

GENTRIFICATION, DISPLACEMENT AND THE ETHNIC NEIGHBORHOOD OF  
GREENPOINT, BROOKLYN

by

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A THESIS

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“Gentrification, Displacement and the Ethnic Neighborhood of Greenpoint, Brooklyn,” a thesis prepared by Justyna Goworowska in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in the Department of Geography. This thesis has been approved and accepted by:

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This thesis examines the various forces shaping neighborhood change in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, and concludes that the future of the community's Polish ethnic enclave is in jeopardy. Findings reveal that Greenpoint, a long-standing center of the Polish ethnic community in New York City, is experiencing rapid gentrification resulting in displacement of area residents. Third-wave gentrification in Greenpoint is driven by the changing global economy, lack of national redistribution policies and local tax abatement plans and zoning changes. Combined with Poland's accession to the European Union and the resulting shift in migration patterns, Greenpoint is facing an eradication of its distinctive cultural landscape. Based on an analysis of US Census data and information from survey questionnaires and interviews, it is evident that gentrification-led displacement is now underway. Greenpoint's Polish residents are on the move, creating new ethnic enclaves in other Queens neighborhoods of Ridgewood, Middle Village and Maspeth.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the issues of gentrification, gentrification-led displacement and neighborhood change now underway in an ethnic neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York. Greenpoint, the neighborhood in question, is transitioning from a working-class, predominantly Polish ethnic neighborhood into a professionalized, hip and young poly-cultural area.

In my research I examine the multiscalar forces shaping neighborhood change in Greenpoint. I consider the local forces driving gentrification in Greenpoint, such as rezoning and tax abatement plans, as well as “overspill gentrification” from Williamsburg, a neighborhood just south of Greenpoint. I also look at how the changes in the global economy and the federal policy on redistribution of resources influence cities and the process of gentrification within them. Apart from looking at the causes of gentrification in Greenpoint, I also explore its consequences, with a specific focus on displacement.

However, the story of neighborhood change in Greenpoint is not only affected by gentrification and gentrification-led displacement. The changing migration patterns, resulting from Poland’s membership in the European Union, influence the future of Poles in Greenpoint. Decreased migration combined with gentrification-led displacement is speeding up the process of homogenization of the cultural landscape of Greenpoint. The

neighborhood faces an uncertain future given the multiple factors that are driving its transformation.

### **Research Significance**

This thesis on gentrification, displacement and neighborhood change in Greenpoint, Brooklyn is very timely. In recent years the process of gentrification has exploded reaching neighborhoods far removed from the inner city, affecting rural communities, as well as touching cities outside of the First World. Gentrification literature has also expanded, addressing multiple perspectives on this critically important research topic. The scope of the research has broadened to encompass new theoretical explanations of the phenomenon and also to examine its consequences. After years of focusing on the definition of gentrification, as well as the gentrifier himself, the social justice and policy implications of gentrification are now on the agenda as well. Studies of gentrification have also become much more interdisciplinary, and are now not only the forte of geographers or urban studies scholars, but also include architects and lawyers.

Despite such a large body of literature on gentrification, as presented in the following chapter, Tom Slater (2006) points out that unfortunately many of the recent publications tend to portray the process in a very positive light. There is no question that gentrification is beneficial. The benefits, though, are rained on the wealthy gentrifiers and real estate developers, and not the working-class residents. Atkinson (2002), in a review of over one hundred gentrification studies, finds that: "...majority of research evidence on gentrification points to its detrimental effects" (p. 20). Furthermore, his gentrification research finds: "displacement and moving around of social problems rather than a net

gain either through local taxes, improved physical environment or a reduction in the demand for sprawling urban development” (Atkinson 2002:21).

Together with the sugarcoating of the process of gentrification, which is often replaced with alternative words such as regeneration, revitalization, renaissance, and residentialization, displacement also receives new labels, such as professionalization and “social mixing.” Slater (2006) goes as far as to say that “displacement got displaced” from current research and gentrification is very often seen as a “healthy economic present and future for cities across the globe” (p. 738). That is why it is incredibly important to pursue research which shines a light on issues that are uncomfortable, but yet crucial to examine.

Therefore, this thesis addresses the negative outcomes of gentrification, with a particular focus on displacement. The neighborhood effects of gentrification in Greenpoint include not only the shrinking pool of affordable housing, up-zoning of manufacturing areas and added stress to the area’s infrastructure, but most importantly population displacement. This research is a direct reaction to the gap in current literature and a response to Slater’s statement proclaiming that: “displacement is and always will be vital to an understanding of gentrification, in terms of retaining ... a critical perspective on the process” (2006:748).

In addition, this thesis research contributes to yet another gap in the gentrification literature, the relationship between ethnicity and gentrification. As discussed by Lees (2000) “class and gender studies of gentrification have far outweighed studies of ethnicity and race” (p. 400). Even studies that have addressed race and gentrification have focused

primarily on a specific group as the gentrifier, for example African Americans (see Taylor 1992; Lees 1996; Downer 1999). My thesis research is, therefore, one of the first gentrification studies that not only focuses on an ethnic group, but also examines the ethnic group not as a gentrifier, but as a displacee.

Furthermore, as discussed in the following chapters, this project employs a unique combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to measure gentrification, and gentrification-led displacement. “In a huge literature on gentrification, there are almost no qualitative accounts of displacement. Doing something about this is vital if critical perspectives are to be reinstated” (Slater 2006:749). By employing qualitative survey and interview data, my research provides the human element in the study of gentrification-led displacement and corroborates the often unreliable or simply unavailable quantitative data.

Moreover, as a woman geographer, an immigrant and a member of the Polish ethnic group, I am making a unique contribution to the field of urban geography, which is still dominated by white male perspectives (Lees 1999). My own positionality allows me to provide a different point of view on this study of neighborhood change. Slater, Curran and Lees (2004) lament the abundance of research on the middle class by the middle class researchers. They challenge the ivory tower scholars to “find and listen to the people most at risk of displacement” in order to provide a more accurate depiction of the process of gentrification and its consequences (Slater et al. 2004:1142).



## **Research Questions**

After conducting an extensive literature review and becoming aware of some of the aforementioned gaps in the gentrification research, I was inspired to ask a number of questions. One of the leading issues in my research is examining the global, national and local forces driving gentrification. I am also interested in seeing how these forces materialize on the ground in Greenpoint. My thesis also extensively addresses the visible and possible future outcomes of gentrification in Greenpoint.

One of the most important consequences of gentrification is displacement. As mentioned before, gentrification-led displacement is a phenomenon that is incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to measure. I decided to follow in Newman and Wyly's (2006) footsteps and employ a mixed methods approach to the study of displacement in Greenpoint. Through conducting surveys and interviews in the area I was able to look at the potential for displacement of the neighborhood working class residents.

Apart from focusing on the broad scale phenomena of gentrification and displacement which affect numerous cities and their neighborhoods, I focused on the neighborhood ethnic factor. I was particularly interested in examining the consequences that gentrification in Greenpoint might have on the community's Polish ethnic neighborhood. However, in the process of conducting research I realized that apart from gentrification, another international scale process is affecting neighborhood change in Greenpoint.

After speaking to a few of my interviewees I realized that Poland's membership in the European Union is influencing local scale dynamics in the United States. Based on

data presented in the analysis chapter it is not unreasonable to state that the opening of EU's borders resulted in smaller numbers of Polish immigrants arriving in the United States. Therefore, I was curious to examine how the changing patterns of Polish emigration might influence the integrity and longevity of Greenpoint as a Polish ethnic neighborhood.

### **Case Study Site**

Multiple reasons influenced my decision to choose Greenpoint, Brooklyn as my research site. It is a neighborhood that I am very familiar with, even though I have never lived there. Just like any other Polish immigrant in New York City, Greenpoint represents the heart of my ethnic community. It is a neighborhood I frequently visited and still do when I am in New York, whether because I need a haircut or because I want to shop for Polish products. I also had the opportunity to work in Greenpoint during the summer of 2005 and the summer of 2007. My brief employment in Greenpoint in 2007 allowed for a better access to the local community, but also provided numerous opportunities for participant observation.

Moreover, Greenpoint is in its primary stages of gentrification, which allows for the unique opportunity to study the potential for displacement of its current residents. Given the difficulty of studying gentrification-led displacement due to the lack of access to the displaced population, I decided to gain access to the population most at risk of displacement.

Naturally, the fact that I am Polish myself provides for a better access to the community. Many of Greenpoint's residents are non-English speaking Polish immigrants.

In many instances the period of their residence in the U.S. does not matter, as many of them have lived in Greenpoint for over ten years and have not developed English language skills. As opposed to an outsider, I am more attuned to some of the residents' illegal immigration status. The fear of deportation for many of them is very real, resulting in apprehension to surveys or interviews.

### **Structure**

This introduction serves as an opening chapter for the rest of this thesis. It introduces the case study and the research questions and provides a foundation for what lies ahead. Chapter II is an overview of over forty years of the major strands of research on gentrification, as well as gentrification-led displacement. This chapter discusses literature focused both on the causes and effects of the process of gentrification, as well as the actors involved in the process. Apart from presenting gentrification research in a chronological order, Chapter II also examines briefly the literature on Polish immigrants in the U.S. to provide context for the ethnic neighborhood of Greenpoint.

Chapter III has two distinct parts. One focuses on the theories of gentrification while the other outlines the methods used to conduct this study. Production and consumption-oriented explanations of gentrification are explored in the first section, as well as different gentrification models, such as the third-wave model. In the second part of this chapter, the choice of the mixed methods approach in this case study is extensively defended. Moreover, all quantitative and qualitative data sources are presented and accompanied by a justification for their use.

Chapter IV provides the reader with a historical background of the neighborhood of Greenpoint. The rich manufacturing legacy of Greenpoint is explored and relationships with its southern neighbor, Williamsburg, are examined. This chapter also introduces the reader to the changes currently taking place in the area. In order to set the stage for the analysis and conclusions chapters that follow, this chapter also briefly discusses the forces driving gentrification and displacement in Greenpoint, as well as the international factors contributing to neighborhood change.

The final two chapters of this thesis are very much intertwined. Chapter V focuses on the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected for this project. The data, which were mapped and graphed for greater legibility, are discussed at length and help reach conclusions with respect to the consequences of gentrification and the presence of gentrification-led displacement in Greenpoint. Chapter VI addresses the four research questions outlined in this Introduction. It also provides a summary of my research findings and ties them together with some of the theories and gentrification models put forth in Chapter III.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the major strands of research on gentrification, as well as gentrification-led displacement. The literature reviewed in this chapter examines the causes and effects of the process of gentrification, looks at numerous actors involved in the process and delves into the multiscalar relationships gentrification shares with other phenomena. This chapter is structured chronologically, following the major developments in gentrification research, decade after decade. For the purpose of this thesis, the literature on Polish immigrants is briefly reviewed as well to provide context for the ethnic neighborhood of Greenpoint. Moreover, connections are drawn between the gentrification literature and the ethnic group research articles, as gentrification plays an important role in the process of ethnic neighborhood change.

Gentrification research has gone through many waves in the last fifty years. The earliest publications focused on simply defining the phenomenon, with later ones addressing the processes shaping gentrification and discussed early theories of gentrification, such as Neil Smith's rent gap theory. Upon development of the production and consumption-oriented explanations for gentrification and numerous research studies devoted to the gentrifiers themselves, more researchers began calling for gentrification research from the perspective of the working class residents of newly gentrifying

neighborhoods. Gentrification-led displacement has always been a part of the gentrification literature, gaining or losing in popularity depending on the decade.

More recently, the gentrification literature has exploded, as has the phenomenon itself. It is now a critically important research topic, not only for large urban areas of the United States, Canada or the United Kingdom, but also for cities such as Prague, Brussels and Melbourne. The scope of the research has also broadened, with new and ever more diverse theoretical explanations of the phenomenon emerging from various perspectives, not only from the standpoint of the gentrifier. The social justice and policy implications of gentrification are now on the agenda as well.

Studies of gentrification, once a topic mainly for geographers and urban studies' scholars, now involve researchers in disciplines such as architecture, anthropology, political science and law. The interdisciplinary work exposes not only new ways of understanding gentrification, but also new methods of measuring it. Most recent research also refers to the spatial differences in gentrification, since the process differs for every neighborhood.

### **Gentrification Defined and Theorized**

Research on gentrification began in the 1960s in selected European cities, especially in the cities of the United Kingdom. In 1964 in an Introduction to *London: Aspects of Change*, an edited volume by the Centre for Urban Studies, Ruth Glass was the first to define the phenomenon of gentrification.

One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes – upper and lower. ...Larger Victorian houses, downgraded in an earlier or recent period – which were used as lodging houses or were otherwise

multiple occupation – have been upgraded once again. ...Once this process of gentrification starts in a district, it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed (Glass 1964:xviii).

From the very beginning, displacement and transformation of social class were part of the gentrification process. Even though many scholars would attempt to divorce these phenomena from one another, a number of researchers, such as Smith and Williams (1986), Ley (1996), Atkinson (2000), Newman and Wyly (2006) remained faithful to the original definition and much of their work focuses on displacement and other negative outcomes of gentrification, especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The true beginning of research on gentrification in the United States began in earnest after 1975 (Beauregard 1985). This was a decade when urban geography shifted to the “back to the city” movement, a phenomenon characterized by middle classes’ reclaiming of the inner cities, which is in direct opposition to the suburbanization of the 1950s. Gentrification became a major part of this process and was used as an urban renewal strategy, very often initiated through state-led programs as exemplified by Philadelphia’s Society Hill (Smith 1979).

Neil Smith and David Ley were two of the first researchers to attempt to theorize gentrification in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Smith’s approach varied greatly from Ley’s. Smith, in his 1979 article, provides an in-depth discussion of the causes of gentrification with a focus on the economic forces behind the phenomenon. Smith examines the “supply side” of the gentrification equation through the rent gap theory.

The rent gap refers to the difference between ground rent and potential rent at a particular location. If the gap is wide enough, this makes the property or an entire neighborhood ripe for gentrification. The process also requires time and significant disinvestment. Disinvestment can occur, both through honest and “natural” processes, such as undermaintenance of property, as well as through now illegal real estate tactics, such as block busting and red lining. Further disinvestment in the neighborhood, decay and finally abandonment, lead to just the right conditions for redevelopment, especially in neighborhoods where the rent gap is particularly wide. State-led initiatives can play a role in the process of revitalizing the abandoned area, but it is usually a collective action undertaken by communities and developers that drives gentrification (Smith 1979).

David Ley takes a different approach to explaining gentrification. He focuses more on the cultural aspects of gentrification, providing the “demand side” of the equation. He is also much more holistic in his theory of gentrification, attempting to unify the consumption and production forces driving redevelopment. Moreover, Ley goes beyond the theoretical understandings of gentrification to present empirical evidence in support of the process.

Ley (1986) attempts to bring together the common explanations of gentrification and juxtapose them with the reality of case studies in Canadian cities. According to Ley, forces shaping gentrification can be divided into four, not exclusive, categories: demographic change, housing market dynamics, urban amenity values, and the economic base.



The demographic changes Ley is referring to include changes in household size, particularly for the baby boomers' generation. Two-wage earner households with no children became more common in the 1970s and 1980s, presenting the housing market with different needs. Moreover, the 1970s fuel crises made a number of people aware of the importance of the cost of their commute to work. Living close to the city (or preferably in the inner-city) reduced travel expenses.

As for the housing market forces on gentrification, Ley presents two alternative concepts, one more demand oriented and the other focused on supply. The rising prices of suburban homes in the 1970s and high mortgage rates forced many to consider housing options outside of the suburbs. The so called "second choice" home was either an inner-city apartment or a remodeled inner-city row house. On the supply end of the story, Ley brings up Smith's rent gap theory, where a significant difference between ground rent and potential rent makes an area ripe for redevelopment.

Another set of factors contributing to gentrification, according to Ley's research, are the amenities of the city. Gentrifiers of the 1970s and 1980s have a sizeable disposable income, are childless and seek non-family-oriented lifestyles. "The opportunity for contacts with a wide variety of people was the reason offered in 1972 by 80 percent of a national sample of Americans who preferred to live in a large city" (Ley 1986:524). Access to different cultural events, a larger array of jobs with higher wages, also bring people into the inner city. Moreover, aesthetically pleasing areas, such as waterfront neighborhoods or historic districts, are usually the first to gentrify. Therefore, consumption practices of the middle class begin to shape reinvestment in the inner city.

Last but not least, Ley points to the economic forces behind city revitalization. The shift in metropolitan economies from secondary to tertiary and quaternary saturates the city with white-collar employees, who become the gentry that redevelop inner-city neighborhoods.

The debate between Smith and Ley was the main focus of the gentrification literature in geography for more than a decade. The dispute still circles around the economic versus the cultural factors leading to gentrification. However, increasingly attempts have been made to merge the two approaches. Both Smith and Ley in their 1987 exchange in the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* tackle economic and cultural factors in their discussions of the causes of gentrification. Moreover, researchers are on a mission to develop new theories and approaches that would help better understand gentrification. In addition, the causes of gentrification are being investigated as well as the effects of this process.

Smith and Williams' (1986) edited volume, *Gentrification of the City*, answers the call for a greater focus on the influence of gentrification on the working class and delves into the effects of the phenomenon. Another theme related to the working class running through gentrification research is the study of gentrification-led displacement. Marcuse (1985) calls for an involvement of public policy in order to mitigate the effects of gentrification and to reduce displacement. He also, for the first time, points to "exclusionary displacement," i.e. the inability to move into a housing unit, because it has gentrified and its price has become prohibitive.

Beauregard (1985) focuses mostly on the meaning of gentrification and the type of attention it attracts. He begins by analyzing the “insignificance” of the phenomenon. Based on statistical data, gentrification is not incredibly important. To begin with, there is no data on the dollar amounts spent on gentrification, i.e. renovations, new housing units, etc. Furthermore, populations affected by gentrification represent a very small percentage of the total city population. And even though gentrification can be statistically significant on a neighborhood scale, it is quite insignificant on a city scale. “Overall the evidence at various spatial scales suggests that gentrification is a relatively insignificant part of the *total* process of neighborhood change and housing rehabilitation” (Beauregard 1985:54).

However, the statistical significance of gentrification is not the be all and end all of the phenomenon. Beauregard points out the ideological, political and social ramifications of gentrification, which can be disturbing even when the process has not taken over all of United States’ cities. He discusses the historical background of the origins of the process of gentrification in the United States, pointing out forces such as suburbanization, white-flight and loss of jobs in cities, particularly manufacturing ones with a replacement in service jobs. In the 1970s, cities were facing disinvestment coupled with the decreasing role of the federal government, with respect to redistribution of resources. Financially strapped cities, devoid of capital with rising social services needs were in need of a solution. “From certain perspectives, then, gentrification looked to be an antidote for most urban ills” (Beauregard 1985:56). For many, such as media, elected officials, investors and developers, gentrification was a promise – promise of a better life for all, social ‘up-scaling’, all with little or no government investment. Unfortunately,

gentrification is all too often not a perfect solution as it brings with it certain problems, such as displacement.

### **The Emancipatory and Revanchist City**

After nearly two decades of solid research on gentrification and displacement, the 1990s were not as ground-breaking as the 1980s. The recession underway in the United States and the United Kingdom in the early 1990s was part of the reason. Plunging real estate values, rising mortgage rates and corporate downsizing had both the media and the academics convinced that the end of gentrification had arrived (Lees 2000). Smith (1996) cautioned, however, that the gentrification game was not over yet.

During this decade not much happened in the area of gentrification-led displacement as displacement is next to impossible to quantify. "In the neoliberal context of public policy being constructed on a 'reliable' (i.e. quantitative) evidence base, no numbers on displacement meant no policy to address it" (Slater 2006:748). Moreover, constant debates over the supply and demand explanations of gentrification and calls for new directions in theories of gentrification provided little material for new publications (Lees 2000).

Eric Clark (1992) proposed that research on gentrification be looked at through various models and perspectives since gentrification, as a complex phenomenon, resists definitive qualification and cannot be labeled. Moreover, Clark argued that the various models employed to study gentrification should not be considered as mutually exclusive.

Jan van Weesep (1994) followed Clark and criticized current approaches to gentrification as too simplistic. Instead of looking for simple causal relationships,

researchers should focus on the complexity of the phenomenon and the problems it creates. He also argued that calls for the end to gentrification are ludicrous, as it is one of social change processes. van Weesep also pointed out the spatial variation of gentrification and displacement, noting that they are not the same in all areas. Therefore, local governments and policymakers are in the best position to deal with the benefits and drawbacks of gentrification.

These calls fell on deaf ears to some extent, as two more, polar opposite, mutually exclusive theses materialized. The emancipatory and revanchist city perspectives emerged in mid 1990s. Caulfield (1994) first developed the emancipatory perspective, using Toronto as his case study. The emancipatory thesis states that the city is a liberating space and that gentrification helps to free the middle class from the cookie-cutter suburban life. Inner-city neighborhoods provide the middle class with the much needed diversity and enable a creation of new social practices (Lees 2000). Ley (1996) and Butler (1997) were also important in the development of the emancipatory perspective. This is quite logical given their earlier focus on the human agency in the process of gentrification (the consumption side of the equation). Slater (2006) however, is quite critical of this perspective. "This discourse tends to sugarcoat the process with a sort of romantic glaze that has the (often unintended) consequence of steering the understanding of gentrification away from the negative effects it produces" (Slater 2006:741).

The revanchist city thesis is developed by Neil Smith (1996) who claims that gentrification is a way for the middle class to take revenge on the poor of the inner-city neighborhoods for taking the city over in the 1970s. This perspective is in direct

opposition to the emancipatory city concept. The middle class does not seek emancipation in the inner city, on the contrary, it seeks to reclaim the inner-city from the poor who stole it and brought it to its knees. Smith turns the city into a combat zone, not a liberating space as Caulfield envisioned (Lees 2000).

### **Gentrification and Displacement in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, gentrification begins to be alternatively referred to as regeneration, revitalization, renaissance, and residentialization with respect to displacement of other economic activities. Displacement also receives new labels, professionalization being the most prominent. It refers to neighborhood residents' advancement in social class, which supposedly affects everyone in the area and therefore no one gets displaced.

Tom Slater (2006) points out that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century gentrification research has lost its focus on rent increases and displacement, and began to concentrate on the 'hip' factor connected to the phenomenon. Gentrification is often thought of as a "healthy economic present and future for cities across the globe" (Slater 2006:738) It is no longer a "dirty word" as first referred to by Neil Smith in 1996.

Zukin and Kosta (2004) demonstrate this trend in their research of the East Village in New York City, or particularly the one square block of East 9<sup>th</sup> Street. They praise the economic and aesthetic benefits gentrification brought to this area, as exemplified by high end clothing stores, such as Eileen Fisher.

The positive outlook on gentrification spreads into other disciplines as well. A Miami architect, Andres Duany publishes a short piece entitled "Three Cheers for

Gentrification” in a 2001 issue of the *American Enterprise*. Duany states: “Gentrification rebalances a concentration of poverty by providing the tax base, rub-off work ethic, and political effectiveness of a middle class, and in the process improves the quality of life for all of a community’s residents. It is the rising tide that lifts all boats” (2001:37). Duany also mentions that gentrification-led displacement is a myth, given that gentrifying neighborhoods are not being taken away from the poor, they are simply returning to their natural state from a few decades ago. Another cheer for gentrification comes from a law professor Peter Byrne, in his 2003 article “Two Cheers for Gentrification”.

As surprising as it may seem, forty years after Ruth Glass first defined the term gentrification, there is an ongoing debate in the literature on the definition of the phenomenon. As much as it is important to have a uniform understanding of its meaning, so much research has been devoted to this issue, that it seems a waste to be publishing full articles dealing with the problem. Hackworth and Smith in their 2001 article provide a thorough guide through the evolving definition of gentrification, as seen over the years. Moreover, Hackworth (2002) provides a short definition of gentrification, in hopes of ending the debate once and for all. According to his understanding gentrification is “the production of space for progressively more affluent users” (Hackworth 2002:815).

Some examples of the never ending definition debate include, Boddy and Lambert (2002), Tallon and Bromley (2004), and Bromley, Tallon and Thomas (2005). Boddy and Lambert (2002) use the term gentrification but exclude the “class transformation” aspect of its definition. Their motivation is unclear, but thanks to such a creative way of interpreting gentrification, the changes occurring in Bristol, their research site, are simply

the result of the needs and wants of the middle class, and they are not in fact gentrification. Bromley et al. (2005) move even further, and claim that the phenomenon they are researching is actually residentialization and not gentrification. Their understanding of residentialization is the replacement of all other land uses with housing and it is a “response to the new spaces and opportunities created by deindustrialization, decentralization and suburbanization” (Bromley et al. 2005:2423). They argue that residentialization is a positive process since it recycles derelict land and buildings, limits leapfrogging and peripheral development and results in more compact cities. Unfortunately, the forces that Bromley et al. claim to be driving residentialization, to most scholars, especially Smith (2002), actually further the process of gentrification.

Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, arguments over what frameworks to apply to gentrification and how to better understand it persist. Scholars not only squabble over the definition of gentrification, but also over how to best explain the processes leading to the phenomenon. Whether it is the production aspect (i.e. economic factors) associated with the work of Neil Smith, or the consumption aspect (i.e. cultural factors) tied with David Ley, time is being diverted away from understanding the effects of gentrification. I argue that these impacts on people and place should be at the forefront of gentrification research in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Redfern (2003) discusses what makes gentrification ‘gentrification’? As he points out, so many phenomena have been labeled gentrification, but not always appropriately. For one, he brings up Loretta Lees’ (2003) concept of super-gentrification, where an even richer class of gentry displaces and outbids the already wealthy residents of Brooklyn



Heights. To Redfern, this is not really gentrification. According to Redfern, gentrification requires, on the supply side, the availability of improvable housing, and on the demand side, an anxiety among the population about their identity and status. Redfern sees status purely in terms of an economic one, therefore the only difference between gentrifiers and displacees is their access to means, as their motivations are the same. They both want to maintain identity and status. In the process of gentrification, however, only one group gets to do that. The gentrifiers affirm their identity and status by gentrifying a neighborhood and at the same time, they create anxiety about identity and status for the displacees.

Another theme running through gentrification literature is displacement, or rather lack of it. Slater (2006) claims that “displacement got displaced” from research on gentrification. Atkinson (2000) brings up the issue of invisibility of displacees, who are no longer around to be counted. Newman and Wyly (2006) repeat Atkinson’s observation by stating: “...it is difficult to find people who have been displaced, particularly if these people are poor... By definition, displaced residents have disappeared from the very places where researchers and census takers go to look for them” (p. 27).

Hamnett (2003) seems to be one of the gentrification skeptics and opts for a different understanding of the phenomenon taking place. “The transformation which has taken place in the occupational class structure of London has been associated with the gradual replacement of one class by another, rather than large-scale direct displacement” (Hamnett 2003:2454). He refuses to admit that regardless of a lack of quantitative evidence, displacement, rather than professionalization has occurred. Once again the

thesis of the 'blinking-out' of the working classes is presented, exactly as it was in Butler (2003).

Freeman and Braconi's (2002) research on gentrification-led displacement resulted in somewhat surprising observations. According to the authors, low-income residents of gentrifying neighborhoods were more likely to stay in the neighborhood rather than relocate, as they desired the improved services, safety and aesthetics of the neighborhood. These results were "seen by the media and policy-makers as having put a verdict on gentrification and displacement" (Slater 2006:748). Freeman and Braconi did note that through shrinking the numbers of affordable housing-units the poor get adversely affected by the middle class, however, that point was lost on the media and the policy-makers.

Freeman later published a clarification to his original research in 2005, pointing at the inflation of housing prices as being the primary concern in gentrifying neighborhoods. "Households that would have formerly been able to find housing in gentrifying neighborhoods must now search elsewhere....Moreover, although displacement may be relatively rare in gentrifying neighborhoods, it is perhaps such a traumatic experience to nonetheless engender widespread concern" (Freeman 2005:488). Freeman exposed the phenomenon of "exclusionary displacement" first pointed out by Marcuse (1985), which on the ground translates to the inability to move into a housing unit, because it has gentrified and its price became prohibitive. Freeman also pointed to the emotional cost of displacement, earlier emphasized by Beauregard (1985), often overlooked in research concentrated on finding empirical evidence of displacement.

Newman and Wyly (2006) respond to Freeman and Braconi (2002) with a detailed analysis of the New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey data as well as thirty three interviews with community members and activists in the seven gentrifying New York City neighborhoods identified by Freeman and Braconi. Newman and Wyly acknowledge that the NYCHVS dataset has its shortcomings and therefore any speculation on displacement is difficult to make. They do find that the rate of displacement in New York City varied between six and ten percent each year, between 1989 and 2002. Even though, it is a small rate in a city of eight million, it cannot be ignored. Their qualitative research is used to corroborate the faulty quantitative data. Based on their interviews, gentrification-induced displacement is evident in all boroughs of New York City.

Newman and Wyly also look at low-income residents who do not get displaced but seek strategies to stay put in gentrifying neighborhoods. This is one group that is not considered by any data set. It becomes evident through their interviews that many immigrants, elderly or low-income residents double or triple-up, move in with family or enter the city shelter system in order to cope with increasing rents. This theme is also explored recently by Marcuse (2005) and van Criekingen (2006). Newman and Wyly also point to “exclusionary displacement” first explored by Marcuse (1985) and also considered by Freeman (2005) in his clarification piece.

### **Neoliberalism and Contemporary Cities**

Neoliberalism is another theme that is prominent in the gentrification literature of this century. Smith (2002) argues that today’s cities are facing a new form of urbanism.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century liberalism gave way to 21<sup>st</sup> century neoliberalism, which ushered in strong emphasis on the freeing of the market from government controls, cutting social services, deregulation, especially of environmental protection and job safety, and privatization of formerly state run operations such as, highways, railroads, hospitals or prisons (Smith 2002). Moreover, the ease in communication, transportation and increasing financial deregulation changed the scale of economic production and the extent of capital mobility. Regional production is a thing of the past, whereas “metropolitan scale is an expression of global change” (Smith 2002:434). International migration has freed nations and cities from reliance on local labor, enabling large concessions to corporate capital and cutbacks in local services without fear of labor shortage (Smith 2002).

Smith’s discussion of gentrification fits in very well into the literature on the changing global economy, as he proclaims it to be a new ‘global urban strategy.’ The new gentrification, “third wave” according to Hackworth and Smith (2001), displays five specific characteristics. First of all, the role of the state in inner city redevelopment has increased dramatically. As Smith (2002) notes, urban policy no longer shapes urban economic growth, but is an intricate part of it. In addition, the role and extent of penetration of the global capital into local redevelopment initiatives is unprecedented. Meanwhile, opposition to gentrification seems to have taken a back seat. Though often associated with core urban areas, gentrification is moving outwards into areas farther away from the urban center. This is especially true for areas with amenities, such as a waterfront, historical architecture or parkland. Last but not least, local governments are

increasingly joining in with corporate powers in ushering gentrification (Hackworth 2002; Leitner 1990).

Current, “third-wave” era of gentrification is driven by state and local governments and their social programs, such as “social mixing” (Rose 2004; Blomley 2004; Slater 2004; Smith 2002). Social mixing implies the purposeful actions by local governments that attempt to move middle class residents into working class neighborhoods. The strategy is undertaken in order to balance out decaying neighborhoods, encourage redevelopment and home-ownership. Slater (2006) quickly points out that masquerading gentrification as ‘social mixing’ is more than obvious. “Gentrification disguised as ‘social mix’ serves as an excellent example of how the rhetoric and reality of gentrification has been replaced by a different discursive, theoretical and policy language that consistently deflects criticism and resistance” (Slater 2006:751).

Many other, less developed trends are now present in gentrification research, some closely related to the phenomenon, some not. Some of the research projects described in a recent edited volume by Atkinson and Bridge (2005) focus on finding neighborhoods that had very positive experiences with gentrification. Yet another project explores the phenomenon of social preservation, (Brown-Saracino 2004) which is related to gentrification but, according to the author, it is not gentrification. “Social preservationists” migrate to neighborhoods and small towns because they are drawn to their social authenticity. They also want to protect the neighborhood and its old-time residents, which puts them in direct opposition to displacement.

### **The Missing Puzzle to Gentrification Research**

Loretta Lees (2000) focuses on the theoretical conceptualizations related to gentrification that have been developed thus far. She also examines the relationship between gentrification and gender, homosexuality, race, ethnicity and class. She points out that: “To date class and gender studies of gentrification have far outweighed studies of ethnicity and race” (Lees 2000:400). To date, there has been more of a focus on race and gentrification, as exemplified by studies of African Americans as gentrifiers (Taylor 1992; Lees 1996; Downer 1999), and also racial groups as victims of gentrification (Smith 1996; Ley 1995). Despite decades of work on gentrification we have yet to see a study of an ethnic group in the process of being displaced owing to gentrification.

The Poles of Greenpoint, Brooklyn are just beginning to experience gentrification-led displacement, which makes them an ideal ethnic group to study. Literature on Poles in the United States is quite scarce, especially recent publications. Little has been published about the ethnic group in the last twenty years, which is puzzling, given that nearly nine million Americans claimed Polish ancestry in the 2000 Census, with an additional 500,000 foreign born Poles (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000). Moreover, the scant published literature focuses mainly on the history of the waves of Polish migration, spatial patterns of settlement around the United States, assimilation to the American way of life and often the community life of American Polonia (Polzin 1973; Lopata 1976; Golab 1977; Bukowczyk 1996). Somewhat more recent work focuses on the formation of Polish ethnic communities. However, this research largely centers on

the evolution of Polish communities and the importance of the Catholic Church, Polish media outlets and Solidarity (Kantowicz 1995).

It seems that in recent years more has been published about Poles in the United Kingdom. British researchers focus on the Polish diaspora in Britain, with a particular focus on the post World War II migration (Winslow 1999) as well as women's roles within this refugee community (Temple 1994, 1995). Even more recently, Burrell (2003) looks at the transnational activities of an established small group of Poles in a British town of Leicester and examines their connections with the homeland, both before and after the fall of communism.

According to American researchers, majority of Poles arriving in eastern and Midwestern parts of the United States, settled in urban areas, such as Chicago, New York and Detroit (Noble 1992). In addition, similarly to other immigrant groups, Poles formed ethnic neighborhoods, resulting in a clustered settlement pattern. Some of the reasons for such a settlement pattern include presence of fellow compatriots speaking a common language, low inner-city rents, proximity to places of employment and public transportation, and presence of ethnic churches and other institutions (Noble 1992). These factors most definitely played out in the establishment of Greenpoint as a Polish ethnic neighborhood. These Polish clustered ethnic communities are also often transnational communities. Given that many migrants are illegal residents, tourists who overstayed their six month visa allowance, they often maintain connections to the homeland.

The preceding literature review provides an excellent background for this thesis and situates this case study in more than forty years of broad gentrification research. Apart from gaining a better understanding of the major developments in gentrification research, this chapter also briefly examines the Polish ethnic group, its history and settlement. In addition, the following chapter devoted to theoretical underpinnings and methodology is greatly informed by this literature review.



## CHAPTER III

### THEORY AND METHODS

This chapter provides the theoretical background, as well as the methodological approach for the empirical study of gentrification, displacement and neighborhood change in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. In order to gain a better understanding of contemporary ideas in gentrification theory and methods, one needs to examine how these concepts have been shaped. I begin with an overview of the two major opposing gentrification theories, the production and the consumption-oriented explanations. This is followed by a discussion of contemporary gentrification theories and models, such as the third-wave gentrification model. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to a defense and explanation of the mixed methods approach utilized in this research.

#### **Recent Theoretical Trends in Gentrification Research**

In recent years, researchers have tended to lean towards all encompassing theories of gentrification, rather than becoming mired in the production versus consumption debate. It took many decades for theorists to realize that gentrification, as a complex social process, cannot be explained with either a supply or demand-oriented theory, rather it needed both. Neil Smith (1979) developed the rent gap theory, the most prominent production-oriented theory of gentrification. Essentially, Smith argues that the difference between actual ground rent and potential ground rent for a given property creates an incentive to gentrify the landscape, following the logic of the highest and best use. Urban

land values are incredibly dynamic and for the most part socially constructed (Lees, Slater and Wyly 2007). However, parcels designated with a particular type of use become somewhat permanent and therefore inflexible. This creates a mismatch as with time the optimal use for a given parcel changes (consider suburbanization of the 1950s and back to the city movement of the 1970s).

The opportunity to produce monetary gain becomes the primary factor in neighborhood and housing choice decision-making process for both individuals and groups. Smith succinctly sums up the process:

Gentrification is a structural product of the land and housing markets. Capital flows where the rate of return is highest, and the movement of capital to the suburbs, along with the continual depreciation of inner city capital, eventually produces the rent gap. When this gap grows sufficiently large, rehabilitation (or, for that matter, renewal) can begin to challenge the rates of return available elsewhere, and capital flows back (1979:546).

The rent gap theory would suggest that places with the highest gap between actual and potential ground rent would be the first to gentrify. However, this is not the case. As it turns out, scale plays an important factor in understanding rent gap driven gentrification. Even though on an individual parcel scale, the rent gap may be large, the neighborhood scale plays a role as well. If a given area is perceived to be crime ridden, unsafe and the center of urban poverty, it will not gentrify no matter how large the rent gap. Customarily, working class neighborhoods with sizeable rent gaps, but acceptable safety conditions, will be the first to gentrify, especially if amenities such as parks or waterfront are present (Lees et al. 2007).

A number of criticisms have been launched against the rent gap theory, as well as production-oriented explanations of gentrification in general. Firstly, these theories assume rational economic behavior of groups and individuals, overlooking the importance of individual choice. Smith (1992) acknowledges this criticism and fires back by pointing out “that economics so strongly affects one’s ability to exercise preferences” (p. 114). Moreover, the tight connection implied by the production-oriented scholars between gentrifying neighborhoods and global capitalism strikes many as an implication that “gentrifiers behave first and foremost as ruthless capital accumulators” (Lees et al. 2007:74). Lastly, measuring the rent gap continues to be a challenge, given that data on capitalized ground rent is not available.

Nevertheless, the now nearly forty-year-old rent gap theory is still valid and is being continuously transformed to match the conditions of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The growing social inequality in the world is expressed through gentrification on a neighborhood scale (Lees et al. 2007). The local rent gap is ever more related to the international securities market. Especially in the case of the United States, local mortgages are closely connected to the transnational financial market, as they are often sold overseas. Furthermore, the edge of gentrification is constantly shifting outwards and affects neighborhoods far away from the inner city, exposing new areas ripe for redevelopment in accordance with the rent gap theory. Lastly, “gentrification now receives more explicit governmental support, through both subsidies to large corporate developers and targeted policies designed to attract individual gentrifiers” (Lees et al. 2007:81). These peculiar gentrification characteristics are just some of the 21<sup>st</sup> century developments that Jason Hackworth and

Neil Smith (2001) label as ‘third-wave gentrification’. However, before I delve more deeply into their ideas, I will turn to the consumption-oriented explanations of gentrification.

Naturally, a set of theories looking at the consumption side of the equation developed in response to the structure-oriented production explanations. Prominent in this research area are David Ley and Chris Hamnett. Both of these scholars argue that gentrification is a result of the changing society, shifting from manufacturing to service economy, the new middle class composed of upwardly mobile young professionals. Ley (1996), through examining the dynamics in Canada’s urban areas, found that this new professional middle class was rejecting the usual, suburban lifestyle. This new “cultural class” was not only pursuing economic success but was also seeking a higher quality of life – life unrestrained by the cultural norms of suburbia. This countercultural movement was what drove the new middle class into the inner-city (see also, Caulfield 1994).

For Chris Hamnett (1994) the rise in gentrification is associated with the “professionalization” of the population that is the rise in the proportion of people employed in the professional and managerial sectors of the economy, as opposed to all other sectors. This expanding professional middle class puts an enormous pressure on the housing market. With ever more elaborate taste of the new group and a comfortable income, new neighborhoods are gentrified to meet the needs. What is interesting about Hamnett’s “professionalization theory” is that he assumes that the former manufacturing, working class population is simply replaced by the new professional one, rather than displaced.

Many researchers have followed Ley's and Hamnett's footsteps with analyses of issues such as the gay gentrifiers (Castells 1983), women as gentrifiers (Rose 1984) and African Americans as gentrifiers (Taylor 1992; Freeman 2006). However, all of these analytical works focus on the gentrifier – the person who benefits the most from the process. None of them stop to consider the working class resident who is getting displaced. This is one of the biggest flaws of the consumption-oriented explanations of gentrification. Smith (1996) offers an interesting comment on the abundant research in the gentrification literature that refers to gentrifiers as 'urban pioneers.' He argues that "the idea of 'urban pioneers' is as insulting applied to contemporary cities as the original idea of 'pioneers' in the US West. Now, as then, it implies that no one lives in the areas being pioneered – no one worthy of notice, at least" (p.33).

Another important problem with the consumption-oriented theories of gentrification is that they suggest that modern global cities are devoid of manufacturing activities. Such logic is very true of New York City leaders, who do not believe that industrial activity fits well with an image of a global city they are trying to promote. Therefore, through gentrification manufacturing gets zoned out and priced out, cutting the working class off of work (Curran 2004). According to Lees et al. (2007:123), "Curran's main argument is that consumption explanations rooted in the postindustrial thesis advanced by Daniel Bell and David Ley tend to conceal the industrial activity that still exists in central cities... Without understanding how gentrification displaces work as well as residence... the understanding of the process cannot be complete."

Clearly, both consumption and production-oriented theories of gentrification have their flaws and that is why developing more inclusive theories is crucial to advancing a better understanding of the process. Emerging theories need to be comprehensive, both in terms of incorporating structure and agency explanations, but also considering the gentrifier and the displacee. In addition, given the fluid nature of gentrification and the speed at which it evolves and encapsulates even more processes (rural gentrification, super-gentrification, new-build gentrification, to name a few), there is a growing need to address these new dynamics, as theories from the 1970s and 1980s are simply not enough.

Contemporary gentrification is increasingly influenced not only by local forces, but also by changes in the national and global dynamics. Smith (2002) argues that gentrification has become a new “global urban strategy” for the world’s cities. Not only is gentrification affecting cities worldwide, as opposed to being confined to the First World, but also the state has become more involved in shaping growth-promoting policies rather than social welfare protections (Smith 2002). These neoliberal urban policies are an expression of the change in government priorities resulting from a shift in global market dynamics.

Twenty-first century Neoliberalism is characterized by reduced federal and state government control, decrease in social spending, deregulation (from environmental protection to job safety), privatization of state run operations and freeing of the market in general. This departure from national or state government control turns cities into actors on the global economic arena (Smith 2002). Combined with the rising ease in

communication, transportation, worldwide migration and increasing financial deregulation, globalization works hand in hand with Neoliberalism changing the scale of economic production and the extent of capital mobility.

Given these changes in the global economy, cities are at a constant risk of being priced out by another locality in the race for capital. Large international corporations are in control by positioning cities against one another in competition for corporate investment. Due to the lack of federal redistribution policies, cities are forced to lure investment and development with strategies that go beyond land-use control (Leitner 1990). For many cities such strategies are a matter of survival. That is why cities increasingly provide corporate capital and investors with tax incentives, low interest loans and loan guarantees (Leitner 1990). Therefore, gentrification becomes a great urban growth strategy.

The Neoliberalism and globalization threads examined by Smith (2002) are also an intricate part of Hackworth and Smith's (2001) model of "third-wave gentrification" or "postrecession gentrification" which began in the 1990s. In contrast to the second-wave, third-wave gentrification became an ever more intensive tactic of capital accumulation (Lees et al. 2007). Unlike classic gentrification, third-wave gentrification lacks urban pioneers who renew neighborhoods with sweat equity. Rather, postrecession gentrification is a product of corporate developers working hand in hand with local governments. With the increasing role of local governments as gentrification advocates, rising public-private partnerships and increased cooperation with corporate developers, the process now affects neighborhoods farther and farther away from the urban core

(Hackworth 2002). Moreover, resistance to gentrification is nearly invisible, exposing the futility of protest against such a well-oiled urban growth machine.

To the dismay of displaced residents of gentrifying neighborhoods, the trends of third-wave gentrification only intensified in the 2000s, pushing Lees, Slater and Wylie (2007) to refer to yet another wave of gentrification called the “fourth wave.” According to these authors, fourth wave gentrification is only observable in the United States so far. It is characterized by an even stronger pro-gentrification stance among local governments, but also a much closer relationship of local neighborhoods to the global financial markets. The booming housing market of the early 2000s resulted in an enormous mortgage debt in the United States. Combined with astounding rates of subprime mortgages given out by lenders, this mushrooming mortgage debt entered the international trade market, just like stocks and bonds (Lees et al. 2007). “As a result, the flows of capital in local neighborhoods became much more tightly integrated with the conditions of national and global capital markets” (Lees et al. 2007:179).

In addition, fourth wave gentrification is developing in a climate of broad local and national governments’ support for the process. Both the Clinton and Bush administrations have made continuous efforts to eradicate any form of a social welfare system and have reoriented their policy focus to the needs of the wealthy (Lees et al. 2007). “Jamie Peck has diagnosed this as a fundamental shift from ‘welfarist modes of urban governance’ to a new dominant conservative urbanism ‘based on the invasive moral and penal regulation of the poor, together with the state-assisted efforts to reclaim the city for business, the middle classes, and the market’” (quoted in Lees et al. 2007:184).



This brief summary of the major trends in gentrification theory has provided an overview of the primary causes of the gentrification process. Presently, it is largely accepted that both production and consumption-oriented theories have something to contribute to gentrification studies, but the jury is still out on the outcome of the debate. “In more practical terms, the questions have changed: more and more researchers have turned away from questions of *causality* – which lead almost invariably to contests between competing explanations – to examine *consequences*” (Lees et al. 2007:190, emphasis in original).

### **Methodology**

The following section of this chapter provides an overview of the methodological approach used in my mixed methods research. As in earlier chapters, my goal here is to lay a foundation for the story of gentrification and neighborhood change in Greenpoint that follows.

The research conducted for this thesis is based on the analysis of both, qualitative and quantitative data. It is one of very few gentrification case studies that utilizes a mixed methods approach, with majority of gentrification research solely taking advantage of quantitative methods (Slater 2006). The advantage of looking at both quantitative and qualitative research is that this approach provides stronger evidence of gentrification and gentrification-led displacement in a given area.

In the case of gentrification-led displacement, in particular there are no quantitative datasets that measure the occurrence (Slater 2006; Atkinson 2000). The New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey, collected by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, is

the only dataset that examines the reasons for leaving one's residence, including "wanting less expensive residence" and "harassment by landlord." These and other factors analyzed from this survey help document gentrification-led displacement (Newman and Wyly 2006:30). As mentioned in Chapter II, the availability of quantitative data on gentrification and gentrification-led displacement is only one of the challenges to documenting and analyzing gentrification and displacement rates. Interpretation of the data is yet another challenge, as evidenced by the exchange between Freeman and Braconi (2002) and Newman and Wyly (2006), as well as Chris Hmanett's research (2003). Therefore, employing qualitative survey and interview data provides the human element in the study of gentrification-led displacement and corroborates the often unreliable quantitative data.

In addition, one needs to keep in mind that the longstanding production versus consumption-oriented gentrification theory debate, as laid out in the previous section, has had a tremendous influence on methodologies employed in gentrification studies. Production-oriented explanations of gentrification tend to favor a quantitative approach, with a particular focus on the changes in ground rent, whereas consumption-oriented theories support more qualitative research that teases out the personal preferences of the new professional middle class. Fortunately, as the divisions between supply and demand-focused scholars fade, and more inclusive work is being produced on the topic of gentrification, methodologies have also begun to diversify.

The quantitative data analyzed in this thesis is drawn from a number of sources. In order to determine the presence of gentrification in a given neighborhood, multiple

proxy measures derived from U.S. Census data were used. It is a common practice among geographers and urban studies scholars to use socio-economic data to determine the occurrence of the process of gentrification in a given area (see, for example, the work of Wyly and Hammel 1999 and Newman and Wyly 2006). Since direct gentrification measures are unavailable, variables such as income, educational attainment and occupation, as well as median rent are used to approximate gentrification.

For this project, the following variables were derived from both the 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census using the block group geographic scale: median household income, educational attainment for the population twenty five years and older, occupation for the population sixteen years and older, median gross rent, as well as total number of housing units. For all variables the percent of change between 1990 and 2000 was calculated. The derived block group level data were then transferred onto multiple choropleth maps, utilizing TIGER/Line (Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing) shapefile geographic data provided by Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI). Dramatic changes in income, educational attainment, number persons employed in manufacturing, as well as rises in median rent were determined to signify gentrification in the area.

Another crucial aspect of gentrification in Greenpoint that needs to be examined is that it is being orchestrated by the local government. A detailed look into the zoning change of 2005 and the 421-a tax abatement plan was enabled by using the data published by the New York City Department of City Planning and New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development. A set of quantitative data

acquired from the New York City Department of City Planning (NYC DCP) was analyzed to examine land-use changes in the Greenpoint area. A geographic shapefile with tax lot boundaries was downloaded from the NYC DCP's "Bytes of Big Apple" web page. In addition, I used images depicting zoning designations in the area, before rezoning (2003) and after the 2005 plan was approved, that were downloaded from the NYC DCP web page. The base layer of tax lots was then used to georeference images depicting zoning and zoning changes in the area. Zoning maps of Greenpoint's tax lots for 2003 and 2005 were produced by manually coding each tax lot to a specific land-use. The created land-use spreadsheet was also used to create a percent of total land-use graph for 2003 and 2005 comparing specific zone type to the total number of tax lots in the area. Moreover, a table with percent change in zone type between 2003 and 2005 was also derived from this spreadsheet.

An additional quantitative dataset was acquired from the U.S. Census Bureau's New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey. It is a survey conducted every three years on a sample of 18,000 housing units. The purpose of the survey is to collect housing data for the five boroughs of New York City, with a particular focus on rental vacancy rates and rent regulation status. For the purposes of this thesis, data on the number of renter and owner-occupied housing units was acquired for the borough of Brooklyn, together with the number of rent regulated and rent stabilized units, as well as owner-occupied condominium and co-op units. These raw variables were graphed on a bar chart for 1999, 2002 and 2005 survey years. The primary purpose of including this data in the thesis is to examine the changing owner to renter ratios in Brooklyn as well as to track changes in

the affordable housing sector and the wealthier condominium and co-op area. Even though this data is not available on a neighborhood scale, it provides an excellent context for the broader dynamics in the New York City metropolitan area.

Multiple locational maps were created to give the reader a better understanding of the location of Greenpoint with respect to the greater New York City metropolitan area as well as with respect to Brooklyn (Kings County). Major arteries were depicted in these maps to give the reader a better understanding of the location of neighborhood boundaries and the area's main commercial strip. Maps were also provided whenever making any references to place within the New York City area. For example, maps depicting the Geographic Exclusion Area for the original 421-a plan and the expanded 421-a plan of 2007 were created so that the reader would have a reference map while reading about the new boundaries.

To test my hypotheses related to the future of the Polish population in Greenpoint as outlined in the introduction, I analyzed two datasets that indicate changing patterns of Polish migration to the United States. U.S. Census Bureau's 2000 Decennial Census and 2006 American Community Survey data were used to measure the foreign Polish-born populations of Kings County (Brooklyn) and New York City, as well as Polish ancestry reported in these areas. The data was then used to derive the percent of change in ancestry and foreign-born population over the six year period and a table was created to display the data. The purpose of this data set is to provide an overview of New York City's Polish population and its growth trends, both on the broad metropolitan scale and the county/borough scale. Unfortunately, the smallest geographic scale of analysis used

by the U.S. Census Bureau in the American Community Survey is a county, prohibiting analysis on a block group or even census tract level. Caution must be taken with the accuracy of the 2006 data, as it is survey data with a sample of roughly three million people (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2006).

The other information that I analyzed to gain a better understanding of the migration trends of Polish citizens to the United States, is a dataset depicting the number of immigrant and nonimmigrant visas issued to Poles, which was acquired from the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs. This dataset is available online as annual reports and it spans a sixteen year period, from 1991 to 2007 in decadal increments. Raw data was downloaded from the Report of the Visa Office for fiscal years 2000 and 2007 and then plotted on a timeline graph depicting the rise and fall in the number of visas issued to Poles.

Along with the quantitative datasets discussed above, qualitative data were collected in the field in the summer of 2007 including field observation, unstructured guided interviews, and survey questionnaires. Thirty eight survey questionnaires were distributed in the months of July and August of 2007 to the Polish residents of Greenpoint, Brooklyn. Each participant was asked if he or she resided in Greenpoint before receiving the survey. These Polish language survey questionnaires are composed of fifteen questions, eleven of which are multiple choice and the remaining four are short answer (see Appendix B).

In addition to the survey data, I conducted five in-depth personal interviews. Four of the interviewees were men and only one was a woman, even though every effort was

made to have a representative sample of respondents. Four of the interviews were conducted in Polish with Polish citizens living in the United States, and one interview was recorded with a U.S. citizen in English. Interviewees were identified primarily through a 'snowballing' of contacts, resulting in a combination of Greenpoint residents and nonresidents. The interviews were unstructured, but interviewees were asked guiding questions about the neighborhood of Greenpoint, the changes taking place and their ideas for what the future may bring (see Appendix C).

Based on my analysis of such a multitude of diverse data about Greenpoint and its residents, as well as broader changes happening in the New York City metropolitan area, I am confident that my analysis of the case study presented in Chapter V is well informed. I also hope that my innovative mixed methods approach to studying gentrification will serve as a model for future case studies. In the next chapter, I first set the stage for later data analysis by discussing the history and development of the neighborhood of Greenpoint. Then, a series of maps, graphs and tables are used to help summarize the data analyzed for this study and ground my final conclusions. Throughout the remaining three chapters of this thesis, my key concern is analyzing the impacts of gentrification on the community of Greenpoint, especially its Polish residents.

## CHAPTER IV

### SETTING THE STAGE – THE GREENPOINT STORY

The goal of this chapter is to situate the analysis of the impacts of gentrification and displacement in my study area of Greenpoint, Brooklyn. In order to understand the existing conditions in the neighborhood, one needs to look back at the history of the area, how it developed and was shaped into its current form. This chapter also looks at the influence of large scale processes on the area as well as the impact of neighboring locales on Greenpoint's evolution.

Greenpoint is the northernmost neighborhood in Brooklyn. The original site was purchased from the Keshaechqueren Indians by the Dutch in 1638 and named for a grassy area that extended into the East River. What started as a farming area in the early 1800s became an industrial center between 1840s and 1860s with two ferry lines connecting Greenpoint to Manhattan. "It was soon the site of what were known as the five black arts: printing, pottery, petroleum and gas refining, glassmaking, and iron making" (Jackson 1995). In the late 1800s shipbuilding industry flourished on Greenpoint's East River waterfront, with the USS Monitor constructed on site in 1861.

For many years both Greenpoint, and its southern neighbor, Williamsburg were largely industrial neighborhoods. Both played a crucial role in Brooklyn's manufacturing industry, especially in the nineteenth century. Given their waterfront location, these two neighborhoods were perfect for shipbuilding, manufacturing and other industrial



activities. However, in the first half of the twentieth century the industry began to fade and by the end of World War II, it had almost completely disappeared (Jackson 1995).

Even though the “five black arts” no longer dominated Greenpoint’s economic base after the mid-1940s, the neighborhood continued to get more than its share of dirt. “From the late fifties to today public policies have led Greenpoint’s eastern sector to become a ‘dumping ground’ for burdensome facilities” (NYC DCP 2002: 3). New York City Department of Sanitation houses a solid waste station with an inactive incinerator in Greenpoint, in close proximity to the Department of Environmental Protection’s Water Pollution Control Plant. Moreover, in the 1950s the explosion of Standard Oil refinery has most likely caused a large oil spill, which to this day contaminates Greenpoint’s soil and Newtown Creek (Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance 2007).

Greenpoint’s waterfront location plays a crucial role in the neighborhood’s current redevelopment, one that was initiated with community designed proposals put forth in the Greenpoint 197-a Plan. As shown in Figure 1, the 946 acre neighborhood is bounded by the East River to the west, Newtown Creek to the north, Brooklyn-Queens Expressway to the east and North 7th Street to the south. Locationally, it is a quite compact place, given the water boundaries to the west and north, but also an elevated expressway to the east. The only area that allows for the blurring of the border is the southern extent of Greenpoint, which transitions into Williamsburg.

Williamsburg, much like Greenpoint, has a rich history of manufacturing, warehousing and shipbuilding, activities which have declined significantly in the second half of the twentieth century. However, storage facilities, the Domino sugar plant and

other small scale manufacturers were still alive and well in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but the changes that were afoot would soon put an end to their existence. As early as in the 1970s and 1980s Williamsburg went through another major transformation, economically and culturally when artists were attracted to its many vacant manufacturing lofts (Curran 2004). At that time, the neighborhood was still affordable, was located within a short distance away from Manhattan and had some of the most breathtaking views of the city. This could not stay a secret for long and slowly but surely, waves of affluent urban professionals, discouraged by rents in Manhattan, began flowing into Williamsburg. The neighborhood became so attractive that in the 1990s rents began to rise dramatically. Numerous cafes and restaurants opened to provide services to the new residents. Yoga centers, health food stores, and pet daycare soon followed. Whatever viable manufacturing and warehousing activities of Williamsburg there were, they were sentenced to extinction as they could not compete with residential and commercial activities (Curran 2004).

For many years changes occurring in Williamsburg had hardly any influence on what was happening in Greenpoint, primarily because the latter neighborhood housed a number of nauseating facilities and had a less well developed public transportation system. Williamsburg's L train runs through its heart and is capable of delivering thousands of wealthy youth to Manhattan within ten minutes. Greenpoint, on the other hand, is cursed with the G train, with only four cars, instead of the standard eight being the only crosstown train that does not travel through Manhattan. Thus, even though Greenpoint is only fifteen minutes away from Manhattan, the subway transfers must have

been discouraging for potential new residents. This transportation limitation, combined with the afore mentioned “dumping ground” status prevented Greenpoint from undergoing major economic, social and cultural changes as rapidly as nearby Williamsburg and other parts of Brooklyn.

Another major difference in the make-up of Greenpoint as compared to nearby Williamsburg is its importance as a long term Polish ethnic enclave. Poles are an immigrant group that has been an important component in the American history for well over a hundred years. Some left their homeland in Europe and migrated to the United States as early as in the 1800s, mainly because of political reasons. A much larger wave of Polish migrants arrived between 1860s and 1910s, primarily driven by economic and religious rationales (Greene 1980). During this time period, Polish immigrants settled all across the country, with particular concentrations in the Midwestern and Northeastern urban areas of Chicago, Cleveland, New York and Buffalo (Greene 1980; Noble 1992). Greenpoint, due to its industrial nature and multitude of low skill jobs, became the choice neighborhood for settlement of Polish immigrants as early as the 1800s (Nessen 2008).

After the Second World War there was an increase in the number of Polish immigrants, who made Greenpoint the center of the city’s Polish community. In the 1980s Poles accounted for about half of all the immigrants who settled in Greenpoint (Jackson 1995). According to the 2000 issue of *The Newest New Yorkers* out of 20,100 foreign-born residents of Greenpoint, two thirds were Poles (NYC DCP 2004). However, Greenpoint is a very specific kind of an ethnic enclave as it is an immigrant gateway.

One of the primary reasons that Greenpoint remains the neighborhood of choice for new arrivals from Poland is because it provides Poles with all services in their native language. Even before leaving Poland, many immigrants choose Greenpoint as their destination because they know that they will be able to find a room for rent and employment, as well as shop and eat at local restaurants without ever using a word of English. Currently, new immigrants are even able to get a MetroCard (subway fare) in Polish, whether from an actual person or a vending machine.

Many of Greenpoint's Polish immigrants are people who arrive on tourist visas and stay over the six month visa period. They are the ones who need the aforementioned services most. Many of the immigrants only plan to stay in the United States and work for two or three years and return to Poland, however many of them stay as long as ten or twenty years. These transitory Poles never develop an attachment to their new home and continue to plan a return to Poland, causing them to live in limbo, neither here nor there. They do not invest in their own future in the United States, but instead most focus on sending money back home. With such a strong focus on remittances many migrants never learn English and since all services are available in Polish, they do not feel the need.

Because Greenpoint is an immigrant gateway for Poles, many other Polish immigrants living in other New York City neighborhoods perceive Greenpoint residents to be failures. The theory is that once you have made it in New York, you should move out of Greenpoint as you no longer need the hand holding of an all Polish neighborhood. Those who decide to stay in Greenpoint are often looked down upon as people unable to cope in a foreign country.

These factors make for a unique and interesting neighborhood. Greenpoint is a place with a relatively poor transportation network, but then again is considered prime real estate location with respect to its proximity to Manhattan. It has a priceless view of the Manhattan skyline, though overshadowed by barbed wire left over from the industrial era that dominated the neighborhood in the past. Another major difference in Greenpoint is its importance as a site of arrival for a large number of new immigrants that are often perceived as “incapable” by their co-ethnics.

More recently, Greenpoint has been influenced by economic, social, and cultural changes occurring in its southern neighbor, Williamsburg. In the late 1990s, Williamsburg began to lose its edgy, bohemian, artsy flavor and transform into a more homogenous, cookie-cutter McNeighborhood. Manufacturing lofts were often illegally converted into residential spaces, increasing the pressure on the real estate market and exposing the constant “affordable” housing shortage in New York City. Because of the high demand for real estate, many brokers questioned Williamsburg’s north border and shifted the boundary according to their own needs.

According to *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, North 7<sup>th</sup> street is the south border of Greenpoint, i.e. the north border of Williamsburg (Jackson 1995). However, since Greenpoint as a real estate location did not sell as well as Williamsburg in the late 1990s, North 12<sup>th</sup> Street (south extent of McCarren Park) became the new border. Ever since Williamsburg’s gentrification exploded, there has been a push on Greenpoint’s south border and in the early 2000s, Greenpoint began to gentrify as well, partially as a result of “overspill gentrification” from Williamsburg and other upscale New York City

neighborhoods (Slater 2004). Williamsburg became so expensive to some of its residents that they decided to seek refuge farther north.

As a result of the changes inside and outside Greenpoint in the past decade, although the neighborhood was known primarily as a “Polish village” for many years, more recently it has become one of the trendiest and fastest growing neighborhoods in New York City. At this point in time, in fact, Greenpoint is rapidly gentrifying. Construction sites abound, with luxury condominiums springing up everywhere. Rents are skyrocketing. A two bedroom apartment that rented for \$500 fifteen years ago now rents for at least \$1500. This price is not reflecting the new loft apartment costs that are usually, not rental units, but condominiums. Aptsandlofts.com (2008) lists one bedroom lofts in Greenpoint at anywhere from \$500,000 to \$800,000.

Multiscalar processes are influencing the rate of redevelopment in Greenpoint. The changing global economy is putting a lot of pressure on cities such as New York to compete for capital. The lack of federal redistribution of resources, forces U.S. cities to seek creative ways of attracting that capital. Commonly, tax abatement and other incentive plans are deployed by city governments to lure investors. Increasingly, power is put in the hands of corporate developers creating an unhealthy imbalance.

For Greenpoint, the 421-a plan was only one of the ways to attract investment into a rusty, contaminated and unappealing neighborhood. The original 421-a plan was developed in 1971 and offered property tax abatement of up to twenty five years for newly constructed multifamily buildings. It was designed to encourage growth outside of the island of Manhattan (NYC RGB 2007). When neighborhoods such as Williamsburg

and Park Slope began to reach their maximum potential for redevelopment, construction spilled into Greenpoint. However, city government aware of the rapid changes was preparing an amendment to the 421-a plan which was finally implemented in December of 2007.

The amended 421-a plan expanded the Exclusion Area (see Figure 9), so that now construction was encouraged in areas not only outside of Manhattan, but also outside the entire Brooklyn and Queens East River waterfront. Developers who wanted to build in Williamsburg and Greenpoint would now have to dedicate twenty percent of their units to affordable housing. The impending changes to the 421-a plan were made clear by the local government about a year in advance, giving developers plenty of time to demolish old units and begin construction that would still qualify for tax abatement under the original 1971 421-a plan.

Real estate developers were also blessed with the perfect timing of a rezoning law that was passed in 2005, providing space for all that tax-free construction. As a longstanding industrial neighborhood nearly twenty percent of its tax lots were zoned for manufacturing use and an additional fourteen percent were zoned for mixed residential and manufacturing use. The 2005 rezoning law increased the number of residentially zoned lots and eradicated nearly half of all the manufacturing zoned lots (see Table 1). The East River waterfront experienced the most of the changes, providing a prime real estate location for new condominiums with a beautiful view of the Manhattan skyline.

Residential space is not the only market that is being affected by gentrification. Even though unaffected by the 2005 zoning change, Greenpoint's main commercial strip

along Manhattan Avenue is also changing rapidly. Storefronts which were formerly occupied by hardware stores, mom and pops grocery stores, local movie theaters and restaurants are transitioning into cookie-cutter chain stores, including Starbucks Walgreens and Dunkin' Donuts. This blend of identity-free, poly-cultural establishments is slowly taking over the streets of Greenpoint catering to the new young urban professional residents.

In light of mass consumerism, the majority of the Polish residents of Greenpoint have little to offer in terms of consumption. Poles grew up eating their meals at home with restaurants reserved for special occasions. Only some migrants too busy to cook patronize Greenpoint's restaurants, but only the restaurants that serve Polish food and only if they are take out. Tips, according to many Polish immigrants, are an unnecessary waste of money. Many Polish migrants do not have credit cards and are very much conditioned to live debt free, further limiting their consumerist capabilities.

Not surprisingly then, in a 21<sup>st</sup> century in a global city such as New York, an old Polish immigrant neighborhood such as Greenpoint has little chance for survival. There are numerous forces driving the changes in Greenpoint. Gentrification is one of them. There are also other changes affecting Polish immigration at the international scale that are helping reshape the neighborhood.

Poland's 2004 accession to the European Union has brought a number of changes, some felt across the ocean in the United States. Poland's membership in the EU allowed Polish citizens to work freely in the British and Irish job markets immediately upon joining the union. Other European Union countries, such as Germany, imposed a three



year or longer waiting periods for opening their job markets. More restrictive visa requirements for Poles entering the United States combined with the opening of some of EU's job markets caused many potential migrants to wonder about the profitability of immigrating to the United States. The United Kingdom is located in close proximity to Poland and is thus less expensive to move to. It does not require a visa and Poles can reside and work legally in the UK. Moreover, the weakening American dollar is making for a very poor exchange rate between the United States and Poland. This may have a direct impact on Greenpoint, as the steady flow of Polish immigrants to this New York City neighborhood might be interrupted.

This chapter provides a brief introduction to the history and the current developments in Greenpoint. With a clear understanding of Greenpoint's "dumping ground" history it is easier to comprehend a somewhat delayed gentrification of the area. Moreover, considering the local laws implemented by the City of New York, the fast rate of changes in Greenpoint in early 2000s becomes easier to realize. Furthermore, this chapter situates the neighborhood changes in a broader international environment, pointing to the influence of international processes on neighborhood change. The following chapter delves much deeper into the analysis of the aforementioned changes with a close look at all of the collected quantitative and qualitative data.

## CHAPTER V

### ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter delves into the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data collected for the study of the neighborhood of Greenpoint. It provides a strong foundation for the concluding chapter of this thesis and serves as empirical evidence for the hypotheses put forth in the Introduction.

#### **Measuring Gentrification**

As mentioned in the methods section of Chapter III, gentrification and gentrification-led displacement are phenomena that are incredibly difficult to measure. In the case of the process of gentrification, various proxy measures have been used by gentrification researchers to capture the presence of redevelopment in a given area. Some of the leading ways of measuring gentrification quantitatively, are to look at the socio-economic variables for the neighborhood population. For the purposes of this thesis I examined educational attainment and occupation variables, as well as median household income, median gross rent and the number of housing units.

Figures 2 and 3 depict the change in the number of educated individuals in Greenpoint, by block group, between 1990 and 2000. Based on Figure 2, the dramatic change in the number of Bachelor's degree holders is obvious, especially on the Greenpoint waterfront. Also, block groups adjacent to Williamsburg show a marked increase in the number of Bachelor's degree recipients. Figure 3 shows a significant increase in the number of graduate degree holders, displaying a similar pattern to the

previous map, with biggest changes visible in the block groups adjacent to the waterfront and to Williamsburg.

Another socio-economic variable commonly used to approximate gentrification is income. Figure 4 depicts the change in median household income between 1990 and 2000. The income values were adjusted for inflation and are expressed in 1999 dollars. Even though most block groups in the neighborhood suffered a loss in income, block groups adjacent to Williamsburg have seen a rise of fifty or even one hundred percent in median household income. These patterns of increased income and education are not accidental; on the contrary, they represent the very beginnings of gentrification in Greenpoint.

As mentioned in Chapter IV, gentrification in Greenpoint did not take off until mid 2000s, when it was fueled by the 421-a tax incentive plan and the 2005 zoning change. Therefore, the socio-economic changes visible in the 2000 Census data represent the very early stages of gentrification, which begins with a handful of gentrifiers who are attracted to the neighborhood by low rents and plenty of space. Also, the obvious pattern visible in the block groups adjacent to Williamsburg indicates the blurring of the boundaries between the two neighborhoods and an “overspill gentrification” from Williamsburg.

Figure 5 shows the change in median gross rent between 1990 and 2000. Like median household income, the rent values were adjusted for inflation and expressed in 1999 dollars. It is evident that majority of Greenpoint’s block groups experienced a rise in rents, with the three block groups adjacent to Williamsburg showing a change in rent

on the scale of fifty to one hundred percent. Block groups adjacent to the Department of Environmental Protection Water Pollution Treatment Plant have witnessed a slight drop in median gross rent, possibly because of proximity to this negative neighborhood facility. The significant drop in rents on the Greenpoint waterfront may be accounted for by the unprecedented rise in the number of new housing units in this area.

Figure 6 indicates that the block group adjacent to the waterfront experienced a 367 percent increase in the number of housing units. A largely manufacturing block group in 1990 with only eighteen housing units, changed into an increasingly loft residential area with eighty four housing units reported in 2000. Even though the zoning change of 2005 has not been implemented at the time of the 2000 Census, multiple zoning variances were granted to residents seeking a legal conversion from manufacturing to residential use. Moreover, many more illegal conversions of industrial spaces into residential lofts took place in Greenpoint, repeating the pattern from Williamsburg (Curran 2004; Curran and Hanson 2005).

Further support for the changing nature of Greenpoint as a long-standing manufacturing neighborhood, as described in Chapter IV, is seen in Figure 7. It depicts the percent of change between 1990 and 2000 in the number of persons employed in manufacturing. Majority of Greenpoint's block groups have seen a significant decline in manufacturing jobs, with the exception of a few centrally located block groups. It is evident that industrial activities do not fit in with New York City's image as a global city; therefore manufacturing is being forced out of the city (Curran 2004).

### **Local Redevelopment Forces**

The aforementioned results stemming from the proxy gentrification measures, though at this time eight years out of date, do indicate significant changes in the neighborhood. These select U.S. Census socio-economic indicators are supported by data from real estate firms. Aptsandlofts.com (2008) lists one bedroom apartment rentals in Greenpoint at anywhere from \$1,500 to \$2,500 per month, depending on location. On the other hand, one bedroom condominium lofts in Greenpoint sell at anywhere from \$500,000 to \$800,000. In addition, the real estate agency's description of the neighborhood on their website reveals that changes are afoot.

The neighborhood, although often thought of as a predominantly Polish area, is widening its demographic to include artists, photographers, creative professionals and expanding young families. The outcome—a new vibrant layer alongside the existing intimate community: cutting-edge galleries, hip lounges and bars, and a plethora of new restaurants alongside authentic Polish eateries, friendly vendors and neighbors (Aptsandlofts.com 2008).

Changes seen in Greenpoint are not exclusive to this ethnic neighborhood. The entire New York City metropolitan area has been experiencing gentrification for quite some time. As seen in Figure 8, Brooklyn has been experiencing a steady decline in the number of renter-occupied housing units since 2002, while the number of owner-occupied units has been rising since 1999, according to the New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey. Moreover, the number of rent controlled and rent stabilized units has been declining with the number of condominiums and co-ops steadily rising since 1999. These changes indicate a shift in the housing market in New York City, and Brooklyn in particular. The stock of affordable housing is being chipped away each time a new

condominium is built, often utilizing laws that were meant to protect the affordable housing stock.

One of the first local scale factors, influencing the rate of redevelopment in Greenpoint, is the 421-a tax abatement plan. This is a tax incentive plan that was originally developed in 1971 to encourage construction and development in areas outside of the exclusion zone located roughly between 14<sup>th</sup> and 96<sup>th</sup> streets in Manhattan (see Figure 9a). The plan, in the 1970s provided an incentive to upgrade housing in the decaying neighborhoods outside of Manhattan. It offered an exemption from paying additional real estate taxes for a period of ten to even twenty-five years. Essentially, building owners were released from paying tax on the improved property and were only obliged to pay tax on the land itself (NYC RGB 2007; Jacek Bikowski, Personal Interview 2007). “Eligible projects must be new construction of multiple dwellings on lots that were vacant, predominantly vacant, or improved with a nonconforming use three or more years before the new construction commences” (NYC RGB 2007:5).

Other qualifications, such as location, size of the structure (must be multi-family) and provision of affordable units, are also a factor in granting 421-a tax abatements. Moreover, tenants of buildings that benefit from 421-a plan, are protected by the city’s rent stabilization program subject to rent regulation by the Rent Guidelines Board (NYC RGB 2007). This plan survived in the same shape and form until December 28, 2007 when the city realized that encouraging growth in areas already overdeveloped was no longer logical. The new and improved 421-a plan increased the size of the exclusion zone to encompass a larger area of Manhattan, but also included some of the outer boroughs

(see Figure 9b). For example, the entire Brooklyn East River waterfront was added to the exclusion zone, including the neighborhoods of Williamsburg and Greenpoint (NYC RGB 2007). “Housing built anywhere in the new Exclusion Zone and utilizing 421-a benefits will have to provide 20% of units for affordable housing on-site. In addition, only the first \$65,000 of an apartment’s assessed value would be exempt from taxes and the longest exemption periods, 25 years, would only be granted to developments that provide affordable housing for the entire duration of benefits” (NYC RGB 2007:5). Moreover, only buildings with a minimum of four units are eligible under the new 421-a plan, in contrast with the three unit minimum in the original plan (NYC HPD 2008).

New York City developers were very much aware of the future changes to the 421-a plan for a few years before they were finally adopted. This caused many developers to take advantage of the opportunity to buy up multiple parcels, demolish old structures and build up new multi-family homes without making any provisions for affordable housing. Greenpoint, as one of the areas affected by the new 421-a plan, became an attractive place to develop, even more so given the upcoming zoning changes and waterfront redevelopment, as outlined in Greenpoint community’s plan 197-a. Therefore, a majority of the new developments in Greenpoint, built before the end of 2007, were a result of the 421-a plan incentives. Furthermore, given New York’s permanent housing shortage, the demand for the new units was very high. Of course, the newly constructed condominiums became homes to affluent residents, putting even more pressure on the shrinking low-income pool of housing units (see Figure 8).

The resulting rapid rise in property values and rental prices can also be partially attributed to the 2005 waterfront rezoning which affected both Williamsburg and Greenpoint. For many years the city council planned to redevelop the dilapidated and hideous waterfront from a manufacturing rusty relic into a booming residential community. Williamsburg's rapid gentrification in the 1980s and 1990s took off thanks to a well developed transportation network and proximity to Manhattan, but also because of the original incentives of the 421-a plan. Gentrification in Greenpoint did require an extra push, however, despite its proximity to gentrifying Williamsburg and an acceptable transportation system. The impending 421-a plan changes and the new waterfront redevelopment plans scheduled to pass in 2005 made for that push factor – the last minute opportunity to take advantage of developer friendly local laws and capitalize on the upcoming zoning changes. Since that time, gentrification in Greenpoint has exploded.

Suddenly, a primarily manufacturing-zoned neighborhood transformed into a residential and mixed residential – manufacturing zoned area. There was a forty three percent increase in the number of residential tax lots (see Figure 10 and Table 1), not to mention the mixed tax lots, which simply zone more residential use, as manufacturing rent cannot outbid residential rent. These changes opened the door to high-rise luxury condominiums. It is projected that the redevelopment plan will add 20,000 – 30,000 new housing units to Greenpoint's housing stock, with an expected twenty percent devoted to affordable housing. However, not all developers choose to participate in the affordable housing program, which requires designating twenty percent of total units to affordable housing in exchange for permits to build higher and wider structures (Jacek Bikowski,



Personal Interview 2007). Nonetheless, developers who started construction before the December 2007 deadline enacting the new 421-a plan, are not bound by the affordable housing provisions.

Table 1. Percent change in zone type, 2003 – 2005.

Zone Type	2003	2005	Percent Change 2003 – 2005
Manufacturing	978	551	-43.21%
Commercial	223	223	0.80%
Mixed	748	649	-12.54%
Park	2	19	857.62%
Residential	3580	4045	13.89%

Source: New York City Department of City Planning.

### **Moving Out or Staying Put?**

Much like gentrification projects and processes elsewhere, these changes in Greenpoint are most likely to benefit the wealthy and only in a small percentage contribute to the rise in the pool of affordable housing units. As a matter of fact, given the rapid gentrification on the ground, owners of older three-story units want to capitalize on the changes as well and put even more pressure on the affordable housing market. Many landlords tied by rent regulation or rent stabilization laws apply for permits to demolish and rebuild their structures or renew them in at least seventy five percent in order to deregulate them and place them in an open market (Jacek Bikowski, Personal Interview 2007). In such legal ways landlords contribute to the shrinking pool of rent regulated

apartments in the neighborhood. However, legal is not always the route chosen by landlords.

Stories of illegal evictions and landlord harassment abound in the city of New York, and Greenpoint is no exception. The elderly are most often victims of such practices, as they usually occupy rent controlled or rent stabilized units where rents have been kept low for a number of years. Landlords keen on capitalizing on the rising market prices will begin a process of illegal eviction. “One of the strategies is withdrawing essential services like heat or hot water” according to interviewee Jacek Bikowski (2007). If inconveniencing the tenant does not work, then threats are used. Very often, in the case of Polish tenants in Greenpoint, threats of being reported to the INS are deployed. As mentioned in Chapter IV, many of Greenpoint’s Polish residents are illegal immigrants, making deportation a serious concern.

Based on my survey and interview data, as well as anecdotal information, it is clear that some of Greenpoint’s residents are getting displaced. Whether they are leaving because of legal or illegal landlord practices makes no difference since the trauma of losing your home and leaving your community cannot be translated into dollars. Many of my survey respondents moved into Greenpoint because it is a Polish community and they wanted to be close to their Polish friends and family (see Figure 12). For many of my respondents access to Polish food and products, banks and churches, as well as the ability to communicate in Polish also rank high on the list of reasons for living in Greenpoint (see Figure 13). Losing that long-standing Polish community will be a hardship not only to its residents, but also to its regular visitors.

Even though it will take time to eradicate this long-standing Polish community, signs of strain on the community are already visible. In my survey results I found that majority of my respondents earned less than \$25,000 annually (see Figure 14) and spent about \$1,000 in monthly rent (see Figure 15). These data would indicate that more than half of a person's annual income was devoted to rent, which is not uncommon. I hypothesize, though, that my respondents were most likely reporting the monthly rent for the entire apartment, not just their share as a roommate.

This explanation is a probable one when one examines Figure 16, which depicts the number of persons who share the apartment with the respondent. I expected to see two or three additional persons, but I was stunned to see four, five or even six additional people. This unfortunately is a common practice among many immigrant groups. Rising rents force people to take in additional roommates, or to move out.

According to Figure 17 those who felt that they would have to move in the near future, were a majority by a very small margin, which might indicate that sharing apartments with more people is yet another strategy to deal with gentrification. Moreover, since it is becoming more difficult to find an affordable neighborhood in New York City, as so many of them have gentrified, the practice of doubling-up or even tripling-up may gain in popularity. Exclusionary displacement, that is the inability to move into a housing unit or a neighborhood because of its prohibitive price, may be the grim future of New York City's residents. On the other hand, data depicted in Figure 17 may also indicate the lack of awareness on the part of Greenpoint's Polish residents as to the threat of gentrification and the possibility of homogenization of their ethnic neighborhood.

### **The European Union and the Changing Migration Patterns**

As previously suggested in Chapter IV, gentrification and displacement are not the only factors influencing neighborhood change in Greenpoint. Broader scale factors involving the changing immigrant status of Poles in the European Union and in the United States, result in local scale changes. Poland's accession into the European Union in 2004 redefined the status of Poles in Europe. From that day forward Poles were legal residents of all other EU countries and were allowed to work legally in the British and Irish job markets immediately. Given the cheaper and shorter commute from Poland to the UK, as opposed to the U.S., combined with no visa requirements for the UK, many Poles changed their migration path.

According to Poland's Main Statistical Office (GUS), nearly two million people have left the country between May 1, 2004 and the end of 2006, many headed for the UK and Ireland (Easton 2008). As much as Poland's membership in the European Union and distance to the UK played a role in choosing this destination, the falling value of the US dollar also contributed to the change in migration patterns. As seen in Figure 18, there has been a nearly 20,000 drop in the number of nonimmigrant visas issued to Poles since 2005, and a nearly 4,000 drop in the number of immigrant visas issued since 2004. These data may indicate the changing migration pattern for Poles. As a matter of fact, both New York City as a whole and Brooklyn have seen a decline in the number of foreign-born Poles and in the number of persons with Polish ancestry. According to the Census Bureau and as seen in Table 2, the number of foreign-born Poles declined by thirty nine percent

in Kings County (Brooklyn) and by nine percent in all of New York City, between 2000 and 2006.

Table 2. Change in the Polish Foreign-Born and Polish Ancestry Populations, 2000 – 2006.

	Foreign Born Poles 2000	Foreign Born Poles 2006	Percent Change	Ancestry: Polish 2000	Ancestry: Polish 2006	Percent Change
Kings County (Brooklyn)	35,382	21,749	-39%	61,018	52,325	-14%
New York City	65,999	60,153	-9%	163,026	159,641	-2%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Decennial Census and 2006 American Community Survey

Data from interviews and survey questionnaires, as well as the quantitative data presented in this chapter lay a foundation for my final analysis summarized in the concluding chapter of this thesis. By examining socio-economic census data I can see that gentrification started to take root in Greenpoint, as early as in 2000. To strengthen the evidence of gentrification, I looked at real estate listings for the area and then examined the gentrification inducing forces of the 421-a plan and the 2005 zoning change. Also, by examining the New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey data, I was able to note city-wide patterns of increasing condominium ownership and decreasing number of affordable units. Lastly, the incorporation of my survey and interview data provides a unique glimpse into the gentrification coping strategies, be it staying put and doubling-up or getting displaced. The following chapter ties together all factors influencing Greenpoint and provides answers to the research questions presented in the Introduction.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarizes the findings of my research and provides answers to the research questions posed in the Introduction. It also ties the story of gentrification, displacement and neighborhood change together with some of the theories presented in Chapter III.

Based on the lessons learned from the literature review and the theories presented in Chapter III, it is clear that gentrification can no longer be explained by looking at production versus consumption-oriented theories and justifications. It is widely acknowledged among scholars that the process is complex and therefore, stating that its theoretical explanations are mutually exclusive is inappropriate. I argue that consideration needs to be given to both the supply and demand sides of gentrification, not only in my case study in Greenpoint, but in other places as well. This dual approach helps scholars and policy-makers understand not only the intricate causes of the process, it also (especially if based on a mixed-methods approach), allows for a better comprehension of the outcomes.

Based on the data analyzed in the previous chapter, it is evident that gentrification in Greenpoint has not only been caused by the rent gap which allows for the development of highest and best use. Greenpoint's gentrification is also the outcome of people's individual agency and decision-making. Based on my findings from the U.S. Census

socio-economic data presented in the previous chapter, the pattern of “overspill gentrification” from Williamsburg is clear.

Moreover, the outcome of my research indicates that third-wave gentrification, as discussed in Chapter III, has emerged as the perfect model for what is happening in Greenpoint. Hackworth (2002) argues that one of the important differences between classic gentrification and postrecession gentrification is the lack of or minimal presence of pioneer gentrifiers. As much as Greenpoint has probably seen a handful of urban pioneers very early on, the neighborhood’s gentrification has been largely orchestrated by corporate developers working closely with local government.

As previously discussed, the 421-a plan and the rezoning of 2005 have had, and will continue to have a tremendous impact on Greenpoint. The 421-a tax abatement plan, as originally developed in 1971, encouraged developers to invest in neighborhoods which suffered from disinvestment at that time. In the 1970s, essentially every neighborhood outside of the core of Manhattan needed such an encouragement. However, as New York City’s neighborhoods were revitalized, the 421-a plan contributed to overdevelopment and the eradication of affordable housing. Before the city government decided to pass an amendment to the 421-a plan in 2007, damage had already been done to Greenpoint’s affordable housing stock.

It is important to note that developers and the local government were not the only agents of change that helped gentrify the neighborhood’s residential areas. Manufacturing has possibly paid the highest price in Greenpoint’s redevelopment. As argued in the previous chapter, the rezoning plan of 2005 increased the number of residentially zoned

tax lots, at the cost of manufacturing activity. City government concerned about New York's image as a global city, decided to displace essentially all manufacturing activity out of the city, therefore displacing it out of Greenpoint.

Both, the 421-a plan and the 2005 rezoning are local expressions of broader international and national changes. As discussed in Chapter III, Neil Smith argues that gentrification has become a new "global urban strategy" for the world's cities. In the face of twenty-first century Neoliberalism with its reduced federal government control, decrease in social spending, and privatization of formerly state run operations, cities have become actors on the global economic arena (Smith 2002). Combined with the rising ease in communication, transportation, worldwide migration and increasing financial deregulation, globalization works hand in hand with Neoliberalism changing the scale of economic production and the extent of capital mobility.

Given these changes in the global economy, cities are at a constant risk of being priced out by another locality in the race for capital, and they often find themselves controlled by large corporations. Faced with the lack of federal redistribution policies, cities are forced to attract investment and development with creative strategies (Leitner 1990). For many cities such strategies are a matter of survival. That is why cities increasingly provide corporate capital and investors with tax incentives, low interest loans and loan guarantees (Leitner 1990). Therefore, it is not surprising to see plans such as the 2005 rezoning and the 421-a plan enacted in a city such as New York.

It is quite obvious that these kinds of decisions made by the city of New York only benefit the wealthy. Lees, Slater and Wyly (2007) argue that such a political attitude



is representative of a new fourth wave gentrification, where the interests of the wealthy are protected “combined with a bold effort to dismantle the last of the social welfare programs” (p.183). Moreover, both third and fourth wave gentrification models claim that areas farther away from the urban core become gentrified, which is definitely true for Greenpoint, as well as other New York City neighborhoods. Last, but not least, in both models community resistance to gentrification is nonexistent. I address this issue as it relates to Greenpoint later in this final chapter.

### **Residential Displacement**

Multiscalar gentrification forces have already produced local scale results in Greenpoint. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Greenpoint has seen a tremendous rise in the prices of rentals, as well as real estate prices. On top of the rising prices, Greenpoint is also experiencing “condofication” whereby an astounding number of predominantly condominium units are being build, in place of the old residential or old manufacturing units. This process puts a tremendous strain on the availability of affordable housing.

With many high-end apartments under construction in Greenpoint it is not surprising to see gentrification-led displacement. Apart from new construction, old rental units are also capitalizing on the rising market prices. Many landlords try desperately to take their units out of rent control or rent stabilization, using both legal and illegal tactics, as discussed in the previous chapter. As difficult as it is to measure the rate of displacement quantitatively, Newman and Wyly (2006) succeeded in doing just that, through the development of an elaborate displacement model. Newman and Wyly used

the New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey to come up with the number of displacees. They only looked at persons who moved because of expensive housing, landlord harassment and individuals displaced by private action. Newman and Wyly's research shows that anywhere from 8,000 to 11,000 people were displaced annually between 1989 and 2002 in New York City as a whole.

My survey data show a moderate concern among Greenpoint's Polish residents with the likelihood of displacement. In contrast, however, interview data provide evidence that local residents are greatly concerned about displacement, claiming that a large population of Greenpoint's Poles has already moved out. The most popular destinations for Poles priced out of Greenpoint are Queens neighborhoods of Maspeth, Ridgewood and Middle Village. As a matter of fact, Polish ethnic enclaves are currently emerging in these neighborhoods, with numerous Polish stores, restaurants and banks opening up.

Despite the seemingly pain-free transition of Poles from Greenpoint to Ridgewood or Maspeth, the trauma is definitely there. These residents are leaving not only their apartment that they inhabited for often upwards of ten years, but they are leaving their friends, their favorite stores and parks, and their whole community including their immigrant social networks.

For those who decide to stay put despite the rising rents, life only gets more difficult. Many are forced to take in additional roommates to be able to afford rent. As discussed in the previous chapter, my survey data show as many as five or even six

people sharing apartments in Greenpoint. This common immigrant practice, though relieves the financial stress, most definitely puts additional emotional stress on their lives.

### **Commercial and Industrial Displacement**

For some of Greenpoint's residents, displacement not only means getting priced out of their residence. Since many of the low-skilled Polish immigrants work in construction, manufacturing or warehousing, the 2005 up-zoning of manufacturing from the neighborhood serves as a second blow. As shown in my survey results, numerous Polish residents of Greenpoint not only live but also work in the area. With the reduced access to manufacturing jobs they need to look elsewhere.

Apart from residences and industrial activities, commercial operations are also seeing signs of gentrification. Multiple agencies providing translation and immigration services to Polish immigrants are finding it more difficult to stay afloat. Anna Plucinski, an owner of one of those agencies says: "On a good day we used to have 50 or 60 people opening the door. Now we are lucky to get 20 or 30. The phone is not ringing, it's really dead" (Nessen 2008). Even though Polish bakeries, grocery stores and restaurants are still viable, an increasing number of non-ethnic businesses are becoming visible along Manhattan Avenue, the main commercial strip. Yet another Starbucks may soon replace Rzeszowska Bakery, just like the first one displaced a Polish movie theater named after Frederic Chopin.

Just as in the case of up-zoned manufacturing, disappearing Polish businesses mean a loss of jobs for Greenpoint's Polish residents. As much as some of these employees will be able to find work with new American employers, those without

English language skills will most likely have to search for work elsewhere or move out altogether.

### **The Future of Polish Greenpoint**

It is evident that gentrification is displacing Polish residents of Greenpoint, whether through expensive housing units, disappearing manufacturing jobs or through the changing commercial landscape. However, as mentioned in Chapters IV and V, large scale international processes affecting Polish immigrants also have local consequences for Greenpoint. As discussed in Chapter V, in the last three years or so there has been a drop both in the number of immigrant and nonimmigrant U.S. visas issued to Poles. Moreover, both the number of Polish foreign born and persons with Polish ancestry have declined between 2000 and 2006, in New York City as whole and in Brooklyn.

These statistics can be associated with the recent changes in Poland's political and economic position. On May 1, 2004 Poland joined the European Union. Immediately upon joining the doors of the United Kingdom and Ireland's job markets were opened to Poles. Other EU countries, such as Germany, imposed waiting periods before opening their job markets. The British and Irish openness resulted in nearly two million Poles leaving their home country between 2004 and 2006 (Easton 2008).

All of a sudden, migrating to the United States for economic reasons ceased to make sense. The trip to the U.S. is much more expensive and requires a visa. Since most Polish migrants arrive in the U.S. on tourist visas, they are legally not allowed to work. In the case of the United Kingdom or Ireland, no visas are required since Poles are now legal residents of those countries. In addition, the travel expenses are much lower than in

the case of flying to the United States. Also, being closer to Poland allows for frequent visits, which in the case of U.S. migrants is not an option, partially because of cost, but also owing to the illegal alien status. Last but not least, it is increasingly more difficult to make the economic justification for migration to the U.S. given the falling value of the U.S. dollar.

Polish consul general in New York, Krzysztof W. Kasprzyk gives similar reasons for the smaller number of Poles immigrating to the U.S.: “Jobs in Europe are fully legal, workers get social security and medical insurance, and they don’t need a visa ...they can also go back to Poland on the weekends” (Nessen 2008). The better economic prospects and freedom of movement make European Union countries, and increasingly Poland itself, a more logical choice as the land of opportunity.

The combination of gentrification – led displacement of low income Polish residents of Greenpoint and the decreasing flow of new immigrants to the neighborhood are proving fatal to the long-term importance of Polish space, culture and identity in Greenpoint. Exacerbating this trend are the preferences of Polish business owners and Polish landlords to increasingly target an American clientele. Some landlords actually refuse to rent out to Poles since they can almost always make more money on Americans, whereas with fellow Poles they often feel forced to ask for lower rents. Owners of Polish restaurants increasingly cater to Americans by redesigning the décor of their restaurants and attracting American customers with a promise of a unique, culture-rich dining experience (Christopher, Personal Interview 2007).

The changes in Greenpoint are zooming through like an express train, with hardly any resistance from the community. Though there are individual lawsuits against landlord harassment and illegal evictions, nothing has happened to slow the forces of change on a broader scale. One of the key informants interviewed for this thesis, Jacek Bikowski, (an employee of the North Brooklyn Redevelopment Corporation, an organization that helps with landlord tenant disputes), claims that there are three reasons why Poles in Greenpoint do not organize against gentrification. First, new immigrants or transitory Poles, as I refer to them (see Chapter IV), do not care about the changes in Greenpoint because theoretically they do not affect them. These Poles are preoccupied with work and sending remittances home that they possibly do not even notice what is happening. And if they are being adversely affected by rising rents, some choose to get an additional roommate, rather than to move out. This final factor was confirmed by my survey data as well as the informant's observations.

Along with this large group of newer Polish immigrants who are seemingly unaware of the dramatic changes now underway in their neighborhood are a second dramatically different group of Poles in Greenpoint. Most do not even speak the Polish language. The changing neighborhood does not affect them as much, since they care much less about the integrity of the Polish identity of their place of residence. If some of the Polish stores, restaurants and agencies disappear, they will not be as affected, as they are comfortable patronizing other business. These more assimilated Poles can easily blend into the group of new, more affluent and more American-like residents.

A third distinct group of Greenpoint Poles are the new homeowners. These are the people who have worked extremely hard and have finally reached the American Dream of homeownership. However, despite their economic success, many are poorly educated, have minimal English language skills and are very much dependent on Greenpoint's Polish service sector. They probably bought their home with the aid of a Polish real estate agent and a Polish lawyer. Even though they have much at stake in preserving the ethnic neighborhood, they are so unsure and unaware of their rights that their fear keeps them silent.

Even though in the past Greenpoint's residents organized as a community to prevent the closure of a fire house, or to oppose certain proposed zoning law changes, things have changed. This decreased resistance is yet another reflection of third-wave gentrification. There are many parties involved in the changes Greenpoint is going through. Each has a different stake in the neighborhood. For developers, this situation must feel like paradise – but for current residents, it may be something closer to hell. Apart from being at risk of displacement, they are facing increased stress resulting from higher demands on the local infrastructure.

The findings discussed in this final chapter and throughout the thesis, indicate that Greenpoint is rapidly transitioning from a Polish ethnic enclave into a hip urban American neighborhood. On the one hand, gentrification is quickly spreading through Greenpoint, causing some displacement of the area residents, while making others double-up. Greenpoint's gentrification also leads to exclusionary displacement, making it prohibitive for low income persons, especially immigrants, to move into Greenpoint. On

the other hand, international forces affecting mobility of Poles and their immigrant status are reducing the number of potential Polish Greenpoint residents from even getting to the U.S. Together, these mechanisms are likely to lead to the disappearance of Poles from Greenpoint and to a homogenization of the landscape.

According to a neighborhood description found on the Corcoran Group's web page:

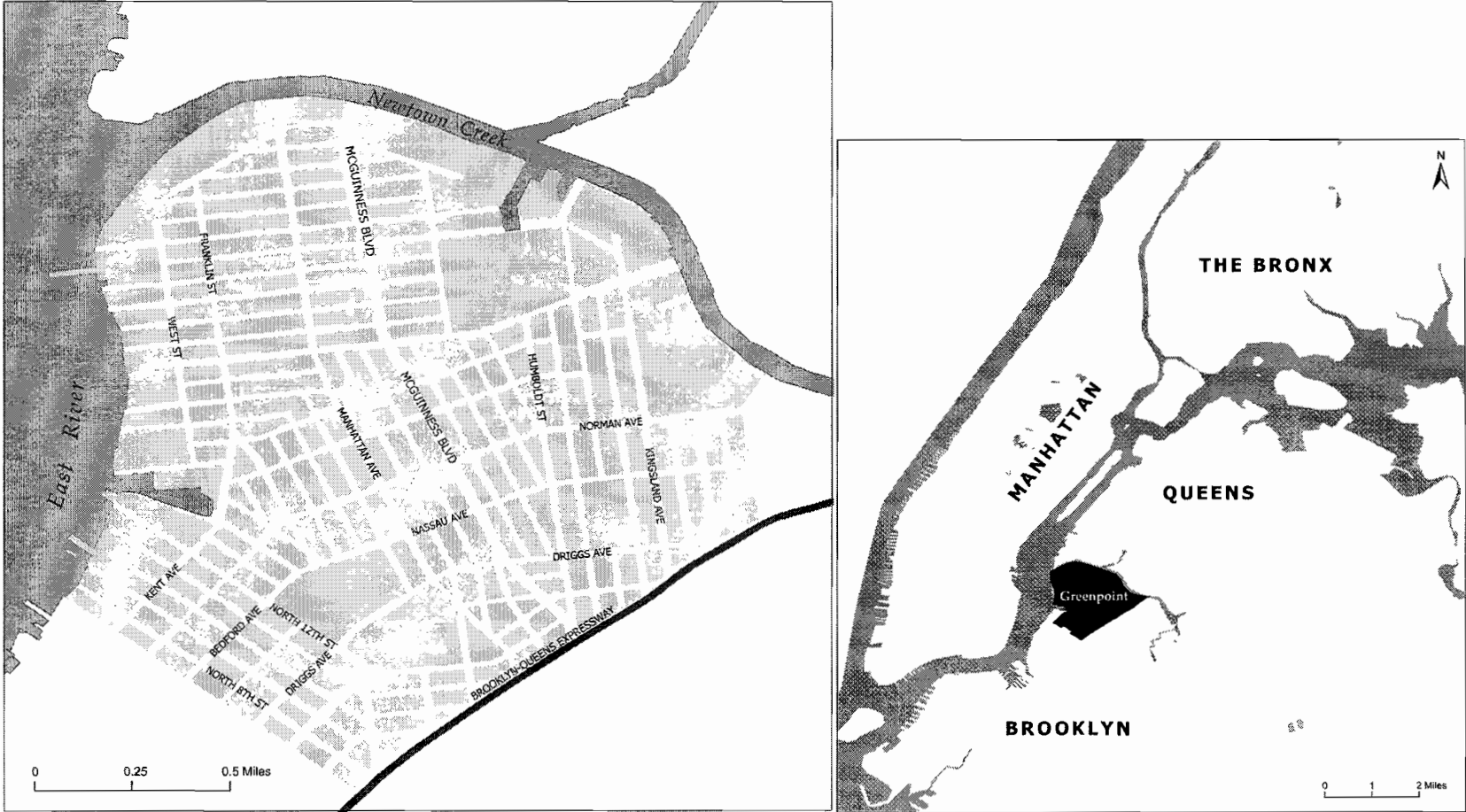
Greenpoint boasts a plethora of popular art galleries, yoga studios, cafes, shops and restaurants, including one of the most famous brunch spots in Brooklyn, Enid's. But there is also plenty of green in this point. McCarren Park, which has a farmer's market and athletic track and Monsignor McGolrick Park's bustling dog run help keep the neighborhood-y feel. New condos are a stable part of the housing inventory here but the nabe is also well known for being a renter's paradise (Corcoran Group, INC. 2008).

Sadly, no mention is made of Polish immigrants in this description of the Greenpoint neighborhood in Brooklyn. The unique identity of Greenpoint as a distinctive place may soon be erased. Many of the Polish residents of Greenpoint have already been displaced, or never even constituted a vital part of this neighborhood, judging from this description. As is happening in many other neighborhoods in North American cities, Greenpoint will soon become yet another invisible part of New York City metropolitan area's urban landscape.



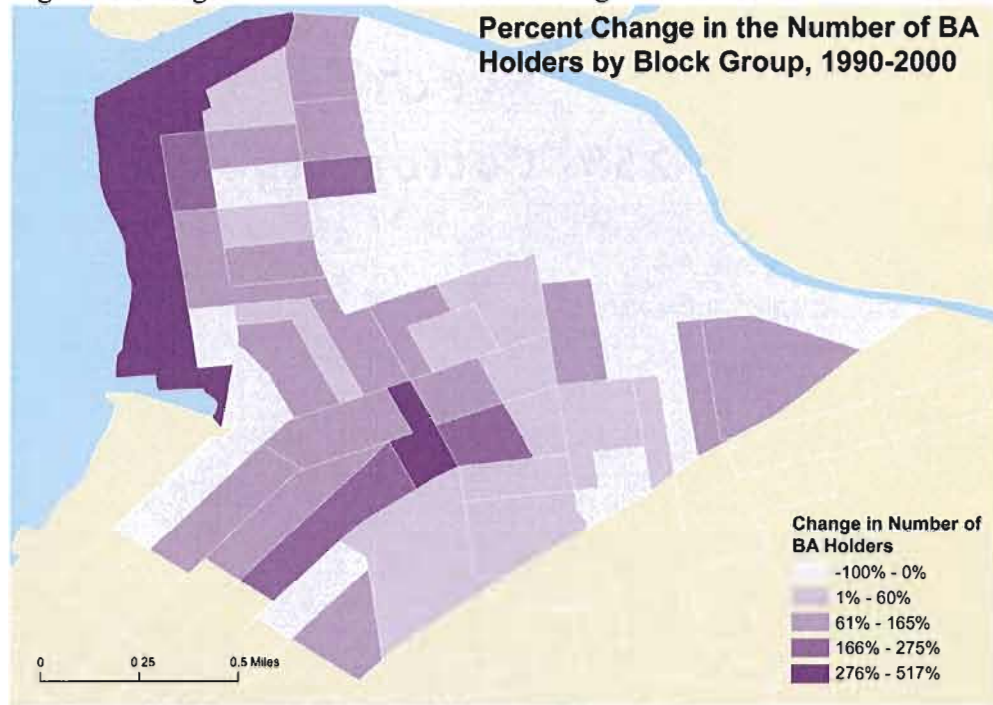
APPENDIX A  
MAPS AND GRAHPS

Figure 1. a) Location of Greenpoint within the New York City metropolitan area. b) Shaded area context.



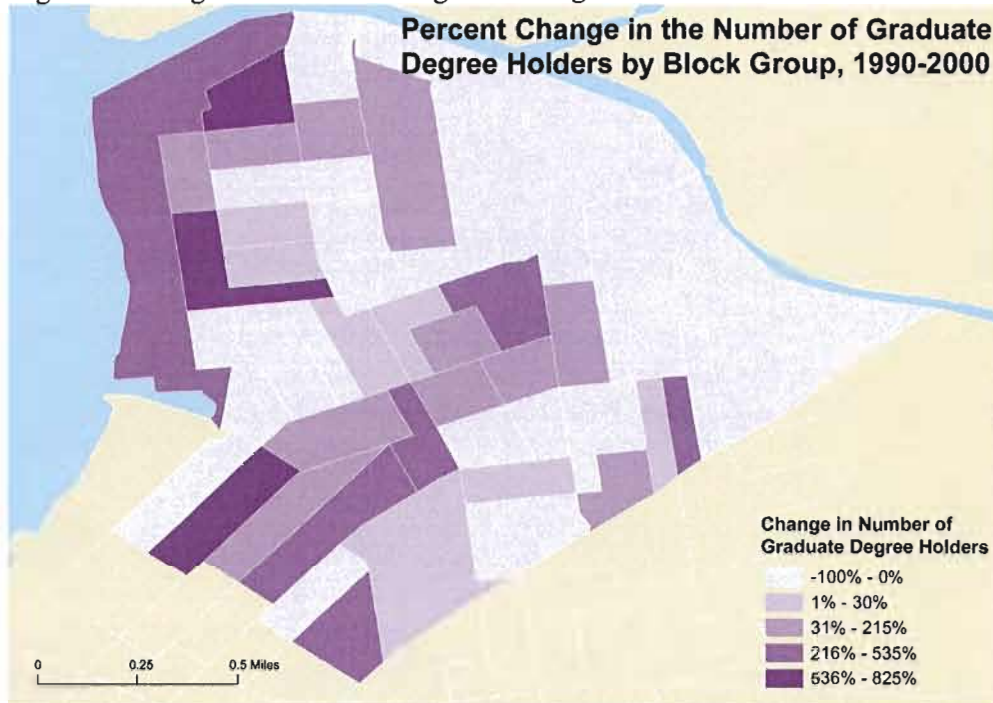
Data Sources: New York City Department of City Planning, ESRI.

Figure 2. Change in the number of bachelor's degree holders.



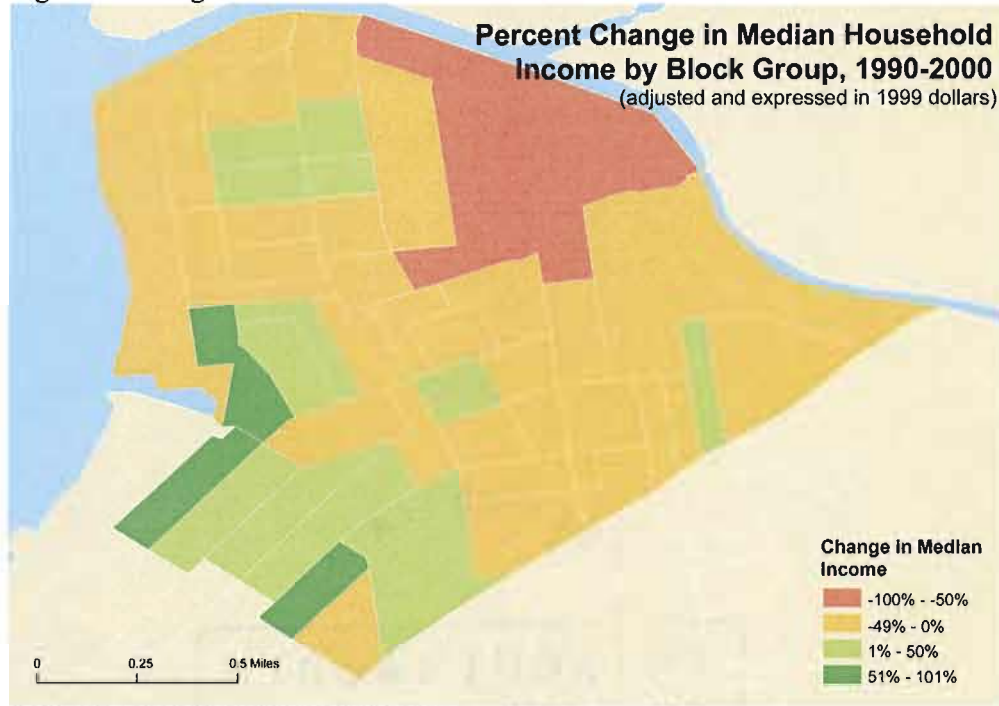
Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census.

Figure 3. Change in the number of graduate degree holders.



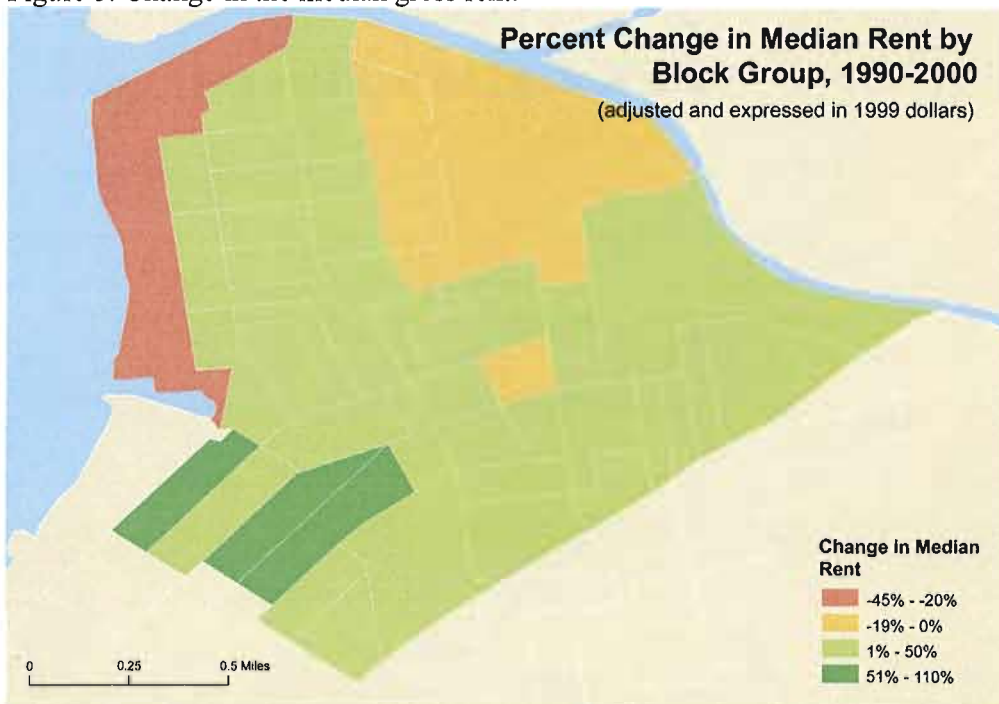
Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census.

Figure 4. Change in the median household income.



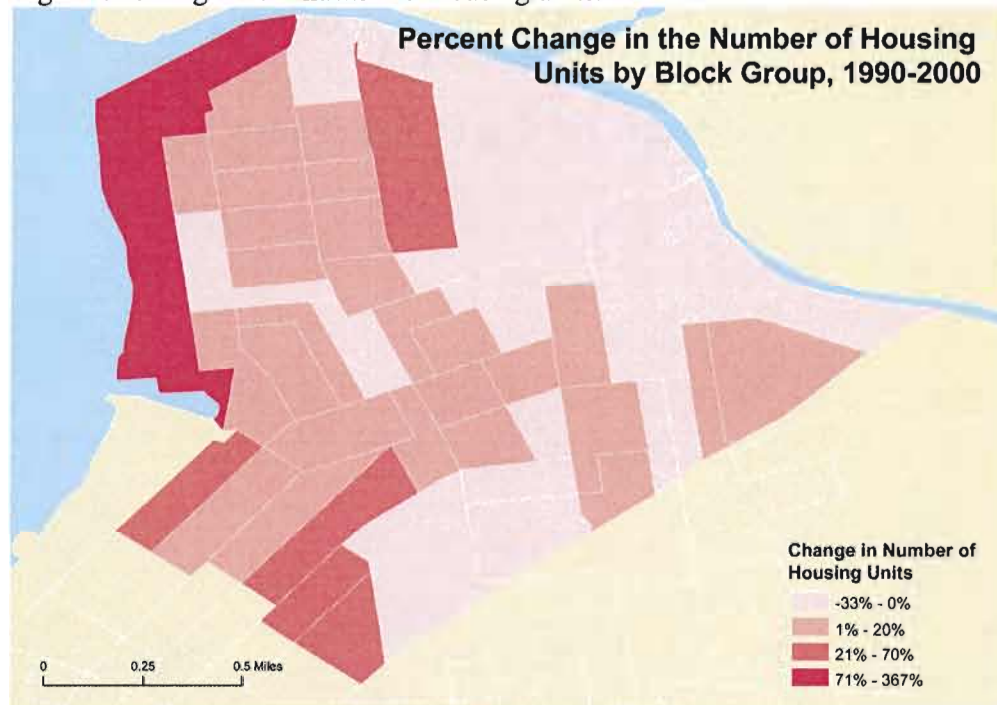
Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census.

Figure 5. Change in the median gross rent.



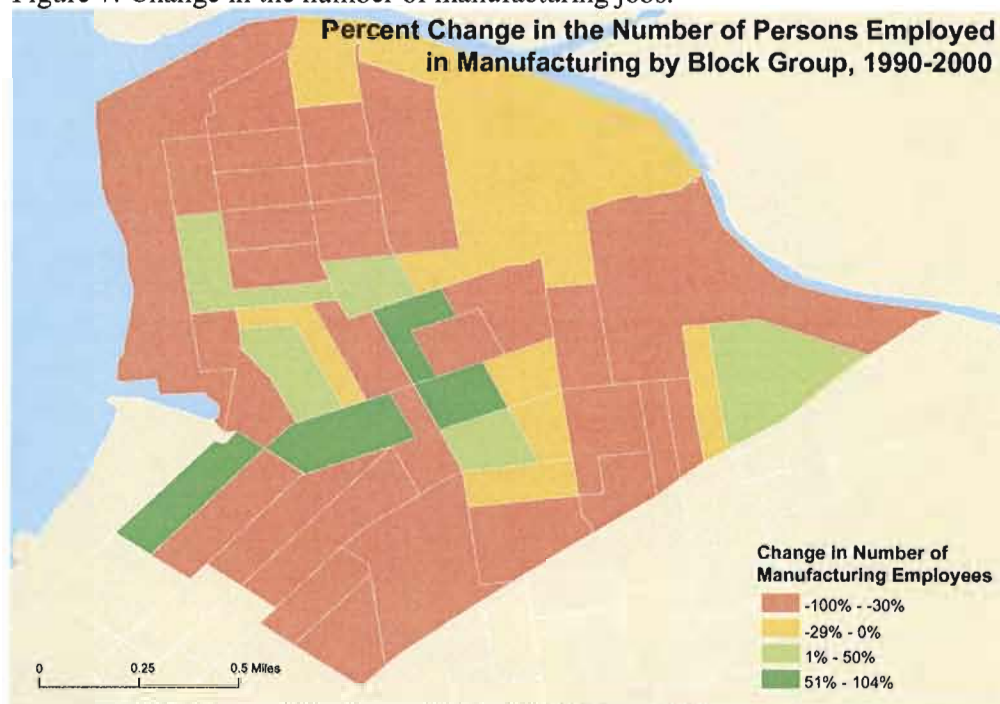
Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census.

Figure 6. Change in the number of housing units.



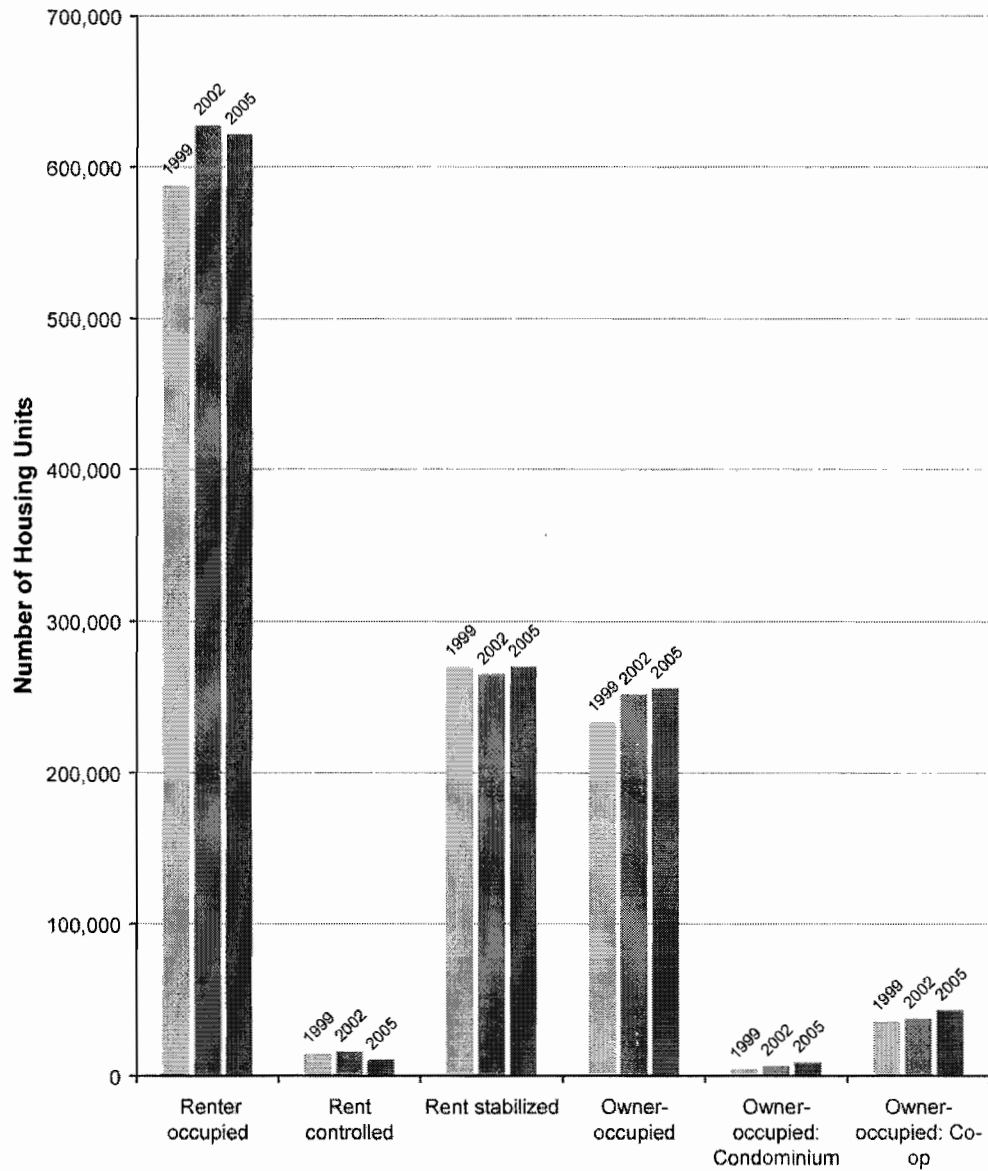
Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census.

Figure 7. Change in the number of manufacturing jobs.



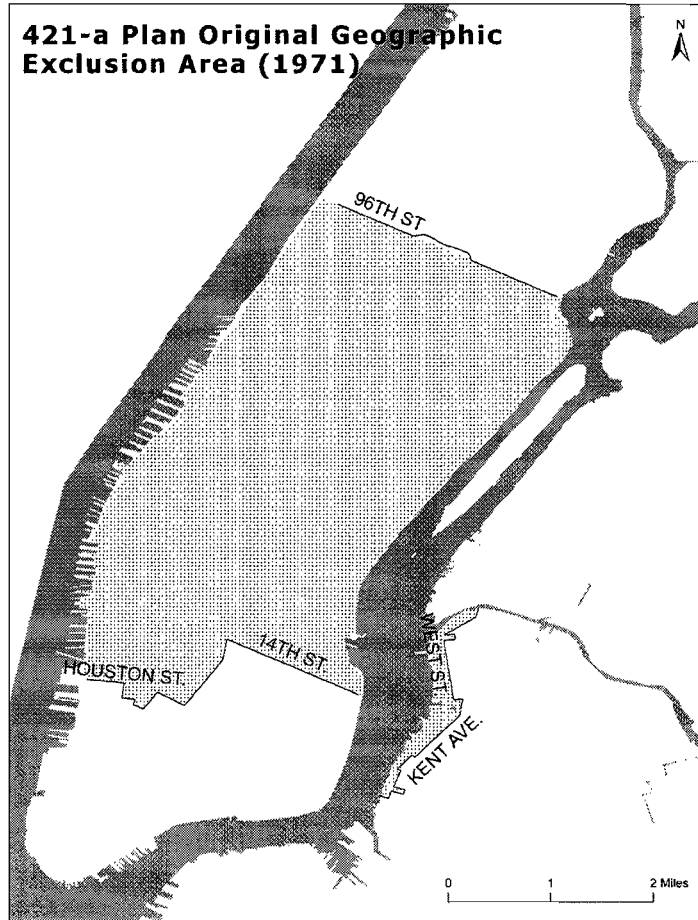
Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census.

Figure 8. Changes in Brooklyn's housing variables, 1999 – 2005.

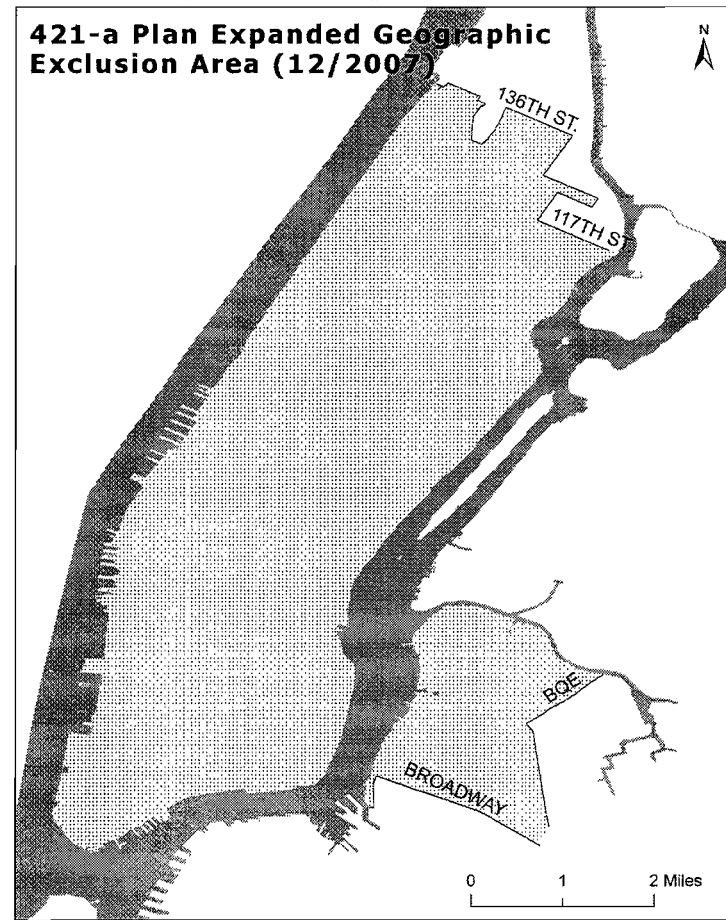


Data Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey.

Figure 9. a) 421-a original geographic exclusion area.

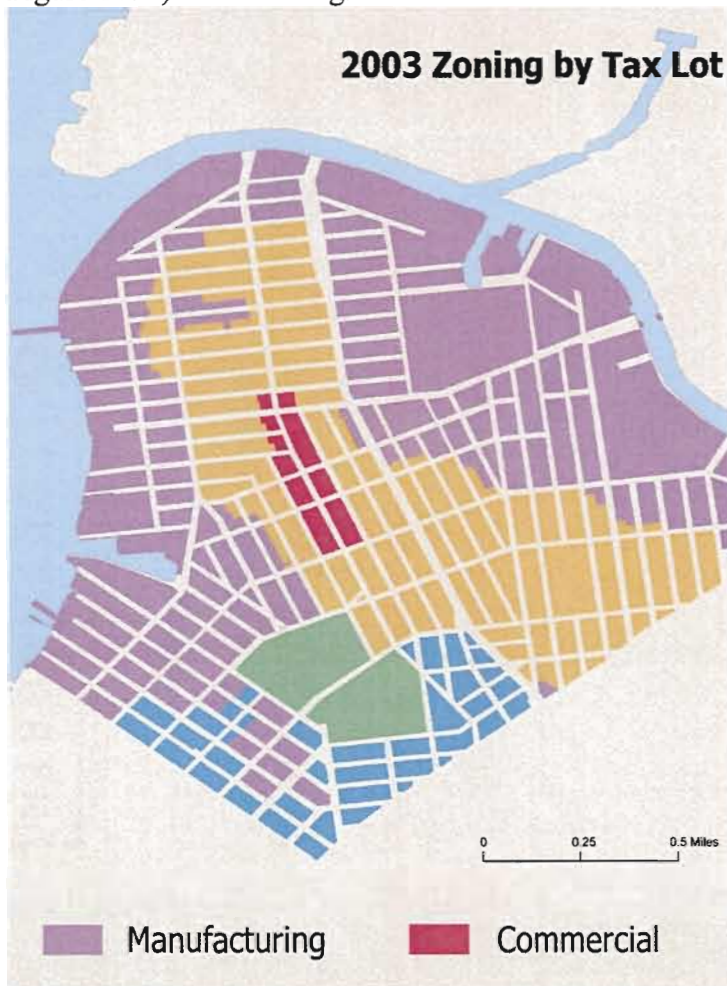


b) 421-a expanded geographic exclusion area.



Data Source: New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, ESRI. Note: Not all expanded exclusion areas are portrayed.

Figure 10. a) 2003 Zoning.



b) 2005 zoning.

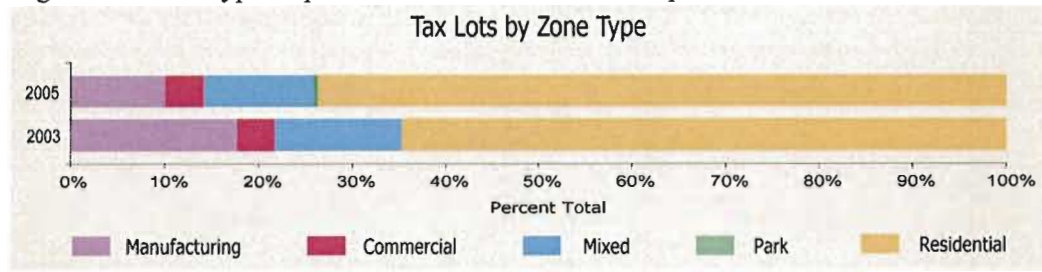


Manufacturing Commercial Mixed Park Residential

Data Source: New York City Department of City Planning, ESRI.

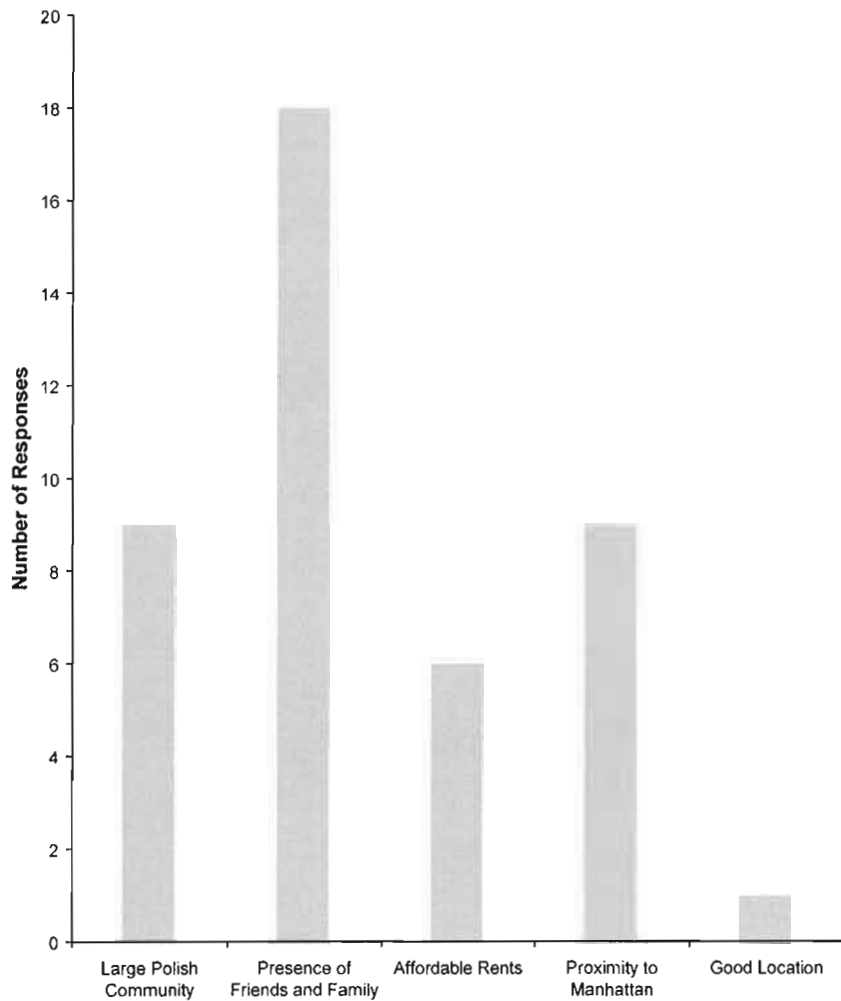


Figure 11. Zone type as percent of all tax lots in Greenpoint.



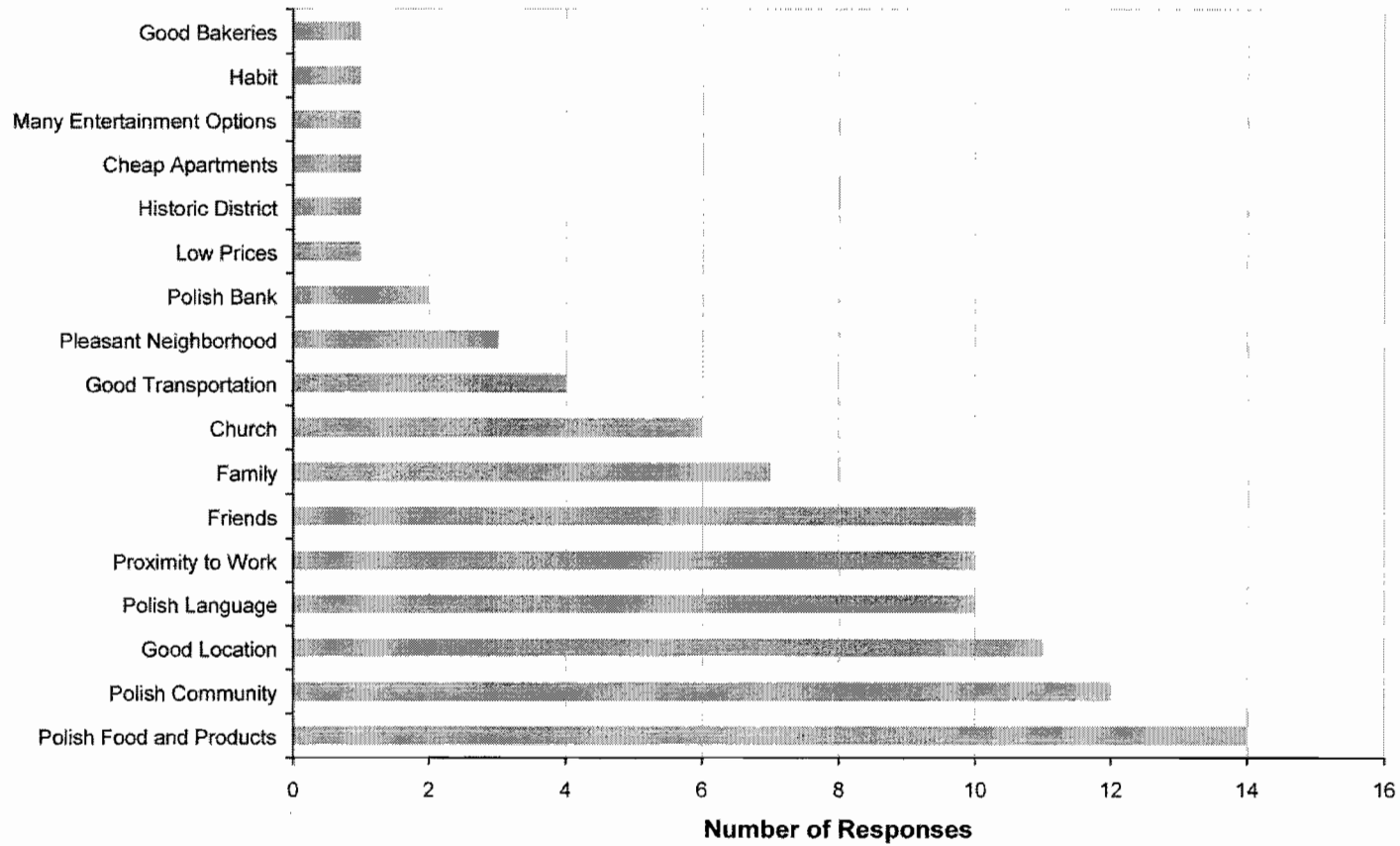
Data Source: New York City Department of City Planning.

Figure 12. Reasons for Moving into Greenpoint.



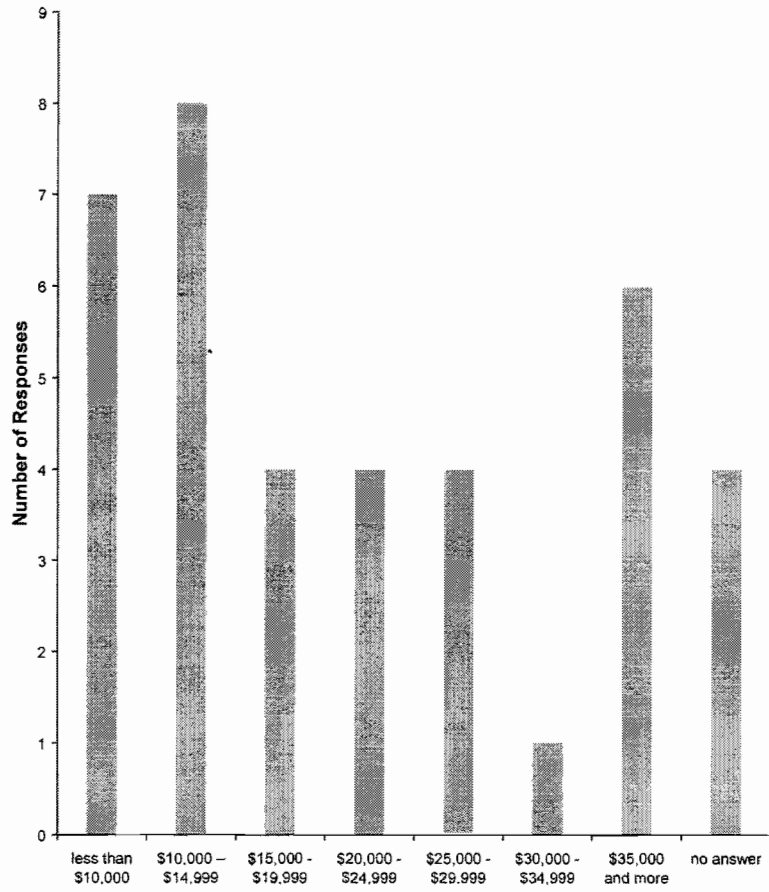
Data Source: Survey by Author.

Figure 13. Features I most enjoy about Greenpoint.



Data Source: Survey by Author.

Figure 14. Annual gross income.



Data Source: Survey by Author.

Figure 15. Monthly rent.

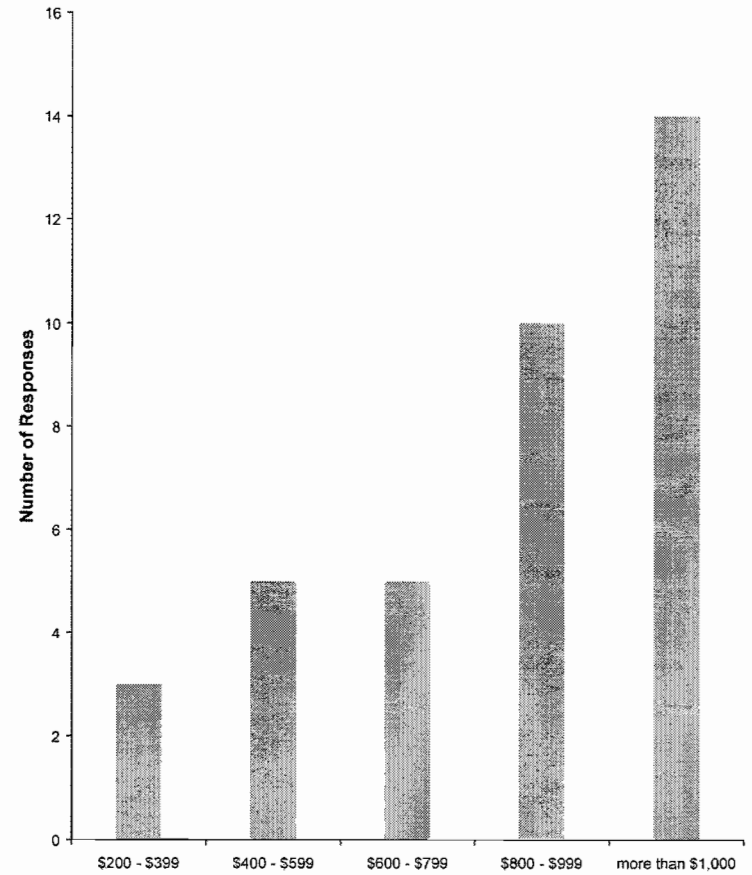
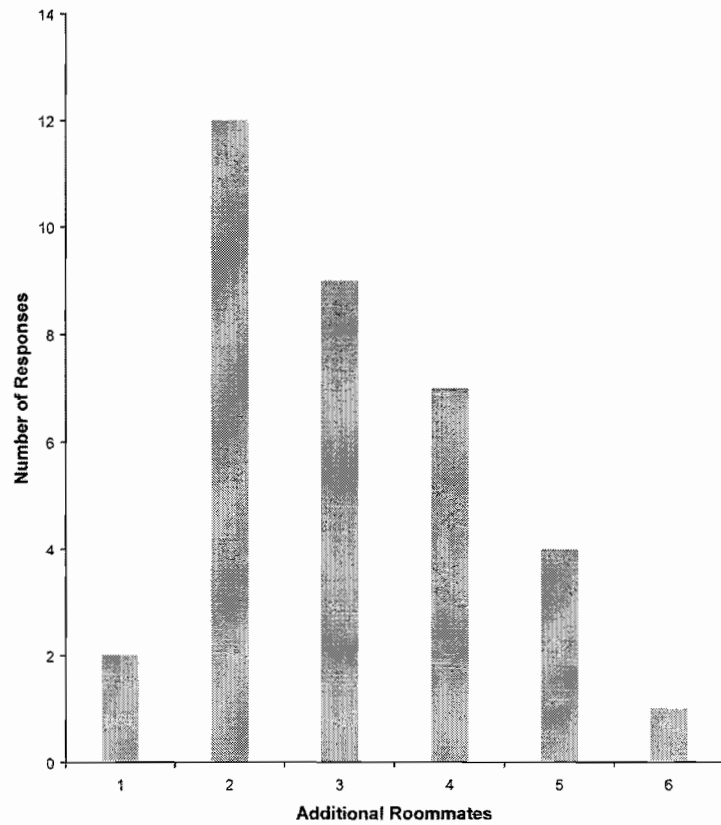


Figure 16. Number of people who share the apartment with you.



Data Source: Survey by Author.

Figure 17. Do you feel you will have to move in the future?

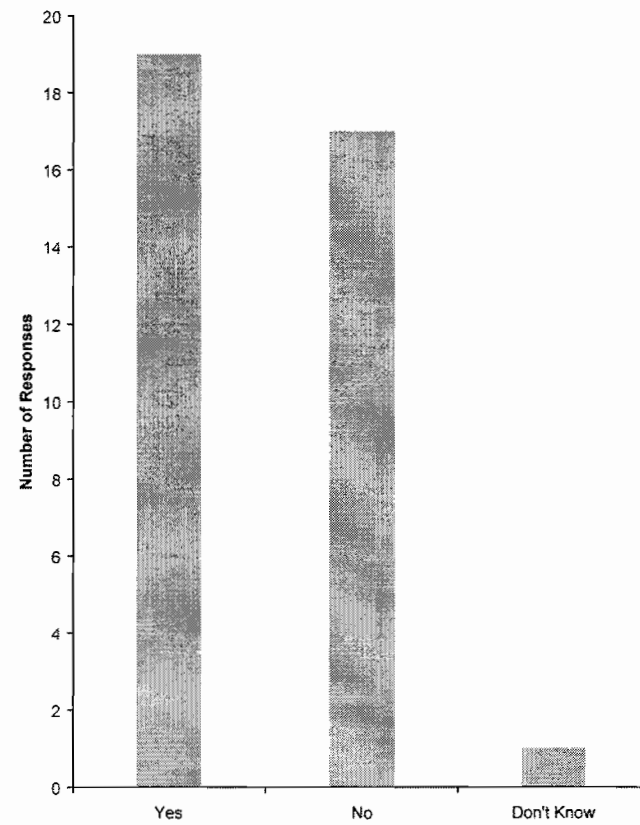
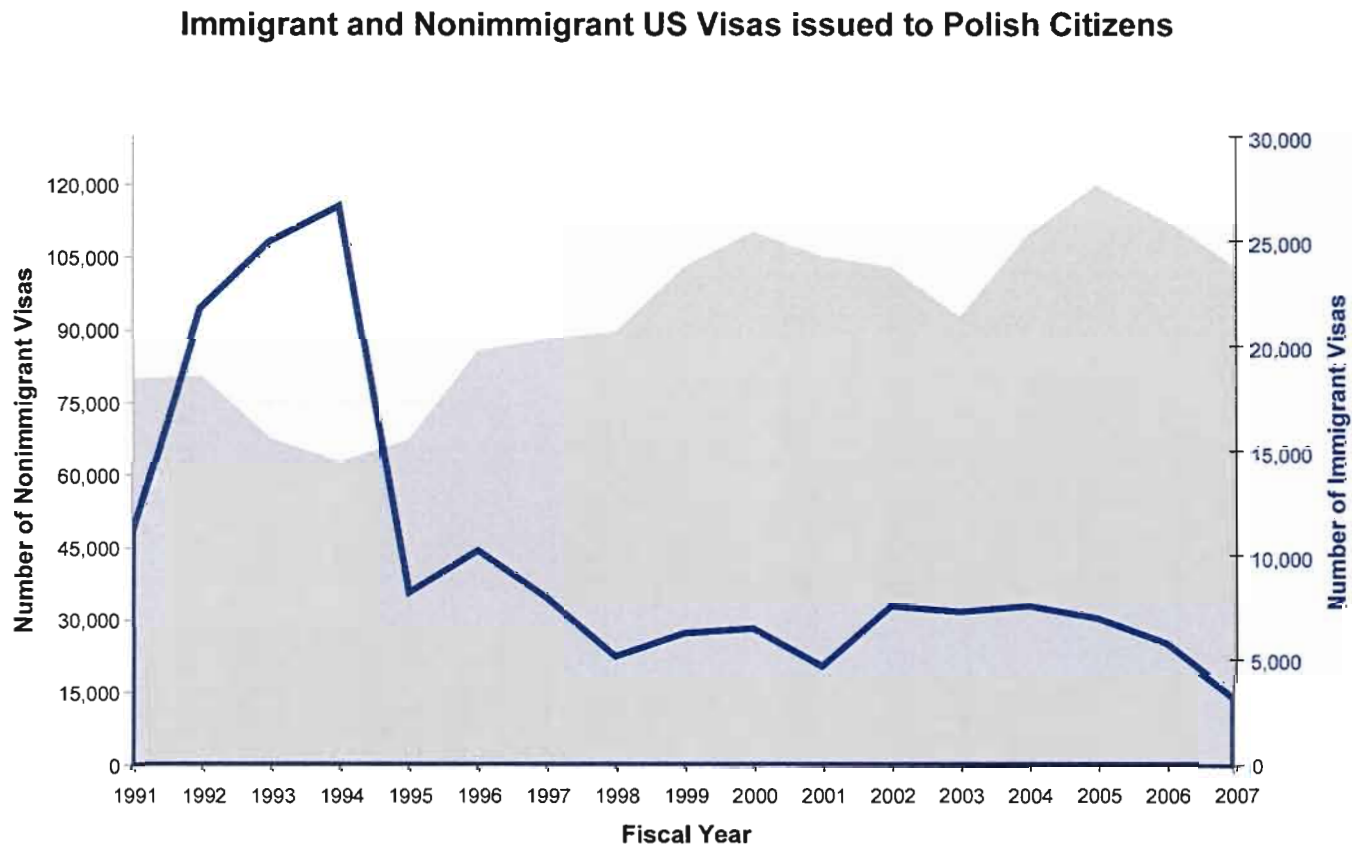


Figure 18. United States visas issued to Poles



Data Source: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Report of the Visa Office, Fiscal Year 2007 and 2000 Annual Reports.

APPENDIX B  
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1) How long have you lived in Greenpoint:
- a) less than 1 year
  - b) 1-2 years
  - c) 3-5 years
  - d) 5-9 years
  - e) More than 10 years
- 2) Why did you choose to live in Greenpoint when you first moved here:
- a) large Polish community including stores and services where business is conducted in Polish
  - b) presence of friends and family (social networks)
  - c) affordable rents
  - d) proximity to Manhattan
  - e) other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) What is your current occupation?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) How old are you:
- a) 18-24
  - b) 25-34
  - c) 35-44
  - d) 45-54
  - e) 55-64
  - f) 65+
- 5) What is your annual gross income:
- a) less than \$10,000
  - b) \$10,000 – \$14,999

- c) \$15,000 - \$19,999
- d) \$20,000 - \$24,999
- e) \$25,000 - \$29,999
- f) \$30,000 - \$34,999
- g) \$35,000 and more

6) What is your monthly rent at your place of residence:

- a) less than \$200
- b) \$200 - \$399
- c) \$400 - \$599
- d) \$600 - \$799
- e) \$800 - \$999
- f) \$1,000 and more

7) How much of your monthly salary is devoted to rent:

- a) less than 10 percent
- b) 10 – 19 percent
- c) 20 – 29 percent
- d) 30 - 39 percent
- e) 40 - 49 percent
- f) 50 percent and more

8) Is the building you live in rent stabilized or rent regulated? (check one)

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

9) Do you live with:

- a) family
- b) roommates
- c) other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

10) How many people share the apartment with you?

---

11) What do you most enjoy about living in Greenpoint? Name three aspects:

- a)

b)

c)

12) Has your building been rent control deregulated?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ I don't know \_\_\_\_\_

13) Did your financial situation, due to rent increases force you to take in a roommate?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

14) Do you feel that you will have to move in the near future?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

15) What do you think about the increasing presence of non-Polish businesses in the area?

*Many thanks for your help with my research project. I really appreciate your participation.*



## APPENDIX C

## SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Has your rent changed in the past 2-3 years, if so how much?

Has your building been rent control deregulated?

Do you know of any individuals that have had to move because of changing rents, conversion to condominiums or other housing related reasons?

Did your financial situation, due to rent increases force you to take in a roommate?

Is your building being converted into condominiums? Have you heard any rumors?

Do you feel that you will have to move in the near future?

What changes have you noticed in the neighborhood? What do you think about the changes?

What do you think about the increasing presence of non-Polish businesses in the area? Do you think their number will increase or decrease in the future?

Do you prefer to stay in Greenpoint in the future no matter how much things may change?

What are the three most important reasons you live in Greenpoint as compared to living in other parts of Brooklyn or the New York metro area?

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