AND THEN THE NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGED: JEWISH INTRA-URBAN MIGRATION AND RACIAL IDENTITY IN THE BRONX, NY

by

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Abstract

AND THEN THE NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGED: JEWISH INTRA-URBAN MIGRATION AND RACIAL IDENTITY IN THE BRONX, NY

by

Bradley Gardener

Adviser: Professor Marianna Pavlovskaya

The major research goal is to explain the causes of urban Jewish migration from the West Bronx to Riverdale and determine how it impacted their racial identity. I ask the following questions: Why did Jews leave the West Bronx? Why did they move to Riverdale? How did moving between these places affect the racial identity of Jews?

Employing a relational understanding of race and space, I use a mixed method approach consisting of both qualitative and quantitative techniques to examine how the racial identity of Jews was affected by moving from the West Bronx to Riverdale. The primary methods employed in my study were participant observation, residential histories, and GIS.

My study makes three primary theoretical contributions. First, my research shows that white identity or whiteness is fluid. As Jews moved from the West Bronx to Riverdale, their white identities changed. More specifically, their white identities changed in relation to material processes like neighborhood disinvestment and migration. These processes condensed into a historically and geographically specific articulation of white identity related to the conditions under which my participants moved from the West Bronx to Riverdale.

In a second related contribution, my research shows that the connections scholars make between Jewish whiteness to suburbanization is largely an over generalization. Although the race of Jews was impacted by suburban migration, it was not the only way in which they negotiated the racialization process. Further, contrary to the notion that Jews assimilated into static racialized places, they profoundly changed the places they moved into. As their identities changed, so did the meaning of the places they inhabited.

Third, my research opens up possibilities for reimagining narratives of white flight and racialized interpretations of neighborhood change. Often, white flight movers are made legible through rational choice theory. My research challenges the logic of white flight, showing that my participants didn't move to the suburbs because they wanted to continue urban Jewish living.

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And finally, to my participants, to the Jewish Diaspora, my ancestors, future generations, and to the Bronx – my ancestral homeland!

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Chapter I: Introduction and Background/Research Questions

White flight is a concept used to describe racial population shifts in Northeastern United States cities during the middle-late twentieth century. It is generally defined as whites fleeing increasingly non-white urban neighborhoods for all white suburbs. From the 1920's to the 1950's, Jews were the largest population group living in the Bronx, particularly in the West Bronx. From the mid 1960's through the late 1970's, Jewish ethnic neighborhoods located in the West Bronx dissolved through rapid out-migration.

Most of the literature written on this subject describes the migration of Jews from urban ethnic neighborhoods to the suburbs. Social Scientists argue that by moving to the suburbs Jews became white.[1]

While the movement of Jews from urban ethnic neighborhoods to the suburbs is well documented, scholars have rarely written about Jews who out-migrated to urban areas. In the case of the West Bronx, many Jews moved to Riverdale, which is located in the Northwest section of the Bronx. In the first half of the 20th century, when the Bronx was primarily Jewish, Riverdale only constituted a very small portion of the Jewish population. As early as the 1980's, Riverdale became the highest populated and most densely settled Jewish community in the Bronx. It still is today (See Figure 1 for map of study area).

This dissertation research focuses on the migration of Jews from the West Bronx to Riverdale. I am interested in how the racial identity of Jews was affected as they

[1] Although class, specifically becoming middle class, clearly plays a role in becoming white, this dissertation is focused on the race, not the class of Jews. Therefore, I will only approach class as it relates to whiteness.

migrated from one urban area to another in the Bronx. In the literature on white flight, suburban migration is used to explain the changes in racial identity Jews underwent during this time period. The literature says that through suburban migration, Jews became white.

Similarly, in this study, changes in racial identity are linked to the spatial process of migration. To understand this issue, I examine the migration process with respects to race. My study differs from previous research because it investigates specific places within urban areas, as opposed to generic conceptions of city and suburb.

The major research goal is to explain the causes of urban Jewish migration from the West Bronx to Riverdale and determine how it impacted their racial identity. More specifically, I will ask the following questions: **Why did Jews leave the West Bronx? Why did they move to Riverdale? How did moving between these places affect the racial identity of Jews?**

Jews, Racialization, and White Identity

Scholars are wary to call Jews a race for several reasons. First, following shifts in dominant racial paradigms after World War II, American Jews were placed in an unmarked racial category. In other words, Jews in the United States are generally considered white, and thus largely free from debates regarding racial categorization. Given the legacy of the Holocaust, Jewish scholars are particularly hesitant to question Jews' white racial position. Second, Jewish identity is multifaceted. Jewish is simultaneously a religious, ethnic, and cultural identity. Third, Jews are an incredibly diverse group that does not fit neatly into established racial schema.

Although coupling Jews and race together is problematic, Jewish racialization is an important process to examine. Jews, like other groups, are both racially marked by broader society, and use race as a way of understanding the world. The ambiguity surrounding Jewish race makes Jews a particularly interesting case for studying how racial categories form, change, and dissolve.

What does it mean for race to change or for a group to become white? In this study, race is not a fixed or an essentialized way of being. Although one is born with a definite phenotype, race is a social relationship, a social phenomenon that arises out of interactions between people (Saldana 2006). Race is assigned, lived, and internalized by *racialized* groups such as Jews. At no point in my research, do I understand Jews as being fixed in a racial category. Rather, I show that Jews, like other groups, have been racialized differently, or placed differently in racialized schemas based on the historical and geographical contexts in which they have lived. Ultimately, I argue that the migration process impacts their racial identity, or the way they racialize themselves, people of color, and the geography of the Bronx.

In chapter three, I demonstrate how this process works. I show how the race of Jews changed when they moved from the Lower East Side to the Bronx. That is to say, Jews as a race, part of a socially mediated process with material affects rooted in the body, were categorized and conceived differently as they moved from one place to another. In turn, the migration process affected their racial identities, or how they identified themselves in a hierarchy of racialized groups.

What is at stake with conceptualizing race in this way? Why does it matter? Following many other scholars in critical race theory, I hold that groups are racialized

into categories according to hierarchal power relations (Kobayashi and Peak 2000, Gilmore 2002, March 2010). Race is a product of power and difference. According to Gilmore, race is, "the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death" (Gilmore 2002 p. 17). In this framework, race profoundly affects who lives and who dies. Thus, our task as anti-racist social scientists is study *how* groups become white, black, brown, yellow, and red. Further, the imperative of geographers who study race is to examine *how* geographies become racialized.

The focus of this study is racial identity and more specifically, white identity. My study hinges on the idea that racialized identities are a crucial moment in the racialization process. In this framework, affirmations of white identity are linked to a racialization process that allows white groups to secure and maintain power in relation to other racialized groups. As I will demonstrate, racialized identities are spatialized, articulated through conceptions of geography.

Theoretical Framework

My theoretical framework consists of three important themes, all of which are linked to the racialization process described above. Together they provide a framework for understanding how the racial identity of Jews changed as they moved from the West Bronx to Riverdale. First, I explore the links between race and Jewish migration history, focusing on how scholars understand "the Jews becoming white." Second, I make the link between race and space, showing how place is affects and is affected by the racialization process. Last, I discuss how identity is simultaneously racialized and tied to

place, ultimately providing a strong theoretical grounding for the implementation of my research.

Race and Jewish Migration

Becoming white has come to define the Southern and Eastern European Jewish experience in the United States. Academics have frequently drawn upon upward residential mobility, becoming white, and racial assimilation to understand Jewish migration patterns in the 20th century. Previous research shows that changes in the racialization of Jews at the New York Metropolitan and national scales were the result of a society increasingly racially tolerant towards Jews following World War II (Moore 2009), the desire to assimilate with whites through the emulation of mainstream American norms (Heinze 1990), and an emphasis on education (Moynihan and Glazer 1970). Constance Rosenblum's nostalgic account of the West Bronx and Deborah Dash Moore's extensive research about second generation Jews in New York both embody these themes of Jewish transformation through migration (Moore 1981, Rosenblum 2009). These authors argue that Jewish migration to the West Bronx, and eventually to the suburbs, was about moving up in class and becoming more like other whites.

Karen Brodkin, Steven Steinberg, and Matthew Jacobson, similarly argue that Jews became white through the suburbanization process (Jacobson 1998, Brodkin 1999). These authors reinterpret prevailing narratives of Jewish upward mobility by shifting focus from individual and group issues to structural factors that affect class and race. They concentrate both on large scale changes in racial classification that took place in the early 20th century and the role government institutions like the FHA played in Jewish suburban migration. These authors argue that Jews who were once less than white in the

classification schemes of racial science became white through government programs that benefited persons of European heritage vis-à-vis groups like African Americans.

Becoming white in this way is tied to an empirical pattern of Jewish migration. Jewish migration scholars argue that Jews assimilated or blended in with their neighbors of European heritage taking on a more homogenous white identity (Brodkin 1999, Rueben 2001). The suburbanization process worked to erase differences both between and within white ethnic groups like the Jews, Italians, and Irish.

A narrow emphasis on the racial transformations Jews underwent as they moved to the suburbs ignores other Jewish migration streams. Without the suburbs as an end point for Jewish migration, conceptions of Jewish racialization and Jewish racial identities must be renegotiated. Given that not all Jews moved to the suburbs from urban neighborhoods in the Bronx, this dissertation asks, if Jews moved to a Jewish neighborhood within the Bronx like Riverdale, what does that say about how their race?

Race and Space/Place

In this dissertation, I use the geographical literature on race to understand the racial identity of Jews who moved from West Bronx to Riverdale. Broadly my research is animated by the socio-spatial dialectic (Soja 1980). Through this lens, social practices are materially reflected in and affected by the spaces people inhabit (Harvey 1996). Space can be thought of as a concretization of social relations. The space created by social relations then acts as a prescriptive standard for future social change. Similarly, as relations between people change, so do the functions, representations, and meanings imbued in the built environment. The essence of this dialectic is contestation or the struggle over the production of space (Lefebvre 1991, McCann 1999).

Race, the focus of this dissertation, underpins the production of space. Geographers argue that the social process of race, produces racialized spaces (Goldberg 1993, Kobayashi and Peake 2000, Delaney 2002, Gilmore 2002, ibid. 2007, Wilson 2009). Space impacts the way race is understood and lived. Place, the particular manifestation of space, situates social processes in a specific geographical context. Thus, changes in race, especially those related to migration, vary geographically. Drawing upon this place specific understanding of racial identity, I employ the concept of white identity to account for how the intra-urban migration process affected the racial identity of Jews.

Geographer Laura Pulido similarly argues that race is a differential process across space (Pulido 2000, ibid. 2006). She says, "The process by which a people becomes racialized is highly specific. The particulars of history, geography, the needs of capital, and the attributes of various populations all contribute to it" (Pulido 2006, p. 24).

The literature on space and race provides a foundation from which to theorize how race is impacted by the migration process. In the context of the socio-spatial dialectic, Jews' relationship with whiteness is affected by the origin and destination of their movement. In this dissertation, I examine how the race of Jews was affected by movement from the West Bronx to Riverdale.

Race, Space/Place, and Identity

In this study, I use data collected through residential histories and participant observation to understand how my participants' racial identity was affected by the migration process. Migration specialists have used a similar methodology to study identity, race, and place (Gutting 1996, Findlay and Li 1996, 1999). Daniel Gutting employs a residential history method to reveal who his participants are, what they think is

important, and how they make sense of the world. In this study, I use residential histories in a similar manner to understand my participants' racial identity.

In this research, I understand the racial identity of my participants through the way they talk about space. Environmental psychologists have explored the relationship between space and identity. Influenced by geographers like Tuan, Sibley, and Relph, environmental psychologists have built a rich conception of place based identity. They posit that identity is constitutive of human interactions with the material environment (Gutting 1996, Dixon and Durrheim 2004). As persons root or dwell in a place, the environment simultaneously becomes both an extension of the self and a way of regulating the self. Environments are shaped by individuals to reflect what is important to them or who they think they are. Changes in this environment beyond the control of individuals produce a rupture in place based identity. Environmental psychologists call this phenomenon displacement or dis-attachment.

Dixon and Durrheim's study about how white people racialize beaches in South Africa shows how race and place are related to identity (Dixon and Durrheim 2004). The authors argue that racial identity is often expressed through what they call "feelings of alienation about place." Beach desegregation made whites feel anxious and fear for their safety. In this case, alienation about place is expressed through tropes of crowding, declining quality of life, and displacement.

As racial identities are embedded in space, it is clear that changing where one lives yields changes in identity. Thus, identity becomes a window from which to view how race is affected by the migration process. The residential histories of Jewish

migrants who moved to Riverdale are valuable tools for understanding how movement from one urban place to another affects the process of racial identity change.

In this research, racial identity and its link to space is understood relationally. Critical race scholars have gone to great lengths to show that white identity is rooted in the delineation and valuing of racial others (Goldberg 1993, Frankenberg 1997, Dwyer and Jones III 2000, Kobayashi and Peake 2000, Lewis 2001, Davis 2008, Pollack 2008). They demonstrate that racial identities are formed in relation to other races in what is sometimes called a racial hierarchy or racial field (Kim 1999, Pulido 2006). Drawing from this literature, I gauge my participants' racial identities by paying close attention to how they talk about other racialized groups.

Relational theories about race have also been spatialized (Anderson 1991, Delaney 2002). John Paul Jones III and Owen Dwyer draw upon examples of residential segregation and social mobility to show how white identities rely on non-relational readings of space (Dwyer and Jones III 2000). Attempts by whites to sever the relational connection between black and white spaces facilitates the formation of a racist spatial logic in which whites are neither culpable for their own racial privilege, nor are they responsible for the oppression of people of color.

In this study, I employ a relational understanding of racialization with respect to migration, space/place, and identity. A scholarly emphasis on white flight and suburban migration provides one way of understanding how the racial identity of Jews changed in the second half of the twentieth century. In this study, I examine a different set of geographies, examining how the racial identity of Jews was impacted by migrating from one urban place to another in the Bronx, New York.

I draw inspiration from ethnographers who study racial identity, whiteness, and neighborhood change. My study is influenced by Roger Sanjek's study of racial identity and neighborhood change in post white-flight Corona-Elmhurst (Sanjek 1998), Leland Saito's investigation of a small white population living in multi-racial Monterey, a suburb of Los Angeles (Saito 1998), John Hartigan Jr's study of whiteness in Detroit (Hartigan Jr. 2005), and Pamela Perry's comparative investigation of racialized schools in central California (Perry 2002). These studies' emphasis on how whiteness is produced and reproduced through space/place helped me understand my participants' racial identities in nuanced ways. Setha Low's study of gated communities informs my research's methodology and qualitative data analysis (Low 2003).

Research Design/Methods

Employing a relational understanding of race and space, I use a mixed method approach consisting of both qualitative and quantitative techniques to examine how the racial identity of Jews was affected by moving from the West Bronx to Riverdale. The primary methods employed in my study were participant observation and residential histories. Through a participant observation method, I observed and interacted with research subjects at a Senior Center in Riverdale, New York. This senior center featured a large concentration of Jews who moved from the West Bronx to Riverdale. Through a participant observation method, I produced many field notes. The second method employed, residential histories, was conducted with participants from the senior center who moved from the West Bronx to Riverdale. Residential histories were typically conducted as interviews. These interviews were recorded and analyzed side by side with field notes using a grounded theory method. The third method, GIS, was primarily used

to visualize the residential histories of my participants. GIS provided a different vantage point from which to understand how the racial of my participants was affected by the migration process (See Figures 1, 3, and 4).

In terms of structure, this dissertation is organized into eight chapters: an introduction, a description of the research design and the methods used, a history chapter that focuses on the relationship between Jews, migration, race, space, and identity, three analytical chapters, a theoretical reflection on my empirical findings, and a conclusion.

In the introduction, I presented my research questions and built a theoretical framework focused on how the migration process affected both the racialization and racial identity of my study's participants. In the second chapter, I reveal my research design and describe the methods I employed. In chapter three, I examine how the past 140 years of Jewish migration has affected Jewish racialization. This chapter is split into two sections. The first section focuses on Jewish migration from Russia, to the Lower East Side, and the Bronx. The second, section concentrates on how Jews left the Bronx, providing a context for the analytical chapters. In the fourth chapter, the first analytical chapter, I examine the residential histories of my participants. This chapter is chronologically structured. Starting from the beginning of my participants lives in the 1930's, I use GIS methods, participant observation, and residential histories to understand their migration patterns. The second analytic chapter is about white identity and space. Using a relational understanding of racial identity and place, I analyze how my participants' racial identities were impacted when they migrated from the West Bronx to Riverdale. Analyzing data collected from residential histories and participant observation, I focus on how they articulate their white identities through the racialization of the West

Bronx and Riverdale. Arguing that Jewish whiteness was reconfigured through migration to Riverdale, I discuss the white identity of my participants (Smith 1996, Fine et al 2006, Low 2009). In the final analytical chapter, I continue to discuss racial identity and place by examining interruptions in my participants' white identities. Through an analysis of residential histories I show how the white identities of my participants were challenged by the influx of orthodox Jews into Riverdale. In chapter 7, I draw upon the work of geographers Arun Saldana and Clyde Woods to reflect on my empirical findings. Following up on my analysis in chapter 6, I build a framework in which we can reimagine how racial identity changes. Further, I take initial steps towards re-theorizing relationships between blacks and Jews in the Bronx. I will conclude by summarizing my findings and reflecting on how we might retell stories about white flight and urban destruction in the mid-late 20th century.

Primary Findings

To conclude this chapter, I will briefly discuss some of my primary findings. First, I unsettle the relationship between Jews, whiteness, and the suburbs by showing that Jews were white before they left the West Bronx. Second, I demonstrate that Jewish migration to the suburbs was not inevitable. My participants stayed in the Bronx because they wanted to continue urban Jewish living. When they moved to Riverdale, this way of living, along with their white identities, were reconfigured or rearticulated.

Chapter II: Research Design and Methodology

In this dissertation I examine how moving from the West Bronx to Riverdale affected the way Jews understood their racial identities. In order to study this phenomenon I used a mixed methods approach that investigated from different angles, the residential histories of elderly Jews who migrated from the West Bronx to Riverdale.[2]

Research Design

This research was designed to reveal how the intra-urban migration process affected the racial identity of Jews in the Bronx. Each method I used helped me achieve this goal.

Historical analysis of secondary sources that pertained to Jews and the Bronx were important to this study in several regards. I used this method to formulate a research question, select a study area, and choose a population of research subjects.

Participant observation was the foundation for qualitative data collection in this study. I built rapport with Jewish octogenarians by participating in a plethora of activities at the senior center. The field notes I recorded through this process were used to build theoretical concepts employed in the analytical chapters of this dissertation.

The primary method used to understand the racial identities of Jews who moved from the West Bronx to Riverdale was residential histories. In these tape recorded one-on-one interviews, I was able to directly ask questions about migration, place, and racial identity. I used a grounded theory method to analyze these data.

[2] They are elderly now, not when they initially moved to the Riverdale in the 1960's and 1970's.

GIS methods were used in two capacities. First, they helped contextualize the study area (See Figure 1). Second, GIS methods were used to both visualize and analyze the migration patterns of my participants (See Figures 3 and 4). At the Census tract level, I also used GIS to compare the neighborhoods my participants moved to and from on the basis of race and socio economic status (See chapter 4).

My research design reveals how the racial identity of Jews was affected by movement from the West Bronx to Riverdale in the 1960's and 1970's. In the next section, I will describe the methodology in more detail.

Description of Methods and Analysis

Qualitative Methods and Analysis

From 2009-2011, I implemented a participant observation method at a senior center in Riverdale. In this study, participant observation involved both observing and interacting with members at the senior center members. In the common room where members read the newspaper, chatted with friends, and waited for lunch to be served, I listened to discussions and took scratch notes, often interjecting into conversations and asking questions. I participated in creative writing classes, talked about philosophy and romance with center members, chatted with young women of color who were paid to be care takers of center members, listened to lectures, modeled for painting classes, handed out government mandated milk rations after lunch, listened to people kvetch[3] about why their kids and grandkids never called or visited them, transformed rooms by moving

[3] Kvetch is a Yiddish word that means to complain.

tables and chairs, gave lectures, and talked about the Yankees chance of winning the world series with the staff. I produced field notes for over sixty visits to this senior center.

I chose the senior center to do my research because it provided a spatial catchment area for the population I was interested in. After a short time, I realized that there were a sufficient number of participants who fit my sampling criteria. Participants were selected based upon their migration history. Specifically, they were chosen if they fit two criteria. First they had to have lived in the West Bronx during the 1950's and 1960's. Second, at the time of the research, they had to live in Riverdale. Although, I interacted with seniors who had a wide range of migration histories, there were at least fifty to sixty persons who fit these criteria. Participants were gathered through several techniques. I handed out fliers at lunch and explained the study to the entire group during birthday celebrations. To coax potential participants, I handed out gift certificates to a local kosher deli. Some of my interviewees refused this gift, reasoning that I needed a square kosher meal more than they did! I draw my analysis from this group/population.

The participant observation method allowed me to accomplish the following research goals. First, by conducting lectures and physically being at the senior center, I built rapport with participants. The trust fostered through participant observation facilitated recruitment strategies for the interview process. Second, through informal conversation I garnered how participants felt about issues relevant to the research. I primarily asked general questions about racial identity and migration. Finally, from field notes produced through participant observation, I refined questions for one-on-one interviews.

During the Spring/Summer of 2010, I conducted 30 one-on-one interviews at the Riverdale Senior Center. I drew my analysis from 25 of these interviews. Five of them could not be used for reasons related to technology malfunction, the ethnic/racial identification of the participant, the participant's migration history, and the ability of the participant to recall the past.

The interviews were structured as residential histories. Starting with childhood, I asked participants to tell me their entire migration histories, highlighting why they moved from one place to another. After transcribing these interviews, I coded them for major themes (See chapter 2 for qualitative analysis methodology). I organized these themes into a database that includes participants' place of origin and destination for a given period. For each ten year interval, starting in 1925-1936, and concluding in 1996-2005, I generally describe the aggregate migration of my participants, drawing upon their own words to explain why they moved from one place to another.

I used grounded theory to create theoretical concepts out of data produced from interviews and participant observation. Providing several tools for analyzing qualitative data, the implementation of ground theory insured that theoretical concepts were tethered to the data collection process (Miles and Hubermas 1984, Strauss and Corbin 1998). Coding was the primary method of analysis I used to analyze qualitative data. Coding involved a line-by-line analysis of transcribed interviews and field notes produced through participant observation. Themes were developed out of similarities in the text. These themes were linked together through larger theoretical concepts. This process was reiterative. For example, important concepts used in this dissertation like "neighborhood change," were the product of many iterations of coding. I also used theoretical memos.

Memos allowed for thoughts, feelings, and insights that didn't fit within the parameters of coding.

Spatial Boundaries: You Moved From Where to Where?

Place boundaries are drawn on the basis of 1957 New York City Community Districts (Horowitz, Kaplan, and Felt 1957, See Figure 1). [4] These boundaries have stayed relatively consistent over time and overlap with my participants' geographic understanding of the West Bronx, Fordham, and Riverdale.

I constructed individual migration maps for each participant, using the boundaries from 1957 to determine which neighborhoods my participants moved to and from in a given period (see figures 3 and 4 for individual migration histories of the participants interviewed). The places in which my participants lived were geocoded and mapped as point data. These maps help situate my participants residential histories (Kwan and Ding 2008).

Chronology

I chose to structure the analysis in this chapter in ten year intervals for several reasons. First, Census data is taken every ten years. Second, participants often spoke in windows of time instead of exact years. Third, a temporal framework of ten year intervals allows for easier inter-period comparison.

[4] Fordham is located immediately North of the West Bronx community district. While it was not as densely populated with Jews as the West Bronx community district, it is still considered by my participants to be part of the West Bronx. The large majority of my participants migrated into the Riverdale community district when they moved north from the West Bronx to Riverdale.

Participant Names

All participants in the analysis chapters are referred to through pseudonyms.

GIS Methods, Data, and Analysis

Geographers advocate interpreting GIS results in relation to ethnographic data. In conjunction, these methods produce a deeper understanding of the research problem (Pavlovskaya 2004, Cope and Elwood 2009). In this study, the collection, manipulation, and visualization of spatial data through a GIS framework broadly situated the accounts of migration and race/class transformation produced through participant observation and residential histories. Secondary historical data from the Census and American Jewish Survey provided a racial, ethnic, and political economic context for Jewish migration from the West Bronx to Riverdale.

Following the lead of other qualitative researchers who employ GIS methods, I took a novel approach to GIS analysis (Pavlovskaya 2004, Cope and Elwood 2009). Eschewing quantitative analysis grounded in statistical statistics, my GIS analysis primary consisted of visualizing and comparing the migration patterns of my participants (See figures 3 and 4). This type of methodology allowed me to analyze data produced in a GIS side by side with participant observation and residential histories. GIS methods gave my qualitative methods more depth.

GIS analysis was conducted in four parts. First, I analyzed the distribution of synagogues in order to better understand the geography of Jewish neighborhoods. There is a list of these synagogues available online at Bronxsynagogues.org. I geo-coded and mapped them (See Figure 1). Second, I charted changes in racial and socioeconomic data from 1950-2000 in the West Bronx and Riverdale at the Census Tract level. The Census

tracts my participants moved to and from in a given year were organized, compared, and analyzed. These data were gleaned from the National Historical GIS database. Third, based on the scale of the district, I conducted a more coarsely grained analysis of shifts in Jewish population over the same time period. These data were acquired from the Mandell L. Berman Institute North American Jewish Data Bank. Finally, I geo-coded and visualized the individual migration patterns of participants (See Figures 3 and 4). These analyses provided me with another perspective from which to understand where Jews from the West Bronx moved, and why they moved there. In chapter 4, the analytical chapter on migration, I describe this analysis in more detail.

Analysis of Census Data

I also analyze race/ethnicity and socio economic data at the Census tract level for three 10 year periods: 1946-1955, 1956-1965, and 1966-1975 because my participants moved most frequently in these years. My analysis of Census data consists of comparing the Census tracts my participants migrated to and from in a given period.

The analysis of race data is based on percentage counts of the following categories: White, Black, and Hispanic.[5] Ethnicity data is based on the Census measured categories of native born, mixed, and foreign born persons per tract who claim a European ancestry. The mixed category counts persons who have both a foreign born and native born parent with European Ancestry. A comparative analysis of ethnicity will consider these categories together. The category, "Central and Eastern European," is a tally of European ancestry from central and eastern European countries. Historical

[5] Data for Hispanics were not available until the 1966-1975 period.

research shows that this region, particularly Russia and Poland, was the origin for most of the Bronx's Jews (Liebman 1979, Howe 1992). I also consider the Irish and Italians as they lived in the West Bronx during this time period as well. Measuring the presence of these groups in the West Bronx indicates whether my participants were living in mono-ethnic or multi-ethnic white neighborhoods at the Census tract level.

The analysis of socio-economic data is tied to several variables. For a given period, rent, income, and education statistics are used to ascertain changes in socio economic status. For 1966-1975, my analysis also includes the category of "percentage with access to air conditioning."

Doing Mixed Methods

This study was designed to implement several different kinds of methods. Feminist geographers believe that methods should be implemented according to the nature of the study, not prior prejudices about qualitative or quantitative methods. They argue that in the right epistemological framework, GIS data and ethnographic data are not mutually exclusive, but rather, complimentary (Pavlovskaya 2004, Cope and Elwood 2009).

Once imagined as a purely positivist tool, feminist geographers have broadened the epistemological horizons of GIS, encouraging its use in social justice research. Geographers with social justice research agendas use GIS as a tool to investigate issues like environmental racism, children's mobility, and food security. Participatory GIS or PPGIS, an offshoot of Social Justice GIS, aims to democratize GIS technologies (Pavlovskaya 2004, Cope and Elwood 2009).

Feminist geographers have also demonstrated that GIS can also be used to gather narratives (Kwan 2008). Social justice research often relies on qualitative methods and analysis. GIS can be used to organize and visualize data produced in these studies, providing a different analytical perspective. In this research, the maps I created in a GIS framework enhance my understanding of migration, race, and identity.

Although some feminist geographers vigorously defend the use of quantitative methods, they also plead with researchers to be vigilant when analyzing Census data (Lawson 1995, Pavlovskaya and Bier 2011). They argue that the way in which Census data essentializes groups, categories, and the individuals placed in them, is a point of concern for researchers with social justice agendas. Anti-racist and feminist scholars have challenged the stability of racialized, classed, sexualized, abled, and gendered subjects/identities produced through Census categories (Rose 1993, Fine 1998, Arvidson 2000, Kenny 2000, Pratt 2000, Rothenberg 2000, Razack 2002, Puar 2004, Teo 2007, Tuck 2009). They argue that by placing people in populations such as black, woman, or proletariat, researchers undermine the complexity and multiple subject positions human beings hold. The narrow use of these categories has been referred to as epistemological violence (Teo 2007).

In an attempt to avoid wreaking this kind of violence on the community I worked with, I employed a self-reflexive method (Teo 2007). I believe a short description of my relationship with the group I worked with is an important step towards implementing a mixed methods approach in an ethical way.

In the next section, I provide a detailed description of the senior center where I did my research. I will also introduce my participants, describing their relationship with money and what their views on Israel were.

Description of Participants and Senior Center (See Figure 6 for Matrix of Participant Characteristics)

I implemented participant observation and residential history methods at a state funded senior center located in Riverdale, New York. According to the website for the NYC Department of the Aged, the senior center I conducted my research at provides, "congregate lunch, education/recreation, and nutrition education (NYC Department of the Aged)." No one lived at the senior center. It was open Monday through Friday from the early morning to the middle of the afternoon.

At the senior center, Jewish holidays were celebrated, prayers were chanted in Hebrew, holocaust survivors were recognized, and lecturers were conducted about Jewish history. In this way, seniors were able to recreate a specific kind of Jewish living that had become increasingly hard due to limited mobility, death, and out-migration.

Although most of the seniors were Jewish, the senior center was visited by a small contingent of Chinese folks who took the bus from Chinatown and a few women of color who couldn't turn down a cheap kosher meal.

My participants were drawn to the senior center for several reasons. First and foremost, they craved social interaction with other people. Some senior center members were widowers. In other cases, the partners of senior members had become physically ill and needed to stay in assisted living facilities. One woman told me that all of her friends had died. The senior center provided my participants with an opportunity to "get out of

the house," and interact with a range of different people, which included staff, social workers, and academics. The senior center also provided seniors with a space to preserve or recreate community through religious, cultural, military, and birthday ceremonies.

Center members were also attracted to a daily, "pay what you can," Kosher lunch. In fact, some people I talked to only came for lunch. They played down their ties to the senior center, insisting that they "rarely came." Some center members exercised in the morning, ate lunch in the afternoon, and left without taking part in any of the senior center's planned activities.

In the hours before lunch time, a center member, usually one of my participants, sat by the door to the lunch room and sold lunch tickets for a minimal fee, which usually consisted of a few dollars. No one was ever rejected because they couldn't pay, but other center members were upset by this practice. One man complained that some of the center members were "wealthy free riders," In other words, these "free riders," could afford to pay for lunch, they were just cheap. Anxieties about lunch money were exacerbated by city budget cuts.

The lunch room was a large rectangular room attached to a kitchen. The back of the lunch room also served as a multi-purpose space, in which various activities took place, some of which I will describe later in this section. Circular tables were set up in anticipation of how many seniors were eating lunch on particular day. There were about eight to ten spots at each table. Seating for lunch was often a contentious activity, as seniors often fought over space at tables. I remember one incident in which the whole lunch room argued over what it meant to leave one's coat on a chair. Was it right to move the coat and sit there anyway? What if it was usually your seat?

The menu varied, but lunch always came with a piece of rye bread wrapped in plastic. Chicken was frequently served with meals, prompting comments like, “Chicken Again?” I remember fish and meatloaf being served as well. Some seniors planned their visits around the food calendar, only coming in on days when fish was served. Although paid staff prepared and served the food, able senior members volunteered to bring food out from the kitchen. Dessert was often served after lunch. Although I was always offered lunch, I often protested, arguing that I had already ate.

About ten to fifteen percent of the senior had aids. Sometimes they would eat with the seniors. Other times they would talk on the phone, talk to other aids, or do crossword puzzles in a different room.

The center was also attractive to seniors because it offered a large variety of programs, which included creative writing classes, art classes, exercise classes, improv classes, musical performances, lectures, and “raps,” or informal conversations about a specific topic. These activities would take place in ancillary classrooms located around the senior center, or in the back of the cafeteria.

Lectures usually pertained to Jewish history, music, and religion. On several occasions, a religious man lectured center members, arguing that Israel should be among their primary concerns. This was particularly the case during the Gaza Flotilla Raid in the summer of 2010. This man was also sure to remind center remembers that they were dying soon. He strongly encouraged them to forge a stronger relationship with God before they passed away.

Center members’ feelings about Israel varied greatly. Mildred told me that the senior center was like the neighborhood she grew up in, “everyone had a different

opinion about Israel." In contrast to a large contingent of ardent Israel supporters, several center members were conflicted about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Sensing my leftist politics, Fred confided in me exclaiming, "I don't know what Israel is doing. I wish they wouldn't be so aggressive." Mildred, who was immersed in socialist politics as a child, was also unsure about her support for Israel. Vladimir, a Russian ex-patriot and a Marxist doctor, was critical of the Israeli state.

Doctors with specialties in Geriatrics also gave lectures. I was incensed by the way the doctors talked to the seniors. They lectured the seniors about their health like they were irresponsible children.

In terms of music, a frank Sinatra impersonator made regular appearances at the senior center. The seniors were also partial to Klezmor music.

Conversations or "raps," were often led and moderated by senior members. Sometimes seniors would discuss new developments in health care legislation. Other times they would discuss how to invest money. One conversation I remember in particular was about new parking meters in Riverdale. Center members were concerned about how the new "meterless," system would affect seniors with limited mobility. The most well attended "raps," were hosted by a local university professor who was the same age as most of the seniors. They insisted on complete silence, frequently shushing side conversations. They seemed to hang on his every word.

I gave several lectures at the senior center in order to give back to the seniors who made this study possible. I talked on topics that ranged from "Migration History in the United States," to "Neighborhood Change in New York." On all occasions, post interview question and answer sessions were lively. Center members were anxious to

compliment and critique me. After a lecture on migration Saul commented that Israel had not been good to non-white Jews. His comment was loudly protested by other center members. The questions I received varied and were not always on topic. Citing historian Arnold Toynbee, Curt blamed slavery on African chiefs. At times, it became impossible to reign in the conversation back towards the subject of the lecture. Another man asked me to speak to the Arab plot to take over the United States government.

The senior center also featured a handful of Holocaust survivors. In my field notes I referred to them as rock stars. Survivors were usually very outgoing. They drew a significant amount of outside attention, particularly from academics. On one occasion, one of the survivors and her Lehman College based co-author held a book release party at the senior center. Other center members were somewhat shocked that I was interested in "ordinary," Jews who moved from the West Bronx to Riverdale, and not Holocaust survivors.

The folks I talked to, though identifying from a different range of class backgrounds, never seemed to have a problem with money. They complained about how the senior center was run, how Riverdale was changing for the worse, and how this or that person was doing something distasteful, but they never found difficulty paying rent. Some of the men I talked to led successful military careers and then worked for private industries such as American Express and Boeing. One of my participants was a retired accountant, and another was a retired financial advisor. Many of the center members would brag to me about their second house in the country or how much money they had invested the stock market. Phil, a recent widower, who often feel asleep mid conversation said, "It is a good time to have a girlfriend. I don't even have to worry about money."

Many of the women were partially living off their husbands' pensions, and the money they had saved working part time after their kids were grown. In several cases, center members were supported by their children.

Positionality of Researcher

Using a multi-faceted research design, I attempted to provide an accurate portrayal of my research subjects. I listened carefully to their opinions and tried my hardest to respect what they said. I also attempted to represent them in a way they felt comfortable with. That being said, the knowledge produced in this study is situated within my positionality. As a member of the Bronx's Jewish Diaspora, this research has personal importance to me.

Both sets of my grandparents lived most of their lives in the Bronx. My father grew up on a street adjacent to the Grand Concourse in the West Bronx. In the 1970's my parents moved to a suburban development on the border of New York and New Jersey in Rockland County, New York. My father remained a primary school teacher until his retirement in 2004 in what is now called the South Bronx.

My family history and subject position mediated my interaction with octogenarian Jews at the senior center. I was identified as Jewish, white, male, young, professional, able bodied, and heterosexual. In essence, I was seen by my participants as a nice young Jewish boy going for his doctorate at the City University. I was invited to attend synagogue, asked if I needed a room to rent, and pressured to date single granddaughters.

Although the subject positions assigned to me were not always comfortable, especially in regards to race, what it meant to be Jewish, and issues regarding Israel, I chose not to openly contest my participants, especially during the primary data collection

process. At times my commitment to a non-confrontational style was tested, but in the large majority of situations, I was respectful, and generally agreeable with the octogenarians who volunteered their time for this study.

These strategies profoundly shaped the data collection process. My participants identified with me. They craved meaningful social interaction, especially with younger persons who were interested in their past. Given my family history and subject positions I believe that my participants and I had a genuine level of interaction that went beyond the purpose of the research. I believe they honestly recounted their migration histories without hiding important details.

The relationships we fostered also encouraged my participants to assume that we had a shared understanding of Jewish life in the Bronx. This was especially the case when they explained why they left the West Bronx.

If I were a person of color, the rapport I developed with my participants would have changed significantly. If I were black for example, they would have been more reticent to talk about race and anti-Semitism. As my participants knew that I was Jewish, and that my parents were from the Bronx, they described their experiences with ease. For example, sometimes they used Yiddish words to explain why they migrated from one place to another. I think that a person of color would have been forced to build a stronger rapport with my participants to reach such a level of openness.

My position as a young, unmarried man also shaped the conversations I had with both men and women. Men talked to me about money and sex in a way that would not have been unlikely if I were a woman. Further, performing my heterosexuality, I am guilty of flirting with some of the women. Sometimes I would interview participants in a

back room to create an environment conducive to clean tape recording. If I was interviewing a woman whose husband was also at the senior center, I might hear a comment from another man like, “He’s going back there with your wife Fred, I’d be worried!”

Limitations of the Study

Beyond issues related to my subject position, my study had several limitations. The most significant limitation had to do with generalizability. My research was primarily conducted in one place. The specific characteristics of the senior center I conducted my research at limited my ability to talk about *all* Jews who moved out the West Bronx to Riverdale. A comparative study of several senior centers in Riverdale could have increased the generalizability of the study. Further, my findings would be very different if I had conducted my study at Workman’s Circle meetings or a socialist summer camp. My participants’ politics and their views on race would have been skewed more towards the left. The relatively small sample size of my residential histories also affected my ability to generalize my findings.

The skewed gender ratio of my participants also determined the results of the study. My study could have benefitted from a larger male sample. To be fair, finding men was difficult as the target population, Jews who moved from West Bronx to Riverdale in the 1960’s and 1970’s, was lessened by issues like death, out-migration, and diminished mental acuity.

Finally, my study was limited by its relatively narrow geographic scope. Examining Jewish migration to the East Bronx in a place like Pelham Parkway would have revealed more insights into Jewish migration, race, and identity.

Despite the limitations of this study, my findings are theoretically representative of all Jews who moved from the West Bronx to Riverdale in the late 1960's and early 1970's. While the specific characteristics of other senior centers and institutions like the Workman's Circle would have altered the findings of my study, my methods still allowed me to successfully identify major processes and mechanisms important to my research questions.

Conducting my research at a senior center allowed me to speak to Jews with a range of class backgrounds and find a population that moved from the West Bronx to Riverdale in the time period I was interested in. Moreover, the social dynamics of the senior center, specifically the way people interacted with another, provided a privileged perspective to understand racial identity.

Chapter III: A Historical Context: Jewish Migration in the 20th century

In this chapter, I construct a historical narrative to contextualize my research. I discuss two moments of Jewish migration focusing on how the racialization of Jews affected their racial identity as they moved from one place to another. First, I describe Jewish migration to the Bronx from the Lower East Side, focusing on how Jews formed middle class neighborhoods in the West Bronx. Next, I concentrate on disinvestment in the West Bronx, and the movement of Jews from the West Bronx to Co-op City and Riverdale. This narrative will provide a context for my analysis of white identity, which is largely conducted at a more intimate scale.

My historical narrative describes how Jews were racialized as white and increased their class status over time and space. Providing a context for my research I provide an explanation of how the race and class of Jews changed as they moved from place to another. Drawing upon relational understandings of racial identity, I argue that Jews were already white when they moved from the Lower East Side and South Bronx to middle class Jewish neighborhoods in the West Bronx. Unsettling theories that Jews became white by migrating to the suburbs, I suggest that the white identities of Jews were always contested, constantly being reconfigured or rearticulated in relation to other racialized groups like African Americans and material processes like war, class, and migration.
Moving from the Bronx to the Lower East Side

In 1899, the Bronx was annexed by New York City. During this period, real estate interests facilitated significant land speculation in anticipation of suburban development. Geographic development followed the path of street cars, and then elevated trains.

Growth expanded on a grid system constructed to guarantee the highest rate of return for investors (Gonzalez 2004).

On the Lower East Side, the center of Eastern European Jewish immigrant political and cultural life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Jews were displaced by the leveling of tenement buildings and the construction of the Williamsburg Bridge. They moved uptown to Harlem, eastward to Brooklyn, and north to the Bronx. Most scholars argue that Jews moved because neighborhoods in these places were newer and less congested than neighborhoods in the Lower East Side. (Liebman 1979, Gorelick 1982, Jonnes 2002, Gonzalez 2004) .

In the first decades of the 20th century, Jews moved in great numbers to Southern parts of the Bronx. Between 1916 and 1925, the Jewish population in the Bronx went from 211,000 to 390,000, increasing from 14 to 23 percent of New York's City's total Jewish population (Horowitz, Kaplan, and Felt 1957). Although the Jewish population was starting to shift from the East Bronx to the West Bronx during this time period, the majority of Jews in the Bronx lived in its Southeastern sections.

Evelyn Gonzalez writes about Jews in this area, "Eastern European Jews, meanwhile, were in the majority in Claremont, an area that in 1915, was described as a foreign district… with Hebrew characters and strange tongues" (Gonzalez 2004 p. 77). In the 1920's, Jews were also numerous in other parts of the South Bronx. Jews had a significant presence in Hunts Point, Melrose, and Morrisania. In these places, Jews often lived side by side with the Irish, Italians, and other European migrant groups (Horowitz, Kaplan, and Felt 1957, Gonzalez 2004) (See figure five for a map of the South Bronx).

According to Gonzalez, by 1940, many Jews had moved out of the Southeast Bronx. Italians and Irish took their place as they moved north and west. By 1940, The West Bronx had passed Morissania as the area in the Bronx with the most Jewish population. By 1958, this area, which had 64.8 percent of the Bronx's Jewish population in 1923, only contained 27.6 percent of Jews in the Bronx. For many scholars who study Jews and the Bronx, the East Bronx is conceptualized as a temporary stopping point on a "tenement trail" that ended in places like the West Bronx and Pelham Parkway (Horowitz, Kaplan, and Felt 1957, Lloyd and Hermalyn 1992, Rosenblum p. 46, 2009) (See figure five for map of the Bronx with places names of the South Bronx).

Jewish Settlement in the West Bronx

In 2010, the wide boulevard known as the Grand Concourse, which runs down the center of the Bronx, celebrated its 100th birthday. The Grand Concourse was originally planned by French architect Louise Risse. Speculated to be modeled after the French boulevard, Champs de Elysses, the Grand Concourse was and is still best known for art deco architecture. Development in this area followed speculation that followed the incorporation of the Bronx into New York City in the early 1900's. This area, like most of the Bronx at the turn of the 20th century, was undeveloped, owned by large land owners (Jonnes 2002, Gonzalez 2004, Rosenblum 2009).

Apartment construction on the Grand Concourse and the appearance of elevated trains in the Bronx facilitated the movement of Jews from the Lower East Side, Harlem, and the Southeast Bronx to the West Bronx.

Over the first half of the 20th century the Jewish population in the Bronx shifted from the South-east Bronx to West Bronx. In 1923 the West Bronx and Fordham made

up 11.3 of the Bronx's Jewish population. By 1958, 45.2 percent of the Bronx's Jewish population was in these areas, with an additional 13.2 percent living on Pelham Parkway, a Jewish settlement, which was located in the Northeast Bronx (Horowitz, Kaplan, and Felt 1957)(See Figure 5 for location).

The West Bronx, which was sometimes called the Grand Concourse, became the center of Jewish life in the Bronx. By 1930, 81 percent of the West Bronx's population was Jewish. In 1940, 585,000 Jews lived in the West Bronx area making it the place in the Bronx with the highest Jewish population (Horowitz, Kaplan, and Felt 1957, Rosenblum 2009).

Explaining what attracted socially mobile Jews to the Grand Concourse, Ultan Lloyd says, "On the Grand Concourse, new, elegant, six-story apartment houses were built by private landlords in the fashionable Art Deco design, with cream-colored brick and casement windows. Those apartments were eagerly sought by the boroughs up and coming people who knew that a Grand Concourse address was a badge of social status" (Lloyd and Hermalyn 1992, p.1).

Constance Rosenblum, who recently authored a book about the Grand Concourse, agrees with Lloyd. Jews were drawn to this area by visions of prestige and class. As more Jews left the Southeast Bronx and settled in the West Bronx, the Grand Concourse became an attractive place for socially mobile Jews (Rosenblum 2009).

Most Bronx scholars agree that the Grand Concourse and the West Bronx, had a certain mystique about it. Newer apartments equipped with modern appliances and higher rents made the West Bronx prestigious, especially in relation to the East Bronx, where less well-off Jews lived. The closer one lived to the Grand Concourse, the more class

they had. Perhaps the social status of the West Bronx was best exemplified by the spectacle of walking precessions that went up and down the Grand Concourse on major Jewish holidays. It is rumored that people came from side streets and even other neighborhoods to watch wealthy Jews strut down the boulevard in their finest clothes (Lloyd and Hermalyn 1992, Jonnes 2002, Gonzales 2004,Rosenblum 2009).

As Jews organized through unions and participated in class struggle they effectively changed the conditions under which they labored. Sherry Gorelick argues that successful class struggle lead to the deradicalization of Jews. The conditions that give rise to the Lower East Side lead to its dissolution and Jewish migration to the Bronx and Brooklyn (Gorelick 1982).

In New York, the response of wealthy German Jews, the state, and other philanthropists to class struggle in the Lower East Side was to significantly expand high school and university level education in New York. The expansion of public schools and the creation of the CUNY system were devised as a way to Americanize the children of new immigrants (Gorelick 1982).

During this time period, the public university system produced a large number of teachers and social workers. These professions were higher paying and provided more prestige than they had in the past. The children of proleterianzed immigrants from the Pale were professionalized through CUNY. Their parents' class struggle created social mobility for Jews, something that was largely absent in the Pale of Settlement (Gorelick 1982).

The changing class position of Jews during this time can also be attributed to the Immigration of Act of 1924. This influential legislation limited all migration into the

United States and set quotas for migrants originating from Southern and Eastern Europe. Left leaning old country intellectual traditions suffered greatly without a steady flow of new immigrants (Leibman 1979, Rosenblum 2009).

The rise of white Jewish neighborhoods in the West Bronx was also determined by what scholars have called a Post-war consensus between labor and capital. Citing the enhanced redistributive capacities of the state following the depression, Douglas Massey calls this time period the age of egalitarian capitalism. The Post-war consensus also spawned government programs like the GI Bill and Federal Housing Administration, which facilitated social mobility for European white males (Brodkin 1999, Freeman 2000, Massey 2008).

In terms of class struggle or socialist ideals, Jewish social mobility in the post war period challenged the working class consciousness forged in the Lower East Side. Glassman argues that in the Post War period, the white working class often worked to expand capitalist social relations, particularly by supporting U.S. foreign policy. If white workers in the United States could secure a sizable piece of the surplus they helped create, they were complicit in the growth of capitalism (Harvey 1982, Glassman 2002).

Using a Gramcian conception of power relations to understand labors' consent to American foreign policy, particularly around the cold war and Communism, Jim Glassman explains, "Thus, even in a rather narrow economic sense, workers in given (privileged) locations at certain times have limited reasons to fight against capital rather than ally with it" (Glassman 2002, p. 577). It made little sense for Jews to engage in violent struggle with capital when they could ride the coat tails of economic growth to segregated middle class neighborhoods like the West Bronx.

The transition of Jews from racial question mark to white or American was impacted by the Jewish male experience in the armed forces during World War II. Entering the war, Jews often came from provincial neighborhoods, in which they rarely came across adults that didn't speak English without a Yiddush or Italian accent. As they trained and fought alongside a geographic hodgepodge of working class whites, Deborah Dash Moore argues that young Jewish men went through the process of Americanization or becoming white (Moore 2004). As the armed forces were still segregated, the white male experience, which was already formed vis-à-vis racial others, was reconfigured to include Jews and the children of other European migrants (Moore 2004, Roediger 2006).

For the first time in U.S. history, Jews and Christians soldiers were buried in the same plots. Both rabbis and chaplains spoke at the ceremonies for the dead. Through the experience of war, a Judeo-Christian tradition was created. In this tradition, Jews were firmly classified on the white side of a black/white racial hierarchy (Moore 2004). Jewish became a religion and not a race. Identifying Jews by race or classifying them as "Mediterranean," fell out of fashion (Brodkin 1999, Goldstein 2004). Jews were promised that they would be judged as individuals who had a right to exercise freedom of religion, not racialized on the basis of scientific criterion.

The aftermath of World War II facilitated the creation of a new racial paradigm in the social sciences, one that would be grounded in culture, not biology. Starting in the early 20th century Jewish social scientists like Maurice Fishberg and Franz Boaz dedicated their careers to scientifically proving that there were only four or five races (Goldstein 2006). Fishman spent his career using commonly accepted measures of racial fitness such as skull size to prove that Ashkenazi Jews had blended in with Europeans

over time. The Jewish quest to be recognized as white in the eyes of science and the state is part of a larger historical struggle over the racialization process in the United States.

Although racial scientists, the state, and lay peoples' definition of whiteness has been fluid over time and space, there are several regular patterns that can be observed. In the Census for example, the racial category of black is consistently held in tension with white. The Census attempts to create a racial typology in which no categories overlap. If one is black, they cannot be white. Historically, proving whiteness has been a prerequisite to owning property, attending college, finding employment, or being promoted. Jews knew how important the racialization process was because of their experiences of anti-Semitism in Europe. The consolidation of many European races into one was necessary in order for Jews to become human beings entitled to a full complement of rights, both in the public and private sphere. Thus, Jewish intellectuals and professionals sought hard to change public perception that Jews were a race, especially one that was inferior to other white folks. They helped facilitate a shift in racial categorization that helped place Jews as white in dominant racial hierarchies (Liebman 1979, Goldberg 1995, Jacobson 1998, Goldstein 2006).

Later, scholars like Gunnar Myrdal would further develop the research of anthropologist Franz Boaz, effectively transforming the relationship between science and race (Jacobson 1998). The division of human races was decreased to five, and race was accepted by most social scientists in the United States to be a cultural phenomenon, not a biological essence. In this new set of racial classifications Jews were categorized as European and white. Further, the aftermath of the Nazi Holocaust put severe limitations

on the eugenics movement and its classificatory systems of race and fitness (Bonilla-Silva 1996, Jacobson 1998, Brodkin 1999, Goldstein 2006).

Karen Brodkin argues that these developments culminated in what she calls a pre-figurative whiteness. She shows how changing conceptions of race in the social sciences, combined with the growth of a right leaning Jewish intelligentsia, precipitated the rise of a Jewish model minority myth.[6] She believes that the model minority myth affected Jewish identity, further distinguishing Jews from people of color in New York, catapulting them firmly into the white category. Right leaning Jewish intellectuals created a new definition of Jewish culture. Jewish parenting and emphasis on education was contrasted to the perceived failures of African American culture. Brodkin writes about this phenomenon, "The construction of Jewishness as a model minority is part of a larger American racial discourse in which whiteness, to understand itself, depends upon an invented and contrasting blackness as its evil (and sometimes enviable) twin." (Brodkin 1999, p.151).

While the whitening of Jews was an uneven process, the events of this time period profoundly transformed Jewish identity, pulling Jewish working class consciousness towards the right, especially in regards to race (Brodkin 1999).

Building a Racialized West Bronx

In her book, *At home in America: Second Generation New York Jews*, Deborah Dash Moore explores the formation of Jewish middle class neighborhoods and institutions in Brooklyn and the Bronx (Moore 1981). She argues that migration from the

[6] The Jewish model minority myth separates Jews from other racially differentiated groups claiming, they worked hard than other groups to achieve economic success (Steinberg 2001).

Lower East Side to Brooklyn and the Bronx transformed New York Jewry. In these communities the second generation adopted American bourgeoisie or middle class values. According to Moore, American values of individualism, hard work, and upward striving mixed with Jewish political and religious traditions to form a white Jewish-American space (Moore 1981).

Paralleling research conducted by scholars focused on the Jewish Bronx like Deborah Dash Moore, my participants conceptualized the neighborhood as a locus for major social activities. The neighborhood was the scale of social reproduction. In this study, emphasis on the neighborhood as an institution is particularly strong because of the overrepresentation of women in my sample.

My participants didn't talk much about religious institutions like synagogues, particularly in the West Bronx. When my participants grew up In the 1930's and 1940's, it was uncommon for women to learn Hebrew, go to religious school, or get Bat Mitsvahed. Simone remembered handing cigarettes to men finishing long preying sessions in a synagogue she was not permitted to enter. As a small child she refused to let go of her big brother's leg when he was learning prayers for his Bar Mitzvah. She remembered that the rabbi was quite annoyed that she wouldn't leave.

Women often learned to be Jewish outside of the synagogue in institutions like the Workman's Circle, a social justice oriented Jewish fraternal organization. Rosen, who considered herself to be a Jewish Socialist, spent her teenage years learning, "how to be a Jewish socialist," at Workman's Circle events. Irene told me that she didn't learn to be Jewish in a synagogue, but instead, in a youth education program sponsored by the Workman's Circle. She said laughingly, "a lot of people said it was communist, but we

really learned a lot about being Jewish." Ruth learned about what it meant to be Jewish as a young child in Brownville. Speaking of a Jewish summer camp she attended as a small girl, she said, "Everything was Jewish. They taught us about the holidays and the customs."

Most of the men I spoke to were "taught how to be Jewish," in synagogues, learned how to read Hebrew from rabbis, and were Bar Mitvahed at the age of 13. Gale's husband, who at times had trouble focusing on the questions I asked him, had nothing but fond memories of the synagogue he attended in his youth. Other male participants, particularly Fred, who was self-avowed "lefty," were very critical of religion, and did not wish to talk at length about their experiences at synagogues. The men, as well as the women, who eventually attended synagogue without any formal Hebrew education, were mostly "twice a year Jews," only going on the high holy days of Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah.

Although Jewish women have a history with unions, particularly in the case of the ILGWU or International Ladies Garment Workers Union, few of the women I talked to had direct ties to unions. Even when directly prompted, my participants said little about unions. Most of the women I talked to had spent their early adult years raising children, and rarely participated in the formal economy. On occasion, they might be collecting part of a pension from a deceased husband who had ties to a union. Further, the men I talked, with the exception a few retired teachers, did not have strong ties to unions.

The Racialization of the West Bronx

Jews' improving position in scaled racial hierarchies can also be seen at the neighborhood level through a discussion of how the Grand Concourse was racialized.

The physical boundaries of the Grand Concourse were racially enforced, restricting the mobility of African Americans. Young men of color complained that they were harassed by cops the second they stepped onto the Grand Concourse (Rosenblum 2009). It was known, often through violent acts, that black children were not allowed on this boulevard. Incidents like these showed that the state would go to great lengths to enforce segregation in the West Bronx. Even in a Jewish liberal community like the West Bronx, there was violence that one would expect to hear about in the South during this time period. In the early 1960's, a superintendent for a building on Grant Avenue, located two blocks from the Grand Concourse, was murdered (Rosenblum 2009). His body was found naked on a steaming radiator. Investors found that he was murdered because of his relationship with a white woman.

The existence of the "Bronx Slave Market," is further evidence that the West Bronx, as a white Jewish space, relationally drew its identity from African Americans at the neighborhood scale. On several corners adjacent to the Grand Concourse, Jewish housewives would bid on the services of black women commuting from Harlem, often on foot. Once "bought," black women were expected to do a variety of domestic chores for minimal pay. Worse, there is evidence that housewives would set back the clock an hour to cheat day laborers of previously agreed upon wages (Rosenblum 2009).

In conclusion, Jews moved north from the Lower East Side to the Bronx and Brooklyn in the first decades of the 20th Century. Initially moving to the South Bronx, by the 1930's and 1940's, the Jewish population in the Bronx shifted towards newer dwellings in the West Bronx. The quality of living and prestige associated with the West Bronx attracted Jews from the South Bronx and other parts of New York. Migrating to

the Bronx changed Jews. Through class struggle on the Lower East Side, Jews helped facilitate the expansion of the university system in New York. The rise of CUNY made possible the professionalization of occupations like teaching and social work, both of which were over represented by Jews. In the Post War period, the United States would enter a period of egalitarian capitalism. During this time the United States' government facilitated social mobility for white European males through programs like the GI bill. The experience of male Jews in World War II, the changing dynamics of racial classification by scientists, and right leaning Jewish intellectuals who sought to distinguish Jews from African Americans, helped Jews both understand themselves as, and be understood, as white. These changing racial dynamics were built into the institutions of neighborhoods like the Grand Concourse, where Jews adopted "American values." At the neighborhood scale, the West Bronx was built on relationships with African Americans that were both exclusionary and exploitative.

In this period, Jews changed from being working class socialists fighting against anti-Semitism to middle class Jews, who started to feel confident in their ability to claim whiteness, especially in relation to groups like African Americans. Changes in Jewish racialization during this time period foreshadowed how Jewish white identity would shift in the 1960's and 1970's.

Next, I will describe the movement of Jews out of the West Bronx. Following a discussion of disinvestment in the West Bronx, I will explain why Jews out-migrated to Riverdale, Co-op City, and the suburbs, paying specific attention to the way in which the racial identity of Jews was re-articulated in relation to the migration process. Next, I will describe how events at the municipal, national, and international scales such as the Six

Day War, the Ocean-Hill Brownsville Teachers Strike, and the rise of Jewish Defense League affected the racial identity of Jews living in New York during the 1960's and 1970's. As these events played significant roles in shaping my participants identities, they will help situate my analytical chapters.

Jewish Out-Migration from the West Bronx (See Figures 2a and 2b for graphical representations of featured statistics)

In 1957, 65 percent of the West Bronx was Jewish. Save for some areas east of the Grand Concourse like Highbridge, which was predominately Irish, and one street in the northern part of the Concourse, Villa Avenue, which was Italian, the West Bronx or the Grand Concourse was primarily Jewish. By 1980, there were only 2,000 Jews left in this area (Horowitz, Kaplan, and Felt 1957, Rosenblum 2009).

According to the 1969 plan for New York City, this area was 99 percent white in 1950. As of 1969, the number of whites had decreased to sixty percent (Hefferle and Kaplan 1969a, ibid 1969b). These changes were generally characterized in terms of race. Statistical counts of racial categories showed dramatic changes in the racial composition of the population. African Americans and Puerto Ricans moved into housing abandoned by Jews who migrated to the North Bronx, Co-op City, the metropolitan suburbs, and Southern Florida (Horowitz, Kaplan, and Felt 1957, Rooney1995, Jonnes 2002, Rosenblum 2009).

In a very short period of time the social space of the West Bronx radically changed. In ten to twenty years, nearly all of the Jews who once lived in the West Bronx left. By the late 1970's any Jews who could leave did. Only in extenuating circumstances

such as poverty, advanced age, and family death, did some Jews stay in the West Bronx (Rosenblum 2009).

Disinvestment in the West Bronx

The story of how and why the Bronx changed from white and middle class to black/brown and poor has been reproduced ad naseum by writers, film makers, and news casters. Constance Rosenblum captures the essence of these narratives. Talking about these changes she says, "Initially the causes seemed bewildering, even mysterious. In retrospect they were tragically obvious, born of the intersection of powerful social, economic, and political trends, along with profound generational shifts, and fueled by what proved to be disastrous policies on every level of government and in the private sector" (Rosenblum 2009 p. 154).

Following Rosenblum, I will provide a multi-scaled account of how and why the South Bronx, and more specifically, the West Bronx, was disinvested in during this period. For the purposes of this chapter, disinvestment is defined as the withdrawal of money, labor, businesses, and population in a geographical location..[7] Starting with the dynamics of disinvestment at the neighborhood level, I will increase the scope of my narrative to discuss the metropolitan and global scales.

Disinvestment in the Built Environment

Scholars in geography and urban studies have argued that landlord disinvestment, or the refusal of landlords to invest into their properties, played an important role in what

[7] While race is certainly an integral part of this process, as a strategic measure, I separate it from disinvestment. Here, in contrast to most scholars who write about the Bronx, I want to make sure that race is not understand as a primary determinant or the final cause of neighborhood change or disinvestment.

happened to the South Bronx during this period. As red lining contributed to private disinvestment, it became very difficult for landlords to reinvest in their properties. In this situation, it became necessary for landlords to use what are often thought to be unethical practices to reap profits from their buildings (Smith 1983, Gonzalez 2004, Rosenblum 2009).

Several authors explain that landlords used milking and subdividing as solutions to crises of profitability. In these cases, landlords would often invest their money in more profitable ventures, allowing the buildings they owned to fall apart (Roberts 1966, Smith 1984, Rosenblum 2009). Speaking of unscrupulous landlord practices on the Grand Concourse one commentator said, "When someone dies they move in an undesirable family, one on welfare with three kids in a bedroom. They cut services to the bone. Less stable families come in, sometimes several in one apartment so they can pay the rent, which of course goes up 15 percent" (Roberts 1966).

As buildings became uninhabitable they were used by owners as tax shelters. Landlords were able to lessen their tax burden by showing that the original value of the building had severely depreciated. Devoid of care these buildings became targets for urban scavengers who gleaned the structures for anything of value. Finally, as a last resort, landlords would cash in on fire insurance policies by burning down their own buildings. It was even rumored that residents themselves burned the buildings they lived in to guarantee that they would be first in line for the limited amount of new housing that was built by the municipal government. (Hefferle and Kaplan 1969 b, Rooney 1995, Jonnes 2002, Gonzalez 2004, Rosenblum 2009).

According to research done by Evelyn Gonzalez, the Grand Concourse, the boulevard itself, was largely spared from arson because of its high quality housing stock. In other words, it didn't pay for landlords to burn their buildings down. The adjacent blocks were not as fortunate as they often fell victim to large scale abandonment. In some cases, buildings on these blocks were burned as well (Gonzalez 2004).

While never burned, the transformation of the Grand Concourse Plaza Hotel was emblematic of disinvestment in the West Bronx. In the 1940's and 1950's, the Plaza Hotel was very prestigious. New York Yankee legends Babe Ruth and Mickey Mantle had been known to take up residence in this hotel during the baseball season. On the presidential campaign trail, John F. Kennedy appeared at the Plaza Hotel for a fund raiser. Wealthy families from the area would often have their sons' Bar Mitzvahs there as well (Lloyd and Hermalyn 1992, Gonzalez 2004). By the late 1960's the hotel had lost its grandeur. According to Gonzales, by this time, it was host to "drug addicts and welfare families" (Gonzalez p.129). According to most scholars, the construction of the Cross Bronx expressway is fundamental to understanding disinvestment in the Bronx. Robert Caro, author of *The Power Broker* essentially blames Robert Moses for rampant disinvestment in the Bronx. Marshall Berman, who saw the Cross Bronx being built from his home as a child, temporarily restrains his love affair with modernity to address the pain of watching his neighborhood being destroyed. Describing the construction of the Cross Bronx Expressway he says,

> "The Jews of the Bronx were non plussed: could a fellow Jew really to do this to us. And even if he did want to do it, we were sure it couldn't happen here, not in America. We were still basking in the afterglow of the New Deal: the government

> was our government and it would come to protect us in the end. And yet, before we knew it, steam shovels and bulldozers were there, and people were getting notice that they had better clear out fast. They look numbly at the wreckers, at the disappearing streets, each other, and they went. Moses was coming through, and no temporal or spiritual power could block his way. (Berman 1983 p. 185)."

Urban renewal, in this case, in the form of a massive highway, displaced thousands of what he calls "middle class families," both Jewish and African American. Agreeing with Moses' biographer Robert Caro, who reasons that the construction process and its aftermath ultimately caused the massive disinvestment of the Bronx and what Berman refers to as urbicide, or the destruction of urban living (Berman 1983, ibid 1996). (Figure 1 shows that the construction of the Cross Bronx Expressway displaced several synagogues in the West Bronx).

New York's financial crisis reflected the city's inability to draw enough revenue to cover its expenditures (Epstein 1976, Moody 2007). On a larger geographic scale it was intimately linked to the global accumulation crisis of the late 1960's and early 1970's (Alcaly and Bodian 1976, Moody 2007, Vitale 2007, Greenberg 2008). This crisis caused significant shifts in the geography of production at a global scale. As a result, New York lost much of its manufacturing base (Moody 2007, Greenberg 2008). The loss of tax revenues coupled with the extreme undervaluing of real estate assessments put the city's finances in a precarious state. By the early 1970's the municipal government was financing a large part of its budget by selling bonds. The fiscal crisis occurred when banks considered the city to be too much of a financial risk for further lending.

As it became clear that the city would not be able to become financially solvent on its own accord, the state appointed a committee of bankers, developers, and other business interests to discipline the city's spending (Moody 2007, Greenberg 2008, Vitale 2008). The city's working classes were hardest hit by these shifts in power. Immediate measures taken by this Emergency Financial Control Board included the instatement of CUNY tuition, service hikes for the MTA, the closure of public hospitals, and wage freezes for city employees. New York centric scholars have conceptualized the fiscal crisis as a transitory period between Welfare State Liberalism and Neo-Liberalism in New York City (Harvey 2007, Moody 2007).

The city's new investment strategy was geographically coordinated. Money, social services, and other state resources were poured into Lower and Midtown Manhattan to attract business and tourists at the expense of neighborhoods in the outer boroughs. This philosophy was formalized into what 1976 city housing Commissioner Roger Starr named planned shrinkage. His plan was to accelerate disinvestment in struggling neighborhoods. Planned shrinkage was a Social Darwinist policy that was explicitly racialized. Starr once said,

> "Stop Puerto Ricans and the rural blacks from living in the city… 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. Better a thriving city of five million than a Calcutta of seven million" (Moody 2008, p. 76).

While this policy was denounced by various groups in the city, and the program was formally shelled, its philosophy lived on as the municipal government often helped

accelerate disinvestment in the Bronx (Smith 1983, Wallace 1998, Harvey 2006, Moody 2007, Greenberg 2008).

The Bronx was devastated by the fiscal crisis and planned shrinkage. During 1970 and 1977, 10,000 manufacturing jobs left the Bronx diminishing steady work prospects for its residents. In 1976, the district South of Fordham road, which included the West Bronx, had a 25-30 unemployment rate (Gonzalez 2004).

Public and private disinvestment also caused the reported incidents of crime to rise in the South Bronx. Citing the increase of crime in the West Bronx Gonzalez says, "By 1967, violent crime was spreading out from the original South Bronx, reaching Highbridge, the Lower Concourse, Fordham, Kingsbridge, and Bronx Park" (Gonzalez 2004, p.120).

Predictably, poverty also increased. By the 1980's 55 percent of families were living in poverty according to city wide standards and 39 percent of the total population were receiving government assistance in the form of welfare (Gonzalez 2004).

In the late 1960's and early 1970's Jews left neighborhoods in the South Bronx in large numbers. During this time, the West Bronx, which would become known as part of the South Bronx, was heavily disinvested. The actions of banks, landlords, Robert Moses, New York's business elite, and the municipal government all contributed to disinvestment in the South Bronx. The deteriorating quality of the built environment, arson, high unemployment, rising poverty rates, and increases in the measured incidents of crime were all consequences of a geographically coordinated disinvestment, sponsored by both public and private interests.

Where Did the Jews Go from the West Bronx? General Shifts in Jewish Demography on the Metropolitan Scale (See Figures 2c, 2d, 2e, and 2f for graphical representations of featured statistics)

The displacement and disinvestment process caused a significant redistribution of the Jewish population in the New York Metropolitan area. Until the late 1960's, Jewish neighborhoods in the outer boroughs, particularly the Bronx, were relatively stable in terms of population growth/decline. Although the Jewish population of the West Bronx had been declining since the 1950's, it was only decreasing at slow rate. In 1957 only 18 percent of Jews lived outside of the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan (See Figure 2a for Graph, Horowitz, Kaplan, and Felt 1957).[8]

By 1981, New York's Jewish population had shifted to the suburbs. (See Figure 2a for Graph) At this time, 32 percent of Jews in the New York City metro area lived in suburban counties. In 1981 only 81,000 Jews lived in the Bronx, constituting just 9 percent of the total population, a significant decrease from 1957, when at 493,000 persons, they made up 34.6 percent of the borough's total population (See Figures 2b and 2c for Graphs). Moreover, in 1981, Jews almost exclusively lived north of the Cross Bronx Expressway, seemingly absent from the places they had dominated twenty to twenty-five years earlier. In 1981, Jews only made up 6 percent of the Jewish metropolitan total. In the same year, Westchester County made up 7 percent of this group. Nassau County, located in Long Island, contained 18 percent of the Jewish population at this time, while Brooklyn constituted 25 percent of the metropolitan total.

[8] The Jewish population survey of New York did not collect data at regular intervals during this time period. In this case, there is 25 year gap between 1957 and 1981.

Moreover, in 1981, over one third of the Jewish population in the Bronx was over the age of 65 (Horowitz, Kaplan, and Felt 1957, Ritterband and Cohen 1981, Horowitz 1991, Ukeles and Miller 2002).

By 1990, 39 percent of Jews lived in suburban counties. The Bronx's Jewish population had stabilized at 80,000, down 10,000 from the previous decade when it constituted 6.8 percent of the total population in the Bronx and 6 percent of the metropolitan area's Jewish population. The population continued to be elderly, as 38 percent of Jews in the Bronx were over 60 as opposed to an average of 22 percent for Jews in the entire metropolitan area. In 2002, only 45,000 Jews remained in the Bronx, a near 100 percent drop from 1990 (See Figure 2d for Graph). Meanwhile, Westchester County's Jewish population increased significantly to 120,000, going up 40 percent from 1990. In 2002 Jews only made up 3 percent of the total population and 5 percent of all households in the Bronx. The elderly population in the Bronx was 29 percent of the Jewish total. At this time, the Bronx was still the borough with the oldest Jewish population (Horowitz, Kaplan, and Felt 1957, Ritterband and Cohen 1981, Horowitz 1991, Ukeles and Miller 2002).

While the suburban portion of the Jewish population increased significantly over the second half of the twentieth century, many Jews, especially members of older age cohorts, moved within the Bronx. The two places they moved to most often were Co-op City and Riverdale.

Co-op City's perceived failure, immense production costs, and mammoth size caused Joshua Freeman to call it the "Vietnam of the non-profit cooperative housing movement" (Freeman 2000 p.119). The construction of Co-op City was New York City's

most ambitious effort to publicly house its middle class. The brain child of Alfred Kazan's United Housing Federation, architect Herman Jessor, and Robert Moses, this housing project created 55,000 housing units on a swamp in the Northeast Bronx (Ennis 1965, Farrell 1968, Huxtable 1968, Curron 1978, Freeman 2000).

The state firmly believed that creating affordable housing would preserve middle class institutions and prevent out-migration (Hefferly 1969a). Co-op City seemed to be a perfect solution for a planning apparatus that was concerned with the massive flight of a white middle class population.

Co-op City was an attractive place because of artificially low monthly payments, spacious rooms with air conditioning, and ample closet space. People who moved to or considered moving to Co-op City told me about its lure. As the West Bronx was being disinvested, my participants were given a golden parachute in the form of what they thought would be their own community. They felt that w white middle class Jewish space could be reproduced in Co-op City. The co-op structure would make sure that they didn't have to deal with landlords and fixed rents would cushion the transition into old age. Some thought that Co-op City would be the last move they would ever make. For these reasons, many jumped at the chance to migrate to Co-op City. According to the New York Times and New York City planning apparatus, a sizable number of Co-op City applicants came from the West Bronx (Roberts 1966, Hefferle and Kaplan 1969a).

Co-op City was not without its detractors though. Architectural critic Ada Louise Huxtable panned the project as inhuman and the City's own officials such as former Bronx Borough president Herman Badillo lambasted the parties responsible for its construction. Similar to the way Robert Caro blamed Moses for the destruction of the

Bronx, Badillo blamed Co-op City for destroying the "Heart of the Bronx" (Badillo 2006). Co-op City has also been criticized for its marginal location, lack of public transportation, and poor construction. Former members of the West Bronx's Jewish community often regret the mass migration to Co-op City reasoning that it "killed the Bronx" (I will describe the significance of the Bronx "dying," in chapter 5).

The rent strike that took place in Co-op City during the mid-1970's dampened lofty expectations of what Co-op City could be. Soaring energy costs and the fiscal crisis forced the city to renege on agreements it made with residents about monthly costs. Though the rent strike was partially successful, it soured relations between residents and the city. In the 1980's and 1990's Co-op City was also partially disinvested. In this time period, older Jews passed away or out-migrated from Co-op City towards Riverdale and Florida in large numbers (Curron 1978, Freeman 2000).

Leaving the West Bronx: Riverdale

Riverdale was another place in the Bronx that Jews migrated to from the West Bronx. Riverdale was once a rural preserve for New York's wealthy. Mansions still dot the Hudson River in Wave Hill. This area was once home to the famous Italian conductor Arturo Tuscanini. Riverdale was primarily Irish until the 1960's when wealthy Jews from the started to migrate in from areas like the West Bronx.

Though it has lost some of its prestige over the years, living in Riverdale is still a symbol of race and class status for many of its residents. Located in the Northwestern part of the Bronx, boosters have called Riverdale the Upper Upper West Side of Manhattan (Lloyd 1979, Rooney 1995, Gonzalez 2004). The racial and economic make

up of Riverdale radically differ from the Bronx as a whole, especially in the areas adjacent to the Henry Hudson Parkway, which is primarily Jewish.

In 2002, Riverdale constituted 44 percent of the Bronx's Jewish population even though the percentage of Jews living in Riverdale decreased from 43 to 26 percent from 1991-2002. According to the American Jewish community survey, Riverdale contained the wealthiest Jews in the Bronx, and was characterized by a high level of ritual practice. Elderly persons, defined as 65 years and older, constituted over 25 percent of the total Jewish population. The survey also noted that there was a growing population of orthodox Jews that partially offset the large rates of Jewish out-migration and death (Ukeles and Miller 2002).

In the second half of the twentieth century, the Jewish population in the New York Metropolitan Area shifted from Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Manhattan to suburban counties like Nassau and Westchester. The Bronx had the most dramatic population loss over this time period. Many Jews moved to the suburbs, but some, especially in older age cohorts, stayed in the Bronx. The two places they moved to most frequently were Co-op City and Riverdale. Today, Riverdale is most densely populated Jewish place in the Bronx.

How Did Moving Out of the West Bronx Affect Jews?

As Jews moved from the Lower East Side towards the West Bronx, their leftist class consciousness formed in response to proletarianization and anti-Semitism was transformed. As their positions in both local and national racial hierarchies increased relative to African Americans, and conditions for white workers in the United States improved, they became white and middle class. While living in West Bronx their

understanding of race and class changed. Most Jews in New York became liberal. As liberals, they voted democratic, routed for the underdog, believed that everyone was the same underneath, and trusted that things could get better through incremental change. While their earlier experience with racial hierarchy and industrial capital tended towards to push them towards radicalism, their experience over several generations in the United States effectively changed how they saw the world, and further, what they thought was best for people of color in the city. This experience would profoundly impact how they experienced the displacements of neighborhood disinvestment (Lederhendler 2001, Jacobson 2008).

This form of being liberal was heavily influenced by the right leaning Jewish intelligentsia I addressed earlier. As liberals, Jews believed that new immigrants and other "minority," groups such as African Americans and Puerto Ricans could succeed as the Jews had if they worked hard and took advantage of liberal institutions such as public schools and civil service. These imperatives were linked to a liberal identity, in which the key to social mobility was to make claims about individual rights and entitlements. These claims were to be made in the work place through unionization, and in the courts, through the law (Lederhendler 2001, Jacobson 2008).

Two broad developments concretized Jews' shift towards liberalism and the right in the late 1960's and early 1970's.[9] First, Jews were affected by the disinvestment of their neighborhoods and the changing role of the state in these areas. The changing relations between poverty, racialized others, and space in times of disinvestment

[9] Yes. Becoming liberal was a shift to the right from socialism.

challenged the liberal idea that all human beings were the same, or entitled to certain kinds of rights. Second, several events during this time period challenged the political and social commitments of New York Jews. They include Israel's Six Day War in 1967, the rise of civil rights politics in New York, the formation of the new left, and the appearance of Jewish movements and groups associated with the right. Together, these movements changed Jews, ultimately strengthening their white identities and pushing them further to the right politically (Lederhendler 2001, Jacobson 2008).

These related processes came to a head in the 1967 Oceanhill-Brownsville strike.[10] Jerald Podair has emphatically referred to this moment as 'the strike that changed New York'. The strike started because a school district in a primarily African American section of Brooklyn sought to bring the school board under community control. The unionized teachers that worked at the school were mostly Jewish and were represented by the UFT. These teachers were unceremoniously fired setting up a bitter conflict between the administration and the teachers union. Charges of anti-Semitism by Jews and accusations of racism by African Americans precipitated a series of city wide teacher strikes. Although the fired teachers were eventually reinstated, this conflict had the effect of deepening tensions between Jews and people of color across the city (Lederhendler 2001, Podair 2001, Jacobson 2008).

Podair explains about Oceanhill-Brownsville,

> "These strikes pitted the city's white middle class, which backed the UFT, against New York's black poor, and government business, media, and intellectual elites,

[10] Eli Lederhendler has written at length about how these events affected what it meant to be Jewish in New York (Lederhendler 2001).

who rallied in support of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville local school board and the community control ideas."

He goes on to say that the strike, "created an atmosphere in which continued Jewish ambivalence about "white identity" became impossible" (Podair 2001, p.2).

Podair also emphasizes that Jews took a significant step towards identifying with outer borough whites like the Irish and Italians. In the late 1960's Jews transitioned from what Karen Brodkin calls a "whiteness of their own," to forging a whiteness that crossed ethnic boundaries (Brodkin 1999).

Filling the Void

The Oceanhill Brownsville strike showed that despite the liberal posturing of well-meaning Jews, there was a large political rift between Jews and people of color in New York City. In this period, the tendency of Jews to identify with other whites dovetailed with a re-articulation of a more insular Jewish identity. The crumbling of the old left in the late 1960's provided an opening for other ideologies like Zionism, which had gained popularity among American Jews after the six day war, Neo-Conservatism a movement that has defined its membership as "liberals who had been mugged by reality," and the doctrines of groups like the Jewish Defense League (Lederhendler 2001, Podair 2001, Murray 2005). [11]

The JDL was formed directly in response to the Oceanhill-Brownsville strikes. Its stated purpose was to, "protect inner city Jews" (Lenderhendeler 2001). While the Jewish defense league constituted only a small minority of Jews it marked a significant break

[11] See Lederhendler 2001, for a good description of the relationship between Jews, the Old Left, and the New Left

with the traditions of the old left and Jewish liberalism. The intellectual vanguard of the group included Meir Kahane, whose closes friends said that, “he had always exhibited a deep hatred towards Blacks” (Jacobson 2008 p.89). Taking a stand on what he called black extremism, he argued that the Oceanhill-Brownsville strikes were caused by black anti-Semitism. The JDL sought to fight this anti-Semitism by taking up the cause of the “forgotten,” or “marginalized,” working class ethnic Jew. Kahane was a proponent of a strong Jewish identity and rejected the assimilationist tendencies of liberal leanings Jews (Jacobson 2008).

In response to what he understood as “Black welfare cheats,” he once made the bold claim that, “I don’t see any Jews on welfare” (Jacobson 2008 p.91). Kahane and others like him were among the first to portray white ethnics as victims of a political system that was purported to support undeserving people of color (Jacobson 2008). Movements like the JDL helped shape a growing discourse about race that would have profound implications for future debates about welfare, affirmative action, and Jewish white identity (Jacobson 2008).

As Jews moved from the West Bronx to Co-op City and Riverdale, the experience of urban disinvestment and events like the Oceanhill Brownsville strike profoundly affected the way in which Jews viewed the world. Jewish commitments to the left were thrown into question as Zionism and Neo-Conservatism filled the void formed by the waning influence of radical Jewish traditions. In moments of crisis, groups like JDL showed that Jews were willing and able to assert a white racial identity against people of color.

Conclusion

Jews moved north from the Lower East Side to the Bronx and Brooklyn in the first decades of the 20th Century. Initially moving to the South Bronx, by 1930's and 1940's the Jewish population in the Bronx shifted towards newer dwellings in the West Bronx. The quality of living and prestige of the West Bronx attracted Jews from all over New York. Migration to the West Bronx impacted the class and race of Jews. Through class struggle on the Lower East Side Jews helped expand the university system. CUNY facilitated the professionalization of occupations like teaching and social work, of which Jews were over represented. In an age of egalitarian capitalism, the post-depression/World War II United States' government facilitated social mobility for white European males. The experience of fighting alongside other whites in World War II, the changing dynamics of scientific racial classification, and right leaning Jewish intellectuals who sought to distinguish Jews from African Americans, caused Jews to both be classified as, and understand themselves, as white. Changing race and class dynamics were built into the institutions of neighborhoods like the West Bronx, where Jews adopted "American values." Jews' whiteness was also evident in the West Bronx through the exclusionary and exploitative relationships they had with African Americans in the West Bronx.

In this period Jews changed from working class socialists fighting against anti-Semitism to middle class Jews, who started to feel confident in their ability to claim whiteness, especially in relation to groups like African Americans. These changes, anticipated future shifts in race and class that were spurred on by urban disinvestment in the West Bronx and migration to the Riverdale and Co-op City.

Urban disinvestment in the West Bronx and other parts of the South Bronx was the coordinated effort of both public and private interests. Jews left the West Bronx in great numbers as buildings were deprived of repairs and burnt for insurance purposes.

After becoming white and middle class in the middle part of the 20th century in neighborhoods like the West Bronx, what it meant to be white, Jewish, and middle class changed again in the late 1960's. As Jews moved from the West Bronx to Co-op City and Riverdale, urban disinvestment and events like the Oceanhill-Brownsville Strike profoundly affected the ways Jews viewed the world. Commitments to the left were thrown into question as the ideologies of Zionism and Neo-Conservatism became more influential in the Jewish community. These shifts condensed into the formation of movements like the JDL.

My participants' racial identities were profoundly shaped by the events and processes described in this chapter. Examining Jewish migration from the West Bronx to Riverdale provides a framework for understanding how the white identities of my participants changed in the late 1960's and early 1970's. In the following chapters, I analyze primary and secondary data to more intimately investigate how the migration process affected my participants' racial identities.

Chapter IV: Migration Data and Analysis

This research is focused on the migration patterns of Jews that left the West Bronx in the late 1960's and early 1970's. In this chapter, I primarily concentrate on where my participants moved to, and why they moved to these places. For each ten year period starting in 1930 and ending in 2000, I implement qualitative and quantitative analyses grounded in data gleaned from residential histories, participant observation, and the historical census. To conclude, I consider the sum of my participants' movements, analyzing their migration patterns across time, examining the tension that characterized their residential histories, and discussing how the migration process affected their racial identities.

Methodology (Please see chapter II for a more in-depth description)

My analysis of residential histories is divided into ten year periods, starting in 1935 and ending in 2005. I analyze each time period in two ways. First, I use my participants' narratives residential histories to create a narrative about why they moved from one place to another. Second, I use historical Census data to contextualize my participants' narratives, focusing on how socio economic, racial, and ethnic categories changed over time and space.

The Early Years: The Depression and Moving Down in the World

For my participants the 1920's, 1930's, and early 1940's were characterized by frequent migration within the West Bronx and Fordham, family crowding, and downward social mobility. The first 10-15 years of Elaine, Bernice, Shirley, and Mildred's lives were marked by constant movement. Although my participants were not very clear about

why their families moved so frequently, they emphasized family members' tenuous employment status and fluctuations in rent. For example, in the first 20 years of her life, Mildred moved 8 times within the West Bronx. She lived with various family members in a variety of different living arrangements. She vividly remembered the frequent moves, especially what it was like to switch schools so often.

High rates of poverty during this period determined the places where my participants went and the reasons why they migrated. Downward social mobility was the norm for my participants' parents. Migration was often a way of dealing with poverty. Mildred slept in the same hammock as her grandmother for a three year period as her father searched for steady work. Dorothy's father lost most of his money in the stock market crash of 1929. Her family was forced to move from a luxurious apartment on the Grand Concourse to a less glamorous location in the West Bronx. Shirley's father was a failed entrepreneur, and both Elaine and Stacy's fathers died prematurely. They all moved around frequently as children. Migration in these years differed significantly from future movements, as my participants did not have much agency in making decisions. As adults, they would become more clear about why they moved to specific places.

1946-1955: Important Themes and General Movements

In 1946-1955, 20 out of the 25 participants I interviewed moved. My participants moved the most in this period. Overwhelmingly, they tried to remain in the West Bronx, close to the neighborhoods they grew up in. The primary reasons my participants moved included housing scarcity, staying in a Jewish neighborhood, remaining close to one's family, urban renewal, and in a few cases, neighborhood change in the East Bronx (See Figure 5 for the location of the East Bronx).

Lack of housing or housing scarcity was an important determinant of where my participants moved. In market economies, housing scarcity is often produced by landlords and banks to artificially manipulate rental markets on the basis of race and class (Harvey 1976, Smith 1982). In the West Bronx, during this time period, housing scarcity can be attributed to two factors. On one hand, rent control laws rewarded tenants for staying in place. Landlords could not raise rents unless they had new tenants (Gonzalez 2004). On the other, returning soldiers from World War II sought out apartments of their own to start families. In New York, particularly the Bronx, new housing was in short supply (Rosenblum 2008). As a result, housing scarcity forced my participants to settle for apartments in relatively undesirable locations.

Housing shortages in this time period affected most of my participants. A large percentage of my participants mentioned housing scarcity as a reason why they moved in this period. Every male participant in my study was drafted to, or volunteered for service in the military. In the years following the war, every woman I interviewed, with the exception of Edna, was married to a Jewish man returning from military service.

Shirley was forced to move to Midwood, Brooklyn because of housing scarcity in the West Bronx. Midwood seemed like a far distance from her family. She was happy to leave in 1959, when her apartment was demolished as part of an urban redevelopment project in Midwood. After they married, Abe and Linda settled in the East Bronx on Vyze Avenue until housing in the West Bronx became less scarce. Mildred and her husband briefly lived in Quonset Huts in Staten Island until a friend notified them of an opening in a newly built section of the Amalgamated Houses in the North Bronx.

Often, relief from housing scarcity was only achieved through extra payments to landlords and superintendents. These fees were almost always brokered through social networks. For example, Rosen secured an apartment in her Aunt's building by making one of these "under the table," payments.

Although housing scarcity limited my participants' choices, they were clear about their desire to stay Bronx. Moreover, they did not want to move into a neighborhood that was not Jewish. Staying in a Jewish neighborhood was important for my participants, but not difficult considering that in 1946-1955, the Bronx was 35.7 percent Jewish (Horowitz, Kaplan, and Felt 1957).

The provincial sense of place my participants forged living in the West Bronx contributed to their desire to stay in Jewish neighborhoods. As children, my participants felt like the world was a small place in which most everyone was Jewish. Not living in a Jewish neighborhood was inconceivable.

Although my participants wanted to stay in neighborhoods close to family and friends, a second preference was to move to an unfamiliar Jewish neighborhood, preferably in the Bronx, and sometimes, as was the case with Shirley, in Brooklyn. A third preference was to move into an Italian or Irish area that was not far from a Jewish neighborhood. The latter fate was suffered by Sasha, who as a child, was pelted with rocks on a daily basis, "because she was Jewish."

Living in a Jewish neighborhood during the years immediately following the Holocaust was particularly important for Mildred and others, because they were still

unsure about how Jews were perceived in gentile society.[12] My participants were fearful that ignorance, bigotry, and prejudice would make their experience living in non-Jewish neighborhoods difficult. My participants also wanted to live in Jewish neighborhoods because it made ritual practices such as keeping kosher, observing Jewish holidays, and attending synagogue more convenient.

The third most reported reason for moving during this time period was being close to one's family. 63 percent of participants cited family as the reason why they migrated to a particular place. The way urban Jewish space was experienced during 1946-1955 was highlighted by the importance of family. My participants' depictions of the Jewish Bronx in 1946-1955 were characterized by themes of warmth and togetherness. Living near family was a main priority. It was a way of being in the world.

Speaking to this theme, Gale talked about how provincial the Bronx was. She emphasized how spatially concentrated her extended family was. Most of them lived in the West Bronx, often in the crowded apartment she grew up in. She told me that as a girl she was convinced that the whole world was Jewish. Reminiscing about her childhood, Lori told me how large 3 blocks seemed to be where she grew up on East Tremont Avenue in the East Bronx. Upon moving to Florida on her 18th birthday, Ann had never heard any adult talk without an Italian or Yiddush accent. Stacy felt privileged that she had the opportunity to move to another floor in the same building she grew up in. Unlike some of her friends who moved five or six blocks down north or south, she was able to live downstairs from her mother. Living close to her mother made childcare easy.

[12] Gentile is a Yiddish word often used in a derogatory fashion to describe the non-Jewish world.

Moreover, she felt privileged to stay in her mother's building because she had heard "horror stories," about people who were forced to move long distances from their friends and family because of the housing shortage. Clearly, she had no intention of doing this.

These feelings of warmth and togetherness also had a very practical element. For many women, living close to family was a way of keeping urban Jewish life afloat. Child care was a primary motivation for moving close to family. Several of my participants talked about how important the labor of their parents and friends were in helping raise children. Conversely, they also discussed the hardships they faced when this labor was not readily available. Ann relied on her mother to help take care of two young children. Irene didn't like the first building she lived in because there were relatively few young mothers there. She felt isolated after spending large amounts of time in her apartment with only her children. In this location, she also had trouble finding baby sitters. For Irene, caring for two children without much help was exhausting. All of this changed when she moved to Townsend Avenue in the early 1950's. She was especially excited that she could travel within her building find babysitters and play cards while only wearing a house dress. Reflecting on kind of collective child care that was common in the Bronx during this time period, Lori remarked,

> "We had a rotating system. When it rained and if the children couldn't go outside they would all go from one apartment to another for three quarters of an hour and that was it. So they had a good time because they got cookies everywhere they went and we had a great time because you had five to seven children to play with for a short time. The rest of the day was yours."

The in-migration of blacks and Puerto Ricans into the East Bronx was also a reason why some participants moved to the West Bronx during this time period. When Shirley and Ruth were married, they left both their parents, and the East Bronx behind.

Shirley grew up on Wilkinson Ave in the East Bronx. She told me why her parents moved out of the East Bronx.

> "It was horrible. There were whole families living in one room and the buildings were very close and our apartment was seven rooms from the front to the back. Each family had the windows open. It was horrible. People were loud and very promiscuous. It was, ya know, summer time. It was hot. Everybody's windows were open. It was really bad."
>
> She went onto say, "The neighborhood was not of a good quality. It started getting really bad and my friends moved away very quickly. It's funny how quickly it happened."

Much like Jews who left the West Bronx in the 1960's and 1970's, Shirley made it clear that it was no longer possible to reproduce urban Jewish ways of living in the East Bronx. Her family and community were not well suited for the noise and chaos she described. Her solution to this problem was to migrate to the West Bronx.

Ruth's decision to move out of the East Bronx paralleled Shirley's out-migration story. Ruth grew up on the South Side of Crotona Park in Charlotte Gardens. Jimmy Carter made this area famous in 1977 by comparing it to the firebombed ruins of Dresden, Germany.

She struggled to tell me about what happened to her neighborhood. When I asked her why she didn't stay in the East Bronx she explained,

"No, no, there was nothing. It was nothing already. It was starting to change. I had a baby already and ya know it was the schools and all of that. You couldn't get apartments. You took what you got, and it just happened to be a beautiful area. It was beautiful back then, and I mean beautiful (laughing)."

Ruth's narrative showed that even though scarcity was important, it did not fully determine migration patterns. Although housing was technically available in the East Bronx, it was no longer an acceptable neighborhood to raise a Jewish child in. As Ruth said, even though "one took what they could get," the East Bronx wasn't an option (See Figure 5 for map of the South Bronx).

Let me re-emphasize that the degree of out-migration from the East Bronx in this time period was not as large as the outflow of Jews from the West Bronx in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Only a small percentage of my participants moved because the East Bronx was changing.

In this time period, some of my participants were also displaced through the process of urban renewal. Several participants had family and friends who were relocated by the construction of the Cross Bronx Expressway in the early 1950's. In the years following the war, Dorothy's apartment building was taken over by the WAVES or "Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service."[13] In the late 1940's, Linda was forced to move because of parking lot construction for Bronx Lebanon Hospital. Although Lori and Mildred moved into the community district of Riverdale in this time

[13] The WAVES was an official part of the NAVY. Women who participated in the WAVES were promised military careers after the war ended.

period, neither of them moved to areas that would be heavily populated by Jews in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Historical Census data analysis produced similar insights.

1946-1955: Race, Ethnicity, and Socio Economic Status

For participants who migrated in the years between 1946 and 1955, changes between the racial/ethnic composition and socio-economic status of Census tracts of origin and destination were not very large.

Irene, Abe, Linda, and Rosen all moved to areas in the West Bronx in which Central and Eastern European ancestry was 60 percent or higher. Although some my participants moved to tracts in Fordham, which had a higher Irish population than where they had previously lived, the Irish percentage in all tracts of origin or destination was still lower than 25 percent. These data highlight that Jews moved to neighborhoods with a similar race and ancestry make up to their Census tract of origin. The presence of non-whites, in this case, measured by the Census designated category of "Negro," was minute in all tracts of origin and destination.

Socio economic indicators did not show significant change between Census tracts of origin and destination. In some cases the median rent of tracts my participants moved to was lower than the ones from they came. I think that differences in the cost of rent was related to scarcity. Simply, newlyweds took what they got, even when it may have been a step down in class. They would have stayed in the neighborhoods they grew up in, even if it meant paying slightly more rent.

Although Lori and Mildred moved to Riverdale, the neighborhoods they settled in had similar racial compositions and socio economic statuses to the areas they had previously lived. These neighborhoods can be characterized as having mixed of white

ethnicities. In these tracts, the Census category that marked African Americans never rose above 2 percent. Even though Ruth and Shirley moved out of the East Bronx because of changing racial dynamics, Census data analysis does not indicate significant differences between the places they moved to and from.

An analysis of Census data showed that 1946-1955 was not a period of upward social mobility for my participants. Generally, Jews were not moving to neighborhoods that were more non-Jewish white, or of higher socio-economic status. On the whole, Jews migrated to places that were actually more homogenous in terms of ethnicity. In terms of rent, they often paid lower or similar amounts in relation to their Census tract of origin.

1946-1955: Conclusion

In 1946-1955, my participants primarily moved to the West Bronx or within the West Bronx. Scarcity, a desire to live close to family, changing racial dynamics, as was the case with Ruth and Shirley in the East Bronx, and urban renewal determined why they moved and where they would move to. The next period of migration would be characterized by less frequent movements.

1956-1965: Important Themes and General Movements

Only eight of my participants migrated in 1956-1965. The desire to be close to family and the need for more space to accommodate growing families were the two most cited reasons for moving during these years. As newlyweds, some of my participants' residential mobility was limited. They settled in apartments that were too small for children, in buildings that did not have young families, and neighborhoods that were relatively far from their parents. In 1956-1965, when housing scarcity was less

pronounced, some of my participants chose to move to neighborhoods that were closer to family. Other reasons my participants expressed for migrating included untimely family death and access to transportation. The large majority of participants were happy to be in the West Bronx. The few that left did so out of necessity.

Lori loved the neighborhood she lived in located on Girard Avenue. Friends and family helped raise her children. She did most of her shopping in a two block radius. Although she was sad to go, the growth of her family made her living situation in the West Bronx untenable. Her husband's job as a traveling salesman also contributed to the move. On the block Lori lived on, finding a parking space was difficult, especially late at night, when her husband came home. These issues considered, Lori moved into a Jewish neighborhood on the border of Riverdale and Westchester. Although she visited the West Bronx frequently, she missed its shopping, social scene, and urban Jewish character.

In 1956-1965, migration was often necessitated through unexpected events at the scale of the individual or family. For example, Bernice moved to Riverdale because of her father's untimely death. She said,

> "I left because my father died, and everyone was completely in a state of insanity. So we decided to move. My brother got this large apartment. At that time there were no co-ops, so he spoke to the landlord and explained the situation. We paid a few bucks under the table."

Bernice's family needed a larger apartment. They wanted a change of scenery, and the relative wealth of their family afforded them an opportunity to move to an area with a higher class status. Migrating to Riverdale was devised as a way to share the responsibility of caring for two widowed mothers. Bernice's sister-in-law had also lost

her father. Bernice's adjustment to living in a "fancier" neighborhood was not easy. She felt uncomfortable there and described the area as being very snobbish. Bernice told me that everyone had maids, a luxury she was not accustomed to growing up in the West Bronx.

In 1956-1965, Bernice's case was rare. Riverdale was not on the radar of my most of my participants. The Jewish population was still relatively small there. Ann told me Riverdale was primarily associated with Wave Hill, a place dotted with mansions that overlooked the Hudson River. According to a centenarian who has lived in Wave Hill since the mid 1940's, this area was very exclusive.

Anti-Semitism was also an issue in Riverdale. Early movers told stories about how their children were terrorized for being Jewish. For example, Bernice told me that her son was chased home from school by Catholic children while being called "Christ killer."

An analysis of residential histories revealed that there were two primary reasons why my participants didn't move to Riverdale in 1956-1965. First, its general racial and class character made Riverdale undesirable or unavailable to the majority of Jews. Second, I believe that my participants really liked living in the West Bronx. They didn't move unless they were impelled to do so.

Commute and location to employment were also important to my participants. They sought to stay close to transportation hubs, particularly the B and D trains, which were, and still are, located on the Grand Concourse.

In some cases, deterioration and changing racial dynamics impacted my participants' migration patterns in 1956-1965. Ann and Edna had heard from friends that

that “undesirable,” people were moving to adjacent blocks and neighborhoods. They left their homes, but stayed in the West Bronx and Fordham. Their concerns were uncommon in this time period. For the majority of participants who moved in 1956-1965, quality of neighborhood, issues of safety, racial anxiety, and the inability to reproduce urban Jewish life were not relevant. Ann and Edna were particularly sensitive to these issues, moving in advance of the possibility that there could be neighborhood change.

1956-1965: Secondary Data Analysis

Mirroring migration patterns in 1946-1955, all of my participants moved to neighborhoods that were close to 100 percent white in 1956-1965. Although the category Puerto Rican was introduced in the 1960 Census, counts were not significant in any of the tracts my participants left or moved to. The highest percentage of Puerto Ricans in a Census tract of destination or origin was 2 percent. Similarly, only the tract that Simon migrated from had a significant measure on the Census designated category of “negro,” at 9 percent.

The ethnicity statistics were confounding. They did not follow a general pattern and seemed to be linked to the individual places that participants migrated to. This pattern can be attributed to the small sample size of movers in this period. With the exception of Lori who moved to the border of Riverdale and Yonkers, the number of Italians and Irish in the Census tracts participants moved to and from, were under ten percent. As was the case in 1946-1955, participants primarily moved between tracts with high Central and Eastern European ancestry.

The categories by which socio economic status was measured did not fluctuate much between tracts of origin and tracts of destination. Participants moved to and from

areas with similar rents, incomes and educational attainment level. The exception was Simon's migration to Riverdale. The differences between these places on the basis of socio economic categories foreshadowed patterns in 1966-1975. In Simon's case, the amount of people with, "at least some college," went up from 19 percent to 65 percent. Rents and income also went up significantly.

1956-1965: Conclusion

Family expansion, death, access to transportation, and in Ann and Edna's case, the fear of changing racial dynamics, provided an impetus for my participants to move in 1956-1965. They moved within the West Bronx and Fordham, and to a lesser extent, Riverdale. In the years between 1946 and 1965 the West Bronx and Fordham had a relatively steady Jewish population. The majority of Jews were not moving. In 1958, there were 128,000 Jews living in the West Bronx as compared to 121,000 in 1950. In Fordham, during these 8 years, the Jewish population only decreased by 2,000, from 105,000 to 103,000. Most importantly, the conditions necessary for the dissolution of urban Jewish life in the Bronx were still faint. These conditions did not affect most of the West Bronx and Fordham. In 1956-1965, my participants migrated for reasons that were usually only relevant at the individual or family scale.

In this time period, the universe of possible migration destinations was still relatively restricted. Riverdale was not on the radar for most Jews and Co-op City was not created yet. There was little reason to leave the West Bronx. If one could stay there, they were unlikely to move. In the West Bronx, the shopping was better, family was closer, and the commute to Manhattan was more convenient. People had produced a way of life in the West Bronx that they were determined to keep.

In conclusion, although a few individuals entered a higher class when they moved to Riverdale, the majority of participants either continued to stay in the same place they had lived in 1946-1955, or they moved to another middle class urban Jewish neighborhood in the West Bronx or Fordham.

In 1966-1975, participants' movement increased. During this time period my participants were displaced from the West Bronx. They moved to Riverdale and Co-op City, and not the suburbs.

1966-1975: Important Themes and General Movements

Looking back, my participants had a general feeling that there was something unexceptional about migrating in the years between 1946 and 1965. Bernice told me, "That's just what you did in those days!" If one moved they didn't choose to go far. As Maxine said, "In those days everyone was in the same zip code." These migrations were part and parcel of making Jewish urban space.

To my participants, 1966-1975 represented a significant break with the past. My participants began moving to unfamiliar places. Riverdale, which was only home to a small number of Jews before this time period, became a major destination for my participants. Further Co-op City, which was constructed in 1969 became a new destination for Jews, who sought to re-create urban Jewish communities in a new place. They moved to these places because the neighborhoods they had grown to love, significantly changed. Overwhelmingly, the West Bronx and Fordham became places where urban Jewish living struggled to survive.

In 1966-1975, 17 of my participants moved. Only one of them moved within the West Bronx or Fordham. The other 16 participants migrated to Riverdale or Co-op City.

88 percent of my participants cited the desire to live in a Jewish neighborhood as an important reason for moving. Over two thirds of them said that neighborhood change or a "changing neighborhood," were an important reason for why they moved. My participants moved because of issues related to the safety of elderly relatives and children, the quality of schools, the availability of new/cheap housing, and the desire to be closer to nature.

Neighborhood change consistently found its way into most of my participants' narratives.[14] Ann, for example, migrated in both 1956-1965 and 1966-1975 for this reason. In 1956-1965, she migrated north along the Grand Concourse to Ecko place, which was located in Fordham. Six years later in 1966-1975 she felt pressured to move again. She told me,

> "People started moving away. We started getting a lot of black people. Not a lot, but we started to get black people moving in. Today it doesn't make a difference, but in those days it was like the neighborhood was going down. They weren't too friendly when they moved in. Maybe we weren't too friendly to them."

Her account of race and change paralleled other participants' accounts of out-migration. They rarely engaged in any turf battles with black or brown folks. Rather, they saw or heard about what was happening in the block or neighborhood over and migrated as a precautionary measure. In the words of Abe, "the writing was on the wall."

Gale decided to move for this reason. What follows is a vignette she told me about neighborhood change in the late 1960's. Her story was very long, so I only

[14] I take up this concept in more detail in the analysis chapter on race.

included the last third of it. Gale was looking for her young son's bicycle thief, someone she called Angel.

> "… As we are walking down the street, (laughing) we see this little kid and he's looking up towards us, not necessarily to us, but on the other side of the street. My son said, "That's Angel," so I walked over and he had no bicycle. There was no bike there. I didn't even say, "Are you Angel?" I said, what did you do with my son's bicycle? Where is it? I was angry and he was crying. He said, "The black kid took it from me." I didn't know who it was and I never pursued it. Later that day I said to my husband, "I think it's time to move." I think that was one of the impetuses to move for many people. Well yeah that, and um, I liked living in a Jewish neighborhood!"

In many of my participants' narratives, issues of safety went hand in hand with accounts of the neighborhood changing. For Gale, the theft of her son's bike signified danger. The desire to live in a Jewish neighborhood was often correlated with feelings of safety. Participants felt safe because they lived in a Jewish neighborhood and vice versa. Ann told me months after I had interviewed her that I should remember, "That the only reason we moved is because we feared for our safety."

Fred, Elaine, and Blanche migrated out of their respective neighborhoods because their loved ones were threatened with acts of violence. Fred's elderly mother in law was the victim of a purse snatcher. Blanche's son was threatened with a knife, and Elaine told me that students bused in from Harlem were pulling down girls' panties at school.

Nearly all accounts of neighborhood change and threats to safety were racially inflected. Abe spoke of his neighborhood in the following way,

"The neighborhood was already changing quickly in the Bronx. It was becoming less Jewish and more gentile. I don't know. There were more Puerto Ricans moving further south. I don't think they were coming up that far, but it was changing."

He went on to say,

"I guess the thing was, someone in the building, the son of one of the families that lived in the building, he killed someone. He was a drug addict. He must of killed someone. I don't know. The neighborhood just didn't feel right. There were incidents that happened. We just felt it was time."

There was a perception among many participants that the large scale construction of Mitchell Lama housing projects made leaving the West Bronx easier. As Simon put it, "It was a sweetheart deal." Transition out of a place that was no longer perceived as Jewish, safe, or comfortable was alleviated by the perks of Mitchell Lama projects, which included subsidized rent, low carrying costs for co-ops, easy access to parking, elevators, and newer buildings in these projects.

Unlike 1956-1965, participants also felt compelled to migrate because everyone they knew was leaving. Urban Jewish life was relocating. If one wanted to continue to be part of it, they had no choice but to move as well. Describing why she left the neighborhood she loved so much in the West Bronx, Irene said,

"Because everyone was migrating. Everyone in the building was leaving. Everyone in my building, and the whole neighborhood was leaving. They were all going to Co-op city except this one group of women. My children went to school with those children and they were very close friends. They were moving as well

and they had mentioned this building that was going up in Riverdale. And, and I said ok, I'll join. I joined the group and well that's where I bought the apartment from blueprint. The community was disappearing, it was disappearing."

Concern over the quality of schools was also a significant issue for movers in 1966-1975. For parents with young children, racial diversity in schools was often the first sign of neighborhood change. Elaine fought vehemently over issues of desegregation and busing. Her story is worth quoting at length. Elaine explained,

"What happened is that they started busing undesirable children in the neighborhood. At first they wanted us to take our children and bus them into other neighborhoods. We were a large group and we fought bitterly. We won, but then they started bringing other children into our neighborhood. It would be fine, it would be fine, but what happened was my younger daughter was going to junior high school and they decide to bring in… they were really struggling, recalcitrant, difficult, children. They were problematic children with serious learning problems. What happened is that they bought this group from Harlem. They had to be supervised. They were definitely emotionally problematic children. We all had to go to school in the afternoon and pick up our children because these children were…they didn't behave properly. They put gum in the children's hair. They stuck them with pins. I mean they started to pull down the girls panties. They were not desirable. We all panicked and there was nothing we could do while this was what was happening, so we all picked ourselves up and went to Co-op City."

Like Elaine, several participants felt that integration through busing signified a loss of control over public schools. In a fit of panic about the education and safety of their children, my participants moved without much thought about where they could go. My participants' desire to control local schools was at odds with the actions of the UFT in the Ocean-Hill Brownsville strike. In the latter case, Jewish members of the United Teachers Federation fought vehemently against community control of the Ocean-Hill Brownville school district (See chapter III for a more in-depth conversation of the Oceanhill-Brownsville strike). Despite wide spread Jewish support for the teachers' union, the United Teacher's Federation, it appears that in regards to issues like desegregation and busing, Jews were willing to fight for local control of schools.

Some participants moved to be closer to nature. Both Rosen and Ann were in awe of how green the North Bronx was. Several other participants expressed that moving to Riverdale was important because it gave them space to "breathe". They told me that the places they grew up in were nearly treeless. In these cases, participants' gauged their social mobility through the transition of grey to green at the neighborhood scale.

The effects of disinvestment also figured into the out-migration of my participants. The maintenance and overall quality of the buildings they lived in were decreasing. Several participants were forced to move because of these issues. Talking about why she moved, Dorothy explained, "And also the building was very run down. It wasn't taken care of. The heat was bad, and the whole building was sort of falling apart."

In most narratives of white flight, Jews leave increasingly disinvested black and brown neighborhoods for the suburbs. As I will show in the next section, they were not enthusiastic about moving to the suburbs.

We Are Leaving the West Bronx, but Were Not Going to the Suburbs

My theoretical framework showed that suburban migration looms large in narratives about changes in Jewish class and race. In this section, I address why my participants did not move to the suburbs. Their explanations also highlight why they decided to stay in the Bronx. My participants chose not to move to the suburbs for several reasons which included their position in the life cycle, the ages of their children, issues related to commute, the prospects of maintaining a home, issues of lifestyle, and the location of aging/dependent family.

Before I analyze my participants' residential histories in regards to why they moved to Riverdale and Co-op City, and not the suburbs, I will contextualize their narratives by discussing the literature about suburbanization and white flight. Why did whites leave the city, and what caused them to move to the suburbs?

Explaining the suburbanization process in the Northeastern United States, Marxist scholars highlight dynamics of capital investment and disinvestment in the built environment (Walker 1981). Simply, urban neighborhoods were disinvested in favor of suburban development (Greenberg 2007). On a metropolitan scale, private investors, including landlords, found greater return on their investment in the suburbs (Smith 1984). A powerful cabal of high way builders, car manufacturers, politicians and other actors benefitted from suburban development in pro-growth constellations often referred to as growth machine coalitions (Brodkin 2000). Structural factors provided significant push and pull factors for white urban groups like the Jews. White flight migration was facilitated by issues related to home ownership, declining quality of city services, and the unethical practices of landlords /real estate agents (Jackson 1985).

Kenneth Jackson, who has written one of the most important accounts of suburbanization in the United States writes,

> "The young families who joyously moved into the new homes of the suburbs were not terribly concerned about the problems of the inner-city housing market or the snobbish views of Lewis Mumford and other social critics. They were concerned about their hopes and their dreams. They were looking for good schools, private space, and personal safety, and places like Levittown could provide those amenities on a scale and at a price that crowded city neighborhoods, both in the Old World and in the new, could not match." (Jackson 1985, p 244-245).

Scholars argue that the market success of suburban communities demonstrates that urban whites demanded or clamored for the suburbs. Such claims usually position migrating whites as bad judges of aesthetics, distrustful of public transportation, afraid of living in diverse communities, and without agency. In the latter case, white flight migrants are determined by the suggestions of capitalism, racism, and patriarchy. Their attachment to place, specifically urban ways of living, is not adequately considered in this literature.

Demographers try to understand why people move to the suburbs at the level of the individual (Wilson 1983, Frey 1985, Harris 1999, Crowder 2000, Kryson 2002). These studies attempt to understand the behavior of white flight migrants using statistical methods. The central debate in this literature revolves around the role race plays in white

out-migration from urban neighborhoods. Are people prejudiced? Do they leave urban neighborhoods because they hold racist views towards people or color, or do they move because of what the literature calls, “extra-racial factors?” By extra-racial factors, they mean “non-racial issues,” like cleanliness, school quality, and housing prices.

While I am dumbfounded that social scientists can cleave apart race from issues like the quality of schools from race, I am more interested in how in this literature conceptualizes white flight as an inevitable act. Most studies, even critical research that discusses how capitalism, racism, and patriarchy co-determine suburban migration, understand white flight as a foregone conclusion.

The residential histories I collected tell a different story. As my participants attempted to reproduce urban Jewish living in the West Bronx, they were dissuaded from moving to the suburbs. In the following pages, I will explain how these desires shaped their migration patterns.

Life cycle played an important role in the choice of migration destination for my participants. By the late 1960’s, most of my participants were in their early 40’s. Participants with grown children were less likely to be attracted to the segregated schools and racially pristine environments that the suburbs promised. Their position in the life cycle also meant that they were not very excited about the prospects of moving into a spacious house or living among young families. Moreover, as they started to think ahead towards retirement, a 20 or 30 year loan seemed daunting.

For many, the hardships of commuting a long distance made idea of moving to the suburbs ridiculous. Rosen told me that her husband would never move anywhere where he would have to cross a bridge to go to work. Chip, who worked in the

department of education in Downtown Brooklyn, was convinced that long commutes led to the premature death of several of his colleagues. Abe and Linda thought about moving to the suburbs, but never seriously considered it because of the hours Abe was required to work as an accountant. He said that his days were already long enough, even without the commute. The way he put it, “Money wise and opportunity wise, we didn’t move to the suburbs.”

Several participants told me that they didn’t want to own a home because neither they, nor their spouses were good at fixing things. When I asked Stan if he thought about moving to the suburbs, he said, “No, not really. I’m not a handy man. And I think a person who is not handy shouldn’t own a home unless they have a lot of money” Similarly, Rosen reflected, “You see my husband is not skilled at repairing anything. It always ends up that I have to do it. I would do all the work. Clearly, I would not want that to happen.”

Many participants had lived in the Bronx their whole lives. Even if the Bronx was becoming less Jewish, participants still had friends and family in the five boroughs. This was especially the case with elderly relatives, whose residential mobility was limited. Hirsch stayed in Bronx partly because she wanted to be close to her mother in Queens. Part of the reason Shirley stayed in the Bronx is because her parents bought a home in the Northeast Bronx.

The way of life associated with the suburbs also seemed banal to some participants. When I asked Rosen if she had considered moving to Rockland County, she said with disgust in her face,

“I mean it’s nice to look at the lake, the ducks, and to be in nature, but the city is

the place for me. There is always something going on. It's very exciting. There is music, concerts, and its intellectual stimulating. There is liveliness here."

Some of the women I talked to were concerned by their lack of access to a car. They feared they would be isolated in a suburban neighborhood. The way one participant worded it, "In the suburbs you need to get a car everywhere." Other women wondered if they would not be able to shop in the same way. How would they make it to the department store Bea Altman's in Midtown Manhattan, go to the supermarket, and get home in time to make dinner? [15]

The suburbs could not offer the urban Jewish way of living my participants grown accustom to. They wanted to live in a place that was Jewish, not just white. They were wary about living a far distance from a kosher deli. They were afraid the synagogue, a symbol of the Jewish community, would no longer mark the space they inhabited.

Several of my participants left the Bronx and eventually came back. They missed urban Jewish living. Shortly after she was married, Ann briefly moved to Florida. She moved back to the Bronx after experiencing the hardships of giving birth to her first son in isolation. Lori briefly moved to Spring Valley in Rockland County. She only stayed a year because she missed the Jewish community in the West Bronx. Shirley lived in an Irish neighborhood in the Northwest Bronx on Moshulu Parkway. She moved to Co-op City because even though her Irish neighbors were nice, she didn't feel like she could relate to them. The space wasn't comfortable to her. After years of living on the North

[15] Bea Altman's was located in what is now the Graduate Center!

Shore of Long Island Scott divorced his wife and moved to Riverdale reasoning, “This is the center of everything!”

It is my view that the dislocation of my participants from the West Bronx actually strengthened my participants’ desire to live in Jewish neighborhoods. This process discouraged them from moving to the same neighborhoods as non-Jewish whites when possible. The lifestyle and commute my participants sought out was located in Riverdale and Co-op City, not in the suburbs. These places served their needs in a way that the suburbs could not.

My findings unsettle the literature on Jewish suburbanization, which makes the decision to move to suburbs both logical and inevitable. In the Bronx, the construction of Cross Bronx Expressway is the linchpin for this argument of inevitability, as it simultaneously destroys the viability of urban neighborhoods, while providing a way for displaced white groups to migrate to the suburbs in Long Island and New Jersey. The literature not only argues that Jews were forced to move, but also, that they desired to live in the suburbs. Moving to the suburbs was an easy decision because of the benefits of home ownership and the socio-spatial privileges of living in a segregated space. Thus, the material advantages of living among whites in detached homes outweighed any desire to be live among Jews in urban neighborhoods. Urban Jews are placed in the grid of rational choice theory. Why wouldn’t they want to reap the socio-spatial benefits of suburban white privilege?

My analysis shows that a narrow focus on suburbanization produces a narrow reading of Jewish migration out of areas like the West Bronx. Foregoing analysis of specific places, studies about whiteness and white identity tend to create binary spatial

arrangements like black city and white suburb (Goldberg 1993). Although I cannot speak specifically to the white identities of those Jews who moved to the suburbs, my data demonstrates that leaving the West Bronx wasn't easy decision. Further, my research shows how my participants made a strong effort, both in Riverdale and Co-op City, to reproduce urban ways of Jewish living. Further research needs to be conducted about Jews who moved to the suburbs from the West Bronx. How did they try to reproduce urban Jewish life in the suburbs?

To continue urban Jewish living, my participants had two options, Co-op City and Riverdale. In the next section, I will explain why they chose one location over the other.

Choosing Between Co-op City and Riverdale

If my participants didn't want to move to the suburbs, where did they go? Although they all eventually moved to Riverdale, some went to Co-op City first.[16] Moreover, those participants that moved to Riverdale migrated to different places within it. Most of them moved to the area that surrounds the Henry Hudson Parkway. As of 2002, it had the highest concentration of Jews in Riverdale (Ukeles and Miller 2002). There were also some participants that scattered around the community district of Riverdale in Mitchell Lama projects.

An analysis of participant responses showed that their choice of migration destinations within the North Bronx can be understood along the axes of class, social networks, and urgency.

[16] They all moved to Riverdale with the exception of Shirley who still lives in Co-op city.

While the Jewish West Bronx was often thought of as a middle class neighborhood, there were class divisions between the people that lived there. Many of these distinctions were built into space. Class status was often indicated by how far one lived from the Grand Concourse. Even the synagogue one attended said something about their class (Moore 1981, Rosenblum 2009).

The wealthiest participants like Simon and Bernice moved to Riverdale in 1956-1965, before the other movers. Irene, Fred, and their respective partners moved to the Whitehall, a prestigious building located parallel to the Henry Hudson Parkway. Fred was quick to tell me that it had a private swimming pool, an amenity unheard of in the West Bronx. Stan, Sylvia, Ann, Edna, and Dorothy also moved to this neighborhood.

At first, many of these buildings were not cooperatives. For the most part, participants were still renting when they initially moved. The difference in rent between the West Bronx and Riverdale was often quite large. According to Census data, rents increased anywhere from between 50 and 300 percent. To pay for rent, some of the women I interviewed were forced to take part time jobs and ask for financial help from their parents. Movers were ambivalent about the rise in rent. On one hand, they felt like they were being ripped off. On the other hand, they knew that they had little choice if they wanted to continue urban Jewish living. For my participants, moving to Riverdale was accompanied by ambivalent feelings. They were unhappy that they had to leave the West Bronx, but all things considered, Riverdale, which previously had only been reserved for the wealthiest Jews, was a pretty good option. More by necessity than want, the meaning of Riverdale was reconfigured or changed from a mostly non-Jewish wealthy enclave to a Jewish middle class place. Riverdale, albeit different from the West

Bronx, could be transformed in a Jewish space where my participants could maintain Jewish institutions and culture while being separated from the "deterioration," that plagued the West Bronx. There was also a feeling among my participants that the prestige of Riverdale, which hinged on the exclusion of racialized others, would be protected by the same state that had failed them in the West Bronx. Riverdale, unlike the West Bronx, would not be a place where people of color would not be allowed to move.

While Gale, her husband, Maxine, Stacy, Linda, and Abe lived within the administrative boundaries of Riverdale, they did not live on or very close to the Henry Hudson Parkway. Abe, Linda, and Dorothy secured housing in the Mitchell Lama project Scott Towers, which is located across the street from the prestigious New York City high school, Bronx Science. While the neighborhood surrounding Scott Towers is not as white, Jewish, or wealthy as the area close to the Henry Hudson Parkway, its Jewish residents came from the same parts of the West Bronx and moved for similar reasons. [17]

My participants' migration patterns within the Bronx were also influenced by the class status of social networks. Irene initially moved with a group of friends to Kappock Street in Riverdale instead of Co-op City. Similarly, Gale's brother provided her with an apartment in a labor union sponsored co-op near Van Cordtlandt Park. Abe and Linda paid far below market value for a three bedroom apartment they secured through Abe's colleague. Utilities were included and they had a sheltered parking spot.

Class and social networks also played an important role in the decision to move to Co-op City. Participants who initially moved to Riverdale complained that Co-op City

[17] According to Stacy, Scott Towers was, "100 percent Jewish," when my participants first moved there.

was too large. Their opinions of Co-op City mirrored many of the critiques that Ada Louise Huxtable made about this publically built project (Huxtable 1968). Jews who moved directly to Riverdale were not attracted to Co-op City's location, scale, and architecture. Co-op City stood in sharp contrast to the grandeur of the Grand Concourse. The aesthetics and prestige of the boulevard lined with art deco buildings was very different compared to what was perceived by many to be glorified public housing. Co-op was a step down from where they had lived. As one of my participants put it, Co-op City was nothing more than a "luxury project."

Movers to Riverdale also thought Co-op city was too far out of the way. My participants' were used to living in the West Bronx. Going to Co-op City meant moving to the East Bronx. My participants felt like moving to Co-op City was a long distance even though it was relatively small in Euclidian distance. Movers to Riverdale were also concerned about the amount of control they would have over who their neighbors were. Bernice, who was a real estate agent at the time, complained about the screening process. She told me that they were willing to fill up Co-op City with, "just about anyone."

To other migrants however, Co-op City had a utopian flavor to it. It was a chance to start over. On one hand, the cordoning off of Co-op City on a swamp in the Long Island Sound bounded by the Ann Hutchinson Parkway appeared to be yet another example of unfavorable siting for public housing (Goldberg 1993). On the other, the spatial insularity of Co-op City was welcomed as neighborhood change was perceived to be an outcome of invading people of color. This was especially the case in the 1970 's, when my participants watched the Bronx burn from their television sets. Co-op City provided protection in its peripheral location.

Even though control over one's neighbors remained and issue, Co-op City was built for a mostly white middle class. Entrance into Co-op City required both a down payment and a monthly carrying charge. Although Co-op City was not exclusively Jewish when it opened, several participants told me that it had at least four primarily Jewish sections. For some, Co-op City was seen as a chance to continue urban Jewish living without having to worry about landlords. My participants were attracted to Co-op City because of low carrying costs, convenient laundry, elevators, closet space, and proximity to friends and family.

For Jews who moved to Co-op City, urgency was also important. If they had time to plan and prepare they were more likely to move to Riverdale. Elaine's rushed move out of the West Bronx was common. She moved to Co-op City because she felt panicked about her child's safety at school. Co-op City was easy and available. She felt like she had no choice.

Partly because of what was perceived by my participants as a "change in race," in the 1980's and 1990's, migrants who initially went to Co-op City tended to regret moving there.[18] In my participants' narratives, the seemingly rational and coordinated efforts of moving to Riverdale were contrasted to the chaotic tales of fleeing to Co-op City. Moving directly to Riverdale allowed participants to argue they had moved to a nice place, while their Co-op City bound counterparts often had trouble making sense of their residential histories. Unlike participants that initially moved to Riverdale from the West

[18] Although movers to Co-op City were not included in my interview sample, I did have the pleasure of talking to several seniors who had lived in Co-op City and then moved to Riverdale, or in one case, still lived in Co-op City. Participants of the study who moved to Riverdale also told me stories about friends who moved to Co-op City.

Bronx, it wasn't clear to former Co-op City residents that they had moved up in the world. Moreover, movers to Co-op City felt responsible for "killing," the Bronx, while migrants to Riverdale were absolved of this sin.

A review of historical Census data reflects insights gained through an analysis of my participants' residential histories in this time period. Overwhelmingly, my participants left neighborhoods that were becoming black/brown for majority white Census tracts.

1966-1975: Secondary Data Analysis

With the exception of Co-op City, which was 86 percent white in 1966-1975, all of the Census tracts my participants migrated to were over 90 percent white. The neighborhood that Abe and Linda moved away from in the West Bronx was 56 percent African American and 16 percent Hispanic in 1966-1975. Gale and her husband moved from an area that was 16 percent white in the West Bronx to an area in Riverdale that was 96 percent white. The Census tracts that Elaine, Abe, Linda, and Sylvia moved to and from followed similar patterns, as they migrated from areas where the Census designated category of white had significantly decreased since 1956-1965.

In terms of categories that measured white ethnicity, the number of Central and Eastern Europeans generally increased in places where my participants moved. Excluding Rosen, the percentage of persons with Irish ancestry dropped anywhere from 3 to 25 percent in tracts of destination. Except in the case of Edna, the percentage of Italians per tract stayed insignificant. None of the tracts that Jews moved into had more than 10 percent Italian ancestry. Similar to previous migrations made in 1946-1955 and 1956-

1965, my participants tended to move to neighborhoods that were more homogenous in terms of European ancestry.

In 1966-1975, the difference between the socio economic status of Census tracts of origin and destination were large. The rent in all of the tracts my participants moved to increased significantly. Rents in Riverdale were often two and half times what participants were paying in the West Bronx.

The amount of persons with at least a high school degree and some college rose significantly between tracts. Persons with a high school degree generally increased from around 38-50 percent to 75-85 percent. Similarly, the amount of persons with some college rose from 3-8 percent to between 30-40 percent. These gains in educational attainment level were uniform except in the case of Edna. Unlike the other participants, she actually moved to the Grand Concourse during this time period. She was probably about 10-15 years younger than most of the participants. Her movement was tethered to her father's failing health.

The percentage of people with family incomes over 10,000 dollars per tract doubled for most of my participants. West Bronx Census tracts averaged around 30 percent for this measure, while Riverdale tracts averaged 70 percent. As my participants moved to Riverdale, the percentage of people who had no air conditioning also dropped significantly.

1966-1975: Conclusion

For my participants, 1966-1975 was a tumultuous period. They dealt with the trauma of moving to new places out of necessity. They moved because they wanted to live in a Jewish neighborhood, feel safe, and continue an urban Jewish way of living.

This was no longer possible in the West Bronx. The declining quality of schools and being close to nature also figured into their decisions. My participants didn't move to the suburbs for reasons having to do with their stage in the life cycle and preferred lifestyle. Women felt like they would be isolated and men were not interested in prolonging their commutes. Neither men nor women wanted to put in the energy required to maintaining a home. Perhaps most importantly, my participants wanted to stay in an urban Jewish neighborhood. They were attached to this way of living.

Instead of moving to suburban places in Rockland or Westchester Counties my participants moved to Co-op City and Riverdale. In Riverdale, participants either moved within close vicinity to the Henry Hudson Parkway or they secured housing in Mitchell Lama projects spread around the same general area. Class, social networks, and a sense of urgency determined where my participants moved in the North Bronx.

In terms of Census data, changes between Census tracts of origin and destination were enormous. Participants moved to places that were whiter, had higher percentages of Central and Eastern European Ancestry, and measured significantly higher on Census categories related to socio economic status.

My participants' choice of destruction was fueled by the desire to hold onto urban Jewish living. Migration was a way to reclaim a respectable middle class Jewish identity. Further, my participants' sense of being was threatened by the influx of people of color. They migrated to maintain, hold onto, or reproduce white privilege. In the next chapter, I will elaborate on how this process impacted Jewish racial identity.

From 1975 to Present

For most of my participants 1966-1975 was the last time they migrated. In total there were six migrants in 1976-1985, one in 1986-1995, and two in 1996-2005. In the last 35 years, the remainder of Jews who still lived in the West Bronx after 1966-1975, migrated north. Deciding when one would migrate was dependent on several factors. First, geographic variation was important. The whole West Bronx didn't change the same way, or all at once. Second, if one's children were still in school, migration was a more likely response to integration and busing.

Overwhelmingly, in 1976-1985, my participants moved out of the West Bronx for the same reasons they did in 1966-1975. In 1976-1985, "neighborhood change," and the desire to live in a Jewish place figured greatly into the migrations of Ruth, Edna, Stan, and Sylvia. Edna was robbed and feared for her safety. She told me that she refused to live among black people. She would only feel comfortable in a white neighborhood. Ruth complained about noise and dirty streets. Stan and Sylvia's children insisted that they move to a "nicer," location. In terms of Census data, there were many similarities between 1966-1975 and 1976-1985. The white population in tracts of destination increased significantly, while the percentage of the population with Irish ancestry decreased, and the number of Italians stayed fairly low. Rent, income, and education all increased two fold as participants moved north.

In 1986-1995, Ann moved from Co-op City to Riverdale, citing rumors of drug use in the parking garages. She moved to a building near Henry-Hudson Parkway in Riverdale because she wanted to have a nice place to walk her dog. She also desired to be close to her friends and live in a Jewish community. From 1976 to 1995, Co-op City also

became less white. The Census tract it was located in also had a relatively lower socio economic status than it did in its initial years.

In 1996-2005, Elaine and Prudence moved. Elaine migrated primarily because she felt like her apartment in Co-op City was too large. Unlike Ann, Elaine had no specific problems with Co-op City. She moved citing a desire to live closer to friends in a smaller apartment. Her children also complained that they were tired of traversing the entire cross Bronx to see her. Prudence who lived in Riverdale at the time, moved out of a larger apartment she had shared with her terminally ill son. In regards to the Census data analysis of this time period, indicators of race, ethnicity, and socio economic status were consistent with 1966-1975, 1976-1985, and 1986-1995.

Migrants in 1976-1985 moved for many of the same reasons they did in 1966-1975. "Neighborhood change" and living in a Jewish neighborhood factored heavily into their migration patterns. Changes in race, ethnicity, and socio economic categories also paralleled 1966-1975. The areas they moved to were whiter, had a higher Central and Eastern European ancestry percentage, and were much higher in terms of socio economic status. In, 1986-1995, Ann moved from Co-op City to Riverdale for many of the same reasons. The migration of Elaine and Prudence in 1996-2005 had to do with factors related with family, friends, and life cycle.

For the most part, these migrations were precipitated by the breakdown of urban Jewish life in the West Bronx, and then later, in Co-op City. Migration was used as a tool to reclaim an urban Jewish way of living.

By 1986-1995 my participants' age prevented them from moving frequently. Besides, they were happy to be living in Riverdale, where urban Jewish life continued, albeit in a different place.

Longitudinal Analysis: Distance?

In this section, I conceptualize my participants' migration histories in total.

A comparative analysis of my participants' residential histories revealed that they never migrated far from the West Bronx. The Bronx is only twelve miles north to south, and four miles east to west. The center of the Jewish West Bronx on 169th street and the Ground Concourse is only eight to ten miles from the Henry Hudson Parkway area in Riverdale. The paths taken by participants from the West Bronx to Riverdale and Co-op City seem minute compared to the borders travailed and distances traveled by their grandparents across the Atlantic ocean to unfamiliar territory in New York. My participants also thought the suburbs were far away as well, even though, the Cross Bronx gave then an easy way to leave the Bronx.

Despite the relatively small distance they traveled, my participants didn't think the West Bronx was very close to where they lived. Although the old neighborhood was accessible through several forms of transportation, return visits were infrequent. In the rare occasion they made these trips, they were filled with fear, anxiety, and regret. My participants' claims that nothing of value or worth existed in the old neighborhood demonstrated the social distance that existed between Riverdale and the West Bronx. The way Bernice put it, "It is unrecognizable to me." Anyone they would have known in that area moved away 35 years ago. They seemed to get most of their information about the West Bronx from the newspaper or the television news. In this regard, the West Bronx or

South Bronx could have been located, in my participants' words, "halfway across the world."

For my participants, the suburbs were also a very far distance away. Just as they could no longer recognize their old neighborhoods, they could not fathom living in the suburbs. They did not want to live in white neighborhoods where gentiles and non-gentiles surrendered public distinctions. They sought to maintain an urban Jewish way of living. In a multi-ethnic white community, this didn't seem possible. My participants wanted to be both Jewish and white, not just white.

Tension: Upward Social Mobility and Place Dis-attachment

The reasons why people moved, and where they moved to, revealed important insights into who people thought they were. For my participants, being Jewish was lived through close location to friends, access to public transportation, proximity to cultural and social events, and the familiarity/convenience of living in urban areas. I believe that my participants' main impetus for migration was the recuperation of this space, or an attempt to continue its reproduction.

This narrative of recuperation through migration was in tension with stories of upward social mobility that often characterize Jewish urban out migration to the suburbs. This tension played out in the way my participants' reflected on their lives. Despite being satisfied with the way she had lived her life, and the migration decisions she had made, Shirley said the following when questioned about visiting the West Bronx,

> "It's changed tremendously. When I go back to my old neighborhoods I feel cheated. I do. I feel like somebody took something away from me. Because I came back and looked. It's gone. It's different. It has changed and I feel like it

was by accident. All of this was political I really do. I don't think people paid enough attention to it while it was happening."

Just as Shirley felt uneasy about this process, Ann marveled at how she had been able to move to a nicer environment over time. Ann said:

"I laugh. I tell my dog we live here in Riverdale. It's all trees and beautiful things. Where I lived on Grant Ave there wasn't one tree. It was all cement. Ya know, there was few uhh… almost all walk ups except on that corner. When I was about five or six they built a couple of nice elevated buildings, but it was all walk ups."

Sometimes participants would reveal the tension between upward social mobility and moving to maintain urban Jewish living in the same breath. Reflecting on her life, Prudence said:

"Well I didn't actually move with the desire of moving, I moved out of need." She went onto say, "My parents only moved because they needed a larger apartment. They found one and they moved. I used to hear stories about families that had to move every year because they had to pay the rent. You know different things. We only moved because we had an opportunity to have a better location."

Prudence's relationship to social mobility was complicated. On one hand, she moved because she had to. The place she was living in was fine. Her family was not upward striving, they had no choice but to move. On the other hand, she sought to differentiate herself from those families that moved because they couldn't pay rent. Upon reevaluation, Prudence decided that moving to a better location was necessary. Just as

poor families who couldn't pay rent moved because they had no choice, her family migrated because they wanted to live in a better location.

Although Lori didn't want to leave the West Bronx, she retrospectively reasoned that it was a good decision. She said,

> "The shopping in that area (the West Bronx) was excellent. Anything you liked was in walking distance. The trains and buses were in walking distance. The only thing that was bad was the parking. That was bad. (Laughing) That was my husband's problem every night. Um, but when it was time for us to move, I was really very sad about it because my friends were there and it was such a nice comfortable way to live."

At the end of the interview she said, "Well ya know, I think it takes adjustments. I think we were fortunate that we were able to adjust to moving to different places and everything, but I think in the long run we managed to choose the right thing."

My participants understood the past in terms of triumph, overcoming the odds, and following the right path in order to mitigate hurt feelings connected to place dis-attachment and out-migration. This sentiment was best expressed by Gale. She had the uncanny ability to use the language of upwardly social mobility to describe her life experience. She nonchalantly told me, "Um Neighborhoods… that's what happens. We are an upward mobile people. Anyhow, we move up up up."

Similarly Ann, who eventually left Co-op City because of what she referred to as neighborhood change, reflected on her initial move there.

> "Well let me say this. I think that our circumstances improved and like everyone else when your circumstances change and you can afford something better you

want it. You know? It wasn't such a big deal but for me, but it was, ya know? So um, like I said when we moved to Co-op, it was brand new. It was a place where I thought I would stay forever, so that is why I moved."

I responded to her, "So moving up in the world." She continued,

"Moving up. That's exactly right. When I did it, I didn't realize… I didn't realize we would collapse the whole Bronx. I didn't think that so many people would move to Co-op or that we killed the Grand Concourse. It was so lovely when I was growing up. There was a building when I was a kid on Grant Ave. It was called the Roosevelt apartments. It's still there 174th street and the Concourse. I think it's gated now. They used to have these beautiful fountains at night. The fountains would have different colors and that was a place for us to walk to."

Part of Ann regretted moving to Co-op City. By situating herself in the process of "Collapsing the Bronx," she was acknowledging the pain of rapid out-migration and place dis-attachment (I discuss the "collapsing," or "killing," of the Bronx in detail in chapter 5). She also saw upward mobility as logical and inevitable. Her memories of Roosevelt Gardens became more palatable, or easier to discuss through a narrative of right choices and triumphant migration.

Conclusion

My participants primarily migrated in 1946-1955 and 1966-1975. In 1946-1955 migration patterns were determined by housing scarcity, location to family, marriage, and alleviating the burden of child care. In 1946-1955, my participants overwhelmingly moved to and within the West Bronx and Fordham. They stayed in neighborhoods that

were almost exclusively white and had high percentages of Central and Eastern European ancestry. In terms of class or socioeconomic status there was little change between migrants' point of origin and destination.

In 1966-1975 my participants primarily moved because of urban disinvestment and the in-migration of black and brown people. They wanted to live in an urban Jewish neighborhood. The migration patterns my participants exhibited in 1966-1975 were determined by the quality of schools, safety issues, building disinvestment, location to nature, and the availability of newer/cheaper housing. Contrary to what the literature about white flight and suburbanization says, my participants didn't want to move to the suburbs. Instead, they out-migrated to Co-op City and Riverdale. Choosing between Riverdale and Co-op City, was impacted by class, social networks, and a sense of urgency. 1966-1975 differed greatly from other periods in regards to historical Census data measures of race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status. These measures were significantly different between points of origin and destination. The move from the West Bronx to Riverdale and Co-op City was characterized by increases in the categories of white and Central and Eastern European ancestry. There was also a significant increase in socio economic categories such as rent, educational attainment level, and income.

Migration to Co-op City and Riverdale represented an attempt to continue urban Jewish ways of living that were no longer possible in the West Bronx and Fordham. In residential histories, this notion of place dis-attachment was in tension with tropes of upward social mobility. I believe that notions of "moving up the world," ultimately provided a palliative to the poison of the displacement process.

Chapter V: Articulating White Identity in Space: The West Bronx, Neighborhood Change and Riverdale

On my first visit to the senior center, the director gave me a tour. As we walked down the stairs to meet the administration, he detailed a demographic profile of the senior center. He informed me that with the exception of the West Indian aids that assisted some of the seniors, and some of the staff, everyone at the center was both white and Jewish.

The IRB information sheets I gave to my participants contained a short description of my study. One of the preliminary research goals was to evaluate the whiteness of Jews at the senior center. Upon reading this sheet, Simon muttered, "This is ridiculous. I am white."

Gabe told me a story about the 1977 blackouts. Stranded without trains in service, Gabe accepted a ride from his secretary's African American boyfriend. After they dropped him off in Harlem, he needed to take a bus to the Bronx. The bus he needed took two hours to arrive. He was scared because he had never been to Harlem. He had never been the only white person in such a large crowd. Reflecting on arriving home safely he said, "I was surprised nothing happened to me."

According to Stacy, in the neighborhood she grew up in, the only black person was the superintendent. Elaine told me that in her school you could count the number of African Americans on your hand. Similarly, Bernice could recall only one or two black girls in her high school. One "colored gentlemen," lived in Gale's building. Edna described her old neighborhood as safe and wonderful. She was quick to add that it also, "had no blacks in it."

These vignettes reveal how my participants understood their white identities. Their claims on whiteness were not ambiguous. As Jews, they felt white, especially in relation to people of color, whom more often than not, they named as black.

In this chapter, I primarily focus on the ways my participants used space to articulate their white identities. Through an analysis of participant observation and residential histories, I analyze how the process of being displaced from the West Bronx affected my participants' white identities. My analysis centers on themes of race and place as they relate to binaries of order/chaos and cleanliness/contamination.

In this chapter, there are three parts to the analysis. First, as a framing mechanism, I examine my participants' liberal understandings of the world. Showing the way in which my participants were liberal is important to understanding how the migration process affected their racial identities. Their commitments to liberalism helped determine how, and in what ways, they articulated their white identities.

After providing a theoretical lens for understanding how places are racialized, I examine how my participants located their white identities in a changing West Bronx. They used the concept of neighborhood change to understand how they were displaced, and why they were forced to move to Riverdale. Here, I demonstrate how my participants' white identities cohered around themes of race, space, and urban deterioration. In their narratives of neighborhood change, people of color were portrayed as external contaminants that disrupted the harmonious flow of a primarily Jewish West Bronx.

Next, I examine how my participants' white identities were articulated through the racialization of Riverdale. Their identities were rooted in racialized distinctions made

between Riverdale and the rest of the Bronx. Riverdale's identity as a secure, homogenous, and white place was predicated upon the exclusion of people of color. My participants reasoned that racial exclusion was a way of protecting Riverdale from the forces that negatively transformed the West Bronx.

In the conclusion, I come back to my primary research question and examine how this analysis helps us understand how the racial identity of Jews was changed by the migration process. I argue that Jews' whiteness was not created, but instead, reconfigured when they moved to Riverdale. I outline the specific articulation of white identity produced through Jewish migration from the West Bronx to Riverdale.

A Liberal Framing of Race

In chapter 3, I demonstrated that being liberal was an integral part of my participants' identities. In this section, I use ethnographic data to show how my participants' understanding of what it meant to be liberal affected their white identities. Liberal has many meanings. In an international context, it is an economic philosophy centered on free market principles. In the United States, liberal is also a political identity used to characterize left leaning democrats. In this chapter, I use liberal in two ways. First, I deploy liberal to understand my participants' political leanings. Their opinions and beliefs were informed by powerful notions of liberal equality. Second, I use liberal to describe the way my participants individualized race. For my participants, racist outcomes such as segregation and uneven distribution of wealth were born out of ignorance and individual prejudice.

My participants' generally believed that the world was composed of equal individuals with similar wants, desires, and rationales for acting. Each of these

individuals was entitled to a bundle of rights which included, but was not limited to the right to practice religion without persecution, the right to be judged on the basis of merit in the public sphere, and the right to an adequate education. They believed that these rights were more or less distributed equally over the social world.

My participants revealed liberal ways of understanding the world through discussions around education, democracy, assimilation, and wealth redistribution. Lillian, a former New York City teacher complained that, "The problem is unequal standards. If everyone had the same standards, then these kids would go onto college." A talk about the upcoming mayoral election prompted Thomas to say, "That is why our system is great, everyone has a choice to pick their candidate. If Bloomberg gets re-elected, it is because of the idiots that voted him in. They made the choice." In one of my first conversations at the senior center, Greta marveled at the success of immigrants in the United States. She said, "Every immigrant comes to the United States and brings something different. Here, they are able to contribute to society and be rewarded for their hard work. That is the story of my family."

My participants talked unfavorably of anything that gave individuals special kinds of advantages, both in the cases of privileges given to the very wealthy and government programs like section 8, public assistance, and affirmative action. Jack complained about how greedy bankers were unethical. He exclaimed, "I can't believe the government gave all of that money to Wall Street! Why should they get bailed out when your average American can't?" Stressing the importance of equality, he warned me, "You gotta watch out for these people on welfare. They are cheats. They don't have to work as hard as you and I."

My participants' belief that all humans were equal and entitled to certain rights was strong, but not universal. They made it clear that there were circumstances in which these rights could be withheld or disrespected. My participants reasoned that they had forged an implicit agreement or social contract with other individuals in respect to these rights. If this agreement was broken by any individuals or groups because of improper culture or learned behavior[19], their ability to claim these rights could be constrained (Brodkin 1999, Pollack 2004, Friedman 2005, Lipsitz 2006, Friedman 2005, Harvey 2007).[20]

Irene's evaluation of other "nationalities," moving into her neighborhood, and the presence of a small cohort of Chinese members at the senior center best demonstrated the type of liberal world view described above. She said,

> "Yeah, well you can't stop people from moving. I don't mind if they move in either. They have a life too. As long as they don't interfere with my life I'm very happy. Don't tell me how to live. In my home it's the way I like it. If those Chinese people told me to take off my shoes in their home, I would, but don't come to my house and tell me to take my shoes off. I'll honor yours if you honor mine."

For Irene, people were entitled to live how they wanted. However, once they challenged her way of living, they were no longer welcome. She had no fundamental problem with someone being Chinese. Her willingness to accept a group was tied to their

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[19] Never their biological essence!

[20] In this chapter I use culture and learned behavior interchangeably. My participants saw aberrant or problematic behavior such as poor education as a symptom of inferior culture. They were two related parts of the same differentiation process.

behavior. If the Chinese visitors did not practice what she perceived to be primary traits of Chinese culture such as taking off shoes in a space she claimed as her own like the senior center, they were okay. In other words, they had a right to be in that space, but they did not have the right to help make it. This seemingly abstract argument about behavior and tolerance prefigured my participants' explanations of Jewish displacement from the West Bronx. Anyone was welcome to live in the West Bronx, as long as they didn't struggle to make their own space. My participants would not have minded the new comers if they had accepted Jewish stewardship and followed the cultural/behavioral patterns that were already in place. In the case of the West Bronx, the production of a Jewish middle class space involved the selective inclusion and exclusion of people of color. If black folks moved into the neighborhood and started creating the West Bronx in a different way than my participants did, it would no longer be the same middle class Jewish space.

These claims of equality among groups/individuals lost traction when my participants talked about the West Bronx. According to many of them, Jewish ways of living or being in space were the best. Abe said, "Being Jewish is like being so much superior, superior than anything else there is. There is more morality and more ethics. Other people, they are not as ethical. Religious or not, they are not as ethical or moral."

In terms of race, seeing the social world through a lens of individual rights made issues of structural racism invisible or unimportant. Although racism existed, it was only articulated as the actions of misguided or ignorant individuals. Stan told me, "There will always be bigots, but we try to ignore them."

My participants' recollections of racism or anti-Semitism were far and few between. Even after I directly asked my participants about anti-Semitism, they often struggled to describe how it impacted their lives. Often, a silence indicated their inability to relate to what I was talking about.

More frequently, they discussed how the efforts of the Nation of Islam or Islamic fundamentalists could threaten Jewish life at the national and international scales. In this case, anti-Semitism was not an important process at the scale of the neighborhood. Even when they talked about neighborhood change, anti-Semitism was never an issue. In all cases, my participants insisted that racism was never the institutionalized norm. Rather, they believed that anti-Semitism and racism were caused by the prejudice of ignorant individuals.

My participants' understanding of racism was related to the way they collapsed race into culture and learned behavior. They believed that the deterioration of the Bronx was caused by individual behaviors associated with a flawed black culture.

Value judgments about culture were always rooted in learned behavior, never biological essence. This commitment to nurture over nature dovetailed nicely with tales of black individuals who had good manners, cultural values, or respect/pride for the space they inhabited. By respect, my participants meant that they acted in a way deemed "normal," in Jewish space. These "good," blacks were contrasted to black culture as a whole. Persons with dark skin who took on problematic culture, behavior, or values were couched in absolute difference. It was these blacks that were responsible for Jewish displacement and the deterioration of the Bronx. Ultimately, my participants' white

identities stood out in stark relief to spaces produced by deficient black culture, which included the West Bronx after neighborhood change.

Consistent with their preference to articulate race through culture, my participants' narratives were rife with disclaimers about their capacity to think in racial terms. They continually expressed their liberal understanding of equality to me. My participants wanted me to know that all races were basically equal and that all people should be judged, in the words of one of my participants borrowing from Martin Luther King Jr., "On the basis of their character not the color of their skin." Leaving ample room to discuss the importance of culture and individual influences such as parenting, pride, and responsibility, they disavowed their ability to treat people differently on the basis of race.

Gale and Ann told me that they had black friends. Dorothy and Elaine prefaced their statements about neighborhood change by respectively saying, "I'm not a bigot," and "I love people. I am a people person." Edna even went to the point of telling me that she couldn't have a problem with black people because some of them had begged her to stay in the West Bronx when the neighborhood "started to change."

My participants found it difficult to link undesirable behavior to race while simultaneously maintaining liberal commitments to equal rights. The tension created through this process was evident in my participants' reluctance to use direct racial assignments such as black or brown. Instead, they used terms like "nationalities," "cultures," and "mixtures." Bernice blamed the influx of low income people for the destruction of Co-op City. Both Dorothy and Fred told me that a rougher element moved into the neighborhoods they lived in. Irene preferred the term "nationalities," when

talking about race. Prudence insisted that inferior breeding caused the downfall of society.

Although my participants avoided racial signifiers and insisted that they couldn't be racist, sometimes they slipped up. They discussed race in a different way when they talked about their children and grandchildren. In these cases, their anxieties about the breakdown of urban Jewish community were expressed through race. Belinda was incensed when her son moved across the country to marry a Vietnamese woman. They have since divorced, but her son did not move back to New York. She said, "whoever heard of moving so far away. It's not good to be so far away from your family." Belinda described her ex-daughter-in-law as a "poor mother," and a "gold digger," at one point saying that, if it weren't for her son, "she would be still be begging on the side of the road in Vietnam."

Bernice was also puzzled by the proclivities of her offspring. After lambasting young people who participated in online dating exclaiming, "Who knows – it could be an axe murder," Bernice also expressed her displeasure with the racial mix of Bronx Science, the school her grandson was attending. She said with a frown on her face, "Everyone is friends with everyone there. Everyone is mixing. Is inter-marriage a good thing, I don't know."

In conclusion, my participants saw the world through a liberal framework of individual rights. They felt that all persons were equal and entitled to a bundle of rights which included the right to an education and the right to freely practice religion. This conception of equal rights was not universal though. It was only valid under a particular

set of conditions. Inequality in the social world was legitimate if one's behavior or values were deemed improper.

Through this framework, my participants were able to blame neighborhood change on black and brown people without appearing to be racist. For my participants, negative valuations of black folks were always about the culture and behavior of individuals, never biological essence. Ostensibly, if the newcomers had accepted Jewish stewardship and respected Jewish ways of life, they would have been accepted with open arms.[21]

On one hand, my participants' faith in individual rights lessened the importance they assigned to race. On the other, they often structured the social world through a lens of racialized culture and learned behavior. For every story about inferior black culture, there was a complimentary tale about a person of color who was well mannered and respectful.

Disavowing the importance of race while understanding the world through a racial lens created tension in my participants' narratives. They dealt with this tension by using several strategies, which included collapsing race into culture, denying their ability to be racist, and avoiding the use of direct racial assignments.

By fixing black bodies and culture into valued categories, liberal world views provided a strong foundation for white identity. In the next section, I will explain how my participants expressed these white identities through the concept of neighborhood change.

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[21] All this being said, I am not calling my participants racists. They insisted that they were not racists. I respect their wishes. In addition, I don't think it is productive to call individuals or groups racist. This term often obscures how racial categories are produced and internalized, especially in the case of the population I am interested in. That being said, as a social scientist and ethnographer, I believe it is my duty to uncover the racialized tensions that exist in the liberal way of seeing the world I have described.

Articulating White Identity in the West Bronx and Neighborhood Change

In this section I analyze how my participants' used the concept of neighborhood change to articulate their white identities. In what follows, I demonstrate that my participants differentiated themselves from people of color through neighborhood change, a concept which effectively encapsulated interrelationships between race, space, and the physical deterioration of the urban environment. To frame this discussion, I will briefly describe how the literature on the racialization of place informs my analysis.

In the introduction, I used the socio-spatial dialectic to explain the relationship between space and social process. In this framework, social relationships like race affect the production of space. Like space, place is also a racialized process. Moreover, racial hierarchies, another concept I described in the introduction, give meaning to places. Speaking to the relationship between the racialization process and changes, Kay Anderson explains, "Racial ideology has been materially embedded in space and it is through "place" that it has been given a local referent, become a social fact, and aided its own reproduction" (Anderson 1987 p.384). Kay Anderson's seminal article about the racialization of Chinatown in Vancouver, informs my understanding of place and race in this chapter. She reveals how metaphors of the body and disease are used to racialize urban places.

In Anderson's framework, the city is conceptualized as a living organism. To function properly, the organism's body must be kept clean or sanitary. Thus, normal or healthy denizens of the city have an anxiety or fear about foreign elements or diseases invading the city, which is often imagined as the body politic in this context. To prevent the body politic from becoming ill, racialized groups, who are often represented through

social pathologies such as poverty, prostitution, and drug use, must be quarantined, cleaned, or purged. More concretely, racialized groups, seen as a cancer on the body politics, are subject to segregation, surveillance by police, gentrification, and urban renewal. David Goldberg adds, "The racialized image of urban squalor is taken to pollute the picture we are supposed to have of the body politic by reflecting itself in terms of other social pathologies like crime, drug abuse, prostitution, and now AIDS" (Goldberg 1994 p. 197).

Quoting an early 20th century Canadian official Kay Anderson demonstrates how places are racialized within the body/disease framework. The official refers to Vancouver's Chinatown as, "an ulcer lodged like a piece of wood in the tissues of the human body, which unless treated must cause disease in the places around it and ultimately to the whole body" (Anderson 1987 p. 386).

Anthropologist Mary Douglas takes up themes of disease, purity, and place in her seminal work, *Purity and Danger*: *an Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. Speaking to the idea that dirt is matter out of place, she says, "It implies two conditions: a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order. Dirt then, is never a unique, isolated event. Where there is dirt there is system" (Douglas 1984 p. 35). Douglas understands purity, dirt, and disease as relative cultural constructions. Depending on the "system," spaces are subject to varying rules concerning purity and disease.

Setha Low explores intersections of dirt, disease, purity, and space in her 2003 work, *Behind the Gates* (2003). Channeling the spirit of the socio-spatial dialectic, Low employs Mary Klein's concept of psychological splitting to explain why her interviewees chose to live in gated communities. Gated residents' social anxieties created an "us vs.

them," dynamic. This social relationship ossified into the militarized geography of gated communities. Low succinctly lays out the connection between fear of others and the gated communities when she says, "The walls are marking visible the systems of exclusion that are already there. Now the walls are constructed in concrete" (Low 2003 p. 151).

Speaking to how notions of dirt and cleanliness impact the meaning of place in a gated community she observes, "Cleanliness and orderliness indicate the "type of people," who live in a place, and establish a norm of middle-class civility (Low 2003 p. 154)." In a more recent article, Low indirectly speaks to geographers like Kay Anderson, as she further develops her insights about "cleanliness and orderliness," to understand how gated communities are racialized. For Low, gated communities hold an important position in the geographies of whiteness (Low 2009).

The aforementioned understanding of race, the body politic, and disease frame how my participants deployed neighborhood change to articulate their white identities. It was common for my participants to discuss the West Bronx as blighted, destroyed, and even *dead*. My participants consistently used a language of "killing," or "collapsing," to describe what happened to the West Bronx.[22] If we think through how places are racialized, we can analyze what my participants meant when they talked about the Bronx dying or collapsing.

[22] I first heard the language of "collapsing," or" killing," in my youth. My aunt, mother, and grandmother were sure that the Bronx "collapsed," because the Jews moved from the Grand Concourse to Co-op City. During Passover 2012, my aunt reiterated this claim, telling me that she already knew what my dissertation was about!

The racialization of place is a dynamic process. The West Bronx, which my participants once understood as a healthy white place was transformed through neighborhood change. In the eyes of my participants, racialized neighborhood change evacuated the worth or value out of the middle class Jewish neighborhoods they called home. Without Jewish stewardship the West Bronx became uncivilized. When Jews left, time went backwards. As Elaine said, the West Bronx, "regressed," or "collapsed." In this case, the West Bronx was not only conceptualized as an infected part of the body politic, poisoned by the pathologies of people of color, but it died as well. These themes were present throughout my participants' residential histories.

In stories about neighborhood change people of color and their social pathologies were diseases that infected a healthy white West Bronx. Within this framework, my participants consistently asserted their white identities by racializing the built environment, ultimately tying whiteness to cleanliness and neighborhood health. In this respect, blackness, black space, and black culture became disorderly, chaotic, and (un)clean. Racial differentiation distanced my participants from deterioration and displacement. My participants used race to distance themselves from the "death," of the Bronx.

Ruth internalized several of these themes. She was generous with her explanation for what she called the "downfall of the Bronx." I asked her about how the Bronx had developed over her life time. She said,

> "Well… ya know, I mean, its peoples' attitudes. They say, that's not my street. I could throw things here. I mean I was at the bus stop a few weeks ago and a man

had a container of coffee. He was waiting for the bus. The trash can was close and he just threw it on the floor."

Continuing after a pause she sharply said, "It's also upbringing. If there is no trashcan you hold onto it. I don't know if it was poverty or where they came from, but that was their way. I just don't know. No pride! They have no pride!"

Ruth's narrative was a good example of how my participants used values and behaviors as a proxy to talk about race. She racialized (un)cleanliness in space through links to bad parenting, negative attitudes, and a lack of pride. Ruth effectively drew boundaries between herself, a representative of middle class Jews in the Bronx, and racialized behaviors, which in her estimation, led the Bronx to be, "a dirty place." She demonstrated her whiteness by "cleaning," her hands of the "dirty," place most of the Bronx had become.

Ruth further elaborated on the connection between race, (un)cleanliness, and space when she described why she moved out of her neighborhood in the early 1970's. After expressing that she had not moved because of anything in particular that had happened on her block, I asked her if she had heard stories from her neighbors. She replied, "The stories? No. It was what you saw. All the cars were parked on the sidewalks. They were cleaning them. They were oiling them. The streets were starting to get very dirty." The streets were unclean in two related ways. She not only saw a stained sidewalk with oil, but also, people of color, who by virtue of having a different culture and set of behaviors, ruptured her understanding of a clean white space. For Ruth, the sidewalks were contaminated by "them." The link between disorder and (un)cleanly space was clear. She was differentiating herself from an unsanitary racial other,

externalizing the forces that transformed the West Bronx during those years. In other words, the West Bronx, under the stewardship of white middle class Jews was, and perhaps would still be, nice, intact, and clean. Black folks with different values and behaviors that caused the West Bronx to be dirty or chaotic.

Bernice similarly made a link between race, space, and cleanliness. When I asked her about what had changed in the Bronx over her life time, she said with disdain, "It's very bad. The streets are filthy. The temple near where I used to live is now a church." She continued,

> "I remember when I moved to Grand Avenue. My parents still lived in my old neighborhood. I had a baby and it was late so I slept over and they were tossing bottles in the street and screaming. I thought what happened here? The whole place has changed. It was noisy and filthy."

For Bernice, neighborhood change was defined through chaos and disorderly behavior in space. She individualized and mapped noise and filth onto racial bodies. The space created by these behaviors arose in the absence of white, or in this case, Jewish leadership and control. Like many other participants, Bernice understood the West Bronx as harmonious or orderly before the arrival of black folks. Jewish-white values and behaviors were the negation of deterioration, chaos, and disorder. Black and brown bodies represented noise and filth.

Elaine also articulated neighborhood change through tropes of racialized contamination. At first she was hesitant to explicate this theory. She said, "The neighborhood changed because people are very stupid. I can't get into it. I am a very political person. I don't want to get into all of this. I just want to tell you what I know." I

insisted. After some reluctance she agreed to talk. Struggling hard to articulate what had happened to the West Bronx she said,

> "There was an influx of other cultures. I'm not going to call it bigotry entirely. When you overflow a country a city, a neighborhood, this is what happens. People are looking for apartments. It changes. It gets overcrowded and their values may be different. They may not take as good of care of the property and then people look to move and that is what eventually destroys a neighborhood."

She continued by summing up her thoughts about the neighborhood she lived in the West Bronx. Elaine said, "It's very sad, you wouldn't know but it was magnificent and now it's destroyed. You see we regress. We went back and it's destroyed now." I asked her what she meant by destroyed. She told me, "Abandonment, boarded up buildings, and no more stores." She continued, "It shouldn't have happened because it wasn't a slum. It wasn't old walkups, old railroad flats, or cold water flats."

Utilizing a Malthusian framework that linked population growth to the decreasing quality of life, Elaine connected classic signs of disinvestment such as retail closure and boarded up buildings with an invading force of racialized others. She argued that the white West Bronx she helped make was changed by racialized forces external to it. She took no responsibility for the Bronx's "destruction," nor did she address the role landlords, political economy, or the fiscal crisis played in this process. Elaine exclusively attributed deterioration and Jewish displacement from the West Bronx to the influx of people of color.

The physical condition of the neighborhood, understood through its lack of slum like qualities was dramatically changed by the "values," of people of color. She characterized these values by a "lack of care for property."[23]

Her Malthusian slant to neighborhood change made "other people," into resource consuming zombies. In effect, their behavior became part and parcel of neighborhood change and the displacement of Jews from the West Bronx. Elaine had no doubt that the racialized in migrants' pathological behavior caused the West Bronx "to regress," and transformed the environment from "magnificent to destroyed." Through her description of neighborhood change Elaine effectively marked herself as white, separating herself from the "destruction," of the West Bronx.

Stories linking the deterioration of the built environment and race were common. The way Dorothy described her migration out of the West Bronx demonstrated this connection. After asking her to elaborate on the reasons she moved from the West Bronx to Riverdale she said, "Um, it was the influx of a lot of mixtures." She went on, "And also the building was very run down. It wasn't taken care of. The heat was bad, and the whole building was falling apart." In her narrative of Jewish displacement from the West Bronx, and the physical deterioration of her home was tied to the appearance of racial others. She did not mention alternative explanations for her building falling into disrepair such as landlord disinvestment. In her narrative, the "mixtures," became undistinguishable from deterioration in the urban environment. She strengthened her

[23] This is an example of a classic trope in which racialized groups are chided for not using their land/property at maximum efficiency or the highest and best use. Such reasoning was used to justify the genocide of Indigenous people in North America and to legitimize urban renewal and gentrification projects that disproportionately affect people of color.

white identity by distinguishing herself from the destruction wrought by people of color in the West Bronx.

To summarize, my participants articulated their white identities through stories about how the West Bronx changed. They located neighborhood change in racialized spaces marked by (un)cleanliness, disorder, and physical destruction. My participants articulated their white identities by separating white middle class Jewish space from racialized deterioration. White identity was reaffirmed through the creation of a spatial order in which the West Bronx was contaminated by the behaviors, values, and culture of racialized bodies. In their version of Jewish displacement, the actions of black folks ultimately caused the out migration of Jews from the West Bronx.

Articulating White Identity in Riverdale

In this section I continue to show how my participants articulated their white identities through the racialized meanings they imbued in space. For my participants, the deterioration of the West Bronx was external to the normal functioning of white Jewish space. The order, safety, and stability of the Jewish West Bronx were contrasted to the racialized destruction and (un)cleanliness caused by neighborhood change. As the last remaining vestige of the Jewish West Bronx, Riverdale served several purposes for my participants' identities. Standing in sharp relief to the process of neighborhood change, Riverdale was a stalwart of white identity and a beacon of order in the Bronx's racialized geography of chaos.

Other than a few complaints about parking and overbuilding, my participants were very happy living in Riverdale. Most of them understood Riverdale to be an ideal community, especially compared to the rest of the Bronx. My participants commonly

used militaristic spatial metaphors to describe Riverdale. Stacy demonstrated this tendency best when she said, “It’s (Riverdale) the last outpost in the Bronx.”

Many of my participants believed that Riverdale had stayed “good,” because of the control residents had over who lived there. It was “good,” because institutional mechanisms such as high rents, political influence, and the quality of schools excluded people of color.

The perceived stability of Riverdale was articulated through many of the same tropes as neighborhood change. Racialized others were viewed as pollutants that sought to jeopardize the health of Riverdale’s white Jewish community. My participants were sure that neighborhood change would happen again if racialized bodies, understood through their capacity to destroy harmonious white Jewish spaces, were not quarantined from a healthy, white, Riverdale. [24] The way Charles put it, “They aren’t all bad, really, but you can’t take the chance.”

Edna valorized Riverdale through virtue of its whiteness and upper class status. After I asked her about why Riverdale was different from the rest of the Bronx she said, “Well the rents are very high. So far they have not taken in welfare, and if they do that, it will ruin Riverdale,” I probed her further asking, “You think that’s what happened to the rest of the Bronx,” She said,

> “I think so yes. Because when they come in it’s quite a bit different. I mean we have one or two different black people, but they are not in the majority. It’s also the schools. There are a lot of schools that you have here. And I know because I

[24] I believe that many of the senior center’s daily activities were organized in a way that reflected this imperative to maintain order and control. The distribution of government subsidized milk was a good example of this process.

was working the polls and it was mostly white people. The people who weren't white who were the people who were working the polls, but it's really friendly atmosphere around here."

For Edna, there was a strong link between Riverdale's friendly atmosphere and its absence of "black people." Control was maintained through high rents and political power. If these mechanisms of control were to be removed, and racialized others were allowed to move in, their behavior and values would destroy a white-Jewish Riverdale, just like it destroyed the white-Jewish West Bronx.

Sylvia and Stan elaborated on this theme of exclusion,

"The area is beautiful and the schools are very good. So that's what kept the area from deteriorating. And yes, Riverdale has a high income level. So that keeps people certain people out and others in." Stan agreed with Sylvia's assessment of the situation and said, "Yes. I suppose it is good we have high rents here. It keeps the undesirables out."

Losing control over who could move to Riverdale was among my participants' chief concerns. My participant observation method revealed that there was a general anxiety among senior center members about overbuilding in Riverdale. They were concerned about the growing number of high rises in the community. My participants feared that new investors and developers would not have their values in mind when selecting tenants.

In conclusion, the way in which my participants used Riverdale to articulate their white identities reflected the way in which they experienced displacement from the West Bronx. Their white identities were predicated upon the exclusion of black and brown people, from a white and Jewish Riverdale. The safety, cleanliness, and general desirability of living in Riverdale were understood in relation to a racialized Bronx. Their message was overwhelming. If Riverdale was not kept white, it would undergo neighborhood change. My participants' concern about neighborhood change was reflected in the importance they assigned to community control. Control was enacted through institutional mechanisms such as high rent and political power.

Conclusion

My participants grounded their white identities in two space-times, the West Bronx in the 1960's and 1970's, and contemporary Riverdale. In both cases, they sought to simultaneously externalize and define themselves against the racially inflected qualities of disorder and (un)cleanliness that characterized the West Bronx.

Their white identities were framed through a liberal way of seeing the world, which was characterized by locating racism as an individual issue of ignorance, emphasizing culture/learned behavior over biological understandings of race, and attempting to avoid racial assignments altogether.

One of the ways my participants articulated their white identities was by describing how the West Bronx changed in the 1960's and 1970's. My participants articulated their white identities by tying together themes of disorder, race, deterioration, and displacement. Black and brown bodies were understood as external agents who contaminated stable Jewish white neighborhoods in the West Bronx. White Jewish ways

of making space were understood in relation to urban deterioration, and destruction, which became synonymous with racial otherness.

My participants' white identities were not created when they moved to Riverdale, because they were already white in the West Bronx. Rather, their white identities were reconfigured or rearticulated through the migration process. My analysis shows that Jews *reaffirmed* their white identities through the use of neighborhood change. That is, their white identities were threatened as the Jewish West Bronx dissolved. The way they discussed neighborhood change, helped them recoup a white identity.

Even through Riverdale was "more gentile," than the West Bronx, my participants saw migration as an opportunity to recreate an urban Jewish way of living, and to reconstruct an identity that "deteriorated," with neighborhood change in the West Bronx. The way they understood Riverdale as a racialized place was heavily influenced by this reclamation project. Thus, Riverdale was seen as a white and Jewish space in relation to the rest of the Bronx. As the last remaining vestige of urban Jewish life that once encompassed most of the Bronx, my participants were willing to protect Riverdale at all costs. They wanted to prevent it from becoming what they perceived the West Bronx to be: black/brown, disorderly, polluted, and destroyed. My participants' fears about losing control over who lived in Riverdale was highlighted through concerns over new construction.

The imperative to maintain a liberal white and Jewish identity through the migration process determined how my participants would understand the displacements of urban disinvestment. The physical destruction, hurt feelings, and place dis-attachment that characterized out migration from the West Bronx was channeled towards the

behaviors and culture of black and brown bodies, profoundly shaping the trajectory of urban based white identity. Through this process, blackness and brownness effectively became synonymous urban destruction. Any place that was nice, safe, or livable in the Bronx was understood through a racialized spatial logic of white and not-white.

While my participants' liberal sensibilities prevented them from labeling black folks as innately bad or less than human, their narratives of neighborhood change showed that race played a major role in how they arbitrated the health and well-being of urban places. As they understood themselves in relation to the displacements of urban disinvestment, it made sense that my participants believed that a significant unchecked influx of black and brown folks to Riverdale would destroy their community.

My participants' way of explaining neighborhood disinvestment in the West Bronx and understanding of Riverdale's relationship to the rest of the Bronx showed how the migration process affected their racial identities. The way my participants experienced the migration process condensed into a specific articulation of white identity, which had three primary characteristics. First, my participants organize the geography of the Bronx into a militaristic framework that focuses on territorial struggle. Second, the feelings of hurt they experienced from leaving of the West Bronx are channeled towards people of color. Third, even though they don't want to migrate back to the West Bronx, they hope its future can be salvaged by the gentrification process.

Although 40 years have passed since most of my participants left the West Bronx, they still express strong feelings towards it. Riverdale is a Jewish place, but it is not the West Bronx. Their children moved away, and their closest friends died. My participants'

attachment to the West Bronx reveals a longing for territories lost to an invading force of people of color.

Although my participants, now in their 80's, had no desire to leave Riverdale, they did express a strong desire to restore the West Bronx as a classed and raced space. My participants were excited about gentrification in the South Bronx, or what my participants referred to as "where the young people are going." News of, "how the Bronx was coming back," was always in reference to gentrification projects.

As I discussed earlier in the chapter, I do not think my participants were racist. They did not hate people of color. Rather, as I will show in chapter six, my participants had a great deal of ambivalence about their white identities, often questioning the way they organized racialized space in the Bronx. Neighborhood change did not fully determine my participants identities, rather it demonstrated how racialized discourses of space, safety, and cleanlineness can co-opt or hi-jack the way people understand and interact with the world.

In conclusion, my participants forged a place-specific white identity through the experience of neighborhood displacement and out migration from the West Bronx. Through this process my participants positioned themselves as liberal anti-racists while maintaining strong white identities couched in racial differentiations between valued spaces, behaviors, and values. This contradiction was internal to the formation of this specific articulation of identity.[25] Tension created through this contradiction was often

[25] I use contradiction a specific way. Contradiction in this instance, does not mean oxy-moron. Seemingly incompatible imperative of identity can co-exist. Contradiction is a fundamental element of my participants' white identities. A focus on contradictions reveals a glimpse into what my participants' white identities have the potential to become.

productive of new kinds of identities and ways of understanding the world. The same tensions that produced white identities also made it unstable. In the next chapter I examine how leftist versions of Jewish displacement from the West Bronx and the influx of Orthodox Jews into Riverdale often exacerbated the tensions that produced my participants' white identities.

Chapter VI: Productive Tensions in White Identity

In the last chapter, I outlined how my participants articulated their white identities by racializing the West Bronx and Riverdale. My analysis revealed that my participants' white identities were tethered to two racialized geography. First, my participants racialized the West Bronx through narratives of neighborhood change. By racializing the West Bronx my participants separated themselves from the people of color they blamed for disinvestment. Second, my participants racialized Riverdale as a white and Jewish space. It's identity as a desirable place was predicated upon the exclusion of black and brown people. Riverdale's racial homogeneity was necessary for its survival.

In this chapter I reveal tensions within my participants' white identities. Specifically, I will attend to how my participants struggled to make meaning out of the Bronx's racial geography, both in the West Bronx and Riverdale. Using the data gleaned from participant observation and residential histories I will examine the potential that existed within my participants' narratives for new kinds of racialized identities to form.

In chapter five, I analyzed my participants' white identities by analyzing the way they racialized the Bronx's geographies. My analysis here differs from the previous chapter as it is focused on potential, possibility, and conjecture. I cannot say with certainty that my participants' white identities are developing towards a different kind of racialized identity rooted in an alternative geographic understanding of the Bronx. That being said, the data I collected does permit me to reveal the tensions built into this articulation of white identity, and furthermore, examine the potential that exists for new kinds of identities to develop. My analysis will primarily draw upon participant

understandings of the Bronx that were incongruous with the racialized geographies of my participants' white identities.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. I begin with my participants' narratives of Jewish out-migration from the West Bronx and move to contemporary characterizations of Riverdale. First, I examine how my participants' interpretations of urban disinvestment and Jewish displacement created an opening for re-imagining the racial geography of the Bronx. Moving to Riverdale, I discuss how the influx of Orthodox Jews forced my participants to reconsider the racialized geographies produced through my participants' white identities. The racial ambiguity of what my participants called Orthodox Jews transformed Riverdale from an internally homogenous space, understood in relation to the rest of a negatively racialized Bronx, into a site at which white identity was struggled over.[26]

Rewriting the Bronx's Historical Geography: Challenging the Way Neighborhood Change Organized Racialized Space

The articulation of white identity formed through Jewish migration from the West Bronx to Riverdale effectively organized the Bronx's racialized geography and placed bodies and spaces into well-defined categories. If one was white or Jewish, neighborhood change was not their fault. If one was black or brown, their behaviors, values, and culture

[26] The term "Orthodox Jew" is fraught with tension. Many practices, identities, and places can be included in this category. It was often unclear what my participants meant by "Orthodox." Through context clues and direct inquiry I found that more often than not, they were referring to the one or several sects of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement. Their failure to make these distinctions indicated something important about what they thought it meant to be white and Jewish. Furthermore, I do not believe that negatively racializing a group that also identified as Jewish was a good thing. Instead, I wish to demonstrate that my participants white identities were constructed on unstable grounds. As such, I believe there is potential for new ways of being white and Jewish to arise.

caused disinvestment, and ultimately, the displacement of Jews from the West Bronx. This line of reasoning created a Bronx cleaved into two segregated spaces, one white, human, and rational, and the other, black/brown, chaotic, and irrational. Neighborhood change was a powerful principle to organize identity around because of its totalizing imperatives, the ease by which it could be expressed, and its tendency to absolve my participants from any responsibility in the disinvestment process.

Despite the frequency with which it was used, and its tendency to crowd out other explanations of Jewish displacement from the West Bronx, my participants understanding of the Bronx's racialized geography was not always compatible with the logic of neighborhood change. The process by which neighborhood change papered over the complexity of the Bronx's racialized geography was not complete. At times, my participants' sharp minds and leftist proclivities allowed them to re-imagine the Bronx's racialized geographies, crippling the monopoly neighborhood change held over explanations of Jewish displacement from the West Bronx.

It was often in fits of passion and frustration that my participants challenged the way in which their white identities were tied to neighborhood change. My participants and I remade the historical geography of the Bronx by discussing New York City's financial crisis, the role landlords played in Jewish displacement, and the civil rights movement. Although my participants still held on tightly to their white identities, in these moments, they were forced to consider the complexities that neighborhood change attempted to flatten.

Shirley's residential history demonstrated this process. Talking about why the Bronx had changed, she said, "I really feel that it was the government. That no one paid

attention. No one cared. They thought, who cares it's the Bronx." After explaining to her how the outer boroughs had been deliberately disinvested in by the city she replied,

> "Yeah, I know. It didn't have to happen that way with the burnt out buildings. Stuff like that. None of it had to happen, and I guess I don't know if I could have personally done anything. I guess I could have but I didn't. I didn't do anything. I didn't fight and stay. I don't know."

Shirley complicated the narrow ways in which my participants used neighborhood change to conceptualize the Bronx's racialized historical geography. Reaching an impasse about why her neighborhood changed, Shirley embraced an ambiguous relationship between race, disinvestment, the government, and burned out buildings.

Shirley's understanding of Jewish culpability in the disinvestment process was inconsistent with the way neighborhood change organized the Bronx's racialized geographies. As I demonstrated in chapter 5, my participants pinned the displacement process on people of color. Presumably, if they had not moved into the West Bronx, Jews would not have out-migrated to Riverdale. My participants' white identities were tied to the idea that Jews were passive victims of black/brown values, behaviors, and culture. Black culture transformed spaces from safe and orderly to dangerous and chaotic. In this excerpt, Shirley took responsibility for what happened in her neighborhood and imagined how Jews and other racialized groups could have worked together to curtail disinvestment. She complicated the hard geographic boundaries drawn around Jews and people of color in the Bronx, opening up new possibilities for understanding the displacement process.

Similarly, Abe challenged the logic of neighborhood change when he highlighted the institutional mechanisms responsible for the displacement of Jews from the West Bronx. Undermining the idea that black and brown people "ruined," the West Bronx, he forged a link between disinvestment and the actions of landlords. Abe explained that a combination of rent controls and opportunistic landlords caused the rapid out migration of Jews from the West Bronx. Rent control laws in the Post-War period had made it profitable for landlords to rapidly turnover buildings. Raises in rent could only occur if longtime residents moved out. Unfortunately for landlords, residents often had no desire to leave. Abe told me that the most effective way to facilitate this process was to bust blocks on racial grounds.[27]

Abe's narrative about Jewish displacement from the West Bronx revealed several tensions in his white identity. Instead of highlighting the negative behaviors and values black and brown people exhibited in his neighborhood, he placed the legacy of urban disinvestment and Jewish displacement on rent control laws and landlords. In this moment, the racialized geography of the Bronx was temporarily rearranged. The racialized geography of neighborhood change that segregated the Bronx into human and sub-human broke down. Black folks were no longer the same as disinvestment. Abe believed that disinvestment could not be reduced to racial categories. The disinvestment process negatively affected both black and white folks.

Gale also reflected on the disinvestment process in ways that revealed tension in her white identity. Her experiences working and living with African Americans led her to

[27] His story checked out with historical research I conducted (see chapter 3).

implicitly question the sharp divisions that characterized the Bronx's racialized geography.

She told me a story about a store she used to work at located underneath the Third Avenue elevated train in the Southern part of the Bronx. Regaining her focus after getting distracted she said,

> "… but anyway it was during the 60's. You have to remember this is the time of the revolution and civil rights. People were agitated. They became aware of what they were buying and who they were. One day I was alone because all the men were out. No wait, I wasn't alone. I wasn't in the factory, but there were some workers in it. I was in the front. The office was in front and this man comes in and I said can I help you. He's telling me that he can't use these blinds. God knows how old they were, but I said we don't accept any returns and then he got very agitated. He said, I've seen better heads on cabbages. (Laughing hard) I didn't know what to say so I pressed my little button and someone from the back came out and said get out of here. They were all black. Everyone who worked for us was black, and it was through them that I realized the deprivation. They were all from New York, but there was one man who lived in our building. He was an alcoholic. I don't remember his name. We called him Mr. Engels and he told me that he couldn't get a job. He graduated from high school and he couldn't get a job. It was from him I realized the prejudice that existed."

The way in which Gale talked about her experience with African Americans allowed her to critique her white identity. In this case, a liberal understanding of race revealed tensions in white identity, ultimately producing room new understandings of the

Bronx's geography to form. While attempting to separate herself from racism or racists, she revealed different ways of understanding her relationship to racialized bodies and geographies in the Bronx.

Instead of seeing the behavior of the angry black man as a symptom of disinvestment, she laughed off his comment, "I've seen better heads on cabbages." Moreover, she refused to rob her neighbor, "Mr. Engels,", of his humanity. "Black," had a name! "Black," was a person! In this moment, black space was produced through struggle, not deviant values and behaviors.

The context Gale provided about the 1960's was rarely mentioned by any of the other participants. They chose to avoid discussing civil rights even though it historically, and in some cases, geographically, dovetailed with Jewish displacement from the West Bronx. By prefacing her vignette about the store with a discussion of civil rights she rationalized the black man's behavior. Gale critiqued a collective white identity grounded in essential cultural differences between Jews and Blacks. Black space could no longer be coded through destruction or irrationality. The primary principle by which neighborhood change was used to organize the Bronx's racial geography was temporarily displaced.

On several occasions, the dialogue between the seniors and I was transformative. I believe that our interactions helped shape their understanding of the Bronx's racialized geography. It was often by pointing out contradictions in their narratives that we achieved break throughs.

After reflecting on how the Bronx changed over the course of her life, Mildred forcefully challenged the racialized assumptions of her white identity. She used Fagin the

Jew, an anti-Semitic caricature from Charles Dickens' novel, *Oliver Twist* to make her point. Reflecting on her migration history, Mildred said with confidence,

> "There are different types of people among types. When I say types I mean degrees of intelligence and honesty. If anyone has a bad quality in that category, they make it the category. That's the trouble, ya know? If you do something as a Jew you are Fagin the Jew, not just Fagin."

Mildred articulated the relationship between individual behavior and race differently than any of the other participants. With clarity, she saw the work that racial categories do. In so many words, Mildred explained that racial categories rob people of their humanity.

This specific articulation of white identity concretized the humanity of my participants by taking it away from people of color. It created hard spatial boundaries grounded in racialized culture and behavior. These boundaries were productive of two geographies, human and not-human. Mildred's take on racial categories complicated this racialized production of these spaces.

To conclude, the racialized geographies produced through my participants' white identities often failed to crowd out alternative explanations of Jewish displacement from the West Bronx. With pain in their voices, my participants challenged the racialized geographies of neighborhood change by considering how the government and landlords affected the disinvestment process. Unintentionally disrupting their white identities, my participants humanized racialized bodies and spaces that had previously been marked as pathological and diseased.

My participants' challenges to dominant conceptions of neighborhood change and the articulation of white identity forged through Jewish migration from the West Bronx to Riverdale revealed the fractured character of the identity formation process. Shirley, for example, was not afraid to directly challenge the racialized logic of neighborhood change. Re-thinking who caused neighborhood change, and who it affected, she recast the geographies of her white identity. The racialized boundaries that enlivened her white identity broke down as Shirley suggested that both Jews and people and color were victims of the disinvestment process. White flight didn't have to happen!

Gale unsettled her white identity by emphasizing the civil rights movement. White identity was recast in light of new bodies and new geographies. A nuanced account of the civil rights movement legitimized black behavior, culture, and place making, rendering her white identity unstable. Finally, Mildred's sophisticated analysis of race revealed how the racialization process dehumanizes people. Her attention to the diversity within categories provided a foundation from which to re-conceptualize social relationships and spaces in the Bronx.

In the next section, I continue to reveal how the racialized geographies produced through my participants' white identities were unstable by analyzing their feelings about the influx of Orthodox Jews into Riverdale.

Orthodox Jews: Complicating Riverdale's Homogeneity

In the last ten to fifteen years, there has been a large in migration of Orthodox Jews into Riverdale. [28] Their growing influence in Riverdale forced my participants to rethink the way their white identities organized the Bronx's racialized geography. As my participants differentiated themselves from other white Jews, Riverdale's racial identity in relation to the rest of the Bronx became tenuous.

In this section, I analyze how the in-migration of Orthodox Jews to Riverdale challenged my participants understanding of the Bronx's racial geography. As I demonstrated in chapter five, my participants positioned Riverdale as a white space vis-à-vis the black and brown South Bronx. This racial binary rested upon a geography in which Riverdale was a homogenous white space. Riverdale's homogeneity was upset by the difference my participants cast upon Orthodox Jews. They were white and Jewish in name, but often, their behaviors did not categorically fit into what my participants understood to be characteristic of white Jews.

My participants imagined Orthodox Jewish difference along several lines, which included: the racial division of labor, the division between secular and holy space, and what constituted proper reproductive practice. The ways in which my participants differentiated themselves from Orthodox Jews made it difficult for them to conceive of Riverdale as homogenous place, thus undermining the racialized geographies of my participants' white identities.

[28] The 2000 edition of the Jewish population count for New York shows that younger Orthodox Jews stabilized the age of Riverdale's Jewish population.

Edna expressed Orthodox Jewish difference through an interaction she had with a father of several young children.[29] She said,

> "I was helping someone in my building and the doctor said to me, I hear you are very good. I said, well I treat the children like they are my grandchildren. He said to me well I would like you to play with the kids. Do the dishes morning, noon, and night, and when they are sleeping I'd like you to clean the house and go down to the washing machine. I looked at him and I said you have the wrong person. I said if you want that you have to get someone else, someone black. There's a lot of Jamaicans."

She continued,

> "I said I have someone coming in and cleaning my house so I'm not going to clean your house. I pleaded with him. Well you're a religious Jew. I said I'm a Jew, I'm white, I have a college degree, and I was a professional legal secretary. That's what you are getting to play with your children. He said no, if I'm paying money I want you to do everything. I said not me."

Their understanding of the racialized divisions of labor clashed. The doctor ignored Edna's white identity and class status. Edna knew that she was white because she paid a woman of color to clean her house. Her white identity was disrupted by the doctor's rejection of her offer to take care of his children without cleaning the house. Edna was offended because the doctor didn't differentiate between her and a Jamaican woman. He was not sensitive to her appeals of common race and class identity. The

[29] She did not give this person a name.

doctor's sense of what it meant to be white, Jewish, and well educated was different than hers. Another white Jew like her would have recognized this hierarchy, and refrained from asking her to clean the house. [30] While the doctor failed to differentiate Edna from a "Jamaican woman," he did not hesitate the gender her labor. For the doctor, childcare and cleaning were women's work, regardless of their race.

In this moment, Riverdale was no longer a homogenous place. The category of white Jews was cleaved in two, providing an opportunity to re-formulate the Bronx's racialized geographies.

Fred also challenged the racial geographies of his white identity by differentiating himself from Orthodox Jews. In a light mood for most of our conversation, he became agitated when I mentioned the influx of Orthodox Jews into Riverdale. He was particularly troubled by their growing numbers in his building. "Religious Jews," had knocked down the walls between two rooms in his apartment building and built a space for worship. Explaining what had happened, he said,

> "This guy says to me, we need you for a minion.[31] He asked me, are you Jewish. I said yes. He says c'mon up let's go to the tenth floor. I walked into this place. They knocked out the regular column. They made a temple and they worship there a lot."
>
> He continued,
>
> "I find it uncomfortable. Uncomfortable in the sense that the rituals they keep seem so out of place. They want to keep themselves apart. They have many

[30] A Jew like her from the West Bronx…
[31] A minion is generally understood as the number of Jewish adult men needed to conduct public prayer. Quorum is set at ten males over the age of 13.

children. Birth control is not their speed. These women look like teenagers. They already have three kids, one more in the belly and one more on their mind."

Fred was not sure that the Orthodox Jews moving into his building were white and Jewish in the same way he was. He used the language of values and behaviors to differentiate himself from the new comers. His feelings about Orthodox Jews echoed the way other participants talked about brown and black people.

Fred's understandings of being "in place," as a Jew was disturbed by Orthodox Jews' use of residential space for prayer and the rate at which they procreated (Creswell 1996). By complicating the assumption that Orthodox Jews with light skin were white and Jewish in the same way he was, Fred challenged the idea that Riverdale was internally homogenous in relation to the rest of the Bronx, opening up potential for reimagining the Bronx's racial geographies.

Bernice was also ambivalent about the arrival of Orthodox Jews in Riverdale. Her understanding of neighborhood change muddied the racialized geography that undergirded my participants' white identities. Following up on earlier comments she had made about neighborhood change, I asked Bernice why she thought Riverdale had not changed the way the rest of the Bronx had. With a scowl on her face, she said,

"It has changed in the sense that it became very Orthodox and that's one of the prime reasons people buy here, because of the synagogues. I have never been to a place with so many synagogues. I personally don't like it."

She continued on, "And a lot of those people are very chauvinistic." After a pause she said,

> "I disagree with most people. They think it's a good thing because they fear that the lower classes are moving in, but people are people. With these Orthodox, I think it's too much."

In Bernice's narrative, what it meant to be white and Jewish in Riverdale was ambiguous. For most of our interview, she was sure why Jews moved out of the West Bronx and Co-op City. She articulated her white identity using expressions like "lower class," to describe racialized groups in the Bronx. Here, Bernice questioned her previous use of the term, complicating the link between brown/ black bodies, class, and urban disinvestment. She countered the logic of neighborhood change by interrogating the impact of Orthodox Jews on Riverdale. In this moment, Bernice was forced to re-think the racialized geography of white identity that positioned Riverdale as a homogenous place in relation to the rest of the Bronx.

For Bernice, Orthodox Jews *changed* Riverdale. Her white identity became complicated as she could no longer use the racialized geography of neighborhood change to differentiate between racialized people and places. According to Bernice, white Jews could also cause neighborhood change. Uncertainty about the homogeneity of Riverdale revealed tension in her white identity.

Recouping White Identity

Although there were moments in which my participants were forced to re-imagine the racialized geography of the Bronx, they vigorously defended their white identities. Many of my participants reacted to the ambiguous racial/ethnic position of Orthodox Jews in Riverdale by expanding the boundaries of whiteness. In other words, the racial geography of my participants' white identities survived because they chose to include

Orthodox Jews in the white category. Thus, my participants reaffirmed the idea that Riverdale was a homogenous place in relation to the rest of the Bronx, ultimately strengthening their white identities.

Irene was excited about Orthodox Jews in Riverdale, "I really like seeing Jewish families walking to synagogue together. I am Jewish. I like to see these things." Elaine said, "Even though I am not religious I find that they are very nice people." She argued, "The reason why Riverdale has not *changed* is because of the influx of Orthodox Jews. They keep the neighborhood under Jewish control, a Jewish place." I told Lori that other people had been unsettled by the influx of Orthodox Jews. She quipped back, "I think it's good to have an area that is openly Jewish. I think it's the only place to still have it."

These participants papered over differences they had with Orthodox Jews to maintain Riverdale's white identity. They reasoned that Orthodox Jews, despite their differences, were superior neighbors to the black and brown people. Elaine reiterated the racialized theme of neighborhood change that Bernice challenged. Instead of Orthodox Jews causing the neighborhood to change, they were now a bulwark against it!

Ann encapsulated these themes coherently when she said,

> "One thing I'll tell you about Riverdale. I feel very safe. I feel very, very, safe. It never enters my mind that someone is going to hit me on the head or mug me. We have a lot of Orthodox people that live here. Some people don't like it. I like it. I'm never worried about these people. They aren't going to do anything to me. They are all lovely people."

Ann was comfortable expanding the white category to include anyone who did not have the capacity to threaten her safety.[32] Unlike black and brown people, she didn't believe Orthodox Jews had a capacity for violence. For Ann, and other participants, Orthodox Jews in Riverdale were both similar and different. Despite their differences, my participants felt that Orthodox Jews were still white and Jewish, especially in relation to the rest of the Bronx. They belonged in Riverdale.

In summary, many of participants differentiated themselves from Orthodox Jews on the basis of behavior and culture. Their notions of Riverdale as a homogenous white and Jewish place were challenged by the behaviors and values of Orthodox Jews. My participants drew comparisons between the newcomers and the black and brown folks they blamed for neighborhood change. These comparisons produced an internally differentiated understanding of Riverdale inconsistent with the racialized geographies of their white identities.

Through her interaction with the "Orthodox," doctor, Edna discovered that even though her neighbors were both Jewish and white, they did not share her understanding of race, gender, and labor relationships. Their failure to negotiate child care responsibilities forced Edna to question who should be included in the white-Jewish category.

Fred, a secular Jew with leftist leanings, was upset about the way Orthodox Jews turned his secular apartment building into a space for religious practice. Orthodox Jews unsettled his understanding of domestic space. Similar to neighborhood change in the

[32] Issue of safety were related to migration, identity, and space. This is a fecund area for future analysis.

West Bronx, newcomers were behaving and creating space in a way that threatened urban Jewish living.

Finally, Bernice subverted the logic of neighborhood change by questioning the homogeneity of Riverdale. White Jews were not only different, but they were causing Riverdale to change. In this moment, her understanding of racialized geographies in the Bronx was reorganized.

Despite the way my participants marked Orthodox Jews as different, they were eager to keep imagining Riverdale as a homogenous place. More often than not, they expanded the boundaries of whiteness and Jewishness to include Orthodox Jews. My participants reaffirmed Riverdale as a white and Jewish space in relation to the rest of the Bronx.

In the cases of Irene and Elaine, even though Orthodox Jews were different, they were still better neighbors than people of color. For Ann, safety was a primary concern. Young black and Puerto Rican men could physically intimate and harm her. Orthodox Jews, on the other hand, despite their "strange," behavior and insularity, did not seem capable of such actions.

Conclusion

White identities forged through the migration process sought to monopolize how my participants conceptualized race and space in the Bronx. Through dialogues about Jewish displacement, tensions undergirding my participants white identities emerged. By acknowledging broader historical processes having to do with the state, landlords, and civil rights my participants complicated the racialized geographies produced through their white identities.

My participants' reaction to Orthodox Jewish in-migration introduced yet another fold or nuance into their white identities. Just as it seemed that the racialized geographies of neighborhood change threatened to fix my participants' identities, Orthodox Jewish racial and religious difference fractured their white identities. My research shows that identity is cast and recast upon a plethora of racialized bodies, both those classified as white and non-white.

Ruptures, fissures, and tensions in race, class, and gender identities are common. However, they do not often lead to the creation of new identities. In this chapter, I promised to highlight the points at which I saw the potential for new kinds of racial identities to arise. As I expressed earlier, I do not think that there is a coherent identity being constructed through these challenges. To the contrary, I think the data shows that these moments of uncertainty, the influx of Orthodox Jews in particular, actually strengthened my participants resolve to maintain a white identity, and in some cases, hold on tighter to the racialized geographies of neighborhood change. In the next chapter, I will reflect on my empirical findings, developing a theoretical understanding of how white identity is both strengthened and weakened. I also attempt to build a framework in which it is possible to understand how the fissures described in this chapter might mature into different identities.

Chapter VII – A Theoretical Inflection on Empirical Work

In this chapter, primarily drawing from the work of two geographers, I build a framework for future research about Jewish white identity and the Bronx. I introduce Arun Saldana's Deleuzian understanding of race to inject fluidity into conceptions of white identity, and Clyde Woods' Blues epistemology to develop a strategy for reframing the historical relationship between blacks and Jews in the Bronx.

First, I focus on how the social science literature has positioned the relationship between Jews, whiteness, and the suburbs. I draw attention to how my work provides new opportunities for conceptualizing how the Jews became white, and how their racial identities continue to evolve. Second, I attribute problematic conceptions of Jewish whiteness to formulations of identity grounded in the binary classification of self and other. Relying heavily on the work of geographer Arun Saldana, I critique this way of understanding identity, introducing an anti-racist politics that emphasizes interactions between people and place. After showing how these insights can help us understand how my participants' white identities work, I turn to Clyde Woods' Blues Epistemology to forge important links between black and Jewish visions of socio-spatial development in the Bronx. I introduce Hip Hop and radical Jewish thought about socialist cooperatives as ways both blacks and Jews imagined the Bronx as a liberatory space.

Much of the literature about Jews and whiteness focuses on the inferior racial position of Eastern European Jews in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and furthermore, how Jews came to be accepted as racially normal or as Leonard Rogoff says, "undistinguishable from Non-Jewish whites" (Rogoff 1997 p.230). Karen Brodkin and E.L. Goldstein among others have made Jewish whiteness a social fact (Rogoff 1997,

Brodkin 2000, Melnick 2000, Goldstein 2006) (See chapters 1 and 3 for a more robust conversation about Jews and whiteness).

In my analysis, a scholarly focus on Jewish whiteness is related to several contextual issues. First, although many scholars, particularly in Ethnic Studies, have vehemently argued against using a black-white paradigm to understand the nuances of racial hierarchy, social scientists who examine Jewish race or whiteness still unconsciously import binary conceptions of race into their research (Kim 1997, Pulido 2007). Within this binary, where race and privilege are tied together, economic success places Jews firmly in the white category. Second, I believe authors who write about Jews and whiteness use Jewish white privilege as a position from which to argue against the Jewish model minority myth. Highlighting the ambiguous racial position of economically successful Jews could provide ammunition for groups who seek to demonize the behavior and cultural practices of people of color.

Insisting on Jewish whiteness causes authors who discuss how the Jews became white to make two problematic assumptions. First, although they are largely committed to fluid notions of race and post-structural principals such as intersectionality, these scholars largely paint Jews as a homogenous group. Second, in an effort to highlight Jewish privilege vis-à-vis people of color in a Post-War era characterized by resource distribution polarities, they argue that Jews easily assimilated into a relatively static socio-spatial suburban whiteness (Brodkin 2000).

Jews are not a homogenous group by any stretch of the imagination. Not only are Jews diverse in terms of how they interpret Jewish religion, running the gamut from atheist to Orthodox, but they are racialized differently as well. Even the West Bronx, a

place remembered by my participants for its racial, ethnic, and cultural homogeneity, was home not only to Eastern European Ashkenazi Jews, but Sephardic Jews as well, who had origins in Spain and North African. On an international scale, scholars in a range of disciplines have done the work of destabilizing the Israeli/Arab binary, demonstrating that Jews of Middle Eastern decent are racially ambiguous (Shohat 2005, Georgis 2007, Hochberg 2007). In the Southern United States, there are numerous African American Jewish communities. In Nigeria, Uganda, and Ethiopia there are large groups of African Jews. (Miles 2011). A July 2011 edition of the journal *Transitions* that investigates black-Jewish relations demonstrates the great diversity among people who identify as Jewish (Miles 2011).

When scholars make the argument that Jews transitioned from non-white to white, they often draw attention towards two moments. First, they argue that once racial categories on a national scale were redrawn to include Jews, they became entitled to the windfalls of white privilege. This privilege becomes apparent through a second moment, suburbanization. Since the suburbs, particularly in New York, were off limits to people of color, primarily black folks, Jews' ability to move to suburban places like Long Island proved their whiteness.

An emphasis on these moments obscures the fluidity of the racialization process. How did the white identity of both Jews and suburban places change in this interaction? If Jews were already white in urban neighborhoods, places in which they were often displaced from, how did moving to the suburbs affect their white identities?

Adding to studies on Jews and whiteness, my dissertation shows that white identity is a place specific phenomenon, profoundly affected by the migration process. I

demonstrate that whiteness, and more specifically, white identity, is determined by the interaction between people and place. Geographer Arun Saldana agrees arguing, "The concept of race is not for taxonomic ordering, but for studying the *movement between* human bodies, things, and their changing environment" (Saldana 2006, p.19 emphasis in original).

My research shows that the interactions between people and place, in Riverdale and other places, changed what it means to be white. Jews did not assimilate into a homogenous and static socio-spatial category of suburban whiteness or transcend racial classification by transforming from non-white to white, but instead, reconfigured or rearticulated their white identities in relation to the migration process.

Becoming white through suburbanization is often conceptualized as a moment frozen in time, in which Jews permanently become like other whites. In this case, the way that movement and interaction affect the racialization process is minimized or obscured. I believe the aforementioned tendency towards viewing the socio-spatial production of Jewish whiteness as homogenous and static is intimately linked to the way racial identity is conceptualized in these studies.

While race and whiteness is often portrayed as a fluid concept, a way of classifying bodies that is slippery and even amorphous, the mechanisms by which we capture the racialization process, particularly in empirical investigations, are often constrained by what several authors have called the Hegelian motion of identity or representation (Goldberg 1993, Kurtz 2006, Saldana 2006, Puar 2007, Saldana 2007).

Hegelian notions of identity rest upon binary negation. One comes to understand themselves, or the group they are part of, such as white, by negating another. Most

commonly, whiteness is understood as an identity that negates blackness. This way of understanding identity is usually traced back to Frantz Fanon's seminal work *Black Skin White Masks.* In a frequently quoted passage, Fanon uses an interaction with a boy on a train as an opportunity to theorize what he calls the "racial epidermal schema." Reacting to the boys cry, "Look – A negro," Fanon shows how his body is locked into absolute otherness through a racialized grid of intelligibility. Arun Saldana reflects on the train passage, explaining Hegelian forms of identity. He says,

> "Fanon's work argues that under colonialism a black body is inevitably imbricated in a binary classification regime, defined by the white man's stereotypes and exploitation. Blackness exists only by virtue of what it is not; to reclaim humanity and a rightful place in universal history, blacks need to break out of the binary classification imposed by whites and to assert the arbitrary nature of racial division. Thinking about difference as self-versus other is a legacy of Hegelian dialectics, which inspires practically all commentary on Fanon…" (Saldana 2006 p.12).

The self vs. other binary simultaneously reifies the racial categories it names and obscures the way in which racial identities come into being. In conversation with scholars who utilize this form of identity Saldana elaborates on these points,

> "… they tend to treat white and nonwhite not only as a dyad, but as almost naturally opposed entries. There is then little attention paid to the complicated processes whereby some racial formations become dominant, that is how racial formations emerge from material conditions and collective interactions, which

greatly exceed the spatiality of self vs. other (Saldana 2007 p. 194).

Saldana argues that whiteness is constantly emerging, or as I have framed it, being rearticulated or reconfigured out of, "material conditions and collective interactions" (Saldana 2007 p. 194). Saldana's framework for studying identity has implications on how we design research and analyze data. In a specific time-space, race simultaneously articulates traditional axes of power such as class, gender, and sexuality, and internalizes physical processes that interact with human bodies. In my research, white identity may appear as the negation of black bodies and spaces, but it is also manifests as trash removal, leaks in the ceiling, bricks falling off the edifice, and inconsistent access to hot water. In this framework, whiteness sits in the materiality of place. [33] Whiteness is the interaction between people and space. White was not an already existing category or place that Jews simply joined when they migrated to Riverdale. The way my participants were displaced from the West Bronx simultaneously tempered how they understood themselves as white and the way Riverdale developed as a racialized place.

Psychologist Ann Cheng also critiques Hegelian notions of identity. She employs the Freudian concept of melancholy to express the problematic aspects of self vs. other forms of identity. For Freud, healthy morning is achieved when the deceased object is attacked and destroyed. During a state of melancholy, the object being mourned over integrates with the subject. Unable to let go of the dead object, the mourner suffers.

Cheng argues that holding onto racial identities formed out of injury produces a melancholic state. The racialization processes marginalizes and dehumanizes groups.

[33] I take this insight from anthropologist Keith Basso's work with Indigenous groups in the Southwestern United States (Basso 1996.)

Even if racialized groups re-appropriate the hegemonic meanings of racialized identity, they still bear the scars of racialization. Ultimately, racialized people are unable to let go of that which has caused them pain. Cheng hopes that there is a different way to understand oneself beyond the toxic process of racialization. To properly mourn over the past injuries of racism, Cheng argues that we must, "disembody that is both the master and the slave." In other words, in order to overcome the melancholy of race, we must re-conceptualize the way in which racial identity is formed and reformed. Even a positive racialized identity is cast upon another racilized group, perpetuating the melancholy of race.

Cheng's research can be applied to Jewish identity as well. My participants hold onto a white-Jewish identity forged in relation to processes like anti-Semitism and assimilation. Although they valorize being Jewish, they do so at the expense of people of color and Orthodox Jews. My research shows that the racial identity formation process creates a house of mirrors in which identity is continually cast and recast against different bodies. If we take arguments about complexity a step further, we need to re-imagine how people situate themselves in relation to the world beyond self vs. other forms of identity.

Identity seen through these lenses is useful for conceptualizing both how racial identities come together, and how they change, or come apart. A focus on material interactions has serious implications for an anti-racist politics. Saldana employs the social theory of Deleuze and Guattari to conceptualize race in a different way than the binary classification scheme I discussed above. Instead of seeing race as the bifurcation of human beings, the self and other, Saldana constructs race out of a single material. Different races become deviations of the same substance. Instead of being the negation of

blackness, Saldana argues that whiteness works as an ideal or normal body. All other bodies are seen as aberrations from this norm, some greater than others. This conception of race speaks to the literature in whiteness studies, which argues that white people produce their own historically and geographically specific ideas, culture, and bodies as universal or normal. This norm becomes the standard by which all other ideas, cultures, and bodies are judged against (Frankenburg 1997, Saldana 2007).

Most significantly, in this framework, each interaction with another racialized body becomes a point at which the normal white body is reconceptualized and white identity is reconfigured. For Saldana, this is the point where an anti-racist intervention can be made.[34] He says, "Every time phenotype makes another machinic connection there is a stutter. Every time bodies are further entrenched in segregation however brutal there needs to be an affective investment of some sort. This is the ruptural moment in which to intervene" (Saldana 2006 p. 13).

What is a machinic connection? Saldana, borrowing form Deleuze, firmly believes in an ontology of flows. These flows, which can be thought of as processes constantly in motion, are captured with other flows, temporarily fusing into what are called machines. These machines cut off flows, temporarily placing them with other flows into relatively consistent constellations. Using a framework of machines and flows it is possible to re-conceptualize things and processes in a way that makes them more sensitive to change. A focus on machines allows us to see how white identity comes together through the material processes and interactions outlined in my ethnography, and

[34] Clearly this is not the only effective anti-racist politics, or necessarily the best one in all situations. I employ this set of politics here because it makes conceptualizing the re-articulation of whiteness easier in my study.

ultimately, how and in what ways it will reconfigure (Saldana 2007, Puar 2007, Andrucki 2010). White identity is a machine because it cuts off flows like place-disattachment, safety, and collective memory and organizes them into a relatively stable constellation. If we see white identity's constitutive elements as flows, we can imagine how they can break loose to form new machines or different constellations of identity.

Ethnographies about racial identity such as my study are particularly well suited for this type of analysis. I conceptualized my participants' white identities by focusing on the interactions they had with people and places. We can imagine that each interaction my participants had with a racialized body or space reconfigured their white identities. Further, we can see how each interaction strengthened or weakened my participants' commitment to white identity.

Anthropologist John Hartigan Jr. has also explored the material implications of ethnographic research on whiteness. Employing a "cultural analysis," Hartigan sees whiteness as a, "host of nuanced practices and repertoires linked to specific locals (Hartigan Jr. 2005 p.267)." Hartigan Jr. privileges interactions between bodies as an important vantage point for examining whiteness. Explaining the materiality of whiteness he says, "… people actively shape and rework meaningful structures and they typically do so in distinct places, where the multiplicity of encounters and the mutability of the landscape often militate against stock ideological reflexes (Hartigan Jr. 2005, p.273)." Both Saldana and Hartigan Jr. argue that an ethnographic focus on everyday practices, routines, and uses of space can unsettle dominant modes of whiteness and white identity.

Ruth's interaction with a man of color who threw trash on the floor confirmed the connection she made between the deterioration of the built environment in the Bronx and

racialized behavior. Just as Ruth felt justified in her sense of what it meant to be white, Edna's experience being turned down for a baby-sitting job because she wouldn't clean the floors or do the laundry weakened her conception of Riverdale as a homogenous white place. Noise, dirt, promiscuous sexual behavior, issues of safety, and the deterioration of the physical environment played heavily into the way my participants understood race. Ultimately, it was these types of interactions that constitute my participants' white identities.

In these interactions, my participants' white identities were also challenged. Gale's interactions with people of color, both in her apartment buildings, and where she worked in the South Bronx, allowed her to understand why black people were agitated. These interactions led her to take the civil right movement seriously, a decision that further shaped her interactions with people of color. Several of my participants' interactions with Orthodox Jews, including Fred's religious experience in a secular apartment building, and Edna's tense negotiation with an Orthodox doctor, forced my participants to rethink dimensions of racial difference and otherness, especially as they related to Riverdale's racial and ethnic identity.

Further, inside this framework, the interactions between senior center member and their aids, who were primarily women of color, become more relevant to my study. Examining their exchanges reveals new understandings of how my participants' white identities were reconfigured at the senior center. These interactions produced a myriad of outcomes, some which I believe strengthened my participants' white identities, others of which weakened them. In some cases, care relationships were forged that changed my participants' views of race. Saul's aides dressed him in baggy clothes that reflected Hip

Hop style more than it did the other seniors. All of the aides liked him a lot, and he could say nothing but good things about the women who, "gave him new life." In other instances, interactions between the groups confirmed my participants' negative disposition towards people of color. Sadie insisted that Sarah, one of the aids who regularly brought Jack to the Senior Center had deliberately defiled her new coat by touching it with chocolate on her hands! This incident, which affected her white identity, led her to reveal a racial anxiety about disappearing personal items at the senior center. She went on to talk about how the Macy's in a racially marked shopping plaza was too crowded. She also complained that the women of color who worked there were rude.

In summary, the interactions between people and place play an important part in the articulation and re-articulation of white identity. In the context of this study, shifting from a negation centered approach to identity towards one grounded in material conditions and collective interactions allows us to re-think my participants' white identities in two important ways. First, we can look into the past to better understand how my participants' white identities arose. Instead of seeing it as the inevitable outcome of losing privilege in the form of displacement, we can think historically about alternative paths my participants' white identities could have taken. Second, instead of being intellectually exhausted by what appears to be the continuance of my participants' white identities, we can see how the potential for new kinds of identities are both strengthened and weakened in every day interactions.

A Deluzian framework of machines and flows is only one of the ways in which it is possible to re-imagine what racial identity is and how it changes. So far, I have focused on how everyday interactions change white identity. Although this framework opens up

conceptions of white identity to process and change, it is still difficult for me to concretely imagine how these changes might unfold. To think through these changes in a way that is more attuned to the history of the Bronx, particularly in regards to blacks and Jews, I turn to the work of Clyde Woods. Woods' understanding of the Blues geography or the Blues epistemology allows us to locate and blend together African American and Jewish intellectual traditions. It is my hope that this engagement will allow us to reconceptualize the discourse around blacks and Jews in the Bronx, particularly during the period of my participants' out-migration from the West Bronx.

The Blues epistemology is an African American system of "investigation and interpretation," developed in relation to anti-black racism in the Mississippi Delta. Woods argues that the Blues epistemology, of which Blues music is only one part, was both a method of dealing with oppression and a way of developing new social relations/re-organizing racist geographies.

Although slavery formally ended in the 1850's and radical reconstruction, provided African Americans in the South with glimpses of social and economic justice, white elites continued to extract value out of black bodies in what Woods calls a plantation economy (Woods 1998, ibid. 2007). The plantation economy, built on highly exploitative practices such as sharecropping, lead to the immiseration and premature death of African Africans in the Mississippi delta. Two of the more well known way in which African Americans struggled against the plantation elite included migration to the north, and eventually, the creation of a large scale civil rights movement. The Blues both pre-dates and informs these movements. The Blues, which is sometimes referred to as "devil's music," in racist intellectual formations, provided African Americans with a way

of recording and expressing the horrors of the plantation economy.[35] The Blues or Blues epistemology also provided useful information about how to survive, providing both utopian imaginings and concrete solutions to the racist social relations that marked the Mississippi delta. Though originating in the South, the Blues significantly influenced musical, cultural, and intellectual traditions across the entire United States and even the world (Woods 1998, ibid. 2007).

Hip Hop is a musical, cultural, and intellectual tradition that has its roots in the Blues. As I discussed in chapter three, Hip Hop was formed as a way of coping with public and private disinvestment in the Bronx. The Hip Hop movement also constructed a knowledge base from which to resist disinvestment and transform the Bronx. Knowledge or consciousness is one of the five elements of hip-hop.[36] Hip-hop pioneer Afrika Bambaataa, who grew up in the Bronx River Projects, not far from a whites only beach club frequented my participants in the 1950's, built hip-hop "… into a fluid university system organized around a community centered consciousness and the principles of, "knowledge, wisdom, understanding, freedom, justice, equality, peace, unity, love, respect, work, fun, overcoming the negative to the positive, economics, mathematics, science, life, truth facts, faith, and the oneness of god."[37]" (Woods 2007 p. 67).

What does Hip Hop have to do with Jews who moved to Riverdale and largely blamed the people of color for disinvestment in the West Bronx? The Blues

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[35] Much like Hip Hop music today, the Blues was largely panned by pro-plantation elite intellectuals and media. Negative depictions of the Blues deliberately tried to obscure their revolutionary potential.
[36] Along with mc-ing or rapping, dj-ing, b-boying and b-girling or dancing, and graffiti art (Chang 2004, Woods 2007).
[37] Originally quoted from Universal Zulu Nation, "The Beliefs of the Zulu Nation" http://www.zulunation.com.

epistemology, and in this case, the Hip Hop epistemology, has the ability to unite different groups together. Woods explains, "Therefore, those who are marginalized based on their culture, ethnic, race, class, gender, and regional position find this epistemology and its analogical reasoning empowering. It enables them to reach inward to explore new depths while simultaneously allowing them to reach beyond enforced boundaries in order to unite with other demonized communities – the "wretched" of the earth" (Woods 2007, p.74).

Jews, although finding a soft landing place in Riverdale, were displaced from their neighborhoods through the disinvestment process. By reinterpreting moments of Jewish displacement or "Reach(ing) beyond enforced boundaries," we can re-imagine the relationship between "white," Jews and "black," African Americans (Woods 2007).

Jewish intellectual traditions exist that can produce a different understanding of Jewish displacement from the West Bronx. In chapter three, I described how Jews were radicalized in response to race and class oppression in the Pale of the Settlement. Groups like the Bund developed critiques of how capitalism and Anti-Semitism worked together to marginalize Jews (Liebman 1979, Brodkin 1999). Much like African Americans, Jews brought with them modes of interpretation and utopian visions of socio-spatial relations (Liebman 1979, Robinson 1983, Woods 2007). On the Lower East Side, union organizing, wild cat strikes, and collectively organized social reproduction were informed by this tradition.

A logical position from which to link this tradition to Hip Hop would be the Socialist Jewish co-operative movement. In the 1920's and 1930's, the United Workers Cooperative Colony or the Coops was built according to a radical Jewish understanding

of geography. Like the Blues and Hip Hop, this mode of interpretation and analysis provided Jews on the Lower East Side a refuge to the tyranny of capitalist social relations and a way of imagining what life could be beyond them. An advertisement in a socialist newspaper for the Coops read, "Don't keep our savings in the capitalist banks! Capitalists aid strike breakers and gunmen! Make your money serve your own class! Six Percent return on equity. Help finance the Coop" (cited in Hazelton 1998)!

In summary, I believe the Blues epistemology can be used as a framework to blend together the intellectual traditions that inform Hip Hop and Jewish radicalism. From this position, it is possible to re-imagine the geographies of white flight that make black and Jewish visions of the Bronx irreconcilable. Fostering connections between these groups is an important step towards changing the terrain on which black-Jewish relations are generally understood. We need to steer away from the polarities that often characterize this relationship. On one hand, a narrow reading of blacks and Jews as the same encourages an oppression olympics.[38] On the other, understanding this relationship as a complete schism cuts off any opportunity for these groups to reclaim or imagine a different Bronx together. I believe that the aforementioned approaches to Black-Jewish relations can only strengthen the articulation of white identity forged through the migration of Jews from the West Bronx to Riverdale. Only by taking a different path, can we hope to weaken its continued production.

[38] My group has it worse than your group!

Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed how my own research reveals theoretical lacunae in scholarship about Jews and whiteness. Critiquing Hegelian notions of identity, I used the work of Arun Saldana to advocate for an increased emphasis on material conditions and collective interactions in studies about race and racial identity. I argued that such a conception of identity opens up static conceptions of whiteness and helps us better conceptualize how white identity changes. Further, using my own research as an example, I made the argument that the interaction between people and place is a strategic moment for an anti-racist politics to intervene.

Desiring a more concrete way of reimagining both the trajectory of black-Jewish relations in the Bronx, I introduced Clyde Woods' concept of the Blues epistemology. Linking this method of description, analysis, and development to the birth of Hip Hop in the South Bronx, I emphasized its ability to, "reach beyond enforced boundaries in order to unite with other demonized communities," (Woods 2004 p.74). Finally, I linked the Hip Hop tradition to radical Jewish ways of imagining the Bronx, as evident in the construction of socialist cooperatives in the 1920's and 1930's. I concluded by arguing that we need a new way of imagining black and Jewish relationships in the Bronx if we are serious about weakening my participants' white identities.

Chapter VIII: Conclusion

Between the late 1950's and the early 1980's, the Jewish population in the West Bronx decreased by 98 percent (Horowitz, Kaplan, and Felt 1957, Ritterband and Cohen 1981). The white flight literature describes how Jews became white and middle class as they moved to the suburbs. In this dissertation, I examined the case of Jews who moved from the West Bronx to Riverdale. Drawing upon data collected using several different methods, I analyzed why Jews migrated out of the West Bronx to Riverdale and how it affected their racial identities.

The conclusion is split into four parts. First, I address the empirical, theoretical, and methodological significance of my study. Second, focusing on my analytic chapters, I summarize my major findings. Third, I explain why despite the fluidity that characterizes racialized identities, my participants' white identities continue to persist. Fourth, I discuss strategies for breaking the link between disinvestment and race.

Significance of Study

My study makes empirical, theoretical, and methodological contributions to geography, Jewish studies, and whiteness studies.

The geographic concentration of my study has empirical significance. Most studies about Jews in New York during the Post-War period focus on how the racial identity of Jews changed through the suburbanization process. Social science researchers often posit that Jews transformed from non-white or conditionally white to white through suburban migration. Choosing a stronger white socio-spatial identity, Jews moved amongst other white groups like the Irish and Italians. Presumably, the socio spatial

privileges afforded to suburban migrants made moving out of places like the West Bronx an easy decision.

The suburbs, however, were not the only place that Jews went when they left the West Bronx. Jewish out-migration from the Bronx had several trajectories. In my research, I examined how the racial identity of Jews was affected by migrating to Riverdale. My participants decided to continue living in urban Jewish places like Riverdale and Co-op City instead of moving to the suburbs. Thus, empirically, this research documents and analyses a new trajectory of Jewish migration (See Chapter 4).

The oral histories I collected from my participants are also empirically significant. Their narratives express a personalized version of the Bronx's historical evolution, thoughts about present day Riverdale, and worries about the future of Jewry in the Bronx. My participants' stories show how New York has radically transformed over the course of the 20th and 21st centuries. Their accounts of change over time are a rich resource for theorizing race and space. Further, the empirical contributions of my study are valuable because of the advanced age of the group I worked with. Soon, my participants' unique perspectives will be lost (See Chapter 4).

My study makes three primary theoretical contributions. First, my research shows that white identity or whiteness is fluid. As Jews moved from the West Bronx to Riverdale, their white identities changed. More specifically, their white identities changed in relation to material processes like neighborhood disinvestment and migration. These processes condensed into a historically and geographically specific articulation of

white identity related to the conditions under which my participants moved from the West Bronx to Riverdale. I outlined three primary characteristics of this form of white identity. First, my participants organized their white identities in a spatial way, focusing on the struggle over lost territory. Second, they blamed people of color for the destruction of urban Jewish living in the West Bronx. Third, although, they had no desire to move back to the West Bronx, they wished to see it's restoration as a particular kind of race and classed space. My research also showed that potential existed within my participants' narratives for new white identities to form. My participants' white identities were both strengthened and weakened through my participants relationships with Orthodox Jews and West Indian Aides (See chapters 5, 6, and 7).

In a second related contribution, my research shows that the connections scholars make between Jewish whiteness to suburbanization is largely an over generalization. Although the race of Jews was impacted by suburban migration, it was not the only way in which they negotiated the racialization process. Further, contrary to the notion that Jews assimilated into static racialized places, they profoundly changed the places they moved into. As their identities changed, so did the meaning of the places they inhabited. Riverdale's evolution as a racialized place is a good example of this process (See Chapters 3, 4, and 7).

Third, my research opens up possibilities for reimagining narratives of white flight and racialized interpretations of neighborhood change. Often, white flight movers are made legible through rational choice theory. In other words, the privileges afforded to suburban residents, made leaving urban ethnic neighborhoods an easy choice. My

research challenges the logic of white flight, showing that my participants didn't move to the suburbs because they wanted to continue urban Jewish living. They moved to Riverdale and Co-op City for this reason (See Chapters 4 and 7).

My mixed methods approach has significance as well. Although my methodology was primarily qualitative, consisting of participant observation and residential histories, I also used GIS techniques. Combining GIS with qualitative methods in novel ways, my research makes an important contribution to the study of mixed methodologies in the social sciences. In this study, I used GIS to visualize the residential histories of my participants. Viewing my participants' migration histories in a GIS framework revealed an important perspective unavailable through a strictly qualitative approach (Kwan 2002). To contextualize my qualitative data, I also conducted a spatial analysis of quantitative historical Census data. By mixing methods in this way, my study also contributes to "qualitative GIS," a burgeoning sub-field in geography (See chapter 2).

Major Findings: A Brief Summary of My Research

In this section I will summarize the main points of my dissertation. I will focus on how the migration process affected the racial identity of my participants, reviewing the major findings in each of the analytic chapters.

In chapter 3, I made the argument that Jews were white in relation to other racialized groups in outer borough neighborhoods like the West Bronx. My historical research showed that Jews in the West Bronx drew both material and psychological privileges from the exclusion and exploitation of African Americans. Moreover, I found that the Bronx was crippled by a potent combination of state and landlord disinvestment.

Black and brown folks appearance in Jewish space was a product of the disinvestment process.

In chapter 4, I showed that my participants experienced displacement from the West Bronx as the influx of black and brown bodies in o previously all white and Jewish spaces. “Neighborhood change,” precipitated the rapid migration of Jews out of the West Bronx. The speed of this process was disorienting, leaving my participants desperate for explanations. Their out-migration was characterized by strong feelings of place dis-attachment. The West Bronx was a rich source of identity for my participants. The disinvestment process threw their sense of who they were into a tail spin.

My research also showed that my participants migrated to Riverdale in an effort to continue living in white urban Jewish neighborhoods. These desires lead my participants to eschew the suburbs and move to places within the Bronx like Co-op City and Riverdale.

In chapter 5, I showed that the way Jews left the West Bronx and settled in Co-op City and Riverdale profoundly affected their racial identities. As they were already white in relation to people of color in the West Bronx, they did not become white when they moved to Riverdale. Rather, their whiteness or white identities changed. These identities were reconfigured or re-articulated in relation to the material processes of race, disinvestment, and migration.

My participants’ experience with disinvestment, place dis-attachment, out-migration, and demographic change contributed to the formation of a historically and geographically contingent articulation of white identity. This racial identity had two

primary characteristics, both of which were grounded in specific organizations of the Bronx's racial geography.

First, my participants differentiated themselves from people of color who they blamed for disinvestment in the West Bronx. As a method of explaining "what happened to the Bronx," neighborhood change organized the racial geographies of the Bronx in a way that linked people of color's individual behaviors, particularly African Americans and Puerto Ricans, to chaos, dirt, and disinvestment.

Second, my participants organized the geography of the Bronx by imagining Riverdale as a racially homogenous place. As such, the presence of people of color in Riverdale threatened its racialized identity, as well as my participants understanding of what it meant to be white in the Bronx.

Although white identity was the primary way in which my participants articulated their racial identities, internal tensions within their narratives revealed the potential for new kinds of white identities to form. In chapter 6, I showed how my participants challenged the way in which the Bronx's racial geographies were organized by humanizing people of color, explaining the role of landlords in the disinvestment process, and acknowledging the struggles of the civil rights movement.

They also contested the racial geographies of white identity by questioning the whiteness of Orthodox Jews. The racial homogeneity of Riverdale, an important component of my participants' white identities, was muddied as they arbitrated Orthodox Jewish difference. Although my participants' narratives provided exciting opportunities for reimagining the Bronx's racial geography, they often recovered their white identities by expanding whiteness to include Orthodox Jews. In their minds, Riverdale remained a

homogenous place. Although my participants acknowledged that Orthodox Jews were different from what they considered "normal Jews," they moved to expand the white category, effectively strengthening their white identities.

The Persistence of White Identity

In the previous chapter, I presented a framework from which to reconsider the history of blacks and Jews in the Bronx. I also showed how the manifestation of white identity I described in chapter V is both strengthened and weakened through individual interactions. Here, I try to understand why the white identity of my participants was stubborn. Despite the fluidity that characterizes racial identity, why did this form of white identity continue to persist?

My participants' desire to hold onto this form of white identity can be attributed to several factors. First, popular portrayals of the South Bronx informed my participants' white identities. Since the 1970's, the Bronx has been a metaphor for the failure of urban life and modern civilization (Berman 1996). Clyde Woods argues that the South Bronx, which the West Bronx is now a part of, became the new center of "Black Primitivism," or flawed black culture/behavior (Woods 2007). The Bronx, particularly the South Bronx, was, and still is, frequently made legible through tropes of racialized destruction, blight, and disease (Associated Press 1997). Generally understood as an unlivable place, my participants were quick to distance themselves from the South Bronx and the Bronx in general. Claiming whiteness was a way of removing oneself from negatively racialized understandings of the South Bronx.

My participants were reluctant about identifying with the Bronx in everyday interactions at the senior center. There were often intense debates among senior center

members about whether Riverdale should be included as part of Manhattan. During an improvisation game I participated in, I pretended to be a bus driver taking passengers to Shore Haven, a long defunct Jewish beach club once located on the Long Island Sound. Ike, a man who more often than not expressed himself in jokes, blurted out, "oh no, anywhere but there, not the Bronx." The rest of the group laughed, agreeing as they nodded their heads in approval.

The overall feeling that the South Bronx, and the Bronx in general were damaged places, meant that the people who lived in these places were also damaged. In an effort to differentiate urban Jewish life from this destruction, my participants relied on prevailing racial hierarchies and what Clyde Woods calls "Black Depravity Studies," to forge a strong link between material indicators of disinvestment and people of color (Woods 2007).[39] [40]

Black Depravity Studies describes hegemonic forms of knowledge production which seek to delegitimize revolutionary forms of knowledge while simultaneously dividing and atomizing groups with common interests (Woods 2007). The renewal of the racialized culture of poverty argument in the Regan years was aimed at pathologizing black and Latino behavior in places like the South Bronx. Black Depravity Studies delegitimized and devalued the way people of color organized space following the disinvestment of the Bronx. The rise of Black Depravity Studies in this period dovetailed with a reinvigorated Jewish model minority myth. Led by the battle cries of Jewish

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[39] See "Remembrance of Synagogue Past: The Lost Civilization of the Jewish South Bronx," at www.Bronxsynagogues.org.

[40] By "Black Depravity Studies," Woods refers to the production of the racialized welfare queen, culture of poverty arguments, and the general demonization of black cultural forms and behavior.

intellectuals like Nathan Glazer, constant comparisons of Jews and blacks in New York on the basis of culture and behavior channeled the experience of my participants into racialized understandings of the Bronx's geography (Heinz 2000, Lederhendler 2001, Steinberg 2001). This intellectual formation heavily influenced my participants' experiences of being displaced from the West Bronx. It gave a concrete shape to the emotions of place dis-attachment they felt. Future research needs to address how Black Depravity Studies was deployed by the media and the state to explain the events surrounding Jewish displacement from the West Bronx.

The influence of Black Depravity Studies during this time period reveals the contingent and fragmented way in which people are recruited into racialized ways of understanding the world. Although my participants understood the racial geographies of the Bronx in a way that produced and reaffirmed a relative position of privilege and power, their anxiety about racism and their ambivalence about their white identities showed that they were not fully determined by the racist suggestions of Black Depravity Studies. Finally, I believe that this specific articulation of white identity was persistent because it played an important role in creating and maintaining the collective memory of my participants. Neighborhood change acted as a social coagulant for seniors who craved interaction with contemporaries. The sharp contours of class, gender, age, and geography were smoothed through a common narrative of how the Bronx had changed over time. A racialized understanding of the Bronx's geography was a key component of my participants' shared identity. Sharing experiences of neighborhood change was a way of showing that one was a veteran of the same painful experience. In this way, white identity was reproduced through the seniors' everyday interactions.

Future Research: Disentangling Race and Disinvestment

Anti-Racist intellectuals are well positioned to muddy the link between disinvestment and race. To fight this battle, we need to create a more nuanced understanding of capital disinvestment, particularly as it relates to the outer boroughs in New York. Studies showing how capitalism produces space through the process of creative destruction are plentiful, particularly regarding how investment and disinvestment flows in and out of the urban environment (Harvey 1982, Berman 1983, ibid. 1984, Smith, Duncan, and Reid 1989, Moody 2007, Greenberg 2009). How can we use this wellspring of knowledge to counter Black Depravity Studies, an intellectual formation which colonizes the geographical imaginations of my participants and strengthens the connection between disinvestment and race?

A renewed emphasis on the historical geography of disinvestment in specific places like the West Bronx is a good place to start. A social justice oriented GIS framework can illustrate this geography (Pavlovskaya 2006). I imagine creating a spatial database that contains narratives of disinvestment in the West Bronx both from Jews and African Americans.[41] Their stories could animate the abstract methods Marxist geographers often use to measure disinvestment. [42] This qualitative GIS project would be useful in two important ways. First, a focus on the way people imbue meaning into the disinvestment process could be a useful teaching tool. People's stories are more

[41] See www.invinciblecities.com for a visualization of the kind of spatial database I am describing.

[42] Disinvestment is usually measured through proxy data such as the number of businesses that have opened or closed in a particular area or the tax liens that landlords have collected over a period of time (Smith 1983, ibid. 1984, Smith, Duncan, and Reid 1989, Smith, Caris, and Wyly 2001).

expressive than tax lien data. This project would make seeing and understanding the disinvestment processes easier for non-academics. Second, putting multiple interpretations of space side by side will show that people of color were the not cause of disinvestment, but instead, were negatively affected. Visualizing these narratives could lead to new understandings of neighborhood change.

I recommend social justice GIS both as a methodological tool for gathering narratives, and as an analytical tool for developing theory. GIS methodologies allow researchers to collect, organize, and visualize people's narratives in a way that can inform social justice projects. GIS visualization and spatial analysis are powerful tools for theorizing how capitalism, racism, and patriarchy are produced and reproduced through space.

In conjunction with the spatial database I described, there are several ways anti-racist scholars can unsettle the link between disinvestment and race. First, we should closely examine disinvested neighborhoods in which there were no changes in Census based racial categories. How is white identity articulated in these places? Second, to muddy the connection between race and disinvestment we need to directly attack the pillars of Black Depravity Studies. We should add to, teach, and present research that critiques racial injustice in both the criminal justice system and segregated schools. Further, we can illuminate more examples of how poverty and welfare work in rural white places. Finally, following in the footsteps of Clyde Woods, we should show how revolutionary projects like the Blues and Hip Hop are born out of the struggle against racism. The way Black Depravity Studies demonizes these projects obscures their capacity to unite subordinate groups across race and class boundaries. Together, a

framework that embraces these forms of scholarship can sever the connection between race and disinvestment and weaken the racialized geographies of white identity.

Conclusion: Tying it all Together

In conclusion, the migration process deeply affected the racial identity of Jews. Their decision to move to Riverdale, and not to the suburbs, affected the way in which they would understand what it meant to be white. Living through disinvestment, displacement, and feelings of place dis-attachment profoundly shaped their understanding of both themselves and the Bronx's geography.

My participants articulated their white identities by racializing the Bronx's geography. Riverdale, where my participants lived, was white, Jewish, orderly, and nice while the rest of the Bronx, particularly those parts my participants had once lived in, were black, gentile, destroyed, unrecognizable, and beyond repair. This way of organizing the Bronx's geographies congealed in a white identity in which people of color needed to be excluded from Riverdale at all costs.

My participants' mixed reaction to the influx of Orthodox Jews revealed tensions in my participants' white identities. These tensions hinted at new ways of understanding the Bronx's historical geography. Building on the analysis I conducted in chapter six, I re-conceptualized my empirical findings in two important ways.

First, I used the Deleuzian lens of Arun Saldana to re-think racial identity in a way that better accounts for fluidity and change. Drawing on examples from my research, I argued that scholars ought to focus on how material conditions and collective interactions impact race and racial identity. Conceptualizing race in this way helps us

better understand how white identity is strengthened and weakened through everyday interactions.

Second, I used Clyde Woods' understanding of the Blues epistemology to re-imagine the historical trajectory of black-Jewish relations in the Bronx. Using Hip Hop and socialist cooperatives as examples, I built a framework for future research that embraces both black and Jewish visions of socio-spatial justice in the Bronx.

How we tell the story of displacement, disinvestment, place dis-attachment, and white flight is fundamental to challenging the kinds of white identities I have gone at lengths to describe. I can only hope that my research challenges readers to take steps towards rethinking how the Bronx's geography can be organized. I ask them to critically evaluate conceptions of white flight and neighborhood change with the desire that we can collectively construct the relational sense of belonging that racialized geographies obscure.

Figures

Figure 1: Overview of Jewish Settlement in the West Bronx and Fordham

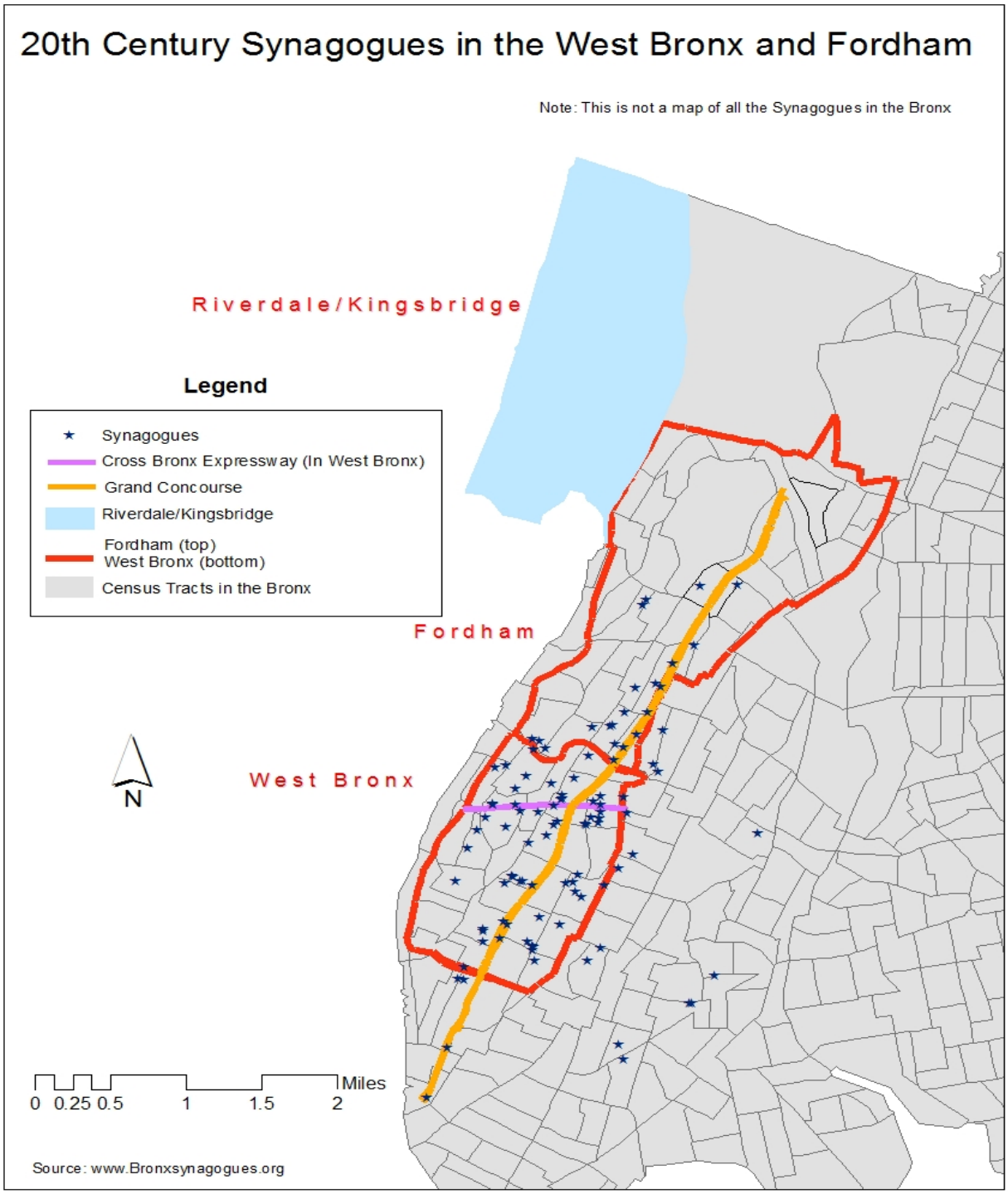
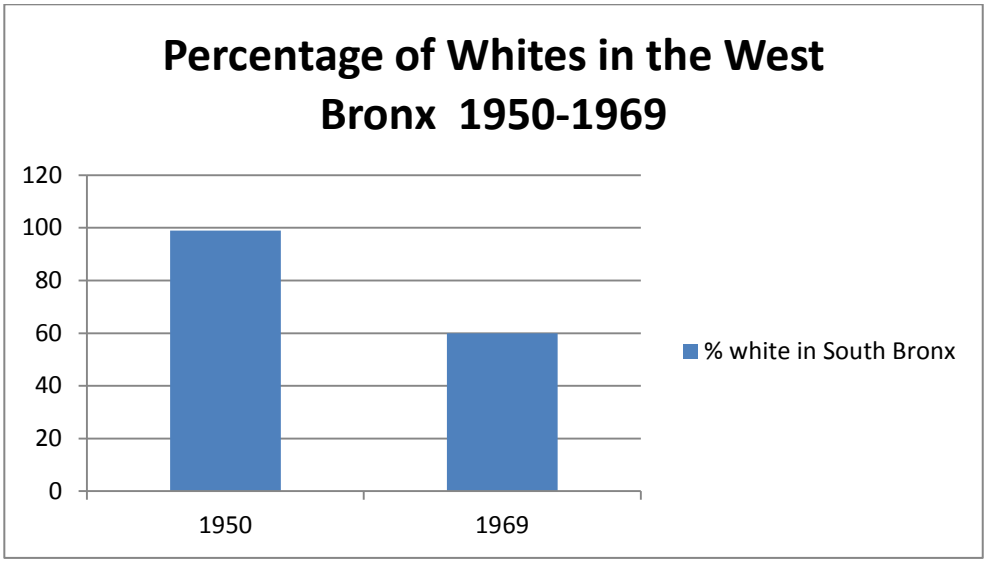
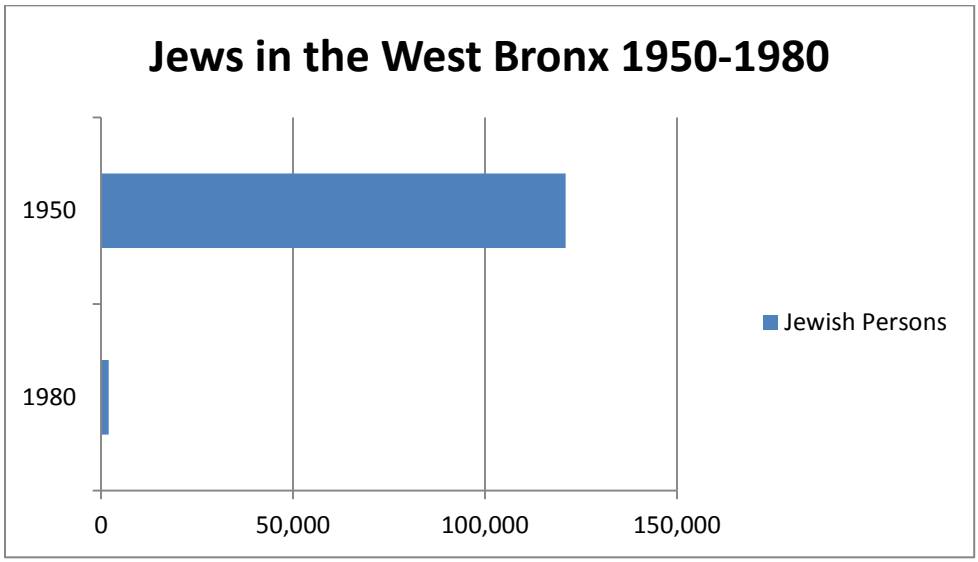


Figure 2: Demographic Changes in The Bronx

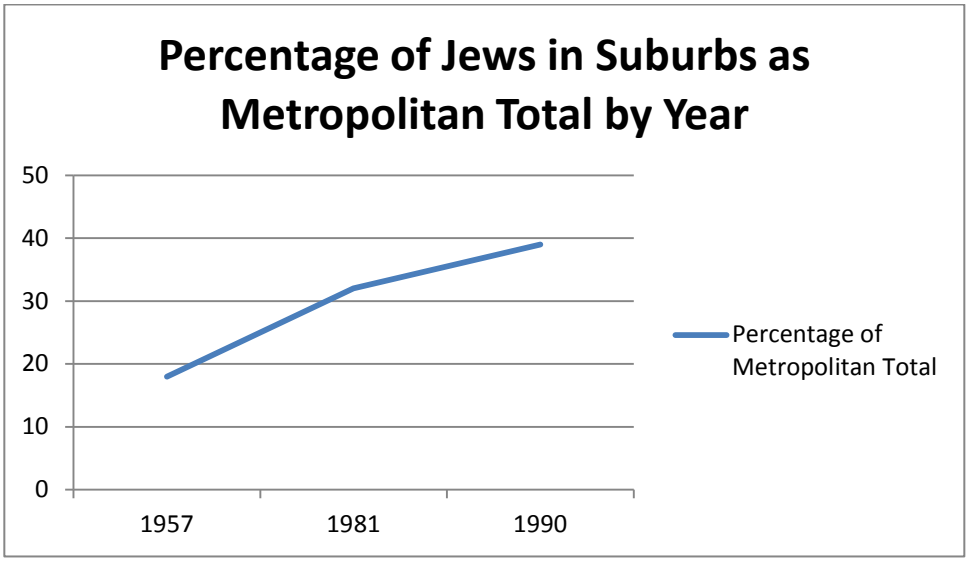
a) Percentage of Whites in the West Bronx 1950-1969



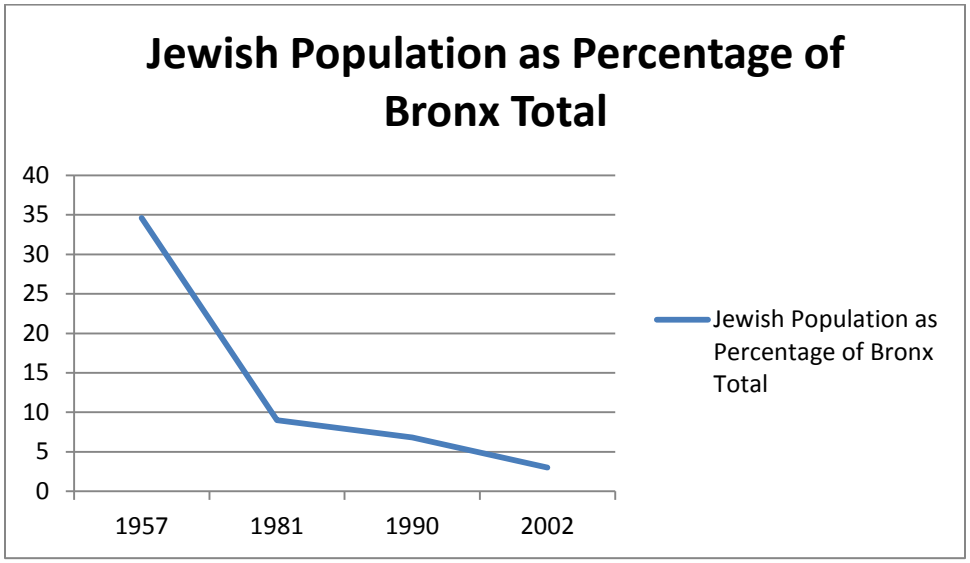
b) Jews in the West Bronx: 1950-1980



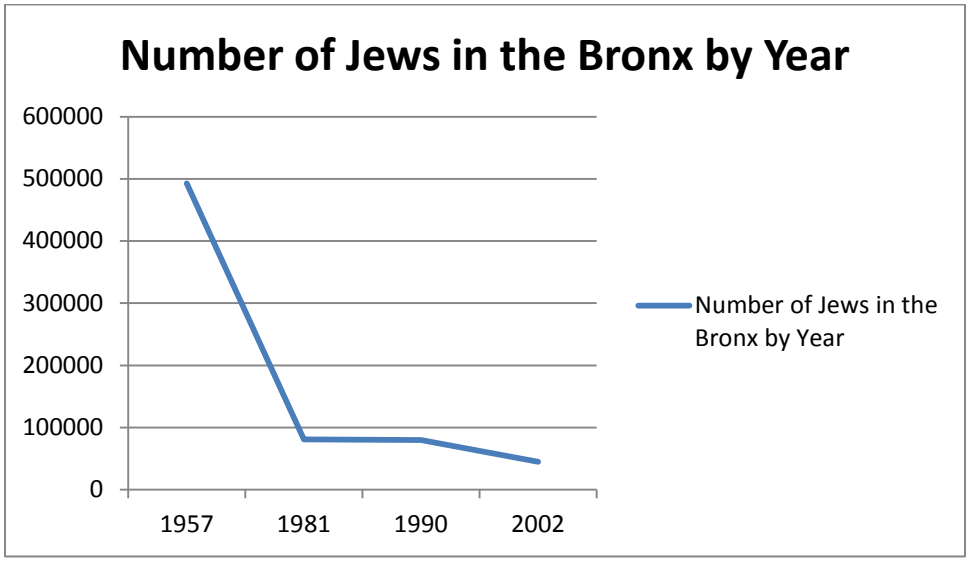
c) Percentage of Jews in Suburbs as Metropolitan Total by Year



d) Jewish Population as Percentage of Bronx Total



e) Number of Jews in the Bronx by Year



f) Jews in Bronx and Weschester Counties in 2002

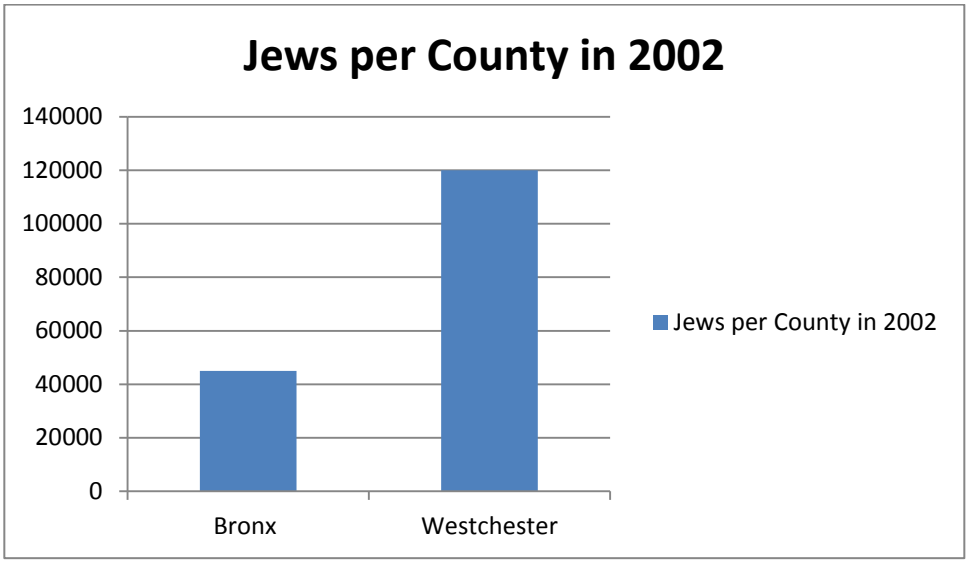


Figure 3: Key/Codes for Migration Histories by Alphabetical Order

CS: Participant Moved Because They Wanted a Change of Scenery

DD: Participant Moved to Dodge the Draft

DF: Participant Moved Because of a Death in the Family

DM: Participant Moved Because of Downward Mobility/Poverty

FA: Participant Moved Because They Wanted to be Closer to Family

FR: Particpant Moved Because They Wanted to be Closer to Friends

GR: Participant Moved to be in a Greener Area (Nature)

HB: Participant Moved Within the Bronx Because They Were Happy There

IC: Participant Left a Place Because It was Inconvenient

JC: Participant Moved Because of a Job or for a Shorter Commute

JN: Participant Moved Because They Wanted to Live in a Jewish Neighborhood

LM: Participant Moved Because They Wanted to Live Among Like Minded People

LS: Participant Moved Because They Wanted Less Space

MA: Participant Moved Because They Were Married

MS: Participant Moved Because They Wanted More Space

NC: Participant Moved Because the Neighborhood Changed

NP: Participant Moved Because They Wanted to Live in a Nicer Place

NS: Participant was Not Sure Why They Moved

PR/ML: Participant Moved to a Particular Location Because it was the Right Price. This Code was Used Specifically in Reference to the Mitchell Lama Housing Projects my Participants Moved to When They Left the West Bronx

SA: Participant Moved Because They Were Concerned For Their Safety

SC: Participant Moved to a Particular Location Because There was a Scarcity of Apartments in the Area They Wanted to Live in

SCI: Participant Moved Because of Issues with Public Schools

SRI: Participant Moved Because of Social Reproduction Issues Having to do with Child Care

TCD: Participant Didn't Move to Particular Location Because of Issues Related to Transportation. This was an Issue for Women who Didn't Move to the Suburbs Because They Were Worried They Would be Stranded Without a Car

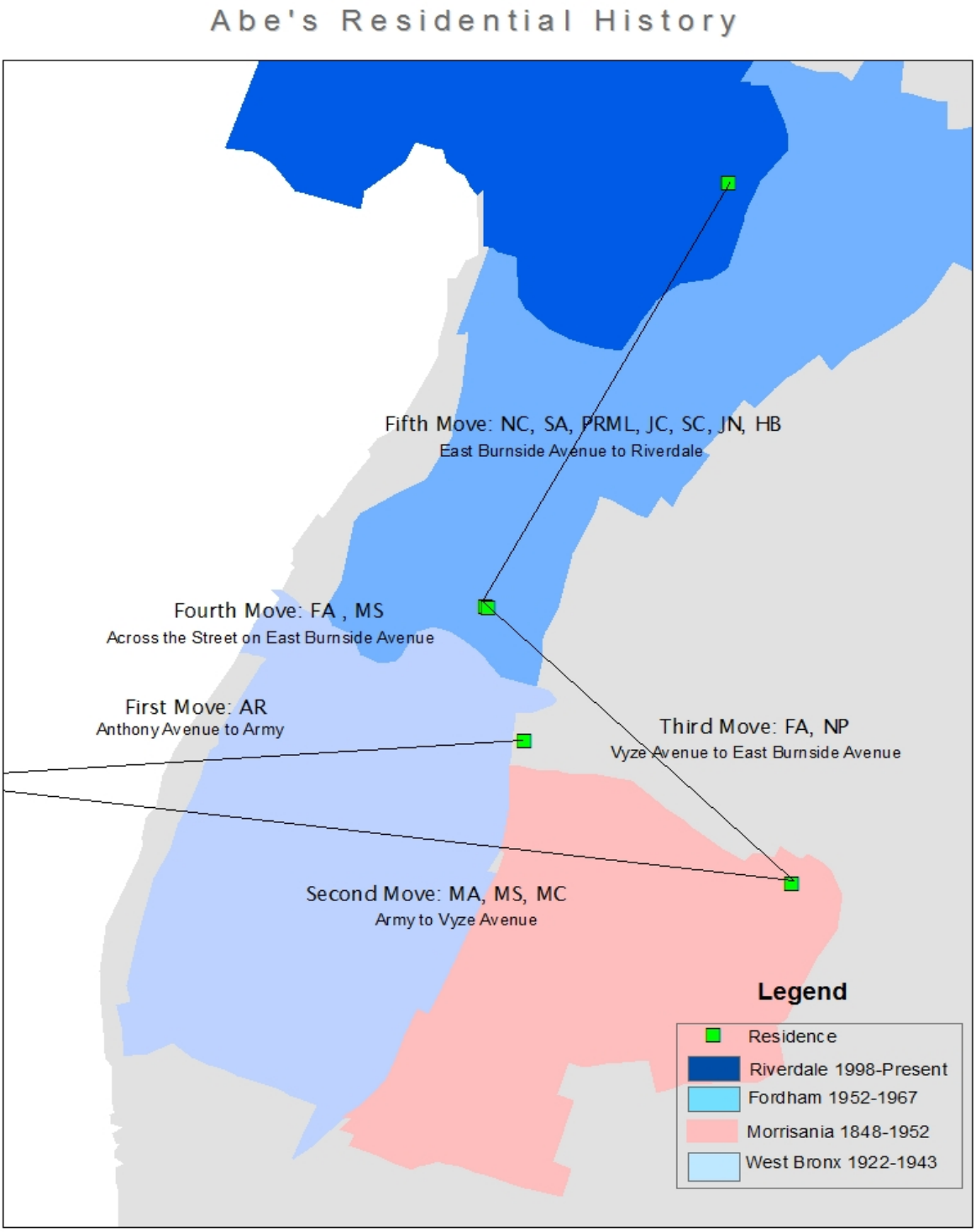
UP: Participant Moved Because of Problems with Utlities such as Heating in Their Building

URD: Participant Moved Because They Were Displaced By Either Urban Renewal or Eminent Domain

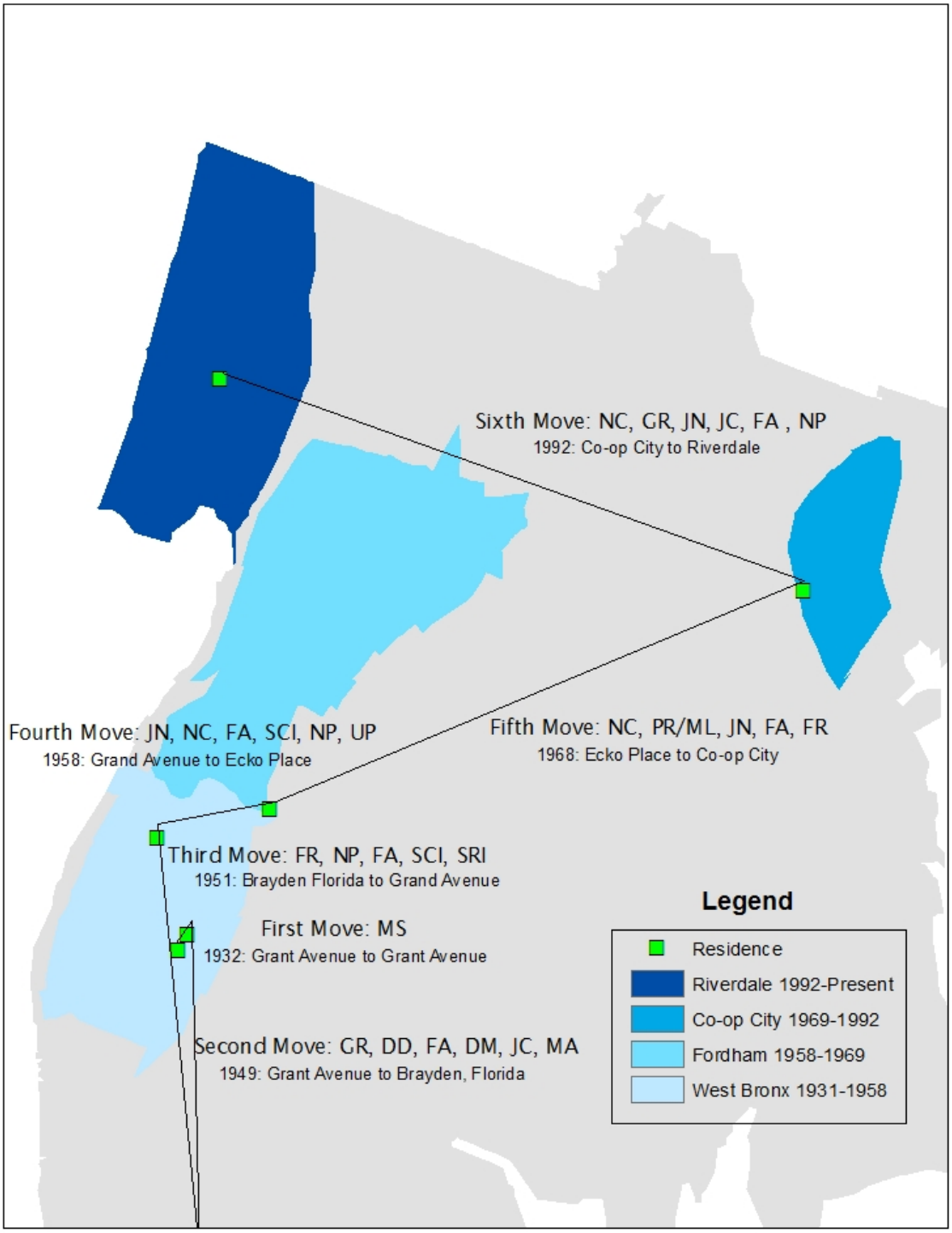
WP: Participant Moved Because They Explicitly Wanted to Live in a White Neighborhood

Figure 4: Participant Residential Histories (For scale, North arrow, and context, see Figure 1)

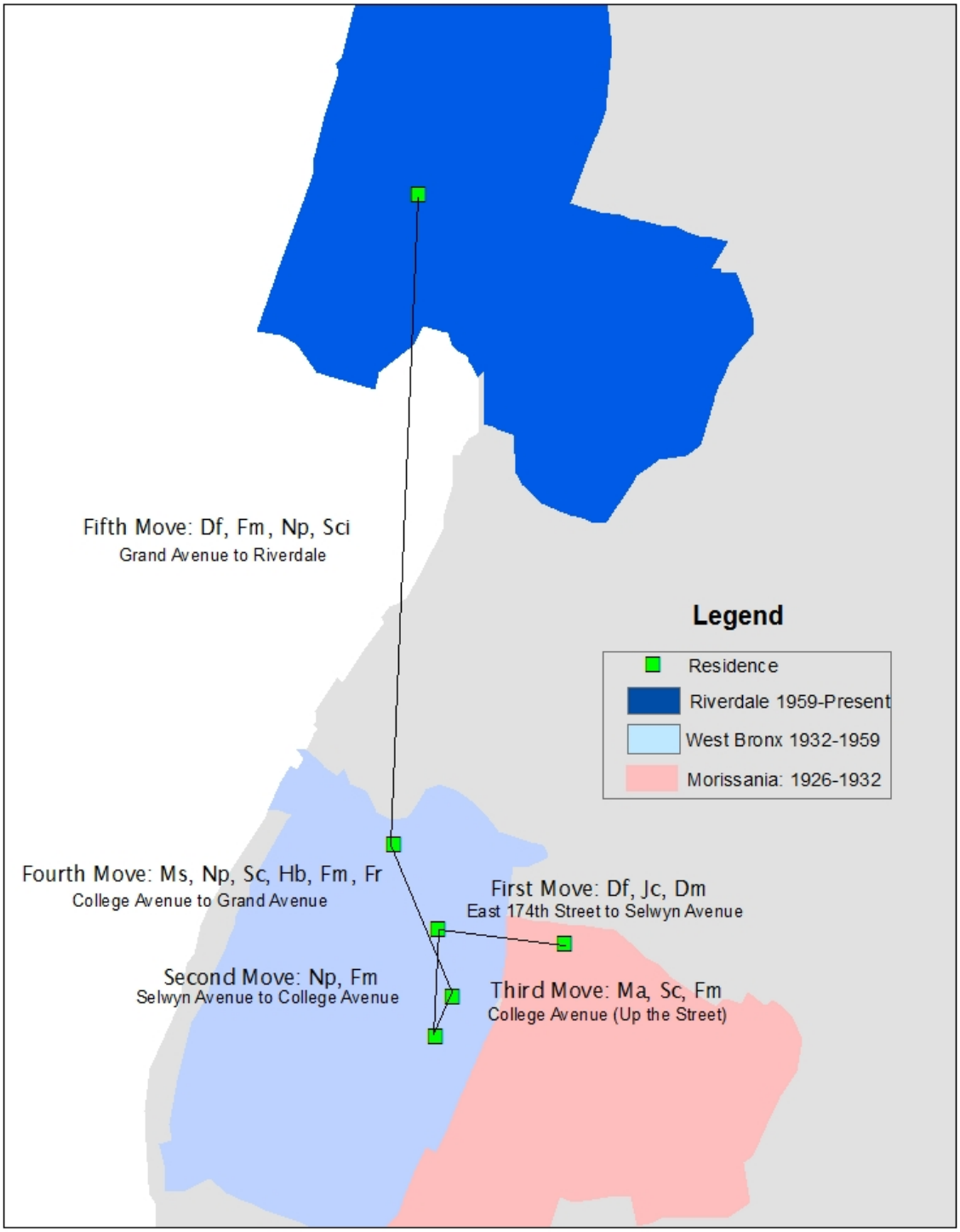
(Arrows without and end or residence attached to them signify a location outside of the Bronx)



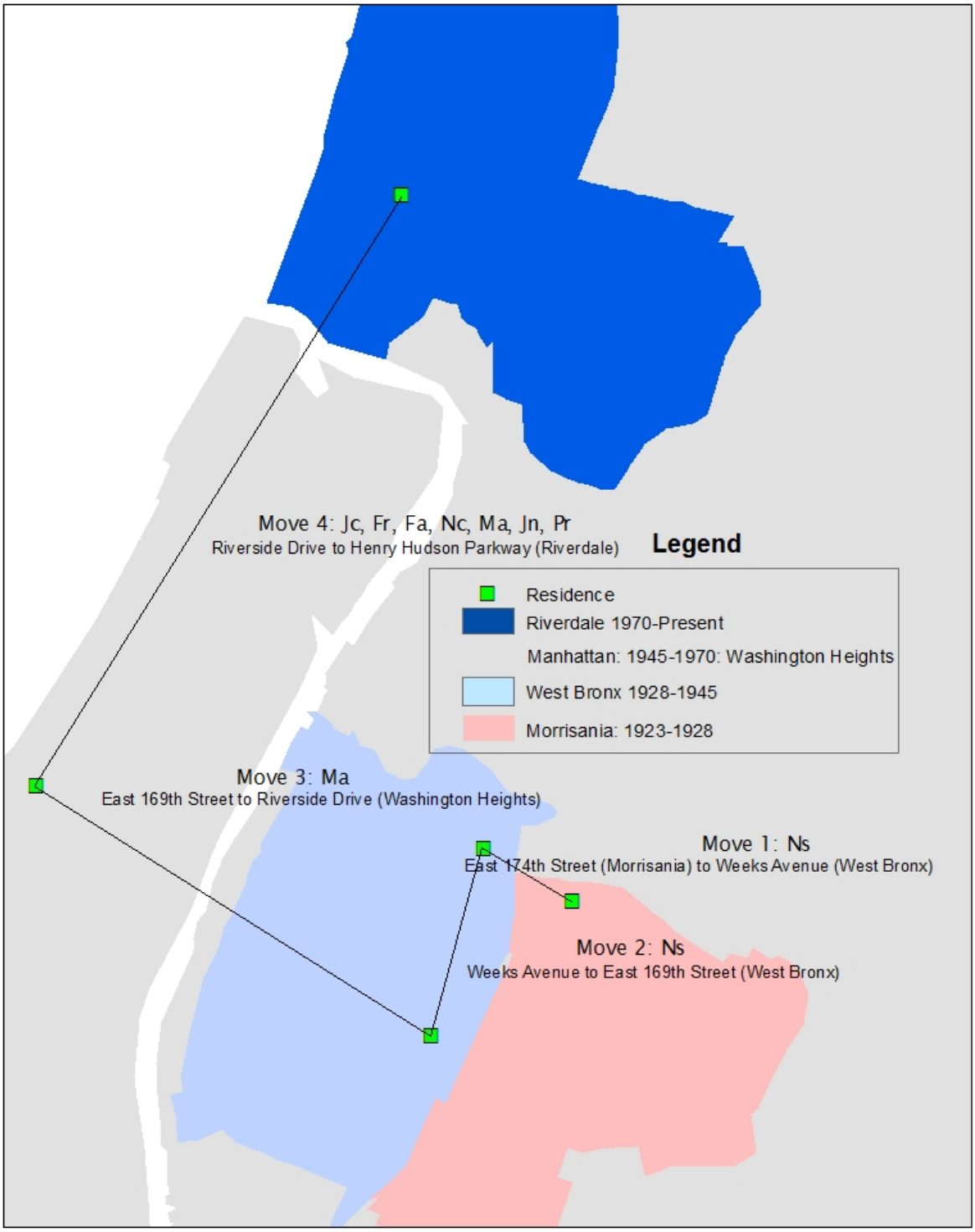
Ann's Residential History



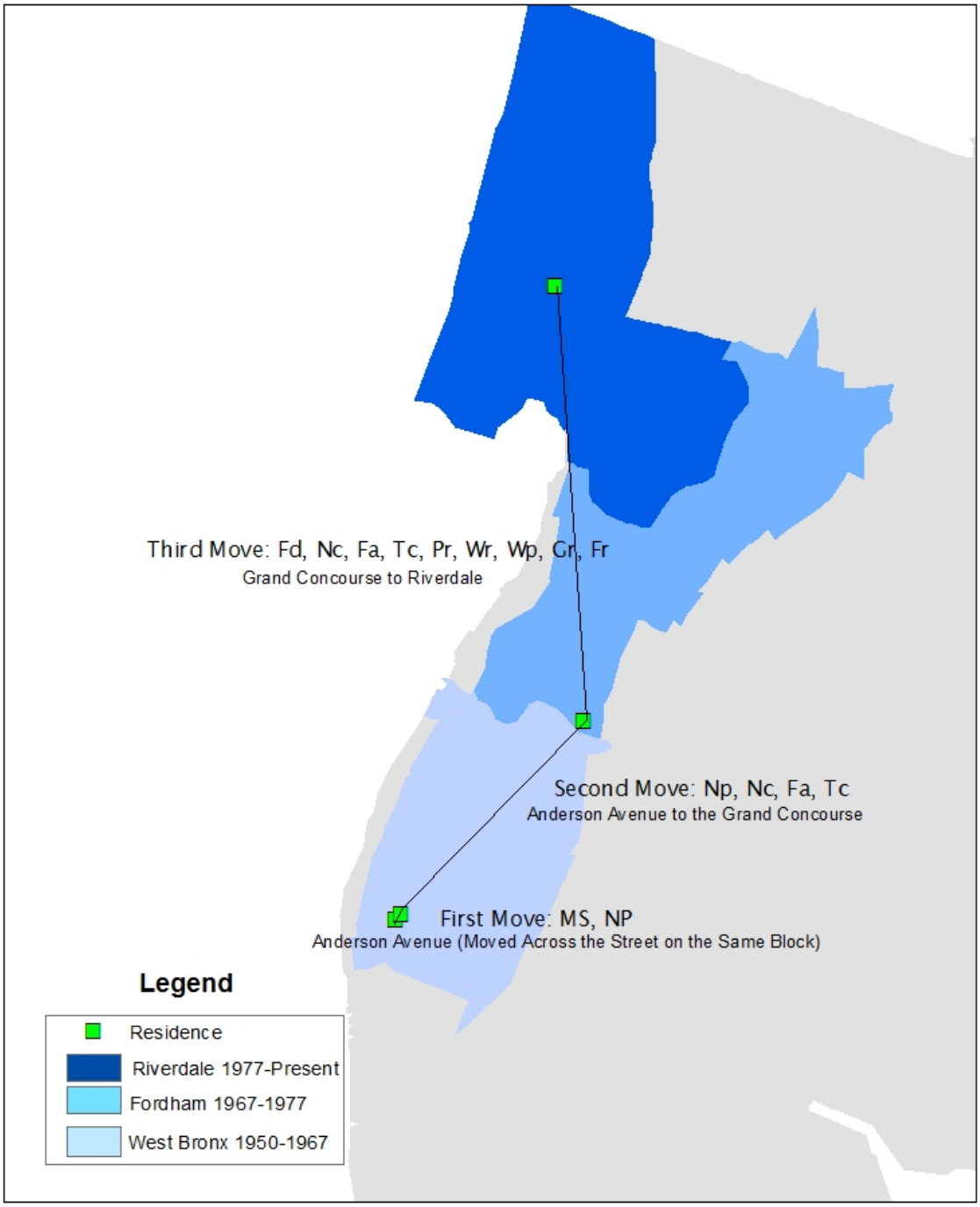
Bernice's Residential History



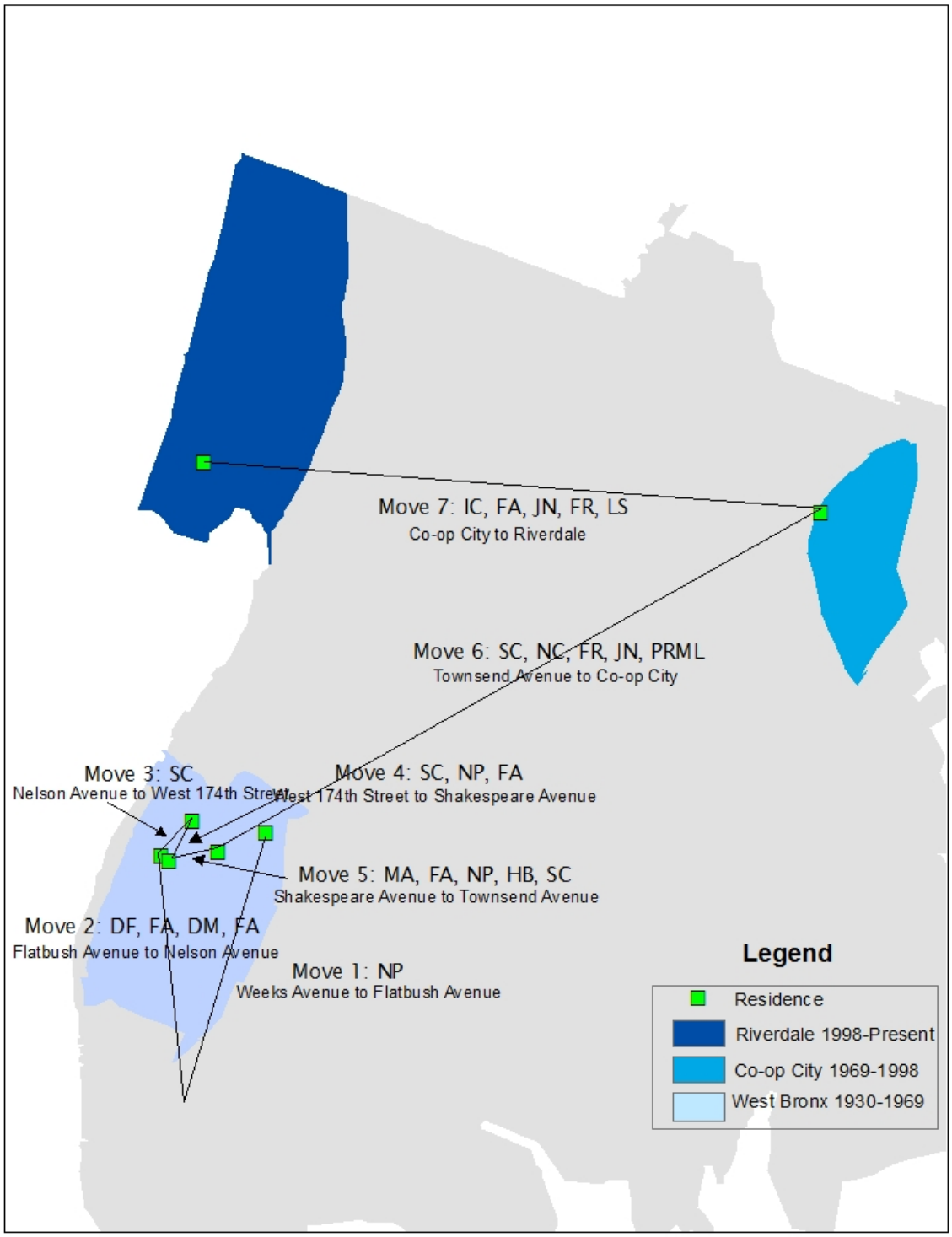
Fred's Residential History



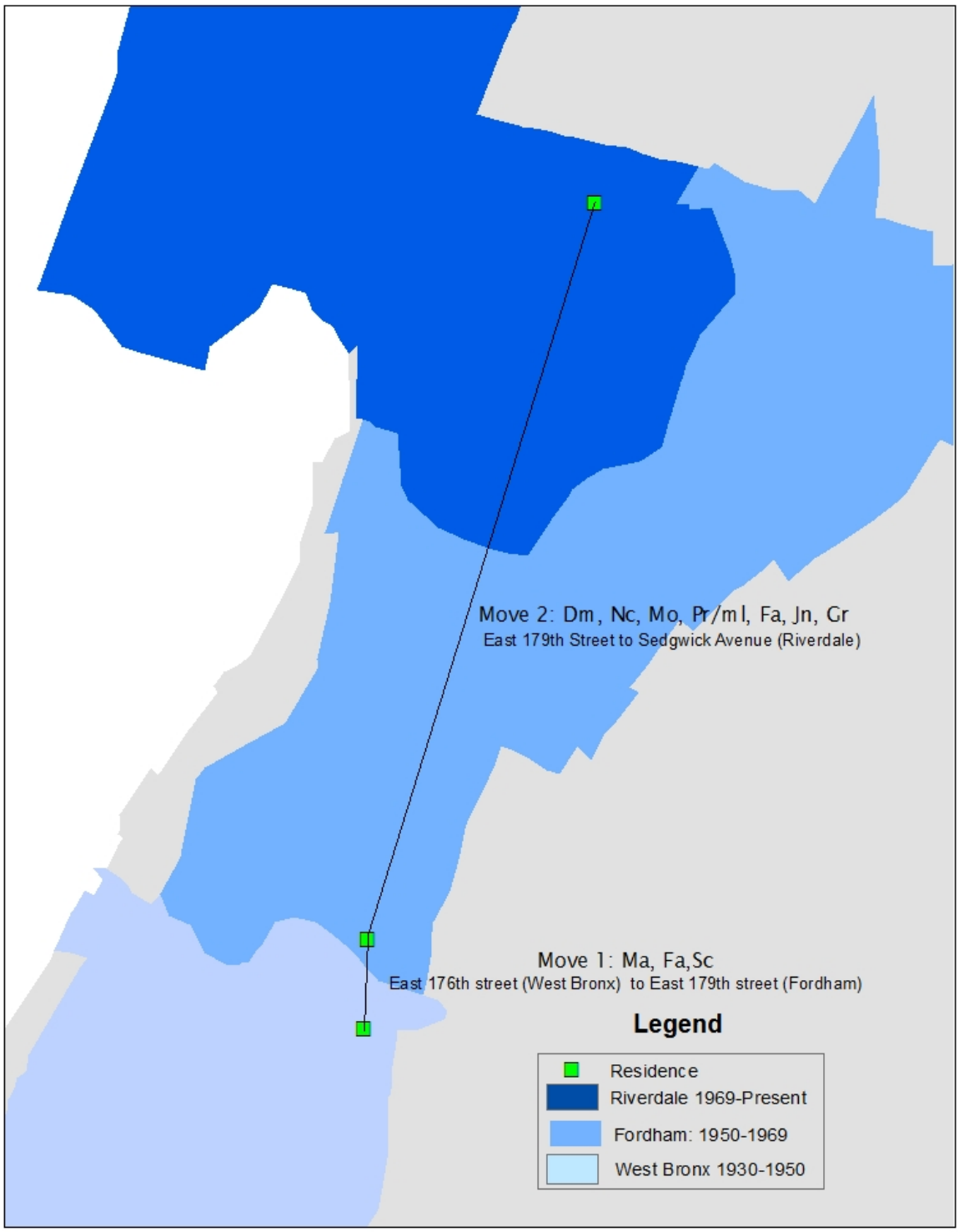
Edna's Residential History



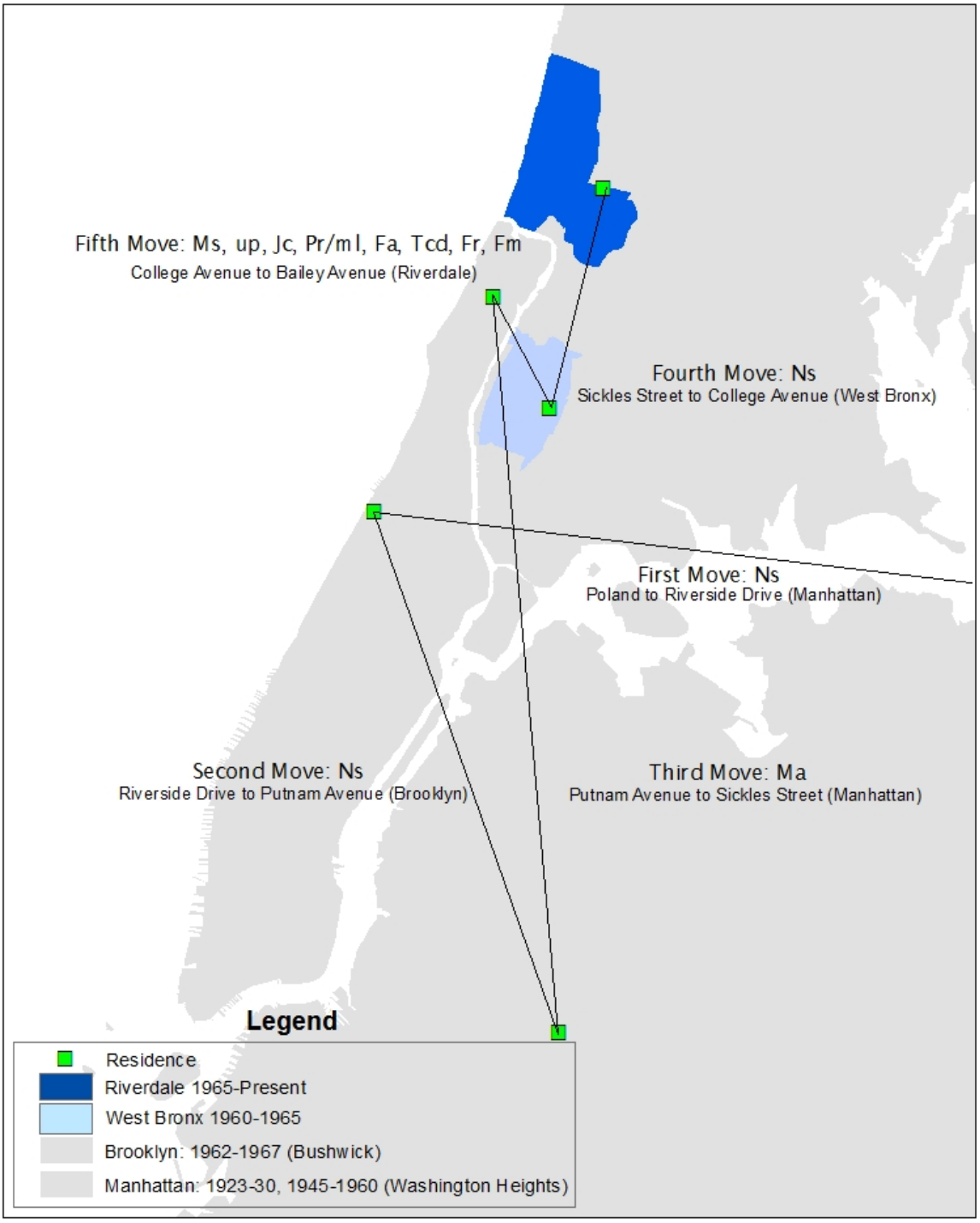
Elaine's Residential History



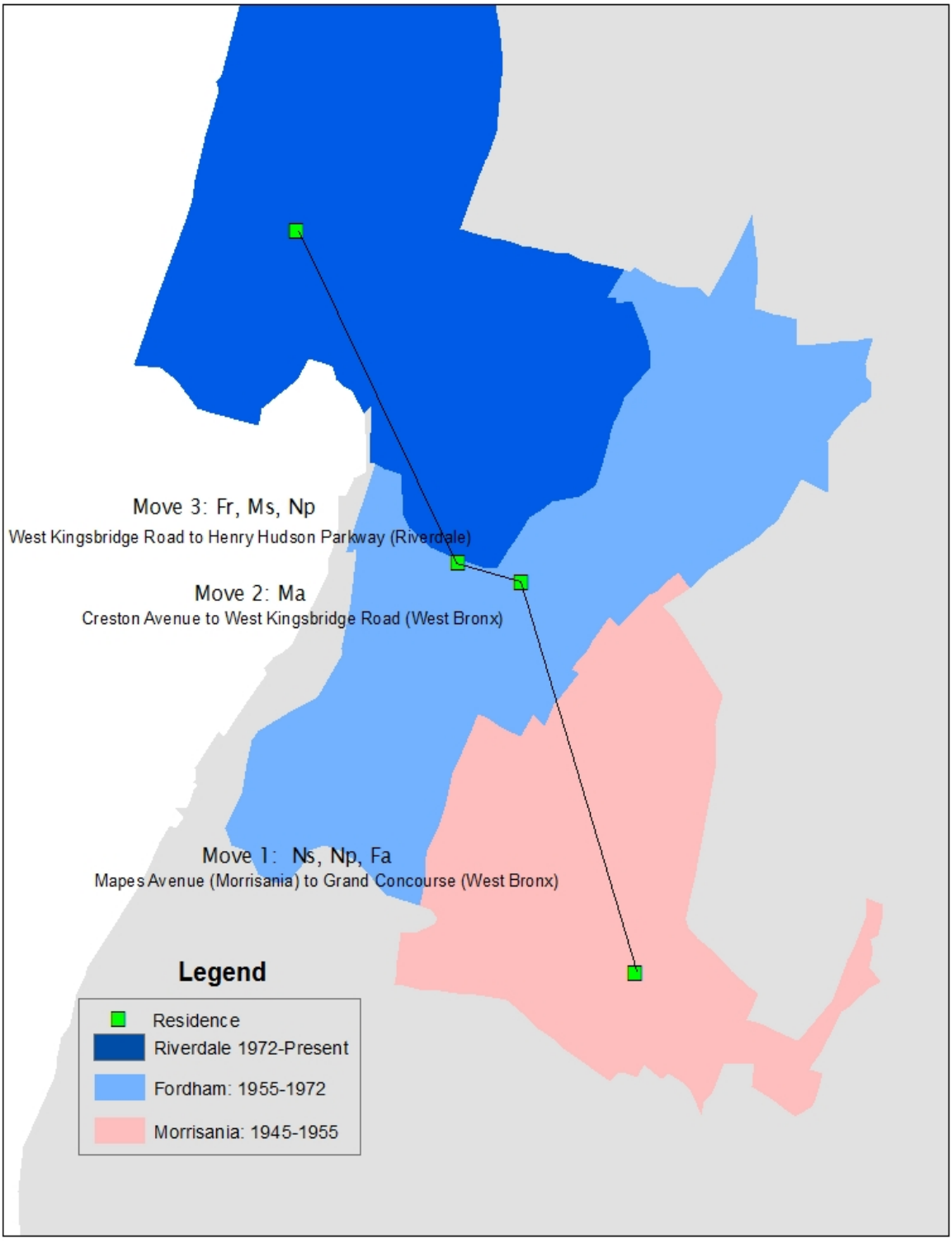
Gale's Residential History

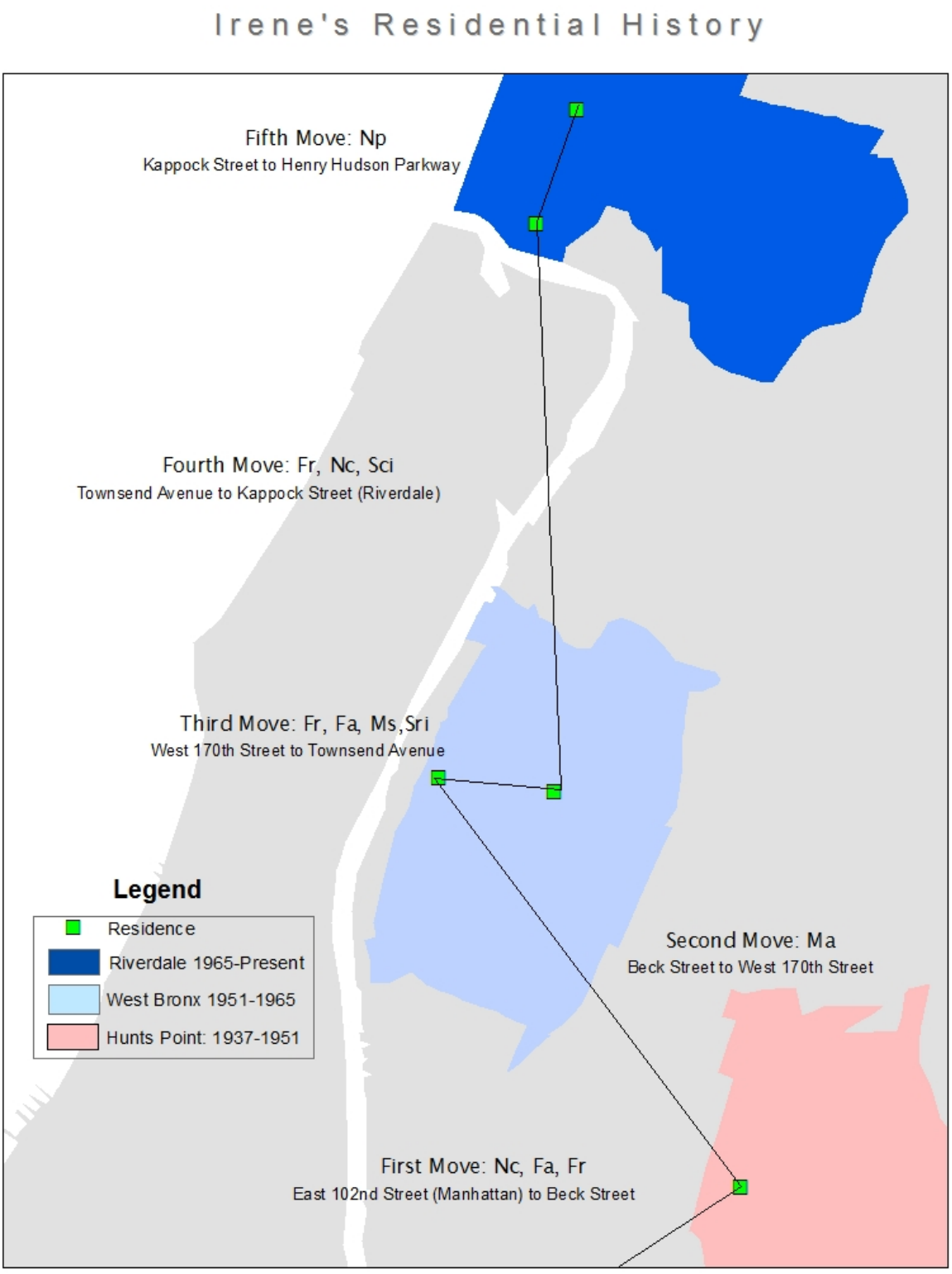


Hirsch's Residential History

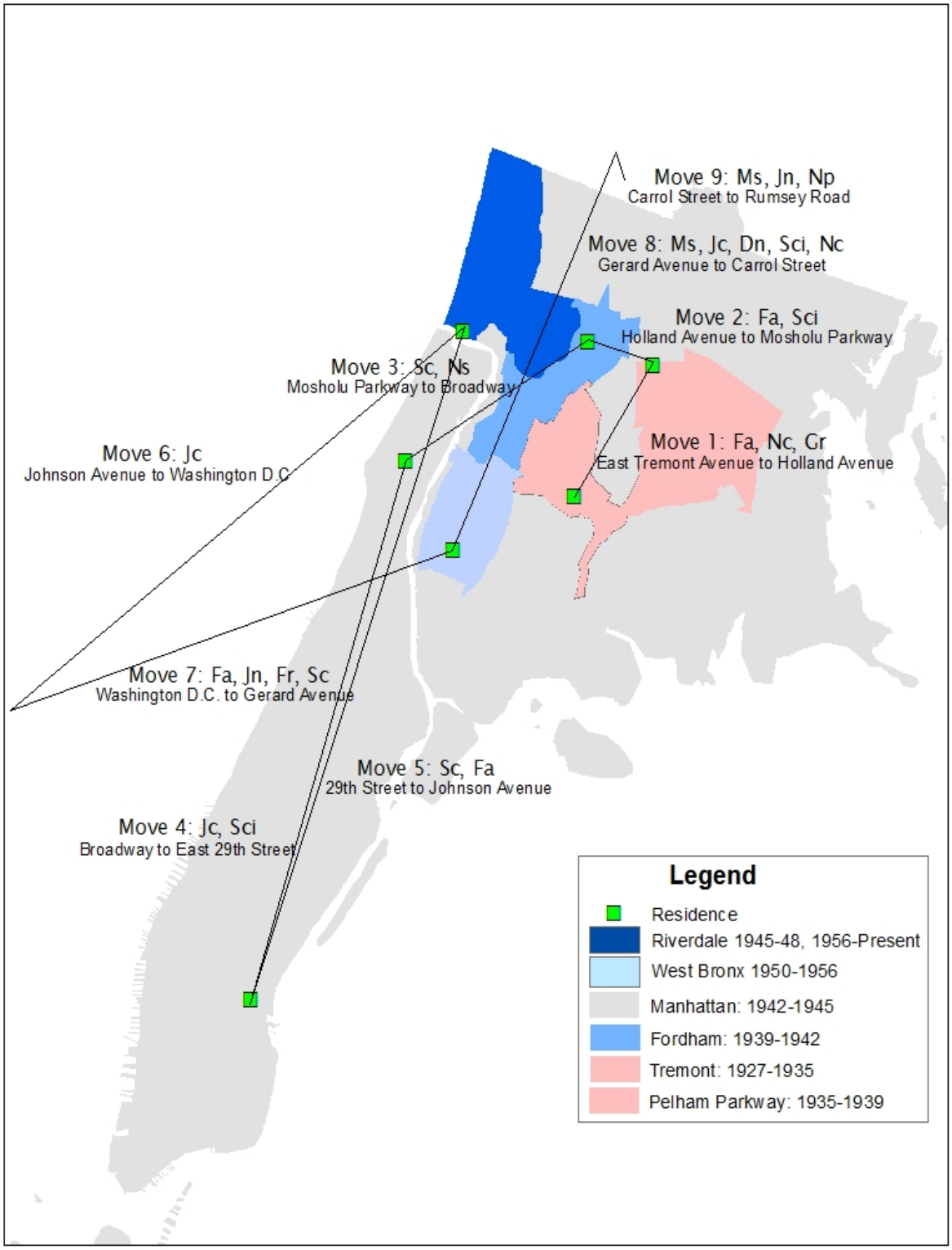


Ida's Residential History

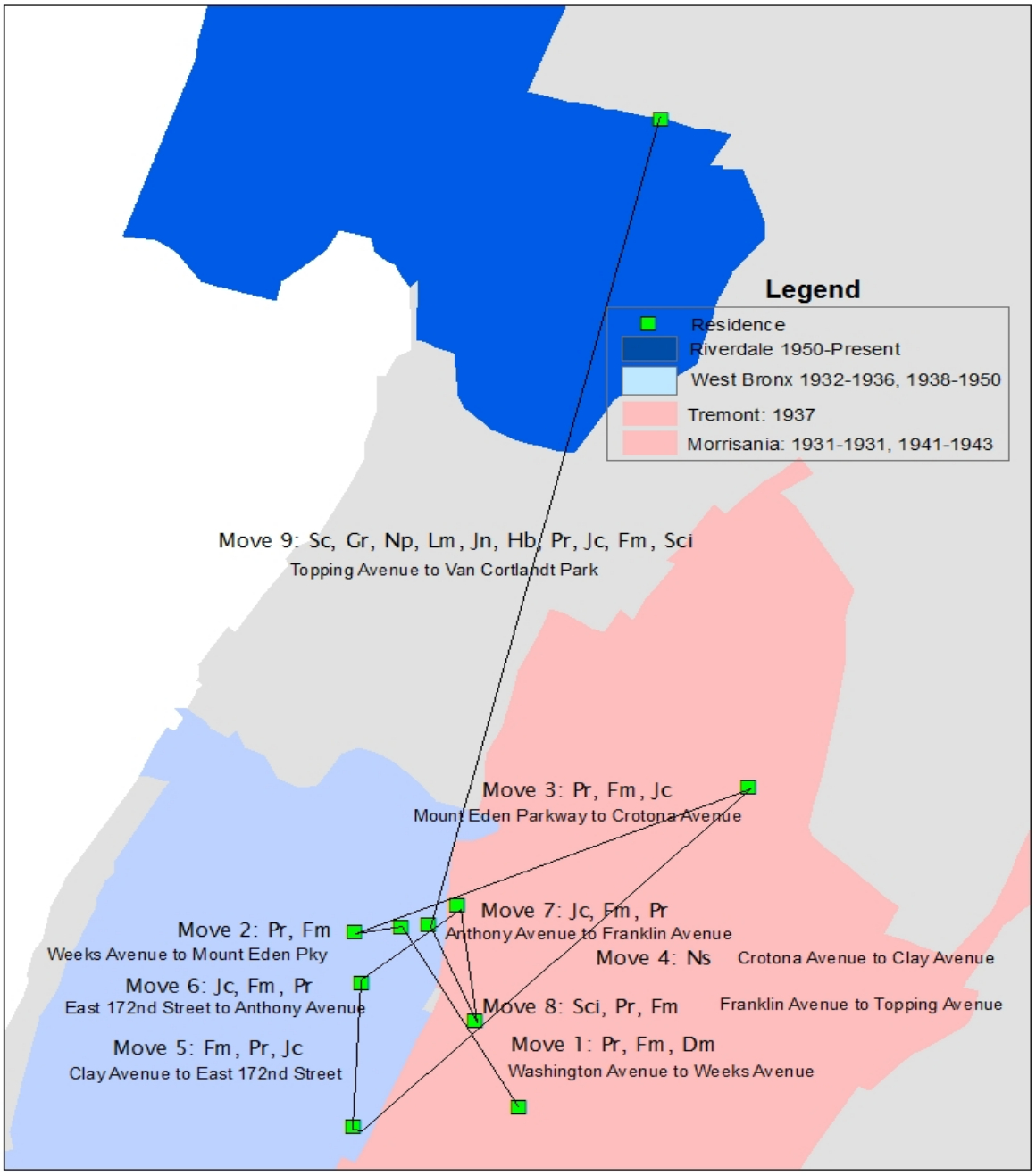


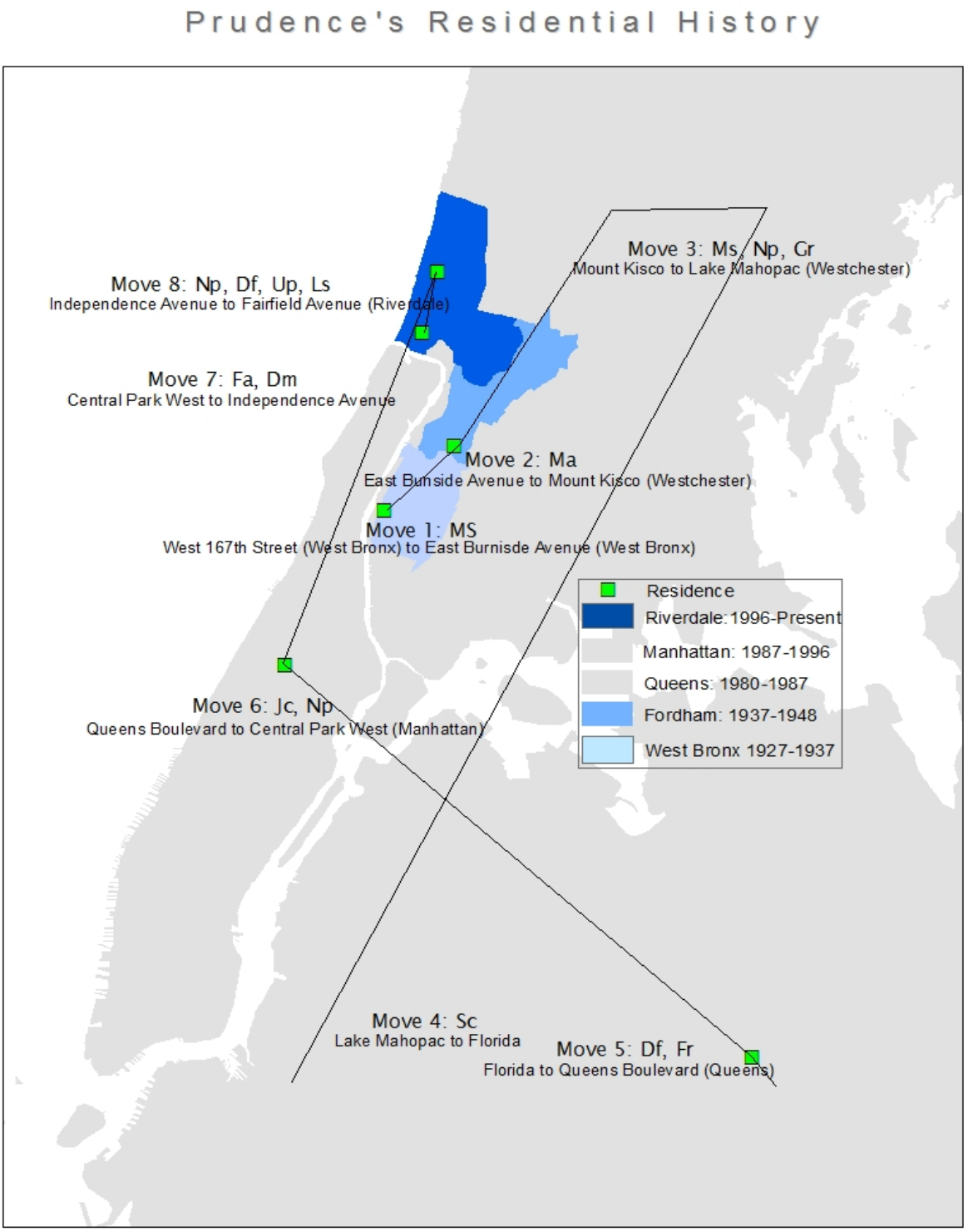

Irene's Residential History
Fifth Move: Np
Kappock Street to Henry Hudson Parkway
Fourth Move: Fr, Nc, Sci
Townsend Avenue to Kappock Street (Riverdale)
Third Move: Fr, Fa, Ms,Sri
West 170th Street to Townsend Avenue
Second Move: Ma
Beck Street to West 170th Street
First Move: Nc, Fa, Fr
East 102nd Street (Manhattan) to Beck Street
Legend
Residence
Riverdale 1965-Present
West Bronx 1951-1965
Hunts Point: 1937-1951

Lori's Residential History

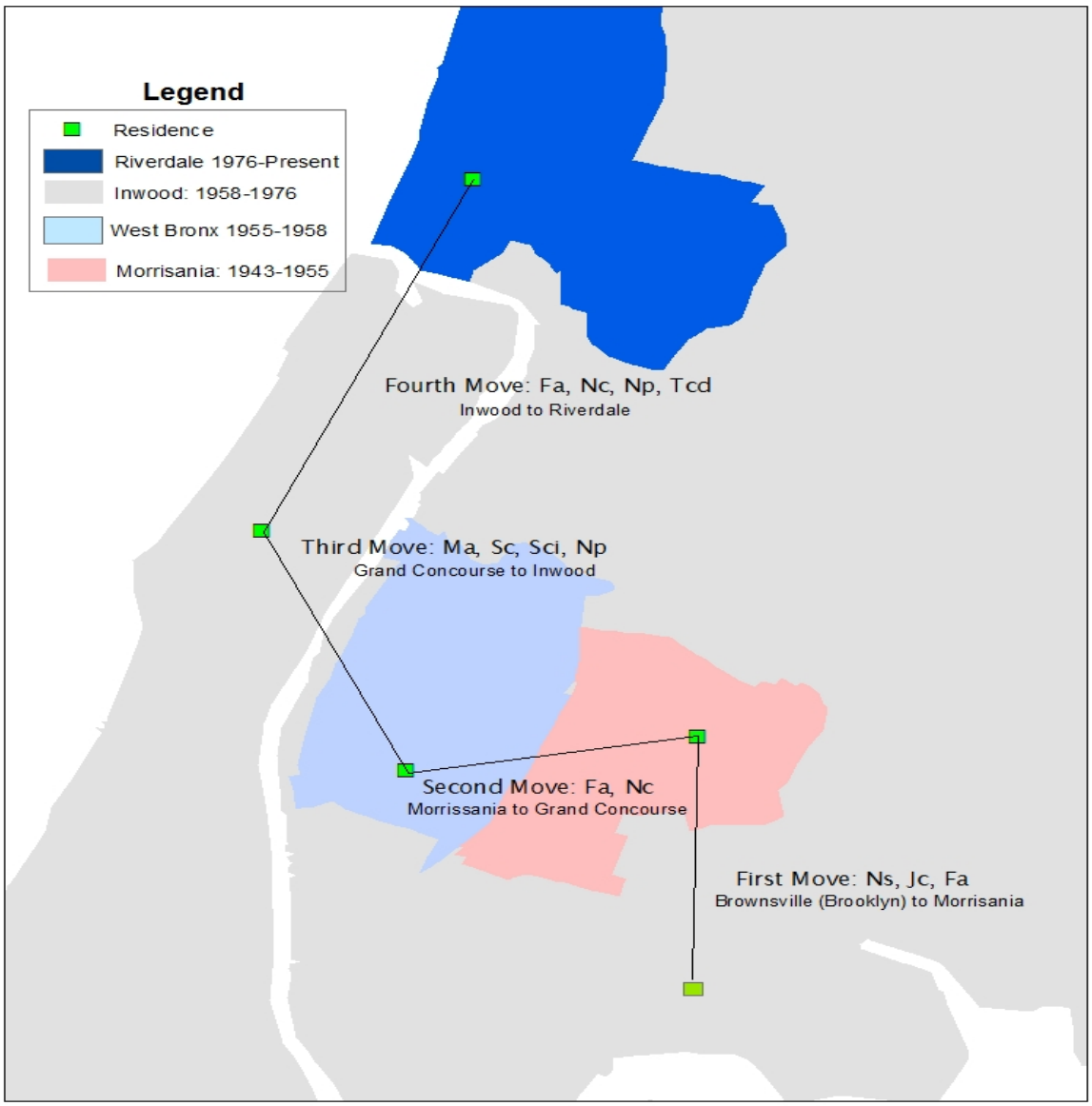


Mildred's Residential History

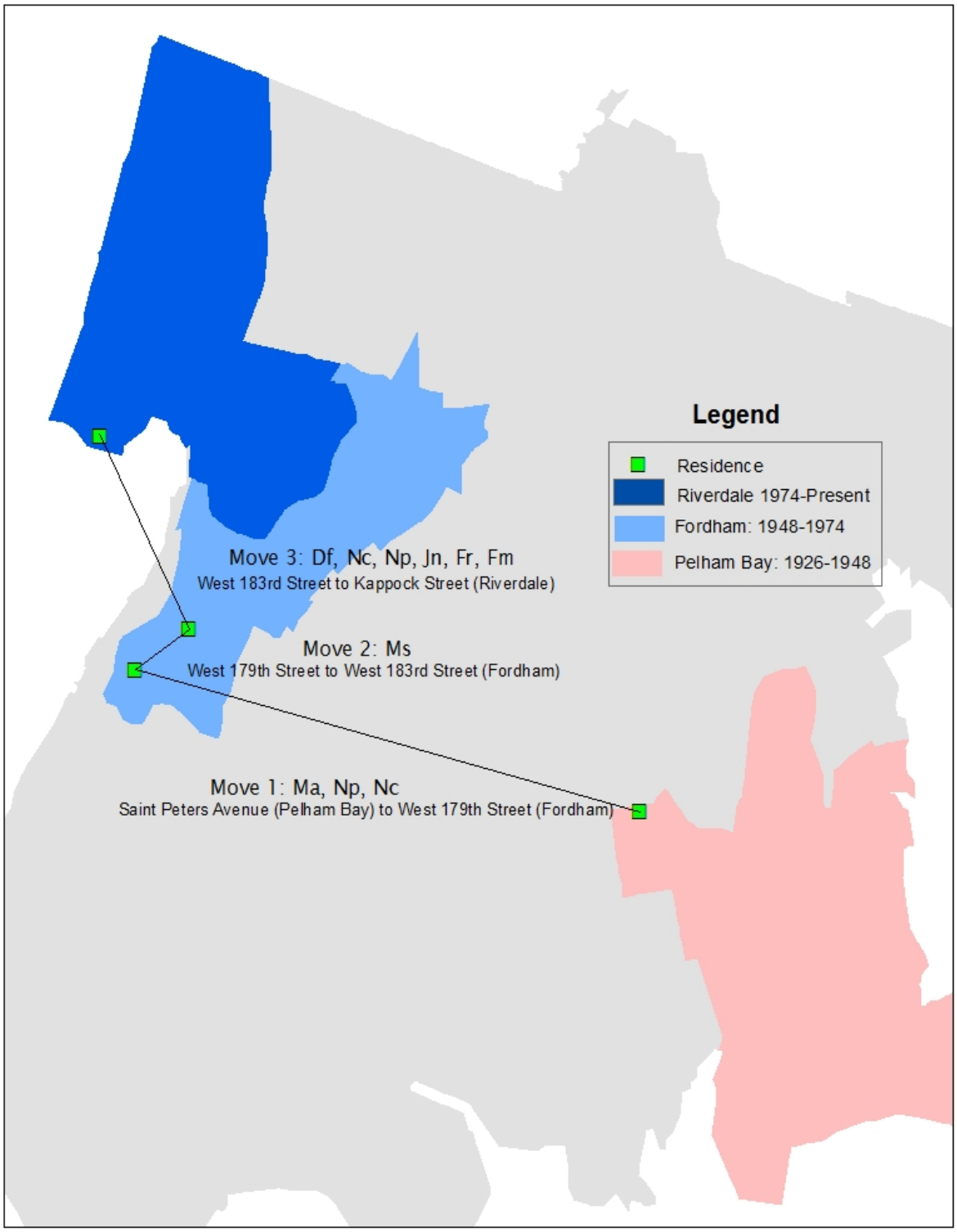



Prudence's Residential History
Move 8: Np, Df, Up, Ls
Independence Avenue to Fairfield Avenue (Riverdale)
Move 3: Ms, Np, Gr
Mount Kisco to Lake Mahopac (Westchester)
Move 7: Fa, Dm
Central Park West to Independence Avenue
Move 2: Ma
East Burnside Avenue to Mount Kisco (Westchester)
Move 1: MS
West 167th Street (West Bronx) to East Burnisde Avenue (West Bronx)
Residence
Riverdale: 1996-Present
Manhattan: 1987-1996
Queens: 1980-1987
Fordham: 1937-1948
West Bronx 1927-1937
Move 6: Jc, Np
Queens Boulevard to Central Park West (Manhattan)
Move 4: Sc
Lake Mahopac to Florida
Move 5: Df, Fr
Florida to Queens Boulevard (Queens)

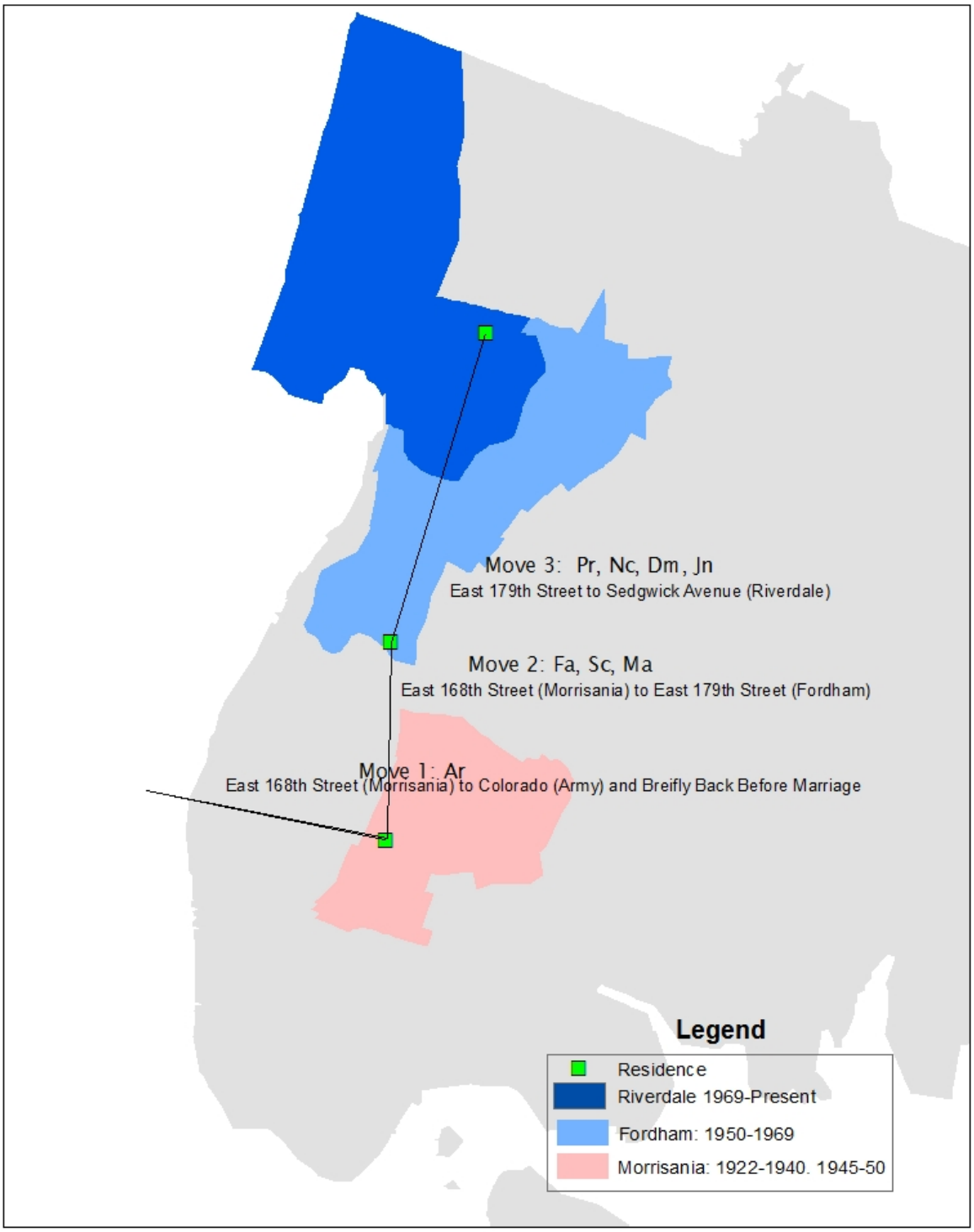
Ruth's Residential History



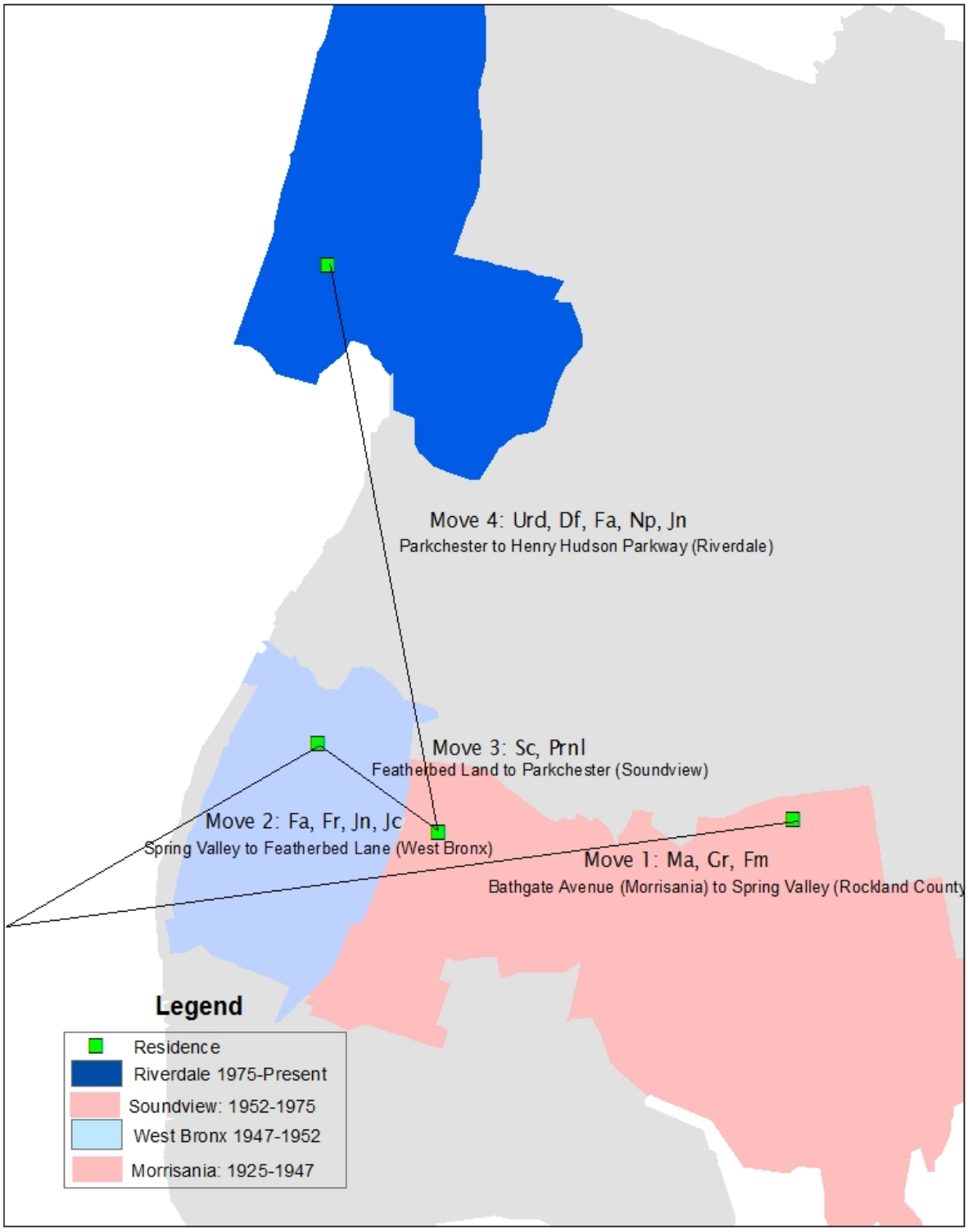
Sara's Residential History



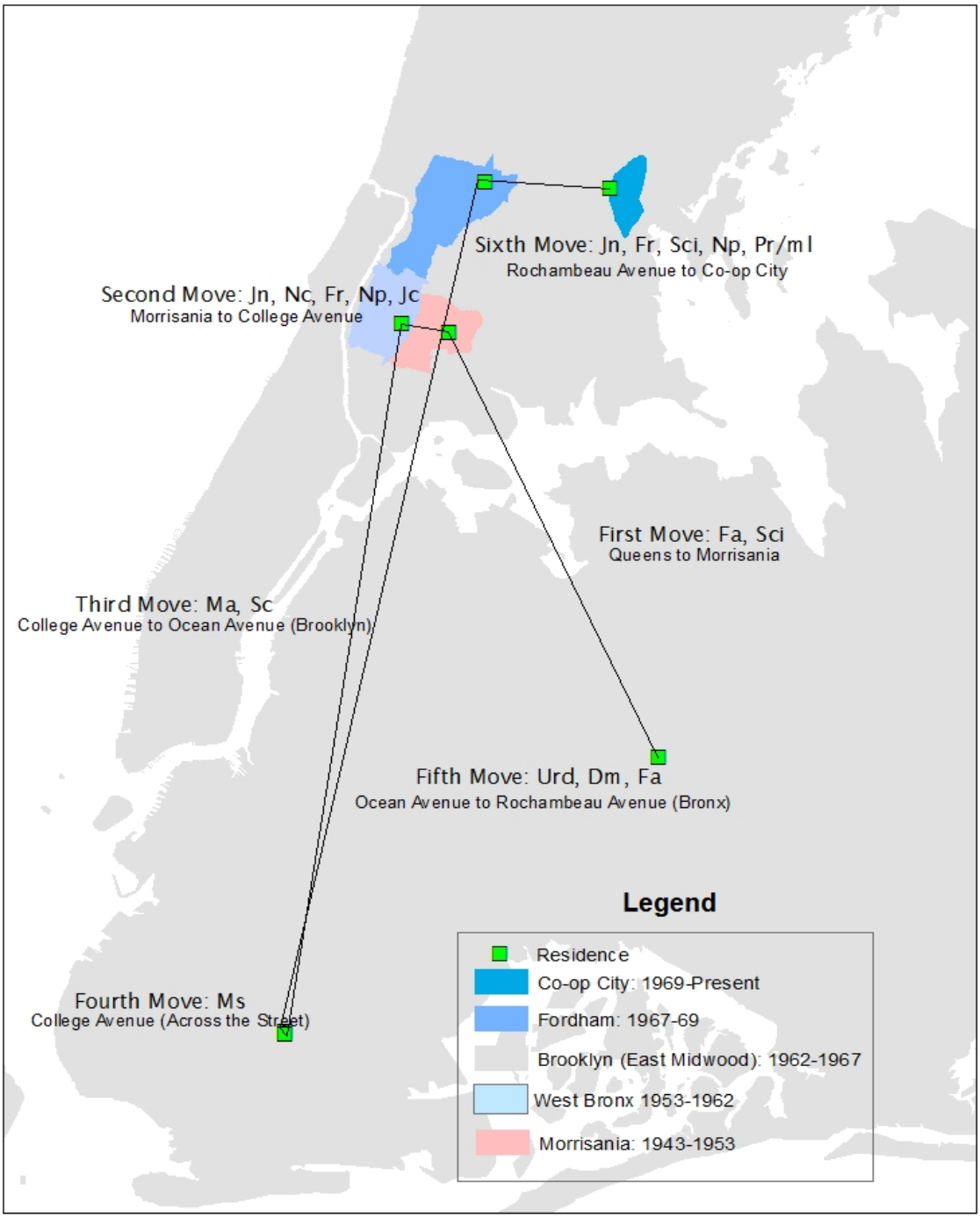
Saul's Residential History

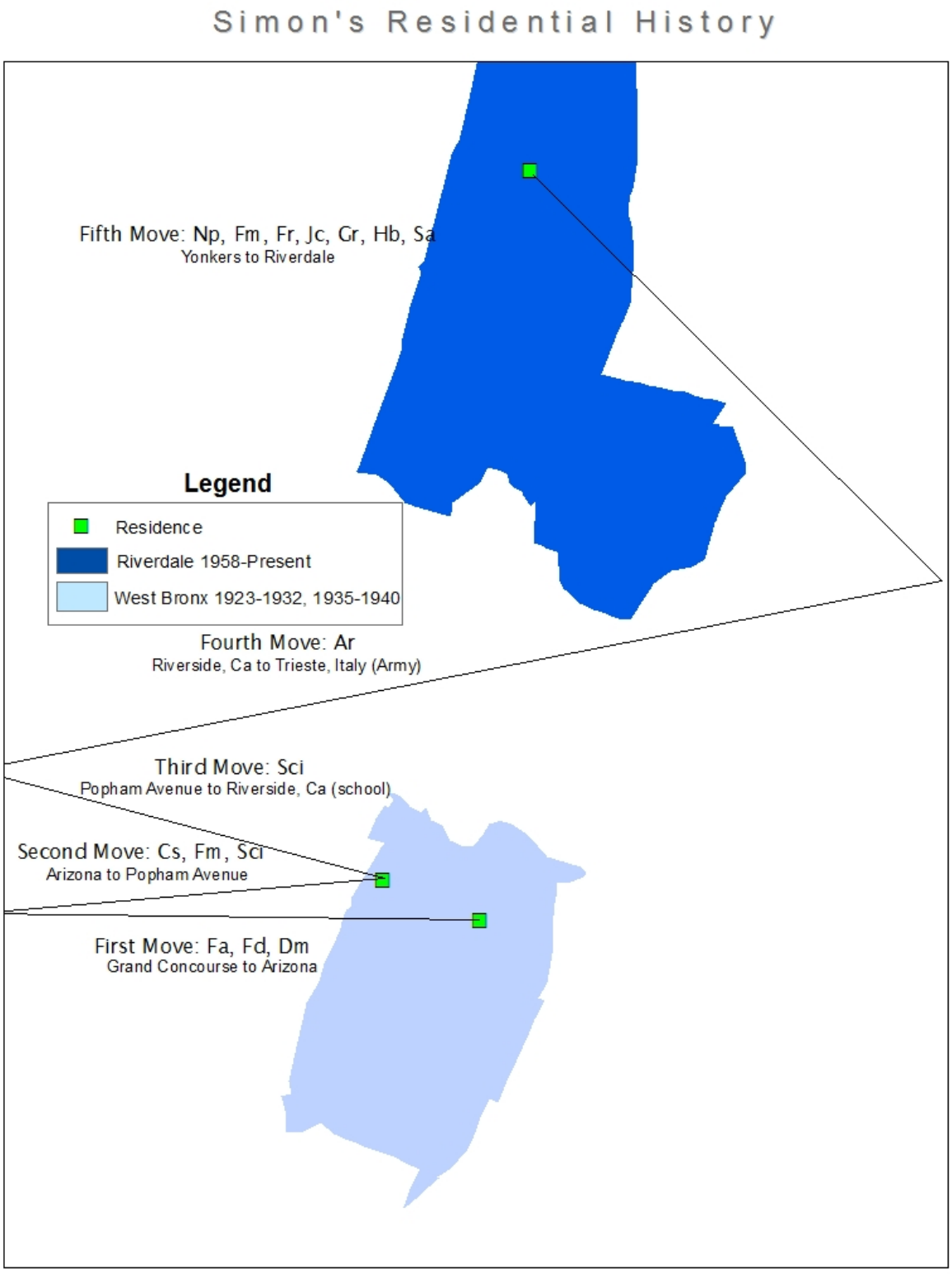


Shari's Residential History

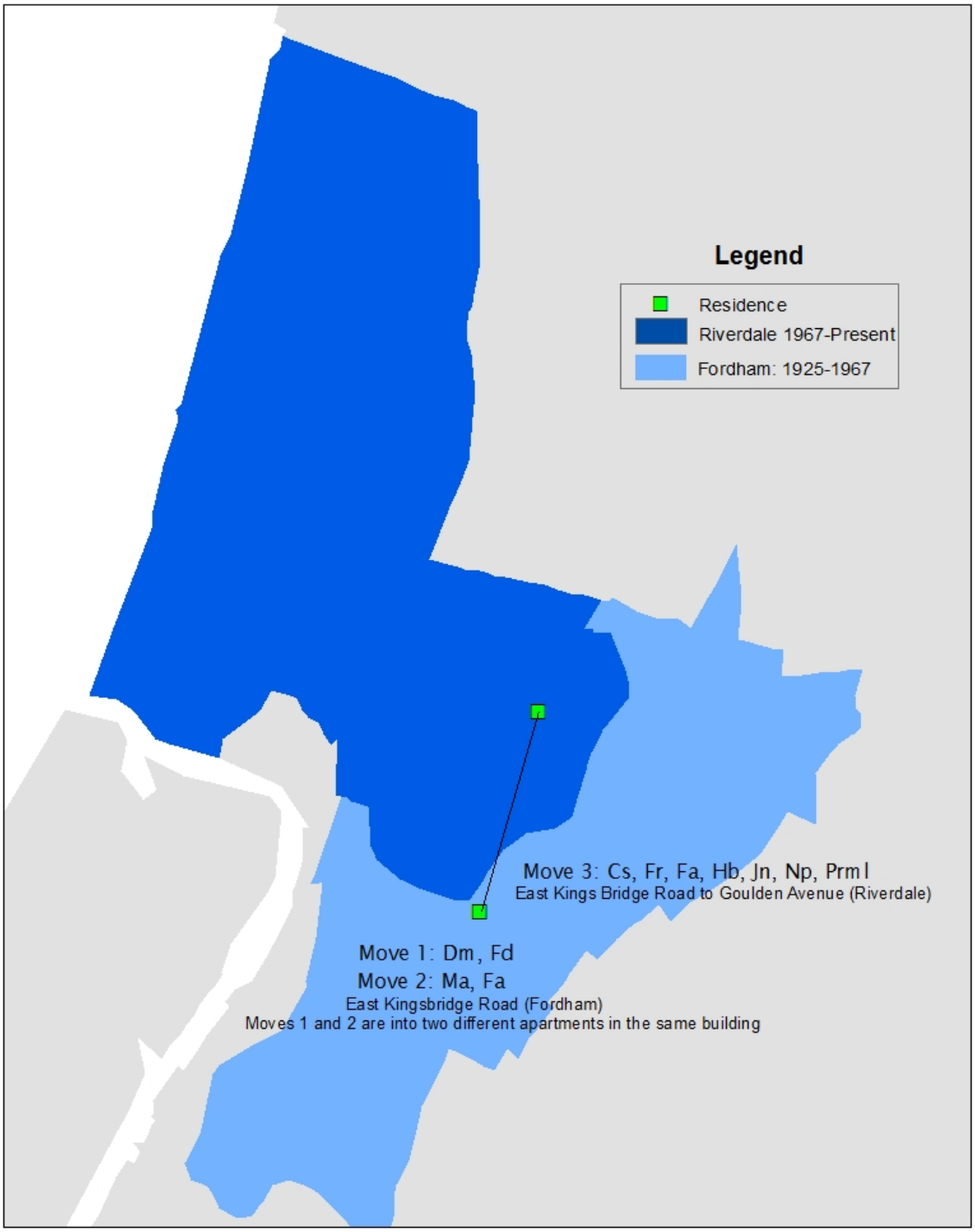


Shirley's Residential History

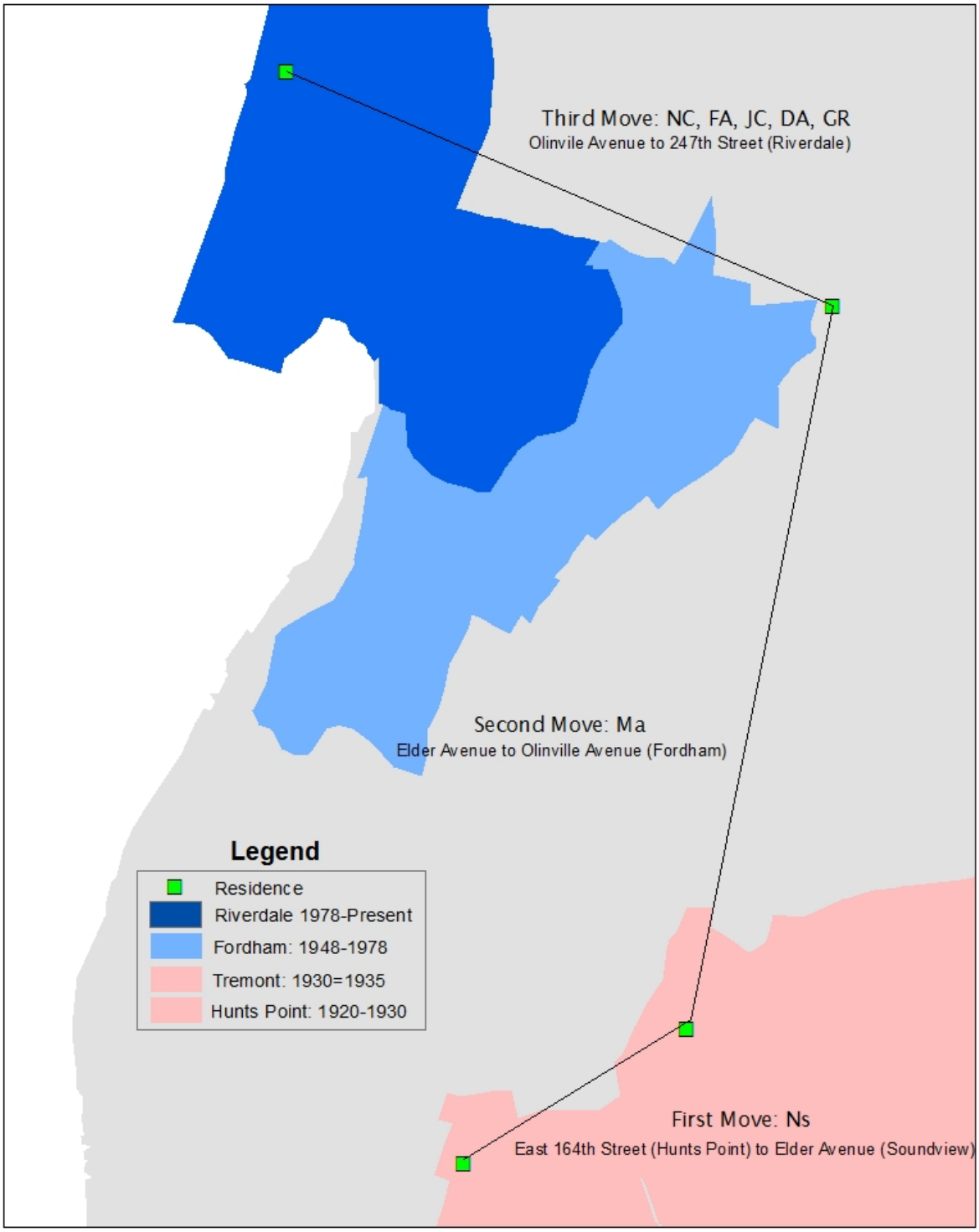



Simon's Residential History
Fifth Move: Np, Fm, Fr, Jc, Gr, Hb, Sa
Yonkers to Riverdale
Legend
Residence
Riverdale 1958-Present
West Bronx 1923-1932, 1935-1940
Fourth Move: Ar
Riverside, Ca to Trieste, Italy (Army)
Third Move: Sci
Popham Avenue to Riverside, Ca (school)
Second Move: Cs, Fm, Sci
Arizona to Popham Avenue
First Move: Fa, Fd, Dm
Grand Concourse to Arizona

Stacy's Residential History



Stan's Residential History



Sylvia's Residential History

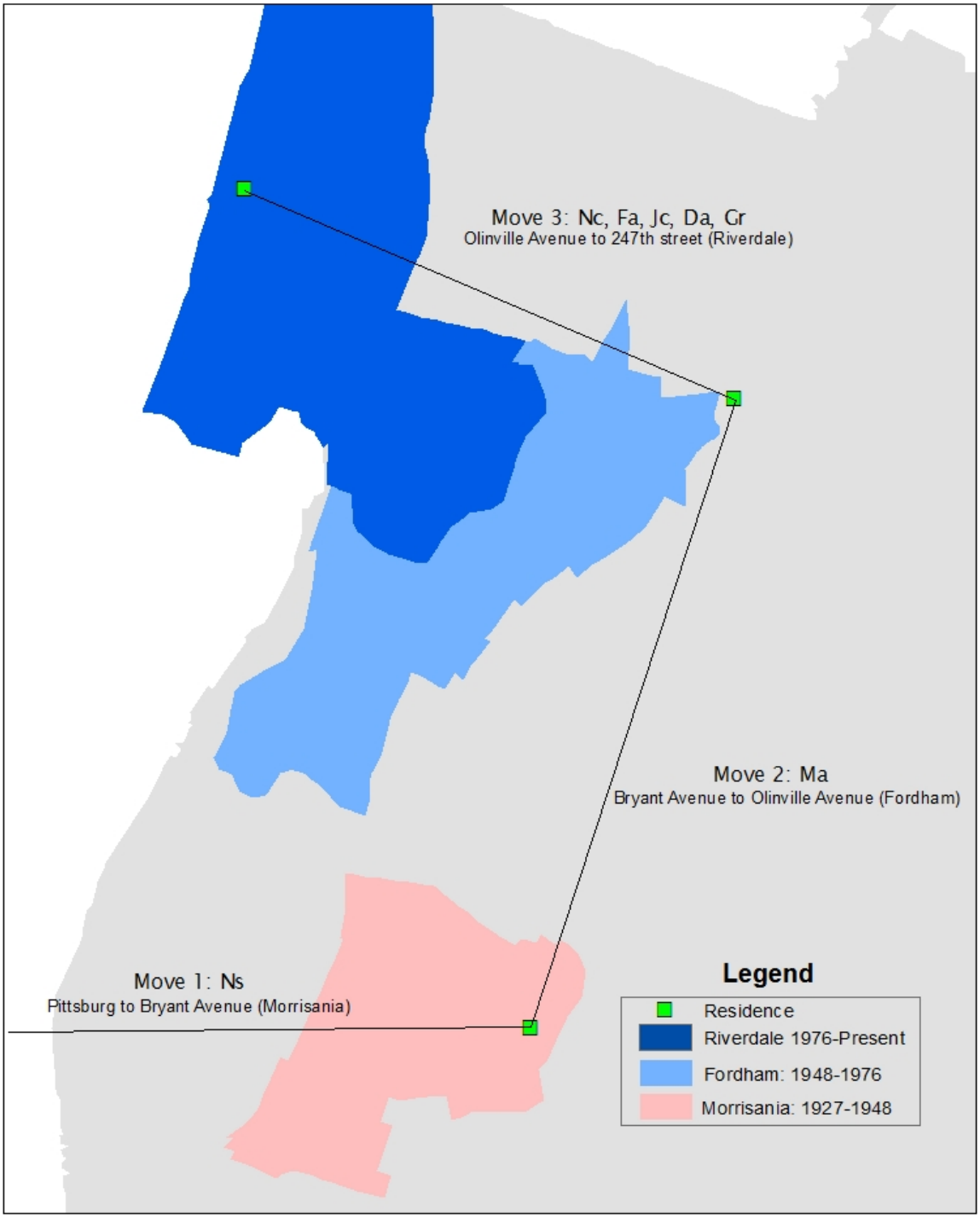
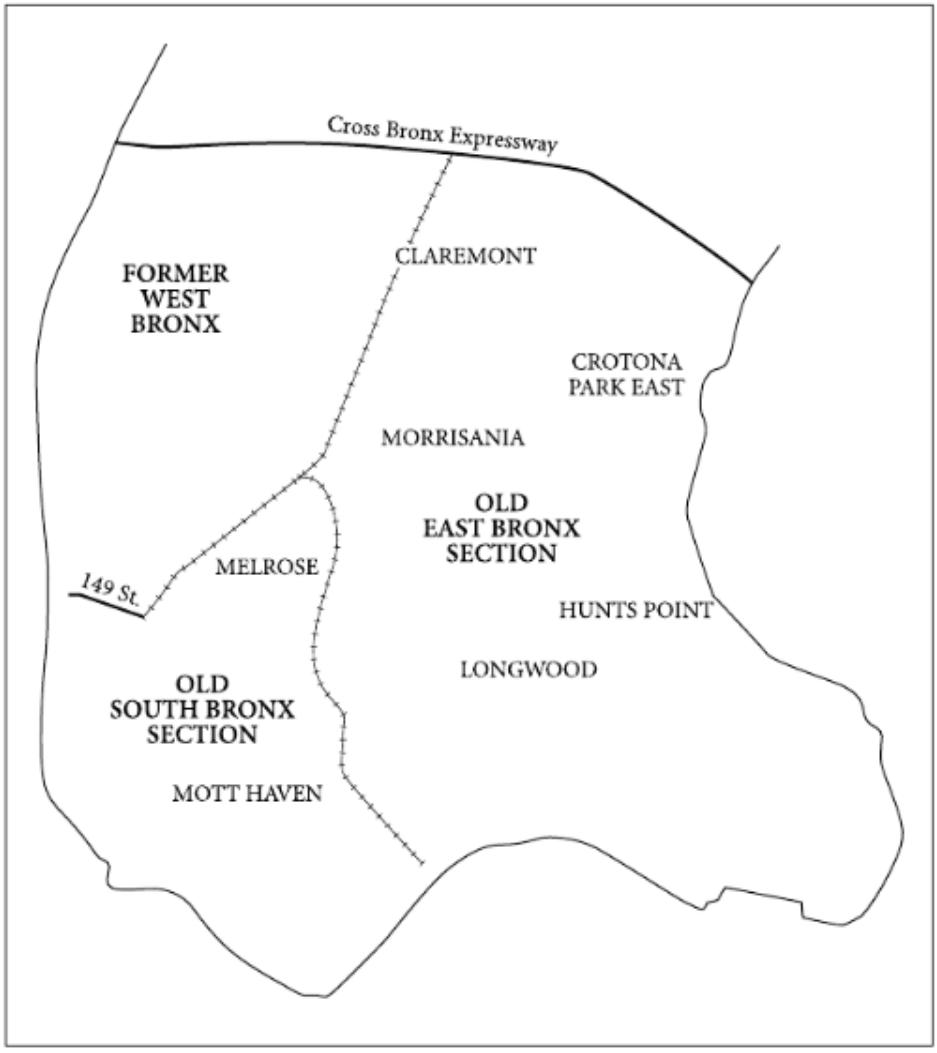


Figure 5: Neighborhoods in the South Bronx in 1950



MAP 1.2 Neighborhoods in the Former South and East Bronx Sections, 1950

Source: (Gonzalez 2004)

Figure 6: Matrix of Participant Characteristics

Period of concentrated data collection	Summer 2010
Average number of seniors on weekdays who ate lunch	80
Number of times I visited to the Senior Center	65
Total hours spent at the Senior Center	300
Percentage of senior members with aids	15 %
# of total interviews	30
# of useable interviews	25
Average length of interviews	56 minutes
Number of women in residential histories	21
Number of men in residential histories	4
Number of participants in their 70's (age)	3
Number of participants in their 80's (age)	21
Number of participants in their 90's (age)	1
Number of participants who moved to Riverdale (permanently) before 1966-1975	3
Number of participants who move to Riverdale in 1966-1975	15
Number of participants who moved to Riverdale after 1966-1975	7
Lectures I delivered at the senior center	4
Creative writing classes I attended	8
Times I was asked to go on a "blind date," with "nice," granddaughters	3
Times I turned down free lunch	40

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