Riot: Community Organizations and Public Communication Following Crown

Heights and Tompkins Square

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This is a qualitative study of the extent to which community organizations reclaimed public space in the face of community conflict and the mechanisms by which they did so, in the case of the Crown Heights and Tompkins Square Park riots. Six community organizers, activists and residents took part in semi-structured interviews regarding safety, ownership, public space and community organizations in their neighborhoods. Media in the form of newspaper articles and op-ed's were also utilized to gauge the public discourse surrounding the riots and how the communities were able to represent themselves. The research uses a communicative planning theory approach to the issues of conflict and community organizing, and exposes opportunities planners can take advantage of in order to assist communities in representing themselves and minimizing conflict.

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* Due to the intricate nature of the topics of this research, this table of contents serves as a loose framework, and crossover will be noticed between topics throughout.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

In recent months, the U.S has seen numerous demonstrations of democratic expression such as the Women's March on Washington, Black Lives Matter protests, taking place in public spaces within it's cities. These occupations of physical space are modes by which people can represent themselves and inform the ways that people interact with the urban environment and with one another in public space. During past episodes of urban conflict in New York City history, community organizations have formed and neighborhoods have unified in order to combat violence and protect the public space they share ownership of, and have interacted with institutional forces such as the police and city government in different ways.

This research aims to identify how community organizations reclaim public space in the face of conflict, as well as the factors that drove these actors to participate in demonstrating their needs, and how the public discourse surrounding the events and memorializing the events took place and were perceived by the public. This research is being done in order to identify how planners can facilitate purposeful representation of communities to the government and the public through a framework of communicative planning theory. Two case studies are analyzed to complete this research: the Crown Height Riots of August 1991 and the Tompkins Square Park Riots of August 1988. The Crown Heights Riots erupted in a racially tense environment after a car chauffeuring a Rabbi hit two African-American children, killing one and injuring another. The ensuing riots pitted black and Lubavitcher populations against each other in a violent battle that led to the eventual unification of the neighborhood to put an end to the physical and economic violence that was, and had been, taking place. The evolution of this violence occurred in the context of a neighborhood in which residents perceived the government as propagating

systemic biases and were lacked a substantial way to engage in participatory processes. The Tompkins Square Park riots differed as they were not the result of two community factions fighting against one another, but rather the community rallying against the institutional force of the NYPD and the city's alleged pro-gentrification agenda, who were seeking to remove "undesirable" populations from Tompkins Square Park. Although the factors that led these two groups to unify were not the same, they similarly offer lessons for other cities battling conflict in public space through community-led action as well as ways of sharing information through public discourse that can be facilitated by urban planners.

1.1 Background

The problems and issues being addressed in this thesis explore the relationships between community organizations, conceptions surrounding ownership of public space and community conflict and violence. The primary research question connecting these issues is "how do community organizations reclaim public space in the face of community conflict?" This question is important to those in the planning profession for several reasons, including the accountability of planners for fostering factors that contribute to community conflict through subtle policy decisions, the location of violence in publicly owned space and institutional reactions to violence from agencies such as the police, that can lead to displacement and gentrification. Additionally, the causes of conflict, including the health and safety of the public, the exclusion of minority voices from public participation, representations of public space and class conflict are all traditional planning problems that should be addressed through communicative planning theory as a preventative measure for conflict.

Urban violence often takes place in publicly-owned spaces such as parks, streets and public housing. The reaction that this violence stirs within a community could lead to valuable information regarding how to stem violence in vulnerable communities in order to protect our public spaces and keep the ownership of these spaces to the residents of the community. One role of the planner is to act as a mediator in situations of conflict in order to ensure that cities are functioning in a way that best serves its stakeholders (Alexander 1986). In the case of these riots, we have seen community organizations evolve into the planner's role by instituting methods of unifying their citizens for a common goal, which presents the opportunities for planners to learn how to better support communities. In addition to violence's physical location in the public arena, urban planning decisions can exacerbate violence, which should be accounted for in planning policies.

Finally, the planner must be cognizant of the fact that reducing urban violence and increasing police presence and militarization of police forces can create an environment primed for gentrification and the eventual displacement of indigenous residents who fought to protect their communities and fight against the violence destroying them. Gentrification is an issue that urban planners have been maneuvering with much tension and criticism, and it is important that planning professionals are aware of the factors that may perpetuate gentrification, such as the reduction of violence and increased police presence, and try to find a way in which institutions can protect communities without displacing them.

a. Tompkins Square Park

The riots that took place in Tompkins Square Park occurred on August 6-7 of 1988. The park is located in the Lower East Side neighborhood of Manhattan, in Community Board 3.

Leading up to the protests, the park had become home to some city residents, causing tensions between issues such as "homelessness, gentrification and the future of the neighborhood" (Moynihan 2008). At the recommendation of the Community Board and the New York City Parks Department, the park adopted a 1 a.m. curfew in an attempt to curb the amount of homeless and "undesirable" citizens who had taken to residing in or utilizing the public space throughout the night, and who had turned the park into "a festering wound of drug use, homeless encampments and all-night music and parties"(Moynihan 2008). On August 6th, a rally was held which erupted into a riot between protesters holding signs with rhetoric such as "Gentrification is Class War" and police (Moynihan 2008). The reaction of the police to the demonstration against the park curfew was acknowledged by Police Commissioner Ward as a police riot. A report issued by the commissioner admitted that the police who responded to the scene "had not been briefed about the event…were not equipped of such an encounter…were not under the direct supervision of a superior officer" (NYT 1988). The violence continued until 6 a.m the following day, and ended with over 100 complaints of police brutality.

b. Crown Heights

The three days of rioting that occurred in the Crown Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn in Community Board 7, began as the result of a car accident that killed a seven year old African American boy named Gavin Cato. Cato was riding his bike on his residential street, taking turns with his cousin, under the supervision of his dad, when a car chauffeuring Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, the grand rebbe of the Lubavitcher community, careened onto the pavement and killed the child. The car was part of a three-car motorcade escorting the Rabbi to the local cemetery, the last car of which was driven by Lifsh. Lifsh reportedly jumped from the vehicle

after the accident to assist the victims, but was attacked by an angry mob. Back up was then

called by police as the angry crowd of Jews and African-Americans grew. The medical response

to the scene was from a Hatzolah ambulance, a voluntary Emergency Medical Service serving

the Jewish community in Crown Heights (Chevra Hatzalah of Crown Heights). The ambulance

assisted the Jewish driver of the crashed vehicle and drove him to a hospital,

> "leaving the two children on the ground, the long-simmering cauldron of
>
> racial and religious tensions between the black and hasidic communities -
>
> fueled by clashes over housing, city resources, political access to local
>
> community boards and alleged preferential treatment from police,
>
> exploded" (Schapiro 2016).

 News of the events, and exaggerations of the events, spread throughout the community

rapidly, and "[b]ottles, objects and racial slurs were hurled with equal venom"(Schapiro 2016)

before the night was over. The riots that ensued have been labelled as "the worst episode of

racial violence the city had seen in 20 years" (Schapiro 2016). As a result of these riots, Yankel

Rosenbaum, a Jewish college student, was stabbed to death on the street in Brooklyn by a black

teenager and the violence erupted even further after his death. As in the case of the Tompkins

Square Park riots, the NYPD was markedly unprepared for the events and their response was

highly criticized, especially due to the fact that the 71st Precinct, where the riots took place,

obtained a new Commander the day the riots began.

1.2 Questions

The primary question of this thesis is "how do community organizations reclaim public space in the face of urban conflict?" In order to answer this question, an appropriate framework had to be chosen by which to conceptualize ownership of public space and the planners' role in community conflict and communication. Background research also had to be completed in order to address the question of the relationship between community organizations and conflict, in previous planning literature, as well as well as how community conflict is related to gentrification. Finally, questions of how people utilize public space in order to solve and create conflict were explored.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

Little existing scholarship assess the value of community organizations in reclaiming public space in the face of community conflict directly. This question is notably pertinent to urban environments today, as we see demonstrations and protests taking place in order to combat police brutality and other social justice issues surrounding race and class. In order to collect sufficient prior academic work to answer the research question pursued in this research, pertinent literature on six topics was reviewed: communities and public space, community organizing and conflict, gentrification and community conflict, the right to the city and ownership, communicative planning theory, and a review of the literature surrounding the two case studies of the Tompkins Square Park and Crown Heights riots.

2.1 Public Space, Communities and Conflict

Communities utilize public space in order to satisfy various needs, including expressions of democracy, both spontaneous and organized, that vary depending on the views and cultures of neighborhood occupants. In *Justice and Politics of Difference*, Young affirms that different public spaces are produced by different cultures, because cultural lenses and backgrounds influence our use of public space and the meanings behind public space (Young 2011). This public space is "necessarily conflicted" space as it is where shaped and reshaping public boundaries come together, not always by choice (Langegger 2015). Claiming of public space can take place through many nuanced forms that impact the ways in which people carry out their every day lives. In "Right-of-way gentrification: Conflict, Commodification and Cosmopolitanism," Langegger offers the simple example of parking spaces and writes, "[w]ho parks, when and why they park, and whether their pedestrian movements along sidewalks are driven by sporadic bursts of consumption or the sustained, intertwining movements of friends and families, directly impacts the rhythms of everyday public space" (Langegger 2015, p. 5).

Berman, in "Take it to the Streets: Conflict and Community in Public Space" uses a Marxist lens to argue that the ability to express civil unrest through social action is a means of organizing our own individual powers, that allows us to relate to others. More specifically, public space in the modern city creates an environment in which people are "forced to share [public space] with some of the underclass, and so to think about where he stands in relation to them," because in open spaces that are genuinely open, "all of a society's inner contradictions can express and unfold themselves"(Berman 1986, p. 484).

In the case of the city of Stockholm, inner contradictions and ignored racial discrimination erupted into violent riots during 2013 in a "sobering moment of truth"(Schierup 2014, p. 3). The circumstances of these riots and the precedents for that instance of violence are explored by authors Schierup, Alund and Kings, who find that urban rebellions of the last three decades burst out of a "perceived lack of democratic channels"(Schierup 2014, p. 4). These rebellions are classified by the authors as the "urban justice movement," finding that activists are articulating "the anguish of spatial marginality with consensus of social inequality, racial inequality, racism and quests for justice"(Schierup 2014, p. 10). An important quality of this social movement is that place is the basis for mobilization, making public space and the urban environment a key element of community action and activism (Schierup 2014).

In relation to the questions explored in this research, the previous literature reinforces the importance of access to public space as a meaningful way for communities to represent themselves and feel power. Berman also shows that public space can provide an equalizing platform where community members from various demographics can relate to each other. Together, this reveals that perhaps public space should be a priority of communities and the people who plan them, due to the diversity of services it can provide if communication is informed within the community.

2.2 Gentrification and Communities in Conflict

An introduction to gentrification by Sharon Zukin in "Gentrification: Culture and Capital in the Urban Core" reveals that the term originated in North America and Western Europe in order to describe the reversal of an established program of residential behaviors that had led to the decline of inner cities. This changing pattern towards greater investment in urban centers

was funded largely by the private real estate market and changed the form of the downtown. Powered by the capitalist economy, Zukin explains that gentrification is both a spatial and social process that leads to the displacement of residents by an alternate class culture. Within this space, communities often organize in order to combat displacement and "mobilize to defend their neighborhood"(Zukin 1987, p. 6). Zukin elaborates writing how this defense takes place not only in the face of developers, but also "the whole set of economic and social processes the underlie 'development'"(Zukin 1987, p. 6), as institutional forces are often lacking in their protection of vulnerable residents. As well as leading efforts to fight gentrification, communities can also play an invaluable role in mediating between community's and developers interests.

Gentrification, defined by Freeman and Braconi in "Gentrification and Displacement", is "a dramatic shift in their [a neighborhoods] demographic composition toward better educated and more affluent residents"(Freeman 2004, p. 1). While this process can present the chance to "increase socioeconomic, racial and ethnic integration"(Freeman 2004, p. 1), it can also lead to widespread displacement of residents, from which conflict and community action can arise. This community action can display itself through many forms, including pressure being applied to local government to build a larger and more comprehensive affordable housing policy, the creation of a community development corporation or the community-led management of services that support residents who face eviction due to economic violence(Freeman 2004). Freeman and Braconi reveal that although gentrification leads to forced relocation and can lead to immediate violence in the form of democratic expressions, a benefit that can arise is a perceived increase in the safety of the neighborhood (Freeman 2004).

Gentrification has succeeded in weakening activism against this social process, by lowering the density of working-class residents in various neighborhoods (Hakworth 2002). This

is explained by Hackworth, as political action has been dampened by dismissing the threat of mass displacement (Hakworth 2002). Although this has been the case in some instances, Niedt shows that gentrification can unify populations that are vulnerable to displacement, with newer-gentrifiers and artists who join together with activists to join in on "drawing a line against gentrification of newer in-migrants"(Niedt 2006, p. 3).

Author Marshall Boyd discusses how in the case of the Douglas/Grand Boulevard neighborhood of the South Side of Chicago, the racial dynamics of gentrification led to community action in order for citizens to protect their community. The predominantly African-American neighborhood viewed incoming development proposals for their neighborhood as a continuation of long pattern of racial discrimination, and united in order to propose their own neighborhood developments in what author Boyd describes as "defensive development"(Boyd 2008). However, this organizing eventually led to self-inflicted gentrification, that was not defined by race but rather economic status, that priced-out lower income Blacks. Gentrification also played into the meaning of place and public space in the neighborhood as Boyd describes "gentrification as a conflict between use value and place value, with a neighborhood residents more concerned with preserving the place meanings that derive from their daily interactions in their community"(Boyd 2008, p. 2). Interviews with residents revealed that community organizing in order to combat gentrification was important to them, as they had faced a long history of being repressed or ignored due to their race, while community led action allowed them to maintain and take ownership of their place.

While many factors can be divisive between older and gentrifying neighborhood residents, from food preferences (Smith 1987) to real estate prices, the use of public space is an important factor as well. Lanegger describes how ownership of space can become contentious during the

process of gentrification as incoming residents may have different uses of public space in comparison to pre-gentrification residents in "Right-of-way gentrification: Conflict, commodification and cosmopolitanism". In this case, the new uses can eclipse ethnic character, resulting in the validation of gentrification for new residents (Langegger 2015). Langegger also shows that "the gentrification of public space is often subtle, relying not on police power but on the little understood power of low-level bureaucracies"(Langegger 2015, p. 14). This can take place through the approval of liquor licenses, parking policies or right-of-way socializing.

2.3 Right to the City and Ownership

The *right to the city* as defined by Lefebvre, is the "right to urban life," arguing, in the words of Purcell, "that it is the everyday experience of inhabiting the city that entitles one to a right to the city, rather than ones nation-state citizenship"(Purcell 2014, p. 2). This goes against the notion that the rights of property owners exceed the rights of neighborhood members. Through this lens, this thesis understands the rights of communities to exhibit democratic expression and organize in public space. Lefebvre provides an important "conceptual framework through which the spatial practices of everyday life, including violence and protest, can be understood as central to the production and maintenance of physical spaces"(McCann 1999, p. 6) for this study, as we use his structure of abstract and representational space. Lefebvre offers the example of the street as abstract space, and notes that "[i]n the street, each individual is supposed not to attack those who he [sic] meets; anyone who transgresses this law is deemed guilty of a criminal act" (Lefebre 1991, p. 56). Additionally, abstract space must "be a space from which previous histories have been erased" (Gregory 1994, p. 366), which stands in direct contrast to the notion of "representational space", which is "space experienced through the complex symbols and images

of it's 'inhabitants' and 'users'" (Lefebvre 1991, p. 33). In this way, the act of protesting or rioting

can be read as transforming public space from the abstract to the representational. McCann

describes Mitchell's interpretation of Lefebvre and that it "argues that public spaces gain political

importance when they are taken by marginalized groups and restructured as 'spaces for

representation'" (McCann 1999, p. 17).

Dikec offers a brief history of the linkages between justice and geographical terms,

beginning with Bleddyn Davies use of the term "territorial justice" in 1968(Davies 1968). The

term was created in an attempt to assess "the distribution of local services with respect to the

needs of designated service areas"(Dikec 2001). The defining academic piece on this topic,

Harvey's *Social Justice and the City*, verbalized the concept of 'territorial social justice", and

connected this idea beyond consumption, towards the structural workings of capitalist

production(Harvey 2010). Dikec goes on to pronounce that urban social justice is achieved

through a "political struggle 'against oppression, social hierarchies and inequality'"(Dikec 2001,

p. 82).

Fisher et. al. explore the relevance of the theory of the *right to the city* in current times, as

"urban struggles against displacement and gentrification have become directions for urban

mobilization across the globe"(Fisher 2013, p. 2) in the article "We Are Radical: The Right to the

City Alliance and the Future of Community Organizing". Instrumental to this mobilization is the

role of community organizations, as they have played more of a role in urban resistance over the

past 40 years, as told by Mayer in "The 'Right to the City' in the context of shifting mottos of

urban social movements"(Mayer 2009). Mayer goes on to say how community organizations

began to transition "from protest to programs" (Mayer 2009, p. 364) during the 1980s as poverty

and unemployment grew. Fisher et. al. expand on this by noting that during this period protests

were still taking place, however "new organizations formed that were rooted in local, professionalized services"(Fisher 2013, p. 165).

The *right to the city* movement is legitimized in Purcell's "Excavating Lefebvre: The right to the city and its urban politics of the inhabitant" as he states that the movement can "offer solutions to the problems of enfranchisement in cities" (Purcell 2002, p. 105) and that its popularity proves that it offers something valuable to learn. Authors such as Falk(2001), Held(1995) and Swyngedouw(1996) explain how disenfranchisement has become an increasing problem in a time of global restructuring, making the *right to the city* increasingly more important. However, Purcell also points out that the *right to the city* movement cannot be the only element to building a more democratic society, as it also must take into account intricate political systems that structure our modern world (Purcell 2002).

The combined notions of disenfranchisement, social justice, and urban democratic expression associated with the *right to the city* relate to the problems addressed in this research, as it frames public space as a place in which all members of urban communities can interact and represent themselves to external powers, and provides a way for communities and planners to identify members of the population that had previously been ignored or disenfranchised.

2.4 Communicative Planning Theory

Communicative planning theory occurs when planning and planners are "responsive to difference,...genuinely participatory, and...strive to create deliberative contexts that, as far as possible, minimize inequalities of power and knowledge" (Huxley 2000, p. 369). The inequalities to be minimized include "income and wealth, consumer ideologies...the manipulation of public ignorance...racial, ethnic and sexual type-casting…" (Forester 1987, p. 205). If these inequalities

are ignored consensus among planners and communities agreement cannot be arrived upon, as

"consensus is not achieved automatically but must be created by identifying sources of

systematically distorted communication in systematically unequal social structures, and by

creating ideal speech situations in which self-reflexive, communicatively competent, and rational

human subjects can achieve consensus on matters that affect their lifeworlds" (Huxley 2000, p.

370). These situations of "ideal speech" are described by Huxley are "freed from state and

economic power relations are theoretically linked together" (Huxley 2000, p. 371).

Crucial to the concept of communicative planning is the importance of the perspective

of the individual planner, as "...communicative planning emphasizes that individual planners do

make a difference; therefore their actions should be studied, their constructions of reality

understood" (Huxley 2000, p. 369). This understanding is important because it informs the way

that planners communicate with the public and may expose "ethical dilemmas" (Huxley 2000, p.

369). Forrester elaborates that "if planners do not recognize how their ordinary actions may have

subtle communicative effects, the planners may be well-meaning but counterproductive

nonetheless" (Forrester 1987, p. 203).

Community groups, organizations and action are all central themes of communicative

planning theory as planning and planners are "inevitably related to the state - its power, resources

and regulations, whether or not they are carried out by private corporations, community

organizations, or state planning departments," something that is explored in this research. In

addition to the interrelation of planning and various levels of government and power,

"community action groups call on the state to take action, and are often directly or indirectly

supported by the state's resources; developers; and private firms equally require decisions from

the state and receive benefits and exemptions from state subsidies and taxes. Planners working in

any such organizations spend time and resources negotiating with their state-employed counterparts over these matters" (Huxley, p. 320).

The communicative planning process may create situations of conflict as "to understand is not necessarily to agree" (Fay 1987, p. 190) although this may end in a positive outcome as "...conflict of some sort may be inevitable and, indeed, may be positively productive of change under conditions of inequality and oppression" (Huxley, p. 373). Planners can learn through collective struggle, even though this new knowledge may stand in opposition with what the planner had previously experienced or thought (Foley). In some cases, communicative planning theory can prevent conflict by providing information "in relation to access to material sources but increasingly around production and appropriation of resources..." (Foley 1997, p. 9).

The management of information is considered a primary task of planners through the lens of communicative planning theory (Healey). In order to best do this, planners must "...pay greater attention to the construction of the discourse of collective actors who are not just passive receivers of information or misinformation" (Foley 1997, p. 1). One way in which planners can pay genuinely closer attention to this discourse is by not having "separate sets of participatory processes run by bureaucrats who, in theory, are accountable to elected representatives and not directly to the public" (Huxley 2000, p. 375). By being more involved in the democratic process, planners can engage in political debate and "collectively" construct "new design and policy proposals" (Forrester 1988, pg. 154). A communicative planning approach would involve a process in which planners took the role of mediator during the process of conflict and reduced information asymmetries while empowering people to express their thoughts (Healey), "values are not predetermined but are established in the communicative process itself" (Foley 1997, p. 1)

so that a situation is avoided in which there is "no understanding, no common sense, no shared basis even for disagreement or conflict" (Forrester 1988, p. 143).

When faced with conflict within communities, communicative planning theory provides a tool that planners can utilize to support and sustain communication between government organizations, community organizations and within communities themselves, in order to prevent future conflict and prevent the distribution of asymmetrical information.

2.5 The Case of the Crown Heights and Tompkins Square Park Riots

a. Tompkins Square Park

The 1992 article "Public Space, Private Place: The Contested Terrain of Tompkins Square Park" by Mattson and Duncombe describe gentrification as causing an uproar in the neighborhood of Tompkins Square Park, as a new influx of residents were seen as "displacing an ethnically mixed, working class and sub-cultural population that cannot compete for living space"(Mattson 1992, p. 129). The authors spent time in Tompkins Square Park interviewing various park users. Their research found that the social geography of the park was in constant flux as conflicts surrounding the usage of the space altered depending upon the needs of the visitors. The study found that the park is used for a diverse array of activities as reported uses of the park included "seeking solitude, escape, and at times companionship"(Mattson 1992, p. 156).

The issues surrounding the conflicted terrain of Tompkins Square Park was seen by Gardner in "Tompkins Square Park: Past and Present" as exemplifying larger problems within New York City during the time period, including the issues of "homelessness, racial conflict and drug warfare"(Gardner 1990). For many New Yorkers, Speer writes, the riots were viewed as "a

'legitimate' police 'response' toward a group of 'misfit' protestors composed of 'drug addicts,' 'anarchists' and homeless' who were fighting against the capitalist driven ideology of developers"(Speer 2008, p. 203). In this case it was, as Alinsky wrote, an issue of organized money versus organized people, the only two sources of power (Alinsky 1972).

In addition to social conflicts of discrimination that took place in the park and it's surrounding area due to bias, Mele points out that urban development was another important dimension of social inequality, as "real estate developers have translated the symbolic value of cultural difference into economic value" (Mele 2000, p. 3). In order to do this, real estate developers exploited the poverty and struggles of older residents in order to promote a "bohemian mix" to potential buyers and renters, mounting yet even more tension in the neighborhood as fears regarding gentrification rose (Mele 2000). Indeed, the 1 am curfew imposed on the park was seen not as a benefit to the community, but rather an expression of the institutional approval of gentrification throughout the neighborhood.

In "Social Justice, Postmodernism and the City" Harvey describes Tompkins Square Park as a "locus of exploitation and oppression"(Harvey 1992) as it became a battleground in which institutional forces evicted homeless people and erected barriers. In his view, this was an example of the militarization of public space that led to the extinguishing of the park as genuinely public space, as it became privatized by the New York City government, denying neighborhood residents ownership. Brigham and Gordon also note the subtle ways in which space for public use is taken away from and given to residents as "Walking (down the sidewalk), one is made aware of what is public and what is not…Ownership is presented in material ways (locks, fences, razor wire) and more discursively (in language that says 'Get out,' 'Where is the rent.' 'Come in')"(Brigham 1996, pg. 278). This comment takes place during a discussion of how uses and

meanings of public space and property relations in the Lower East Side are heavily attached to politics(Blomley 2003).

b. Crown Heights

Racial tensions were a large contributor to the preconditions that surrounded the Crown Heights Riots. Adding to the conversation about the role of race during the Crown Heights riots, Conaway argues that the racial aspects were over simplified as a back-white conflict, when in reality more intricate issues of ethnic tensions were at play between "African Americans and Caribbean-Americans on one side and Lubavitcher Jews on the other"(Conaway 1999, pg. 93). The author blames this over-simplification on the media, who used racial rather than ethnically discriminatory rhetoric to frame the riots.

Shapiro echoes the extensive degree to which the media affected the public discourse surrounding the riots. He mentions a speech given in 1991 by Leonard Jeffries, a CUNY City College professor, who "accused Jews of having controlled the slave trade and of subjecting blacks to derogatory stereotyping through their control of the mass media, particularly Hollywood"(Shapiro 2002). Finer details of the riots were also lost in the translation of the events that took place by the media as Shapiro points out that Yankel Rosenbaum, who died in an attack after the car accident that killed a young African American boy, was labeled as a "'rabbinical student," a "religious scholar," a "seminarian," a "Talmudic scholar," and a "divinity student"'(Shapiro 2002, p. 101) when Rosenbaum was really in the U.S studying Eastern European history and was wearing clothing and had facial hair similar to the Lubavitcher Jews. In an attempt to unify an area that had caused a lot of pain surrounding the riots, a few community organizations were born, which Smith touches on in "Not So Special Vehicles."

These organizations such as "The Increase the Peace Corps" were instrumental in demanding and maintaining peace, and worked in part alongside the Mayor's office.

In "Intergroup Relations", Chanes notes the strong racial tensions underlying the riots, as the mayor during the time, Dinkins, an African American himself, was viewed as being biased in favor of the African American community. Racial discrimination was not the only factor involved and Chanes goes on to discuss the political undertones of the Crown Heights riots, exhibited especially by the Jewish population at the end of Mayor Dinkins term. In the next election, Giuliani was the first Republican mayor since 1965, and won 68% of the Jewish vote, a five percent increase from the 1989 election cycle (Chanes 1995). Thompson points out that the success of mayors is not judged based on facts, but rather values, and the image that Dinkins portrayed during the time of this violent crisis was as having values that were 'soft on crime'(Thompson 2005). In spite of this widespread view, many African-Americans at the time were experiencing police brutality and hostility in poorer neighborhoods. Although for different reasons, the events of the riots were also an expression of democracy presented by the Black population in order to stand up against the government and larger social structures (Thompson 2005).

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

This research addresses the role of community organizations in combating urban violence and reclaiming public space, as well as the factors that drive these organizations to act. This research is being conducted in an effort to identify how communities currently experiencing violence and displacement can be informed by these processes and can express their needs in the

face of community conflict, and the role that urban planners can have in facilitating discourse between community groups for the development of more equitable neighborhoods.

In order to identify how communities reclaim public space and their relationship with government institutions while doing so, the case studies of the Crown Heights and Tompkins Square Park Riots are studied and analyzed. These riots were selected because they both took place during the early 1990s/late 1980s in public spaces in New York City in areas with high racial/ethnic/socioeconomic tensions that manifested into violence that was perpetrated by community groups, police, local residents and curious outsiders, and ended with police brutality. While these two cases differ in that the Crown Heights Riots began as two community factions fighting against each other, while the Tompkins Square Park Riots began as citizens fighting with police and government, these two cases are able to be studied comparatively, as the Crown Heights Riots did evolve into the community fighting against police, with 152 police personnel ultimately injured during the riots.

Additionally, both neighborhoods were beginning to experience gentrification during these periods of violence, and have experienced gentrification in the years following the violence. Gentrification was defined by utilizing indicators identified by Lance Freeman in his 2004 article "Gentrification and Displacement in New York City in the 1990s". These indicators include: educational attainment, average monthly rent and proportion of whites.

To conceptualize the questions at hand, literature by Lefebvre and his critics was studied to examine how public space is democratized through the concept of the "right to the city." This included how the idea of the "right to the city" can address issues of disenfranchisement, which were affecting the population groups being studied in the research of the Crown Heights and Tompkins Square Park Riots. Further theoretical framing was provided by communicative

planning theory, which provided a basis for planners' involvement in community conflict, public communication and community organizations.

The tensions that were affecting the area at the time were explored through semi structured interviews with community members who were active during the riots and the period following them. Bill DePaola, director of the Museum of reclaimed Urban Space, which provides tours of Tompkins Square Park and it's history as well as preserving the history of activism in the area, was interviewed, as well as two Avenue A Block Association members who all provided valuable insight into the events that took place before and after the riots and the causes of them. These organizations were chosen by reviewing media coverage of the riots at the time, and identifying actors involved. Additionally, three board members of a HDFC co-op in Crown Heights that was established after the riots, were interviewed in a conference call to gain a deeper understanding of how the neighborhood has changed in their eyes following the riots, and the relationship between the building and the government today. Questions asked to the Tompkins Square Park respondents included Likert scaled questions regarding safety and whether the community organization members viewed themselves as having contributed to positive change following the riots. Conversations evolved to also include questions of police involvement and gentrification. Questions asked to begin these conversations with Tompkins Square Park interviewees can be found in Appendix A. Crown Heights residents who participated did not participate in the same survey, as they were not active in their communities until after the riots. Questions were asked a such as, "How long have you lived in the area?" and "How have you seen the neighborhood change?" in order to facilitate a natural conversation that eventually touched on issues such as gentrification and the buildings's relationship with the government.

A small number of respondents volunteered to participate in the research from both neighborhoods, causing the methodology to include a deep analysis of the rhetoric used to describe the events of the riots as well as remembering the events of the riots 25 years later, specifically to identify how public media discourse described the involvement of community organizations and the government.

Due to a lack of data provided by the NYPD, data and information from the media were utilized in order to look at how crime changed in the time before and after the riots. While there is statistical crime data from the NYPD regarding crime during the years of the violence, the level at which it is reported is aggregated at the borough or city level, and so it does not provide an accurate depiction of the frequency and type of crime in the neighborhoods. Additionally, an analysis of the media discourse also allows better discrimination of what data is relevant to the community organizations guarding against these riots. Articles were selected for review by doing a Google search using the keywords "Crown Heights Riots" and "Tompkins Square Park Riots."

CHAPTER 4: Findings

4.1 Crown Heights

Major themes evident throughout the discourse analysis included: exclusion from institutional representation, racial tensions, and conflicting perceptions of all of these between various community groups and the media. Representative articles were chosen from various media outlets consisting of op-ed's and journalistic pieces in an attempt to gain a comprehensive understanding of how these themes were perceived by the public and within the community that addressed the research questions, due to a lack of interview respondents. The interviewees from

Crown Heights are current board members from an HDFC co-op, named respondents 1, 2 and 3, that were part of the sweat equity program of the city in the 1990s which allowed people to apply for HDFC co-op status with low interest rates, affordability and regulatory requirements when co-op residents rehabilitated "abandoned" buildings (NYU Furman Center).

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     a. Race

Rhetoric utilized by Newsday two years after the riots in 1993 was extremely racialized, categorizing individuals who were rioting against the death of Gavin Cato and what they perceived as systemic racism as, "bands of black youth who unleashed their rage on Crown Heights streets" (Newsday July 13, 1993). In reference to community activist Al Sharpton's participation in the unrest, the Jerusalem Post similarly categorized the same group of protestors as "busloads of thugs from outside" who were "encouraged...to vent their wrath" (Silverman). Both reference a tone of the invasion of public space which makes subtle reference to the broader theme of the ownership of public space. In a very physical demonstration of recovering conflicted space, the Crown Heights Coalition planted "peace trees" in a Crown Heights park, uniting community leaders from "both sides" in an effort to find common ground (Getlin). Racialized discourse extended as far as Los Angeles media representation, with an article beginning from the perspective of a real estate developer, initially describing Crown Heights as "less than 15 minutes from Wall Street" where "Caribbean blacks go about their daily business with Hasidic Jews, a reclusive, Messianic group whose men wear black hats, long black coats and beards" (Getlin). The article then goes on to question the validity of the seemingly peaceful use of public space in the neighborhood, articulating that the peaceful sharing of urban streets was simply a facade to disguise "a cauldron of animosity." This piece was particularly representative

of much of the media and government discourse during the time, as it portrayed the Lubavitcher community as a people who had invested much into the community and their ethnic enclave, only to be forced into sharing their urban space with black residents taking advantage of low housing prices in the area during the period of white flight.

When recounting the relationship among different ethnic groups, some community members expressed that a tension did exist. A survey completed by Gallup for Newsday two years after the riot in 1993, reported that "56 per cent of the Brooklyn residents surveyed said that blacks and Jews get along worse than blacks and other whites." For context, 52 per cent of city-wide residents perceived blacks and Jews as having a worse relationship compared with blacks and other white ethnicities. Barcha Levertov, a community resident stated that rabble-rousers from "the outside" were partially responsible for racial tensions in the area, but exhibited resistance when it came to believing in a peaceful future, because "when you see toughs walking on your side of the street, you cross to the other side. I'm sorry. Feelings are feelings" (Getlin). In a similar remark to that of Levertov, Richard Green, director of the Crown Heights Youth Collective, explicitly said that representation of the community to those on the outside was skewed;

"Even in Crown Heights, where the media has heightened that so-called {black-Jewish} divisiveness, that does not really exist. If you take a survey of people-to-people feelings in both communities you'll find people feel a lot different than what is portrayed. What we have to look at is how do we really feel in our hearts. The Jewish legacy and the African legacy are so closely parallel that it is almost impossible for us to see each other in any way other than as allies, co-workers and co-strugglers."

Jewish community leader Joseph Spielman, the head of the Crown Heights Jewish Community Council, pointed to preferential treatment of the black community over the Lubavitcher community as a cause of unrest within Crown Heights. The examples that he provided included an increase in the budget of the Crown Heights Youth Collective and increased city dollars for

youth programs as well as that "the black-run group is the sponsor of 860 neighborhood youth

jobs this year" (Newsday July 13, 1993). In light of this comment, Community Assistance Unit

director, Michael Kharfen, said that it was the Crown Heights Youth Collectives track record of

working well with youth of all backgrounds, as well as success recruiting youth that got the

collective the funding.

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b. Government Services

Although a positive externality of the Crown Heights riots was increased spending on

youth programs, it is evident that distribution of government services have long caused

resentment in Crown Heights. While both Levertov and Green pointed to "outsiders," such as

the media as contributing toward animosity, media reports frequently cited problems regarding

the distribution of government services and representation of various groups needs to

government institutions as the main issues between residents and outsiders. Brooklyn Democratic

County Leader, Assemblymember Clarence Norman indicated to Newsday that,

"Preferential treatment in the form of street closings, round the clock police-posts outside the Lubavitcher
headquarters and the home of Grand Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, and even with police escorts, had, along with a
past history of giving a disproportionate share of government dollars to Lubavitch community, built up a hearty
resentment in young blacks" (Newsday July 13, 1993).

The rhetoric used by Assemblymember Norman implies that the black population perceived the

police and city government as providing mechanisms for the Lubavitcher community to claim

ownership of public space without allowing the black community the same treatment.

Community Board 9 District Manager Enid Ford cited a historic example of how the black

population had received different treatment than the Lubavitcher community in the 1980s. The

black community had fought for poverty designation in the 1980s with repeated denial from city

officials, while the Lubavitcher community had successfully received poverty designated

expediently and as a result received "tens of thousands of dollars in funding for weatherization

programs, neighborhood patrols and other improvement projects that non-designated areas could

not get" (Newsday July 13, 1993). Interestingly, District Manager Ford attributed the success of

the Lubavitcher community to their organizational skills, stating, "They are empowered. They

remain empowered because they are organized. Blacks organize around issues, around crisis

situations, and then disperse" (Newsday July 13, 1993). Assemblymember Norman went on to

note that now the riots are over there is a greater feeling of equity throughout the neighborhood,

and qualified the comment by saying that, "The police and their deployment has always been a

symbolic statement of the inequity. They're more equitably distributed throughout the Crown

Heights community" (Newsday July 13, 1993).

Beyond the police, community advocate and lawyer for a group of Hasidim and the

Crown Heights Community Council, Franklyn Snitow, was frustrated that her persistent efforts to

contact federal investigators to pursue an inquiry into the events of the riots had received no

response (Coehler). While the Justice Department officially stated that it was completing an

investigation into the murder of Yankel Rosenbaum, reports that had been obtained by and

printed in The Jewish Week contradicted correspondence from Senior Justice Officials. The

source of the lack of responsibility from the state and federal government cited in the media was

that District Attorney Joseph Hynes was not interested in pursuing a weak case when he was

being poised to run for Governor (Coehler). Another activist representing the black community,

Rev. Al Sharpton, called a report released by Mayor Dinkins and Director of Criminal Justice

Girgenti "hogwash," indicating that these government leaders had not done enough to promote

healing within the community (Frankel). Girgenti additionally commented that, "What was

unique about the Crown Heights rioting was one community targeting another," supporting

Green and Levertov's claims that outsiders had influenced relationships within the community.

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c. Remembering

In the course of remembering the Crown Heights riots, ten and 25 years after the events, it was clear that many community member, activists and the media have distinctly different perceptions of how the community relates to each other and how the neighborhood has healed. Lisa Mathis, a neighborhood resident of over 50 years and Crown Heights Tenants Union organizer said, "I feel invisible in the community now" (Morris), in reference to the gentrification that has taken place and displaced older residents. The gentrification that has taken place has included an increase of six percent in rental residential building and commercial and development properties investment from 2011 to 2016, according to Cushman and Wakefield (Morris). In addition to skyrocketing real-estate prices that led to retail rates rising by over 100% in certain parts of the neighborhood, the black population has also been decreasing, while the white population has been on the rise (Morris). Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, a Democrat from Crown Heights, framed the issue as residents being,

"victims of their own success since they lived in Crown Heights and helped to turn the community around in it's greatest hour of need. Twenty-five years later, if they don't own the residence, they may be forced out due to skyrocketing rents" (Morris).

HDFC Co-op board respondent 3 also represented this opinion when they stated that the community started to change after "people took pride in their property. Once a community and an area which is really good location changes and people take more pride into what they have and start to appreciate the value of their property," which occurred in the Crown Heights area

prior to gentrification. This sense of community pride after the riots was derived from an

increased importance of safety for children and political and community partnering. Interviewee

3 said, "I think between politics and community it took a lot of partnering and people that cared

about their community and what they were going to tolerate. At some point, everything changed,

the whole system changed, you're to just going to do what you want to do, you're going to make

this area safe for our children." Interviewee 2 and 3 also attributed gentrification to real estate

redevelopment;

"There was a lot of redevelopment and it had a lot to do with gentrification, we live across the street from a hospital and they turned it into apartments and renovated it and there are other properties around here that are high rise developments and it has a lot to do with the class of people who live there. When I moved into Crown Heights it wasn't really a good location, it was a really bad location. It was drug infested and the area wasn't safe at one time at least i didn't feel safe, and they [the community] cleaned up the area." - 2

Gentrification also altered the physical landscape of the neighborhood, as political

boundaries changed following the riots, "a lot of the areas, once the realtors or whoever they are,

decided that the convenience of this community would be good for certain populations…the

signs for names of the area have changed." (3) This was reiterated by respondent 1 who said,

"When I came in, the boundaries were different, we're right on the border (we say), of Crown

Heights and Prospect Heights," and interviewee 2 who shared , "When we applied for the

building and going through the process at that time, it was called Crown Heights. Since we've

been here, it's been changed to Prospect Heights." These changing boundaries were also

attributed by respondents to political funding, although not explicitly stated how. When

discussing how board members interacted with the city, it was apparent that interactions were

minimal as that had been taken care of by the founding co-op members, through "organizations

and certain individuals,"(1) mostly through paperwork and not direct contact, and now it is the

job of the board to make sure the building and it's tenants uphold the regulatory agreements established with the City.

Gentrification was also included in the media discourse in other articles, including one editorial printed anonymously in Washington Jewish Weekly in 2016. The author discussed how the composition of the neighborhood has shifted to a higher-income population composition, leading to new manifestations of conflict within the community, including competing Jewish factions, as wealthier Jews from different New York City neighborhoods are seen as contributing towards gentrification. An example of the manifestation of this conflict included the development of a eruv (a religious boundary) around an area of the neighborhood, which was criticized by the Lubavitcher community and ultimately taken down. The author of the editorial calls for unity surrounding the memorializing of the Crown Heights riots and writes, "We cannot tolerate this new war, specifically the conduct of those who would seek to impose their religious beliefs on others. That behaviour has to stop. But we also see the eruv controversy as an outgrowth of the neighborhood's expanding gentrification, which threatens lower-income residents, whatever their ethnicity" (Washington Weekly, Aug. 25, 2016). Upon reflection, the author identifies the causes of the riots as being,

"the hostility, cultural misunderstandings and poor communications that existed at the time between the two communities. On the one hand, the Chasidim felt threatened by hostility within the community, and their African-American neighbors felt that the Chasidim were getting preferential police protection while larger community needs were being ignored." (Washington Weekly, Aug. 25, 2016).

While the author is vocal against the potential for violence erupting as a result of gentrification, they also acknowledge the strides that have been made in the neighborhood to heal the issues that brought the riots to be.

Many of the articles reflecting on the events of the riots had an optimistic tone about the future and represented the neighborhood as having made huge strides, with some community

members suggesting that the racial tensions have completely dissolved since the 1990s. Executive

Director of the Crown Heights Service Center, a black resident of the neighborhood, Jesse

Hamilton, noted that 25 years after the riots "There seems to be little tension; it's not a crisis

anymore" (Kifner). Assistant Chief of the Brooklyn South Police Commander, an institutional

force that received much blame for causing the tensions that led up to the riots claimed

"Everybody is much more in tune" (Kifner). An article in the New York Times wrote of how

leaders and members of both the Jewish and black populations felt comfortable asking each other

for help and facilities to run different programs. Also discussed is how engagement between

community manifests in physical space through "joint picnics and ice-skating parties, even a

police-supervised Halloween parade. There is a storefront mediation center, a black and Jewish

mothers group, and an effort to add black youngsters to the private Jewish security

patrols" (Kifner). However, just as the media had reflected in the past on underlying problems in

the neighborhood that were not reflected on the street, the same New York Times article insisted

that, "despite the efforts of the leaders, the elected officials and lots of the neighborhood's

ordinary residents, many of the old differences and distrusts remain, buried just beneath the

surface. These are communities that, almost by definition, lead separate lives even as they live

side by side" (Kifner). The sources pointed to as the cause of these deep-seated tensions were the

same as those pointed to when the riots occurred in 1991.

Unequal influence on government institutions within the neighborhood is still an issue

that some find hard to ignore. An example of how some perceive unequally distributed power

today is higher property ownership by Hasidic Jews within the neighborhood and their activity in

the local school board, despite the fact that the Hasidic population does not send their children to

public schools. Additionally, the perception still exists among some that the police are still biased

favorably towards the Jewish population (Kifner).

Lack of power and representation are also themes that continued when memorializing

the event. A Mothers to Mothers meeting at the Brooklyn Mediation Centre in 2001 for mothers

of both the black and Jewish community brought up the topic of power contributing to the

events of the riots in the following conversation;

" 'The riots broke out because of frustration and despair," Mrs. Meltz said, her voice trembling. "I know how people felt. You had no power. Political power. Things don't happen in a vacuum.' 'So why did they have to take it out on the Jews?' snapped Rivka Katzen, a Jewish woman. 'Because they were there,' Mrs. Meltz snapped back."

Another community resident told the New York Post, in reference to the Jewish

community, "Not a damn thing has changed. They've still got the money, they've still got the

power." A similar sentiment was echoed by Rev. Herbert Daughtry who said ""If you're 10

percent of the community and you get 90 percent of the goods and services, that's an apartheid

situation. It's not about smiling at one another. The situation in Crown Heights has always been

about power" (Robinson). Representation of the more diverse demographics that have recently

entered the neighborhood are also a concern for residents as exemplified by Mr. Richard Green;

"From Utica to Atlantic Avenue, do you have any idea of how many villages you travel through?" Mr. Green said. "And we don't have any ambassadors to these enclaves. They all carry their own nationalistic attitudes. At least now the Hasidic village is talking to the African village. What about the Korean village?'" (Kifner).

In spite of this lack of representation and insular nature of the Lubavitcher population, within

the black community the Lubavitcher community is still perceived as more organized, which was

attributed to the success of that portion of the community. The director of a social services

centre in Crown Heights explained;

"The Hasidic community is a very closed community. They don't socialize with the rest of the community that much." But, like some other black leaders, he expressed admiration for their ability to organize, saying "they do their homework better. They don't leave any stone unturned."

In spite of the perception that the government gives special treatment to the Jewish community, efforts have been made to pro-actively combat tension-building situation and conflict. In 2000, the Jewish Community Council was granted funds to rehabilitate housing in "a traditionally black neighborhood." In order to help mediate the situation, black and Jewish leaders met to ensure that some of the housing was preserved for members of the black community.

Technology came up repeatedly when thinking about the events of the riots and what could have been done to prevent them. Vice Chairman of the Crown Heights Jewish Community Council, Chanina Sperlin said, "I wish we had all these beeper and phone numbers for each other back then." Reiterating that communication between groups was poor and was crucial to the cohesion of the neighborhood (Kifner). A comment from the director of the Crown Heights Community Mediation Center, Amy Ellenbogen, reflected that communication and technology have been instrumental to the healing of the community stating, "In 1991, people didn't even know who the leaders were to talk to each other, now they're Facebook friends" (Washington Jewish Week, Aug. 25, 2016).

The events to memorialize the riots in 2016 seemed to fall short of remembering the deaths and destruction that took place in an appropriate way and seemed divisive to some. A report in the Times described the events of the memorial, which drew about three dozen people, as including a "memorial service, march, and street festival that organizers said showed how far the community had come." The events were held as part of 'One Crown Heights', to bring children who represent all populations of the community together and reinforce that the events of the riots did not characterize the community today. The borough president Eric Adams reiterated these feelings when he said, "We will not allow ourselves to be defined by what happened 25 years ago" (Balsamo). The victim, Gavin Cato's, father also spoke at the event, and

said that he felt as though the memorial events that took place "showed the love and that the

community is back together" (Balsamo). This was reminiscent of his statement at the 2001

memorial events when he said that there had been "a lot of changes" in the neighborhood since

the riots, but was a big difference from the statement Gavin's grandmother gave when she stated

"I'm sick within my heart. There's no progress. It's more painful." A witness of the 1991 events

who owned a business near the location of the accident also expressed that the neighborhood was

more cohesive and stated,

"We had young guys who wanted to take the laws in their own hands, and they did. It's been a rift between the community, mainly between blacks and Jews for years. But we know two wrongs don't make a right and we have to eliminate the hatred and the dissatisfaction that some might have on both sides. Today you find a more peaceful, respectful and understanding community of Crown Heights. Anything that happens that brings Jews and blacks and the police together is for the betterment of the community" (Balsamo).

In spite of the intention of the organizers to show how healed the neighborhood is and the

attending community members feelings of healing, the Times reported skepticism among critics

who called the events "insensitive" (Balsamo). The article also subtly conveyed that there were

racial divides within the memorial events itself. Describing the memorial on Sunday the author

wrote that the crowd that was addressed by the Brooklyn Borough President was predominantly

white, however, after the memorial service the crowd who attended the activities at the local part

were mostly black. An article from the New York post in 2001 about the one decade memorial for

Gavin Cato drew "60 African Americans" but made no mention of the other demographics that

were present (Robinson).

Just as the media were accused of being partially responsible for the events of the riots

when they took place in 1991, an anonymously written editorial from The New York Jewish

Week explained that these feelings still remained. The author explicitly described how the media

described the conflict as taking place between "Jewish and black clashes" when there was no

"equivalency between broken glass and the rock that broke it." The author also points out that this problem is still occurring because when "in noting the anniversary of the riot, The Daily News wrote of "roving gangs of Jewish and black youth [that] started attacking each other and random pedestrians," an equivalency myth contradicted by the Girgenti Report" (The New York Jewish Week). In spite of this disparity between the way the media reported the conflict and the events that took place, the author acknowledged that Jewish organizations played an essential role in mending relationships.

Community organizations such as the Crown Heights Youth Collective and Project CURE were, and continue to be, dedicated to healing the relationships between all community groups, and have hosted activities such as a joint Kwanzaa-Chanukah party and basketball games for all community youth. Project CURE was started immediately following the riots by Hasidic and black youth with a mission of promoting peace. The origin of the Crown Heights Youth Collective began in 1977 with the purpose of offering comprehensive youth-outreach programs, which provided services "such as drug prevention, crisis counseling, career and educational guidance," as well as weekend and after-school educational programs, art workshops and events for senior citizens and youth. The organizations website also explicitly states the purpose of fostering better relationships between groups "by reaching our Hasidic Lubavitcher neighbors" (Crown Heights Youth Collective). Youth programs such as these have been credited with doing great work towards unifying the community, and received optimistic comments from students who participated in their programs, with one student saying in 1992 that the youth understood the conflict more clearly after attending talk-sessions with the borough president (Lin). Efforts were also praised by board chairman of the National Committee for the Furtherance of Jewish Education, Rabbi Shea Hecht as saying, "it was through black and

Lubavitch unity that Crown Heights was given more police, and increased spending on youth

programs" (Newsday July 13, 1993). Although, not all efforts to heal the community through

youth education and activism were appreciated by all community factions.

4.2 Tompkins Square Park

The media discourse surrounding the events of the Tompkins Square Park riots evoked themes

of gentrification, poor and inadequate response from city agencies, and lack of representation

among various community groups. Interview Participants included Bill DePaola, the director of

the Museum of Reclaimed Urban Space and community activist, Sarah Schulman, Avenue A

Block Association and tenant organization member and author and Mary Round, Avenue A

Block Association member and landlord in the neighborhood. The Avenue A Block Association,

described by Mary Round, originated in the 1980s when the Lower East Side neighborhood felt

like "the wild west" in an effort to foster a sense of community. The group consists of mostly

women who organized events such as block parties for people who were part of the community

to enjoy themselves.

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a. Gentrification

Many of the articles that discussed the events of the riots mentioned gentrification taking

place in the Lower East Side as contributing towards the riots explicitly or ambiguously. The Los

Angeles times reported in 1991 that middle income residents were often "harassed by some of

the 200 homeless people living in a shanty town at the...end of the park" (Getlin). Donna Ryan, a

resident of the neighborhood, told the Los Angeles Times that she had been harassed by the

homeless population who were residing in the park multiple times, and that she had become used

to the "abuse", stating an example in which a park resident "did it [defecated] in front of us, and when I asked him to stop, he told me to go live on Park Avenue if I didn't like it" (Getlin). The statement from the Tompkins Square Park resident, whose perspective was not included in the article explicitly, exemplified how wealthier residents who were altering the demographic landscape of the neighborhood were viewed as outsiders and unwelcome by other neighborhood populations. Also included in the article was the perspective of activist Rev. George Kuhn of St. Brigid's church, located at Avenue B and 8th Street, on the periphery of the park. In his opinion, "We've had an ongoing battle between the people who believe they are going to be displaced here and the people who are moving into the area. When you spend thousands of dollars on a home, you don't want to overlook a park where there are 200 homeless people" (Getlin). This idea was agreed with by Antonio Pagan, the director of the Lower East Side Coalition for Housing Development, who stated "The morning after the police swept through the park, I felt like a Frenchman after the liberation of Paris. I felt we could breathe again." This statement revealed that the removal of the homeless population from the park was a relief to some residents, which stood in contradiction to the mission of The Lower East Side Housing Coalition which is touted as existing "to improve and stabilize the quality of life for local residents by the development of new construction and the substantial rehabilitation of vacant housing stock to preserve affordable housing for individuals of low-to-moderate income" (Lower East Side Coalition Housing Development, Inc.).

An article in the Christian Science Monitor argued that the sentiment within the community was that the closing of Tompkins Square park was a move to benefit real estate investors who wanted "Tompkins Square to be a verdant enclave for dog-walking and reading the Sunday New York Times" (Barr). Isaac Huitt, a park resident told a reporter that real estate

investment was a direct cause of the park closure, as investors "want a cleaner, more tranquil Tompkins Square" (Barr). He went on to state that the new demographic moving in, "yuppies," were responsible for the events because they had power. These yuppies that he mentions were described in the article as being "young professionals attracted to the vibrancy of the neighborhood," who find the diversity of the community (excluding the homeless) to be appealing, and quickly stimulated the real estate market. According to Mr. George McDonald the president of the non-profit the Doe Fund, which provides job training and housing to homeless people, gentrification is part of a systematic process of displacement in New York City that is constantly taking place. Another pastor in the neighborhood, Rev. Robert Wollenburg of Trinity Lower East Side Lutheran Church, who's parish supplies 300 meals a week to those who can't afford it, stated that the "closure and 'renovation' of Tompkins Square Park resulted from the desire to gentrify the area" and an attempt to keep the park "nice and clean and tidy so young professionals can choose from any one of a million benches" (Barr).

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b. Lack of representation

Lack of representation was a common theme among media articles and was a concern that was reinforced considerably by community members. The physical occupation of the park served as a way for park squatters to represent themselves in the eye of the public through the erection of temporary housing structures. Chris Henry, a representative of homeless squatters in Tompkins Square Park said at a meeting with Parks Department officials and six city police in reference to the tents, "I guess it's going to be a long, hot, summer, because we're going to be here the whole time. We'll just put 'em up, take 'em down, put 'em up, take 'em down" (Laboy). The meeting, which took place one year after the 1988 riots, also included two other homeless

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squatter representatives, and all who were present agreed to be non-violent about the issue. However, homeless resident Levon Williams said, "We're going to wear them out on the structure issue. They have to enforce the regulations; we understand that. But we have to do what we have to do" (Laboy).

Much confusion was raised after Mayor Koch, who was representing the city's citizens politically, stated that the park was a "cesspool" and that, "You see very few women and children in the park, and I don't blame them. They're probably scared to death" (Hemphill). This comment left many mothers who used the park with their children frustrated as "several said they wanted better maintenance, not restrictions on who could use the playground" (Hemphill), indicating that the Mayor was not representing the needs of the people who utilized the public amenity.

The way in which certain groups represented themselves to the public and the vocabulary that they used to label themselves, did seem to make an impact on the media, the public perception of these groups, and the political groups they aimed wanted acknowledgement from. Mayor Koch stated, "You have a group there that refer to themselves as anarchists, and they've decided as part of the class struggle, as they put it, they're going to take over the park. They are allowed to use it, but it's not theirs" (Hemphill). Indeed, this label seemed to cause rifts with the police, as one officer at the park said, "The homeless were never the problem, it's those young people who are calling us names" (Nieves). However, the label of anarchist was said to be a tool of political divisiveness by some such as a lawyer who represented "a coalition of community residents," Andy Cohen who said that referring to these groups as anarchists was an "exercise in cheap political labelling," insisting, "You can talk to certain homeless people who are in solidarity

with the activists, and there are thousands of people in the community who agree with their protests" (Nieves).

Although some assumed the title of anarchist and claimed to represent and want to protect the interests of the homeless population, it also appeared to be the case that the homeless population did not feel represented by those who claimed to be doing so. The New York Times reported that "the homeless people who lived in the park ignored the weekend protests organized in their name. They swept up trash and finished setting up 30 tents in two vacant lots near the park" (Nieves). When asked how they feel about those protesting on their behalf, Bill Jones, a park resident said "We don't have time for protests. We're not the purple-hair homeless. We're not let's pretend homeless. We're the authentic homeless, fend for ourselves" (Nieves). Roland Legiardi-Laura, a long-time Lower East Side resident and filmmaker and contractor reflected on the topic of representation, "As long as the park stays closed, and as long as 'the community' can't determine how the park is used, the Lower East Side's identity - artistic, diverse, humane - is lost" (Barr). This statement reveals that until the community can occupy the physical space and take ownership of it and represent themselves within it, the character and uniqueness of the entire community is gone.

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c. Inadequate Government Response

An overwhelming amount of the media coverage of the riots heavily discussed the failure of the government to address the needs of the community and respond appropriately to what community members described as their needs. Indeed, in an article printed by the Los Angeles Times the author wrote, "Tompkins Square has come to symbolize the intractability of

homelessness in New York, and the inability of city government to respond effectively-even to

waves of violence" (Getlin). It was also suggested that "The sheer number [of homeless people]

and lack of effective political response brought the issue to a boil" (Ladd). This perspective was

repeated continuously, with park residents and activists making comments such as;

"I'm no fool. I know that they wouldn't let us live in the park forever, even the people who said they were our friends," says Justice Robles, 41, who had been living in a tent in Tompkins Square Park since 1988. "They didn't solve nothing here. They just swept us under another rug. They failed. And this neighborhood still faces a world of trouble." - Justice Robles, 41 (Getlin).

"It's not a pretty sight, yet homelessness is not a pretty sight anywhere. The problem just wasn't being addressed by the city, and that's why tensions here finally boiled over." - Rev. George Kuhn (Getlin).

"We're still sleeping here, and they're still having their little riot. The problems are not getting solved. Putting up the tents to have them knocked down is prolonging the situation." - Gregory Turner, 34 (Getlin).

"I must say I believe the park has been abandoned by the city, not by the community. I feel very offended he {Koch} would call our park a cesspool." - Betsy Newman (Hemphill).

Even gentrifiers, in reference to the undesirable people they saw occupying the park or the

improvements they wanted to see on the grounds, made comments such as: "I told myself, `That's

it. How much more do we have to put up with in this town? Why doesn't the city do something?'"

(Getlin) and "Is this the way things are done here? A group of us maintained the dog run. We've

cleaned it, sodded it, it's a long process. But we did it for our park. This whole thing has

politicized me. I'm organizing meetings on this" (Nieves).

Two representative articles that mentioned the failure of the government, brought up the

budget to repair the park as a response from the government. Both touted a $2.3 million plan to

restore the park, which included things such as "fixing pathways, laying sod and making other

repairs" as part of "Operation Restoration" (Ladd, Nieves). "Operation Restore" was the policy

of the 1990s that had the aim "to 'take back' the parks, streets and neighborhoods from those

who had supposedly 'stolen' them from 'the public'" (Smith, King).

Distilling the issue further, some articles pointed to the fact that the specific way in which the government failed the Lower East Side community was by not providing adequate and affordable housing. The Christian Science Monitor wrote;

"What is going on in Tompkins Square Park is inextricably linked to the long-running discussions of what to do about housing in New York. More than ever, time spent in the city is marked by unnerving encounters with public poverty. Consider a walk through a shantytown a block and a half away from Tompkins Square, where some of the park's former denizens relocated" (Barr).

Ruth Silber, a community resident who worked with the homeless population in St. Birgid's Church astutely said, "These people who live in the park have nothing else," Silber says. The only solution, she says, is not a shelter or a help center, but housing. "It's very simple" (Mangaliman).

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d. Remembering

In interviews with community activists and leaders today, 29 years after the riots, many of the same themes arose that were prevalent immediately following the events, including the financial situation of the city government, the community's relationship with the police, and gentrification.

In an interview with Bill DePaola, Lower East Side resident, environmental activist and director of the Museum of Reclaimed Urban Space, the financial situation of the city government was considered a cause of the riots, as "the city was broke, they cut back in certain neighborhoods." Explaining further, Mr. DePaola said;

"Instead of the people leaving the neighborhood they reclaimed the gardens, the reclaimed the space, in the process it wasn't about sustainability, it was more about people taking back the neighborhood and trying to find a place to sleep because they didn't want to leave, because it was crime ridden, because the city didn't want to take care of them because they were broke... in this process they didn't buy stuff, because it wasn't really their land, the city was broke, they recycled stuff they composted stuff, sustainability started right here in the East Village, its was kind of unfortunate, they weren't environmentalists, it was just normal to do that, it was an incorporate way of life that

started. Times up, an environmental group came along, saw all these people in the neighborhood doing all this environmental stuff we pushed that to the rest of the city."

In contrast to the way in which people described their upset at the city not providing the services residents needed, Mr. DePaola recognized that the lack of services provided an opportunity for community members to be creative with their surroundings and take ownership of spaces the City had seemingly abandoned. The group the DePaola was working with, an environmental organization called Times Up, were impressed by the amount of ingenuity exhibited by the community;

"The group that I was with [Times Up], which was a very small group of people, couldn't believe, or were just so overwhelmed that these people called squatters and some of the activists in this neighborhood were so interested in sustainability stuff and community stuff that it was resonating with us that these people were crazy awesome because, maybe it's an accident, whatever reason, they are doing these things like composting, recycling, riding their bikes, and it's such a sustainable thing in the middle of this crazy city that the people that I was with really valued these people who didn't even realize what superstars they were, because they were such activists and they would help out and start these community gardens. They would hop a fence and start these gardens, and they were like 'No big deal, I started this garden.'"

He also stated that, "Everyone cleaned up the park, because the city was arguing that it wasn't clean enough," indicating that the cleaning of the park was a protectionist method of maintaining ownership of the space. However, Mr. DePaola recognized that this came at a cost;

"In the middle of this situation, two amazing things happened; the first amazing thing was that the city went broke, that had nothing to do with anybody, it just happened, the people reclaimed the space and tried to fix it up themselves. The second amazing thing that happened, which is probably even more amazing, is that when the city came in...and said, "That's great that you guys came in and fixed up the neighborhood but get out of here we're going to gentrify it, give us back all our stuff, give us the buildings." The people fought them, how did they fight them? They used public space. What do you use? You use the public park, so just like Occupy Wall Street, just like any event you use the public park to kind of be there 24 hours, to teach people what's going on."

This insight shows how Mr. DePaola's perception is that the city used the work the community put into fixing what the City had overlooked to benefit real estate developers who wanted to take advantage of a well maintained neighborhood that was primed for gentrification.

Sarah Schulman, Lower East Side resident, author and tenant organization member,

weighed in on how the aims of the community were ultimately lost, because of the gentrification

that was a result of government policy;

"Gentrification was policy. They had tax cuts for the wealthy, corporate welfare, they had tax cuts for developers. I mean they didn't build low income housing, our tax money went to luxury housing, that's policy. So you know a little tenant association can't affect that."

Mary Round also commented that monetary interests tied to gentrification were a result of

financial interests being supported by the government due to campaign incentives. Ms. Round

stated that the police were simply working for "the powers that be" and that she still recognized

that the police were doing their best. The tenant association that Ms. Schulman was a part of,

and many of the tenant associations in the neighborhood were tied to the larger umbrella

organizations of The Good Old Lower East Side and The Metropolitan Council on Housing,

who operated out of storefronts and "knew the rules" (Schulman) and sent organizers out to

tenant associations to provide services such as setting up meetings and bank accounts in order to

have a rent strike. When asked if she felt as though she contributed to change within her

community, Schulman stated that "by being a tenant organizer and in a tenant association I tried

to help stem the tide [of gentrification], but ultimately this went from an interracial

neighborhood to a white neighborhood, and I'm still here."

Ms. Schulman also related the issue of gentrification to the problems the community

experienced with the police who were outsiders that were pursuing the City's agenda of

gentrification. Ms. Schulman began by discussing Christodora House and "Operation Pressure

Point." Christodora House is a structure once described as "a windowless hulk", that was

converted into luxury condominium housing that "symbolized gentrification, luring well-heeled

professionals (and celebrities like Iggy Pop, Julia Stiles and Vincent D'Onofrio) to a once-gritty

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neighborhood that was a hotbed of boundary-pushing art and transgressive lifestyles" (Williams).

"Operation Pressure Point" was started by NYPD Police Commissioner Ben Ward in the Lower

East Side "put a cop on every single corner in twenty square blocks, almost 24 hours a day," with

the intention of arresting people who were trafficking drugs on the street corners. In regards to

Operation Pressure Point and Christodora House, Schulman said;

"That building was abandoned for many years and when they decided to make it luxury housing, Operation Pressure Point was part of that process because they didn't want the dealers across the street for real estate purposes. So it wasn't like they were getting the dealers of the streets for the residents they were getting them off for developers so that's why those police raids or whatever were not viewed favorably by the people who lived here."

DePaola described the exact same sentiment behind Christodora when he brought up the

property, "...there were real estate companies, there was this building called the Christodora, the

police were on their team." When discussing the methods the police used, DePaola said,

"Back then the police didn't strategize as much as they do today. Now they do more mental things to break up the activists, back then they just used brute force, because there was no videos...Very few people had video cameras so they could beat on us. After they got us out of the park, their next strategy was to really go after the organizers, to harass them, kind of pull them over and say "What are you doing?", to arrest them."

The methods that the police used during the riots were particularly violent, as DePaola said,

"There was a lot of physical violence, they didn't have to use psychological warfare." When

discussing how safe he felt in the period after the riots, DePaola said, "Definitely after the thing

[the riots], it got really dangerous for the activists. Their idea [police] was to get them out of the

neighborhood." Ms, Round also stated that the events of the riots were a power play on the

behalf of the police and that a large contributing factor to the brutality was that many older

police retired the year of and before the riots, leaving no examples for rookie cops to be paired up

with. In comparison to how community groups are dismantled by the government today,

DePaola stated, "The way the city breaks up community groups now is unbelievably good, like

they don't even do it, they just use us to do it. So they introduce rumors," meaning that the City

pits groups within the community against each other by spreading false information, rather than

attacking the groups themselves.

The police presence increased drastically after the riots during the Operation according

to Schulman and DePaola, in an area that had traditionally not seen much of the police force.

Much of this police force consisted of outsiders who could not relate to the greater community;

"When they shut down the park they put all these police here and the police lived in like, Staten Island and Queens and stuff like that, and they were afraid of people in the neighborhood so they made it uncomfortable. The other thing, and this is an interesting thing, is that at that time the neighborhood was starting to gentrify, it hadn't totally gentrified, and there was no fast food here and I remember the police asking "Where's the nearest McDonalds?" and stuff like that. They couldn't relate to the ethnicity of the neighborhood, so they made it hostile, and this is also around the time of Operation Pressure Point." - Schulman

When describing the type of people who were gentrifying the area, both Schulman and DePaola

had similar descriptions;

"Now that I look at it, I'm even mad about it [gentrification], because the people I knew lived in the neighborhood and I was born here, so why do I have to move? ...The people coming in were from Connecticut so it's like, now that I think about it that's kind of disgusting." - DePaola

"When I first moved here this was an interracial neighborhood, now it's a white neighborhood. But [before] you'd see Spanish all the time, it was just a mixed race neighborhood. This was a latino, a strong dominican and puerto rican, neighborhood here. Now, it's an all white neighborhood. The other thing is that what "white" means changes. What white here to mean here is ethnic whites, Ukrainians, Italians and Jews. Now their like WASPs [White Anglo-Saxon Protestants], from the Midwest who moved here to work for Wall Street or work in the Financial District or something, so you know even though both of those two groups of people are white they're not the same type of white." - Schulman

Mr. DePaola's description of how the community utilized public space in order to reclaim

ownership and fight against institutional forces that were trying to gentrify the area speaks to how

important access to public space is for democratic expression, even in more recent history such as

the #Occupy movement. Indeed, the squatters and homeless who stayed in Tompkins Square

Park were staging an occupation in the eyes of DePaola who said, "The police want you out of

the public park, so you have to stay there." DePaola also stated that what happened in Tompkins

Square Park during the time of the riots was also happening elsewhere within the city;

"I was an organizer back then, we, back then [Times Up], we were having campaigns all over the city so we saw this encroachment on public space happening everywhere and people in the East Village, people just thought this was happening in our park, they wanted to put a curfew on every park at this point, and in fact after Tompkins [Square Park] it went to Washington [Square Park], and we had to fight it there."

Although the Lower East Side community believed that they were victims of the City, who were trying to impose gentrification on their neighborhood, and struggled to represent themselves, other groups within the city, such as those surrounding Washington Square Park, were experiencing something similar.

Schulman also commented that people were not able to represent themselves in a meaningful way, stating that "All around New York City there's no example for success, because it was on such a large scale. You know, you have to understand that early on gentrification was presented as normal change it was there was a false normalization rhetoric but actually it was planned."

Although DePaola felt as though gentrification ultimately prevailed in the neighborhood, he still felt as though positive change had occurred due to his work, as many of the ideas that he, Times Up, and the Lower East Side community were promoting eventually spread throughout the city;

"Things start off in this neighborhood, the East Village, it gets pushed to the rest of the city with incredible resistance, then the city adopts the idea, says it was their idea, then tries to destroy the history of the idea, then they try to corporatize the idea. So how do they do that? It's a miracle to me it's a community idea, but the end result is them trying to corporatize it."

From these interviews, it is evident that much of what was included in the rhetoric surrounding the riots initially was still relevant to the conversation of what happened during the riots in retrospect. One difference when talking to community members was the hostility and personal

distaste for the police who were present during and after the riots, and the feeling of blame that was placed on them for pursuing the City's gentrification agenda.

CHAPTER 5: Discussion

The findings of the media analysis and interviews ultimately revealed several unifying themes between the public discourses that took place following the Crown Heights and Tompkins Square Park riots that are relevant to planning today:

Institutional Neglect

Gentrification

Public Space

While each of these themes were relevant, a broader theme of "outsiders" also infiltrated the conversation in both the media and among residents as well as traditional planning problems such as public health and safety and the representation of multiple voices. These issues are at the forefront of planning problems today, as more city residents take to public space to represent their frustration with issues such as police brutality, economic inequality and racism. In addition to taking place in different contexts and being discussed from different perspectives, these neighborhoods also had remarkably different approaches to resolving conflict through public communication and organization and found youth involvement beneficial and maintained healing activities.

5.1 Institutional neglect

Institutional neglect was experienced by both Crown Heights and the Lower East Side and was exemplified by biased police who were unequally distributed throughout neighborhoods; unfairly distributed government funds; ignorance of the housing and homeless problems; and lack of accountability in the justice system.

In the case of Crown Heights, community members sought answers to the death of Yankel Rosenbaum, but were greeted with an unresponsive justice system. Other frustrations arose because different groups within the community viewed the other as receiving special services in the form of funding and police services. In the case of the Lower East Side, residents felt as though the the key issues of housing and homelessness that had been part of the problem that led to the riots and violence were not being acknowledged by city officials in a sustainable way.

In both the Crown Heights and Tompkins Square Park riot cases, community members described the police as symbolizing inequities within their neighborhoods prior to the riots (Newsday, July 19, 1993)(Schulman, DePaola) and noted an increase in police presence after the riots (Schulman, DePaola) (Newsday, July 19, 1993). In the case of Crown Heights, this increased presence was attributed as a result of black and Lubavitcher unity (Newsday, July 19, 1993), while in the case of Tompkins Square, the increased police presence was viewed as a mechanism by which the City government could enforce their agenda of gentrification (Schulman, DePaola, Round). The public and community-driven discourse surrounding the Tompkins Square riots revealed that the community felt as though they could not relate to the police, who were viewed as outsiders that did not understand the residents and their needs and were not there to protect

the residents but rather to take crime off the street so that the neighborhood could be primed for gentrification (Schulman, DePaola, Round). Feelings of not being the priority of the police were also echoed in Crown Heights, where the black population were frustrated that the Lubavitcher community received special treatment and services from the police (Washington Jewish Week 2016). In both cases, the police were viewed as fueling tensions between community groups. In Crown Heights the violence erupted as a result of unequal police distribution that created tensions between black and Lubavitcher community groups, while in the case of Tompkins Square Park, the police were seen as protecting incoming gentrifiers, which drove an even greater wedge between original residents and new neighborhood residents.

In spite of these similarities, in the case of Crown Heights most community members reported to the media that community discourse facilitated by local organizations led to a more equitably served neighborhood by the police (Norman, Rabbi Hecht, Newsday, July 19, 1993). In contrast, the police presence that rose after the riots in Tompkins Square was hostile towards original community members and made the area dangerous for activists to represent themselves in public space (DePaola). Looking forward, community members would benefit from hosting an internal dialogue about how police are distributed in their community and who they are serving, in an effort to bring attention to the issue and create a more equitable situation in order to avoid conflict. Related to communicative planning theory, if planners had addressed these "systematically distorted communications[s] in systematically unequal social structures" (Huxley 2000, p. 370) associated with the issue of public safety, a traditional planning problem, a situation for "ideal speech" (Huxley 2000, p. 370) could be fostered and conversations could have been facilitated to acknowledge the problems and move forward and heal, which Crown Heights

community organizations such as the Crown Heights Youth Collective, Project CURE and Mothers to Mothers were able to do successfully and independently.

5.2 Gentrification

Crown Heights experienced huge increases in rental prices (Morris) and residents reported "feeling invisible" (Frankel, Mathis) today. Gentrification was also discussed as being responsible for creating new conflict within the community among different Jewish populations (Washington Jewish Week 2016), but the article in Washington Jewish Week used the media to demand that the conflict over gentrification be avoided. Discussions with tenant organizers revealed that gentrification altered the physical boundaries of Crown Heights, because realtors used different names to make the location seem more valuable to potential residents, and also made the area feel safer and more "cleaned up" (TRACY). This feeling of a safer, more clean neighborhood was not attributed to the gentrifiers directly, but to original community residents who started to value their land more and take greater pride in it following the incoming, wealthier population.

In the Lower East Side, interviews with residents who sought to fight against gentrification in their neighborhood felt as though they had lost the battle with the neighborhood ultimately gentrifying and pushing out non-white, low-income residents (Shulman, Round, DePaola). In spite of the formation of tenant organizations to protect housing, in the end gentrification still took place. DePaola was the only respondent who noted a positive aspect of the gentrification that occurred, by noting that the ideas about sustainability that were growing in the Lower East Side were ultimately pushed to the rest of the city, to the benefit of the larger population. Another common thread among interviewees and what was discussed in the media was that the

process of gentrification was perceived as being imposed on the community by the city and enforced with the police force (Shulman, Round, DePaola). Frustration and confusion was felt by residents towards the government, who were puzzled that they were being displaced when they had done so much to improve their community themselves (DePaola).

The Crown Heights and Lower East Side neighborhoods jointly experienced gentrification after the riots. In the case of Tompkins Square Park, gentrification was the the driving force behind conflict, while in the case of Crown Heights, gentrification occurred separately from the events of the riots, but was still discussed in association with them. Similarly, residents of both neighborhoods expressed feeling as though the lacked a meaningful mechanism to represent themselves and protect their communities in the face of gentrification. Through a communicative planning theory lens, the responsibility to promote discourse between community members and the government is the responsibility of planners. As a measure of preventing conflict when addressing issues of gentrification in the future, communities can benefit from planners assuming this responsibility and ensuring that participatory planning processes are run by people who are accountable to neighborhood residents and not elected representatives (Huxley).

5.3 Public Space

Public space was another theme that prevailed in the findings of Crown Heights and Tompkins Square Park riots. Both events took place in public space, as an attempt for people who felt marginalized by the government to reclaim ownership of the space. In Crown Heights, the rhetoric used in the media had a clear perception that public space was being invaded during the riots, especially by black youth. The conversation surrounding Tompkins Square demonized the

"anarchists" who were mostly youth, who "took over" the public space of the park in an effort to protect the rights of the homeless population and raise awareness of the displacement that was occurring due to gentrification. DePaola related the use of public space to "fight" the city and reclaim ownership over the neighborhood that residents had improved through their own tenacity, to the more recent events of Occupy Wall Street's occupation of Zucotti Park, showing how relevant the issue is today. The discussion generally reinforced how critical access to public space is for the purpose of democratic expression, especially in areas where populations have been traditionally repressed by the government.

In remembering the events of the riots, Crown Heights and the Lower East Side had drastically different approaches to utilizing public space to promote healing within the community. In Crown Heights, public space was used to host events for all members of the community such as tree-planting, memorial services and marches that were organized by local community groups, an approach that was considered successful by many. In this way, Crown Heights residents were successful in reclaiming public space where conflict had taken place by utilizing youth who had been perceived as exacerbating violence. In contrast, media discourse and interviews with community members today do not provide any examples of community organizations coming together in Tompkins Square Park or other public space within the community to memorialize the events of what happened or further help community members form relationships.

Looking back to Lefebvre's theories of spatial representation, it is clear that in the cases of both the Crown Heights and Tompkins Square Park riots a tension existed between representations of space projected by institutional forces that ignored representational spaces. Within this tension lies an opportunity for planners to advocate for citizens and facilitate

communication to align institutional expectations of how public space is used with every day spatial practices.

The lessons to be learned about public space from this research is twofold; that public space is necessary for representation of communities, and that providing an outlet for legitimate representation through better management of community discourse could prevent public space being utilized in a violent way in the future. It is possible, that if residents of both communities had felt as though they had an adequate way to voice their frustrations to the government prior to the riots, that they ultimately would not have occurred, as it would have been unnecessary to occupy physical space in order to be seen and heard, again reinforcing the principles of communicative planning theory.

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5.4 Planning

The findings of this research reinforce that communicative planning theory is a preventative step towards community conflict that can help ease tensions and support positive discourse and understanding through the sharing of active information and honest conversation led by community members. The research shows that moving forward, communities who struggle to represent themselves to the government in the face of forces such as gentrification and poorly distributed government services may find healing and progress in the formation of community organizations, but may also pay costs of gentrification after "cleaning up" their communities and investing in their neighborhoods as evidenced by Crown Heights and Tompkins Square. This raises questions for future study regarding how communities can invest in themselves without

being vulnerable to real estate development and displacement. More open communication and the practice of communicative planning theory may also benefit the government in addition to communities, as it could prevent the violent occupation of urban space, which requires financial resources to address.

In light of recent political activity involving the use of public space and these precedents, it is clear that issues surrounding representation in public space presents opportunities for planners to use their expertise to reduce conflict by facilitating discourse and providing outlets for legitimate participation in planning-related problems. This research, combined with Lefebvre's theories surrounding representation in public space and communicative planning theory, demonstrates that planning and planners can play a critical role in ensuring that democratic expression and representation is free of violent conflict and that there are no barriers to engaging in meaningful participatory processes.

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APPENDIX A

Survey

1. How long have you/did you live in the area?

2. What prompted you to get involved at the community level?

3. Agree or disagree on a scale of 1 - 5 (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)

   a) I felt welcome in the public space of the neighborhood before the conflict

        1   2   3   4   5

   b) I felt welcome in the public space of the neighborhood after the conflict

        1   2   3   4   5

   c) Looking back at the time period, I felt safe out and about

        1   2   3   4   5

   d) I feel as though I contributed to change in my community

        1   2   3   4   5