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The Battle of Brooklyn: World City and Space of Neighborhoods

Benjamin Shepard 1

Throughout Brooklyn, regular people are fighting off the negative dynamics of urban experience, including uneven development, speculative gentrification, displacement, and police brutality long seen in global cities. Yet, little of the global cities literature considers the ways local actors impact global forces shaping world cities. Instead, observers of globalization suggest local actors have been relegated the sidelines as passive spectators of larger social and economic forces. Many wonder, is there a space for agency in global cities? Can regular people shape the dynamics of life in cities? For many, the answer is clearly affirmative. Throughout the borough of Brooklyn, people are coping with the underside of globalization by creating viable alternatives. Could studying the Brooklyn experience offer some insight into efforts to cope with globalization? Throughout six case studies - on rezoning, eviction defense, a battle against a big box chain store, for a bike lane, a local business, and against police brutality- Brooklyn is viewed as a space which contends with the forces impacting globalization and uneven development in surprising and innovative ways. [Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2013 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]

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Observers have long suggested New York City is undergoing a vast transformation. Between globalization, hyper development and accompanying homogenization, the city's neighborhoods are being remade in front of our eyes (Sites, 2003). Increasingly, even the borough of Brooklyn, New York, is experiencing this phenomenon. "Brooklyn is booming," wrote Kenneth Brown (2007, 1) in the business glossy Brooklyn Tomorrow. "In a decade, it will be vastly different, packed with more parks waterfront destinations, glittering residential towers with Manhattan style views." The "facelift of Coney Island" and the Atlantic Yards Project "will change the heart of Brooklyn," (p.1). Others wonder what of it will remain. Two centuries after the 1776 Battle of Brooklyn, the landscape of Brooklyn is being remapped anew in a struggle over what it will become.

Independent of the other four boroughs of New York City, Brooklyn would be the fourth biggest city in the United States. Today Brooklyn is experiencing both the benefits and limitations of its experience as a world city. While urban spaces are thought to magnify the democratic possibilities (Glasser, 2010), their development tends to expand social inequalities (Smith, 1990). Yet, the people of Brooklyn have long resisted elements of the homogenization steamroller - including big box stores, chains, and high-rises - exorbiting other cities including their Manhattan neighbor, which is currently coping with its own brand of suburban urbanism (Hammett and Hammett, 2007). For decades, the people of the borough fought to preserve their brownstones (Osman, 2011). While many revel in the borough's vast cultural history (Hamill, 2008; Hughes, 2011), others lament patterns of displacement, pollution, and environmental disrepair which follows patterns of uneven urban development (Eviator, 2007; Smith, 1990; Witt, 2006). Throughout Brooklyn, regular people are fighting off negative dynamics of the globalization experience, including speculative gentrification, displacement, and police brutality. The battle over these transformations is a struggle over the contested nature of globalization in Brooklyn.

The Battle of Brooklyn is an effort to help keep what is distinct and rich about Brooklyn, its streets, distinct neighborhoods, and people. While certainly some of the renaissance taking place in Brooklyn is a good thing, growth is paradoxical (Mooney, 2011). Today, the battle is a struggle against the sea of identical details, stadiums, out of place buildings, and displacement. With the foreclosure crisis on the rise (Witt, 2006), some wonder if the borough is a space for displacement or democracy? What is the future of Brooklyn's neighborhoods once they

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have been rezoned? And can there be a new model of sustainable development for a world city? In highlighting the ways Brooklyn residents, groups, and neighborhoods are experiencing urban development and the strategies activists have employed to address the issues of displacement and homogenization of urban space, we consider alternative models of urban development in which the poor are not pushed from neighborhood to neighborhood, the character of streets is not blandified, and community space is supported rather than squeezed from public view.

BROOKLYN AS GLOBAL CITY

Why did Brooklyn lose the Dodgers and work on the waterfront in a matter of years a half a century ago? 60,000 jobs and a beloved home team were lost with containerization (Freeman, 2000; Levinson, 2008). Brooklyn has long coped with the ravages of displacement and deindustrialization, forces many describe as features of globalization (Sites, 2003).

"Brooklyn will be the City," argued George Templeton Strong on March 18, 1865 (Burns, 2001). "Manhattan will be the suburb." The borough of Brooklyn has long been considered a unique geography, even as one of the five boroughs of New York City. Yet, unlike Manhattan, it is a space which extends deep into the horizon. Today, it is a space for social and cultural capital, mass transportation, and policy innovation (Freeman, 2000, Mooney, 2011). "In recent years writers have made the move to Brooklyn in droves," notes Even Hughes (2011, p. 2-3).

"Brooklyn's bookish "scene" has become the literary world. There's a good chance that an American author lives in New York City, as always. But there is an even better chance a New York City author is based in the borough of Brooklyn."

In short, it has become a "global brand" (Zukin 2010, p.50). While it has been a part of the five boroughs of New York City for well over a hundred years, Brooklyn still functions as a world city in and of itself. Global cities are spaces "which successfully compete for major city status in at least one of several important functions of integrating the transnationalist capitalist economy into a neomercantilist world," (Gladstein and Fainstein, 2003, 85). Even with the Dodgers gone, Brooklyn has maintained characteristics of a world city, including: culture, financial institutions, universities, commerce, health services, immigration, and even the return of a major sports franchise, followed by another. Today, Brooklyn has become a location for leisure as well as

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work. From Smith Street to the Gowanus Canal, Brooklyn has become a place where people come to eat and image; Brooklyn is a space not only for work, but for desire (Gross, 2010; Hamill, 2008; Mooney, 2011). Its waterways are being cleaned up; park spaces expanded; its skies are now filled with the site of cranes, the streets congested with construction crews (Ouroussoff, 2010; Crowley, 2010). Its industrial waterfront, long dormant as a work space, has become a space of play and leisure (Campo, 2002). Of course, the downside of this pattern is Brooklyn's development also includes many of the negative characteristics of a rapid economic growth. These include: patterns of displacement of the poor, redlining, foreclosures, ecological damage, police brutality, polluted waterways, and a general squeeze on public space (Johnson, 2003; Vitale, 2008; Wilder, 2000). For much of the city, the fiscal crisis of the 1970's never ended. The city must endure persistent unemployment, loss of work for the middle-class (Freeman, 2000). While the forces of top down globalization steamroller eviscerate what was, Brooklyn is generating culture. While much of the honkey tonk feel of the Coney Island boardwalk is being washed away (McLauphlin, 2008; Bush, 2009; Smithsimon, 2008/2011); a few steps away Brighton Beach offers a pulsing Brooklyn immigration and cultural mix. As a global city it must contend with both these processes.

Like many urban geographies, Brooklyn's public spaces and its waterways have become sites of contestation. Brooklyn has experienced many of the lurching changes related to de-industrialization, gentrification, globalization, and regeneration (Berman, 2007; Levinson 2006). Carroll Gardens is undergoing a building boom which inspired the neighborhood to rezone itself restricting heights for construction (Buiso, 2009). Sunset Park is rapidly turning into a pulsing Chinatown. Neighborhoods including Fortt Greene, DUMBO, Williamsburg, and Carroll Gardens are blossoming as young professionals and artists settle into them. Yet, questions remain about the pace of this development. Who stands to benefit and who stands to be pushed out? One thing is for sure, as Brooklyn is being remade, traditions and touchstones of historic Brooklyn are in danger of being buried, obscured from site and memory. Here, all that is solid melts into air (Berman, 1982). Marx was willing to note that Capitalism does amazing things, yet he was appalled by the human cost. The Battle of Brooklyn is a struggle to grapple with the social, cultural, and ecological costs; it suggests there could be a different route for a global city. Yet, what do these changes mean for regular people? How can one make sense of so many lurching changes or develop alternative models for a cosmopolitan city?

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Authors approach the subject of New York's transformation from any number of perspectives. Some consider the post war experience of life and work in New York City from the perspective of labor (Freeman, 1990; Moody, 2007). Others consider the experience of the city since the 1970's fiscal crisis (Berman, 2007; Fitch, 1993; Hammett and Hammett, 2007; Sites, 2003, Vitale, 2008). Still others consider the changes from a neighborhood perspective (Berman, 1982). Marshall Berman (2007) notes many have incorrectly considered the story of New York from a Manhattan-centric perspective. Yet, even this view of the city is changing with literature increasingly addressing the borough of Brooklyn as a subject unto itself (Fromer and Fromer 2004; Mooney, 2011; Reiss, 2002; Robbins and Palitz, 2001). Yet, much of this literature feels backward leaning. Little of it helps observers make sense of the global dynamics now shaping the borough. Conversely, little of the global cities literature (Abu-Ludhod 1999; Gladstone and Fainstein, 2003; Sassen, 2001) considers the ways local actors impact global forces shaping world

cities. Instead, many suggest local actors have been relegated to passive spectators to larger social and economic forces (Castells, 1996; Sites, 2003). If global cities create displacement, is a different model possible? What might such a path look like? Is there a space for agency, in which local actors shape the dynamics of life in global cities? Could studying the Brooklyn experience offer some insight? Throughout five case studies - on rezoning, eviction defense, a battle against a big box chain store, for a bike lane, and against police brutality - I explore a few of these options, building on my perspective as an observing participant in social movements struggling with these challenges (Butters, 1983; Lichterman 2002; Snow and Danny, 2002; Tedlock 1991) to consider the story of a geography in transition.

CASE STUDY #1 - REZONING AND THE BATTLE OVER THE WATERFRONT

I'll never forget seeing the Hungry March Band, a Brechtian anarchist street band perform on the decaying Williamsburg Waterfront in the late 1990s and 2000's. We'd meet at a space off Kent Avenue, in the long closed Brooklyn Eastern District Terminal. Since 1985, it has been a majestic open space looking over the East River, with decaying piers, a place in between Brooklyn's industrial past and uncertain future. While the waterfront has historically been a place of work (Freeman, 2000). In recent years, it has also become a place for play and recreation, with music, poetry, and daydreams created among the decaying piers. The

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vernacular uses of the waterfront are many. And over time the state came to recognize these uses, purchasing the two block area and making it into a park in 2001 (Campo, 2002). In other cases, it closed off access to the waterfront (Mindlin 2008). With industrial use gone, new residents pouring in as historic buildings were gutted by the day (Mooney, 2011; Zudin, 2010), the National Trust for Historic Preservation declared the waterfront an endangered site (Pogerbin, 2007). The waterfront would become the epicenter of a culture war over what the borough would become. Throughout this struggle, many hoped the waterfront could serve as alternative, neighborhood based model of a global city, rather than an impersonal image of displacement, oversized buildings, condominiums, and privatized access to the waterways.

In 2005, it would become subject to a fierce battle pitting community interest in conflict with a Bloomberg driven plan to rezone the area. For me, much of the battle began when I received a few emails from my friend Beka Economopoulos (2005A, B). "Dear Friends," her email began: "One of the most aggressive rezonings in NYC's history has been proposed for Williamsburg/Greenpoint by Bloomberg and his greedy land grabber friends. And it's happening under our noses." This was a pattern taking place all over the city. "Development's happening. What will it look like? Who's gonna win? It's an epic battle." Laying out the players, "Team Bloomberg has a plan that will add a wall of 40-story luxury condos along the waterfront, will privatize access to the river, won't add park space, won't increase L service, won't keep rents affordable or safeguard local businesses The city plan would be "Gentrification on Steroids." It would allow for development of 22 40-story luxury condominiums along the waterfront, offer no affordable housing units, privatize the waterfront access, limit open space, and increase the population of Williamsburg/Greenpoint without addressing the resultant infrastructural needs, including transportation and education needs (Economopoulos, 2005 A, B)..

"Team Community," has put together an alternative plan to "develop and defend" their community. This includes a "community plan for rezoning and development." The plan was first established to restrict "undesirable and noxious industries along the waterfront, and to bring more economic vitality and clean industry to the waterfront." The community members looked to "a section of the city charter called 197a, which allows communities to propose their own plans for development." And so they did, initiating an assessment of community needs into a task force to examine: 1) affordable housing, 2) economic development, 3) height and bulk, and 4) parks and open space. The Williamsburg

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Waterfront 197A Plan (2002), approved by Community Board 1, includes rezoning, social services, and badly needed public transportation. "Unfortunately, the 197a are recommendations: they are not legally binding," noted Economopoulos (2005 A, B). In response, the City Planning Commission drafted their own developer driven rezoning plan, with few of the community needs addressed in the 197A plan.

In December 2004, the Community Board voted against the city plan, during a raucous community board meeting attended by some 1500 who jeered and booed the city plan. In January 2005 the borough president condemned the plan. By March and April, the City Planning Commission would hold a public hearing on the plan, followed by a vote by the City Council.

"Things to Bear in Mind. This is a citywide struggle," Economopoulos' email concluded, "What's happening here is happening in all 5 boroughs. If we run a kick-ass campaign, we can amplify the voices and the work of resisters throughout the city. Really, this is happening throughout the world.. .and in communities across the globe."

On February 28, a wide coalition, from neighborhood organizing, arts, global justice, and anti-war crammed into the Not An Alternative Space to lay out a plan. The Williamsburg Warriors, dressed like the late 1970's cult film, as well as members of the Church of Stop Shopping were there, as were many of the people who had gotten to know each other organizing against the Republican National Convention the previous summer. At the meeting, the organizers outlined a plan of action for a "Creative Industries" coalition, beginning with a timeline of actions as well as means to mobilize creative people from around Williamsburg. We formed creative organizing teams to highlight the issue, create a message, communicate it to the media and decision makers, develop messaging materials, and get the word out through outreach. The message was simple: "SAVE THE NEIGHBORHOOD STOP BLOOMBERG'S WILLIAMSBURG/ GREENPOINT REZONING PLAN! SAY NO TO 40-STORY HIGH-RISES ON THE WATERFRONT! VOTE NO ON REZONING!" (Economopoulos2005A, B).

Over the next two months, the Creative Industries coalition would get the word out with public information sessions at bars, at a Reverend Billy show in the East Village, hold a press conference at City Hall, attend hearings, and organize a colorful waterfront festival in Williamsburg with supporters dressed as flowers, carrying shovels emblazoned with the word "Community Plan" (Silverman, 2005). The artist FLY made a sign declaring, "WE DON'T WANT NO STINKIN

TOWERS! WE WANT SPACE TO PLANT OUR FLOWERS!!!" Bike Riders with cardboard horse heads organized a Paula Revere Ride to notify the community about the changes coming. And the papers started taking notice (Bleyer, 2005; Padala, 2005).

"[T]his is happening all over new york," wrote Elana Levin (2005) to a listserve.

"[T]he things that make our neighborhoods unique, and New York- y are being killed by the landgrabbing billionaires for Bloomberg and deathbots for doctoroff. This is going to be the most fun you've ever had at a hearing ever, it is a veritable festival of costumes, props, songs, testimony and that which makes New York New York. It will also be one of the most diverse rooms of people you'll ever see. Watch artists unite with longtime residents from far off lands like Poland and Le Republica Domincana to demand the New York we deserve. Feel the people power and wear your patriot best, OR dress in Williamsburg Warrior late 70's nyc chic."

When supporters of the community plan held a press conference condemning the mayor's rezoning plan in 2005, the mayor passed by on his way to City Hall. Activists, chanted "Community Plan! Community Plan!" Hearing their chant, the mayor leaned over in a guffaw, laughing. A few days later, the group, once again dressed as flowers with their shovels, sang "Won't You Help Us Gifford" to the tune of "Don't You Want Me" in front of Council Speaker Gifford Miller's office, holding a mock battle between those dressed as towers and as flowers. In the match, the towers were vanquished by the flowers. The same could not be said of the larger battle. By May, the City Council would vote in support of the developer backed rezoning (Bahney, 2005; Cardell, 2005; Keller, 2005; Moses, 2005).

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Fig. 1 Anti-zoning and Won't You Help Us Gifford actions in support of community plan. Photos F Askew

While the community plan was opposed by the mayor, it garnered

support from some of the most thoughtful observers of cities. "What the intelligently worked out plan devised by the community itself does not do is worth noticing," wrote the eighty-eight-year-old Jane Jacobs (2005) to Mayor Bloomberg and the City Council, in favor of the community plan just a year before her death. "The community's plan does not violate the existing scale of the community, nor does it insult the visual and economic advantages of neighborhoods that are precisely of the kind that demonstrably attract artists and other craftsmen, initiating spontaneous and self-organizing renewal," she explained. "I will make two predictions with utter confidence," wrote Jacobs: "If you follow the community's plan you will harvest a success. If you follow the proposal before you today, you will maybe enrich a few heedless and ignorant developers, but at the cost of an ugly and intractable mistake." She would caution: "Even the presumed beneficiaries of this misuse of governmental powers, the developers and financiers of luxury towers, may not benefit; misused environments are not good long-term economic bets," (Jacobs 2005). The Times would sit on Jacobs' letter until after the council vote in favor of rezoning. Jacobs' statement remains prophetic and prescient. Today, semi-completed forty-story condos stand empty along the waterfront, an homage to shortsighted planning. After the vote, I remember walking into a party only to see a resigned crowd of the activists involved, complaining to a friend about the loss. She grabbed

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me by the shoulders and declared emphatically, "This is happening all over the world." I am not sure what she was saying, but it made the loss no less comforting.

The struggle over Brooklyn rezoning would not end in Williamsburg. It was one of over one hundred rezoning measures seen over the last decade in New York. Each involved core questions about what Brooklyn would become as contends with globalization. Would Brooklyn's transformation be driven by residents or developers, backed by transnational capital. Many were developer-supported and backed by the mayor, under whom construction spending doubled (Buettner and Rivera 2009), aided by financing from the real estate bubble. The struggle against big, ugly buildings would extend all over the borough. It was not a new battle (Suleiman, 2011). Many residents across the borough hoped

they could avoid ugly glass towers, such as Frank Gehry's "Miss Brooklyn", from being erected in their neighborhoods (Kuntzman, 2008). And some fought to prevent them using the zoning process.

In summer 2007, I noticed a 40 foot high shell on top of a 19 th century building at 333 Carroll Street looming over all the historic brownstones of Carroll Gardens. Not long after, I learned the neighborhood would be losing the Second Street entrance of the F train on Smith Street to make way for a project by Robert Scarano, a notorious architect famous for violating building codes in some 25 other projects (Maniscalco, 2007, 2008). Yet, he planned to develop another out of scale building at 360 Smith Street.

Figure 2 333 Carroll St - 'Hell House'. After rezoning the extension at 333 Carroll would have to come down. Photo by Benjamin Shepard

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Many wondered about the site where the project was sleighed to stand. "What's in the dirt at 360 Smith Street?" neighborhood residents asked. And what about delicate ecology between Brooklyn streets, blue skies, tree-lined sidewalks, and towering condos obscuring everything in their path. What is in the soil of the industrial spaces now slated for redevelopment along Brooklyn's waterways from Red Hook to the Gowanus Canal? What are the environmental implications of rapid development along once polluted waterways and industrial areas? Already the Whole Foods planned for Third Ave and Third Street on the edge of the Gowanus Canal was stalled because of the difficulties of building on a brown field of toxic soil. Instead of overdevelopment, many residents wanted the space to remain open to blue skies (Berger, 2005). Over time, this conversation found expression outside the F station at Second Street where the Scarano building was planned. The New York Times suggested it was "Twilight for the Transporters," an homage to those who stood outside to watch the incoming F train moving from Smith and 9 th to Second Place (Moony, 2007).

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Figure 3 Graffiti at the Carroll Street subway winter 2008. "The neighborhood is dying - 360 Smith" read one caption. Photos by Benjamin Shepard

The space was becoming the epicenter for a debate about zoning and downsizing. Graffiti and flyers started to appear. "What's going on here?" one read, announcing a community meeting. "Safe?" someone else painted, alluding to the project? Is it safe? "What's getting built here?" "Calling all Brooklynites? I am losing the blue sky?" another painting asked over an image of a super hero perched atop the buildings of Carroll Gardens. "The Carroll Gardens neighborhood is dying! 360 Smith Street" another warned. "Frenzy of development." Others called for a building moratorium: "The moratorium is still a good idea. Have you signed our petition?" Throughout the summer and fall of 2007, neighborhood residents collected some 3000 signatures calling for a building moratorium in the neighborhood, restricting the height of buildings so they remained in proportion with the neighborhood. "360 Smith Street," another piece of graffiti asked: "#1 What exactly do you plan to build here - 75-85 feet high, 49 units. #2 Will you conform to landmarked statutes and downzoning height and density codes?" Neighborhood activists would hold meetings, strategy sessions and demonstrations. "RALLY TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT CARROLL GARDNES, SOUTH BROOKLYN , NEW YORK," read a flyer for an action on January 29 th , 2008. "To support a resolution calling upon the

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Department of City Planning to immediately commence a downsizing

study of Carroll Gardens to protect our neighborhood and Department of Buildings to implement the appropriate procedure to preserve the character of Carroll Gardens." Over the next few months, neighborhood groups worked with the council to help pass the hundredth rezoning amendment of Michael Bloomberg's term, restricting the height of new construction to 50 feet or 70 on Streets which already have higher buildings, this time with full support of the community (Buiso, 2009; Feedblitz, 2008). The bill wasn't everything and it did not stop the 360 Smith Street project or other out of scale buildings projected for the neighborhood, but it was an example of a historic district speaking up for itself and the character of the neighborhood, in the face of developers dead set on building higher buildings, with more units wherever they could.

CASE STUDY #2 - EVICTION DEFENSE

One of the most pernicious dynamics of capitalist globalization is the commodification of what feels like everything, including space where people live. Here, developers hope to extract maximum profits from space (Logan and Molotch, 1987). Those who can pay a premium move in. Those unable to contend with increasing rents face eviction and displacement (Smith, 1990). Echoing Marx, social welfare scholar William Sites (2003) describes this process of primitive accumulation as "primitive globalization." "[T]hrough capital surplus-value is made and from surplus-value more capital," Marx famously (1906, p. 784) writes in volume one of *Capital*. "The whole movement, therefore, seems to turn in a vicious circle, out of which we can only get by supposing a primitive accumulation preceding capitalistic accumulation," (p. 784) Primitive globalization takes shape through the displacement of bodies from the land where they work and the neighborhoods where they dwell (Sites, 2003). Conversely, revolutions are born when people fight this process. For Marx, "those moments when great masses of men are suddenly and forcibly torn from their means of subsistence, and hurled as free and "unattached" proletarians on the labor-market," - these are moments which ignite social movements. "The expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant, from the soil, is the basis of the whole process," (p. 787). A response to the patterns of accumulation, displacement, and eviction was part of what ignited the Occupy Movement in New York City in the fall of 2011 (Writers for the 99%, 2011).

Concerned with the human cost of development booms followed by foreclosures in Brooklyn and around the nation (Witt, 2006), a group formed dubbing itself Organizing for the Occupation (O40) called for a movement against foreclosures in Brooklyn. O40's first action would take place on August 19th, 2011. At 8 AM I rode from Carroll Gardens to Mary Lee Ward's apartment in Bed Stuy, where she was facing eviction from her long time apartment. I passed by Atlantic Yards, where 5th Avenue and its bars, as well as much of Fort Greene, is being consumed into the super shopping big box expanding from Bruce Ratner's unpopular project (Levin, 2011). Of course, the people of Bed Stuy have long endured hardships of banking. Red lining was practically born in the neighborhood, where bankers once drew lines around the map of the district and denied bank loans for those in the area (Wilder, 2000). Today, many of these same people are facing the foreclosures, yet not without fighting back.

Word on Facebook all week was about Friday's eviction defense action: "Stop the Eviction of Mary Lee Ward! Eviction Blockade" to take place at "Ms. Ward's Home in Bed-Stuy." The Facebook invite provided background on the scene:

Mary Lee Ward, an 82-year-old grandmother and resident of the Bed-Stuy community for 44 years faces eviction from her home due to the deceptive practices of bankers and speculators. Predatory lenders like the now defunct Delta Funding, Inc. and real estate speculators like 768 Dean Inc. are targeting and destroying diverse communities of color like Bed-Stuy... stripping them of their equity, wealth and homes! We, the members of Organizing for Occupation (O40), a citywide network of concerned NYC residents active in the struggle to make housing a human right, can no longer sit back and watch the destruction of our communities! Stand in solidarity with Ms. Ward this Friday morning, August 19, 2011! Stop the eviction of Ms. Ward from her home! EVICT THE SCHEMING BANKERS AND SPECULATORS FROM OUR COMMUNITIES!

Stop the eviction of Ms. Ward!!
Tell the marshal: NO foreclosures in Bed-Stuy!

Friday, August 19, 2011 at 9am
320 Tompkins Avenue
G to Bedford-Nostrand or A/C to Kingston-Throop

Ms. Maryalice Ward, an 82-year-old grandmother.
African American woman and Bed-Stuy resident
for the past 44 years is facing eviction
from her home due to the deceptive practices
of banks and speculators!!

Predator)* lenders like the now defunct Delta Funding
and real estate speculators like "768 Dean Inc" are
destroying Bed-Stuy, intentionally stripping
communities of color of their equity, wealth, and homes

We, the members of Organizing for Occupation (O4O)
a citywide network of concerned NYC residents active
in the struggle to make housing a human right.

can no longer sit back and watch the destruction
of our communities!

Stand in solidarity with Ms. Ward!

Stop the Eviction of Ms Ward from her home!

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Evict the Scheming Bankers and
Speculators from our Communities!

Organizing for Occupation:

www.o4onyc.org
212-213-3020

Figure 4 Flyer for anti-foreclosure action in support of Ms. Ward. The action largely anticipated the actions of the Occupy Wall Street Movement to take place a month later.

Riding toward Ms. Ward's home, I heard roars of the crowd, cheering after countless cars and trucks honked in solidarity, followed by more cheers in a reciprocal display of neighborhood support. "Housing is a human right, fight, fight, fight!" The crowd cheered. Members of Picture the Homeless were there, many locked inside Ms Ward's home, ready to physically resist the marshals. Activists from neighborhood organizing, as well as global justice circles were there in support. My friend Beka,

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who fought the rezoning over the Brooklyn waterfront discussed in the first case study, was there. TV cameras, politicians, undercover police, participants in the Doe Fund program down the block were there. "They are not going to kick out that grandmother," I heard one man comment walking by. I looked up to the second floor window of Ms. Ward's apartment and Seth Tobocman and Frank Morales watched. Tobocman is author of *War in the Neighborhood*, a novel on squatter battles of the 1980's and 1990's, when residents fought displacement from the East Village. Then as now, the message was the same: housing is a human right. Black and white signs hung from Ms. Ward's apartment: "Evict Speculators=Not Grandmothers" and "Predatory lending = Racism and kleptocracy."

We were all waiting for the marshals to come make an attempt to take Ms Ward's home. "Hey, my people. We have a story. Tell the whole wide world this is people territory," people began to chant, clapping along. "Defend the block." And that they did. More and more people filled both sides of Tompkins Street. "They are not going to come today," I commented to a friend. "Too many camera crews." Evictions don't tend to take place when everyone knows about the plans; too many cameras. Those involved in such unsavory activities thrive in secrecy.

"Is Ms. Ward in her house? Yes she is, yes she is!" the crowd chanted.

"Will Ms. Ward keep her house? Yes she will, yes she will!"

By 9 AM, people were coming in and out of the apartment, where activist film crews sat along with the activists ready to fight the eviction. And out comes a lawyer, who notified the crowd that local politicians were working with the "landlord" to work out a deal so Ms. Ward would not be displaced from her long time home. Everyone roared. As the morning went on, it started to look like the marshals would not come today, that the eviction blockade had worked, and Ms. Ward would remain at 320 Tompkins, for the time being (Lennard, 2011). The combination of the mobilization of social networks, legal pressure, direct action, as well as neighborhood leadership all helped provide a show of strength for the neighborhood. Yet, the battle is far from over. Having joined a campaign against foreclosures extending from Brooklyn to Barcelona, even international media started covering this campaign (Holoman, 2011). "Hopefully, with all the help I've been getting, I will finally get my house back," explained Ward. "Home is home. You should be in your home. I've been here since 1969. I hope by winning my case, I can help all those other people who lost their homes," (Holoman, 2011).

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On my bike ride home from the blockade, I ran into my friend Austin, who is fighting to stop Walmart from opening a store in East New York. It was already shaping up as yet another skirmish in the battle over what Brooklyn would become in the years to come.

CASE # 3 - WALMART OUT OF EAST NEW YORK

One of the primary limitations of corporate globalization is the sense that all cities must contend with an ever expanding sameness, robbing spaces of their uniqueness, color, and the sense of difference which makes urban living enticing. While the landscape of US roads once included mom and pop businesses, today they are filled with McDonald's signs and big box stores, such as Walmart. Over half the

people in the US live within five miles of a Walmart store (Fishman,2006). Global trade seems to demand this encroachment into physical surroundings of cities and towns. Yet, not all cities want this. And many ask, do all global cities need to look the same? For years now, New York has resisted Walmart' s attempts to bring a store to New York. Many argue the city already feels enough like a shopping zone without another retail big box store (Agnotti, 2008, Zukin, 2004). They worry the city's details are being lost in a sea of identical details, as homogenization steamrollers difference. While an infusion of corporate capital and uneven development are seen as part of life in global cities (Abu-Lughod, 1999; Gladstone and Fainstein, 2003; Smith, 1990), others have to come to ask if there is a different way of shaping global cities (Brecher, 2011).

"New York is not a shopping Mall, It's not a Shopping Mall!" screamed East Village activists with the Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping in 1999, shortly before the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle. Over a decade later, the call remains the same, yet the epicenter of the struggle is no longer the East Village. Instead it is taking place throughout Brooklyn, where Walmart has set its sites on a space in East New York.

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Join small business owners and community members prior to the New York City Council hearing on Wal-Mart and tell the City we don't need or want a Wal-Mart in NYCI

for more ta/ornefefl rootort: A* Wo*tf. l«S«««(rt 1111

Figure 5 Flyer for the successful campaign to beat back Walmart.

February 7, 2011, opponents of Walmart held a rally in City Hall Park. Members of Times Up!, an environmental group, rode down to City Hall on bikes with cardboard Horse Heads, echoing Paul Revere's calls, screaming: "The big boxes are coming!!!! Walmart is coming!!!" as we rode from the Lower East Side to City Hall. By the time we got to City Hall, we were joined by Rev. Billy and the Choir, unions, members of the Working Families Party, Jobs for Justice, and others in the Walmart Free NYC Coalition. As we waited to get through security, members of Families United for Racial and Economic Equality (FUREE), a Brooklyn-based organizing group, chanted: "Up with the People, yea yea, down with Walmart, down down!" "NYC is Walmart Free! NYC is Walmart Free." "New York is not a shopping mall!"

By the time we got to the entrance, the security informed us we would not be allowed inside. I asked the security about that quaint point about "Congress" not passing "law[s] prohibiting the people to peaceably assemble to petition the government for a redress of grievances." That was when they said they might have to arrest me. Conflict between civil liberties and security has become common in New York (Zukin, 2010). Still speakers from City Hall, including the Public Advocate and the speaker denounced Walmart as a job killing entity unwelcome in East New York or anywhere in the five boroughs (Kelley, 2011).

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Figure 6 The author locked out City Hall during the City Council hearing on Walmart. Photo by Brennan Cavanaugh

Yet, this was just the beginning of the campaign. Over the next few weeks, opponents of Walmart would zap board meetings of supporters of the plan and even organize a Flash Mob in a shopping mall owned by Related, the company which might lease Walmart the space (Ryan, 2011). After finishing the flashmob, a man started talking to me as we rode down Lexington. "The era of materialism is ending. The people of Japan are learning that. They are just glad to be alive. The same is coming here. I love you." And he rode off. There are other ways to create urban space. The streets were filled with stories as we geared up the campaign.

In March, Times Up! rode down to the location for the proposed site in East New York, deep in Brooklyn. There we met members of Jobs for Justice, New York Communities for Change (formerly NY ACORN) and Rev. Billy and the Church of Earthaleuia (201 1) in a vast field behind a shopping mall which already included any number of big box stores. With a baby carriage strewn aside, an old pair of discarded sneakers and a few assorted empty beer cans in between sand dunes, the undeveloped sandlot resembled a wasteland. "[A] lovely field of shore dunes and ravines in East New York, sometimes called Brownsville," noted Billy (2011). "The place has an uncertain future. It is slated for development and over the years communities gathered to make a plan." After introductions, members of New York Communities for Change spoke about community plans for the space, which supported what was already in the neighborhood. The community members talked about needing more libraries, schools, and small businesses, not a large box store,

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which would mark their demise as it has done around the country. "They imagined a friendly kind of town with smaller businesses and space for walking, for schools and playgrounds," noted Billy (2011). "Now the billionaire mayor and his friends are arranging for an addition." Opponents have ample arguments against the big-box store. "The bad jobs, the mono-culture of the sweatshop store, all the traffic and the death of bodegas and longtime local shops. This Walmart, the first in NYC, could be righteously opposed by all of us."

The reverend preached about what it would take to beat back the Walmart. It would start with making the community plan a reality. "Make that playground. Make a contest - make music, make films here in this field. Find the old-timers who grew up here." Recognize the vernacular uses of the space. "There are neighborhood children, of course, that use it as a secret place of adventure. So the stories come back." The reverend (2011) concluded with a lament. "If we really believe in this field of change, then what we do in resistance to police and bulldozers won't be a question of bravery, or ego, or correct-thinking. Imagine what we can do."

Big box stores are part of an evolution of capitalism which reproduces social inequalities. "[T]he production of a particular kind of nature and

space under historical capitalism is essential to the uneven development of a landscape that integrates poverty with wealth, industrial urbanization with agricultural diminishment," explains Edward Said (quoted in Harvey, 2008, viii). David Harvey (2008, viii) elaborates: "The unequal development of the global economy, with its burgeoning extremes of wealth and poverty, its astonishing pace of urbanization and environmental deregulation, has accelerated, rather than diminished." Certainly these features are part of what takes shape in each neighborhood Walmart enters, devastating local economies, killing local businesses, and making Walmart shareholders richer (Neumark, 2005; Stone, 1988).

They are also part of the local and global Battle of Brooklyn. The struggle would take any number of dynamics throughout the spring. Some struggles, such as the case of the battle against Walmart, involved residents fighting corporations which dominate the global economy; in other cases, they fought to create effective alternatives to global problems, such as congestion and global warming (which ignited their own backlashes). It would be another year and a half of street actions, flash mobs, and hearings before Walmart declared defeat, canceling all plans to locate a store in East New York (Yakas, 2012). After the speak out end in East New York, some of us departed by bike for Prospect Park

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where we planned another event in defense of the beleaguered Prospect Park West bike lane later that afternoon (Shepard, 2011, B).

CASE #4 -BIKES VS. CARS, LOCAL VS. GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON NON-POLLUTING TRANSPORTATION AND PLANNING

"How one New York bike lane could affect the future of cycling worldwide," that was the name of an article in London's Guardian newspaper the day before a Brooklyn Community Board Six Meeting addressing the contentious topic of the Prospect Park West Bike Lane, a two-way designed bike lane off of Frederick Law Olmsted's Prospect Park (Seaton, 2011). Over the last decade, urban cycling has become the subject of a protracted urban battle involving debates over land use, civil

liberties, sustainable development, and urban living itself (Crowley, 2009; Furness; 2010; Shepard and Smithsimon, 2011). Nowhere has this battle taken on the same intensity as in Brooklyn. The fourth case study considers the competing perspectives on the bike lane and the culture war over the automobiles, bikes, green nimbyism, sustainable development, and competing visions of urban space taking shape in the debates over a very local space, as it contends with its complicated relationship to both New York City and the world.

The subtext of the battle involved a tension over the ways a city copes with the vexing interconnection between globalization and global warming. "Globalization is fueling global warming," argues Les Leopold (2007). Critics such as Leopold argue that unrestricted global trade only seems to hasten the process. And while cities cannot depend on large scale agreements on the issue, what they can do is build an infrastructure which supports non-polluting transportation, which many see as part of the solution for a sustainable future for the common preservation of cities (Brecher, 2011)

I have always loved cycling. After years of taking the subway from Brooklyn to the Bronx for my daily commute, in 2007 I started working in downtown Brooklyn, a ten minute bike ride from my home in Carroll Gardens. I was ecstatic to read the city plans to lay out an extensive network of some 200 miles of bike lanes through the five boroughs of New York, including one down the street from my house to work. As the bike lanes were laid out, many drivers ignored the bike lanes, treating the spaces as double parking zones, places to text, and chat on the phone. A Hunter study would later confirm the point (Nelson, 2009).

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Figure 6.5 Police car parked on Hoyt Street Bike Lane. Photo by Benjamin Shepard

Over time, Times Up!, the group I work with, would increasingly organize to help educate the public about the bike lanes, which many loved, some ignored, and an increasingly vocal minority of Brooklynites

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seemed to detest (Shepard and Smithsimon, 2011). We would organize bike rides in which, dressed as clowns, we ticketed cars parked in lanes, joking with those drivers about why they parked in the bike lanes. We would write up press releases for each ride, inviting journalists to come witness the cars illegally parked in the bike lanes. As the rides continued from 2005 to 2008, the intensity of the debate over the lanes only increased, with each new lane. When the city established a bike lane on Kent Ave, local residents complained they would lose their parking spaces, that immodest women rode through the neighborhood, the lane created unsafe conditions, and they would block access to the lanes (Muessig, 2008A). When Times UP! heard about this, we planned to be there. On most rides, we were able to get our message out through a simple press release. Yet, this ride felt different. We were facing a group of politically connected residents who seemed to resent being connected to a network of 200 miles of bike lanes linking the borough with bikers, ideas, and styles of dress with which these residents felt uncomfortable. Whether they liked it or not, they were still part of a global city, contending with global problems, such as global warming and congestion. Bike lanes were a simple way to reduce car use which only increase carbon emissions. They were also part of the five boroughs of New York, which are as socially and economically connected to the world as they are to the U.S. (Fitch, 1993; Harvey, 2005; Moody, 2007). Speaking with journalists before the ride, I realized the global dimensions of the story were not finding traction in the local press. While most of the coverage for the ride was quite positive coverage (Signore, 2008), few of the papers considered the larger global perspective on the story, seemingly rejecting Brooklyn's position as a vital ingredient of a global city, if not one in itself (Abu-Lughod, 1999;), even belittling the need for alternatives to automobiles (Muessig,2008B). I wrote a letter to the paper asking the editors to consider the larger picture. "Williamsburg is part of a global city, which saw a 36% increase in biking last year. Biking is on the rise city wide. These are the people who pushed for the new bike lanes as part of the Bloomberg comprehensive 2030 Plan for the city. This increase in biking represents a vision of a sustainable city independent of cars or polluting transportation. A global city requires a global view of its problems and possibilities, a view which recognizes that the best way to reduce carbon emissions is by reducing the use of cars. Biking, not car driving,

increases health. The Kent Ave bike lane is part of the solution for a global city of residents with many more positions than represented in Muessig's one sided piece." I suggested there were many more residents

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of Brooklyn who support more practical solutions to a congested city's health and environmental problems than a small cohort of residents who care about little more than their own parking spaces. "There is enough room on rent for schools, commerce, and a bike lane. This cross section of interests and points of view is what New York's diverse social polity is all about." Within the debate about the bike lanes, we were iwitnessing a parochialism which has accompanied many of the changes taking place in Brooklyn throughout the years (Osman, 2011).

PROSPECT PARK WEST ALERT 111
ACCIDENTS ABE GOING TO HAPPEN !!!

Dear Neighbors:

"A T wo-way B icycle l ane Is going l ato effe ct as ol lune 2010
along the entire length of Pros pect Part West
'This will eliminate toe B- 69 Bus Route and reduce Traffic
along PPW to 2 lanes.

- By reducing Traffic to 2 lanes on Prospect Part West-

- Tins will adversely affect Ambulances, fire. Emergency Vehicles and All local Services.

"There has been No Public Notification to the Residents of Part Slope. We already have a working Bicycle Path in Prospect Park that could accommodate 2 Directions!

PLEASE VOJCJYOUR O PPOSITION BY E MAILING AND CONTACTIN G THE FOLLI WING:

Mayor Bloomberg: vmw.nyc.gov/mayor

Cotact NY 1 News: DISK@NY1NtWS.COM

Marty Markowitz 85Knwriy@braoftlyiib p.nyc. gov

718-802-3700

Community Board 6: INFO@BR00K1YNB6.ORG

718-643-3027

Janette Sadik-Khan D.O.T. Commissioner:

www.nyc.gov: go to contact DOT & by letter -

DOT Commissioner, 55 Water Street NY, NY 10041

Brad Lander Councilman' Lander '^council nyc gov

Tin iiaa.inon

Jim Brennan Assemblyman: 718-788-7221

BRENNANJ@ASSEMBLY.STATE.NY.US

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Figure 7 Top - Left Anti PPW Bike Lane Flyer. Right Time's Up! Annual Pies of March ride and Pie Fight at 9 Prospect Park by Adrian Kinloch. The fight took place at 9 Prospect Park, the Home of former New York Department of Transportation Commissioner Iris Weinshall and New York Senator Chuck Schumer. The home served as home base for anti PPW organizing. While a vocal minority opposed the PPW bike lane, the majority of those in Park Slope supported the PPW bike lane. In Spring 2011, Times Up! held its Pies of March ride with a pie fight between bike opponents Marty Markowitz and Iris Weinshall and PPW Bike Lane supporter New York Department of Transportation Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan seen being pied.

Over the next few years, the debate would only intensify as supporters of bike lanes as a solution for a global city would be forced to contend with a new form of Green Nimbyism, in which opponents supported the calls for a greener city, just not in their own backyard (Rosenthal, 2011). The Department of Transportation continued to implement its plan for the bike paths. In December 2009, Mayor Bloomberg would travel to Copenhagen for the UN Conference on Climate Change 2009. There he hoped to certify his bonafides as an innovator of green urbanism. Little did many know, the mayor had also offered a green light to the

Department of Transportation to remove the Williamsburg Bedford Bike Lane in exchange for political support. The lane was removed in early December. The clowns ^Several members of Times UP! were already scheduled to attend the climate conference in Copenhagen. A supporter of the group went as far as to boast to the New York Post that the group

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would confront the mayor in Copenhagen. The paper ran with that bit of information. "The city's decision to strip away 14 blocks of bike lanes in Brooklyn is turning into an international crisis," Jeremy Olshen (2009) began his report in the Post. "When Mayor Bloomberg arrives at the climate-change [=meetings in Copenhagen Monday he'll be confronted by a group of activists from the borough, demanding to know how an environmentalist can take an anti-cycling stance," the article continued. "'How can he fly all the way there to talk about being a green mayor when at home he is yanking bike lanes off the streets?'" said Baruch Herzfeld, an unofficial spokesman for the groups of riders who repainted sections of Bedford Avenue bike lanes in protest at the removal," (Olshen, 2009). The report also referred to the mock funeral for bike lanes. Brooklyn transportation policy was becoming an international story, a media controversy for a global city.

The heat would only increase in 2010 when the city laid out a bike bath along Prospect Park West (PPW). I immediately loved the lane, especially when I saw kids who had been in cars, riding their bikes to our daughters' school in September. Yet, others disagreed. While the neighborhood had asked for the lane as a way to make Prospect Park West safer by reducing speeds cars could drive, a small but vocal group of well connected neighborhood members resented the changes. Over time, evaluations and surveys suggested the lane had achieved its goals (Lander, 2011; NY Department of Transportation, 2011). Still, opponents resented the changes. And they were given top billing at city council hearings as well as community board meetings about the bike lanes. Along the way, they helped trigger a backlash (Shepard, 2011 A).

In response, advocates would make the case for bike lanes, applauding efforts to expand the network of bike lanes throughout New York City's five boroughs. The first argument would be that bicycles are part of the

future of a transportation network for a global city. Cycling reduces car congestion, offers a clear transportation alternative to the MTA's increased fares and reduced service, and finally, it helps cool a planet suffering from far too many carbon emissions. In short, bicycling is a cost-effective solution for a myriad of problems. It represents the future of cities.

Yet today it is under threat. According to a Hunter College study, there is a 60 percent chance of a cyclist being obstructed by a car in a bike lane (Nelson, 2009). Over the last year, countless members of our group have been doored, ticketed, and hit. It does not have to be this way. Yet, as the New York Department of Health report "Bicyclist Fatalities and Serious Injuries in New York City: 1996-2005" lays out, it often is. Since the

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2004 Republican National Convention, cycling has been the subject of an inordinate amount of scrutiny and harassment. Cyclists have been violently pulled off their bikes and arrested, had their bikes confiscated, etc. - all at enormous taxpayer expense. On May 30, 2008, the Reverend Al Sharpton made this same point before a Critical Mass Ride: "We're going to work together to have a Critical Mass in this city where we can ride injustice... so when you ride tonight, we come to stand with you because we must stand together, whether you are white, whether you are black, whether you are Latino or Asian, whether you are fat, skinny, gay, straight: we are all Sean Bell, we are all Critical Mass, we are all here together." (Chung, 2008). Cyclists litigated. And the city was found to be guilty of violating cyclists' basic rights. Fall 2010, the city agreed to pay cyclists attacked on Critical Mass rides \$965,000.00. Yet, instead of apologizing, the city set its target on cyclists.

As the backlash gained steam, a small, though vocal portion of the populace remained dissatisfied with the city's new bike lanes. At community board meetings former Deputy Mayor Normal Steisel paced up and down with his hands in his suspenders as opponents spoke, only to declare that he promised to litigate. In November 2010, the New York City Council's Transportation Committee held a hearing on NYC Bike Policy. After hours of one sided testimony, Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz waltzed in to testify against the Prospect Park West

Bike Lane (PPL) bike lane, without having to wait in line. As he concluded, Markowitz proceeded to sing "My Favorite Things" to the crowd of cycling supporters, who by this time, had been sitting there for three hours. Others were forced to stand outside in the cold, waiting for their turn to speak, long after the politicians had left. My friend Joe wanted to stand up and shout the president down. I encouraged him not to. There were other routes for us to take.

On Thursday December 16 at 9:30am, the clowns came to Brooklyn Borough Hall dressed in holiday costumes. There we sang holiday songs, such as "Bikes to the World" to the tune of "Joy to the World," and presented Borough President Marty Markowitz with his holiday gift of a donated bicycle painted gold. The gesture was Time's UP!'s response to Markowitz 's own clownish behavior at the hearing. In contrast to Markowitz's anti-bike stance, the "Love Your Lanes" clowns' songs featured positive messages about bicycling.

"Markowitz used his time last week to sing a song, rather than give any real facts to explain his opposition to the Prospect Park West Bike Lane," said Barbara Ross of Time's UP! "Meanwhile, a packed house of

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New Yorkers in favor of more protected bike lanes waited for hours in below-freezing weather for their turn to testify. Many didn't."

"If Marty wants to clown around, we can too," said Ross. "His stance is not shared by most New Yorkers. Marty does his constituents no favors by lacking both knowledge and a desire to be educated on the challenges faced by pedestrians and cyclists alike." Ross noted that other officials like Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer and such Council members as Tish James and Gale Brewer came prepared with a both a real sense of the current situation and realistic solutions for bike policies.

"Don't be a schlemiel Marty, love your bike lanes." "Come on, get on your bike and ride with us?" I noted, while holding a sign declaring: "Marty is out of Touch with Brooklyn."

While bike backlash ebbed for most of 2011, by summer time a New York court dismissed litigation to stop the Prospect Park Bike Lane.

Much of Brooklyn celebrated; the local papers even called for opponents to call off their appeal and recognize support for the lane (Brooklyn Paper, 2011). With ridership increasing, it looked like the battle of the bike lanes was waning. Yet, the case is still moving its way through appeals. And other struggles over land use and public space continued (Levine, 2011).

CASE STUDY #5 FIGHTING POLICE BRUTALITY

Al Sharpton spoke at the Critical Mass rally for a reason. Over the years, Brooklyn has become a site in a class war between those who live, work, and play in public and those who seek to control, curtail, and privatize this space. Shortly after his election as mayor in 1993, Giuliani's police chief William Bratton released a blueprint for policing focused on reclaiming New York's public spaces from the presence of the impoverished, the poor, and other social outsiders (Vitale 2008). This involved a "broken windows" style of policing which included no tolerance for the smallest of infractions. Histories of police brutality in New York City dedicate considerable attention to this aggressive policing approach (Johnson 2003). While police have increasingly targeted specific communities, such as youth of color (McArdle and Erzen 2001), critics note that the underside of "quality of life" policing is increased police brutality and social control (Sites 2003). Such policing has long been thought to be necessary to support the neoliberal economic policies of a global city (Harvey, 2005, Shepard and Smithsimon, 2011; Vitale 2008). Yet it comes at a cost.

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In 2007, a group of thirty-two African American and Latino young people in Bushwick, a neighborhood in Brooklyn, were arrested while going to attend the funeral of a friend. Initially, Police Commissioner Ray Kelly claimed the teens were blocking traffic, damaging property and were part of an "unlawful assembly" as they walked from a park to the subway station to attend the funeral, which was of an alleged gang member. The Brooklyn district attorney claimed "they were not just walking on one car; they were trampling on all sorts of cars. It was almost as if they were inviting their arrest" (quoted in Herbert 2009). Yet, no evidence supported the police claim that the students were

blocking traffic or jumping on cars. "Witnesses who saw the kids, including one man who used his cellphone to take photos of some of them who were handcuffed on the sidewalk, said they had been orderly, quiet and well behaved," reported Bob Herbert (2009). Greer Martin, a witness to the arrests outside her front window, spoke on the record. "[S]he felt the police officers had abused their power," noted Herbert. "I was shocked beyond shock," she explained. "My windows were open, and it didn't look like the kids had done anything wrong." In the wake of the event, citizens started mobilizing. Make the Road by Walking, helped the students in Bushwick get organized. The students formed a group called Student Coalition Against Racial Profiling (SCARP), which was able to get the charges thrown out for its members and procure a legal settlement, with several thousand dollars being paid to minors who were held by police for a day and a half (Herbert 2009; Lee 2007A, B). The prolonged detention for minor infractions that the teens suffered is a byproduct of the policing which has become part of life in global Brooklyn. It is also one of the battlefronts. While SCARP and Make the Road by Walking have fought for a right to the city, their experiences suggest that structural violence continues to be a common experience for social outsiders. Michael Scolnick, a lawyer for those arrested in Bushwick, said, "What I have been told by my clients is that their being stopped on the street merely for being on the street is about as common an occurrence in their lives as me getting up in the morning and brushing my teeth, and that's pretty outrageous" (Herbert 2009). These arrests reflect a larger pattern of hyper-regulation of public space and preemptive action against any behavior deemed deviant by the NYPD (McArdle and Erzen 2001). This involved no tolerance for the smallest of infractions, flexible deployment, and the ongoing generation of new rules and regulations all combining to micromanage public space (Vitale 2008). "[Authorities responded by criminalizing whole communities of

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impoverished and marginalized populations," noted David Harvey (2005, 48). Such actions were all part of the changing face of Brooklyn.

CONCLUSION

"It doesn't feel like Coney Island," one of my daughter's friends

lamented the first time we came to Coney Island and could not find the iconic kids rides of Astroland. Toward the end of summer of 2011, my two daughters and I went out for a final night of a summer ritual - going to rides and baseball at Coney Island. While Astroland was gone (Santos, 2007), Luna Park remained. Today, the rides at Luna Park, which replaced Astroland, feel like they could be anywhere. Yet they are still fun. The Coney Island of Woody Guthrie and Lawrence Ferlinghetti constantly intermingles with the rezoned entertainment space being created there (Bush 2009; McLaughlin, 2008; Bush, 2009, Register, 2001). After the rides, we stopped by Paul's Daughter, at 1001 Riegelmann Boardwalk, on the way to the Cyclones game. Paul's Daughter, a forty-one-year-old mom and pop and one of eight historic businesses told by the city that their leases would not be renewed (Bush, 2009). Paul's Daughter was now being evicted, replaced by corporate chain Sodexo. "Shoot the Freak" was illegally bulldozed. Ruby's Bar was being replaced by a sports bar. "We don't want the clientele who come to your business," the owners of Paul's Daughter were told after they received "To Whom It May Concern" letters from the city, giving them a month to depart. The Coney Island Eight litigated, staged protests, and won the right to another summer, which was ending in 2011 (Marx, 2011). "It's the last hurrah," Al told me, giving my daughters, who go to school with Paul's granddaughter, free lollipops. "Are any of you going to stay?" "No, its over." Walking over to the game, we enjoyed a sunset on the still pulsing boardwalk. In just a few short weeks, the city would bow to pressure from supporters who'd staged citywide rallies, giving new leases Paul's Daughter and other Brooklyn based businesses on the boardwalk (Bush, 2011)

"New York has always been a wastrel with its cultural treasures," noted writer Kevin Baker (2007) witnessing the remapping of Coney Island. "Again and again, we have let unique places vanish, victims of a passing market force or individual whim: the great jazz clubs and jitterbug palaces of Harlem, the Cotton Club... Ebbets Field." Rather than destroy its history, the city would be well advised to revisit the planning process, inviting ideas for what the space could be. "The dozens of small businesses that stuck it out through Coney Island's worst years

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and did so much to preserve its honky-tonk flavor should be encouraged to stay," (Baker 2007). Today, it looks like the city may be learning this

lesson. While few actual New Yorkers go to Times Square anymore after its rezoning and purge, the same fate may not befall Coney Island which bustles with people from all walks of life all summer long.

Earlier in the year, we'd attended several goodbye events for the old Coney Island, hosted by several of the Coney Island Eight, with music at Ruby's, as well as a New Orleans style "Jazz Funeral for Coney Island" with the Jumbalaya Jazz band, featuring a horse and carriage for the symbolic coffin, and Darryl The Jazz Funeral and Second Line Parade saying goodbye to the old and expressing hopes for the rebirth. "It's time for the dead to be reborn," several screamed. The funeral parade strolled along Stillwell Avenue, before turning into a joyous "second lining" as it made its way down the Boardwalk.

Brooklyn of old constantly mingles with Brooklyn of new. Despite the funerals for the old Coney Island, there are alternative models for urban development represented by the fights over global Brooklyn (Agnotti, 2008; Shepard, and Smithsimon, 2011). Is there a space for agency, in which local actors shape the dynamics of life in global cities? Could studying the Brooklyn experience offer some insight? These are the questions which opened this paper. Certainly, displacement remains. As a global city, Brooklyn has a great deal to learn from other world cities (Abu-Lughod, 1999). And today, boroughs such as Boerum Hill have borrowed from model from other cities such as Berlin where restrictive zoning helps the city retain its unique feel and history (Krai, 2011). This is one of many alternative models, including the innovative bike lane on PPW supporting non-polluting transportation, the Zoning Text Amendment in Carroll Gardens, the eviction defense witnessed in Bed Stuy, the fight against Walmart, and for more community gardens. The case studies highlighted here suggest there are ways to create a different kind of global city if citizens organize and engage. The case studies highlight ways to battle eviction, big box stores, buildings, and police brutality through community mobilization, which links a clear proposal with mobilization, legal advocacy, social networking, research, and a little direct action. Of course, the first case study against the Williamsburg rezoning suggests that the merging of real estate with financial capital creates a formal adversary; here land is viewed as a commodity to maximize by the inch (Agnotti, 2008; Logan and Moloch 1987; Moody, 2007). And the city is viewed as a growth machine, rather than as a space for convivial social relations. Yet, the Carroll Gardens Zoning amendment did force a skeleton of a building, half developed for

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nearly a decade to come down, because it was oversized, and out of character with the rest of the brownstones in the area. When a neighborhood forces big buildings to shrink, that is a victory for all (Biuso,2011).

Yet, the patterns of displacement continue among those neighborhoods coping with both climate chaos and speculative gentrification. During the eviction defense action in Bed Stuy in August of 2011, I found out that the organizers who had fought the Williamsburg rezoning had been priced out of their own neighborhood, displaced like too many others. "We saw potential beyond a home/office, and when the 2004 Republican National Convention was announced Not An Alternative was formed, and we started to use the storefront as our headquarters," read a dispatch from Not An Alternative (2011) in my mailbox later that week. "In collaboration with community groups and cultural producers. Our first major effort involved a series of projects aimed at challenging the 2005 rezoning and gentrification of North Brooklyn. But the neighborhood has changed dramatically since then, and we've had front row seats. The block built up, the foot traffic grew, and so did the rent. The latest hike is the last straw: a 240% rent increase, from \$2500 to \$6000. And so we find ourselves displaced, like countless other spaces, businesses, and residents around here over the years... Much gratitude to our residents and coworkers, our audience, our allies, and our collaborators, past and present."

For Brooklyn to thrive as a globalized space, it must help create spaces to preserve its cultural resources, while coping with ongoing challenges including homogenization and climate chaos. Future plans must include more protection for individuals and historic buildings, as well as room for green spaces to help sustain communities. Already the ways the borough coped with Super Storm Sandy suggest the city has to do more to think about supporting its own models of sustainable urbanism (Shepard, 2013). Yet, these issues are beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say, unmet needs include support for non-polluting transportation, affordable housing, schools, parking, food, safe bike paths, support for the arts, and open space. Without addressing these needs, the Brooklyn of old will struggle with the vast transformations shaping global Brooklyn. Yet, today it feels like the right pieces are coming together in the long standing battle over what global Brooklyn will become.

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