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THE DYNAMICS OF NEIGHBORHOOD DEFENSE: A SOCIOLOGICAL
ACCOUNT OF GREENPOINT, BROOKLYN

City University of New York

PH.D. 1985

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**THE DYNAMICS OF NEIGHBORHOOD DEFENSE:
A SOCIOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF GREENPOINT, BROOKLYN**

by

JUDITH N. DESENA

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1985

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

THE DYNAMICS OF NEIGHBORHOOD DEFENSE:
A SOCIOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF GREENPOINT, BROOKLYN

by

JUDITH N. DESENA

Adviser: Professor Sylvia Fava

This research focuses on the response of Greenpoint, a predominantly white, blue collar neighborhood in Brooklyn to the changing metropolis. Residents of Greenpoint have responded by creating a "defended neighborhood" (Suttles, 1972). This research describes the strategies of defense that residents of Greenpoint employ in order to maintain a predominantly white, non-Hispanic neighborhood.

Interviews with 55 residents of Greenpoint suggest that the neighborhood is segregated into northern and southern areas, and that this segregation is based on ethnicity. Northern Greenpoint is composed mainly of Poles and Hispanics. Because of the presence of Hispanics, residents discuss a division in the neighborhood. Southern Greenpoint is made up of Polish, Irish, Italian, and Hispanic groups.

Residents of both northern and southern Greenpoint attempt to resist minority growth by employing a number of defensive strategies. These strategies include: an

informal housing network, where available housing never reaches the market, but is absorbed beforehand. Sponsorship, the practice by local residents who recommend potential tenants to homeowners with available housing, is described in detail. The state of local realty businesses is also presented. Realtors do not depend solely on housing for their existence. They sell insurance and offer legal services.

Local surveillance, both informal and formal, is examined as a strategy of defense in southern Greenpoint. This dissertation depicts the ways that residents "keep an eye" on one another's property, watch the block, and participate in civilian patrols. The role of neighborhood women in defending southern Greenpoint from change is explored. The findings suggest that women are involved in a variety of neighborhood activities. Non-Hispanic residents in northern Greenpoint employ strategies of defense that are somewhat similar to those existing in the south except that defense is by building rather than block.

The ways of Hispanic residents, who are the target of these strategies, are also examined. This includes a portrayal of how Hispanics obtain housing, and the relationships between them and their non-Hispanic neighbors.

Further, this research focuses on why non-Hispanics defend. Four explanations, from the point of view of neighborhood residents, are presented: the prevention of crime, the prevention of physical deterioration, the increasing threat of minority growth, and the limited options of residents of Greenpoint. Greenpoint's future is also discussed. It examines such factors as minority growth, an increase in Polish immigrants, and gentrification. Finally, the implications of this study for theory are addressed, including: housing as the focus of neighborhood defense, the role of the Church in Greenpoint, an examination of women as a unit of analysis, and the consequences of "insider" research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION.....1
Scope and Purpose
Literature Review
Research Methods

II. DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY OF GREENPOINT.....36
A Sketch of Greenpoint's Geography,
Transportation, Population, Housing,
Religion
Description by Residents
History of Greenpoint

III. STRATEGIES OF DEFENSE IN
SOUTHERN GREENPOINT.....74
Description of Southern Greenpoint
Housing as a Strategy of Defense
Informal Surveillance
Formal Surveillance
The Role of Neighborhood Women

**IV. STRATEGIES OF DEFENSE IN
NORTHERN GREENPOINT.....114**
Description of Northern Greenpoint
Defense by White Residents
Hispanics as the Target of Defense Strategies
Neighborhood Segregation
Segregation in Northern Greenpoint
The Church

V. CONCLUSIONS.....147
Why They Defend
Implications for Theory
The Model of the Defended Neighborhood
Greenpoint's Future



APPENDIX.....169

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.....190

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1.	Street Map of Greenpoint.....	37
2.	Greenpoint's Ethnic Composition in 1980.....	42
3.	Greenpoint's Ethnic Composition in 1950.....	63
4.	Greenpoint's Ethnic Composition in 1960.....	64
5.	Pictures of Southern Greenpoint.....	75
6.	Pictures of Northern Greenpoint.....	115

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The position of urban neighborhoods within society is a topic of research for many social scientists. The neighborhood cannot be viewed in isolation, but must be addressed in the ways that it is linked to the forces of the larger society. The routines and practices of neighborhood residents must therefore be examined in light of their relation to the larger society, but also as factors in their own right.

This study focuses on the response of a predominantly white, blue collar neighborhood in Brooklyn, Greenpoint, to the changing New York metropolis. Residents of Greenpoint have responded to these changes by creating a "defended neighborhood" (Suttles, 1972). This study describes the strategies of defense that Greenpoint residents employ in order to maintain a predominantly white non-Hispanic neighborhood. Findings suggest that white, non-Hispanic residents of Greenpoint are attempting to regulate minority growth, while also relegating minority residents to a particular area within Greenpoint.

Metropolitan decentralization of city residents and activities brought about a number of related urban problems. As residents made their exodus to the suburbs, the city's tax base eroded. Sections of the city began to deteriorate physically and municipal services were cut back. The city's industrial base also eroded with industry moving to the suburbs, the Sun Belt, other parts

of the world, or closing completely. Moreover, racial segregation increased, because the suburban movement was largely a movement by whites.

These changes in the metropolis affected blue collar neighborhoods. As whites moved beyond city limits, the ethnic composition of inner city neighborhoods changed. Minority individuals became a numerical majority in some cities, moving into what were once predominantly white neighborhoods. This phenomenon is illustrated in the sociological literature on "white flight." Blue collar groups in changing neighborhoods were therefore faced with increasing minority populations. On the other hand, some inner city neighborhoods underwent gentrification,¹ housing affluent city residents and therefore excluding blue collar groups. Blue collar neighborhoods experienced increasing pressure by the changes taking place in the metropolis, minority growth on one hand and gentrification on the other. Further, with an eroding industrial base there was a decline in blue collar jobs in the city.

The meaning of blue collar neighborhoods has changed along with the metropolis. Blue collar individuals experienced a reduction in residential choices. Many do not have the economic wherewithal to participate in the suburban movement. In addition, the pool of other blue collar neighborhoods to choose from as a place of residence has greatly diminished. Moreover, blue collar

groups are not affluent, and cannot move to gentrified areas, and some find racially mixed areas unacceptable.

The effects of the changing metropolis on blue collar individuals is reflected in Greenpoint. Greenpoint's residents have these limited options. One way Greenpoint residents are managing these changes in the metropolis is by defending their neighborhood. In the past, neighborhood defense in Greenpoint may not have been necessary, given the availability of a pool of potential white residents and other blue collar neighborhoods. At present, however, defense is a rational response by these people, given their lack of viable alternatives.

Residents of Greenpoint are also attached to the city because of their jobs. In 1980, 89% of Greenpoint's residents worked in New York City, while 11% worked outside the City.² Of those who worked in the City, 43% worked in Kings County (Brooklyn), their county of residence, and 41% worked in New York County (Manhattan). The remaining 16% worked in another part of New York City. This factor may help to explain defense by residents of Greenpoint. Most work in the city and live a short distance from their jobs. In 1980, the mean travel time to work for residents of Greenpoint was approximately 31 minutes.³ One reason they defend Greenpoint is because of

its proximity to their place of work and because of their limited options in choosing an alternative place of residence.

This dissertation begins with a review of the literature on neighborhoods and resistance to neighborhood change followed by a description of the research methods used in the study. Chapter II focuses on a description and history of Greenpoint and attempts to link contemporary Greenpoint with its past. Chapters III and IV describe the strategies of defense used by white, non-Hispanic residents. They focus on the existence of an informal housing network, informal and formal surveillance, the role of neighborhood women, and the role of the Roman Catholic church in neighborhood defense. In addition, a discussion of Hispanics, as the targets of these strategies of defense is presented. Finally, in Chapter V a projection of Greenpoint's future is considered, along with the impact of this study on theory.

Literature Review

The starting point of any research related to an urban neighborhood must begin with an assessment of the principal themes found in past writings. Robert E. Park of the University of Chicago, was a major influence and

pioneer regarding the study of urban neighborhoods. In his article, "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment" (1915), Park outlines a massive research program. He suggests that sociological studies focus on the "neighborhood" as a means of determining demographic characteristics of the population, the areas where people live, and the types of dwellings they occupy. In addition, he suggests a series of case studies on the various types of people that comprise the neighborhood. These suggestions were carried out by some students of the Chicago School (Lofland, 1983) and were later broadened by examining ecological aspects, developed by Burgess. Their combined influence shaped the focus of the Chicago school, where a number of studies were conducted. These studies include The Hobo (Anderson, 1923), The Gang (Thrasher, 1927), The Ghetto (Wirth, 1928), and The Gold Coast and the Slum (Zorbaugh, 1929). In addition, Park and Burgess investigated ethnic neighborhoods in Chicago and described them as transitional. They argued that as people assimilated, ethnic neighborhoods would gradually disappear.

Much later, a number of studies challenged Park and Burgess' ideas. These researches focused on ethnicity in urban neighborhoods and affirmed the persistence of ethnic

neighborhoods within cities. Studies on ethnic neighborhoods in Boston (Whyte, 1955; Gans, 1962) and Chicago (Suttles, 1968; Kornblum, 1974) are part of this genre. These researches view ethnic neighborhoods as a form of community within cities, and emphasize social integration and local attachments (Olson, 1980; 1982). Whyte's study of Cornerville (1955), an Italian slum in the North End of Boston, is an example. Whyte selected Cornerville because he was interested in studying a slum district, and Cornerville best fitted his sense of what a slum district should look like. He focused on the interaction of "corner boys" (The Nortons), "college boys" (the Italian Community Club), "racketeers," and "politicians."

The intensive examination of these groups enabled Whyte to uncover the status of group members, and the social structure of Cornerville, which held individual members in their places. This study also helped to dispel a widely held idea that slums were disorganized. The area's physical decay did not reflect its social structure.

Like Whyte, Gans (1962) studied an Italian American community in Boston. Gans studied the West End, which was bulldozed between 1958 and 1960 and replaced by luxury

housing in contrast to Whyte's North End which still exists as an Italian American area. Gans' research began in an effort to test the validity of the approach used by professionals to help low income populations improve their living conditions. He argued that professional "caretakers" (city planners, social workers, etc.) impose their middle class values on low income populations, by making policy decisions regarding the future existence of slum districts. His research, therefore, focused on the lifestyles of a working class Italian American subculture in West End, a Boston neighborhood that had been previously declared a slum. Gans concludes from his study that "caretakers" were wrong about the West End, since it was not really a slum. West Enders' way of life constituted a distinct, complex, and independent working class subculture. Thus, for Gans, the values and lifestyles of this population should first be understood and considered by "caretakers" before policy decisions are made. These conclusions, however, were too late to have an impact on West End, for it has been redeveloped under the federal renewal program, and no longer exists in the way that Gans studied it. Like Whyte in the North End, Gans found a viable social structure in the West End and not a disorganized slum.

Suttles' research is another example of an ethnic neighborhood which emphasizes territory and local attachments. Suttles (1968) studied four ethnic groups: Italians, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Blacks in the Addams area of Chicago. Territory has been divided among these four groups and residents are fragmented. In the Addams area an "ordered segmentation" has been created that allows for orderly relationships among groups. Turf is clearly defined. Groups only combine in instances of opposition to outside threats. Ethnic groups are separated by location, institutional arrangements (religion, recreation), and communicative devices (language, clothing). Street corner gangs maintain ethnic boundaries.

Kornblum's research focuses on the importance on local attachments in the development of a unified working class. Kornblum's (1974) study of blue collar workers in south Chicago attempts to answer a classic sociological question: why is there no powerful political movement among the working class in the United States. As a participant observer, Kornblum examined community institutions, local unions, and local ward politics. He found that workers identify themselves as labor while they are in the mills. Yet as soon as they go home they become

Poles, Croatians, and Mexicans. Kornblum concluded that ethnic and racial separation continues to divide the American working class. Katznelson (1981) makes a similar point in his study of Washington Heights- Inwood in Manhattan. He finds that urban politics has emphasized ethnicity, race, and territoriality instead of social class. Individuals have, therefore, separated the "politics of work" from the "politics of community."

According to Kornblum, the potential for breaking down these barriers exists at the local level, in neighborhood institutions. Within local institutions, such as mills, unions, and political organizations, groups of friends are formed whose members are from highly diverse subcultures. In addition, the desire to win a voice in decisions of union policy, and in selecting future leaders, not ethnicity or race are overriding issues for those who participate in union affairs. However, the intimate relations that develop among union members are formed through competition and co-operation in neighborhood institutions, such as taverns, churches, and block associations. These institutions are staging areas for resolving disputes among various ethnic and racial groups. Thus, for Kornblum, the future of a unified working class is dependent on the part played by unions

and local party organizations in national politics.

There is one recent social science study (Susser, 1982) which includes Greenpoint as part of the larger Greenpoint-Williamsburg area, Brooklyn's Community Board 1. Like the Kornblum and Katznelson studies, Susser focuses on the lack of political organization among the urban working class. She examines the effects of New York's fiscal crisis on working class people. She demonstrates the conflicts in Greenpoint-Williamsburg between working class people and pressures from the state. Susser argues that working class residents have been dislocated as a social class. One way that she illustrates conflict is by describing the relationship between officials of the welfare system and their clients, some of whom are residents of Greenpoint-Williamsburg. Clients are often harassed by officials and in this way, are discouraged from applying for assistance.

Susser also focuses on "landlord-tenant" relations, discussing the actions of resident and absentee landlords toward potential tenants. Resident landlords opt for security. They do not rent to recipients of welfare as often as absentee landlords. When resident landlords rent to welfare recipients, they charge them a rent higher than they would someone who did not receive welfare. This

practice was also applied to minorities. Minorities and those receiving public assistance were relegated to buildings that were poorly maintained and owned by absentee landlords.

Another way that Susser illustrates conflict is through a description of a block association that experienced problems which were based on divisions of class, race, and gender.

Finally, Susser demonstrates exploitation of residents by describing a conflict between the community and the City of New York. A firehouse was closed in Greenpoint-Williamsburg. Residents organized in an attempt to influence this policy decision. They occupied the firehouse, picketed at dinners held for politicians, and stopped traffic on the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway during rush hour. After one and one half years of collective action, the firehouse was re-opened.

Susser concludes that deterioration of neighborhoods cannot be attributed to poverty and racism. There are larger forces at work, such as the policies of the state.

The study of neighborhood change in the United States was also initiated by the Chicago School. The spatial distribution of population is constantly changing. Individuals or groups usually vary their location for a

variety of reasons. As individuals leave neighborhoods, they are usually replaced by others with the same general status as the original residents. However, newcomers may have different social characteristics, such as race or ethnicity, from original residents.

Through the development of human ecology, Burgess (1928) traced population movements and described areas of "invasion." According to Burgess, neighborhood change occurs through a process of "succession." The first stage of this process is called "invasion." This occurs when a different group gradually penetrates a residential area. The second stage in this process is called "reaction." During this stage local residents show resistance (ranging from mild to violent) to the newcomers. This stage results in an "influx" of newcomers and the consequent flight by old time residents. The final stage in the process of succession is called "climax." It occurs when a neighborhood experiences stability once again with newcomers as residents. Much later, Duncan and Duncan (1957) developed a somewhat similar four stage process of neighborhood change, which was based on their studies of black migration in Chicago. The stages they discuss are: penetration, invasion, consolidation, and piling up. Unlike Burgess' scheme, Duncan and Duncan did not include

resistance as part of the succession process. Burgess notes, however, that "every residential community offers resistance to the intrusion of a new group of imputed inferior status whether on the basis of race, economic standing, or cultural difference."⁴

Resistance to neighborhood change has taken a variety of forms. In some cases, local residents have committed acts of violence toward newcomers. In other instances, realtors have been the "gatekeepers" of neighborhoods, steering and discouraging minority "homeseekers" (Pearce, 1979). Another example is when individuals are prevented from moving into a particular area because of restricted covenants or zones (Krase, 1982) in that area. A final illustration is of local residents who resist change by attempting to "manage" it (Molotch, 1972).

Molotch's study of the South Shore of Chicago is an example of local resistance to neighborhood change. It illustrates an "attempt to inhibit succession through the creation of a racially integrated community."⁵ A commission of residents "managed integration" in South Shore through a number of strategies. South Shore's leaders attempted to make the community "the place to live," for in this way they would maintain the existing white population and compete for new white residents.

Making South Shore the "place to live" meant creating conditions that would attract whites, such as a quiet, safe neighborhood with "good neighbors" whose children are good students. One way that the commission attempted to create safety was by developing a "Youth Guidance Program." This program was set up to keep black youths "out of trouble." Under the direction of a South Shore volunteer psychiatrist, white residents invited black youngsters on family outings and assisted the youths with school work and job needs.⁶ The commission also encouraged other local youth programs to expand their services.

The commission attempted to raise the quality of education in South Shore for the purpose of attracting whites to the area. It checked on the academic curricula to make sure that they had not changed. In addition, it established a program for gifted children at one of the six local elementary schools. Moreover, the commission worked at providing white residents with schools in the area which were comprised of a large proportion of white children. An attempt was therefore made at altering the racial composition of the local schools in order to avoid "resegregation." In other words, the Commission attempted to retain whites by making South Shore's schools more

attractive than those in other areas.

In order to attract white residents, housing in South Shore also needed to be maintained; hence the commission established a "housing service center." This center conducted building inspections, assisted residents in obtaining federal home improvement loans, and prevented overcrowding and structural changes.

A positive image was created for South Shore so that Chicago whites would view the area as "the place to live." The commission sponsored an annual "Open House Day" which consisted of tours through South Shore's more impressive homes. These tours brought the area positive publicity.

Another strategy used in attempting to keep white residents and attract new ones was through the development of a tenant referral service. The goal of this service was to draw whites into the area and then move them into integrated buildings. The commission believed that this tactic would also keep present white residents from moving out. Those interested in renting an apartment in South Shore visited the Tenant Referral Service (TRS). Individuals would specify their needs, financial capabilities, and references. In return, they would be presented with a list of apartments that suited their needs. TRS received its listings from local real estate

firms. It should be noted that TRS served blacks as well as whites. This practice was advantageous in managing integration. Blacks applying for apartments were either discouraged from living in South Shore or they were placed in buildings "where their presence would be least damaging to the commission's racial goals."⁷ In addition, the service could screen out those viewed as undesirable.

Krase's study of Lefferts Manor (1982), an area within Prospect-Lefferts Gardens, Brooklyn, illustrates how established residents responded to inhabitants of a new ethnic group. Newcomers are met with hostility and sometimes the "silent treatment" from established residents. Newcomers are gradually accepted into the community, but are socialized by established residents about their residential duties. Established residents would write letters to the editor of a community newsletter reminding newcomers to sweep their sidewalks or to shovel snow. Letters were also used by established residents to voice complaints about the habits of newcomers, such as their noise level and the placement of garbage cans. According to Krase, Manor residents were extremely diverse except for social class. Social class was maintained in the Manor by a restrictive covenant, which was established in 1893. The covenant prohibited

owners from using Manor homes for anything other than private, single family homes. In 1960 the New York City Planning Commission also zoned the Lefferts Manor area "one-family only." Violators of the single family covenant have been taken to court by a local group, the Manor Association.

Suttles (1972) has conceptualized local resistance to neighborhood change as the "defended neighborhood." He defines the defended neighborhood as "the residential group which seals itself off through the efforts of delinquent gangs, by restrictive covenants, by sharp boundaries, or by a forbidding reputation."⁸ The defended neighborhood is an attempt at maintaining ethnic, racial, and/or economic integrity. Its boundaries can expand or contract, and its activation is episodic, a reaction to threatening events.

Features of the defended neighborhood are street corner gangs, vigilante groups, doormen in uniforms, and the use of door buzzers and TV monitors. Suttles illustrates defensive measures in The Social Order of the Slum where he examines four ethnic groups (Italians, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, blacks) that reside in the Addams area of Chicago. These ethnic groups have withdrawn into small territories, which are relatively independent, and

have created an "ordered segmentation." This ordered segmentation suggests that the relationship among ethnic groups (territorial units) is a well structured one, where ethnic groups are separated by location and institutional arrangements, where street corner groups maintain ethnic boundaries.

Another important element of the defended neighborhood is its reputation. Some neighborhoods are identified as tough, dangerous, snobbish, or are simply unknown to outsiders. The reputation of a neighborhood is a defensive strategy which restricts the spatial movement of outsiders.

According to Suttles, a resident's investment in neighborhood defense depends on his or her stage in the life cycle. Mothers with young children have a considerable investment in neighborhood defense because they spend most of their time in the neighborhood, and are therefore concerned about their personal safety and the safety of their children. The elderly also invest in neighborhood defense. They provide a certain amount of surveillance. However, those who are young and single remain detached from the neighborhood, choosing alternative loyalties.

The defended neighborhood is a product of an urban

environment, and a response to the fear of invasion by other ethnic, racial, and/or economic groups. External allies, such as adjacent neighborhoods, are therefore essential to a neighborhood's defense. According to Suttles, the development of the defended neighborhood occurs "naturally" without intentional effort by its members.

This last characteristic of the defended neighborhood implies the Chicago School's notion of "natural area," developed by Park. Park compared human actions to plant ecology. He argued that individuals competed for scarce resources, such as housing and food. Consequently, the city took on a spatial form which was comprised of a series of "natural areas." It was believed that these areas were not intentionally planned. They were the product of the proverbial "chips falling as they may" as groups competed with each other in the market. For according to Park, "there are forces at work within the limits of the urban community - within the limits of any natural area of human habitation, in fact - which tend to bring about an orderly and typical grouping of its populations and institutions."⁹ Changes within the city were also explained in terms of this process.

In contrast to Suttles' suggestion (following Park)

that the defended neighborhood is a natural occurrence, the dynamics of defense at work in Greenpoint are deliberate and intentional attempts to "manage segregation," not integration. They appear to be based on shared values of residents. These issues will become apparent in subsequent chapters.

Both Burgess (1928) and Molotch (1972) acknowledge that the literature on urban neighborhoods has given little attention to the notion of resistance to neighborhood change. The literature has focused on invasion and succession with particular reference to "white flight."

This dissertation examines resistance to neighborhood change in Greenpoint. It focuses on the existence of a defended neighborhood by documenting a number of strategies that are used by residents in their attempt at maintaining a predominantly white, non-Hispanic neighborhood. These strategies include: the way that available housing is obtained and rented or sold, local surveillance by residents, and the role of neighborhood women in defending Greenpoint from change.

Unlike most neighborhood studies which focus on formal structures, this study examines the informal practices of residents regarding neighborhood defense.

Housing, for example, has not been a variable in most studies of urban neighborhoods. In those studies that examine housing and housing discrimination, the focus is on institutional discrimination. Racial steering by realtors (Pearce, 1979) and screening committees (Molotch, 1972; Schoenberg and Rosenbaum, 1980) have been the formal vehicles through which housing has been examined. This dissertation focuses on the informal way that housing is rented and sold in Greenpoint, without being placed on the local market. Findings indicate that residents use an informal network to learn about vacant apartments and houses for sale, from neighbor to neighbor. Residents act as their own "gatekeepers" as opposed to relying on realtors for this task. The result, however, is the same. Racial segregation is perpetuated through this informal strategy of neighborhood defense.

In addition, urban sociology has ignored women (Fava, Abu-Lughod, and Gist, forthcoming). Women have not been investigated in studies on urban neighborhoods. One notes from reviewing the literature that findings and conclusions regarding urban neighborhoods are based on a male perspective. Whyte focused on "corner boys" and "college boys." He notes in a response to a critique of his research (1978), that because of local customs, he

could not become involved with young women in Cornerville, for he would have been expected to marry a woman whom he dated steadily. Gans also collected more of his data from men than women. Liebow studied "streetcorner men" and Kornblum presents male spheres, the steelworker's union and party organizations. Lofland (1975) argues that in studies on urban sociology, women are merely "there." They are part of the background, but not included in the action. Lofland points to the emphasis on formal community as a model of social organization as a factor in creating the "thereness of women." Lofland argues that the use of social organization as a model of community directs researchers away from women's activities. The emphasis on this model of community may account for studies on housing discrimination focusing on institutional discrimination and not informal practices.

Moreover, most researchers have been men. This creates a problem of access into various research situations. Gans notes, for example, that communication between the sexes is limited in a working class neighborhood. Thus, gaining access to women's groups or obtaining interviews with women are difficult tasks for male researchers. Women will be the focus of urban research when more urban researchers are women, or when

male urban researchers realize the possibility of "taking the role of the other." According to Daniels (1967), researchers can penetrate a social setting even when they do not fit into roles that are traditionally acceptable. In her study of U.S. army subgroups, Daniels describes the tactics and strategies she employed in order to overcome the resistance of military officers to a sociologist, a civilian, and a woman. Howell, in his study of Clay Street (1973), spent a great deal of time with two respondents who were women, Bobbi Jean Shackelford and June Moseby. He attributes his being married and having a child as major factors which enabled him to gain access to women neighbors. Howell lived in the neighborhood and his wife and child were often with him when he visited Bobbi Jean and June. As Howell explains, his family was friendly with their families.

Horowitz's study (1983) of a Chicano community in Chicago suggests that being a woman is advantageous in field work. She frequented street corners and park benches with male gang members in order to understand their process of growing up. She gained access to these gangs because, as a woman, she did not threaten them. Because of her sex, she also had access to the young women.

Criticisms have been made by professionals from other fields who rely on this literature. Wekerle (1980) notes that detailed research on women in urban settings might provide information for planners and designers, which would enable them to create environments that are more responsive to women's needs. This dissertation examines the role of women in defending Greenpoint. Findings suggest that women are involved in a variety of neighborhood dynamics, particularly formal and informal surveillance and the informal housing network.

Research Methods

This is a qualitative study, carried out by conducting a total of 55 open ended interviews (Maccoby and Maccoby, 1954). An interview schedule was developed (see Appendix A) but it was not followed strictly. Many interviews were quite unstructured, with the interview schedule serving only as a guide. Many issues raised in the interview schedule are not discussed in the dissertation. Respondents could not relate to some questions, and were not knowledgeable about certain issues. During the interview, I used a technique called "projective interviewing" where I asked respondents to tell me about the practices of their neighbors.

Respondents seemed comfortable with this approach and talked freely. Many qualified their responses by opening with "this isn't what I do or think but my neighbors..."

Respondents were obtained by using a snowball sampling¹⁰ technique. In addition, the sample was stratified for sex, ethnicity, and age. Initially it was hoped that these groups would be proportionately represented in the sample. I quickly learned that perfection is difficult when snowballing is used. Since ethnicity was an important variable for this study, I began sampling by identifying ethnic clusters through block and block group data¹¹ from the 1980 census. Clusters¹² were identified for four major ethnic groups in Greenpoint, Hispanics, Irish, Italians, and Polish. Once these ethnic enclaves were apparent, I began contacting individuals I knew¹³ who resided in these clusters (see maps of ethnic clusters). These individuals were used as key informants. I told them about my research and they directed me to other residents (their friends and neighbors) who identified themselves as being of the same ethnicity as the designated cluster. These people made up the sample. I asked each respondent at the end of the interview if they could refer me to other individuals. Some respondents obliged and other did not, explaining

that they did not know anyone else. Consequently, interviews were conducted with a total of fifty-five individuals, 51 of them were with "ordinary" residents, and the remaining 4 were with the community leaders or employees of local organizations.

Of the 51 residents, 23 were men and 28 were women. Fifteen respondents were Irish, 13 were Italian, 15 were Polish, and 8 were Hispanics.¹⁴ In terms of age, 17 were between the ages of 20 to 35, 11 were 36 to 49 and 23 were 50 and older. A large majority of respondents were life-long residents of Greenpoint. A very small number "married into" the neighborhood and had lived there over twenty years. Respondents were not asked about their income, level of education, occupation, or age, since I was warned by key informants that such information would be considered "too personal." I was, however, able to collect information on the occupation and age of respondents through a reputational approach,¹⁵ from key informants. The distribution of occupation of the sample was as follows: 6 semi professionals, 24 sales/clerical workers, 9 laborers, 4 self employed, 3 housewives, 6 retired, 3 unemployed. All respondents were Roman Catholic. All interviews were recorded on tape.

Respondents were assured that the interviews were

confidential and that they would remain anonymous. Most respondents were satisfied with that and spoke freely. One respondent asked me to turn off the recorder at a particular point in the interview. During another interview I felt that the respondent did not feel at ease so I voluntarily turned off the recorder and asked him if he preferred to finish the interview without the recorder. He became much more relaxed and articulate. These interviews were then reconstructed from memory.

Researchers often have a number of experiences during the course of their work that immediately come to mind when thinking about the research situation. I, too, have had my share, particularly since respondents (especially the white ethnic ones) regarded and treated me as one of them, a neighbor and an "insider." At times respondents expected something from me.¹⁶ On one occasion, an interview was interrupted because a family member of the respondent became ill. I volunteered to drive her to the hospital and actually did so. This was something that a "good neighbor" would do. Some respondents, however, were initially apprehensive about the interview and did some "checking up" on me before our appointment. This was apparent in one interview. After I arrived I began with some small talk to develop rapport. The respondent

started discussing a local "hangout" and I mentioned the name of my husband's uncle (this was deliberate on my part because I knew that the respondent and this uncle periodically frequented this hangout). He answered me by saying "you're Neil Sheehan's wife, not that I was investigating." It became obvious that we had both done our "homework." On a few occasions I was reunited with individuals whom I had not seen in ten or more years, friends with whom I had attended school, or parents of these friends. Key informants linked me to these individuals. The last experience that I recall occurred while I was making contacts in the Irish cluster. After several interviews, respondents were referring me to the same people; the same individuals were being mentioned as potential respondents. This suggested that I had come upon a social network, probably part of Greenpoint's Irish network. In general, most respondents and informants referred me to women for interviews. This suggests that the neighborhood is women's responsibility.

There are some major weaknesses with research of this nature. The sample is small and because of the way respondents were selected, they may not represent completely Greenpoint residents. In fact, given the method of research, the researcher may have in some way

been predisposed to these respondents or selected a particular "type" of resident. Although the sample is small, reasonable generalizations are made based on the accounts of those interviewed. In addition, there is a controversy within sociology regarding the relationship between the researcher and those he/she is studying. Sociologists present the advantages and disadvantages of a researcher's position as an "insider and outsider" (Merton, 1972) of the research situation. Some social scientists argue that taking an insider's view is a precondition for research (Wax, 1971), since the researcher must learn new forms of communication and new meanings of everyday life, in order to be able to think according to the symbols of those under study. Others see the insider as claiming a monopoly on knowledge that is based on ascribed statuses (Merton, 1972). A contrasting view is that outsiders may have better prospects for insights, since they will observe with detachment.

In retrospect, I think that an insider's position and being a woman were advantageous for this study. I was able to represent the ethnicity of each non-Hispanic group. My mother is Polish; my father is Italian, and my husband is Irish. During interviews, I emphasized the appropriate ethnicity depending on which group the

respondent belonged. Because of this position I was invited into people's homes, they were not threatened by me; in fact, most trusted me. Several respondents opened their social network to me so that I could approach more respondents. In addition, those interviewed appeared quite frank in their answers and many said that they had enjoyed the interview. I think an outsider would have had a difficult time gaining access to residents and therefore the data.

However, I was an outsider to the Hispanic community. My role as an outsider is best illustrated by the fact that I was unable to obtain many interviews with Hispanics. I found the role of outsider to be quite awkward. At one point, I completed an interview with a Hispanic man and asked him for a referral to another Hispanic resident. He referred me to a friend of his but also gave me a warning, "Are you sure that you're ready for this?" Needless to say, I felt anxious about this next interview. The interview went well. The respondent was frank and rather militant in describing the position of Hispanics in Greenpoint, and the way they are treated by white, old time residents. In retrospect, I realize that I was being warned about his friend's frankness and straightforwardness.

I have a personal history in Greenpoint. Although I grew up and presently reside in Williamsburg, I attended elementary school in Greenpoint. My mother was born and raised in Greenpoint, and so was my husband. His family currently resides there. Unlike other researchers who lived in the neighborhoods they were studying for a short period of time, I have been interacting with Greenpoint all my life. My husband and I also have a long term commitment to Greenpoint as a place of residence. We plan to buy a house there. I therefore have the experience of a local. This position enabled me to get information unavailable to others. It also made the interviewing process more possible and more productive, particularly with non-Hispanics. Moore (1978) notes in her study of gangs and prison in Los Angeles that "interviewers who are comfortable with ... a controversial act elicit from respondents more admission of such acts."¹⁷ The study on Greenpoint seems to support this point. An outsider would have inhibited the responses of residents in discussing their informal practices. Because of my experience with Greenpoint, I was not surprised nor uncomfortable by the actions described by residents.

The urban working class has been viewed as powerless, naive, and exploited. My access to insider information

from my experience and from interviews with residents indicates that the urban working class does attempt to control its own destiny. They are organized, but often in ways, such as informal networks, which are not apparent to outsiders.

Although the method has its limitations, I think it was fruitful, given the nature of the research, the sensitivity of the topic being investigated, and the focus on informal practices.

NOTES

¹ Gentrification is a term used to describe the movement of professional individuals into blue collar and poor inner city neighborhoods. This process upgrades neighborhoods, but usually displaces the original residents.

² This information was obtained from tract data on "Journey to Work" from the 1980 Census. They are sample data. Moreover, they are approximations since two tract boundaries did not conform to neighborhood boundaries.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ernest Burgess, "Residential Segregation in American Cities," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CXI. (November 1928) : 112

⁵ Harvey L. Molotch, Managed Integration (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p.8

⁶ Ibid., p.90

⁷ Ibid., p. 119

⁸ Gerald D. Suttles, The Social Construction of Communities. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 21

⁹ Robert E. Park, "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment," in Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, The City (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974) p. 1 The article was

originally published in 1915 in the American Journal of Sociology

¹⁰In the snowball sampling technique each person interviewed is asked to suggest other individuals for interviewing.

¹¹Race and ancestry data were examined for this purpose.

¹²Information for 1980 on ancestry is based on sample data. A cluster was classified as a particular ethnicity if there was a majority of that ethnic group residing in it.

¹³A discussion on my role as an "insider" follows.

¹⁴It was difficult for me to gain access to the Hispanic community since I am an outsider, "una blanca." Levine (1977) notes that special techniques are needed when studying minority communities.

¹⁵Reputational approach refers to a technique where residents are asked to rank other residents. In this study key informants were asked to furnish information about individuals to whom they directed me.

¹⁶Daniels (1983) discusses the reciprocal relationships that develop in fieldwork.

¹⁷Joan W. Moore, Homeboys (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978) p. 202

CHAPTER II
DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY OF GREENPOINT

Street Map of Greenpoint



The study of a neighborhood is incomplete without a description of it. The purpose of this chapter is to provide that description. It begins with an overview of Greenpoint's geography followed by its demographic characteristics in 1980. Characterizations of the neighborhood by residents are then presented. Subsequently, a brief history of Greenpoint from the 17th to the 20th century is given. The chapter ends with an explanation of the apparent change in local tradition, which is exemplified in white resistance to neighborhood change.

DESCRIPTION OF GREENPOINT:

Geography

Greenpoint is a peninsula at the northernmost tip of Brooklyn. It is bounded on the north and the east by Newtown Creek, and on the west by the East River. There is disagreement among residents regarding the southern boundary. Some point to a City park, while others to the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, or to another border. For purposes of this research, the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (Meeker Avenue) and North 7th Street have been selected as Greenpoint's southern boundary (this is the boundary cited by the New York City Planning Commission in 1969). In addition, the Brooklyn Queens Expressway is an elevated

structure through Greenpoint, so it breaks up the continuity of residential areas.

Greenpoint lies across the river from Manhattan. In fact, the Citicorp building is visible from Greenpoint's main shopping strip (Manhattan Avenue). Greenpoint's waterfront overlooks Manhattan's east side. Manhattan is easily accessible from Greenpoint by car. One can choose among the Williamsburg Bridge, the Queensborough Bridge (59th Street), or the Queens Midtown Tunnel. It takes about fifteen minutes driving time with any of these crossings to get from Greenpoint to Manhattan.

Greenpoint is connected to neighborhoods in Queens, namely Long Island City, Sunnyside, and Maspeth by the Pulaski Bridge, the Greenpoint Avenue Bridge and the Kosciusko Bridge, respectively. The Kosciusko Bridge also links the Brooklyn Queens Expressway with the Long Island Expressway.

Adjacent to Greenpoint in Brooklyn, lying just across its southern boundary is Williamsburg. Greenpoint and Williamsburg share many municipal services, and together, they make up Brooklyn's Community Board 1. According to New York City's charter, city services are to be co-terminous with Community Board boundaries. This is not the case in Brooklyn's Community Board 1. Along with a small part of Williamsburg, Greenpoint is serviced by the 94th Precinct. Williamsburg is mainly serviced by the

90th Precinct. An attempt was made by the Koch Administration to close the 94th Precinct, leaving Greenpoint to share the 90th Precinct with Williamsburg. Greenpoint residents found this decision unacceptable and organized a number of rallies and meetings. The 94th Precinct will continue to serve Greenpoint. However, it had to be temporarily moved so that the precinct house can undergo major renovations. It is expected to re-open in 1985.

Greenpoint and Williamsburg plus another smaller adjacent section from Fort Greene make up School District 14. Although there is a School Board elected to manage the school districts, in reality it is controlled by the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). To be elected to the School Board, one needs UFT endorsement (Susser, 1982).

TRANSPORTATION

Greenpoint is served by the Independent Subway Line, the G train. This train runs from Roosevelt Avenue in Queens through Greenpoint to Hoyt and Schermerhorn Streets in Brooklyn, an area commonly referred to as "downtown Brooklyn." However, the subway journey to Manhattan from Greenpoint is indirect: one must ride to Queens Plaza in order to obtain a Manhattan bound train, namely an E or F. However, residents who live on the "northside" of Greenpoint (streets named North 7 through North 13) have

access to the BMT Canarsie Line, the L train. It is a short ride (three stops) to the Union Square station in Manhattan where one can transfer to other BMT trains as well as the IRT line. Surface transportation in Greenpoint cover about the same Brooklyn-Queens route as the Independent subway. None of the buses serving Greenpoint are Manhattan bound.

POPULATION

Greenpoint is a working class neighborhood. Since the early 1900's Greenpoint has been a white ethnic neighborhood comprised mostly of Irish, Italian, and Polish families. The Irish were the largest group through the 1920's. However, residents report that the Irish population has diminished; many of Greenpoint's Irish have moved to suburbs.

A significant influx of Polish immigrants occurred in Greenpoint after World War II (Susser, 1980). More recently there has been an additional wave of Polish refugees who fled martial law in Poland. These immigrants are aided by local Polish organizations and churches.

A degree of ethnic segmentation exists in Greenpoint. Individual ethnic groups seem to cluster around churches. The Irish live around St. Anthony -St. Alphonsus, while the Italians surround Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, and the Poles cluster around St. Stanislaus Kostka and Sts. Cyril and Methodius. The area surrounding Sts. Cyril and Methodius parish is Polish and Hispanic, but the area immediately surrounding the church is mostly Polish. Most areas in Greenpoint, however, are fairly heterogeneous.

In 1980, the population of Greenpoint was approximately 39,310.¹ Like the population of the city that it is part of, Greenpoint's has been declining.

Between 1970 and 1980, Greenpoint lost approximately 11,900 residents.

In 1980, residents of non-Hispanic, white ethnicities made up 75% of Greenpoint's population. Since 1950, however, northern Greenpoint has seen an influx of Hispanic residents, who in 1980 comprised 21% of the neighborhood's population. Although the Hispanic population increased between 1970 and 1980, the Puerto Rican population grew very slightly in this ten year period. In 1970 there were 5014 Puerto Ricans living in Greenpoint.² In 1980, the Puerto Rican population was 5166, the largest Hispanic group in Greenpoint (63% of Hispanics). Puerto Ricans residents stated in their interviews that the increase in the Hispanic population in Greenpoint has been among Latin Americans, Colombians and Ecuadorians. The remaining 4% of Greenpoint's population was made up of Asian (2.5%) and black (.50%) individuals. One percent identified themselves as "other." Thus, in 1980, 75% of Greenpoint's population was made up of whites (non-Hispanic), while the remaining 25% was made up of minority residents.

The racial distribution in Greenpoint differs from population trends in other parts of Brooklyn and New York City. In 1980, 48% of Brooklyn's population was white

(non-Hispanic), and 52% belonged to minorities. Of this minority population, 31% was black, 18% was Hispanic, and 3% was "other." The black population in Brooklyn was substantially larger than that of Greenpoint. However, the proportion of Hispanics in Greenpoint is about the same as in Brooklyn as a whole. The racial distribution in New York City (all 5 boroughs) is slightly different than in Brooklyn, but like Brooklyn as a whole, it is different when compared to Greenpoint. In 1980, 52% of New York City's population was white (non-Hispanic), and 48% was made up of minorities. Blacks comprised 24% of the population, Hispanics made up 20%, and "other" were the remaining 4%. In summary, in 1980 there was a higher percentage of blacks in Brooklyn than in New York City. The black population, in Brooklyn as a whole and New York City, however, was a much larger percentage than in Greenpoint. The proportion of Hispanics in all three areas (Greenpoint, Brooklyn as a whole, and New York City) was about the same while the proportion of whites (non-Hispanic), is much larger in Greenpoint than in Brooklyn and New York City.

EDUCATION

In 1980, 44% of Greenpoint's population were high school graduates.³ The proportion of graduates in Greenpoint is much lower than that of Brooklyn as a whole, and substantially lower than the proportion of high school graduates in New York City. In 1980, 61% of New York City residents were high school graduates.

INCOME

Average median family income in 1979 in Greenpoint was \$14,464.00. It was slightly lower than the median family income for Brooklyn, which was \$14,664.00 in 1979. These are lower than New York City's median family income: \$16,818.00 in 1979.

OCCUPATION

In 1980, Greenpoint residents held a variety of occupations. The largest group was in technical and sales occupations (32%), followed by operators and laborers (28%) and service occupations (16%). Only 9% of Greenpoint's residents held professional or managerial occupations in 1980. This was a substantially lower proportion of professionals and managers than lived in the

borough as a whole. In 1980, 21% of Brooklyn's residents were professionals or managers. The proportion of Brooklyn residents who held technical and sales occupations (40%) was also somewhat higher than in Greenpoint.

A majority of Greenpoint residents (86%) were employees of the private sector in 1980, while 11% were government workers. The remaining 3% were self employed. This differs from the borough as a whole. In 1980, 76% of Brooklyn residents worked in the private sector, 20% were government workers, and 4% were self employed. A larger proportion of Greenpoint residents were employees of the private sector than Brooklyn residents as a whole, while a larger proportion of Brooklyn residents were government workers.

HOUSING

While a majority of Greenpoint's housing was built before 1939, many structures were built before 1900. More than 60% of the residential buildings are made of wood (New York City Planning Commission, 1974). There are a few streets in Greenpoint made up of brownstones and brick townhouses, remnants of Dutch settlement from the 17th century. These particular streets are presently part of a

seven block historic district bordered by Franklin Street, Manhattan Avenue, Calyer and Kent Streets. Included in this district is the largest collection of commercial structures remaining from the 19th century. Greenpoint has witnessed very little new housing, with the exception of some new construction along Mc Guinness Boulevard.

Residential structures in Greenpoint are not higher than six stories, and 71% of them contain four or fewer dwelling units per structure (New York City Planning Commission, 1974). A small number of housing units were owner occupied, and 81% of them were renter occupied in 1980. However, "the percentage of owner occupied buildings with rental units is unusually high."⁴ Whites made up the majority of both owner (91%) and renter (79%) occupied housing units. Hispanics made up 7% of owner occupied and 18% of renter occupied units. In 1980, the average median rent in Greenpoint was \$140. In interviews, residents report some lower rents than the median, usually because of tenure and rent control laws. Along with the City trend, rents in Greenpoint have been escalating. Residents report monthly rents as high as \$500 and \$600. These rents are usually charged for apartments in brownstones or townhouses.

In owner occupied housing units in 1980, 64% of the

householders moved into the dwellings before 1969. This contrasts with 36% in renter occupied housing units. In 1983 a sixty unit apartment building was converted into a co-op. This is the first one in Greenpoint.

RELIGION

There are a number of churches in Greenpoint "but most with large congregation [are] Catholic."⁵ As stated previously, Catholic churches in Greenpoint are the center of ethnic clusters. Residents report that each church is associated with an ethnic group. There are two types of Roman Catholic churches in Greenpoint, diocesan and national. Diocesan churches have territorial boundaries or parishes and are part of a larger territory or diocese with other churches. The parishes of diocesan churches do not overlap. National churches are those that serve a particular ethnic group. They are usually located within the boundaries of a diocesan church. There are three national churches in Greenpoint: two Polish and one Italian. There is also one diocesan church that is reported to be dominated by Irish residents. The national churches offer mass in their national language and English. The diocesan church offers mass in English and

Spanish. Each church has an elementary school connected to it.

DESCRIPTIONS BY RESIDENTS

Those Greenpoint residents interviewed were asked to describe their neighborhood. Their descriptions take a variety of forms. Some residents highlight neighborliness.

I love Greenpoint. It's like a little town and everybody knows everybody, and it's just very nice. I love Greenpoint I would never leave.

I think it's a good neighborhood. It's really a neighborhood. Everyone, at least I think, you know your neighbors, your family live here, there is a lot of marriages between families, you know their sons and daughters from school.

I like it. People are very friendly. I go on the Avenue everybody meets me, I can't come back in time to do anything, very friendly.

I brought a guy here from work, he was amazed at when I was going through the streets, driving him around, had to go to different stores, how many people I knew who would say hello, you know from all over, they're used to a couple of people here, a person on the block, your neighbor over here, they can't see 10-15 blocks away you knowing everybody, it's really a pretty good neighborhood where you can get to know people.

These descriptions suggest that Greenpoint is a neighborhood where there is a high degree of neighboring. Neighbors meet each other on streets, while shopping and stop to chat. The quotation above suggests that outsiders are amazed at the degree of neighboring and interaction that exists in Greenpoint.

Others describe Greenpoint by discussing generational continuity. Many families have "planted roots" in the neighborhood. In some cases, their grandchildren have remained and have made Greenpoint their home.

It's fairly closed, somewhat closed community, you know my mother was born a few blocks from here and she still lives here, and you know I was born here and my friends from grammar school are still here, people can't believe I still have friends from grammar school, they think it's very strange that it could happen these days, and you can always come back no matter how long you're away, you can always come back to the neighborhood and stay, and meet people you haven't seen in years and, you know, it doesn't matter, they'll say Hi, how you doing. It doesn't matter because you always belong here no matter how long you're away, you always belong here, and there's still people who are here when you were young.

Where I am is just a section of Italian people that have been here for many many generations, their grandparents and great grand parents have settled here, and that's how it has remained here even though they might buy a house. I know a few people gone

outside this neighborhood, bought houses on the Island or Staten Island or Jersey, wherever, but always manage to come back to the little nest, and stay here and refurbish it.

I live in a six family apartment house, OK, that the family owns. They're all my aunts, I mean usually there were three aunts, my mother and my two aunts, now another aunt moved in, other people had been in and out there, but a select group of people. My aunt moved in, everyone's Italian, then my mother, her aunt lives downstairs. Uncle lives across the street, another aunt lives two doors down. And my sister still lives in the neighborhood, she's married, she has children. My brother moved away and then he came back into Middle Village to be closer. His wife's family in Brooklyn and in Queens, so they moved, they lived in Staten Island for short time, and were miserable away from everyone so they moved back.

These responses imply that kinship and neighboring are elements at work which allow Greenpoint to be called "a tightly - knit ethnic community [where]... a feeling of small town friendliness and informality characterizes interchanges among residents."⁶ It appears that residents agree.

Some residents expressed concern about the neighborhood changing.

I rather people don't know about us [the neighborhood] because I like it the way it is.

This respondent prefers that Greenpoint not get publicity from the media because "outsiders" may be attracted to the neighborhood. For this respondent, newcomers would change the neighborhood.

Other residents described Greenpoint in terms of its safety, which enabled them to go out at night without any fears. Others describe its geographic location and accessibility to Manhattan. As is evident from these responses, interviewed residents had positive images of their neighborhood.

HISTORY OF GREENPOINT

Greenpoint was purchased from the Canarsie Indians by the Dutch West India Company in 1638. A parcel of land, which included Bushwick, Williamsburg, and Greenpoint, was secured from the Indians for the price of "eight fathoms of duffels, eight strings of wampun, twelve kettles, eight chip axes, eight hatchets and some knives, beads, and awls."⁷ At that time, Greenpoint was part of the Township of Bushwick, which was governed by Peter Stuyvesant.

Greenpoint remained an isolated area for many years because of its geography; it was surrounded by water on three sides and partially on the south. The Bushwick

Creek separated part of Greenpoint's south from Williamsburg. This Creek was later filled and is presently Mc Carren Park. During the Revolutionary War, there were only five families in Greenpoint: the Bennets, Calyers, Meseroles, Provoosts, and Van Zandts. These families and their slaves farmed the land. They transported their produce across the East River to Manhattan by a large boat which each family had. Some of the streets in Greenpoint have been named after these families.

Greenpoint resisted commercial development until the late 1830's. In 1838 the first public highway, Franklin Turnpike, was completed. This highway included a bridge over Bushwick and Newtown Creeks. It was Greenpoint's first link to industrializing areas, such as Williamsburg and Astoria, Queens. The opening of this highway marked the end of Greenpoint's isolation and pastoral existence.

Like its neighboring communities, Greenpoint began to industrialize. A shipbuilding industry developed on the waterfront. It was the major industry in Greenpoint until about 1870, employing over half of the local population. A variety of vessels were built in Greenpoint (clipper ships, steam ships) by renowned shipbuilders, such as John Englis, Henry Steers, and John Ericcson. Ericcson was

responsible for designing and building the "Monitor," an iron-clad ship, which is credited with changing the course of naval history. It saved the Union Navy by defeating the Confederate "Merrimac" in the Civil War. The "Monitor" was built at the Continental Shipbuilding Corporation at 64 Calyer Street.

The growing shipbuilding industry brought laborers from Ireland and later from Italy. Emigration from Ireland began around 1850 because of a famine. By 1855, one third of New York City's voters were Irish (Glazer and Moynihan, 1970). In the same year, Italians began crossing the Atlantic. However, it was not until the 1870's that mass migration from Italy began. Immigrants from both groups had few skills and little industrial training. The initial place of settlement in Greenpoint for both groups of immigrants was in its northern section, since that was the area that was first developed because of its proximity to waterfront industries.

Residential and shopping areas were developed in order to accommodate workers. Three and four story frame houses were built near the waterfront. The Astral Apartments, a six-story apartment complex, was built by Charles Pratt to lodge workers. In addition, brownstones were built along a few streets to house the local elite.

By the mid 1840's, Protestant denominations opened churches. Greenpoint's first school also opened at this time. The first Catholic church was not established until 1856.

Around 1850, a steam ferry service began which ran from East 10th Street in Manhattan to Greenpoint Avenue. A second ferry was later established which ran from East 23rd Street to Greenpoint Avenue. The ferry service was started by Neziah Bliss. Bliss was influential in the development of Greenpoint. He was originally from Connecticut, but married Mary Meserole, the daughter of one of Greenpoint's first families, and made Greenpoint his home. In 1855, Greenpoint was annexed to the city of Brooklyn. Neziah Bliss was chosen as a Greenpoint representative on the Board of Aldermen for the city of Brooklyn.

During the 1870's, the shipbuilding industry began to decline because of increasing costs for lumber and the emergence of iron ships. However, this was not the end of industry in Greenpoint. Other industries developed on Greenpoint's waterfront, such as jute mills, oil refineries (Charles Pratt refined Astral Lamp Oil), and manufacturing concerns, including iron, glass, and porcelain. The growth of these industries brought

numerous Polish immigrants to Greenpoint. During this time, immigration from Poland to the United States was increasing. These individuals, however, are considered early immigrants, since immigration from Poland was extensive from the turn of the century to around 1930 (Lopata, 1976). Between 1871 and 1890, 64,776 Poles immigrated to the United States (Lopata, 1976). Most immigrants were farm and unskilled laborers, coming from rural areas in Poland.

By the turn of the century, Greenpoint was industrialized. The waterfront was lined with heavy industry and light industry developed in other parts of the area. Most of the houses that presently exist had already been built. New housing construction was at a minimum.

During the 1950's, Greenpoint began experiencing minority growth. Immigration to New York City from Puerto Rico was at its peak in 1952 and 1953 (Glazer and Moynihan, 1970). At the same time, white ethnics began moving from inner city neighborhoods to the suburbs. Greenpoint, especially the section of Greenpoint between the waterfront and Greenpoint Avenue (from here on referred to as northern Greenpoint) experienced both of these changes. At present, this area is comprised mostly

of Hispanics and Poles, illustrating those trends.

Those residents from northern Greenpoint who were interviewed point to a number of factors which contributed to minority growth in their area. These factors are movement to the suburbs in search of the American Dream, closing of a local bridge, industry, slum lords, and white flight.

MOVE TO THE SUBURBS

Interviewed residents discussed how many of the younger people in the neighborhood "were looking for something better than they had." They were searching for the "American Dream." They wanted backyards and swimming pools. So, when their parents died, the children sold the house in Greenpoint and moved to places such as Long Island and New Jersey. As one respondent said

I think a lot of them left because they wanted sort of a better more countrified, they went to Queens, or they moved out to Middle Village, or out to Long Island like a lot of people did when they married, the young people didn't want to stay in Greenpoint, it wasn't good enough for them so they left.

CLOSING OF A BRIDGE

Until the 1950's, there was a bridge at the foot of Manhattan Avenue which crossed the Newtown Creek and linked Greenpoint with Long Island City in Queens. This bridge was at one end of Greenpoint's main merchant strip. Residents recall how they would walk Manhattan Avenue, shop, and walk across the bridge into Long Island City to continue their activities. They also report that Long Island City residents would cross the bridge and shop in Greenpoint.

During the 1950's New York City decided to construct a major traffic artery through Greenpoint that would link the Queenborough Bridge and Queens Midtown Tunnel with Brooklyn Queens and Long Island Expressways. This major artery is presently Mc Guinness Boulevard in Greenpoint (previously Oakland Street). In addition to the construction of Mc Guinness Boulevard, a new bridge known as the Pulaski Bridge was built at the foot of Mc Guinness Boulevard crossing the Newtown Creek and completing this traffic pattern. The Manhattan Avenue Bridge was closed.

Residents see the closing of this bridge as having a major impact on northern Greenpoint. The merchant strip on Manhattan Avenue in northern Greenpoint, between

Greenpoint Avenue and the waterfront, began deteriorating because residents no longer walked this portion of the neighborhood. According to some residents, these effects contributed to minority growth in northern Greenpoint.

Sure, that's like a deadend there, now before, all the trolley cars and everybody used to walk across the bridge, and on the way back and forth they'd shop and that changed.

When they put the bridge on the next block over [Mc Guinness Boulevard] they actually segregated the northern part of Greenpoint, because a lot of people would take the subway there, people from that area [Long Island City] would come to Greenpoint to shop.

It was basically the influx of Puerto Rican people. Now why they moved down there and why there was so much room available, you know, people move where there is space, and I think that area was deteriorating somewhat, especially once the bridge closed down. I think that was a factor. Once there's no more bridge, then a lot of the stores closed, less traffic and there's empty buildings, and there are a lot of nice apartments there.

INDUSTRY

A few residents point to the existence of industry in the neighborhood as a "pull" factor, a reason for Hispanics, in particular, to be attracted to Greenpoint.

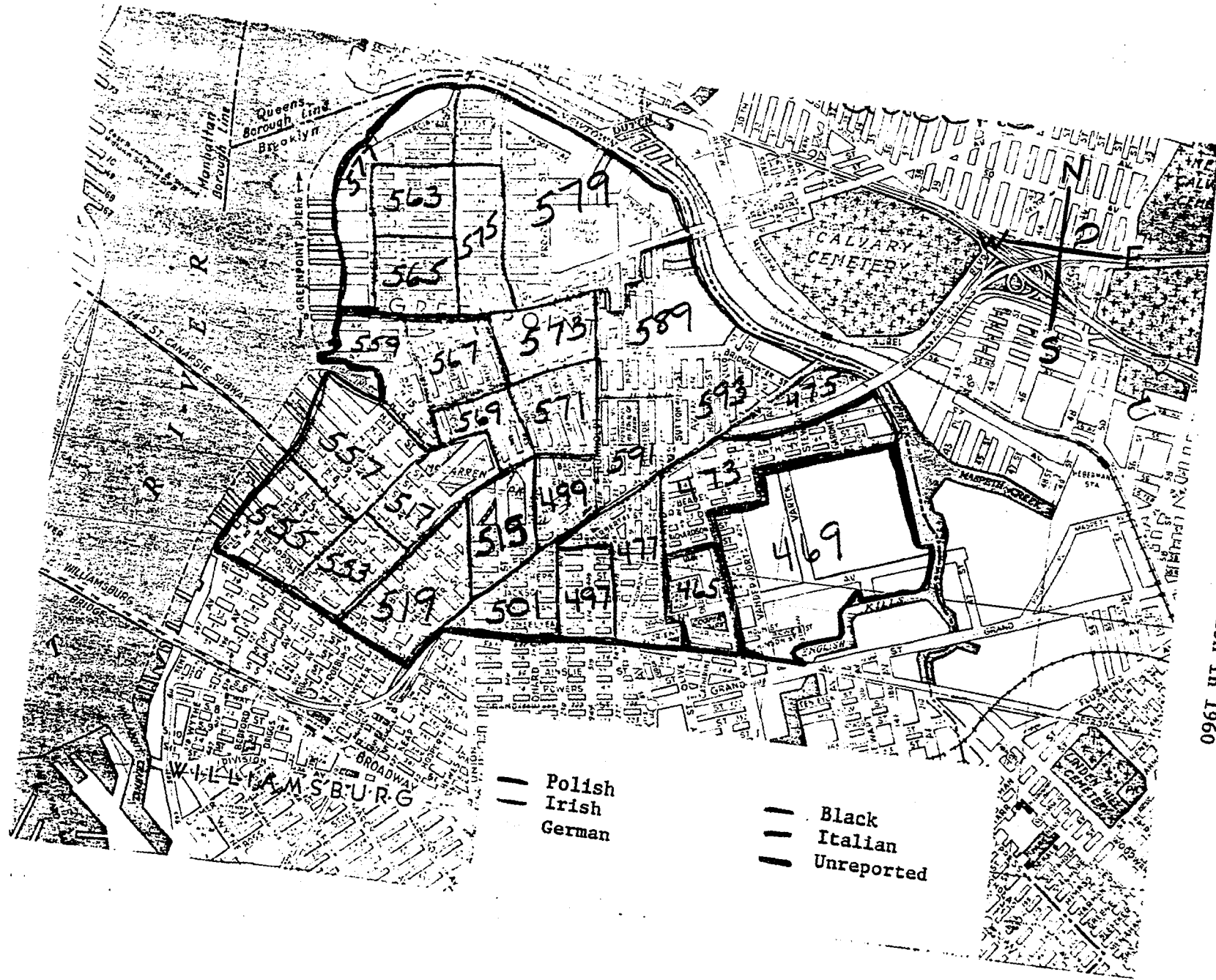
During the late 19th Century, it was common for workers in manufacturing industries to live close to their workplace (Hershberg, 1981). This seems to be the case for European immigrants settling in Greenpoint. Industry attracted them. Puerto Rican migrants and other Hispanic groups that followed seem to have continued this trend. Some Greenpoint residents therefore believe that industry is responsible for "the change" in northern Greenpoint, the growth of an Hispanic population.

SLUM LORDS

Some residents say that absentee landlords, who are slum lords, are responsible for minority growth in northern Greenpoint. According to residents, these landlords were only concerned with collecting rents from their buildings.

It was a good neighborhood. What happened, well you got a lot of landlords that didn't live here. They bought the big buildings and they took anything and everything in, just for the money, it didn't matter to them what happened to the buildings.

Susser (1982) notes that minorities have been relegated to these buildings.



Greenvale's Ethnic Composition in 1960

WHITE FLIGHT

Once Hispanics began moving into northern Greenpoint, white residents started leaving. Census information supports this point. In 1950, Greenpoint was predominantly German, while in 1960 it was mainly Polish with lesser numbers of Irish and Italian. By 1980, however, Hispanics emerge as an ethnic group in Greenpoint. Moreover, it seems that the Germans were one of the first groups to arrive and also one of the first to leave. The descriptions that residents give illustrate theories on ecological succession (Duncan and Duncan, 1957).

[There are] all kinds of factories over there and that's why it went down, I guess, it went down quicker and then one thing, when the other element came in, they come in there, and then the whites start getting away from them, you know, and that's another thing cause once they come in, the other ones start pushing, they're afraid, they're afraid, so they're pushing out.

They [slum lords] brought in these people, and like I say they were all Puerto Ricans and the Polish people wouldn't put up with this sort of thing, and they started selling their houses. Ah, to a lot of people in this neighborhood who own houses,

especially my block over here, I know 5 or 6 Polish people got scared and they left. And they sold their houses for ridiculous prices.

Then you get the hysteria, "The Spanish are coming in, I'm selling the house, I'm getting the hell out of the neighborhood."

These accounts which described the factors contributing to Hispanic growth in northern Greenpoint, were obtained by asking residents about neighborhood change; most answered immediately by discussing the existence of Hispanic residents in northern Greenpoint. However, the responses obtained from a few older residents, who were knowledgeable about Greenpoint's history, suggest that northern Greenpoint has traditionally been the staging area for immigrants.

Everything above Greenpoint Avenue was called Irishtown, and that was considered the poorer section way back, cause many of the immigrants that were coming in were Irish, and those sections there were less elaborate than those south of Greenpoint [Avenue], those south of Greenpoint were pretty much owned by what was the remainder of the old Dutch settlers.

This here section of Greenpoint changed so often, it used to be different ethnic groups, at first it started off with the Italians, then it was the

Germans, then it was the Polish, and right now it's Hispanics that seem to be taking over, and then I think they'll probably go their way and then, I think there's an influx of Orientals.

It should be remembered that northern Greenpoint was the first section of the neighborhood to be developed. The development of shipbuilding and other industries on the waterfront led to the construction of housing in the northern portion of Greenpoint. Given this history, it is understandable that northern Greenpoint experienced successive waves of European immigrants. However, it appears that this tradition continues in Greenpoint with Hispanics. As immigrant groups assimilate and become upwardly mobile, some individuals move to an area that represents their status, leaving northern Greenpoint to the next wave of immigrants.

White ethnic residents in Greenpoint responded to the growth of an Hispanic community by defending their neighborhood. According to respondents, non-Hispanic residents employ a number of defensive strategies in an attempt to maintain a white ethnic neighborhood. In addition, it seems that the growth of an Hispanic community in Greenpoint has led to the neighborhood becoming segregated between the northern portion (north of

Greenpoint Avenue to the waterfront), and the southern portion (south of Greenpoint Avenue to the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway). Most Hispanic residents live in northern Greenpoint. A small percentage live in southern Greenpoint, and are usually found in larger buildings (six or more units) with absentee landlords. It was suggested in interviews with residents that non-Hispanic residents from both the north and the south of Greenpoint are defending their neighborhood. However, given the differences between these two areas, the way that residents of each area defend is somewhat different. The defensive strategies for each area will be discussed in subsequent chapters. According to residents, northern Greenpoint became viewed as an undesirable area. Northern Greenpoint residents are aware of this "stigma" (Goffman, 1963). Respondents point to Greenpoint Avenue as the symbolic boundary between the north and south areas. This street is a major thoroughfare and includes a bus route, truck route, and train station. Moreover, there are no banks north of Greenpoint Avenue. The annual street fair and outdoor Christmas lights provided by local merchants do not go farther north than Greenpoint Avenue. Respondents say, however, that the boundary is probably a few blocks further north, at Java or India Streets,

because north of these streets is where the residential clustering of Hispanics becomes more obvious. In addition, most residents interviewed hold the southern area in higher esteem.

[a northern Greenpoint resident].....Like I said, I been here 29 years and after Greenpoint Avenue to me, that's white neighborhood that's what it is, and this side is more to the Puerto Rican.

[a southern Greenpoint resident].....I always remember, once you cross Greenpoint Avenue, except for a few white blocks, that wasn't the good section of Greenpoint.

[a southern Greenpoint resident].....We never really went down that end, we had St. Anthony and we never really associated with St. Alphonsus, that was like the other territory or something.

[a northern Greenpoint resident].....As long as I remember, that was the poorer end of the neighborhood down there, you just never went, all the stores and everything were always up this way you just never...when you went up my block on Kent you just never made the right, you always made a left cause that's where all the stores and everything were, up this way, you never went down that way, you just didn't go.

There is a marked difference as one crosses Greenpoint Avenue going north. The ground begins a steady

downhill pattern. Bodegas are numerous on a number of street corners. During the summer it is quite common to hear salsa music being played in the streets. Buildings show signs of deterioration to a greater degree than those in the south. Some buildings have been condemned and only their shells remain. Houses in the north have a lower market value than those in the south, and it is more difficult to obtain mortgages and home improvement loans for housing in this area. Local folklore has it that one of the major lending institutions, the Greenpoint Savings Bank, gives out mortgage money for properties "as far as it can throw a rock." This distance happens to go no farther than north Greenpoint Avenue. Southern Greenpoint is different. It tends to be better kept. Homes are renovated and buildings show less deterioration than in northern Greenpoint. Ethnic specialty stores are typically Polish: butcher shops, bakeries, and corner grocery stores. The south holds the local shopping strip where all kinds of retail stores can be found. Because there are apparent differences as one crosses the division in the neighborhood, Greenpoint Avenue, I asked residents how this boundary is maintained. They responded in a variety of ways. However, the most prominent explanation is that white ethnics in southern Greenpoint will not

allow Hispanics to cross the boundary.

There was a recognition among the Hispanic and the white that you stay to your end of the neighborhood, and I'll stay to mine, I just think it was an understood thing, they preferred to be with their own, the Hispanic preferred to live with the Hispanic, but I think they also didn't like the difference in housing, but weren't politically sure enough or organized enough to change it.

People are not moving...[on this street] 90% of the houses are owned by either the people who had them 40 years ago, or their sons live there, and I'm saying that I think that's typical of some of the other streets too.

I just don't think that they [southern residents] rent to anybody other than their own...you'll never see anybody [whol] lives on that side [the south] come and live down here.

These statements suggest that the relationship between Hispanics and white ethnics in Greenpoint is far less than congenial. In addition, these responses imply that there is an attempt at keeping distance between these groups. White, non-Hispanics view Hispanics as a different race. Yet a distinction would be made about someone whose ancestry is European, Spain for example or Cuban, rather than Puerto Rican. This suggests a class

distinction. They see someone from Spain or Cuba as a "better class" of Hispanic. Sometimes non-Hispanics will use this class distinction to rationalize their acceptance of an Hispanic with whom they have become friendly.

Contemporary Greenpoint appears to be a product of its history. It began as an isolated territory in the 17th century, and its present white ethnic residents, in some ways, want to maintain their isolation. Many of the neighborhood traditions that are part of its history seem to have continued. New immigrants start in northern Greenpoint and move farther south as they assimilate and become upwardly mobile. Hispanics, however, seem to have been blocked from continuing this tradition because white residents from southern Greenpoint want them to stay in the north.

NOTES

¹ Information on total population and race were obtained by examining block data from the 1980 census. The white and black counts do not include Hispanic persons. Hispanics were counted as a separate category, since white, non-Hispanic residents perceive Hispanic residents as a separate race.

² This was obtained by examining tract data from the 1970 Census on Puerto Rican Birth or Parentage.

³ Information on education refers to persons over 25 years old. It was obtained from the 1980 Census.

⁴ Christopher Wellisz, "If You're Thinking of Living In Greenpoint," New York Times, 12 December 1982, sec. 8, p. R9.

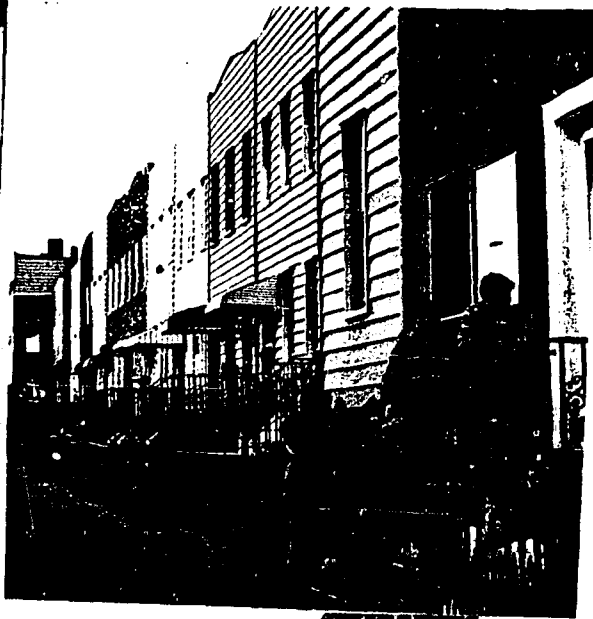
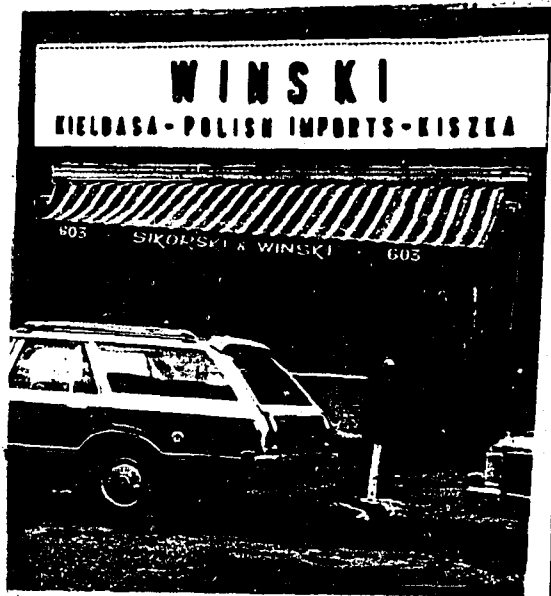
⁵ Ida Susser, Norman Street, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 35.

⁶ New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, Brooklyn Survey: Greenpoint, Proposed Historic District.

⁷ "Greenpoint" unpublished pamphlet, sponsored by the Brooklyn Union Gas Company, p.1

CHAPTER III

STRATEGIES OF DEFENSE IN SOUTHERN GREENPOINT



This chapter focuses on the ways that southern Greenpoint attempts to resist minority growth. It describes the strategies of defense that are used by residents. Those examined are: an informal housing network and informal and formal surveillance. This chapter begins by presenting a demographic picture of southern Greenpoint. Housing as a strategy of defense will then be discussed. This will include the ways that apartments are rented and houses sold, how one goes about finding an available apartment or house, the role of local realtors, the reaction of neighbors to an available apartment or house on their block, and a possible way for minority families to gain access to owner occupied housing in southern Greenpoint. Local surveillance, both informal and formal, will then be discussed as a strategy of defense. This will focus on "block watchers" and civilian patrols as examples of informal and formal surveillance, respectively. Last, the role of neighborhood women in defending southern Greenpoint from change will be explored.

DESCRIPTION

Southern Greenpoint is that portion of the neighborhood bounded by Greenpoint Avenue on the north, to the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway on the south, the East River on the west, and the Newtown Creek on the east. As

mentioned previously, interviewed residents pointed to Greenpoint Avenue as the "division" in the neighborhood.

In 1980, southern Greenpoint had a population of approximately 26,648.¹ Of these persons, 83% were white, less than one percent (.25%) were black,² 13% were Hispanic, and 4% were identified as other. The white population is made up of those who identify themselves as Irish, Italian and Polish. The average median family income in 1979 was \$15,210. In 1980, only 42% of those over 25 years were high school graduates. In addition, one-third of southern Greenpoint's population held technical and sales occupations, followed by operators and laborers.

With regard to housing, 78% of the housing units in 1980 were renter occupied. Whites inhabited an overwhelming majority of both owner (94%) and renter (83%) occupied housing units. The median rent in 1980 was \$139 in southern Greenpoint. Most owners (64%) moved into their housing units in 1969 or earlier. The majority of renters (63%) moved into their housing units between 1970 and 1980. Of southern Greenpoint's housing structures in 1980, 44% had between one and four units, 45% had five to nine units, and the remaining 11% had over ten units in the building.

According to residents who were interviewed, southern Greenpoint is the more desirable area in the neighborhood.

There is a higher status attached to this area by residents from both areas. One reason for its higher status is that it has a small percentage of minority residents. Interviewed residents were able to name streets and houses on them that were "Spanish." In addition, they were certainly aware of and concerned about minority growth in northern Greenpoint. They are attempting to "hold the line" at Greenpoint Avenue and maintain this boundary because they do not want northern Greenpoint to expand into their area. They are determined to prevent southern Greenpoint from becoming another northern Greenpoint. In fact, these residents maintain a series of defensive strategies in their attempt to resist minority growth in southern Greenpoint. The strategies of defense that were uncovered by this research focus around housing and surveillance.

HOUSING

It is difficult to rent an apartment or purchase a house in southern Greenpoint. Local realtors have said that "there isn't a one, two or three family house available." The local newspaper lists only a few apartments and houses for sale, while the length of its "APTS. WANTED" and "HOUSES WANTED" columns increase.

Residents are particularly cautious about renting their vacant apartments. Not only do they want to control rigidly the type of tenants they may get, but they also want to determine who will be informed about the availability of an apartment. All respondents in southern Greenpoint, regardless of ethnicity, claimed that available apartments are rented "by word of mouth."

There are some ads in the local paper, but I think most of the time it's by word of mouth. I think they mostly don't put ads in the paper, because when you put an ad in the paper, you don't know who is gonna come.

Yeh, definitely, they um, there's I guess the thing in the entire neighborhood, and even probably up around Grand Avenue, cause they're all the same, all the same type of people. You know, middle class people, working people, mostly Italian or Irish or whatever, and ah when there's an apartment vacant, no one knows about it. They're very hush, or word of mouth um even, even if they're not Hispanic, they still watch who they rent to.

Resident homeowners go about finding a tenant by an informal network through which they inform family, friends, and neighbors that an apartment is available. This is evident by the following statements:

As far as I can see, when there is a vacant apartment, they'll always go and ask their neighbors do they know anyone who's interested.

There was an apartment right across the street, and well she just said, "Tell the neighbors, you know anyone that's interested in an apartment," and that's the way they get in. Other than that how would you do it?

Somebody on the block usually tells somebody, "Do you know somebody that's looking for an apartment," or "If you hear of rooms in the neighborhood," through the grapevine.

Consequently, if one of these informants knows someone who is "in the market" for an apartment, he/she will recommend this individual to the owner. In other words, individuals seeking apartments are "sponsored" by locals to homeowners.

Recommendations absolutely. You want rooms, I know that Mary has rooms. I'll say, "Mary, I know so and so, she seems to be a nice person, why don't you give her the rooms?"

You keep it to yourself and rent it word of mouth. If you're a friend of mine and you hear of an apartment, you say, "Here I got a good friend," you guarantee him.

What they do is they don't want strangers that they don't know in their house. They want people to come who are recommended, or people who may be friends of people that they know. They're cautious because they're not necessarily anxious for the dollars that would be coming in, a family type of residence, people that they can get along with. They do that for their own security and for their own happiness because sometimes you can rent to somebody and not know who they are. And you know, they may be flamingo dancers for all you know and you're subject to this sort of stuff all the time.

In this kind of situation, a homeowner selects those he/she trusts to tell about an available apartment. Those who are selected as informants are assumed to be similar to the homeowner and to possess the same values. It is therefore presumed by both parties that an informant would only sponsor a potential tenant who is the "type" of person the homeowner is seeking. Thus, it is expected that an informant would only sponsor an individual who would be acceptable to the homeowner.

She said, "If they're friends of yours they must be OK," no she didn't say anything else.

The practice of sponsoring an individual as a potential tenant to a homeowner places the reputation of

the sponsor "on the line." His/her standing in the community could be tainted if a tenant he/she sponsored turned out not to be the type of person initially expected. One presumption is that selected informants will sponsor white ethnics, not minorities. When a neighbor is selected as an informant by a homeowner, the homeowner does not need to list his/her requirements for a tenant. Informants know what homeowners expect. Likewise, homeowners select informants who they presume will know the characteristics expected in a tenant. Given this relationship between homeowners and their selected informants, most minorities are unable to gain access to apartments in southern Greenpoint. Informants would jeopardize their reputations if they recommended a minority individual to homeowners who wanted and expected to consider only white ethnics as tenants. There is little possibility that this kind of situation occurs because it seems that homeowners are cautious about whom they select as informants. They do not choose informants who may breach the expected relationship. As one stated,

They tell you because they know you're not gonna tell Spanish or black.

A few respondents, not sponsored by another resident, recalled their "apartment hunting" experience. One couple (an Irish woman and a Puerto Rican man) was asked "what are you?" by the landlord. The woman said that she was Irish, and the man said Hispanic. The landlord asked him "what kind of Hispanic?" and he answered "Puerto Rican." The landlord then asked if they had any "crawling things" in their present apartment. She refused to rent to them and accused them of trying to deceive her. Another account is of a single Italian man who was looking for an apartment in Greenpoint. All of the landlords that he spoke with asked him if he was Puerto Rican.

According to southern Greenpoint residents, renters realize that in order to find an apartment they must look to be sponsored by someone who is part of the network.

I have two friends right now that would really like to get an apartment, and they have just said to me, "Gee if you hear of anything." And I have other friends of my own that might hear of something too, that live in the neighborhood and I'll mention it to them.

Another respondent summed up the practice of securing an apartment in southern Greenpoint by saying "apartments in Greenpoint, it's the same as getting a job, it's who you

know."

These practices are illustrated by examining the accounts of respondents who explained how they came upon their present apartment.

[My wife] found out that people upstairs were moving out, and she knew the landlord cause she was friends with the landlord's sister, so then the sister moved up to Monroe, New York, so then when the sister left we were getting married, my sister-in-law heard, she told my sister-in-law, and that's how we got this apartment.

My mother, she called me when I was planning to move and I told her, "Find me an apartment in the neighborhood," and she said OK fine and she went to visit her friend, and [told] her family, and she found out that this apartment here was going to be empty because the lady that lived here, was the landlord's niece and she was moving.

My sister-in-law just moved across the street, the man came over to me, he's a friend of the family, he said, "My tenant is moving out, I have this apartment, I'm re-doing it would you like it? ...well do you know of anyone that would like it? ... keep it closed," meaning any of my friends or relatives, and my husband went over to his sister and said, "Would you like to live on Withers Street," and she came and took the apartment.

In each instance the apartments are found through an informal network. In all the cases noted above, a relative played the role of the sponsor. In the last anecdote the owner approached a potential tenant directly but she was not interested. This respondent became an informant and she sponsored her sister-in-law. She also followed the owner's instructions, she kept information about the availability of this apartment within her family. The owner did not want her to reach outside of her own social circle. Based on his impression of this respondent, the owner presupposed that any of her close friends or relatives would be acceptable tenants. According to respondents, many houses are sold in the same way that apartments are rented, by an informal network.

The people next door just sold their house, and they sold it to the people [next to them]. They own this house, and the son is getting married so he bought the other house, you know that type of thing. It also happened with the other house alongside, her daughter was getting married....it seems it stays basically within, that they know who it is.

There's always somebody on the block that don't have a house [and might be interested].

One respondent explained the networking process for

both, apartments and houses.

It's all through word of mouth, same as a house when it's up for sale, it's gone before it, I would say after three people know it then know somebody's buying it...somebody just says I was thinking of renting an apartment, or so and so is moving out of an apartment, and they'll just mention it to somebody in passing, and then they'll say oh I will know somebody looking for an apartment, or somebody will meet you on the Avenue and say do you know of any apartments available, and the next thing you know you do hear of one, so you call them and say, I heard of an apartment available, very few of them that are worth even looking at, or a house worth looking at is in the paper.

Some respondents recalled how they came to purchase their present home.

The lady that lived here just got friendly with my mother and used to bring her down here, and my mother kinda fell in love with the house, she liked this room and everything else, and she started saying, "Wouldn't it be better to have a one family?" She was actually setting her up so to speak, so she set the whole thing up and my mother said, "Yeh I'd really like to have the house," and sold that house and we bought this house. She wanted someone to come in who would love the house, she was born here and she didn't want it anymore, and she wanted to give it to someone that she knew personally, that was just the way she felt and that's how we wound up here.

This account is an example of how houses are sold through an informal network in southern Greenpoint. It is common

to hear anecdotes such as this one, where homeowners select a buyer for their house before the house is actually up for sale. For example, homeowners may watch a family grow over the years and when they decide to sell their home, they may approach that family. As with apartments, this illustrates another way that the network operates.

In some cases, respondents said that homes are more likely to be sold through realtors than by "word of mouth," because sellers are looking for a fair price. There is an assumption that when one rents or sells through the local network, the price will be at a level that locals can afford. This rate tends to be lower than market value. In instances where respondents mentioned the use of realtors, they cited the name of one particular realtor, a local resident. Some neighbors give her their business because she lives in the neighborhood and can, therefore, presumably be trusted and expected to follow tradition. There is an assumption made by these respondents that her loyalty to maintaining the neighborhood's status quo comes before her loyalty to her profession. Therefore, she would not engage in any activities that may change the ethnic composition of southern Greenpoint.

Given the apparent existence of an informal housing network in southern Greenpoint one questions the financial state of local realty businesses. In Greenpoint the licensed real estate brokers are also licensed insurance brokers. Local realty businesses, therefore, sell insurance in addition to selling and renting property. In some cases, local realtors are also lawyers, so they maintain their business by offering legal services to locals as well.

Like South Shore in Chicago (Molotch, 1972), Greenpoint has not experienced the pressure from realtors that is commonly heard about in other inner city neighborhoods. In some neighborhoods they have gained the reputation of being block busters. If anything, Greenpoint realtors probably screen their clients and, therefore, discriminate. Pressure, however, seems to exist within the informal housing network. According to respondents, neighbors sometimes pressure one another about the type of person that will be rented an apartment or sold a house. The major focus is for minority individuals to be unable to gain access to available apartments or houses.

When the guy across the street was selling his house somebody came out and said, "I hope you're not selling to Blacks," something like that.

This house was almost bought by a Cuban gentleman, and the lady on this side of us told our landlord that they are not welcome here, in very choice words she used, and they almost threatened him, don't sell and the sale did not go through.

I just know of an instance just lately, a girl couple of houses down, she'd sell to anybody for the price, and the girl that lived next door to her never talked to her since because she felt, you grew up in this neighborhood and you're gonna do this, as it turned out she did sell it to black people, and the last thing she said as she was moving is, I hope your neighbor does the same thing to you.

These responses illustrate the pressure that some neighbors apply to one another when an apartment or house is available. In some instances threats are made. These accounts suggest that applying pressure sometimes works in Greenpoint but not always.

Other respondents indicated that applying pressure is unnecessary because there is an "unwritten agreement," analogous to a "pact," among neighbors. They agree that they will not rent or sell to minority individuals.

It's a, how can I put it, it's an unwritten law, I would say in other words, you know your family's gonna hear it if you rent to a black...I know what they would go through, that's why I wouldn't really do it.

This response suggests that this pact operates without any overt pressure. It further suggests that residents who violate the pact will be confronted by their neighbors.

One respondent recalled a time when she and her family moved. She stated that her father did not sell through the local informal housing network, but advertised in a Catholic newspaper. By doing so he presumed that he would get acceptable buyers. To their surprise, a black family became interested in the house and came by to see it.

My father didn't know what the heck he was going to do, but he felt that the neighbors would probably never speak to him again.

Her father knew that if he sold to this black family, he would face unpleasant reactions from his neighbors. A likely consequence, he thought was that his neighbors would not speak to him again.

Another respondent spoke about a friend who re-develops abandoned housing in Greenpoint. This developer

was thinking about renting to blacks.

A friend of mine is doing a renovation job in Greenpoint...he's asking pretty big rents \$650 to \$725, plus you pay your own heat. Now this is in an area of Greenpoint that [for] most people who are from Greenpoint, it's on Guernsey Street, they would fall off a chair. And in talking to him one day, he has a tremendous amount of money invested in this, now he must be able to get the type of tenant that can afford to pay this rent. And just talking one day he mentioned, "What do you think about renting to two black men that are gay?" "My feeling on it or what I think about it?" "Both," he said. I said, "My feeling is I deal with too many people to judge them by their color," I said, "For what your future plans are," because he plans to develop more housing in Greenpoint, I said, "I think it will hurt you tremendously and I don't see that you should do that...because of their color...the politics of the area seems to be that you can rent to almost anybody except to blacks...it seems that the power brokers don't want any more minorities [than] they have already.

This respondent advised his friend, the developer, not to violate the pact, in order to avoid unfavorable repercussions which may cause his business to suffer.

An additional respondent recalled an instance in which her neighbor asked other homeowners on the block if they would be upset if she rented to a Cuban family.

She asked her neighbor, her neighbor had friends and she came to us and said, do you mind, I'm going to rent to these people, they're Cubans and do you mind

if I rent to them...and there was no problem, she asked us and everybody agreed.

There are a number of implications brought to light by this account. First, it suggests that this homeowner did not want to violate the pact. She therefore, not only informed her neighbors of her intention, but also asked for their opinion on the matter. Second, it is apparent that this Cuban family was being sponsored by another neighbor. The other homeowners were comfortable with this arrangement and thus suspended the pact in this instance. Third, it seems that the way for minority families to gain access to owner occupied housing in southern Greenpoint is to be sponsored by a respected resident. Residents who are selling their house do not always respond appropriately to pressure from their neighbors. If by their move, they are leaving the neighborhood completely, and they are not leaving anyone behind, then they have no reason to come back. Under these conditions, the seller is more concerned with the price he/she can get for the sale of the house, rather than considering the standards of neighbors. However, if family and friends of the seller remain in Greenpoint, and the seller intends to visit, then he/she is likely to succumb to pressure

exerted by neighbors when selecting a buyer.

In summary, it can be said that it is by defending accessibility to housing, that residents of southern Greenpoint resist minority growth. Most apartments are rented through an informal housing network, by which residents sponsor individuals as tenants. Some houses are also sold this way, while others are sold through realtors who are trusted not to "blockbust." Pressure seems to operate among residents concerning the type of person to whom a homeowner rents or sells his/her property. However, some report that a "pact" exists among neighbors making pressure unnecessary. This pact is an unwritten agreement whereby residents do not rent or sell to minorities. In some instances, when the pact was violated, the violator faced consequences. This was illustrated by responses where neighbors argued about to whom a homeowner was selling, and also by the concern expressed by a homeowner regarding the reactions of his neighbors should he sell to minorities. In another instance the pact was suspended by neighbors, allowing a homeowner to rent to a minority family because they were sponsored by another homeowner. This seems to be one way that minority individuals gain access to owner occupied housing in southern Greenpoint. It can be concluded that

in most cases, available housing never reaches the legitimate market, but remains part of the neighborhood's "underlife" (Suttles, 1974). Moreover, by keeping the availability of housing out of the market, southern Greenpoint residents are not discriminating in the traditional sense (they are not turning minorities away). Instead, residents take an offensive position and prevent minorities from applying for housing. This is done by keeping available housing within an informal network.

SURVEILLANCE

Another way that residents defend southern Greenpoint is through local surveillance. Surveillance in southern Greenpoint can be divided into two categories, informal and formal. Informal surveillance refers to activities where individuals "watch" the block. These individuals are not sanctioned by any authority to "block watch," nor are they tied to any local organization for this purpose. Formal surveillance, on the other hand, operates by a Civilian Observation Patrol (COP). The Civilian Observation Patrol is a local organization whose purpose is to train and coordinate individual block or small area (a number of blocks) patrols. In both cases, the

objective is to protect the neighborhood (i.e., neighbors, children, property, etc.) from criminal disturbances. Both types of surveillance will now be discussed.

INFORMAL SURVEILLANCE

Informal surveillance in southern Greenpoint operates in a variety of ways. One is by residents informing their neighbors when they are going out for the day or on vacation, and by asking them to watch their property while they are gone. This kind of surveillance is different from that used to keep "undesirable" people from moving in.

[My neighbor] might call me and say, "I'm gonna be out all day today keep an eye," and [another neighbor] might say the same thing, and a third neighbor will bring me her stuff and say, "You watch it in your house nobody's in mine." We do that.

Well now for instance, myself, when there's just my mother and I in the house, and I was going away and I was gone like, you know, maybe over the weekend or something, and I was going where it wasn't convenient for my mother to go or she didn't choose to go, I would call several people and made sure that they knew that I wasn't going to be home, and told them a number where they could reach me, and I knew that I could depend on them here, and just in little ways, you know.

I go away in the summer and I always tell the people, "I'm going away, nothing's gonna happen in my house, no TV's, no refrigerator, nothing's gonna be repaired, so if you see anyone coming out."

They're very conscious of the community, I'll give you an example, I go away for the summer [and] made a day trip back once a week, my mail was taken out of my mailbox everyday and put in the hallway so that no one would know that I was not home, [I] did not ask them to do it at all.

These responses indicate that there is concern about homes being burglarized. Residents therefore try to prevent such occurrences by putting neighbors "on guard." This strategy is proactive, as opposed to being reactive. In other words, residents attempt to prevent burglaries from happening as opposed to reacting after the incident has occurred.

Another way that informal surveillance operates in southern Greenpoint is through residents who take it upon themselves to observe block activities. These "block watchers" are extremely suspicious of outsiders (Gans, 1962).

We have certain people, like mainly men that are retired. There was one guy we called the mayor, he'd walk up and down, he'd know everything.

I think everyone watches everyone else's home here, there's always someone outside, on this block there's a particular person that's always outside, it happens to be an elderly man, he's always out here and he watches, he watches the children, he watches the block itself, and if anything goes wrong he'll alert us to that fact. If a stranger happens to come I think he's extra precautions about that, yeh he'll ask, you know, I saw this girl with red hair, yeh, that was my friend, oh ok.

It seems that residents are suspicious of any strangers. I can recall being closely watched by locals as I looked for, and entered people's homes, when conducting interviews for this research. Respondents pointed out that residents are able to identify outsiders and often confront these individuals about their intentions.

People from the area basically see the same people everyday, constantly, and when you see somebody different you think about what they're doing or who they're looking for, and some of the people ask, "Are you looking for somebody in particular?" which is good.

Strangers, strangers, any stranger that come to the door, we'd ask them, "Hello who are you looking for?" and they'll tell us; if we weren't satisfied we'd just say, "Sorry they're not home," and watch them leave.

I'm only here like six weeks and there's this club on the corner, the members say, "Hello Mrs. _____ how are you," they know that I go to the park [and] they wait for me to come back, "Hello, ah someone was here, I think someone was here looking for you, we told them you wasn't home but you'll be back at such a time." Um, people just say, "Hello," they know your face, they don't know your name. I'll call and I'll call my son and the lady will say, "Is that your little boy, he's over there." They just automatically know who belongs here and they tend to just watch. It's just like an unspoken agreement. And I know myself, the girl up the street was looking for her little girl, I said, "Gee she went around the [corner]." You just can't help find yourself saying she went around the [corner]. You watch [and] you do watch. If I see somebody strange coming out of, not here, because I'm not here long enough cause I don't really know everyone, but when I lived [on the other street] if I seen someone going into my neighbors hall who didn't look [quite right], I would go into the house and call her and, you know, run right back out and see if they came out. If they didn't come out I'd call the police and I'd stay there and say, "Don't worry." You just did it, you know, you can just tell by the look. You just know, um you can just see bad, I think you can sense it, you can just sense something's up.

This last response suggests that residents not only "watch," but also have a "sense" or a working knowledge of who does and does not belong. Surveillants observe the activities of strangers and often confront them and question them.

Interviews indicated that there is yet another method

of informal surveillance in southern Greenpoint that is reactive. This method is illustrated by block observers who witness crimes and contact the police.

During the summertime, the girl across the street, she works and sometimes her grandchildren come around, and they have bicycles in there. And this here car stopped this day and went into the house, and came out with the bicycles. But the guy next door, "the watcher," had taken down the number of his car, and as soon as they left he went and called the cops. And the cops looked up the number of the car, looked up the kid and sure enough they got the bike. And that's where it was. Oh they're always watching. There's five men in particular that's retired. It's not a block association they're on their own.

I walked up Calyer Street towards Manhattan Avenue, I got as far as Guernsey Street and I'm crossing Guernsey Street and I see these two men coming, and one with a television on his shoulder, and I said, "Cee, they could have robbed that television." So I turned around to see if I could get the license plate number. There was no license plate number on the front of the car. So I made believe I forgot something and turned around like that, [as if I were] the cop, and I walked back, and I crossed Guernsey Street back again, and I turned around just as they were pulling away. And I got the license plate number of the car, and it was a Bonneville, and I forgot about it. I did write it down but I forgot about it. But later on in the evening, see this is what I mean about being a neighborhood, now I happened to be walking up the Avenue again and I saw [a neighbor] sitting and few other people sitting on the stoop down Guernsey Street. And they called me there to ask me a question of some kind. When I was leaving I said, "By the way if anybody lost a television on this block I know where it is, I'm a detective." The next morning [the neighbor] calls me, she says, "Do you still have the license plate number," she said, "The lady across the street was robbed yesterday and

they took her television." So the two of us went around to the police station and I understand they did get them.

These sketches exemplify the action that is taken by surveillants, who encounter questionable events that may be criminal. Observers respond to the event by contacting the police. Also reported, however, are instances where a suspect was detained by locals, while waiting for the police to arrive.

On [this] street there was a young girl down the train station and a fellow or a young boy took her purse, and on [this] street there is a pizza parlor and there's a bar where a lot of men, Italian men stay, and they ran after this fellow and they got him I think they must of roughed him up a little bit by the time the police came, but they seem to get control of the situation after that.

Described above is an instance where a criminal activity was handled by the local residents in what is suggested as a vigilante style. Locals responded to a crime that was committed against another resident.

These accounts describe the way that some southern Greenpoint residents informally oversee street activities. Respondents report that in some instances, residents will

contact neighbors to "keep an eye" on their property while they are out for the day or on vacation. Like the informal housing network discussed earlier, this informal method of surveillance is an offensive strategy. Residents inform their neighbors of their absence in an attempt to prevent a crime from occurring. Likewise, the informal housing network is an offensive strategy in that it attempts to prevent minority individuals from knowing about available housing in southern Greenpoint. In both strategies, the emphasis is on prevention. Another proactive strategy of informal surveillance was illustrated by the response of some southern Greenpoint residents to outsiders, and to suspicious events. However, upon witnessing crimes, residents use reactive surveillance methods. By these methods residents respond to the occurrence of criminal activities, as opposed to attempting to prevent them.

FORMAL SURVEILLANCE

Formal surveillance in southern Greenpoint operates through a Civilian Observation Patrol (COP), a voluntary organization in Greenpoint. It first began as part of a block association in southern Greenpoint. It developed in

response to numerous complaints by block association members about auto thefts and break-ins. The result was a system, where two residents ride around a particular segment of the neighborhood in their own cars, which are equipped with CB radios. If they encounter any criminal activity or any event which appears suspicious, they relay the event to their "base station." The base station consists of a CB radio in someone's home and a resident to respond to calls. If a call is relayed from a civilian patrol car to the base station, the base station operator responds to the call by alerting police of the incident. According to a COP member, most base station operators are women, while most car patrols are made up by men. He describes the method of relaying a call as follows:

A call comes in from the mobile unit, gives a description of what's going on, notifies the base station. The base station in turn identifies himself, like a block watching unit. They dial 911, [he's] only repeating what the mobile unit says. And [he] calls it in judging on the type of call. That's where [his] training comes in. If it's an emergency call naturally 911. Not an emergency, [he's] instructed to call the precinct and identify [himself] at the precinct desk, "Civilian patrol, I have a bunch of kids on the corner," you know, something like that. But the 911, [he] identifies [himself] not only that [he's] a member of a civilian patrol, also gives [his] block watcher's number, which is given no priority but it's considered a legitimate professional call. Somebody that knows what they're doing out there.

Patrol member do not become directly involved with neighborhood disturbances. They act as additional "eyes and ears" for the local police. Patrols usually operate on weekend nights and follow a schedule that was developed by members. However, some added a day patrol which is comprised mostly of local women.

As previously mentioned, civilian patrols began as an activity of one block association in southern Greenpoint. The local police precinct captain was initially skeptical about this activity. He was concerned that it was a vigilante organization. This original patrol was closely monitored by the local police and eventually recognized as a legitimate civilian activity. According to patrol members, crime decreased substantially in the area that was patrolled by civilians. The effectiveness of this patrol was publicized. Residents in other areas of the neighborhood were experiencing crime waves. The patrol founders met with these groups and explained their method. According to one founder,

From there we started blossoming into different sections of Greenpoint. At one give time we developed into twelve active areas being covered by patrols.

Subsequently, the patrol founders saw it necessary to unite the individual patrols into one organization, and the 94th Civilian Observation Patrol was formed. This organization was a consortium of civilian patrols in Greenpoint. The 94th COP acted as a liaison between the local police and member patrols. Initially, each civilian patrol operated independently. During the summer of 1983, the 94th COP was preparing to supervise and coordinate the operations of all civilian patrols that were members. At that point in time, they had obtained new radio equipment and had planned on centralizing patrol activities and administering duties. Instead of each patrol working with its own base station, all member patrols would work with one central base station. In addition, the 94th COP had divided the neighborhood into a number of small sections. By doing so they planned to expand the areas to be covered by each patrol, in an attempt to patrol more streets. In addition, the 94th COP would arrange patrol schedules instead of each patrol devising its own.

At the time of data collection (summer, 1983) only four member patrols were active in Greenpoint: two in southern and two in northern Greenpoint. A respondent who

was a block patrol member explained the inactivity of patrols.

Once there isn't too much crime, people start to drop out. They don't have too much time. Once things do start happening they all participate and they do a very good job.

This information suggests that the existence of active patrols in Greenpoint are episodic and sporadic (Suttles, 1972). They are organized and become active when events occur that call for their emergence, such as an increase in crime. As crime diminishes, patrols become dormant, only to re-emerge with the next crime wave. Therefore, civilian patrols in Greenpoint are viewed as a defense strategy.

These descriptions of informal and formal surveillance illustrate the way that southern Greenpoint residents further defend the neighborhood. As a whole, Greenpoint was designated a low crime area within New York City. In addition, according to a local police sergeant, southern Greenpoint is the lower crime area within the neighborhood. Some residents agree that the area has low crime, while others disagree and are very concerned about local crime. Given a higher incidence of crime in

northern Greenpoint, Williamsburg, the adjacent neighborhood, and the city as a whole, southern Greenpoint residents are quite suspicious of strangers. In addition, northern Greenpoint and Williamsburg are populated by many more Hispanics than southern Greenpoint. It appears that southern Greenpoint residents associate high crime with minority individuals. It, therefore, seems that locals act as surveillants in order to manage the activities of minority individuals, who "pass through" and live in the area, as well as attempt to prevent crime.

THE ROLE OF NEIGHBORHOOD WOMEN

As noted earlier, past research regarding urban neighborhoods has been based on a male perspective, and has not examined the role of women (Gans, 1962; Kornblum, 1974; Suttles, 1968; Whyte, 1955). Whyte examines "corner boys" and "college boys." Gans states in his methodological note that more of his data were gathered from and about men rather than women, and that his report on the peer group society emphasizes men. Liebow focuses on "streetcorner men," and Kornblum's presentation of the steelworker's union and local party organizations are largely male worlds. When women are discussed in these

studies, they are presented as extensions of men. Whyte describes the "sex code" of Cornerville (1943) by discussing the standards of sexual behavior in Cornerville centers around male values and male perceptions, expectations, and classifications of women, who range from virgin to professional prostitute. Liebow discusses women in terms of their relationship to "streetcorner men" as wives and lovers. Once again, accounts of marriage relationships and consensual unions are described from the point of view of men.

Lofland (1975) argues that in urban sociological literature women are merely "there." They are part of the scene, but are not part of the action. The plots of such studies simply move around them. As discussed previously, the "thereness of women" is a result of the emphasis on community in urban sociology, the funding of research, and the sex of the researcher. The emphasis on community as a model of social organization is presently the dominant one within sociology. For Lofland, this model creates a problem of conceptualization. Emphasis on this model confines the researcher's view of urban forms to those which the model can be applied. Other possible urban forms are therefore not investigated. Thus, the use of this model of community points researchers to empirical

settings where women are only "there," and directs them away from settings where women are present. Researchers have missed women's activities in studies of urban settings because women's activities are largely informal and behind the scenes (parks, beauty parlors, coffee shops). The dominant conception of community focuses on more formal associations, where men are prevalent. Lofland's argument seems to be supported by this research. It appears that women play a major role in southern Greenpoint's informal housing network. They seem to "pass along the word," regarding the availability of housing to family, friends, and neighbors. Women have replaced the role of realtors. The following anecdote reported by a local woman illustrates this point.

I was in a butcher one day and we were talking, and I just happen to mention that my niece was looking for rooms, and this woman says, "Hello," she told me who she was, and that she had rooms. So there right in the butcher shop, not that I ever got the rooms. But [if I wanted] rooms for a friend of mine or for anybody I would spread the word around in the society [a women's religious organization]. That would be the first place, right I'd say, "Girls, anybody hears of rooms let me know." They would tell someone.

This account suggests that women's activities are largely informal and occur in places like a butcher shop.

It further suggests that when women are members of formal organizations, the organizations tend to be made up of mostly women. Male researchers are therefore unable to reach them. Moreover, it supports the idea that women's activities are "behind the scenes." Southern Greenpoint's informal housing network is a sound example.

This research has also implied that retired men, and women of all ages are involved in defending southern Greenpoint. This notion contradicts Suttles' impression that "mothers with young children are probably the most confined and involved in the defending neighborhood."³ In addition to their involvement in southern Greenpoint's informal surveillance, neighborhood women asked their women neighbors to watch their property while they were out for the day or on vacation. Moreover, neighborhood women as well as men act as informal surveillants, witnessing and reporting suspicious events and crimes to the police.

Women in southern Greenpoint are also members of civilian patrols. As mentioned earlier most operate base stations, as opposed to policing the area in cars at night. However, it was reported that one of the active patrols, under the 94th COP in southern Greenpoint, included a day patrol which is made up of local women.

The day patrol is a foot patrol. Teams of women walk around the area with CB radios and relay disturbances to their base station. They patrol an area around the Greenpoint Savings Bank on the first few days of each month, during which time, senior citizens receive and cash their Social Security checks. This patrol tries to prevent robberies. Moreover, there is an organization in southern Greenpoint called Friends of Mc Colrick Park. It is made up mostly of women. The major objective of this group is the restoration and beautification of the park.⁴ The group encountered some problems with drug addicts congregating in the park. To help alleviate this problem they formed a day patrol. The patrol is comprised solely of women. The patrol is called Park Anti-Crime Teams (PACT). PACT was originally a member of the 94th COP, but withdrew its membership. The group felt that they were being discriminated against because they were women.

They took almost a year in training us before we could get out on patrol. They didn't like the idea of two women in a car, they wanted a man. And I always felt that they had no right to make a decision. [Then at a fundraising event they wanted us] to sell raffles... and all hell broke loose and my whole group left and we formed our own [patrol].

These findings regarding the role of women in neighborhood defense suggest that women are involved in a number of neighborhood dynamics. They can no longer be disregarded or not be seriously considered in urban neighborhood research. These findings also indicate that working class women are moving from a "traditional working class" lifestyle to a "modern working class" lifestyle by belonging to more groups outside the family (Mc Court, 1977).

This chapter focused on the ways that residents in southern Greenpoint attempt to resist minority growth by employing a number of defensive strategies. These strategies include: an informal housing network, where available housing never reaches the market but is absorbed beforehand. The notion of sponsorship was also discussed. This refers to the practice by local residents of recommending potential tenants to homeowners with available housing. The state of local realty businesses was also presented. Realtors do not depend solely on housing for their existence. They sell insurance and offer legal services. Local surveillance, both informal and formal, was examined as a strategy of defense in southern Greenpoint. This discussion depicted the ways that residents "keep an eye" on one another's property,

watch the block, and participate in civilian patrols. Finally, the role of neighborhood women in defending southern Greenpoint from change was explored. The findings suggest that women are involved in a variety of neighborhood activities. It is therefore imperative that they be routinely included in studies on urban neighborhoods.

NOTES

¹These data are approximations since tract boundaries are not the same as those given by residents.

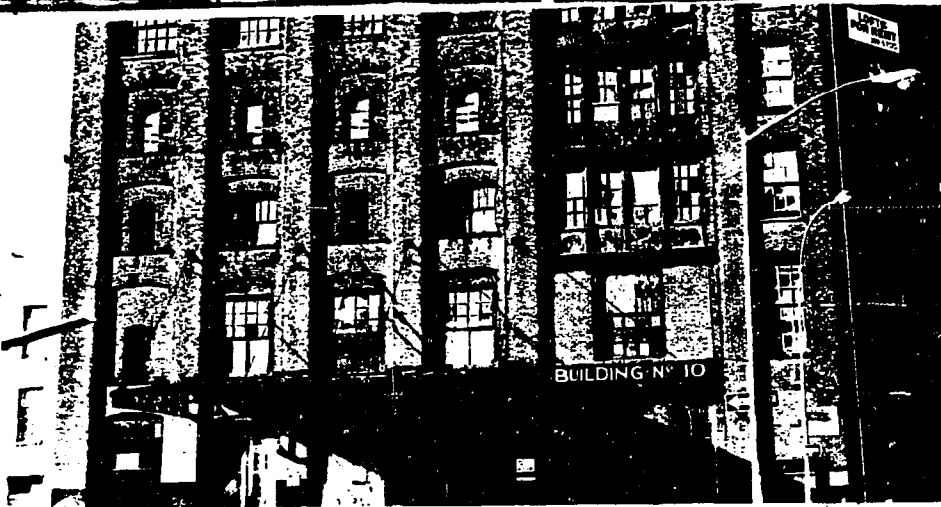
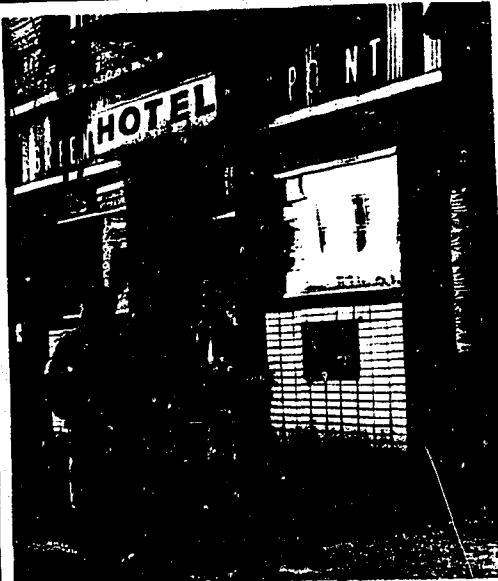
²The white and black counts do not include Hispanic persons. Hispanics were counted as a separate category.

³ Gerald D. Suttles, The Social Construction of Communities (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 40.

⁴See Dabrowski (1983) for a discussion on the involvement of working class women in voluntary organizations, which focus on maintaining and improving city neighborhoods.

CHAPTER IV

STRATEGIES OF DEFENSE IN NORTHERN GREENPOINT



This chapter focuses on the strategies of defense that operate in northern Greenpoint. As in the south, those examined are: an informal housing network and informal and formal surveillance. It begins with a geographic and demographic description, followed by a discussion of the strategies of defense employed by white, non-Hispanic in the north. These strategies are compared to those uncovered in southern Greenpoint. The practices of Hispanic residents in northern Greenpoint will be examined. It will include a portrayal of the way that housing is obtained, and the relationships between them and their white non-Hispanic neighbors. Finally, neighborhood segregation will be discussed. Segregation between northern and southern Greenpoint will be examined, followed by a description of segregation within the north. Housing, recreation, religious services, and church activities are the areas to be investigated within northern Greenpoint regarding the existence of segregation.

DESCRIPTION

Northern Greenpoint is the part of the neighborhood from the waterfront to Greenpoint Avenue. In 1980, northern Greenpoint had a population of approximately

12562,¹ less than half that of southern Greenpoint. Likewise, northern Greenpoint is much smaller geographically than southern Greenpoint. In 1980 northern Greenpoint was 58% white, 1% black,² 37% Hispanic, 2% Asian, and 2% were identified as other. The white population is made of mostly of Poles. However, there are fewer non-Hispanics and substantially more minorities residing in northern Greenpoint than in southern Greenpoint. The average median family income in 1979 was \$11,852, \$3,358 less than in southern Greenpoint. Northern Greenpoint also has a somewhat smaller percentage of high school graduates than southern Greenpoint. In 1980 40% of those over 25 years, who resided in northern Greenpoint were high school graduates. Like residents in southern Greenpoint, one-third of northern Greenpoint's population held technical and sales occupations, followed by operators and laborers.

In 1980 86% of the housing units in northern Greenpoint were renter occupied, a larger percentage than in southern Greenpoint. Like southern Greenpoint, whites made up an overwhelming majority of both owner (81%) and renter (70%) occupied housing units. The average median rent in northern Greenpoint in 1980 was \$143, somewhat higher than in southern Greenpoint. Like southern Greenpoint, most owners (61%) in the north moved into their housing unit in 1969 or earlier. The majority of

renters (66%) moved into their housing unit between 1970 and 1980. Of the housing structures in 1980, the majority (53%) had between five and nine units, followed by 31% which had between one and four units. The remaining 16% had over ten units in the building. Housing structures in the north were somewhat different than those in the south. The north had more structures which held five to nine units, while the south had more structures with one to four units.

This housing information indicates that buildings in northern Greenpoint are larger than in southern Greenpoint in that there are more units in each dwelling. In addition, there are substantially fewer owner-occupied units in the north. In general, resident landlords do not rent to those receiving public assistance. Absentee landlords rent to welfare recipients and charge the maximum amount allowed by the Department of Social Services. This amount is usually higher than what is asked of non-welfare tenants (Susser, 1982). This may explain why the median rent is higher in the north than in the south. Moreover, resident landlords are concerned that tenants care for property, and as previously discussed, are quite cautious about the type of persons to whom they rent. Absentee landlords are not tied to the local

housing network and therefore rent to Hispanics and welfare recipients more often than resident landlords (Susser, 1982). The absentee landlord is interested in collecting the best rents, but their buildings are poorly maintained, differentiating them from buildings owned by resident landlords (Susser, 1982). In addition, there appears to be a relationship between larger housing structures owned by absentee landlords and Hispanic occupants. In Greenpoint, most Hispanic residents live in buildings with five or more dwellings, owned by an absentee landlord.

Northern Greenpoint is viewed as the undesirable part of the neighborhood because of the number of minority residents. As one resident from the north remarked

A lot of people don't want to come down this end because everybody thinks being there's an awful lot of Spanish here

As previously stated, minority growth occurred in northern Greenpoint during the 1950's. It appears to have been precipitated by such factors as movement to the suburbs, the closing of a bridge, local industry, and white flight. In addition, the northern portion of the

neighborhood seems to be the traditional staging area for immigrants. In the same way that European immigrants settled in northern Greenpoint, so too did Hispanics. The ethnic composition of northern Greenpoint, which in 1960 was mostly Polish and Hispanic, represents these trends. It was originally thought that since minority growth has occurred in the north, white resistance to it would no longer exist. This research uncovered that like in the south, northern Greenpoint's non-Hispanic residents continue to maintain a series of defensive strategies. These strategies also focus around housing and surveillance. However, the scope of these strategies appears different from that in the south. They occur on a much smaller scale.

DEFENSE BY WHITE RESIDENTS

HOUSING

As in the south, white, non-Hispanic residents homeowners from the north are interested in controlling those to whom they rent. In addition, they want to

determine who knows about a vacancy. Apartments are therefore rented by "word of mouth."

Cheek to mouth so to speak, somebody moves out another family says, hey you're looking for rooms I know these people that are gonna move out in the next month or so, why don't you talk to the landlord.

You have to know somebody whose renting an apartment, otherwise your gonna get an apartment that really doesn't look like anything.

Sometimes apartments are rented through advertisements in different languages which are displayed locally. In northern Greenpoint notices are often in Polish so that only Poles can understand them. It is another way of keeping Hispanics at a distance.

I walked into the deli, Polish grocery store, I walked in there and I had bought something and I seen, I was with my mother-in-law thank goodness, and they had a card, a couple of cards taped to the display case but it was written in Polish, which now written in Polish probably because unless you could read Polish you wouldn't know about the apartment, that keeps a certain element out I guess...my mother, I said, what does that say is that about some sort of cold cuts or something, so she's reading and says no those are ads for apartments, I said oh gosh, I asked for a paper bag and a pencil, they know me a long time, ma read it to me in English and I wrote it down.

In this case the ads appeared in a Polish grocery store and were written in Polish. The respondent could not read nor understand Polish, but her mother-in-law was able to read it. She first thought that the message on the cards referred to grocery items. Probably other individuals who could not read Polish though the same thing. Like those in the south, this instance exemplifies a defense strategy used in northern Greenpoint against Hispanics.

It has been indicated that white residents in the north attempt to keep "outsiders" from learning about a vacant apartment. They do this by using an informal housing network. However, in northern Greenpoint there is also a concern with physical appearance; does the apartment "look" vacant?

A lot of people keep blinds and shades on the windows and don't tell anybody.

Residents do this so that it appears that someone is living in the apartment. Moreover, they do not tell

anyone whom they do not trust that the apartment is actually vacant.

Some residents say that houses are also sold through an informal housing network.

[If my mother was selling] she would let the people around us know she's selling, the neighbors.

Oh, I found mine, I found my house through word of mouth. [Like] the house up the block's for sale.

Both respondents discuss the use of an informal network when buying or selling their homes.

Northern Greenpoint residents are aware that their part of the neighborhood is viewed as undesirable. This view affects the housing market in the north.

We're the forgotten end down here, nobody's gonna buy a house at this end.

Anybody that's looking for a house, when you mention Greenpoint down to Box Street nobody wants to touch it.

Because of the "stigma" that the north possesses, some residents report that houses are sold through

realtors.

If they want to get rid of it they'll do anything, they'll put it in a real estate.

When they sell the property it's by realty, for some reason there seems to be a better price, in other words realty wants to get as much as they can.

Their responses suggest that this is the only way to find a buyer who is willing to pay a price that is worthwhile.

Unlike southern Greenpoint, residents in the north report that neighbors do not pressure one another about the kinds of people to whom they rent and sell. However it appears that white, non-Hispanic, resident landlords maintain white, non-hispanic buildings. This suggests that defense among white ethnics in northern Greenpoint has contracted to one's own house. There is no immediate concern about the ethnicity of one's neighbors on the block, as exists in the south. Instead, whites in the north are interested in the ethnicity of their tenants. In fact, whites in the north are accustomed to having Hispanics as next door neighbors, but not as neighbors in the same house.

SURVEILLANCE

As in southern Greenpoint, white ethnic residents in the north are involved in local surveillance strategies. Surveillance in the north is also divided into two categories, informal and formal. As mentioned earlier, informal surveillance refers to activities where residents "watch" the block. Formal surveillance operates by the use of a civilian patrol.

As in the south, some residents in the north take it upon themselves to observe block activities.

[We] have persons [who] sit outside. They see if they see anything suspicious. No, we don't have a schedule we do have, like the person across the street, when it's a nice day, is always out there. Man and woman, and then, we have the same thing up further, he does the same thing. [It's] something, I come down I says you know, "let's see what's going on."

We have block watchers, some of the retired people they have nothing do to so they stand outside and they look around. On this block everybody looks out for one another. If somebody sees somebody coming along and they look suspicious they'll, you know, "are you looking for something," you know, they're really nice.

These responses indicate that as in the south, white

ethnic residents respond to block activities by observing, confronting, and questioning those who look suspicious. One resident recalled confronting someone who appeared to be stealing a car.

This one time this fella's by the car, so I don't know whose car but he's sort of suspicious. He's up there he's trying to get into the car, he says "I lost my keys I can't get into the car," I says, "well what are gonna do," he says, "well I'll have to break the lock," I says, "well can't you get a key from the, another key from the car dealer or something." "Oh no," he says, "can't do it." So then I called the cops but by that time the person took off, he figures that there's something, so he took off.

According to this respondent, he prevented a car theft by confronting an individual who seemed suspicious.

Formal surveillance in northern Greenpoint operates through a civilian patrol, as it does in the south. However, only one civilian patrol existed in the north at the time that interviews were conducted. This patrol includes three streets and was originally organized out of the block association which included these streets (these three streets together formed one block association). This patrol is a member of the Civilian Observation Patrol (COP), and operates in the same way as patrols in the

south. The overwhelming majority of this patrol is made up of white, non-Hispanic residents. There are a few Hispanic homeowners who are members of both, the block association and civilian patrol.

It is evident that white ethnics in northern Greenpoint are engaged in the same strategies of defense as those used in the south. However, defense in the north seems to have diminished in comparison to the south. White, non-Hispanic residents appear to be unconcerned about the ethnicity of their neighbors on the block. In addition, it seems that pressure does not operate among white neighbors regarding the renting and selling of property. They are concerned however about with whom they share the house. Most resident owners, therefore, rent only to white, non-Hispanic individuals. Moreover, surveillance exists in northern Greenpoint, on a much smaller scale than it does in the south. Informal surveillance in the north seems to focus on the activities of Hispanics. Hispanics are suspected of criminal acts.

Formal surveillance in the north also exists on a smaller scale than in the south. There is only one civilian patrol in northern Greenpoint. It is possible that the strategies of defense used in Greenpoint developed after a fair amount of minority growth occurred

in northern Greenpoint. If so, then residents in the south, being threatened, resisted minority growth by developing and employing the strategies discussed. White residents in the north may be using them "to hold on" and maintain their place in northern Greenpoint. Many residents have no where else to go. Their "roots" are in Greenpoint and they lack the economic ability to leave. Others have made a conscious decision to stay (maybe because they too lack alternatives). They are concerned about the value of their property and are attempting to prevent northern Greenpoint from becoming a burned-out neighborhood like Bushwick or South Bronx. Moreover, residents associate a decline in property value and deteriorated conditions with minorities.

In general, white residents in the north would like to see their area change. They point to two main ways that change could occur. One way is by the large number of Polish immigrants residing in Greenpoint. Some of these immigrants are here illegally. They left Poland before martial law was instituted. Many work as skilled laborers, renovating houses in Greenpoint. Many of these Poles are buying property in northern Greenpoint. They obtain mortgages from a federal credit union, which is affiliated with a local Polish organization. White

residents say that these immigrants are displacing Hispanics. Although there are some reservations about the habits⁴ of these Poles, white residents prefer them to Hispanics.

The second possible way for northern Greenpoint to change is through gentrification. Residents are not defending against gentrification. In fact, they welcome it. They see gentrification as a way to displace Hispanics. They do not realize that they themselves may be displaced. White ethnics look with hope toward the development of Greenpoint's waterfront. In fact, the block association and civilian patrol in northern Greenpoint, which was previously discussed, have been developing a plan to construct a promenade at Greenpoint's waterfront. They have met with a number of City agencies about it. Moreover, resident landlords would like to see the waterfront developed because property values would increase. Northern Greenpoint would therefore lose its stigma.

HISPANICS

Hispanics in northern Greenpoint are the targets of the practices used by non-Hispanic residents. Hispanics appear not to engage in defensive strategies in the same way as their non-Hispanic neighbors. Hispanic residents are not trying to keep non-Hispanics out of the north, nor are they trying to get rid of them. They are, however, trying to maintain their place in northern Greenpoint, since it is more difficult for them to live in the south.

HOUSING

Hispanics in northern Greenpoint, like white ethnic residents in both the north and the south, look for an available apartment through an informal network.

Most of the people, the Spanish, how they get their apartments is by somebody who had been living in their apartment before. Like myself, my sister used to live in this apartment and she moved and I moved here. So that's how the people get apartments, the Spanish people. They get in touch with all the people, "oh you let me know if this place if there's any vacancies in your building." Like I'm doing that right now too. I'm trying to get another apartment and move out of this one and I've been talking to friends, and hey you know, and that's the way most people do it.

Through friends, like this apartment, the woman was still in here when I came to see it with all her furniture and everything. I was living on Dupont

Street and the apartment was too small and I told my girl friend, "look I'm looking for an apartment," she goes, "well I know my girlfriend's leaving here," so I said, "well can I see it?" and she said, "a huh." I came and I saw it and I liked it. I didn't even see the landlord, he took it by word of her.

These responses indicate that Hispanics conduct an apartment search in the same way as white ethnic residents, through an informal network. However, it is also suggested that Hispanics and whites do not participate in the same network. These networks seem to include one's "own kind," individuals of the same ethnicity/race.

Hispanic respondents explained why they did not use local realtors.

From my own belief realtors over here in this area is working for white not for Hispanic. I believe if I go there I'll be treated different, and probably most likely I will not get any apartment anyway. So that's why I wouldn't go to a realtor.

I think there could be apartments, but I don't think this down side of Greenpoint, there's any realtors working for, say like owners of something. I think the other side is where it works more for them. That's why I wouldn't go there because I think it's more mainly for white people. Because if you see, there's a real estate up all the way after Greenpoint

Avenue, say like Noble Street near the church and all the way up. You keep on going you see the other ones and I wouldn't dare to go in there and ask for an apartment when I really know that it's not gonna go for me. And probably the apartment's in the white area, and if the person there in the real estate would give it to me, say, "OK you go to this address," probably the owner's not going to give it to me. So that's why I wouldn't go.

These Hispanic respondents are aware of their position in Greenpoint. They will not use realtors because they see them as representing white interests and, therefore, do not serve Hispanics. It is also suggested that even if the realtor services them, the owner would not rent to an Hispanic. Moreover, the last response indicates that local realtors do not operate in northern Greenpoint. In fact, at the time of this interview, there were not any realty businesses located in northern Greenpoint. The first realtor encountered was on Manhattan Avenue off the northern side of Greenpoint Avenue.

According to respondents, Hispanics in northern Greenpoint use informal network in their apartment search and avoid local realtors because they believe it is the only way for them to obtain housing. Moreover, the use of an informal housing network is a way for Hispanic residents to maintain their place in northern Greenpoint. This becomes necessary given their position in the

neighborhood. Some respondents described the relationship between Hispanics and white ethnics.

There is discrimination, you can see it when you go to the store and between other people. Say when you go shopping there's white and Spanish and everything, and you see how some people just move away from you. You know the supermarket here there's a C-Town, so I used to go there and shop, and I used to see old women and they just don't want to get involved with Puerto Ricans. And some white people they don't say Hispanics, and they don't see the difference between the Hispanic themselves, they just say, "ah this is another Puerto Rican."

When the police come here, for say like Hispanic trouble, they know that it's from the Hispanic community, they come more like aggressive against the Hispanic people than when they come for white person. They don't act the same way.

These respondents claim that Hispanics are treated as an inferior class in Greenpoint. One respondent summed up the relationship between Hispanics and white ethnics by saying "the white community doesn't want to change they want to keep it all themselves."

NEIGHBORHOOD SEGREGATION

Greenpoint Avenue was described by residents as the

dividing line in the neighborhood. As previously discussed, some residents say that this division may actually be a few blocks further north. However, Greenpoint Avenue is cited as the neighborhood's symbolic boundary because it is a major thoroughfare. Residents in northern Greenpoint, both white ethnic and Hispanic say that the neighborhood is segregated into northern and southern areas, and this segregation is based on ethnicity.

From Greenpoint Avenue down to Box Street you'll find that there's more well, to me [in] this territory [I] find more Puerto Ricans than on that side. But you find more Puerto Ricans mingling with white people. And up there you won't find anything [you'll] only find one type. This side is more integrated than that side I think, then again this side has more apartment buildings.

Here we go. They're really Archie Bunkers on the other end. They just won't let um cross. Because like I said to you again there is no big apartments except, they have one on Noble Street.

It's a division because you look, take a day say like Saturday. Everybody's shopping. You go to Greenpoint Avenue and look down to this end [north], you'll see like different shades of people say Hispanic, and you'll see a little bit of white and Polish people. But if you go all the way up [south] say like to Nassau Avenue, look at the people that are walking around, they're all white...Because the people over here [north] like Polish, they have their houses and everything, they rent their houses to any

persons say. But if you go all the way up the Polish people is less I think. If there is they're very discriminating and they won't let [you] in their house. They won't rent apartments for Hispanics. And that's why you see the area very big, you don't see Hispanic in the area. They will go only for shopping and come back to this end.

Respondents describe northern Greenpoint as the area which is made up of different ethnicities. It is also comprised of more Hispanics than the south. It is for this reason that residents discuss a division in the neighborhood. These responses also accuse residents in southern Greenpoint of maintaining segregation by not renting to Hispanics. In addition, residents suggested that there is a relationship between the presence of Hispanics in northern Greenpoint and the existence of larger housing structures. They imply that this type of housing is difficult to control, and that as newcomers, Hispanics initially reside in this kind of housing.

Another resident from the north proposed that

The Puerto Ricans don't get in there. [There's] a higher class [of] people there than here. They pay more rent. There it's a better section put it that way. It's considered a better section, it always was.

This response suggests that Greenpoint is not only segregated according to ethnicity, but also according to social class. The south is considered the superior area because it is made up of individuals from a higher social class. As previously discussed, those who live in southern Greenpoint tend to have higher incomes. Southern Greenpoint is also viewed as the more attractive part by residents of both areas. Moreover, this response shows stereotyping at work. There is an assumption that residents in the south pay more rent than those in the north. However, census data indicate the reverse to be the case. Average median rent in 1980 was somewhat higher in the north than in the south.

SEGREGATION IN NORTHERN GREENPOINT

Northern Greenpoint has been described as the area that is more heterogeneous as compared to southern Greenpoint. It is comprised of "different shades of people" integrated together. This appears to be a valid portrayal, based on surface observations. Closer examination, however, shows that segregation exists in

northern Greenpoint between white ethnic and Hispanic residents. This research found that residents are separated in housing, recreation, religious services, and church activities.

HOUSING

White non-Hispanic resident homeowners appear to be defending by maintaining white, non-Hispanic homes. In other words, as previously stated, they rent apartments through an informal network to other whites.

In some places like Kent Street, and some other place like [Huron Street], there's houses that only [have] white people. It's all white and they won't rent to Spanish. Those are private houses that they won't rent their apartments for anybody Spanish.

Although northern Greenpoint appears integrated, with whites and Hispanics living side by side, residents indicate that this is not the case. They suggest that there are houses which are occupied exclusively by whites. This respondent says that they are "private houses," meaning that they are owner occupied and have a few units.

Segregated housing seems to exist where one finds "white houses" and "Hispanic houses."

RECREATION

A variety of recreational activities exist in northern Greenpoint. These include: taverns, local organizations, and street gatherings such as block parties. Residents indicate that these activities are also segregated.

Turf, in terms of local establishments, seems to be clearly defined. Residents report that there is a "sense" of one's territory. Local taverns⁵ illustrate this "sense." Residents are privy to which taverns welcome and are frequented by people of their ethnicity.⁶

On this side there's only one Puerto Rican bar that I would say. And it's probably on Dupont and Manhattan Avenue. Any other bar from Box to Greenpoint Avenue is probably a white bar.

With reference to a particular tavern in northern Greenpoint, it was reported,

There they hardly go, Spanish people. There's another one on India that don't go Hispanics.

Not anyone would just walk in there, you'd have to know somebody.

These statements illustrate that taverns are segregated by ethnicity. Moreover, they exemplify how turf is defined in terms of taverns.

Local voluntary organizations are also segregated. There are organizations which are made up largely of white residents, such as the block association and civilian patrol discussed earlier. One resident discussed the separation of whites and Hispanics by describing the positions of each group regarding block association membership.

Big issue [in the] block association. They want to get more Puerto Rican people to come to join the association. But they don't want to be part of the block association. Why, because they think it's run by whites, you understand. But the white people want them to come there. Not all the white people, the executive board. They don't go to the meetings so then these other people think that they don't want to be bothered. What else could they think, they don't come.

This characterization point to a way that segregation is maintained. It shows that integration is not encouraged because "not all the white people" want Hispanics to join the block association. Hispanics are, therefore, acting appropriately by not getting involved with it and white, non-Hispanic residents.

Similarly, there are local organizations which are comprised of Hispanic residents. In fact, during the course of an interview, I learned about a new Hispanic organization that was formed in northern Greenpoint, called Hipanos Unidos de Greenpoint (United Hispanics of Greenpoint). In their first newsletter, it was stated that the purpose of the organization was to

Stand up for the Hispanics and their needs. 90% of other organizations in this area are controlled and under the direction of other ethnic groups. [They] do not provide any type of service to the Hispanic community.

Street gatherings were cited as another example of segregation in northern Greenpoint. One resident described a block party that she attended.

Right there on that street you can see the big difference because he had a block party. You see the difference because the Hispanics stay on one side and they have their party. All the Spanish there they get all together and they make food for everybody. Everybody eating for free, sodas, and the kids having a good time. The only people that they get along with is the little kids. So you see the Hispanics the grown ups separate and the white have their own little party in the same block. Because I remember this last here summer I brought my son over there to the block party and the Spanish had their food, they had pig. And the other side I was looking and there were the other white people in the bottom of their houses. They were cooking for themselves and they had a big table. I'm not criticizing, I can see the difference and I'm aware of everything.

Although the block is integrated, whites and Hispanics did no interact at this gathering. This response suggests that segregation is an accepted part of everyday life in Greenpoint.

The examination of particular recreational activities in northern Greenpoint shows that segregation exists. Although whites and Hispanics live together on the same streets, they do not mingle with one another.

THE CHURCH

There are a number of Roman Catholic churches in

Greenpoint. As previously mentioned, there is a difference between a national church and a diocesan church. National churches were established for the purpose of serving a particular ethnic group. On the other hand, a diocesan church has geographic boundaries, and serves individuals within those boundaries.

In northern Greenpoint there are two Catholic churches both of which were national churches. One was Polish, and the other German. The Polish church, Sts. Cyril and Methodius is located in the heart of the Hispanic community. This church holds masses and other services in Polish and English. It does not accommodate the Spanish speaking community.⁸

The other national church, St. Alphonsus, is located on the boundary which divides Greenpoint's north and south. Since the German population in Greenpoint has diminished, the church's congregation also decreased. This church was purchased by the Diocese of Brooklyn a few years ago and merged with Greenpoint's diocesan church, St. Anthony of Padua. St. Anthony's is located one block south of Greenpoint Avenue, the symbolic boundary. The parish is presently called St. Anthony - St. Alphonsus, and consists of two church buildings which are approximately two blocks apart. St. Anthony's church

building is a large elaborate, ornate, cathedral type. Its main entrance is on Manhattan Avenue, Greenpoint's main shopping strip. Shoppers are informed of the time of day by the tolling of church bells from St. Anthony's church. St. Alphonsus church is located on a side street, Kent Street. It is much smaller and less elaborate than St. Anthony's church.

St. Anthony - St. Alphonsus parish serves the Spanish speaking community. It offers masses in English and Spanish. This is understandable since the Hispanic community is within parish boundaries and is not serviced by any other church. However it appears that the parish segregates Spanish speaking and English speaking congregations by the church building to which each group is assigned for masses. According to the parish's bulletin, two weekly masses are held in St. Alphonsus church, one on Saturday evenings in English, and one on Sunday mornings in Spanish. The remaining six weekly masses are held in St. Anthony's church in English. Hispanics are physically separated from other ethnic groups, not only by a different mass, but also because Spanish masses take place in a separate building. It was reported, however, that the Hispanic congregation was happy to have their "own" church.

In addition, it appears that parish activities are also segregated.

Whenever it is social, for example, they don't allow it. [The parish] is going to have a dance for St. Valentine's Day but we are all going to be Spanish there, not one English speaker is going to go. They don't cross lines. I am trying to do something in that respect. Not only to bring the Hispanics into the English community, but I want to do the opposite too, take the English speakers and invite them over to our activities. Otherwise you're going to continue on and on with this problem of segregation because it's real. You have two parishes in one and I don't like that. I would like for all the people to be one.

This respondent was not pleased with parish social events. Yet, by his displeasure, the distinctions made among ethnic groups in church activities were brought to light. It was also noted that parish committees are dominated by white ethnics, mostly Irish parishoners.

It is therefore apparent that through these practices, and the presence of national churches in Greenpoint that local churches participate in neighborhood defense. National churches serve a particular ethnic group. In northern Greenpoint, Sts. Cyril and Methodius is a Polish church. It does not cater to the Hispanic

population, which lives close by. The local diocesan church has segregated the Hispanic congregation from church services and activities. It seems that clergy are responding to pressure exerted by their parishoners.

This chapter focused on the strategies of defense that operate in northern Greenpoint. It began with a geographic and demographic description of northern Greenpoint. This was followed by a discussion of the strategies of defense employed by white ethnics in the north. It was found that these practices were somewhat similar to those existing in the south. The ways of Hispanic residents were also examined. This included a portrayal of how Hispanics obtain housing, and the relationships between them and their non-Hispanic neighbors. Finally, the existence of neighborhood segregation was discussed. Segregation between northern and southern Greenpoint, as well as within the northern area was described. Within northern Greenpoint, housing, recreation, religious services and church activities were investigated. Segregation seems to exist in all of these areas.

NOTES

¹These data are approximations since tract boundaries are not the same as those given by residents.

²The white and black counts do not include Hispanic persons. Hispanics were counted as a separate category.

³Susser (1982) noted in her study that her landlord told her to put curtains on her windows because Hispanics were asking if the apartment was vacant.

⁴There are accounts where these immigrants have been seen numerous times intoxicated, staggering around the neighborhood. This behavior is frowned upon by most residents of Greenpoint.

⁵See Kornblum (1974) and Molotch (1972) for a discussion on local taverns.

⁶Molotch (1972) discusses segregation in taverns.

⁷This quotation is a translation. The newsletter was written in Spanish.

⁸See Molotch (1972) for discussion on the exclusionary practices of churches.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS

In this concluding chapter, we focus on why Greenpoint's white ethnic residents employ defensive strategies. Four explanations, from the perspective of residents, are discussed: the prevention of crime, physical deterioration, the increasing threat of minority growth, and the limited options of Greenpoint residents. This chapter also examines such factors as minority growth, an increase in Polish immigrants, and gentrification in discussing Greenpoint's future. Finally, the implications of this study for theory is presented.

WHY THEY DEFEND

There are a number of reasons which white ethnic Greenpoint residents cite for defending their neighborhood. Crime is one of them. These residents associate crime with minority individuals.

Look back on statistics. They can prove a lot of things, you know. Good people like good people. It's not if you're white or black, but if you look at statistics, black and Hispanic people bring in a lot of crime. And so what else can you do. You're scared, just scared. But I really don't want to characterize somebody like that. I, that's just how I feel. I wish I didn't have to feel like that, but I have no choice. Because when I look in the paper, you know, and I think most crimes are committed by those people. And statistics show it. I think that's what I read. I can't remember now, but that's how I feel. Anyway I'm more comfortable, I'm more

comfortable with my own people. Say if there is a good black family moved in and with statistics, somehow somewhere somebody else might come in and just might ruin it. I mean I'm not the only one who says this. You see it, where the Polish or the whites live, and you see how the other section lives. I'm sorry to say that, really I really don't like saying that, but it's the truth.

I think most of our crime can be traced back to the influx of Puerto Ricans. I think most of the bombed out areas, I mean I walk up past Grand Street on Union Avenue and I see these, what were gorgeous buildings at one time were taken over by Puerto Ricans and now they're not there. I mean they're so completely bombed out, who'd live in them. I think they're just destructive people.

These statements suggest that a notion of "perceived security" operates among Greenpoint's white ethnic residents.¹ Because residents associate crime with minorities, residents in southern Greenpoint believe that they are secure because most minorities live in the north. In addition, they come in contact with few minorities during their daily activities within the neighborhood. For example, it is striking that when the G train stops in Greenpoint (the first stop in Brooklyn from Queens) on its way to Brooklyn and white passengers are discharged, the remaining passengers are mostly black and Hispanic. This is an example of perceived security. Greenpoint residents feel safe because they left minority individuals back on the train.

Other respondents cited the condition of other neighborhoods as a reason for their defense of Greenpoint.

People may be trying to keep the neighborhood white because of the conditions of neighborhoods that are no longer white.

They want to keep what they got. They're afraid of a black community because of the burned out buildings [where] they are.

There's a part that you can actually see where most of the Polish or Italian or Irish are and you see all the other ones. Others are, you can see the difference, of course, you can see just the way the houses are. How clean these are kept and how dirty the others are. I mean you could be poor but there's just, you don't have to have open windows, curtains flying out, dirty rooms, horrible, the music, the I don't like that.

As is evident in these responses, defense in Greenpoint is affected by poor conditions in other inner city neighborhoods (and probably in northern Greenpoint). Their interpretation of these conditions does not go beyond the race and/or ethnicity of those who inhabit these neighborhoods. These statements indicate that respondents do not consider the multitude of factors that

can help to explain such poor living conditions, such as poverty, disinvestment practices, slum lords, etc.

Another explanation for defending Greenpoint has to do with the increasing threat of minority growth.

Years ago you didn't have this different people coming in. It could be another Southside [of Williamsburg].

Although residents say that they have been defending for as long as they can remember, defense probably became a routine part of residents' activities only when the threat of minority growth increased and expanded into their area. As this response suggests, some years ago minority individuals were not a threat. Since their numbers have increased in New York City, Greenpoint residents resist change so that it does not become a minority neighborhood like Williamsburg.

Finally, residents in Greenpoint resist change because they have limited options. Economically, they do not have many choices. They are not affluent people who can pack up and move somewhere else. As one commented,

[There are those who] cry, "I have this Spanish person living next to me, what's gonna become of me,

what's gonna become of my property." It's the only thing they have.

This respondent was dramatizing the concern that his neighbors express about Hispanics living nearby. He interpreted their concern by realizing that "it's the only thing they have." For many residents, owning their home is all they have after years of hard work. Many homeowners are not any better off than their tenants (Susser, 1982). In addition, their options are limited because there are not many places left for them to move. The number of predominantly white, Catholic, blue collar neighborhoods in New York City has certainly diminished. Hence, the possibilities for Greenpoint residents are quite narrow, since the economically available neighborhoods are unacceptable on racial or ethnic bases. Residents therefore will remain in Greenpoint and defend what they have. For them, Greenpoint is not a "community of limited liability" (Janowitz, 1967). It provides residents with amenities which satisfy their needs. In essence, neighborhood defense can be viewed as a "culturally sanctioned rational response to struggles over scarce resources."² It is one way for whites in general, and Greenpoint's whites in particular, to cope with the

demands made by minorities.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY

The theoretical place of this study in the field originates in Burgess' notion of resistance (a stage in the invasion-succession model) and with Suttles' concept of a defended neighborhood. Findings in Greenpoint support Park and Burgess' idea of neighborhood. Greenpoint is a spatial community with residents who are invested in it. It however departs from Park, Burgess, and Suttles in that a defended neighborhood is not a "natural area." Residents of Greenpoint intentionally use the strategies discussed to resist minority growth. Hispanics, as the focus of defense, are aware that most long-time residents do not welcome them, and they are, therefore, not treated fairly. Indeed, Greenpoint's white, non-Hispanic residents use these tactics in a deliberate attempt to reach their goal: the maintenance of a predominantly white ethnic neighborhood, and management of segregation. Neighborhood defense in Greenpoint is accomplished by the "decisions of individual neighborhood residents" (Taub, Taylor, and Dunham, 1984), who as a group, attempt to regulate ethnic and racial change in

Greenpoint.

This study focuses on the informal practices of residents in Greenpoint. It is a "people's approach" (Fava, Abu-Lughod, and Gist, forthcoming). By focusing on informal practices, this study shows that one way in which the area is defended is by the control of information through a network. This network of information excludes those who are not part of the group. The network helps to create the sense of continuity and boundaries. For example, residents share the local shopping strip. Those interviewed claimed that it was difficult for them to shop quickly because they meet a number of friends and neighbors and stop to chat. Some may look forward to shopping because of its social features. Moreover, many residents of Greenpoint have continuity. Some have three generations of family in Greenpoint. Many neighbors were schoolmates and families sometimes intermarry. Greenpoint exemplifies the notion of "community saved" (Wellman, 1979). Communal ties persist. By focusing on informal practices and networks, this study deals theoretical issues which have not been addressed fully in the literature, nor in a unified way. These issues include:

1. housing, as the focus of neighborhood defense,

2. the role of the Church in Greenpoint,
3. the examination of women as a unit of analysis in the neighborhood.

Housing

Housing plays a critical role in neighborhood defense. Housing has not been examined in this way in other studies. As pointed out in Chapter 1, Suttles' discussion of the Addams area does not include housing. Perhaps this is because he studied the young men of the area for whom housing was probably not a very salient feature of their activities, given their gender and stage in the life cycle.

In their attempt to control who lives in Greenpoint, residents limit who resides in the neighborhood. The informal processes used by residents differ between northern and southern Greenpoint. Northern Greenpoint is defended on a building by building basis, while southern Greenpoint is defended on a block by block basis. A crucial difference is that Northern Greenpoint contains many absentee landlords.

This study also discovered that the absentee landlord is an important aspect to understand neighborhood change.

This study indicates that turnover from resident landlords to absentee landlords is an important factor in changing neighborhoods. In addition, this study demonstrates that larger housing structures are more difficult to control than smaller ones. When absentee landlords own larger structures, control over the building by neighborhood residents is typically lost. This is especially the case since absentee landlords tend not to be tied to a local network. They therefore are not responsive to the wishes of residents particularly about the "kind" of people to whom they rent.

Absentee landlords sometimes intrude on a neighborhood's way of life. They not only change neighborhoods whose residents do not want change, but also exploit those to whom they rent. They tend to charge rents higher than resident landlords and do not provide essential services. They also cheat the system. They charge welfare recipients the highest rent allowable, do not maintain the building and let it deteriorate. Yet the building serves as a tax shelter for the absentee landlord. When the building becomes a problem, the landlord abandons it by no longer paying taxes. There have also been cases where absentee landlords have profited through arson.

Susser's study of Greenpoint-Williamsburg does include a discussion on landlord-tenant relations. However, this study of informal housing networks in Greenpoint begins where her discussion ends. She discusses the differences between resident and absentee landlords in terms of the deterioration of buildings owned by absentee landlords. But she does not examine the dynamics of how segregation of Hispanics in buildings owned by absentee landlords occurs.

The Church

The study of the Church in the local community has not been part of the mainstream of sociological literature on community in the United States. For example, Suttles notes that the Roman Catholic Church is part of the territory belonging to Italians in the Addams area which enables them to exert greater control. He does not deal with Church involvement in neighborhood defense, and does not discuss the recreational activities offered by the Church to young locals. The studies by Gans, Susser, and Kornblum barely mention the existence of religious facilities. In contrast, Howell notes that part of his participant observation occurred at Sunday services

especially Southern Baptist and Pentecostal. We can infer from Howell's discussion that he had some familiarity with these churches. Whyte's study of Cornerville includes an extensive description of the "festa" and an analysis of this event as part of working class culture. This activity links religion with the local community in southern Italy. The "festa" celebrates the feast of the patron saint of a particular town in Italy. Including religious institutions as part of one's research is a sensitive and difficult task, but the results are quite rewarding.

The Church in Greenpoint is involved in defense because it is a forum for interaction among residents. Locals attend religious services, church socials, and sit on various committees. The Church serves a social function as well as a religious one. As discussed in Chapter 4, the national churches in Greenpoint do not service the Spanish community. The local diocesan church offers Spanish masses, but segregates Hispanic and non-Hispanic congregations at masses and church socials.

Women

Women play a major role in neighborhood defense.

Women are mostly responsible for information flowing through the informal housing network. It may be said that to a large extent, women have replaced real estate agents. This is clearly a major finding since women have been ignored in community studies. In Greenpoint, women are involved in a number of activities. Their role as real estate agents in Greenpoint can be viewed negatively since they discriminate against minorities and therefore violate Civil Rights Acts. From a power analysis, however, local women can be viewed quite favorably in that they are deciding who lives in Greenpoint.

Models of community need to be constructed which "build in" women to the ongoing actions of the local area. In his discussion of a defended neighborhood, Suttles includes women but refers only to mothers with small children. According to Suttles, these women have a great investment in the defended neighborhood because they are confined to it. They are therefore concerned about their personal safety and the safety of their children. However findings in Greenpoint go beyond Suttles' model. They suggest that women are quite active in various strategies of neighborhood defense. Women appear to be the "networkers" of available housing. They participate in informal surveillance activities, as block watchers, and

are found as civilian patrol members. In Greenpoint, women of all ages, not just mothers with small children, are active in defending the neighborhood.

THE MODEL OF THE DEFENDED NEIGHBORHOOD

Findings from this study suggest that the concept of a defended neighborhood should be expanded. Factors to consider when studying a defended neighborhood are: informal networks of housing allocation, the role of neighborhood women, local churches, recreational establishments, and local gatherings. In addition to these points, there are other major differences between this study and Suttles' model of defended neighborhood. Greenpoint does not have many of the characteristics of the defended neighborhood presented by Suttles. There are no street corner gangs, militant conservation groups, uniformed doormen, door buzzers, or TV monitors in Greenpoint. According to Suttles, it is through these measures that the defended neighborhood creates cohesive groups because of the joint action that these measures require. However, it seems that in Greenpoint cohesion must first exist and therefore be in place in order for

the strategies of defense uncovered to operate. For example, relationships must first exist among neighbors in order for an informal housing network to develop. Likewise, neighbors would not be able to ask one another to "keep an eye" on property, if a relationship had not already been established.

Suttles says that strategies of neighborhood defense are episodic. The activation of formal surveillance is episodic. It was reported that civilian patrols developed out of local concern over a number of burglaries that had occurred. The patrol was therefore a response to the issue of crime. However, once the crime rate had decreased, many patrols became inactive. However, Greenpoint's informal housing network and informal surveillance are strategies of defense which are constantly active. These strategies are in place and are part of the residents' daily routines and activities. The informal housing network and informal surveillance do not emerge as a response to a threatening event; these strategies are part of Greenpoint's everyday life.

Susser's study is especially important to consider because it includes Greenpoint as part of its study area. My study supports Susser's contention that working class people have been dislocated. They are faced with

gentrification, disinvestment practices, minority growth, and the flight of industry. Susser, however, takes a neo-Marxist perspective and she focuses on conflict between the working class population of Greenpoint-Williamsburg and: the welfare system, landlord-tenant relations, and the City of New York. This perspective leads her to present the people of Greenpoint-Williamsburg as exploited, powerless, and politically naive.³ However, Susser's own study indicates that the attempt to retain the Firehouse was successful; but she regards the organization and political effectiveness of the residents as the "exception rather than the rule." She cites another example of unsuccessful local organizations, block associations, which she regards as more typical of the residents' ineffectiveness. She does not include a roster of viable organizations, such as People's Firehouse which developed as a result of the collective action previously described, and long-standing block associations.

By focusing on the informal interaction of local residents in neighborhood defense of housing, my study of Greenpoint moves toward the construction of models of neighborhood defense which are more optimistic and more dynamic, and gives locals more control over their own lives.

THE FUTURE

Greenpoint's future is very difficult to predict. Moreover, this study does not deny the influence of larger forces, such as national and city-wide policy decisions on neighborhoods, as well as broad economic and demographic shifts. Until now, white residents have been able to maintain a predominantly white neighborhood. There has been a pool of white individuals who want to rent and buy in Greenpoint. However, as minority populations in New York City and Greenpoint increase, and as old time residents die, the possibility of maintaining a white neighborhood seems unlikely. As in South Shore (Molotch, 1972) in the long run the efforts of residents did not affect the neighborhood's future. South Shore did become a black community because blacks were attracted to the very same things that were used to attract whites (Taub, Taylor, and Dunham, 1984). The influx of Polish immigrants in Greenpoint must also be considered. It is possible for them to displace Hispanics in northern Greenpoint and continue employing defensive strategies in the northern and southern sections, especially since they

seem to be the neighborhood's major investors. These refugees, some of whom are here illegally, work a number of different jobs and live under substandard conditions in order to save money. Some buy houses with cash and others obtain mortgages from the Polish Slavic Federal Credit Union. One respondent remarked that these Poles are presently Greenpoint's power brokers because they have the capital.

Another possibility for Greenpoint's future is gentrification.⁴ There are a few streets in Greenpoint which are made up of brownstones and brick townhouses. Gentrification has taken place on one of these streets, and is illustrated by an asking price of \$200,000 for one of the brownstones. This is considered an outrageous price for Greenpoint. Moreover, the availability of this house was advertised in the New York Times. Greenpoint residents are not defending against gentrification. Like homeowners in Long Island City, Greenpoint homeowners would like the neighborhood to be gentrified. Their housing investments would pay off, the neighborhood would be up-graded, and Hispanics would be displaced. They do not realize that many other residents such as their tenants, neighbors, and possibly they themselves would be displaced. However, large scale gentrification seems

unlikely because most of Greenpoint's housing is not brownstone, but wood framed. Yet gentrification by renters is possible, especially since Greenpoint has been described as an area with "affordable rentals" (Hinds, 1984). And the impact that the redevelopment of Long Island City, which is just across the Creek, will have on Greenpoint remains to be seen. The Port Authority has proposed an investment of \$100 million for infrastructure work and an additional \$400 million from private investors to construct "offices, apartment buildings, stores, performing art spaces, and scientific research facilities."⁵

The impact that changes in the subway system will have on Greenpoint is unclear. The Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) wants to limit the number of trains and therefore individuals using the Queens Plaza station. One part of this plan is that the G train (which serves most of Greenpoint) will terminate at the Court Square station instead of Queens Plaza. A tunnel will be built connecting Court Square and 23rd Street-Ely Avenue stations. This walkway will allow passengers from the G train to connect with the E and F trains. This will be a new pattern of transportation for Greenpoint residents. They will lose access to the N train. Residents are

resisting this change. Like Susser's description of the action taken against the closing of a firehouse, locals are ready and willing to fight this decision. A public hearing was held with an MTA representative. The community voiced its concern about the possibility of muggings while walking through a tunnel to change trains, and its anger that the City is "cheating" the community of services. Their willingness to "fight City Hall" suggests that residents are not naive but are politically active.

Finally, there are fundamental value decisions underlying the future of Greenpoint. Thus, attempts to stabilize Greenpoint facilitate the actions of informal housing networks; they also limit the housing options of racial and ethnic minorities. For example, this study of Greenpoint supports the policy suggestion that government agencies, planners, and developers should keep the number of units in dwellings low and/or control housing ownership in order to maintain neighborhood stability. It was indicated that absentee landlords, especially of large buildings, permit rapid neighborhood change and the entry of new ethnic groups to the area. These new groups are sometimes exploited by absentee landlords, as in northern Greenpoint. New York City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) has recognized the

injury caused by absentee landlords, and has apparently planned on a city-wide basis to try to minimize absentee ownership. Thus, the City requires that parties interested in buying a city-owned building must commit themselves to living in the building for a specified period of time (sometimes for as long as ten years).

The basic question raised by this dissertation is the extent to which the interests of a variety of groups are balanced. Some neighborhoods, like Greenpoint, wish to maintain their local culture and therefore, attempt to exclude minorities. On the other hand, the formal policy of the city and national governments is one of equity and social justice. Neo-Marxists, however, argue that policy decisions are based on the interests of a small group of elites. Thus, the question raised is how will policy decisions juggle these competing values.

NOTES

¹Krase (1982) discusses the feeling of security among residents in Prospect-Lefferts Gardens.

²David T. Wellman, "Prejudiced People Are Not the Only Racists in America," in Ronald Berkman and Laura W. Kitch (eds.), People, Power, and Politics (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1984) p. 131

³In contrast to Susser's point, DiFasio notes in his study of longshoremen that he had to read the Daily News and the New York Times every morning before meeting with the men, so that he would be able to discuss political events with them.

⁴D. Chall, "Neighborhood Changes in New York City During the 1970's: Are the "Gentry" Returning," American Demographics, (October 1984): 19-45 Chall cites Greenpoint as having a significant amount of in-migration.

⁵Barry Jacobs, "A Gold Coast in Queens?," Village Voice, May 8, 1984, p. 17.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What do you call the neighborhood in which you live?
2. Looking at this map, what are the boundaries of _____?
3. How would you describe (Greenpoint) today?
4. How long have you lived here?
5. Do you think the neighborhood (your area) has changed?
6. If so, describe the change that has taken place?
7. What are the main things which brought about this change?
8. If not, how or in what way hasn't it changed?
9. Do you think Greenpoint will change or will continue to change?
- 9A. If so, how?
10. Would you like to see Greenpoint become a luxury neighborhood?
- 10A. If so, why, if not - why not?
11. Is Greenpoint all pretty much the same or are there any distinct sections in it? (Hunter) Name and locate these sections.
12. How would you describe the crime rate in Greenpoint?

13. Where are the high crime areas?
14. Has the crime rate always been this way?
- 14A. If so, why has it remained the same?
- 14B. If not, what do you think caused the change?
15. Are there any problems which concern people in Greenpoint?
- 15A. If so, what are they?
16. Do you feel attached to this neighborhood?
- 16A. If so, why?
- 16B. If not, why not?
- 16C. Did you feel differently at another time?
17. Would you like your children to live here?
- 17A. Why or why not?
18. Do any of your relatives live in Greenpoint?
- 18A. Is that important to you?
- 18B. If not, where do they live?
- 18C. Does that bother you?
19. Do you think you will move within the next 5 years?
20. Do you think you will ever move from this neighborhood?
- 20A. Why or why not?
- 20B. What keeps you here?
21. Would you recommend Greenpoint to other people as a place to live?

21A. Why or why not?

22. If you were to move, what kind of neighborhood would

you move to?

Ideal characteristics?

22A. Do you have any particular place in mind? Why?

23. Would you describe Greenpoint as an integrated neighborhood?

23A. If so why, if not why not?

24. Do you or your neighbors watch the block and each other's property?

24A. Is there anyone in particular on this block who does

this? (men, women - age -)

24B. What kinds of things do you watch for?

24C. What do you do if something like this happens?

25. Have you ever heard of the Civilian Observation Patrol

(COP)?

25A. Is this block part of a COP?

25B. If not, what do you think about COP'S?

25C. Why is a COP necessary?

25D. If so which neighbors are members? (men/women).

25E. What kinds of things has your patrol encountered?

25F. Is the COP successful?

25G. Would things be different without it?

26. Is there a block association here?

26A. What blocks comprise the association?

26B. Do you belong to it?

26C. Are you an active member?

26D. Are most active members men or women?

26E. What are some of the issues discussed at block
association

meetings?

27. Do you belong to any other neighborhood groups?
(church, community organizations, politics)

27A. If so, which ones?

27B. Are the active members of these groups men or
women?

Who are officers?

27C. What do you do with these groups?

27D. How often do you meet?

27E. Are there any specific membership requirements?

27F. Must one be a specific ethnicity (nationality or
race)?

27G. How does one become a member?

27H. Could an Hispanic or black resident become a
member?

28. Do you consider yourself a member of any informal
groups (neighbors gathering, mother's group,
people you
meet with regularly).

28A. Are members of these groups mostly men, women or both?

28B. What do you do with these groups?

28C. How often do you gather?

28D. Any specific membership requirements?

28E. Any ethnic or race requirements?

28F. How does one become a member?

28G. Could an Hispanic or black resident become a member?

29. How would you describe the way white residents of different nationalities get along?

29A. Do you know of any conflicts that occurred because of

differences between nationalities?

29B. Can you give me some concrete examples?

30. How would you describe the way that white residents get

along with Spanish or black residents?

30A. Where do Spanish live?

30B. Do you know of any conflicts that occurred between

these groups?

30C. Can you give me some concrete examples?

31. If you had an apartment to rent, would you register

with a realtor? Who in your household would be

responsible for finding a tenant?

31A. If so, would you give the realtor specific requirements

for a tenant?

31B. What requirements specifically?

31C. How do realtors respond to these requests?

32. Would you advertise in the local newspaper?

33. If you did not register with a realtor or advertise in

the local newspaper, how would you find a tenant?

33A. Do residents talk to each other about vacant apartments

or houses for sale? - mostly men or women?

33B. Do they refer people?

33C. Would you give your neighbors requirements for a tenant?

33D. What kinds of people do they prefer?

34. How does someone find an apartment here?

35. For renters: How did you find this apartment?

35A. In looking for an apartment, what kinds of things did

owners ask you?

36. How does someone find a house to buy here?

36A. For homeowners: How did you find this house?

37. If you were looking to buy a house in this neighborhood, how would you go about it?

38. Do your neighbors pressure each other about who they

rent or sell to?

39. Do you rent this house (apt.)?

39A. Do you own any property in Greenpoint?

39B. If not, who owns this house?

39C. Does the owner live here?

40. Some of the people that I have spoken to have said that

they are trying to keep the neighborhood white.

Do you

think they are trying to keep it white.

40A. Why are residents trying to keep the neighborhood white?

41. Can you tell me of any ways in which people are trying

to keep the neighborhood white?

42. Do you think that men and women do different things

regarding this?

42A. How do neighborhood women try to keep the neighborhood

white?

42B. What about neighborhood men?

43. How long have residents been doing this?

43A. Have they been successful in keeping the

neighborhood

white?

44. Do you think the non-white population in Greenpoint is

increasing or decreasing?

44A. If increasing, how are they getting in if white residents are trying to keep them out?

44B. If decreasing, why?

45. Do you think there are advantages to a neighborhood

being composed of one nationality?

45A. If so, what are they?

45B. If not, why not?

45C. Are there any disadvantages?

45D. If so, what are they?

45E. If not, why not?

46. I have been told that about 45 years ago, a public

housing project was planned for Greenpoint? Do you

know anything about it?

47. About two years ago there was some talk that the 94th

precinct was going to be closed. Do you remember hearing about this? How did you feel about it?

47A. It is now being said that the precinct will be

temporarily moved to Herbert Street so that the Meserole Ave precinct house can be renovated. How

do

you feel about this? Why is it important to

leave the

precinct on Meserole Ave.?

48. A few years ago, residents wanted the Methadone Clinic

relocated. How did you feel about it? How would you

feel if it was moved to an area nearby?

49. How do you feel about the closing of Greenpoint Hospital? Why? Did you ever use this hospital?

Why

is it important to keep it where it is? Are you concerned about what will be done with the

hospital/property? Have you heard of any plans

for

this property?

50. School Board elections were held during May. Do

you

vote in these elections? Do you know anything

about

them? Was there anything about these elections

that

caught your attention? What about campaign ads

in the

Gazette?

51. During general elections I often see posters on
Manhattan Ave. of black or Hispanic candidates
from
other neighborhoods. Why are they there? Do
they
influence the way in which Greenpoint residents
vote?

How? What about campaign ads in the Gazette?

52. Are there problems with youths in Greenpoint?
A. If so why?
B. If not, why not?
53. Any youth gangs?
A. What do they do?
54. Any conflicts among youths?
A. Different white nationalities?
B. White vs. non-white?
55. How much rent do you pay?

nationality?

Is the congregation mostly white? Does the church serve Spanish residents? How or how not?

Are any parish residents members of church groups? Do their children attend church schools?

How do you identify yourself regarding your nationality?

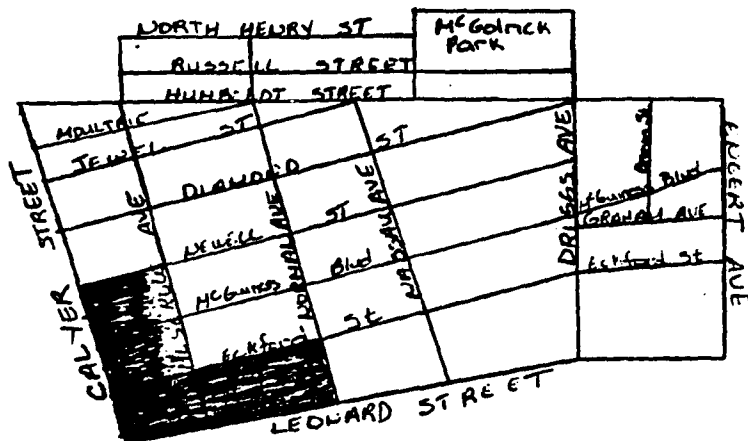
What does being_____mean to you

How do you maintain your nationality (customs, food, clubs, events)

Is that important to you?

APPENDIX B
MAPS USED TO RECRUIT RESPONDENTS

Judy DeSena
98 Herbert St.
Brooklyn, New York 11222

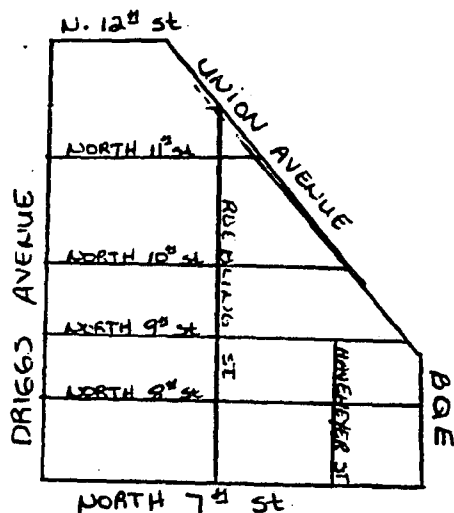


Please attempt to identify individuals of Polish descent who live within the boundaries described above. Ask these individuals if they are willing to be interviewed by me (preferably within the next week). I am interested in learning what people think about their neighborhood.

Once you have identified interested individuals, please call me at 388-7970 with their names and phone numbers. I will then call them for an appointment.

Thanks so much for your help!

Judy De.Sena
98 Herbert St.
Brooklyn, New York 11222



Please attempt to identify individuals of Italian descent who live within the boundaries described above. Ask these individuals if they are willing to be interviewed by me (preferably within the next week). I am interested in learning what people think about their neighborhood.

Once you have identified interested individuals, please call me at 388-7970 with their names + phone numbers. I will then call them for an appointment.

Thanks so much for your help!

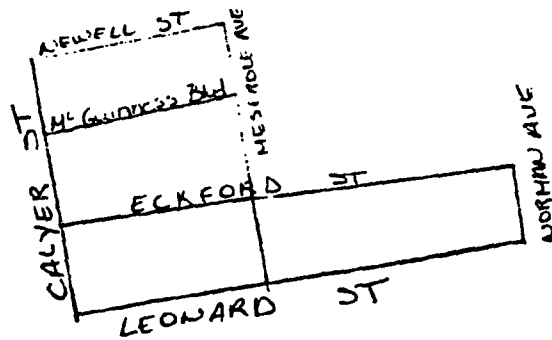
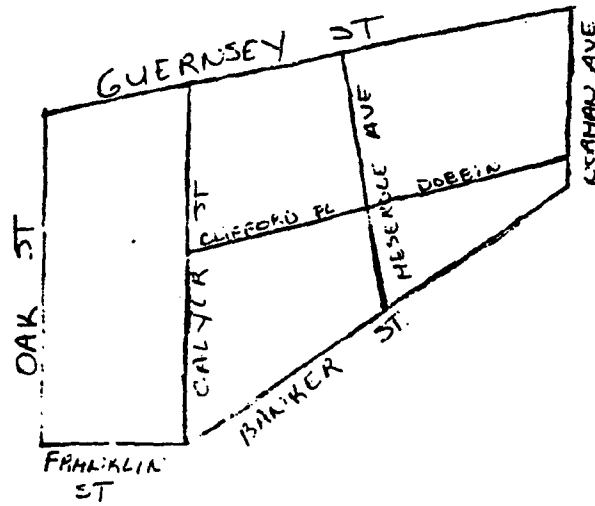
Judy DeSena
98 Herbert St
Brooklyn, New York 11222



Please attempt to identify individuals of Italian descent who live within the boundaries described above. Ask these individuals if they are willing to be interviewed by me (preferably within the next week). I am interested in learning what people think about their neighborhood.

Once you have identified interested individuals, please call me at 398-7970 with their names and phone numbers. I will then call them for an appointment.

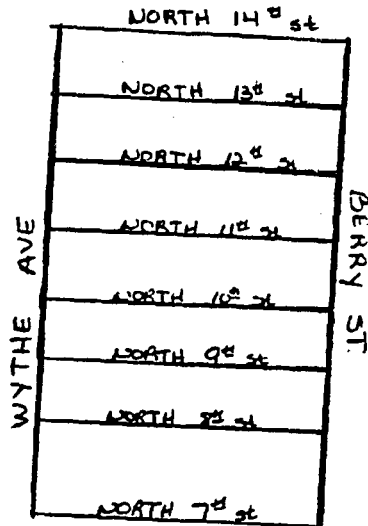
Thanks so much for your help!



Please attempt to identify individuals of Irish descent who live within the areas described above. I am interested in interviewing these persons in order to learn what people think about their neighborhood.

I would appreciate your asking your friends, relatives, & neighbors who live within these areas if they would be willing to be interviewed by me. All interviews are confidential and respondents will remain anonymous.

Judy DeSena
98 Herbert St
Brooklyn, New York 11222

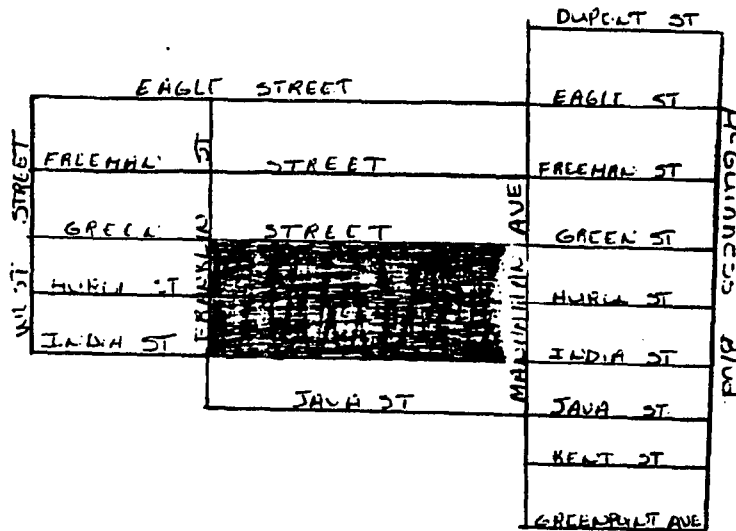


Please attempt to identify individuals of Polish descent who live within the boundaries described above. Ask these individuals if they are willing to be interviewed by me (preferably within the next week). I am interested in learning what people think about their neighborhood.

Once you have identified interested individuals, please call me at 388-7970 with their names and phone numbers. I will then call them for an appointment.

Thanks so much for your help!

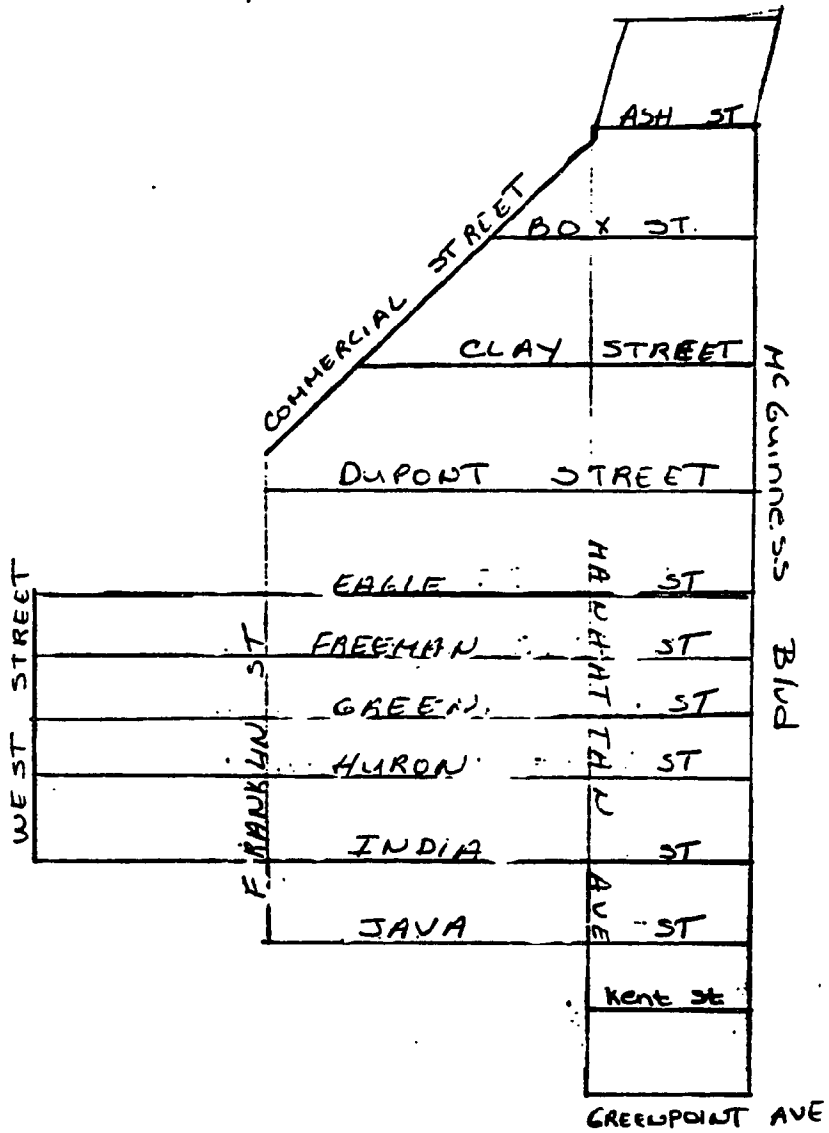
Judy DeSena
98 Herbert St
Brooklyn, New York 11222



Please attempt to identify individuals of Polish descent who live within the boundaries described above. Ask these individuals if they are willing to be interviewed by me (preferably within the next week). I am interested in learning what people think about their neighborhood.

Once you have identified interested individuals, please call me at 388-7970 with their names and phone numbers. I will then call them for an appointment.

Thanks so much for your help!



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