

# Racial Uplift? Intra-Racial Class Conflict and the Economic Revitalization of Harlem and Bronzeville

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The study of revitalizing African American urban neighborhoods is needed to understand how race, class, and politics influence community development. While numerous investigations of urban neighborhoods stress inter-racial conflict, few explore intra-racial class discord. Class antagonism within black America is a controversial and debated topic. Several scholars claim that the common experience of racism has led to social and political unity among African Americans. However, others predict that with greater economic differentiation, shared feelings of social and political commonality will decrease. The economic transformation of Harlem in New York City and Bronzeville in Chicago, two historic African American communities, provides valuable insight into the importance of class conflict to community change. After decades of economic abandonment, these areas are experiencing a resurgence of residential and commercial investments, triggered, in part, by the return of the black middle class. Based on a 4-year, comparative ethnographic investigation, using extensive participant observation, interviews, and archival data, this study reveals the conflict between lower- and upper-income residents. I highlight the process by which members of the black middle class translate their preferences for community improvement, through local organizations, by advocating for the removal of the poor from these once low-income neighborhoods. I argue that intra-racial class antagonism plays a critical role in the economic development of these communities, and assess whether the redevelopment of Harlem and Bronzeville can be considered "racial uplift." This study supports the notion that class conflict is essential for understanding community change and the black experience in urban America.

## INTRODUCTION

Many studies exploring the conditions of poverty-stricken, black neighborhoods focus on the influence of white society. In the most well-known book to date, *American Apartheid*, Massey and Denton (1993) claim that institutional racism and residential segregation are the primary causes of the deplorable conditions in black, American ghettos. They leave little room, if any, for the role of African Americans in shaping black communities. In contrast, the work of Wilson (1987; 1996) suggests that the flight of the black middle class from these neighborhoods is associated with the downward spiral of these areas. In *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987), he states, "I believe the exodus of the middle- and

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working-class families from many ghetto neighborhoods removes an important 'social buffer' that could deflect the full impact of prolonged and increasing joblessness" (56). For Wilson, the national economy and jobs are principal; he maintains, however, that the movement of the black middle class weakened community organizations that provided an important social infrastructure. According to Wilson's work, the return of the middle class to the inner city would greatly improve conditions for low-income residents.

In the 1990s several formerly low-income African American inner city areas began to experience an influx of the black middle class.<sup>1</sup> Recent studies in redeveloping black areas illuminate tensions and conflicts that emerge when such migration occurs (Boyd, 2000; Pattillo, 2003; Taylor, 2002). Intra-racial class conflict arises when competing factions, such as homeowners and renters, debate the path of neighborhood development. The black middle class fiercely wants to "restore" these communities to safe, prosperous, and tranquil places. To achieve this goal, they often display negative attitudes and behaviors toward the poor in their community. While a great deal of scholarship depicts inter-racial conflict in urban life (Hirsch, [1983] 1998; Massey and Denton, 1993; Sugrue, 1996), inadequate attention is given to the role intra-racial class antagonism plays in the economic development of inner city areas.

The economic transformations of Harlem in New York City and Bronzeville in Chicago illustrate the impact of black middle-class mobilization and class antagonism in shaping the landscape of today's inner cities. The "second renaissance" of these areas is influenced by an influx of upper- and middle-income African Americans, threatening to displace many low-income, black residents. In these communities, low-income residents and institutions that represent their interests are working to ensure a place for people of varying incomes, while more affluent residents come together to promote greater economic growth, with little concern for the black "underclass."

This circumstance raises two important questions related to the works of Massey and Denton and Wilson. First, in what ways are black organizations influencing the redevelopment of the former ghetto and second, is the return of the black middle class assisting low-income residents? Although many scholars have discussed class differences among African Americans and its effect on general attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Du Bois, [1899] 1996; Frazier, 1957; Landry, 1987), my point of departure is to understand how more contemporary class distinctions translate into specific political actions influencing property values in revitalizing black neighborhoods.

An investigation of Harlem and Bronzeville provides a unique opportunity to explore class relations within black America. While many revitalizing inner city areas experience an influx of white residents (Smith, [1996] 2000), Harlem and Bronzeville are revitalizing without drastic racial changeover; they are experiencing "black gentrification" (Taylor, 2002). According to the 1990 and 2000 Censuses, Central Harlem's white population increased only from 1.5 percent to 2 percent, and the percentage of whites in Bronzeville decreased slightly. Today, Central Harlem is nearly 80 percent African American, and Bronzeville, 90 percent. While remaining racially homogeneous, these communities' income structures have diversified, making them ideal places for exploring issues of class.

Harlem and Bronzeville are arguably the most historic African American neighborhoods in the country. Due to their historic nature, segments of the black middle class perceive that by relocating into these formerly impoverished, black communities they partake in "racial uplift," advancing the interests and goals of the entire race. Boyd (2000) states that for residents "in Bronzeville, buildings are not just pieces of individually owned property,

but symbols of community spirit . . . the physical entities through and within which race uplift may be achieved” (117). Further, Taylor (2002) posits that the “black gentry” moves to Harlem “to express a larger commitment and solidarity with the race as a whole” (131). Certain scholars contend that the black middle class is “saving” these communities from a white takeover and thus contributing to the preservation of black history in the United States.

However, the actions of the black middle class, in regards to racial uplift, are filled with contradictions. The movement of upper-income blacks to these areas and their political action is associated with the displacement of many low-income residents. Can racial uplift occur in the face of displacement? As one resident in Bronzeville explains:

The black middle class, [returning] from its corporate isolation and having done the integration thing, are now saying I need to get back to blackness, ‘cause I’m still being discriminated against . . . Now, when you get back, are you going to turn on your *brother*, or are you going to try to use your resources to help empower him? (italics added, Boyd, 2000: 119).

Extensive ethnographic data collected over a 4-year period (1999–2003) support the argument that class antagonism is important to the redevelopment of these communities.<sup>2</sup> First, I demonstrate that the attitudes and beliefs of the black middle class translate into political actions associated with rising property values and the displacement of the black underclass. Middle-class African Americans—those who have lived in these communities for some time and new arrivals—are creating and reinvigorating institutions and organizations that make community improvements that coincide with their preferences. I argue that middle-class interests dominate various local organizations and institutions, such as planning boards, block clubs, and religious-affiliated community development corporations, which are critical to the development process. This important finding contradicts several accounts claiming that the behaviors of whites are principal in shaping black neighborhoods (Hirsch, [1983] 1998; Massey and Denton, 1993). Secondly, I point out a contradiction associated with the actions of the black middle class, since many researchers claim they are coming “home” to these communities to facilitate racial uplift, unity, and pride, and yet their actions influence the displacement of poor African Americans. In light of Wilson’s work, this finding has important implications, as it suggests that the arrival of the black middle class is not clearly advantageous for the “underclass.” For many in the black middle class, “coming home” refers to returning to culturally significant spaces where poor blacks are no longer welcome.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies of neighborhood change, particularly in black neighborhoods, fail to focus on the active participation of the local institutional structure. For instance, Gregory (1998), in *Black Corona*, critiques the urban community change literature by asserting that “little had been devoted to social and institutional structure of urban black communities” (10). Although studies demonstrate that black social networks and formal associations effectively moderate the effects of living in poverty, very few scholarly works claim that black-led organizations have the political wherewithal to alter broader conditions such as property values. For instance, Stack (1974) and Venkatesh (2000) show that informal and formal black-led associations, composed of mainly single mothers living in abject poverty, help

to provide a safe and manageable living environment for their children. However, as Venkatesh (2000) notes, the impoverished conditions in the Robert Taylor Homes were primarily “shaped by larger social forces” (235).

The community development literature debates whether formal, local organizations produce changes in the community landscape. Some studies point to alternative internal community mechanisms of change, such as the density of informal groups (Putnam, 1993) and neighborhood norms (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls, 1997), as more important than formal organizations.<sup>3</sup> However, several studies demonstrate that certain community-based organizations are critical in determining neighborhood conditions (Crenson, 1983; Gittell, 1992; Taub, Taylor, and Dunham, 1984). For example, Crenson’s (1983) Baltimore study reports that most residents perceive formal community organizations as effective entities in their neighborhoods. Further, a comprehensive investigation of change in Chicago neighborhoods reveals that elite community organizations greatly contribute to property value escalation (Taub, Taylor, and Dunham, 1984). In light of this evidence, investigations that solely focus on informal groups and community norms with concepts such as social capital (Putnam, 1993) and collective efficacy (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls, 1997) are limited in scope. This is not to deny or dismiss the importance of the local norms of engagement, trust, and collective action but to emphasize that we must begin to understand the specific mechanisms by which norms translate into more tangible expressions of local political action and control. According to Crenson’s and Taub’s work, elite formal organizations are viable change agents.

In low-income, black communities, collective action alerts city policymakers to resident concerns. However, in economically transitioning communities, like Harlem and Bronzeville, collective interests are often hard to maintain and residents seldom agree on shared goals, like property values. Logan and Molotch (1987) make a fundamental distinction in neighborhoods between those who seek “use” and those who desire “exchange” value. The use value faction is composed of renters who do not put a priority on enhancing land cost since this type of development could drive rents beyond their reach. However, individuals desiring exchange value, usually homeowners, encourage rising real estate prices to increase the worth of their neighborhood investment.<sup>4</sup> The tension between use and exchange value seekers “determine[s] the patterns of neighborhood life—the ways in which people . . . interconnect with one another, and defend (or offend) the places in which they live” (Logan and Molotch, 1987: 99). These competing interests manifest in local organizations attempting to either preserve the existing neighborhood or transform it into something new.

#### IS THE CONCEPT OF CLASS IMPORTANT IN BLACK AMERICA?

Scholars dispute the value of class as a theoretical line of inquiry within black communities. In a recent study entitled *Harlem World*, Jackson (2001) acknowledges Harlem’s current economic stratification, fueled by the influx of the middle class; however, he argues that people’s lives and behaviors “don’t necessarily make sense in terms of middle classes, underclasses, or even carefully measured working classes” (94). Taylor (2002) claims that the lives of Harlem residents cannot be explained by “a differentiated black class structure” (176). In contrast, Pattillo’s (1999, 2003) ethnographic research documenting the “perils” of the black middle class in two south side Chicago communities brings the importance of class conflict within black America to the forefront. She states, “Class, status, and

lifestyle are real axes of distinction in the black community” (Pattillo-McCoy, 1999: 209). In Pattillo’s (2003) study of Kenwood/Oakland, a redeveloping black neighborhood just east of Bronzeville, she writes, “The politics of neighborhood change . . . is occurring not only at the level of the city bureaucrats and developers who wield electoral or financial powers, but also among residents—new and old, formally educated and not, owners and renters, rich and poor” (64).

Since the 1960s the black middle class has tripled (Gates, 2004). As the black middle and upper classes expand, there is debate concerning how this affects social and political unity among African Americans. Wilson’s study (1987) of the inner city suggests that the movement of the middle class to formerly low-income neighborhoods will positively affect lower-class residents. He predicts that middle-class residents will reinvigorate and strengthen community organizations and act as role models for the lower-class residents by demonstrating appropriate, pro-social behaviors. However, it is not clear if the black middle class desires to take on this function.

Some researchers suggest that the persistent experience of racism binds African Americans together, regardless of income and educational background, while others contend that intra-group strife is prevalent. This academic dispute has important implications for economically diversifying black communities and is exemplified by comparing the research of two scholars: Michael Dawson and Manning Marable.

Dawson, a political scientist, sees black society as a relatively cohesive unit as compared to other ethnic groups. Although he recognizes the growing economic division within black America, he maintains that racial solidarity persists. In *Behind the Mule*, Dawson (1994) analyzes the National Black Election Panel Study, a political opinion survey, and concludes that most blacks believe that what helps the race also benefits their individual interests. He coins this phenomenon the *black utility heuristic*. This concept, which is based on the idea of linked fate and identification among black individuals, suggests that African Americans will identify with their own racial group, regardless of class differences. One critique of Dawson’s work is that it is mainly based on perceptions of racial solidarity rather than actual behaviors grounded in black communities.

Marable, a historian, argues that the growing economic division among blacks is leading to greater social division in America. He writes, “As the scope, complexity, and size of the black elite grew to unprecedented dimensions, the bonds that tied it to the bulk of African American majority fragmented and in many instances ceased to exist” (Marable, 2002: 172). In response to recent claims of racial solidarity, he declares, “The black bourgeoisie’s connections with the fates of the black working class and poor have gradually become more tenuous” (191). Marable contends that as segments of black America achieve financial success, they will become less attached to lower-class African Americans. In this study, I explore how socioeconomic differences embedded within neighborhood organizations contribute to local political processes shaping emerging conditions.

## METHODOLOGY

### DESIGN

This study uses a multiple-case design method (Yin, 2003), known as the comparative approach (King, Keohane, and Verba, 1994). The logic behind this comparative approach

is analogous to replicating an experiment in various environments. I originally chose Bronzeville and Harlem due to their similarities. After spending 2 years investigating the redevelopment of Bronzeville, I considered comparing it with another gentrifying black community. Using replication logic, I attempted to find a community that matched Bronzeville on many characteristics. Both Bronzeville and Harlem are located near the central business districts (CBD) of their respective cities.<sup>5</sup> Proximity to the CBD was important because some argue that distance from the central city relates to the patterns of gentrification (Sassen, 2000). In addition, both communities are targets of similar federal initiatives, such as the Empowerment Zone Initiative. Moreover, these communities, according to the 1990 census, have similar baseline levels of deprivation and their recent income diversifications have followed analogous patterns. Lastly, Bronzeville and Harlem have rich African American histories (see Drake and Cayton, [1945] 1993; Osofsky, [1963] 1996).<sup>6</sup>

Bronzeville and Harlem have one striking difference; they are embedded in cities with distinct citywide political landscapes. Chicago is known for its centralized political machine, while New York City is characterized as a fragmented, pluralist system (Fuchs, 1992). I have rigorously assessed this political distinction and its effect on the redevelopment patterns (Hyra, forthcoming).<sup>7</sup> Despite this difference, class antagonism has remained a central change dynamic mostly unaffected by the citywide political variation. By simultaneously investigating two black communities, I have increased the probability that class antagonism and its relationship to redevelopment can be viewed as a reliable and robust finding, despite one important situational discrepancy.

Following in the tradition of other participant-observational studies, such as Pattillo-McCoy (1999), Gans ([1962] 1982), and Whyte ([1943] 1955), I chose to collect most of my data while living in these communities. After spending nearly 3 years gathering data in Bronzeville (1999–2001), in 2002, I moved to Harlem for 6 months of fieldwork. After this experience, I returned to Chicago for 6 months and finished collecting data in 2003 with another half year in Harlem. My approach allows for in-depth knowledge of the forces that affect the community as they are perceived and acted upon by individuals during their everyday lives.

#### ACCESS

I initially gained access to Bronzeville through involvement in an ongoing study.<sup>8</sup> During the 2 years of this study, I met many community leaders and established relationships with them. In 1999 my investigation formally began and I became a member of the South Side Partnership, a coalition of key organizational leaders in Bronzeville. My induction to the group was facilitated by the relationships I had developed with many of the members over the previous 2 years. In addition to the coalition, I worked for a social service and advocacy organization located in one of the public housing projects in the community. This experience gave me insight into the issues facing public housing residents.

In Harlem, I began my investigation with few area contacts. However, I was familiar with the community since I had played for a local basketball team during high school. During my first 6 months of research, I attended public meetings and interviewed representatives from many prominent social service organizations, grassroots advocacy groups, and public housing tenant associations; however I found it difficult, at first, to establish trusting relationships. A key turning point in my investigation occurred when I interviewed former

Mayor David Dinkins, New York City's first and only African American mayor. Following the interview he notified several of his contacts in Harlem of my presence, greatly increasing my access to organizational leaders. Moreover, I met Harlem's New York State Assemblyman, Keith Wright, while playing basketball at the Harlem YMCA. We developed a good relationship and I interned for him during my second period in Harlem. This opportunity proved invaluable and opened up an array of important observation opportunities.

#### DATA COLLECTION

This study used a variety of data-collecting techniques including participant observation, interviews, and collecting archival materials. Participant observation was the primary method of data collection; I attended hundreds of community meetings and events in both areas. These meetings included block clubs, public housing tenant associations, coalition gatherings of civic leaders, community district meetings, and public meetings of social service organizations. Most of these gatherings were segregated by socio-economic status but some had a mix of people from various financial backgrounds. In addition to direct group observation, I interviewed 35 people in Harlem and 35 people in Bronzeville through scheduled one-on-one sessions averaging an hour. I developed a snowball sample by asking the people I spoke with to recommend other individuals and organizations they perceived as important to the redevelopment process. I conversed with a diverse set of individuals including heads of human service organizations, grassroots advocacy groups, public housing tenant councils, homeowner associations, community development corporations, elected officials, staff in city agencies, business leaders, and relevant academic researchers. Besides these meetings and interviews, I had countless informal interactions with people on the streets and in homes, restaurants, bars, coffee shops, barbershops, and recreational centers. Lastly, I assembled archival materials including city documents, meeting minutes from community-based organizations, recent academic reports, newspaper articles, and census data.

#### CONCEPT OF CLASS

Much of the community dispute, as it related to the redevelopment, was associated with alternate levels of income and education, leading to distinct patterns of behavior and consumption. Surplus income allows people to achieve distinct lifestyles, including fancy cars, private education, evenings at upscale restaurants, and most importantly the opportunity to purchase homes. Most advocates for community improvements, associated with rising real estate value, had, on average, educational and income levels that enable them to become homeowners, a distinct class or status group. This more affluent group is distinctive from low-income renters who are fighting rising property values to stay within these communities. In this paper, I loosely define class as a socioeconomic construct associated with distinct levels of educational attainment and income, relating to property ownership.

#### CHANGING CLASS STRUCTURE

Black middle and upper classes are moving into these neighborhoods at a rapid pace. From 1990 to 2000, the percentage of households earning between \$25,000 and \$74,999

increased by 35 percent in Harlem and 50 percent in Bronzeville. Moreover, the number of households earning \$75,000 or more skyrocketed in both communities. In Harlem this population jumped from 3 percent to 8 percent, while in Bronzeville they climbed from 2 percent to 10 percent. The 2000 Census numbers also indicate that the percent of the population with a B.A. degree or higher increased by 50 percent in Central Harlem and by almost 40 percent in Bronzeville in the last 10 years. At the same time, the percent of homeowners increased from 4.6 percent to 7 percent and 5.5 percent to 10 percent, in Harlem and Bronzeville, respectively. In addition to quantitative evidence, my field notes also capture the influx of the black middle class. For instance, the executive director of one of Harlem's largest nonprofit developers notes, "Five years ago we had to beg the young professionals to move into Harlem, but now they are begging us for brownstones." As the middle class moves in, there has been a sharp decrease in the number of low-income households, yet a sizable proportion of these communities remains extremely poor. In 2000, approximately 45 percent of residents in both neighborhoods earn under \$15,000. While the middle class arrives and the poor exits, median home value and household income soar (see the Appendix).

#### DATA PRESENTATION

Illustrative examples from my field notes demonstrate that class discord is ubiquitous in both communities. Each of the following sections has vignettes building a more convincing argument that class antagonism exists and manifests itself within the organizational structures of these communities. Various elite-dominated, black-led organizations are simultaneously contributing to community development and the displacement of the poor.<sup>9</sup> I first demonstrate that interests in property value escalation drive the political actions of homeowners and segments of the middle class. I then show that upper-income residents are more concerned with "community improvements" than with mentoring and supporting members of the "underclass" in their neighborhood. The pervasiveness of this phenomenon is illustrated in a subsequent section that suggests that some religious-based organizations, once seen as critical to the civil rights movement, are serving the interests of the middle class at the expense of the poor. The culmination of evidence forces us to consider whether the revitalization of these historic black communities exemplifies racial uplift.

#### INTRA-RACIAL CLASS ANTAGONISM

##### PROPERTY VALUES

One evening I attend the monthly meeting of Community Board 10, a politically appointed resident planning board that oversees land use and housing development in Central Harlem. The community board is an official feature of the city's formal governance structure. Real estate developers receiving city funds must present their plans to the board. The board votes on whether to accept the developers' plans and although the city council has the final say on development projects, the community board often influences their position.

The meeting is on the second floor of the Harlem State Office Building at 125th Street and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard. Two opposite entrances are used to access the

large meeting room, one for the public at large and the other for community board members. Board members are mainly homeowners and are selected by the Manhattan Borough President, a longtime resident of Harlem. Only board members are given a packet of detailed information concerning the evening's presenters. When I walk into the room, I first notice that the walls are covered with James Brown memorabilia: framed posters, album covers, and gold records. The room serves as a gallery for black artists, denoting it as a space of black culture and pride. The seating in the room is assigned; approximately 40 board members sit in the center of the room and the general public sits on either side. The meeting is packed with approximately 200 people, almost all of whom are black.

The first presenter is a white developer who proposes to build a 24-story, luxury condominium building on the corner of a historic, brownstone-lined block known as Astor Row. The corner, located at 130th and Lenox, is presently occupied by an abandoned building. The developer expects to sell two-bedroom units for approximately \$450,000. The developer's architect, who is also white, claims the building would remove an "eyesore that had been there for years."

As the architect holds up a rendering of the exclusive high-rise building, the crowd groans, shouting, "Oh no!" Then a man dressed in jeans and a worn flannel shirt stands up from the general public section and says in a demanding tone:

It's unacceptable! I have been here for forty years . . . this is a beautiful block. I struggled. I am a poor man, all right? I worked my heart out to live on this block. Okay? Not for someone from Westchester to come onto my block. On my block! This [project] doesn't mean anything to anyone except the developers.

This man's plea clearly indicates a white/black tension. He yells at the white developers that he does not want anyone from the predominantly wealthy, white suburban Westchester County living on "his" block. However, what happens next illuminates the conflict of interests between the lower income and more affluent blacks in Harlem.

After hearing objections from the general public, the architect immediately turns to the center of the room, to the community board members. He says, "The community board's own position calls for middle- and upper-income housing to be introduced in Harlem." In fact, the community board's comprehensive plan specifies the need for quality middle-income housing and a "new income mix among residents" (Manhattan Community Board 10, 1999: 50). The architect tells board members that this is a "market rate project" and that a family earning \$100,000 a year could afford a condo in this development. At this price tag, less than 5 percent of Central Harlem residents qualify. Despite the high price and public opposition from numerous residents, the board members approve the luxury high-rise development.

The board consistently supports posh housing developments clearly beyond the means of most current residents. Although some might speculate that the board members have been co-opted by outside white interests, this is not the circumstance. Many community board members and others homeowners in Harlem want high-priced housing in the community. A person heavily involved in Harlem's economic transition reports:

Some of the most low down, antipoor people activity that I ever saw came from black people. I mean, I will never forget Nora's comments at the community board meeting when we were doing some [subsidized] project and she looked at me and

she was like, “Damn it, I am tired of all these no rent and low rent people that y’all are bringing up here.” Nora, her thing is homeownership. She wants homeowners in Harlem, because she is a homeowner. Oh yes, I understand her block has been ragged for all those years. She wants her property values to go up. She wants to leave something for her granddaughter and I completely understand. But it’s definitely a class issue, and it definitely resonates in a lot of circumstances.

By consistently approving luxury, high-priced developments, the community board helps to drive up Harlem’s housing market, increasing the threat of displacement.

In Bronzeville, many middle class homeowners want their property values to increase and this relates to their political activity. In the early evening, I attend the monthly meeting of the recently formed Bronzeville Homeowners Association at the police station on 51st and Federal Street. Members of the association are interested in building a better community by increasing the number of homeowners and promoting property value escalation. One of the issues discussed is whether the group is willing to allow renters into the association. Some argue that renters would strengthen the membership base while others fear that renters may take leadership positions in the organization and alter its mission. Vera, an African American property owner and manager in Bronzeville, fiercely opposes allowing renters. She states in a rather patronizing manner, “Please, I don’t want renters!” She explains that she deals with low-income renters all day and that she did not help found an association to cater to the needs of people who rent. One member of the association later says, “Long-term residents, meaning people who bought into Bronzeville 10, 15, 20 years ago, really want to see the benefit of their investment and I’ve heard those folks saying, ‘I’m tired of poor people, I don’t care about poor people, I want some good homeowners in the community, we need more homeowners.’”

A massive amount of Bronzeville residents are being displaced due to the demolition of high-rise public housing in the community. Approximately 17,000 residents living in high-rises are to relocate using Section 8 vouchers, a housing subsidy for rental units in the private market.<sup>10</sup> Despite the abundance of vacant lots in the area, very little affordable or replacement housing is being built. This circumstance reflects the mayor’s preference for the development of high-priced properties, which increases the city’s tax base. However, limited affordable housing construction is also related to the desire of middle-class residents to rid their community of undesirables, particularly Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) tenants.

Several homeowner-dominated block clubs in Bronzeville make it clear that creating a space in the community for low-income people is not a priority. Middle-class-led block clubs and organizations support the removal of the projects. One organizer sums up the situation: “We have had people that made public statements that they didn’t want public housing residents living next door to them and I think a lot of people saw it as an opportunity for their property values to go up so they opted to just turn their backs, okay and let it happen.” Another community leader comments, “The middle-income African Americans who have been in the community for a while or who are now moving into the community really want to see a community that’s primarily reflective of their values and their interests.” He continues, “The middle income and upper-income African Americans who are buying these four, five, six hundred thousand dollar houses and these two hundred thousand dollar condos really have little interest in seeing affordable or low-income housing being built in their community. It’s sad but true.”

The political behaviors of segments of the black middle class fit with the theory of exchange value (Logan and Molotch, 1987). Homeowners, working through community organizations, are vigilantly ensuring that their property values are preserved, thus contributing to the redevelopment of these neighborhoods. In Harlem, upper-income residents ensure that luxury real estate developers have access to the community, while in Bronzeville some of the more affluent members of the community are advocating for the removal of the public housing projects and are not concerned with the construction of affordable replacement housing.

#### MENTORING THE POOR?

In her investigation of Harlem, Taylor (2002) notes, "For successful black professionals, the values of middle class America—the importance of education, the ideal of home ownership, the work ethic, self initiative, and self-reliance—shape their visions of what life in the community should be" (86). While the black middle class upholds these American standards, they also carry an additional burden that the white middle class does not; they are expected (Wilson, 1996) to mentor lower-income individuals in their community. According to Dawson's (1994) research, this expectation arises out of a shared experience of racial discrimination. Additionally, many of the black middle classes have family members that might be considered part of the "underclass" or grew up poor themselves (see Pattillo-McCoy, 1999). Some might perceive that this would lead to a more sympathetic stance by the black middle class toward the plight of the black urban poor. For a few it does, but others feel ambivalent toward or disdainful of low-income individuals.

Often community leaders have conflicting views about the ability of poor residents to meet middle-class standards. During a South Side Partnership meeting in Bronzeville, two women who head prominent community organizations argue about whether public housing residents can integrate into the surrounding community. A male member, who directs a social service agency and is a local homeowner, claims that some former public housing residents are "tearing up the place" in their market rate Section 8 housing. In response, a woman exclaims, "Well, you're going to see a lot more of that because –" She is immediately interrupted by another woman who cries out, "Oh, you're stereotyping!" The first woman continues, "No, but the problem is—Let me say this. I live across from scatter-site [low-rise public housing], and I've lived in this community now for about 10 years. The first year I moved down here it was pretty bad, then it got increasingly better, since they have torn down the high rises."

However, she explains that many of the tenants from the high rises are moving in with relatives in scatter-site housing. She says, "Where you [once] had a grandmother, now you have four daughters with five kids apiece." The second woman responds emotionally, "I used to live in a house with 20 people. I did it and it goes back to saying how do we empower the people, how do we help them, they're our sisters and brothers. You may not like it but they're your sisters and brothers. They have the same spirit. They just have a different attitude. Now how do we help them with that attitude?" Although this woman is clearly making a call for racial solidarity, by claiming that the lower-income residents are "your sisters and brothers," the first woman, referring to public housing residents' abilities to change their perceived ill attitudes and behaviors, retorts, "I don't think they can do it." Her tone rises and she repeats, "They can't do it!" The idea of actively role modeling,

supporting, and mentoring the poor is not a major priority for the many middle-class residents.

In Harlem many block clubs are devoted to making the community “better,” even if doing so is detrimental to disadvantaged African Americans. One night, I accompany Harlem’s New York State Assemblyman, Keith Wright, and his executive assistant, Mignonne, to the 136th Street block club association’s meeting. The block club invites Keith to solicit his support against the opening of a group home for young, single mothers.

The meeting is in a small church basement, just two houses away from the proposed group home. About 25 African American homeowners attend the meeting. When we arrive, the executive director of the social service agency, in charge of the group home, is making her case for the program. She explains that the home will teach mothers effective parenting techniques. When she completes her presentation, many of the block club members are very vocal about preventing the social service agency access to the area. They tell the director that they are prepared to protest outside of the home should the program move to “their” block. Their concerns center on the young men associated with these women. They claim these men would pose a threat to the block’s safety. A bank executive, in his business suit, is extremely vocal about barring the group home from “his” block. He explains that he moved to Harlem 2 years ago and will not let a program on the block that would threaten its “safety” or the value of his property “investment.” As he speaks, Mignonne, Keith’s executive assistant, looks at me with a face of disgust.

When the banker finishes, all the participants turn to Keith for his reaction. Keith begins by mentioning that there are many single mothers in the Central Harlem population. He knows that the residents do not want the program and he is very deliberate with his words. Keith tells them that they may want to accept “the devil you know.” He explains that this social service agency has a good reputation (the agency is Harlem based) and that the church that owns the land could place another social service agency with less “community ties” on the corner. The block club is not convinced or swayed. In fact, as Keith completes his monologue, the vice president of the block group hands out a list of all the social service agencies in the neighborhood and says, “Enough is enough!” In the end, the executive director says she will not place the mothers where they are not welcome. In response, the banker and many others in the block association smile and nod their heads in approval, while Mignonne rolls her eyes at me.

Mignonne has lived in Harlem her entire life. She grew up in the Lincoln Homes, a public housing project, and raised two sons as a single mother. She is a frank woman who has worked for Keith for almost 10 years. After the meeting she tells me this program could help some of the young, single mothers in the community. While elaborating on the program’s potential, she says she hates the “implants,” affluent people that move to Harlem, buy brownstones and drive up property values without any concern for long-term, low-income residents. Mignonne is passionate about her contempt for “implants” because she closely identifies with long-term residents and despises newcomers who claim Harlem solely for themselves.

The preferences and tastes of the upper- and middle-income residents are dominant political forces in these communities. To a certain extent this circumstance is predicted by Wilson (1996); the middle class is strengthening neighborhood organizations. Block clubs, reinvigorated in the last few years, are very successful at keeping homeless shelters, drug treatment clinics, and other social service programs off their streets. Block club actions

help maintain property values and neighborhood standards. However, the new arrivals, such as the bank executive, appear uninterested in being “role models” to the underclass and are more concerned with maintaining property values by keeping the undesirables out of the community. Not only are class tensions prevalent in block clubs, but they also have become integrated into the organizational fabric of the black church.

#### THE BLACK CHURCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Black churches are seen as the pillars of strength and hope in low-income communities throughout the country. Black congregations were central to the civil rights movement and there was an expectation that the church would help and support the downtrodden. However, in these historic, economically transitioning black communities several churches are promoting the interests of the upper and middle class, while neglecting, and in some instances contributing to, pressing issues facing the poor. For instance, many local churches have affiliated community development corporations that are building high-income housing that contributes to displacement.

The Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement (HCCI), a collaboration of several smaller churches, is one of Harlem’s leading nonprofit property managers and housing developers. They also provide an array of social service programs in the community. In a recent meeting, Craig, the head of real estate development for HCCI, stands before Central Harlem’s community board wearing a gray suit. He announces that HCCI plans to rehabilitate several units near West 148th Street between 7th and 8th Avenue. He says such development will turn the area into “a mixed-income block,” with “units of low, moderate and middle-income housing.” The 110 unit project will cost \$17.5 million. To qualify for a one-bedroom unit an individual will need to earn between \$32,000 and \$141,000 a year, while to be eligible for a three-bedroom unit a family would be required to have a gross income ranging from \$61,000 to \$169,000. Most of the units are for the higher-income ranges.

After Craig presents these income levels, a man behind me calls out, “Forget about it,” meaning that he did not believe anyone in Harlem could afford the development. In response, Craig states, “Again, this is our attempt to address a mixed-income community for this block . . . . Our feeling, at this point in Harlem’s development, is that we need to create housing for a mixed-income community.” Although these units are beyond the means of many Harlem residents, HCCI is implementing the type of housing that political leadership and the community board have requested. Virginia Fields, the Manhattan Borough President and a 24-year Harlem resident, referring to the boom in housing for the middle class, explains, “This is what is needed in this community. For far too long living in Harlem was for low income [people].”<sup>11</sup>

HCCI is not the only nonprofit, church-based developer in Harlem constructing housing beyond the means of current residents. The famed Abyssinian Baptist Church is another major non-profit housing developer in Harlem. At one of the community board meetings, a representative from Abyssinian’s Development Corporation responds to accusations that her organization is not helping current families occupying buildings that Abyssinian plans to redevelop. She states sternly,

We are not trying to remove anyone from the community [meaning Central Harlem].  
We have other units in this community that are vacant, that may be of less quality, but

we are not sending anyone to the Bronx, Brooklyn, or Staten Island. We are keeping people in the community. People will still have a home within Abyssinian.

A resident of one building slated for redevelopment stands up and yells at the Abyssinian representative and a City Department of Housing Preservation and Department (HPD) employee. She tells them she was never informed that residents could have collectively purchased her building through the City's Tenant Interim Lease program, an initiative that allows residents of city owned buildings to purchase them as cooperatives below market rate. She says she was misinformed by Abyssinian and the city about her rights as a tenant. She also asserts that Abyssinian did not have a unit to accommodate her family of nine. The woman from HPD begins to read documentation of attempts by Abyssinian staff members to contact the resident about alternative housing options. As the representative from HPD reads out the dates, some residents start screaming that the situation is unjust and immoral.

Eventually, three different factions all begin shouting at once. One-third of the audience blames HPD, one-third blame Abyssinian, and one-third blame the woman with the complaint. For example, one person calls out, "We need the facts about how reliable this woman has been in paying her rent." Another says, "It's not Abyssinian's fault because they are working within the faulty framework set up by HPD and the city." Another woman sitting next to me yells out, "Abyssinian don't care nothing about you! They have sold you out. They are in the real estate business." Order is finally restored when a board member says to the Abyssinian representative, "We know the constraints you work under with dealing with the city agency [meaning HPD], but you have to do better than what outside agencies [meaning other real estate companies outside of Harlem] are doing in this community." Despite the concerns regarding the displacement of this family, the community board approves the project.

On the south side of Chicago, religiously affiliated community development corporations are building housing for middle-income individuals in Bronzeville.<sup>12</sup> This circumstance, as in Harlem, helps to improve the economic conditions of the community, but does little to assist the poor in these areas, and in fact often contributes to their displacement. Findings such as these in Harlem and Bronzeville coincide with other research investigating the role of churches in disadvantaged black neighborhoods. For instance, McRoberts' (2003) ethnographic study of Four Corners in Boston illustrates that local religious institutions rarely advocate for the residents of communities in which they are located. The 29 churches McRoberts observes, as he puts it, "were not formed to serve residents and did not try to incorporate them" (143). One explanation given by McRoberts is that many African American churches located in depressed black communities often have a substantial membership from more affluent communities. Thus, they are uninterested in helping the poor located just outside of their places of worship.

#### DISPLACEMENT AND DISCORD

The behaviors of black-led community institutions and organizations, such as the community board, block clubs, and non-profit developers are leading to the direct and indirect displacement of low- and moderate-income tenants.<sup>13</sup> The political leadership speaks about the issue but little concrete action is taken. "Everyone is concerned about gentrification—

I'm not. As I see it, most of the people moving into Harlem are black," declares one political leader in Harlem. Howard Dotson, the executive director of the Harlem's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, explains, "You can't have it both ways, you can't have development and have no displacement." Others feel the same way. A Harlem resident and employee of NYC's Department of Housing Preservation and Development explains that people who cannot afford to stay in the community are "a casualty of development." Florence Forbes, an economic development specialist for the Manhattan Borough President states:

I think the class [conflict] thing has to happen. My big argument is that if you don't do that Harlem is going to remain a ghetto. Not that it still isn't, but that it would remain one if you don't attract people that make \$50,000 and above.

Leaders in Bronzeville articulate similar sentiments. Several proclaim that the conditions in public housing are so deplorable that demolition and ensuing displacement are worthy trade-offs.

However, others perceive individuals promoting the redevelopment as "sell outs," "race traitors," and "Uncle Toms." During a community meeting on gentrification in Harlem, one activist declares, "The Empowerment Zone wasn't created to help us . . . those bullshit artists, selling out the community . . . . The community boards, it's the same thing. I've never seen such a bunch of Uncle Toms in my life . . . Community Board 10, they're selling us out!" Some public housing residents in Bronzeville refer to their local politicians as "poli-trick-ans." They explain that the current leadership makes claims of racial solidarity by supporting national issues like reparations, yet turn their backs on low-income members of the community. "So this makes reparations a big contradiction," declares a former public housing resident, "You got . . . vacant land on 47th Street right now . . . you don't have to go about reparations . . . You got the power to actually empower the people, but you put the people on hold for your personal political agenda." As Harlem and Bronzeville redevelop, a vulnerable segment of the black population is pushed out, leading to the question of whether or not the "second renaissance" of these areas can be considered symbols of racial advancement.

#### RACIAL UPLIFT?

Some consider the redevelopment of Harlem and Bronzeville as racial uplift. Boyd (2000) discusses how a segment of Bronzeville sees the restoration of historic buildings as preserving the "history of the race" (116). Further, Taylor (2002) notes, "Out of symbolic meanings, Harlem gives forth an ideology of race consciousness, racial pride, and collective strength" (82). In *Black Metropolis*, Drake and Cayton ([1945] 1993) set forth their definition of racial uplift, or as they call it "advancing the race." They state:

When Negroes speak of advancing the race they may be referring to either of two things: (1) individual achievement which 'reflects credit on the race' or (2) organized activities which are consciously designed to raise the status of the group as a whole (716).

Undoubtedly, how these communities are characterized will disproportionately represent black America. The redevelopment of these two historic communities is racial uplift in

one sense—the achievement of the black middle class is saving these culturally significant areas from a sizeable white influx. Preserving the historic legacies of these communities helps to maintain an important aspect of black history and culture.

However, applying the concept of racial uplift to the development in Harlem and Bronzeville is problematic. Symbolically, the economic re-emergence of these areas will “reflect credit on the race,” but it does little for “the group as a whole.” In fact, I would argue that for these communities to achieve their redevelopment, conscious political decisions are constantly made to exclude the most disadvantaged segment of the black population. While portions of the black middle class and white society might claim that the redevelopment of these communities, based on their historic past, is part of racial uplift, Boyd (2000) points out that this rhetoric “gloss(es) over intra-racial difference and construct(s) the redevelopment as a goal of the entire racial community” (116). The paradox of these communities, in regard to racial uplift, is that individual success and achievement by the black middle class have made the redevelopment possible, but as a consequence the most vulnerable members of the race are displaced to other high-poverty localities (Venkatesh et al., 2004).

The meaning of the black middle-class behaviors cannot be fully understood without addressing their vulnerability. Pattillo-McCoy’s (1999) ethnographic investigation of an African American, mixed-income community on the south side of Chicago, points out the economic, social, and spatial vulnerability of the black middle class. She states, “The ecological context of black middle-class families is a basic feature of difference between the white and the black middle class” (211). The black middle class, on average, lives closer to poor neighbors than their white counterparts (Adelman, 2004). A recent Chicago report, using 2000 Census data, indicates that 78 percent of black middle-class blocks are within a half mile from blocks with at least one-third living below the poverty line, while only 25 percent of middle-class white blocks are in the same spatial circumstance.<sup>14</sup> Many middle-class enclaves in both Harlem and Bronzeville are near public housing and areas known for drug activity. Living in close proximity to the poor presents a heightened risk of coming into contact with crime. In addition to being more susceptible to crime, the black middle class is economically vulnerable. While earning comparable income, the black middle class has much less wealth compared to whites (Oliver and Shapiro, 1995). Thus, by protecting property investments the black middle class may be creating safe and prosperous communities, building household wealth, and sustaining their tenuous class status.

## DISCUSSION

In this paper, I stress the importance of intra-racial class conflict in regards to neighborhood development. I have argued that community organizations, dominated by middle-class interests, contribute to rising property values at the expense of the poor. This important finding has major implications for theorizing neighborhood change and notions of racial solidarity.

This research suggests that formal community organizational structures must be taken into account when attempting to understand the political dynamics of community change and local economic development. The last few years have seen an increasing focus on nonspecific informal neighborhood groups and community norms as facilitators of

community improvement (see Putnam, 1993; Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls, 1997). However, this line of research lacks a clear and tangible mechanism for change. I am not saying that norms of collective action and general community participation are unimportant. They may be antecedents or indicators of more specific forms of concrete political action, such as alerting a politician that certain groups will not be tolerated. I believe that my research, as well as that of others (Crenson, 1983; Gregory, 1998; Pattillo, 2003; Taub, Taylor, and Dunham, 1984), suggests that formal organizations, dominated by elite interests, must be incorporated into theories of neighborhood change.

I have argued that certain black-led organizations contribute to neighborhood conditions. Although past studies suggest that black social networks and formal organizations moderate harsh living circumstances (Stack, 1974; Venkatesh, 2000), their role in altering property values has not been thoroughly discussed. In the urban development literature, African American organizations are virtually ignored as agents in the process of community change. For example, Massey and Denton's work claims that white-dominated institutions are the only entities central to the development of the inner city. Moreover, Hirsch's historical account of the altering conditions of Bronzeville in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s focuses exclusively on elite white actors, downtown real estate, and commercial interests. He explains, "Primary attention is devoted to whites . . . that is where the power was" (xvi). Since the 1960s, we have witnessed a burgeoning black middle class in the United States and this group has gained the economic and political capital to alter the urban landscape. This is not to say that white-dominated organizations such as major banks, certain government institutions, and real estate companies are not heavily influencing the redevelopment processes in these communities; they are. However, elite-led black organizations also contribute to this process. My research suggests that social scientists employing concepts of "exchange value" and the "growth machine" to explain urban development need to incorporate a new constituency, the black middle class.

Although middle-class populations are important to the revitalization process in low-income neighborhoods, they might not have the effect predicted by previous works. Wilson's studies (1987, 1996) suggest that more affluent residents will strengthen neighborhood organizations benefiting the whole community. However, the positive effects he assumes are based on a time when upper, middle, and lower classes of African Americans were forced to live together under state-sanctioned segregation. Once these restrictions were lifted, the more affluent fled the ghettos to get away from the lower classes. Now that the inner city is perceived as valuable, the black middle class returns. However, they are not acting as a support mechanism to the poor; they instead use their heightened political power to remove the undesirables. Based on this circumstance, we must question the presumed positive effect, for the poor, brought on by a return of the black middle class.

In terms of race theory, my data support Marable's notion of class heterogeneity within black America. Harlem and Bronzeville residents have very different attitudes and actions concerning the redevelopment of their community based on differentiated attachments to distinct socioeconomic status groups. The more affluent residents advocate for "community improvements" and the removal of the poor, while lower-income residents fight to remain in the neighborhood. However, "race consciousness," "black solidarity," and Dawson's black utility heuristic are not unimportant. For example, Pattillo (2003) in her study of "black gentrification" finds that while intra-racial conflict persists over who is allowed to remain in the community, there is a strong tendency for residents, regardless

of class, to collectively resist the movement of whites into the neighborhood. Additionally, some black professionals move into these communities because of their importance as black symbols. Therefore, black solidarity exists in particular spheres but becomes less important in others (Reed, 1999). Certain African Americans desire to live in historic black communities, but they want these areas to meet their standards of middle-class urban living, even if it means organizing and advocating for the displacement of low-income individuals of their own race. Thus, this research highlights the need to think more deeply about the specific circumstances when race trumps class and vice versa.

#### METHODOLOGICAL CONCERN

One tension running through this project common to ethnographies is the constant movement between observation and theory, an oscillation between inductive and deductive inquiry. In studying these communities, I had a broad research agenda. I wanted to compare and understand how internal and external community forces were related to their redevelopment. In particular, I wanted to explore how the distinct citywide political circumstances affected the patterns of development. My initial framework had been influenced by urban literature such as Sassen (2000), Wilson (1996), Logan and Molotch (1987), Massey and Denton (1993), and Fuchs (1992). These studies highlight external community conditions, like economic globalization, the national economy, federal policies, institutional racism, and city politics as central to urban development. While noting these forces, I was struck by how internal community strife, distinguished by class difference, also contributed. Thus, my research focus developed first from previous research and then was altered somewhat by field observations. Therefore, my research is not designed to test theories of urban development and race but is intended to generate findings, questions, and hypotheses that critique past research and contribute to further explorations. Nevertheless, I believe that the comparative nature of this study has certain advantages over single-case ethnographies. By investigating two similar black communities, my findings are significantly more reliable and robust than a singular examination.

#### POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The argument presented in this paper has two important implications for urban development policy. In the mid- and late 1990s the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development began implementing the HOPE VI program (see Kingsley, Johnson, and Pettit, 2003). This initiative subsidizes the development of "mixed-income" housing developments that are to replace public housing in many black communities. Several of the developments funded through HOPE VI are designed to have one-third market rate homeowners, one-third market rate renters, and one-third public housing tenants. While this initiative seems a viable solution to eliminating high-poverty areas, this research suggests that class conflict among the residents of these new developments has to be contended with for the program to be successful. If maintaining economic diversity is the goal of these programs, measures must be taken to integrate and assimilate residents of distinct classes. Otherwise, two outcomes are inevitable: either upper-income residents will become politically active and remove the lower-income population or they will move to more class

segregated areas. To successfully integrate these developments, one would have to employ strategies to mitigate tensions between these economically distinct populations.

Since the election of President George W. Bush, there has been a push to increase funding for faith-based involvement in neighborhood development. This research suggests that we must think differently about the participation of religious institutions in neighborhood revitalization efforts. There is an implicit assumption that these entities aspire, and are in a better position than other organizations, to help those in dire circumstances. However, as I have shown, some churches in low-income communities have interests that align more with their middle-class membership. Churches, like other organizations, must serve their core constituents, yet it is assumed that these entities are better equipped to assist the poor because they are located in the inner city. My research, as well as McRoberts' (2003) study, demonstrates that this can be a faulty assumption.

#### FUTURE RESEARCH

Further work needs to more rigorously identify the contribution of black middle-class organizations to the process of community change. Obviously, forces beyond the community, such as city politics (Fuchs, 1992), federal policies (Halpern, 1995), and economic globalization (Sassen, 2000), affect local participation and conditions in urban neighborhoods. A more comprehensive contextualized analysis that better incorporates these factors is needed to more accurately estimate the contribution of local organizations. Another limitation of this research is that it assumes that all affluent African Americans seek similar economic and political outcomes. A more refined analysis is necessary to understand how the "old guard" in these developing communities reacts to the influx of a new black middle class. Many of the newcomers to these communities have different political values than the "gatekeepers" who maintain an immense amount of political power within these neighborhoods (Jacoby and Siegel, 1999). The fight for political power among a diverse set of black elites may be as important to the future of these communities as the conflict between low income and more affluent populations. Lastly, although explicit racism against African Americans is decreasing, racism remains pervasive in the United States. These everyday experiences help form meaningful bonds among African Americans of all economic backgrounds. However, an important research task remains to better specify conditions when bonds of solidarity exist and when they become less important. As Harlem and Bronzeville continue to develop, it will be interesting to see if whites move into these neighborhoods. If so, how the movement of whites affects the level of strife between upper- and lower-income African Americans will be important to investigate.

#### CONCLUSION

This study supports the notion that intra-racial class conflict is essential to understanding community change and black civil society. While several outside forces, ranging from government policy to white real estate speculators, influence the redevelopment of Harlem and Bronzeville, it is undisputable that the black middle class and their preferences for "community improvement" are associated with rising property values and the displacement of the poor. Therefore, it is difficult to determine whether the economic re-emergence of these neighborhoods can be associated with racial uplift. Nonetheless, this

study supports the notion that socioeconomic stratification within black America is an extremely important distinction that shapes social and political action related to neighborhood transformation.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this paper I use the terms African American and black interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup> Identities of informants are only revealed if explicit written and verbal permission was granted. Otherwise, pseudonyms are used to conceal their identities.

<sup>3</sup> Other studies note that factors beyond the community, such as economic globalization (Sassen, 2000), federal policies (Halpern, 1995), and city politics (Fuchs, 1992), contribute to shaping urban neighborhoods. Discussing these broader forces is important but beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>4</sup> Homeowners, facilitating exchange value, are part of the broader urban "growth machine," a diverse set of urban actors concerned with property value escalation (Logan and Molotch, 1987).

<sup>5</sup> When I refer to Harlem, I am referring to Central Harlem. It is located toward the northern tip of Manhattan and is bounded by Central Park at 110th Street to the south, 155th Street to the north, 5th Avenue on the east, and Morningside and St. Nicholas Park on the west. Bronzeville is located on the south side of Chicago and is bounded by 26th Street to the north, 51st Street to the south, Cottage Grove Avenue to the east, and the Dan Ryan Expressway to the west.

<sup>6</sup> During the 1920s, these areas were thriving mixed-income communities from which many forms of black cultural expression, such as literature, art, and politics, emerged. Writers such as Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Gwendolyn Brooks; painters like Jacob Lawrence and Archibald Motley; and politicians like Adam Clayton Powell Jr. and William Dawson, all lived in one of these communities.

<sup>7</sup> This difference is not insignificant, but it is not the focus of this paper.

<sup>8</sup> I became familiar with Bronzeville beginning in September of 1997 as part of a research team from the University of Kansas, documenting a comprehensive community initiative supported by the MacArthur Foundation.

<sup>9</sup> Due to space constraints, I do not always present fully detailed examples from both communities.

<sup>10</sup> This rough calculation is made by taking the estimated number of 1996 Bronzeville residents (25,400) who lived in Chicago Public Housing Authority public housing units slated for demolition and subtracting the fraction (i.e., 1/3) of people who are supposed to return to developments in Bronzeville after low-rise, mixed-income housing is constructed.

<sup>11</sup> Wax, A.J., and Padgett, T. (2002, August 5). "Things Are Looking Uptown," *New York Newsday*.

<sup>12</sup> Dumke, M. (2000, September). "Black Ministers Put Faith in Daley," *The Chicago Reporter*.

<sup>13</sup> No one refutes the extent of displacement in Bronzeville. However, my findings in Harlem contradict the results of one study that suggests displacement is not a major occurrence (Freeman and Braconi, 2004). Freeman and Braconi's claims about the lack of displacement in Harlem go against several investigations grounded in this neighborhood (e.g., Davila, 2004; Smith, [1996] 2000; Taylor, 2002). Based on the number of investigations that discover instances of displacement in Harlem, we must be skeptical of the validity of Freeman and Braconi's claims.

<sup>14</sup> Mendell, D., and Little, D. (2003, July 27). "Poverty, Crime Still Stalk City's Middle-Class Blacks," *The Chicago Tribune*.

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APPENDIX

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

**TABLE A1.** Percent Black and White by Community Area

	Black 1990	White 1990	Black 2000	White 2000
Bronzeville*	95	4.0	92	3.5
Central Harlem	88	1.5	77	2.0

\*Douglas and Grand Boulevard community districts.  
Census data.

**TABLE A2.** Household Income Structure by Community Area

Income*	Bronzeville		Central Harlem	
	1990	2000**	1990	2000**
Low	63	45	53	42
Moderate	14	12	18	15
Middle	22	33	26	35
High	2	10	3	8

\*Low = below 15,000; moderate = 15,000–24,999; middle = 25,000–74,999; high = 75,000+\*\*unadjusted for inflation.

**TABLE A3.** Percent of Population with B.A. or Higher by Community Area

	1980	1990	2000	Percent Change (1990–2000) (%)
Bronzeville	8	13	18	38
Central Harlem	5	10	15	50

Census data.

**TABLE A4.** Owner-occupied Units by Community Area

	1980	1990	2000
Bronzeville	5.6	5.5	10.0
Central Harlem	3.5	4.6	7.0

Census data.

**TABLE A5.** Median Home Value by Community Area

	1980	1990	2000*
Douglas	\$25,900	\$124,632	\$208,449
Grand Boulevard	\$23,400	\$61,601	\$179,849
Central Harlem	\$53,873	\$199,025	\$250,000

Census data.

\*Unadjusted for inflation.