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City University of New York

PH.D. 1986

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Urban Displacement In Central Harlem:
The Consequences For Community

by

Nicholas J. Nelson

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

1986

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Nicholas J. Nelson

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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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4/25/86
date

William Korbey
Executive Officer

William Korbey
Evel Suckert
Frank Baele
Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

Abstract

URBAN DISPLACEMENT IN CENTRAL HARLEM;
THE CONSEQUENCES FOR COMMUNITY

by
Nicholas J. Nelson

Adviser: Professor William Kornblum

The subject of urban displacement has, in recent years become the stimulus for much discussion among scholars, policy makers and concerned citizens generally. Although there have been a number of good articles and books that have focused on certain aspects of the phenomenon, few studies have dealt with some of the deeper sociological consequences of urban displacement for neighborhood communities.

The effects that both urban displacement and the related issue of urban revitalization have had on individuals and groups in the local community setting are a major concern of the study. The fact that the community under study is Central Harlem adds a special interest because Harlem has often been thought of as a premier black community by many people around the world. The developing socio-economic turmoil of the 1960's and 1970's laid waste many of the neighborhoods

of Central Harlem, displacing much of Harlems population.

This study traces the historical development of the process of urban displacement in Harlem, as it shows the effects of the mechanisms of displacement on the discrete households that remained in the Harlem neighborhoods. The process of "gentrification" is also considered in terms of its potential for change in Harlem.

The question of class differences is raised in the context of the displacement and gentrification issues. The point that is pondered in this regard is whether middle class, working class or underclass groups will benefit from what some feel will be the inevitable revitalization of Central Harlem.

The critical issue of community organization is discussed as a most common strategy used by local neighborhood groups in attempting to deal with the serious social and economic consequences of urban displacement. A number of tenant and block associations are surveyed to assess the degree of success these groups have had in their efforts to mobilize, obtain knowledge, and move toward coalition building with other organizations and politicians.

Relations between the government helping agency, community groups, and political representatives in the local community are considered. The implications that these relations may carry for generating local

community empowerment with realistic expectations for community as well as public and business interests in Harlem is a central issue.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the members of my dissertation committee for their help and wise counsel. Professors Frank Bonilla, Erol Ricketts and William Kornblum were generally there when the problems arose and always moved to put things into their proper perspective.

Thanks too must go to Professor Susan Seagert of the Environmental Psychology Department of the CUNY Graduate School for her support, and for showing me the virtues of the electronic tape recorder for field research interviews.

Finally, my thanks and love go to my mother, Mrs. Mary Nelson, whose moral support and prayers for me were an important source of strength during the difficult time. !Que Viva Madre!

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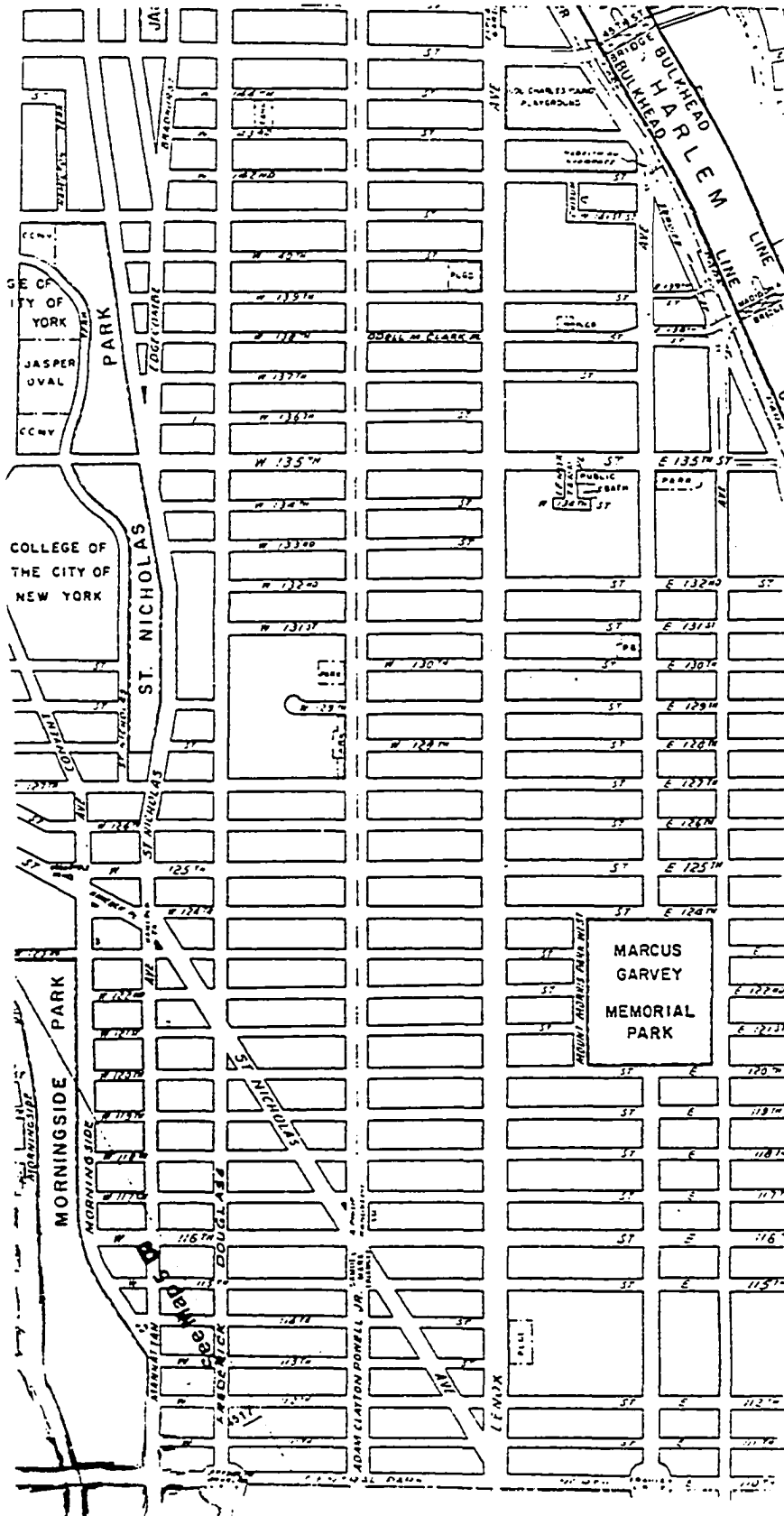
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...So we stand here
On the edge of hell
In Harlem
And look out on the world
And wonder
What we're gonna do
In the face of what
We remember.

from the poem "Harlem"
by Langston Hughes

Central Harlem



Chapter I
The Purpose of This Study

For the residents of the area of New York City called Central Harlem the period of twenty years that preceeded the 1980's were years of great change. Social, economic and political forces that affected the nation as a whole wrought profound changes in this historic section of the city. If nothing else may be certain for Harlem in the coming years, dramatic and continuing change seem to be the inevitables.

The primary purpose of this study is the discussion of the phenomenon of urban displacement in Central Harlem. Starting with an exploration of the social, economic and political forces of change that form the historical backdrop to urban displacement, the study will then analyze the processes of this phenomenon in Central Harlem, showing the consequences for the individuals and groups of people who are the life blood of this black community.

The study, then, really seeks to explain the phenomenon of displacement in the context of its consequences for community: the social, political economic and political costs to the tenants and home owners who attempt to remain in the community. The study is concerned with the effect on the very sense of community in the thinking of Harlem residents as the physical and sociological changes caused by urban

displacement impact on their neighborhoods.

This perspective grows, in part, out of the philosophical concerns voiced by Robert Nisbet, Emile Durkheim and others about the deterioration of the social and psychological support systems that are provided to the individual by the community.¹ But it is a perspective which leans most heavily on a number of sociological theories of power and community development in discussing the special case of Central Harlem.²

What is urban displacement? Can one talk about a theory of urban displacement, and if so, how can such a theory be applied to Central Harlem?

These are crucial theoretical questions since urban displacement does not assume the same form in every city, town, or community in which its development may be observed. In certain communities the operation of one mechanism of displacement may be more strongly in evidence than in another. In Denver, Colorado, where 110,805 units of the 219,012 total housing units were single family owned in 1979,³ Denver's elderly home owners were said to be "...very susceptible to various pressures to sell their homes, only to find that remaining housing options are very limited."⁴

In the Central Harlem section of New York City more than 90 percent of the residential housing units are of the multifamily variety. In such a housing mix residents face some what different obstacles in the

struggle to remain where they are. These obstacles are understood here to include the decline or absence of basic services in the building, forms of harassment or neglect of building security. But in most cases the decisive obstacle becomes the feeling of powerlessness to counter the inevitable as both building and neighborhood services decline, stores close, homes are abandoned, and drug related crime increases.

A theory of urban displacement must be understood in its relationship to the present day phenomenon of "gentrification." A perspective that has been advanced by Peter Salins, Chairman of the Urban Affairs Department at Hunter College, makes the following points:

(1) Gentrification can occur only in areas that are "immediately adjacent to already fashionable" areas.⁵

The theoretical perspective on urban displacement that is employed in this study cannot totally accept this point since, as will be shown for the case of both South and North Central Harlem, the initiatives of some outside interests have already changed the composition of the managers of certain housing complexes in Harlem. Geographic proximity, then, becomes an important factor, but a secondary one to that of rational machination by various interests.

And, in many areas of Harlem, whether bordered by fashionable areas or not, the growing belief by some that outside interests are at play in the removal of black Harlemites has made the reaction to the call that "gentrification is coming" one of wariness and uncertainty for many, at a time when others see the real possibility of a new Harlem renaissance.

(2) Salins adds that in the areas of potential gentrification there are to be found "clusters of architecturally or historically interesting housing."

This point is accepted since the most cursory look at the housing stock in Central Harlem will show that there are many clusters of architecturally or historically, and therefore potentially profit generating, interesting buildings.

(3) He continues by stating that this type of quality housing stock is generally not to be found outside of "high-status" neighborhoods.

Naturally, the existence of clusters of "quality" housing in Central Harlem leads us to reject this third one. The debate over the disposition of City held "brownstone" buildings in Harlem, which occurred during much of 1981, was about such valuable housing stock.⁶

(4) Would-be gentrifiers who "buy the hype" of real

estate interests are quickly disappointed by the condition of the communities and the housing stock that is being pushed.

In responding to point (4); gentrifiers who follow real estate sales pitches may indeed become disillusioned by the conditions of their places of residence. The sense of disillusionment is illustrated in the case of one young black middle income woman who was interviewed after returning to live in Central Harlem following graduation from a prestigious University and employment with a major corporation in midtown Manhattan. For this study the issue of the "hard sell" side of the housing market is of only partial importance; of more pressing interest will be the overt or clandestine attempts of business and government interests to remove poor or minority people from their neighborhoods.

(5) Salins insists that only in those areas where the minority population appears to be significantly receding does the "gentry" attempt to venture in.

The perspective on urban displacement that is advanced in this study accepts point (5) as a given: gentrification requires a sufficiently large displacement of the undesirable class out of the area in order for property speculators to begin the advertising campaign to the gentry. But in Harlem there is presently little geographic separation

between the classes, unlike many white communities. In this regard the phenomenon of a small, but rapidly growing, black middle class in Central Harlem will be a subject for close concern in this study. Their attitudes toward the working poor and underclass groups are considered here as important to an understanding of present and future class relations within this African-American community.

After giving consideration to the definition and theoretical questions of urban displacement in the discussion of its consequences for community, the study then assesses the role community organizations play in countering the pervasive mechanisms of displacement in Harlem. It will be argued here that, even though community organization can be a problematic undertaking for organized groups and individuals (quasi-groups).⁷ it can prove an effective means of channeling the individuals desire to "do something" and his sense of community with his neighbor in the direction of taking practical action in the effort to avoid displacement.

When building tenants form tenant associations, when small home owners form block associations; these quasi-groups have moved to build on the natural solidarity of identification and sentiment for the community of which they are members.

Each individual's reasons for involvement in formal

organization will, to a lesser or greater degree, be motivated by the self serving needs and desires of that man or woman. Personal self interest can be destructive or constructive for community organization. It is an important element in the process that moves quasi-groups based on personal community feeling into organized interest groups.

Formal community organization at the tenant and small home owner level can counter the displacement mechanism in two basic ways: through knowledge and mobilization.

The meaning of the word "knowledge" is understood here to include not simply the possession of information but the abilities and skills needed to use information. Knowledge can then also be seen as an understanding gained by actual experience;⁸ wherein the individual or group has acquired some practical skill. The internal mobilization of the organizations membership around the issues that confront it can create the necessity for seeking out information sources and the acquisition of knowledge.

With the acquired knowledge practical strategies can be made which ideally operate in facilitating group sophistication, coordination, confidence, and in the de-mystification of the elements of the problem. The de-mystification of government "helping" agencies also can follow as the organization learns to engage these arms of legitimate authority and manipulate

them.

Successful community organization can also give support and stimulus to the sense of community feeling in the thinking of the residents generally. So that the rewards to the group that experiences success with a rationally planned initiative, for rational ends, can also yield the non-rational end of a feeling of personal connectedness, on the part of individuals, to the community and its future.

Background Of Theory and Research

For the proposed study of urban displacement in Central Harlem I have chosen to use the term "mechanism" in describing how displacement can occur because of its power to express two observable qualities of displacement:

Mechanical Quality

1. A mechanism is said to be a "mechanical operation or action." The displacement process functions in such a manner (mechanical operation or action). As the displacement develops it is possible to observe its development to each stage; its development is often predictable. The displacement process, with its consequences for the person being displaced proceeds with a cause/effect regularity; an observable mechanism.

Quality of Purpose

2. A mechanism is also said to be "a process or technique for achieving a result." Here there can be a clear implication of a conscious plan or purpose. The actions of private developers, government agencies and other sources of legitimate legal and financial power in minority and poor communities are formed and executed in a rational manner, with concrete results in mind.

The "mechanisms" I consider here are exogenous ones. That is to say, they are brought about by any number of forces from outside the person's individual powers to resist or change the direction of events. A

popular definition of urban displacement has been developed by George and Eunice Grier. Although there currently exists no "perfect" definition of displacement, the Griers definition is, to me, quite elegant in its simplicity, inclusiveness and attention to some of the major issues of displacement. I submit this definition:

"Displacement occurs when any household is forced to move from its residence by conditions which affect the dwelling or its immediate surroundings, and which:

1. Are beyond the household's reasonable ability to control or prevent.
2. occur despite the household's having met all previously-imposed conditions of occupancy; and
3. make continued occupancy by that household impossible, hazardous, or unaffordable."¹⁰

Any existing condition -- poor fire protection, building abandonment, action of government or private developer, rising neighborhood crime rate and related drug abuse problems, etc. -- can be seen as a potential displacing mechanism, acting alone or jointly with other mechanisms in the displacement process.

Applications of power, conflict and community organization theories are also employed in the study. From Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society, for example, Ralf Dahrendorf derives a theory of interest group formation from non-organized

quasi-groups. For Dahrendorf the quasi-group is the fertile soil from which the interest group may potentially grow. His interest group is a "conflict group", united by common interest in opposition to some other group that is in authority: "From these quasi-groups, interest groups are recruited, the articulate programs of which defend or attack the legitimacy of the existing structure. In any given association, two such groups are in conflict."¹¹ Dahrendorfs' "association" between authority and subject group is the center piece of his theory of interest group formation.

Dahrendorfs' theory does not attempt to explain interest group formation around certain other types of stimuli; for example, the tenants who organize to purchase a new furnace after the landlord has abandoned their building (in this case the authority holder has also abandoned the association). But the conflict model that Dahrendorf offers is of great value, for example, in explaining what happens when the City government takes over the building and refuses to provide fuel for the oil furnace, unless or until the tenants agree to leave the building and be relocated else where. It is in this latter context that Dahrendorfs' theoretical construction acquires a great utility, since the actions of large private and government institutions are, in this study, understood to be potential contributors to the urban displacement

process.

Quasi-groups are concerned with their "latent interest" which, for a building tenant, might be paying his monthly rent. He shares this in common with other tenants, but not on a cooperative or organized level. In the thinking of the tenant it is an individual concern. When the tenants cooperate by opposing the City government plan to evict them, they act as an interest group and display their "manifest interest" in jointly moving to change the situation to their advantage. Manifest interests, then, are not simply shared interests, but are interests which mobilize groups to take collective action in order to achieve a sought goal.

A theory of the role of self interest in the formation of community organization is derived from Neighborhood Organization and Interest Group Processes, by David J. O'Brien. Central to O'Brien's theory of community organization is the notion that community organization precedes political organization: "Therefore one might argue that the poor neighborhoods do not organize basically because they lack a high enough degree of organization."¹² But for successful organization the poor must "coerce" themselves (convince themselves) into paying the costs of spent time, effort, and money in order to reap the collective benefits. This voluntary coercion can occur when there is an expectation of some kind of

positive payoff (e.g. neighborhood revitalization without displacement, opportunity to lead, etc.) for the group and the individual. Each individual will bring his or her own interests and expectations to the pursuit of organization. Individuals discover skills in certain areas of organization, and leadership develops.

Floyd Hunter's Community Power Structure and Robert Dahl's Who Governs? are classic studies, each employing different theories of power (elite and pluralist) in describing the interaction of government and interest group. The pluralist perspective of Dahl would see great potential for local community based groups in influencing government programs that affect them. Through pressure put on elected officials, local citizens could be heard.

Hunter would have seen such a potential as somewhat unrealistic. Before local community based groups could influence government actions in the community, elite power interests linking business and political sectors usually dictated government actions in the local community.

The approach taken in this, Central Harlem, study stands midway between the pluralist and elitist positions. On the one hand it accepts the pluralist assumption that local community interest groups can be effective in influencing government. But it will agree with those who felt that Dahl was far too

optimistic in praising the selfless "democratic creed",¹³ said to be adhered to by the public servant. Dahl theorized a general consensus of thought among Americans with reference to what were understood to be the democratic ideals of fair play, honesty, and integrity in the governmental system. Government officials, partly by virtue of their better education and indoctrination in these ideals, were constrained in the manner they conducted themselves on issues affecting the citizenry: "How the professionals act, what they advocate, what they are likely to believe, are all constrained by the wide adherence to the creed that exists throughout the community."¹⁴

Floyd Hunter's perspective on the relationship between the elite business and political interests in the formation of government policies in the local community is likewise accepted. Hunter, in his study, traced the power network of business and political elites in "Regional City" (Atlanta, Georgia), raising a potent argument against the pluralist assumptions of representational democracy in America. The attempts of local groups to move the governing political structure to change its policies were met with frustration. Decisions on community development policy were dictated by a small group of business and political leaders, quite apart from local community influence. Hunter writes: "In the realm of policy

the top leaders are in substantial agreement most of the time on the basic ideologies of the culture."¹⁵ Continuing, he later states: "The individual in the bulk of the population of Regional City has no voice in policy determination. These individuals are a silent group. The voice of the professional understructure may have something to say about policy, but it usually goes unheeded. The flow of information is downward in larger volume than it is upward."¹⁶

But to make too close a comparison between the city of Atlanta in 1953 and Central Harlem in the post Great Society era would be an error. The large government "helping" bureaucracies (e.g. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and New York City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development) often interact with local community groups and individuals. Some groups are successful in making these bureaucratic giants work for them. Real estate and private development companies also negotiate with the large helping agencies; and because of this fact we must regard such government institutions as potential arenas for conflict between community, business and government interests. Those community groups that achieve a certain degree of sophistication in negotiation have attained a basic knowledge of how to do so; those who have not need knowledge.

Even though the agency of legitimate authority may

often favor the property speculator, as will be shown in the study, a knowledgeable community organization can succeed in moving the bureaucracy to its side. It is important for such bureaucracies that they assume an image of being about the business of helping the citizen in the community in which it exercises power. For the community organization alliances can be made with individuals, and various offices, of the helping agency. Certain officials will be more sympathetic than others, there is often competition and conflict between and within departments that negotiating groups may exploit. This suggests a compositionally complex system which, though elitist in its essential nature, contains an active pluralist aspect. Top leaders may be "in substantial agreement most of the time ..." on basic ideologies that lie behind policy; but the implementation of policy must be handled through the arena that is the helping institution, and its interface with the communities and various interest groups.

We expect that the implementation of agreed upon policy will take place in the largest number of instances. How it takes place, and its outcome can be influenced to varying degrees by community interest groups. The compositionally complex system is neither a pure elitist model, nor one of classic pluralism. It is the system as it presently exists, and affects the community.

Police, fire, health and sanitation departments, civil and housing courts are also bureaucratic arms of legitimate authority. Most disadvantaged community residents have contact with them, and often without success. It is the neighborhood where the services of these agencies are minimal that shows the most startling mark of the mechanisms of displacement. It is in the neighborhood where community organization is most active that the agencies of legitimate authority are often more responsive to the needs of residents.

Population And Sample Studied

A sample of 170 residents, tenants and home owners, were sounded out as to their knowledge of government and private agencies; attitudes about and sentiments for neighborhood, etc. The sample was drawn from a population of 166,087 residents in 33 census tracts that make up Central and West Harlem. In the 26 Central Harlem tracts there were 999 small home owners and 49,709 renters. The West Harlem tracts had 484 small home owners and 14,302 renters .17

The Central Harlem sample populations response to the question of racial or ethnic origin was 93.5% black, 1.8% Puerto Rican, 0.6% Dominican Republic, 1.8% white and 2.4% other. The largest ethnic division within the black Harlem population that this sample was drawn from were the offspring of those born in the southern states of this country. But many Harlem residents had parents who were originally from the English (and even Spanish) speaking Caribbean and South America. The ethnic differences seem to fade within two generations, as a general Afro-American identity developes.

Table 1.1: Racial or Ethnic Identification

	absolute frequency	relative frequency
black	159	93.5%
Puerto Rican	3	1.8%
Dominicano	1	0.6%
white	3	1.8%
other	4	2.4%
Total:	170	100.0%

27.6%(47) of the sample was between 18 and 38 years of age, 30.6%(53) were between 39 and 58 years, and 38.8%(66) were 59 years and over. Responses to the query on employment status were 53.5%(91) employed, 5.9%(10) unemployed, 12.9%(23) receiving social service assistance, 23.5%(40) retired, 1.8% (3) student or other, 2.4%(4) no reply.

Most were originally from New York City, 56.5%(96). 0.6%(1) was from another City in New York State and 32.9%(56) were from out of the state. 2.4%(5) were born in foreign countries. The majority of the sample were married, 43.5%(74). Only 16.5% (28) responded as being single, while 7.6%(13) were separated and 9.4%(16) were divorced. 15.3%(26) were widowed.

For many in the Harlem census tracts the government census and other data have consistently reported the many indicators of poverty: chronic unemployment and underemployment, drug addiction and crime, poor health services and high incidence of mental illness. Studies have highlighted the problems of youth unemployment and school drop out rate,¹⁸ while other

studies have suggested that the adult Harlem population is "surprisingly well-educated, at least in terms of hours spent in school...yet Harlem's labor force has not been able to translate its formal education into job credentials."¹⁹

Methodology

In attempting to arrive at a satisfactory methodological approach my first inclination was to rely on the classical urban study of neighborhood succession and settlement, The City, by Robert Park and Ernest Burgess.²⁰ The inclination to compare the neighborhood settlement and succession processes in Central Harlem with those of the classic Chicago study would, I thought, show the effect of human ecological development on the norms and values of a social group. Certainly historical studies have shown that the African-American succession to Harlem had many aspects which parallel an "invasion" process, as blacks replaced successful white ethnic groups in Harlem in the early part of this century.²¹

But after noting the obvious parallels, at least two gross differences began to temper this researchers instincts to study Central Harlem too strictly in the context of the traditional Chicago school model. For one thing, I had begun to note a peculiar cohesive quality in the thinking of blacks in Harlem with regard to shared values and norms, and a sense of being part of a larger black community in Harlem. This quality seemed to have a special cultural and historic meaning attached to it; and was often apparent in the responses of first, second, third and

fourth generation Harlemites that I was able to hear. So that, at least for the sample that I was beginning to collect, the breakdown of certain mores and values did not seem to follow the pattern suggested by Robert Park, whereby the second generation loses the traditional values and mores of the first generation in the urban setting.

Another other difference lies in the very nature of the urban displacement process itself. In the classic urban ecological study it was difficult to find a reasonable parallel to what has happened in Central Harlem during the period under study. The process in Harlem was more rapid and intense in its activity, and too often attached to the rational decisions of public or private interests. The methodologies used, then, would need to take into account the special changes that were distinct to the Harlem experience.

Given the above considerations, My approach to forming a research methodology was guided by the decision to use any sociological methodologies and data relevant to the subject under study. The central objective was an understanding of the process of urban displacement as it affected ordinary Central Harlem residents. With this in mind, the materials that I began to gather for the study included every possible kind of data that would show the development of this process and its consequences.

An important methodology in this regard was the

collection of government census data on social and economic change. My intention was to show significant changes in demographics, housing, and other sectors for the period of the 1970 and 1980 census. Since the census data is organized somewhat differently from one census period to the next in certain categories, quite a bit of time was occupied in reorganizing the "raw" census data into an appropriate and readable form for the subject under study. Other methodologies included making field notes of interviews and observations that I made in Central and West Harlem. Visits to local Community Boards were helpfull in directing me to some local community and political leaders.

Questionnaires were circulated in the Harlem population in person and by mail, to tenants and home owners. 133 tenants and 37 home owners were selected in 5 areas of the 33 census tracts that make up Central and West Harlem.

Central Harlem Areas

Mount Morris Park area--Bounded on the east by Park Avenue, and on the south by 119th and 118th streets. Its northern borders include 126th street and 120th street. Its western borders are Lenox Avenue and Frederick Douglas Boulevard.

Census tracts: #198.00, #200.00, #220.00

Central Park North Area--Bounded on the west by Manhattan Avenue and Morningside Park. On the east by Fifth Avenue. 110th street on the south and 113th street on the North.

census tracts: #197.02, #216.00, #186.00

Morningside Park Area--Bounded on the south by 114th street. On the north by 122nd street and 118th street. Its eastern border is Lenox Avenue while its western border is Morningside Park.

Census tracts: #201.02, #207.02, #218.00

Strivers Row Area--Bounded on the south by 134th street and on the north by 142nd street. Lenox Avenue is its eastern border and Frederick Douglas Boulevard its western border.

Census tracts: #228.00, #230.00

West Harlem Area

Hamilton Heights Area--Bounded on the east by Amsterdam Avenue and on the west by Riverside Drive. Its northern border is 155th street and its southern border 134th street.

Census tracts: #223.00, #225.00, #229.00,
#233.00, #237.00

In addition to the 170 questionnaires that I circulated for the study, I also have included excerpts from interviews that I made as a part of a research project conducted by Dr. Susan Seagert, of the Department of Environmental Psychology at City University Graduate Center, of elderly tenants in Harlem. In working with her I learned how to make

effective use of the portable cassette recorder in doing interviews. After overcoming some problems of incorporating this technology into my own interview style, I found it to be a valuable tool, when used with discretion. Once the respondent agreed to its use, I could employ a conversational style of interview, weaving in pertinent points of interest. This would be accomplished without fear of missing obscure but relevant issues. I found my discussions with these residents fascinating and informative, and I also thank Dr. Seagert for her help and support.

The conducting of face to face interviews and the circulation by mail of the questionnaire proved to be a challenging experience. After creating a questionnaire, that I hoped would cover many of the issues and concerns of the displacement and revitalization issues in Central Harlem, I sent out a thousand questionnaires in the mail. The financial cost of this initiative was devastating to my limited personal economy. Somewhat less devastating were the 107 responses that found their way back to me from this effort. My assumption was that the natural reaction of many of those who received the questionnaire would be one of suspicion. Who was the individual asking for this information? could the requested information be used for some harmful purpose? Having done some earlier interviews in Central Harlem, I understood the sense of wariness

that can greet requests for opinions and information in a community experiencing the kind of socio-economic changes that were occurring in Harlem.

Together with the face to face interviews I had, what I considered to be, a small but reasonable sample for a qualitative study of the displacement process in Harlem. The sample frame from which I drew the names and addresses of residents for the mailing was the Cole's Directory For Manhattan, New York. It is a listing of names and businesses in the borough of Manhattan that is published yearly. organized by zip code area, block, building and individual tenant and homeowner. Although 25 questionnaires were returned because some residents had moved, most of them apparently got to their destinations. Some respondents who mailed back the questionnaire left out responses to some questions. This would limit some kinds of statistical analyses.

The face to face interviews were another matter. In selecting respondents for face to face interviews I, at first, tried to pick every second or third building on a street, so as to maintain some degree of randomness and representativeness in the sample. My desire to do this was quickly blunted by the reality of emptied or gutted buildings on some blocks. More and more my selections became based upon who was there when I got to a building or a house, or knocked on a door. Sometimes a respondent would suggest that I

ring their neighbors door bell, this sometimes assured me another interview. Once I was able to bridge the initial problem of making contact with a resident on a street or in a building my probability of getting some kind of interview seemed to be about 65%.

Because of the concern for personal security, felt by many of the Harlem residents I talked with, in person interviews were difficult on some occasions. The fear of criminal activity that is prevalent in so many New York City neighborhoods is a social fact for Harlem as well. Some residents were reluctant to answer their doors when I knocked. And the presence of a tall black male standing in their door seeking to ask questions would sometimes generate suspicions among a resident black population who were, more often than not, victims of crimes perpetrated by black males.

In doing some of the interviews (e.g. the elderly) I generally dressed in a shirt and tie, wearing a sports jacket, dress slacks and shoes. "Sneakers" or tennis shoes were not worn because of the common held perception that they were "larceny shoes", worn by the adult and adolescent street thug during purse snatchings and muggings. I adopted this rather formal dress, which was quite different from my usually casual attire, after I began to realize that many people simply would not open their doors to talk with a black male who looked, in some way, like a criminal

or deviant individual.

On the other hand, I would occasionally wear sneakers, dungarees, and an old field jacket when interviewing others. Examples included two younger middle class black people and also some "hustler" or "street people" who I talked with in neighborhood bars.

In either situation, I often carried a briefcase for my notes. Many people would first assume that I was a social worker or from the City department of sanitation. This served to bring home to me the great extent to which the agencies of the legitimate authority were held as sources of power in the economic and politically vulnerable neighborhood. Often before I could explain who I was, a building tenant would rush to show me a building violation or some other problem that they were not able to get resolved by some City agency "inspector."

In interviewing federal, state and City officials I found that they were usually agreeable to arranging an interview appointment. Actual meetings, however, were not always held as scheduled for any number of emergencies that would call some of these professionals away. But once they could be cornered, most were cooperative and informative in interview. Of principal interest in the interviews were the attitudes of the professional to community organization and action, in combating urban

displacement. The issue of the extent of legitimate authorities power and its desire to use it in assisting community organization was pursued in these interviews.

Finally, some perspectives of Harlem real estate development agents and building owners were studied to ascertain their position on the issue of displacement and redevelopment. Of importance was an understanding of this groups stake in the developing situation in Harlem.

Each of the five selected areas had neighborhoods or streets that had been successful or not successful in countering different mechanisms of displacement. In the Central Park North area, for example, 111th Street, west of Frederick Douglas Boulevard was a block plagued with rapidly escalating tenant displacement.²⁰ But on 111th Street from Lenox Avenue, west to Fifth Avenue one saw the antithesis of the west of Fredrick Douglas Boulevard situation. In this block could be seen only well kept, secure buildings, and clean side walks. This block had an active block association.

Forty tenants were queried in the Morningside Park area and forty three in the Central Park North area. Forty seven in the Strivers Row area were also interviewed. Within each area some of the questionnaires were circulated in a successful block or neighborhood, while others were circulated in less

successful ones. In addition, three tenants were interviewed in the Mount Morris Park area, and one tenant in the Hamilton Heights area of West Harlem.

Table 1.2: Summary Of The Number Of Respondents.

Five Harlem Areas	Renters	Home Owners	Total
Morningside Park	40	2	42
Central Park North	43	---	43
Mount Morris Park	2	11	13
Strivers Row	47	10	57
Hamilton Heights	1	14	15
Totals	134	37	170

Eleven home owners were sampled in the Mount Morris Park area and ten in the Strivers Row area. Fourteen were circulated in the Hamilton Heights area. The analysis here was at the individual home owner and area levels.

The 170 tenant and home owner sample is small. Its major strength lies in the informative, and sometimes pointed and forceful, responses of the Central Harlem residents who were interviewed. It is these responses that are the center of this qualitative study. My primary concern was an analysis at the discrete household (individual or small group) level; taking into account the fact that rather dissimilar economic and or social characteristics might be evident in households that share the same neighborhood, street or building. The way that households are affected by the operation of the mechanisms of displacement, and their responses to the phenomenon are the stuff out of which the analysis develops. My sample contains a number of micro level accounts by socio- economically varied

respondents, living in close geographic proximity to one another in an urban area undergoing profound and apparently irreversible change.

The selection of areas was done with the aid of information garnered through my own personal research and observations in the Harlem area, community and news sources. This included data on urban displacement or revitalization, whether it had occurred, was occurring or anticipated in a given area.²²

Implications of The Study

It is the writers belief that the study will have some use for researchers in community organization and power study. Implications may also be shown for those involved in community action programs and for government policy makers concerned with local community development projects.

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Chapter II

The Spur of Socio-Economic Change

Events move events, that in turn move other events. Such must be our understanding as we begin our investigation of the consequences of urban displacement in Central Harlem. Events at the national, regional and local levels have combined to make their impact on Harlem. In this chapter I will discuss a number of these events as they relate to the issue of urban displacement in Central Harlem.

White Movement To The Suburbs: 1950 - 1970

The end of the Second World War ushered in a remarkable period of American history. Most Americans had struggled through the depression era and the war years. They, and the returning war veterans, having sacrificed an important part of their lives to the defense of the nation, now sought to enjoy the fruits of democracy: a good education; a good job; a "dream house" in the country. The nation responded by providing a number of programs to assist its citizens. Development of the suburban areas of the nation, which had begun in the 1920's, only to be halted by the great depression, began again with an unprecedented vigor.₁

New highway construction made the opening up and development of new suburban areas possible. Government programs like the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) loans₂ assisted many families in the realization of their dream for the better life in the suburbs. The FHA and VA loan programs were designed to be administered through private lending agencies. Essentially insurance schemes that guaranteed mortgages, they came under increasing criticism because they often discriminated against blacks and older house seekers.₃

The great exodus from the central cities to the suburbs continued to be a largely white, middle class, Phenomenon. Soon the social exodus was being paralleled by an economic one as large numbers of manufacturing and commercial industries also left the central cities for the suburban ring, and beyond.

Through out the period of the 1950's and 60's regional data on population changes in the central cities and suburban ring show a clear trend of white movement from the cities. In one study 72 large metropolitan areas in the four national regions (i.e. The south, northeast, midwest and western regions) indicated that 35 of the 38 large older cities of the northeast and midwest had sustained population losses. The southern and western regions, totaling 34 cities, had only 8 that sustained white population loss.₄

Census data for the 1960 to 1970 decade suggests

that the larger the S.M.S.A., the lower the rate of population growth tended to be in the central city. So that the population of a city in an S.M.S.A. of 2 million showed a decline, while cities of 250 thousand or less showed a population increase.

Table 2.1- POPULATION CHANGE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE
OF CENTRAL CITIES BY SIZE OF SMSA, 1960-70

	smsa % of change	central city % of change	outside central city % of change
Total.....	16.6	5.3	28.2
smsa's			
2,000,000 or more.....	12.0	-1.8	26.1
1,000,000 to 1,999,999...	26.6	9.7	41.7
500,000 to 999,999.....	18.0	7.6	30.2
250,000 to 499,999.....	16.3	9.6	22.2
less than 250,000.....	14.2	12.5	16.4

Source: Table E, U.S. Bureau of the Census of
Population and Housing: 1970, General Demographic
Trends for Metropolitan Areas, 1960 to 1970. Final
report PHC(2)-1 United States, Washington, U.S.
Government Printing Office, 1971

5.

Cities in the large S.M.S.A.'s experienced higher losses of whites than did those in the smaller S.M.S.A.'s of the south western regions. Table 2.2 illustrates the rate of population change, both inside and outside the central cities, by race and size of S.M.S.A. for the 1960 - 1970 period.

Table 2.2- POPULATION CHANGE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE
CENTRAL CITY BY RACE AND SIZE OF SMSA, 1960-70
(percentage change)

smsa population	Central city		Outside Central city	
	white	black	white	black
Total.....	-1.2	32.6	27.5	29.0
2,000,000 or more.....	-13.4	36.7	23.9	58.9
1,000,000 to 1,999,999....	3.3	39.1	41.1	37.8
500,000 to 999,999.....	3.6	25.9	30.7	7.9
250,000 to 499,999.....	6.7	23.8	22.3	12.0
less than 250,000.....	11.0	21.0	17.4	-2.4

Source: Table E, U.S. Bureau of the Census of Population and Housing: Trends for Metropolitan Areas, 1960 to 1970, Final Report PHC (2)-1, United States, Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971.

6.

Census data for the 1960 - 1970 period also show the dramatic rate of white loss from the central cities to the suburbs, regionally. The most precipitous losses occurred in the northeast and midwestern regions of the nation, as shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3-POPULATION CHANGE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE
CENTRAL CITY BY RACE AND BY SIZE OF SMSA, 1960-1970
(percent change)

	Central city		Outside Central city	
	white	black	white	black
Total.....	-1.2	31.9	27.5	29.2
Regions:				
Northeast.....	-10.3	44.6	18.0	42.7
Midwest.....	-7.3	32.6	26.0	46.7
South.....	6.9	22.4	38.5	11.3
West.....	13.6	50.8	34.3	80.0

Source: Table 3, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing: 1970, General Demographic Trends for Metropolitan Areas, 1960 to 1970, Final Report PHC (2)-1 United States, Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971.

7.

Government census data on family incomes show that, in hard dollar terms, national median family incomes grew at slower rates for central city families. Incomes for suburban families increased by 32.0% as contrasted with a 23.0% change for central city families. Table 2.4 illustrates these changes.

Table 2.4- MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME INSIDE
AND OUTSIDE CENTRAL CITY 1959 TO 1969

	median income 1969	median income 1959	percent change
Metropolitan.....	\$10,261	\$7,880	30.2
Central City.....	9,157	7,417	23.0
Outside Central City...	11,003	8,351	32.0

Source: Table B, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, series P-23, No. 37, "Social and Economic Characteristics of the Population in Metropolitan Areas: 1970 and 1960," Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971.

8.

In the period of years from 1959 through 1969 the percentages of citizens said to be living below the poverty level showed a decline. But the same government census data shows that poverty levels in the central cities were higher than those of the suburbs. Poverty levels for inner city families were one and a half times that of the suburban family by the time of the 1970 census. Table 2.5 gives us a clear illustration of this trend, with poverty levels in the suburban areas moving from 12.2% in 1959 to 6.3% by 1969. At the same time, central city poverty levels moved from 18.3% in 1959 to 13.4% in 1969.

Table 2.5- DISTRIBUTION OF PERSONS BELOW POVERTY LEVEL INSIDE AND OUTSIDE CENTRAL CITY, 1959-1969

	Number of persons below poverty level (millions)		Percent below poverty level	
	1959 - 1969		1959 - 1969	
Residence:				
United States.....	38.8	24.3	22.0	12.1
Metropolitan area....	17.0	12.3	15.3	9.5
Central City.....	10.4	7.8	18.3	13.4
Outside central city..	6.6	4.6	12.2	6.3

Source: Table D, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, series P-23, No. 37, "Social and Economic characteristics of the Population in Metropolitan Areas: 1970 and 1960," Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971.

9.

The central cities suffered losses in white middle class population and family income, while registering increments in the percentages of citizens below the poverty level. Following closely behind these events came debilitating fiscal problems that began to grip many of the older large cities during the period of suburban expansion. In a survey, which looked at the census data on expenditures of forty one large cities from 1962 through 1970, the total expenditures for these cities increased by 116.0%. There was a 98.0% increment for police and fire protection; a 270.0% increase for public welfare, a 139.0% increase for health and hospital services.¹⁰ In another study, the rate of tax base growth for a number of central

cities were contrasted with their suburbs. The ability of most of the central cities to generate local revenues had declined or slowed in comparison to their suburbs. With only minor deviations, the components of the tax base (i.e. volume of trade; property values; and average income) showed more growth in the outside central city areas than within the central city.¹¹

With the ongoing shift of middle class whites from the central cities to the suburbs, an increasingly slowed tax base became the problem for a number of central cities. Within the central cities rapidly escalating expenditure figures combined with a revenue base that had slowed its rate of growth. The resulting effect was an increase in the burden of taxes on central city residents.

For many who have written about the period of the great suburban expansion, the crux of the problem of the central cities lay, not so much with the "low need" white middle class that left the city centers, but with the "high need" (poverty prone minorities, female headed households, the aged, etc.) who remained. It was the high need group that was the consumer of large amounts of services and transfer payments, increasing expenditures while contributing less to the tax base. The presence of the high need segment of society in the central cities was seen as the main reason for the rise in central city

government expenditures. The presence of a critical mass of "low need" families in the suburbs was related to higher family incomes and lower rates of poverty, as tables 2.4 and 2.5 have previously illustrated.

The Decline of The Manufacturing Sector of
New York City's Economy

The developing asymmetric socio-economic relationship that, more and more, characterized many central cities and their suburbs was augmented also by the shift of manufacturing jobs from the central cities to the suburbs, and elsewhere. For New York City and Harlem this shift had great significance since blacks and other presumed high need groups made up a large segment of the manufacturing sectors work force. New migrants from the rural south or Puerto Rico would generally have success in finding employment on the lower rung of the ladder in the manufacturing job market.

For some urban theorists, trends in the type and number of jobs tend to evince a cyclical pattern. A city's business life moves through a cycle, from economic adolescence through maturity. David Birch, in his study, The Economic Future of City And Suburb, has offered such a theory. Here I quote his summation of that theory: "This suggests a sequence whereby younger cities chew up low-density land at a good clip with manufacturing floor space, parking lots, and road networks. The other economic functions develop more slowly. As the city ages and becomes more densely populated, central-city land becomes more expensive, and manufacturing declines in significance, as does

retail and wholesale trade. Services, in contrast, appear to thrive on concentration, for all the reasons indicated earlier, and through a process of self-selection and survival, emerge as the dominant economic force in older, large cities. The tendency of central-cities to become elite service centers appears, like rheumatism and decaying teeth, to be a strong function of age.¹²

Birch's study analysed 73 cities and found that, while older cities had lost manufacturing and retail jobs, the younger cities tended to show growth in all sectors: manufacturing; wholesale; as well as the trade and service end of the spectrum.

That New York City was a center for a multitude of small or independent manufacturing firms is a fact that has enriched the folklore of this famed "city of new immigrants" to Americas shores. In 1947 a peak total of 1,073,000 people were employed in New York City's manufacturing sector. But the decline of manufacturing in New York City was a steady one through the years. If 30 percent of those employed in the city in 1950 worked in manufacturing, only 15 percent were so employed in 1980.¹³

In the five Harlem areas that I have selected for this study the numbers of those employed in manufacturing showed significant declines between the 1960 and 1970 census figures. For the Central Park North area 2,482 were employed in manufacturing in

1960 and only 931 remained so by 1970, a 37.5% change. The 1960 figure for the Mount Morris Park area was 2,314, dropping to 705 in 1970, a 30.4% change. The Morningside Heights area had a 45.0% change, with a drop from 2,498 in 1960 to 1,125 manufacturing employees by 1970. A 45.9% change was shown for the Strivers Row area, where 1,797 manufacturing employees dropped to 825 in 1970. West Harlem went from 6,110 workers in 1960 to 3,971 in 1970, a 64.9% decrement.¹⁴ Although there were some gains in the low rung service sector jobs and jobs in the public sector, an important means of work income for the poor working class black was removed with the decline of the manufacturing sector.

In contrast to the natural cycle approach that Birch might have applied to the issue of the demise of the manufacturing sector in New York, William Tabb has argued that the major corporations headquartered in the city were indifferent, if not supportive of the demise of the manufacturing sector: "Indeed, they have been treated as a nuisance by the city's elite, which would like more manufacturing moved out of the city, making room for corporate offices and support services in down town areas. The manufacturing sector tended to have Jewish and Catholic ownership and a minority-group workforce, both very different from the individuals who dominate the city's corporate world."¹⁵

The New York City Fiscal Crisis

The "Great Society" era of the 1960's created many government programs that impacted directly on local urban communities, often side stepping the local political machines that were once the dispenser of community power and patronage. New York City, more than any other central city, had led in creating many innovative programs in housing, health and education, in order to better capture more of the federal funding dollars for its citizens.

But, with the end of the Vietnam War, a serious crisis was developing nationally; a recession which some said was the worst since the great depression of the 1930's. Those who had hoped to channel the money saved by the pulling out of U.S. forces from the war into the financing of social programs were met with disappointment, as funds were transferred to the defense sector. One after another, the federal government sharply reduced funding to many local and community programs.

New York City, by the mid 1970's, faced a serious expenditure and revenue gap dilemma. With the national economy strained, state and federal governments were reducing expenditure transfers, and banks would not renew loans. David Rockefeller, then chairman of Chase bank, and Elmore Patterson of Morgan Trust joined with other banking leaders in deciding to

bailout of the New York City bond market, selling billions in securities.¹⁶ The creation of the Municipal Assistance Corporation (MAC), and later the Emergency Financial Control Board (EFCB) were set up to rearrange the city's financial structure, and make it fiscally sound.

The end result of the MAC, EFCB fiscal engineering initiative was the instituting of a program by which severe cuts in city services were made. The closing of hospitals, physical and mental health centers, youth and senior citizen centers began, as the emphasis was put on insuring that successful businesses did not flee the city. At one point, in 1975, some 15,000 public school teachers and ancillary staff were laid off; the number of black or Hispanic teachers, in the school system of largely black and Hispanic students, declined from 13 to 11 percent.¹⁷

Police protection and fire protection, important services in the vulnerable minority neighborhoods of the city, were cut considerably. The number of police officers was decreased by 13.7%, forcing a reduction in the numbers and types of arrests. Communities like Central Harlem, that had struggled through the social disruptions of the 1960s, were in the poorest condition to withstand the inevitable social consequences of the fiscal crisis. The symptoms of anomie and social dislocation could be gauged by dramatic population losses, grand larceny and drug

related crime statistics. Escalating rates of building abandonment and the rise in health problems during a period of population losses for many communities were part of the mute testament to the real human costs of the fiscal crisis.

It is during this period of the 1970's that two interesting "dispersal" strategies were advanced to solve the socio-economic problem posed by the large critical mass of minority communities in New York and other central cities. Anthony Downs, in his book Opening Up The Suburbs, reasoned that the problem of poor or minority communities in the central cities could not be solved by simply trying to rebuild them, while increasing government expenditures for services. And, since a number of the jobs that were once located in the central city had moved to the suburban areas, why not begin to move numbers minority people out of the central city to the suburbs. This would serve to relieve the fiscal problems of the central city government, while allowing the minority group emigres to become resocialized to the behavior patterns of their new, majority, suburban middle class neighbors.¹⁸ Having moved a sufficient number of the high need group out of the "crisis ghetto" an improvement in the racial relations within the city would also become possible.¹⁹

Downs' strategy never really takes into account the many social differences within a given community. It

only assumes that there are the pathological "culture of poverty" poor, or the more serviceable poor whose "non-middle-class behavior patterns represent adaptations to their 'left out' status...."²⁰ The community with its particular history and values is never really addressed. There is only a "crisis ghetto" reference.

The social healing potential of minority entrance into the suburbs is an extremely problematic one. The accounts of segregation tactics by real estate and political interests, as well as the all too frequent reports of cross burnings and home bombings tend to contradict the far too easy assumptions of Downs' strategy.²¹

To this writer, Downs "benign" strategy is merely the reverse side of the second strategy we consider from this period; that of "planned shrinkage." For one of this strategy's more celebrated proponents, Roger Starr, the movement of high need minorities out of the central cities was the potential summum bonum for the fiscal crisis of the cities. Why, Starr argued, should minorities be asked to remain where the types of jobs they do are not to be found? Why not allow building abandonment to accelerate, if it will encourage the poor to go elsewhere?

Unlike the more benign Downs, he offers no detailed explanation of where the poor may be relocated. With fewer Hispanic and rural American blacks migrating to

the cities, local governments could then, for the first time, be free to deal with the complex problems of urban development in a more rational manner. The fiscal problems of the city, then, become solvable in straight-forward fashion. And in considering any socio-economic consequences for those high need groups who may be affected, Starr notes: "Our urban system is based on the theory of taking the peasant and turning him into an industrial worker. Now there are no industrial jobs. Why not keep him a peasant?"²²

In discussing the issue of dispersal strategies that had been set in motion during the 1970's, urban social analysts Richard T. Legates and Chester Hartman have noted the tendency of legitimate authority to be implicated in such social engineering initiatives: "A final issue is the question of the federal government involvement in the dispersal of blacks. There is no question that the federal government has been pursuing a policy of decentralizing assisted housing away from impacted neighborhoods within central cities to suburbs (although it is uncertain whether the Reagan administration HUD will continue this policy.) The motives for this movement are hotly contested, as is the degree to which HUD consciously or unconsciously promotes other forms of dispersal."²³

Serious questions have been expressed concerning the potential for "Soweto" styled suburban ghettos,

wherein low income blacks may be "contained" in conditions that are equal or worse than the central city location they have been extracted from.²⁴

Returning, as the nature of this study dictates, to the question of community; Legates and Hartman have stressed that the recurring point of strong concern in the responses of blacks they had interviewed revolved around a widely held belief that "there is cultural and political strength in numbers."²⁵ There were fears that dispersal to numerous suburban areas would mean the submerging of black culture in the predominantly white middle class suburban culture. And, with the notable success of a number of, community based, black political initiatives for gaining control of local governments in some American cities, one can understand the reluctance to risk the undercutting of voting block potential through population dispersal.

The Rise Of The Service Industries
And The New Professionals

What develops out of the tumultuous period of fiscal crisis and the decline of the manufacturing sector of New York cities economy during the 1970's is the clear hegemony of the service area of the economy. It is the shining new sector of business growth, "dominated by enterprises that produce 'goods' that travel only by mail, telephone line, radio wave or electronic impulse."²⁶ New York City presently leads the nation in service center growth. Employment in service industries such as insurance, finance and real estate rose 17 percent in the past five years, while the same period of time has seen a 15 percent decline in the number of manufacturing jobs. Between 1977 and 1981 legal service jobs advanced by 25 percent--some 9,000 jobs. Management consulting, accounting, public relations and similar "business service" jobs became New York City's second largest category of employment, growing by 56 percent in 20 years to some 243,000 jobs. The important banking sector of New York cities economy saw a 51 percent rise in jobs from 1980 to 1982; some 173,000 new jobs.

The prodigious growth in the service sector has meant that the city has become an increasingly international one, as many international business elites and other wealthy have gravitated to New York.

The outlook for the new service sector can only be seen as favorable, and the anticipation is that the growing services today will mirror the manufacturing industry of the past by generating a multiplicity of ancillary business activities.

But the central feature of the unprecedented growth of the service sector in New York City, and it will be of continuing concern throughout this study, is that it occurs primarily in one borough of the city. Indeed, one could say that much of this activity is concentrated in the mid-town Manhattan central business district, especially "the area bounded roughly by 34th Street and 60th Street and Third and Eighth Avenues." In this area there has occurred a phenomenal boom in office building construction. Much of this new construction centers in an area east of 5th Avenue on Madison where the demand by foreign and domestic corporate business elites for "only the poshest addresses" has led to inflated property values, and the squeezing of new ultra modern office buildings into an already crowded business district.²⁷

The work force that moves this service economy is made up largely of young professionals. They are generally college graduates whose ranks include lawyers, stock brokers, bank executives, computer specialists, various types of consultants, among other skilled workers. But at the lowest end of the service

labor force are the marginally paid workers in data processing, clerical, fast foods and messenger services. These jobs, usually filled by minority group youths and women, often lack job security and real advancement potential.²⁸

The Spur Of Gentrification

The new, young, college trained professionals tend to be partial to urban living; especially in Manhattan. Whatever difficulties Manhattan life may pose by virtue of its comparable higher cost of living, noise, etc; the travel convenience, and the Manhattan mystique seem to outweigh all other factors. The choice of Manhattan over other boroughs as a place of residence has contributed to an accute housing shortage in Manhattan, at a time when the "good housing" in the city as a whole is in short supply. With outrageously rising property values and rents, the full utilization of residential property for profit has assumed the greatest importance.

Architectural critic Paul Goldberger notes: "Thus we have the shortage of Manhattan apartments, the conversion into housing of loft buildings that once contained manufacturing operations, the erection of white brick apartment towers on what seems like every corner of the Upper East Side, the replacement of old bars and hardware stores by boutiques and gourmet take-out shops to serve the city's new professional class. It is all part of the same phenomenon, and it would seem, if this was all there was to it, to be a healthy state of affairs."²⁹

It is apparent that many of those who comprise the new professional group are the offspring of the white

middle class cohort that made the exodus to the suburbs during the late 1940s through 1960s. In the article "Suburbia: End Of The Golden Age"³⁰ William S. Kowinski has observed that, for many children of the great suburban migrations, suburbia's shining promise of a better life has little relevance to their future personal aspirations. Kowinski, noting that the suburbs are growing older, has pointed out a number of suburbs with declining proportions of young people. Problems of social isolation, rising crime rates and energy costs are also indicated as factors which may serve to blur some of the differences between the central city and the suburbs for many offspring of the suburban migration.

New York City's ability to provide the kind of "high status" housing that is demanded by the higher income professional is seriously constrained by a lack of available new housing in attractive areas of the city. The remaining older housing has taken on a grossly inflated value. In 1978 the city housing vacancy rate was at 2.95 percent. The vacancy rate for the city's estimated 1.9 million rental apartment units dropped by 28.% to 2.13% by 1981.³¹ This dramatic decline in residential housing unit availability has occurred during a period of population decline for New York City, from 7,894,862 in 1970 to 7,071,639 with the 1980 census. The decline in population has had little effect on the vacancy rate

city wide, indicating a potential for increased competition among New Yorkers over a dwindling housing stock. In this situation, the poor are found paying the higher percentage of their incomes for housing.³² In a U.S. Government Census inquiry 380,332 respondents were said to have earned \$5,000 a year less and paid 35 percent or more of their household incomes for rent, compared with a second group. The second group of respondents, who earned \$20,000 or more a year totaled 479,931, the majority of this group paid less than 20 percent of their incomes yearly for rent.³³

Declines in the size of the New York City households as a proportion of the population showed a trend toward smaller households, and a notable increase in single person households. One person households increased from 25.2% in 1970 to 32.7% by the 1980 census. At the same time, four person households were declining from 27.9% in 1970 to 23% in 1980. In Manhattan, the center of the housing crunch, the average household size had dropped from 2.17 in 1970 to 1.96 in 1980 -- the lowest of all five boroughs and far below the national figure for 1980 of 2.49.

By the end of the 1970's, at a time of decline in suitable housing, much attention by public officials and news media began to be given over to the discussion of gentrification.³⁴ Stories of young

professionals moving into marginal neighborhoods and revitalizing them through creative effort, and money, were always the good human interest story in the cities major newspapers and television newscasts. There were also accounts of the creation of clean, newly renovated apartment units in, what may have been, run down tenements or old brownstones by inventive development companies. To some, there seemed to have developed a new alternative for the problem of urban development. The belief among a number of local government officials, social scientists and planners was that a return of white, middle class, professional people to the central city neighborhoods would mean a strengthened tax base for the city. But it could also mean the upgrading of the neighborhoods the new gentry would come to live in. Property values, it was thought, must certainly rise as new shops and neighborhood businesses were generated to service the needs of the gentry.

Because the more attractive residential housing areas of Manhattan (e.g. the West Side, Chelsea, Soho, West Village, etc.) were rapidly reaching the point of renter saturation and high rental costs, private developers and powerful real estate interests began to look seriously at some of the more marginal neighborhoods of Manhattan and its neighboring boroughs for potential speculation.

One such neighborhood was the East Village. In an

earlier time a neighborhood of Jewish immigrants, this section of the Lower East Side had, since the 1960's, been occupied by people of Slavic heritage, a number of Hispanics, artist/Bohemian residents. But by the 1970's the area was thought to be a prime prospect for real estate speculation and profit: a number of its residents, who had the financial means to do so, had left. The older Slavic residents, Hispanic families and artists were, at best, quasi-groups which coexisted in relatively the same spatial environment. These groups exhibited patterns of mutual toleration but little interaction.

By the end of the 1970's a number of major real estate groups were moving into the East Village area. A Daily News article of the time began: " a flyer from Helmsley-Spear offering an apartment at 11th St. and Avenue A for \$240,000 advises that 'the East Village is changing to a Soho-like area.' The salesman attached to this brochure agitatedly insists that he not be named and that he doesn't want it thought that 'Helmsley-Spear is taking over the Lower East Side.' He says stoutly that he is 'just one little salesman in a very big organization who has happened to sell a couple of buildings in that area, 'and that theres no big real estate Goliath coming into the area to chase out the poor unfortunate poor people'." ³⁵ A local community leader stood at a Community Board 3 meeting and denounced the machinations of real estate interest

attempts to "force out the Puerto Ricans" while squeezing the present middle class residents by forcing rents up.³⁶

How large, successful, real estate concerns adapt to meet the problem of investment and disinvestment in the neighborhood that is going through a period of transition is a difficult question. No neighborhood is the mirror image of another. It can be said, however, that because the most successful real estate corporations must constantly deal with the problems of renting laws, building code restrictions, property taxes and a myriad of other local, state and federal laws, they have had to maintain a continually intimate relationship with the legitimate authority.³⁷ The \$10,000 total donation made by realtor Harry Helmsly and his partner Irving Schneider to the Abraham Beame 1973 election campaign, the \$102,000 political campaign gift made by Donald Trump to then Governor Hugh Carey³⁸ are but the simplest examples of the close relations and involvement of real estate interests with the legitimate authority and its agents.

But real estate involvement in the continually developing events surrounding the displacement issue must, once again, be understood in the context of the events which have preceded it. The major migration of the white middle class to the suburban ring following the end of the second world war left a growing

minority population, of often unskilled workers, in the central city. Many of these workers were concentrated in the old manufacturing work sector. With the rapid demise of large scale manufacturing in the central cities, only a number of these workers were able to secure employment in the lower end of the service sector, or in local government. At the upper income end of the service sector, the young professionals were forced to compete for housing in a strained Manhattan housing market. In such a market, certain marginal neighborhoods of Manhattan, occupied by minorities and older ethnic groups, attained a grossly inflated real estate value.

The unprecedented situation exists in which the borough of Manhattan has the smallest average household size as a proportion of population, city-wide, and nationally. Declining vacancy rates for rental housing continue, even as the cities population decreases. Competition for this scarce resource is not only waged at the individual renter or home owner level, but at the level of the professional housing entrepreneur.

Moving increasingly into the center of these controversial social developments is Central Harlem which, due in part to its geographic location in Manhattan and central mass transit links (among other factors to be discussed), is seen as one of the ripest areas in Manhattan for real estate development and

profit.³⁹ On the Upper West Side of Manhattan gentrification has continued to rapidly transform the Morningside Heights area. A study prepared by the City Planning Commission suggests that this transformation has resulted in the displacement of a number of former residents. Single room occupancy hotel conversions resulted in the loss of some 5,000 rooms, an estimated 73% decline. The average income in the area was said to have increased while the population fell 4%. There was an increase in the number of unrelated and younger individuals, while the number of families decreased at a faster rate than the city as a whole.⁴⁰

The words of Ronald Rayevich, in 1980 Columbia University's director of investments, lend a sense of the spirit of change in the area of the Upper West Side and Central Harlem, its eastern neighbor: "'Look down that hill,' he declared. 'See how that community down the hill is doing...you put Columbia down in Harlem Valley and Harlem Valley will look just like up here.'"⁴¹

The Idea Of Black Harlem And The Sense
Of Community

The idea of "black Harlem", the mythic pictures that come to the minds of many across the face of the planet, has remained a powerful one. Emile Durkheims' discourse on the mystical, mist shrouded period of a peoples history (the "fabulous time")⁴² seems to capture this mythic quality. Since Harlem has often been thought of as the premier black community in America, mention of some of the legendary events and people that gave birth to the idea of black Harlem is made here. They provide a grand starting point for the discussion of Harlem today; whether they inspired great pride or great disappointment in the possessor of the idea.

What were some of the facts that have fed part of the idea of black Harlem? The 1920's was a period in which Harlem became known internationally as a center for entertainment. Fashionable whites would conclude their evening of entertainment by "slumming" in Harlem.⁴³ This was also the period of the "Harlem Renaissance", when such black writers as Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, sociologists E. Franklin Frazier and W. E. B. Dubois made Harlem a center for intellectual and cultural activity. Many of the great Jazz and Swing bands of the 1930's made American popular music history, in Harlem.

Creating a special legend of its own, the 369th Harlem National Guard Unit distinguished itself during the first world war by being awarded the Croix de Guerre, spending more days in combat than any other American fighting unit.⁴⁴ And, there was Josephine Baker, Duke Ellington, Joe Louis, Billy Holiday, and many other names and events that, woven together, have formed one notable part of the idea of black Harlem.

Another part of the idea of black Harlem has developed largely from the social reality of Harlem in the wake of the urban rebellions of the 1960's and the fiscal crisis of the 1970's and 80's. Not that Harlem was free from social problems before the 1960's. Quite the contrary. The social problems of Harlem were as real in 1923 as they were in 1983.⁴⁵ But the social turmoil and dislocation that was experienced in Harlem from the 1960's onward was much celebrated in the news media, both nationally and internationally; just as Harlems entertainment center image had been during the 1920's. The idea of black Harlem developed in many minds of a place of high crime, drug addiction, and large numbers of women on welfare, with hordes of fatherless children.

Both ideas, the Harlem of shining legend and the Harlem of the festering ghetto, exist in the mind of the outsider. And often the idea holder will hold only one of the two ideas of black Harlem. In attempting to derive a true understanding of what

Harlem is, the two ideas should not escape our consideration. But they must never be allowed to overshadow the sociological significance of Harlem as a community.

For, indeed, Harlem is a community of "Neighborhood communities." Many of these neighborhoods are old, some dating back to the early period (1906 - 1916) when black realtors and then the black churches led the steady exodus of blacks from the mid-West Side of Manhattan to Harlem.⁴⁶ A number of these neighborhoods developed their own distinctive set of inter-family and individual relationships that gave each its own, special, community feeling, within the context of the Harlem community. It is in this sense that Harlem can be thought of as a community of neighborhood communities, where the townhouse lifestyle of the Strivers Row resident may contrast with the large multiple dwelling lifestyle of the Central Park North area. Each somewhat different; yet each maintaining a distinct Harlem community identity.

The "oldtimers" in Harlem still talk about the past days when so many of the Harlem neighborhood streets were filled with people. Before the problems of the 1960's and 1970's, the sense of community in Harlem was often expressed in a close relationship between neighbors. Within the neighborhood one usually knew, or knew of, most of the neighborhood residents. A generally pervading "moral order", which derived from

the African-American communalism of the south, was to some extent still operative in the gesellschaft setting of the city. Cooperation between individuals and groups in the community was a working reality.

The gemeinschaft-like experience, within the context of the rational urban setting, has interested the thinking of many writers. Andrew Billingsly has described the black family as constituting a part of the larger black community, and then the wider society. For Billingsly social institutions in the black community include: "schools, churches, taverns, newspapers, neighborhood associations, lodges, fraternities, ...funeral societies, and various organised systems of hustling."⁴⁷ Surrounding the black community is the wider society of political and economic institutions. Within the family system the community and family operate in a mutually supportive relationship.

To speak of a sense of community is, of course, to echo Emile Durkheims seminal discourse on the "common conscience and the solidarity which it produces."⁴⁸ Durkheims outlook of gloom for the survival of traditional community values was similar to that expressed by Robert Park in his Chicago study. Under the force of urbanization the "...social ritual and moral order..." survived only temporarily. "Social control, based on the home mores, breaks down, however, in the second generation."⁴⁹

In decrying what he argues is the modern, rationalizing worlds attack on the traditional values of community, Robert Nisbet asserted: "Where, then, are the dislocations that have driven so many men...to the quest for community...?" Nisbet, replying to his own rhetorical question continues: "They lie in the realm of the small, primary, personal relationships of society- the relationships that mediate directly between man and his larger world..."⁵⁰

The list of those who have added to the wealth of knowledge in this area is much longer than the few names I have mentioned here; although, I am sure, they are all equally distinguished. The common thread of concern running through much of this literature has to do with the fate of traditional community values in the developing urban society, and the relationship of the individual with the community.

Having experienced both the South Bronx as well as Harlem as I grew up during the period of the 1950's, the memory of this social solidarity is still a very clear and vivid one for me. There did, indeed, exist a strong sense of community, that was never commented on or discussed, and yet was always tacitly in force. If a mother prepared beans and rice for her children, the neighbors child also had a place at the table. If a suspicious stranger was seen hanging around the neighborhood, the word was gotten out, and often the stranger was confronted by the men of the community.

When death visited one household the community shared the grief. I especially recall that with the first news of a death, the household of the deceased would first become filled with the women of the community. They would bring food, cook and care for the children and gave expressive support to the family leaders.

The old, and the least advantaged members of the community, were granted respect, not in a forced, superficial manner, but in a simple and straight-forward way.

Jesse Jackson, the civil rights advocate, probably captured something of the flavor of this black communalism when he stated that he was raised in a "love triangle." Such a "triangle" can be discussed in sociological terms as a series of connective human relations; which combine community, family, church, etc., in an "expressive" and "instrumental" system.⁵¹ In this system some measure of social and psychological support was given to the individuals who constituted and supported the social solidarity.

Our discussion here of a special sense of community in Harlem is not offered as a means to further, what Gerald Suttles termed "the overromanticization of the local community",⁵² nor an attempt "...to make sentimentalism so basic to it that the community could later be dismissed as only an expressive solidarity without instrumental functions." The instrumental

function of the old sense of community in Harlem neighborhoods translates into accounts by residents of a time when old people walked the streets at night in relative safety; when many families safely slept on tenement building roof tops on warm summer evenings; when an adult woman could stop a group of teenaged boys from using improper language, by "threatening to tell their parents." It translates, in short, into a community's ability to maintain a certain degree of social control over itself, within the larger context of the city.

But the instrumental functions of this community solidarity was, at times, expressed in the first attempts at political organization in Harlem after the first world war.⁵³ It was the coming together of Harlem communities that continued to reelect Adam Clayton Powell to the Congress, even after he had supposedly been rendered politically powerless by vote of his Congressional peers. This potential for political mobilization had only periodically blossomed as an instrumental flower of the community solidarity. Whether it can in the future will be a matter for our later concern in this study.

The inclination to overromanticize the neighborhood community in Harlem fails because these communities could never solve the real social and economic problems that gradually wore away at the core of the community. The natural solidarity that seemed a facet

of so many neighborhoods had existed in a gesellschaft setting. The economic livelihood of Harlem had always come from without; it was economically controlled from without. The socio-economic changes that culminated in the New York fiscal crisis of 1975 destroyed individual streets and neighborhoods. Banks and stores closed, landlords walked away from their buildings', unemployment, drug addiction and crime escalated.

To the outsider, the least apparent victim of these socio-economic changes seemed to be a "sense of community." The natural solidarity had never been fused into, or directed as a vehicle for organizing communities in Harlem to deal with sustained and worsening community problems. And the solidarity was gradually eclipsed by the general social and physical destruction of the communities.

Wide adherence to a moral order can tend to short circuit during such anomic developments. Once many of ones neighbors have left the community, leaving empty buildings in their wake; it becomes increasingly harder to extend ones psychic energies in support of the general social solidarity. New, possibly hostile or socially pathological, people may have replaced those one once knew.

The mother who sees her neighbors' child doing something wrong now hesitates, and thinks. What if the neighbor does not subscribe to the same values and

norms as she? Will the neighbor support her if she acts to correct the child or attack her, perhaps physically? Likewise, if a man notices a threatening criminal activity in his neighborhood, should he let his neighbors know? How far can he trust them to uphold a moral order? The perception can begin to form that there is only oneself. Perhaps the agencies of the legitimate authority may act, perhaps not. But the alienation of groups and individuals in the community increases as a function of the general socio-economic trend.

Socio - Economic Pathology

The demographic data on population change dramatically illustrate the consequences of urban displacement in Central Harlem. The loss of an estimated 93,837 people in a 20 year period shrunk Central Harlems total population from 202,926 in 1960 to 104,089 by the 1980 census.⁵⁴ By 1970 Central Harlems' population was 162,969, a loss of some 39,957 residents, or a 19.6% decline. With the 1980 census 58,880 (36.1%) more losses were registered.

Although this study is primarily concerned with the effects of urban displacement on those groups and individuals who have remained in Central Harlem, the possible relocation areas chosen by those who have left is a matter of some interest. It has been accepted belief that a prime factor determining the decline of Central Harlem's population has been that of social mobility: caused when (1) households achieved a degree of economic success, thus permitting a move to a different geographic location; and (2) the factor of age, since young people can often be expected to be more prepared to change location than the elderly. Both these causes are reflected in an article from the early 1970's.⁵⁵ In an interview with a New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) statistician, Owen Moritz, the writer, got these responses: "Some people are being driven out, no

doubt about it. But one thing planners don't have is a way to trace population movements, and I suspect a lot of this outmigration reflects people who have upped themselves economically."⁵⁶ An H.P.D. official, quoted in the same article, also noted the age factor: "One way of looking at this is that fewer young people are settling in this area. When you consider this is a pretty stable area, this factor of age takes on importance." The area of probable resettlement for many Harlem residents were said to include Washington Heights, where a northward spillover affect was thought to be very likely. Brooklyn, which has shown significant black population gains is a most likely place of relocation. Since the 1970's Brooklyn's population gains have figured much in the shift of black political potential from Harlem to Brooklyn. Much remains for future research regarding the resettlement of the great number of those who left Harlem during the period of the 1960's and 1970's.

The DCP Community Development Program: Statement of Objectives and Budget, for July 1, 1982, showed that Central Harlem had become demographically older than many comparable minority communities in the city. By 1980, 20% of its population was over 62 years of age as compared to 9% for East New York, in Brooklyn, and 9% for the Lower East Side of Manhattan.⁵⁷ The Community Portfolio: Fact Book for 1977 listed roughly 12.65% of those elderly without families as

falling below the poverty level; as compared to 7.98% for the borough of Manhattan.⁵⁸

In 1978 some 30,267 (27%) of Central Harlem residents recieved some public assistance. By 1981 there were 26,696 (33%) residents recieving public assistance. The rapid population drop had left Harlem a comparably older population that would need increasingly more specialized services.

The 1975 Fiscal Crisis: Increasing Building
Abandonment, Then Increasing Crime

DCP housing census figures showed that the decline in population between the 1970 and 1980 census had driven the number of occupied housing units downward, from an estimated 49,184 in 1970 to 35,880 by 1980. In the four Central Harlem areas of this study the combined rate of housing change for multifamily housing units showed a steady decline; from the 1972 figure of 27,254 units, down to 24,272 units in 1982, an overall loss of 2,982 units in the four combined Central Harlem areas. It is interesting to note that the 1975-1976 period (the height of the city's ill famed fiscal crisis) was one of the periods of greatest housing loss.⁵⁹ Many multifamily building owners were finding that their investments were no longer turning the kind of profits that balanced off the costs of operating them, or for using the building as collateral for further purchase of property.

On a somewhat more positive note, the DCP Community Program Development data showed an increase in owner occupied housing units, from 968 in 1970 to 1,016 by 1980, a 48 unit increment.⁶⁰ But in the four Central Harlem areas of our study, the period from 1972 to 1982 showed a decline in one and two family housing from 456 units in 1972 to 420 in 1982, a loss of 32 (8.4%) units of housing.⁶¹

The 8.4% loss in the four Central Harlem areas one and two family housing units was not as severe a change as the change in the multiple housing units. This could be seen as some indication of community stability during the period of socio-economic difficulty that culminates in the cities fiscal crisis of 1975. And yet, even here, we note a precipitous loss of 36, one and two family, housing units between 1979 and 1980; from 456 down to 420. Such figures might suggest that a number of home owners were experiencing serious problems in meeting the rising costs of maintaining ownership of their properties. The DCP data on tax arrears for the period, 1975 through 1982, seem to support this position. At only three times during this period (1966, 1978, 1979) was the mean number for changes in tax arrears (1251.3) surpassed. The 1979 year figure of 1303 exceeded the mean figure by an increment of more than 50.⁶²

The data on the numbers and percentages of residential sales turnovers in the four Central Harlem areas mirror the trend toward disinvestment and displacement. Residential sales data show that from 1975 to 1981 the largest increase in property turnovers occurs the year after the 1975 fiscal crisis began. By 1978, property turnovers had fallen below 8.0% of the total number of residential lot properties, settling around 124 sales, or 5.6% in 1979. ⁶³

Our data on changes in population and housing give unambiguous reportage on these important social indicators. But other, related, social variables have contributed to the urban displacement phenomenon in Central Harlem.

The social indicators of crime and drug addiction also factor decisively into the developing urban pathology. It is the newspaper headline that begins to give some idea of the period that concerns us:

100,000 ADDICTS REPORTED IN CITY

....Commissioners estimate came after a Harlem clergyman, the Rev. Oberia Dempsy, told the hearing that '50,000 drug addicts are moving in and out of Harlem daily to get dope they need, and they get it.

New York Times. 12/14/67

HARLEM BLOCK RENOVATED, BUT ADDICTS REMAIN

'....I used to be worried about housing', she said. 'Now I'm worried about the environment, the junkies, the dope addicts. I'm more afraid now since they renovated the block than I was then....'

New York Times. 8/14/69

HEROIN NOW A WEARY NOD

....It said in the report that the city now has as many as 177,500 heroin addicts. ...He jumped from his chair at the desk and pointed out on W.116th St. 'Look at that right there' he said. Outside two cops ...were grabbing at two teenaged youths on the sidewalk. 'I'll bet it's drugs....drugs is killing the youth today...'

Earl Caldwell
Daily News. 6/16/82

PARADE SUPPORTS HARLEM CRIME FIGHT

New York Times. 4/4/76

Statistical data on crime often seem erratic and unpredictable in the manner of their change over time. It is, therefore, with interest that we here consider the, predictable and uniform, data from the New York City Police Department on youth crime and drug addiction. These data are taken from the regular reports of the 28th and 32nd precincts (which are inclusive of all of Central Harlem), during the period from 1972 through 1982.

In a number of crime categories, the ten year period under study began with relatively high figures, which tended to decrease in the following one or two years. Burglary complaints, for instance, began at a 4,417 high number in 1972, but had declined to 3,467 by 1973. But then, in the category of youth arrests (ages 16 thru 20) the period from 1975 to 1976 showed a major increase from 931 to 1521, a 38.7% or 590 arrests increment. It was by far the steepest for the ten year period that began at only 749 such arrests, in 1972. By 1977 the number had increased to 1,689 youth arrests.⁶⁴

Of interest also was an apparant ripple effect: with the number of young adult (21 through 24 years of age) felony arrests increasing in tandem behind those for the youth arrests. Young adult felony arrests went from 890 in 1975 to 1,170 in 1976, then to 1,411 by 1977. Finally, felony arrests of all those 20 years and over made a precipitous jump from 3,081 in

1976 to 4,091 in 1977, a gain of some 1,010 arrests, or a 24.6% increment.

In terms of every day life in the Harlem community, these data only serve to lend a little more to our understanding of what it meant to wake up each morning and prepare to meet each day. Doors always had to be securely locked, windows had to have good metal gates if they open on to a fire escape. Whether one is young or old, it becomes important to watch where you walk in the neighborhood and how you walk; as the increasing number of abandoned buildings began to provide a meeting place for drug and criminal activity in the neighborhoods. And, sadly for some, it meant becoming a victim of crime or the unfortunate parent of a youth who had been arrested and charged with a crime.

The community's ability to maintain control of the social developments within its borders had clearly been shaken. Police arrest reports, it must be stressed here, can only indicate the numbers of those individuals who were caught, and not the score and ten who eluded arrest.

the data on drug related crime complaints is another area of interest. In 1972 the number of drug related crime complaints was at 1,568 for the two combined precincts. In 1976 it had risen to 3,390, an increment of 48.0%, or 1,616 more than the previous year of 1975. It would remain above the three

thousand for mark for three years in succession (1976 through 1978).

The effect of drug related crime on a community has to be understood in terms of the tragic social and psychological fallout that so often occurs. Much has been written about the ghetto parent who is forced to throw out an older, drug addicted, teenager in order to maintain what little order exists in the family household. Much has been written in newsprint about the drug "shooting galleries" and drug sales that take place in abandoned buildings.

A Harlem Health Crisis

A little studied, but important, indicator of the social consequences of urban displacement in Central Harlem is the New York City Department of Health (DH) Vital Statistics. This yearly publication lists the numbers or rates of various illnesses for the cities "health areas" (i.e. communities). The population data in the Vital Statistics, though not calculated from regular federal census data, give a good estimation of the ongoing development of serious health problems in any community.

From these data emerges the picture of a Central Harlem community in serious health crisis. DH data show a basic decline in the Central Harlem health area population: from 183,000 in 1973; 159,000 in 1977; 121,995 in 1980 and 121,000 by 1981. During this same (1973 to 1981) period, the most serious illnesses either remained roughly the same in number or incremented. The most serious manifestations of the increments occur around the period of 1981 - 1982, at the time of the lowest population estimates, and following the closing of Sydenham Hospital.⁶⁵

An example wherein the population of Central Harlem was dropping while the number of cases of an illness remained stable was that of malignant neoplasms (cancer). In 1973 there were 461 cases in the 183,000 Central Harlem health area population. By 1979 the

number was 430, while the population dropped to 159,000. By 1981 the number was set at 446 cases, while the population dropped to its lowest level of 121,000. At no time in this nine year period had the yearly number of cases gone below 400. Naturally, the yearly rates of malignant neoplasms were actually increasing, from 251.9% in 1973, 270.4% in 1979, and 365.6% by 1981.

The mean rate for ischemic and other heart disease during the period under study was 417.6%. The lowest rate was 357.9% in 1979, but the highest rates were 538.5% in 1980 and 509.9% in 1981; once again, the years of lowest population totals for the nine years under study.

With small deviations, this tendency of population decline with stable and advancing rates, or numbers, runs through much of the health data. The rate for cirrhosis of the liver had a mean value of 51.4% for the combined 9 year period; but showed rates of 71.3% for 1980 and 67.2% for 1981. The data on deaths from all causes produced a mean rate of 14.3% for the 1973 through 1981 period under study; while its highest rates occurred in 1980 (18.2%) and 1981 (17.9%).

The arguments that raged back and forth between Harlems' political leaders (chiefly, Rep. Charles Rangel, City Councilman Fred Samuel) and the Koch administration over the closing of Sydenham Hospital can be appreciated in light of the health data

presented here. Councilman Samuel charged that Richard Berman, then Director of the State Office of Health Systems Management, in moving to finalize the hospitals closing, was performing an "...insensitive, reckless and inhuman bureaucratic act..."⁶⁶

Professional medical service is an essential, and often capital intensive, need for the maintainance of life in the urban social setting. In the community that is experiencing wrenching social dislocations, we can expect that, at the level of discrete social units (individuals or families), a significant number will be in need of such services. As the social pathology continues its development, certain individuals in the community who are weaker (either by virtue of their personal economic condition, age, mental or physical condition, or any combination of these) can be expected to be less likely to cope with the community pathology.

One elderly man in his eighties had lived in the Central Park North area of Harlem on a fixed income for a number of years. Conditions in his block had deteriorated greatly, with building abandonements by owners and then tenants. Those individuals and groups in the block, who had taken a regular interest in the old mans personal welfare and health, moved away. This individual moved into an SRO hotel after his apartment was repeatedly robbed. In the SRO, which was located a few blocks away from his original

neighborhood, conditions were not much better. Criminal activity in the SRO was a constant threat, and the concentration of troubled individuals, many of whom had serious mental or emotional problems, contributed to an atmosphere of depression and disorientation.

In his first winter in the SRO, he was removed to a hospital where the front half of one foot was amputated, after severe frostbite led to a gangrenous development. The oil burner in the SRO was said to have been out of order an extended number of days. In an attempt to keep warm the old man had covered himself with blankets and his two overcoats. Unfortunately, one foot had slipped out from under the blankets as he slept.

As he related the story, I noted his eyes begin to fill with tears. His hands began to shake slightly as he spoke of how different it had been at his previous residence. Since the incident, his general health had deteriorated to the degree that he was taking medication for hypertension. When I spoke with this individual he was living in his third SRO (outside of Harlem) and his greatest complaint concerned the fact that his whole life now seemed to be centered in his one room.

Although his original Harlem apartment was not much bigger than his SRO room, he felt much more socially connected, to the world and to life, when he lived in

Harlem than he now was. Alone now, even the fond memories of his youth usually became short circuited by his fears for his future, and of dying alone: "I sure don't know what I'm going to do now, I sure don't know."

The cumulative effects of the social indicators, thus far mentioned, would seem to suggest a community skidding into the status of what has been termed an "undefended community";⁶⁷ so socially weakened and powerless that its unpleasant demise would be simply a cause for quickly noting in passing, before moving on to other matters.

However one may choose to interpret the trends of these indicators, they can only show us a particular dimension of developments in Central Harlem. What remains for this study is the investigation of a few of Central Harlems communities. Yet to be understood is the thinking of some groups and individuals in these communities regarding Harlems past, present and future. And, if Harlems past and present are understood by its residents as implying a future for these communities, the central issue of community (if it, indeed, still exists) will remain for our consideration.

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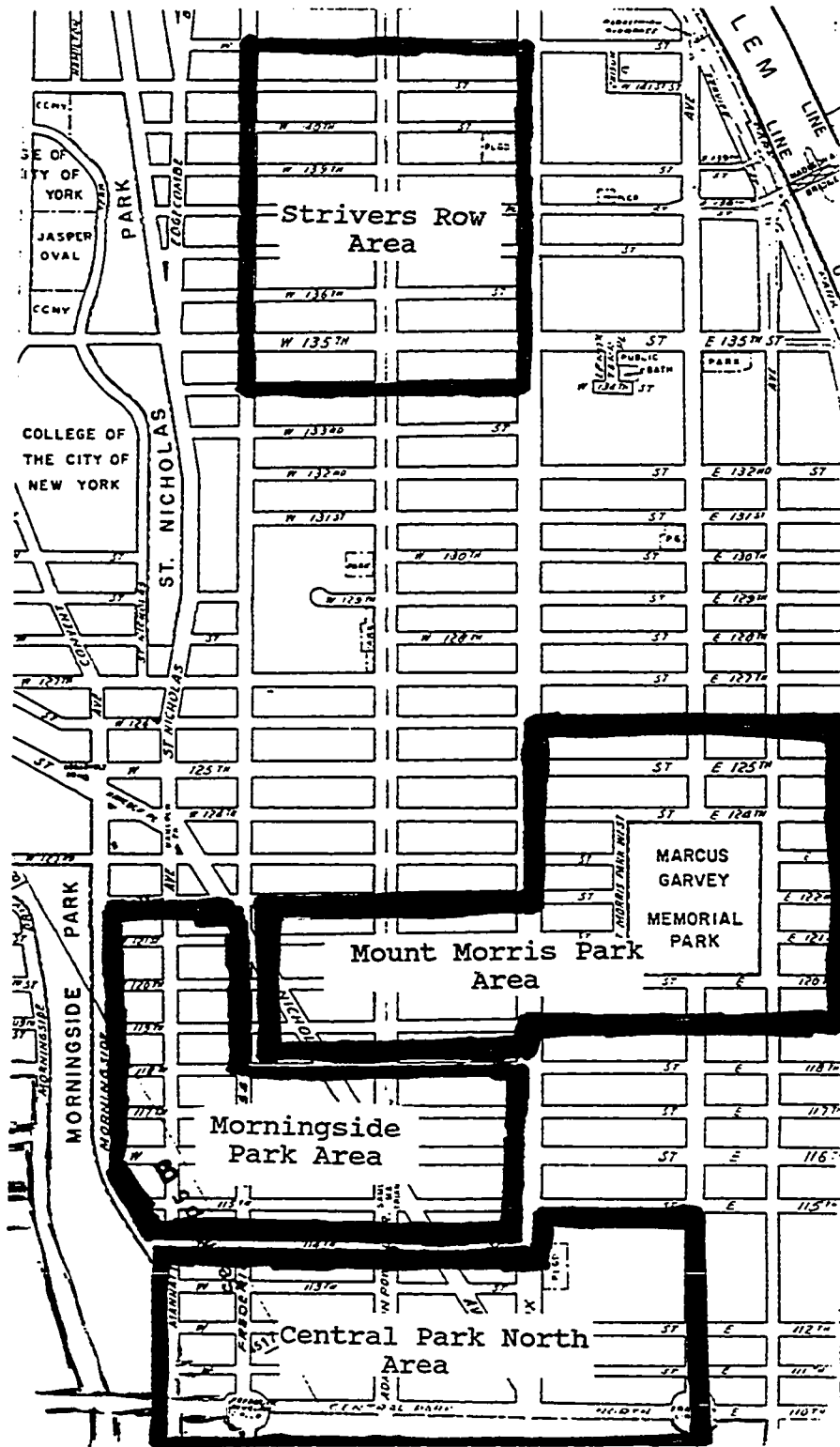
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Chapter III

The Harlem Areas

In this chapter we will look closely at a number of the neighborhood communities which comprise the four Central Harlem areas. In addition, the study also makes a more general reconnaissance of the West Harlem area. For each Central Harlem area I present basic demographic and socio-economic information, describing particular neighborhoods or streets where the effects of urban displacement have been shown to be most in evidence. Another important task of this chapter is to make a first note of the small, but rapidly growing, numbers of "middle class" individuals in the four Central Harlem areas. Although the indicators of "class structure" are not directly accessible from the government census information, certain social and economic indicators do provide a reasonable gauge of socio-economic balances and change in the Central Harlem areas.

The Four Central Harlem Areas



The U.S. Government Census data on income group membership, numbers of residents employed in service and manufacturing jobs, age group proportions and education do combine well to provide a basis for the writers assumption of a small but rapidly growing "middle class" in the Central Harlem areas. There significance is related to the potential skills and energy they can bring, as well as some of the problems involved with their entrance into Central Harlem. The data on the Central Harlem areas will also constitute the statistical background that will complement interviews of black; middle, lower working, and underclass residents -- which will follow in chapters IV, V, and VI of this study.

U.S. Census data show that changes in the numbers of income group members in the four Central Harlem areas differed from the New York City Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA). In a period when the New York City SMSA had lost population (1970-80); Central Harlem had lost proportionately more. At the same time, the four combined Central Harlem areas experienced a comparably greater growth in the numbers and percentages of income group members, when compared to the New York City SMSA (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: CHANGES IN INCOME FOR THE FOUR
COMBINED CENTRAL HARLEM AREAS AND THE NEW
YORK CITY SMSA. 1970 - 1980.

Combined Central Harlem Areas			
income groups	1970	1980	% of change
\$9,999 and under...	13,947	14,307	2.5
\$10,000 to \$14,999..	2,032	2,538	19.9
\$15,000 and over....	803	3,297	75.6
New York City SMSA			
\$9,999 and under.....	1,328,168	1,173,048	-13.2
\$10,000 to \$14,999.....	773,905	517,893	-49.4
\$15,000 and over..	868,352	1,811,292	52.0

Source: U.S. Government Census of Population.
Census Tract Statistics. 1970 and 1980. Table
P-4. Income Characteristics of the Population.
New York. N.Y., SMSA.

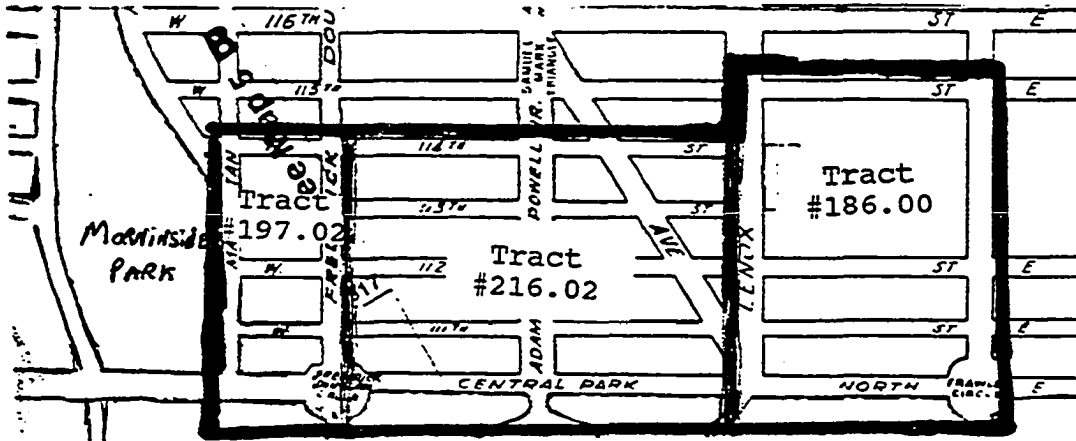
Even allowing for the natural changes that occur as adjustments to inflation, the data here is startling in showing relative stability and positive income group growth for the Central Harlem areas, when compared to the New York SMSA as a whole. Particular attention should be given to the 75.6% increases in the \$15,000 and over income group members in the combined Central Harlem areas, which quadrupled this groups numbers.

During the period of great population loss the proportions of service workers increased to 86.4% of

the work force in Central Harlem. This proportional increase, which occurs with the previously noted increases in the income group membership, happens during a period when there is a 29.1% increase in those residents with four or more years of college: going from 944 in 1970 to 1,333 by the 1980 census. These developments seemed to agree with my experiences as I interviewed a number of younger black professional people who, after acquiring their degrees and establishing themselves in their chosen professions, had either moved to Harlem for the first time or had been raised in Harlem and were returning. Numerically they are still a small, but growing group. They as yet remain hidden in the general population, in part because their life styles and habits do not drastically differ in appearance from the general Afro-American behavior mode in Harlem. Yet they espouse definite middle class goals and desires. They are a new addition to the older middle class (or "tenuous middle class") establishment in black Harlem and must, therefore, be understood as important social actors in the events that develop in Central Harlem (see Chapter IV).

What follows next is a more detailed social description of each of the Central Harlem areas, and the West Harlem area, of the study. It is an extended section, and is designed to be referred back to as an ancillary source of general information and specific

facts.

Central Park North Area

The Central Park North area is bounded on the west by Manhattan Avenue and Morningside Park. Its eastern border is Fifth Avenue. The southern border is 110th Street and Central Park, while its most northern border is 113th Street (see map). Three major avenues begin at 110th Street and run north through Central Harlem (Lenox Avenue, Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard, Frederick Douglas Boulevard). Another avenue, Saint Nicholas, branches off from Lenox Avenue, then runs north west. An IND local subway station at Frederick Douglas Blvd. and 110th Street and an IRT express

subway station at Lenox provide direct transportation to the downtown central business district (CBD). With the exception of Saint Nicholas, all avenues in the area have regular bus service to and from the CBD.

In the 1890's the construction of new tenement buildings heralded the opening up of this area to such white ethnic groups as East European Jews and Italians.¹ But by the 1930's blacks had moved southward from 135th Street to 110th Street, replacing the white ethnic populations. Later, the great migrations of blacks from the south to the northern cities swelled the Harlem population, creating crowded slum conditions in many neighborhoods. By the 1960 census the population of the Central Park North area stood at 27,743.² Population changes from 1970 to 1980 saw declines in the number and proportions of children, while the proportions of elderly were increasing.

Table 3.2: CHANGES IN AGE GROUP PROPORTIONS IN
THE CENTRAL PARK NORTH AREA. 1970 - 1980.

age groups	1970 %	1980 %	proportional % of change
19 and below	35.5 (7,400)	31.9 (4,167)	- 3.6
20 to 44	32.7 (6,815)	33.5 (4,383)	0.8
45 to 64	21.6 (4,505)	22.3 (2,918)	0.7
65 and over	9.9 (2,077)	12.1 (1,583)	2.2

Source: U.S. Government Census of Population. Census Tract Statistics. 1970 and 1980. Table P-1. General Characteristics of Persons. New York, N.Y., SMSA.

The 1980 census showed the areas population had declined to 13,120, the 19 year old and under group had declined to 4,383, but the 65 year and older segment had increased proportionally to 12.1% of the population (1,583); The area population in 1980 was 90.2% (11,841) black with 1,310 Hispanic and 405 white residents.

The number of families declined -32.8% (1,494), from 4,543 in 1970 to 3,049 in 1980. Unrelated individuals declined -33.3% (1,439), from 4,315 to 2,876. The mean income for families had increased from \$6,388 in 1970 to \$9,011 by the 1970 census. The mean income for unrelated individuals went from \$3,313 in 1970 to \$5,034 in 1980.

The population decrease was less severe for those with higher incomes. In Table 3.3 the decline in the number of those with incomes below \$10,000 stands in striking contrast to the dramatic increase in the number of area residents making \$15,000 and over.³

Table 3.3: CHANGES IN INCOME FOR THE CENTRAL PARK NORTH AREA. 1970 - 1980.

income groups	1970	1980	% of change
\$9,999 and under.....	4,216	3,649	-13.4
\$10,000 to \$14,999...	599	656	8.6
\$15,000 and over.....	197	827	76.1

Source: U.S. Government Census of Population. Census Tract Statistics 1970 and 1980. Table P-4 Income Characteristics of the Population. New York N.Y., SMSA.

In Table 3.4 the census data on education show a decrease in the number of those with one to 3 years of High School, from the 1970 to 1980 census. Of great interest here is the increase in the number of those with one to 3 years of college, and the significant increase in the number of those with four and more years of higher education.

Table 3.4: CENTRAL PARK NORTH AREA. CHANGES IN EDUCATION LEVELS. 1970 - 1980.

formal education	1970	1980	% of change
1 to 3 years of college.....	512	545	6.0
4 years of college and over..	189	291	35.0
1 to 3 years high school.....	2,920	2,411	-17.4
% of high school graduates.....	35.5%	36.3%	0.8%

Source: U.S. Government Census of Population. Census Tract Statistics 1970 and 1980. Education Characteristics of Population. New York N.Y., SMSA.

The sector that is east of Lenox Avenue (tract 186.00) is the sector where in the number of workers employed in the upper end of the service sector of the economy was the greatest. In Table 3.5 Tract 186.00 had 126 (10%) of its workers in the upper end of the service sector. The bulk of occupation holders fell into the lower end of the service sector, for all three of the areas tracts.

Table 3.5: OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION IN THE
IN THE CENTRAL PARK NORTH AREA TRACTS. 1980.

	197.02	216.00	186.00
upper end service sector... (4.2)	11 (4.2)	90 (6.8)	126 (10.1)
lower end service sector.. (72.6)	196 (72.6)	931 (71.1)	785 (63.2)
manufacturing and related..... (20.)	52 (20.)	288 (22.0)	331 (26.6)
	259	1,309	1,242

Source: U.S. Government Census of Population.
Census Tract Statistics. 1970 and 1980. Labor
Force and Disability Characteristics of Persons.
Table P-10. New York, N.Y., SMSA.

Today the three census tracts that make up the Central Park North area (197.02, 216.00, 186.00) provide vivid contrasts to one another, each one with neighborhoods and streets that show the developing mechanisms of urban displacement and the efforts of some to reverse the process.

In the short streets that run west from Frederick Douglas Boulevard to Morningside Park (Tract 197.02), rapid loss of population accompanied the decline in the number of occupied housing units; giving some streets a ghostly, almost deserted, appearance during the day time. At night the same empty streets inspire watchfulness, as the crime and drug related activity, always tacitly present during the day, imposes an uneasy influence on the thinking remaining residents. One man, commenting on the sale of illicit

drugs and criminal activity on 111th street, expressed his fear that his pre-teenaged nephews might be sold drugs: "...thats the way a lot of them make their money, selling that shit... they just better not me let catch them selling that shit to these kids (his nephews). I won't say I'd kill them (the drug sellers), but I definately will break an arm or a leg on them."

In the number of tract 197.02 sector occupied tenant rental housing units, that went from 1,222 in 1940 to 1,387 units by the 1960 census, had declined to only 538 units by 1980. Quality housing had become an increasingly scarce resource. The owner occupied housing declined from 25 bulidings in 1950 to only 7 by the 1980 census,a serious change because of the socially stabilizing nature of such housing for neighborhoods in transition. In 1983 this sector of the Central Park North area had declined beyond the point where the efforts of its residents alone could make a difference in halting the accellerating trend. By 1984 111th Street was almost devoid of people. Building demolition had begun on the buildings on the south side of 111th Street to make way for a new (possibly middle or upper middle income) cooperative apartment complex sponsored by the David Rockefeller "Partnership" organization, with private and government cooperation. At this point in the 197.02 sectors development those remaining low income

households that were able to leave have left. Those few who remain must be understood as having few options.

At the eastern end of the Central Park North area, from Lenox Avenue east to Fifth Avenue, and north to 113th Street, a much different situation holds. The facades of the buildings on 110th Street appear in comparably better condition than those located west of Frederick Douglas Blvd. For some residents the presence of the New York State Correctional facility, located next door to some multifamily rental buildings on 110th Street, adds an awkward (government reservation) atmosphere to what would otherwise be a relaxed residential setting.

A complex of buildings on 111th Street are examples of fine rehabilitative work. The block association that runs and owns the building complex on the block has maintained the properties to such a high degree that this little street has, over the years, functioned as a center piece for neighborhood stability and other rehabilitative efforts in the surrounding neighborhood. North of 112th Street is the Martin Luther King Towers, Public Housing Project. A ten building, 1,379 rental unit development, MLK Towers has also acted as a neighborhood stabilizing factor, during the period of great population loss.

Although the housing stock in the 186.00 sector has a number of seriously dilapidated housing structures,

some have been saved as a result of conscious efforts on the part of community based groups and the churches. The rental housing units in the 186.00 census tract, that stood at 2,250 in 1940, had increased to 2,436 units by 1960. With the 1970 census they had declined to 2,101 units, only to fall again to 1,917 units by 1980. The number of owner occupied housing units was the highest in 1960 at 25, dropping to 11 in 1970, and increasing to 17 by the 1980 census.

If census tracts 197.02, on the west, and 186.00, on the east, are contrasts in successful and less successful streets and neighborhoods; The middle sector (tract 216.00) of the Central Park North area tends to show aspects found in both these areas. With the exception of 110th Street, the cross streets of this sector tend to be ones in which fully occupied buildings stand next to one or more abandoned ones; a feeling of struggle between trends of depopulation and population is evident. 110th Street, from Lenox Avenue, west to Frederick Douglas Blvd. is a showcase of the image that the Harlem of the 1980's seek's to project to the world; with large multi-family buildings in various stages of rehabilitation. But 111th Street gives the image that is probably representative of Harlem in general: it is one of differing classes, ages, normal and deviant life styles, living in the closest proximity during a

period of change.

From 111th Street to 114th Street, the initial individual perceptions that I got from community residents were often mixed, reflecting the cross currents of change occurring in this sector. A woman community activist, noting the lack of services and the many abandoned buildings, had these comments: "With so many abandoned buildings we don't even have a neighborhood anymore. We need more supermarkets and service stores. We need day nurseries and activities for our teenagers - like sports clubs. But everything is money these days."

For a 53 year old man, who said that he had spent an eleven year period in and out of prison, a sense of community feeling and neighborhood future were illusions: "This block (111th Street) ain't got no future. The ones left on this block stay high and chill out. Look at those kids over there (the respondent was pointing across the street to where two teenaged girls and three teenaged boys were dancing to the music of a large radio). Those little girls will keep on dancing with the boys until one of the boys knocks them up. Then, all shes got is a big belly and he running off to get high and find some new pussy. Thats all thats happening here." Still another respondent, a woman resident for 40 years, saw the community life on her block as one of cooperation between neighbors, with only minor difficulties:

"Once in a while you hear a little cursing, but nobody bothers you. Everyboby sticks together on our street...certain areas are bad, like on Eighth Avenue (Frederick Douglas Blvd.) and 111th Street..."

In 1960 this sector had reached its highest number of occupied rental housing units (4,555 units). At that time it also had the largest number of owner occupied housing units (71). By 1970 tenant housing had declined -13.8% to 3,919 units. But by the 1980 census the available rental housing had declined another -36.3% to a low of 2,495 units. Meanwhile, owner occupied housing had declined to 47 properties.

Summary of The Central Park North Area.

The great depopulation of the western sector of the area, relative stability in its western sector, and mixed indicators in the center sector. The Central Park North area runs the gamut from development to devastation. Increases in the number of residents in the upper end of the income scale in an area of largely low income, lower end service employed and fixed income poor and elderly, show the area as a criss cross of trends.

Lenox and Madison Avenues run north and south through the area. Fifth Avenue runs south to Marcus Garvey (formerly, Mount Morris) Park, where Mount Morris Place continues south to 120th Street, to continue the south bound traffic on Fifth Avenue. Private bus lines often take this Fifth Avenue passage enroute to the downtown CBD.

Although the Mount Morris Park area has in no way escaped the ravages of urban disinvestment and displacement, it remains an area where elegant brownstone bulidings still recall a period of Harlems history that stressed the refined and privileged life style. The area around the park has lost much of its population to urban displacement, and is now the focus of plans, both public and private, for its rehabilitation and repopulation. West of Lenox Avenue is a stable sector of brownstone home owners struggling to maintain their neighborhoods as the costs of maintainance has become higher.

From 1950, when the areas population was 24,486, to 1980 when it had declined to only 8,989, the census figures have recorded a generally steady decline. The 1970 population figure of 12,967 had a 65 and older age segment of 1,489 (11.4%). By 1980 it was decreased to 1,422 (a 16.4% proportional increase), mostly by virtue of population declines among the younger age groups. The 19 year old and under segment declined from 3,653 (28.1%) in 1970 to 1,942 (22.5%) by the 1980 census. This was the only one of the Harlem areas wherein the 20 to 44 years age group declined proportionally; from 4,639 (35.7%) in 1970 to 2,805 (32.4%) in 1980.

Table 3.6: CHANGES IN AGE GROUP PROPORTIONS
IN THE MOUNT MORRIS PARK AREA. 1970 - 1980.

age groups	1970 %	1980 %	proportional % of change
19 and below	28.1 (3,653)	22.5 (1,942)	- 5.6
20 to 44	35.7 (4,639)	32.4 (2,805)	- 3.3
45 to 64	24.5 (3,186)	28.5 (2,462)	4.0
65 and over	11.4 (1,489)	16.4 (1,422)	5.0

Source: U.S. Government Census of Population.
Census Tract Statistics. 1970 and 1980. Table P-1.
General Characteristics of Persons. New York
N.Y. SMSA.

The Mount Morris Park area population is 96.9% black with 290 Hispanics and 92 white residents. A

major decline (43.9%) in the number of families, from 3,015 in 1970 to 1,689 in 1980, contrasted with a comparably minor decline (-2.3%) in the number of unrelated individuals, from 3,951 in 1970 to 3,860 in 1980. The mean income for families was \$6,559 in 1970, then \$10,179 in 1980, while that of unrelated individuals went from \$3,982 in 1970 to \$5,346 in 1980.

With general declines in population, and particularly the interesting contrasts of family and unrelated individual trends, the census data on incomes becomes valuable in showing marked increases in the numbers of income earners. Table 3.7 shows that a 37.3% increase in those with incomes of \$9,999 and below is accompanied by a 49.9% increase in the number of those in the \$10,000 to \$14,999 income bracket and a 75.7% increase in those earning \$15,000 and over.

Table 3.7: CHANGES IN INCOME FOR THE MOUNT MORRIS PARK AREA. 1970 - 1980.

income groups	1970	1980	% of change
\$9,999 and under.....	2,537	4,049	37.3
\$10,000 to \$14,999.....	309	611	49.4
\$15,000 and over.....	169	698	75.7

Source: U.S. Government Census of Population. Census Tract Statistics. 1970 and 1980. Table P-4. Income Characteristics of Population. New York N.Y., SMSA.

Despite decreases in population a steadily growing, income generating, segment of the population is in evidence. It is reflected also in the data on education in Table 3.8 Even with a -34.3% decline in those with one to three years of High School, increases of 35% and 20% for those with four or more years of college, respectively, tends to support the perception of a growing and more educated wage earning group.

Table 3.8: MOUNT MORRIS PARK AREA. CHANGES IN EDUCATION LEVELS. 1970 - 1980.

formal education	1970	1980	% of change
1 to 3 years of college.....	262	404	35.0
4 years of college and over..	208	260	20.0
1 to 3 years of high school...2,806		1,842	-34.3
% of high school graduates.....	30.9%	34.5%	3.6

Source: U.S. Government Census of Population.
Census Tract Statistics. 1970 and 1980.
Education Characteristics of Population.
New York, N.Y., SMSA.

In census tract 200.00 15.3% of the worker occupations were in the upper end of the service sector by the 1980 census (the greatest percentage of the three Mount Morris area tracts).

Table 3.9: OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION IN THE MOUNT MORRIS PARK AREA TRACTS. 1980.

	198.00	200.00	220.00
upper end service sector...	9 (2.4)	180 (15.3)	95 (7.9)
lower end service sector..	177 (48.2)	740 (62.9)	742 (62.4)
manufacturing and related.....	181 (49.3)	256 (21.7)	351 (29.5)
	367	1,176	1,188

Source: U.S. Government Census of Population. Census Tract Statistics. 1970 and 1980. Labor Force and Disability Characteristics of Persons. Table P-10. New York, N.Y., SMSA.

In the most eastern sector of the Mount Morris Park area (tract 198.00) disinvestment and displacement had brought the socio-economic situation to a nadir. To walk along Madison Avenue, across from Marcus Garvey Park, during the early 1980's was to become acutely aware of this fact. Many of the brownstones had been demolished, abandoned or sealed. Those remaining occupied stood in poor condition, their owners unable or unwilling to put the necessary capital into their maintenance and repair. On the other side of Madison Avenue, Marcus Garvey Park (renamed in honor of the great black activist and organizer) was a drab shell

of what it had been. Drug addicts slept on the park benches, while the park facilities had declined markedly.

Yet, the quality of much of the housing stock in this sector remained serviceable; needing the capital and work that would make help it take advantage of the still attractive aspects of the area. The decline in the number of occupied tenant rental housing units was greatest after 1970, when it declined -50%, from 1,355 units to a low 667 units. Owner occupied buildings, after declining from 59 in 1960 to only 23 in 1970, increased to 28 in 1980.

On the Fifth Avenue side of Marcus Garvey Park, in the middle sector (tract 200.00), I spoke with a middle aged woman who worked at the Mount Morris Park Community Center, which is located in the park on the Fifth Avenue side. A big concern for her was the fear of large scale displacement of people out of the neighborhood as a result of both the continuing disinvestment of building owners and the new signs of real estate speculation and talk of gentrification heard in the neighborhood. She noted one multiple dwelling building in the sector where a landlord had threatened to get organized crime members to force them out. But she also believed that the local tenants and block associations in the area were not working together to maintain the community unity and preserve its remaining occupied housing. Although

occupied tenant rental units declined 12.0%, from 1,847 in 1970 to 1,624 units by 1980, owner occupied units (i.e. brownstone buildings) increased 34.%; going from 58 in 1970 to 88 in 1980. The increase in the number of owner occupied housing is in part a reflection of the changes in upper income levels for this sector.

For the sector (tract 220.00) that lies west of Lenox Avenue, the major population losses made certain streets difficult for many long time residents to remain, as deviant individuals found their way into certain neighborhoods. In this sector, one example was West 119th Street between Saint Nicholas Avenue and Frederick Douglas Blvd. When I visisted it in 1980 it was a block with three remaining occupied buildings. This part of the tract 220.00 sector could only be categorized as one of great drug proliferation with drug related crime. As I talked with one resident on the block occasional groups of two or three men passed through the street on foot. Some of these mem carried shopping bags with odd goods for sale--slacks, detergent, cheap jewelry. Most looked unkempt in appearance and affected the mannerisms of the street drug culture.

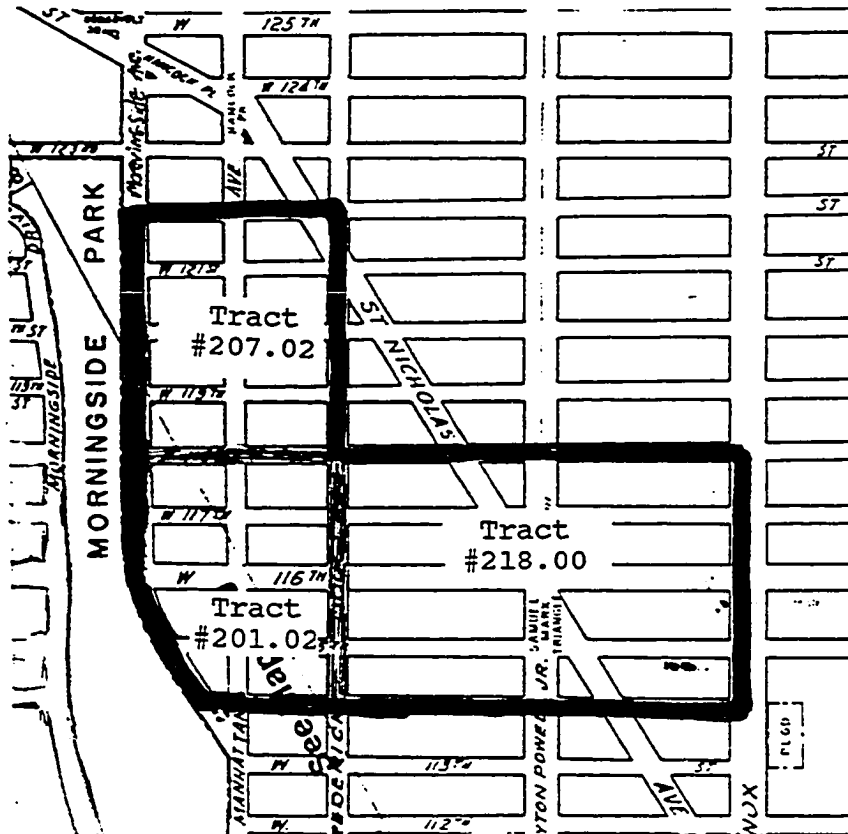
When I asked the resident of this block, a 60 year old grandmother who had lived there for 37 years, whether the deteriorating situation on her block would force her to move, she said: "...only if my life got

seriously threatened." This had been a major concern because of the increasing number of addicts coming through the block: "These junkies are always trying to get into the building. The other day two of them asked me to let them into the burned out apartment (on the first floor of her building) so they could drink wine." Looking up and down the street nervously, the respondent then spoke in low tones: "I used to complain to the police about the junkies. But now they (the junkies) threatened me."

But the tract 220.00 sector has also had a good number of brownstone buildings, some of them of excellent quality and in good care. Most of these buildings are located on the blocks that run from 120th to 124th Streets, between Lenox Avenue and Adam Clayton Powell Blvd. It is in these blocks that block associations have been active in attempting to maintain the neighborhood against the threat posed by the advancing mechanisms of urban displacement (see chapter IV). A gain of 18 new owner occupied homes in the tract 220.00 sector increased the number of occupied brownstones from 37 in 1970 to 55 by the 1980 census. But a 25.3% decline in multiple housing rental units, of 940 units in 1970 to 702 units in 1980, was a clear reflection of the loss of families from the sector.

Summary of The Mount Morris Park Area

Massive building abandonment and depopulation in the most eastern sector; comparative stability and an increase in owner occupied brownstone housing in the middle sector. In the western sector owner occupied housing also increasing even in a still declining population.

Morningside Park Area.

The three sectors (tracts 201.02, 207.02, 218.00) that make up the Morningside Park area are sectors in which both the effects of urban displacement and of purposeful attempts by community and government to rehabilitate can be observed.

On west 114th Street, between Adam Clayton Powell

and Frederick Douglas Blvd.'s, a block revitalization program combining the effort of the residents and the city government has had some success in rehabilitating the blocks buildings while keeping the resident population in tact. But to walk around the corner onto Frederick Douglas Blvd. the resident is greeted by massive building abandonment. The rows of abandoned structures often becoming the refuge for squatters crime and drug related activity.

At a large apartment building that I visited, on Manhattan Avenue and 121st Street, the tenants association that has managed the property purchased it from the city and forming a management corporation to run the building. Four blocks south on Manhattan Avenue I spoke to a tenant in a small walk-up building, who lived in fear that drug addicts might break into her apartment from a window in an abandoned building that was next to her bedroom window. Although the signs of disinvestment and displacement were still in evidence in the Morningside Park area, some positive signs could also be seen.

Morningside Park area is bounded on the south by 114th Street and on the north by 122nd and 118th Streets (see map). The avenues include Morningside Avenue (at the park); Manhattan, Saint Nicholas and Lenox Avenues; Frederick Douglas and Adam Clayton Powell Blvd.'s.

At the onset of the Second World War the areas population stood at a grand total of 34,461. Declines through the years brought the population number down to 17,751 in 1970, and then to 9,539 by the 1980 census. Declines in the number of youths, 19 years of age and younger, decreased this segment of the population from 5,929 (33.4%) in 1970 to 2,758 (28.5%) by the 1980 census. While this was occurring the number of elderly people decreased even as their proportional percentage of the population was increasing, from 1,967 (11.1%) in 1970 to 1,498 (16.0%) by 1980. The 20 through 44 year age group decline in number from 5,578 (31.5%) in 1970 to 3,081 (33.0%) by 1980.

Table 3.10: CHANGES IN AGE GROUP PROPORTIONS
IN THE MORNINGSIDE PARK AREA. 1970 - 1980.

age groups	1970 %	1980 %	proportional % of change
19 and below	33.4 (5,929)	29.5 (2,758)	- 3.9
20 to 44	31.5 (5,578)	33.0 (3,081)	1.5
45 to 64	23.8 (4,227)	21.3 (1,992)	- 2.5
65 and over	11.1 (1,967)	16.0 (1,498)	4.9

Source: U.S. Government Census of Population. Census Tract Statistics. 1970 and 1980. Table P-1. General Characteristics of Persons. New York, N.Y., SMSA.

The Morningside Park area population is 96.7% black with 33 whites and 195 people of Hispanic origin. In this area the number of families decreased -53.5% from 4,139 in 1970 to 2,730 by the 1980 census. Paralelling this decline was a 24.1% decrease in the number of unrelated individuals, going from 3,843 in 1970 to 2,915 by 1980. The mean income for families was \$6,805 in 1970, but stood at \$9,791 by 1980. Mean incomes for unrelated individuals went from \$3,422 in 1970 to \$4,889 with the 1980 census. A noticeable decline in the number of those with incomes of \$9,999 and below tended to underscore the losses of families and unrelated individuals. The 58.3% increase in those with incomes over \$15,000 points up, once again, the existence of a small but growing upper end income membership.

Table 3.11: CHANGES IN INCOME FOR THE MORNINGSIDE PARK AREA. 1970 - 1980.

income groups	1970	1980	% of change
\$9,999 and under.....	3,266	2,730	-16.4
\$10,000 to \$9,999.....	543	575	- 5.5
\$15,000 and over.....	230	552	58.3

Source: U.S. Government Census of Population. Census Tract Statistics. 1970 and 1980. Table P-4. Income Characteristics of Population. New York N.Y., SMSA.

Declines in the numbers of those attending college or high school reflected the loss of population generally, but more especially, the loss of young people age 19 years and below. The 48% decline in the ranks of those with one to three years of high school is indicative of this trend that is only marginally explained by the 3.6% increase in high school graduates.

Table 3.12: MORNINGSIDE PARK AREA. CHANGES IN EDUCATION LEVELS. 1970 - 1980.

formal education	1970	1980	% of change
1 to 3 years of college.....	408	361	- 11.5
4 years of college and over..	275	246	- 10.5
1 to 3 years of high school..	3,001	1,551	- 48.3
% of high school graduates.....	30.9%	34.5%	3.6

Source: U.S. Government Census of Population.
Census Tract Statistics. 1970 and 1980.
Education Characteristics of Population. New York
N.Y., SMSA.

In the Morningside Park area severe population declines have not only emptied streets and buildings, but affected the occupational distribution in the area as well. In all three sectors most people are employed in the lower end of the service sector. Table 3.13 shows that in only one sector (tract 201.02) does the number of upper end of service sector people reach 10% of the total occupational holders.

Table 3.13: OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION IN THE MORNINGSIDE PARK AREA TRACTS. 1980.

	201.02	207.02	218.00
upper end service sector..	77 (10.0)	37 (5.9)	65 (6.5)
lower end service sector..	506 (66.1)	469 (75.5)	760 (76.3)
manufacturing and related.....	186 (23.7)	115 (18.5)	171 (17.1)
	765	621	996

Source: U.S. Government Census of Population. Census Tract Statistics. 1970 and 1980. Labor Force and Disability Characteristics of Persons. Table P-10. New York, N.Y., SMSA.

The most eastern sector of the Morningside Park area (tract 218.00) has been affected greatly by urban displacement. Housing abandonment and population loss have been characteristic signs of the phenomenon. The faces of the unemployed men and women who stand along 116th Street near Frederick Douglas Blvd. are yet another sign of the phenomenon. A few of them have given up the struggle, falling through any real or

imagined government social welfare net, to join the ranks of the homeless "street people." Most hold on. One elderly man from 117th Street expressed the feeling of unease and apprehension of a community caught in a web of social malaise: "Too many people have too much time on their hands; just sitting around. Those that don't work just stay out all night. I saw a ten year old boy walking the street at 3 A.M. carrying a baseball bat."

The housing choices in the sector are also a problematic matter. In 1940 there were no housing vacancies in the sector. By 1980 there were 432 vacant units. 1,489 occupied rental units in 1970 declined to 1,029 by 1980.

To the west of tract 218.00, the geographically smallest sector in the Morningside Park area (tract 201.02) runs west from Frederick Douglas Blvd., to Morningside Park. In summer months parents sit on the park benches near the entrances to Morningside Park. It is a pleasant experience just to sit and talk with friends while watching the people pass by on a summer day. The fact that the park benches are also used for drug trafficking and other deviant activities serves to make the resident in search of a casual stroll to the park cautious. One woman resident of Morningside Avenue at 116th Street had these comments when asked "is there one thing that makes it hard for you to stay?" (Woman resident): "The crime in the area; they

found a man dead in the park not too long ago...Our problem is moving out these junkies. Sometimes they congregate in the building (abandoned) next to ours." Building abandonment and population loss have figured greatly in the kinds of deviant activity in this sector, and the attitudes of the residents to the prospects of bringing about real neighborhood progress.

After the sector population had dropped 26%, from 6,604 in 1960 to 4,829 in 1970, it made a 50.2% drop to 2,404 by the 1980 census. The amount of available housing had decreased greatly in recent times. Census data show that the numbers of vacant or for sale units in the sector increased sharply from 73 in 1970 to 458 by 1980; as 1,815 tenant rental units and 26 owner occupied structures declined to 995 units and 14 structures respectively. By 1984 a number of community rehabilitation efforts had improved things somewhat. Selected buildings on Morningside Avenue and, most notably, on Manhattan Avenue from 114th Street to 118th Street, are showing visible improvements. Manhattan Avenue has a number of large multifamily rental buildings. Even with the numbers of people who often crowd the side walks and front stoops of the buildings on a summer evening, the passerby cannot help but note the regular maintenance that continually goes into a number the building facades. While I watched a group of teenaged boys

carrying a basketball to the nearby school yard court, I noted that in a number of windows colorful potted plants had been installed by residents, that added to the general attractiveness of Manhattan Avenue in this sector.

But Manhattan Avenue, from 118th Street north to 121st Street, is a different matter. A part of the next most northern sector (tract 207.02), Manhattan Avenue is here marked by heavy building abandonment and population loss. Most of these buildings are multifamily rental structures that have, generally, been sealed up in concrete by the City or, sometimes, by the private owner. The portion of Manhattan Avenue north of 121st Street to 123rd Street (near the closed Sydenham Hospital) has a concentration of brownstone buildings on the west side of the Avenue, and large multifamily buildings on the east side of the Avenue. The appearance of the brownstone facades is good to excellent. The facades of the multifamily rental buildings on the eastern side of the avenue are excellent, and show continuing maintenance of the properties.

Changes in population for this sector have followed the general trend for the Morningside Park area. A -36.0% decline from 6,443 in 1960 to 4,118 in 1970, was followed by a -43.0% drop to 2,308 by the 1980 census. A significant corollary to this change was a 48.7% decline in the number of families, from 933 in

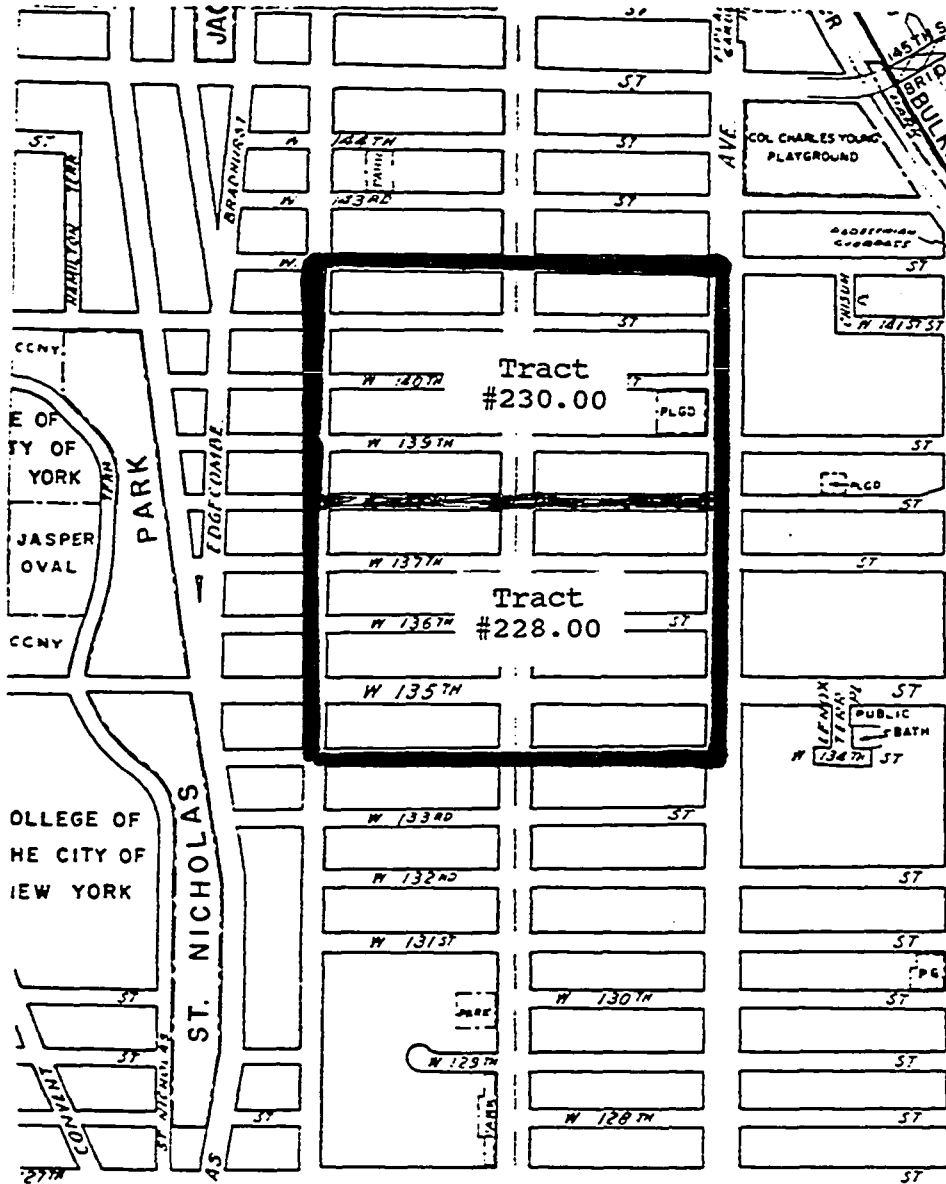
1970 to 478 by 1980; a -35.2% decline in unrelated individual households from 931 in 1970 to 603 in 1980, was another one.

The -41% loss in tenant rental units: 1,509 in 1970 to 889 by the 1980 census, has only served to make the remaining housing choices limited.

Summary of The Morningside Park Area.

For the three sectors comprising the Morninside Park area decreases in the proportions of children and a growing number of upper end income wage earners are significant sign post of change. Despite great, spreading, building abandonment particular streets and neighborhoods survive and even prosper.

The Strivers Row Area.



Bordered on the south by 135th Street and 142nd Street on the north, the Strivers Row areas most eastern border is Lenox Avenue and its most western border is Frederick Douglas Blvd. (census tracts 228.00 and 230.00). The only other Avenue is Adam Clayton Powell Blvd. The area is serviced by the IND subway system on Frederick Douglas Blvd., and the IRT subway system on Lenox Avenue. Regular bus service operates on all three avenues to the downtown CBD.

In the first decade of the twentieth century the area that would be called Strivers Row was one of the first black enclaves in what was to become black Central Harlem. Saint Phillips Protestant Episcopal Church, still a major influence in Harlem affairs, had purchased "a row of thirteen large apartment houses..."⁴ on 135th Street near Lenox Avenue in the early part of the century. The Strivers Row blocks of 137th, 138th and 139th Streets, west of Adam Clayton Powell Blvd. have traditionally been known as the dwelling place of the upper class and the ambitious, upwardly mobile black person. Hence the name "Strivers Row" was applied early on by black Harlemites.

Writing in the early 1940's, journalist Roi Ottley described these streets in the following manner: "Prim tree-dotted Strivers' Row, so named because of the efforts its residents made to maintain upper-class status, is Harlems exclusive residential area. The

spacious three story dwellings, designed by Stanford White, cover the two blocks of 138th and 139th Street, between Seventh and Eighth Avenues. They are similar in status to Washington's smart Le Droit section, St. Louis's Enright Street..." 5

By the 1980's the streets that Ottley described still maintain much of their charm and attractiveness. But, like the rest of Central Harlem they have not remained unaffected by the urban displacement or its socio-economic consequences. A population of 22,141 in 1960 declined by 31.8% to 17,966 in 1970. By 1980 a 27% decline brought the population down to 13,107. The significant changes in the percentages of age groups has occurred among children (19 years and under) and the elderly (65 years and over). A -7.3% decline in the proportions of children, from 31.7% in 1970 to 24.4% by 1980 contrasted with a 5.0% increase in the proportions of elderly, from 13.5% in 1970 to 18.5% in 1980. In the declining population the proportions of prime aged (20 to 44 years) people had increased by 2.4%, while those 45 to 65 years of age showed no significant proportional change.

Table 3.14: CHANGES IN AGE GROUP PROPORTIONS
IN THE STRIVERS ROW AREA. 1970 - 1980.

age groups	1970 %	1980 %	proportional % of change
19 and below	31.7 (5,870)	24.4 (3,201)	- 7.3
20 to 44	29.1 (5,380)	31.5 (4,131)	2.4
45 to 64	25.5 (4,709)	25.4 (3,338)	- 0.1
65 and over	13.5 (2,507)	18.5 (2,430)	5.0

Source: U.S. Government Census of Population.
Census Tract Statistics. 1970 and 1980. Table P-1.
General Characteristics of Persons. New York
N.Y., SMSA.

The areas population is 97.5% (12,636) black with 347 Hispanic and 124 whites. While proportions of prime aged individuals increased, the number of families declined sharply by 36.%, going from 3,928 in 1970 to 2,512 by the 1980 census. At the same time, the number of unrelated individuals remained stable, with a slight (0.4%) increase, from 4,945 in 1970 to 4,956 by the 1980 census. In this situation of declining families and stable numbers of unrelated individuals there was a 83.% increase in the number of those earning \$15,000 and over. Table 3.15 also shows lesser increases for those in the lower income categories.

Table 3.15: CHANGES IN INCOME FOR THE STRIVERS ROW AREA. 1970 - 1980.

income groups	1970	1980	% of change
\$9,999 and under...	3,928	3,879	19.1
\$10,000 to \$14,999..	581	696	16.5
\$15,000 and over....	207	1,220	83.0

Source: U.S. Government Census of Population. Census Tract Statistics 1970 and 1980. Table P-4. Income Characteristics of the Population. New York N.Y., SMSA.

The mean income for families was \$11,472, highest of the four Central Harlem areas. The mean income for unrelated individuals was \$5,974. With the increasing numbers of the upper end income group members, there were at least 20% more college experienced people who had four or more years of college in the most northern sector (tract 230.00). But as Table 3.16 indicates, the increases in college attending residents of the Strivers Row area have been general for the two census tract sectors that make up the area.

Table 3.16: CHANGES IN COLLEGE ATTENDENCE FOR THE STRIVERS ROW AREA CENSUS TRACTS: 228.00, 230.00 FOR 1970-80

tracts	1 to 3 years college			4 and over years college		
	1970	1980	% of change	1970	1980	% of change
228.00	322	440	26.8	115	237	51.4
230.00	309	407	24.0	157	299	47.4
	631	847		272	536	

Source: U.S. Government Census of Population. Census Tract Statistics. 1970 and 1980. Education Characteristics of Population. New York N.Y., SMSA.

The percentage of workers employed in the upper end of the service sector was reflective of the education achievements of Strivers Row residents. Table 3.17 shows that while most workers were employed in the service sectors of the economy, a significant percentage of these were in the upper end of the service occupations; 12.2% of the tract 228.00 workers and 14.4% of the tract 230.00 workers.

Table 3.17: OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION IN THE STRIVERS ROW AREA TRACTS. 1980.

	228.00	230.00
upper end service sector.....	212 (12.2)	346 (14.4)
lower end service sector.....	1,156 (66.7)	1,439 (60.1)
manufacturing and related.....	363 (20.9)	609 (25.4)
	1,731	2,394

Source: U.S. Government Census of Population. Census Tract Statistics. 1970 and 1980. Labor Force and Disability Characteristics of Persons Table P-10. New York, N.Y., SMSA.

In the most northern sector of the Strivers Row area (tract 228.00) a mixture of traditional brownstone buildings, lining the cross streets between Adam Clayton Powell Blvd. and Frederick Douglas Blvd., combine with the multifamily rental buildings along the avenues in projecting an image of differing economic life styles within Harlems social setting.

135th Street at Lenox Avenue boasts the Schomberg Center for Research in Black Culture. A few doors west on 135th Street, there are the refurbished multifamily buildings, owned by Saint Phillips Church. Continuing further west is the Harlem YMCA, which has hosted many cultural events, and in the past was the home for a number of black writers and artists who later went on to world wide celebrity.

The combination of black historical and cultural centers, elegant brownstones; and a mixture of middle class and working class black community life styles, epitomize much of the positive image of the area that are pitted in on-going contradiction to the social facts of urban displacement in this sector. Although the police precinct is also located on 135th Street, the socio-economic mechanisms of housing disinvestment and abandonment, loss of population and the destruction of many households, unable to withstand the changing social situation serve to make the neighborhood a vulnerable one. The corollary to the action of these mechanisms is seen in the problems of alcoholism, drug addiction with crime and related deviant activity.

A -26.7% decline drove the tract 228.00 sector population down from 7,230 in 1970 to 5,296 by the 1980 census. Hidden in this decline was a -38.8% decline in families, from 1,572 to 962, and a 5.9% increase in unrelated individuals, from 2,387 to

2,539. In 1980 47.7% (1,210) of unrelated individuals were below the poverty level, whereas 34.6% (827) were in 1970. By 1980: 35.7% (343) of the families were below the poverty level in the census tract 228.00 sector, whereas 29% (461) had been in 1970.

For those at the upper end of the income scale, the numbers of owner occupied housing units (i.e. brownstones, townhouse, etc.) were at their lowest number (113) in 1940. By 1970 they were at their highest, 197 structures. But a -15.7% (31) loss set the number of occupied units to 166 in 1980. The fiscal problems of 1975-76 and rising costs generally, made homeownership difficult for a number of residents. The period of the largest number of occupied multifamily housing units in this sector was 1960, when 4,004 rental housing units were fully occupied. A -28.6% (1,146) loss dropped the occupied rental housing units to 2,858 in 1970. But a combination of community, private and government funded initiatives had succeeded in increasing occupied rental units by 16.6% (572 units) to 3,430 units by 1980.

On 136th Street between Adam Clayton Powell Blvd. and Frederick Douglas Blvd., one sees interesting contrasts. Many building facades are in excellent repair, with special iron work adornments and flowered plants gracing the windows. Other building facades show the signs of less care, i.e. less capital for

the up-keep and improvement of the facade. And about three buildings were sealed up with brick, awaiting some new development that would make them reoccupied again.

One block north, on 137th Street, the appearance of the brownstone and townhouse structures become decidedly impressive. It is clearly a middle, upper middle, income street and the ornateness of this blocks appearance is carried over, and becomes even richer, in the two blocks immediately to the north: 138th and 139th Streets, in the 230.00 census tract sector. This is the heart of the Strivers Row area. For one man who has lived on 138th Street for over 50 years, and was born on the block, the changes that have occurred there have sometimes been gradual, some times rapid. The neighborhood had changed: "...I can remember how it was when the old families, the original owners, were here. All the original owners are dead now. What you have (now) is the younger people coming in...yes that's what is gratifying, the young blacks are coming back. In 1945 some blacks were getting rid of their properties and leaving the neighborhood. If blacks in 1945 would have stayed, we could have made it."

The most northern streets in the 230.00 sector are 104th and 141st Streets. From Lenox Avenue west to Frederick Douglas Blvd., the housing on these streets is characterized by large multifamily rental

structures. They are generally of the older walkup type. 140th Street, between Adam Clayton Powell Blvd. and Frederick Douglas Blvd. is a street that is struggling, not only to survive, but to prosper. The large soot covered buildings house many working class family households, as well as, elderly and other households on fixed incomes. In 1981 an active block association was working to improve the block.

One block north on 141st Street, a City housing project dominates the north side of the street with Saint Charles Boromeo Roman Catholic Church near the corner of Adam Clayton Powell Blvd. The multifamily tenement housing on the south side of the street has reached near complete dilapidation and a number of buildings are abandoned. On occasion the passerby notices someone looking out of the window of an abandoned building. It becomes clear that for the few residents who remain on this block, the social mobility options have been severely restricted. And, whether they are the elderly or the young; they are effected by, and in turn will have an effect on the other socio-economic groups in the community.

In the tract 230.00 sector steep population decline occurred between 1970 and 1980, when the population dropped -27.3%, from 10,736 down to 7,804. From 1970 to 1980 the number of families declined in this sector by -34.2%, from 2,558 to 2,427. Family poverty levels in the tract 230.00 sector increased from 442 (18.8%

of the population) in 1970 to 517 (33.4%). The number of unrelated individuals increased slightly from 1,007 (39.4%) in 1970 to 1,025 (42.2%) by the 1980 census. 37% of unrelated individuals below the poverty level were 65 years of age or older.

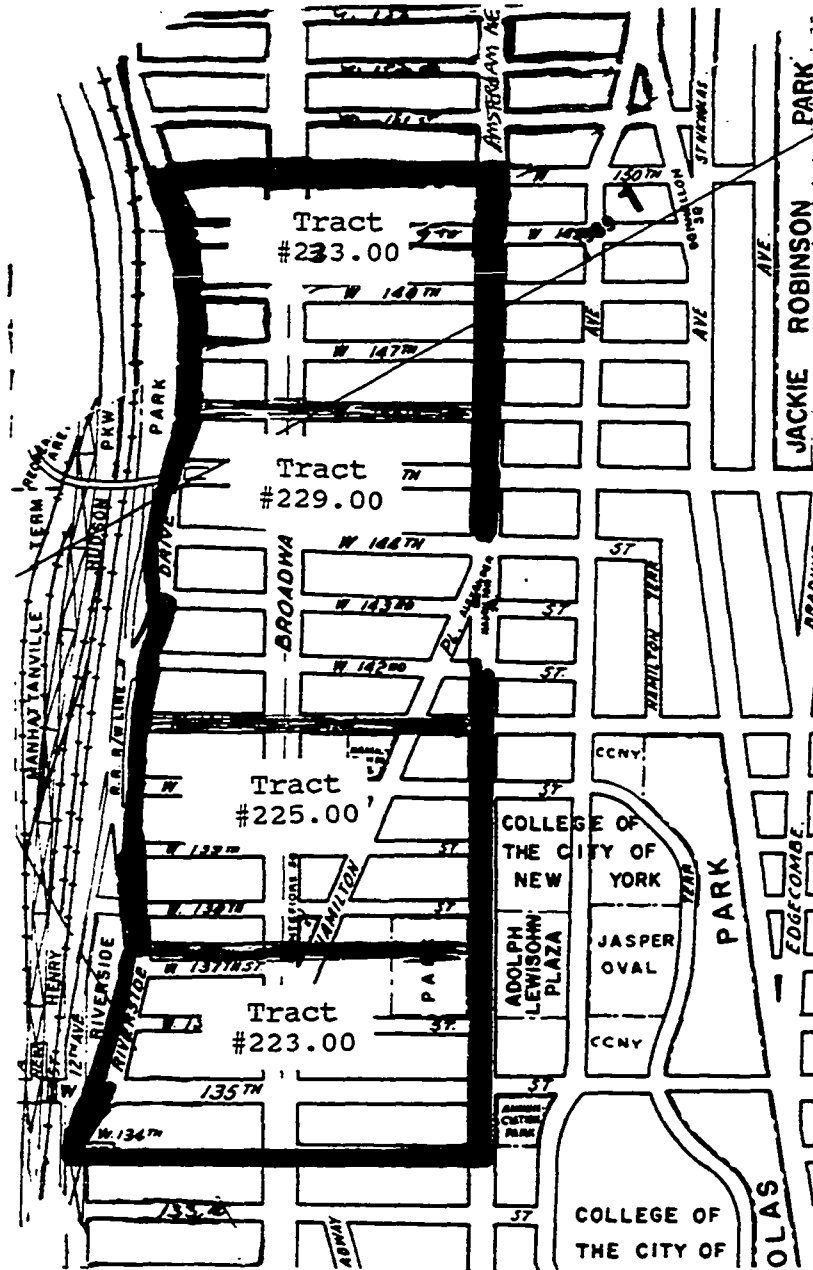
In 1960 the 230.00 sector had the greatest number of occupied housing units in the post World War Two era. There were 4,464 multifamily rental housing units and 107 owner occupied buildings. By 1970 multifamily housing declined to 3,839 units, decreasing another -18.2% to 3,137 units by 1980. owner occupied housing units, after declining to 95 occupied buildings in 1970, increased to 98 buildings by 1980. Many of the standing multifamily housing structures that were abandoned remain essentially sound, lacking only capital to move them back on to the City tax rolls once again. Others are too far gone, having had serious fires that have weakened their basic structure.

Summary of The Strivers Row Area.

Plagued by most of the socio-economic problems of the other Central Harlem areas, the Strivers Row area has benefitted from a concentration of comparably higher income households, a number of stable and populated streets and neighborhoods. The decline in

the number of families with a simultaneous increase in the proportions of elderly were trends that Strivers Row shared with other Central Harlem areas.

West Harlem Area.



The West Harlem area is the last, but a significant, area for our consideration. Its inclusion in the study of urban displacement in Central Harlem is based on a number of points that make it important to the discussion of the topic. The perception of many Harlemites that West Harlem is an integral part of Harlem has persisted despite some changes that have occurred in the area. A number of historic, cultural and social institutions and artifacts, that are related to the black Harlem experience are located in West the West Harlem area. Economic development and, in particular, increasing real estate speculation have begun to be evident in the area. Developing mechanisms have been showing their effects, particularly in regard to the problem of homeowners in the West Harlem area. Given the special relationship of West Harlem to black Central Harlem, there are some unique social and cultural differences, having to do with the large Hispanic community, that can be seen as possessing great potential for influencing trends in the area.

For the purposes of this study the West Harlem area is inclusive of four census tract sectors (223.00, 225.00 229.00, 233.00) which capture many, but certainly not all, aspects that may be of interest. Its eastern border will begin at Amsterdam Avenue and its western border is 135th Street and the most southern border is 150th Street.

The population of the West Harlem area was at its highest, in recent years, in 1950 when it stood at 43,444. In 1970 it had decreased to 35,030, then to 34,262 with the 1980 census.

Within these developments the number of families decreased by -5.%, from 8,274 in 1970 to 7,860 in 1980. At the same time, the number of unrelated individuals increased by 12%, going from 6,274 in 1970 to 7,130 by the 1980 census. As the number of unrelated individuals increased the percentage of their number who fell below the poverty level increased, from 28.3% of the population (1,691) in 1970 to 38.1% (2,722) in 1980. With the small decrease in the number of families, family poverty rates increased from 1,260 (15.5%) in 1970 to 2,389 (29.8%). With these developments the West Harlem area differed clearly from the Central Harlem areas in that it evinced a more stable population balance with little if any change in the proportional or numerical representation of the various age groups (see Table 3.18).

Table 3.18: CHANGES IN AGE GROUP PROPORTIONS
IN THE WEST HARLEM AREA. 1970 - 1980.

age groups	1970 %	1980 %	proportional % of change
19 and below	30.9 (10,834)	31.4 (10,766)	-0.5
20 to 44	36.5 (12,806)	37.0 (12,704)	0.5
45 to 64	22.5 (7,908)	21.0 (7,220)	-1.5
65 and over	9.9 (3,482)	10.4 (3,572)	-0.5

Source: U.S Government Census of Population.
Census Tract Statistics. 1970 and 1980. Table P-1.

General Characteristics of Persons. New York
N.Y., SMSA.

Family mean income in the West Harlem area was \$8,421 in 1970 and increased to \$12,694 by 1980. This substantial growth in income is reflective of an overall increase in incomes for residents in the West Harlem area. Table 3.19 shows the 72.7% increase in the \$15,000 and over income group in the area.

Table 3.19: CHANGES IN INCOME FOR THE WEST HARLEM AREA. 1970 - 1980.

income income	1970	1980	% of change
\$9,999 and under.....	5,547	6,893	19.5
\$10,000 to \$14,999....	1,613	2,130	24.2
\$15,000 and over.....	944	3,467	72.7

Source: U.S. Government Census of Population. Census Tract Statistics. 1970 and 1980. Table P-4. Income Characteristics of the Population. New York N.Y., SMSA.

In the West Harlem area, where the two largest resident groups are Hispanics and blacks, Day time operation of some the neighborhood stores that are owned by Chinese, Koreans, East Indians and others, lends an international flavor to the 145th Street and Broadway shopping node. But at the end of the regular business day most of these groups lock their places of business securely and leave; as the area, once again, takes on its true black and Hispanic character.

Broadway from 135th to 150th Street is the avenue that, in truth, reflects the mixture of Afro-American

and Hispanic-Caribbean cultures. On summer saturday afternoons Dominican men gather around the small table outside a bodega for a game of dominos and conversation. A group of black brownstone home owners stand together on the side walk at 147th Street spiritedly discussing the neighborhood happenings. At the "House of Talisman" religeous store/botanica on 145th Street, both blacks and Hispanics gather to purchase religeous articles, potions and herbs, in a similar Afrocentric tradition. On the same street Copelands Restaurant and Lounge, well known throughout Harlem, prepares for the evenings customers. Because the West Harlem area is more densley populated than many areas of Central Harlem one sees more families, more young people. Because of the denser population there is an enhanced feeling of safety when one is on the street during the day. Drug related activities, although a clear reality in the area, are not carried out quite as openly in West Harlem as in certain other parts of Harlem.

In the most southern sector of the West Harlem area (Tract 223.00), From Amsterdam Avenue at the campus of City College, down the hill and across Broadway to Riverside Drive, the housing stock is much the same. Large old multifamily rental buildings make up most of the standing structures, with a few smaller buildings. The sector population has increased by 18.4% between 1970 and 1980, going from 9,253 to 11,344. The population is 71.% Hispanic and 26% black, with a small number of assorted white ethnic people included. The number of multifamily housing units in the sector increased from 2,646 in 1970 to 3,629 by 1980. Owner occupied units increased from 31 in 1970 to 50 in 1980. During this period, total vacant housing units also increased from 26 to 411, as some new housing was made available.

In the next northern sector (Tract 225.00), from 138th to 142nd Streets, there was an increase in the number of occupied brownstone buildings along the streets that intersect with Hamilton Place, Broadway and Riverside Drive. The population declined slightly (7.1%) going from 11,035 in 1970 to 10,248 in 1980. Hispanics make up 60% of the population in the sector while blacks are 35.6%. A decrease in the number of owner occupied buildings in the tract 225.00 sector left 90 vacant structures: dropping the number of owner occupied structures from 335 in 1970 to 245 by the 1980 census. A less significant drop in occupied

multifamily tenant rental units decreased their number from 3,561 units in 1970 to 3,357 by 1980.

In Tract 229.00, the next northern sector, a slightly larger (-13.5%) decline dropped the sector population from 8,353 in 1970 to 7,224 in 1980. The percentage of blacks and Hispanics was following a regular pattern for the four census tracts of the West Harlem area by showing an increase in the percentage of blacks, accompanied by a decrease in the percentage of Hispanics, the further north one traveled. The number of owner occupied structures in the tract 229.00 sector decreased, from 95 in 1970 to 39 by 1980. Multiple housing rental units declined 27.2%, going down from 3,839 housing units in 1970 to 2,793 in 1980.

In the most northern sector (Tract 233.00) the population has been in a gradual decline for a number of years. The steepest drop (-26.5%) occurred between 1960 and 1970 when the 8,695 total went to 6,389. This was followed by a -14.7% decline, setting the population at 5,446 by the 1980 census. In this sector the percentages of blacks to Hispanics is almost the exact opposite of the most southern sector of the West Harlem area, blacks account for 82.4% of the population and Hispanics for 16.0%.

In the 233.00 sector the pattern of large multifamily rental buildings and streets with concentrations of brownstone buildings is

continued. On 146th Street, between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue, most of these housing units are in dilapidated condition or abandoned. 1,046 tenant rental units had become unoccupied between 1970 and 1980, decreasing occupied rental units from 3,839 to 2,793. Some of the most attractive owner occupied units, brownstones, are also located in the sector. On 147th Street between Broadway and Riverside Drive a number of, mostly, well maintained brownstones line the block. Most of these are owner occupied buildings, whose owners are primarily black, young to elderly middle income, people. The number of owner occupied units in the sector had stood at 140 in 1960, but decreased to 64 in 1970. They increased by only one to 65 units with the 1980 census.

Summary of the West Harlem Area.

An area that had experienced population declines has, in recent years, begun to reverse the trend with a growing Hispanic population. The 72.7% increase in the percentage of upper end income earners, and a mean income in 1980 of \$12,694, up from \$8,421 in 1970, were positive signs. Decreases in the number of families (-5.0%) and increases in the number of unrelated individuals (12.%) followed the trends for other areas of Harlem.

Comparing the Harlem Areas.

Of the four Central Harlem areas, the Morningside Park area appears to have lost the greatest proportion of its population to the displacement process. Its western most sector and the western most sector of the Central Park North area, both border Morningside Park and the "gentrified" areas of Morningside Heights. These two Neighborhoods, then, would best conform to Peter Salins requisite conditions for the gentrification process (i.e. being located near an already gentrified Morningside Heights area, and experiencing serious population losses).

Although the development of a small, but growing, middle class (or upper-end income) group appears to be a trend for all the Harlem areas, the Strivers Row area is the one that seems to possess the most immediate potential for the further growth of this group. Like the Mount Morris Park area it has a number of fine brownstones, townhouses and serviceable multi-family dwellings. And the fact that (in terms of reputation) the Strivers Row area has remained the acknowledged neighborhood of Harlems black elites, during "good" and bad times, has made it a first neighborhood of consideration for black middle-class potential settlers. Its location away from a (outside of Harlem) gentrified area would, theoretically, preclude Strivers Row from being considered a

potential gentrification area in Salins definition; and unlike the western sectors of the Central Park North and Morningside Park areas.

The macro area trends of fewer families, fewer proportions of children, greater proportions of elderly are general for the four Central Harlem areas, as well as West Harlem. It is reasonable to assume that these trends are generalizable to all of Harlem. No single area has been able to avoid the brunt of the displacement problem. It has impacted too completely, touching too many aspects of the socio-economic infrastructure of Harlem. If one neighborhood may have an advantage in terms of development potential, it can only be seen as a slight advantage. For that neighborhood will, for the most part, still be surrounded by the other neighborhood communities of Harlem. That neighborhood will still remain close to, and in contact with all the terrible problems and shining potentials that are a part of the life of the neighborhoods that surround it.

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2. U.S Government Census of Population. General Characteristics of Persons. 1960.
3. From the data in the 1970 and 1980 Government census statistics, the upper end income group in four Central Harlem areas is a small but growing one. Most of the upper end income group members are in the 15 to 24 thousand dollar bracket, 91.1% (770) in 1970 down to 71.1% (2,297) in 1980. This percentage decline in 1980 is really due to an increase in that segment of upper end income members in the 25 to 24 thousand dollar bracket: they were only 6.9% (59) in 1970; but were 26.5% (853) of the upper end income group in 1980. The number of those in the 50 thousand dollar and over bracket went from 16 in 1970 to 60 in 1980.

UPPER END INCOME DISTRIBUTION FOR THE FOUR
CENTRAL HARLEM AREAS. 1970 - 1980.

	1970	1980	% of change
\$15,000 to \$24,000.....	770	2,297 (91.1)	66.4 (71.1)
\$25,000 to \$49,000.....	59	853 (6.9)	93.0 (26.5)
\$50,000 and over.....	16	60 (2.0)	73.3 (2.4)
		845	2,297

Source: U.S. Government Census of Population.
Census Tract Statistics. 1970 and 1980. Table
P-4. Income Characteristics of The Population.
New York, N.Y., SMSA.

4. Ottley, Roi., New World A-Coming. Arno Press.
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5. Ibid. Ottley, Roi., New World A-Coming.
Pg. 179-180.

Chapter IV.

Class Relations In Close Geographic Proximity.

In this chapter I will explore developing mechanisms of displacement and some important displacement generated problems, that develop with direct consequences for community: relations between the underclass, lower working and the middle or upper classes; economic costs; and, what I will call, the geist of gentrification.

In his description of an ideal typical, contemporary African-American community, Douglas G. Glasgow, professor of social welfare and former dean of the School of Social Welfare at Howard University, explored fundamental differences in class relations, comparing black urban communities with the majority white community: "...unlike lower-income and upper-income whites, who usually live in distinctly different neighborhoods, separated as an expression of social means and opportunity, Blacks of all income levels live in closer proximity in bounded areas of living. This fact contributes to the greater cohesiveness and sense of 'Black community' as articulated by blacks. It also means that what occurs to one section of the community has an immediate impact on all members of the community irrespective of

income, social status, or differences accorded to individuals by their achievement."¹

Contemporary Central Harlem is a most orthodox representation of Dr. Glasgows model. Within its geographical boundaries residents with a common black heritage, but different economic means, live on adjacent streets, in contiguous buildings or apartments. During that period when the multiple implosions of the mechanisms of urban displacement caused gross population loss, a number of middle and lower working class households remained. As the social pathology spread, and increasingly more economically marginal households fell below the poverty level, the middle and lower income working households also came under great pressure, caused by the anomic rent in the fabric of the social order.

Andrew Billingsley's description of the ideal typical Afro-American urban class structure should be mentioned here. His late 1968 discription ran as follows: "Today we would estimate that in the urban areas of the country, where nearly 75 per cent of Negro families live, roughly 10 per cent would be considered upper class, 30 per cent middle class, and 65 per cent lower class."²

His estimation, though frozen in the time frame of the late 1960's, is still of some value in describing Central Harlem. Within his "lower class" there is a "working non-poor" group, under which there is a

"working poor" group, followed by an "underclass."³
In agreeing with Billingsley, many members of the upper and middle classes in Harlem expend time and energy in maintaining their class status. As Billingsley put it: "The precarious upper class status is understood by the fact that Negro professionals earn less in a life time than white professionals and their wives often have to keep them in this status."⁴

Great optimism has risen in Central Harlem in the light of new information which strongly indicates the existence of a large and growing number of middle class blacks in the city who, given the proper incentive of quality housing and good services, would like to live in Harlem.⁵ A number of community backed projects were underway by 1982 to provide the kind of quality housing that could attract the black middle class. In the Strivers Row area Bishop Emerson Moore of St. Charles Boromeo Roman Catholic Church heads a church and community sponsored project to build a market rate condominium on Frederick Douglas Blvd. at 141st Street. Most units of the condo were expected to cost from \$90,000 to over \$100,000. The Harlem Urban Development Corporation (HUDC) also has backed a plan to build cooperative apartments in the Central Park North area of Harlem. HUDC's price tag was said to be in the \$40,000 to \$85,000 range per unit.

Some honest concern has been voiced by those who fear that higher priced co-op's or condominiums could have some adverse affects on the lower working class and the and fixed income or underclass households in Central Harlem. Such households, lacking in economic means, find that their options are sorely limited when they are forced to move, to make way for neighborhood development projects.

In the Tract 197.02 sector of the Central Park North area massive displacement of low income households was, in the late 1970's and 1980's, augmented by the city governments action to remove remaining tenants in some City owned buildings. This was part of, what was called, the "Gateway to Harlem" project. The projects stated purpose was to revitalize the neighborhoods of the Central Park North area. A number of buildings were scheduled for "gut rehabilitation"; which would be done by private, community based contractors with community and city government cooperation. Displaced tenants would, according to government guidelines, be placed in suitable replacement housing pending the completion of the rehabilitation work.⁶

For two remaining underclass tenants, that I was able to reach prior to their removal, the problem of where they could go was a difficult one. At what was 308 West 111th Street I spoke to a slightly heavy set woman, about 45 years of age and a mother of a

pre-teenaged boy and teenaged girl. Their building had become the property of the City and was slated to be evacuated in preparation for gut rehabilitation. Except for the tin boarded up window of the first floor apartment, the facade of this building looked sound. There was a good lock on the door and the hallways were clean and well lit (I was to learn that the building upkeep was handled by many of the tenants).

The respondent, who had lived in the same building for thirty years, was asked where she would move to once the building was closed: "I don't know and the city won't give a guarantee that we will be able to move back home (308 West 111th Street) once the work was completed. With the building slated for evacuation the respondent noted a decrease in building services: " ...the service in the building is not good and is not getting better. There is no hot water and no heat." In this respondent's opinion the rehabilitation work would be beneficial to the neighborhood, but she felt that it was not being done for the present, largely black, residents of the neighborhood: "Most of all I would like to see the buildings in the neighborhood restored. These buildings are built solid, and I think when they fix them up it will be for the whites."

Two buildings away, at 312 West 111th Street, another tenant was uncertain as to where she could

move with her children, on a fixed income provided by the social service system. At 312 West 111th Street only two households remained. The 20 apartment unit structure showed the signs of large scale tenant abandonment. The building's front door lock appeared to have been ripped out of the door, which was left completely open. The hallway was a shambles with boarded or tinned up apartment doors -- some had been smashed in and opened. All mail boxes were broken open.

I spoke with a small black woman, about 35 years of age. She was the mother of five sons, ranging in age from two to eleven years of age. The young woman, who said she had lived in the building for 13 years, was not sure where she would next move her family: "I don't know. Im trying to move now, and I hope in a week...probably in Harlem; but they want us out. Ive been looking for a place all week and have not found anything definite yet. Theres only one tenant left in the building besides us. I can't feel safe."

If Harlem is to rebound there will have to be a class situation that allows for a balance of groups: not forcing out the poor, while making Central Harlem attractive to those groups that can bring the skills and fresh enthusiasm that can invigorate the community. So goes the general thinking of Harlem's leaders.⁷ Although most political, community and economic leaders are heartened by the apparent in

movement of the black middle class brethren, a question remains as to how much should the community bend in its desire to accommodate returning or new in movers.

In the Mount Morris Park area, a conflict ensued in 1982 between long time residents of the Mount Morris Park community and a small group of primarily white brownstone owners concerning the long time residents plan to set up a mental health facility for black and Hispanic youth in nine brownstone buildings fronting Marcus Garvey Park.⁸ As far back as 1971, the long time residents had formed the Harlem Interfaith Council, whose membership consisted of a number of community leaders who had been in the struggle to maintain the Harlem community through some of the worst years of urban displacement and disinvestment.

The newcomers, on the other hand, were talented professional people who had purchased brownstones in the years following the formation of the Coalition. A number of newcomers had not heard of the Harlem Interfaith Council, and were shocked to find out about the planned mental health facility. In the perceptions of the newcomers, the center would generate a dangerous situation in the neighborhood. The newcomers formed a counter organization, The Mount Morris Park Association, to block the creation of the mental health facility. Work on the facility continued as discussions with the small group were set

to smooth over the issue.

Black Middle Class Arrivals

The relations between new middle class arrivals and the established black groups in Harlem must not be construed as one of constant conflict. By and large, the adjustment of newly arriving middle class blacks in Harlem is, at least, as problematic as any adjustment they might have to make in many other black communities in the city or nation. I spoke with a young woman who had relocated from the mid west with her husband after finishing college. They had purchased a brownstone on 120th Street west of Lenox Avenue, in the Mount Morris Park area of Central Harlem.

She confided that she had experienced a somewhat cool reception from her neighbors after she had become active in the neighborhood block association. What really irked some was her aggressiveness in attempting to move on block association projects. While the somewhat older neighbors sought results, they were inclined to more conservative actions than she. And yet, the woman found general acceptance; since the basis of the neighbors criticisms concerned the form and not the substance of the womans actions on behalf of the block association. Conflicts over form are usually over means or strategies used to achieve a goal. It also refers to the group's perception of the appropriateness of some means or strategy to achieve

the goal: do the means conform with the manner and style judged appropriate for the group by its members? But conflicts over substance go to the heart of the groups unity: which goal is the appropriate one? Division of opinion over questions of form can often be easily mediated by community groups, even set aside. But, as Georg Simmel insisted, divisions that go to the center of the group unity (i.e. divisions of substance) can hinder and destroy the group.⁹

In the young woman's case, there was, the perceived threat to an on-going social project, as with the other Mount Morris Park example. In the Harlem Interfaith Council case, the community leadership had been struggling to achieve a goal that would affect a more than two decade long social problem in Central Harlem. The contrast between form and substance in intra class relations will, I believe, tend to be a critical one in black Harlem. For, despite differences among Harlem's leadership there is a basic unity of direction regarding Harlem's social needs.¹⁰ New, higher income, people who now come into Harlem will have to understand that the priorities of Harlems residents, who stayed, have been conditioned by extreme social and economic turmoil. They have emerged from that period with a sense of the failure of the existing system to aid Harlem, and with a natural suspicion of those who would now rush in with ambitious seeming plans to remake Harlem into

something other than a community reflective of a black ethos.

Such is the orientation of the general feeling of Harlemites (the ones that stayed). Many of the "middle class" blacks who will arrive in Central Harlem will also be first generation middle class members, only recently accomplishing the tough trek from the lower working class backgrounds, marked by social need. Because of this strong probability, one would expect that intra class conflicts may be somewhat muted. If, as is believed by some, middle class whites also come to Harlem in significant numbers the problem of differences of substance could prove the basis for some serious conflict, of a type only mildly suggested by the newcomers and Interfaith Council situation in the Mount Morris Park area. Given a (hypothetically) large white minority presence in Central Harlem, with a strong tendency to remain "...separated as an expression of social means and opportunity..." (again, recalling Glasgow's contrast between black and white community structures), meaningful cooperation on community issues could become bogged down, while factions formed around strict class, and eventually racial lines of group interests. But, once again, we deal here in a very hypothetical situation. As of this writing the number of whites in Central Harlem is extremely small.

By the middle of the 1980's, when the action of the

mechanisms of displacement had slowed to some degree, in certain areas, a number of middle class blacks are turning or returning to Harlem. Many bring with them skills, enthusiasm, a sense of black consciousness and a desire to work toward the rebuilding of Harlem. But they also bring real needs; for quality housing, services, and safety.

The tight New York City housing market, which has made for stiff buyer/renter competition, has been hard for black middle class people seeking to rent or purchase in the "status" sections of Manhattan. There is often the complaint of discrimination in renting or sales of properties. One also hears the complaints of some blacks living in majority white gentrified areas of harassment by shop or boutique owners who, somehow, confuse them with petty shoplifters, and keep them under close surveillance while in the store.

In Central Harlem the newly arrived middle class resident finds few boutiques or cafes, such as those in the downtown areas. A major problem for the black urban professionals who moves to neighborhoods in Central Harlem has been the lack of basic commercial services: good laundromats, supermarkets, banks, dry cleaners. Many of these types of business services were among the first commercial victims of the urban displacement process in Harlem. Many of the small businesses one sees in Harlem today are those limited to small "odds and ends" items: small groceries and

laundromats, liquor stores, fried chicken and rib joints, numbers parlors, head shop/video-games, etc. In some areas it is hard to find a neighborhood bakery, pharmacy or optician.

One woman, who had moved to the outer boroughs years before, had returned to a nice apartment in the Central Park North area of Harlem. After receiving her bachelors degree in business finance, then achieving success as a junior executive with a major banking institution in down town Manhattan, her desire was to return to Harlem where she had spent her growing up years. Among the problems she first encountered upon moving back was finding a supermarket to do her shopping. She often traveled west along 110th Street to shop at the Sloans supermarket on Broadway at 110th Street (outside Central Harlem).

Her first experience with a store in her neighborhood occurred a few days after she had moved into her building: "We had just finished moving some things and I needed some groceries. Even though it was pretty late we thought we'd try find an open supermarket. Absolutely nothing... nothing resembling an A and P or a Pathmark. We found one little, dinky joint where half the packaged beef on the (laughing) fresh meat shelf was either turning gray or green. I mean, forget it."

The woman also expressed her feelings of fear while at a neighborhood laundromat. In the same week that

she had moved back to Harlem, circumstances forced her to rise early one morning to use a neighborhood laundromat: "...around seven A.M. I wanted to get a headstart and wash a bunch of things I had carried over in our move. When I got to the nearest laundry most of the machines weren't working and I found myself alone in the place with some crazy acting drug addicts. They were carrying on and arguing with each other about something. I was looking at my paper and going from hysteria to panic, and back again...I just was wishing some straight (non-deviant) people, a lot of them, could suddenly walk in. I really was hoping my clothes could finish washing so I could get out of there."

The concerns of this returning middle class woman for safety and services is certainly the concern of others in Central Harlem. I interviewed one professional man who has been a resident of Harlem all his life; purchasing a brownstone home on 139th Street in the Strivers Row area, in 1970. This husband and father of a teenaged daughter and pre-teenaged son was specific as to the cause of much of his neighborhoods problems: "Troublemakers." For this resident the trouble maker is in essence the unemployed, underemployed, frequently criminally employed, men and women who are in a real sense a partial product of the urban displacement phenomenon in Central Harlem. They were, many of them, the offspring of pathological

households of the chronically, and now apparently permanent poor of the city.

The professional man related accounts of how he personally argued with trouble makers who wanted to sit on the front stoop of his brownstone home. He also told of the recent experience of a neighbor down the street from him. The neighbor had come home one afternoon and found two youths, a young man and a woman, on his front stoop. They were drinking beer from a bottle in a brown bag. The neighbor asked them to leave his steps in a direct manner. This infuriated the young man, who began cursing and making aggressive gestures. Finally, they left. The neighbor was on an upper floor of his home when he heard a loud popping sound from his living room downstairs. Arriving downstairs he found that a front window in his living room had been shot out with a small caliber hand gun.

The Underclass.

Much has been written regarding the problems of disadvantaged youth in urban areas. A number of studies have referred back to Durkheim's seminal discussions that distinguished between human physical needs and social needs: how the unregulated social needs for prestige, wealth and power lead to anomic developments.¹¹ Robert Merton extended Durkheim's perspective by proposing that anomie can be a direct result of a breakdown in the connective goals and existing legitimate avenues of access to the desired goals. ¹²

Cloward and Ohlin, in contrast, argued that it was differential access to illegitimate opportunity structures which determined the tendency to deviant behavior. The disadvantaged youth is placed into subcultures which provide opportunity to become deviant. Three basic subcultures are identified: "...'the criminal subculture'-a type of gang which is devoted to theft, extortion...a 'conflict sub-culture'-a type of gang that predominates as a way of winning status...'retreatist sub-cultures'- a type of gang in which the consumption of drugs is stressed."¹³ For Cloward and Ohlin the young people "...who form delinquent subcultures...have internalized an emphasis upon conventional goals. Faced with limitations on legitimate avenues of access

to these goals, and forced to readjust their aspirations lower, they experience intense frustrations; the exploration of nonconformist alternatives may result."¹⁴

For another writer, David Matza, these deviant subcultures are largely rooted in a history of bygone experience: young peoples unsuccessful experiences at school, in the home, with police, in prisons, etc. Matza notes: " These events and incidents are the special histories of distinct subcultures...the subcultural adherent is not fully dependent on personal experience. His knowledge of local history supplies him with an initial set of incidents on which he may build. The subculture of delinquency is, among other things, a memory file that collects injustices."¹⁵

Glasgow points out that black underclass youths feel a connectedness to their community, seeing it as offering some small security. It is the seat of their cultural identification, even though they are aware of its relative powerlessness. There is, then, a conflicting feeling of resentment and identification: " ...their conflicting feelings are often misdirected toward the 'bourgeois brothers on the hill,' those Blacks who have achieved middle-classness in income and in display but who lack the real power conventionally ascribed to whites of comparable income and status."¹⁶

Though lacking many social advantages, some underclass and poor black youths manage to succeed on the conventional track of the public school system, leading to college or other career potentials. The Williams and Kornblum study of youth unemployment¹⁷ makes particular note of the "superkids"; boys and girls who succeed, sometimes, despite coming from broken homes or having experienced early deviant socialization.

As Williams and Kornblum explain the superkids: "The largest proportion of these youth are from homes where parents have struggled for years to provide them with as many benefits of stability and education as possible, even at great sacrifice to themselves. The influence of family values, even in the absence of material support, the relative security of religious beliefs and practice, fortunate experiences with teachers and schools -- all of these factors are important in shaping the life chances of young achievers."¹⁸

With the trend toward a high skill, service economy in New York City, how are the socio-economically entrapped black underclass to make the quantitative leap up that advances them and Central Harlem? The traditional avenue for the leap up in America has been the school system. And yet, some of the most caring and skilled of the teaching professionals in the socially and economically vulnerable communities can

find great difficulty in dealing with the special problem of the child from a pathological home, who brings the symptoms of that pathology with him to school.

I asked a black man, who has been an educator in the public school system for many years, and is presently the principal at a public school outside of Harlem, to explain some of the difficulties faced by the elementary school principal in dealing with the child from the pathological family:

"Two types of parents see me in here. Let me give you a common experience. Number one; the 'problem mother.' She gets summoned to school...comes in, and as I'm trying to talk with her about her child's problem, I realize she is not psychologically rational. She may be schizophrenic, she may be shooting up, she may be boozing or into a hedonistic trip, or a combination of all of these. She is usually the product of a family that has been badly damaged by, what you call the social consequences of displacement. Her children bring the disruption of the home to the classroom."

One of the immediate problems that this professional focused on were the large number of fights in the schools, which he felt were more dangerous than those in more affluent neighborhood public schools: "In many Harlem schools, and other black areas, like here, there are more fights between

students." I commented: "But most of us had our small fights when we were kids. Its a part of growing up." Principal: " These fights are far more serious and more numerous than those that occur in the school system generally. They (the fights) threaten the students and teachers, and the teaching atmosphere. A few disruptive ones can make it impossible."

"'The working class mother'. Shes afraid to send her children to many neighborhood schools. Why should the parent put her child in jeopardy? Many of these schools have low reading levels; maybe 60% of the children may be reading below the norm. Most working class parents have to keep their children in a school they don't like or trust. The slick parent (knowlegeable parent) knows how to make the right political connections to move their child from the school district that has problems to the one that has the better teaching skills and safety. They make the connections with the key local Board members and District politicians by offering favors they are in a position to do. Most working class parents don't know how to do this."

The working lower class Harlemites, most of whom are employed in the lower end of the service sector and the manufacturing sector, are challenged with the maintainance of their households in a period of rising living costs: particularly in the areas of lodging, medical, food and clothing. If children are present

in the household, as they often are, these costs are even more challenging, with the added task of educational preparation.

The Special Case of The Elderly

In the neighborhood, as in the school system, the close proximity to pathological households can place real pressures on the working class households need for safety and community equilibrium. The elderly are especially affected by the sense of loss of community equilibrium. In a number of interviews with the elderly it became clear that the impact of the mechanisms of displacement had seriously compromised their lives by eclipsing the sense of black community that was, until fairly recent memory, the unspoken and functioning order of things in their neighborhoods. Most painful for many of the elderly was the dual perception of the destruction of the old process wherein the community was instrumental in assisting the family with the socialization of young people, and that some young people must be considered threats to their physical safety in their declining years.

Some elderly become virtual recluses, doomed to only rarely leave their apartments as they carry on lives of loneliness and fear. The comments of two elderly women, both in their early nineties, illustrate the sense of fear that can be generated by youth deviance, and the lament for the social order that made ones neighbor responsible for one's child.

When I asked one of the respondents why she did not go outside, she answered: "...cause I'm really

afraid...you see, I got hurt on the street." "About 13 years ago, 1970, I got a stroke first and I was doing very well. I was out walking on the street and somebody knocked me down and broke my hip."

I asked: "You mean somebody pushed you?" The respondents answered that: "It was two of them...they thought I was alone, but I wasn't. He (her friend) had stopped to light a cigarette. They were young boys, both were young. So my friend said to one 'you knocked her down.' He said 'no I didn't.'

So, they said lets take her in the park, and he (her friend) said 'no, your not taking her in the park.' Thats why I don't go out on the street... I can go out, but I get frightened...Somebody might jump out... I got bad nerves."

Another elderly woman talked about the role that the extended family or close neighbors had in the rearing of children, when she was a child and in the Harlem of the 1980's: "...and they (the adult) chastised you, you just took it. If you saying to yourself 'she not my mother.' But didn't say it to them. You said it in your own self, you said 'shes not my mother, why should I listen to her?' But you did (listen)." "If you chastise a child now, they'll (the childs parents) will come and curse you out...even the child too. you're afraid to say anything to these children these days. If they see you out in the street they'll knock your block off."

Still another elderly woman, in the Strivers Row area, expressed her feeling that the welfare of the underclass youth in Harlem was an important concern for her. These were her comments: "...Well, I tell you the truth, Im not so much interested in the old people. Im interested in the young people. I don't know, sometimes I set up here and see things, hear about things. And, it brings tears to my eyes. Because Im more interested in the young people. I've always loved young people. And wherever I go I've always had a lot of young people around me. Course, these young people today, you can't do a thing with them. But I'm interested in the young people, cause thats where it begins."

"And they (the young) are the ones who really need help. Cause most of us (the elderly) are on social security or some sort of thing, and we get taken care of. And if we get too old, we can go to the old peoples home or something like that. But its the young people that need us, that need to be looked after. That's the way that I feel...Some of these kids can't read, period. And its embarrassing to see them trying to read over the television...cause they just can't read. Say, how you going to get a job, you can't read or speak?"

I asked: "Are you saying that its harder for the kids growing up now than when you grew up?"
Respondent: "Yes, I think so." As the young are

caught in the vise of the socio-economic consequences of urban displacement, so too are the very old -- the mutually nourishing tie that linked the generations, apparently severed.

The Close Proximity of Lower Working Class
and Deviant Households.

The pressures of the mechanisms of urban displacement continue. They often act in concert with each other, as in one case which combined the existence of an abandoned building with the perceived inaction of government helping agencies. On Manhattan Avenue, in the Morningside Park area, just four blocks south of the now closed Sydenham Hospital the experience of a 55 year old woman tenant serves to illustrate the immediacy of these mechanisms as they impact on the working class household. The respondent sat on the front stoop of her building with a neighbor -- an elderly woman in her seventies -- and watched as her teenaged daughter jumped double-dutch with friends. (neighbor of respondent): "...its too bad we can't do something about these junkies in that abandoned building next door. The City owns that building and they should get them out of there." (respondent): "Yes, that building has been abandoned for two years now and those two are still living in the place, not paying rent. They let the junkies come in there at night. Sooner or later they will start a fire." (neighbor of respondent): "My windows are level with their windows, right next to them. Lord, I'm so afraid they are going to break into my house and kill me." (respondent): "One of them throws lye and

lime on the stoop to keep people from sitting on the stoop. My daughter better not get burned by any of that stuff."

At the insistence of the respondent, I walked over to the front stoop of the abandoned building. The stoop, its stone hand railings and the side walk in front of the stoop were covered with a white, powdered substance. I asked whether anyone had been burned by contact with the substance (respondent): "Yes, now people don't sit there anymore." I asked: "But, if the building belongs to the City, why don't you contact them, its their building?" (respondent): "We didn't know who to contact. But this sure can't stay this way."

A Tabular display of Anomie and
Sense of Community Variables.

The feeling of regular threat to safety and sanity from continuing anomic activity remains the strong influence underlining the attitudes of many Harlem residents. It runs, like a fine thread through the responses of most of those I was able to interview for the study. In order to understand how this threat might affect the sense of community, two variables were developed as reasonable indicators of a sense of community in the thinking of Harlem residents. One of these variables was formed in a question that asked whether the respondents liked the fact that their people (i.e. black people) lived in their neighborhood; while the other sense of community variable gauged whether they liked the fact that their friends lived there.

I then created two variables that I felt were reasonable indicators of a sense of anomie. One of these variables asked whether the respondent thought crime was increasing or decreasing in the neighborhood. Another variable asked whether there had been a decrease of police on the street. I first crosstabulated the two anomie variables to gauge the respondents perceptions of trends in criminal activity and the amount of police who could meet this threat to safety and order.

When I crosstabulated the responses of those who answered the question of whether they thought crime or the number of police on the street were increasing or decreasing, criminal activity was clearly thought to be increasing: Of 134 respondents, 102 (76.1%) believed that crime was increasing. Most of those who believed there had been a crime increase also believed that the number of police had declined. The perception seemed to agree with many of the responses of the residents (noted in this and other chapters of the study).

Table 4.1- RESPONDENTS ATTITUDES ABOUT THE NUMBERS OF POLICE ON THE STREET AND THE AMOUNT OF CRIME IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

crime has...	the number of police have...				total
	increased	decreased	not changed	don't know	
increased	(15) 68.1	(64) 85.3	(21) 70.0	(2) 28.5	102 (76.1)
decreased	(5) 22.7	(5) 6.6	(2) 6.6	(3) 42.8	15 (11.2)
no changed	(1) 4.5	(5) 6.6	(7) 23.3	(2) 28.5	15 (11.2)
don't know	(1) 4.5	(1) 1.3	(0) 0	(0) 0	2 (1.5)
	22 (16.4)	75 (55.9)	30 (22.4)	7 (5.3)	134 (100)
	Chi-Square=24.0	D.F.=9	N.S.	Gamma=.21	

Given the Harlem residents perception of an apparently deteriorated social situation, it is interesting to note that the sense of community among this sample of Harlemites, though conditioned by anomie, appear to be quite alive. I crosstabulated the responses on crime with the "...Mostly my people live here..." variable. The intent was to test for an ambivalent or mixed response, which would be due to the effect of the crime factor. In Table 4.2 the 111 people who responded were clearly divided as to whether the presence of their people (i.e. black people) was acceptable or not.

None said they did not like the fact that their people lived there (don't like); this was clearly a

sensitive question. The response to "like only somewhat" and "does not apply", then, became the important categories because they avoided the strong response, "don't like." 30.4% (34) of the sample answered "like only somewhat", while 22.3% (24) answered "does not apply." But 28 (82.3%) of the "like only somewhat" responses fell in the increased crime category. At the same time, 53 or 47.3% of the respondents (the majority) checked the "I like it very much" category. 75% (40) of this category's responses lay in the the increased crime category. Even while most respondents felt that criminal activity was on the rise, a rudimentary sense of peoplehood seemed to be in effect in the thinking of many of those sampled.

Table 4.2- RESPONDENTS ATTITUDES ABOUT
THE AMOUNT OF CRIME IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD
AND THE FACT THAT THEIR PEOPLE LIVED THERE.

my people live here -----	the amount of crime has...			total
	increased	decreased	not changed	
I like it very much	(40) 48.1	(7) 43.7	(6) 50.	(53) 47.3
like only somewhat	(28) 33.7	(3) 18.7	(3) 25.0	(34) 30.4
does not apply	(15) 18.0	(6) 37.5	(3) 25.0	(24) 22.3
	83 100.	16 100.	12 100.	111 100.

Chi-Square=3.6 D.F.=4 N.S. Gamma=.11

If the crime issue did not negate the attitudes of those responding regarding their sense of identification with the predominant racial/ethnic group in Central Harlem, how can the crime issue be described in terms of its relationship to personal friendship? Crosstabulating the question "...I like living here because my friends live here" with the change in the "amount of crime in the neighborhood" variable brought out an interesting response. Despite the fact that 73.8% (101) of the 136 respondents felt that crime had increased to some degree. 86.8% of the 136 indicated that most liked the fact that their friends lived there. 68.6% (94) of these respondents liked it "very much"; the majority of them (76.5% or 72) lying within the increased crime category.

In many of the responses of residents, the friend and neighbor seemed to play both instrumental and expressive roles. One such role was the providing of mutual security for ones neighbor and oneself: the telephoning (or knocking on the door) of a neighbor who may be concerned about being robbed to make sure that they are safe; looking out for a friend or neighbors children while they played outside; sharing the cost of a secure front door lock for the building with neighbors.

Table 4.3: RESPONDENTS ATTITUDES ABOUT THE FACT THAT THEIR FRIENDS LIVED THERE AND THE AMOUNT OF CRIME IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

my friends live here -----	the amount of crime has... -----			total
	increased	decreased	not changed	
I like it very much	(72) 71.0	(10) 50.0	(12) 80.0	(94) 68.6
like it somewhat	(19) 18.8	(5) 25.0	(1) 6.6	(25) 18.2
does not apply	(10) 9.9	(5) 25.0	(2) 13.3	(18) 13.1
	101 100.	20 100.	15 100.	136 100.

	Chi-Square=6.0	D.F.=4	N.S.	Gamma=.19

The sense of community, as it is gauged in the attitudes of the responding Harlem residents, appears to be militated against by the perception of criminal activity in the community. A feeling of vulnerability, due to a decline of order, appeared to be partly expressed in terms of the perception of a lack of police on the street. The responses from the sense of community indicators suggest that a sample from a community which has sustained the gross amount of social trauma that Harlem has, shows a persistent sense of community. This seems to suggests a community that has not become fatally fragmented by the ordeal of urban displacement. People are still feeling and doing community in Harlem. Its just somewhat harder in the doing.

Instrumental and Expressive Cooperation

In the responses of many of the residents sampled, it became obvious that mutual cooperation, identification and involvement with fellow tenants and home owners still exists in the community. This was the case even when respondents registered negative feelings about certain aspects of life in their buildings or neighborhood. A few examples that illustrate this form of instrumental assistance to the local neighborhood social group are shown in the responses of Harlem tenants.

At a City owned building, on 119th Street in the Mount Morris Park area, that had a surprisingly graffiti free hallway, a short heavy set black woman, about 40 years of age, made these comments: "In this building there are mostly older people. There are not too many children. But the kids we have in our building are good. They don't be marking up the wall or peeing in the hallway. Everybody helps to keep the building clean. I had swept the first and second floor this morning."

At another City owned building, on West 111th Street in the Central Park North area, one respondent said: "The tenants do some of the building maintainance (sweeping, mopping) because the man they (the City) hired as super doesn't. We feel safe cause we got a good door. But we put the wire fence on the

door ourselves." I found that this sort of voluntarism among tenants was a fairly common practice. When certain basic services needed augmenting voluntary cooperation for the common good seemed to occur naturally in many buildings.

Tenant cooperation in building security and also neighborhood sanitation was exhibited in this response, taken from the interview of the two women tenants on Manhattan Avenue, in the Morningside Park area: "Everyone pulls together in our building to keep watch and keep the place clean. Look, we all black. If we don't stick together, we going down. We have elderly in this building, and they get treated with respect."

"We try to get on the politicians. We called the City when they left that dumpster (pointing two blocks south to a large green construction waste dumpster unit) next to our building. People were throwing garbage in it and it was smelling stink, and there was lice all on the ground near it. Let me tell you, they moved it away from us." This was the same respondent, mentioned earlier, who did not know who was to be contacted to have an abandoned building sealed. The willingness to cooperate, shown by the respondents noted here, is indicative of an attitude of many: that tacitly supports instrumental contribution to the immediate local group interests. This is reflected also in the tenants attitude about their fellow

tenants involvement in the building.

Building security and cleanliness are problems for tenants in many buildings. Whether the problem stems from one or more unruly tenants in the building; or is the result of outsiders who manage to enter because of an open door or broken window. The integrity of the shared or communal space (front stoops, hallways, stairwells, etc.) become compromised in the most straight forward interpretation of our definition of urban displacement. When 138 respondents of our Harlem sample were asked whether fellow tenants helped keep their building clean 44.7% (59) said that "some do", 38.6% (51) said "most do", and 7.6% (10) said "none do." Clearly, most respondents noted that some people tried to keep communal areas clean. But the fact that most people in their buildings contributed toward this end showed that, for a significant portion of the tenants sampled, group cooperation in this important aspect of local group interest, has not been rendered extinct.

The tenant sample was also asked whether their fellow tenants helped keep building security. Of 119 respondents 42.4% (56) answered that "some do", 39.4% (52) said that "most do", while 8.3% (11) said "none do." Once again, most of those tenants responding felt that some of their fellow tenants were contributing to the keeping of building security. And, almost half of these respondents believed that most of their fellow

tenants contributed in some direct way to building security.

One poignant example of neighbors giving expressive aid to others occurred one afternoon as I talked with a woman block association leader from 121st Street in the Mount Morris Park area. We stood on the side walk of 120th Street, between Lenox Avenue and Adam Clayton Powell Blvd., where the woman was working as a school crossing guard. A teenaged girl was walking to the building across the street, when a woman came out of the building, ran to her and said something excitedly to her. The teenaged girl cried out, as if in pain, and dashed into the building, followed by the woman. The block association woman explained to me that the girl's mother had died earlier that day after an operation. The teenager was just then given the news.

Although she lived on the next block, where she owned her own brownstone, the block association woman knew the family of the deceased, as well as other families in the building. Suddenly, as we talked, there was a loud commotion from the third floor of window of the teenager's building. The distraught girl was being restrained from going out onto the fire escape. From the street we heard her cry out: "...let me die, oh please, let me die..." The block association woman said that some of the neighbors were probably at the girl's house and that she too would soon join them to comfort the family; and particularly

the daughter, who was very attached to the mother.

In the post urban displacement period of Central Harlem's history the reported behavior of the neighborhood people is, I think, illustrative of the expressive aspect of black communalism. In many neighborhoods people continue to show the special support in the "unspoken but tacitly understood" manner. Of course, such behavior is no longer expressed as easily because of a myriad of interceding anomic mechanisms of displacement, mentioned earlier on. The fact that such an example of people "doing community" can be cited must imply that, given more favorable socio-economic and political circumstances, in Central Harlem, a real basis for social improvement may be lying dormant, but by no means dead.

In West Harlem an older middle class woman, who owned a brownstone home, not only raised her own daughter but also managed to assist in raising children of other household in the community. On one occasion the woman introduced me to a young woman of twenty years of age, who told me that she had been raised in part in this woman's home, when her own mother was troubled emotionally and unable to assume responsibility for her own children. The older woman had stepped in and provided a stabilized life style for her. The young woman, now employed, was preparing to marry a young man who was also employed. This type

of involvement, though not the rule in all responses, is indicative of the caring inclination that was evident from a number of interviews and observations I made in the Central Harlem areas.

In the questionnaire, the sample of 138 tenant respondents were asked whether they felt their fellow tenants cared about their neighbors. 47.7% (63) said that "some do", 37.1% (49) said "most do", and 5.3% (7) said that "none do." This question, a purposely redundant one (i.e. similar to the sense of community variables), was designed to follow up my probe of people's attitudes on a possibly sensitive issue; whether their neighbors exhibited "expressive" behavior. That most said that, at least, "some do" should be indicative of a working, if small, degree of expressive community behavior. That 37.1% of those responding said "most do" leads one to expect that, for a number of building tenants, cooperation is not simply an exercise in quasi-group relationships (people paying their rent, looking after their own individual concerns), but a much richer and involved mesh of inter household relationships.

The Geist of Gentrification.

That an operable sense of community lives and functions in the thinking of many Harlem residents is certain. But, in a period when much discussion is taking place concerning the rebirth or redevelopment of Harlem, there has been some concern expressed as to who will inherit the new Harlem. From the working poor, the middle class, real estate or business interests, and the so many other individuals and groups who are Harlem; apprehension for the future in Central Harlem is real. This phenomenon of apprehension played against optimism I have referred to as the "geist of gentrification." It is expressed in the informal conversations and reactions of residents as they see change and the signs of change in the Central Harlem areas. An important aspect of the reaction to the sense of impending change is often the feeling of alienation from any positive results that the expected change will bring.

The sense of community, I believe, must be understood as both being affected by this geist, but also as influencing the reactions of many residents to the phenomenon. One reaction to the geist was expressed in the words of a lower working class man in the Central Park North area, an area undergoing great redevelopment in recent years. Angered by the anticipated removal of a relative and other tenants by

the City from a building on 111th Street, west of Frederick Douglas Blvd., the man made these comments:

"Between you and me they want us out so they can put their own in here. When do you hear somebody telling you to move so they can repair your home, and not telling you how you can come back? The whites had this street years ago and now they want it back. They want that park back (Morningside Park) because it has everything in it, and they always wanted it. Its a god dammed shame."

He continued: "I see how we being pushed out of here. The other day there were three guy's measuring the side walk and the street. I don't want to talk too much because you never know who might hear. But in Allah there is wisdom. So I just sit here and keep my eyes open, and wait."

There is a sense of powerlessness in these words; a feeling that events have, somehow, gotten out of the control of local hands, and are now being manipulated from elsewhere. There is the sense of fear that, soon, one more aspect of what the individual understood to be the community life would also be made superfluous by some "they", who control from elsewhere. His fear was that his community would be replaced by an alian one, not based upon his particular community's values.

In Central Harlem the signs of the geist of gentrification often are plainly displayed on weekend

afternoons. Cars can be seen driving down the avenues and side streets, as the white occupants of the vehicles peer out the windows to look at some of the better building properties and neighborhoods. As they look, they avoid the eyes of the black people seated on the front stoops or looking out of the windows of their homes. The young black woman, noted earlier, who had returned to the Central Park North area as an adult found this to be an especially strange experience: "...they (the whites) just seem to look through you, as if you weren't there. If they are walking past your building, they may just stop and stare, before walking on."

The emergence of Harlem as a focus of real estate investment has become a fact. Of the four Central Harlem areas, all are seeing some form of rehabilitation activity, though some more than others. In the West Harlem area, where this writer lived for some five years, a number of streets have fine brownstone buildings. I can recall the times when the owner of the building pointing out the whites who slowly drove through 147th Street, sometimes turning right on Riverside Drive in order to come through the block once again from the Broadway side. Home owners are regularly offered money to sell their properties. Letters from real estate or other sources were said to arrive in the mail with great frequency by some. Because many of the black owner occupied buildings

belong to elderly or aging people, part of the constant offers to purchase are attempts to see whether an elderly owner may want to give up the responsibilities of homeownership and for a smaller place.

But there are other reasons. The costs of maintaining a property in Manhattan have become a capital intensive task for many, especially for those on fixed incomes. Of the 38 home owners in my Harlem sample 9 (23.7%) said their properties had been in tax arrears. Five (13.2%) said they had been threatened with foreclosures and five with termination of their property fire insurance. 15 said that they or their neighbors were aware of some form of neighborhood development or rehabilitation going on nearby. Of the sample of 38 home owners, 25 (65.8%) said that they or their neighbors received letters asking if they wanted to sell their properties.

Interestingly there was at least one case where long time building tenants were sent letters asking whether they would sell their apartments. In a building on Adam Clayton Powell Blvd. at 112th Street, in the Central Park North area, a woman tenant made these comments:

"A letter came in the mail that said a person would pay my father 2,000 dollars cash on the spot for the apartment; it was from a real estate company, and gave a number to call if we were interested. Some other

tenants got similar letters. We have no intentions of moving. The apartments in this building are big and roomy."

"My father moved here 50 years ago, when the building was all white. We were the first (black) family on the block. Now the service has fallen down so badly that it is difficult to remain."

The value that their large apartment and, indeed, that the entire building would have in the now volatile real estate market of the Central Park North area is obvious. Situated two blocks north of Central Park and 110th Street, the value of such a property can be expected to more than double in the immediate future. Whether the buildings owners and real estate interests were operating seperately or together was not clear. A carrot/stick mechanism was clearly in operation: The cutting down of building services was providing the "stick" effect by pushing out the old tenants, whose rents were generally very low due th the many years of their residence; while a \$2,000 "carrot" provided the pull for these lower working class or fixed income households.

In this present period of Harlem's history, many of its leaders have embraced the idea that the redevelopment of Harlem as a largely black community is a quintessential goal. Politicians such as Congressman Charles Rangel, the late City Councilman Fred Samuel and State Senator Leon Bogues have all

spoken affirmatively on this point.¹⁹ James H. Dowdy and Donald Cogsville of the Harlem Commonwealth Council; Community Board 10 Chairperson Virginia Fields; real estate leaders Eugene H. Webb and Edward Myers; Bishop Emerson Moore and Reverend William James -- are among those who have worked continually toward this goal. They are but a fraction of a much larger population of community leaders in Harlem. Civic leaders, churchmen, business people, educators, lawyers, and a number of diverse organization or interest group leaders who have direct or indirect influences on events in Central Harlem.

Despite, sometimes pointed, differences in philosophy and perspective the solidarity of opinion around the goal of community development for a black Harlem continues. But the optimistic language becomes guarded when the question of just how Harlem is to be opened up to "outside" development initiatives.

In August of 1982 Mayor Edward I. Koch announced a comprehensive redevelopment plan for Harlem, to promote both housing and economic improvement. The plan was the result of a 20 month series of meetings between officials from city government and Harlem's political and community leaders. The plan relied heavily on private development groups, banks and financial institutions. It proposed to target an area which is generally inclusive of the four Central Harlem areas of this study. Community Board

Chairperson Virginia Fields and Harlem City Councilman Fred Samuel had played leading roles in developing the plan. A New York Times article by Lee A. Daniels reported the optimistic comments of the Commissioner of HPD, the City Comptroller and other City government notables.²⁰

By the fall of 1982, the plan was also being met with suspicion as well as optimism by Harlem leaders. A Lee Daniels article stated: "The fact that community leaders-including Virginia Fields, Chairman of the Central Harlem Community Board, and City Councilman Frederick E. Samuel-helped formulate the strategy failed to convince those attending last week's hearing that it was not, as one speaker put it, simply 'another game' to disperse blacks from Harlem and redevelop it as an affluent, predominantly white community...Some Harlem leaders contend that redevelopment will not cause significant displacement because of the extent of low-and moderate income housing, the sizeable group of middle-class homeowners and the area's many empty buildings and lots."

"But the 'black removal' theory has considerable currency in Harlem. It is fed by the fact that, unlike other impoverished communities, Harlem is not only relatively close to midtown Manhattan, but is also crisscrossed by several bus and subway lines and has a large stock of prewar apartment buildings and townhouses. These resources, combined with explosive

real estate pressures to the south, have convinced many that that redevelopment is a matter of when, not if."²¹

"Redevelopment", then, becomes a loaded word for Harlem's leaders. The City's plan for Harlem redevelopment would rely upon heavy private funding, much of it coming from sources outside of Harlem. Most Harlem leaders agree that such funding is needed, but wonder whether it might come with hidden strings to compromise Harlem's future as a black community; while also portraying Harlem's leaders as the Judas sheep who sold out black Harlem to the white outsider. Urban affairs writer and analyst Keith Moore put appropriate emphasis on the sense of caution felt by Harlem's leaders. Of Harlem, Moore writes: "Some consider it a jewel that is being grudgingly admired by outsiders at the same time that it is jealously guarded by Harlemites...No wonder Harlem is constantly looking over its shoulder."

"But in the background of all that pride, that energy, and the given fact that Harlem by any definition is a handsome piece of real estate, also is the realization that it will need private redevelopment dollars- 'the outsiders'- at a time when public funds have dried up. The very private redevelopment dollars that Harlem needs are the same monies that it fears."²²

And so redevelopment has begun. A number of lower

and middle to upper income housing complexes have been built in Harlem and its immediate vicinity. Much of this construction was the result of community group initiated work with federal and local government funding, from now defunct sources such as the section-8 program. Community groups that have been active in such ventures have included block associations, neighborhood improvement organizations, and churches: the black church has traditionally been a community organizing leader in such ventures.

I now list a few moderate to upper income housing complexes: some of which are well known to Harlemites and New Yorkers generally. Most are located in or near four of the five Harlem areas under study. All of them became embroiled in a most significant conflict involving a group of Harlems established black real estate interests, who charged that whites had taken over the management of these properties and were pushing black real estate brokers out of business.

Strivers Row Area -----	Mount Morris Park Area -----
Mother Zion. Esplanade Gardens. Harlem Interfaith Houses. Lenox Terrace. Riverton Apartments. 1199 Plaza Coop. Lionel Hampton Apartments. Paul Robeson Houses Delano Village.	Riverbend Coop. Franklin Plaza Coop. Clayton Apartments. Fifth Avenue Lakeview. Morningside Park Area ----- none
West Harlem Area -----	Central Park North area -----
Heights Apartments. Riverton Coop. Hamilton Heights Terrace. Dunwell Plaza. Riverterrace Coop. 3333 Broadway.	Lenoxville Apartments. Canaan Apartments. Taino Towers.

In mid December of 1984 the Greater Harlem Real Estate Board (GHREB), without question the biggest organization of independent black real estate brokers, charged that black real estate firms got less than 5% of an estimated 91.5 million dollars in annual rental income from black owned but white managed housing complexes. In a front page story in the Amsterdam News, Peter Noel noted the sense of urgency in the GHREB position: "Alarmed by what it calls the most 'dangerous' example of gentrification it has seen in the Black community in recent years, the group warned that Black brokers have sharply drawn the battle lines for a protracted real estate development and management war that ultimately could determine the

future of Blacks in Harlem." 23

Blocked from making any significant entry into the real estate market in downtown Manhattan, black real estate brokers were largely shut out of the management of new housing complexes in Harlem. The precedent of white real estate firms being selected over black firms, to manage such complexes, really began with the construction of some of the first such buildings. The black boards of directors of some complexes had hired minority or black firms. But problems of coordinating government funding, and impatience with the sometimes slow delivery of services, that is often involved with public funding, strained relations between new black complex directors and black managers.

Middle class and middle class identifying black residents of such complexes naturally pressured for efficiency and low costs. But operating costs for the black management firm would necessarily, at first, be somewhat higher than for the larger, more capital intensive, white firms from outside the Harlem community. After established black firms had been alienated from this lucrative sector of Harlem real estate business, a number of reports point to poor and even illegal management practices in some of these buildings.

In Les Mathews' "Mr. 1.2.5. Street." column, in the Amsterdam News comes this report: "...A Supreme Court judge investigated complaints against the Lionel

Hampton Housing Development. Tenants complained of no security and negligence."²⁴ But the fuse that ignited the GHREB dispute stemmed from charges made by the GHREB: "The controversy revolves around a \$2 million 'kickback' scandal at the Esplanade Gardens..., in which former board president Oliver Ingleton and other subordinates have been implicated. Critics say Ingleton, in an attempt to deflect criticism and quiet the scandal, leveled charges that Black Brokers wanted to control the management of the more than \$8 million rental income at Esplanade Gardens."²⁵

Responding to the charges GHREB's chairman stated to the press that a take over was exactly what his organization would want: "...But we want to take over control of economic jobs for people in Harlem. why should the white man have it. They (referring to the Esplanade Gardens Board of Directors) have one hell of a nerve to think that we shouldn't take over our community."²⁶

The sense of confrontation was even sharper when GHREB issued a position paper spelling out its assertion that " Pieces of Harlem are being lost to opportunists who rarely, if ever, contribute to the Black community's development and nourishment. Developers, leasers and planners from community's outside Harlem are controlling almost all our land and property..."²⁷ " The community is being stripped of

essential services, a sure way of decreasing the monetary value of property while encouraging the working class to flee. This is evidenced by the closing of hospitals such as Arthur C Logan and Sydenham at a time that infant mortality rates and incidents of cancer are at an all time high in the black community..."

What is immediately understood about this conflict is that it occurs during a period when much has been spoken and reported about revitalization in Harlem. And, although it has developed over a period of years, the conflict was, in a real sense, a development of the geist of gentrification; fueled by that same juxtaposition of optimism and apprehension about who will inherit the new Harlem.

This conflict surrounds the question of gentrification; but a form of gentrification that does not involve a different group of residents who move into a marginal neighborhood that is contiguous to an already developed neighborhood (as Peter Salins would explain the gentrification process). It involves the replacement of one group of managers with a financially more powerful one. The incumbency of this managerial gentry differs from Salins model only in that close geographical proximity is not a factor. It is essentially the same as Salins' in that rational market mechanisms are the central stimuli of events. Or, as Dennis Keating and Chester Hartman have

stressed, "...the major forces causing urban displacement are indeed market forces - profit seeking and profitability, the availability and flow of investment capital, etc..."²⁸ Like the mid-town manhattan confection store owner who is displaced from his Lexington Avenue store front to make way for an expensive boutique, Harlem real estate firms were displaced from, what they believed, was their natural market -- the management of black Harlem housing complexes.

Contrasting Salins' gentrification theory once again, we note that only four of the mentioned housing complexes lay in an area that was reasonably close to a gentrified or developed outside neighborhood: the Central Park North area, which had only four such complexes. The majority of these housing complexes were in or around the Strivers Row area (9), West Harlem area (6) and the Mount Morris Park area (4) -- a total of nineteen. These are areas having no close geographic proximity to an outside of Harlem gentrified neighborhood.

The sense that others are attempting or succeeding in changing ones neighborhood; removing you from it, in favor of someone or something else. The appearance of strangers in the neighborhood, who seem to look silently through you, with eyes that see only your building or home. The suspicion with which some community people meet the talk of plans for

revitalization. The developing Harlem real estate controversy. These are some of the major signposts of the geist of gentrification. In some instances the geist acts as a socio-psychological mechanism of displacement by conditioning people to believe that changes occurring in their neighborhoods are indicators that they, sooner or later, must be removed. When this, very real, mechanism operates in conjunction with other mechanisms (poor building service or vandalism, for example) perceptions can be radically altered.

Whether we are considering the reactions of Harlem leaders or those of individual Harlem residents, the spectre of the geist of gentrification is a social fact. That things will never be whatever they once were in Harlem, there can be no doubt. The fact that the geist of gentrification will be fuelled by, and will in turn fuel, developing issues in Harlem will remain a sobering concern.

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Chapter V.

The Role of Community Organization.

One of the most common responses to the mechanisms of urban displacement and neighborhood development in Central Harlem has been the strategy choice of community organization. Whether it has been successful or a failure, few tenants or home owners have not heard about a neighbor or friend having been involved in some form of this activity. And, even though opinions may be mixed as to the value of community organization as a strategy choice, its popularity as a means for local action in Harlem neighborhoods seems to be established.

In this chapter the focus of concern will be the tenant and block association form of organization, as a response to the challenges of both urban displacement and revitalization. In pursuing this end the experiences of successful and not successful attempts at community organization are presented to show how groups organize around issues, move to gain knowledge, and extend the sphere of their interests beyond the original issues of contention to new and diverse ones.

Why do community organizations develop? In much of the literature on community organization the basic reason is to maintain or to change an existing social

reality. The reality is there. The decision to take a given organized action comes from within the collective understanding that there is need for action. Marshall B. Clinard notes: "People appear to be willing to participate in actions directed at adjusting or changing conditions in their neighborhoods if they perceive the need for change and are adequately aroused. The desire for change seems to precede any successful program of self help."₁

Morris Janowitz maintains that the form of contemporary community organization in urban America has followed a clear line of development: "Our analysis of the trends in community organization strategies, practices, and consequences is guided by two hypotheses. First, while strategies of comprehensive and total restructuring have persisted and are periodically reemphasized, there has been a gradual increasing trend of emphasizing pragmatic and partial strategies. Second, since the turn of the century, the emphasis in community organization has shifted gradually from social interaction and local self-improvement to coalition building and political participation."₂

The "Great Society" era was a period when community organization in many central city minority communities moved at an accelerated pace; particularly after the federal government initiated the Community Action Program (CAP). Stressing "maximum feasible

participation",³ the CAP's featured a number of neighborhood programs which utilized the talents of "grass root" neighborhood groups in government funded community uplift programs. But O'Brien reminds us that these programs had built in policy problems which alienated both local community residents and local governments: "...the CAP's did not contain any provisions that would enable poor neighborhoods to organize in any appreciable measure. Most of the local community action programs did not support aggressive neighborhood-organization efforts, and those that did...received severe sanctions, which at times included the suspension of funding."⁴ In addition, the CAP programs alienated local governments, as mayors felt side stepped by the federal governments direct community organization initiative.

The Community Action Program eventually ended when the programs were placed under the control of local mayors. With the demise of the Johnson administration's "War On Poverty" the financing for many other local community efforts were curtailed. One of the significant corollaries from this period was that the experience of involvement in these experiments in community action had stimulated a consciousness and demand, among local groups, for more community based self help programs in the community.⁵

The Struggle For Local Community Organization
In The West Harlem Area

But, in the post "War On Poverty" Harlem, in the aftermath of the urban rebellions, disinvestment and urban displacement, community organization at the tenant and block association level has often been a problematic undertaking. The problem of organizing a block of twenty home owners or a building of thirty five apartment renters is not, simply, the task of forming the thinking of individuals around one clear cut issue. That issue, around which solidarity of action is sought, can be one of some complexity.

One woman tenant association leader had organized the tenants in her building on 152nd Street in the West Harlem area. She explained to me some of the difficulties that followed when she attempted to organize the black and Hispanic residents of her building around community issues of crime and neighborhood development. Starting their first meetings in her own apartment, later gatherings were planned at more appropriate sites in the neighborhood: "...Before, what we were doing, with the group in this building, was alternating in the apartments to have our meetings; and I wasn't getting a full turnout then. So they only come when they figure that the'res something official that they can go to. Its been a

real pain to get them to go to the community center or over to the police precinct...first of all, they're afraid to go out late at night. Second, they don't see where anythings going to be done. They're very apathetic, and the landlords know this. They know they're dealing with apathetic people, and maybe they call us (the tenant organizers) malcontents rather than people who would like to see the neighborhood maintain some sort of standard. So this way you can say its built in failure; 'well they didn't know what to do anyway'.

...What we have also is, (at one end of the street) we have a Hispanic group of people, at the (other end of the street) we have mostly African-American. What happens is, they don't meet at all. Their kids stay at (either ends of the street). Now, when we gave the block parties... I was getting it together. I was getting them to work together to help each other out."

In this example, encouraging residents to leave the safety of their homes to participate in a block improvement project was a task made difficult by the tenants' fear of street crime and a feeling that nothing would get done. The special West Harlem reality of neighborhoods shared by both blacks and Hispanics proved to be less of a rallying problem than getting people to the meetings "physically." But, getting them there was directly dependent on the residents' perception that something constructive

would be accomplished once they got there. As Clinard puts it: "The problem of the poor involves not simply an economic nexus but a power nexus as well. Slum dwellers generally react with apathy to their own powerlessness."⁶

Furthermore, it is not always easy to determine what is a successful exercise of power. The results of a group's attempt to do something may be mixed, or even appear to be a failure. An organization will often find that it must seek the knowledge of how to achieve something while it is engaged in the actual struggle. A feeling of powerlessness and apathy can result when the full extent of what has, or has not, been achieved escapes a full assessment.

This was the case when the 152nd Street leader had her first experience in the formation of her building's tenants association. She had moved into the 70 unit apartment house on West 152nd Street in the early 1970s. The building had left the hands of the original owners due to their failure to pay real estate taxes on the property, and was the property of the City.

The tenants had organized in order to assume the management of the building, and purchase it from the City through the City Department of Housing Preservation And Development (HPD) Tenant Interim Lease (TIL) program. When they had sent a tenant representative to make inquiries and begin

negotiations with the City, they found that another management company had been given priority to purchase the building. The property went to the new owner through HPD's Private Ownership and Management Program (POMP).

In its basic organizational structure this association resembled the common model of the block or tenants association. In the common model there is a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, along with members who may hold special consulting offices or roles. These specialist members develop as a result of the organizations adjustments to developments and because a group may have individual members with particular professional skills. One member may be a lawyer, in another group a member might be an accountant or have some other skills that in some way contribute to the work of the organization. In many instances a member who has a particular association job, say "secretary", will take on the tasks of some other job title, perhaps "president" or "treasurer." Flexibility in association roles and specialization based on particular skills are often important aspects of this type of community organization.

The tenant leader and other tenants in the West 152nd Street building had organized their tenants organization around the building purchase issue. When the building went to its new manager/owners the

battle, for all practical purposes, was lost. What remained was a viable, though still not knowledgeable, tenants association. Under the POMP guidelines the new management had to complete major repairs by the end of the first 6 months of the program.⁷ But many tenants felt that their apartments were in basically good shape, needing particular repairs, but not a major rehabilitation: "...So we organized. We sent letters around saying we didn't want any part of this rehabilitation. They (HPD) had a meeting in our hallway...and they started harrassing everybody, telling them that they had to go along because it was better for us and everything. And we were saying, what we basically had to be done here was minor repairs; such as painting, plastering, the hallway. The elevator needed a new cab; we went along with that...my apartment was in top condition, and I said 'I don't need anything done in here.' "

The rehabilitation conflict was also lost. A major rehabilitation of many of the apartments began. Bathroom walls were ripped out to install new plumbing, some ceilings were lowered. Tenants went through a winter with only intermittent heat and hot water, as the manager rushed to comply with the requirements of the POMP guidelines. During the rehabilitation two elderly people died. Some tenants felt that the ever present dust in the air and falling plaster (all a result of the rushed rehabilitation)

had contributed to the deaths, as a number of adults, children and family pets had become ill because of the drastically altered environment.

The association went to housing court, at one point, to stop what were felt to be some of the excesses of the rehabilitation. One such excess occurred when a tenants apartment was entered by workmen while the tenant was not at home--they had to do work on the bathroom. The tenant returned home to find that the workmen had knocked a huge hole through the bathroom wall from the apartment of a neighbor, and entered the apartment.

Out of this conflict a viable tenants association had now become a knowledgeable one. They had learned something of negotiation, but had done so at a high price: negotiating with only minimal information, and no fore-knowledge of what to anticipate during negotiation. Some members expressed disappointment and bitterness about the seeming inability of the organization to succeed, and a few active members became inactive. One member had been active in the struggle and had spent a series of frustrating days in the housing court, where long waits and delays met the association's attempt to redress, what were felt to be, unfair tactics of the management during the rehabilitation. Disappointment and the sense of a lack of preparation in the groups effort are conveyed in this members words: "...its all right to have an

association of people who really know what they're doing...they didn't know what they were doing...I mean, if you don't know what you're doing, you don't get in any of these things." The development of this organization is not dissimilar to that of other such groups. The favored choice, acquiring knowledge prior to the effort to realize the goal, is the route desired by most organizations as they seek empowerment and to develop.

For most groups that I was able to be in contact, complete prior knowledge of how to negotiate was never attained. How interesting it is to contrast the development of the tenant association just mentioned with yet another tenants association in the West Harlem area. On West 143rd Street, between Amsterdam Avenue and Broadway, the tenants of a large fifty unit building were successful in organizing the tenants around the issue of managing their building after the City took the building from its previous owner through IN REM tax foreclosure. Unlike the 152nd Street tenants association, the tenants in the building on 143rd Street had attained some basic knowledge of the process of acquiring the building and how to conduct negotiations during the process. One ally in this regard was the Urban Homestead Assistance Board (UHAB), an advisory agency to tenant and local community groups.

When the tenants learned that their building might

be sold to a private developer and turned into a co-operative, the tenants were able to move much faster than the process. They had learned through sympathetic sources of the developing agenda: "We just came in under the wire, that's for sure. We organized our own corporation and purchased the building for 250 dollars per unit...They knew we had the lease and left us alone."

The neighborhood of West 143rd Street and Amsterdam Avenue is in transition. It has already experienced much building abandonment, although the block itself is well populated. Illegal drug activity is carried on, sometimes openly, on the north west corner of Amsterdam Avenue and 145th Street; in seeming competition with the mental health center on the north eastern side of the avenue. The gut rehabilitation of many abandoned buildings south of 145th Street, on Amsterdam Avenue, has raised the expectations of many people in the sector. With the success of the tenants organization on 143rd Street in acquiring their building, they have become respected knowledge sources in the neighborhood.

Their building front is kept clean by the tenants. Their hallways are clean and neat; so much so that some of the neighborhood children were said to have begun to gravitate there: "The neighborhood kids come to our clean lobby to play jump rope. They need to turn that vacant lot into a park (pointing to a small

vacant lot across the street). That is a City owned lot, so what good is it doing the tax payers, the residents of the community."

With success this tenants association has changed its goals and priorities. Having attained its central goal, management and then ownership of their building, the focus had begun to move to the neighborhood and beyond. In discussing the continuing problem of crime and disorder in the neighborhood, the organization president said: "...we can't let outsiders come into our community and our building to destroy. We're going to need help from politicians too. Tenants can get help from politicians and get their help in getting funds to fix their own apartments. A registered voter can help by going to assemblyman Miller-he will help out."

It is important to remember that the intention of the tenant association leader on 152nd Street was also to carry out or expand the focus of organization activity beyond the limited issues of the building. But, for the 152nd Street tenant association leader, the consolidation of gains in her building had to come first.

From the many discussions I have had with tenant or block association leaders, it is hard to construct an ideal typical leader. Differences in personality and temperament were always evident during interviews. It did become clear, however, that these individuals were

(with exceptions) intelligent, creative, and generally ambitious people. Some had impressive backgrounds (college graduates, creative artist). Most were active in church or local political activity. The central point of understanding, once again, is that in the thinking of these leaders there was always the notion that, given the prospect of success in achieving the major goal around which their interest group first came together, the leadership's next inclination was to begin to move out from the first parochial issue and seek to expand the sphere of interests (from the building to the block; from the block to the larger community, etc).

An Individual Attempt At Tenant Organization

In the neighborhood or building where the mechanisms of displacement have seriously affected the quality of life, the desire to do "do something" about the reality begins, in some instances, as an individual undertaking. It may only later involve that individual's attempt to organize the group. This was the case for a woman tenant in a large 60 unit building on west 119th Street in the Mount Morris Park area of Central Harlem. Located between Lenox and Fifth avenues, the buildings on this block are a mixture of brownstone and multifamily dwellings. The sale of drugs such as heroin and particularly "angel dust" (PCP) had become a serious problem. Although the outside facade of this woman's building had been painted, the front hallway window that faced the street had been broken out. There were no vestibule to hallway or front door locks; absolute necessities for minimum safety. Although the hallway lighting was bright, the floors and stairwells were badly littered and had a faint urine odor. There were graffiti markings on the walls and the buildings elevator was inoperable.

The woman I talked to had lived in the building for five years. A single working woman in her early thirties, she shared a one and a half room apartment

with her pre-teenaged son. Having moved to the building in part because the rents were not as high as in some others that she had investigated, she soon found that the landlord was in the process of cutting down on building services. The building was accumulating numerous violations, that ranged from service and safety to sanitation.

The woman had gone on her own to the HPD to find out what could be done to pressure the landlord into becoming more responsible. This was in part the reason that inspectors were sent to the building, and then a letter sent to the woman advising her that the landlord was not upholding his end of the lease contract. After confronting the landlord with this information the woman decided to try and organize the tenants. But, in attempting to interest the tenants to organize and take action, she found that only a handful expressed some interest. Most were apathetic, feeling that the landlord would simply milk the building for all it was worth and that there was nothing they could do about it. Then, a small number of pathological households (those involved in forms of deviant activity) were plainly hostile when approached. As the woman put it:

"Only a few tenants in the building try to get together to deal with this jive landlord. Everybody else just looks out for themselves. I had gotten a letter from the City that said our rents should be

decreased by 25 to 30 dollars because of the violations and the lack of service in the building. When I asked the landlord about this he claimed he was not contacted by the City housing (HPD) to find out more. The last time any rehabilitation work was done on this building, I heard, was eleven years ago. So they need to do something."

Even as this woman was hoping that the City would have some influence, she felt great disappointment with the apathy of her fellow tenants. The feeling of disappointment and the lack of confidence in the potential for the tenants to become involved was couched in her own frequent references to moving: "I don't know, I been trying to look around for a place, rents are always so high..." or "...the way the (building) service in this place is, makes me think about moving." Certainly the cooperation of tenants in the building was the other major hurdle needed to deal with the primary displacing mechanism of landlord disinvestment. But in this building the individual's readiness to lead in the search for organization, information and the knowledge needed to reverse the operation of displacement mechanisms would be derailed by a quasi-group rental population that had become conditioned to some eleven years of decreasing service. Although the building apartments were 75% rented, the feeling persisted that everyone would remain as long as possible -- or at least until

conditions had degenerated to the intolerable stage.

The woman noted: "Theres too many kids in this building also, and that makes the upkeep hard. But if the tenants would get it together the kids could be controlled. They (the tenants) just don't care anymore, that's part of why the place is going down. Maybe if the City took over it would be better. But, from what I see, you can't be sure...With that broken hallway window and no lock on the front door, any crazy fool can walk in this place..."

David Hunter, I believe, has come close to capsulizing the root cause of the dilemma this woman faced in attempting to move from her own individual effort to group participation in problem solving: "Citizen participation has relevance to improving the slum condition because one of the attributes of slum people is that they are out. The world of success and good things of life is somewhere else."⁸ He then states that "...the poor and slum residents know that things are run by someone else." This last quote agrees with David O'Briens contention that the powerless will often decide not to organize for group struggle because of their rational assessment that the situation to be changed, cannot be changed.⁹ For O'Brien the remedy is "...to find incentives to induce this individual to pay for nondivisible collective good."¹⁰

In the present period, when the cross currents of

both urban displacement and revitalization are in operation in Harlem, the desire to move the quasi-group from strictly latent interests to manifest interests can be easily hampered by the belief that the issue to be organized around is too large, and mysterious in its complexity. Needed incentives that foster a willingness on the part of individuals to coerce themselves into paying the costs of time, energy and money do exist. And if the initial effort does not meet with failure, such as the failures of the tenant organization in the northern sector of West Harlem and the effort of the Mount Morris Park area woman, the general inclination within many of the groups I observed was toward an increase in the willingness of individual members to shoulder part of the organization work load. Success tended to breed a desire to pay the costs for more success.

Organizing Against Drug Proliferation And for
Neighborhood Development In The Mount Morris
Park Area

This was particularly true for a block association located on 120th Street, just west of Lenox Avenue. A short few blocks away from the 119th Street apartment building, 120th Street between Lenox Avenue and Adam Clayton Powell Blvd. had been struggling with the same problem of heroin and PCP drug sales, along with related crime. Young males (pre-teenagers through their late twenties) began to gravitate into this street of mostly owner occupied brownstones, that also had some multifamily buildings. The in-migration of this activity was the direct result of pressures that had been put on these young people by community actions in neighborhoods to the west of the Mount Morris Park area.

After the death of its former leader, a minister, the leadership of the 120th Street block association had remained inactive for a period of almost two years. The election of a young woman who had bought a brownstone on the block after relocating to New York from out of state (mentioned in chapter 4) served to revive block association activity. "We had no clearly defined agenda" the organizations president said. "I began by getting the word out and letting people know about the block association. So, we had a block party

that got the kids of the block involved, with a band made up of musicians from the neighborhood."

For the president and the other leaders of the block association the problem of drugs on the block was the immediate issue. The residents of the block were primarily: middle income and fixed income elderly brownstone owners, some of whom rented out apartments or rooms; middle and lower and fixed income apartment renters in the occupied buildings and brownstones. All of them used the street sidewalks and front stoops to enter and leave the block. As with other, more populated, blocks in Harlem, much social activity took place on the sidewalks and front stoops as both renter and home owner resident utilized these outdoor areas.

A number of the street residents had known one another for thirty or forty years, and more. Firm friendships that had been formed on the crucible of shared experiences during the life process (i.e. the rearing of children, marriages, births, deaths, etc.) had served the continuance of a sense of community. This was reminiscent of Herbert Gans' description of life in the Italian-American West End community of Boston: "For most West Enders, then, life in the area resembled that found in the village or small town..."¹¹ The use of the physical space on 120th Street paralleled Chester Hartmans earlier description of Bostons West End population of the 1950's. Hartman

wrote: "...in the working class, external areas are far more casually used and, by comparison, the surrounding neighborhood is a far more important component of the residential 'life space.'"¹²

Of course the old West End area never experienced the type of wrenching socio-economic upheavals that characterized Central Harlems history for over two decades. For the 120th Street resident, as for many other Harlemites, the physical boundaries of a residential "life space" probably only extends for the one or two blocks wherein the community resident expects to see the most familiar: faces and social activities.

It was, then, a true crisis situation, when 120th Street residents witnessed the virtual invasion of their street by young drug dealers: "At one time there would be one hundred or so teenagers selling angel dust." The in-migration had taken a few months, but the full impact was to alter the way the residents used the side walks and stoops on the block. Basic safety precautions that anyone would take for central city living, became even more intensified, as apartment or building breakins and street intimidations of residents began. Most residents became watchfull while outdoors, and ventured out of doors more selectively. A mechanism of displacement was gradually setting into operation, that was beginning to have the effect of atomizing or

fragmenting individual households and groups from connection with the social life of the block. The sense of community would, logically, follow as an inevitable victim of such socially fragmenting developments.

"They were selling stuff (drugs) on the block. Some teenaged kids from outside the neighborhood were coming in and a lot of cars with out of state licence plates were in the block." During a series of block association meetings it was decided to pressure the police department for help. Direct meetings with the 28th precinct command; and, at one point, phone calls to the precinct every half hour by block association members served to underscore the community's concern. The response of the police department was relatively swift. In one night nearly one hundred arrests were made on the block. For one month following this action three foot patrolmen patrolled the block, checking the identifications of suspicious individuals.

Of course, the lucrative drug activity was not wiped out, but only shifted further east to less mobilized neighborhoods. It was a clear victory for the block association, and the immediate significant social fact was that the organization had provided the blocks residents with an instrumental public good: some degree of public safety and a lessening of anomie. The residents had also been provided with an

expressive social good: this was the strengthening of the sense of community that was experienced through the social catharsis, which followed in the wake of the time of community testing. The enthusiasm spread throughout the block and to surrounding streets; somebody "got something done."

Members of this block association had been in regular contact with Community Board 10, attending meetings there and seeking any information that might be of value. It was at the Community Board that the 120th Street block association learned that a developer had been negotiating with the City through the Urban Land Use Review Prodeedure (ULURP), to purchase a building on the south western end of their street. The developers plan was to demolish the multifamily building and later install a smaller building which would allow a "short-cut" access to 120trh Street from 119th Street. After fighting to discourage easy access to 120th Street by drug related activity, the block association rushed to intercept the ULURP through negotiations at a number of City government levels.

Because the second step of the ULURP requires a review and discussion of a proposed property transfer to be done in open meeting at the local community board, association members attended community board meetings on the proposed sale and argued their side to the Board. The third and fourth stages of the ULURP

are reviews by the Borough Presidents Office and by the City Board Of Estimate. The block association made direct contact with Borough President Andrew Stein and Carol Bellamy, President of the Board Of Estimate.

Aside from the fact that the offices of the Borough President and the Board Of Estimate of the City of New York wield considerable power in local communities of the city; they are also politically sensitive offices. They have a clear interest in sustaining an image of not, in principal, being against taking a community advocacy position; even though other political and special interests, naturally, may have a stronger influence in their decision process. Journalists Jack Newfield and Paul Du Brul have insisted that: "Whenever a major building project is under consideration at the Board Of Estimate, City Hall Looks as if it were under assault from an army of pinstriped-suited ants. The most outraged and organized community defending itself from such a project is no match for this onslaught."¹³

But this was a relatively small project by the city standards. Of great importance were the stated philosophical positions of Bellamy and Stein which were usually pro-local community effort in tone. After investing some time and energy in continued dialogue with these two offices, the block association learned that, after studying the situation on their

block, both the Board Of Estimate and the Borough Presidents Office had been swayed to their side. The developers ULURP was halted, and in its place, the block association asked if it could take the building and do a gut rehabilitation to produce more housing units for the block: "HPD and Steins office said that if we could get eighty to ninety percent funding, we could do it."

I asked the block association president what some of the organizations interests were at this point, and into the foreseeable future. A major interest was local coalition building: "We are talking to the block associations on 119th Street and 121st Street, about working with us. We have to go slow though, because some of the groups still have problems." The self interests of their block association would now have to be considered. Sharing information and, more importantly, "knowledge" would have to be done with allies prepared to use what would be shared.

Political Interest

An important objective for this block association would be political education. I was told that the general opinion of most of the 120th Street block association leadership was that the Reagan administration's cut of 312 Rehabilitation Loan Program and the faze out of the Section-8 Moderate Rehabilitation program would hurt Harlem, and inevitably their block. It was necessary to create needed housing and community development programs capable of empowering their block and Harlem.

This same theme is repeated in the examples of other block associations. In the Strivers Row area I spoke to block associaition leaders who expressed their concerns about the necessity for community organization to become creatively involved in political activity. On west 138th Street, between Adam Clayton Powell and Frederick Douglas Boulevards, the man who had been block association president for over 20 years (noted in Chapter 4.) was certain of what community based organization could do in moving to political action, based apon what had been accomplished in his neighborhood: "Our organization joined with the 139th Street block association in electing (City Councilman) Fred Samuel and his wife district leader."

"We have some things that we need to work out on this block. Everything is not a problem in need of organized politics, but I would say that a lot of what needs to be done will require political action. That's going to mean votes. When we had the 312 loans and section-8 you were seeing a lot of neighborhoods getting it together, doing rehabilitation on their buildings. Reagan has turned his back on all that. The man's policies are going to hurt our efforts."

Few home owners on 138th Street had roomers living in their homes, but a number of breakins had occurred as the drug problem worsened in the surrounding street of the area. The block benefits from a strong sense of community and cooperation born out of the fact that households have lived on the block for two or more generations: "Every neighbor has each other's phone and watches their neighbors home to see that nobody (outsiders) start acting suspicious. We need the political linkups to get people in City Hall and Washington who can help us make our neighborhoods safe. And that means creating jobs for these young people."

One block north, on 139th Street, a member of the 139th Street block association shared the same desire of extending local community organization into political mobilization. He noted an example wherein some political help could have made the difference in his organization's struggle to keep a liquor store

from being installed in a store front on the north east corner of Frederick Douglas Blvd., at 139th Street: "Even though our block got a designation of landmark status we got stuck with this liquor store (being built) ...They (the liquor store owners) approached the Community Board 10 with their plan to open the liquor store. We were right on the thing with our protest. The neighborhood has enough problems with alcoholism, and all this does is attract the wrong people to the wrong street. Listen, we want to make our street nice. As it is, our kids have to pass the liquor store on the way to school and church. But, the Community Board allowed them to locate there, and all the problems we thought it would bring, it brought. The community boards aren't controlled by the community. If somebody from outside the community wants to come in, with money and political strings, the Community Board is going to give them the preference, and not the community."

In the thinking of this resident, if community boards were not responsive to local community, then local community needed some means of acquiring that desired response from the local community board. The logical means was thought to be through political negotiation or lobbying efforts at levels of government above the community board level.

Community Organization And The Sense
Of Community: As Mutual Reinforcers.

One block north, on 140th Street, a block association made up of building apartment renters had first organized as early as 1967 when two women of the block began to organize tenants in the buildings around the issue of saving their neighborhood and, especially, its children. When I spoke to the president of this association she explained that, in the late 1960's and mid 1970's period, an influx of drugs that paralleled the disinvestment on the part of some building owners had created a crisis situation. A few families that had always managed to maintain control of their children found that some young sons or daughters on the block had become involved in heroin drug use or drug related crime. 140th Street between Adam Clayton Powell and Frederick Douglas Boulevards has always been a populated block. Even with population losses, to walk through this street on a summer day, as I have, is to become immediately aware that it has remained a block of families. Some families go back three generations or more than fifty years.

What developed out of the perception that a neighborhood problem existed was the desire to do something about it. The manifest interest (saving the

rental housing, as well as the youth of the block) were fueled by a strong sense of community feeling that had always been a social fact for this block. A core of family, individual or non-related households maintained the strong social bond that served to nourish the moral order through the period of social turmoil. As the association president explained: "I've known the families on this block a long time. We have all been together for many years. Mrs. Gonz and Mrs. Ruby Turner started our block association in 1967. From that time we have been working to do something for the kids and the senior citizens."

One of the accomplishments was the conversion of a tenement building on the block for use as a community center and organization meeting place. The organization had installed youth after school and senior citizen activities in the building. The building served as a focal point for integrating residents from the block and the immediate surrounding streets in social activities. Most importantly, it had given the adults a means by which to monitor and direct some of the activities of the young people, channeling a part of their (non-school time) energies into projects that benefited the block by including them in recreational and cultural activity. It was an example of how a local block association was attempting to provide a reasonable reason to contribute to the support of the sense of community

solidarity-- or, in O'Briens words, to "coerce themselves" into supporting a sense of community.

By providing the young people with a valuable public good, the association president felt that the difficult job of teaching what the adults felt were proper values could be accomplished. On the day (in 1981) when I visited the building , I had to quickly step aside as a group of 15 or 20 boys and girls (in their teens and pre-teens) dashed past me into the building. In physical appearance the building was an unattractive tenement that had been abandoned by its owner, as were other buildings on the block. But the noise and blur of activity created by the young people had the effect of giving the old building, with its worn front stoops, an atmosphere of life and vitality.

The organization hoped that as more young people and their families became involved, it could follow through on its plan to purchase 13 buildings on the block from the City. The goal was to form a corporation; by which the organization would receive government funding to initiate rehabilitation of the properties; bringing them up to rental ready condition. The desire and the expectation was that some neighborhood jobs could be developed during and after the rehabilitation: "The way it is now, neighborhood jobs is number one. Housing is number two. With the jobs, people can keep up on their rent. They can keep the family together."

Given this most ambitious initiative on the part of the 140th Street group, it must be noted that when I returned to the block in the spring of 1985, the block association had been unable to achieve the funding it had sought. Regular activities for the youth, the elderly, and the general neighborhood had ceased to function after the economic development financing was not attained. The 140th Street experience was illustrative of how a local community organization supported, and was in turn nurtured by and then organized, the natural community solidarity.

Unlike the 120th Street block association of the Mount Morris Park area, the 140th Street block association was not able to achieve both instrumental and expressive objectives. The objective of developing the instrumental public good of economic development (through funding) was not achieved. Their inability to clear that important hurdle set the block's residents back, but not completely to a quasi-group status. This was because the association was able to offer the divisible "expressive" social good of community involvement for the individual. So long as it could do this there would always be the expectation of new developments, some new reason to mobilize community efforts around some neighborhood activity.

In such neighborhoods, struggling socio-economic displacement mechanisms, the expressive social good

can act as a community cohesive. When it is present, residents are slow to opt to leave. And often seek to find reasons for hanging on a little longer. I have found that, even in some instrumentally weak tenant or block associations, those that were able to offer the social good of expressive community involvement generally seemed to have the tacit, and inevitably, active support of the enclosing quasi-group. While agreeing with Dahrendorf and the seminal writers on interest group formation (such as David Truman and later: Theodore Lowi, Grant McConnell, Henry Kanel),¹⁴ it can also be said that the interest group and its quasi-group parent can sometimes have mutually sustaining roles -- despite having failed in achieving some kind of instrumental success. And although Clinard is correct in insisting that the success of local community organization development is linked to success at achieving tangible (i.e. instrumental) victories,¹⁵ the ability of the organization to provide the expressive social good, which inspires support for the sense of community, has to be seen as one effective means to counter the urban displacement phenomenon. Residents, at least, can provide themselves with some encouragement to remain where they are.

Another example of an expressively successful community organization was a tenants association at a building on 139th Street, between Lenox Avenue and

Adam Clayton Powell Blvd., in the Strivers Row area. Situated on a street with mostly abandoned buildings, tenants of this, more than 120 unit, building consisted of many elderly people, but had a number of young households that were gradually moving in. The tenants had formed an association in 1981 to maintain their building after their old landlord walked away and the City received it through the IN REM process.

Although the only instrumental success for this group was the successful formation of the tenant's association, the remarks of one tenants association member, an elderly widow and a building resident for more than thirty years, is enlightening in providing one individual expression of the philosophical base from which many, though by no means all, black community organizations spring. When I asked her how the association members generally responded if a neighbor were ill or in need, the respondent stated:

"If someone not feeling well, we go see em. And don't you know we cook the food too. Cook pots of soup, and sometimes we spread a dinner in the hall (for social events)...This one house, one family. What happen to one, happen to everybody. When they dead we go in the house (apartment) and get that money (bring money for the funeral), and everybody leave here got a flower (funeral bouquet) this big (stretching out her arms for emphasis)...If they (the family) don't want the flowers we give them the money.

We go to the house and fill it up with food, and tell everybody come on..."

"And that is why we don't want to leave here. The house falling down, needs fixin, but we don't want to go. Cause, you know what: Why live in a beautifull place, if you don't have no companion? You get sick, you don't have anybody to say nothing every night, and nobody bell to ring..."

In this building a minimally successfull tanant's association was the clear extension of the sense of community among the tenants, many of whom were elderly. The significance of the organization was that it served to give a formalizing stamp to the already established group integrative behavior. This formalizing stamp of legitimation seemed, for this observer, to operate much like many churches in the black community, by encouraging members to assist fellow members and take an interest in their well being.

The Sense Of Community In The Instrumentally
Successfull Organization.

At another building, in the Morningside Park area, a successfull tenant's association had built upon the same sense of community, in initially organizing, and then moving to purchase their building through the HPD Tenant Interim Lease program (TIL). The two, multi-unit, building complex on Manhattan Avenue is two blocks south of the closed Sydenham Hospital.

The history of the tenants organization in the building complex began in the mid-1940's. The 66 households in the building had protested their landlords intentions to take out the manual operated elevator. One of the tenants, a black man who was an architect, lead in organizing the tenants around that issue. The landlord succeeded in removing the operator elevator service, but the tenants had developed past quasi-group status. Building from the natural solidarity, the tenants began to participate in small activities related to living in the building. These were mostly of a social nature, and were only occasional activities. As the man who has been the tenant's leader for almost fifty years explained to me: "Our organization didn't stay tight all the time. We were moving in the right direction, and we were doing just what we needed to do at that point. We

gave bus rides and did community work: that was the sort of thing we would do to keep our organization going."

"In the 1950's there was a neighborhood group at the Church Of The Master. There was a fellow employed there that used to give us advice about how we might do better with some of the community projects we were doing. Then in the early 1970's, when the landlords started walking away from their buildings and cutting down on the services, our landlord hired an 'S.O.B.' super who started to let the place fall apart. We took them to the City housing people. When they (the City agency representative) saw our numbers, it helped. We had all three houses with the organization there."

Impressive numbers were effective in influencing the City housing agency to bring pressure on the building owner to make the superintendent do his job. But, by 1974 conditions in the building were deteriorating once again. This time the tenants association called a rent strike: "But we told the landlord if he did certain things for the building service, we would pay. When that one ended we really felt that we could do a better job running the building than him. In 1976 we met with the landlord, with a lawyer. He (the landlord) gave us a letter agreeing to let us run (manage) the place for a year. In 1977 th City took over. We refused to pay the

City. Out of 60 tenants, only three paid the City."

In early 1976 the tenant leader had seen a story in the New York Times about the Urban Homestead Assistance Board (UHAB). When he made contact with a UHAB representative, the situation the tenants found themselves in was evaluated in terms of the options that would be available. The evaluation of the UHAB representative was that they had demonstrated that they were able to manage the property -- why not continue to manage the building through the TIL program and work towards eventually purchasing the building? This would put the building back on the tax rolls: bringing revenues back to the City, while allowing the tenants association to continue the business of running their buildings.

Though the association still did not pay the rent, they continued to negotiate with the City: "The first thing, The City threatened to throw us out, but we didn't pay. HPD gave us our first lease in 1977. The lease was renewed for 1978 and 1979. Then, in December of 1980, we bought it. We paid the whole amount, and only three of the 66 didn't go along."

In 1979 I attended a meeting of the tenant's association, in one of the apartments of the building complex. Seated around the room were about twenty men and women, ranging in age from their mid-twenties through eighties. In this building a number of those attending were middle income people. at the start of

the meeting the attending members bowed their heads as the association leader lead them in a prayer for a successful and productive meeting. This was during a period when they were negotiating to purchase their building from the City. The members listened attentively as particular committee people discussed the developments relating to the purchase of the building.

The atmosphere at the meeting seemed one of concern but also of confidence. Here was a veteran organization that had experienced much. Out of the first problem issues around which they had first organized during the mid 1940's, the sense of community among the tenants and the emergence of competent leadership the organization had developed. The aquisition and development of knowledge followed from the regular and conscious attempts by its leadership to seek out knowledge sources and allies.

Trying Without Knowledge

The destructive results of the urban displacement in the Morningside Park area is a social fact that is only lightly affected by the success of the tenant organization just noted. The mute evidence of building after building that has been left abandoned in the Morningside Park area imply other efforts: certainly, some involving other attempts by ordinary people to "do something." On 117th Street, between Manhattan and Morninside Park Avenues I spoke with four black men who sat on the front stoop of an abandoned building. It was early in the evening in mid summer, and these men were meeting on the stoop after the day's work on their jobs, to share a few bottles of beer and talk. As I walked up to them they observed me with, what I considered to be, a pronounced degree of suspicion. When I explained that I was trying to locate a block association or similar group in the area, and also told a little about my work, their attitude changed.

In warm tones one stocky man, of about fifty five years, explained that they and some neighbors from the area had formed a social club which they wanted to develop into a block association. These men and their spouses had all been raised in the neighborhood and had watched it rapidly deteriorate during the height

of the displacement process in the Morningside Park area.

Their problem was the aquisition of knowledge: "We have been asking around to some of the outfits (organizations) in the neighborhood to find out how to get a start. Look like the ones that doing something will give you advice -- but, just so much. We want to take over a couple of these buildings (abandoned ones) and do something with them." In a period when a number of institutional "means" to grass roots community development have been cut back greatly, if not terminated; the knowledge of how to make the strategic connections that bring the "means" becomes an important resource. The organization that possesses such a resource can scarcely be blamed for not sharing it arbitrarily.

They mentioned a number of important groups and also some government helping agencies in the area that they had gone to for information. But they felt that they were asking the wrong questions in the wrong manner, or asking the right questions to the wrong (i.e. unsympathetic) people. The group appeared caught between the ambition to continue trying, or giving up and returning to the social club format they had developed as an expression of their solidarity. Past efforts had not brought the needed knowledge.

A Struggle To Remain In The Central Park North Area

In concluding the chapter on the community organization response to the challenges of both urban displacement and redevelopment, I turn to the experiences of three organizations in the Central Park North area. Two of them were embroiled in a conflict which centered on the redevelopment strategies of certain interests. Only one organization survived that conflict. The third organization faced a series of conflicts involving its own community redevelopment, and did so with success.

From 1978 into 1979 some of the last of the "Section-8" funding for community development projects were coming out of the "pipeline." One of the recipients of this funding was a Harlem based housing management group and its redevelopment partner, a Harlem based housing development company. Part of a larger federally funded and HPD administered program titled the "Gateway To Harlem" project, the territory covered was roughly coincident with the Central Park North area of this study. The total funding awarded to the management group and developer was a 10 million dollar government subsidy to rehabilitate 177 apartment units in ten buildings.

On 111th Street, between Adam Clayton Powell and Frederick Douglas Boulevards, the two buildings, which I will call "A" and "B", were located on the block.

In 1980 the block had many abandoned buildings (about half). Generally, the condition of both the buildings in question was good. Building "A" had a Victorian styled hallway that lead to the stairwell, which circled around an old, elegant iron encased elevator. Building "B" had a smaller entrance way, but was brightly lit by electric fixtures and natural sunlight coming through its hallway windows. In both buildings the respondents allowed me to see their apartments. Room sizes were generally very large with high ceilings.

The respondent at "B" building, a 75 year old black woman, had been a resident of the building for 40 years. She was the leader of the tenants association in the building: "Our problem is that our building and ("A") are part of a package where the City has a number of buildings on 111th Street scheduled for complete rehabilitation. All the tenants will have to move out, with no guarantee they can move back in again. Now the City says that either ("A") can be exempted from having to move or us. One or the other."

"The City is trying to play one tenants organization against the other. We have been working with ("A") tenant association for a long time; they helped us get started. But we have to think about ("B") West 111th Street first, when it comes down to the crunch. I hope we can find some way around having

to go against them ("A")."

"There have been some strange goings on here sometimes. The super said some people asked to see their apartment, and some men were doing survey work in the street."

The divisive situation into which the two buildings tenants were placed was the direct result of both being City owned properties. Although both buildings were managed by their tenants under the Tenant Interim Lease program, and their tenants had already begun the slow process of purchasing their buildings from the City; the "Gateway To Harlem" area project had been designated a "Neighborhood Strategy Area" (NSA) by the U.S. Department Of Housing And Urban Development (HUD). The imperative behind the new designation of their neighborhood as an NSA short -- circuited the purchasing process.

In their proposal, the management group and development company had included the two fully occupied buildings among a number of others chosen from City owned properties. Since neither building's tenants had as yet taken title to their buildings HPD, interested in expediting the execution of the federally funded NSA project, acquiesced to the wishes of the management group and development company interests.

I was also able to talk with the tenant leader of the building "A" tenants association, a black woman in

her late fifties. The respondent voiced her membership's desire to keep their building, and also questioned the reasoning behind the desire to acquire occupied buildings when a large number of unoccupied structures proliferate in the area: "We have been in the Tenant Interim Lease program since it started, and had made it clear we did not want to be part of their deal. We have large beautiful apartments. All they (the developers) would do is cut up the apartments and raise the rents on them sky high. They would make a big profit and we would be homeless. With all the unoccupied buildings around here they have to choose an occupied one. How could they do that without first asking us about it? Its shocking how our homes are supposed to be offered to a developer out of the clear blue sky."

After hearing these respondents, the question of the role building tenants play in determining who shall be affected when a macro development program is carried out by private "community" and government interests groups, became a difficult one for me. The word "tenant" cannot refer to the person who is the legal owner of the property being rented. These tenants did not yet own their buildings, but were renters in a period when government policy had begun to lean more toward redevelopment initiatives by private business interests as a means of putting abandoned buildings back on the city governments tax

rolls. And these respondents seemed to claim a rightful voice in determining the utilization of property they only rented.

I followed these interviews up by going to HPD to talk with an Assistant Director of Public Affairs. I asked for an explanation of HPD's policy in regard to the selection of buildings in such redevelopment areas, and secondly for a discussion of the rights of the primary interest groups in this instance (the developers and the tenants). The HPD representative said: "Every effort is made to avoid moving people out. But if they must be moved, then under Section-8 they can become eligible for relocation assistance. Developers have to prove that removal of people from an occupied building is warranted. This all must be done in accordance with HUD guidelines."

"HPD tries to discourage the unnecessary displacement of people by maintaining strict standards when selecting from plans submitted by developers. Priority is given to those developers with a proven record. They are going to be judged by the number of projects successfully completed and the way they have treated tenants in the past."

These comments seemed, on the surface, to be quite straight-forward: tenants were displaced only when necessary; displaced tenants could get financial help. But after thinking through these words one came away feeling that much was left unclear or was mired in

obfuscation.

If developers were judged by their previous deeds, that might mean that some newly accepted developers were, even as the HPD representative spoke, performing their first misdeeds--or their second, or their third. If tenants were displaced only when necessary, that too could mean under any set of circumstances; perhaps when information on a building was suppressed or lost. In the period of the 1980's when the Reagan administration cut back on a number of local community housing development programs, the ideological thrust of federal housing policy has moved toward the redevelopment efforts of business concerns, with less emphasis on "grass roots" community input. If, prior to the Reagan regime, there was not government clarity as to which groups in the community were representative of the community, the post Reagan era has only compounded the lack of clarification by often equating rationally oriented business interest groups with the, only partly rationally oriented, tenants or block association type of effort.

This practice exists even though the federal, and many local guidelines, that were developed for "Citizen Participation" projects during the "Great Society" era are still in effect for some of the remaining government assisted or approved projects. From the HUD CDBG Entitlement Regulations, the responsibility of city government is explained as follows:

- " C (3) The applicant shall make reasonable efforts to ensure continuity of involvement of citizen organizations throughout all stages of the program;
- (4) citizens shall be provided adequate timely information, so as to enable them to be meaningfully involved in important decisions at various stages of the program.
- (5) Citizens, particularly low-and moderate-income persons and residents of blighted neighborhoods, shall be encouraged to submit their views and proposals regarding community development programs;
- d Scope of Participation. The applicant shall provide for continuity of citizen participation throughout all stages of the program..."¹⁶

The HUD strategy was to make the local government the guardian or monitor of projects like the NSA. From HUD's own Displacement Report. I abstracted the following: "Moreover, local governments are responsible for planning and managing the neighborhood revitalization effort, including securing Section-8 substantial rehabilitation proposals. More stringent relocation proposals are possible under the NSA program than other forms of Section-8 program because of the significant role of the local government and because a funding source for relocation payments is available."¹⁷ Ideally, local government agencies like HPD will prevent the abuses of tenants rights and assure that their opinions are heard and acted upon on matters of greatest concern to them.

Prior to interviewing the 111th Street tenants, I had spoken with a representative of the community management group that was the co-recipient of the redevelopment award. Our discussion at that time had nothing to do with the 111th Street situation. The discussion was concerned more with this organization's goals, perception of the community, etc: "...We are the most productive organization in the West Harlem area. Other organizations do as best they can, but we get something done for the community."

When I asked some of the things they were doing to encourage tenants to remain in the buildings they

managed, a number of projects were mentioned. Then I was told: "We've been successful, and we know what tenants need. Some of them don't always like to listen, but they don't have a workable plan to get the community moving; we do." Such multi-building community management groups perform a special and needed service in communities like Central Harlem. They provide regular managerial and development help to tenants in landlord abandoned or City owned properties: especially when strong tenant organization has not arisen within the building to lead in the quest for knowledge and improvement of the living quality in a building. Despite cut backs in various government housing funds in the post Reagan era many of these community management groups have made the positive difference for many poor and working class residents of neighborhoods throughout the city.

A multi-building community management group usually manages from the top down. That is to say, it accepts complaints and suggestions from tenants in buildings that it manages; but does not, necessarily, include tenants in on strategy or policy decision making. When such a group encounters building tenants that have already taken on the responsibilities of strategy and policy decision making, it becomes easy to see how a conflict association may be formed. The clash of differing group interests and styles can leave little room for reasoned discussion and compromise. And when

legitimate authority (government) is involved, the conflict can become exacerbated. For the community, the problem begins when the legitimate authority will not or cannot accurately determine the desires of all legitimate community interests. This is important for government so that it can follow its own stated policy. When, for whatever reason, legitimate authority will not or cannot rigorously follow through with its own stated policies in the politically and economically vulnerable community, its social engineering initiative becomes a mechanism for displacement. It is probably one of the most effective mechanisms because it is prosecuted with the full, legitimate and dispassionate, power of the state.

What resulted from the conflict association of tenants, development interests and government, was that the tenants in building "B" lost their bid to purchase their building, and also lost their building. By 1984 it had been demolished to help make way for a new "efficiency" building on the corner of Frederick Douglas Blvd. and 111th Street. The tenants in building "A" were successful in purchasing their building: having had the longer lived and more knowledgeable organization, their connections and negotiation skills had been developed through many meetings with government and private agencies.

The relationship between community resident and

government in this situation seemed less one in which the resident was "meaningfully involved in important decisions at various stages" (again, quoting the HUD CDBG Entitlement Regulations), and more a lopsided contest between ridiculously mismatched adversaries. An opportunity for cooperation between government and local community was missed. It is anticipated here that as revitalization in Harlem continues, this variety of conflict may become more common place. The seriousness of its potential, of course, lies in its ability to tear apart the bonds of friendship and community feeling between neighbors -- leaving only the sense of alienation and bad feelings as inevitable corollaries.

How different, then, were the experiences of the final community group we now discuss. On 111th Street, between Fifth and Lenox Avenues the tenants in seven old-law walkup buildings, succeeded in saving their buildings from demolition. In doing so, they turned their block into a special example of local community development and stability in the Central Park North area.

In the seven buildings that make up most of the resident housing on the block, many of the tenants were families who had lived there for many years. The large scale abandonment of buildings that occurred during the late 1960s and 70s had also left the seven buildings ownerless. Finally, they became properties

of the City through IN REM tax foreclosure. In these buildings as in some previously noted cases, there was a strong sense of community which centered around a number of families that had shared collective life experiences over many years.

The tenants had formed an association prior to the City taking the buildings in the early 1970's. But when the City took control the tenants learned that the seven buildings would be demolished because the area had deteriorated into a slum. A new cooperative building would be built and the City began to move many of the households to temporary living quarters in the Harlem area.

In meetings with HPD representatives the block association stated their desire to remain and to rehabilitate the seven buildings. They finally made it clear that they would not move. Conditions in the buildings deteriorated as the City seemed to take a benign neglect posture with the remaining tenants. Front door locks were allowed to go unrepaired, drug addicts took up residence in open apartments. At one point an emotionally disturbed woman kept 53 dogs in her apartment. When tenants protested, the City representatives allowed the woman to remain, with the dogs.

The anomic conditions had little effect on the block association's efforts to avoid displacement. One of the first persons they turned to for help was

Roy Miller, then the director of Milbank Frawley Urban Renewal area, and later the director of the Harlem Neighborhood Preservation Office. So impressed was he by their tenacity and resolve that he became a friend to their cause, giving some of the needed advice in negotiating with the City housing bureacracy. One of the block association leaders explained their situation this way: "We had stopped paying rent for two years when the City was the landlord. They wanted us out so bad that they did everything to us that they could. When they found they couldn't push us around they helped us out."

After a series of court fights that ran for over two years (1975 - 1977) the block association had succeeded in convincing the City authorities that they intended to stay. By 1978, with the help of Roy Miller, They had succeeded in attaining a \$7 million federally subsidized rehabilitation grant, that was estimated as being less expensive than the City's first plan for erecting new housing on the site.

To walk through this block is to see the result of a partnership between government and community. Seven buildings were set back onto the City tax roll. Residents of this local community are the owners of their buildings. In this case the cooperation between legitimate authority and community did not come about without conflict. If there had been no conflict there would have only been a vacant lot awaiting some kind

of construction, at some future time. Likewise, the successful negotiations, both in and out of court, were the result of the acquisition of knowledge.

The Perspectives Within The Government Helping Agency.

Conflict is certainly not the requisite component of a successful relationship between the helping agency and the community. But, knowledge is. Both the organized and non-organized community member may, at some time, have dealings with the helping agency. The responses of the Harlem sample indicated that some, at least, knew someone who had sought help. I cross tabulated the responses of the Harlem sample on two questions: whether they had heard of HPD with membership in a tenants or block association. Most of the 152 whp responded had heard of HPD, 106 (69.7%): the majority of those answering yes to this part of the query were, or had been, members of an organization.

Table 5.1: KNOWLEDGE OF HPD WITH MEMBERSHIP IN
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION.

community organization membership	have you heard of HPD		
	no	yes	total
yes.	7 (15.2)	55 (51.8)	62 (40.7)
no.	11 (23.9)	9 (8.4)	20 (13.1)
had been a member.	24 (52.1)	40 (37.7)	64 (42.1)
would like to be.	4 (8.6)	2 (1.8)	6 (3.9)
	46 (100)	106 (100)	152 (100)

Rather different responses were registered when the U.S. Department of Housing Development was substituted for HPD. Of 91 respondents to the query, it was mostly active organization members who knew of HUD. Most previous members did not. as with the HPD example, many of those who claimed to be former organization members had not heard of the agency. This was an interesting occurrence, but not unusual since local agencies like HPD, are in more direct and constant contact with community people than the huge HUD type of agency.

Table 5.2: KNOWLEDGE OF HUD WITH MEMBERSHIP IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

community organization member	have you heard of HUD		
	no	yes	total
yes.	15 (34%)	34 (72.3)	49 (53.8)
no.	4 (9.0)	3 (6.3)	7 (7.6)
had been a member.	23 (52.2)	10 (21.2)	33 (36.2)
would like to be.	2 (4.5)	0 (0)	2 (2.1)
	44 (100)	47 (100)	91 (100)

Frederick L. Bates saw the various parties to

negotiation as "elemental groups", each having particular objectives and goals. When the representatives of each group are joined together in the process of negotiation they are an "interstitial" group: "An interstitial group stands between two elemental groups and has the function of affecting a transfer of goods and services (or functions) from one group to another.¹⁸ When "the relationship between actors in an interstitial group are conceived of normatively as cooperative, directed towards commonly defined and sought goals..." it is a "reciprocal" relationship. When the parties to the interstitial relationship have conflicting goals they have a "conjunctive relationship."¹⁹

In talking with representatives of various helping agencies it became clear that these professionals, with different personal perspectives, had similar attitudes on some basic community organization related issues. A common point of view for all the representatives that I talked to was that they worked best, and preferred to work, with those community groups that were the most knowledgeable. This was evidenced in the words of a Harlem Urban Development Corporation (HUDC) planner: "We have architects and planners on staff to help our projects become feasible. We work with community groups put together in coalitions. When they know what they're doing, what the limitations the task proposed are,

communication becomes easier. They can see it (a proposed project) from where we stand." From this first comment it would seem that the degree to which an (HUDC and community) interstitial group displays reciprocal and conjunctive relations will, early on, be affected by the knowledge displayed by the community group.

HUDC is a subsidiary of the New York State UDC. Created in 1971 to spearhead redevelopment in Harlem residential housing while assisting in the economic development effort. HUDC works with the City Planning Board in the ULURP process, through which local community people purchase property from the City, and it also assisted some groups with seed money to initiate certain projects. For HUDC leadership, which is made up mainly of black professionals, there is the realization that their decisions will be among the key decisions that determine Harlems future. They often have to make tough and, sometimes, unpopular decisions: Which site will be selected for development; which groups plan will be chosen above some others? The reality of decision informs the representatives attitude to the approach to the community organizations representatives -- and to the idea of community organization. But it is only one of a number of factors that inform the attitude that the HUDC representative may bring to the interstitial group.

The two HUDC representatives that I talked to were young, black middle class, professional men who both openly expressed their desire to see Harlem redeveloped as a black community. They were both plain in opinions on the role of grass roots Harlemites: "...I say we do a great job. But, what is going to make it work (Harlem redevelopment) is the impact made by the resident: not HUDC, HPD, etc...It has to be the people that make the future, and make the dream come true."

The perspective that the HUDC representative would bring to the exchange with community organization made an interesting contrast to the comments of a woman representative of the HUD Community Development Program, at their New York office. She explained that her program was almost strictly concerned with the transfer of funds to local governments for the funding of approved local community group projects. But their program did have some contacts with local groups: "If someone has a complaint they might come to us. But usually they go to the City agency. If we get a complaint, lets say if a group believed they were treated unfairly, we would follow up by contacting the City and ask to see the complaint. These things are taken as local government issues; although a question of discrimination would be reason for attention."

"A lot of community groups bring complaints that are broad, sweeping, generalities. They run the

gamut, and it's hard to keep many community groups going. From the ones that I've seen, that try to fight a problem and not ignore it, they do it with planning. The rule, the most important thing is, is to know the political process in their neighborhood, and how to connect it to the local agency. But, too often they don't have the know-how, and bring complaints here that didn't have the facts right, or only half thought out ideas. I mean, what can they expect?"

Like the HUDC response, the HUD representative laid the burden of liability in the interstitial negotiation with local community organization. In talks with more than twelve different representatives this was always the case. It is a feature of the compositionally complex system that all sides to the negotiation bring agendas that contain easily negotiable to less negotiable points. When, during the summer of 1979, I worked at the HUD Regional Office in Manhattan, I was able to observe a few of the many interstitial group formations that take place at a helping agency. Representatives would receive calls from everyday citizens, real estate or development firms, small town mayors and powerful state or federal legislative representatives. Given the set of guidelines within which to work, the agency representative enters the negotiation process. They are not immune from all the outside pressure. Some

local community projects that may have been in the "pipeline" for months might be scratched when a single phone call or letter is received. But many others continue to completion by virtue of the interstitial dialog between local community group member and HUD representative.

Federal, state and local political interests have a definite stake in particular projects that are funneled through the helping agency. In the post Reagan era new private interest groups that combine powerful business groups from outside marginal communities with locally based business and community development groups have become well known in many of the nation's urban areas -- in New York City the "New York City Partnership" is such a phenomenon.

In the Central Park North area the plan was originally forwarded to build the large "Frederick Douglas Homes" complex, was to feature middle income high rise condominiums on the north west end of Frederick Douglas Circle (110th Street and Frederick Douglas Blvd). The southern end high rise was to be developed by a local community housing organization as low income housing. After negotiations that stretched over a fifteen year period, the role of the local community organization was put aside in favor of the, clearly, more financially prestigious and influential New York City Partnership.

The middle to upper income resident had become the

focus of the project development. This led Assemblyman Edward Sullivan, Democrat of Manhattan, to wonder about the City government's shift in position: "I have trouble, 'he went on,' understanding why the other project held together by poor people and others concerned in the district got stalled for 15 years while this one that goes from middle to rich is being rushed...greased through the system. It does not represent the efforts of the larger number of people in the district who were here trying to do something before' the Partnership appeared on the scene."²⁰

And so, in the compositionally complex system that forms the interstitial meeting of helping agency and local organization, there will remain real limitations on the local group's ability to move events to suit its interests. Knowledge is the valuable key to the kingdom of local organization success, but it is often rendered valueless when superior power interests enter into the interstitial group to negotiate.

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Chapter VI

Conclusion

A critical issue, that has been addressed in this study, has been the state of the sense of community in the thinking of Harlem residents. I have tried to show how it has been impacted upon by the soci-economic mechanisms of urban displacement. In examining the role of community organization in meeting the challenges posed by both the urban displacement process and revitalization, the sense of community was shown to provide a natural supportive base for the development of community organization.

Black Political and Community Organization

Community organization in Harlem can also be shown to have potential as a base for political organization. From the comments and examples presented in the previous chapter, and earlier on, it is evident that the political arena connects with the compositionally complex system of the helping agency, at its interstitial link to the local community.

It is interesting to note that, when the Central

Harlem sample was asked to register their opinion as to the effectiveness of political office holders, none of the holders got high marks from the majority of those who responded. Usually 40% or more of the respondents felt that the politician was not effective in helping people in the community. 20% or more did not know whether the politician had any effect (see Table 6.1). The highest marks for being (very or somewhat) effective went to the congressman (29.3%) and the City Councilman (26.8%). But it is quite clear that, for these respondents, the politician generally inspired something less than a positive response.

Table 6.1: RESPONSE ON THE EFFECTIVENESS
OF POLITICIANS.

	senator	congres rep.	state legis.	state senator	city council
very effective	3.6% (5)	8.0% (11)	7.5% (10)	6.0% (8)	6.1% (8)
somewhat effective	9.5% (13)	21.3% (29)	15.7% (21)	13.5% (18)	20.7% (27)
rarely effective	16.9% (23)	11.7% (16)	12.7% (17)	17.2% (23)	16.1% (21)
never effective	39.7% (54)	31.6% (43)	35.3% (47)	36.0% (48)	36.0% (41)
dont know	30.1% (41)	27.2% (37)	28.5% (38)	27.0% (36)	25.3% (33)
	100% (136)	100% (136)	100% (133)	100% (133)	100% (130)

Ambivalence is probably what these data convey most. Or, as one man expressed his feelings about the political representative: "...Most politicians don't want to do nothing. All they want is to keep their good jobs. I don't believe nobody (politicians) going to do nothing. Those that might want to do something don't have enough power, and the other politicians don't have the same ideas (as the constituency)."

Harlem has traditionally had political organization that was linked to and functioned like, the democratic party machine in Manhattan. After Harlems' political boundaries were redrawn in 1944, the list of black political leaders has continued from Adam Clayton

Powell jr. through Percy Sutton, Charles Rangel, Leon Bogues, Fred Samuel, and others. These have often been knowledgeable and, in some instances, courageous leaders. The pattern of political behavior in Harlem has generally reflected the traditional New York City democratic party machine political behavior: aiding one group or interest in the community and avoiding the issue of constructing a large permanent, local community and political alliance. Such community and political alliances were formed for emergency situations by the politician (e.g. for elections) then quickly and quietly dismantled.

From those who got individual help from the politician there would, of course, be words of praise. But as the hammer blows of the macro mechanisms of urban displacement diminished the powers of politicians to dispense the decreasing number of available favors to particular groups or individuals, a feeling of ambivalence toward the politician was an inevitable development -- as political help became a scarce resource.

The feeling of ambivalence in the responses of the Harlem sample makes a thought provoking contrast to the information which indicates significant gains in black and Hispanic voter enrollment in the Democratic party in New York City. A study done by the Institute For Puerto Rican Policy was noted in a 1984 New York Times news story:

"The records show that the three districts in which Democratic enrollment rose by 9,000 or more were predominantly black and Hispanic: Brooklyn's 55th and 56th, which include Bedford Stuyvesant, Brownsville, Ocean Hill, and in East Harlem."

"With more than 41,000 enrolled Democrats, the 70th Assembly District in Central Harlem now ranks second citywide. It trails the 24th in Queens, which includes Fresh Meadows and Little Neck, by a few hundred, and leads the district with the third highest number of Democrats - the 67th on the Upper West Side of Manhattan - by about 1,000."₁

Despite the gains in population for the black communities in Brooklyn over the years, Central Harlem will undoubtedly figure as an important participant in future attempts to bring about political empowerment for minority groups in New York City. And, although it is probably too early to assess what the meaning of the increases in upper-end income earners in Harlem (noted in Chapter III) will portend for the city politics in general, there is little doubt that the increases in their numbers will have meaning for community and political organization in Harlem; bringing in some of the young black professional people needed to move into areas of leadership in local community organization, economic and political activity in Central Harlem.

In recent years Brooklyn blacks, under the

leadership of political- community leaders such as Al Vann and Congressman Major Owens, have developed an energetic political organization that formed from, and is firmly rooted in, a base of local community organization. It has broken the mold of machine politics that once characterized Brooklyn's black political setting, and to some extent is still true of Harlem. In the new "community based politics" Brooklyn political leaders are often found in direct and co-equal strategy development meetings with community group workers and organizers.

Of Machine politics in minority community's Al Vann has been quoted as believing that it no longer is practical for addressing the challenge of urban social change: "Those days are coming to a close, because the problems are too vast and people have become too critical. Of course we negotiate for our constituency, but we don't make the patronage deals because we're basically a grassroots organization. People sacrifice a lot of time and energy, because there's no quick way. It's door to door, with coffee klatches, raffles, and service. We have no benefactors, which is good because it forces us to broaden our base."₂

Although community organization in Central Harlem has, in some instances, developed to stages of great sophistication, with the cooperation of particular local politicians: the Brooklyn model that has

developed political organization out of community organization is a new socio-political model. The turmoil of the Ocean Hill Brownsville community control struggles of 1968 had significance for the City as a whole.³ In the confrontation between local community organizations, on the one hand, and teachers union on the other, a socially catalytic situation had set the ground work for the unique fusion relationship between black political leadership and local community organization in Brooklyn.

Harlem has never experienced that particular conflict association, and this fact may go the greatest distance in explaining the responses of the Harlem sample on the effectiveness of elected politicians. In talking with organized and non-organized community residents in Harlem, the politician was usually spoken of in terms of the one who had to be approached: as someone who becomes distanced, somehow, from local problems and decisions. Yes, they see the politician's photo in the Amsterdam News or Big Red (newspaper): perhaps as he or she is dedicating a senior citizens housing facility or greeting a visiting African diplomat. But the politicians regular cooperative involvement with community organization strategy making is not assumed by residents. The politician's cooperation is yet another objective that must be competed for by the many local organizations in Harlem.

Some black community organizations in Brooklyn may still compete for knowledge, information and power sources that the politician may possess. But there is now one organized means for identifying and dealing with some of the persistent problems (and positive potentials) in the broader realm of local community group interests. This is the significance of the development of a more permanent socio-political structure in the Brooklyn black community. The formation of a large coalition of local community organizations in Harlem has not yet developed, in part, because of the competition to find and secure knowledge and power resources that occupies individual organizations.

This has meant fragmented or only partially affective attempts by groups to deal with many problems, ranging from drug proliferation to changes in local and federal government housing policies. The utilization of the politician as something other than an integrated participant in a community based political effort is another part of this community power allocation problem. Had there existed a strong coalition that was inclusive of local block and tenants organizations -- one which also acted as a base for, and cooperative partner of, an aggressive as well as progressive political leadership -- the destructive force of the mechanisms of urban displacement that continued throughout the late 1960's

and 70's could not have been so devastating.

For the immediate, and long term future, this type of cooperative relationship will be a necessity: to short circuit the destructive rivalries in neighborhoods between local development and block or tenants associations; to anticipate and plan for government policy shifts; to more efficiently exploit the interstitial group relationships at the government helping agency, legislative and political power development sectors. Whether this sort of integrated relationship will develop in Harlem remains the question.

Closing Statements And Reflections
On Socio-Economic Change In Harlem

The question of "who will benefit?" from the revitalization that is now becoming evident in some neighborhoods of Central Harlem can be answered by stating: "those who are in a position to benefit." At this juncture it cannot be said whether all Harlemites in general will be in a position to benefit. Socio-economic developments nationally and locally have made it clear that Harlem must change. But this can mean that for Harlem residents, both the ones who have stayed and the ones who are returning, that a realistic potential may exist for redevelopment with less destruction of the indigenous community life of Harlem.

The sense of black community in Harlem has been the "non-rational" base for "rational" organizational efforts in Harlem: from the Marcus Garvey movement through the fight to maintain Adam Clayton Powell in the United States Congress. It remains the potential unifying factor for any group effort. In the past, political or mass movement organizers tapped this strength in order to mobilize the Harlem residents around the rationally planned initiatives that were thought important.

The socially destructive corollary from the urban

displacement phenomenon has dictated that, before the sense of community can be reasonably employed as a rallying point for rational planning, some social, economic and political gains will most probably have to be achieved first. The limits of a sense of community were shown clearly in the case of the West 141st Street block association in the Strivers Row area, as well as in some of the other examples mentioned in the previous chapter. After one or a series of setbacks in the effort to achieve the rationally pursued gains, the unifying power of a sense of community was no longer directed as an ideological basis for rationally planned community action; but reverted to its other function, providing "expressive" involvement and support in the organizationally inactive community.

I suggest that an "ideal model" of local community organization would place the "non-rational" factor of a "sense of community" in a symbiotic system; in which rationally directed community based organization worked with local political organization in fueling economic and social development gains. These gains, in turn, could provide the positive signals to local community members that the sense of community must be directed toward providing the needed ideological basis for further rationally planned local community initiatives. This, of course, presupposes a rather different operable relationship between Harlems local

community members and Harlems political
representatives.

Ideal Model Of Community
Organization

1.community and political
organization strategy

4.directed sense
of community

2.development
gains

3.local community
member enthusiasm

The social planner or activist might ask: What are some potentials for social change that could prove feasible in such a local community development; could, seemingly intractable, problems like teenaged pregnancy become more malleable to a social engineering effort in the "ideal model?" As noted earlier on, one of the latent functions of successful community organization is that it tends to capture the interest of those in the immediate social vicinity: both acting to bolster the sense of community and stimulating individual attention to what is taking place.

This may be one key to capturing the, sometimes elusive, allegiance of the young; by giving them an intimate sense of belonging to an ongoing activity. After the initial generation of interest, organizers

could formulate activities which would involve youth in community action projects that made behavioral demands of them while providing instrumental and expressive rewards for compliance. If the military services of most countries have recognized the use of a form of this strategy in molding the behavior of the young for their combat community building needs, community organization leaders in the socio-economically vulnerable neighborhood may decide to direct a "be...all that you can be..." challenge to many young people, based on what organizers have shown has been (and can be) done in the community. Community organization has this potential, and has the potential advantage of being a product of the same quasi-group that both the young as well as the old belong to. Close geographic proximity, and a strategy of real rewards and demands are the instruments of action which could be employed in such an "ideal model" of community organization.

In this study I have taken an approach to the relationship between the government helping agency and the community that has been something less than a rosey picture of ongoing cooperation. The picture that has been projected here has been one marked by conflicts, no or partial cooperation, and misunderstanding. While the weight of the data I have assembled here demands that I stand by this approach, it is necessary to state that the best operating

relationship for government with the organized residents of communities like Harlem, should be a cooperative one. Whether government's policy is to stress massive government funding (e.g. "Great Society") or a mixed bag that lays the stress on "individual" initiative and private funding -- the agreed upon policy must be operationalized in a real neighborhood social setting. Many different histories and perspectives will greet the policy maker's initiative in a local community setting. They can turn the elan of a new program into a morass of ill feelings for all sides, or a glowing success story. But the initial direction of events will first be directed by the holder of the legitimate power, who initiates the plan. Care, and an appreciation of local attitudes and social realities, will probably be needed by the government policy maker and planner.

A final point, that is directly informed by the data from this study, holds that if democracy contains an aspect of organized competition, it will require the various interest groups who compete for scarce resources to be educated in the rules of the democratic competition. Indeed, many may need to have it explained to them that they have been placed in a contest; before serious harm is done to them. The conflicts that meet so many groups have been the result of a lack of such knowledge. In this regard the need for knowledge can be seen in the Thomas

Jefferson perspective that saw the need of education for citizenship as a continuing occupation for all Americans.

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Appendix.

Tenant and Home Owner
Questionnaires

Introductory Letter For
The Questionnaires

BUILDING TENANTS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please do not write your name on this questionnaire. Your answers will be treated confidentially.

1. What is the name of your neighborhood?.....

2. Is your building any of the following?

- (a) under rent control
- (b) under rent stabilization
- (c) privately owned
- (d) city owned
- (e) 7A Administered
- (f) tenant managed
- (g) tenant owned
- (h) other.....
please specify

3. What is the condition of your building?

- excellent good fair poor very bad
-

4. What is the quality of building service?

- excellent good fair poor very bad
-

5. Do you feel safe in your building?

- very safe somewhat safe not safe
-

11. your age:

- 18 to 38 39 to 58 59 and over
-

6. How many floors in your building?

7. How long have you lived here?

8. How many rooms in your apartment?

9. How many people in your household?

10. What is their relationship to you?

- husband
- wife check one

- daughters
- sons
- mother
- father
- mother-inlaw
- father-inlaw
- other.....
please specify

give number

12. your sex: male female

13. are you.....

- (a) currently employed?
- (b) unemployed seeking work?
- (c) receiving social service assistance?
- (d) retired?
- (e) other.....
please specify

please turn to

14. Where were you born?

City _____

State _____

Country _____

15. Do you consider yourself to be?

- black
- Puerto Rican
- Dominican
- white

16. Are you:

- married?
- single?
- separated?
- divorced?
- widowed?

17. Are you a member of a community organization?

	yes	no	have been in the past	would like to be
Tenant Association				
block Association				
Church Organization				
Parent, Teachers Association				
Political Party				
Other:				

.....
please specify

18. Can such organizations help community people to improve any of the following?

	yes greatly	only somewhat	no	don't know
The Neighborhood				
The Block				
The school				
Homeowners Improve Property				
Tenants Improve Their Buildings				
People To Learn How To Get Things Done				

Please discuss

.....

.....

19. Do any neighborhood organizations you may know about, or may be a member of, work with or get assistance from the following types of agencies:

	yes	no	don't know
City Government			
Agency			
State Agency			
Federal Agency			
Private Agency			
Other Neighborhood Organizations			

20. Looking at your neighborhood, has the amount of the following increased or decreased in the past 7 years.

	increased greatly	increased somewhat	decreased greatly	decreased somewhat	not changed	don't know
New Building Construction?						
New Stores Opened?						
Stores Closing?						
New People Moving In?						
Neighbors Moving Out?						
Buildings Abandoned?						
Public Schools?						
Services For Elderly?						
Hospitals?						
Crime?						
Police On The Street?						
Fire House Stations?						

please turn to reverse side.

21. Has the quality of the following things in your neighborhood improved or gotten worse?

	much improved	somewhat improved	somewhat worse	much worse	not changed	don't know
Hospital Services?						
Public Schools?						
Services For Elderly?						
Public Sanitation?						
Social Service Help?						
Police Protection?						
Community Pride?						
Other:						
..... please specify						

22. What things do you like about your neighborhood?

	like very much	like somewhat	don't like	does not apply
My Friends Live Here				
People Are Helpfull				
People Leave Me Alone				
Near Transportation				
Mostly My People Live Here				
Near Place Of Worship				
I Feel Relaxed Here				
Other:				
..... please specify				

23. Do you ever consider moving somewhere else?

	yes	no	where?.....
Inside Harlem		
Outside Harlem		

24. Name one thing that would influence you in a decision to move;.....

Please discuss:.....

25. If you had no other choice, where do you think you would be able to move to?

.....
 please specify

26. Would moving affect your ability to have access to any of the following?

	no	some difficulty	great difficulty	access impossible	don't know
Your Place Of Employment					
Schools					
Place Of Worship					
Social Service Help					
Job Training					
Neighborhood Service Center					
Medical Aid					
Other:					

.....
 please specify

27. Is your monthly rent: \$100 or less? \$100 to \$250? \$250 to \$350? \$350 to \$450 \$450 and over?

28. Do you consider your rent to be reasonable?

reasonable very reasonable not reasonable

29. Do you presently receive "section - 8" rent subsidies?

yes no

.....
 please turn page.

30. Do you:

	very much	somewhat	not at all
(a) like your building?			
(b) like your apartment?			
(c) want to stay in your building?			
(d) want to stay in your apartment?			

31. On the whole, would you say that your fellow tenants:

	some do	most do	none do
Help keep the building clean			
Help keep the building safe			
Care about their neighbor			
Assist in general maintenance			

Please discuss.....

32. Have you or fellow tenants ever been:

	yes	no
(a) told your building was going to be turned into a co-op?		
(b) told building was scheduled for major rehabilitation		
(c) offered money for apartment (by landlord, real estate firm, etc.)?		
(d) told to move because of income level, welfare status, etc?		
(e) encouraged or harrassed to move?		
(f) told of a major rent increase?		
(g) told building may be closed down or sold?		

(h) if you answered yes to any of (a) through (g) please explain.....

33. If you answered yes to any of #32, did it mean you had to move? yes no

34. Are more tenant assistance programs needed?

	yes	no
Federal programs		
State programs		
City programs		

35. Do you know any of the following private or government agencies?

	no	yes	have gone to them for help
Department of housing Preservation and Development (HPD)			
Harlem Urban Development Corporation (HUDC)			
Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)			
Met Council on Housing			
Black United Front			
Community Board			
Urban Homestead Assistance Board (UHAAB)			
N.Y.C. Housing Court			
Tenant Interim Lease Organization			

36. If you answered yes to any of #35, did the agency:

help someone you know?
help you?
help your group?
gave no help?
made things worse?

Please discuss.....

please turn on p.

HOME OWNERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please do not write your name on this questionnaire. Your answers will be treated confidentially.

1. What is the name of your neighborhood?.....

2. How long have you owned your property?

3. What would you say is the condition of your property?

excellent good fair poor very bad

4. How many floors in your building?

5. Do you rent out:

Floors? apartments? rooms? do not rent?

6. If you answered yes to any of #5, please give the amount rented out

7. If you do rent out, would you say your tenants on the whole;

	all	most do	some do	only a few	none
Pay Rent On Time?					
Help Keep Building Security?					
Help Keep Building Clean?					
Assist In General Maintenance?					

8. About how old is your property?

under 30 years 30 to 40 years 40 to 60 years 60 to 80 years over 80 years

9. How many people are in your household??

10. What is their relationship to you?

- husband
- wife check one
- daughters
- sons
- mother
- father
- mother-inlaw
- father-inlaw give number
- other.....
 please specify

11. your age:

18 to 38 39 to 58 59 and over

12. your sex: male female

please turn to

13. are you.....
- (a) currently employed?
 - (b) unemployed seeking work?.....!
 - (c) receiving social service assistance?
 - (d) retired?
 - (e) other.....
please specify

14. Where were you born?

City.....

State.....

Country.....

15. Ethnicity:
- Black
 - Dominican
 - Puerto Rican
 - White
 - Other.....
please specify

16. Are you:

- married?
- single?
- seperated?
- divorced?
- widowed?

17. Are you a member of a community organization?

	yes	no	have been in the past	would like to be
Tenant Association				
Block Association				
Church Organization				
Parent Teachers Association				
Political Party				
Other Social Or Community Group..... please specify				

18. Can such organizations help community people to improve any of the following?

	yes greatly	only somewhat	no	don't know
The Neighborhood				
The Block				
The Schools				
Homeowners Improve Property				
Tenants Improve Their Buildings				
People To Learn How To Get Things Done				

19. Do any neighborhood organizations you may know about, or may be a member of, work with or get assistance from the following types of agencies:

	yes	no	don't know
City Government Agency			
State Agency			
Federal Agency			
Private Agency			
Other Neighborhood Agency.....			
please specify			

20. Looking at your neighborhood, has the amount of the following increased or decreased in the past 7 years:

	increased greatly	increased somewhat	decreased greatly	decreased somewhat	not changed	don't know
New Building Construction?						
New Stores Opened?						
Stores Closing?						
New People Moving In?						
Neighbors Moving Out?						
Buildings Abandoned?						
Public Schools?						
Services For Elderly?						
Hospitals?						
Crime?						
Police On The Street?						
Fire House Stations?						

21. Has the quality of the following things in your neighborhood improved or gotten worse?

	much improved	somewhat improved	somewhat worse	much worse	not changed	don't know
Hospital Service?						
Public Schools?						
Services For Elderly?						
Public Sanitation?						
Social Service Help?						
Police Protection?						
Community Pride?						
Other:						

.....
please specify

22. What things do you like about your neighborhood?

	like very much	like somewhat	don't like	does not apply
My Friends Live Here				
People Are Helpfull				
People Leave Me Alone				
Near Transportation				
Mostly My People Live Here				
Near Place Of Worship				
I Feel Relaxed Here				
Other:				

.....
please specify

23. Do you ever consider moving somewhere else:

	no	yes	
inside Harlem?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	where?.....
outside Harlem?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	where?.....

24. Name one thing that would influence you in a decision to move.....

Please discuss:.....

25. If you had no other choice, where do you think you would be able to move to?

Please specify.....

26. Would moving affect your ability to have access to any of the following?

	no	some difficulty	great difficulty	access impossible	don't know
Your Place Of Employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Place Of Worship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Service Help	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job Training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neighborhood Service Center	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical Aid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Close Friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

please specify

27. Would you purchase another home? yes no

28. Were your property maintenance cost last year:

<u>less than \$599</u>	<u>\$600 to \$999</u>	<u>\$1,000 to \$1,999</u>	<u>\$2,000 and over</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

34. Are more government home owner assistance programs needed?

	yes	no
Federal Programs		
State Programs		
City Programs		

35. Do you know any of the following private or government agencies?

	no	yes	have gone to them for help
Dept. Of Housing Preservation And Development (HPD)			
Harlem Urban Development Corporation (HUDC)			
Dept. Of Housing And Urban Development (HUD)			
Met Council On Housing			
Black United Front			
Community Board			
Urban Homesteading Assistance Board (UHAAB)			
N.Y.C. Housing Court			

36. If you answered yes to any of #35, did the agency:

help someone you know?
 help you?
 help your group?
 gave no help?
 made things worse?

Please discuss.....

37. Are you familiar with any of the following government community action programs and community aids.

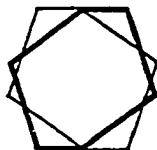
	no	yes	have been helped by it	would like to learn about it
Urban Development Action Grants (UDAG)				
Neighborhood Strategy Areas (NSA)				
N.Y.C. Rent Guidelines				
Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)				
J-51 Tax Abatement / Exemption Program				
Tenants Housing Court Information Booklet				
National Consumer Cooperative Bank				

38. Do you feel your elected officials are effective in solving problems of home owners and tenants in your neighborhood?

	very effective	somewhat effective	rarely effective	never effective	don't know
Mayor					
Senator					
Congressman					
State Legislator					
State Senator					
City Councilman					
Borough President					

39. What can community people do to improve their neighborhood?

Please discuss.....



The Graduate School and University Center
of the City University of New York
Graduate Center: 33 West 42 Street, New York, N.Y. 10036

Dear Friend:

Greetings! As a Harlem resident, I am interested in the attitudes of other Harlem residents toward improvement in the quality of housing in Harlem. I am therefore undertaking a study designed to gauge the opinions of tenants and homeowners concerning the present housing situation, and their feelings as to what is needed now to ensure the prospects for better housing and strengthened communities in Harlem.

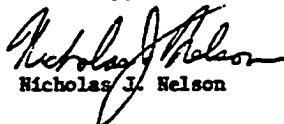
I am a researcher in Sociology at the City University Graduate School and I feel that a study of this sort will help community people in Harlem in their continuing neighborhood improvement efforts. More importantly this type of study will lead to a better understanding of how communities can get greater access to some vital information sources needed to carry out neighborhood improvements. I need not stress the importance of such an understanding at this juncture of Harlem's history.

This information is totally confidential and you are asked not to write your name or any other identifying mark on the questionnaire. Please take a few moments of your time to complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me.

I am counting on your cooperation and prompt response.

Thanks.

Sincerely,


Nicholas J. Nelson

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