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**The Contradictions of Capital in Rezoning and
Affordable Housing Policies:
A Case Study of East New York**

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Disclaimer:

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>List of Maps</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>List of Images</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>List of Acronyms</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	<i>vi</i>
<i>Relevance to Development Studies</i>	<i>vi</i>
<i>Keywords</i>	<i>vi</i>
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Setting the Scene and Objectives	1
1.2 Methodology and Considerations	7
Chapter 2: Conceptual and Analytical Framework	12
2.1 Right to the City	12
2.2 Housing in Political Economy	14
2.3 Analytical Framework	18
Chapter 3: Housing in NYC and East New York	19
3.1 History and Context of Housing in NYC	19
3.2 Housing NY Plan	21
3.3 East New York	24
Chapter 4: Mechanisms within a Growth Machine City	26
4.1 Mechanisms for Affordable Housing	26
4.2 Mandatory Inclusionary Housing	31
Chapter 5: Who Really Benefits?	34
5.1 House Flipping, Rising Rents and Displacement	34
5.2 Market, Racial and Spatial Divisions	38
Chapter 6: Conclusions	42
<i>References</i>	

List of Images

Image 1: View of Fulton Avenue in East New York, August 2017	1
Image 2: Rendering of rezoned Fulton Ave.	1
Image 3: Site of Chestnut Commons, August 2017	28
Image 4: Site of Chestnut Commons, August 2017	28
Image 5: Rendering of Chestnut Commons	28
Image 6: Arlington Village, August 2017	30
Image 7: Arlington Village, August 2017	30
Image 8: Illegal ‘We Buy Houses’ sign in East New York, August 2017	36

List of Maps

Map 1: Brooklyn, New York Neighborhoods	3
Map 2: Racial Dot Map of East New York, from 2010 Census	39
Map 3: ENY Walking Map of Affordable Housing Developments	39

List of Figures

Figure 1: Right to the City Framework	17
Figure 2: Housing in Political Economy Framework	18
Figure 3: Revised Affordability Levels of Housing NY Plan	21
Figure 4: 2017 NYC Income Limits by Household Size	23
Figure 5: East New York Rezoning Plan Framework	26
Figure 6: Average Costs of Flipped Homes in East New York, 2016	35
Figure 7: Average Rental Costs of Flipped Homes in East New York, 2016	35

List of Acronyms

ENY	East New York
NYC	New York City
DCP	Department of City Planning
HPD	Housing Preservation and Development Department
AMI	Area Median Income
CCA	Coalition for Community Advancement
MIH	Mandatory Inclusionary Housing

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Abstract

Between a rapidly growing population and costs of rents rising faster than income levels, New York City is in the middle of a housing crisis. With a large amount of its population rent burdened, the city is exploring new ways to create and preserve affordable housing. This case study examines how the city's most recent approach of rezoning has affected the neighborhood of East New York, its access to affordable housing, and its low-income residents ability to be able to maintain a space within the neighborhood. By framing this research within the right to the city and political economy approaches, the paper explores how social, political, economic, and spatial structures influence rezoning and affordable housing. It also looks at housing in capitalism, and how the circulation, social relation, and ideology of capital have guided the process that the city has engaged in. Specifically looking at the mechanisms used, with attention paid to a new policy of mandatory inclusionary housing, and weighing these against the question of who benefits and who is excluded from the rezoning, shows how the rezoning and preservation of affordable housing end up in conflict with one another. This paper suggests additional mechanisms to be able to increase the effectiveness of the policy, as well as a general reframing of the approach as a more bottom up, inclusive, community development directed policy that prioritizes the preservation of current affordability levels, and community development at same level of importance as new market based development.

Relevance to Development Studies

As the world's population has increased in recent years, with cities at the center of these population surges, many urban areas lack an adequate supply of affordable housing ('Urbanization and Development: Emerging Futures' 2016: 51). This is an issue that faces the global north and south, and that development organizations look to deal with from both global and local levels. Specifically within urban development, the need for adequate and affordable housing is an increasingly urgent issue as cities become more crowded and levels of inequality grow. By looking specifically at how urban rezoning and affordable housing interacts, in attempts to improve access to affordable housing, I hope to be able to add to this discourse.

Keywords

Affordable Housing, Rezoning, Right to the City, Political Economy, Gentrification, Displacement, Capital, Urban

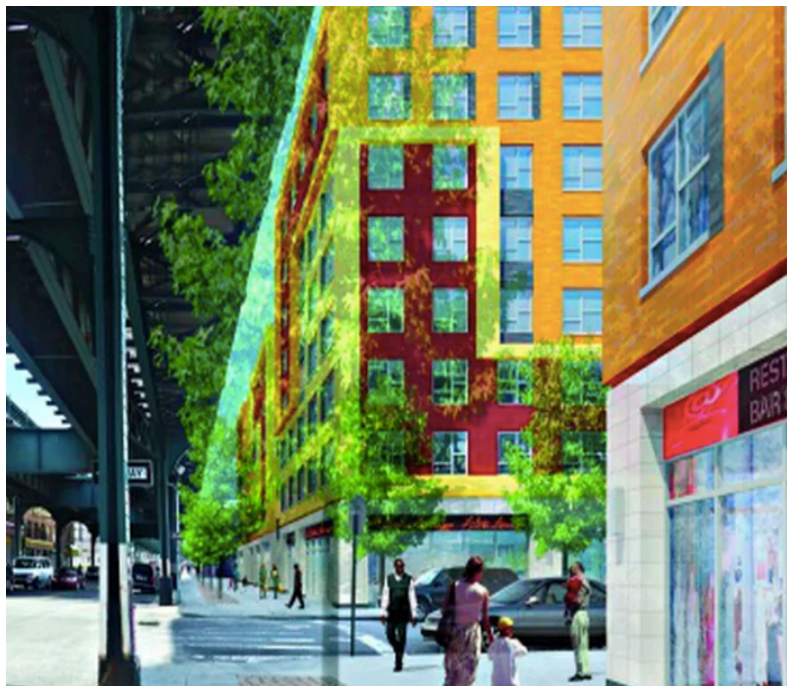
Chapter 1 : Introduction

1.1 Setting the Scene and Objective

Image 1: View of Fulton Avenue in East New York, August 2017



Image 2: Rendering of rezoned Fulton Ave.



Source: www.ny.curbed.com

The central part of East New York in Brooklyn, home to 100,000 people in 1965, was largely destroyed in the following decade. The destruction accompanied a racial shift in the population, from 85 percent white in 1960 to 80 percent black and Puerto Rican by 1966. During that period, the racially biased policies of real estate brokers and speculators and their unrestrained exploitation of house-hungry blacks and Puerto Ricans, the redlining of the community by the banks, and the almost total neglect of the situation by the city and its agencies brought the area to the brink of collapse. (Thabit 2003: 1)

This is the late 20th century story of East New York (ENY), and before the last few years, was the image that many New Yorkers probably had of the area. ENY is a neighborhood on the edge of Brooklyn, as far as you can get from Manhattan, before you hit Queens. It's a neighborhood that many may pass through on the way to JFK airport, or while commuting to the suburbs on Long Island, but otherwise has most often been known for high poverty and crime rates ('NYC Planning Community District Profiles: Brooklyn Community District 5' 2017). But since 2014, ENY has been popping up in city newspapers and on real estate and development websites, and not because of crime or poverty issues that might have brought it attention in the past. Instead, ENY has become the potential 'poster child' for Mayor Bill DeBlasio, and his citywide housing plan that help get him elected in 2014.

As I found in my interviews with city officials, ENY had actually been teed up for a number of years prior to Mayor DeBlasio's election, to be a major site for New York City (NYC) development. It has relatively low-density levels and the city owns a number of sizable pieces of undeveloped land in the neighborhood, which is extremely rare around NYC these days (DCP Official A 2017, Personal Interview). Despite these attributes that made it a neighborhood of prime opportunity for the city, the residents of ENY hadn't experienced much attention from the city government leading up to this period (Wilkins, *Hopes, Fears and Nuance Among Residents of a Rezoned Neighborhood* 2017). Since the population shift, and subsequent neglect of the 1960s, there hasn't been much development in the neighborhood. ENY is made up of mostly low rise, 1-2 family homes in large residential swaths. The main thoroughfare of Atlantic Avenue was once a thriving industrial area, but now has half empty warehouses, and more fast food and car repair shops than manufacturing. The population is almost 90% black and Latino, with some of the highest levels of poverty and unemployment in the city ('NYC Planning Community District Profiles: Brooklyn Community District 5' 2017). So when the mayor and city officials focused on ENY as the first neighborhood to be rezoned in an attempt to create more affordable housing for NYC, there was already history of distrust and neighborhood invisibility that stood between the community and city development plans (Ford, *Hopes, Fears and Nuance Among Residents of a Rezoned Neighborhood* 2017).

Map 1: Brooklyn, New York Neighborhoods



Source: www.nyc tourist.com

As can be seen from Map 1, ENY is quite a large neighborhood that actually also encompasses Cypress Hills, pictured to the north of it in blue. This whole area is Brooklyn district 5, according to the Department of City Planning (DCP) ('NYC Planning Community District Profiles: Brooklyn Community District 5' 2017). For the sake of simplicity I'll refer to this entire area as ENY, throughout. However it is important to note that the rezoning in ENY does *NOT* encompass this whole neighborhood. The rezoning was only implemented within the City Council (not DCP) District 37, which is only the northern half of ENY. The southern half of the neighborhood falls within City Council District 42 (City Council Official 2017, Interview). So given this split, the rezoning only directly effected City Council District 37, but the whole neighborhood of ENY has experienced changes from it. Beyond this it should also be noted that despite the rezoning being a part of a wider city housing plan, it is a fairly multi-dimension approach, that goes beyond just housing policies, but also calls for increased mixed use, business, industry, and commercial development, as well as updated parks, a new 1,000 seat school, and a neighborhood job center ('East New York: Neighborhood Re-Zoning

Neighborhood Plan' 2015, 'East New York Neighborhood Plan: Progress Report' 2017). However, any of these additions such as the parks, school and job center only came about after community organizations became involved via the Coalition for Community Advancement (CCA), and demanded more community solutions and benefits, in the face of what could become a tide of development and gentrification.

Nearby, neighborhoods in Brooklyn have seen drastic population changes over the past few decades that seem to be creeping closer and closer to ENY. During the 1990s, gentrification started to reach into brownstone Brooklyn (Hackworth 202: 818) and by Mayor Bloomberg's administration in the 2000s, other parts of Brooklyn like Williamsburg and Greenpoint were actively being rezoned by the city, and further developed within the market, aided by city subsidies. These communities changed drastically from mixed use, low-rise, residential and industrial areas, with low and middle income largely Hispanic and Polish populations, to waterfront high rises and younger, richer, and whiter populations moving in (Angotti and Morse 2016: 73). As low rise residences were torn down and replaced with condos, or remodeled and rented at much higher prices, many long time residents were displaced and forced into other neighborhoods farther from Manhattan, or out of the city entirely (*There Goes the Neighborhood (Season 1)* 2016). More recently, as these neighborhoods continue to become more expensive, residents who were once the gentrifiers of the 1990s or early 2000s can no longer afford to stay, and are moving on to new 'hip', and again, predominantly Hispanic and black neighborhoods in nearby areas like Bedford-Stuyvesant and Bushwick. In addition to this wave of residents seemingly being pushed from neighborhood to neighborhood by rising rent prices, there's also been a population boom, with a constant stream of new residents moving in.

Over the last 15 years, the population of NYC has increased by over 500,000 residents; and that paired with market rents rising much faster than residents' income levels, has created a housing crisis ('The State of New York City's Housing and Neighborhoods in 2016' 2017: 36). Rental vacancy rates for the city are currently very low at 3.5%, while 32% of the population are affected by (the median rate of) rent burdens, and the amount of New Yorkers in homeless shelters has almost doubled over the past 10 years (Ibid. 2017: 36, 10). Keep in mind, that this housing crisis affects more than just low-income residents though. The Area Median Income (AMI) for a single person in NYC is \$66,800 a year, while for a family of three its \$85,900 ('NYC Housing Preservation & Development: Inclusionary Housing Program' 2017), and the affordable housing program in NYC includes middle income residents up to 120% of the AMI, as due to high market rates, there is a shortage of affordable housing even for families with total incomes into the six figures. Its also important to note that the AMI levels that the city uses to regulate affordable housing are set by the federal government, and not the city itself, which has caused issues of its own. I'll delve more deeply into this later, but the figures above show that NYC residents of various income levels have been affected by this housing crisis, but those that have suffered the most are the Extremely and Very Low-Income residents who have the highest rent burdens, and the least amount of affordable units available to them ('The State of New York City's

Housing and Neighborhoods in 2016' 2017: 25). As of 2015, 39.6% of ENY's population were severely rent burdened low-income households, with a median income of \$35,480; far lower than the AMI set by the federal government (Ibid. 2017: 58).

This sets the scene for what I walked into the summer of 2017 as I began my research in ENY. Although I had read articles and histories about the neighborhood, as well as the Mayor's Housing NY Plan, upon spending time in the neighborhood and speaking with both city officials, and residents and community associations, I can't say I was quite prepared for the web of complications that I encountered. ENY has officially been rezoned as of 2016, but according to city officials, not in the same way that rezonings have functioned in the past, which have only seemed to have actively fuel gentrification (DCP Officials A & C 2017, Personal Interviews). The current DeBlasio administration has assembled a toolkit of zoning policies, which many have said is one the most aggressive approaches in the United States (Greenberg, 2017; DCP Official C 2017, Personal Interview). By combining city housing subsidies, zoning for quality, affordability and density, reform of a state tax exemption program for builders, and a mandatory inclusionary housing policy, (amongst other policies and initiatives) the city's goal is to create, and preserve affordable housing in ENY, and use it as a template for future rezonings across the city (HNY 2015: 10). This rezoning is actually an upzoning, increasing density and mixed-use development in the neighborhood. But in addition to planning private and publically funded subsidized housing developments, the city has also added mandatory inclusionary housing, which it feels is a strong tool to help add affordable housing units, at essentially no cost for the city, and curb the onset of gentrification (HPD Official B 2017, Personal Interview). Mandatory inclusionary housing earmarks at least 25-30% of units, in larger private developments to be set at affordable AMI rates ('NYC Department of City Planning: Inclusionary Housing' 2017). Inclusionary housing (or zoning) is not new, but being mandatory for all new private, market developments is, and the city is counting on this policy to add additional affordable rental units (to those its planned for and subsidized by the government) and help to preserve a space for lower income residents in the face of gentrification.

But in a city where there is an overall housing shortage and high levels of rent burdens which reach into middle class, how can rezoning actually provide affordable housing in a neighborhood, without further fueling gentrification and displacement from increased market activity and rents in the surrounding area? The research question I have formulated looks to explore this issue.

How does urban neighborhood rezoning function as a policy to achieve affordable housing solutions, and maintain a space for low-income residents within the city?

Within that question, I'll look to answer:

- *What mechanisms are used to create affordable housing in a capitalistic, growth machine city, like New York City?*
- *What role does Mandatory Inclusionary zoning play within this rezoning policy? And can it protect against potential gentrification and displacement?*
- *Who benefits from rezoning, and how? And who is excluded or negatively affected by the policy?*
- *What are the racial implications of rezoning?*

I'll look to answer these questions within the framework of the *right to the city* and the *housing in political economy* approaches. The right to the city, as put forth by Henri Lefebvre, and later David Harvey, envisions that citizens not only have the right to physically be in an “appropriate” urban space, but also to take part in decisions, control and production of that space (Purcell 2003: 577). It argues for integration of citizens, especially the working class, within the space of the city, and emphasizes the city's “use value over exchange value”, (Roy 2011: 8). For Lefebvre, human reproduction and social relations are the real commodity power of city, rather than the production of things or objects (Lefebvre et al. 1996: 101). David Harvey updates this and further emphasizes that not only should citizens have the right to urban space and to participate in the production of it, but also have a right to a fair disbursement of surplus of commodities that come from that production (Harvey 2008: 37). The housing in political economy approach builds on this, as to how it relates to housing as something beyond just policy or market. Manuel B. Aalbers and Brett Christophers put forth this approach as a way to understand housing from a multidimensional perspective that takes into account the political and economic structures and contexts, as well as theoretical and societal issues (Aalbers and Christophers 2014: 388). It looks at housing and underscores its relationship to the circulation, social relations and ideology of capital; and as such the contradictions that come about with housing as both a market commodity and space for social reproduction that falls under social policy (Ibid. 2014: 389).

By framing my analysis of the rezoning in ENY within the right to the city and housing in political economy approaches, I'll examine how, this rezoning, which is perceived as a fairly progressive city housing policy (within the United States), actually plays out in a highly capitalistic, growth machine city like NYC. I characterize NYC as a growth machine city in that its urban development is fueled not only by the city government, but also financial elite like real estate

speculators, banks, universities, and commercial enterprises who's interest and involvement in development and property value increases and strengthens the profitability of their own businesses and institutions and helps shape overall development of the city (Hyra 2008: 18). I'll consider this within the history of the city and neighborhood of ENY – taking into account not only the political and economic contexts, but also social relations of power of race, class and age. I'll analyze how the city government has utilized the rezoning to not only create 'affordable' housing, but also increase capital and shape the urban space of ENY. And I'll look at the residents' participation in this process; what levels of control and influence they have with the city, and how it has affected the rezoning process. Overall I'll examine who is really benefiting from this rezoning and how, and what mechanisms might be introduced to increase the benefits to those that most need it, namely the long time, low income residents of ENY who are directly affected by the rezoning of their neighborhood.

This paper is structured in six parts, with the first being an introduction to the context of the rezoning of ENY, as well as objectives for the research, and methodology used. Chapter 2 outlines the concepts of the right to the city and housing in political economy, and shows a framework of factors from within these that I'll use in my analysis throughout the paper. Chapter 3 looks briefly at the history of housing in NYC, and the current citywide Housing NY Plan, including the exclusive nature of the AMI, as well as the history and context of ENY. Chapter 4 examines the mechanisms the city uses to create affordable housing in the ENY rezoning, and looks at how these are shaped and driven by a capitalistic growth machine city, which is heavily entwined with private capital and the market. Chapter 5 looks at housing flips, rising rents, displacement, and spatial and racial segregation, and who really benefits from this plan. Lastly I'll conclude by ensuring I've addressed my research question and its sub questions, and hopefully expand briefly on the effectiveness and potential improvements and policy changes that might be helpful in using rezoning to achieve affordable housing solutions.

1.2 Methodology and Considerations

The issue of affordable housing, and lack there of, especially in the urban context, is a global problem that affects various parts of the world in different ways. But as the housing in political economy approach suggests, it remains a complex conflict of capital and social reproduction, and market and policy. So in looking at how the policy of rezoning functions to create affordable housing, I wanted to look at rezoning as not just a theoretical solution, but one that interacts with social relations of capital, power, race, and class and the production of space. Given this complexity, a case study seemed the most thorough approach to take (Yin 2009: 4). By looking at this question within its relation to the neighborhood of ENY, it allowed me both spatial and population limitations, to be able to more deeply examine the various issues the question brings up, and explore from a mixed-methods approach within this case study. By using various methods of data collection and sources, I've

been able to gain insights from multiple perspectives on an issue that otherwise might be too broad and difficult to properly address within my time and research limits.

Additionally, within the context of New York City as both a diverse and populous location (representative of broader populations), as well as its place as a long time leader in urban housing issues within the United States ('Housing Policy in New York City: A Brief History'2006: 1), it provides a representative and generalizable background for which to perform my research within (Yin 2014: 48). Even more so, the specific case of ENY as a place that the mayor and city has chosen to initiate their program for affordable housing and rezoning is very interesting due to not only its history and demographics, but also its spatial location within the city. On the one hand, this is a lower income, predominantly minority neighborhood that is in need of affordable housing. However, given that the rezoning also depends on private developers investing capital to build market rate housing in this neighborhood as well, it's provoking, since this not in what might be defined as a geographically desirable location in the city (i.e. close to the city center of Manhattan). In this sense, this case could be seen as both a typical and potentially deviant case in how it may play out especially into regards to issues of gentrification (Ibid. 2014: 52). Given this duality, I feel it will provide quality and complex data that will be applicable to multiple and wider contexts.

Within this case study, I've used a mixed methods approach. I performed semi-structured qualitative interviews, collected both quantitative and qualitative data from primary and secondary sources, and spent time in the neighborhood of ENY to observe not only the physical developments and housing projects brought about by the rezoning, but also the daily lives of the residents and a feel of the neighborhood. In collecting both quantitative and qualitative data I aimed to access multiple stakeholders to be able to triangulate and compare data as much as possible, and to be able to add a narrative, and resident's voices to more deeply understand how this policy has been playing out (O'Leary 2004: 147).

Quantitative data was collected from several sources – mainly the city government, academic research, and non-profit and community organization reports. I was able to access data sets, surveys, and reports from the NYC Department of City Planning (DCP) and the Housing Preservation and Development department (HPD), online. Additionally I used the NYU Furman center's *2016 State of NYC's Housing and Neighborhoods* report and data sets from their datacore.nyc website. And lastly, I looked to the community organizations of the Coalition for Community Advancement (CCA) and the Center for NYC Neighborhoods for their alternative community plans and progress report study (respectively). Timing wise, this research had its strengths and weaknesses. Given that the rezoning only took effect in early 2016, many of the outcomes have yet to be seen. However, the DCP released a 1-year progress report on the rezoning in ENY in the spring (2017), with updated outcomes and data. And the Center for NYC Neighborhoods just published a study on housing affordability in ENY in October (2017). With

these reports and up-to-date databases available online from the city and NYU, I was able to capitalize on a large amount of relevant and usable quantitative data that had previously been collected (O'Leary 2004: 127).

In addition, much of my research was based on qualitative data from primary interviews, as well as secondary sources such as video and audio recordings of ENY residents. I did semi-structured interviews with city officials, residents, community organizers and developers to enhance the quantitative data and add lived personal experience and voices to the rezoning process in the neighborhood. Although I aimed to interview 4-6 members of each of the four groups, I fell short of that goal with only eleven interviews in total, due to difficulty reaching and receiving responses from all groups except city officials. I found this a bit ironic, as I had expected to run into issues securing both developers and city officials for interviews. But it turned out city officials from multiple departments were quite happy to speak about the ENY rezoning, albeit none on the record. I was able to interview six city officials in total, from the DCP, HPD, and the local district city council. They are noted as DCP Officials A, B, C; HPD Officials D, E, and City Council Official. I was only able to speak to one person on the developer side, a project manager for a private for-profit developer working on affordable housing projects. This project manager was not working on any of the ENY developments, but knew the context and was able to give some broad insight into the overall process and perspective from the private, market developer side.

In addition to the city officials and developer interviews, I also interviewed Julia Watts-Rosenfeld, the Director of Community Organizing and Advocacy, at the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation. She also heads up the Community Coalition for Advancement (CCA) a coalition of “community and civic organizations, small businesses, houses of worship and local citizens... in order to advocate for a fair and just rezoning process” (‘East New York Rezone’ 2017). The CCA worked not only with local community organizations, but also with civic, academic, and legal groups to put forward an alternative community rezoning plan, to the city’s initial plan. They also communicated with the district’s city council member, Rafael Espinal, to better vocalize community concerns regarding the rezoning, and encourage him to advocate for these issues. Julia spoke with me about the process of the rezoning, the stakeholder interactions, and what she saw as progress and failures of the process.

Within the community, from both community organizers (beyond Julia, noted above) and residents, there seemed to be much less willingness to speak with me than I had expected, and I was only able to obtain interviews with four respondents from these two groups in total. I was asked repeatedly if I was a reporter, or with the city, and what my study was for. I was fully upfront and as transparent as I could be about the aim of the research and tried to answer any questions to quell concerns. One Saturday, when I was attending the ENY Farmer’s Market, and speaking with one of the organizers, she told me that many people are just tired of talking about the rezoning. She mentioned another student researcher had been there just a few weeks before

me, and was not the first one enquiring about the changes in the neighborhood. Additionally those ‘nosing around’ also tend to be real estate speculators and buyers. So when the topic comes up for ENY homeowners, they seemed to be especially suspicious of inquiries.

Although I had hoped to speak with at six least residents, from varying backgrounds and genders, to take an intersectional approach, my lack of respondents limited me in this. Despite these obstacles, I was able to sit down for semi-structured interviews with three community members. Two were West Indian (black) females who had emigrated from the Caribbean, one middle-aged and one senior citizen (75 years old), and the other a thirty-something Latino male. All three were longtime ENY residents, with deep ties to the neighborhood. Both females declined to be recorded, but spoke openly about their experiences in ENY. Miss P., the senior citizen, is a longtime homeowner and had experienced harassment from real estate speculators pressuring her to sell her home within in the last year. Miss J. rents an apartment, but she owns 4 small plots of land (formerly vacant lots) in the neighborhood where she farms, and in turn sells her produce at the ENY Farmers Market. Both women lived in the southern part of ENY, beyond the reach of the rezoned area, but still seemed to know a considerable amount about the rezoning, and had felt the effects of it were reaching them and their neighbors. Mr. R, the male resident, lives in the northern part of the neighborhood, within the rezoned area. He has worked with a local community center and youth organization, and is very familiar with the rezoning and community development in the neighborhood. Although I was only back to obtain these three interviews with residents, I was able to utilize secondary sources for additional interviews and voices of residents from the neighborhood.

In 2016 WNYC, the public radio station, produced a 10-part podcast, *There Goes the Neighborhood* about gentrification in Brooklyn, with about half of the episodes including interviews and testimonials from ENY residents. I was able to pull reflections, quotes, and insights from this podcast. Additionally, I was able to access a database of twenty oral histories from current and former residents of ENY, from the Brooklyn Historical Society. Most were of African American, West Indian, Puerto Rican, and Jewish backgrounds. These interviews were conducted in 2014-2015, after Mayor DeBlasio was elected and the rezoning was announced, but prior to it being enacted. Although much of the content focuses on the history of the neighborhood, gentrification and more current issues were also included in some cases. Lastly, City Limits, a non-profit organization conducted and posted twelve short interviews with residents and community organizers from an ENY Community Coalition meeting in June 2017 about their reflections on the rezoning and how it affected the community. There were nine females and three males interviewed; six were black (African American or West Indian), five were Latino, and one interviewee was white. They were a mix of homeowners and renters, and both long time and newer residents, including some who had moved away and returned. Of the residents interviewed, four worked with local community organizations and one was state district leader and committeewoman. These

insightful interviews added valuable and knowledgeable community voices and perspectives to the primary interviews that I had conducted.

Lastly, I spent time in ENY, observing both the physical and social aspects of the community and changes going on there. I visited various parts of the neighborhood, both within the limits of the rezoning in the northern Cypress Hills section, and the residential area to the south that is outside the rezoning lines. I used city development and advocacy websites such as NewYorkYimby.com and CityLimits.org to track and find new affordable housing developments that had been, or are set to be built, and explored those areas. As I spent time in the neighborhood, I also observed new office buildings going up, construction around the transit hub at Broadway Junction, mixed industry along the commercial corridor of Atlantic Avenue, and newly refurbished park and playgrounds. I attended a rally regarding the need for jobs in ENY. I also spent time at the ENY Farmer's Market, where I met one of the women I interviewed, as well as interacted with community members both working and patronizing the market. Actually being in the neighborhood allowed me to have a first hand perspective of not only the housing and spatial issues of the rezoning, but also deepen my understanding of the community response.

Now despite having lived in Brooklyn for 12 years, this was the first time I had really been to ENY, other than passing through it on the subway, or by taxi on Atlantic Avenue. So going to spend time in the neighborhood was somewhat out of my comfort zone at first. It's quite a big neighborhood, stretching over a large area, and I often needed to navigate around with cell phone in hand, feeling quite out of place in a part of Brooklyn I didn't know well. Additionally, I felt keenly aware that I likely *looked* out of place as a 30-something middle class white woman. This made me feel my positionality quite strongly. I actually felt like I was unnerving neighborhood people as I walked by, like they were seeing me as a harbinger of gentrification. That I was just the type of person that so many residents were nervous they were going to be pushed out and displaced by, as had happened in other areas of Brooklyn and around the city. This feeling could very well have been more of my own guilt of my position of potentially contributing to gentrification over my years in Brooklyn, rather than a reflection of feelings coming from others. When I interacted with locals at the farmers market or at the rally, none of those sentiments had been directed at me, and everyone was quite kind and welcoming. But it was something I noticed throughout my time in ENY, and definitely gave me pause for reflection as I went about my research.

Chapter 2 : Conceptual & Analytical Framework

2.1 Right to the City

The concept of the right to the city was first put forth by Henri Lefebvre in the 1960s. Lefebvre saw the city, or the urban space, as someplace constantly being produced, created and recreated. As Ananya Roy describes,

Lefebvre uses the term urban to signal the processes through which the production of space becomes the prime engine of economy and society. Yet, in Lefebvre's work, urbanism is not overdetermined by capital accumulation. Urbanism is an assemblage of meanings and signs, of spatial memories and lived experiences (2011: 8).

For Lefebvre, the people creating these meanings and memories, and acting as the engine of the city, are the working class. Although state and institutions may be the ones to shape the city from a surface view, Lefebvre argues that without the support and political involvement of the working class, urban development will never really be effective (Lefebvre et al. 1996: 154). He suggests that while urban growth and changes may happen, these will be more superficial than real, and merely hide the segregation that exists beneath (Ibid. 1996: 177). To overcome this mere ideology of change and development in the city, and achieve not only integration, but also strong urban strategy (Ibid. 1996: 154), Lefebvre argues for two central rights:

(1) The right to appropriate urban space; and (2) the right to participate centrally in the production of urban space...The right to appropriate urban space involves the right to live in, play in, work in, represent, characterize, and occupy urban space in a particular city. (Purcell 2003: 577).

Although he acknowledges the economic and political forces at work in the city, he argues that despite the commodification of the city, or perhaps because of it, the city's inhabitants, especially the working class, have a right to not only proper space but also in the decision making processes for that space. Moreover he looks at the need for urban space as not only a place to live, but space to exist and thrive in, and for that to happen, he acknowledges the need of citizen involvement in this space making and decisions around it.

In looking at this concept in relation to the rezoning in ENY, we can parallel the low-income population to the working class in Lefebvre's theory. And, given the statistics of the population as majority black and Latino, we can also form a parallel with race. So in this case, the low-income, minority population of ENY would need to be able to assert their rights to the city, by being part of the rezoning planning and implementation for this policy to have real positive development effects, and not just to further segregation and only superficial development. Specifically in this case, the segregation could

potentially manifest itself as displacement of this population. As without enough available affordable housing options, and rising market rent costs, the conditions could push residents outside not only the neighborhood, but also potentially the city itself.

This connects to David Harvey's expansion of the right to the city. Harvey looks more towards capital and argues that the city itself has become a commodity (2008: 31). He means this two-fold in that the culture and cache of the city are now things to be sold. Additionally, the process of making the city; building, planning, and real estate are all engines of capital surpluses (Ibid. 2008: 37). But he points to this process of urbanization as a major issue of the right to the city,

Surplus absorption through urban transformation has an even darker aspect. It has entailed repeated bouts of urban restructuring through 'creative destruction', which nearly always has a class dimension since it is the poor, the underprivileged and those marginalized from political power that suffer first and foremost from this process. Violence is required to build the new urban world on the wreckage of the old (Ibid. 2008: 33).

Here Harvey outlines the core struggle of urban development, and how capitalism and commodification have become the driving factors in urbanization, taking advantage of and harming its poorest and most marginalized citizens in the process. In his right to the city, he suggests a new kind of urbanization with a more inclusive and democratic control of the surplus capital that comes out of the urban process (Ibid. 2008: 40). He quite literally suggests the right to the city as a political approach that focuses not only on access to, and input about production of space, but even more so, who controls the surplus that comes from that production (Ibid. 2008: 40). He calls for,

Greater democratic control over the production and utilization of the surplus. Since the urban process is a major channel of surplus use, establishing democratic management over its urban deployment constitutes the right to the city (Ibid. 2008: 37).

Lefebvre's goal for the right to the city seems challenging enough, so to add on having more democratic control of the capital surplus of urbanization sounds impossible in the current urban context. But given how the city and urban process is able to create large amounts of capital, and with that, power, it is a necessary consideration in who has the right to the city, and what that really means.

In ENY, this can be seen in residents' struggle to not only find and keep affordable housing, and their place in the neighborhood, but also in relation to how they might stand to profit from the rezoning, or ways they're cut out of those profits. With real estate speculators coming into the neighborhood looking to buy homes, and either renovate and resell them, or convert to

apartments and rent them – current homeowners have the potential to accumulate capital and profit off of the rising market rates. But many homeowners don't know the worth of their home in the current market and may be undercut in a sale, or even after selling, may not have enough capital to invest and stay in the city (Hidalgo, *Hopes, Fears and Nuance Among Residents of a Reasoned Neighborhood* 2017). Additionally in the rental market, new market rate apartments, or the prices of rising rents in the neighborhood puts capital surplus in the hands of developers or owners, but takes money from the pockets of the low-income renters, and potentially even pushes them out if they're unable to afford rent hikes. In this case, this lack of democratic control over the financial surpluses in the neighborhood, and this right to the city, can potentially lead to a physical displacement from the city itself.

Between Lefebvre and Harvey's definitions of the right to the city, we can surmise that there are three considerations to be taken into account; the right to the production and use of urban space, the right to participate in all aspects of that space and its control, and the right to the fair and democratic disbursement of the surplus accumulation and capital created by the urban space. With these considerations of what is encompassed within the right to the city, it's clear that capital and political power play huge roles in who actually benefits from this right. Next I'll look more closely at how housing functions within this, from the housing in political economy approach.

2.2 Housing in Political Economy

Housing has often been looked at either from a policy or a market standpoint. Both angles have merit, but it's difficult to reconcile the two as they seem to be in a constant tug-of-war between seeing housing as a space of social reproduction with a need for social protection, and as a commodity whose value is ruled by the market. But Aalbers and Christopher have brought forth a more multidimensional approach of framing housing within political economy. They define political economy from an interdisciplinary angle, looking at how social and political aspects of society affect the economy (Aalbers and Christophers 2014: 374). Within their approach, they place housing at the center of societal, political, and economic contexts and stress the need to consider theory, policy and market factors as well (Ibid. 2014: 388). They look at housing in relation to three aspects of capital, which they argue is central to political economy,

...And identify the multiple (and ever more material) roles of housing when capital is considered from the perspective of each of its three primary, mutually constitutive guises: capital as process of circulation; capital as social relation; and capital as ideology (Ibid. 2014: 375).

They outline housing's ever-increasing role in the circulation of capital as both a product that can be produced and sold, or rented on the market, but also but also as something that can be bought and invested in to keep and accumulate capital just from ownership over time, or improvements made to it

(Ibid. 2014: 376). It seems hard to untangle housing from the circulation of capital, as a ‘good’ that is globally needed and which in turn capital is necessary to obtain and maintain it, whether that be through rent, mortgages or caretaking (maintenance, cleaning, etc.) of the physical housing. This has also been looked at as the commodification or financialization of housing (Garcia-Lamarca and Kaika 2016: 316, Fields 2014: 149). Fields and Uffer note that this financialization does not take place only on the economic side of the market, but is affected by the political as well, as governments create regulations and conditions such as subsidies that might lubricate the market, or can alter protections or controls on rent prices (2016: 1488). This is seen clearly in the ENY rezoning, as the city rewrites where developers can build larger housing complexes, and by doing so, hopes to increase investment and private market rate housing in the area.

In addition to circulation, seeing how housing functions as a social relation of capital is equally important. Given that the amount of capital or wealth that one has is usually in direct relation to the quality, size, appearance, and location of housing that one might be able to afford, this brings a real physical manifestation of class and one’s standing with capital to housing (Aalbers and Christophers 2014: 380). This can be seen in the spatial and social divisions that exist in different neighborhoods in Brooklyn, with those closer to Manhattan generally being comprised of more middle and high-income residents with greater access to capital, than those on the outskirts like ENY. As we can see in ENY, this can also play out beyond just class divisions, but also along racial and ethnic (and even gender and age) lines, especially when overlapping (Ibid. 2014: 386). This can create further inequality and these populations become physically segregated and relegated to only accessing housing in certain spaces. Beyond just the cost of housing, this reaches further into social relations.

The poor location of housing may, for instance, increase commuting times and hamper access to good schools, clean air, transportation and a wide range of other services, recreational and commercial spaces, and so forth. It may also increase residents’ exposure to crime, environmental pollution, flooding and a whole range of other problems (Ibid. 2014: 380).

Bringing this back around to circulation of capital, these conditions can also affect the sale price of a home, so that an owner in one of these lower income communities receives less return on their investment of a house in an area such as the above.

Additionally the social relation of capital plays out greatly in landlord – tenant relationships and exploitation that often takes place. These might be even better referred to as “monetized power relations”, as Susanne Soederberg details (2017b: 3). Soederberg suggests this social relationship comes from the power dynamic the owner or landlord has over the tenant, as the supplier of a home, a place needed for one’s survival (Ibid. 2017b: 3). Additionally she outlines the tendency for exploitation that comes from this relationship, as a landlord is the one holding the power as the owner of the property, setting the rent price and this usually means having legal power as well (Ibid. 2017b: 3). Even within the more controlled affordable housing context that we’re exploring in ENY, this power relation can still be seen. Despite government

limits on rent prices, the city is the one with the power to set the price according to the AMI, even though this still may be too costly for residents in ENY where the median income is lower than the city average. In this social relationship, the tendency for exploitation of the tenant, usually a person with less capital and of a lower class than the owner, is widespread and seems part of the landlord-tenant dynamic that exists within this monetized power relation.

The last and perhaps most important issue of the social relation of capital and housing from Aalbers and Christopher that I'll outline here is the connection between social reproduction, housing and capital. Housing can be seen at the crux of social reproduction, as it's the domestic space where much of this work takes place (Aalbers and Christophers 2014: 381). It's a human need, literally the place that fosters health and knowledge power for people to go out and produce work and capital, which without adequate housing for social reproduction to take place in, wears down the means of production and in turns means of producing capital (Desmond 2016: 311)). In this sense the need for and very right to housing is necessary to continue circulation of capital. And Aalbers and Christopher further argue that vice versa, the "unequal social relations arising from the circulation of capital, and expressed in housing wealth, tend to endanger the very social reproduction required for circulation safely to continue" (2014: 389). So no matter which direction you look at the relationship between capital circulation and social reproduction in relation to housing, they are inextricably linked and dependent on each other.

The third aspect that Aalbers and Christopher look at housing in relation to is that of the ideology of capital. They jump straight to the point outlining that,

...The ideology of housing today epitomizes capitalist ideology more generally, inasmuch as private property ownership, market allocation mechanism and accumulation strategies are decisively privileged. And second, because housing not only epitomizes but buttresses that wider capitalist ideology: it is in and through housing that much of the political work of reproducing and reinforcing the ideology of capital is performed (Aalbers and Christophers 2014: 384).

Essentially housing today is built on the capitalist ideology of private market and the accumulation of capital. As mentioned earlier, housing itself is a commodity and financial asset to be owned or to profit off of. And this idea prioritizes this importance of owning a house and gaining accumulation from it. For those that don't have the capital to buy and can only rent, there is a certain level of stigma or judgment, of not investing in your own home, but merely dumping money into rent which will never accumulate capital. Additionally, for people who need to take advantage of affordable housing options, there is even further stigma where they may be 'othered' and seen as not being able to reach the 'normalized' desirable levels of housing (Ibid. 2014: 386). While owning ones own housing may be ideologically preferred, in NYC, there is an overwhelming amount of renters, and the buyers market for housing is so expensive, that within its urban bubble, it's become the norm to

have to rent. Beyond that, people of various income levels will join long wait lists in the hopes of obtaining a affordable housing unit, even those middle class residents, making into the six figures, if its on the lower end and they can qualify. This though, has come in step with the privatization and financialization of affordable housing being part of the market and not separated as government run social housing. This clearly plays into this de-stigmatization of affordable housing, and again exemplifies how not only the ideology of capital but also social relation and circulation all effect housing.

By using the housing in political economy approach and looking at its relations to the circulation, social relation, and ideology of capital, and further examining within the social, political and economic contexts; we can see the complexity of the issue beyond just trying to simplify housing as an issue of only policy or market. In this complexity, it's important to note the contradictions that arise of housing within capitalism, and look critically at these issues (Ibid. 2014: 389). With this multidimensional approach, it offers the opportunity to examine issues of housing as both policy and market within political economy, which I will use along with the right to the city, to frame and analyze the case study of the rezoning of ENY.

2.3 Analytical Framework

Figure 1: Right to the City Framework

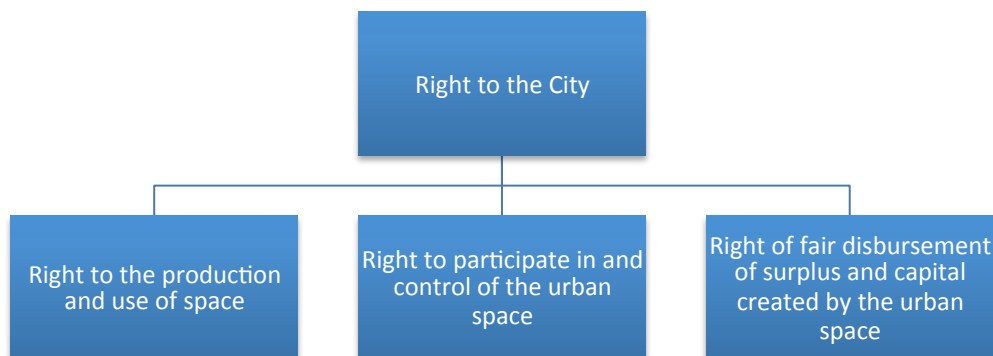
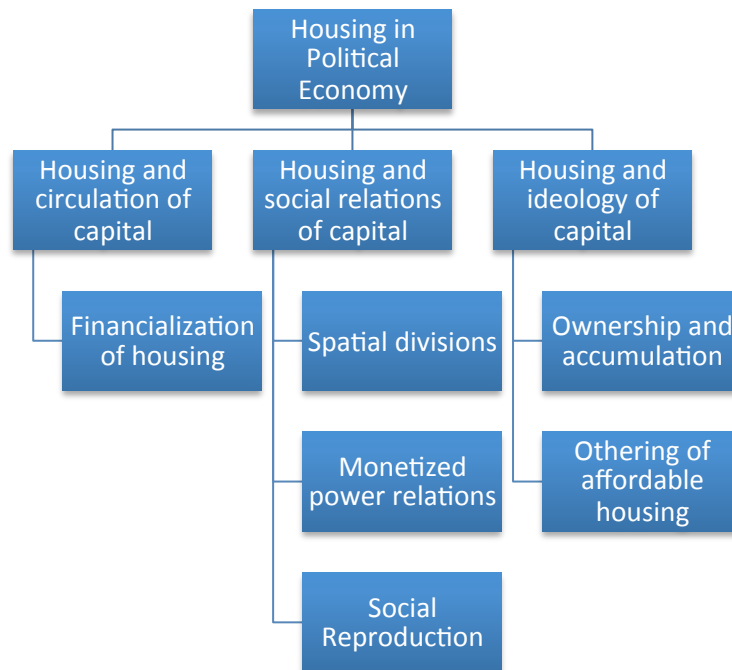


Figure 2: Housing in Political Economy Framework



By utilizing the approaches of the right to the city and housing in political economy to frame my analysis of the rezoning of ENY case, it will help me to examine how (and if) the rezoning policy has functioned thus far to create affordable housing solutions and also maintain a space for low-income residents within the neighborhood. Considering that these approaches do stem from a common ideology and considerations of capital (although less with Lefebvre), social relations and the right to the production of space, there will be overlaps between the two. I will first consider how the housing in political economy frame can help examine what mechanisms are used within the rezoning in ENY and why. Additionally, I'll utilize the framework to specifically look at the mechanism of mandatory inclusionary housing and how it functions in relation to circulation and social relations of capital and housing. This will also overlap into the right to the city, if this mechanism does in fact allow for more democratic use and control of the urban space, and how it might protect against gentrification and displacement.

Looking at the case further from the right to the city context, I will examine who benefits from this rezoning and how; and who is excluded by looking at who controls the production of space, who utilizes it, and who participates in decisions about it. Additionally I'll look at the monetized power relations, and who benefits from the financial gains from the rezoning, and if those financial gains will be returned to the neighborhood and community in any way. Or if displacement occurs, I'll examine the right to the use of space, and how this affects social reproduction. I'll take into context issues of class, race, and age – which can also be examined as social relations of capital and housing within the political economy approach.

Chapter 3 : Housing in NYC and ENY

3.1 History and Context of Housing in NYC

Since its first big population boom in the early 1900s, NYC has been at the forefront of housing policies. Due to overcrowded and inhumane tenement buildings, housing thousands of immigrants, NYC was the first in the country to implement housing codes with the Tenement Housing Act of 1905. It followed with the creation of NYC Housing Authority during the New Deal Era, and the first low-income public housing project in the Lower East Side in 1934, before the federal government began any public housing programs of their own (Salama et al. March 2003: 1). New York State stayed in step by creating the first state Division of Housing in the U.S. in 1926, and by the 1950s, the city and state joined together to initiate an incentive program called Mitchell-Lama that created tens-of-thousands of middle income apartments by offering private developers interest rate subsidies and tax exemptions (Ibid. March 2003: 1-2).

However despite these progressive policies that paved the way for many urban planning and housing policies throughout the United States, some of these ‘urban renewal’ policies strongly shaped the urban space along racial and class lines. In 1949 there was the Federal Housing Act, which allowed cities the power to rid themselves of ‘slums’ – be they tent cities or tenements. Although this was supposed to be a health and safety act, it was essentially recognized as “Negro removal” (Angotti et al 2016: 57) as it was used widely throughout minority neighborhoods in NYC, often to make room for city planner Robert Moses’ highways. Also, throughout the 1930s and 40s redlining was rampant practice. It was used by the federally run organization called the Home Owners Loan Corporation, wherein they would literally cross out neighborhoods on a map with a red line that had black populations of more than 5%, seeing it as a signal of decline, and they counted them as undesirable neighborhoods for banks to lend mortgages to (Ibid 2016: 59). This practice drastically shaped the landscape of the city as whole neighborhoods and populations were turned away from home loans for ownership, and furthered the economic limitations, and decline within them. We can see the social relations of capital and housing play out here in relation to race and ethnicity, through monetized power relations with the city and home owners corporations using their financial power to shape the city’s neighborhoods and create further racial and spatial segregation and exclusion (Tighe 2011: 105).

In the 1960s and 70s, with economic decline on the rise, and racial tensions leading to ‘white flight’, the city now faced a dwindling and largely lower income population. This white flight was fueled by practices of ‘blockbusting’, wherein agents would come into redlined neighborhoods handing out scare flyers and low appraisals on homes, playing on fears of decline from the white inhabitants, so the agents could buy and flip houses,

and rent to blacks and Latinos who were immigrating to these neighborhoods at inflated prices (Thabit 2003: 45). In many of these redlined neighborhoods, urban decline increased into 1970s as the areas essentially became ghettoized, and white flight spread through much of the city. As Ingrid Gould Ellen, describes, “Entire neighborhoods were devastated by abandonment and arson, and by 1979, the city had taken ownership of approximately 60,000 vacant and 40,000 occupied apartments as a result of tax foreclosures” (2006: 35).

In 1985, Mayor Edward Koch launched his ‘Ten Year Plan’ to reconstruct and rehabilitate much of the city owned *in rem* housing and worked with private developers to turn them into capped-rent affordable housing units. Koch’s ‘Ten Year Plan’, ended up expanding to the year 2000, and cost \$5.1 billion, with most funds coming from the city’s capital budget, and the remaining being funded by state and federal housing subsidies (Salama et al. March 2003: 3). The plan succeeded in building and rehabilitating over 180,000 units of housing and revitalizing some once decimated neighborhoods.

By the 2000s, the city was headed in a better direction with a more solid amount of city assisted, affordable housing for lower income residents, but with a booming economy, housing rental prices rose across the private market, and became increasingly unaffordable for the growing population. Mayor Bloomberg launched the New Housing Market Plan, to build and preserve 165,000 units of affordable housing aimed at middle and lower middle-income residents by 2014; but the plan was side-tracked by the financial crisis of 2008 (The City of New York et al. May 2014: 15-16). Despite this overall failure for the creation of affordable housing, a rezoning of Williamsburg and Greenpoint Brooklyn still went through, but instead of affordable housing units, luxury high rises were allowed in a once mixed-use residential and industrial area. Rents in the neighborhoods skyrocketed, and land and building speculation increased drastically. Low-income residents, largely Latino, were displaced, with an increasingly white, wealthier population (Anglotti Et Al 2016: 74). This particular instance shows that without specific policy mechanisms to ensure affordable housing, that rezoning to increase density and development can drive up real estate speculation for not only housing, but the neighborhood in general, as happened in these areas. The financialization of housing accelerated investment and accumulation in the area, and further drove the circulation of capital (Garcia-Lamarca and Kaika 2016: 316).

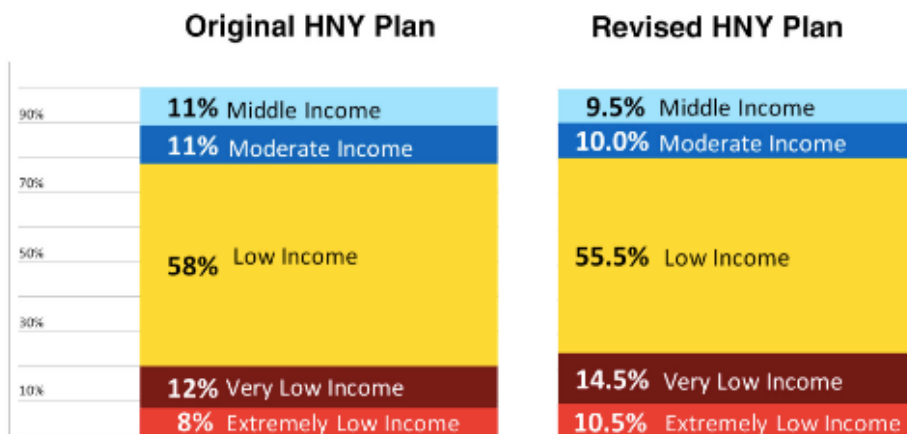
Throughout the history of NYC’s approach to affordable housing, we can see the constant affects that political, economic and social factors have had as they shaped the not only how the city approached housing policies and solutions, but also how they were implemented. In opposition to the right to the city, all of the policy mechanisms that were used top down approaches, from the city government and financial institutions which actively sought to shape and control the urban space, leaving little control to the residents themselves. But beyond just policy, housing in NYC was specifically affected by increasing financialization of housing throughout the years, and a shift away from city owned affordable housing, to working with private developers to facilitate affordable housing within the market. This changed not only the

circulation of capital within the city and its housing approach, but also effected the social relations, as tenants were no longer renting from the city, but now were a part of the market, and interacting with developers and private, largely for-profit landlords (Fenton et al. 2013: 374). Although there were and are regulations and controls that these landlords need to abide by, the social relation has still been altered by who the tenants pay their rent to, and how they interact with both the city and the market. Additionally this shifted the ideology of affordable housing in the city. Once seen only a ‘tenements’ and ‘projects’, affordable housing is now largely thought of within the market realm, and to an extent that has helped to de-stigmatize it.

3.2 Housing NY Plan

This brings us up to 2014, when Mayor DeBlasio, who ran on the platform to expand affordable housing and make it a major priority for the city, was elected. His administration laid out an ambitious ten-year plan, ‘Housing New York’ that aimed to provide (by preservation or building) 200,000 units of affordable housing to 500,000 residents, and was projected to cost \$41.4 billion, to be funded between the city, state and federal governments, as well as a majority of the funding coming from private contributions via tax credits, bonds, and various other private financing sources. (The City of New York et al. May 2014: 100). The scope of the plan has over 50, involves 13 city agencies, and has input from more than 200 stakeholders - public, private, and civil society. As of October of 2017, the city has said the plan is on track and actually ahead of schedule, and as such, has chosen to expand the plan and timeline to 300,000 units of affordable housing (40% new construction and 60% preserved) by 2026 (‘Mayor De Blasio to Complete Affordable Housing Plan 2 Years Ahead of Schedule, Accelerate Pace and Expand Goals’2017).

Figure 3: Revised Affordability Levels of Housing NY Plan



Source: NYC Housing Preservations & Development

Additionally, as can be seen in the above figure, the city has increased the allocation for Very Low and Extremely Low-Income households, and decreased its allotment for moderate and middle-income households, with the majority still going to low-income households. This translates to 10.5% of the affordable housing citywide earmarked for families of three making less than approximately \$25,000, and 14.5% set aside for families making less than approximately \$42,000 ('HPD Announces New Targets for Housing New York Plan to Achieve Deeper Affordability'2017). But in a neighborhood like ENY where the median income for a family of three is only \$35,480, that means that a large percentage of families will fall into these bottom two categories, and won't even reach the large chunk of housing set aside for just 'Low-Income' households ('The State of New York City's Housing and Neighborhoods in 2016' 2017: 58).

In looking at the division of how much housing is allotted for each income level, we can trace this back to market influences and the circulation of capital. As the city is working with private developers in both creating and preserving affordable housing, despite subsidies provided, it still needs to engage with market prices for building, renovating, and maintaining housing units. Each category also corresponds to a monthly rent ceiling, so the more very and extremely low-income units the city takes on, the more cost the city must cover within the market. So despite that the lowest income levels may need access to affordable housing the most, the city must work within the market to reach these goals. For this reason, the increase from the goal of 200,000 to 300,000 units might not actually go far for those at the lowest income levels, most in need of affordable housing.

Despite a slight raise in the percentages of housing allotted for the lower incomes, and the overall increase in the amount of units, the updates to the NY Housing Plan don't change the levels of affordability that are used. As mentioned previously, the city uses the federally set AMI. In my speaking with one the DCP Officials, he noted that it was the easiest to keep with the same standards of median income that the federal and state levels use, for clarity and consistency, especially given that both levels of government also fund the NY Housing Plan (DCP Official A 2017, Personal Interview).

Figure 4: 2017 NYC Income Limits by Household Size

Family Size	30% of AMI	40% of AMI	50% of AMI	60% of AMI	70% of AMI	80% of AMI	100% of AMI	130% of AMI	165% of AMI
1	\$20,040	\$26,720	\$33,400	\$40,080	\$46,760	\$53,440	\$66,800	\$86,840	\$110,220
2	\$22,920	\$30,560	\$38,200	\$45,840	\$53,480	\$61,120	\$76,400	\$99,320	\$126,060
3	\$25,770	\$34,360	\$42,950	\$51,540	\$60,130	\$68,720	\$85,900	\$111,670	\$141,735
4	\$28,620	\$38,160	\$47,700	\$57,240	\$66,780	\$76,320	\$95,400	\$124,020	\$157,410
5	\$30,930	\$41,240	\$51,550	\$61,860	\$72,170	\$82,480	\$103,100	\$134,030	\$170,115

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and NYC.gov HDP

The AMI in NYC is calculated using not only the income of residents within the five boroughs of the city, but also three suburban counties in the NYC region (Murphy 2016). Many NYC housing advocates, including Julia from the CCA argue that this skews the median up, when the city AMI itself is actually lower than the levels listed (Julia Watts-Rosenfeld, 2017, Personal Interview). This is definitely the case in ENY where average incomes have remained stagnant since 2010, but the housing prices continue to rise despite (Goldberg et al. 2017: 4). So even though some improvements and expansions have been made to the plan, the basis for how income levels are set and measured are done so by the government, and not in accordance with the reality of incomes only within the city and its neighborhoods. This again allows the city to control who is able to access this affordable housing, and limits the amount of affordable housing in relation to economic restraints. And it leaves a large number of those residents at the lowest income levels underserved, without much control to increase access to the limited amount of affordable housing.

In addition to its overall goals for increased affordable housing around the city in general, the NY Housing Plan has earmarked 15 neighborhoods to be rezoned for greater density and development, with specific attention paid to increased amounts of affordable housing. As noted, ENY is the first neighborhood to be rezoned, as of 2016, and it serves at the place where I focused my research on how the rezoning has actually functioned in its attempt to create affordable housing, and preserve space for low-income residents.

3.3 ENY

As mentioned in the introduction, ENY as had a tough last 50 years. It began as a farming neighborhood established by the Dutch in the late 1600s, and slowly over time became a residential and industrial neighborhood known for having strong immigrant communities, mostly Italian, Irish, German, and Jewish up until 1960s. Then with the racially charged urban renewal laws and redlining during this time, it became a neighborhood that almost completely flipped its population from white immigrants to black and brown immigrants within a 6-year period.

Of the 29,500 households, about 6,000 (equal numbers of blacks and Puerto Ricans) with an average of five persons per household were on welfare, with another 5,500 households with an average of three persons per household (80 percent black and 20 percent Puerto Rican) were eligible for welfare but not on it. Many eligible households that applied were illegally denied welfare benefits.... However it was sliced, 40 percent of ENY households were living in poverty (Thabit 2003: 7).

In the years since the major population shift in ENY, its garnered attention mostly from local press as a poor, industrial and residential area of Brooklyn with high levels of homelessness, shelters and violence. However, some would also note it for its strong community spirit and organizations (Lafontant, *Hopes, Fears and Nuance Among Residents of a Rezoned Neighborhood* 2017, Barksdale, *Sarita Daftary-Steel collection of East New York oral histories 2014-2015 (2015.011)* 2015). Local community organizations started in NYC Housing Authority Nehemiah houses, church organizations banded together and created the East Brooklyn Congregations, and eventually the ENY Local Development Corporation to the south side of the neighborhood, and the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation to the north side of the neighborhood formed. These organizations advocated for a neighborhood that otherwise felt largely forgotten by the city. As Mr. R put it to me, “ENY has a history where the city overlooked people of color... I'm a person of color in Brooklyn, who knows, remembers, and gets that the city could have done more to protect us in the generations before me” (2017, Personal Interview).

For good or bad, the city has moved ENY into the spotlight with this rezoning. From a spatial and land perspective this is not surprising, as the city had a number of fairly sizable plots of undeveloped land on the eastern edges of the neighborhood, big enough to fit larger developments. Additionally, the western corner of ENY is home to Broadway Junction, a subway and commuter rail transit station that connects with multiple express subway lines and trains to Manhattan and downtown Brooklyn. And as mentioned above, the neighborhood had taken its community and local development into its own hands in the ways that it could. It utilizes community organizations and outreach to strengthen its community, provide additional support for schools and day cares, and educate tenants about housing rights and the rezoning (Grizer, *Sarita Daftary-Steel collection of East New York oral histories 2014-2015*

(2015.011) 2015, Stone, *Hopes, Fears and Nuance Among Residents of a Rezoned Neighborhood* 2017). Given the community involvement and their exercising of their right to the city within this participation, ENY provides a very interesting case study of how this rezoning has functioned thus far and the community's interactions and reactions to it.

Chapter 4 : Mechanisms within a Growth Machine City

4.1 Mechanisms for Affordable Housing

Figure 5: ENY Rezoning Plan Framework



Source: City of NYC June 2017 ENY Neighborhood Plan Progress Report

When looking at the ENY rezoning plan, it seems fairly easy to see the economic and market context that it's been formulated within. Phrases that jump out from the figure above are “Industrial Business Zone”, “Industrial Mix District”, “Growth Corridor” and “Mixed Use Corridor”. From these phrases alone, this gives an idea of how much rezoning is dependent on market growth, not only in housing, but also the development of various industrial and business enterprises that the city expects to be coming to this neighborhood. As outlined in Chapter 3, the Housing NY Plan notes that a large percentage of the plan is actually funded from private financing. Out of the original \$41 billion dollar plan, \$30 billion of it comes from private funding, with a good third of that amount merely listed as “private financing” (Housing New York: A Five Borough, Ten-Year Plan ‘May 2014: 100). This begs the question of where and from whom this capital is coming, and what control this private funding may have in the process. To reiterate, the above rezoning is part of a housing plan. And yet, only half of the zones outlined are residential. This points directly to not only to the relations of capital circulation and housing, but also the ideology of capital and housing as it pertains to overall capital accumulation and growth within the city (Fainstein 2005: 12). And this

suggests that one of the mechanisms to create urban housing within a growth machine city (as defined in Ch. 1) like NYC is integration of planning with industry and business development, beyond just housing development. Again, due to vague wording in the Housing NY Plan, much of the private funding is not disclosed as to where it comes from, so any guesses of if potential industries that might want to further develop within the city actually drive and direct this rezoning and development plans, would be pure speculation.

But from a planning perspective mixed use areas that include housing and industry are increasingly popular in city planning (Ibid. 2005: 16). However, this not a new idea, as Jane Jacobs outlined the need for diversity and multi-functional neighborhoods back in the 1960s (1961: 150). She also specified a mix of old and new buildings, as well as sufficient density to create a diverse and thriving neighborhood (Ibid. 1961: 151). Having spent time walking around some of the streets with the map above, I can say that there is a general footprint there for the lines drawn along the various districts and corridor's, so this wouldn't be an entirely new approach for the neighborhood. The main section of the "growth corridor" along Atlantic venue is currently a mix of industry (car shops, scattered restaurants, various warehouses) and older low-rise housing. But in the framework above, this area calls for "mixed-use growth with new affordable and mixed-income housing, retail businesses, and community facilities". According to DCP Official B, who worked specifically in ENY, none of the affordable or mixed-income housing that will be subsidized by the city will directly displace any current housing (2017, Personal Interview). Despite this, as the area develops and circulation of capital within the corridor increases, it may also lead to increases in land and housing values, as has happened in other areas of the city (Garcia-Lamarca and Kaika 2016: 316). At this point though, a year and half after the rezoning has been passed, the corridor doesn't look much like the renders of city planners, but more as it has for the past few years, it will remain to be seen when and this mixed use development really takes off, and who starts it.

One of the drivers of this expanded growth may come from Chestnut Commons, a new 100% affordable housing development that is being built on what was previously city owned land at the east end of Atlantic Avenue in the Industrial Mixed Used district (in purple).

Images 3 & 4: Site of Chestnut Commons, August 2017

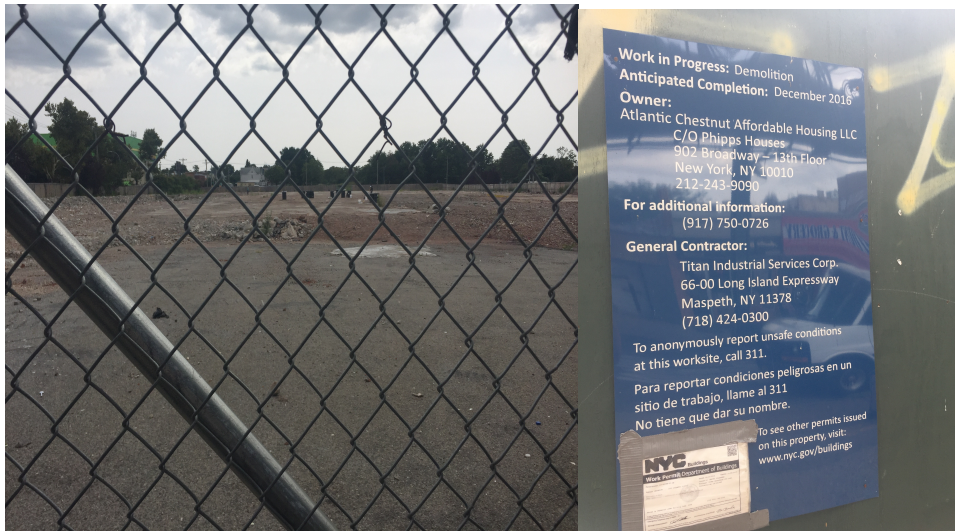


Image 5: Rendering of Chestnut Commons



Source: Housing Preservation & Development, nyc.gov

This development was mentioned to me by all of the City Officials that I spoke with, in DCP, HPD, and on the city council. Given that this will be the first and one of the largest 100% affordable developments in the neighborhood, and its being overseen by a non-profit developer, it seems to be the example that the city most wants to put forward as the beacon of the ENY rezoning. It will house 274 affordable housing rental units, with 30% of those allocated for households that make 30% of the AMI or approx. \$25,000 a year (categorized as extremely low-income) and the remainder of the units will be for low-income households that fall within the 60% AMI category, or approximately \$51,000 a year (HPD and HDC Announce Development Plans for Chestnut Commons, a Mixed-use Community-Oriented Development with

274 Affordable Homes'2017). Beyond just housing, it will also be home to the Cypress Hills Local Community Development Corporation, that Julia, who I interviewed, works for (along with the CCA). During our interview in August 2017, we discussed this development, but she did not mention that her offices would be moving there, likely because this was before it was decided or announced (in October 2017). The Development Corporation will also operate a food incubator meant to help launch local food businesses. Additionally another local community organization, ARTS ENY will open a performing arts center, and CUNY Kingsborough Community College will open a satellite campus. Lastly, Brooklyn Federal Credit Union will open a branch in the building. Although it will be a commercial banking office, it will also “pilot a credit building rent payment program and financial education programs, and offer homeownership workshops for community members” (Ibid. 2017). Also, on the empty plot of land next door to the building, a new 1,000 seat public school will be built (Julia Watts-Rosenfeld, DCP Official and City Council Official 2017, Personal Interviews).

In looking specifically at this development we can see multiple mechanisms for affordable housing that the city employs. Not only is this a public subsidized housing development, but it will be run by a non-profit developer, Phipps Houses. This may slightly alter the social relation between landlord and tenants, as the developer in this case is not only providing affordable housing in conjunction with the city, but they are also not for profit, and not seeking to accumulate capital, but merely continue its circulation, to cover the costs of maintenance of the building and units (DCP Official A 2017 Personal Interview). Again the allocation of affordable housing relies on AMI to set rent levels, and has a majority set at the low income, vs. the extremely low-income level. Given that this building will be run by a non-profit and have not only housing, but also institutional and commercial tenants such as the CUNY college and a credit union branch, it does make me wonder if the injection of capital circulation from these entities might be able to supplement rents enough to increase the amount of extremely low income housing that could be allocated, but I wasn't able to find any data on the finances. Despite this, 30% of housing for extremely low-income residents is higher than the citywide plan, so this seems to be a win for the neighborhood and rezoning, and its allocation of affordable housing levels.

Additionally the inclusion of the Local Development Corp., test kitchen, and Performing Arts center in this building provides more space, use of this urban space for residents, and some control over it by local community organizations. Harvey actually refers to this combination of public, private and community powers coming together to manage urban development as urban entrepreneurialism (2008: 101). In this case, the performing arts center could serve as a place for the community to thrive and play, and even to be able to potentially commodify their art. Additionally the test kitchen sounds to be a great opportunity for local entrepreneurs to thrive and expand, hopefully be able to use this space to ‘cash in’ their right to the city, in the form of some of the surplus capital that might be circulating in the neighborhood from this urban process of development.

In addition to mixed-use developments with a dependence on the private market center, and non-profit publicly subsidized developments (that also have some mixed use and private circulation of capital thrown in), another mechanism for affordable housing within the ENY rezoning is the preservation of current affordable housing via rental controls and stabilizations. About half of the 40,000 units of housing within the rezoned area of ENY are rent controlled or stabilized (CCA Plan 2015: 4). Unfortunately these controls only apply to larger housing developments, and not the smaller 2-4 unit homes that make up much of the housing of ENY (Goldberg et al. 2017: 28). I'll go further into the exploration of the shortcomings of these controls in the next chapter. But for larger developments, specifically Arlington Village, this was one area where the city leaned heavily on these regulations, and actually cut the development out of the rezoning totally to be able to preserve this affordability.

Images 6 & 7: Arlington Village, August 2017



If you look back at Figure 5, along the growth corridor, you'll see a section of the zoning that looks to be cut out. This is Arlington Village. I heard about this old complex of apartments from DCP Official B, Julia at the CCA, and the City Council Official, and it was one issue that all agreed that the right thing had been done (2017, Personal Interviews). Arlington Village was built in the 1940s, takes up about 2 city blocks. It's sprawling and largely vacant, although there are still some residents who live there in rent controlled apartments, who under the present zoning, cannot be displaced. These apartments have 1 an issue of blight or years, for both the neighborhood and residents who have had to deal with lack of maintenance over the years. In 2015, after many attempts of both the city and various non-profit developers to try and purchase the complex, its former owners sold it to Bluestone Group for \$30 million (City Council Official 2017, Personal Interview.)

When the city first proposed its rezoning plan for ENY, this property was included in the growth corridor, and it would have been able to be rezoned for greater density and higher floor counts (up to 14 floors on Atlantic Avenue) as well as mixed-use commercial space (DCP Official B 2017, Personal Interview). But after much push back from the CCA, the city agreed

to cut it entirely from the rezoning plan. Had it been included the new owner Bluestone Group could have massively capitalized on the rezoning, and would only have had to abide by minimum mandatory inclusionary housing levels. But by cutting the entire complex out of the rezoning, the current owners are not able build and develop beyond the present zoning restrictions and controls for the rent controlled tenants who still live in the apartments. The hope is that the Bluestone Group will eventually compromise and sell the property to a non-profit or to the city, at which point the plan would be to rezone this area specifically for affordable housing (Ibid 2017, Personal Interview). In the meantime, when visited in August, it looked like the Bluestone group was making minor repairs and improvements to windows, doors, lawns and mailboxes for the residents who still remain in the complex (Image 7). But for the large amount of uninhabited units, the rest of the buildings were still run down and blighted (Image 6).

In this case, the community, via the CCA, pushed hard for control over how this space would be produced and was able to influence the rezoning process, hopefully giving them a physical right to the space in the future. Additionally, policy seemed to win out over market in this case, as the city recognized the potential for speculation and the excessive accumulation of capital by a developer who only looked to take advantage of the on-coming rezoning for its own gain, with no consideration for the neighborhood.

4.2 Mandatory Inclusionary Housing

One specific mechanism for affordable housing that's been very interesting within the Housing NY Plan and the rezoning in ENY, is mandatory inclusionary housing (MIH). Inclusionary housing is when a municipality requires a certain share of a new construction or development be made affordable to people meeting low or moderate-income levels (Jacobus 2016: 7). Since 1987 NYC has had a voluntary inclusionary housing option for developers to receive subsidies or tax breaks. In the ENY Rezoning, MIH has become mandatory for all buildings being built or increased to sizes beyond 10 housing units, or 12,500 square feet. Additionally, as of July 2017, MIH has been extended beyond rezoned neighborhoods, and will be applied to all developments with more than 25 units of housing, or 25,000 square feet ('NYC Housing Preservation & Development: Inclusionary Housing Program'2017).

Developers in either scenario have two options for the inclusion of affordable housing:

- Option 1: 25% of units set aside at an average of 60 percent AMI, with a minimum of 10% at 40 percent AMI.
- OR
- Option 2: 30 % set aside at an average of 80 percent AMI

Developers can also voluntarily opt for additional subsidy programs offered by HPD to increase the amount of affordable units within the building, which in turn allows them to build more units or floors, or obtain certain tax breaks. But what makes MIH potentially critical is that it's not a subsidy or exchange program that gives developers a tax break in exchange for affordable housing. Instead it mandates all housing developments of a certain size include a minimum level of affordable housing. Essentially these are then affordable house units on the dime of market developers, and not costing the city anything. If developers continue to build, and it becomes widespread enough between various rezonings and large-scale developments around the city, it could add a quality handful of units of affordable housing to the city. Additionally it makes all large housing developments mixed-income building which helps diversify not only buildings, but also neighborhoods and destigmatizes affordable housing ('New York City: Mandatory Inclusionary Housing, Promoting Economically Diverse Neighborhoods' 2015: 71).

However, so far in ENY, there have not been any private developments that have qualified for mandatory inclusionary zoning. At this point, the majority of planned housing developments which will be built, or are in progress, are HPD subsidized projects like Chestnut Commons, that have greater levels of affordable housing allocated than the those put forth by mandatory inclusionary zoning (HPD City Official D 2017, Personal Interview). But the city is counting on developers to be attracted by the opportunity to capitalize on being able to build large, multi-story housing developments, which previously were not zoned for, in ENY. The mandate of 25-30% of units to be rented at affordable housing rates is merely the price to obtain new and potentially profitable properties within the city. But here we can note the contradiction that arises within housing in capitalism (Aalbers and Christophers 2014: 389). On the one hand, the city is depending on private and market investment to develop ENY. With this comes increased capital circulation and likely the rise of land and market housing prices, which can also cause gentrification (Smith 2002: 443). This can lead to residents in low rent housing that is unprotected by rent controls and stabilization, to suffer from rising rents and possibly cause displacement. So while the city depends on urban development to drive some of its mechanisms for affordable housing, these same mechanisms that depend on increased circulation of capital and financialization of the housing market can also cause current low cost, private market affordable housing to be lost.

This slow start to private development within the rezoned area of ENY varies from what many assumed would be an onslaught of developers eager to get in on new sites for large scale development. However, according to DPC Official B, this could be a slow build, even up to 5 years before development really start picking up. She said that this was actually what the city was hoping for, so as not to gentrify the area (2017, Personal Interview). However, just because the big developers have not come yet, that doesn't mean that gentrification and potentially displacement is still not affecting ENY.

Chapter 5 : Who Really Benefits?

5.1 House Flipping, Rising Rents and Displacement

Surprisingly (or perhaps not), those who may benefit the most from the rezoning in ENY are not the residents who need and actually qualify for affordable housing, or the large developers that might take advantage of the increased capacity to build in the neighborhood. Instead it may be a population that is only indirectly connected to the rezoning, which most exploits the increased circulation of capital and buzz of development in the area.

With all the notoriety that ENY has received as the first neighborhood to be rezoned in the Housing NY Plan, and the news of the new MIH policy, the neighborhood has definitely been more talked about over the last few years in terms of real estate, development, and housing. With that, there seems to be an uptick in small private investors and house flippers looking to get in early to capitalize on the overall development of the neighborhood. These real estate speculators are not the developers that the city is counting on to build large housing and mixed-use developments for the growth corridor, that fall within MIH limits though. Additionally, they are not necessarily even looking to specifically build within the rezoned limits, but are seeking to exploit and gain capital accumulation and surplus on the neighborhood as a whole.

As Goldberg et al outline in their progress report on ENY note, the neighborhood is “among the leading neighborhoods in the city for home-flipping, where investors (usually in an anonymous LLC) induce homeowners to sell at below- market prices, undertake superficial repairs, and then resell at significantly higher rates” (2017: 34). This practice not only preys on homeowners who may be into foreclosure or financial distress, but also on the elderly and those who are unaware of the value of their home. Much like blockbusting years before, this practice is a predatory and highly unequal monetized power relation. In addition it furthers the financialization of housing, and the ideology of accumulation and ownership in both capital and housing and continues to alter the urban landscape and market (Fields and Uffer 2016: 1498). In 2016, 88% of houses that were flipped within ENY were purchased under financial distress from the previous owner, and of those houses that went back out on the market, they were typically 46% more expensive to buy or were notably more costly to rent than houses that had not been flipped (Ibid. 2017: 34).

Figure 6: Average Costs of Flipped Homes in ENY, 2016

	Before Flip	After Flip
Price	\$255,000	\$620,000
Income to Afford	\$74,000 (86% of AMI for family of 3)	\$121,000 (141% of AMI for family of 3)

Source: Center for NYC Neighborhoods

Figure 7: Average Rental Costs of Flipped Homes in ENY, 2016



Source: Center for NYC Neighborhoods

Additionally investors that flip these low rise, single family or two unit homes, might split them into three or four apartments to rent out individually. With these buildings not large enough to be included in MIH, or to even have rent control or stabilization if there were previous renters, there's little regulation that inhibits this practice, whether the flip is located within the rezoning or outside of it.

In my interviews with ENY residents, both Ms. P and Ms. J., discussed how either they or a friend or family member had been approached by real estate speculators. Ms. J., the elderly homeowner that had lived in the southern part of ENY for years, outside of the rezoning, described two different speculators that came by pressuring her to sell. One told her that she could sell and move into housing for the elderly in the neighborhood, which she firmly stated she preferred *not* to do at *only* 75 years old. The second speculator came by more than once and she said she actually felt like she had to scare him away by yelling and acting crazy in order to dissuade him (2017,

Personal Interview). She was not alone in this, as the East New Progress report found that 92% of homeowners surveyed have been approached by speculators (Goldberg et al. 2017: 64). Even just walking around the neighborhood, I saw speculator signs, which are technically illegal. The City Council Official I spoke with mentioned he had gathered a group of residents and done laps around the neighborhood taking them down, but they always seemed to pop back up (2017, Personal Interview).

Image 8: Illegal ‘We Buy Houses’ sign in ENY, August 2017



In addition to homeowner harassment, tenant harassment has also been occurring by current and new landlords who want to flip or sell their smaller 1-4 unit buildings, and attempt to force their tenants out by raising rents or not fixing issues with the housing (*There Goes the Neighborhood (Season 1)* 2016, *Hopes, Fears and Nuance Among Residents of a Rezoned Neighborhood* 2017). Although the HPD has some mechanisms for anti-harassment, and tenants can call 311 (the city help hotline) if their landlords are not addressing issues such as heat and hot water, lower level harassment often does not get reported (HPD City Official E, 2017, Personal Interview). Even reports if are made, both Julia and the City Council Official mentioned that the division of HPD that deals with these complaints is not always the most responsive or effective in stopping the harassment (2017 Personal Interviews). Despite these differing accounts, whatever mechanisms are currently in place are not doing enough to be able to dissuade this sort of harassment from continuing.

Beyond harassment though, the question of displacement has long been at the center of issues of house flipping, rising rents, and gentrification. Since reasons for displacement can be quite complex and vary in different contexts (Davidson and Lees 2009: 400), there is usually little to no data beyond stories and antidotes to support this very real fear that community members have of not being able to afford to stay in their neighborhoods. As ENY resident, Amalfi Richards explains,

The development, the way it's happening right now, is scary for a lot of families. As a mother it's very difficult to bring your children to school, when you are thinking about how expensive the rent is going, and also how possible it is to find affordable housing in the Cypress Hill community.... I believe that because of the rezoning, that is the reason why the rent has increased so much, almost doubled, the amount we used to pay.... My neighbors are moving to the Bronx because its less money, and they still want to keep the student in the school. It's not easy for one working parent to keep up all the changes (*Hopes, Fears and Nuance Among Residents of a Rezoned Neighborhood* 2017).

In the case of ENY though, the Center for NYC Neighborhoods just released a study in October 2017 where they actually tracked displaced residents who had left the neighborhood. They followed both renters and financially distressed homeowners and found that most ended up staying the NYC area.

- For the former homeowners, 66% stayed in NYC, but only 18% stayed in the neighborhood; and 67% of them ended up renting after moving.
- Neighborhoods they moved to had availability of affordable housing, but carried high transportation costs and limited upward mobility
- On the other hand, 36% of renters stayed in ENY, with 68% moving to other areas of NYC
- For renters, they moved to areas with high rent burdens and low levels of economic strength.

(Goldberg et al. 2017: 45-46)

With the above data, its clear that not only is displacement being discussed and feared in ENY, but its already happening and effecting economically distressed homeowners and renters who can't afford the rapidly raising rent costs. Although this study doesn't specify if the displaced are actually coming out of the rezoned area of ENY, vs. the southern section of the neighborhood, it may not even matter in the wider scope. As mentioned previously, the actual lines of the rezoning seems to have no real bearing on the issues of house flipping, rent increases, and potential for displacement. These issues are driven by the market, and ideology of capital accumulation in relation to housing. The one question that can still be asked, is if there were no rezoning, would gentrification and the demand for housing still lead the

speculators to ENY? Although there is a definite demand side argument, given the housing crisis in NYC, it's hard to imagine how the rezoning and essentially a big arrow to future development and capital circulation would not play a part in the increased interest in the area.

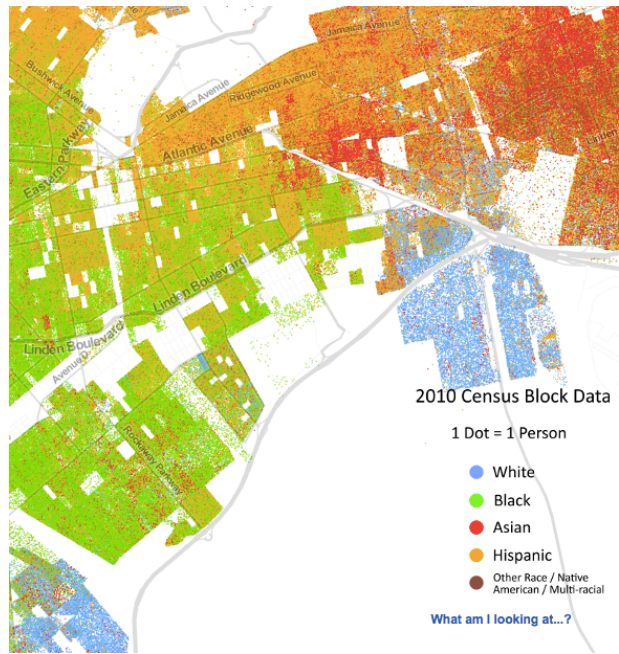
With that said, it suggests that the rezoning has been a failure in relation to the right to the city. Not only are residents limited in their right to access the new affordable housing due to AMI and limited stock for Extremely and Very Low-income populations, but the development going on around the affordable housing has fueled capital circulation to the point that these speculators seem to be not only using, but also participating and controlling a significant amount of the production of the urban space in ENY. On top of this, there is no democratic distribution of the surplus, but rather an exploitative monetary power relation and large accumulation of capital by the speculators.

5.2 Market, Racial and Spatial Divisions

As mentioned in the previous section, much of the private and predatory housing speculation is happening not only within the rezoned area of ENY, but in the south of the neighborhood which had not been rezoned. For speculators, they didn't seem to pay much attention to where the zoning lines are, but what did become clear in my time in ENY was the invisible line that I noticed within the community along the rezoning division.

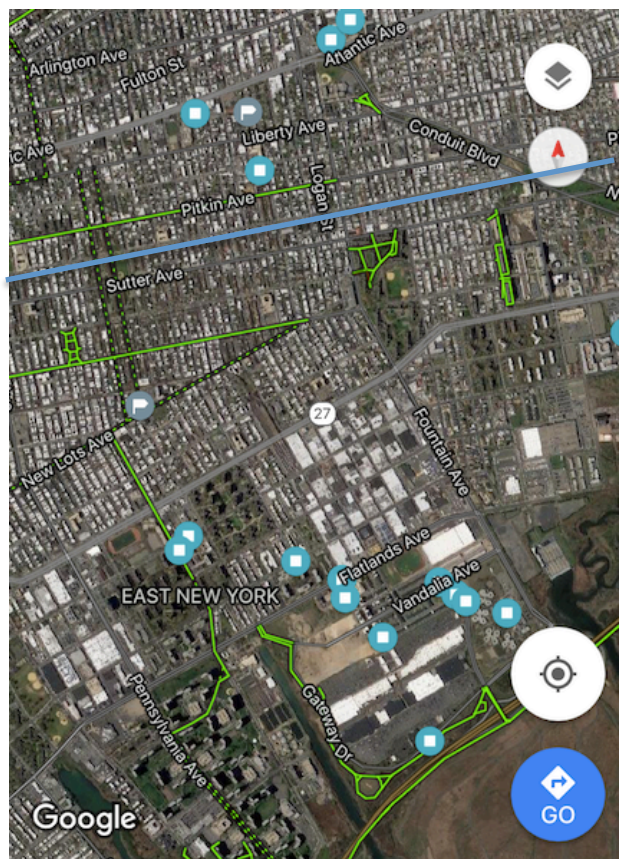
As discussed in Chapter 3, the racial history of ENY is well documented as an area that went through a quick demographic change thanks in most part to the exploitative urban 'renewal' practices in the 1960s (Thabit 2003: 37). Today ENY is made up of two city council districts. The northern district 37 which has been rezoned, encompasses the Cypress Hills and Broadway Junction areas, is a predominantly Latino community, with many from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic (United States Census Bureau. 2016). The southern district 42, which includes New Lots and the area around the new commercially developed Gateway Center (which includes an Aldi Grocery store, Nordstrom Rack store, and a few chain restaurants - and was built on what had previously been city owned land), which has not been rezoned, and is predominantly black, with a large number of immigrants from the West Indian section of the Caribbean (Ibid. 2016). Looking below at Map 2, one can see a greater concentration of the Latino population (or Hispanic according to U.S. Census data) in the north around Atlantic Avenue, and the black population more concentrated in the southern section of the neighborhood. Although there is no hard line division, this does show how ethnic enclaves have formed to an extent within the larger neighborhood.

Map 2: Racial Dot Map of ENY



Source: <https://demographics.virginia.edu/DotMap/>

Map 3: ENY Walking Map of Affordable Housing Developments, August 2017



In Map 3, you can see what I walked around ENY looking at for many days, trying to find all the affordable housing developments being planned and built. On this map the turquoise circles mark the various developments. All of the circles on the bottom half of the map, below the blue line, represent city subsidized 100% affordable housing, for Extremely low to low-income populations that are either completed or in progress. Of the four 100% affordable circles located in the northern – rezoned area –the sites have only been planned, but nothing has been built as of yet. Although the sites for these subsidized buildings around ENY has much to do with where the city still had public land available, I nonetheless found this division of 100% affordable developments between the two parts of the neighborhood intriguing. With over twice as many fully affordable developments (again for mostly Extremely to Low-Income population) in the southern part of the neighborhood, one might say, this is why the northern part of ENY was targeted for rezoning, to increase affordable housing in that area. But given the vast amount of economic development planned for by the city in the rezoned area, I did have to wonder how race and class may have interacted with what spaces that were included in the rezoning, and what and who was excluded.

I asked the City Council Official, who was from the rezoned district 37, about this division of the neighborhood and the rezoning. He mentioned that this was both political, in that with city council line is drawn across the middle of the neighborhood, and the transit hub of Broadway junction in district 37, which likely played into the desirability of the neighborhood for the city. However, he also mentioned the racial divide of the south side of ENY as black and the north as largely Latino. He felt that district 42 was often “short changed” and not getting what it deserved from its elected officials (2017, Personal Interview). Now of course this is just one person’s perspective of the political situation, within what I assume might often be charged or tense city council meetings. But its worth to note the political influence or lack there of can affect the services and attention that a neighborhood receives from the city.

I will say that walking around certain areas in the southern part of ENY, especially towards New Lots and Brownsville, there did seem to be a real need for services and attention. Certain blocks are extremely run down and desolate, with barbwire and dilapidated housing. This is not to say that all of the southern part of ENY is like this by any means, but it did seem to have areas that were underserved, and to me they even looked forgotten. Additionally I noticed many more NYC Housing Authority public houses (often called the ‘projects’) throughout southern ENY. I believe I came across 10 properties, in the southern section, some of them being quite large and covering multiple blocks. Yet I only found two smaller public housing developments on the very edge of the rezoned area off of Pitkin Avenue.

So in adding up all of these observations, it seems to me that there is a class and racial divide that exists spatially in the neighborhood, and that the rezoning has literally drawn its border on this division. As Fainstein notes, “Blacks in the United States, however, remain more segregated than any other identifiable racial or ethnic group at all income levels and continue to experience housing and employment discrimination even when they have escaped from poverty” (2013: 37). Even if it’s not about race alone, this intersection of race and class within the spatial constructs has created a spatial stigmatization for the southern part of the neighborhood (Soederberg 2017a: 478). As Ms. P, one of the long time residents that I interviewed said, “People don’t care because we’re black people... disposable. And people don’t know people out there. Its easier not care if you don’t know people” (2017, Personal Interview). She then when on to equate it to what its like when you see a train crash on TV, that you feel bad for a moment then change the channel. But if you know someone in the crash, it’s a whole other story. In this quote and analogy, she described the invisibility and forgottenness that the community of the southern part of ENY faces parallel to the rezoning.

So while the market, and large scale developers focus their gaze on the ‘growth corridor’ on Atlantic Avenue and invest in that part of the neighborhood, they do so not only because they can within the rezoning, but also because the political and economic factors have pointed and positioned them. Even though the southern part of ENY is excluded from this development, they must still deal with speculators who care little about the rezoning lines, only to continually harass homeowners and the elderly, and threaten displacement. It is here where they must assert their right to their urban space, and maintain themselves within it. As Ms. P. told me, she and may others want development in their neighborhood, but that policy must be made alongside the people affected by it, from the bottom up (2017, Personal Interview). It seems that with people like Ms. P speaking up within this community, they have a real shot at asserting their rights to their urban space, participating in the shaping of it, and working against the unequal social relations that they’re up against.

Chapter 6 : Conclusions

My aim in this paper has been to examine how the rezoning in ENY has functioned in achieving affordable housing solutions and maintaining space for low-income residents in the city. By looking at this within the framework of both the right to the city and housing in political economy approaches, I've been able to observe how embedded the process of creation, and use of urban space and housing is, in relation to capital; and how political, economic, social and spatial forces are constantly interacting and contextualizing this process. Overall I have found that the rezoning in ENY sits at the center of the contradiction of housing in capitalism, and this has caused it to have many contradictions tied up within the rezoning itself.

In the city's most direct approach to creating affordable housing, it uses city land and subsidizes 100% affordable housing developments like Chestnut Commons. But even in this situation, it engages mechanisms like mixed use, bringing in commercial and private money. Additionally, the city relies heavily on the market to create spaces of community, and investments in the neighborhood via privately funded mixed-use development. By opening up zoning to allow for more density and large scale developments, the city aims to attract developers to build in ENY, but with the inclusion of MIH, it forces them to create mixed income housing that helps to subsidize the city's low-income housing stock, on the private dime. Although the city may also think of MIH as a failsafe of sorts to preventing gentrification and subsequent displacement, with only 25-30% of the new housing stock dedicated to low and middle income levels, it doesn't serve enough of the low-income population, especially the extremely and very low-income sectors that are excluded. In addition to the creation of new affordable housing stock, the city also utilizes mechanisms to preserve stock with current affordability via rent control and stabilization. However, as we saw throughout ENY, despite the 'saving' of Arlington Village, generally speaking, the mechanisms it uses for this preservation fall short across the board.

By utilizing so many mechanisms that depend on and feed the market, the city has actually been more successful at drawing in predatory speculators that meanwhile are eroding the community of affordable housing options on the private market. This has created a climate where those who are actually benefitting the most from the rezoning are these speculators who exploit it and the local community, specifically financially distressed homeowners and low-income renters, and the elderly. This exploitation actually can lead to the physical exclusion of this low-income population via displacement as the data has shown, as well as the erasure of this stock of affordable housing within the private market. Ironically this population only has limited access to the new affordable housing being built in their own community, due to a skewed AMI that places many of the affordable units out of reach of their reach. In addition, by creating the spatial limits of development within a specific zone, an entire portion of the ENY population, mainly low-income black residents in the southern part of the neighborhood, are excluded.

Throughout this case study it has become clear that without improved controls and regulations that effect the private housing market, specifically aimed at small scale speculators who operate outside the limits of the rezoning and MIH (and for small scale units generally), that these market activities will continue to erode the current housing stock, effectively undoing any affordable housing solutions the city has achieved via the rezoning. The Center for NYC Neighborhoods outlines a policy toolkit with suggestions such as implementing a flip tax on properties bought and resold within two years, implementing and enforcing a cease and desist zone in ENY to stop the harassment throughout the community, and hopefully slow the displacement that can follow it (Goldberg et al. 2017: 5). Additionally they suggest continuing to fund Homeowner Stabilization Assistance to help keep current financially distressed homeowners in their homes, and supporting landlords with incentives to offer and maintain affordable rents for low-income tenants, as well as the legalization of safe basement apartments (Ibid. 2017: 5). Beyond this it seems that increased controls and implementation is needed to stop landlord harassment of tenants, and that education on housing rights and better access to legal counsel to help implement these rights are also needed. On the positive side, the city is already starting to take some action with additional programs such as the Seniors First program it recently rolled out to increase units available only to low-income senior citizens, as well as the Mitchell-Lama Reinvestment program that preserves current affordable housing, as well as the Neighborhood Pillars program that allows neighborhood non-profits to obtain and manage buildings where they can lock in affordable housing ('Mayor De Blasio to Complete Affordable Housing Plan 2 Years Ahead of Schedule, Accelerate Pace and Expand Goals'2017).

In addition to improved controls and regulations, and policy and program additions to the rezoning to help it better function to create and more importantly maintain current affordable housing, a re-framing is also needed. Although the DCP and City Council Officials that I spoke with mentioned bottom up approaches, and they did engage with the CCA's alternate rezoning plan, took feedback, and made changes from it, more certainly could have been done. Since this rezoning is still new and much of the development and results have yet to happen, there's still time to reshape how it will play out. If the city further engages with the community via urban entrepreneurship opportunities like what's happening at Chestnut Commons, and offering homeowners and tenants protections like those listed above, it can slow need for more affordable housing in the area and gain the trust of the community. By actually embracing a right to the city approach, inclusive of Harvey's democratic disbursement of the surplus, it can increase the capabilities of the community, offering them social, political and economic empowerment that they can use to drive the development within their community. Although this seems at odds with what might be possible in a capitalistic growth machine city like NYC, where as we've seen private finance plays a big role in city government, and drives much of the large scale development; by reframing issues of affordable housing generally as more of a community development issue, it may actually alleviate the need for as much affordable housing to be created, opening up space for market rate development that the growth machine is really after. So by focusing the use value of the community now, it

may actually improve the exchange value of the community in the future (Roy 2011: 8).

As I've learned throughout this research, if you really listen to the community in ENY, generally speaking, they're not against development. They're not against welcoming in new comers to the community; even those who will pay higher rent prices and potentially shift the demographics. What they're looking to do is maintain their space and homes within the community and be empowered to maintain the character and critical history of the community, just as many of the wealthier neighborhoods around NYC have done as they have developed over the years. So by really focusing on maintaining the affordability that's still in the neighborhood, and maintaining the integrity of the neighborhood, the city could still increase density, increase affordable housing, and even increase large scale development and market rate housing in ENY.

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