

2016

# Downtown voices: urban development, cultural production, and territoriality in downtown Phoenix

Carlos E. Mandeville  
camandeville@vassar.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalwindow.vassar.edu/senior\\_capstone](http://digitalwindow.vassar.edu/senior_capstone)

---

## Recommended Citation

Mandeville, Carlos E., "Downtown voices: urban development, cultural production, and territoriality in downtown Phoenix" (2016).  
*Senior Capstone Projects*. Paper 536.

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Window @ Vassar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of Digital Window @ Vassar. For more information, please contact [DigitalWindowAdmin@vassar.edu](mailto:DigitalWindowAdmin@vassar.edu).

# Downtown Voices

---

Urban Development, Cultural Production, and  
Territoriality in Downtown Phoenix

**Carlos E. Mandeville**

**4/25/2016**

Senior Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Bachelor of Arts Degree in Geography

---

Advisor, Professor Brian Godfrey

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	2
Table of Figures.....	3
Introduction: Entering Downtown Space.....	4
Chapter 2: The Reterritorialized Desert and the Decomposition of Downtown.....	18
Chapter 3: Planning the Built Environment in a New Territory.....	35
Chapter 4: Producing a Re-Imagined Downtown Space.....	55
Conclusion: The Implications of Territoriality in Urban Space.....	72
References Cited.....	84

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to first thank my family—Mom, Dad, Paulina, and Michael—for all of your support over the years. You have helped me develop as an individual and as an academic in more ways than I know how to explain. The same goes for my dearest friends who have shaped me and my understanding of the world.

I'd also like to thank all of my academic influences during my time at Vassar and during this project. Thank you, Brian, for your advice and kindness during the bulk of the writing process. Thank you, Joe, for pushing me in the early stages to pursue a project that engaged my interests in urban geography and inequality with my experience at home in Phoenix.

Lastly, thank you to the Geography Department as a whole. Thanks to Lois and Rick for welcoming me into the work environment of Ely Hall as Map Curator. And, of course, thank you to my fellow majors for teaching me and supporting me countless times.

## Table of Figures

Figure 1: <i>“Bird’s Eye View of Phoenix, Maricopa Co., Arizona”, Library of Congress, c. 1885.....</i>	20
Figure 2: <i>Minority Neighborhoods in Phoenix, 1940, Luckingham 1994, p. 41.....</i>	22
Figure 3: <i>Screenshot of Phoenix Metropolitan area, Google Earth 2016.....</i>	29
Figure 4: <i>“Downtown Phoenix Skyline from 7<sup>th</sup> Ave Bridge,” Sean Horan 2005.....</i>	31
Figure 5: <i>Map Showing Arts, Culture, Small Business Area; Zoning Ordinance Chapter 12: Downtown Code, Revised February 15, 2013.....</i>	40
Figure 6: <i>“Downtown Phoenix,” Ayrca June 2, 2010.....</i>	44
Figure 7: <i>“Phoenix Downtown,” Leandro Coletto Blazon, May 16, 2013.....</i>	50
Figure 8: <i>“Artisan Lofts on Central Ave,” Mike Padgett 2009.....</i>	52
Figure 9: <i>Photo of “Her Secret is Patience” by stuinaz April 25, 2009.....</i>	60
Figure 10: <i>Downtown Phoenix Inc. Logo, twitter.com/downtownphoenix.....</i>	70

\*\*\*Some images gathered through Flickr’s creative commons database

## **Introduction: Entering Downtown Space**

During high school, I commuted along large boulevards and through winding freeways from Scottsdale into North Phoenix where I went to Brophy College Preparatory located on Central Avenue. There is a point on this journey along the 51 Freeway as you wind through the Phoenix Mountain Preserve where you catch a fleeting glimpse of Downtown's high-rises glistening in the morning sunshine. There were many mornings when this image played out in the most unspectacular manner: it looked visually intriguing but I remained unable to connect to it on a substantial level. Yet, I remember during the first semester of my freshman year hearing the bells of the newly built Light Rail being tested just outside our campus, and feeling the excitement among both students and teachers about the transformation that this high-efficiency public transportation system could catalyze in Central and Downtown Phoenix. The Light Rail, which extends from North Phoenix south along Central Avenue through Downtown then out east through Tempe and Mesa, opened in December of 2008. Previously, Downtown was merely a business center, and lacked an authentic cultural or residential identity. From about 2005, the process of Downtown development transformed it into a hub of activity.

The development specifically of Roosevelt Row contributed significantly to the local reconceptualization of the Downtown area. Roosevelt Row, which is the northern part of Downtown, is a center for the arts and cultural activity that lies between about 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 7<sup>th</sup> Street, streets that run north to south, and on or within a couple blocks of Roosevelt Street, which runs east-west. Over the course of the past two decades, artists have moved into this dilapidated neighborhood and developed it into a hub of local art,

food, and activity by reimagining what Downtown Phoenix could be (Goth 2014). In order to advertise this revival, the “First Friday” art walk on Roosevelt Row was established which offered the rest of the city an insight to this space. It was during a “First Friday” in high school that I first became acquainted and enamored with this area because of the sheer number of people who were outside enjoying the culture that the city had to offer. As Alex Ross points out, “it was a rare occasion for the city’s ‘alternative’ residents to advertise their presence to otherwise oblivious populations” (2011). It made me realize a truth that for so long I never thought could be true: Phoenix was becoming “cool.”

The excitement I felt for this space was also seen as an investment opportunity for developers in Phoenix who have plans for the construction of over 2000 units of housing in and around the Roosevelt area (Goth 2014). Downtown has a conflicted history of large scale developments which dates back to the 80s and 90s when Mayor Terry Goddard first began advocating for this space. He saw the implementation of unsuccessful commercial spaces like the Arizona Center, along with the building of two sporting arenas for the local baseball and basketball teams. These early attempts at building up Downtown did not establish the sort of inversion that Goddard had imagined, and, rather, further disassociated this space from any sort of substantial identity. Turning towards this century, development driven by both a strong demand and a unity in identity allowed for more successful building up of this area. This trend towards massive residential development in Downtown Phoenix emphasizes the attention that this area has received over the past decade or so as the place to invest in the city of Phoenix. Moreover, this focus contrasts significantly with the distinct lack of attention that its neighbors to the south have been afforded.

During my senior year of high school I planned a visit to a restaurant called Lo-Lo's Chicken and Waffles just south of Downtown. While at some point during my time in the Phoenix metropolitan area I must have driven through this area, I was immediately struck by the stark contrast in the urban landscape that occurred as we drove along the overpass on 7<sup>th</sup> Street—which it is important to note runs over the train tracks—past Downtown and across the boundary of South Phoenix. Downtown boasted more dense buildings, very well kept streets and sidewalks, and the bustle of the Light Rail, while just past the railroad tracks there were more empty lots, less kept roads, and very little foot or vehicle traffic. As Bolin et al. describe, “the east-west railroad became the physical and symbolic barrier between two developing urban worlds” (158). This neighborhood showed signs of an industrial past—empty lots littered the cityscape and the infrastructure appeared worn-down—whereas Downtown and the area north of it had a clear developmental trajectory. According to the Downtown Phoenix website, “with more than \$4 billion newly invested in office space, retail, restaurants, educational facilities, convention space and hotel rooms – this is a new era of growth in our urban center” (dtpbx.org). What was clear in South Phoenix was that this “growth” was not manifested in this area.

Moreover, from my experience and those of people who lived in suburban areas such as Scottsdale, South Phoenix has a reputation of being poorer and perhaps more dangerous, which, coupled with the limited little social or cultural activity occurring there from my perspective, gave us little to no reason to venture there. Even in looking through articles printed about South Phoenix in *The Arizona Republic*, there is an inclination to report crime and gang conflict as opposed to other revitalizing activity



happening in the area. This categorization is imbedded in a history of racism and inequality that has shaped the city for its entire existence. Divisions along racial lines determined the spatial, economic, and social differences according to the desires of the early white population that saw profit in their exploitation. By bounding Downtown and north Phoenix from the beginning of the city's history through exclusionary planning and employment practices, south Phoenix devolved into a manifestation of racial difference and socioeconomic inequality in Phoenix's urban landscape. In the 1920s, the wealthier, white population to the north labeled South Phoenix as an undesirable place because of the heavy industry that for so long dominated it (Bolin et Al., 159). In examining aerial images of the area south of Downtown, the contrast is striking in the number of vacancies and minimally used plots of land compared to Downtown and the neighborhoods to the north of it, as evident by observation and Google Earth (2016). When driving through the area, the South Phoenix landscape reiterates its own historically produced sentiments which are painfully represented in the lack of street activity, generally more impoverished looking buildings and homes, and again, the lot vacancies that loom in the landscape. Clear social, urban, and political boundaries have been (re)produced in this area over the course of Phoenix's history, and there is little evidence that this will change in the coming years.

So apparent from my experiences in these spaces is the astounding difference between them, which has made me question if the development of Phoenix's Downtown will offer tangible benefits to its surrounding neighborhoods. The development of Downtown is a positive movement for the city insofar as it works against its long history of outward sprawl. With the creation of the Light Rail and the growth of activity around

it, there has been a shift to developing a more transit-oriented city which emphasizes local business over national stores and brands. The updating of Downtown streetscapes to include more defined bike paths and wider sidewalks incentivizes a “greener,” more pedestrian- and bike-friendly lifestyle in which it is no longer necessary to depend on cars to get anywhere in the city. And, the implementation of a business improvement district—which offers anything from informational help for visitors to street cleaning teams that maintains the visual standard of Phoenix’s Downtown space—increases its economic possibilities. This along with the fact that Downtown Phoenix is becoming a more interesting cultural space highlights how successful this project has been thus far.

As the positive aspects of Downtown redevelopment continue to contribute to the betterment of this area, it is important to realize the physical and social boundaries that they create for the spaces that surround it. In looking at the racial and economic divisions present throughout the city’s history, one must think critically about the implications of current Downtown development. Furthermore, in analyzing this issue, I hope to better understand how Phoenix’s Downtown development is creating a specific territoriality in this space that serves to exclude previously marginalized people; and the relationship generally between development and the creation of territory in urban centers. The question I hope to answer is: What is the work that the “development” of Downtown Phoenix from about 2000 to the present does vis-à-vis its own bounding? What does this illustrate about territory, segregation, and gentrification in a neoliberal city? How is the concentration of investment into this area situated in the history of isolation and difference between Downtown and marginal spaces like South Phoenix?

Scholars have produced a significant literature on the production of difference in cities through redevelopment projects, bringing light to the social, political, and economic processes that stem from them. *City for Sale* by Chester Hartman discusses how the development process in San Francisco's South of Market area was dictated primarily by business interests, despite the clear opposition held by residents of that region for such development projects. This book highlights the neoliberal nature of city development by showing how wealth and power intersect to promote the goals of the individuals who invest in this change at the cost of those who live the experience. Robert Caro's *The Power Broker* tells the story of Robert Moses's long domination of development and planning in 20<sup>th</sup> century New York City. Among many things, it emphasizes how power can be so easily centralized and then projected through the physical development of urban structures, crushing already existing urban landscapes with imbedded history and culture. Mike Davis, in his book *City of Quartz*, adds to this by showing how wealthy areas in Los Angeles became like a "fortress" as a result of a continual process of creating physical and psychological barriers between the wealthy and the poor of the city. Relying on a Marxist approach, he focuses on the social implications of Los Angeles' urban development for the poor. These, and many other books and articles, emphasize the connection between power and the formation of the urban landscape, and the challenges that come with transforming urban space, especially the spaces occupied by disenfranchised people.

Despite the extensive work done on these issues, there has been little focus on Phoenix as a case study in comparison to the primary U.S. urban centers such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, and New York City. The scholarship that has been

produced tends to be of article-length and specific to issues or neighborhoods in the city. Bolin et al. (2005), for example, offer a great analysis of the blatant environmental racism present in South Phoenix. Their account shows how the historical development of the city, which reflected and perpetuated the economic and political monopoly held by the Anglo population, forced minority populations into areas where they would be directly harmed by pollution and bad living conditions. Similarly, the work of historian Bradford Luckingham (1994, 1989) and Geographer Patricia Gober (2006) offer an important historical background of the city and its development that is necessary to best analyze the issues of modern day Phoenix. Lastly, *Bird on Fire* by Alex Ross (2012) presents recent criticism of Phoenix's growth which incorporates a diverse set of perspectives that make this narrative livelier. Along with these, there are a number of articles that address issues surrounding the development of the Light Rail and Downtown (Golub et al.) and issues of zoning and land use (York et al.), among other topics.

The literature on the subject of urban renewal and redevelopment is extensive, offering a significant theoretical background to tie this project to. Each of the three books mentioned above takes a distinct approach in tackling the issues they hope to deconstruct. Caro provides a narrative through the story and work of a single actor, Robert Moses; Hartman utilizes a community approach to see how the development of South of Market was experienced by the people who lived there; and Davis employs a Marxist approach to emphasize issues of inequality embedded in Los Angeles society. When thinking about how issues of inequality and development are discussed about Phoenix, it becomes clear that the local literature is far too limited in its analysis of the city. There are no really comprehensive books or articles on modern downtown

development in Phoenix and the social effects that come along with that, though Ross' *Bird on Fire* does offer some insights into this process. Furthermore, there is little academic work that contextualizes Downtown Phoenix's current development project in a history of unequal development.

This project will contribute to the scholarship on Phoenix, urban development, and urban inequality by focusing on question of how Downtown is being created as a distinctive place through uneven development where exclusion is made possible. By looking at this growth in light of a history of inequality, I hope to cultivate a strong understanding of how difference, as defined by race and class, is perpetuated in this city through the physical transformation, urban branding, and a resulting territorialization of downtown space. Seeing as a history of inequality and segregation is sewn into the fabric of the city, making a clear connection between that history, along with its current manifestations, and the experience of the individuals in those spaces is crucial. Examining the concept of territory in relation to the development of Downtown gives us the opportunity not only to understand that exclusion is produced spatially with power but also to see how exclusion shapes the very character of space and place. The case of Phoenix adds to our understanding of the forces—economic, social, racial, and political—that produce urban territories and engrain them in the psyche of the city's inhabitants. Additionally, it allows for the creation of solutions on how to integrate marginalized portions of the city with others that are flourishing. With this thesis, I hope to elaborate on Phoenix's history of inequality by bringing into question this re-articulation of historical forms, and contribute to the city's understanding of how the urban setting can perpetuate a process of unequal growth.

In order to achieve this, it is necessary to understand both David Delaney's depiction of territory and David Sibley's conception of spaces of exclusion. Delaney shows that the two components involved in the process of territoriality regardless of their scale are meaning and power (16). Power establishes a boundary around an area as, "a means of controlling what is inside the lines by limiting access or excluding others," so that a sense of security can be built based entirely on the needs of those on the inside (19). By doing so, the entity creating the territory can define what it means—whether that is in terms of a specific conception of the self or in terms of a defined social organization—to both those on the inside and those on the outside. The author emphasizes how a territory is a social product which reflects characteristics of the social order that produces it and thus necessitates the exclusion of those who do not match those characteristics (10). For example, the historical boundary of the railroad line in Phoenix has been socially reterritorialized as structures like the baseball and basketball stadiums have come to mark specifically what the boundary is between the inside and outside of Downtown Phoenix. By understanding territory, we can understand the complex workings of the powers that be in the production of exclusion and inequality.

Sibley expands on this idea of exclusion. He argues in his introduction about exclusion that, "because power is expressed in the monopolization of space and the relegation of weaker groups in society to less desirable environments, any text on the social geography of advanced capitalism should be concerned with the question of exclusion" (1). In his book, Sibley goes into detail about how the self, which is a cultural production (7), produces boundaries against the "other". As variations in power enter the equation, the more dominant body as a result of fear constructs the "other" as bad or

impure, which in the western world tends to have racial implications. Because of this classification, separation becomes part of the process of purification (37), and thus the physical boundaries that are created between different people and spaces, “are in part moral boundaries” (39). Then, an obsession arises to keep those who threaten disorder at a distance in order to preserve the current power structure (46). Laura Pulido (2000) takes on issues of exclusion by highlighting the role that white privilege plays in creating the “distance” that preserves current power structures. She defines white privilege as, “a form of racism that both underlies and is distinct from institutional and overt racism,” in order to emphasize its discrete mechanics (15). I expand on the function of white privilege in Phoenix in Chapter 2 to show how it was utilized to create exclusion and territory. While this just scratches the surface of Sibley’s theoretical contribution, it offers us a base from which we can comprehend how and why Phoenix has developed along such a clear racial and socio-economic divide.

I will also explore issues of exclusion and territoriality through the theorization of the effects of the physical reconstructions of downtown space by drawing on Grierson and Sharp’s *Re-Imagining the City* and McNamara’s *Urban Verbs*. As I introduce in Chapter 4, thinking about the introduction of new urban forms, such as public art, as a product of power relations, we can understand their presence as productive forces that redefine urban space and identity. Pulling theoretical threads from Michel Certeau’s “Walking in the City,” I attribute the name “re-imaging” to this process to highlight the “fresh start” that new urban forms can present individuals within the confines of the historical city. By literally changing the way we view downtown space, public art and new edifices of the development age promote and shape a specific ideal of what

Downtown is and can be. But, because it is a product that requires power, it reflects the desires of the wealthy and politically powerful, while exacerbating the divide between classes. This, then, inscribes an exclusionary identity to a space that values more one's access to capital than their experience in the space. Understanding how exclusion and territoriality can be produced through benign forms is necessary to fully understand Phoenix's Downtown development, which, because of an urban history of segregation in Phoenix, reflects the barriers that historically have prevented marginalized people from participating in this space.

In order to accomplish the goals set out before, I utilize a combination of various types of archival research, and theoretical references to present a conclusive view of Downtown development. First, I consult the vast scholarship on urban development and redevelopment as it relates to the creation of difference within urban space. The theories present in these sources provide firm ground on which I can build my discussion of Phoenix. Next, I continue to look at the historical and geographic scholarship produced about the city of Phoenix. These sources help expand our understanding of Phoenix as a complex place in which this history is unfolding. Third, I use plans produced by the city of Phoenix that have to do with Downtown development in order to situate this project in a real policy and planning process. Lastly, as a way to complement these resources, I draw on newspapers such as the Arizona Republic to articulate how Downtown development is discussed in the media. Other historical newspapers, such as the Phoenix Gazette, help imagine the city's history. By incorporating this diversity of sources, I produce a comprehensive narrative about Downtown development and the production of territory in modern day Phoenix.



As stated before, this is a story about how spatially concentrated development produces territory and excludes marginal bodies and experiences. In the next chapter (Chapter 2), I address how variances in power have shaped the city by looking at the historical formation of Downtown and Phoenix as a whole. This story will start at the beginning of the City's history to show how the landscape has been imbedded with difference. It continues on with a look into the process of suburbanization to reveal how this unequal landscape spread throughout the Valley, and how it left Downtown as a malleable space. By looking at the history of how modern Phoenix came to be, a deep understanding of the exclusionary tactics used by those in power is realized. The city is born from a history of racism and segregation, which has consequences for citizens who inhabit those spaces and experience those territories today.

Chapter 3 builds on our understanding of modern Phoenix by analyzing Downtown's current development project through the policies, people, and physical manifestations that drive its growth. It touches on how artists initiated the urban inversion by creating a viable cultural space, the process of zoning, and the results of developers' presence in the area. Next, it examines the Light Rail which was planned and created through a complex struggle for place in the city. The recent history of place-making in Downtown offers us an indicator of what was seen or developed to be desirable in the eyes of investors and of Phoenix's citizens. Conversely, it also emphasizes what was seen as undesirable and what would not help to create a new, positive image for Downtown Phoenix. This connects back to Sibley and Delaney's ideas on exclusion as a produced phenomenon as a result of inequity in power. This section, thus answers the questions: how does the spatially concentrated development of

the Light Rail gentrify the area around, and what work does that do in the production of territory?

Chapter Four connects the physical changes that have occurred in Downtown's development to the struggle for a spatial identity. I highlight the role that artists and art play in defining this space as trendy or hip, and the effects that it has on the area as a whole. Next, by turning to community groups that monitor and, on some levels, dictate what occurs development-wise in downtown, I question the nuanced power relation between the community and the builders. Finally, through an examination of the official Downtown brand, I underline the exclusionary nature of its specificity. The question driving this chapter is: How is Downtown's identity formed and shaped? What processes of cultural and power production define what Downtown can and will be? And, to a lesser extent, can the democratization of space, through the work of community organizations, work against notions of exclusion perpetuated in large-scale development?

Lastly, in my Conclusion, I string together our comprehensive understanding of Phoenix's Downtown development project with our knowledge of the theory behind it in order to see how urban development reshapes spaces into territories. In order to do this, I will turn my my focus to South Phoenix as a way to juxtapose its growth, or lack thereof, in relation to Downtown. The goal is to uncover how the territorial boundary between these spaces is constructed physically and socially. The question driving this portion of the conclusion is: how is territory experienced in an urban space, and moreover what does that experience reflect about the work that is done by development? It will then contemplate the question: what can be done to create inclusion while also promoting development?

I hope to challenge how we view development in Downtown Phoenix through the production of a more inclusive narrative that accounts for the social history of inequality. While Downtown's growth is a step forward for the city, it is imperative that the benefits are not concentrated solely in regions that have historically benefited from government and investment action, but also reach its surrounding disenfranchised regions.

## **Chapter 2: The Reterritorialized Desert and the Decomposition of Downtown**

Clues and remnants of Phoenix's divided past appear across the valley as one traverses the landscape. In Scottsdale, suburban developments starkly contrast with the open desert of the Native American reservation within the City's boundaries. Other than the growing entertainment economy of this reservation which includes a new Casino resort and a golfing super-complex, there is little interaction between this space and the rest of the city. Another clue comes in the form of the various road names across the valley. Indian School Road cuts across the city, though not so much into the memories of its passengers who easily forget the troubling past of de-territorialization and forced assimilation that the name connotes (Davis 2001, Trennert 1979). The names of U.S. presidents line most of Downtown, while the names of various Native American tribes appear only in South Phoenix. Even the landscape changes as you cross the railroad tracks from Downtown into South Phoenix, shifting from higher density, modern high-rises to vacant lots, warehouses, and less economic activity. Though the signs are present and evident, it is easy for residents of the greater phoenix area to forget the City's divisive past because it is masked by a history of outward suburbanization.

In Chapter 2, I situate the modern day development of Downtown Phoenix in a history of segregation, unequal development, and suburbanization. The question I ask is: How has a history of territorialization and suburbanization created the circumstances for today's downtown development project? To do this, I highlight the north-south racial divide that dominated the City for much of its history while also showing how investment followed that trend in order to answer the question: "why is Downtown receiving so much attention versus other parts of the city"? Then, I examine the hyper-

suburbanization of the Phoenix Metropolitan area through the development of an expansive freeway system to better define the City as a whole. Lastly, we turn inward again to see how suburbanization and poor city planning gutted Downtown into a vacant space where today's significant development project has grown from.

Downtown Phoenix's history prior to its recent wave of development revolves around what, for many years, it has not been able to do. As a "Doughnut City" of the American Southwest, it never had a massive residential population in the core of the city; because of the vacancy of space and the mismanagement of urban growth, it never was a truly vibrant space or a destination for the average citizen in the valley of the sun; and, because of the historic divisions between it and marginalized people and places, it could never be an interactive space where people of diverse backgrounds contribute to a distinct urban culture. Rather, Downtown Phoenix became a shell, an artifact of racist and classist urban development which too became overlooked in favor of outward expansion by populations who had the means to. This history is as important as it is jarring. It is what motivated me to be critical of the current downtown development project, which in many ways can be seen as a continuation of what will be discussed here. The goal, again, is to understand how development is informed and situated in a physical landscape littered with relics of this city's dark past.

#### *Room for the Life: Early Urbanization and Division in Phoenix*

The first settlers of the area were the native Hohokam farmers who constructed over 1000 miles of irrigation canals which, it is estimated, supported up to 40,000 people before their mysterious disappearance around the year 1450 (Gober 2006, 1). The city rose from the ashes of this Native American canal system as pioneers began utilizing it



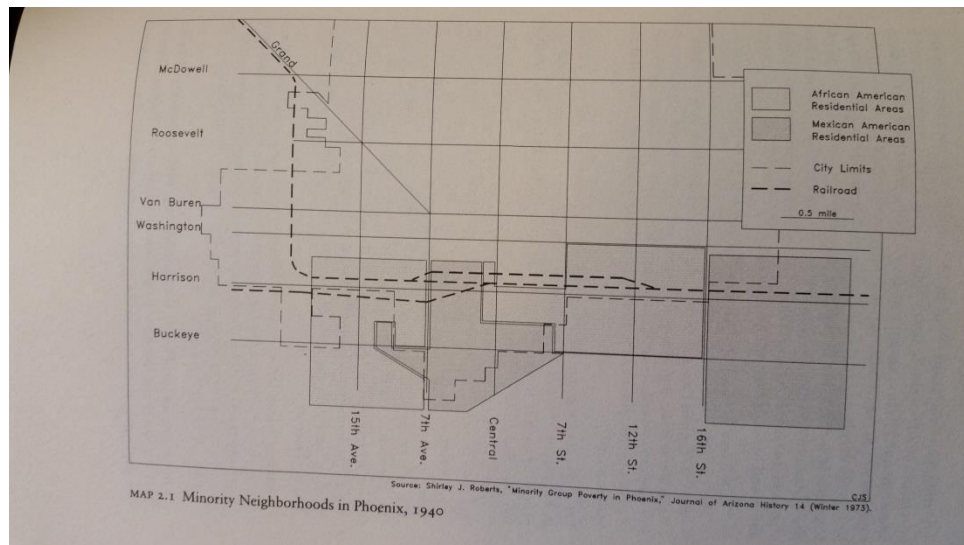
*"Bird's Eye View of Phoenix, Maricopa Co., Arizona," Library of Congress, c. 1885*

around the late 1860s to establish another permanent settlement. As Luckingham states, "the founders of Phoenix were developers and boosters," so they drove the initial spatial formation of the town (1989). It became evident early on that this settlement would boom into an important inland outpost for the journey from coast to coast as soon as the railroad, which was completed in 1887, was built through it. A shifting focus to smart water management and distribution coincided with the city's growth and allowed it to develop its economy further. Having taken control of these processes and the means of production in the early stages of Phoenix's growth, the developers and boosters, who were White, non-Latino individuals, established an economic and political system that worked for white people and against the people of color who cohabitated this space.

Even by the 1890s, Phoenix's geography was already defined by race. White leaders in the city who mobilized strict residential standards zoned the Latino and Black populations were zoned into the southern portion of the city on the other side of the railroad tracks (Luckingham 1989). As Luckingham (1981, 204) notes, the Anglo population determined the growth and development of the city, which inevitably led to a huge disparity in resource allocation between the northern and southern portions of the city. It is ironic, though, that in 1871, one of the founders of the city, Jack Swilling, needed to bribe and intimidate Mexicans and Papago Indians who posed as Mexicans to vote in favor of Phoenix becoming the county seat for this area (1989). By the 1890s, affluent, white citizens of the region began to build homes along Central Avenue north of the core of the town with architecture that, "reflected the city's 'American' heritage" (2001, 31). There was a clear rejection by early Anglo Arizonans of different cultures, highlighted by the Harold's decision to publish solely in English despite having a significant Spanish speaking population in the city (1994, 22). The powerful players in Phoenix's early development dictated the norms of the city space along with its physical shape. A map of the Phoenix Street Railway system, which was first established in 1887, shows how the areas to the north of the railroad tracks were connected to the growth in politics and economy while no connective opportunities were given to marginalized spaces to the south. With business, amenities, and politics focused in the northern part of the city, the powers in Phoenix stripped minorities of the ability to fully participate and benefit from the City's growth and development.

Continuing along the lines of economic and spatial limitations, because the Anglo population controlled the economic resources of the city, the minorities of the city were

limited economically and forced into low-paying, long-hour jobs in the agriculture industry that was driving Phoenix's growth (Bolin et Al. 2005, 159). Some even took to the irregular economy in order to make a living for themselves, such as Val Aguilar who became known as the "Marihuana King of Phoenix" around the 1920s because of his profitable drug trade (Luckingham 1994, 37). During the 1920s as the city began to industrialize, industries established large factories in the neighborhoods of South Phoenix, a process that was informed by prejudices already engrained in the city and one that has reproduced these sentiments in the modern day landscape. Laura Pulido and Bolin et al. describe environmental racism as a process which imbeds racial inequalities in the urban landscape at the cost of the health of those inhabiting that space (Pulido 2000; Bolin et al. 2005).



*Luckingham 1994, p. 41*

As a result of industrialization, the city's Anglo establishment marked South Phoenix as undesirable, thus reinforcing the pattern of segregation that was present since the city's conception (Bolin et al. 2005, 159). It is interesting to note that, during this time and in the decades after, the "white flight" phenomena did not occur as it did in



other cities—referring to the trend of wealthier white citizens escaping the deteriorating inner city where more minorities were living—because racial boundaries of the inner city were so clearly defined (Ibid., 160). Phoenix’s outward growth implicated the investment of more resources to provide sufficient infrastructure for those populations. It comes as no surprise that city officials opted to expand water and sewage infrastructure in the 1920s to incorporate these new, primarily white areas while ignoring the need for this infrastructure in South Phoenix. Living conditions in this part of the city for many years had been unfit for the people living there since many homes did not have access to running water or a proper sewage system. Despite not providing the resources necessary to improve this space, the Anglo population often blamed those in South Phoenix for not improving their own condition, which is a clear indicator of the division that was present in Phoenix’s society (Ibid., 161). Many people referred to the physical conditions of these areas in the south of the city as some of the worst slum-like conditions in the United States. Observers saw poor housing conditions which consisted of “shacks and shanties” littered across the landscape of a neighborhood that lacked any real investment as a reflection of the type of person that inhabited the space.

The efforts that were made by the government to help this area in terms of housing, however, were limited in their scope and reflected racial prejudices. In 1941, with a grant from the federal government of \$1,900,000, the Phoenix Housing Authority built three housing projects that reflected the racial separation in the city: the Marcos de Niza project for Latinos and the Mathew Henson project for the Black population were both in South Phoenix, and the Frank Luke, Jr. project for Anglos in East Phoenix (Luckingham 1989, 216). Even into the post-war period, Mexicans and other minority

groups faced the challenges of economic limitations framed by both a limited access to good jobs and a lack of trust from financial institutions derived from prejudices held against these groups. This, coupled with a blatant segregation of schools in some cases based on “language deficiencies,” prevented any sort of profound mobility for these marginalized communities. Though a number of Mexicans achieved some amount of political and economic advancement through the GI Bill and the establishment of ethnically driven political groups, in comparison to their white counterparts, mobility was limited.

What is evident in this history is the influence of white privilege as described by Laura Pulido (2000). This form of racism—which operates on a structural level to benefit the white population—shapes environments on both ideological and physical levels to inflict harm on people of color, though a specific intentionality on the part of white people cannot be identified. Its amorphous, insidious nature allows it to thrive in, “highly racialized societies that espouse racial equality, but in which whites will not tolerate either being inconvenienced in order to achieve racial equality” (15). Looking at the landscapes in which white privilege operates as a historical and spatial actor is necessary because of the absence of individual hostile actions that produce space as disproportionately white. The example of Phoenix presents clear manifestations of white privilege in city space which have led and continue to contribute to the unequal development between the now theoretical north and south. With political and economic power, as determined by access to capital, concentrated among the white population of the city for most of its history, they perpetuate the historical and spatial influence of this force. Moreover, as opportunities to expand outward became possible with increased

technology and infrastructure, it was the white population that could capitalize on a reterritorialization outward into the open desert.

*Running Up That Hill: Outward Growth and Suburbanization in Phoenix*

With the introduction of the affordable Model T in the early 1910s and the continued growth of an automobile culture in the U.S. as a whole, citizens who could afford to had the opportunity to expand outward, away from the city core.

Suburbanization, which can be seen as a process by which the outer parts of a city grows at a faster rate than the city core, is characterized by several components (Vesselinov and Le Goix 2009). Jackson (1985) highlights suburbanization's low-density nature, the dominance of homeowners as opposed to renters, class and racial divisions, and the necessity for a long commute via an individual vehicle. Because of the racial and socio-economic divisions tied by suburbanization, it works to separate and exclude people of the non-dominant group while also perpetuating the structures of power that have allowed for this process (Sibley 1995, Delaney 2005, and Vesselinov and Le Goix 2009). In the case of Phoenix, it has not just expanded outward, it has boomed. As a result of relaxed land use policies and minimal physical barriers in the landscape, developers stretched this city outwards to an extent that is similar to the likes of Los Angeles with an area of over 9000 square miles. In this section, I address this component of Phoenix's history by focusing on freeway and transportation management because it is tied to development, power, and auto-mobility.

Suburbanization in Phoenix began during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as white citizens expanded northward with the growing streetcar system. Much of what is now known as the Coronado neighborhood was built around the 1920s when a streetcar

extension was constructed along Tenth Street. This new development created the opportunity for continued exclusion such as in the case of Hurley Heights—a neighborhood association of all white residents—who prevented non-white residents from living near them and required that all properties had a value of at least \$4000 (Gober 2006). There were even spatial differences within the northern part of the city because the wealthy wanted to live further away from Central Avenue. Michael Kotlanger stated, “The distance of a homesite from Central Avenue determined the value of the residence” (Luckingham 1989: 79). As residents of Phoenix integrated the automobile into everyday life, this distance grew much larger.

The increased presence of automobiles in the Phoenix landscape and the development of freeways defined the next wave of suburbanization, which in many ways is continuing today. The process of freeway development occurred fairly late in Phoenix, only really taking off around 1960, though the state as a whole had seen significant investment. By 1957, the State Highway Budget had set a record at \$48,427,000 (*The Phoenix Gazette* 1957). As a result of the federal highway law passed in that year, the money being plowed into Arizona’s highway system doubled within a few years, though the federal government was bearing 94% of the cost (*The Phoenix Gazette* 1958). In 1960, the Arizona State Highway Commission, Maricopa County, and the City of Phoenix made the “A Major Street and Highway Plan” which highlighted the goals of the city to create a more expansive road network to accommodate the increase of automobile use. Most of the planning looked to incorporate the newly developing suburban areas such as Scottsdale, Paradise Valley, and Tempe, while neglecting historically marginalized spaces like South Phoenix. This is, in part, because wealthier,

predominantly white citizens who occupied these areas dictated the planning and political process.

There was a clear desire within the City to expand the opportunities for automobiles in specific parts of the city by growing its road and freeway system, but politics often got in the way of its initial expansion. Gober highlights Eugene Pulliam, the owner of *The Arizona Republic* and *The Phoenix Gazette*, who advocated against highway expansion in the 60s. He was concerned that the projects would cost too much money, allow for too much federal intervention in local affairs, and physically divide the city (2006, 151). Pulliam's ideologies reflect the commonly held belief for a large portion of the Phoenix population derived from an obsession with fiscal conservatism that government intervention should be minimal. This trend has had manifestations as it relates to transportation development throughout the years since. In 1994, citizens voted against Proposition 400 which would have mandated a half-cent sales tax to improve both freeways and bus services ("Maricopa Association of Governments Long Range Transportation Plan"). It was citizens with political means, it is necessary to note, who resisted these investments because of a belief that government should be limited. Questions need to be raised, then, about the ideological forces that drove this development.

A desire for speed, automobility, and individuality drove highway-oriented development in Phoenix and Arizona as a whole. First, during the late 1950s and early 1960s, a heated debate was unfolding about the "Brenda Cut-off" which would serve as a high speed route connecting Phoenix to Los Angeles while bypassing the entire system of highway that had previously connected the cities (*The Phoenix Gazette* 1959, *The*

*Arizona Republic* 1961). This incident reflects a higher valuation of speed over place because it would bypass a whole desert landscape and thus the communities on older highways that depended on those drivers. Within the City of Phoenix, increased speeds—made possible by highways that connect far reaching suburbs—pushed Downtown to the periphery of the citizen’s psyche while centering the individual’s place of residence and work which now were only accessible via automobile. The “Major Streets and Highway Plan”—a part of the 1970 Phoenix Forward plan which was developed by citizens looking to influence planning—thought it was a good thing that the city had spread out because it created less congestion. It centers on an argument in favor of flexibility and individuality, but does not acknowledge the class differences, which can be shown by differences in speed and automobility, that might prevent these possibilities for a sizable portion of the population. Looking further, an updated version of the “Long Range Transportation Plan” from 1997 focused primarily on improving mobility, while only briefly mentioning the desire for social and community improvements (Maricopa Association of Governments). Here, again, the automobile becomes a tool to bypass necessary internal investments that would help those who do not have access to them.

Not only did freeway development create the need for increased automobile use, it created the space for massive development on the outskirts of the Phoenix metropolitan area. Between 1980 and 2000, the Greater Phoenix area saw the development of around 721,000 new housing units, mostly on the fringes of the city while the amount of urban territory increased from 273 to 732 square miles in a similar time period (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Gober 2006). Specifically, the 101 Loop and the I-10 served as focal points for development in the northeast and north west, and western parts of Phoenix,

respectively. Suburban cities around Phoenix saw huge spikes in their population during this time. Scottsdale grew from 88,000 citizens to over 200,000 between 1980 and 2000, while Glendale and Mesa grew from 97,000 to 219,000 and 152,000 to almost 400,000 people, respectively, in that same time period (City-Data.com). Growth outward seemed limitless throughout the course of the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the early 21<sup>st</sup> century because, in many ways, it does not have defined urban boundaries. In fact, the document “Phoenix in Perspective: Reflections on Developing the Desert” mentions in its preface that in November of 2000, Proposition 202, which would establish urban growth boundaries, failed to pass as developers spent \$5 million to squash it. Here we get a sense of the continued desire to expand outward to satisfy both the increasing population of the region and the financial aspirations of developers in Phoenix.



*Screenshot of Phoenix Metropolitan area, Google Earth 2016*

It becomes clear in the context of this suburban history that the drive outward to the fringes of this urban desert space was fueled by the resources of the historically wealthy and well-to-do of the city. Moreover, the suburbanization process in Phoenix, as predicted by Jackson, rearticulated racial and class structures across a much broader landscape, particularly in places like Paradise Valley and Scottsdale. Suburbanization reterritorialized Phoenix by emphasizing the outskirts of the city as a site for capital development and exclusive living. Delaney (2005) discusses how territory simplifies and clarifies something else, “such as political authority, cultural identity, individual autonomy, or rights,” and obscures itself as a natural phenomenon to hide the power and politics of its formation and preservation (9, 11). He continues by clarifying that territoriality reproduces “particular conceptions of self, society, identity, knowledge, and power” through the exclusion of the “other” (27). As we interrogate the process of suburbanization within the context of a history of white privilege, the reterritorialized suburb works in the same way as the disparate north-south development in early Phoenix to reconstruct difference along the same lines of race, class, and capital. Predominantly white individuals had the capability of utilizing white privilege to settle in newer, nicer neighborhoods while many people of color were left to the marginalized spaces of the city. Suburbanization further separated these spaces. Left in the dust of this outward growth was Downtown, which took on a new role as an employment center for the highly mobile, and, in the context of their history, the racialized subjects of the City.

#### *Leave It Open: Suburban Effects on Downtown Space*

In August of 1976, a group called Citizens for Mass Transit challenged the draft of Phoenix’s “Environmental Impact Statement” which would continue a trend towards



freeway construction because they feared the negative effects it could have on the city and Downtown. In this document they advocated against freeways, focusing on the local effects their development would have on nearby areas. One of their primary focuses was the dislocation of people, usually lower income individuals, who lived in the physical area that the soon-to-be freeways would occupy. According to them, more than 6200 people were forced to leave the allocated area, with many of them receiving only half of what their property was worth at the time. Citing eminent domain, the Arizona Highway Department showed a lack of empathy with displaced people in their unlawful acquisition of land. All of this was done, though, to allow for the growth of the City's freeway system, one which would feed into Downtown.



*"Downtown Phoenix Skyline from 7<sup>th</sup> Ave Bridge," Sean Horan 2005.*

In August of 1976, a group called Citizens for Mass Transit challenged the draft of Phoenix's "Environmental Impact Statement" which would continue a trend towards freeway construction because they feared the negative effects it could have on the city and Downtown. In this document they advocated against freeways, focusing on the local effects their development would have on nearby areas. One of their primary focuses was the dislocation of people, usually lower income individuals, who lived in the physical area that the soon-to-be freeways would occupy. According to them, more than 6200 people were forced to leave the allocated area, with many of them receiving only half of what their property was worth at the time. Citing eminent domain, the Arizona Highway Department showed a lack of empathy with displaced people in their unlawful acquisition of land. All of this was done, though, to allow for the growth of the City's freeway system, one which would feed into Downtown.

Moreover, as the population grew and moved away to the suburbs, a gradual shift occurred in the purpose for the Downtown space. As a reaction to the untamed growth that dragged Phoenixians outwards, city planners looked to develop an "urban villages" model within the City of Phoenix. This model of growth, which was adopted in 1979, gave up on the possibility of developing a single Downtown area, and, rather, promoted the development of decentralized focal points that would serve as clusters of economic and social activity for their correlated parts of the city ("Phoenix Concept Plan 2000"). The idea behind the urban village is to have both homes and employment be decentralized so as to reduce highway congestion and the transportation burden for citizens (Gober 2006). Though this plan seemed to address the issues of expansion and congestion that faced Phoenix on a superficial level, it did not succeed nor resonate with

citizens. Only a quarter of people actually knew what urban village they resided in, and less than a third of people knew that this urban planning project was even attempted (Ehrenhalt 2012). With still a significant amount of employment centered in Downtown, it became the place that business people from across the valley would flock to on the weekdays at around 8 or 9 in the morning, then promptly return home following the end of the working day at around 5 in the afternoon. This example highlights that the urban village model failed to work in the ways that planners had hoped because people did not view the space in the same way. Resultantly, without a defined Downtown, Phoenix as a whole lacked a sense of focus or identity.

City officials in 1979 were cognizant of the effects that Phoenix's growth model was having on the city center, but succumbed to the similar planning failures that had contributed to the deterioration of Downtown. According to the "Downtown Area Redevelopment and Improvement Plan" from 1979, their transportation goals were accessibility, terminals, and internal movement, all which focus entirely on the use of single vehicle transportation. As stated in "Phoenix in Perspective," citizens who are unable to afford or to use a car need the safety net of a standard transit system that can get them to work, grocery stores, and schools. Back then, planners rationalized that transit should be demand influenced, though they did not take sufficient measures to see the extent of demand in unincorporated places. They showed a lack of understanding in their process only deeming it necessary to update the transit system in the 90s after many years of inadequate mobility for many citizens.

This was despite the acknowledgement that, "Blight, deterioration, and obsolescence are a threat to the continued stability and vitality of this area" ("Downtown

Area Redevelopment and Improvement Plan”). Downtown during this time became host to marginal businesses, like pawnshops or thrift stores, or were left empty altogether (Ehrenhalt 2012). Suburbanization gave developers and planners an almost blank slate to devise a Downtown they could be proud of. Policy makers sought to revitalize Downtown through the development of mega projects, like baseball and basketball stadiums, and the convention center. Driven by aesthetics of modernity, Downtown saw the construction of many high-rise office buildings that served the purpose of promoting a strong business culture. One additional point that the City of Phoenix made in 1979 was the desire to augment boundary features through the use of built structures by highlighting distinct differences between Downtown and the areas around it. So, dually, new buildings and parking structures worked to reaffirm the divide between this area and the historically marginalized ones to the south. Within the context of the history we have discussed, the actions to revitalize Downtown are seen as a (re)articulation of the territoriality of this space. However, because of the City’s lack of identity—which is a result of the poor concentration in the city and also the lack of reverence for its past—the initial projects failed.

By interrogating Phoenix’s urban roots in divisive spatial development, the suburbanization process across the valley, and the subsequent state of Downtown, we reach a strong understanding of how Phoenix’s modern development project relates to the city’s past. Phoenix’s early racial divisions illuminated the way the city has historically remained divided, and how power has been unevenly distributed among its citizens. The case of suburbanization as viewed through the lens of transportation policy revealed the forces that drove outward growth, such as developers who had their sights set on profits,

the automobile that gave people the ability to live further from places of employment, and valley residents who promoted exclusionary ideals through their housing development. All of these factors left Downtown barren and impressionable. It is important to remember as a reader that because this chapter covered an extensive time period, it described a history based on important themes that I felt were necessary to think about as we move forward into the city's modern history of development. As I began to show, Downtown redevelopment projects have not been a recent phenomenon, but have often failed where the current projects are succeeding. This is due to a history of top-down development that defined the city for so long. In the coming chapter, I will expand on the history told in Chapter 2 by focusing in on the people, policies, and processes that produce Downtown in its current form.

### **Chapter 3: Planning the Built Environment in a New Territory**

On one of those pleasantly-cold winter nights in Phoenix, a friend and I planned our excursion to Downtown for the night. As we turned off the I-10 and onto Roosevelt Avenue we could feel the environment change around us. A series of multi-purpose storefront and apartments, which were built over the past few years, covered the right side of the street while repurposed historic homes—which in some cases serve as canvasses for local artists—extended down left side. Driving along Roosevelt we noticed both the construction on the streets, which are being transformed into more pedestrian and bike-friendly complete streets, and the few sites where new high-rise apartments are to be built. We ate at a local restaurant on the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Roosevelt before we made our way down to a new bar rightfully named Valley Bar as it can serve as an epicenter for residents of the “Valley of the Sun” where we were to see several local bands perform. On weekend nights this bar, and others around it, attract hordes of locals who arrive via the Light Rail or perhaps an Uber ride to engage with this Downtown space. Though ours varies because we live in the suburbs, it is this sort of experience that defines the trajectory of Downtown Phoenix’s development: focused on the local and specific experience of Downtown.

Over the last fifteen years, Downtown has matured significantly as a result of a number of factors, such as the growth of the local art scene, the introduction of the Light Rail, and the resultant transit-oriented development that has allowed for the creation of a more livable space. As mentioned in Chapter 1, a massive amount of investment is being channeled into this area in order to make this transformation possible. But, as informed by the last chapter which brought to life the history of uneven development between

South Phoenix and Downtown/North Phoenix, the questions then arise of who is shaping this Downtown and for whom are they doing it. In order to properly understand the lasting effects of this history, an informed view of downtown development should also consider that which is excluded.

This chapter explores the rise of Downtown Phoenix over the course of the past fifteen years in order to understand the people, policies, and processes that are producing this space. Looking briefly at the initial trends of localized growth around a community of artists will make clear how Downtown first became desirable. Analyzing statistics and policies about Downtown will help establish an understanding of both residential and employment trends in this space. Next, examining the creation and short-term effects of the Light Rail can help us to achieve a better understanding of role that investment, transportation, and mobility play in defining this area. Lastly, an analysis of the most recent developments, specifically related to housing, illuminates the potential trends for this space. Through this investigation, we may understand how contemporary development is bounding Downtown as a territory.

#### *Catching Their Eye: An Introduction to the Formation of a Downtown Culture*

The story has roots prior to the year 2000, as a group of artists protested the placement of a new football stadium on their homes and art spaces. In the late 90s and in the 2000s, an art culture and scene took root on Roosevelt and further away on Grand. The stadium conflict motivated local artists to begin purchasing the land they were living on as a way to improve their agency in the face of developers who became more interested in these areas (Ross 2001, 85). A number of buildings began to open as art galleries, such as the Eye Lounge and Modified Arts which has since become the

headquarters for Local First Arizona. As described in Chapter 1, First Fridays, which started to gain popularity in the late 1990s and early 2000s, served as a way to advertise this area as an alternative space to the sprawl and characterless development throughout the rest of the metropolitan area. I can remember back when I was still in middle school going to see my brother and his band perform in spaces on Roosevelt, like Modified, and on Grand in The Trunk Space and being fascinated by the blossoming art scene of each area. It was clear then and in my experiences at First Fridays that there was a positive trend for the art scene of Downtown, one that was beginning to attract people to this area. The primary obstacle to creating a truly viable Downtown life was the limited number of housing units. Developers, enticed by the possibility of profiting from the authentic growth of a trendy area, worked to build around art spaces, though in several cases to the disgust of longer term residents.

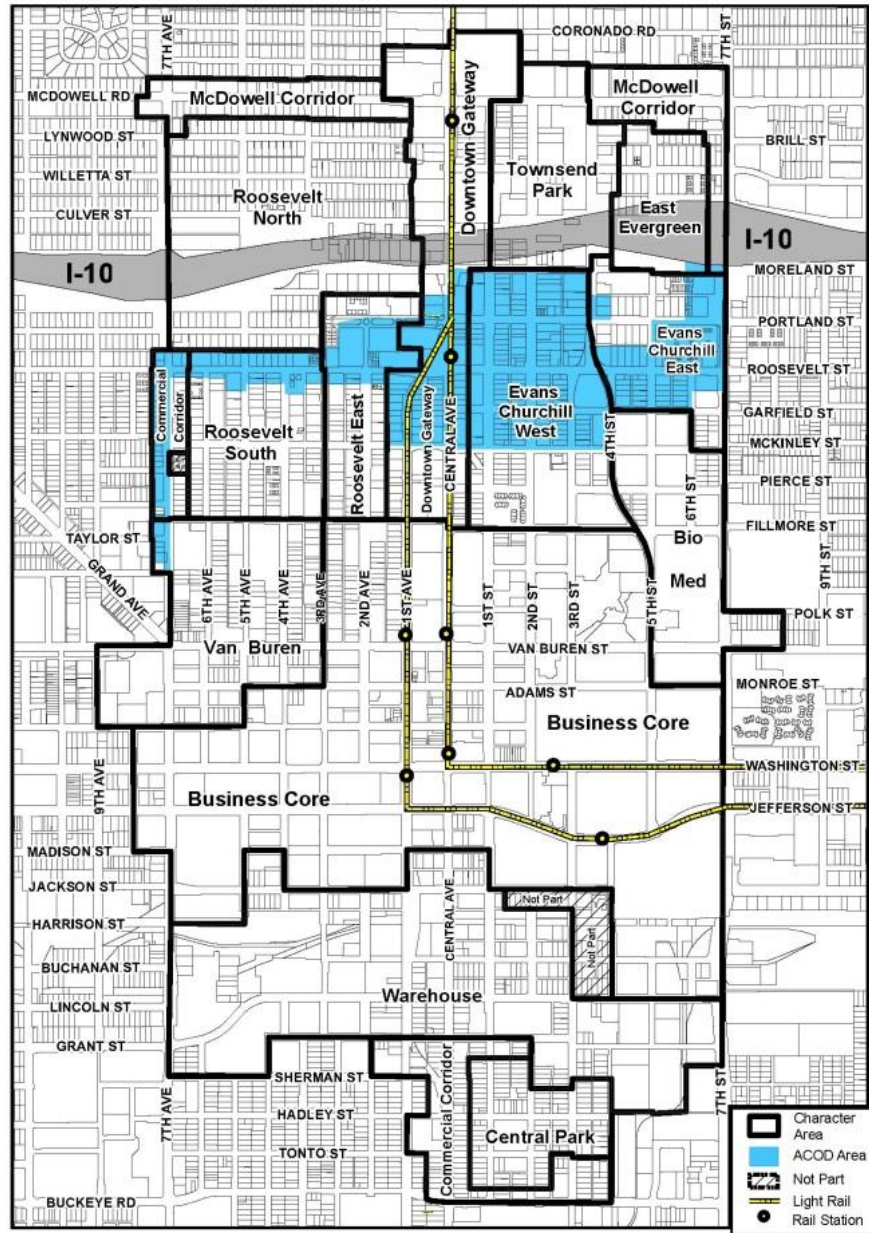
David Harvey (2002) discusses the dangers of the commodification of culture and how it can lead to a monopoly on rents and vice versa, which is what Phoenix's art community fears could happen. First, understanding culture as the social structures—referring to the power relations often derived from the day to day interchange of ideas and capital and determined by the disparity the two—which imbeds spaces with meaning gives us a key insight as to why and how capital works to reproduce social structures in new, unsoiled places. Continuing, Harvey describes monopoly rent as a realization that land owners can improve their income by holding exclusive control over rentable space which allows them to increase the price of rent. The quest for monopoly rent, “leads to the valuation of uniqueness, authenticity, particularity, originality and all manner of other dimensions of social life that are inconsistent with the homogeneity presupposed by



commodity production.” It is this sort of process that makes Don Mitchell’s (2000) claim that culture cannot exist outside of commodity production all too true. As a culture that has previously been influenced little by capital becomes commodified, it absorbs into a larger process which mutates it into a filtered reproduction of itself. Thinking about how Downtown is being produced, there was a clear desire on the part of artists to maintain the area’s cultural significance by guiding the developers who will seek to create a monopoly rent. However, with the central role that the flow of capital plays in determining rhythm of development, Downtown threatens to devolve into an inaccessible bastardization of itself.

In fact, the City, according to Zoning Ordinance 1207, proceeded to create an “Arts, Culture, Small Business Area” around the Roosevelt and Grand communities in 2008, which was then expanded in 2010. This designation offers greater flexibility in land uses, thus allowing residents to continue to create mixed use buildings that served as a backbone for the growth of the Downtown art scene. We saw this first with buildings that operated both as art studios and homes, and now with small businesses of various kinds that are looking to do the same. The area also gains some flexibility when it comes to the production of outdoor public events, such as the First Friday and Third Friday art walks. As long as there is an employee of whatever business space is being used to consent to the event, activities can occur without registration between the hours of 10 and 12 am on Friday and Saturday, and 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. on Sundays. This means that impromptu performances can occur more frequently. For example, the summer following my freshman year at Vassar my friends and I who had formed a band called Carlos Danger were able to perform on the outdoor stage of local business, Bodega 420.

It is this sort of event that makes Downtown a unique place to be in the Metropolitan area of Phoenix; however, it is also the sort of activity that developers tend to capitalize on in their commodification of urban spaces.



*Map Showing Arts, Culture, Small Business Area; Zoning Ordinance Chapter 12: Downtown Code, Revised February 15, 2013.*

Since then, Bodega 420, an important community space for Roosevelt Row and one of the few grocers in the area, closed down for a number of reasons including the increased value of this space. In light of this, the designation of Roosevelt Row as a “Arts, Culture, Small Business Area” cannot only be viewed as a positive policy. While it does establish a space of cultural expression in Downtown Phoenix, the bounding of this space along with the enumeration of specific times and places where events can occur serves to tame alternative forms of expression such as the “Phoenix Burn” which is an annual impromptu public burning of a large wooden sculpture. The sanctioning of certain forms of performance versus others works to undo Roosevelt Row’s authenticity and unpredictability. It is a form of control that reproduces the favorable, marketable traits of this space in order to shape the image of Downtown as a whole into something that is seemingly unique but still accessible for investors and potential residents. Staeheli and Mitchell (2006) describe in their article on the Destiny USA mall in Syracuse, NY how malls become pseudo-public spaces where politics can be monitored and silenced according to the standards set by the mall itself, which then, “shifts the focus of community from public good to private gain” (989). Drawing on their insights, we can understand this designation for Roosevelt Row and Grand Avenue as a regulatory action which orders public space according to a specific and potentially exclusionary standard set by the local government. Furthermore, by being critical of this sort of designation, we highlight a process that commodifies the culture of Downtown Phoenix, polices the space for anything antithetical to its clear vision, and seeks to apply it to a more expansive space.

Keeping this in mind, it is necessary now to focus our attention to the various population and economic trends of Downtown along with the policies that are contributing to them. I will, however, expand on the role that this group of artists had on the production of Downtown Phoenix as a favorable space in Chapter 4, which explores the culture, brand, and livability of this area.

*The Shape of Downtown Phoenix: Policies and Statistics*

Mayor Terry Goddard who served from 1984 to 1990 was one of the first major advocates for Downtown. In 1988, he successfully pushed through an excise tax and bond initiative to promote large scale spending on Downtown. The goal of these projects, for Goddard, was to promote cultural activity in this space, though much activity did not occur until after his term ended (Ross, 2011). As Gober states, “Goddard’s idea was to develop a critical mass of architecturally significant public buildings close enough together to function actively” (2006). Unfortunately, the projects, such as the baseball and basketball stadiums, were unsuccessful in establishing a residential culture. The further failings with developments like the Arizona Center in the early 1990s—which initially advertised as a commercial center which could boost Downtown but did not produce very much activity—marked the first wave of development, a wave defined by its focus on large projects as opposed to local experiences. But, with local attention turning to Downtown as a result of the growth of the art scene, the citizens of Phoenix, along with Mayor Phil Gordon who served between 2004 and 2012 and was a huge proponent of the revitalization of this area, began to view Downtown as the place to invest in. This investment, however, looked to shape Downtown into a neighborhood. By looking at the City’s plans and policies alongside information about population and

employment, we see how investment and government action shaped Phoenix's downtown space.

On December 14, 2004, the City of Phoenix released its strategic vision and blueprint for Downtown Phoenix. In the introduction, it highlights the rekindled potential of downtowns across the country along with the role that the "creative class" is playing in creating vibrant spaces in various downtowns. Turning to Phoenix, it recognizes Downtown's historical lack of focus but emphasizes presence of a foundation upon which to grow into an important economic, cultural, and residential space. These building blocks include the enhanced convention center, the Light Rail, and the "Three Big Bets" which are the growth of Arizona State University Downtown, the establishment of a strong bioscience industry, and the creation of industry clusters that will bring high income jobs in various tech fields to Downtown. Understanding the economic possibility of their Downtown and the emotional investment that citizens had in its future—as evidenced by the cited town hall meeting in which over 750 people shared their visions and concerns about this area—the City harkened on the principles of Community, Connectivity, and Integration to guide their planning of this space.

With these principles in mind, they identified several driving themes, such as knowledge anchors, Downtown living, neighborhoods, arts and entertainment, and shopping. Because of the potential to concentrate highly skilled young professionals, the City is very keen on growing the Biomedical Center where the International Genomics Consortium (IGC) and the Translation Genomics Research Institute (TGen) are located. The TGen Headquarters is a six-story, 46 million dollar building completed in late 2004, highlighting the investment that is being pushed into this project. The Arizona

Biomedical Collaborative would bring together the medical programs of both ASU and U of A to create a “new era medical school.” Lastly, in conjunction with ASU President Michael Crow, the University planned to move 15,000 students, 1,800 faculty and staff, and have 4,000 residents over the course of ten years to a newly built Downtown campus home to departments like the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication and the Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law. The ASU website states that, “A professional, fast-paced downtown environment provides a multitude of academic and professional connections for students,” a statement that brings to light the desired trajectory of ASU Downtown students to first study then work Downtown following graduation ([campus.asu.edu/downtown-phoenix](http://campus.asu.edu/downtown-phoenix)). The “knowledge economy” that the City of Phoenix is hoping to develop is projected to create around 7,700 jobs and



*“Downtown Phoenix,” Ayrcañ June 2, 2010*

spawn more than \$500 million in spending, leading to \$7 million a year in city revenue (11). Part of this economy includes the desire to attract creative business and startups by developing an attractive, livable image of Downtown Phoenix. This relates to Richard Florida's (2002) love affair with the creative class. He emphasizes the role that creative people must play in producing vibrant and economically viable urban spaces that can benefit all. However, when emphasizing the creative class in development, it becomes necessary to acknowledge the people that cannot fit into that category as a result of social, economic, and racial barriers that have been perpetuated throughout a history of difference and marginalization.

Housing development, the document further identifies, offers Downtown Phoenix a unique opportunity to produce a vibrant urban space and capitalize on the trend of growth inversion nationwide because its ability to accommodate "creative types...for the hard-working, hard-playing 'unattached' young people, and for baby boomers with grown children" (14). The initial attempts to create a neighborhood Downtown failed due to their emphasis on high end development. Ehrenhalt (2012) highlights the Summit at Copper Square as a development that put an emphasis on the "Lavish Lifestyle" before focusing on filling out the available spaces. After its first two years, Summit only had filled about half of their spaces due to its exclusivity. This introduction to residential building for the new Downtown made clear the necessity for more intelligent marketing and planning when it comes to creating a neighborhood (Ibid.). According to Downtown Phoenix, Inc., there are more than 650 housing units in the process of being built right now, and close to 1850 units are at some stage of the planning process (Goth 2013). In

order to achieve the goals of the 2004 plan, the City must take active steps to promote inclusivity within these new housing units.

With the growing number of housing units being built, Downtown Phoenix will see its population grow along with the availability of housing units. It is challenging to pin point the exact population growth that has occurred so far during this process because census tracts do not line up well with the official boundaries of Downtown. From my estimation, the latest population estimate from 2010 data showed there were between 10,000 to 13,000 residents in the designated Downtown area—between 7<sup>th</sup> Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the I-10, and Lincoln Street (City-Data). The county as a whole was second in the country in terms of growth between July 1, 2013 and July 1, 2014 with an influx of 74,000 residents (Pedroza 2015). This is projected to grow even by four or five thousand people within the next few years, and even more following the completion of new housing developments. Though the numbers are difficult to show exactly, the increase in housing and overall population growth shows the ways in which this space is growing. It is also maintaining and expanding its economic importance to the Valley.

According to the “City of Phoenix Employment Center Profile of Downtown Phoenix,” this area hosts nearly 570,000 workers within a thirty minute commute of the City’s core. About 64 percent of the population in the commute area—which extends out into areas of Glendale, Tolleson, Tempe, Paradise Valley, and Scottsdale—is between the ages of eighteen and sixty four. With an expected population growth of 300,000 people in this commute area, employment in this area will also most likely grow, especially in the sectors that the City has highlighted as priorities, i.e. health sciences and technology. This document highlights some of the major and planned office buildings of the center



city which include the Downtown Phoenix Technology Exchange, the Arizona Center, 200 West Monroe (proposed), Chase Tower, One North Central, and City Scape. The Phoenix CityScape project reflects the recent trends in development as it incorporates 1.8 million square feet of mixed use space with 560,000 square feet of office space.

Located directly in the city center, this sort of new development looks to build on an increasing desire for mixed use development that can work to create a more vibrant city. The challenges to accomplishing this on a larger scale, as revealed in the aforementioned document, include the high level of development on automobiles to traverse the City's landscape. The previous chapter discussed the motivations for outward development in the Valley of the Sun, and made evident the disparity in mobility between spaces. The City of Phoenix has struggled with public transportation for much of its history as a result of poor funding for a massive geographical area. The City had not implemented effective transportation policy for the city center until this recent time of redevelopment and revitalization, though it is limited to historically privileged places.

#### *Downtown's Path Forward: The Valley Metro Light Rail*

One modern manifestation of the spatially specific investment limited to Downtown is the Valley Metro (Phoenix's public transportation department) Light Rail which is perhaps the most important component of development in Downtown. The Phoenix and Tempe City Councils approved the 1.4 billion dollar Light Rail project in the fall of 2000, and then proceeded to purchase the land for the system in 2001. In January of 2005, the full funding grant agreement was signed, which provided Valley Metro with 587 million dollars in federal funding for the first 20 mile segment. In between this time, legislation was passed that brought a 4/10 of a cent sales tax that

would directly fund public transportation efforts. The first 200 feet of light rail track was installed near the Phoenix and Tempe border at Washington and 56<sup>th</sup> street in 2006. The path goes through central Phoenix to Downtown Phoenix, then east through Tempe (the home of Arizona State University) and into Mesa (Valley Metro).

The planning of the Light Rail offers us an insight to the elaborated goals of Valley Metro's project. Most importantly, they chose the path for the first line by identifying the highest demand corridor—in terms of both population and traffic flow—in order to reduce the congestion occurring on these roadways. The previous manifestations of public transportation along the pathway suffered from long headways, limited hours of service, mixed traffic flows, and high transfer requirements. The Light Rail, then, would provide “capacity and connectivity” for its ridership who could more efficiently travel through the city centers of Phoenix, Tempe, and Mesa. The goal of all of this is to enhance the region's economic potential through increased mobility (“Central Phoenix/East Valley Light Rail Transit Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement”). What is clear from these points and from the construction of Phoenix's public transit system is that the focus has been shifted to this specific space. Moreover, with the opening of the Light Rail, the benefits of these goals began to be realized.

On December 27, 2008 the 20-mile starter line opened, which drew over 200,000 riders during the two-day grand opening. In the first five days, there were over 500,000 riders. By the following November over 1,000,000 rides had been achieved in the month, translating to an average weekday ridership of 40,211, and average Saturday ridership of 27,129, and Sunday ridership of 15,128. These averages were higher than predicted, though it is important to note that cities have become accustomed to aiming low in order

to market a public relations victory (Ross 2011). Valley Metro has also seen a slight increase in ridership of the Light Rail, with a 1.4% increase between 2012 and 2013. This growth in Light Rail use shows its positive reception and effectiveness in transporting a higher quantity of people within its corridor. The Valley Metro Fact Sheet for 2015 reiterates the system's success reporting a total of 14,276,884 rides. Not only has it been fruitful in attracting a high number of riders, but it has also proven to be much more cost effective than the bus system, raising \$12,832,287 in fares while spending \$31,288,715 in operating expenses as opposed to the \$47,040,690 gained in bus fares versus the \$229,809,752 in bus service costs. Though there is a massive discrepancy in the costs for each service, it is important to note that the bus service expands throughout the metropolitan area of Phoenix whereas the Light Rail is confined to its specific path. However, because officials had the confidence to invest in this rail system, the benefits can now be returned in the form of a more efficient fare to service cost ratio and, more importantly, through the increase in investment along the corridor.

This takes the form of transit oriented development—defined by Valley Metro as, “a pattern of development characterized by a mix of uses surrounding a transit station where streets have a high level of connectivity, blocks are small, and buildings and uses cater to the pedestrian.” Other stated goals by this organization in terms of transit oriented development include the promotion of a transit system that creates jobs, housing, and long term economic growth and investment. The stability of a Light Rail line provides developers a definitive place in which they can expect a high number of people to be riding and walking through (as opposed to bus routes which are subject to change and historically have been underutilized in Phoenix) thus enhancing the upside of any

investment. A document produced Valley Metro titled “Valley Metro Rail—Creating Economic Vitality” emphasizes the economic upside that the rail line has for its surrounding area. According to this, “Every \$1 invested in transit creates \$8 in economic growth” and there are many dollars being pushed into this corridor. Though this represents the whole of the Light Rail line, a total of 204 projects between 2005 and the present have been completed or are in some phase of planning which make up a total of \$8.2 billion dollars that are being invested by both public and private entities. A total of 10.3 million square feet of commercial space and 15.6 million square feet of residential space will be added.



*“Phoenix Downtown,” Leandro Coletto Blazon, May 16, 2013*

On the street level, this development as influenced by the previous history of the artist community downtown takes the form of the new housing developments I described previously, the various niche restaurants and coffee shops that have popped up within walking distance of the rail line, and reshaped roads that promote bike use. Transit

oriented development has provided the area surrounding the Light Rail, particularly Downtown, with a means to grow its economy further, and to market itself (to a certain extent at least when thinking about the role of developers) as an area of high spatial and economic mobility. The betterment of this space, though not directly influencing a decline in South Phoenix, perpetuates the gap in economic opportunities between the areas. Returning to the idea of reterritorialization, the hyper-investment of capital back into Downtown following a long history of suburbanization recreates the boundaries that have historically defined this territory. With the construction of the Light Rail through a specific corridor of the center city, planners and developers inadvertently—much in the way that white privilege operates—reinforce the territoriality of the space by allowing for the reiteration of physical and cultural changes inscribed in the urban landscape.

#### *Developers and the Expansion of Downtown*

One of the challenges that faced Downtown in the early 2000s was the restrictive nature of zoning ordinances in this area which did not allow for much mixed-use development to occur. In 2004, Brian Kearny stated the need for, “zoning changes to encourage urban-oriented designs and mixed use.” By this he means that zoning laws would need to allow for mixed-use development such as shops and restaurants that also have residential or office spaces built within the same structure (Kress 2004). Since then, the city mobilized to make mixed-use development a more prominent feature of Downtown growth and building. The goal here is to allow the building of housing units with opportunities for the economy growth through business development. By coupling residential growth with business growth, the City can ensure a continuation of the trend of inversion.

Alan Ehrenhalt (2012) praises the work of builder Eric Brown who pioneered the development of low-rise, medium density housing in the city center. Observing the regulatory requirements of high-rise buildings, Brown decided to build up to the 60 foot limit which would have triggered complicated building code requirements for plumbing and fire, and to have multi-use spaces on the street level to improve street activity. These five-story developments, like the Artisan Village on Roosevelt and 7<sup>th</sup> Street, have successfully filled their living units and promoted exciting urban growth. As the author highlights,

“With an ample supply of empty land in the center and very little historical value to protect, it has the ability in theory at least, to build a downtown that would possess many of the traditional urbanist virtues—street life, compactness, casual sociability—and yet would not resemble the downtowns of older cities” (201).

This sort of housing development offers a unique opportunity to create sustainable growth in the city center that promotes urban growth while not bleeding it dry of its demand.



*“Artisan Lofts on Central Ave,” Mike Padgett 2009*

These sorts of developments may not be the most profitable for developers, however, which is why we have seen the presence and planning of high-rise or large projects. The Residences at CityScape, a group of 224 luxury apartments in the city core completed in 2014, shows the impulsive nature of building Downtown through the construction of extremely exclusionary housing units (“Downtown Phoenix Development Activity”). Union @ Roosevelt, a mixed use project in the planning process to be located right next to the Light Rail station on Roosevelt Street, would offer the benefits of creating a lively street level experience, though the developers have not made plans for affordable housing options. The Portland on the Park project by Habitat Metro, which is expected to be completed at some point this year, will include 149 luxury condominiums ranging from 745 to 2300 square feet. These large scale developments in Downtown—along with numerous other projects—reflect the developer’s desire to profit off of the trend of urban inversion and infill. By focusing heavily on building luxury spaces, developers inscribe exclusion into the dynamic urban landscape. As of right now, there is demand for these sorts of spaces, though other barriers prevent a massive infill.

One challenge that Downtown has not dealt with yet is the absence of a grocery store in the city center. As of right now, the closest grocery store to this area is a Safeway across the on 7<sup>th</sup> Street and McDowell Road, thus classifying it as a food desert. Groups like “This Could Be Phoenix” highlighted spaces like Central and McKinley as ideal vacancies because of their accessibility to all parts of Downtown ([thiscouldbephx.com](http://thiscouldbephx.com)). Seeing as 44% of households in Downtown do not have an automobile, this location offers an accessible fifteen minute or less walk from most housing developments in the area. Smithfield Properties LLC attempted to incorporate a

grocery store into their Central Station project on Van Buren and Central Avenue(which I will discuss in the following paragraphs for different reasons), though they were not able to because of financial impediments (Sunnucks 2015). After much struggle to achieve this landmark for Downtown, it seems as though it is coming to fruition. Fry's Food Stores and RED Development recently proposed a mixed use development that would include a 55,000 square foot grocery store to this area (Goth 2016). The store will open in 2018 if all proceedings go according to plan.

Bureaucratic impediments still restrict growth in Downtown, however. Take, for instance, the proposed Central Station property on Van Buren Street and Central Avenue in the heart of Downtown. In December of 2013, Eric Johnson of the City of Phoenix Community & Economic Development Department along with Kim Gathers of the Public Transit Department issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the redevelopment of the City's public transit property. By February of 2014, the City Transit Commission received two proposals, and selected Smithfield Properties, LLC as the developers. They proposed an \$82 million design for a 34-story tower which would host 475 apartments, parking, City transit facilities, commercial space, a pool, and shade for bus and Light Rail users. Johnson estimated for six months to enter into agreements with the City and developers, eighteen months to begin construction, and another thirty months to complete the structure. This project offered the City many benefits such as 2.8 million dollars in payments from the twenty five year tower lease, 30,000 new square feet of commercial space in the heart of Downtown, construction jobs, and additional tax revenues from a number of sources. After being approved by Paul Blue on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014, it seemed that this project would take off.



Unfortunately, Central Station has hit some roadblocks and has yet to be finished. Smithfield Properties LLC still needs to make a deal with the Federal Transit Administration to set out a clear plan of construction. Because this complex is on public land that serves a significant purpose for public transportation in Downtown, it is necessary for the developers and the city to collaborate on the construction plan so as to limit the disturbances to the movement of citizens (Sunnucks 2015). This delay reveals the discrepancy in developers' expectations and the realities of building in any downtown space. Though Phoenix does offer an easier path to build in Downtown as a result of the availability of empty properties, cheap land, and generally relaxed ordinances, bureaucratic processes and challenges from local groups restrict the actions of developers.

This chapter investigated the initial catalysts for new downtown development on the cultural and political sides, the construction of a high capacity Light Rail, and the new emphasis on building in order to construct a strong image of Downtown Phoenix's landscape. Through this investigation we gain a strong understanding of the site of investment, and learn why it has been the center of attention for City politics. The events discussed bring to light the possibility that this space holds while also raising questions about who is shaping Downtown and why are they invested in it. Is it for monetary gain, political power, or for a genuine passion to make a livable neighborhood space? Downtown and North Phoenix has always been territorialized, but in what ways are these territories transforming in light of the great inversion? Chapter 4 will look into the lived experience of Downtown along with the role that community and commercial organizations are playing in forming an identity for Downtown.

## **Chapter 4: Producing a Re-Imagined Downtown Space**

Back during my first years in Phoenix, my memories of Downtown revolved around “take your child to work” days where I would visit my dad at The Arizona Republic building on the corner of Van Buren and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, and the occasional baseball or basketball game at the adjacent arenas on Jefferson Street. The office buildings felt taller and the stadiums bigger because they were the only moments I could grasp in this space as a distant dwelling suburbanite. As highlighted in the previous chapter, they were the only reference points many citizens had of this area because Downtown, simply, could not make people stay other than for one’s obligation to work and to fair-weather fandom. Pushing forward into high school, inklings of change presented themselves in the form of increased vibrancy and attention to this space. The Light Rail which ran by my school pushed those of us whose interest was piqued into the newly evolving world of Downtown Phoenix, one which highlighted an increased presence of art and artistry, music, and vibrant city living. In the past few years, I have seen the focus shift slightly. While the vibrancy is still present and growing as highlighted by increased activity on non-event nights, the city structures seem to be growing along with it. Construction sites line Roosevelt Row, highlighting the increased demand to live Downtown along with the desire for developers to take advantage of the trend of inversion. We are experiencing a critical moment in Downtown Phoenix’s history where the values and aspirations of certain actors will shape how this space develops.

The changes shown between these moments reflect the constantly changing nature of Downtown’s identity. As different people, organizations, and builders produce this space through their individual movements, collaborative political action, and physical

alteration to this urban landscape, the amorphous nature of the City's identity is revealed. With a number of differing interests influencing this area, it is necessary to look at how several prominent actors seek to inscribe Downtown with a specific meaning. Moreover, understanding the spatial nature of this process by which Downtown comes to be allows us to shed light on issues of power and exclusion that come to define such a space.

Downtown Phoenix's spatial identity is a product of the power relations between residents, developers, and community organizations that frame and bound this space to reproduce a modern, urban subjectivity, one which in its specificity can produce an exclusionary space. By examining the interplay between artists who shifted the city's focus to value to arts and culture, community groups who monitored the growth of this area, and developers who seek to profit from the trend of urban inversion, we can understand the complex production of this area's identity.

#### *Re-Imaging Downtown: Valuing Arts and Culture as Formative Structures*

In Chapter 3, I discussed how a group of artists were able to stake their claim to Downtown through political mobilization and property ownership. Fortunately for them, the space did not draw significant attention from developers (bar the proposed stadium site) until they were able to get a foothold and develop a strong presence. Even when it did, artists had a significant amount of agency in the process of downtown development because they had gained political power through their ownership of land along Roosevelt and Grand. According to Greg Esser, a leader of the Public Arts Commission, "We've grown from five to twelve artist-owned and occupied spaces, in the late 1990s, to probably over one hundred, just within this immediate neighborhood" (Ross 2011, p. 85). As a result of their widespread ownership in Downtown, the artist community played a

critical role in shaping Downtown according to a vision of an artistic hub of activity. Martin Cizmar points out the opportunity presented by Downtown for the music scene saying, “bands that could not get booked in the larger venues in Tempe and Scottsdale were able to come to and play small spaces and develop because no one else was looking” (Cizmar 2009). This can be seen as a metaphor for Downtown as a whole. While attention for most of Phoenix’s history was directed elsewhere, artists were able to make full use of this space and create a new identity for it. As Ernest McIntyer puts it in his article from 2004, “If you think the ‘happening art scene is in Scottsdale, think again. Art has taken a detour to downtown Phoenix.” Little did he know, it would take more than just a detour.

Furthermore, artists expressed their presence tactfully through art-based community groups, such as Artlink and the previous Downtown Phoenix Arts Coalition (D-PAC), which were able to mobilize this newly found identity for political growth. D-PAC, which was first formed in the 80s with the goal of promoting the idea of arts in the city, helped fight against the football stadium proposal through protest and advocacy within city hall (Nilsen 2004). As land owners in the area, they exercised their power to uphold a spatial identity in the face of threats by developers and outsiders (Ross 2011). Though less politically active, Artlink also plays a role in shaping this area’s identity in relation to the ever present influence of art as a cultural indicator. Artlink is a non-profit organization, “dedicated to linking artists, business and the public to better understand, appreciate and support a thriving arts community in downtown Phoenix” (artlinkphoenix.com). This is the group that developed and promoted the Art Detour, First Fridays, and Third Fridays events. In 2002, the seeds of the scene began to manifest

themselves as, “more than a dozen art spaces were taking part in June’s First Friday...Afterward, the artists’ hangout and tiki bar known as Bikini Lounge featured a late-night opening of paintings by a dozen of downtown’s most prominent artists” (Villani 2002). Growing from this modest event, First Fridays now sees anywhere between 14 and 20 thousand visitors each month. In essence, these groups work to create a vibrant urban space through the development of art and the mediated exposure to the community through specific events like First Fridays. They imagine the city as an active center for community, creativity, and localized prosperity as shown by their dedication to creating a distinct downtown identity on Grand Avenue and Roosevelt Row.

Along with these events, public art plays a significant role in the process of reimagining Downtown as a culturally significant space. Rachel Somerstein discusses in her article about the instillation of “Her Secret is Patience” by Janet Echelman, a Boston based sculptor, both the challenges that faced this project because it used public funding and the need for public art to help create a downtown identity. Built in 2009 in Civic Space Park in between 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Central Avenue on Polk Street using the 2.5 million dollar Public Art Fund, this sculpture hangs 145 feet tall as a three dimensional, multi-layered net that illuminates various colors in the evenings, and “dances gently in the air, choreographed by the flux of desert winds” ([www.echelman.com](http://www.echelman.com)). Despite the obvious visual appeal of such a structure, the project hit road bumps as people began to question whether such spending was economical in the face of the 2008 economic recession. The City’s insecurity about this project grew out of a history of public spending that avoided significant prior investments in shaping the City’s image through art. Influenced by the political mobilization of the art community of Downtown, City

Council decided to approve this piece, citing a need to shift how individuals perceive Downtown. With the rise of Roosevelt Row and Grand Avenue as spaces that drive artistic expression within this area, the acceptance of Public Art became the norm. Now as you walk in these areas, it is impossible not to notice the series of murals that color various structures and the newly adapted Roosevelt Light Rail stop that has employed various sculptures to serve both functional and aesthetic purposes for public transit users. These works serve to alter the landscape of Downtown.



*Photo of "Her Secret is Patience" by stuinaz April 25, 2009*

The question then arises of the work that this alteration does for the identity of this area. Several necessary insights can be drawn from *Re-imagining the City* (2013). This work sees art as, “an innovative, symbolic and material expression of global and urban conditions” (3). With creativity as a catalyst for innovative production, art plays a huge role in how cities are experienced and imagined. In Perry’s essay “The Vacant Hotel,” she describes how public artwork serves to form connections through complex, affective assemblages and sensibilities with the mobile subjects that engage with it (95). Her argument centers on a dynamic relationship between the viewer and the artwork, which in its fixed nature serves to give a sense of place to the placeless act of movement. In this process, the viewer and the artwork engage in a dialectic which challenges the purpose of the work and the identity it is hoping to produce while forcing the individual to react to it in some way. Art in the urban context carries the meanings and identities of the artists or organizations that produce it in opposition to established structures which open up the possibility of reimagining the City on both an aesthetic and ideological level.

Moreover, a necessary component to reimagining the city, I propose, is a “reimaging” of the perceptions of a space. By using the term “reimaging” I am referring in an allegorical sense to the process by which computers whose hard drives have failed receive new ones. While the shell along with the general processes and functions of the computer remain the same, the possibilities for what can be achieved by the machine are once again reset. To provide a simple definition I would say: a “reimaging” of downtown does not simply imply a change in structures within urban spaces, it opens the city to ideological change as a result of the new possibilities one has to interact with the space. In thinking about the city as a space of both intertwining continuities and discontinuities,

there is room for change and growth within the historical structure of the city as defined by the physical urban landscape, the policies that police the space, and the people who inhabit it. This change is driven by divergent cultural processes, such as the increased focus, appreciation, and investment in public art, that allow for the reshaping or “reimaging” of the urban landscape. According to Grierson and Sharp (2013), “Through art works and projects, specific responses in the present may come into close relations with historical precedents and possible futures.” With not only the presence of public art but the active advocacy in favor of it, the city begins to reframe how it is perceived by those who interact with the space, especially in the face of a history that ignored this outward form of expression.

Public art, then, becomes a force in shaping a new downtown identity—in its physical complication of the urban landscape and its aesthetically enticing nature—because it begins to shift the movements of individuals in the city. Tying this in with Michel Certeau’s theory on how walking in the city gives shape to urban spaces by enunciating particular structures in the built environment we begin to understand the significance that these structures can have on defining a certain space (1984). When navigating a city we participate in a continual experience of the physicality of the place, a force which has been created by the structures of power that were able to design and plan the space. In redefining how a city is walked public art works to define a space in a new way and give it a newly shaped identity. Moreover, when considering the historical roots of development and cultural production in Downtown Phoenix, the process of “re-imaging” this space ties directly to the larger process of reterritorialization that is occurring as a result of the influx of capital into this area.



As I have discussed before, it is important to question who is creating this formative structure, for whom, and how it serves to identify Downtown. In creating “Her Secret is Patience” and less prominent street art in the likes of the Roosevelt Art District, artists are staking their claim to this area. History suggests that this group of artists is predominantly white and fits nicely into the mold of the “creative class” without dissenting too much from a mainstream identity. Because of this, it becomes challenging to engage marginalized communities through this art because of the distinct differences in their history and experience of Phoenix. The question is raised, then: can this structure that serves to “reimage” urban space ostracize those who do not relate to it on a historical, personal or aesthetic level? Because of the potential to disengage certain groups, public art can influence Downtown Phoenix’s identity to seem exclusionary for people of conflicting backgrounds. Downtown becomes territorialized through the reproduction of ideals and aspirations related to the creative class and economically mobile. By noting this possibility, artists come to the fore as political actors in this newly shaping space. They are crucial as a cultural entity in the production of a vibrant space that can be exploited by outside groups. The responsibility for creating an inclusive Downtown space then begins with this group who can help shape a progressive identity for the area. A “Re-imaging” of Downtown through an inclusive production of urban structures opens the door for further political action in altering the space. Downtown urban space, however, is much more complex than any single actor.

#### *Community-based Development: Downtown Voices and Partnerships*

As development intensified, community members needed to protect their interests while also positioning themselves to benefit from such growth. With the formation of the

Downtown Voices Coalition (DVC) in May of 2004, stakeholders in the neighborhood sought to serve as watchdogs of sorts over development to ensure that a short term boom would not lead to a long term bust for Downtown. Following a meeting of ninety downtown residents, business owners, property owners, and community organizations at the Icehouse in the Warehouse District, the community committed to diligently supporting and monitoring this area. According to Harvey (2002), “Capital often produces widespread alienation and resentment among the cultural producers who experience first-hand the appropriation and exploitation of their creativity for the economic benefit of others” (12). Guided by principles like Community, Aesthetics, Communication, Arts/Culture, and Preservation, the DVC worked to prevent or limit the phenomenon that Harvey described. They wanted to see investment work for the smart, sustainable growth of the Downtown community as opposed to serving as a quick pay day for developers. Members of this organization include Tim Eigo who is a part of Downtown Phoenix, Inc., Steve Dreiseszun of F.Q. Story Neighborhood, and Louisa Stark of the Community Housing Partnership. Coming from different backgrounds, the members of this organization are able to work towards common middle ground in their advocacy work ([downtownvoices.org](http://downtownvoices.org)).

The DVC along with other Downtown advocates like Local First Arizona attempt to make change by engaging in productive dialogue that influences local policy and development decisions. By maintaining an up-to-date community calendar, DVC keeps the community informed about when various committees, such as the Central City Village Planning Committee or the Phoenix Arts & Culture Commission, meet and what they will be discussing. They have also hosted more significant forums in the past like

the Phoenix Mayoral Candidate Forum in 2011 where candidates were able to debate and discuss issues important to the community. The State of Sustainability Forum where local experts engaged in a discussion about the most pressing questions of the City's sustainability is another example of this sort of event. Perhaps their most lasting contribution though is the "Downtown Voices: Creating a Sustainable Downtown" manifesto that, at its core, called for a closer relationship between the City government and the Downtown residents. Revolving around some of the principles mentioned above, this document carried a more locally-informed, clearly expressed message that was in turn incorporated into the General Plan Update of the City of Phoenix (Ross 2011). Coupled with the work that Local First has done in promoting the growth of local business in and around Downtown, these groups build a smart and sustainable space where a local identity has been able to flourish. DVC and Local First employ community-based tactics to resist large scale development projects that would compromise the identity and culture of Downtown.

While this community based resistance to capital has been important in positively guiding development Downtown specifically, it is also important to recognize the ways in which it is implicit in the bounding of Downtown. Looking back to my previous introduction to the concept of territory in Chapter 1, we see how meaning and power are mobilized to produce an exclusive space that works for those on the inside. Delaney emphasizes in his analysis that identity is tied to the process of creating territory (11). Keeping this in mind, by examining the actors that are shaping discourse around Downtown development, we see a clear insider and outsider dichotomy that produces a clear identity for this space. The insiders include the residents and artists of Downtown

who have cultural access to the space, while the investors who are looking to participate in this space occupy a half-outsider role. That is to say that their economic participation in Downtown allows them to shape the space, though their actions are monitored by groups like the DVC. The outsiders here consist of the historically marginalized spaces in South and West Phoenix that are not compatible with Downtown's vision. It is necessary then to raise questions about the accessibility of this space, whether it has to do with mobility or affordability, because of the historically limited benefits offered to these areas.

The groups that have most clearly operated in this half-outsider role are the Downtown Phoenix Partnership, Downtown Phoenix, Inc., and the Phoenix Community Alliance. DPP is a nonprofit funded by property owners within the ninety square block business improvement district that, "exists to strengthen Downtown Phoenix development and to encourage an environment of activity, energy, and vitality" (dtphx.org). Arizona State Statute 48-575 established this organization so it is therefore controlled by the City of Phoenix who guides what the group does. As highlighted in Emily Gersema's article, "DPP is overseen by a board of directors, most of whom are representatives of some major downtown organizations and businesses, such as the Phoenix Suns, Arizona Diamondbacks, and CityScape developer RED Development" (2011). They guide the implementation of specific services such as Hospitality, Streetscape and Urban Design, Transportation, Marketing, Branding, and Economic Development. Central to their project is their image as "not just a business improvement group that keeps streets clean and has brown-shirt customer service reps helping tourists and business travelers" (Phoenix Business Journal 2004). DPI, which is a part of DPP,

works more strictly as a think tank whose goal is to attract businesses, residents, and visitors to Downtown. The PCA was established in 1983 to help mediate large scale public-private projects Downtown.

As advocates for the business improvement district, these organizations tend to promote business interests over those of the community. Up until about 2002, these groups focused almost entirely on mega-projects, such as the Arizona Center or the Baseball and Basketball stadiums, in order to spur life in Downtown. These projects—being driven by developers who desired more to create immediate profit rather than sustained urban growth—only managed to bring people on nights when there were events. This was because there was no focus on the local, small-scale development of a nightlife, restaurant culture, or residential atmosphere. Seemingly influenced by Richard Florida's (who actually attended one of the early Icehouse meetings) unbridled love for the "creative class" as a way to create a vibrant downtown, DPP and PCA have shifted their focus to try and tap into the economic possibilities tied to the great inversion and the growth of the arts district.

They only took this new position because of the pressure from more community oriented groups like DVC. The president of the PCA, Don Keuth, stated that after initial tumultuous discussions, "we are pretty much in agreement with most of them—not all of them. There are still a couple radicals out there who will never buy into anybody that wears a tie." Brian Kearney, who was President and CEO of DPP from 1998 to 2007, reiterated more willingly this change. He admits, "We had a polarization of view; their view was that megaprojects were bad, and that we never paid enough attention to the small projects" (Ross 2011, 97). In examining their changing position, we get a sense of

how development-oriented groups are driven first and foremost by the opportunity for profit. They focused first on megaprojects that could bring in the most money for their investment, then shifted to a small-scale focus after their previous plans failed to gain support with the growing community. This discussion of the groups involved in shaping downtown gives us an idea of how this space's identity is being influenced. Looking, furthermore, at how this space is being branded improves our understanding of what is valued by different forces in Downtown Phoenix.

*A Downtown Brand: A Haven for the Creative Class*

In *Re-Imagining the City*, Miles states in reference to the shifting image of Barcelona as a city that, "it subsumed diverse realities within a single representation of a future to which the city's governing, commercial and cultural elites aspire" (28). This is the challenge that Downtown Phoenix faces now. A number of different actors, like the artist community, DVC, and DPP, have been involved with a contentious process of identity formation within the boundaries of downtown. As I have shown in this chapter and the last, artists took advantage of the vacancies in this space to build a local, unique culture that put art and creativity before all else. Through the years, community groups like DVC used this foundation to build up a more defined downtown identity that incorporated a consciousness of different issues in the face of large and midscale development. However, as a result of the discrepancy in power between these actors, the Downtown Phoenix Partnership and Downtown Phoenix, Inc. drive the process of officially branding Downtown. Because of the presence of the other actors, these groups produce Downtown as a haven for the creative class, and as the ideal location of work and residence for those with the social and economic capability of buying into the space.

Resultantly, it becomes necessary to appropriate certain ideals of the current downtown inversion trend in a neutralized way so as to be seen as exciting yet accessible.

Branding occurs most prominently through media that focuses more-so on the idealized activities of Downtown rather than on the substantive day-to-day experience. The first wave of branding sought to paint Downtown as the ideal place for new biotech workers. In 2002 planners tried to strengthen downtown by designing a thriving urban center because of their perception that, “it’s been kind of a dead area, except for the art happenings. It’s time to take this land and make it its own unique place” (Wingett 2002). Here developers were seeking to brand this space as one for a creative workforce in high paying, high-tech jobs. Patrick Grady, ex-downtown development direct who began working in 2000, highlighted that high-tech employment was one of the key missing elements for downtown at the time, and thus pushed for its growth (Phoenix Business Journal 2004). In 2011, the Maricopa Partnership for Arts and Culture hired a consultant to help brand the region. They described Phoenix as the “Opportunity Oasis” where open space and meritocracy allow individuals to build their own bright future, and focused in on the art scene as a magnet for other like-minded people (Ross 2011). The DPP has been building off this trend through the production of content on their website. The pictures on the website focus in on the physical modernity of this space, while an exhaustive blog depicts it as an edgy, DIY place with a growing nightlife that could fulfill any creative class urbanite’s wildest urban dream. Even the logo—a colorful “DTPHX” in a dynamic font—is effective in projecting a sense of vibrancy, creativity, and prosperity to those who view it. A thorough development of content that in essence

advertises Downtown plays into the tropes that DPP and developers are hoping to perpetuate.



*Downtown Phoenix Inc. Logo, [twitter.com/downtownphoenix](https://twitter.com/downtownphoenix)*

This branding also occurs through its physical construction and presentation. New residential complexes redefine the Downtown skyline, especially in areas like Roosevelt where buildings tend to be one or two stories high. Self-described as, “Edgy, Urban Hip,” these higher end apartments which are “New, Here, Now,” go, “Beyond Lofty Expectations” to reshape how Downtown is viewed by those who live, work, and visit there (Ross 2011). Physical alterations to the landscape work hand in hand with the production of media to support it. The emphasis put on luxury or trendy living by these residential buildings works to reaffirm the “Re-imaging” of Downtown into a space for the high-tech workers, the creative class, and angst-ridden well-to-dos who are fed up with their parent’s suburban set ups. To satisfy their expectations for a modern city, the Downtown Phoenix Partnership employs the Clean Team to spruce up Downtown more



than other places are able to. The Clean Team, which consists of two full time employees, “picks up litter, empties trash cans, cleans alleys and paints over graffiti” in the business core of Downtown (Berry 2010). This is a crucial component of branding Downtown as a high-end space because it offers the area an advantage that the surrounding neighborhoods do not have. Downtown then becomes exceptional simply by being able to channel resources into the betterment of the street level experience.

Resultantly, the Downtown brand which is perpetuated by developers and informed by the artist and community groups produces an exclusionary space. By appealing primarily to a creative class with higher socioeconomic means, this brand actively shuts down the possibility for individuals of diverse backgrounds to fully participate in this space. Situated in the city’s history of exclusionary development, this branding limits the potential for a significant divergence from the north-south divide that has haunted the city. Though some members of the downtown community have advocated for more diversity through a number of means such as a growth in affordable housing, the power structures in place prevent meaningful incorporation for marginalized people and spaces into downtown. In this vein of thought, we see how Downtown is territorialized. By promoting certain ideals that prioritize a certain niche of people, developers exclude everyone whose identity does not line up well with the specific identity being produced for this space. Seen from afar, the skyline of Downtown both entices and pushes away those outside its physical and ideological boundary. The sun reflecting off of the windows of new high-end developments and into the eyes of the outsiders reminds them to turn away.

### *Conclusion*

The process of identity formation for Downtown Phoenix has and will continue to be a contentious struggle for power and place. By examining how artists throughout all phases of development have culturally produced Downtown as an exciting, creative, and vibrant space, I situated the modern struggle for a downtown identity in the history and advocacy of this group. Engaging a “Re-imaging” of the city prepared us to understand how physical changes in the urban landscape can have implications for the lived experience of a place and therefore its ideological development. The next section engaged community groups that built off this initial momentum to construct and advocate for a livable and uniquely Phoenician urban place, while also identifying the challenges they received by powerful local entities. The last section examined the downtown brand to show what it values and what it excludes. Through this analysis, I hoped to raise questions about cultural identity formation, urban space, power, and exclusion in order to further understand how the development process works to build a limited identity and an exclusive space. Having nurtured a comprehensive understanding of Downtown in these past two chapters, I turn now to South Phoenix to conclude so as to reveal the work that downtown territoriality has on a historically marginalized space.

## **Conclusion: The Implications of Territoriality in Urban Space**

The image described in the introduction to this thesis of a distant, glimmering downtown has taken on a new meaning for me over the years. Where once lay a series of distorted edifices of a suburbanized city and economy, now beckons a meaningful space that promotes cultural engagement. As new buildings sprout up from the urban desert landscape to house the residents of this growing community, it becomes clear that this inversion will continue and will promote more sustainable living habits and a growing economy. From my position as a suburbanite looking out towards an exciting urban opportunity, I can imagine myself there. I can see myself living in an apartment in a new development, working only a Light Rail or bike ride away for an up-and-coming business, frequenting gallery shows and concerts, and indulging in the offerings of local cuisine. Because of my background, I have access to this space and can benefit from what it has to offer.

It is important, however, to consider how my own access to Downtown may result in another's lack thereof. I ask, therefore, to shift the position from which we view this concentration of Downtown buildings to that of South Phoenix because it forces an entirely new engagement with the space and its territoriality. Rather than looking down, one must look up at the skyline of Downtown as it casts a symbolic shadow across its neighbor. One must experience its territoriality through the physical distinctions in the urban landscape, the artifacts that reveal their disparate histories, and its lack of significant economic benefit. Looking at South Phoenix as a counterexample to Downtown reveals the tensions between revitalization and exclusion in the production of territory.

### *South Phoenix: A Zone of Exclusion*

Contrary to popular belief, South Phoenix only officially became part of Phoenix in 1960, a fact that reiterates its historical marginality (Ross 2011). The physical division of the railroad placed lower income, predominantly minority populations in danger of the forces of pollution from industry and flooding from the Salt River. As a result of these dangers, industry exploited low land prices in this region, which exacerbated the challenges faced by South Phoenix residents (Bolin et al. 2005). With regulation and infrastructure severely underserving this area, South Phoenix experienced the full effects of territory through the neglect they faced in political and economic arenas. Because there is a “spatial mismatch” between the jobs available in Downtown, the jobs in the industry of South Phoenix, and those who take the jobs, a divergence from this trend becomes increasingly challenging. This territory, as emphasized by several authors (Ibid., Gober 2006, Luckingham 1989, Ross 2011), disproportionately forced people of color into areas where the material effects of racial discrimination would manifest themselves on their bodies. Likewise, these sentiments have been present throughout the City’s history, and contribute further to the lack of successful planning and investment in the area to address its problems.

The “South Phoenix Design Study” from October 1974, which was created by the South Phoenix Planning Committee and the City of Phoenix, offers an insight into the challenges faced by this region along with the ways that planners and politicians assessed them. It is divided into six categories that focus primarily on the visual aesthetics of this space. The primary goal, it seemed, was to make the space more visually appealing rather than addressing the social components of the space. For example, when discussing

diversity, the City referred to a visual diversity in the landscape through the building of different types of structures and public spaces. Along with this, the focus on legibility and meaning raise questions about the previous planning or lack thereof that has occurred in this space. By addressing questions of aesthetics in a design study without making a concerted effort to understand the social requirements of the space, planners perpetuated the top-down policy that was able to silence the people in this space to begin with. Furthermore, the introduction to this document raises definitive concerns faced by environmental hazards such as chemical pollutants from the remaining industries that dot the landscape, though significant solutions to this issue are not offered. When landscaping is highlighted as a legitimate solution to the woes of South Phoenix, it becomes evident that planners are looking to mask the history of unequal development in this part of the city rather than addressing it with investment and informed policy.

As a result of this sort of policy, South Phoenix experiences the challenges of crime, poverty, and intense policing today. Zatz and Portillos (2000) bring to light the social problems of South Phoenix with their in-depth engagement and analysis of gangs, families, and communities. They situate the poverty of South Phoenix in the midst of the economic boom of the more affluent valley by quoting President Bill Clinton who stated, “it is a classic example of a fast-growing region where some residents are being left behind.” The first problems they highlight are the dilapidated, dysfunctional state of their schools, the lack of good public housing options, and the absence of city services from a history of minimal funding and focus in this area. This general lack of investment is coupled with massive poverty and unemployment which persists even in times of general economic growth for the rest of the valley. According to Zatz and Portillos, “The

unemployment rate for 18 census tracts in the South Phoenix area in 1990 was 13.34, almost triple the unemployment rate of 5.3 for Arizona and...quadruple that of the rest of metropolitan Phoenix” (378). The continuing challenges faced by the South Phoenix community in terms of employment and economic opportunity are directly related to the lack of funding and investment in educational and public institutions which have pitiful graduation rates (379). An unfortunate outcome from these circumstances is an increased level of crime in order to cope with the social situation in which they are imbedded. As a result, there is a presence of gangs which operate as “neighborhood institutions” in the absence of public ones to fill their urban landscape with new meanings. These gangs consist of primarily younger minorities who engage in illicit activity because of its prevalence and proximity.

Nonetheless, police increase their presence in order to limit gang activity, producing a clear discrepancy between how the space is viewed from the inside and outside. A study on the Garfield area—located between 7<sup>th</sup> street and 16<sup>th</sup> street, and extending south from the I-10 all the way to the I-17—by Lopez and Lukinbeal (2010) highlights how residents of this region perceive their neighborhood differently than police authorities. Most of those residents who were interviewed lived south of the I-10 freeway, and therefore viewed the areas north of it as more dangerous. The police on the other hand portrayed the entirety of the Garfield area as more dangerous than its residents said, though they identified the aforementioned region as the safest. What this study emphasizes is the disparity in territorial understanding between the north and the south, and how institutions such as the police department react to those perceptions. Because of this lack of understanding, residents of South Phoenix are reproduced as products or

actors in systems of crime, violence, and delinquency, which limits their ability to access the proper resources to alleviate their very real social ailments. Chief Daniel Garcia reflects this produced misunderstanding of South Phoenix in his response about Downtown development when he advises against the implementation of certain types of “infrastructure” which could, “bring in policing issues a downtown area isn’t prepared for” (Scott 2012). He hopes that the social issues of South Phoenix do not have consequences on the Downtown area by maintaining a level of division between these spaces. His comments also reveal how each space is policed differently, and that certain people simply are not allowed in Downtown space.

Furthermore, the history of homelessness in Phoenix shows how the Downtown core has been privileged as a pure space as homeless populations are forced to more marginal spaces South Phoenix or the homeless services complex right next to the railroad tracks. After entering the national spotlight in the 1980s, a tent city of homeless people forced the creation of the Central Arizona Shelter Services which attempted to establish shelters just outside the city center (Brinegar 2000). Coupled with this was the creation of a city-wide ordinance in 1994 which increased the likelihood of conflicts over the siting of human services. As a result, places like 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Jackson Street along with places in South Phoenix becomes the locations for homeless populations as historical processes had minimized those area’s voices. The increase in funds to address homelessness in the 1990s—an increase from \$5 million to \$22 million between 1990 and 1996—proved to be ineffective in addressing the core issues of a lack of affordable housing and economic opportunity for this group. The Human Services Campus, a \$23 million project in 2003, serves as an example of the continuing challenges in addressing

the systematic issues that create extensive homelessness (Robertson 2003). In 2015, The Industrial Development Authority of Maricopa County donated one million dollars to the Valley of the United Way to address issues of homelessness in Phoenix. This donation would provide permanent housing for the 250 individuals who have been to homeless services centers and will connect them to exiting services to further help them out (“Maricopa County, Phoenix Commit \$2M for Homeless Initiative”). The City’s response to homelessness reflects the tendency to cover up significant social issues in marginal spaces rather than addressing their core causes. It endorses Downtown’s territory by limiting the spaces where the homeless can live and operate.

Interestingly, a Light Rail extension has been planned recently that seeks to connect South Phoenix via a rail line along Central Avenue. But, it comes as no surprise that this project was the last conceived extension by Valley Metro with an estimated completion set for 2034, highlighting the perception of South Phoenix as a marginal space. The extension would stretch approximately five miles south of the current rail location down to Baseline Road and include seven station stops, though it is still in the assessment and planning stages. From my personal experience driving along Central Avenue south of Downtown, it is too wide for the amount of traffic that flows through it, and would make for a logical place to extend the light rail. According to the project report card,

“The South Central Light Rail Extension will provide enhanced transit service to a community with high transit ridership and support neighborhood revitalization and connectivity between downtown Phoenix and south Phoenix.”

Obviously it is too early to definitively conclude how this extension will influence the relationship between these two spaces, but the way the report phrases their description of



south Phoenix highlights an awareness of the disparity between the locales. By pointing out the community of transit users, the idea of neighborhood revitalization, and the need for better connectivity between these two areas, we get an idea of how south Phoenix is conceived of in relation to Downtown. It is less mobile for economic reasons imaginably, in a worse condition, and estranged from its neighbor. It will be interesting to see how this branch affects the territoriality of Downtown following its construction because it is one of the first legitimate attempts and creating a dialogue between these spaces.

The counterexample of South Phoenix emphasizes the role that territoriality has in shaping the City along historical lines of race and class. Building on our understanding of Downtown Phoenix's development through a brief look into the case of South Phoenix helps us understand the material effects that a history of territorialization has on marginalized landscapes. The difference that develops as a result of disparities in resource distribution creates spaces that reflect such trends. In the Introduction to this thesis, I raised a couple of questions that drove this project: "What is the work that the "development" of Downtown Phoenix from about 2000 to the present does vis-à-vis its own bounding? And, what does this illustrate about territory, segregation, and gentrification in a neoliberal city?" From the work in this thesis, we can conclude that development works to bound spaces and create exclusion according to reproduced hierarchies that reflect historical difference along the axes of race and class.

#### *Downtown Redevelopment in Perspective*

When considering the history of the City, it becomes evident that politicians, developers, and planners, who for much of the City's existence have come from

homogenous, white backgrounds, shaped the city to promote their hierarchies of the self and space. Phoenix's early history reveals how one's access to capital, which through coercive practices paralleled lines of race, produced a territoriality into the landscape through the development of physical and social boundaries. While the white population lived to the north of the railroad tracks with better access to the business center, protection from environmental dangers, and an opportunity to spread out into the desert because of their access to resources, the people of color south of the railroad tracks struggled to maintain a hospitable environment and any sort of economic independence. When Phoenix began to suburbanize, this initial territory took on a new form, determined by white privilege, as an amorphous and constantly expanding space. Suburbanization spread capital to the fringes of the City so as to offer white populations separation and protection from the conditions of marginalized spaces like South Phoenix. Even though this process shifted the focus away from Downtown, it remained territorialized in many ways as the historical division between north and south held strong apart from areas slightly outside of Downtown like Garfield that were appropriated to some degree.

Phoenix's history of territorialization and reterritorialization brings to light the nuanced ways in which any space can be imbedded with territoriality. Unlike traditional notions of territory which view it as an area defined, bounded, and dominated by a political apparatus, new territoriality, as shown by Delaney (2005), refers to spaces that given meaning through the application of power by forces that have access to the capital or political processes that can form them. This history, which highlights the dynamic and fluid nature of new territory, situates the reterritorialization of Downtown Phoenix in this complex process. It shows us how physical, ideological, and political boundaries work to

create exclusion as “development” reinforces the historical notions of meaning and power in Downtown space.

Phoenix’s Downtown development reterritorializes the center city as more investment reshapes the built environment along standards that favor a wealthier population and as the space becomes more commodified. With the initial presence of artists who create an exciting space, a movement, which followed national trends of inversion towards city centers, a culture was able to grow naturally through a focus on the scale of the local. The city has since mobilized policy, like the “Arts, Culture, Small Business Area” designation, to control spaces by reproducing the traits that developers see as marketable or favorable to the development project in an attempt to imbed Downtown space with a clearer meaning. The City government’s focus on growing high-tech jobs and high-end housing reflects their goals to make this area a haven for the “creative class” rather than a truly democratic space. With the building of the Light Rail, this project asserted a new sort of territoriality tied directly to mobility which was now influenced by the placement of the rail itself. The decision to serve areas to the north and east—places that have been generally beneficiaries of City policy and growth—rather than areas to the south and west echoes Downtown’s territorial relationship with historically marginalized communities. Lastly, as new housing developments in Downtown continue to favor higher income people, the opportunity to engage marginalized people in this space continues to dissolve.

Downtown revitalization created with it a specific spatial identity that reflects the power relations between various actors that have shaped the area. The initial presence of an artist community that was backed by organizations like Artlink and the Downtown

Phoenix Arts Coalition established this area as an exciting space for creative people of the City who wanted to live more sustainable, accessible, and urban lives. As more people became active in this space, more political groups like the Downtown Voices Coalition sought to preserve the positive aspects of this revitalization project's early days while overseeing the work that developers were hoping to do in the area. As we now know, though, developers have had a much more significant influence on this space than these groups would have hoped for because of the capital they flooded into this space. The creation of a specific urban brand through the Downtown Phoenix Partnership that highlights the modernity, livability, and marketability of this space neutralizes much of its original identity and culture. The discrepancies in what community groups hoped to achieve in terms of diversity or affordable housing and the realities of much of the development of this space highlights the difficulties in challenging capital as a producer of space. A reterritorialized Downtown produces boundaries that are much more challenging to deconstruct because they are reaffirmed by a stronger political apparatus that is committed to developing higher levels of capital from and for this space.

Moreover, as Downtown becomes revitalized, reshaped, and “re-imaged” along the paradigms of neoliberal ideologies, the people restricted by this territory lose a grip on their “Right to the City”. David Harvey defines the “Right to the City” as, “a right to change ourselves by changing the city” (2008). Because areas like South Phoenix and marginalized people like the Latino population have faced a history of segregation, they have limited access to the resources and opportunities similar to the wealthier areas in the city, and as a result are not able to participate in urban life to the extent which they should. As regimes of power continually work against these groups through “dominant

strategies and ideologies” reflected in the reterritorialization of Downtown, it becomes increasingly challenging to influence the City’s spatial production (Lefebvre 1968). This is the real issue created in the territorialization of urban space as a result of development projects. As David Harvey notes, “we see the right to the city falling into the hands of private or quasi-private interests,” which means that is being taken away from the individuals who experience the specific rhythms of the city on a day to day basis. Because of this, marginalized people and spaces lose necessary opportunities to define their “Right to the City”. In the case of Phoenix, the continuous history of reterritorialization from the City’s origins which has worked to isolate areas like South Phoenix emphasizes how structures of power are reproduced over time to recurrently deny particular citizens their “Right to the City,” or their right to city space.

This thesis mobilized the example of Phoenix’s recent Downtown development to connect theories of territory and exclusion, cultural production, and urban development. I did this by diving into the resources I had available, which consisted partially of historical analyses of Phoenix, City planning documents, and local news and organizational sources. To compliment and complicate these sources, I drew from theorists such as David Delaney, David Sibley, David Harvey, Henri Lefebvre, and Michel de Certeau in order to draw deeper connections between the process of urban revitalization dependent on a specific cultural production and the production of territory and exclusion. I provided my own anecdotes as introductions to each chapter in order to situate the larger developmental process in a real experience. However, this cannot do justice to all groups who interact with this space, especially those that actively resist and struggle against the hegemonic processes that produce Downtown.

Moving forward, the residents, policymakers, and developers of Downtown Phoenix face the critical challenge of creating an urban space that works against a history of exclusion. By mobilizing groups such as the Downtown Voices Coalition along with a more diverse set of opinions, a more democratized structuring of this space can take place. The inclusion of marginalized voices specifically can help to create policy and planning that works for all of Phoenix and begins to break down historical, social, political, and economic boundaries. This could start by bringing a higher percentage of affordable housing to the area, actively seeking to incorporate minority groups into local community development proceedings, and diversifying urban landscapes to reflect the complex nature of this city. As David Sibley (1995) powerfully advocates, “Understanding the experience of others and their relationship to place involves positioning ourselves in the world. Listening to and talking with people is one necessary part of this endeavor. Reflecting on the experience in such a way that we recognize our own part in the dialogue is another” (186). The consequences of ignoring the complex and exclusionary spatial interaction between a Downtown territory and its surrounding area are already present in the City’s landscape. Therefore, sparking an awareness of the extent to which Downtown has established a territoriality becomes a necessary first step to addressing the structural issues of racism and classism that have allowed for the uneven development of this area relative to specific neighboring spaces. As with the growth of Downtown, this dialogue “ain’t ovah” (Cizmar 2009).

## References Cited

- “Arizona Highway Costs Have Doubled.” 1958. Phoenix: *The Phoenix Gazette*. January 9, 1958.
- Arizona State Legislature. 1998. “State Statute 48-575: Improvement districts for enhanced municipal services”. Phoenix: Arizona State Legislature. Web. [www.azleg.state.az.us](http://www.azleg.state.az.us).
- Arizona State University. “Arizona State University Downtown Phoenix Campus”. Phoenix: ASU Campuses and Locations. Web. [www.campus.asu.edu/downtown-phoenix](http://www.campus.asu.edu/downtown-phoenix).
- Arreola, Daniel D. 2012. “Placemaking and Latino Urbanism in a Phoenix Mexican Immigrant Community,” *Journal of Urbanism*. Volume 5, Nos. 2-3. 157-170.
- Artlink Phoenix. 2016. “Artlink Phoenix About Us”. *Artlink Phoenix*. Web. <http://artlinkphoenix.com/about/>.
- Berry, Jahna. 2010. "Downtown's Clean Team Helps Phoenix Look its Best". Phoenix: *The Arizona Republic*, May 08, 12.
- Bolin et al. 2005. “The Geography of Despair: Environmental Racism and the Making of South Phoenix, Arizona, USA,” *Human Ecology Review*. Volume 12, Issue 2, 156-168.
- “Brenda Cutoff Given Nod as Short Route to Coast”. 1959. Phoenix: *The Phoenix Gazette*. 25 March 1959. Print.
- Brinegar, Sarah JoAnne. 2000. "Emergency Shelter Location and Homeless Family Displacement in the Phoenix Area". Order No. 9963127, Arizona State University.
- Business Journal. 2004. “Valley Influential: Groups—Downtown Phoenix Partnership”. Phoenix: *The Business Journal*. 05 November 2004.
- Caro, Robert A. 1975. *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*. New York: Vintage. Print.
- “Central Phoenix/East Valley Light Rail Transit Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement.” 2001. Regional Public Transportation Authority. Vol. 1. Print.
- Certeau, Michel de. 1984. “Chapter VII: Walking in the City.” *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Print.
- Citizens for Mass Transit-Against Freeways. 1979. “Citizens Challenge to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.” August 1979. Print.

- Citizens Transit Commission. 2014. "Meeting Minutes September 4, 2014: Central Station RFP". Phoenix: *Public Transit Department*. 04 September 2014. Web. [www.phoenix.gov/publicrecordssearch](http://www.phoenix.gov/publicrecordssearch).
- City of Phoenix. 2004. "Downtown Phoenix: A Strategic Vision and Blueprint for the Future". *City of Phoenix Department of Planning*. December 14, 2004.
- City of Phoenix. 2013. "1207 General Standards and Guidelines", *Chapter 12 Downtown Code of Zoning Ordinance*. The City's Clerk Office.
- City of Phoenix Workforce Solutions. 2012. "City of Phoenix Employment Center Profile: Downtown Phoenix". Phoenix: *City of Phoenix Community and Economic Development Department*.
- Cizmar, Martin. 2009. "Getting Ova it: CenPho Scenesters on Why Downtown Phoenix is Still the Hub for Valley Music". Phoenix: *Phoenix New Times*, Nov 12.
- Davis, Julie. 2001. "American Indian Boarding School Experiences: Recent Studies from Native Perspectives". *OAH Magazine of History*. Oxford University Press, 20–22.
- Davis, Mike. 1990. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*. London: Verso. Print.
- Delaney, David. 2005. *Territory: A Short Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. Print.
- "Downtown Area Redevelopment and Improvement Plan." 1979. Phoenix: The City of Phoenix. March 13, 1979. Print.
- "Downtown Neighborhood in Phoenix, Arizona, 85003, 85004, 85006, 85007, 85009, 85034 detailed profile." 2016. Urban Mapping, Inc. on City-Data.com. [city-data.com/neighborhood/downtown-phoenix-az.html](http://city-data.com/neighborhood/downtown-phoenix-az.html).
- Downtown Phoenix Arts Coalition. 2004. "Downtown Voices: Creating a Sustainable Downtown". Phoenix: D-PAC. August 2004. Web. <https://app.box.com/shared/umsreppgkg>.
- Downtown Phoenix Inc. 2016. "The Door is Open". Phoenix: DTPHX. Web. [www.dtphx.org](http://www.dtphx.org).
- Downtown Phoenix Inc. 2016. "Development and Business Research". DTPHX.com. <http://dtphx.org/business/development-business-research/>.
- Downtown Phoenix Inc. 2015. "Downtown Phoenix Development Activity". Phoenix: *Downtown Phoenix Inc.* Fourth Quarter 2015.



- Downtown Voices Coalition. 2011. "About". *Downtown Voices Coalition*. Web.  
<https://downtownvoices.org/about-us/>.
- Ehrenhalt, Alan. 2012. *The Great Inversion and the Future of the American City*. New York: Knopf, Borzoi Books. Print.
- Florida, Richard. 2002. *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*. New York: Basic Books. Print.
- Gersema, Emily. 2011. "Phoenix will boost downtown taxes in '12". Phoenix: *The Arizona Republic*. 02 December 2011.
- Gober, Patricia. 2006. *Metropolitan Phoenix: Place Making and Community Building in the Desert*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Golub et al. 2012. "Spatial and Temporal Capitalization Effects of Light Rail in Phoenix: From Conception, Planning, and Construction to Operation". *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, Vol. 32, No. 4, 415-429.
- Goth, Brenna. 2015. "As Downtown Phoenix grows, community questions losses". Phoenix: *The Arizona Republic*. 18 April 2015.
- Goth, Brenna. 2016. "Downtown Phoenix may (finally) get a grocery store". Phoenix: *The Arizona Republic*. 05 April 2016. Web.  
[www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/phoenix/2016](http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/phoenix/2016).
- Goth, Brenna. 2015. "Roosevelt Row Highlights Downtown Phoenix's Growing Pains." *AZCentral and the Arizona Republic*. 15 April 2015. Web.
- Grierson, Elizabeth and Sharp, Kristen. 2013. *Re-Imagining the City: Art, Globalization and Urban Spaces*. Chicago: *University of Chicago Press*.
- Hartman, Chester W. 2002. *City for Sale: The Transformation of San Francisco*. Berkeley: University of California. Print.
- Harvey, David. 2002. "The Art of Rent: Globalization, Monopoly and the Commodification of Culture". *Socialist Register*, Vol. 38.
- Harvey, David. 2008. *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. Buena Park: *Virso Books*.
- Jackson, Kenneth T. 1985. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*. New York: *Oxford University Press*. Print.
- Kress, Adam. 2004. "Downtown Phoenix on verge of major transformation". Phoenix: *The Business Journal*. 27 February 2004.
- Lefebvre, Henri. 1968. *Le Droit à la ville*. Paris: *Anthropos*. Print.

- Local First Arizona. 2015. "About LFA." [www.localfirstaz.com/about/](http://www.localfirstaz.com/about/).
- "Long Rang Transportation Plan: Summary and 1997 Update." 1998. Phoenix: Maricopa Association of Governments. Print.
- Lopez, Natalie, and Chris Lukinbeal. 2010. "Comparing Police and Residents' Perceptions of Crime in a Phoenix Neighborhood Using Mental Maps in GIS". *Yearbook of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers* 72. University of Hawai'i Press: 33–55.
- Luckingham, Bradford. 1981. "Urban Development in Arizona: The Rise of Phoenix". *The Journal of Arizona History* Vol. 22, No. 2, 197-234.
- Luckingham, Bradford. 1989. *Phoenix: The History of a Southwestern Metropolis*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press. Print.
- Luckingham, Bradford. 1994. *Minorities in Phoenix: A profile of Mexican American, Chinese American, and African American Communities, 1860-1992*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press. Print.
- "Maricopa County, Phoenix commit \$2m for Homeless initiative". Phoenix: Maricopa County Board of Supervisors. Web.  
[www.maricopa.gov/pr\\_detail.aspx?releaseID=2870](http://www.maricopa.gov/pr_detail.aspx?releaseID=2870).
- McIntyer, Ernest. 2004. "Valley Art Scene Takes Detour to Downtown Phoenix". Phoenix: The Arizona Republic. 05 March 2004.
- "Metro Light Rail History 1996-2009". 2010. Phoenix: *Arizona State University, Cronkite School of Journalism*.
- Mitchell, Donald. 2000. *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction*. Massachusetts: Blackwell publishers Inc. 50-260.
- Nilsen, Richard. 2004. "Phoenix elders set the scene/downtown art pioneers get to show their work". Phoenix: *The Arizona Republic*. 11 September 2004.
- Pedroza, Courtney. 2015. "Housing boom drastically changing downtown landscape". Phoenix: Downtown Devil. 8 December 2015. Web.  
[www.downtowndevil.com/2015/12/08/76095/housing-boom-changing-downtown/](http://www.downtowndevil.com/2015/12/08/76095/housing-boom-changing-downtown/).
- "Phoenix Concept Plan." 1979. Urban Forms Directions Steering Committee. Resolution No. 15227, July 31, 1979.
- Phoenix Forward Task Force. 1970. "Phoenix Forward: Citizen Participation in Planning." Print.
- "Phoenix in Perspective: Reflections on Developing the Desert" 1999, 2003. Tempe: Herberger Center for Design Excellence. Grady Gammage Jr. Second Edition. Print.

- Pulido, Laura. 2000. "Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. 12-40.
- Robertson, Anne. 2003. "Downtown human services campus comes to fruition". Phoenix: Phoenix Business Journal. 24 August 2003.
- Ross, Alex. 2011. *Bird on Fire: Lessons from the World's Least Sustainable City*. New York: Oxford University Press. Print.
- Scott, Eugene. 2014. "Moving Forward in Downtown Phoenix". Phoenix: *The Arizona Republic*. 13 March 2014.
- "Screenshot of Phoenix Metropolitan area." 2016. *Google Earth*. Map Data 2016.
- Sibley, David. 1995. *Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West*. London: New York. Print.
- Somerstein, Rachel. 2009. "Phoenix". *The Next American City*, Fall 2009, 28.
- South Phoenix Planning Committee. 1974. "South Phoenix Design Study." Phoenix: *City of Phoenix Planning Department*. October 1974. Print.
- Staeheli, Lynn A. and Mitchel, Don. 2006. "USA's Destiny? Regulating Space and Creating Community in American Shopping Malls". *Urban Studies*, Vol. 43, Nos. 5-6, 977-992.
- "State Highway Budget Set At Record \$48,427,000." 1957. Phoenix: *The Phoenix Gazette*. June 4, 1957. Print.
- Sunnucks, Mike. 2015. "Exclusive: Grocery store could be coming to downtown Phoenix, ASU area". Phoenix: Phoenix Business Journal. 16 June 2015. [www.bizjournals.com/phoenix/news](http://www.bizjournals.com/phoenix/news).
- Talen, Emily. 2012. "Latino Urbanism: Defining a Cultural Urban Form". *Journal of Urbanism: international research on place making and urban sustainability*. Vol. 5, No. 2-3, 101-110.
- Tempset, Ryan and Whissen, Quinn. 2014. "Downtown Grocery Store". Phoenix: *This Could Be Phoenix*. 01 October 2014. <http://www.thiscouldbephx.com/projects/downtown-grocery-store>.
- "Tracks Through Time: The Archaeology of the Metro Light Rail Corridor." 2011. Tempe: Glenn S.L. Stuart Archaeological Consulting Services.
- "Transportation Improvement Plan FY 2002-2006." 2001. Phoenix: Maricopa County Department of Transportation. June 18, 2001. Print.
- Trennert, Robert A.. 1979. "Peaceably If They Will, Forcibly If They Must: The Phoenix Indian School, 1890-1901". *The Journal of Arizona History*. Arizona Historical Society, 297-322.

- "100 mph Toll Road to Los Angeles Advocated". 1961. Phoenix: The Arizona Republic. 19 January 1961. Print.
- "Valley Influential: Downtown Phoenix - Patrick Grady." 2004. *The Business Journal*. 31.
- Valley Metro. 2015. "Valley Metro Rail—Creating Economic Vitality". Phoenix: *Valley Metro*.
- Valley Metro. 2015. "South Central: Light Rail Extension". Phoenix: Valley Metro. December 2015. Web. [www.valleymetro.org](http://www.valleymetro.org).
- Valley Metro. 2016. "Economic Highlights". Phoenix: *Valley Metro*. Web. [www.valleymetro.org](http://www.valleymetro.org).
- Valley Metro. 2016. "System Fact Sheet". Phoenix: *Valley Metro*. Spring 2016. Web. [www.valleymetro.org](http://www.valleymetro.org).
- Valley Metro. 2016. "Transit-Oriented Development". Phoenix: *Valley Metro*. Web. [www.valleymetro.org](http://www.valleymetro.org).
- Valley Metro. 2016. "Valley Metro TOD Strategy". Phoenix: *Valley Metro*. Web. [www.valleymetro.org](http://www.valleymetro.org).
- Vesselinov, Elena and Le Goix, Renaud. 2009. "From Picket Fences to Iron Gates: Suburbanization and Gated Communities in Phoenix, Las Vegas and Seattle". *GeoJournal: Springer Science + Business Media*.
- Villani, John Carlos. 2002. "Plugged in Downtown Galleries Ready for Phoenix Art Walk". Phoenix: *The Arizona Republic*. 06 June 2002.
- Wingett, Yvonne. 2002. "City takes creative turn: With downtown plans Phoenix envisions artistic haven for urbanites". Phoenix: *The Arizona Republic*. 06 December 2002.
- York et al. 2014. "Zoning and Land Use: A Tale of Incompatibility and Environmental Injustice in Early Phoenix." *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 36: 833-853.
- Zatz, Marjorie, and Portillos, Eduardo. 2000. "Voices from the Barrio: Chicano/a Gangs, Families, and Communities". Phoenix: *Criminology*, Vol. 38, No. 2.