with a comprehensive strategy and evolving objectives, [Jacksonville Main Street] now faces the challenge of promoting the area to future businesses and customers."

Looking at recipients versus non-recipients from 2015-2019, 24 out of 40 non-recipients showed an emphasis towards the city's downtown area. However, no more than seven cities in an individual year shows this emphasis at one time. In fact, 2015 only had three cities that showed this emphasis. This is 60 percent of non-recipients showed an overall downtown emphasis while the awarded cities finished with an 80 percent in this category.

Community Engagement, Civic Pride and Enriched City Livelihood

Because Mortimer Levitt made his fortune in the textile industry, one of Levitt's main values is "enriching a community's fabric," which somewhat leads cities to concepts of community engagement, civic pride, or enriched city livelihood. However, it can be seen how a music series could revive these qualities within a city by attracting audiences and producing an event that would make the citizens proud. The cities in this theme were identified if they used key words such as "civic pride" or "community engagement," and also if the language connoted such ideals like "bringing different groups of people together." Every grant recipient application (20 of 20) included the idea of community engagement, civic pride, or similar concepts.

For example, Charlottesville highlighted this theme stating that "Through this concert series, we hope to overcome barriers and strengthen the social fabric of our community. Bringing these groups together will require diverse methods of marketing and outreach." Charlottesville's application reinforced this by stating that "Too often, Charlottesville's music and cultural scenes operate in silos. This free concert series seeks to bring them together." Furthermore, the Carson City applications stated that "Carson City was hit hard by the recession but is now on the verge of great things all of which depend on community engagement and pride in ownerships encouraging our citizens to partake in its vibrant arts community." Again, the city recognized the

value of community engagement and civic pride. A less obvious example is offered in Frederick's application which stated that "The partnership is structuring the Levitt AMP Frederick Music Series to maximize the opportunity for all community members to participate and enjoy great live music in an underutilized space."

While community engagement and civic pride were stressed in the applications of recipients, for 2015-2019, 26 out of 40 non-recipient cities highlighted community engagement within their applications, including 2016 having the most representation with all 10 of its non-recipients. Overall though, 100 percent of the awarded cities displayed community engagement while 65 percent of the non-recipients did.

Economic Development/Revitalization (Using the music series as catalyst or placing music in underused space to launch revitalization/Tourism)

Applications were put in the economic development/revitalization/tourism theme if they offered key words including: economic development, revitalization, revive, rejuvenate, economy, tourism, visitors, and/or underused space. Some cities even referenced a monetary value as their result of the music series. In the general economic development theme, cities were included if they were showing (or hoping for) an economic result from the music series, but not necessarily putting an economic focus on the music/cultural influence towards their economic development which more aligns with the Creative Class theme. Sixteen of the 20 cities had the economic development/revitalization/tourism theme. For example, according to the Carson City application "The budget for 2017 Levitt AMP Carson City series was over \$100,000 which means the economic impact for Carson City was over half a million." Carson City explicitly stated how the music series affected the city economically. However, most of the applications were similar Denison's. Denison's application stated that "The concert series also helps to improve our local

economy by attracting new customers to the area.” While this example is more general, Denison still recognized the potential economic impact.

For non-recipients during 2015-2019, 21 out of 40 cities included economic development as goals within their application. This resulted in a 52.5 percent representation while the awarded cities resulted in 80 percent in this category.

Partnerships/Non-Profit Emphasis

In 2018, Levitt began allowing cities to list community partners on a separate part of the application. However, this was not the case for years 2015-2017. Therefore, for consistency, cities were only placed in this theme if they provided information about relationships with partners within the text of the main application. Key words for this section included: partners, partnership, and non-profit. Based on their applications, some cities emphasized their relationships with partners while others just mentioned an existing relationship, and 11 of the 20 are included in this theme.

Galva’s 2019 application highlighted successful relationships with non-profits and volunteers with “The Levitt AMP Galva Music Series had a tremendous positive impact, bringing live music to over 7,000 people, many for the first time, engaging 75 volunteers, and engaging 18 non-profit organizations.” This application stated the most relationships with non-profits versus any other city in the analysis. Additionally, Utica’s 2016 application stated that “government, businesses and universities are providing shared research and resources,” implying the city has partnered with these institutions to make their city’s music series a successful one.

Comparing recipients to non-recipients during 2015-2019 only three out of 40 non-recipient cities stated a relationship with partners (other than partnering with Levitt) within their application. This resulted in a 7.5 percent, while the awarded cities resulted in 55 percent.

Diversity/Inclusion/Accessibility

Levitt values the importance of diversity, inclusion, and accessibility for all populations. Even though this theme is valued by Levitt, cities were put in this theme if they showed intense commitment to diversity, inclusion, and accessibility, and key words include the former three along with socio-economic, divide, and bridging the gap. For cities that did emphasize this as a goal, it was usually made a large focus within the application. For example, Denison's 2015 application stated that "Music on Main lets the diverse people of groups of Denison, TX come together and engage in the activities in a public park right next to main street." Denison used the music series as the inviting factor that allowed and encouraged diverse groups to interact. Woonsocket's 2018 application stated "[the music series is in] the heart of the city, [and] is easily accessible by individuals of all abilities, incomes, and races." Woonsocket ensured Levitt and potential audiences that their music series will be accepting of all groups of people. Eighteen of the 20 applications emphasized the diversity, inclusion, and accessibility theme.

For non-recipients during 2015-2019, 26 out of 40 cities emphasized themes of diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. This was tied for the highest representation with community engagement for non-recipients and resulted in 65 percent while the awarded cities resulted in 95 percent.

Rebranding/Identity/City (area) Attractiveness

Nine of the 20 cities within the analysis saw the opportunity to use the music series as a rebranding tool for their community. While a rebranding/identity shift may have been an unforeseen effect of cities not included in this theme, cities that explicitly noted language about identity or brand, or implied that the music series would make their city more attractive were included in this theme. One of St. Johnsbury's goals in its 2017 application was to "enhance community pride and brand identity" and to "cement our identity as a working class cultural hub." This application stated how St. Johnsbury's aimed to create and solidify their specific town's brand. Santa Fe showed its goal of becoming more attractive to a specific population by including "Santa Fe is also striving to keep Santa Fe youth in the city while at the same time appealing to a younger demographic nationally, urging them to start a business."

Looking at recipients versus non-recipients from 2015-2019, one out of 40 mentioned the city's identity as an important aspect to their application. This resulted in a 2.5 percent representation while the awarded cities resulted in 45 percent of cities displaying themes of rebranding or identity.

Resident Emphasis (Active Role in Music Series – Not just Audience)

For the music series, one can assume the residents of the city would comprise most of the audience, but not always the planning and execution. Six of 20 cities in this theme had residents engaged in the series planning and execution. Residents took further ownership over the success of the series and sought out opportunities to make it their own. Berea showed their residential involvement in their 2018 application by stating "We hosted public gatherings before and after the series to solicit feedback and identify segments of the community on which to focus our

outreach efforts.” Berea created opportunities to allow residents to take more ownership with these focus groups. Additionally, Stevens Point showed this commitment in their 2017 application stating “Through the city’s comprehensive planning process, residents have voiced a desire to program more frequent, accessible events that would help bring community members downtown.” This implies that within Stevens Point’s planning, they sought the opinion of residents and used their responses to better develop their city’s music series.

By contrast, for 2015-2019, zero of 40 non-recipient cities noted an interest in residential engagement. While only six of the granted cities included a resident emphasis, it still showed that this is a desired value for successful Levitt cities. The non-recipient cities obviously resulted in zero percent, while 30 percent of the awarded cities showed a resident emphasis.

Creative Class Implications/Creative Economy/Music/Cultural/Arts Emphasis

While every city used the word music in their applications (the award name is “The Levitt AMP [Your City] Music Series grant), 16 of 20 applications showed a heightened commitment to the music and cultural sectors of their towns, and some even further claimed to seek or further develop their creative economy. As seen in the literature review, the creative economy and the Creative Class theory are popular among cities looking to rebrand. While there was not research in this project conducted to see if these cities were in a rebranding process, the connections to a cultural-experience-focused economy are evident.

For example, Middlesboro’s 2017 application stated plainly that “perhaps the greatest impact has been placing arts and culture at the forefront of the revitalization of our town.” This aligns perfectly with Florida’s Creative Class theory. Another example of the Creative Class theory is in Carson City’s 2019 application which states “Many families moved into the

neighborhood because of the series and employers are getting more talented applicants that say they are moving here specifically for Levitt AMP Carson City.”

For 2015-2019 non-recipients, 16 out of 40 cities included language that related to the Creative Class theory or put a strengthened commitment to music, culture, and arts. This resulted in 40 percent while the awarded cities resulted in 80 percent.

Placemaking/Gathering Space/Shared Experiences

This idea of placemaking and gathering spaces was introduced in the literature review with Oldenburg’s “Third Places.” Twelve of the 20 cities listed in this theme showed an emphasis on creating these places outside of just the music series or stating the music series location would be used as a placemaking area for more than just the 10-week concert series. Chattanooga actually used the “third place” phrasing in its 2017 application stating that “This series will create a vibrant third place for Chattanoogans outside of work and home life.” In its application, Chattanooga recognizes the value of creating such a place for people to commune and gather. Trenton’s 2015 application showed placemaking was a part of the planning and developing strategy including “This year we put our whole focus on AMP and utilized creative placemaking initiatives to promote and operate the 2017 series.”

For non-recipients during 2015-2019, 12 out of 40 cities mentioned placemaking or gathering space language. While 60 percent of awarded cities stated this plainly within their applications, the consistent grant awards show that this is a valuable quality to music cities. The non-recipient cities resulted in 30 percent.

Table 1

Table 1			
<i>Multi-Year Winners by Theme</i>			
Theme	Theme Overview	Cities with Theme Emphasis	City Totals
Downtown Emphasis	Emphasis on downtown specifically for revitalization efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Charlottesville - Cleveland - Frederick - Denison - Middlesboro - Sheboygan - Chattanooga - Jacksonville - Ocala - Santa Fe - Stevens Point - St. Johnsbury - Trenton - Whitesburg - Woonsocket 	16 of 20

<p>Community Engagement, Civic Pride and Enriched City Livelihood</p>	<p>Connotes ideals that unify groups through civic engagement and pride</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Charlottesville - Carson City - Cleveland - Denison - Frederick - Greensboro - Middlesboro - Sheboygan - Berea - Chattanooga - Galva - Jacksonville - Ocala - Santa Fe - Stevens Point - St. Johnsbury - Trenton - Utica - Whitesburg - Woonsocket 	<p>20/20</p>
<p>Economic Development / Revitalization (Using series as catalyst or placing music in underused space to launch revitalization) / Tourism</p>	<p>Focus on the music series as a driver of economic development separate from the creative economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carson City - Cleveland - Frederick - Denison - Greensboro - Middlesboro - Sheboygan - Berea - Galva - Jacksonville - Ocala - Santa Fe - St. Johnsbury - Trenton - Utica - Whitesburg - Woonsocket 	<p>16 of 19</p>

Partnerships / Non-Profit Emphasis	Emphasis community partnerships new or existing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Charlottesville - Carson City - Cleveland - Frederick - Middlesboro - Sheboygan - Berea - Galva - Ocala - Utica - Woonsocket 	11 of 20
Diversity/ Inclusion / Accessibility	Focus on bringing groups together based on geographic, socio-economic and other divisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Charlottesville - Carson City - Cleveland - Frederick - Denison - Greensboro - Middlesboro - Sheboygan - Berea - Chattanooga - Galva - Ocala - Santa Fe - Stevens Point - St. Johnsbury - Trenton - Utica - Whitesburg - Woonsocket 	19 of 20
Rebranding / Identity / City (area) Attractiveness	Explicitly noted language about identity or brand or implied that the music series would make their city more attractive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carson City - Denison - Chattanooga - Galva - Santa Fe - Stevens Point - St. Johnsbury - Trenton - Whitesburg 	9 of 20
Resident Emphasis (Active Role in Music Series –	Residents took ownership over the success of the series and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carson City - Berea - Ocala - Stevens Point 	6 of 20

Not just Audience)	sought opportunities to make it their own	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trenton - Utica 	
Creative Class Implications / Creative Economy / Music / Cultural / Arts Emphasis	Focuses on a heightened commitment to the music and cultural sectors of towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Berea - Charlottesville - Carson City - Chattanooga - Cleveland - Denison - Jacksonville - Middlesboro - Ocala - Sheboygan - Santa Fe - Stevens Point - St. Johnsbury - Trenton - Utica - Whitesburg 	16 of 20
Placemaking / Gathering Space / Shared Experiences	Emphasis on creating places outside of just the music series or stating the music series location would be used as a placemaking area for more than just the 10-week concert series	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Charlottesville - Carson City - Cleveland - Denison - Middlesboro - Sheboygan - Berea - Chattanooga - Santa Fe - Stevens Point - Trenton - Utica 	12 of 20

Chapter 5: Discussion

The overarching goal of this project was to pinpoint aspects of music-oriented branding that smaller cities could implement in their city branding strategy. More specifically, the goal focused on how live music scenes could be the city brand centerpiece and membrane where the

strategy is originated. Through the findings, connections were formed between literature presented in Chapter Two and themes that emerged in Chapter Four.

After comparing awarded cities and non-recipient cities, several themes became apparent. Overall, every theme had higher representation from grant recipient cities than non-recipient cities. On average the awarded cities beat non-recipients by 33.6 percent, and the theme of resident emphasis was not represented by any of the non-recipient cities. By examining qualities of the multi-year grant recipients and then comparing the recipients to non-recipients, the findings demonstrate that the themes emphasize qualities that make a successful music series and in turn a potentially music-branded city. The most significant factor besides community engagement and diversity was the fact that 17 out of 20 awarded cities represented at least five or more themes while only four out of 40 non-recipient cities represented five or more themes.

City Branding and Rebranding

Nine of the 20 cities specifically stated that one of their goals through the Levitt AMP Music Series was to change, better, or reinforce their city's brand. Branding as a practice ties an object, place, or institution to something of value as Winfield-Pfefforkorn (2005) states. Cities like St. Johnsbury and Santa Fe demonstrated their interest in directly affecting their brand. This correlates with Ponzini (2010), Florida (2012), and Kavaratzis (n.d.) writings that cities are implementing city branding strategies to improve some aspect of their city. Much like Florida's claim of creating a city that possesses attractive qualities or resources for specific populations (2012), Santa Fe wanted to exert an extra emphasis on creating an environment that was attractive to its younger residents.

For small cities specifically, branding has come of interest because restructuring the way the town is seen, in the midst of the populations shifting towards big cities, has become necessary for small towns to stay alive. Norman (2013) states that small cities play a vital role in the overall economy because their economies are usually more diversified than larger rival cities. Stevens Point's 2017 application showed a small town's awareness of this national phenomenon by stating "Across the country, small communities are struggling to attract new professionals as people choose to re-urbanize. Research indicates that this trend is motivated by a thirst for dense communities with rich entertainment amenities." This strengthens the argument for small towns to capitalize on their entertainment options and then use these niche authentic experiences as the foundation of their city branding strategy especially as it relates to music.

In addition, Grodach's (2013) Convention Model is represented in this theme. The Convention Model has a direct focus on attracting outside investments and implementing marketing campaigns, which ties in directly to the rebranding and identity theme. The importance of this is shown through only one of 40 non-recipient cities representing this branding concept. Obviously, to be a well branded city the brand itself has to be a focus. The awarded cities demonstrate that music can be an easy tie-in to the brand implementation.

Creative Class/Cultural Emphasis

The nature of the Levitt AMP application demonstrates that cities value music's role in contributing to a place as further discussed in Hudson (2006). However, many recipient cities referenced the creative economy or included language that could fit within Florida's (2012) Creative Class, Grodach's (2013 & 2017) cultural economy models, and Smith and Warfield's (2008) creative city classifications. Sixteen of 20 cities displayed themes of the Creative Class

theory or put an extended emphasis on music, arts, or culture outside of the Levitt AMP music series location. As introduced earlier, music can be an incredible contributor to a sense of place or brand implementation within cities. Hudson (2006) and Baker (2016) both place a high value on music within a place, which eventually becomes a contributor to the city brand. Additionally, music and cultural emphases and the Creative Class theory are closely related, which is why cities that exemplified this music/culture emphasis were placed in the same theme as those that more directly aligned with Creative Class language. Middlesboro's 2018 application perfectly demonstrated music's power within the city by stating "It is the mission of the Middlesboro Levitt AMP Series to use this love of music as a transformative mechanism to bring people together and give them hope for a brighter future."

This theme is represented by Grodach's (2013) Cultural Planning model and Convention Model. The Cultural Planning Model here is symbiotic to the Convention Model because the "cultural clusters" fuel the products for the convention model (p. 1750). The Creative Class theory revolves around planning revitalization around cultural sectors or creating an economy driven by arts and culture as does the Convention Model. Grodach's (2013) models serve as a guide to how cities can implement brands based on culture. Eighty percent of the awarded cities represented themes within Grodach's (2013) models and Florida's (2012) Creative Class theory. There needs to be a weighted importance on the culture, arts, etc. to create an effective brand.

Economic Development and Revitalization

Economic transition and diversification were a large part of Florida (2012) and Smith and Warfield's (2008) research, and Whitesburg's 2019 application paralleled this nicely with "[The series] has developed and embraced live music, the arts, farming, food and contributions along

with our traditional economic engines.” Additionally, as referenced in Chapter Four, Middlesboro’s 2017 application credited its economic success to anchoring culture and arts as the economic focal point. This arts and cultural emphasis is clearly stated in Florida’s Creative City theory (2012).

Outside of an arts and culture emphasis, Florida (2012) notes in his Creative Class theory that cities which represent Creative Class principles can see a progression to overall economic development and revitalization. Sixteen of the 20 recipient cities demonstrated this thought within their applications. As seen in Chapter Four, Carson City’s 2017 application referenced a specific revenue that came as a result of the music series. Additionally, Berea’s 2017 application offered “[The music series would] assist in revitalizing the ‘Old Town’ artisan village district: inspiring positive and substantive economic and community,” which replicates Florida’s (2012) thoughts on area revitalization. Grodach’s (2013) Cultural Planning model mirrors this theme because of its focus on economic development and revitalization.

Eighty percent of the awarded cities highlighted economic development as a goal or result of their music series. Only half of the non-recipient cities included such language, which showed that a city’s brand should be intentional in its new brand’s effect on its town’s economic development. As seen in Chapter Four and here, economic development is connected closely to live music.

Partnerships and Resident Emphasis

Application strategies for cities could take many forms, but successful cities within the grant recipient’s multi-year analysis implemented a network approach that included many stakeholders, from partners to city residents. This emphasis of a network or partnership approach

is addressed by Dinnie (2011), Insch (2011), Hospers (2011), Gelder (2011), Avraham and Daugherty (2009), and James et al. (2016), demonstrating the importance of partnerships and resident input.

Stakeholders are anyone (or institution) that shares the responsibility of the brand implementation (Gelder 2011) or in the case of the Levitt cities, shares the responsibility of organization and execution of a successful music series. Insch (2011) stresses the importance of the residents' influence on the city brand. This is translated to residential feedback and guidance regarding music series success and improvement. As seen in Berea's 2018 application, the city held focus groups to find what they could be doing better in terms of community outreach. Additionally, 11 out of 20 recipient cities noted involvement of non-profits or other organizations assisting with the music series. Gelder (2011) says a network of partners is necessary to creating this successful brand, as most of the Levitt cities in this theme could also attest. Lastly, this theme fits perfectly within Grodach's (2013) Cultural Industries model because this model assigns an emphasis to different industries (or stakeholders) networking with one another.

As mentioned in this chapter's introduction, the non-recipient cities had no representation for the resident emphasis theme; however, they did result in 7.5 percent representation for other partnerships. Awarded cities show a 55 percent representation. More partners lead to more resources and more stakeholders that not only help create the brand but can actively implement it as time progresses. This reflects back to Gelder's (2011) point about active participation with partners and stakeholders. The brand is more likely to be successful if it has a network of stakeholders and partners.

Community Engagement and Civic Pride

A significant finding was language regarding community engagement and civic pride, which was represented in 20 of 20 multi-year grant recipients. Logically, there needs to be community buy-in to create and execute an effective city brand and music series. Community engagement is very similar to the network approach discussed earlier, but implies interactions of populations further than just the organizations responsible for creating the brand or music series. Williams and Hipp (2018), Florida (2012), Insch (2011), Kavaratzis (n.d.), Hospers (2011), Gelder (2011), Dinnie (2011), and Avraham and Daugherty (2009) tackle specific engagement avenues such as residential involvement, community spaces, etc. As shown earlier, Carson City's 2016 application highlighted its dependency on community engagement to solidify the city's climb out of the recession. Grodach's (2013) Cultural Planning Model is demonstrated in this theme as well. The Cultural Planning Model balances community engagement and economic development.

Non-recipients had one of their highest representations in this category with 65 percent. However, awarded cities showed a 100 percent representation of community engagement and civic pride. A city brand must be collectively "owned" by the community or it presents the risk of seeming forced or inauthentic.

Placemaking

Unsurprisingly, placemaking was a huge focus for many of the cities with winning applications: 12 out of 20 to be exact. There is a natural connection between live music and the making of a place. As Williams and Hipp (2018) say, Oldenburg's third places have to be encouraging of social interaction and community-oriented. These are places outside of work

where individuals can come together and form relationships. For Levitt grant seekers, some of the location designation is guided by Levitt because grants require “accessible” and “open lawn” settings. Levitt is seeking to hold music in places that will help facilitate these social interactions. Many of the cities within this theme were using the music series location as the main placemaking or “third place” within in the town. However, the cities in the placemaking theme showed an affirmed effort in improving placemaking efforts both within the music series location and throughout the city. The very nature of these placemaking locations are inclusive and comfortable for various populations. Williams and Hipp (2018) are adamant of the third places serving as “social levelers” and decreasing “social distance” between populations (p. 69). As an example, Sheboygan’s 2015 application stated that “[The music series] will create a vibrant, public space in the downtown core in need of rejuvenation. . . In bringing diverse populations together, it will advance relations across ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic lines.” These places are where relationships are established and where quality of life and weight of important social interactions become a core part of a city’s culture.

Furthermore, Grodach’s (2013) Cultural Planning Model is well represented in this theme because this model takes a neighborhood development approach that highlights “neighborhood cultural clusters,” (p. 1750) where third-place-like interactions can take place. Sixty percent of the awarded cities showed representation of placemaking within their applications. This is important because a brand needs a place to come alive. The social interactions that happen with placemaking are what lead to the genuine components of a city brand and its execution.

Diversity and Inclusion

Placemaking leads directly into the diversity and inclusion of the music scenes and eventually the city brand. Nineteen of 20 recipient cities put diversity and inclusion at the forefront of their application and their AMP location development. Besides reflecting Levitt's values of inclusion, part of Florida's (2012) theory for city attractiveness is making cities more tolerant. Accepting differing lifestyles was an important aspect because not only did this change the overall *feel* of the town, but also this acceptance increased the amount of support for already existing or developing cultural locations and experiences. Similarly, Norman (2013) states that diversity of populations (including education, race, and [place of origin]) was the primary factor in determining success of small-town livelihood. Recipient cities reflect both of these approaches. According to Sheboygan's 2015 application "In bringing diverse populations together, [the music series] will advance relations across ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic lines." This demonstrates that Sheboygan has these populations already and is just looking for a way to bring them together. The awarded cities in this theme resulted in 95 percent representation. While Levitt highly values diversity, the consistent success of the music series within awarded cities shows how important diversity and inclusion is. This is a huge part of an effective and safe city brand or city planning strategy. Without equal representation among all populations, cities can risk displacement, gentrification, or dissatisfaction among stakeholders.

Avoiding the Creative Class Trap

As mentioned in the literature review, there are negatives to the Creative Class theory. Chattanooga's 2019 application stated that "Chattanooga's revitalization has proven to attract wealthier residents and new businesses but also has shown the need to be more inclusive for the

city's low income and underserved communities; especially within the Black and Latino population.” this statement heeds the warnings of Ponzini and Rossi (2009). The authors caution cities to be mindful of all populations when implementing a branding and revitalization plan because the poorer classes and their homes often become gentrified and displaced.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The nine themes that emerged from this research help create a framework for small cities that want to implement a city brand based on live music. The effect that music has on a place is well documented and is highly valued especially as it relates to city branding. There are many components a city must prepare for when creating a city brand related to music. While Levitt does not represent every music city, these themes based on Levitt data have proven to be successful and consistent factors in the successes of the music series, especially in smaller cities since the AMP grants are limited to such areas. Additionally, as seen in Chapter Four, cities need to include multiple themes to create a successful city brand. These themes can be drawn from to form an effective music-led city brand.

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Appendix A: Non-recipient cities by theme and year

Downtown:

- **2015**
 - Clarksdale
 - Lewisburg
 - Putnam
- **2016**
 - Dixon
 - Livermore
 - Owensboro
 - Oxford
 - Rockford
 - Tahoe city
- **2017**
 - Bristol
 - Durham
 - Jackson
 - Longview
 - Wilkes-Barre
- **2018**
 - Elko
 - Moab
 - Nashua
 - Prior Lake
 - Waterville
- **2019**
 - Aurora
 - Boise
 - Carbondale
 - Harlan
 - New London

Community Engagement:

- **2015**
 - Asbury Park
 - Saugatuck
 - Winona
- **2016**
 - Dixon
 - Fayetteville
 - Germantown
 - Livermore
 - Owensboro
 - Oxford
 - Rockford

- Roxbury
- Stephenville
- Tahoe City
- **2017**
 - Little Rock
 - Bristol
 - Durham
 - Longview
 - Wilkes-Barre
- **2018**
 - Moab
 - Prior Lake
 - Tulsa
 - Waterville
- **2019**
 - Boise
 - Elmira
 - Harlan
 - Port St. Lucie

Economic Development:

- **2015**
 - Asbury Park
 - Shelbyville
 - Wildwood Crest
- **2016**
 - Dixon
 - Germantown
 - Livermore
 - Oxford
 - Rockford
 - Roxbury
 - Stephenville
- **2017**
 - Little Rock
 - Wilkes-Barre
- **2018**
 - Bay St. Louis
 - Elko
 - Prior Lake
 - Waterville
- **2019**
 - Ashland
 - Aurora
 - Elmira
 - Harlan

- New London

Partnership:

- **2015**
 - Clarksdale
 - Putnam
- **2016**
 - Oxford

Diversity/ accessibility:

- **2015**
 - Lewisburg
 - Putnam
 - Saugatuck
 - Shelbyville
 - Winona
- **2016**
 - Dixon
 - Germantown
 - Livermore
 - Owensboro
 - Oxford
 - Roxbury
 - Stephenville
- **2017**
 - Bristol
 - Durham
 - Jackson
 - Longview
- **2018**
 - Bay St. Louis
 - Elko
 - Nashua
 - Tulsa
 - Waterville
- **2019**
 - Aurora
 - Boise
 - Carbondale
 - Harlan
 - New London

Rebranding:

- **2018**

- Waterville

Resident:

Creative City:

- **2015**
 - Lewisburg
 - Putnam
 - Saugatuck
 - St. Francisville
- **2016**
 - Dixon
 - Fayetteville
 - Germantown
 - Oxford
 - Roxbury
- **2017**
 - Little Rock
 - Longview
- **2018**
 - Moab
 - Nashua
- **2019**
 - Harlan
 - New London
 - Port St. Lucie

Placemaking:

- **2015**
 - Clarksdale
- **2016**
 - Livermore
 - Roxbury
- **2017**
 - Durham
 - Jackson
- **2018**
 - Elko
 - Moab
 - Nashua
- **2019**
 - Aurora
 - Boise
 - Carbondale
 - Port St Lucie

Appendix B: Non-Recipient Cities Theme Representation:

This list shows how many themes each city represented.

2015

Asbury Park 2/9
Clarksdale 3/9
Lewisburg 3/9
Putnam 3/9
Saugatuck 3/9
St. Francisville 1/9
Wildwood Crest 1/9
Winona 2/9

2016

Dixon 5/9
Fayetteville 2/9
Germanton 4/9
Livermore 5/9
Owensboro 3/9
Oxford 6/9
Rockford 3/9
Roxbury 5/9
Stephenville 2/9
Tahoe City 2/9

2017

Little Rock 3/9
Bristol 3/9
Durham 4/9
Jackson 3/9
Longview 4/9
Wilkes-Barre 3/9

2018

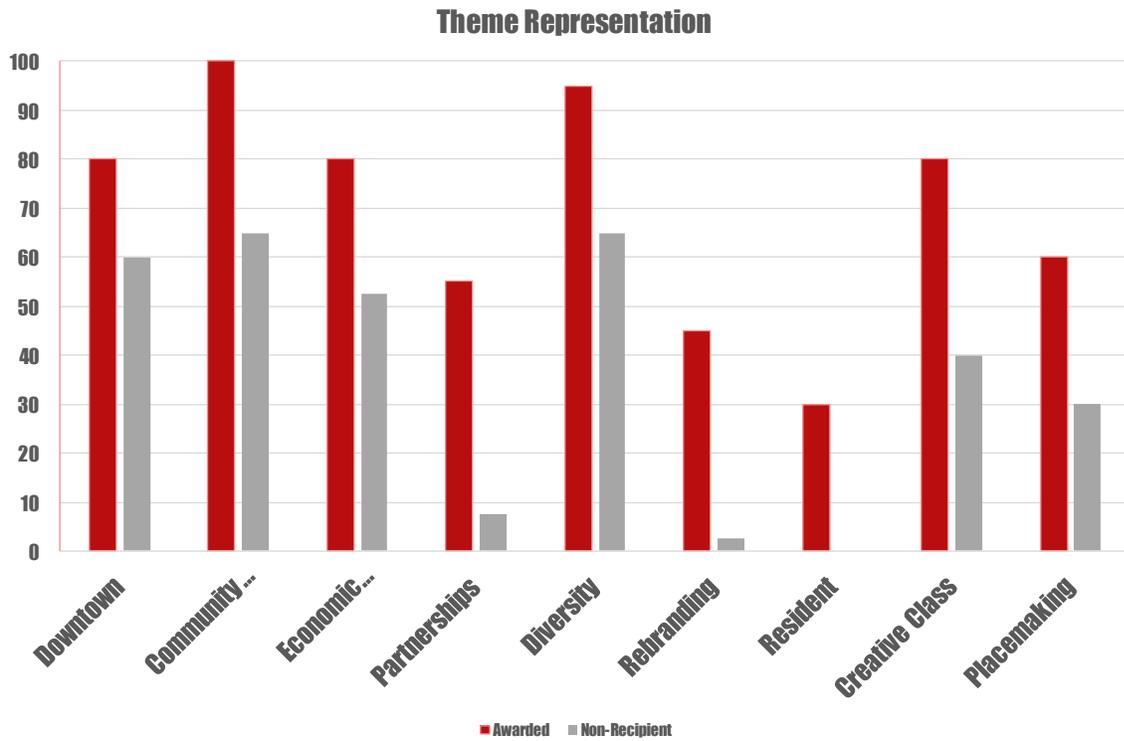
Bay St. Louis 2/9
Elko 4/9
Moab 4/9
Nashua 4/9
Prior Lake 3/9
Tulsa 2/9
Waterville 5/9

2019

Ashland 1/9
Aurora 4/9

Boise 4/9
Carbondale 3/9
Elmira 2/9
Harlan 5/9
New London 4/9
Port St. Lucie 3/9

Appendix C: Graph of grant recipient and non-recipient theme representation by percentages.



The themes are abbreviated here, but they follow with the formatting of Chapter 4.