Gentrification and Urban Displacement Surrounding Fordham University's Bronx Community

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Abstract:

This paper explores whether residents of three Northwest Bronx neighborhoods—Bedford Park, Belmont, and Fordham Road—fear that gentrification and urban displacement will be the consequence of their proximity to Fordham College at Rose Hill campus. I administered over twenty interviews in each neighborhood with community leaders, business owners, and residents to discover the thoughts and feelings that pertain to this subject. Essential findings I have unearthed are that individuals are worried about being priced out and displaced, that Fordham College at Rose Hill has a direct effect on gentrification and displacement in the community, and that Fordham College at Rose Hill will have a lasting impact in the evolution of these three neighborhoods in the next 15-20 years. Based on the review of literature and interviews, I have concluded that the Bronx is going through a period of gentrification and urban displacement, with Fordham College at Rose Hill being a main contributor.

Acknowledgments:

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Mark Naison, whose expertise, patience, and understanding of the subject led to the finishing of my senior thesis. Under Dr. Naison's supervision, I was able to successfully research an issue, specifically gentrification and urban displacement, which has been directly affecting the lives of many low-income individuals living in the Northwest Bronx. I would like to thank my family; whose wholehearted support throughout the four years of my undergraduate career has been nothing shy of impeccable. I would also like to thank a fellow student and dear friend Diven Faron, who assisted in the editing process throughout my thesis.
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Chapter One: Introduction and Literature Review

My thesis seeks to explore gentrification and fears of gentrification in three Northwest Bronx neighborhoods that surround the Fordham College at Rose Hill campus: Bedford Park, Belmont (Arthur Avenue), and Fordham Road. After studying various courses in Urban Studies and Economics during my undergraduate career at Fordham, I developed a fascination for the community and a grand appreciation of the authenticity that personifies the Bronx; however, gentrification and displacement seem to be a collective issue that no individual has investigated within the area. Subsequently, lower-income families accompany the majority of these neighborhoods surrounding Fordham College at Rose Hill, and because of that, I believe that residents, business owners, and community leaders have an impending fear of gentrification and displacement. I will be seeking answers for questions such as: Are neighborhood residents worried about being priced out or replaced? Does Fordham University have a direct effect on gentrification or displacement? What changes do neighborhood residents want to see occur? What can the government do to help the community?

Fordham, which is a group of neighborhoods located in the western Bronx, has a rich history that dates all the way back to 1666, which is when Dutch settler John Archer first arrived to the area. At this time, he established a community at 225th Street near the Harlem River.¹ Old Fordham Village is a section of Fordham that dates back to the English

¹ “John Archer”. Bronx Notables. Bronx County Historical Society
colonial era and is centered on the intersection of Fordham Road and the Grand Concourse. The section’s origins date back to the early 1750s, when the Fordham Manor was built, which is now part of Fordham University. There was a period of transformation after 1900, when most of the remaining farms and estates were sold to developers who built houses and apartments within the area. Fordham was a predominately middle class Jewish/Irish neighborhood from the 1920s through the late 1970s, however, after World War II, the implementation of the G.I. bill allowed many Jewish soldiers to move to the suburbs or retire in Florida, bringing in a new wave of immigrants. After the majority of Jewish residents left the Bronx causing new job openings, the area became populated with African Americans from the South, and Puerto Ricans. The sociocultural dynamics of the Bronx changed; the Black and Puerto Rican neighborhoods produced a plethora of art and culture during this transformation. Not only did the presence of hip-hop arise in these neighborhoods, but so did Salsa, Latin Jazz, and now Bachata. Individuals were able to express themselves during this time; the graffiti produced in the Bronx neighborhoods has had an immense influence on visual arts around the world. From the late 1970s and early 1980s there was a complete evolution in styles and ideas in these areas.

Fordham University’s Rose Hill campus was first established in 1841 and is now one of the largest green spaces in New York City. Originally sitting on over 100 acres of land, the university sold 30 acres east of Southern Boulevard to the New York City government to become part of the New York Botanical Garden. Currently, the Fordham College at Rose

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2 *New-York Historical Society*. The Bronx: Evolution from a Glorified Era to a Decayed One
Hill campus takes up 85 acres in the Northwest Bronx and is the home to 3,487 undergraduates. As of 2015, the undergraduate statistics provide that 56.3% of undergraduates are women and 43.7% are men. Further demographics show that 28.6% of undergraduates are listed as underrepresented populations, 13.6% Hispanic, 9.5% Asian, 5.3% African American, 3.8% two or more racial groups, 0.1% American Indian/Alaskan, and 0.1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Undergraduates come from 48 states in the U.S., Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and 68 countries.⁴

Relations between Fordham and its surrounding neighborhoods vary according to campus officials. At Fordham College at Rose Hill, the University keenly recruits Bronx students from disadvantaged backgrounds through the Higher Education Opportunity Program.⁵ The purpose of this program is to provide students who portray potential for academic success with the educational supportive services and financial assistance they need to become successful. Also, Fordham University is known for its community service, accumulating over 1.2 million community service hours in 2013.⁶ The University prides itself on Global Outreach (GO!), which is a cultural immersion and service program monitored under the Office of Mission and Ministry at Fordham University. Students learn about various issues of economic, political, social, and environmental injustice while living a simple lifestyle that fosters spiritual and communal growth.⁷ I have been lucky enough to be selected to attend a Global Outreach trip to Cape Town, South Africa upon graduation where I will serve as an integral member of a 12 member team, which will volunteer with

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⁴ “Fordham Facts” Fordham.edu
⁵ “HEOP” Fordham.edu
⁶ “Fordham Facts” Fordham.edu
⁷ “Global Outreach” Fordham.edu
various Non-Governmental Organizations dedicated to fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic throughout Africa. These are a few of the many ways Fordham University stays active with the community, as well as participating in worldwide initiatives regarding economic, political, social, and environmental injustice.

The three neighborhoods I will be assessing throughout my research are Bedford Park, Belmont (Arthur Avenue), and Fordham Road. I chose to dissect these three neighborhoods because they border Fordham College at Rose Hill and these neighborhoods are most susceptible to gentrification and urban displacement due to their proximity to the University's campus. The first section of this thesis will contain a literature review on the subject of gentrification and urban displacement. This is important to understand because it is the basis of my research. With this information in hand, it will be easier to get a better grasp of past and present gentrification that has occurred throughout New York City's five boroughs. The information provided will help go into further depth on the main causes and effects of gentrification such as sociocultural aspects, economic and political factors, as well as the positive and negatives consequences of gentrification, including urban displacement.

Tarry Hum's *Making a Global Immigrant Neighborhood: Brooklyn's Sunset Park* will be very helpful on the topic of gentrification because it focuses on a specific location in the borough of Brooklyn that has been recently gentrified. I chose this source because the author pays close attention to the complex political, social, and spatial dynamics that construct the community and forms new leadership roles as well as coalitions. Hum focuses on the evolution of Sunset Park, which was primarily populated with the working-poor and racially diverse immigrants in the 1960s, leading up to the present day Sunset Park, which
has become one of New York City’s most energetic neighborhoods. Throughout her book, Hum explains how globalization, especially immigration patterns and shifts in low wage labor markets, have shaped this neighborhood. This will be a valuable source because I will be able to reference Hum’s findings in urban change and community development and apply it to the three neighborhoods I have researched to see if gentrification will be inevitable in the near future. William A. Darity’s section on “Neighborhoods” in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* provides information on the origin and etymology of gentrification. This source will be significant to my research because it will give a better understanding of the basis of what I am researching in these three neighborhoods. With this information, I will be able to get a better understanding of past and present gentrification that has occurred not just in the United States but also around the world. The information provided will help go into further depth on the main causes and effects on gentrification. This will help me compare the effects of gentrification in the five New York City boroughs with that of other gentrified locations around the world. Neil Smith and Richard Schaffer’s *The Gentrification of Harlem?* Gives a better understanding on the gentrification process that occurred in one of the five New York City boroughs. Smith and Schaffer come to the conclusion that gentrification has begun but that there are several potential limitations in the entire process; “the number of wealthy black households in Harlem is relatively small, and if gentrification proceeds it will eventually lead to white in-migration and the displacement of blacks.”

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to find out whether or not gentrification or urban displacement is prevalent in the three neighborhoods that surround Fordham College at Rose Hill’s campus.

Statistics from the American Community Survey, which is an ongoing statistical survey by the U.S. Census Bureau, will provide me with a better understanding of the demographics, the social organization, and the housing of this area. Although the ACS does not include separate neighborhoods, I have chosen to use the 10458 zip code, which covers all three neighborhoods. For demographics, I will be focusing on the following characteristics: population, race and national origin, nativity status, and poverty status. This information will help the reader obtain a better understanding of the demographics of these neighborhoods and will help the reader determine what population changes have occurred in recent years. For the social organization, I will be focusing on the following characteristics: households by type and educational status of persons 25+. This data will help the reader get a better understanding of the social traits of each neighborhood. For the housing market, I will be focusing on the following characteristics: occupancy status and housing units, housing tenure, and gross rent within the 10458 zip code. This information will help me determine whether there has been an increase or decrease in these characteristics within the neighborhood. I will compare the results between two different decades and describe what is occurring within each neighborhood with respect to its housing market. All data used throughout this section will be gathered from the American Community Survey (Census.gov).

The second section of my thesis will be based solely on interviews. Interviews are a far more personal form of research than surveys. I have divided this middle section into
three subsections by interviewing three different groups: neighborhood residents, business owners, and community leaders. I will draw from a range of 20-25 different individuals in each category and ask the individuals a set of questions. For neighborhood residents, I will ask the following questions: Do you have any contacts with Fordham students? Have you ever been on the Fordham campus? Are rents going up in your neighborhood? Are you worried about having to move because the neighborhood is becoming too expensive? Are there any new stores moving in that you do not feel comfortable in? Are stores you frequent closing because they can’t afford the rent? These questions will give the reader a better understanding of how the community feels about Fordham University and whether or not gentrification and displacement are current factors in their lives. For business owners, I will ask the following questions: Do you have any contact with Fordham students? Are rents going up in your neighborhood making it hard maintaining a business? Do you feel like you are being pushed out? Are there new stores moving in that are hurting your business? Does Fordham University have an impact on your business or the way it is ran? Does your business benefit from cross-racial interactions? Have you see a change in the community over the past 5-10 years? These questions will give the reader better insight of how business owners feel on maintaining a business close to Fordham University. All of the questions posed will help attain a better understanding of the community from multiple different perspectives.

My third and final section will involve a combination of sections one and two and will conclude my thesis. By combining my research with my surveys, the reader will be able to get a better understanding of gentrification, urban displacement, and public policy in the
three neighborhoods that surround Fordham University. I will further my research using scholarly journals and articles written on the aspects of gentrification in other areas in New York City, as well on urban displacement and public policy. These various articles will supplement my thesis. Ultimately, I believe that there will be an increased spread of gentrification within the next 5-10 years in each of the three neighborhoods. During this time period, the lower- and middle-class will be driven out by the middle to upper class as well as by Fordham students. Over the past few years, the Arthur Avenue neighborhood has seen an influx of Fordham Students in these areas grow at an alarming rate. These findings will show the negative aspects of gentrification and displacement shown within the neighborhoods. In my discussion section, I will pose suggestions that will help enhance these neighborhoods so that gentrification can be labeled as a positive aspect.

Throughout my research, I have found there to be a discrepancy with the research and interviews, particularly in the Belmont (Arthur Avenue) neighborhood. After interviewing many residents, the change of the Belmont neighborhood has been immense over the past 10 years. A former student in 2003 said it was unheard of to venture off campus and Fordham College at Rose Hill was a complete bubble. Now, most students live in off-campus apartments on Lorillard, Hoffman, Arthur, and Belmont Street. This fluctuation has proved that many individuals have been displaced already in the Belmont area already although the statistics do not reflect this.

Conducting research on gentrification and urban displacement within the neighborhoods surrounding Fordham College at Rose Hill’s campus will be helpful to both the community and Fordham University. By addressing and attempting to solve these
issues, Fordham University can attack the problem at hand, and give back to the community. After combining my research and interviews, I have come to the conclusion that Fordham’s presence in the neighborhood is expanding; however, the presence has not led to a growth in permanent residents who are white and more affluent. The largely Hispanic population of this portion of the Bronx has remained intact; however, with the new projects coming within the next 5-10 years, the neighborhoods adjoining Fordham could go through a period of gentrification and urban displacement, with these projects as a main contributor.

Chapter Two: Literature on Gentrification and Urban Displacement

The term gentrification was first coined by the British sociologist Ruth Glass in 1964, although it is alleged that she used the term ‘gentrified’ even earlier in an unpublished study of housing in North Kensington, England, in 1959. Born in 1912, Ruth Glass was a Marxist, often analyzing class relations and societal conflict using a materialist interpretation of historical expansion to examine social transformation. She was a refugee from Nazi Germany, and one of the pioneers of urban sociology in Europe during the early 1950’s. Glass’s work reflected her belief “that the purpose of sociological research was to influence government policy and bring about social change.” During this era, she

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explained gentrification as the process of lower class individuals being pushed out of parts of London as upper-class ghettos were being generated; however, the changes she described are not known as those of “classical gentrification”:

One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes—upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages—two rooms and up and two down—have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences. Larger Victorian houses, downgraded in an earlier or recent period—which were used as lodging houses or were otherwise in multiple occupation—have been upgraded once again. Nowadays, many of these houses are being subdivided into costly flats or ‘houselets.’ The current social starts and value of such dwellings are frequently in inverse relation to their status, and in any case enormously inflated by comparison with previous levels in their neighborhoods. Once this process of ‘gentrification’ starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced and the social character of the district is changed. (Glass 1964: xviii-xix)

Ruth Glass’s definition of gentrification is rooted from a traditional English rural class structure, and the term was designed to point to the emergence of a new ‘urban gentry’, paralleling the 18th and 19th century rural gentry familiar to readers of Jane Austen, who comprised the class strata below the landed gentry, but above yeoman farmers and peasants.\(^\text{11}\) By literal translation, ‘gentry-fication’ or gentrification means the replacement of an existing population by a gentry, or people of good social position, specifically in the United Kingdom. However, in Glass’s discussion in London: Aspects of Change, she argues:

While the cores of other large cities in the world, especially of those in the United States, are decaying, and are becoming ghettos of the

\(^{11}\) Lees, 4
“underprivileged”, London may soon be faced with an *embarrass de richesse* in her central area—and this will prove to be a problem too.\(^{12}\)

Although Glass reveals her lack of knowledge of gentrification in the United States, her predictions of London are spot on today, for the 2001 UK Census data shows that most of London is gentrified or in the process of gentrification.\(^{13}\)

While Ruth Glass first coined the term “Gentrification” in 1964, the actual act of gentrification occurred well before. According to Neil Smith, the Hauusmannization of Paris from 1853 and 1870 was an instance of gentrification well before the phrase was coined. Baron Haussmann, a member of Napoleon III’s court, destroyed the residential areas in which deprived people lived in central Paris, displacing them to make room for the city’s now famous tree-lined avenues, which showcase the city’s famous monuments.\(^{14}\)

Dennis Gale, an urban planning consultant in Washington D.C. from 1971 to 1974, argues that by the late 1930s, parts of New Orleans, Charleston, and New York, as well as the Georgetown area of Washington, D.C., were all experiencing gentrification. Loretta Lees firmly believes that the emergence of gentrification began in postwar advanced capitalist cities. The earliest systematic occurrences were in the 1950s in large metropolitan cities such as Boston, Washington D.C., London, and New York City; in both Britain and the United States, postwar urban renewal meant the demolition of old neighborhoods to be replaced by modern highways and housing.\(^{15}\)

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\(^{13}\) Lees, 5

\(^{14}\) Lees, 6

\(^{15}\) Lees, 6
Toronto, ‘whitepainting’ or ‘whitewalling’; in Baltimore, ‘homesteading’; and in San Francisco, ‘red-brick chic’\(^{16}\):

Many American analysts have been uncomfortable with the term ‘gentrification’ (with its obvious class connotations), preferring instead labels such as ‘back-to-the-city movement’, ‘neighborhood revitalization’, and ‘brownstoning’, all of which were indicative of underlying divergences in what was believed to be central to this process.\(^{17}\)

Although there are several preferred words for gentrification, each term has its own piece of history. For example, the term ‘brownstoning’ came from the brownstoning movement in New York City during the late 1960s. The Brownstone Revival Committee, a progentrification group formed by Everett Ortner in 1968, provided historical analysis and rehabilitation tips, and voiced new issues surrounding brownstones and their gentrification. *The Brownstoner* got involved in the politics of gentrification; for example, in 1984, the group published an article arguing, ‘Gentrification is not “genocide” but “genesis.”’\(^{18}\) It is rather interesting how both the United States and the United Kingdom have deflected connotations that accompany the term ‘gentrification’ by using their own coined phrases.

Over the years, the definition of gentrification has changed dramatically. According to the 1980 *Oxford American Dictionary*, gentrification is defined as the movement of middle class families into urban areas causing property values to increase and have the secondary effect of driving out poorer families\(^{19}\); however, this differs completely from the

\(^{16}\) Lees, 6

\(^{17}\) Lees, 6


present day definition of gentrification. According to the 2015 *Oxford American Dictionary*, gentrification is defined as ‘the process of renovating and improving a house or district so that it conforms to middle-class taste.’

After researching and conducting interview within the Bedford, Belmont, and the Fordham Road neighborhoods, I found that the 1984 definition of gentrification is a better description of what is occurring in this area, especially in the Belmont (Arthur Avenue) neighborhood. After interviewing business owners, community leaders, and residents, I have found that the movement of Fordham students into off campus housing, otherwise known as an urban area, has caused the price of rent to increase drastically. This is making it difficult for less fortunate families to afford rent in the area, which causes displacement. Although the 2015 definition of gentrification is still accurate, it does touch on the effects that gentrification has on the poorer families in the area.

Scottish geographer Neil Smith goes into depth on the implications of economics when referencing gentrification. From an economic standpoint, there is nothing optimal or natural about gentrification and urban displacement. Who stands to profit from these changes of inequality? Why has consumer preference changed over the past to allow gentrification? Neil Smith states:

> In the decision to rehabilitate an inner city structure, one consumer preference tends to stand out above the others—the preference for profit, or, more accurately, a sound financial investment. A theory of gentrification must therefore explain why some neighborhoods are profitable to redevelop while others are not.\(^{21}\)

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\(^{21}\) Lees, 50
He goes into further depth on the development and rent gap issues that are a common theme when discussing gentrification:

The logic behind uneven development is that the development of one area creates barriers to further development, thus leading to underdevelopment, and that the underdevelopment of that area creates opportunities for a new phase of development. Geographically this leads to the possibility of what we might call a 'locational seesaw': the successive development, underdevelopment, and redevelopment of given area as capital jumps from one place to another, then back again, both creating and destroying its own opportunities for development.\textsuperscript{22}

In a competitive market economy, the purpose of new urban development is to maximize profit. As location is essential for deciding the best and maximal use of an area, many landowners, developers, and others involved in the developmental process are able to alter the area to maximize their profit. For example, in the Belmont area, one building owner sold her real estate on Arthur Avenue for $4.1 million. With the completion of this transaction, residents have already seen an increase in rent from the year before, causing many individuals to look for another place to live. With the growing numbers of predominately well of Fordham students moving off campus to the Belmont neighborhood, developers raise rents because Fordham students will pay the higher rents; however, local Bronx natives are now being priced out because of these rent raises, and cannot afford the now higher apartment prices.

Throughout history, the process of gentrification has been shown as both a positive and negative process. Gentrification is promoted positively by policy makers who ignore

\textsuperscript{22} Lees, 50
the less desirable effects of gentrification; gentrification is promoted as a way to socially mix, balance, and stabilize neighborhoods has connections with the ideologies of forerunner gentrifiers who sought both residence in the inner city and sociocultural multiplicity. Lees explains that many of the pioneer gentrifiers, mostly women and gay men, chose to live in the inner city to avoid the institutionalized heterosexuality and nuclear family units of the suburbs. However, by way of contrast, Lance Freeman, who is an associate professor of urban planning at Columbia, believes that gentrification can bring benefits that the indigenous residents of these neighborhoods are appreciative of; however, there are significant potential downsides to this revolution, including conflict between newcomers and more established residents, resentment stemming from feelings of irrelevance, and the loss of affordable housing. Although both takes on the positive and negative process of gentrification have validity, Loretta Lees’s section *Gentrification: Positive or Negative?* suggests that the negative aspects have not been taken seriously or have been completely ignored by policy makers.

According to Neil Smith’s *Gentrification of the City*, the actual gentrification process can occur in several ways. The most commonly accepted version is that in which a neighborhood is initially invaded by ‘pioneers’; the process of gentry then quickens as developers participate in the purchase and rehabilitation of single-family dwellings. However, the dynamics are different in those neighborhoods in which large-scale developers purchase multifamily housing and the area is converted into luxury

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23 Lees, 234
24 Lees, 233
condominium and cooperative apartments. Smith also identifies another gentrification process in which the local government takes the initiative through a major urban renewal project or through homesteading programs. Each of the processes possess varying implications that can help or hurt the community. While not trying to rediscover the essence of capitalism, Smith uses the structure and dynamics of capitalism to explain the social phenomenon of gentrification.

Tarry Hum’s *Making a Global Immigrant Neighborhood: Brooklyn’s Sunset Park* focuses on the evolution of Sunset Park, which has become one of New York City’s most energetic neighborhoods. Sunset Park’s evolution from a white ethnic industrial waterfront neighborhood to its decline during the fiscal crisis of the late 1960s, marked controversial urban renewal tactics and white flight, and its remaking in the 1980s as a multiracial neighborhood is an account of modern urban planning, mass international migration, and economic restructuring. During the mid-1950s, Sunset Park’s waterfront was a key center of industrial production and transnational trade; Brooklyn’s waterfront served as the main entry point for imported goods to the United States during this time. Hundreds of small shops swarmed the waterfront during this time, providing a steady flow of blue-collar manufacturing jobs in Sunset Park. Until the early 1960s, Brooklyn’s Sunset Park was made up of Irish, Italians, and Nordic American immigrants; however, as these groups began to leave in the mid-1970s, the Latinization of Sunset Park began. The massive urban renewal

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projects occurring in predominately Puerto Rican neighborhoods in Manhattan caused the
displacement of numerous families at this time. According to economist Martin Anderson,
blacks and Puerto Ricans made up an overwhelming two-thirds majority of those displaced,
leading to references that urban renewal was a ‘Negro removal’ or ‘Negro clearance’
program. Similar to the thoughts of Neil Smith, it seems that there is a correlation
between gentrification and urban renewal, with urban renewal displacing low-income
families from the area. Hum believes the racial transformation of Sunset Park was ‘an
outcome of the interrelated dynamics of economic decline, federal housing policies that
favored white homeownership and encouraged disinvestment in transitioning
neighborhoods, and urban renewal activities that destroyed neighborhoods in the service
of highway construction and suburbanization.’ While the influx of Asian and Latino
immigrant labor post-1965 helped renew Sunset Park’s economy, the presence and growth
of ethnic banks promoted an immigrant growth coalition, which led to a mass revitalization
of a once labor-torn neighborhood. Although ethnic banks were a big factor in the
revitalization of Sunset Park, inequality still persisted.

The fear of gentrification in Sunset Park is inevitable due to the surrounding
neighborhoods. As one of New York City’s most racially and ethnically diverse
neighborhoods, Hum states Sunset Park is continuously at a crossroad as gentrification
pressures intensify. Two market trends are causing the fear of gentrification: the first being
that young white professionals, who cannot afford neighboring areas such as Park Slope,

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29 Hum, 72
are leaving their expensive neighborhoods to settle in more affordable areas such as the northern section of Sunset Park; the second gentrifying force is mobilized by an immigrant growth coalition that consists of Chinese realtors, developers, and ethnic banks in the development of luxury condominium projects throughout Sunset Park. However, community boards and other community-based nonprofit organizations help counteract this by focusing on social and economic justice. Both the Chinese Staff and Workers’ Association (CSWA) and the Sunset Park Alliance of Neighborhoods (SPAN) have successfully created a coalition to protect Sunset Park as an affordable and sustainable working-class neighborhood. Hum explains how globalization, such as immigration patterns and shifts in low wage labor markets have shaped this neighborhood. She explains that the future of Sunset Park is dependent on the cross-relations between immigrant groups to continue to promote sustainable planning, civic engagement, and increasing common interest within the neighborhood. By examining the social, political, and spatial dynamics of Brooklyn’s Sunset Park, we get a better understanding of how leadership and coalition building can revitalize a neighborhood. After analyzing Hum’s findings in urban change and community development, I find that parts of the northwest Bronx are going through a similar revitalization stage; however, the three neighborhoods I am studying will see negative effects of gentrification within the next 10-15 years, which I will later discuss.

Neil Smith and Richard Schaffer’s *The Gentrification of Harlem?* gives the reader a better understanding of past gentrification that has occurred in one of the five New York City boroughs during the 1980s. Smith and Schaffer conclude that gentrification has begun

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30 Hum, 140
but that there are several limitations in the entire process. They state that ‘the number of wealthy black households in Harlem is relatively small, and if gentrification proceeds it will lead eventually to white in-migration and to the displacement of blacks.’ After analyzing the effects of gentrification in Harlem, Schaffer and Smith have two takes on the process: first, the benefits, in terms of higher tax revenues, rehabilitated housing units, and a generally greater ‘economic vigor’ exceeded the costs, specifically displacement. During the Carter presidency, the administration vigorously tried to encourage ‘revitalization.’ The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development acknowledged displacement as a problem but downplayed its importance; 2% was the approximation of annual displacement in gentrifying neighborhoods. On the other hand, more than 23% of departing residents in gentrifying neighborhoods are displaced and government figures indicate that 500,000 families are displaced annually from their homes, with a sizeable number being minorities. Gentrification has proved to be prevalent, especially after the 1990s. In the mid-1990s, Harlem began to show significant signs of gentrification with the number of blacks decreasing and the number of whites increasing. Between 1990 and 2006, the neighborhoods population grew by 16.9%, with the percentage of African Americans decreasing from 87.6% to 69.3%. From 2006 to 2010, the population of African Americans decreased from 69.3% to an alarming 54.4%.

31 Schaffer, 347
32 Schaffer, 349
number of whites in the area increased from 1.5% to 6.6%, and by 2010 the number of whites in Harlem increased to almost 10%. With those statistics in mind, Schaffer and Smith’s journal proves to be outdated (primarily focusing on the 1980’s) with decrease in African Americans and the steady increase in whites in the area. However, these two scholars do suggest that the “discovery” by the white middle class of several of Harlem’s restaurants and clubs could eventually lead to a different crowd in the area, which could explain the fluctuation in these racial groups. Within the next 10-15 years, Harlem will proceed in its gentrification process, ultimately altering the sociocultural dynamics of Harlem.

After reviewing the gentrification patterns in Harlem, I have concluded that Harlem has similar characteristics to that of Bedford Park, Belmont, and Fordham Road. Essential findings that wrap these neighborhoods under the same category are that individuals are being priced out and displaced. In Harlem, the increasing presence of whites is leading to a decrease in African Americans; at Fordham College at Rose Hill, the school’s presence itself is causing a direct effect on gentrification and displacement in the community, primarily in the Belmont neighborhood.

**Chapter Three: Statistical Review of Demographics, Social Organization, Housing**

Statistics from the American Community Survey, which is an ongoing statistical survey by the U.S. Census Bureau, will provide me with a better understanding of the demographics, the social organization, and the housing of this area. Although the ACS does not include separate neighborhoods, I have chosen to use the 10458 zip code because it

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36 Ibid.
covers all three neighborhoods I am studying. The data that I have accumulated ranges from 2000 to 2014, and gives a better understanding of the changes that have occurred throughout the respective time period. For demographics, I will be focusing on the following characteristics: population, race and national origin, nativity status, and poverty status. This information will help the reader obtain a better understanding of the demographics of these neighborhoods and will also help to determine what population changes have occurred in recent years.

According to the American Community Survey, I have found that the population in the 10458 zip code has steadily decreased from 2000 to 2014:

The information provided shows that there has been a steady decline of males from 36,967 in 2000 to 36,592 individuals in 2014. There has also been a steady decrease of females from 40,883 in 2000 to 39,684 females in 2014. The possibility of this decline could be that individuals do not have the resources or capital to live in this area, especially with the rise
in cost of living. This causes the displacement of lower-income families, thus creating a decline in the population. When reviewing the change in demographics from 2000 to 2014, I have found that the race and national origin has shifted with an increase in the Hispanic and Latino race as well as the Black and African American race and a decrease in White individuals over the past 14 years. According to the American Community Survey:

![Race and National Origin](image)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000-2014 American Community Survey

The reason this may be is that most of the Fordham students within the 10458 zip code are not permanent residents; therefore, it will not show the increase of Fordham students renting off campus apartment from 2000 to 2014. The nativity status also varies similarly; The nativity status reveals that there is a decline in native-born residents and an increase in foreign-born residents from 2000 to 2014:
There is a decline of native-born residents from 51,844 in 2000 to 47,521 in 2014. On the contrary, there was a rise of foreign-born residents in the 10458 zip code from 25,855 in 2000 to 28,755 in 2014. The most important aspect of the demographics in the area I am surveying is the poverty status. When examining gentrification and urban displacement, most of the individuals that suffer from gentrification struggle with poverty and are often displaced from their area. As of 2014, the average size per family is 3.13 persons, making the poverty line for a three person family $20,090.\textsuperscript{37} As of 2014, 26.2% of African Americans, 23.6% of Hispanics, and 10.1% of non-Hispanic Whites fell below the poverty line in America.\textsuperscript{38} Hilary Hoynes’s *Poverty In America: Trends and Explanations* goes into depth on the reality of poverty in America. Hoynes, who is a Professor of Public Policy and Economics at the University of California, Berkeley, states that race and ethnicity are also


\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
strongly related to the likelihood of living in poverty. The poverty thresholds were first
developed in 1963-1964 by Mollie Orshansky, an economist at the Social Security
Administration, and were adopted in August 1969. They were assembled by first
estimating the cost of the Department of Agriculture’s “economy food plan” for different
family sizes. These thresholds have been adjusted each year to reflect changes in the cost
of living using the Consumer Price Index (CPI). In 2003, the poverty line was essentially
three times the 1967 cost of the 1967 economy food plan, multiplied by the change in the
CPI. Hoynes’s findings in 2003 show that the poverty rates among blacks and Hispanics
were 24.3% and 22.5%, respectively, nearly triple that of the 8.2% poverty rate for whites.
Also, education is a strong predictor of poverty status in the United States; among
individuals living in families in which the head has less than a high school education, 31.3%
are below the poverty line, compared with just 9.6% of those whose head has at least a high
school education. The correlation between education attainment and poverty within the
10458 zip code in 2014 shows that the higher the educational attainment, the less likely an
individual will suffer from poverty. The statistics provided represent the population from
25 years and older:

40 Hoynes, Hilary Marianne E. Page, Ann Huff Stevens. “Poverty in America: Trends and
41 Hoynes, 52
42 Hoynes, 49
43 Hoynes, 49
The number of individuals that receive a Bachelor's degree or higher in this area have a lesser chance of suffering from poverty, replicating the research of Professor Hoynes. According to the 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate, 39.3% of individuals living within the 10458 zip code live below the poverty level; to put that into perspective, almost four out of the ten people you see walking down the streets in this area live in poverty. The breakdown of race and Hispanic or Latino origin within this area is as follows:

**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT within 10458 Zip code, 2014**

(percentage with given characteristics)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Below Poverty Level</th>
<th>Percent Below Poverty Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population 25 years and older</td>
<td>44,068</td>
<td>14,453</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school graduate</td>
<td>15,533</td>
<td>6,751</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>12,450</td>
<td>4,160</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college, associate's degree</td>
<td>10,758</td>
<td>2,753</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree or higher</td>
<td>5,327</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey

**RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN within 10458 Zip code, 2010-2014**

(percentage with given characteristics)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Below Poverty Level</th>
<th>Percent Below Poverty Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One race</td>
<td>70,182</td>
<td>27,829</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>12,292</td>
<td>4,831</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>16,107</td>
<td>6,035</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2,378</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some other race</td>
<td>38,959</td>
<td>16,057</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>3,008</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ibid.
From the statistics alone, we grasp that Whites have a higher percentage of individuals living below the poverty line in the area at 39.7% compared to Black or African Americans, which 39.3% of individuals live below the poverty line within the 10458 zip code. However, the “some other race” category has the highest percentage of individuals living below the poverty status, which is an alarming 41.2% of individuals. This category may include persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, thus deeming this group most likely to live below the poverty level. Although these statistics may differ from other parts of the Bronx, we get a better understanding of what the demographics are in such a condensed area and get a better understanding of which groups are susceptible to the negative effects of gentrification, including displacement.

Studying the social traits of Bedford Park, Belmont, and Fordham Road gives a better understanding of what it is like living in this community. For social traits, I will be focusing on households by type and the status of persons aged 25+. This data will help the reader get a better understanding of the social traits of each neighborhood.

While reviewing statistics on households by type within the 10458 zip code, I have found that there has been an increase in total households from a total of 25,406 in 2000 to 26,201 households in 2010. This statistic stands out the most while reviewing the data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau because it can be interpreted several different ways. For instance, gentrification and urban displacement could be contributing to the increased total number of households in the area from 2000 to 2010 by drawing in wealthier families; on the contrary, the total number of households in this area could represent the

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45 U.S. Census Bureau, 2000-2014 American Community Survey
stabilized and booming economy within the ten-year range. The breakdown of households by type in 2000 is as follows:

### HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE within 10458 Zip code, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total households</td>
<td>25,406</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family households</td>
<td>17,446</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonfamily households</td>
<td>7,960</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with individuals under 18 years</td>
<td>12,509</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with individuals 65 years and over</td>
<td>4,156</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average household size</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average family size</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 American Community Survey

In comparison, the breakdown of households by type in 2010 is as follows:

### HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE within 10458 Zip code, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total households</td>
<td>26,201</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family households</td>
<td>17,420</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonfamily households</td>
<td>8,781</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with individuals under 18 years</td>
<td>11,681</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with individuals 65 years and over</td>
<td>4,418</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average household size</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average family size</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey

While reviewing the category “households by type”, I have found significant changes from 2000 to 2010, some that I did not expect. For example, family households within the area
decreased from 17,446 in 2000 to 17,420 in 2010; on the other hand, there was an increase in nonfamily households from 7,960 in 2000 to 8,781 in 2010. Why has the number of family households decreased within the ten-year range? The decrease in family households and increase in nonfamily households could be a direct effect of gentrification within the area. Low-income families will be less likely to fight off the wave of gentrification, having to relocate to a different section of the Bronx. The increase in nonfamily households could prove that rents are rising within the area, causing individuals or live with relatives or friends to be able to afford the area. While believing that gentrification and urban displacement are prevalent in the area I am researching, I was surprised that there was such a miniscule decline in the average household size and average family size from 2000 to 2014. The educational status of persons 25+ also shows a significant difference from 2000 to 2014; the statistics indicate:

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000-2014 American Community Survey
Over the 14-year span, the statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau suggests that individuals are receiving higher educations within the 10458 zip code. By breakdown in 2000, 20.3% of individuals received less than a 9th grade education, 24% studied from 9th to 12th grade but received no diploma, 23.8% were high school graduates, 9.9% attended some college but did not earn a degree, 5.1% earned an associate’s degree, 7.3% earned a bachelor’s degree, and 4.7% of individuals earned a graduate or professional degree. On the other hand, in 2014, 17.4% of individuals earned less than a 9th grade education, 17.9% attended high school from 9th to 12th grade but received no diploma, 28.3% were high school graduates, 18% attended some college but received no degree, 6.4% earned an associate’s degree, 8.3% earned a bachelor’s degree, and 3.8% earned a graduate or professional degree. Overall, the statistics indicate that there has been a significant increase in educational attainment over persons 25+ since 2000. The correlation between education attainment and poverty within the 10458 zip code as of 2014 show that the higher the educational attainment, the less likely an individual will suffer from poverty. Fordham College at Rose Hill actively seeks to help low-income families surrounding Fordham University's Bronx campus. AmeriCorps partners with Fordham University to help young children from low-income neighborhoods develop the language, literacy and social skills they need to be successful in Kindergarten setting them on a path to close the achievement gap. Fordham Jumpstart volunteers join teams serving ages 3-5 in Bronx public schools and early learning centers. Recent studies have drawn a clear “link between failure to read proficiently by the end of third grade, ongoing academic difficulties in school, failure to

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46 U.S. Census Bureau, 2000-2014 American Community Survey
47 Legacy.fordham.edu/Jumpstart
graduate from high school on time, and chances of succeeding economically later in life – including the individual’s ability to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty. Fordham students are given an excellent opportunity to gain a hands-on experience making a difference in not just the community but also the lives of many young children. Exploring the social traits helps the reader get a better understanding of the social and economic dynamics within a community.

For the housing market, I will be focusing on the following characteristics: occupancy status and housing units, housing tenure, and gross rent within the 10458 zip code. This information will help me determine whether there has been an increase or decrease in these characteristics within the neighborhood. I will compare the results between two different decades and describe what is occurring within each neighborhood with respect to its housing market.

While examining statistics on the housing market, I found that from 2000 to 2010, there was an increase in the total housing units, with over 1,000 new houses produced within the ten-year span. The statistics show:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPANCY STATUS within 10458 Zip code, 2000–2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27,806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total housing units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26,766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied housing units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant housing units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26,201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,605</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000-2010 American Community Survey

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With the increase in the total number of housing units from 2000 to 2010, there was also an increase in total occupied housing units and total vacant housing units. These statistics suggest that the area has shown a significant amount of growth within the ten-year gap. The housing tenure within the 10458 zip code shows the number of owner-occupied housing units has decreased from 2000 to 2010 and the number of renter-occupied housing units has increased within the ten-year time frame. The statistics show:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupied housing units</td>
<td>25,406</td>
<td>26,201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupied housing units</td>
<td>1,378</td>
<td>1,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter-occupied housing units</td>
<td>24,028</td>
<td>24,995</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000-2010 American Community Survey

While the owner-occupied housing units decreased from 2000 to 2010, this could be related to a price increase in the area, causing owners to change the layout of their housing unit to accommodate renters instead, thus increasing the total number of renter-occupied housing units. On the other hand, the gross rent per occupied unit shows that there has been an increase in rent from 2011 to 2014, which would mean that residents in the area either have to pay more for their living situation or they are forced out of the area because it is too expensive. However, the most important subject when assessing the housing
market within the 10458 zip code is the gross rent in the area. According to the U.S. Census Bureau from 2011 to 2014:

![Gross Rent within 10458 Zip Code: 2011-2014](image)

From 2011 to 2014, there has been a drastic increase in the gross rent per occupied unit within the 10458 zip code. As the gross rent increases year-by-year, we can expect a displacement of low-income families that will not be able to afford this area within the next 10-15 years due to rent rises. In 2011, 51.3% of occupied units paying rent were charged $1,000 or more; comparatively, in 2014, a staggering 62.1% of occupied units paying rent were charged $1,000 or more. This specific statistic on gross rent, or monthly rent charged to occupy a premise which includes an estimate of utilities costs, gives a better understanding of the increasing rents in the area, which will consequently lead to gentrification. It is important to review this statistic in great detail because it is the underlying factor on whether or not a low-income family can survive their living situation.
With this inevitable increase over the past four years, we can expect the total number of individuals living in poverty to increase, causing a wave of gentrification and displacement in the future years to come. I will later discuss how we can counteract this issue, and provide solutions to lower-income families that are in need.
Chapter Four: Interviewing Business Owners, Community Leaders, Residents

After attending Fordham College at Rose Hill for my undergraduate degree, I have come to the realization that throughout my four years of living in the Northwest Bronx, specifically in the Belmont neighborhood, I have become most community-orientated my senior year. Moving off campus after my second semester of freshman year, I never really took it upon myself to “adventure” the Bronx and utilize all of its amenities. However, after studying various courses in Urban Studies and Economics, I grew a fascination for the community and a grand appreciation of the authenticity that accompanies the Bronx. For my research, I conducted interviews with neighborhood residents, business owners, and community leaders to get a better understanding of their feelings on gentrification and urban displacement in their respective neighborhoods. Interviews are a far more personal form of research than surveys and allow you to gain new insight from an individual’s experience growing up in the neighborhood. I administered numerous interviews in each neighborhood – Bedford Park, Belmont, and Fordham Road – and found these interviews to be exceptionally valuable towards my research.

Starting in Bedford Park, a neighborhood predominately known to Fordham students because of the popular bar The Jolly Tinker, the fear of gentrification and rising prices is extremely present. Bedford Park is a mostly residential neighborhood located between the New York Botanical Garden and Lehman College, and with the new
development of a luxury high-rise building that will not have any affordable housing, residents of the area see rising prices as inevitable. I spoke with a Fordham graduate from the class of 2003 who lives in Bedford Park and serves on the Community Board 7. Since serving on the community board, the interviewee has worked heavily with the parks and recreation committee to preserve green space at the Moshulu Park land and to pave the Van Cortland park bike trail completely. The interviewee states that the 12-story luxury building that will take over a parking lot is a hot topic in the neighborhood right now, as residents have been asked to be bought out, and this new development lacks affordable housing. Another shift towards gentrification is Ruben Diaz’s plan to develop the Concourse train yard near 205th and Jerome. With this being said, the interviewee states that there was not much urban displacement yet in the Bedford Park neighborhood, as 75% of the homes remain owner occupied, which allows for less turnover and a stable net market. The interviewee was unsure of current rents, but did state that rents for friends were higher and did seem to increase every year. The interviewee sees the luxury building as a huge source of the gentrification to come and still feels as if the area is being encroached upon. The interviewee sees a future of not just increased traffic for the area, but significant changes in what will be sold, for example, she asks, “Will C Town start selling organic food?”

The interviewee says that she is extremely conscious of gentrification as a single white woman moving in, and it is for this reason that she joined her community board and decided to become more involved in the neighborhood. As a graduate of Fordham College at Rose Hill and a resident of a surrounding neighborhood, the interviewee has a unique
point of view in that she is in touch both with the University as well as the non-University residents of the surrounding areas. The interviewee states that while Fordham students have little to no influence on the Bedford Park neighborhood as of right now, she sees their influence at large in the Belmont neighborhood. She sees this presence as both good and bad, as she says, “Down in Belmont, Fordham kids cause discomfort between residents and the University, being drunk, etc.,” but then going on to say, “Fordham students have a temporary status, there’s nothing Fordham-related at the community board meetings,” and that, “Fordham should have programming to build a tie between the University and the community.”

When asked how the community has changed in the past five years, the interviewee says, “It’s much different now. Fordham students didn’t really embrace the neighborhood (Belmont), there were many local families living on Hoffman St., but not many students - it was like a field trip to go to Full Moon Pizzeria. The University sent messages that the neighborhood wasn’t safe for students, and that definitely didn’t empower any students to help out with the community.” Even now that Hoffman is composed of mostly students though, and a trip to Full Moon Pizzeria is as simple as walking one block over from my apartment, there are still leaders at the University who warn students of the supposed dangers of the community. One of my fellow students, a female, was told by a University staff member to, “Be careful hanging out in Belmont - go to Woodlawn if you want to drink.” It is statements like these that still allow for the disconnect seen today between the University and its surrounding neighborhoods.
Another member of the Bedford Park’s Community Board 7 sees a future for a reunification of the University and the neighborhoods, through looking to the past. As a 36 year resident of Bedford Park, and a 19 year community board member, the second interviewee has a unique view on what once was and what could be. As the interviewee states, “From a historical perspective, the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition created by Fordham University in the 1970s was extremely influential. The clergy got together with the community leaders to create this - one of the leading architects was a pastor from the University. For the first 10-15 years, funding came primarily from the University. Around 20 years ago, this started to stop, and nowadays, there is no community activity.”

There is another entity that the interviewee sees as a domineering force in the neighborhood, but unlike Fordham University’s aid in the 70s, the interviewee sees this new entity as trying to take advantage of the neighborhood through “aiding” the neighborhood. As the interviewee says, “The New York Botanical Gardens are trying to take from the community. They have no community interest and want to build a hotel in the area with affordable housing, but because the hotel will be ‘top notch service,’ no one will want to really leave the hotel, and still no money will be spent in Bedford Park, even though they claim that retail will help money flow.” The interviewee also says that it would be great if Fordham students reengaged with the community, and that there is no animosity towards students in the area, most likely because both interviewees agree on the fact that Fordham students have very little presence in this neighborhood today.
The next neighborhood that I focused on is the Fordham/Fordham Road community, which runs along Fordham Road and has much more retail and shopping than the more residential Bedford Park neighborhood. I interviewed the Deputy Director of the Fordham Road Business Improvement District, a non-profit organization also known as “BID.” The interviewee has been helping the community for 20 years, ten of which were spent with BID. This interviewee plays a crucial role in my research as the interviewee straddles the line between gentrifier and longtime community leader. Currently, the interviewee is involved with the maintenance contracting to build at Fordham Plaza. The plans include a food and cafe souvenir shop, partnered with the Fordham neighborhood, not the University, a farmers market, and opportunities for urban art. Issues that the interviewee sees as hindering progress are parking, and opposition from small businesses who are afraid of being priced off. Even with these issues though, when asked how the community has changed in the past five years, the interviewee states, “Drastically. We have taken urban spaces and activated them, we see a healthy mix of the big shops and the little shops - no one is being displaced, but the plaza is now filled with retail shops where it once was empty.” When asked if there is more gentrification or urban displacement in the community, the interviewee says, “Fordham is a bubble at times, but I see a healthy mix of residents coming here. Businesses aren’t displacing anyone, but they do not stay vacant. It stays the same; residents are still coming here, which means that they are still around. We’ve been cognizant not to do that, we don’t want Fordham to lose its flavor. We really just see healthy changes to the neighborhood.” Further, local business owners in the area state that they thrive off of the customers who do not want to pay $89 for a new pair of
jeans from American Eagle located on Fordham Road; they would rather purchase a pair for $29 from the small shop next door.

The interviewee explains more about their commitment to improve without displacing, stating that the BID works a lot with property owners to keep rents affordable but still maintain proper living conditions, as well as hosting free community events that give back to the community and increase pride and community feelings. He does not feel that low-income families are being priced out of the area despite the improvements, as residents are still seen shopping in the neighborhood. The demographic not seen shopping as much in the Fordham area though are the University students, and, like the community leaders of Bedford Park, the interviewee hopes for more future involvement. As the interviewee says, “Fordham is a bubble. A lot of stuff stays in the gates, and we want them to break out of the bubble.”

Even though the interviewee hopes for students to “break out of the bubble,” there are mixed feelings on the role that students play in the community right now. The interviewee is hopeful for the future though, and sees the relationship as already improving, but states that there needs to be more community involvement. As the interviewee says, “Students should care about the community and want to help. Expose them early, let them venture - people are intimidated because it’s so loud, but it’s a business district, so it has a lot going on and it’s safe.” The interviewee was especially supportive of the University’s “Urban Plunge” program, and thinks that it should be mandatory for all incoming freshman students.
Fordham’s Urban Plunge program is an excellent program that introduces incoming first-year students to the college experience in New York City. Incoming first-year students are teamed with returning students to discuss and reflect on important issues of justice in the diverse ethnic neighborhoods of New York City. These teams perform service projects to help promote affordable housing, educate young children, foster community development, and to combat hunger in various city neighborhoods.49 A fellow Fordham student gave her take on Urban Plunge after she attended her freshman year:

“If I hadn’t done Urban Plunge, I don’t know if my college experience would have been the same, as I wouldn’t have been exposed to what pushed me to emphasize my studies towards peace and justice. Having completed Urban Plunge, I was influenced to join global outreach (GO!), another club that focuses on similar themes, and from there, I declared my minor in peace and justice. Working with communities that suffer from poverty was alarming and has stayed with me throughout my college experience. I became interested in learning more about how other economic injustices exist across this city and the country. I believe that Urban Plunge gave me the initial perspective that caused me to develop an interest in social and economic justice, and in the long-term, feel it would be very beneficial for all students to participate”

Through giving back to the community, and an optimistic eye towards future involvement with the University and students, this interview showed that improvement of an area does not have to go hand in hand with gentrification and urban displacement, as long as the leaders in charge are able to keep both the needs of the community and the goal of improving a community equally in mind.

49 “Urban Plunge” Fordham.edu
I interviewed a fellow student and Bronx native who grew up in the Tremont/Fordham area. The interviewee too agreed that there has been drastic change in the main areas of the neighborhoods, like Fordham Road, 3rd Avenue, and Yankee Stadium. He maintains that, "everything is changing for the better." He also does not see any displacement, and says that he even sees more people moving into the area. He does see gentrification though, and states that, “All of the buildings and shopping areas made in the Bronx are for gentrification, to bring a richer, more affluent market in, instead of helping to better the community that already resides here.” The student does worry that this move towards bringing in more money to the area will have negative effects on long-term residents who cannot afford these new, more expensive stores, and sees these stores as a huge change from the smaller business and restaurants that used to exist in the neighborhood. The student also agrees that there should be more student involvement in the community, but that students are often disrespectful of the area and should be educated against their stereotypes and stigmas against the Bronx. He maintains, and I agree with him on this, that many students look down upon the Bronx because of a disconnect with the neighborhoods, often turn to mocking the area and its residents. Still, many students do not live in the Fordham neighborhood, and, as touched upon by the first interviews, the ideas of displacement and student/community interaction are much more tangible in the heavily student populated Belmont area.

Unlike the first two neighborhoods I explored, the Belmont neighborhood has a large student presence. Here, students are residents, albeit short-term residents, and because students live, shop, eat and go out in this area, they have a strong hold in the
neighborhood, but because they are transient and see themselves leaving in a couple of years, the majority still do not become involved in the community. This leads to a huge disconnect between long-term residents and students, a relationship, which often is not seen as a positive one. Especially in the past year, there have been countless incidents over racial biases that show this relationship as becoming worse, not better. While attending Fordham University just in the past four years, I have seen businesses open and close, I have spoken with small bodega owners who worry about rising prices forcing them out, and I have seen the beginning of real gentrification. A new luxury building aimed for students is being built on Arthur Avenue, between 188th and 187th, and the mere fact that developers are marketing it solely for students is a prime example of how student residents are affecting and changing the Belmont neighborhood. This is the first building of its kind on Arthur Avenue, but with the sale of three apartment buildings that currently house long-term residents and students, a new luxury development is set to go up on Arthur Avenue, between 189th and 188th that will be aimed solely for students.

With these impending threats towards gentrification and urban displacement, Belmont is the most susceptible neighborhood surrounding Fordham College at Rose Hill to suffer from gentrification due to the significant presence of Fordham students living in the area. An article from *The Fordham Ram*, which has been the University's journal of record since 1918, expressed on-campus housing concerns with the class of 2018 as well as classes in the near future. The class of 2018 consists of 2,246 students. In addition to this outstanding number, the university’s Admissions Department reports an acceptance rate of
47.1 percent – nearly 41,000 applications, and a little over 19,000 acceptances.\(^{50}\) Compared to the class of 2017, the size of the freshman class increased by 15%. Currently, with the graduation of the class of 2016, another enormous incoming freshman body could overload the campus and its facilities. The lack of dorms on campus has become a problem; in 2014, Fordham consequently converted Loyola Hall, which was a Jesuit residence prior to this year, into an on-campus residence to fit the freshman class. With the increase in students year-by-year, we can expect the off-campus presence to grow as the housing space on campus diminishes. Also, with the increase in room and board every year, Fordham students will resort to the cheaper alternative of renting off-campus apartments in the near future. With the current room and board cost exceeding $16,000 (2015-2016), many students will resort to a cheaper option, renting an off-campus apartment ranging from $600- $1,000 a month per person. With the substantial increase in class size over the past two years, Fordham College at Rose Hill will bring a greater presence in the neighborhood, whether it is positive or negative.

After conducting numerous interviews, I have come to the conclusion that although gentrification and displacement is not present yet, the three neighborhoods – Bedford Park, Belmont, and Fordham Road– will eventually see signs of gentrification and displacement with the years to come due to the increasing presence of the Fordham student body.

\(^{50}\) Shanahan, Erin. “Class of 2018 Prompts Housing Concerns”. The Fordham Ram. September 17, 2014.
Chapter Five: Correlation between the Research and Interviews

With the abundance of research I have accumulated over a semester’s period, I have been able to assess gentrification and displacement from several diverse viewpoints. The questions I have sought after throughout my research are: Are neighborhood residents worried about being priced out and replaced? Does Fordham University have a direct effect on gentrification or displacement? What changes do neighborhood residents want to see occur? What can government do to help the community? After combining the findings from my research and interviews, I have grown a better understanding of the three
neighborhoods – Bedford Park, Belmont, Fordham Road—through a statistical and social standpoint.

While comparing the research with the interviews I conducted, I found several discrepancies in the data, suggesting that these three neighborhoods are not going through a period of gentrification and displacement...yet. While reviewing the statistics on population from 2000 to 2014 within the 10458 zip code, I found that the population saw a decrease from 77,840 individuals in 2000 to 76,272 in 2014. Although this information represents a decline in population, there are many possibilities that could have caused this decline over a fourteen-year gap, not gentrification specifically. However, the statistics on race and national origin from 2000 to 2014 within this area show that there was an increase in Hispanic and Latino presence, as well as Black and African American presence. With that being said, this area saw a decrease in White individuals, from 10,590 in 2000 to 8,821 in 2014. After reviewing literature on the gentrification of Harlem, I found that Harlem’s gentrification period from 2006 to 2010 saw a sharp decline in African-Americans from 69.3% in 2006 to an alarming 54.4% in 2010. With that be stated, from 1990 to 2006, there was a steady increase of White individuals in the area from 1.5% to 6.6%, and by 2010, the number of White individuals within Harlem increased to just under 10%. Comparatively, while studying the social evolution of Harlem, we can infer that the Northwest Bronx, which has seen an increase in Hispanic and Black presence over the past years, may not be going through a period of gentrification.

On the contrary, after gathering my research, I believe that these neighborhoods are in a period of revitalization. Tarry Hum’s *Making A Global Immigrant Neighborhood*:
Brooklyn’s Sunset Park explains how globalization, especially immigration patterns and shifts in low-wage labor markets, have shaped Sunset Park over the years and has coined it one of New York City’s most energetic neighborhoods. While reviewing statistics on the nativity status within the 10458 zip code, there was a decrease in native-born individuals and an increase in foreign-born individuals. Specifically, from 2000 to 2014, there was a decrease in native-born individuals from 66.7% in 2000 to 62.3% in 2014. The foreign-born presence grew from 33.3% in 2000 to 37.7% in 2014. These projections mirror the thoughts of Tarry Hum’s on globalization, such that the increasing presence of foreign-born individuals in an area can lead to a positive form of urban renewal. Similar to Sunset Park, the future of the Northwest Bronx will be dependent on the cross-relations between immigrant groups to promote sustainable planning, civic engagement, and increasing common interest within the three neighborhoods I am studying. The reason residents, business owners, and community leaders in the Bronx believe that these neighborhoods are not going through a phase of gentrification and displacement is because these individuals see how community-orientated the area is and believe that the Northwest Bronx can maintain its authenticity. The evolution of styles and ideas that originated in the early 1980’s helped the community express itself. The mixture of cultures and nationalities has brought travelers around the world; if it’s not Arthur Avenue’s world famous Italian food, it’s Fordham Road’s ample amount of dining, shopping and local attractions that can be seen a mile long. The rich culture that accompanies these neighborhoods over the past years has led to the revitalization of the community.
Although these neighborhoods may be in a period of revitalization, the future of these neighborhoods may differ. After conducting a great deal of interviews, I found that the increasing number of apartments geared towards Fordham students, the increase in accepted Fordham students, as well the rebirthing of amenities such as the Kingsbridge Armory, may cause a change in the sociocultural dynamics in the near future. While individuals believe that gentrification is not prevalent in Bedford Park or Fordham Road, the increase in off-campus activity in the near future will change these individual’s opinions. As of now, Fordham is actively seeking housing for the excess number of students admitted to the University. Compared to the class of 2017, the class of 2018 increased by 15 percent. Off-campus housing will soon be a necessity, whether it is in the Bedford Park, Belmont, or Fordham Road neighborhoods. Now in a competitive market economy, the purpose of new urban development is to maximize profit. With landowners and developers realizing the potential surround Fordham University and its struggle to house the excess amount of students, I believe that there will be a swift period of displacement, which will entail lower-income families being bought out of the area. With new luxury building on Arthur Avenue aimed for Fordham students, and the mere fact that developers are marketing it solely for Fordham students is a prime example of how student residents are affecting and changing the Belmont neighborhood. Developers and landowners realize that the Belmont community is comprised of predominately well-off Fordham students, and are willing to raise rents in the area to satisfy their needs. After interviewing a property owner, and long-time resident in the Belmont neighborhood, the owner stated “the increase in the Fordham student presence off-campus has been miraculous over the years. We’ve seen a
snowball effect throughout Belmont!” However, this snowball effects might not be so miraculous for the Bronx native’s in the near future. The alarming statistic that supports the theory of displacement of individuals in these neighborhoods in the near future is the fact that within the 10458 zip code, the percentage of individuals paying $1,000 or more for an apartment per month rose from 51.3% in 2011 to 62.1% in 2014; in just four years there was a 10.8% increase in individuals paying $1,000 or more for an apartment. As the Belmont area constructs off-campus housing geared towards Fordham students, lower-income families will be forced to move from the area. While reviewing the statistics on poverty, in 2012, out of 72,021 individuals living within the 10458 zip code, 27,618 or 38.3% of individuals were living below the poverty line. In 2014, out of the 73,190 individuals living in the area, 28,765 or 39.3% of individuals were living below the poverty line.  

Throughout that three-year period, there was a 1% total increase in the percentage of individuals below the poverty line. The combination of statistics and literature explain that as the level of poverty within the 10458 zip code continues to increase year-by-year, the chances of gentrification and displacement within the community also rise.

From a business perspective, gentrification begins by attracting more affluent buyers, and as the average income increases in the area, businesses that cater to the middle and high market will thrive, which results in the decrease in small local businesses. While interviewing business owners in the Bedford Park and Fordham Road neighborhoods, I found that most of the small local businesses thrive off the larger corporation brands in the area such as Footlocker, American Eagle, Best Buy, and many more. These small local

51 U.S. Census Bureau, “Poverty Status: 2012-2014” (United States Department of Labor, 2015)
businesses provide a cheaper alternative to these big named corporations, which keeps them alive. On the other hand, many stores have opened and closed during my four-year duration of living off-campus in the Belmont neighborhood. I believe that many the small businesses that are sprinkled around this area struggle to make it because they are not located near a main street and a majority of Fordham students choose not to venture into these stores. While interviewing a Fordham student about this issue, he stated, “I would rather purchase groceries from Modern Market or C-Town Supermarkets rather than purchasing groceries from a local bodega or food stand.” Whether it’s an issue of comfort or even trust, students should embrace their community, especially while these students spend a significant portion of their lives living in this area.

The correlation between the research and interviews has given me the ability to assess gentrification and displacement from several diverse viewpoints. With the drastic change in sociocultural dynamics in the Belmont neighborhood occurring throughout the past ten years, I believe that these neighborhoods will continue to revolutionize in the years to come. Although the statistics do not reflect the influx and presence of Fordham students living off-campus because they are not permanent residents, the statistics from the American Community Survey regarding housing tenure show that from 2000 to 2010, there was a decrease in owner occupied housing units from 4.6% to 5.4% and substantial increase in renter occupied housing units from 94.6% to 95.4% within the 10458 zip code. The housing tenure in the area I am analyzing suggests that the number of individuals renting in the area is increasing year-by-year, supporting my findings in the Belmont neighborhood. While the Belmont neighborhood is going through this period of change,
individuals in surrounding neighborhoods should expect a rippling effect of gentrification and displacement within the next 10-15 years, possibly sooner.

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Discussion
After an extensive analysis of three neighborhoods surrounding Fordham University’s Bronx campus, I have come to a conclusion that Fordham’s presence in the neighborhood is expanding; however, the presence has not led to a growth in permanent residents who are white and more affluent. The largely Hispanic and Black population of this portion of the Bronx has remained intact; however, with the new urban renewal projects coming within the next 5-10 years, the neighborhoods adjoining Fordham could go through a period of gentrification and urban displacement, with these projects being a main contributor.

With the largely Hispanic and Black population of this portion of the Bronx remaining intact over the past fifteen years, the steady raise in gross rent has caused uncertainty in future living situations for the lower-income families that live in the area. The three neighborhoods – Bedford Park, Belmont, and Fordham Road – will eventually see signs of gentrification and displacement with the years to come due to the increasing presence of the Fordham student body and the expansion of off-campus apartments primarily marketed to Fordham students in the Belmont area. As of now, most residents do not feel that gentrification or displacement is an imperative issue to be dealt with, but they do believe that will change in the near future. As for Fordham College at Rose Hill’s presence within the community, gentrification and displacement is most plausible within the Belmont area and a very miniscule presence is seen within the Bedford Park and Fordham Road neighborhoods; however, with the implementation of these luxury buildings and other attention-grabbing amenities such as the revitalization of the Kingsbridge Armory, Fordham’s admissions office will most likely see an increase in
applicants due to the “beautification” of the area. Nevertheless, this “beautification” can be seen as a positive aspect, drawing in a far more diverse crowd, and a negative aspect, taking away the authenticity of this community by replacing it.

Many neighborhood residents have spent their entire life living in this community; they have seen the area change before their very eyes. With the increasing presence of Fordham students in the community, neighborhood residents would like to see Fordham and their student body give back to the community. Often residents and Bronx natives feel that Fordham students embrace their “temporary status” and don’t give back to the community. I, as well as numerous community leaders who are familiar with the program, believe that Urban Plunge program should be mandatory for all incoming first-year students because it is a great introduction to New York City and upholds the Jesuit goal to be “people for others.” Also, Fordham University should actively promote the Dorothy Day Center for Service and Justice, which serves as a liaison between the local community and the Fordham community. The Dorothy Day Center helps connect students to service and social justice related community experiences through volunteer, service, learning, and non-profit internship opportunities. \(^52\)

My thoughts pertaining to the subject of gentrification and urban displacement vary; I believe that gentrification is not a “racist” tool, rather, it is an economic tool. Gentrification makes a neighborhood economically healthy and sound. On the other hand, gentrification leads to the displacement of lower-income residents by increasing the share of wealthier residents and businesses, as well as increasing the value of property within the respective

\(^52\) “Dorothy Day Center for Service and Justice” Fordham.edu
area. Gentrification is a huge issue in the New York boroughs, especially the Bronx. As real estate markets in more popular boroughs such as Manhattan and Brooklyn start to reach their upper limits, people begin to look for cheaper alternatives. The South Bronx is currently a section that is succumbing to gentrification with the recent influx of new homes and co-ops. These developments attract more affluent residents, and as the average income of residents in the community rises, so will rent and other living costs in that market. A resolution to the problem of gentrification and urban displacement to prevent future issues is to improve neighborhood services. By improving issues such as healthy food options, transportation, and public services, I believe that neighborhoods surrounding Fordham College’s Bronx campus can see a healthy dose of gentrification without the displacement of current residents. After interviewing an individual in the Office of Multicultural Affairs at Fordham University, I had a better understanding of what our community can do to counteract the negative effects of gentrification. The interviewee believes that improving neighborhood services starts with controlling rent and real estate prices for families within a certain level of income and simultaneously raising wages for low-skill jobs in the process, and creating tax incentives that will attract more business to that market. On the point of controlling rent, it is difficult for low-income families to invest and spend where they live immediately if more than 50% of their incomes goes to rent alone. As we see from the statistics provided earlier, there has been a steady increase in gross rent within the past fifteen years, and it does not look like this trend will end any time soon. A program that helps low-income families find more affordable housing, or worst-case scenario relocate to another neighborhood, would be most beneficial. Also, raising wages for certain jobs, even
moderately, while cutting rent, can lead to more disposable income, and that can boost spending. The interviewee believes that it all comes down to more spending which helps the Bronx obtain more tax revenue and thus spend on more public services to help residents. Part of the issue is also getting New York City to spend more in the Bronx; however, that comes down to creating the value needed to encourage spending in the Bronx, so getting more businesses and capital improvement projects to help make the Bronx more popular would be most ideal.

In regards to increasing community development without displacing residents, I believe that community organizing, residential outreach, and leadership development are critical to any anti-displacement approach. In order to reassure residents that are vulnerable to the negative effects of gentrification, it is important that communities are well informed and act as a whole. Communities should be informed and involved in development decisions, as well as contribute to the policy design of the neighborhood. For instance, the Fordham Road Business Improvement District actively seeks to stabilize rent prices along Fordham Road so businesses can thrive. The BID is also responsible for several free community events, such as the toy drive during Christmas time, which provides toys for the first 800 kids, and gives lower-income individuals in the community an opportunity to save money. As the Deputy Directory of the Fordham Road BID stated, “these individuals need to be helped before being priced out.” I firmly believe that if these three neighborhoods – Bedford Park, Belmont, Fordham Road – focus on community organizing, residential outreach, and leadership development, this section of the Northwest Bronx will have the capacity to develop without displacing in the years to come.
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** All interviewee’s identities are kept anonymous **
Interview Questions

Neighborhood Residents

Do you have any contacts with Fordham students?

Have you ever been on the Fordham campus?

Are rents going up in your neighborhood?

Are you worried about having to move because the neighborhood is becoming too expensive?

Are there any new stores moving in that you do not feel comfortable in?

Are stores you frequent closing because they can’t afford the rent?

Business Owners

Do you have any contact with Fordham students?

Are rents going up in your neighborhood making it hard maintaining a business?

Do you feel like you are being pushed out?

Are there new stores moving in that are hurting your business?

Does Fordham University have an impact on your business or the way it is ran?

Does your business benefit from cross-racial interactions?

Have you see a change in the community over the past 5-10 years?

Community Leaders

What is your role in the community?
How many years have you been helping the community?

What current issues are you working with?

How have you seen the community change in the past 5 years?

Do you work solely in the Bronx or other boroughs? If so which?

Do you see more gentrification or urban displacement in your community?

What are your thoughts on the housing in your respective neighborhood?

Do you feel that low-income families are being priced out?

How does Fordham University influence the community?

Is Fordham University making it hard for current neighborhood residents to live in the area?

Do you think Fordham students are seen as a good or bad influence in your community?

If need be, how can Fordham help out these low-income families?

What strategies do you plan to implement for low-income individuals that have the possibility of suffering from displacement?