"A Complex but Contradictory Reality":
Co-production and Creative Placemaking in
The Culture Mile Business Improvement District (BID)

Student name: Marie Gabrielle A. Acosta

Student number: 744847

Supervisor: Dr. Lénia Marques

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ABSTRACT

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are a growing model of urban governance in cities. BIDs collect levies from businesses located in a delineated spatial area and use those funds to provide public realm improvements within that district. This is primarily motivated by the economic potential that better surroundings can bring to businesses—safer, cleaner, and more vibrant places inevitably increase footfall. Since the model was adopted two decades ago in the UK, BIDs have not only become more pervasive, but they are also becoming increasingly concerned with going beyond business and integrating community engagement. As BIDs start to adopt strategies from placemaking, they face the tension and criticism of being private, non-governmental entities that perform services that could otherwise be provided by the government. Participatory strategies like co-production might be the best path for mitigating conflicts of interest. This study then poses the question: how do BIDs utilize co-production in the process of creative placemaking? This question was answered using the Culture Mile BID in London as a case study for qualitative research. The presence of cultural institutions such as the Barbican and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama within its footprint is being leveraged by the BID, utilizing arts and culture as a catalyst for public realm improvements while also branding itself as an artistic destination. Eight interviews were conducted with members from three of the BID's identified key stakeholders—cultural organizations, local authorities, and residents; together with a review of Culture Mile BID's reports. It was found that while BIDs perform co-production by including stakeholders in its board and steering groups, integrating their voice into decision making is not a simple process. While it supports and enables creative placemaking projects, projects initiated by the BID can still be improved so stakeholders feel a deeper connection to these arts and cultural interventions. More broadly, this research illustrates that BIDs must responsibly conduct their internal governance systems, with guardrails from government and its stakeholders, to ensure a balance of interests between these actors.

For my wonderful parents, George and Marge.
No matter where I go, I carry your love with me.

The eminent use of the city, that is, of its streets and squares, edifices and monuments, is *la fête* (a celebration which consumes unproductively, without other advantage but pleasure and prestige and enormous riches in money and objects).
A complex, but contradictory, reality.

Le Droit de la Ville [The Right to the City], Henri Lefebvre, 1968, p. 66

1. Introduction

What constitutes a city? The mind's eye might see a certain built environment: wide roads, large buildings, a variety of commercial establishments. UN Habitat published a report in 2020 that attempts to define a city based on the density of built structures as well as population size of a particular area. While these characteristics can constitute an urban space, cities are more than its spatial qualities and its scale. Italo Calvino describes a city as being "made of desires and fears" (1972, p. 44). They are the sites upon which memory or imagination are built—noises, smells, the body navigating a bustling crowd, recollections of people and significant events, favorite restaurants. A city is constituted by people's experiences of it. It is shaped by collective human activity and collaboration, and the city's built environment changes in response to these actions—it is how urban areas have become densely populated hubs for economic and cultural activity. People create cities, but cities in turn also shape people's attitudes and ways of thinking. Following this logic, cities have the potential to foster a healthy and just society when they successfully provide democratic spaces for its users to live, work, learn, and socialize in. The improvement of urban areas is crucial, as they serve as the backdrop of people's lives.

The importance of cities in influencing quality of life has given birth to people-centered urban planning frameworks. For example, placemaking has fairly recently emerged as a buzzword in the realm of urban planning. It is a somewhat nebulous term, but one that generally connotes creating spaces and activities for people to gather and "strengthen the connection between people and place" (Project for Public Spaces, 2007). In the last few decades, a more specific version of placemaking has emerged—creative placemaking. In 2010, this term was first clearly defined in a white paper that was commissioned by the United States National Endowment for the Arts. Here, creative placemaking is defined as a collaboration between different actors to shape a particular geographic location around "arts and cultural activities" (Markusen and Gadwa, p. 3) as a strategy to promote positive area development and economic growth. Five years later, the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs) for 2030 places the preservation of cultural heritage under the category of Goal 11, to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" (United Nations, 2015) which sets further precedent for the role that culture and creativity can play in creating habitable spaces. These concepts reflect the ideal function of a city but putting them into practice is much more

complex. Many actors simultaneously shape a city, all of whom hold unique subject positions and possess different capacities. Governments are responsible for cities, but cities are not strictly run by governments. Varying collectives, such as neighborhood groups for example, are able to self-organize, manage resources, and provide services within smaller communities. Arguably, the city's public spaces are a common pool resource (Foster & Iaione, 2015) that can be independently managed by groups outside of the public sector.

As such, public realm improvements can be carried out by private actors through public-private partnerships. For example, in places like the USA, UK, The Netherlands, and Germany, business improvement districts (BIDs) are becoming more prevalent as an urban governance model. BIDs are groups of businesses within a certain geographic location that fund enhancement projects in specific areas via a levy they pay (Grail et al., 2020). In recent years, BIDs in London have started to incorporate user-centered urban development frameworks such as placemaking to create more vibrant cities (Future of London & Rocket Science, 2016). BIDs therefore are an example of city users self-organizing to improve an area, which provides a polycentric approach to urban planning. In this regard, private actors (such as BIDs) 'co-produce' certain goods and services together with the public sector. As cities belong to the commons, BIDs are an illustration of how common pool resources are conducive to self-organizing outside of formal government systems. Despite being funded by businesses, London BIDs have also evolved to become responsive to the idea of dialogue with local communities. One such example is the Culture Mile BID, which utilizes arts and culture to position the area as a cultural destination, create attractive streetscapes, and serve as "a place for people" (Culture Mile BID, 2024b, p. 23). However, whether BIDs carry out their functions effectively, and their position as a collective of private entities providing services that can otherwise be provided by the public sector, can be put into question.

More broadly, this study aims to contribute to the literature surrounding creative placemaking, and the complexities of urban governance systems. Specifically, this research will explore how a BID functions as an urban governance system, and how it utilizes creative placemaking to instill vibrancy and inclusivity within the city. These topics can be investigated using the research question:

> **How do business improvement districts (BIDs) utilize co-production in creative placemaking?**
>
> 1.   In what ways do BIDs implement creative placemaking projects?
> 2.   How are BID stakeholders (resident groups, arts and cultural institutions, and local government) included in the process of co-production?

The Culture Mile BID will be used as a specific case study to answer these questions. A qualitative approach will be employed, where interviews will be conducted with individuals belonging to each of the identified stakeholder groups mentioned in sub-question 2. Documents from the Culture Mile BID will also be analyzed. BIDs, despite their prevalence, are a somewhat niche subject that has been studied by academia only in the last three decades. Discourse around BIDs has recently evolved from justifying their effectiveness as a model for urban governance, to questioning its existence due to issues surrounding conflicts of interest. How BIDs operate and whose interests are being served by the model can and should be investigated. These questions become more salient when arts and culture is used as a vehicle to revitalize a city or shape the image of a certain area. While the intersection of urban planning, and arts and culture indeed have the potential to cultivate vibrant and livable places, these strategies nonetheless are entrenched in complicated power dynamics that can be difficult to navigate (Mould & Comunian, 2015).

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Governing the Urban Commons

In 1968, Henri Lefebvre's "The Right to the City" forwards the idea that cities must not only be accessible and beneficial to their users, but they must also possess the right to shape and transform it according to their needs. Lefebvre's argument can be pushed further, and the assumption can be made that cities belong to all their inhabitants and users. Cities, therefore, can be considered as a common pool resource (CPRs), which is characterized by Elinor Ostrom as a rivalrous, nonexcludable good (2010). For example, most people can enter public parks for free (nonexcludable), but an overcrowded park can prevent other people from benefitting from it (rivalrous). Ostrom builds this definition from Hardin's influential work, "The Tragedy of the Commons", where the concept of 'the commons' are described as resources that are shared by a

group of people and do not belong to anyone (1968). The narrative of the commons has been framed largely under this so-called tragedy, where Hardin posits that humans are bound to ruin and overharvest finite common resources simply because they act out of their own rational self-interest. Following this logic, Hardin then proposes that the commons must be governed by a larger regulatory body, such as the government or state, to mitigate inevitable exploitation of common resources.

Ostrom builds upon these concepts with much more nuance. She proposes that this is not an accurate representation of how the commons are governed, and that humans do not need to rely solely on a central body such as the government to regulate these resources and prevent free-rider problems (1999). She observes that users of CPRs are able to self-organize and create systems in place that manage these resources effectively through allocation and sanctioning (2010). In these scenarios, groups who have self-organized and created systems have done so out of their own accord. Intervention from larger centralized bodies is seen as supplementary, sometimes incorporated in the form of a partnership to an existing self-organized system, rather than acting as the main driver for implementing regulatory actions (1999). Ostrom's conception of the commons is radical in the sense that it does not frame human actions solely under the inevitable 'tragedy' of overuse and destruction—instead she points out that people can act as custodians of CPRs through cooperation and shared interest.

While both Hardin and Ostrom's discussions on the commons largely pertain to natural resources, the concept of CPRs can also be applied to cities and urban spaces. Analyzed through Hardin's lens, the image of the metropolis as an overcrowded and squalid place where people live cheek-by-jowl is arguably a manifestation of the 'tragedy' of the commons (Foster & Iaione, 2015). Using Hardin's logic, the city must then be governed by a centralized group, such as the state, to alleviate overexploitation of a CPR. While the application of Hardin's perspective on the city as CPR may hold some truth, Ostrom's conception of the commons can be used to nuance the argument and reflect a more accurate view of reality (Foster & Iaione, 2015). While the state is indeed in charge of the custodianship, regulation, and overall governance of urban public spaces, this responsibility does not always fall on the public sector alone. Groups self-organize to address the immediate needs of a certain community, especially when arduous bureaucratic

processes prevent the government from taking immediate action. Arguably, BIDs are an example of a self-organizing body that has formed to care for the CPR that are public urban spaces.

The idea of the city as 'the commons' then raises slightly more complex questions regarding governance. Ostrom's more nuanced view of CPR being managed by entities that are "neither exclusively public nor exclusively private" (Foster and Iaione, 2015, p. 289) is reflected in public-private partnerships, which are practical for resource management and splitting risks between various actors (Valaguzza & Parisi, 2020). However, this paves the way for gray areas regarding accountability and management of open access resources. While private-public partnerships can facilitate more efficient ways to regulate and govern CPRs, competing interests can also arise between the two entities. These critiques can be raised when thinking of the BID model, where public space improvements are funded and enacted by private businesses. Despite these criticisms, BIDs are appealing because of its promise of efficiency through the decentralization of decision-making and service provision of certain goods. The BID model therefore can be viewed as an example of co-production in action within an urban governance ecosystem.

2.2. Co-production

Elinor Ostrom defines co-production as "the process through which inputs used to produce a good or service are contributed by individuals who are not 'in' the same organization" (1996, p. 1073). She elaborates on this concept further by positing that while governments are supposedly the main providers of public goods such as "education, health, or infrastructure services" (Ostrom, 1996, p. 1073), co-production implies that citizens are not passive recipients of these goods. Under the co-production concept, citizens can occupy a more proactive and participatory role in the production of these public goods and services. Co-production, then, can be seen as an extension of Ostrom's theory of the commons and people's ability to self-govern and organize around CPR. She elaborates on this further, mentioning how co-production is visible in urban areas where services were not only delivered by a centralized government, but were also supplemented by "private firms" (1996, p. 1079).

The concept of co-production has matured over the years. Bovaird (2007) points out that partnerships as a model in public service provision is now common enough that it can be

considered status quo, rendering Ostrom's definition of co-production as somewhat "trivial" (p. 846). The implication of this is that these partnerships have become so prevalent that issues surrounding their presence in any governance ecosystem have become more complex. That said, the definition of co-production must also evolve. Bovaird then proposes that co-production occurs when there is a "regular, long-term relationship between professionalized service providers (in any sector) and service users...where all parties make substantial resource contributions" (p. 847). Similarly, Joshi and Moore's (2006) concept of institutionalized co-production follow in the same vein but is specifically tied to relationships between groups of organized citizens and state agencies. These authors nuance the concept of co-production even further by mentioning that institutionalized co-production goes beyond formally recognized public-private partnerships. They argue that co-production can still be facilitated even when partnerships between public and private actors are ambiguous or not strictly defined. Co-production emphasizes how citizens can play an active role in the management of services or provisions that they benefit from.

Co-production is not the only participatory framework that exists—co-creation is a similar concept that also explores how consumers from outside of formal production domains can create goods and services, blurring the line between the "traditional demand vs supply model" (Valaguzza & Parisi, 2020, p. 644). One difference between co-creation and co-production lies in the generation of value (Voorberg et al., 2015) both "material and symbolic" (Valaguzza & Parisi, 2020, p. 644) which makes the former concept a broader one. Co-production looks more closely at the so-called 'material' production of public goods and services. The added 'symbolic' layer of co-creation lies in the consumer's experience of a particular good or service; to use the example of public spaces, a person's enjoyment of a public park also creates the symbolic value for that product through the "subjective meanings" (Valaguzza & Parisi, 2020, p. 645) that become attached to it. In a systemic literature review of the two concepts, Voorberg et al. finds that the two terms are interchangeably used in published materials, with the only distinction lying in the idea of value creation mentioned prior, and to some extent, the level of participation that a consumer/citizen must input into the creation of goods and services (2015). Voorberg et al. finds that literature on co-creation refers to a higher level of consumer/citizen involvement, while co-production is more pre-occupied with the "(co-)implementation of public services" (2015, p. 1347). As the mandate of BIDs are more

closely tied with 'material' public goods and service generation, co-production will be utilized as the participatory framework for this research.

When co-production is applied to the governance and operation of public spaces within cities, the resulting strategy begins to closely resemble the concept of placemaking. Project for Public Spaces (PPS) defines placemaking as a collective process of shaping the "public realm" (2007) for the benefit of all. Inspired by Ostrom's framework, Ellery and Ellery (2019) propose that co-production is necessary in the placemaking process as a starting point for community engagement: when people are given the ability to make decisions about the spaces they share with others, this instills a sense of "ownership" towards common-pool resources, increasing the chances of "community stewardship" towards a particular place (p. 243). This idea can be taken a step further. Wichowsky et al. (2023), proposes that creative placemaking at its core is an exercise of "participatory governance" that must favor "local autonomy over centralized authority" (p. 1751).

2.3 Placemaking

Placemaking is a term that frequently appears in academia, industry, and community development in relation to public spaces. It has experienced a surge in popularity in recent years and might be perceived as a buzzword that is appropriated from the field of urban studies. Goebel attributes its trendiness to growing urbanization, as well as the term's potential to make urban planning concepts rooted in "design, functionality, and creativity" appealing to the public (2020, p. 15). In fact, the term has been in usage since the 1970s (Keidar et al., 2024) and was inspired by the writings of Jane Jacobs and William Whyte, American urbanists of the 1960s who placed importance on creating livable cities that are centered on people's needs (Project for Public Spaces, 2007). Vital to placemaking is the idea that cities must be planned at a "human scale" (Gómez-Varo et al., 2022, p. 2), which allow for people to encounter each other in public spaces, leading to higher chances of social interactions (Jacobs, 1961). Placemaking is rooted not only in values that position users and their "well-being" at the center of spatial design, but it also situates people as actors who play a crucial role in shaping a city through individual and collective actions (Project for Public Spaces, 2007).

A 1993 article by Schneekloth and Shibley defines placemaking as an "inclusive and enabling practice" (p. 122); the maintenance of a particular area is collaboratively endeavored by

members of a community. Co-production is therefore a crucial aspect of the placemaking process. This implies that placemaking as a practice or strategy is not undertaken by formal producers of spatial improvement services, ie the government, architects and urban planners, alone. Keidar et al., create the distinction between 'planning' and 'placemaking', with the latter characterized as being able to arise from both formal and "informal intervention" (2024, p. 144). Placemaking therefore can be executed by both top-down and bottom-up initiatives. Keidar et al. identifies this aspect as a possible reason why discourse around placemaking has become so popular in recent years. Spatial rights, and the question of who can access public space, comes into focus when one considers the process of placemaking and what the 'places' created from that process can stimulate. Communities can be created with proper public spaces, bonds that ultimately strengthen what Klinenberg calls "social infrastructures" that can boost civic participation and ameliorate a myriad of social issues caused by polarization (2018, p. 5). Placemaking can therefore be understood as 1) a practice that encourages collaboration between numerous stakeholders in a certain area 2) meant to improve and maintain public spaces that 3) prioritize people's well-being.

Placemaking as a concept is often utilized within the context of cities. The dynamic nature of urban areas, the diverse populations usually found in them, and the concentration of wealth and power (in places like major cities in particular), make them high traffic places for artistic and cultural activity. The potential of "cultural production and consumption" (Montgomery, 2003, p. 293) to drive economic activity in a particular area has been recognized by urban developers as a tool that can be used to stimulate growth and transformation in cities. Urban improvement schemes centered around arts and culture have become more common throughout the years, possibly caused by the development of concepts such as creative placemaking.

2.4 Creative Placemaking

Creative placemaking (CPM) was coined in 2010 by Markusen and Gadwa in a white paper commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts. It is defined as a collaboration between different actors to shape a particular geographic location around "arts and cultural activities" (p. 3) to promote positive area development and economic growth. Here, positive area development refers particularly to "livability" or "heightened public safety, community identity,

environmental quality, increased affordable housing and workplace options for creative workers, more beautiful and reliable transportation choices, and increased collaboration between civic, non-profit, and for-profit partners" (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010, p. 5). CPM is associated with a particular process of "shaping" a particular area, with the added dimension of collaboration amongst "public, private, non-profit, and community" (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010, p. 3) actors, which ties back to co-production's role in the framework of placemaking in general. CPM presents ideal outcomes—a social dimension where people's lives and experience of a city are improved through creative placemaking, and an economic growth dimension that is rooted in arts and cultural activity as well as the creative economy. The authors characterize the creative economy as being constituted of "creative workers, cultural industries, and creative communities" (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010, p. 9). While creative placemaking presents solutions to incorporating arts and culture into urban landscapes, there are also tensions within the concept that must be nuanced. First, how can the promise of both social and economic development in CPM be reconciled? Second, what exactly makes creative placemaking 'creative'?

2.4.1 "Livability" and economic growth

The roots of CPM as a concept can be tied back to its potential for economic development. This emphasis on the economic impact of CPM is contextual to the period in which the original white paper was commissioned—shortly after the 2009 US recession, the National Endowment for the Arts explored how arts and culture can respond to the crisis (Gadwa Nicodemus, 2024). Creative placemaking was the organization's response. The 2010 white paper places an emphasis on the role that arts and culture can play in placemaking, underlining the importance of cultural producers and consumers in driving economic activity to an area and promoting neighborhood vitality. Markusen and Gadwa discuss the economic potential of the creative economy: the number of jobs this industry can generate, and how arts and cultural activities within an area can encourage people to spend their "discretionary income locally" (p. 14).

Effective placemaking can revitalize an area by giving it an edge that attracts people and industries that are lucrative (Cohen et al., 2018), an idea which is championed by Richard Florida in his controversial work on the creative class (2004). Florida proposes that an area's creative workforce is the talent pool which cities must not only foster but cater to through its physical

amenities and activities. A common critique of this concept is that the city must not only prioritize a demographic that is profitable, as this pushes marginalized individuals further into the shadows (Mould, 2018). A rhetoric that is often employed to prove the economic impact of creative placemaking is how revitalized areas result in increased investments and a boost in property values (Cohen et al., 2018). A popular example is the High Line in New York City, a condemned railway that has been transformed into an elevated park (Cohen et al., 2018). Vaughan et al., however, point out that a direct relationship between CPM and an increase in property values is tenuous (2021). The economic dimension of CPM has also come under scrutiny in recent years because of its association to the negative effects of gentrification. Since then, the meaning of creative placemaking has shifted to place an equal, if not larger, emphasis on engaging communities and arts practitioners in cities (Gadwa Nicodemus, 2024).

In 2024, Gadwa revisits the impact that her and Markusen's white papers have had on arts and culture-led urban development. Gadwa points out that in 2010, they were inspired by studies that highlighted the social dimension of the arts (Gadwa Nicodemus, 2024) in creative placemaking, which offered a unique value proposition that made CPM very appealing as a concept. Gadwa mentions a study by the NEA in 2006 which found that people who are exposed to and consume literature, art, and music are more likely to be civically involved within their communities versus those who do not participate in arts activities at all; as well as studies conducted in 2007 and 2008 by Stern and Seifert that found that arts and culture activities have a positive effect on people's livelihoods and quality of life in a particular neighborhood (as mentioned in Gadwa Nicodemus, 2024). In response to the growing emphasis on this social dimension, contemporary CPM practices have started to emphasize the value of "temporary event-based activities" (Vaughan et al., 2021, p. 431) to introduce vibrancy and create a sense of community in a city. Vaughan et al., note that civic engagement, increased safety, and place attachment are some of the positive social impacts of these temporary projects. Participation in arts programming activities and repeat visits to a certain location create a sense of community that positively affect people's attitude and perception towards a locality. It was observed that participation in these arts events allowed individuals to interact with people outside of their usual social groups, and the interaction between a diverse set of strangers in these activities strengthen the social fabric of an area (Vaughan et al., 2021); this is consistent with the studies that Gadwa

and Markusen used a decade prior on the social benefits of CPM. This illustrates that CPM's social dimension, rooted in arts and cultural initiatives, is a core aspect of the concept.

The tension between the social and economic growth aspects of CPM becomes apparent when placed side-by-side. On one hand, an increase in a city's profitability through its creative industry can positively affect the "livability" of a place, for example generating jobs and increasing artistic and cultural activities in a certain area. On the other hand, whether these positive impacts are beneficial to majority of a city's users or a select few can be put into question. Efforts to revitalize an area and make it more "livable" by making arts and cultural activities accessible to the public can also be vulnerable to being capitalized upon and turned into profit-generating schemes by private and/or public actors. When viewed this way, creative placemaking resembles a snake eating its own tail, with capitalism and profit maximization serving as the linchpin for critiques surrounding the concept. What purpose then does 'creativity' serve in creative placemaking? Does it serve as an innovative way to ensure urban revitalization and placemaking efforts genuinely serve a public's interests? Or is it a vehicle that obfuscates mass urbanization by making it more palatable through arts and culture?

2.4.2 What is 'creative' about creative placemaking?

In Markusen and Gadwa's white papers, cultural industries, creative economies, and arts and cultural initiatives are the main aspects that differentiates CPM from a more general form of placemaking. Loh et al., proposes that CPM "acted as a bridge between traditional planning practice and arts and cultural practice" (2024, p. 1682). Similarly, Zitcer argues that in CPM, the role of the "artist" moves "out of the studio" (2020, p. 279). An artistic vision does not serve as the primary catalyst for a project—rather, the artist, their practice, and the creative concept becomes part of a larger partnership dynamic between different actors, all of whom are working towards the generation of a good or service that will benefit the public—one of CPM's core tenets (Zitcer, 2020). While an arts practice can indeed enrich city planning and vice-versa by providing interdisciplinarity into both fields, there is fair critique on the use of artistic initiatives to revitalize a city. Gentrification can be a side effect of CPM, with Florida's idea of the creative class being perceived as a phenomenon that exacerbates rather than alleviates social divide within cities (Mould, 2018). Loh et al., (2024) and Wichowsky et al. (2023) have also acknowledged that CPM might be utilized for surface-level improvements, using art and

aesthetics to bolster an area's optics without providing benefits for key stakeholders. From a macro-political perspective, Mould and Comunian have expressed concerns that the privatization of urban development is a larger reflection of a state's neoliberal politics (2015), where economic priorities will always take precedence over cultural and artistic exploration.

CPM and placemaking in general, for all its possible benefits, cannot be regarded as a silver bullet that will alleviate the social, economic, and environmental problems that cities face. Instead, it should be viewed as one approach for incorporating arts and culture, and collective decision-making into how urban spaces are governed. Co-production entails the cooperation and participation of a multitude of actors from both public and private sectors to create better, more vibrant cities. Arguably, co-production can act as a guardrail that allows for CPM initiatives to be centered around the interests of the majority rather than the select few—when recipients of public goods and services participate in the generation of these products, they become included in the process of CPM. If cities are a common pool resource, then they also become conducive to self-governance initiatives (Ostrom, 2010). BIDs are an example of a self-organizing group whose main purpose is to aid in managing and improving city districts for the benefit of business owners and commercial establishments. In the last two decades, BIDs have become prevalent in countries like the US and the UK, transcending their original mandate of "branding, bins and baskets"[1] (Future of London & Rocket Science, 2016, p. 1) and moving into the realm of urban revitalization and placemaking.

2.5 Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)

While BIDs have existed for decades now, there are variations in the nomenclature of the concept (Hoyt & Gopal-Agge, 2007; Mitchell, 2008). Examples include Business Improvement Areas (BIA) which is the term used by Canadian cities such as Toronto, Edmonton, and Ontario; Business Improvement Zones (BIZ) which is the abbreviation of the Dutch *Bedrijven Investeringszone* that is used in the Netherlands, while Cape Town in South Africa refer to their version of BIDs as City Improvement Districts (CID). For the purposes of this study, the term Business Improvement District (BID) will be used to refer to these types of organizations. BIDs possess two facets, what Morçöl & Karagoz would call "the district" and its "district

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[1] 'Branding' referring to place branding, 'bins' referring to waste disposal management, and 'baskets' referring to hanging plant baskets or similar interventions that help an area look more visually appealing

management organization" (2020, p. 889). The district refers to a group of businesses who pay a levy or tax to fund improvement efforts related to public space enhancement, safety services, and place marketing (Kudla, 2022) within a specific "delineated spatial remit" (Grail et al., 2020, p. 75). These efforts are made possible through a public-private partnership model. While 'BID' can be applied to the group of levy-paying businesses in a particular area, it can also reference the group that manages said BID, or the district management organization (DMOs)[2]. DMOs typically take the form of an independent private or public organization that is run by a board of directors who represent businesses in the area (Kudla, 2022; Morçöl & Karagoz, 2020; Michel, 2013). These organizations are tasked with running projects that help execute the business goals of the district, utilizing the funds collected from the levy to make improvements in the area. These DMOs also possess a temporal aspect, with a plan or strategy that is meant to exist for a specific number of years—usually five—after which the district can decide whether it wishes to continue the operation of the DMO (Michel, 2013).

How and where did BIDs start forming? Historically, BIDs are a North American conception. The following overview is taken from Mitchell (2008) who provides a US perspective on its beginnings. Throughout the 1930s and into the 60s, Americans had started to leave the city in favor of the spacious and bucolic suburbs. Individuals were moving outside of crowded city centers, but so were businesses who recognized that suburbs could potentially provide them with more space to expand their enterprises. Living in a city was no longer appealing, and as people fled to its outskirts, governments permitted the establishment of special districts in these areas—described by Mitchell as "a quasi-independent governmental unit" that allowed people living in areas that were not connected to public services to "tax themselves to provide a specific service, such as the disposal of sewage or fire protection" (2008, p. 34). Businesses in city centers then realized that this system can be used to revitalize their own urban commercial areas. American businessmen voluntarily formed associations to make downtowns more appealing and lobbied for projects to improve these areas. According to Hoyt & Gopal-Agge, the concept of BIDs was formalized in Canada after a similar business association had wanted to combat the "free-rider problem" (2007, p. 947) of establishments benefitting from public improvements funded by voluntary contributions despite not having made any payments

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[2] Not to be confused with Destination Management Organization, which shares the same acronym.

themselves. In 1969, legislation was passed to formalize an "autonomous, privately managed entity with the power to impose an additional tax on commercial property owners to fund local revitalization efforts" (Hoyt & Gopal-Agge, 2007, p. 947). The authors attribute this as the beginning of the BID model, which is now implemented in countries across North America, Asia, Europe, The UK, Africa, and Australia.

2.4.1 BIDs around the world

The BID approach has been adopted all over the world. In Johannesburg, the BID concept takes the form of the City Improvement District (CID), the impetus of which was similar to the US model in trying to combat urban decline, with CIDs focusing on alleviating "crime and grime" (Michel, 2013, p. 1014). On the other hand, in Hamburg, BIDs were put in place to advocate for the existence of the traditional European city when faced with the threat of ultra-commercialized shopping centers in town outskirts (Michel, 2013). While BID-like models exist around the world, BIDs themselves might not have been formalized because they are still in their nascent stages. For example, in Denmark, BID-like models were adopted in the 2010s to promote urban vitality and combat decentralization of commercial areas, but it is still in its early stages and has not been passed into legislation as of 2019 (Richner & Olesen, 2019). In Istanbul, BID-like groups have started to form even without prior knowledge of the existence or the influence of similar models in places like the US and the UK. For instance, an association of hotels in Talimhane called the Talimhane Tourism Association (TTA) essentially functions as a BID, complete with an ad hoc public-private partnership. This exists despite Istanbul not possessing a formalized legal structure for BID formation (Kizildere & and Chiodelli, 2018). Like the Istanbul example, a BID-like organization formed in Accra in Ghana, which operated using grassroots community efforts but eventually strained under the lack of institutional and government support (Kaye-Essien, 2020).

BIDs and BID-like structures exist all over the world, but the UK is one of the countries outside of Canada and the USA where it is widely practiced. In the early 2000s, the UK became one of the first countries to adopt the US blueprint for establishing BIDs—22 'pilot' projects from England and Wales were selected to attain a BID status and go through special development programs that would allow them to learn directly from American BID experts—pioneer activities from these newly formed groups eventually created a set of best practices that

was used to inform BID legislation in the UK (Ward, 2006). As of 2019, over 300 BIDs operate across the UK, which is evidence of the country's quick adoption of the BID concept and how rapidly it spread in two decades (Grail et al., 2020). Ward (2006) and Cook (2008) offer a few reasons for the ease with which the US BID approach was adapted in the UK. According to Cook, the two countries shared similar issues pertaining to the seeming decline of downtowns due to decentralization, which lead to declining foot traffic and spending in these areas. An increase in UK public private partnerships in the 90s lead to the formation of town center management (TCMs) schemes, a precursor to BIDs, whose goal was to 'outsource' economic advancement efforts for city centers to the private sector. The Association of Town Center Management (ATCM) was proof of the proliferation of the TCM model, but it also experienced issues regarding free-rider problems like the Canadian example. Cook points out that ACTM's relationship with its North American counterpart, International Downtown Association (IDA) eventually paved the way for BID approach adoption in the UK, so much so that the 'pilot' BIDs project in the UK was headed by ATCM.

Ward (2006) on the other hand offers a much more critical point of view of US BID adoption in the UK, attributing it to the two countries' similar ideological stance on neoliberalism. He argues that the cross-pollination of the BID approach from the US to the UK is not only a transmission of a set of best practices but is arguably a transfer of neoliberal policy. Here he is referring to the government's willingness to 'pass on' some of its responsibilities to the private sector, which divests the public sector of full accountability, and the private sector's willingness to assert its influence in the public sector areas to further its own interests. Neoliberalism implies that both the public and private actors operating within a system uphold the importance of capitalism and individualism, which can be seen as a broader reflection and critique against US and UK political values. Ward's critiques give rise to pertinent questions regarding the BID model: what kind of problems are BIDs trying to address, and in doing so, what are the larger set of values that BIDs are trying to uphold?

2.4.2 Nuancing the BID approach

BIDs and BID-like mechanisms from around the world exist to alleviate a common set of pain points. First, BIDs were created to combat urban decay brought about by the decentralization of commercial and residential areas away from cities. Second, they are presented

as an alternative solution to "state-led governing of urban space" (Michel, 2013, p. 1019) which can be slow to react to an area's needs due to bureaucracy and funding. Finally, BIDs are meant to act as 'custodians' who help oversee the security and cleanliness of a certain district area which can be an issue in dense cities (Morçöl & Karagoz, 2020). From a bird's eye perspective, BIDs propose an exciting prospect—a smaller group or association of businesses are given the ability to improve their urban localities tailored to their needs and with the cooperation of public entities. Ideally, a BID helps an area develop economically and enhances its appearance and reputation. The cooperation of the private sector in generating public value can also be seen as positive civic action, wherein participation and collaboration occurs among citizens in creating public spaces (Michel, 2013).

Overall, the promise that BIDs present is a kind of decentralized model of governance that allows for targeted steps made through collective decision-making to be executed (Morçöl & Karagoz, 2020). However, this becomes complicated when one considers that BIDs are made up of private entities, who possess their own interests and are given the authority to exercise influence on common pool resources that are meant to be used by everyone. Who then are BIDs truly accountable to—their communities at-large, or the business community specifically that funds them? The focus on communities at-large is arguably a goal that BIDs have started to incorporate more recently to varying degrees of success. BIDs can therefore be perceived as a double-edged sword: on one hand, they offer a more decentralized approach to urban planning improvements, where decisions made by people from within a community might prove to be an effective system for implementing change (Grail et al., 2020). On the other hand, public spaces being funded by private actors when they should be under the care of the state is a common critique (Magalhães, 2014) that reflects neoliberal values. BIDs then possess a fundamental contradiction of aiming to improve urban space for all, while also promoting economic growth and private interests (Richner and Olesen, 2019). BIDs and creative placemaking therefore share similar points of tension—while allowing citizens to participate in the provision of public goods and services through co-production offers an effective and inclusive solution for urban development, the questions of *for who*, *by who*, and *to what ends* these frameworks are being utilized become much more salient.

3. Research Design

3.1 Methodological framework

To investigate how BIDs utilize co-production in creative placemaking, a case study approach was utilized focusing particularly on the Culture Mile BID in London. A case study would prove to be the most appropriate methodological lens for this research, given certain limitations and the expected scale in which the study is meant to be executed. BIDs possess liberties in setting their own direction and business strategy. That said, organizational structures and focus areas vary from BID to BID. The case study approach therefore allows for the "complexity and uniqueness of a particular project" (Simons, 2009, p. 21) to be analyzed using empirical evidence, and would be beneficial to contributing to a larger field of study relating to "policy development, professional practice and civil or community action" (p. 21), the realm in which this thesis is best situated in. The Culture Mile BID was chosen particularly for its more obvious integration of arts and culture into its public realm strategy. Given its name, creative placemaking initiatives would be more apparent, if not expected, of the organization. It also claims to be in an area that is "brimming with cultural creativity, commercial vibrancy and a strong sense of community" (Culture Mile BID, n.d.) which the BID is accountable with responding to. A qualitative approach would be best suited for this research because it allows space for people's experiences of being part of the co-production and creative placemaking process to be told (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). This sort of information is best gathered using qualitative methods such as interviews and a document analysis of Culture Mile BIDs' reports and strategic documents, which can later be analyzed to reveal common themes and patterns that help answer the research question.

3.2 Operationalization

To learn more about how the Culture Mile BID employs co-production in the process of placemaking, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the BID's key stakeholders. These interviews were sectioned into three main parts to investigate the main concepts of the research question: a) co-production b) creative placemaking and c) the BID model. The first two concepts can be considered as frameworks that have certain characteristics based on the definitions set in the literature review section. For example, co-production can be observed when there is stakeholder participation, existing longer-term partnerships between entities, and public goods

and service delivery. Meanwhile, creative placemaking themes that have appeared repeatedly in the theoretical framework are the integration of arts and culture into city planning, and the overall positive impact that this can bring. The complexities of the BID model, on the other hand, will be investigated by asking questions regarding governance within the Culture Mile BID. Table 1 shows the definition of the key concepts as well as their more specific themes, along with the corresponding interview questions that were asked during the data gathering process. The full interview guide can be found in Appendix A.

Table 1. Concept overview and operationalization in interview questions

Concept	Themes	Questions
Co-production was initially defined by Ostrom (1996) as the participation of actors/stakeholders outside of formally recognized organizations in contributing to public goods and services delivery. Bovaird (2007) builds upon this definition to include longer-term partnerships where all parties make significant contributions.	Stakeholder participation	• How does Culture Mile BID gather feedback from your organization regarding the types of projects and improvements it plans to initiate for the area? • To what extent are these suggestions incorporated into their programming, and are these visible to those within your organization?
	Existing partnerships	• Can you describe the relationship your organization has to Culture Mile BID? • Does your organization pay any levies to the Culture Mile BID? • How regularly does your organization engage in these types of public projects with Culture Mile BID?
	Public goods and service delivery	• Can you give a recent example of an urban space improvement or public engagement project in which your organization collaborated closely with Culture Mile BID?
Creative placemaking (CPM) is defined by Markusen and Gadwa (2010) as a collaboration between different actors to shape a particular geographic location around "arts and cultural activities" (p. 3) as a strategy to promote positive area	Positive area development and economic growth	• What advantages do BIDs gain from using arts and cultural activities or placemaking strategies to enhance their districts? Are there any downsides to this? • How do you think arts and cultural activities can contribute to fostering a sense of community in this area?
	Arts and culture	• Would you say that artistic and creative projects (this can be in the form of public art or short-term events) have

development and economic growth.		increased/decreased/or stayed the same in this area's public spaces in recent years? • How is Culture Mile BID specifically using arts and culture to create more vibrant places for people to live in?
The BID model refers to a group of businesses who pay a levy or tax to fund improvement efforts related to public space enhancement, safety services, and place marketing (Kudla, 2022) within a specific "delineated spatial remit" (Grail et al., 2020, p. 75)	Governance	• What would you say is the relationship between the City of London and the BIDs that operate within it? • What advantages do stakeholders gain from operating within a BID? • Are BIDs expected to align their goals to the broader goals of the City of London?

3.3 Data collection method and sampling

The data collected for this study is taken from two sources: interviews with Culture Mile BID stakeholders, and a document analysis of the BID's annual reports from 2023-2025, which covers the entirety of the BID's existence thus far. Interviews were gathered through snowball sampling, defined by Bryman as a sampling method that begins with a researcher approaching a small number of interviewees, and using these existing relationships to grow the sample via referral to other key individuals (2016). This type of sampling is ideal for populations or groups that are harder to reach via purposive sampling, which entails a deliberate selection of interviewees based on their expertise or subject position that could contribute to the analysis of the research questions (Bryman, 2016). While the data gathering process began with this type of sampling method, snowball sampling ultimately proved to be the most effective approach due to the nature of BID stakeholders. Individuals who are knowledgeable with BIDs and work closely with the Culture Mile are a relatively small social circle; most people are familiar with each other because BIDs are a niche area of interest. As a researcher not from the UK and not working within this industry, barriers to enter this network were high. However, these barriers were lowered once the researcher was endorsed by one stakeholder group to the another. In total, eight interviews totaling six hours' worth of data was collected over the course of three weeks at the end of April and the beginning of May 2025. This was supplemented by documents totaling 136 pages from the Culture Mile BID outlining their strategic plans, goals, and projected budgets

(Table 2). In this study, participant interviews were transcribed using Notta, a digital transcription service. For accuracy, these were later reviewed manually by the researcher, and corrections were made to ensure the transcriptions made by the software matched the audio recordings.

Semi-structured interviews proved to be the most effective way of collecting data for this research, because it "reveals how case study participants construct reality and think about situations" (Yin, 2012, p. 12). Interviews where open-ended questions can be asked allows for the dynamics within a particular group or organization to emerge (Baškarada, 2014) and are a common strategy to collect data in case study research, together with document analysis (Yin, 2012). A blend of these data collection methods allows for information to be gathered from "multiple sources of evidence" (Yin, 2012, p. 10) which creates a stronger case study analysis. The Culture Mile BID's publicly available reports serve as a valuable source of information that not only outlines the BID's projects and achievements, but also their values, plans, and projected expenditures. These show the BID's priorities as well as the message they wish to project to the public. Stakeholder interviews and Culture Mile BID documents can also be triangulated with each other, where "convergences" and anomalies can be identified for a more "robust" (Yin, 2012, p. 13) analysis.

Table 2. Document analysis overview

Title	Year	Pages	Document type	Description
Culture Mile BID Annual Report 2023/24	2024	21	Report	The first annual report of Culture Mile BID which talks about projects that were executed in its first year of operation, divided into its four strategic themes 1) Sustainable Environment 2) Connected Business Community 3) Inspiring Places and 4) Cultural Destination
Culture Mile Public Realm Vision & Strategy	2024	98	Report and Strategic Document	Contains the Culture Mile BID's vision for its public realm and a spatial strategy. This document is a study meant to identify public realm improvements in the BID's public spaces and major thoroughfares with

				a comprehensive profile of each geographical focus area.
Overview of Projects, Income & Expenditures 2025/26	2025	17	Report and Billing Leaflet	Report of the Culture Mile BID which contains key achievements in 2024/25 together with target aims for projects under the four strategic themes. This report also contains a forecasted budget and expenditures section.

Culture Mile BID identifies the following groups as their key stakeholders: "cultural organizations; property and landowners/developers; neighboring BIDs; local authorities i.e. The City of London Corporation and London Borough of Islington; resident associations" (Culture Mile BID, 2024b). Three main stakeholder groups were approached for this study: cultural organizations, local authorities, and residents/resident associations. Of the key stakeholder groups identified by Culture Mile BID, these three groups are possibly the most relevant in terms of investigating questions relating to co-production and creative placemaking. A total of eight interviews were conducted for this study, with two to three individuals representing each of the three groups. A semi-structured interview was conducted for each of these respondents, based on an interview guide (Appendix A). A consent form was provided for each participant outlining how they would remain anonymous in the study apart from their organization and role (Appendix B). Specific quotes in the results section will not be attributed to any one respondent for confidentiality purposes. References to specific companies or organizations will also be anonymized using pseudonyms in the interest of protecting the participants of the study. A summary of respondents can be found on Table 3 below.

Table 3. Sample Overview

	Organization / area of residence	Role	Stakeholder group
R1	Barbican and Golden Lane Neighborhood Forum (BGLNF)	BGLNF Steering Group Member	Resident associations/ residents
R2	Barbican and Golden Lane Neighborhood Forum (BGLNF)	BGLNF Steering Group Member	
R3	Smithfield Area	Journalist	
R4	Guildhall School of Music and Drama	Culture Mile BID Board Member	Cultural organizations

R5	Barbican	Culture Mile BID Board Member	
R6	Drum Works	Managing Director	
R7	City of London Corporation	Former Common Councillor	Local authorities
R8	City of London Corporation	Common Councillor	

Residents were chosen as a crucial part of the sample as they are arguably the group that is most embedded within the Culture Mile BID area specifically. The Barbican Golden Lane Neighborhood Forum (BGLNF) in particular works closely with Culture Mile BID and acts as resident representatives for those living within the Barbican and Golden Lane estates. The residents that participated in the study have been living in their respective areas for over 15 years, predating the existence of the BID itself. As for cultural organizations, the four most prominent institutions in the BID are the Barbican, the London Symphony Orchestra, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and the London Museum. Only the Barbican and Guildhall School have Culture Mile BID board representation, both of whom are respondents for this study. The third cultural organization that participated in the study is Drum Works, who are a frequent collaborator of the Culture Mile BID and a recipient of the BID's Community Fund, which is awarded to community initiatives within the BID boundary. Common councillors from the City of London Corporation were approached to represent the public sector in this study. These councillors act as representatives of constituents from a particular ward or area for a Court of Common Council within the City of London. One of the respondents is a councillor of a ward within the Culture Mile BID, and the other is a former councillor of a ward neighboring the BID. The purpose of this sample is to illuminate the various angles in which creative placemaking is executed by the Culture Mile BID's identified stakeholders.

3.4 Data analysis

A thematic analysis of the data was employed to produce the results of this study. Thematic analysis is described by Braun & Clarke (2021) as a process in which patterns are identified from a "qualitative dataset" (p. 4) where relevant themes begin to emerge through a process of coding. Coding is a system by which a dataset, in this case, interview transcripts and relevant case study documents, are "[given] labels... that seem to be of potential theoretical significance" or that might be relevant "within the social worlds of those being studied" (Bryman, 2016, p. 653). An inductive approach was then used in the process of coding, whereby

the dataset acts as the main source that will eventually shape theory, rather than a deductive approach wherein a dataset is primarily analyzed using the lens of pre-existing theories (Bryman, 2016).

While an inductive approach was used in data analysis, researchers do not always approach their findings with a blank slate and are usually informed by extant theories and concepts within their field when coding (Braun & Clarke, 2021). That said, a mix of a priori codes and open coding were employed in the data analysis process. A priori codes were derived from the study's theoretical framework, whereby instances of 'creative placemaking' and 'co-production' were sought out using the coding process to answer the research questions. Open coding allowed for a wider range of phenomena related to these initial topics to be observed. Data coding was done primarily using a qualitative data analysis software, Atlas.ti. During the coding process, 108 codes were generated with 442 quotations. These codes were then sorted into broader categories where four themes emerged (Table 4). The construction of these themes was informed by the study's theoretical framework and recurring patterns within the data set. The full codebook appears in Appendix C.

**Table 4. Summary of main themes and associated code groups**

Themes	Code groups
Arts and culture within Culture Mile BID	- Creative placemaking - BID-initiated projects
Creative placemaking: simply 'ticking the box'?	- Spatial aspects - Placemaking (general)
Complexities of co-production	- BID partnerships - Partnership dynamics - Stakeholder engagement
BIDs as a model of urban governance: autonomy and accountability	- BID governance - BID stakeholder perception: opportunities - BID stakeholder perception: threats

The research design of this study is meant to answer the question *how do business improvement districts (BIDs) utilize co-production in creative placemaking?* The case study of the Culture Mile BID (CM BID) is worth looking at because of its unique position as a public-private partnership meant to aid in urban development, with a mission to integrate arts and culture into this mandate.

4. Case Study: Culture Mile BID

The facts presented in this section are taken from the BID's 2024 Public Realm Vision & Strategy document, which the images are also taken from. To give a brief overview of how the BID is managed, its 2023/24 annual report describes it as a non-for-profit company that is managed by a group of board members who represent local businesses and the City of London. Steering groups who are made up of the BID's stakeholders assess activities and make recommendations to the board through the CM BID management team. The steering group is split into four categories, which coincide with Culture Mile BID's strategic themes: 1) Sustainable Environment 2) Connected Business Community 3) Inspiring Places and 4) Cultural Destination. Day-to-day activity and project execution is run by an executive team, which Morçöl & Karagoz (2020) refer to as a district management office.

Figure 1. **Culture Mile BID character area map (Source: Culture Mile BID, 2024b, p. 16)**
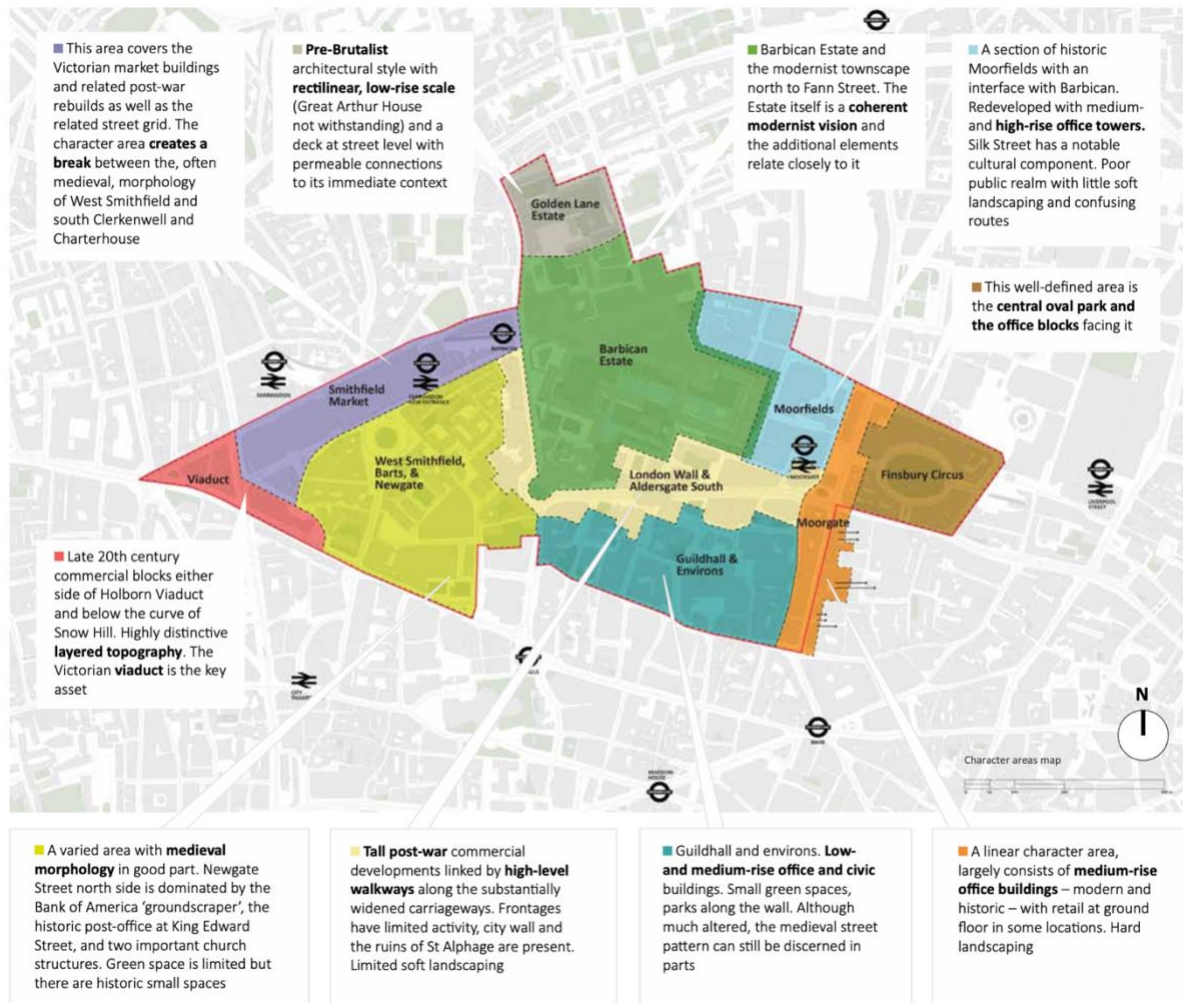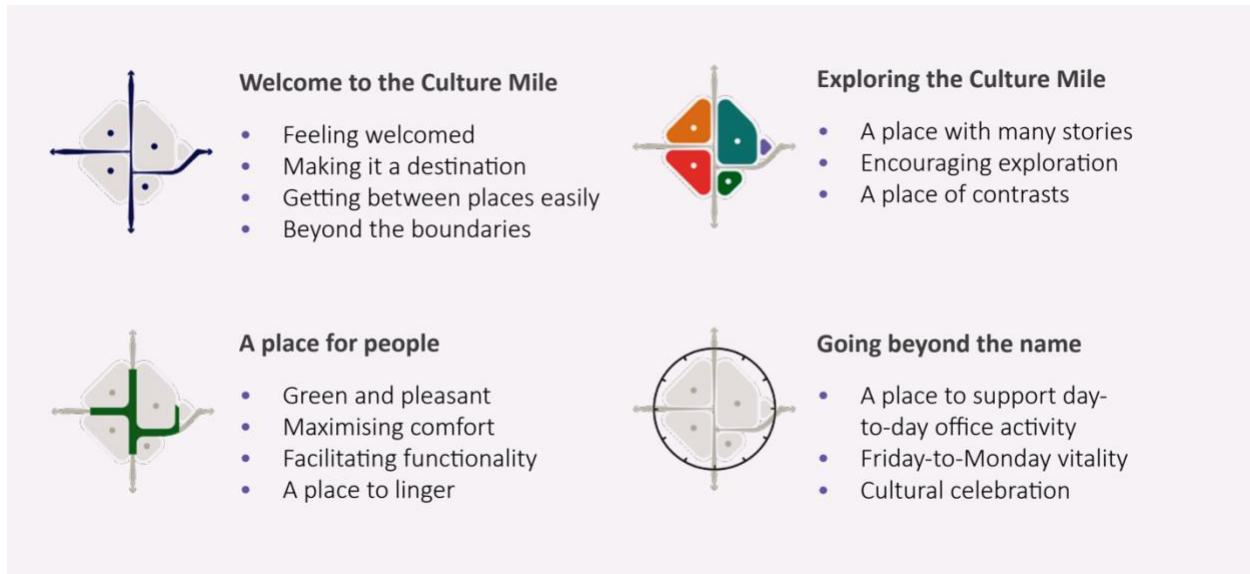
Located within the Square Mile, the Culture Mile BID is a delineated district that runs from the Farringdon to Moorgate underground stations. The neighborhood is considered part of a central area within London, one that is home to major offices and plenty of commercial establishments. While gathering data for this research, it was observed by the researcher that the area's sidewalks and public spaces were densely populated with pedestrians in the daytime, many of whom were workers whose offices were located within the neighborhood. Figure 1 illustrates the specific spatial area of the BID, which includes descriptions and a layout of "Character Areas". This map clarifies smaller neighborhoods or geographical 'pockets' within the BID and will be helpful in situating certain concepts or descriptions that will emerge in the succeeding Results section of this study.

Notably, three arts and cultural institutions are prominent within the CM BID area: the Barbican, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and the London Museum, which is currently under construction. These institutions are key to the establishment of the BID. Prior to its existence as a BID, Culture Mile started as a collective of these three organizations together with the London Symphony Orchestra. This first version of Culture Mile was set up in partnership with the City of London Corporation with the goal of transforming the area to become a "major destination for culture and creativity within the Square Mile" (City of London, 2017). This was formalized in a 2018 "Look and Feel Strategy" commissioned by the City of London. However, this initial Culture Mile was dissolved and ultimately transformed into a BID in 2023. Based on interviews with participants of this study, the decision to turn Culture Mile into a BID was so that it could continue its initial mandate more effectively through a formalized BID model. This makes it the fifth and newest BID within the Square Mile. BIDs typically operate within five-year cycles, which means CM BID is set to operate until 2028, after which it will go to ballot. The ballot typically determines whether the BID will continue to operate for another five years, or if it will be dissolved. In an interview with Respondent 7, they mention that the dissolution of BIDs is a somewhat rare occurrence: "once the genie is out of the bottle, you cannot put it back in."

Figure 2. **Culture Mile BID's 2024 objectives to deliver its vision (Source: Culture Mile BID, 2024b, p. 23)**

Welcome to the Culture Mile
- Feeling welcomed
- Making it a destination
- Getting between places easily
- Beyond the boundaries

Exploring the Culture Mile
- A place with many stories
- Encouraging exploration
- A place of contrasts

A place for people
- Green and pleasant
- Maximising comfort
- Facilitating functionality
- A place to linger

Going beyond the name
- A place to support day-to-day office activity
- Friday-to-Monday vitality
- Cultural celebration

As of 2024, the Culture Mile BID vision is that:

> All projects should help to reveal and celebrate the Culture Mile's multi-layered identity, respond to its rapidly changing nature, its position as a meeting point at the transport crossroads of London, and channel energy from its density of activity, including its unique cultural offer. (Culture Mile Public Realm Vision & Strategy, 2024)

Figure 2 shows four key objectives to facilitate the delivery of its vision. These objectives propose a mix of spatial strategies incorporated into the built environment together with partnerships (with communities or arts and cultural organizations) and shorter-term area activations such as events and programs to operationalize the BID's vision. "Welcome to Culture Mile" focuses on spatial strategies to make the area feel more connected to the city, "A place for people" highlights ways for the area to be more user-friendly, "Exploring the Culture Mile" promotes the area's rich history and arts and cultural assets, and "Going Beyond the Name" attempts to position the Culture Mile as a place that boasts unique offerings outside the 9-to-5 work hours. While creative placemaking is not overtly mentioned in this strategy, arts and cultural activities are embedded in its primary objectives to improve the area. Based on projected budgets from the BID's 2025/26 Billing Leaflet, 1.7 million pounds of its 3.2 million pounds of expenditures will be dedicated to projects related to strengthening arts and cultural activities within the area to create a more vibrant district.

5. Arts and culture within Culture Mile BID

Arts and culture play a crucial role in Culture Mile BID's strategy. Not only is it an evolution of a pre-existing public-private partnership between four cultural institutions and the City of London—then simply called Culture Mile—it is also a BID that overtly aligns itself with culture through its name. The BID describes its spatial footprint as "brimming with cultural creativity, commercial vibrancy, and a strong sense of community" and prioritizes "harnessing the area's culture to build a vibrant landscape" (Culture Mile BID, 2024b, p. 10). This theme is repeated throughout CM's reports—it places an emphasis on how arts and culture can be used to improve the public realm. While creative placemaking as a term is not explicitly used in these documents, its essence as a framework for collaboration between different actors to positively impact urban space through the integration of arts and culture (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010) is very apparent.

Based on the researcher's analysis of the BID's Annual Report 2023/24 and its 2025/26 Overview of Projects, Income & Expenditures, the BID executes two types of artistic creative placemaking projects: public art installations and place-based events and activations. The latter is more prominent and frequently utilized as a strategy by the BID, which is consistent with Vaughn's (2021) observation that temporary events are often used in creative placemaking to inject vibrance into an urban space. These events are much quicker to set up and dismantle, with minimal changes enacted on the area's built environment. That said, public art installations are not frequently initiated by CM. Instead, these are often city-wide projects where the BID cooperates with a separate organizer by placing temporary public art sculptures within its footprint (Culture Mile BID, 2024a). Additionally, a public art installation called Purple Hibiscus by artist Ibrahim Mahama located at the Barbican Art Centre was co-sponsored by the BID (Culture Mile BID, 2025). Aside from these, CM primarily executes artistic place-based events and activities that are open to the public. While CM initiates some of these events on their own, they are also made possible through collaborations undertaken with the arts and cultural institutions located within its area.

Throughout the data analysis process, a common pattern that emerged during interviews with the identified cultural organization stakeholders was CM's financial support of creative

placemaking projects. Respondent 5 remarks that support from CM brought cinema to life in a public space:

> We host an outdoor cinema at the Barbican. Right in the Square Mile, there's an outdoor cinema. It's wonderful to do that... we draw in a huge number of audiences from different community groups, different businesses, employees, [people] from all different walks of life coming in to enjoy that. It's an example of a project that the Culture Mile supported financially.

This was echoed by Respondent 4, referring to an upcoming project that was made possible through CM's support:

> We will be running Vibrance, which is this light show in January that's explicitly funded by the BID and the [Guildhall] school will be putting some money in as well. We hope that that will become an annual festival. But it costs quite a lot of money [to do] projections and that sort of thing. This will be a kind of pilot year coming.

Providing financial support to institutions for artistic projects becomes a way for CM to contribute to creative placemaking in their locality. This seems to be consistent with their commitment to "work with the area's world-class cultural institutions to promote Culture Mile as a major UK destination for culture and leisure" (Culture Mile BID, 2025, p. 16). Partnerships are key in executing creative placemaking projects (Markusen and Gadwa, 2010) and possesses the advantage of bringing people from various sectors together to enact lasting and effective change (Zitcer, 2020). However, a study by Zitcer (2020) nuances the role of partnerships in creative placemaking. The idea of "coerced collaboration" refers to arts institutions working with certain organizations to fund initiatives—a somewhat "opportunistic" relationship (Zitcer, 2020, p. 285). The main criticism behind the idea of this transactional relationship between arts organizations and a larger funding group is that it is not "authentic and sustainable" (p. 286). While the opportunistic relationship between BID and arts institution is somewhat evident in CM, an argument can be made that the existence of these partnerships are ultimately a better alternative to not having any sort of cooperation or collaboration at all (Zitcer, 2020). In the case of CM, its support of creative placemaking projects can be the starting point for stronger and long-lasting collaborations between the BID and arts organizations.

It should be noted that CM does not only support projects from major cultural institutions. Since it was established, the BID runs a Community Fund which is meant to "support a breadth of local projects that drive positive, local impact" (Culture Mile BID, 2024a, p. 10) and that operates with a generous sum. In its 2023/24 Annual report, CM reports the significance of their Community Fund:

> ...totaling £60,000 – a larger funding pot than other City BIDs due to the greater number of residents living in the Culture Mile area in the Barbican, Golden Lane and Barts Close areas of our footprint, approximately around 4,000 in total (p. 10).

Drum Works is a cultural organization that received grants from the Community Fund two years in a row. The group executes music workshops that are free and open to the public within CM, with the purpose of empowering people through a communal and creative activity such as drumming. Respondent 6, the managing director of Drum Works, describes how CM's financial support of their project allows them to continue this mission and provide workshops for those within the CM footprint: "it enables us to run our projects, which we would struggle to do otherwise." CM's support of these projects is not only felt by cultural organizations who collaborate with the BID, but by other stakeholders as well. One respondent from the local authority stakeholder group, explains their experience attending an event supported by CM.

> Culture Mile BID, specifically, is in an area that has so much culture to it, that it can only be good that it's being brought to the attention of more people. Last night, the BID organized an event at St Bartholomew the Great, which is a beautiful church, the oldest church in London... the BID laid on a lecture about some of [its] history. That's an example of the BID doing something very positive that was open to everybody. It wasn't only open to business, it was open to anybody; visitors, residents, to come along and learn about something that probably a lot of people don't know.

Thus, there is some consistency between what the Culture Mile BID has set out to do in terms of "[driving] positive local impact" (Culture Mile BID, 2024a, p. 10). Temporary events that allow people to engage with arts and culture within the area can go a long way in terms of improving people's experience of a particular neighborhood, which was stated in Markusen and Gadwa's white paper on creative placemaking (2010). Additionally, through its Community Fund, CM

BID has paid special attention to recognizing that community-based initiatives already exist within that area and can provide support for these projects by offering financial grants. This grant is not only practical for these community groups; they are also a way for CM BID to engage with a wider set of stakeholders within its district.

While these projects exemplify how creative placemaking is being executed within the CM geographic zone, this is only one facet of the concept. Arts and cultural activities are being introduced into public spaces to inject vibrance and vitality into the urban landscape, but what of positive area development? Vaughn et al. (2021) talk about how the social value of creative placemaking is apparent when social connections are strengthened by opportunities for interaction, which contribute to an overall sense of community within an area. Respondent 6 discusses how Drum Works' music workshops within CM are a vehicle for people to meet and form social relationships.

> People don't just get together [for] drumming. They're always going for drinks at the weekend, or going to gigs together and stuff outside of our sessions. And it's, you know, everything from like 21, 22-year-olds up to people in their sixties. And it's really nice to have that cross generational group as well.

This goes back to creative placemaking's ideal outcome of making a particular area more 'liveable' through arts and cultural interventions (Markusen and Gadwa, 2010). Respondent 6's anecdote regarding social interactions between people of different backgrounds is an example of how creative placemaking can potentially improve quality of life in a particular area. Using arts and culture within a city can also generate positive economic impact by increasing footfall into a particular area. While CM uses "cultural events and activity" (Culture Mile BID, 2024a, p. 16) to attract people to the area, this is a strategy that is executed by BIDs within the city in general. A former councillor for the City of London explains that the City recognizes the potential of BIDs to invite people back into urban areas. This was particularly true post-COVID, where offices were offering hybrid working arrangements for their employees.

> One of the things the [City of London] thinks that BIDs could be helpful for is to 'win back the commute'. So, people are encouraged to come into the city, because there are

other things going on. All these BID activities and BID socials, and free drinks and stuff, is all about [how] can we lure more people [here]? The economic impact of that is huge.

This logic is illustrated in CM's 2023/24 Annual Report, which recognizes a strategic purpose in strengthening CM's position as a cultural destination. In its first year, CM sought to understand the demographic of its area to

> inform future partnerships, cultural events and activity, for the long-term ambition of increasing and diversifying the visitor base, enriching people's perceptions of the area leading to a boost to the local economy and supporting retail and hospitality businesses to thrive (p. 16).

Markusen and Gadwa's definition of creative placemaking places an emphasis on its potential to contribute to the economic development of an area. It can be argued that BIDs have recognized this potential and are utilizing the framework to create strategies around the development of their districts.

Schupbach (2015) outlines how creative placemaking can be used as an "economic development strategy" that involves four action points: "anchoring, activating, fixing, and planning" (p. 29). These action points are reflected in how CM operates. For example, anchoring recognizes key arts organizations in an area and positions them as touchpoints for a community, creating an identity around that and using these to attract foot traffic. CM does this through its emphasis of cultural institutions within its footprint. Activating is when arts and culture is brought into an area either through place-based events like festivals and public performances or more permanent structures such as public art or street furniture (lighting, seating, etc.). CM also practices this as one of its primary approaches to placemaking. Fixing refers to utilizing "vacant or blighted" (p. 30) spaces, and planning is engaging with stakeholders and communities during the process of creating projects. Aside from 'fixing', CM seems to be employing these strategies in the operation of the BID. This goes back to creative placemaking's focus on both improving livability and economic development mentioned in the theoretical framework. Schupbach however recognizes the dissonance that injecting the economic angle to arts and cultural projects can generate, stating that "economic development and art worlds do not speak the same language" (p. 32). This is one of the central tensions of creative placemaking as a concept, which is later reflected in how stakeholders perceive CM projects.

These findings illustrate that CM incorporates arts and cultural activities into its programs and uses these as a catalyst for development within its spatial remit. While it is able to host its own programs, it primarily practices creative placemaking through partnerships with cultural institutions and artistic groups, providing support and funding for projects that inject vibrancy and a sense of community into the area. CM often act as *enablers* of creative placemaking rather than direct *initiators*. This 'enabling' of projects can be vital in forming partnerships within the creative placemaking framework. While this dynamic has its pitfalls as described by Zitcer (2020) as simply being opportunistic, this can still be a good starting point for a longer partnership. This is evident, for example, in the Barbican outdoor cinema project, the Vibrance lightshow, and Drum Works' events. The challenge for CM BID and BIDs in general who wish to endeavor in creative placemaking is going beyond this so-called 'opportunistic' relationship and building a longer partnership that effectively delivers successful projects. While this partnership model has its advantages, how the handful of projects initiated by CM are received by audiences and stakeholders is slightly more nuanced.

6. Creative placemaking: simply 'ticking the box'?

It was observed that while respondents acknowledged the potential benefits of these CM-initiated projects, people also held certain reservations about them. Two respondents have both expressed uncertainty regarding one of CM's initiatives: Street Ambassadors. These are individuals dressed in a coat and bowler hat uniform placed around the district to help people find their way around the area and provide a friendly face to visitors (Culture Mile BID, 2024a). While the presence of ambassadors might bring so-called conviviality into an area, they might not be perceived as such by those who spend plenty of time within the CM BID.

> Personally, maybe [it's] not something that I would prioritize the most. Because to me, you know, the area feels safe, it's very well lit, it's always very busy. Maybe they're just a 'nice to have' rather than an absolute necessity. But I'm very willing to park any kind of questions I have and give it a go for a couple of years and see what happens.

Another respondent says:

> They just don't look like the kind of people that you would stop and ask a question if you were a tourist or a visitor, wanting to know something about the area. The BIDs think

their ambassadors do great work. I'm not saying [Steet Ambassadors are] bad people...

[but] I quite rarely see them engaging with people. I think that's the whole point of them.

And I want to see more of that.

While some respondents of this research have reservations regarding CM BID's Street Ambassadors, the BID is able to gain on-the-ground, street level insights into city user experiences through them. One respondent explains that Street Ambassadors can be useful because they interact directly with CM's surroundings and with people coming into the district: "They're quite helpful in recording immediate feedback and getting an anecdotal feel for how people are experiencing the area, which is actually very helpful."

Sentiments towards CM's Street Ambassadors point towards a larger theme that emerged during the process of data analysis. Stakeholders tend to question not only the effectiveness of certain CM projects, but their authenticity as well. This can be a side effect of the BID model, as BIDs typically enter areas that already have existing culture, histories, communities, and arts ecosystems. A BID's strategies therefore are not developed 'from scratch'—instead they are rooted in the existing narratives or features that form the distinctive qualities of a certain place. BIDs within London tend to form their 'brand' based on these existing histories, which can create tension for stakeholders who have either been living or working within a certain area prior to it becoming placed under a BID. This can be viewed by stakeholders as BIDs capitalizing or co-opting an area's qualities for their own self-interests rather than that of the broader community (Novy & Colomb, 2013). For residents living within CM, the events that the BID organizes come across as topical. One respondent explains their perception of these events:

The latest newsletter had a couple of [events], I think. But they tend to be kind of pepper-potted around, really. There isn't a sense of a joined-up program. And I don't think there's really a sense of them being, I don't know, kind of rooted in the area.

Similarly, one respondent has felt that artistic events and programs that are initiated by the BID feel quite arbitrary and are unable to reach their full potential.

It feels that the BID is operating on this very kind of pedestrian level. There's nothing wrong with that... but there's a kind of sense that it's just delivering small things just to

put tick boxes almost, to their sort of contract rather than them actually [doing something more].

Residents perceiving these projects as superficial may be connected to the fact that people living within CM seem to have an appreciation for the arts, culture, and history connected to these areas. This was observable during the interview process, most particularly with residents. Resident respondents live in proximity to the Barbican and Golden Lane Estates, or the historic Smithfield Market. Resident respondents have expressed affinity or pride in the artistic or cultural significance of their areas—the Barbican and Golden Lane for being stellar examples of brutalist architecture and its status as an artistic hub, and Smithfield Market for its rich Victorian history as London's old meat market. These distinct and significant histories can create a stronger attachment between residents and their neighborhoods.

Place attachment can be developed when a community feels rooted in the history and culture of an area (Lewicka, 2011). Attachment plays a crucial role in fostering a "sense of place" (Ellery et al., 2021, p. 72), which is one facet of the placemaking concept: that of the subjective individual and collective experiences of living in a certain area. These experiences can shape people's perception of their urban locality, which in turn can create a feeling of connection towards a place. Places are unique because they exist as both tangible locations and metaphysical landscapes created by the imagination; the latter referring to the collection of thoughts, feelings, and associations that a person or a group has towards a certain location (Ashworth & Graham, 2005). This amassment of perceptions contributes to a kind of place attachment, which refers to the emotional ties that people can develop towards a certain place (Lewicka, 2011). 'Sense of place' therefore possesses an "affective dimension" (Acedo et al., 2017, p. 505) because places inevitably have a psychological impact on humans. Arts and culture are vehicles by which people can develop a stronger sense of identity and attachment to a particular area. The feeling of superficiality, then, is heightened for these stakeholders. A BID who claims to be invested in an area's cultural assets can inevitably create friction with residents whose connection to these assets feels more personal. One respondent echoes this sentiment.

The Barbican Art Centre... London Museum, the London Symphony Orchestra, Guildhall School... St. Barts' Hospital, the oldest hospital in the UK, which is also an incredible asset and resource. The idea of that being brought into cultural and creative use as an

engine for London and the UK and beyond, the opportunity is so huge. The BID to date has not even thought about the future. It always seems to be focusing on the now. And what BID in the UK would have these things at their fingertips? They've got gold at their fingertips. There's the opportunity to really raise imagination, and we just know we're near it. It just really sounds like we're talking about little, tiny interventions that are low impact.

Despite these sentiments, residents also recognize that CM's primary target is levy-paying businesses. "To be fair to the BID, they're clear that their customers are businesses, not residents", one respondent remarks. The distance between BID and resident stakeholder may be heightened by the latter's existing perceptions regarding their areas not necessarily caused by CM BID alone; one respondent says that "the [Square Mile] sees itself as the business city and therefore, with such a small number of residents, [the resident's] voice is very squeezed out".

Residents, regardless of their position within the BID as 'non-primary' stakeholders, are nonetheless affected by the programs of CM. This is inevitable as residents, unlike the workforce located in CM BID, are ultimately the demographic that cannot punch in a timecard and leave the district. As much as CM is a business improvement district, it is also a neighborhood for thousands of inhabitants. The significance of setting up creative placemaking strategies that are more connected to community cannot be emphasized further. As BIDs must contend with people's existing attachments and the narratives that exist within an area, the participatory aspects of both creative placemaking and co-production can be utilized to ensure that stakeholders are included in shaping a place. Co-production allows for people to become active participants rather than passive receivers of these goods and services (Ostrom, 1996); this process can potentially be beneficial for stakeholders and the BID in setting up projects that feel more rooted in an area's culture as told through the perspective of those who live there. Creative placemaking on the other hand, can be a strategy in which co-production is enacted through the incorporation of different stakeholders (Wichowsky et al., 2023) that use arts and culture as a crux for urban space development.

Critiques around creative placemaking are often found hand in hand with literature around the subject itself. Its connection to economic development, and subsequent questions regarding culture being co-opted by capitalism (Novy & Colomb, 2013; Loh et al., 2024), are

often stumbling blocks around the discourse of creative placemaking. Bedoya (2013) argues that art and culture are not only something that a community possesses and identifies with, but they are also a vehicle for politics and activism. Bedoya goes on to say that placemaking as an act cannot be separated from histories or issues that shape a certain location, no matter how fraught, least a place is shaped around a sanitized narrative that erases factors like political struggle, poverty, or inequality. At the heart of Bedoya's argument is the insistence that creative placemaking must remain authentic to the place that it aims to improve. Beyond authenticity, the use of arts and culture must serve the greater public.

One respondent provides a critical perspective about the driving force behind the Square Mile's creation of public events. They explain that while BIDs may be setting up projects and activities that benefit the larger public, these might also be initiated to show levy-payers that funds are being utilized in a productive way.

> Getting into placemaking, another reason for [BIDs] doing more and their influence becoming more pervasive is because, particularly in places like the [Square Mile], they actually have quite a lot of income and dare I say it, some of them are inventing things to do in order to justify their existence... Savy BIDs realize that, and don't just tick the box... They go out of their way to engage the community and work with them, and if they're savvy, give them some funding. And I think the Culture Mile might do it to a point.

A lack of authenticity, and a sense that there are ulterior motives to a BID's activities, can hinder stakeholders from engaging with BIDs. These findings point to larger issues surrounding not only BIDs but the creative placemaking process in general. Placemaking activities will not always be received by stakeholders in the way that they are intended to by those who put them in place. Creative placemaking projects in areas that already hold significant historic, artistic, or cultural assets must properly integrate these existing factors in an effective way—engaging with stakeholders who possess a personal connection to these assets may be a first step in doing so (Bedoya 2013), despite the challenges that this can impose on a BIDs' plans toward economic development. Mould and Comunian call for a "difficult balancing act needed between cultural consumption, cultural production and fostering a cultural (non-economic) milieu" (2015, p. 2357). BIDs, as organized entities that receive levies from businesses, can be the vehicles for setting up creative placemaking projects. However, they must contend with the perception that

they primarily hold the interests of businesses, while also executing initiatives that are meant to improve the public realm. This can create some mistrust or tension between the BID and stakeholders. How, then, can an organization like a BID include stakeholders in their programming?

7. Complexities of co-production

The promise of co-production lies in its participatory facet that allows stakeholders to be included in the process of public goods and service provision (Dudau et al., 2019). Co-production can be observed when there is 1) stakeholder participation and 2) existing partnerships between groups to provide 3) public goods and service delivery (Ostrom, 1996; Bovaird, 2007). In the case of CM in particular, the positive area impact that arts and cultural activities generate for the public can be considered a public good or service; the BID holds existing partnerships with local authorities such as the City of London Corporation; and CM also has mechanisms in place to include stakeholders in their decision-making processes. Following this logic, one can argue that the BID itself is an example of co-production in practice.

Operationally, CM's main avenue for stakeholder participation is through the constitution of its board members, which all represent CM's levy-paying businesses. As the BID is funded by these businesses, they are treated as CM's primary stakeholders, which explains why they are given the most power when it comes to making decisions. A CM BID board member explains the board's obligations as such:

> Board members feel a very strong responsibility to make sure that the BID is doing everything it should and could be doing in the most efficient way possible. We're looking at the finances, we're looking at the activities, we are pushing for very clear KPIs on what is it that we're trying to do, what is the measure of success, are we hitting that measure, what might we want to do differently next year. We only have a five-year period to prove the value of it, and we want to make sure that, particularly levy paying companies in the area but also everyone who's coming into the area, can experience benefit and value from the presence of the BID.

CM's board sets the BID's objectives, but they are also in charge of choosing which projects are funded and executed. The BID management team takes input from steering groups regarding projects and presents them to the board. One respondent explains the constitution of these steering groups, who still hold some connections to the board.

> What we have are a number of steering groups that have representatives from levy paying companies and include either a board member or somebody who is very close to the board on that steering group. [Steering groups] will do a lot of the day-to-day receiving of proposals of activity. They'll assess the value. They've got [a] criteria for deciding on whether to kind of re-ignite things. And then that will come up to board as a report and a final agreement on whether we say yes to a project, or whether we have qualifying queries for it. That's what we're aiming for, that the steering groups have very informed representatives and specialists in those particular areas to make decisions or recommendations that might go up to the board.

Steering groups are not only made up of members from levy-paying businesses but include resident representation as well. For example, members of the Barbican and Golden Lane Neighborhood Forum (BGLNF) sit on these steering groups. One respondent explains that the Neighborhood Forum has a "formal designation within the decision-making structure" as a "statutory [consort] for the City of London". BGLNF sits on two out of four of CM's steering groups.

While CM BID has formal avenues for stakeholders to participate and have a say in the creation of their programs, the reality of this system is far more complex. A study by Wichowsky et al. (2023) on creative placemaking and participatory governance has found that avenues for stakeholders to have a voice are not an antidote that will completely remedy issues regarding inclusion and community engagement. For example, stakeholders must be defined so a project does not become "all things to all people" (Wichowsky et al., 2023, p. 1765) and set unrealistic expectations for them. This practice is rooted in the larger field of stakeholder management, which states that firms must engage with stakeholders as they are "group[s] or individual[s] who can affect or [are] affected by the achievement of an organization's purpose" (Freeman, 2010, p. 53), and has largely evolved to be a "demonstration" of "good business behaviors" (Pedrini &

Ferri, 2018, p. 45). In the case of CM BID, different stakeholder groups are identified and given opportunity by the BID to contribute to their programs according to their position within the BID structure. For example, residents and community leaders might be given steering group representation, but levy-paying businesses are given priority in terms of board representation. Wichowsky et al. point out that while having actors from different stakeholder groups can strengthen the processes behind a project, it can also "produce an impoverished form of participation" where feedback can be gathered from stakeholders but not necessarily "translated" (2023, p. 1765) to a particular project.

This "impoverished form of participation" (Wichowsky et al., 2023, p. 1765) is a challenge that CM BID faces. One respondent from the local authority stakeholder group expressed that while CM engages with residents, this does not necessarily translate to meaningful exchange, leaving residents feeling distant from the BID.

> I wonder whether a way of them perhaps opening [feedback] up would be to have more strategic meetings with their own stakeholders. This is a reason why some residents feel a little bit excluded, because, although they get invited to interesting events, which is great, they don't really have much of an input into what the BIDs are doing.

CM set up a Community Forum "to ensure residents in the area have a voice in the delivery of the BID" (Culture Mile BID, 2025, p. 9). Regardless, it seems that "mass-member organizations" (Wichowsky et al., 2023, p. 1769) such as neighborhood forums or community associations are still the most effective way for stakeholders such as residents to be heard. Residents who are not associated with any formal neighborhood association such as BGLNF are left to engage with the BID through BID-initiated programs such as the Community Forum. One respondent expressed disappointment regarding this initiative.

> Community is not their business, basically... the public realm study which they completed last year, was then presented at a meeting and they said, 'come and have drinks with us and we'll do a presentation about our public realm strategy over half an hour and, thanks, but we don't want any questions.' They didn't have any questions [during] the community forum which they organized... They're basically in marketing and broadcast mode and not in engagement mode so far as residents are concerned.

This disconnect between BID and stakeholder is not only felt by people outside of the formal organizational structures of CM. Even those who hold steering group and BID board representation can sometimes feel dissatisfied with these channels of communication.

> There was [a meeting] fairly recently when I couldn't be there, but I actually sent some feedback in advance on a particular project... I got no feedback whatsoever; I didn't even get a thank you or anything from sending it in.

One respondent explains the process of selecting proposals but also expresses how this is somewhat lacking in terms of communication.

> It has felt a little bit piecemeal. We as a board get together and we are receivers of information on a board meeting day without really having that dialogue of conversation [with the BID management team]. So, we're receiving requests and you're almost in the spotlight of trying to make a decision based on, you know, [a] limited amount of time.

These findings illustrate that while CM BID have formal mechanisms like community forums, steering groups, and board representation to engage with their stakeholders, communication can still be improved between the BID and these actors to combat "impoverished participation" (Wichowsky et al., 2023, p. 1765). This is proof that the presence of stakeholder participation avenues does not guarantee the effectiveness of these methods in collecting user feedback and incorporating them into projects.

At first glance, one can observe that the BID has the organizational systems in place to allow for effective stakeholder participation. However, these findings show that co-production is not as straightforward as giving stakeholders a so-called 'seat at the table'. In the case of residents, CM's attempts to engage with them might feel token without active dialogue. For representatives sitting on the BID board and steering group, there is still room for improvement. While this shows that co-production is not a straight-forward process and will often entail constant negotiation between its actors, it is possible to view these tensions as a barometer of co-production's existence in a particular context. These challenges can be proof of a multiplicity of voices being incorporated into a project. One respondent who is a resident within CM BID recognizes this: "I think they see [us] as sometimes collaborator, sometimes contester, which is

kind of important because we all have different roles to play in this space." Collaborators are not meant to simply cooperate—the co-production process must also give space for resistance. Arguably, it is through co-production that tensions regarding interests can be navigated. In a study on establishing more just cities through co-production, Perry and Atherton propose that a "collaborative language of 'challenges'" and "shared critique" (2017, p. 42) can be a starting point of co-production.

One critique of the co-production framework is its vulnerability to being co-opted by neoliberal politics, which is a similar critique pointed at the BID model and creative placemaking. Neoliberalism sees the state becoming less accountable in delivering public goods and services, emphasizing the role of the individual and the market in generating these commodities instead (Ward, 2006; Bell & Pahl, 2018). The similarities, then, between co-production, the BID model, and creative placemaking become apparent in the criticisms leveled against them. Additionally, Bell & Pahl urge that "non-hierarchy" (2018, p. 109) should not immediately be assumed in co-production, as the subject position of each actor still holds weight in the co-production process. In the CM BID example, board members are not necessarily 'equal' to other co-producers as they hold power and influence over the decision-making process. A critique of co-production can then be brought up in the realm of accountability, which Verschure et al. pose as a question: "who can users hold accountable when the users themselves are part of the production process?" (2012, p. 1094).

8. BIDs as a model of urban governance: autonomy and accountability

In the UK, BIDs are entities that have proliferated partially through the intervention of government. As mentioned in the theoretical framework of this research, BIDs were seen by the government as an avenue to 'outsource' economic and urban development within a city to private actors (Cook, 2008). Within the context of the Square Mile, the City of London Corporation acts as the main proposer of BIDs (Respondent 7, City of London Corporation), which means that the BIDs in this area exist because of some form of government support. BIDs then are an example of a public-private partnership that operates to deliver public goods and

services (Klijn & Teisman, 2005). One respondent talks about the ways in which this partnership can be mutually beneficial for businesses and residents alike.

> Whilst BIDs are funded by businesses, my view broadly is that they're good for visitors, but they're also good for residents, because of the kind of work they're doing in terms of improving public realm, organizing all kinds of events in all kinds of different spheres... I regard it as a positive. What is good for business is also good for anybody that visits the city, and also anybody that lives in the city.

Like this respondent, some might view the existence of BIDs as generating positive externalities that are beneficial for both businesses and the public. On the one hand, BIDs are accountable to their levy-payers and are meant to improve the area in which businesses operate. On the other hand, BIDs' partnership with the City of London Corporation means that they are accountable to the public sector. Both actors must then balance private and public interests within this relationship.

During the data gathering process, certain issues have emerged regarding the relationship between BIDs and the City of London. According to one respondent, there seems to be a lack in streamlining and alignment of priorities between BIDs and the City.

> BIDs do a lot of work around public realm and improvements. Invariably, they have to get planning commission. And the planning authority is obviously the City of London Corporation. So there needs to be clarity about how that works... There have been occasions when the BIDs have done things, and the City said 'what are you doing? Why have you done that there? Why didn't you ask our permission?' That whole interaction needs to be more clearly understood, because the city's [offices] have not been used to working with BIDs. There's almost an educational role or function that's needed so that people understand how the two sides need to work together.

This is echoed by another respondent, who also notes the additional factor of BIDs having set up unique objectives to differentiate their overall image. This is a factor that not only makes the relationship between the BIDs and the City complex, but it also makes setting a cohesive vision more complicated.

Although the BIDs are not competing against each other or competing against the [City of London], getting them to work in a joined up, seamless fashion is quite challenging. They all have a set of objectives that they wish to achieve within their own footprint... It's much more challenging than it sounds in terms of getting all the objectives, all the visions lined up. I think it's something we can do better.

A lack of synergy between BIDs and government in terms of communication, task delineation, and more crucially in collective goals can cause tension between these actors. Forrer et al. (2010) propose that in private public partnerships (PPP) dynamics, each actor possesses differing levels of accountability. The authors state that government is not only expected to "hold their private partners accountable" but they must also be "accountable to their private partners" while maintaining the interests of the larger public (2010, p. 477). Being transparent regarding the division of responsibilities is one way to strike this balance (Forrer et al., 2010)—a process that the City of London seems to be lacking not only in the case of CM, but their BIDs in general. The absence of these measures is reflected in the way BIDs and the City of London manage their arts and cultural strategy.

BIDs have seen the existing arts and cultural assets within their areas as an opportunity to highlight the uniqueness of their districts. One respondent describes that in the absence of the City of London's clear approach towards promoting arts and culture, BIDs seemed to have filled that role. Post-COVID, the Corporation launched their Destination City Programme, which aims to position the Square Mile as a "world-leading business and leisure location" (*Destination City*, 2025). Notably, Destination City is still in the process of setting up its strategy for art and culture. One local authority respondent says:

We were arguing that we still needed a vision and a strategy for culture and heritage in the City, which would be part of the Destination City offer... [but] because we've had three or four years now without the City saying what its priorities were for a culture placemaking strategy, the BIDs have moved in and almost become... rival bodies within the Square Mile. They have taken ownership of, in their own areas, placemaking, culture, [and] public realm.

Contrary to this response, CM BID has mentioned that its strategy to bring arts and culture into the area is "in support of the City of London Corporation flagship programme Destination City"

(Culture Mile BID, 2024b, p. 5). This incongruence between CM BID's strategy document and the respondent's answer is further proof of the lack of synergy and communication between local authorities and BIDs. Issues regarding creative placemaking become salient in this context. While CM positions itself as a "key advocate for culture and the arts" (Culture Mile BID, 2025, p. 3), it is possible that it also utilizes this as a strategy to differentiate itself as a BID brand. While CM advocates for arts and culture by supporting creative placemaking projects, it may have started to use these as a differentiation or marketing tool in the absence of the government's clear vision, as mentioned by the previous respondent. The government therefore holds a greater responsibility in creating measures to ensure that arts and culture are not engulfed by private interests. This demonstrates how partnerships between government and private entities can be very complex. BIDs can, and to some extents are, quite autonomous—the lack of certain guardrails can make it difficult for the government to hold BIDs accountable. Within the City of London, there is no formal paperwork that describes the partnership between BIDs and the Corporation. One respondent says, "there doesn't seem to be any binding, not that it has to be binding, but any sort of memorandum of understanding or any partnership agreement".

Each public private partnership can take on different forms depending on the arrangement of the parties within that system. Klijn and Teisman (2005) identify two types of agreements between actors. These agreements can either be through a contract, where the delivery of a good or service is outsourced to an external private entity—division of labor, expectations, and set outcomes are clearly defined; or through a partnership, where the focus is on aligning goals so that varying endeavors "are integrated with each other in order to achieve surplus value" (p. 98). The authors note that co-production is much more obvious in the second type of arrangement than the first. In the context of the Square Mile, it is apparent that BIDs have a partnership agreement with the government as they are not formally contracted to deliver certain assets. However, the lack of alignment between the two entities in the case of CM points towards an opportunity for a hybrid arrangement between contract and partnership—a memorandum of understanding (MoU) or partnership agreement may be beneficial in this context to set expectations between the two parties. The "project management"-oriented philosophy of a contract arrangement is therefore balanced with the "process management" aspect of a partnership arrangement (Klijn and Teisman, 2005, p. 102). In the context of CM, an MoU

would act as a guideline that outlines expectations between the two actors while allowing the flexibility for the partnership to evolve depending on its context.

Thus far, the research has discussed the various stakeholders in the BID governance structure: levy-paying businesses that sit on the board, non-levy-paying actors such as residents, and the local government. One key player has yet to be factored in this equation. During the data gathering process, CM's executive team, who run the BID's day-to-day operations, have emerged as being connected to a major actor in BID governance within the Square Mile. CM has contracted the running of its operations to a London-based consultancy who provide the BID with the staffing of its executive team. This company will be hidden under the alias 'Agora' for anonymization purposes. On the company's website, Agora describes itself as "[operating] Business Improvement Districts and Partnerships in the heart of Central London..." working on "placemaking and social regeneration projects". One respondent describes how the CM board is trying to navigate its relationship with its executive team as such:

> The thing that I'm not quite so sure of is whether we're exercising the most out of the relationship between an outsourced executive team through [Agora]. Are we getting value for money, are we getting the kind of services that we would expect from a permanently recruited executive team? Those are questions I think we're deliberating on and key to that is good communication, good dialogue, and understanding... being really clear about our vision and our 12-month plan.

Agora does not only provide this service to CM—almost every single BID within the Square Mile has, in one form or another, contracted Agora for its services. Agora, therefore, holds a significant amount of influence in the operation of BIDs as their primary management providers. This has raised critiques regarding governance and the monopolization of Agora in BID management. BIDs may already be toeing the line in that regard with the question of privatization of public goods and services such as arts and cultural activity. It can be argued that certain public assets can be delivered more efficiently when it is unencumbered by government bureaucracy and the limited financial resources of public entities—hence the emergence of public-private partnerships such as BIDs (Morçöl & Karagoz, 2020). However, the privatization of public services can result in conflicting interests if profit or economic development takes precedence over the provision of assets that should otherwise be accessible to all. Boards can act

as the guardrails that ensure accountability in public private partnerships (Omobowale, 2010), but this would depend on the constitution of its members and how involved they are in the operation of the organization. In the case of BIDs within the Square Mile, it is not simply boards put potentially the City of London Corporation that must also navigate and ensure that the influence of companies, like Agora, is regulated in the interests of the broader public.

Those in government are beginning to question not only the pervasiveness of BIDs within the City of London, but the omnipresence of organizations like Agora in the execution of this model. One local authority respondent says,

> I mean it's probably unlikely that the BID market will be shaken up, but I think there's a move... to try to get at least a little bit of competition [and] get the BIDs to think there are alternatives [to Agora]. It is in the interest of the city to have an alternative to the [Agora] control or influence. At the same time, and to be fair to [Agora], you could argue, and the evidence would be there I think, that the [Agora] model brings cost-effectiveness, efficiency, coordination. It depends which way you want to look at it.

One resident of the CM area who is aware of Agora's existence describes it as a "monopoly" that ultimately affects the way in which BID-led placemaking projects are being executed within the district.

> The Culture Mile BID has, as far as I can see, been completely cookie-cutter from what is happening in the other [Agora] BID areas. There's almost nothing that has been unique to the possibilities of the area, to the needs of the area, to the businesses that are in the area... it is extremely cookie-cutter workshops and things that they've delivered across the other BID areas.

Agora as an outsourced contractor to BIDs can indeed be operationally and financially efficient. Arguably, their existence as a go-to consultancy for BIDs not only streamlines BID operations, but they can also create best practices. However, the pitfalls of having a company like Agora run a BID is evident in the so-called "cookie-cutter" solution to creative placemaking. The price of efficiency is the loss of uniqueness within the creative placemaking process—if one arts and cultural activity proves successful for one BID area, it can be shoehorned to another BID even if it has no relation or rootedness to that area's distinctive qualities. To create more economically

developed areas, groups such as BIDs can capitalize on the unique traits of a place. Once an area has become economically prosperous and property values increase, these places are vulnerable to becoming "homogenous" (Novy & Colomb, 2013, p. 1821) through gentrification. Arts and culture risk being wielded by BIDs as simply a tool to inject vibrancy into a place without engaging with the existing and unique arts communities and cultural contexts within a particular area (Novy & Colomb, 2013; Mould & Comunian, 2015). This is a common critique against the creative placemaking concept (Loh et al. 2024), which is why the engagement of various stakeholder actors through co-production can be a potential strategy to mitigate the topical use of arts and culture in urban development. CM's operations allow this to an extent, as steering groups and board members who represent different stakeholder groups are involved in the process of decision making.

Within its capacity as a BID, CM has shown evidence of embodying co-production through its organizational and decision-making structure. Through this, stakeholders can give input into different arts and cultural projects, making CM enablers of creative placemaking within its spatial footprint. The presence of cultural institutions in CM's board as primary stakeholders also show their commitment to arts and culture-led urban development. The running of the BID however is affected by different power dynamics within this co-production process. This is complicated by CM's positioning of itself as advocates of arts and culture within an area. Arts and culture can hold deeply personal and subjective meanings to individuals, especially when it is connected to their localities which they hold a personal connection to. While CM BID no doubt recognizes the importance of these as evidenced through their funding of creative placemaking projects and the existence of their Community Fund, there is still room for the BID to be proactive in opening their communication channels with their intended stakeholders. In the meantime, CM is in "year three of its initial five-year term" (Culture Mile, 2025, p. 3). Assuming BIDs in London are like a "genie in a bottle" (Respondent 7) that cannot be placed back into its container once released, CM can still fulfill its role to "enable, champion and promote culture in the area" (Culture Mile, 2025, p. 5) after its initial term.

9. Conclusion

A city is a common ground—its public spaces and thoroughfares are meant to be used by everyone. One can argue that BIDs are an example of how the urban commons will be susceptible to self-organization and self-governance, as Ostrom theorized (Foster & Iaione, 2015). The BID model illustrates this, with businesses coming together to maintain and create improvements to their districts for the purpose of stimulating economic growth. In recent years however, BIDs have started to expand their focus to creating positive improvements for their areas that go beyond profit, becoming increasingly concerned with community and placemaking. Recognizing an area's existing assets is part of the process of area improvement—in the case of CM, the presence of arts and cultural organizations are being leveraged by the BID to position the area as a cultural destination. Throughout the process of CM carrying out its duties as a BID, it has set up an organizational structure that allows its identified key stakeholders to have a say in the creation of its programs.

These insights answer the research question: *how do BIDs utilize co-production in creative placemaking*? Using the case study of the Culture Mile BID, it is evident that it uses techniques such as supporting temporary, arts-based events within its footprint as well as public art installations to create vibrancy as well as engage its community. It was found that the latter strategy was employed to a lesser extent. This answers the first sub-question; *in what ways do BIDs implement creative placemaking projects*? Next, CM's board members and its steering groups consist of representatives from their levy-paying businesses, cultural institutions, local authorities, and residents. These stakeholders are then involved in the vetting and selection of projects and proposals that will be supported by the BID, which answers the second sub-question, *how are BID stakeholders included in co-production?* When viewed from a distance, the optics of how BIDs run, specifically in the case of CM, makes it seem like a reasonable and effective option for urban governance for a smaller geographic area. However, the reality of co-production, creative placemaking, and the operation of BIDs at large is much more complex.

Turning a critical eye on the phenomena of BIDs utilizing arts and culture-led public realm strategies, the factors of positionality and power cannot be removed from the equation. Placemaking and area improvements can generate positive outcomes, but *for whom* and *by whom* are they being initiated? In the case of creative placemaking specifically, the economic

development that can result from leveraging arts and culture can be a point of tension (Zitcer, 2020), with profit-driven interests competing with the goal of shaping a place where people can feel connected and develop an affinity towards it through 'creativity'. The threat of gentrification hangs over the BID model. It is possible that BIDs were able to position themselves within the realm of creative placemaking through its economic facet, which was solidified in the widely accepted definition by Markusen and Gadwa (2010). This can also explain why the BID model might be met with some hesitance by some of its stakeholders. While these tensions can be mitigated by participation, which this study foregrounds under the concept of co-production, the process of engaging stakeholders is rarely straightforward or simple (Wichowsky et al., 2023). Based on these findings, three recommendations can be made not only for CM BID, but for BIDs who wish to endeavor in creative placemaking in general:

1) *Communication between BID and stakeholders is crucial*. This is true for both creative placemaking and the co-production framework. Whether it be formal representation within the BID through boards and steering groups, or through more informal gatherings such as forums and town halls, avenues for open dialogue between BIDs and stakeholders are crucial in building trust and transparency between actors. However, these are only the starting points. Open communication will foster both positive and negative feedback that must be integrated into the BID's programs.

2) *Synergy between BIDs and government are vital to the partnership dynamic*. This can come in the form of MoUs or agreements that outline how responsibilities are divided between actors, as well as a broader alignment in strategic goals. This is ultimately more efficient for both parties, allowing them to allocate resources more effectively and hold the other accountable in delivering public goods and services.

3) *Arts and cultural activities must be rooted in the existing communities and histories of a place.* Stakeholder engagement and collaboration with arts and cultural groups within an area is crucial in the creative placemaking process. This ensures that BIDs are not simply using these assets for their own interests but are also acting in service to the community. This can strike a balance between creative placemaking's economic and social dimensions that can ultimately contribute to positive area development.

The research area of BIDs in connection to placemaking has much yet to be explored. Culture Mile BID is but one case study out of five existing BIDs within London's Square Mile and is one out of hundreds in the UK and in the world. Issues surrounding the relative autonomy and pervasiveness of BIDs can still be investigated, especially when one discovers that almost every inch of the Square Mile is covered by a BID. Whether this will be a trend in urban governance that will grow or be nipped in the bud by government or BID detractors can be an expanded, longitudinal approach to the study on the emergence of BIDs. Outside of the UK, the BID model can be observed in different countries. It should be mentioned that in the Anglo-Saxon context, the BID system is quite evolved and has been around for a while. How countries within the EU, or emerging economies around the world, would adopt the model can be a fascinating area to explore. In the meantime, this study attempts to contribute to the growing academic literature around the BID model, and creative placemaking. It is positioned under the much larger research area of management and participatory governance.

This study opened with a quote from French philosopher Henri Lefebvre, who in his piece "The Right to the City" identifies "the eminent use of the city" as "la fête" (1968, p. 66), which roughly translated to English means 'the celebration'. The city is meant to be used for celebration—its public spaces, its architecture, its "edifices and monuments" (p. 66) are to be used by people to enjoy life outside of work and labor. However, people also act as consumers of these spaces, turning a common resource into a rivalrous good. La fête can also refer to the sense of collective identity, ownership and community around arts and culture, which can also be co-opted and capitalized for economic gain. Cities are sites for productivity and the generation of capital—self-organization and the formation of communities within urban spaces will often contend with this facet due to its proximity to these purposes. In the same vein, BIDs are strange creatures that occupy a peculiar space in the ecosystem of urban governance. BIDs were created to bring in more wealth and can be associated with powerful actors in the private sector. However, they are also self-organizing bodies within a certain locality that wish to enact positive change. They are not synonymous with the public sector but are regardless smaller fiefdoms that resemble governments who collect taxes and use these to create public goods and services. What BIDs do, and the power that they hold, can ultimately be determined by their stakeholders. The BID model reveals the city's, in Lefebvre's words, "complex, but contradictory, reality".

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Appendix A – Interview Guide

Introduction
• What organization are you affiliated with? • Can you tell me a bit more about what you do?

Relationship to Culture Mile BID

For cultural organizations and BGLNF
- Can you describe the relationship your organization has to Culture Mile BID?
- How does Culture Mile BID gather feedback from your organization regarding the types of projects and improvements it plans to initiate for the area?
- To what extent are these suggestions incorporated into their programming, and are these visible to those within your organization?
- Can you give a recent example of an urban space improvement or public engagement project in which your organization collaborated closely with Culture Mile BID?
- How regularly does your organization engage in these types of public projects with Culture Mile BID?
- Does the organization you represent pay any levies to the Culture Mile BID?

For residents
- How did you become aware of the Culture Mile BID?
- What is your understanding of what they do for this part of the city?
- What types of activities have you done or participated in within this area do you think is directly attributed to the efforts of Culture Mile BID?
- What kind of feedback has the Culture Mile BID gathered from residents such as yourself regarding the types of projects and improvements it plans to initiate for the area?
- To what extent are these suggestions incorporated into their programming, and are these visible to residents?

For local authorities (City of London Corporation)
- What would you say is the relationship between the City of London and the BIDs that operate within it?
- What value does the City of London see from cooperating with BIDs?
- How do BIDs gather feedback from its stakeholders, in this case City of London, residents, local businesses?
- Are BIDs expected to align their goals to the broader goals of the City of London?
- How is Culture Mile BID specifically beneficial to the users and inhabitants of a particular district?

Creative Placemaking

For cultural organizations and residents

- Would you say that artistic and creative projects (this can be in the form of public art or short-term events) have increased/decreased/or stayed the same in this area's public spaces in recent years?
- To what extent do you think the Culture Mile has played a part in setting up these types of projects?
- How is Culture Mile BID specifically using arts and culture to create more vibrant places for people to live in?
- How do you think arts and cultural activities can contribute to fostering a sense of community in this area?
- What do you think can be improved?

For local authorities (City of London Corporation)

- How are arts and culture being incorporated into urban development strategies within the City of London?
- How is Culture Mile BID specifically using arts and culture to create more vibrant places for people to live in?
- What advantages do BIDs gain from using arts and cultural activities or placemaking strategies to enhance their districts? Are there any downsides to this?
- What do you think can be improved?

Appendix B – Consent form

Information and consent form

BIDs and Creative Placemaking

Introduction

Hello! My name is Arielle Acosta, a student from the University of Glasgow and Erasmus University Rotterdam. Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this study. The following sections of this document will explain more about my research. Feel free to ask me any questions.

What is the research about?

This master's thesis will investigate BIDs as a system of urban governance, and their potential to create vibrant cities and social cohesion through creative placemaking strategies. The Culture Mile BID in London will be the main case study for this thesis.

You have been approached for this study because you have been identified as one of Culture Mile BIDs' stakeholders (cultural organizations, property and landowners/developers, neighbouring BIDs, local authorities such as The City of London Corporation and London Borough of Islington, residents and resident associations) and/or because you are a subject matter expert on BIDs.

What can you expect?

I will be conducting a 40-minute semi-structured interview with you for this study. The questions are divided into themes such as an introduction to yourself; you/your organization's relationship to the Culture Mile BID; your sense of community/belonging in the area; and how you experience art and culture in these urban spaces.

The audio of the interview will be recorded.

During the interview, if you wish to speak candidly about something that you would like to remain off the record, this will be removed from the interview transcript. At the end of the interview, you may also comment on your answers. Should there be any follow-up questions after our interview, I may send them to you via email.

You decide whether to participate

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you wish to no longer participate in the study, you may let me know and your answers will no longer be included in the data that I will be gathering.

What are the potential risks and discomforts?

There is a low potential for physical risk or psychological discomfort from participating in this study.

What are the benefits of participating?
While there are no immediate or financial benefits for participating in this study, your answers will contribute a unique and valuable perspective to how BIDs operate and engage with their stakeholders, as well as how arts and culture can be used to create more liveable cities.

What data will I ask you to provide?
I will store your contact details during the data gathering phase of my study. During the interview, I will collect personal data such as your occupation, the organization(s) which you are affiliated with, the broad area in which you live, your perception and sentiments towards your locality, and your opinions on the Culture Mile BID.

At Erasmus University, we conduct scientific research. We do this to learn, help people, and contribute to society. Since we are an academic institution conducting scientific research, we process your personal data exclusively for research on the basis of public interest.

What will happen to my data?
Apart from your organization and position/occupation or your status as a resident within the Culture Mile BID (if applicable) your identity will remain anonymous. While recordings are transcribed, your name is replaced with a number (ex. Respondent 4), and you will be referred to as such in the study.

The thesis will be accessible in the university's online public repository of master's theses. However, should the information you share here remain strictly confidential, I can request the university to embargo the study, and it will not be available to the public.

How long will your personal data be stored?
The data from this study will be retained for 10 years after completion of the research. We retain the data so that other researchers have the opportunity to verify that the research was conducted correctly. Should you request it from me, your name and contact details can be deleted within one year.

Using your data for new research
(Part of) the data I collect may be useful in anonymized form, for example for educational purposes and future research, including in very different research areas. Although I will not include your name in publications or communicate it to third parties, there is a risk that you could still be indirectly identified because of your affiliation with your organization and/or expertise in the field.

What happens with the results of the study?

The thesis will be published in Erasmus University Rotterdam's public repository of master's theses. It is possible that another academic article can be developed from this study, or that the results will be published online through a website or blog. Should I choose to write an article or publish anything from this research, I will inform you and seek your permission first.

Do you have questions about the study?
If you have any questions about the study or your privacy rights, such as accessing, changing, deleting, or updating your data, please contact me.

> Arielle Acosta
> acosta.mariegabrielle@gmail.com
> Mobile: +33 7 82 40 37 03
> WhatsApp: +63 917 529 1508

Do you have a complaint or concerns about your privacy? Please email the Data Protection Officer (fg@eur.nl) or visit www.autoriteitpersoonsgegevens.nl. (T: 088 - 1805250)

Do you regret your participation?
If at any point you would like to withdraw consent from your participation of this study, please inform me. During or after the study, you may regret your participation. Please indicate this by contacting me. I will then delete your data. However, sometimes we need to keep some of your data from the answers you gave so that, for example, the integrity of the study can be checked.

Declaration of Consent

I have read the information letter. I understand what the study is about and what data will be collected from me. I was able to ask questions as well. My questions were adequately answered.

By signing this form, I:
1. consent to participate in this research;
2. confirm that I am at least 18 years old;
3. confirm that I understand that participating in this research is completely voluntary and that I can stop at any time;
4. confirm that I understand that my data will be anonymised for publication, educational purposes and further research; and
5. confirm that I understand that some of the data can be used for further research.

Check the boxes below if you consent to this.
Audio recording
I consent to the interview being audio recorded.

Name of participant:
 Participant's signature: **Date:**

Appendix C – Codebook

Themes	Code groups and codes
Arts and culture within Culture Mile BID	**Creative placemaking** • Arts and culture • Cultural destination • Culture-led public realm • Economic development • Heritage assets • Historic value • Place-based activities • Positive area development • Public art installations
	BID-initiated projects • BID ambassadors • BID PR and communications • Culture Mile community fund • Funding • Place promotion
Creative placemaking: simply 'ticking the box'?	**Placemaking (general)** • A place to linger • Comfort • Disconnect between people and place • Friendly city • General well-being • Reputation as business area • Rich stories • Sense of belonging • Social impact • Vibrancy
	Spatial aspects • Challenging built environment • Connected city • Green space • Lack of connection between buildings • Large-scale developments • Multi-faceted area • Public amenities • Safety of area • Spatial improvements • Threat of redevelopment • Visual appeal • Wayfinding

Complexities of co-production	**BID partnerships** • Businesses • City of London • Community groups • Cultural institutions • Landowners and developers • London police • Neighboring areas • Residents • Transport for London
	Partnership dynamics • Brokering relationships • Business first • Co-existence • Competition • Having a voice • Public goods and service delivery • Public realm • Synergy BID and government • Synergy business and residents
	Stakeholder engagement • Community • Community forum • Grassroots • Lack of community • Neighborhood forum • Overlooked residents • Recording feedback • Resident associations • Resident engagement • Stakeholder participation
BIDs as a model of urban governance: autonomy and accountability	**BID governance** • Accountability • BID autonomy • BID board • BID's growing role • Lack of board cohesiveness • Leadership system • Pervasiveness • Primera • Steering groups
	BID stakeholder perception: opportunities • Benefits for business • Employee well-being

	• Future potential • Provides support
	BID stakeholder perception: threats • Confusing • Critical view • Disjointed • Initial resistance • Lack of rootedness • Lacking engagement • Mistrust • Reactive • Topical • Uncertainty re. Effectiveness • Weak advertising