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"It's Not Little Senegal": The Tactical Redefinition of the Senegalese Ethnic Enclave In Gentrified Harlem, New York

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"It's Not Little Senegal":
The Tactical Redefinition of the Senegalese Ethnic Enclave
In Gentrified Harlem, New York

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//table of contents//

//introduction//

"A Nerve Center, Newly Electric," proclaims a headline buried on page six of the *New York Times'* Real Estate section on January 5, 2014. John Freeman Gill's article proceeds to detail the so-called "**renaissance**" of Frederick Douglass Boulevard (bolded typeface from the *Times*), what he deems a "formerly blighted corridor of often-abandoned tenements interspersed with rubble-filled lots and tire-repair shops."[1] After describing the new, hip restaurants and recently renovated townhouses – all stemming from "city subsidies and rising [property] values" – Gill finally mentions the dirty word: **gentrification**.[2] Interestingly, this word is bolded as well, calling the reader's attention to Gill's simplistic explanation of its consequences. Gill quotes C. Virginia Fields, former Manhattan borough president: "'some of the pricing, mostly by private developers, has gone beyond the means of many blacks who maybe haven't lived in the area but would like to [...] I hear that a lot, and I regret it.'"[3]

With Fields' help, Gill paints a dangerously limited portrait of the gentrification of Frederick Douglass Boulevard (8th Avenue), the western "border" of Little Senegal. Harlem has faced significant adversity due to disinvestment and official neglect through the latter half of the twentieth century; it is not unfair, then, to depict the difficulties that Harlem has "overcome." To point to Frederick Douglass Boulevard as a no-man's-land, however, is to abide by an unapologetically neocolonial ideology. An unassuming reader – or worse, a young, well-educated White person hunting for an apartment – would learn from Gill's article that there was nothing in this neighborhood before private developers started to construct "crisp

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[1] John Freeman Gill, "A Nerve Center, Newly Electric," *New York Times,* January 5, 2014.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

condominiums," perpetuating the northern migration of New Yorkers seeking affordable apartments.[4]

C. Virginia Fields describes the Harlem developers that she took on bus tours of the neighborhood "'as if they were immigrants coming from a foreign land.'"[5] Meanwhile, there was – and is – an actual immigrant community completely erased by Fields' narrative and Gill's article; Little Senegal and its inhabitants, its businesspeople, and its culture are not acknowledged in the piece. Of course, such an erasure is harmful in that it ignores the fact of the rapid displacement of Senegalese migrants from 116th Street and the subsequent shuttering of many Senegalese businesses. Gentrification is fundamentally changing the community, but the relationship is not by any means unidirectional. Senegalese people proudly *participated* in the gentrification of 116th Street and Frederick Douglass Boulevard.

Currently, as the process that they helped to catalyze undermines their hold on their community, Senegalese people are engaging in tactics to navigate a gentrified landscape – for it is inarguable that gentrification has arrived. In Sharifa Rhodes-Pitts' *Harlem is Nowhere*, she candidly presents the complexities, contradictions, and collaborations that characterize the gentrified reality in the neighborhood. "There is no room for the junk of old Harlem," she writes.[6] Rhodes-Pitts emphasizes the insidious neocolonial mindset that undergirds articles like the *Times'* piece with which I opened – visitors to and observers of Harlem are "afflicted by that exuberant myopia common to colonists of varied epochs and ambitions."[7] She notes the vicious cycle of gentrification's consequences – "it all comes down to a point that is as simple as it is terrible. It is a fact that closes in on itself, like the mythical serpent that devours its own tail:

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[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Sharifa Rhodes-Pitts, *Harlem is Nowhere: A Journey to the Mecca of Black America* (New York: Little, Brown, 2011), 30.
[7] Ibid., 31.

This is our land that we don't own."[8] By suggesting this paradox, Rhodes-Pitts illuminates

exactly the tenuous nature of the Senegalese community's hold on their enclave. In this thesis, I

attempt to open a discursive space to explore this paradox while centering Senegalese agency in

the face of a gentrified reality.

Senegalese immigrants are being excluded from residing in the neighborhood, but Wolof

is still the lingua franca of 116th Street. Many businesses are closed in the wake of rising rents,

but others survive – and thrive – in the gentrified climate. It still smells like Little Senegal – it

smells like Dakar, where I studied abroad, like the streets of Ouakam where I lived with my

famille d'accueille. The plethora of opinions even among the eight interviewees who will be

featured reveals the extent to which Little Senegal is being interrogated and redefined in a

gentrified Harlem. How do Senegalese people perceive their neighborhood and its changing

landscape? What does their interaction with the urban space look like? These are the questions

around which my thesis develops.

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[8] Ibid., 188.

//a note about my subject position//

I spent the fall semester of 2012 living and studying in Dakar and Saint-Louis, Senegal. Though it might be easy to define (and thus dismiss) my time in Senegal as a "culturally immersive experience" during which I learned to bargain, struggled with Wolof, and basked on the beach, I find such an explanation of my semester totally inadequate. Far more important were the times when I reckoned with my Whiteness and what that meant about my presence in a postcolonial nation. Was my being in Senegal an inevitably neocolonial project?

To begin to address this question, I have chosen to highlight my Whiteness and how it might affect the extent to which this thesis can be an antiracist project. In *Black and White Racial Identity*, Janet E. Helms explains a process of White identity development. She underlines how intertwined racism and Whiteness are: "In order to develop a healthy White identity, defined in part as a nonracist identity, virtually every White person in the United Stated must overcome one or more of these aspects of racism. Additionally, he or she must accept his or her own Whiteness, the cultural implications of being White, and define a view of Self as a racial being that does not depend on the perceived superiority of one racial group over another."[9] Helms proceeds to articulate the six stages of White identity development, and because of the U.S.'s specific racialized history, Helms centers her definitions on Black-White interactions. The first stage of White identity development is Contact, characterized by limited engagement with Black people and a blinding naïveté.[10] During the Disintegration phase, a White person starts to see the contradictions in a belief system predicated on equality as compared to the reality of racial relations; this introduces dissonance.[11] The Reintegration phase reconciles this

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[9] Janet E. Helms, "Toward a Model of White Racial Identity Development," in *Black and White Racial Identity: Theory, Research and Practice*, ed. Janet E. Helms (Westport: Praeger, 1990), 49.
[10] Ibid., 55–58.
[11] Ibid., 58–60.

dissonance through recognition and a privileging of a White identity.[12] Subsequently, the

Pseudo-Independent stage occurs, with which I can identify, at least in part. A White person is

"no longer comfortable with a racist identity and begins to search for ways to redefine her or his

White identity. Usually the redefining process takes the form of intellectual acceptance and

curiosity about Blacks."[13] Evidently, this thesis about the Senegalese immigrant community falls

under the category of intellectual curiosity regarding Black people.

The pseudo-independent stage, however, is also characterized by the White person "still

look[ing] to Black rather than White people to explain racism and seek[ing] solutions for it in

hypothetical Black cultural dysfunctionalities" – I cannot say that I abide by such an ideology.[14]

My White identity development, then, falls somewhere between the Pseudo-Independent stage

and the next two phases, Immersion/Emersion and Autonomy. Immersion/Emersion involves a

"quest for a better definition of Whiteness" embodied in questions such as "'Who am I racially?'

and 'Who do I want to be?' and 'Who are you really?'" – these questions resonate with those that

I had posed to myself while in Senegal.[15] The "Autonomous person," meanwhile, "actively

[seeks] opportunities to learn from other cultural groups," which is also a trait with which I

identify.[16] In sum, my White identity development falls on the latter half of the spectrum – as

Helms suggests, "perhaps it is best to think of it as an ongoing process."[17]

Going to Senegal demonstrated the perpetuity of White identity development because

contact in the postcolonial context redefined the contours of the racial discussion. I may have

been at stage four or five in the U.S., but I was at stage one in Senegal. The two circumstances,

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[12] Ibid., 60–61.
[13] Ibid., 61.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., 62.
[16] Ibid., 66.
[17] Ibid.

of course, cannot be equated, which means that my grappling with race in the context of my thesis (a transnationally-based project grounded in a U.S. locality) is radically different than grappling with race as a White person in Senegal. This complicates the issue because it introduces two simultaneous processes of identity development, one domestic, one transnational – both perhaps framed by a (post)colonial mindset. The important thing to take away from this discussion is that I am by no means an expert. I still rely on my Whiteness as a privilege. For example, I did not engage with Helms' stages of identity development from the time I read them two years ago until now. I have that luxury of deciding when to engage with race.

For further justification and contextualization, I have looked to Michael Omi and Howard Winant's work. These scholars illuminate and in fact demand antiracist work on macro- as well as micro-structural levels. Omi and Winant developed the concept of racial formation, which has informed scholarly discourse over the past 25 years. It is, of course, a dynamic and complex concept, but they succinctly define it "as the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed."[18] In a recent anthology, *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century*, Omi and Winant revisit their theory. "Because racial formation processes are dynamic," they contend, "the racial regime remains unstable and contested" (21st Century 316).[19] This leads to their conclusion that "fostering the interruption and interrogation of racism" is a crucial aspect of micropolitically antiracist projects (21st Century 326).[20]

This thesis, then, is a project of necessity. I chose to go to Senegal, but I cannot choose to ignore the implications of that decision. I have presented my subject position and connected it

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[18] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 55.
[19] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, "Racial Formation Rules: Continuity, Instability, and Change," in *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Daniel Martinez HoSang et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 316.
[20] Ibid., 326.

to critical race theory in order to better contextualize this attempt at an antiracist project. In other words, the fact that there exists a marginalized and remarkably under-studied Senegalese community a mere one and a half hours from Vassar College warrants this investigation and demands a focus that is unapologetically on the Senegalese immigrants. As a White student, I recognize the importance of employing counter-narratives to privilege marginalized voices and to rhetorically "step back." I am inevitably contributing, however, to the history of White men "studying" communities of color – please maintain a critique of my Whiteness while you focus on the Senegalese community. This was and is a thesis predicated on interaction, so I encourage such interrogation as the narratives unfold through the following chapters

//theoretical framework: transnationalism, tactics, and gentrification//

Without an understanding of the dynamic subjectivity of Senegalese immigrants, it would be easy to fall into the trap of depicting the community as a passive recipient of global hegemony. Therefore, transnationalism necessarily informs the theoretical framework of this thesis. Later, in addressing the changing (and changed) face of the enclave due to gentrification, this framework will be key in emphasizing Senegalese agency. A discussion of the idea of tactics is also necessary in order to better characterize the actions Senegalese migrants take when engaging with hegemonic structures. This is not to say, however, that there are not real threats to the Senegalese community. Therefore, the interface between gentrification and ethnic enclaves will also be contextualized. While transnational forces elucidate the way in which a community like Little Senegal can arise, it is crucial to highlight the multi-directionality of influences acting in the enclave, creating a portrait in which agency, victimhood, and tactics can – and do – coexist.

This thesis is only possible because of transnationalism. Transnationalism undergirds the Senegalese presence in New York City, so to begin to illuminate any aspect of the Senegalese experience, it is crucial to engage with broader structural forces. There is a trend in the literature positing that the relationship between the global and local is not unidirectional, but rather that the local also profoundly affects transnationalism. In his book *Transnational Urbanism: Locating Globalization,* Michael Peter Smith makes a theoretical distinction between the terms "globalization" and "transnationalism" by which I will abide throughout this project. He distinguishes the two terms essentially by their scope. Globalization discourse, he explains, "draws attention to social processes that are 'largely decentered from specific national territories,'" while transnational scholarship "depicts transnational social relations as 'anchored

in' while also transcending one or more nation states."[21] Transnationalism and its corollary

focus on micro-forces in the context of broader structures will now be explored.

The intersection of transnationalism and urban studies is, according to Ayona Datta, a

vital but often neglected locus to address contemporary forces acting upon urban migrants. Datta

begins her essay, "Diaspora and Transnationalism in Urban Studies," with a distinction between

transnationalism "from above" and "from below." She explains the binary framework:

"*Transnationalism from above* [emphasis hers] has primarily examined the flows and

movements of people across the globe, demographics, and population change. [Migrants' lives]

have been examined largely through economic, political, and social networks between sending

and receiving national contexts, thus signifying the primacy of nation-states."[22] In other words,

macro-structures are favored when using such a framework, even to the problematic point when

"its top-down lens [...] tends to sideline migrant agencies in favor of passive victimhood to

structural conditions of citizenship and belonging."[23] This framework appears in the work of

such well-known "globalization" theorists as Saskia Sassen and David Harvey. Ousmane Oumar

Kane establishes that Little Senegal is indeed entwined in transnational ideology and practice in

his book, *The Homeland is the Arena*, the only full-length work devoted solely to the discussion

of Senegalese immigrants in New York City, let alone Harlem. Thus, using Kane's work (which

will be discussed more fully in a later chapter) for requisite evidence, it can be claimed that using

a "transnationalism from above" framework would resonate with the transnational nature of the

enclave but would silence Senegalese migrants.

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[21] Michael Peter Smith, *Transnational Urbanism: Locating Globalization*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001), 3.
[22] Ayona Datta, "Diaspora and Transnationalism in Urban Studies," in *A Companion to Diaspora and Transnationalism*, ed. Ato Quayson and Girish Daswani (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), 90.
[23] Ibid.

"*Transnationalism from below,*" on the other hand, addresses these shortcomings "through a shift in focus towards subjective processes of citizenship, identity formation, and home-making practices."[24] Theoretically speaking, this entails a "rescaling of theories of transnationalism and diaspora onto more territorial and spatial realms, as well as finding different ways to investigate the multiple sites and processes of transnational urbanism within the city."[25] The phrase "transnationalism from below," however, is misleading in that it implies a framework that exclusively focuses on the local. In their anthology that can be credited with coining the term itself, Michael Peter Smith and Luis Eduardo Guarnizo clarify this potential misconception. Ironically, their anthology *Transnationalism from Below* espouses a far more integrated approach than the title might indicate. Smith and Guarnizo explain that, as compared to an unrelentingly top-down approach, there is an "equally problematic pitfall of starting analysis at the microstructural level, [failing] to connect human intentions to social structure and historical change."[26] Instead, they argue, "to understand transnationalism from below as well as from above, it is crucial to systematically study the translocal micro-reproduction of transnational ties." [27]

A theoretical framework begins to take shape: it is important to focus on the local but especially in the context of its specific history and character so as to avoid diminishing the effect of macro-structures (e.g. global capitalism). This is because "transnational practices do not take place in an imaginary 'third space' (Bhabha 1990; Soja 1996) abstractly located 'in-between'

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid., 92–93.

[26] Guarnizo, Luis Eduardo and Michael Peter Smith, "The Locations of Transnationalism," in *Transnationalism from Below*, ed. Michael Peter Smith and Luis Eduardo Guarnizo (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1998), 25–26.

[27] Ibid., 26. M.P. Smith emphasizes the need to focus on "historically specific 'translocal (i.e. local to local) social relations of power and meaning when studying the actual origins and effects of transnational social networks" (Smith, *Transnational Urbanism*, 19). Here, Smith provides a definition of the translocal as a phenomenon linking specific localities through transnational systems. Little Senegal would be an example of a translocal community, with cultural and economic ties to specific neighborhoods in Senegal.

national territories."[28] On the contrary, as Smith and Guarnizo succinctly illuminate,

"transnational practices, while connecting collectivities located in more than one national

territory, are embodied in specific social relations established between specific people, situated

in unequivocal localities, at historically determined times."[29] This amounts to an unmistakable

call to focus on the local and its effects without losing sight of the broader context.

In another *Transnational Urbanism,* Smith refines and reinforces his ideas regarding the

crucial position of the translocal in transnational communities. Smith explains his theory of

transnational urbanism at the outset of his work. His operational definition presents transnational

urbanism as a "cultural rather than a strictly geographic metaphor."[30] In other words, Smith's

definition of urbanism does not hinge exclusively on cities but instead on the assumption that a

series of diverse places are transnationally connected.[31] Again, Smith promotes an ideology and

methodology predicated on the holistically embedded locality:

> in today's world of accelerated transnational economic, migratory, and cultural
> connections, we must move beyond views of local associational life that fail to fully
> account for the transnational networks of meaning and power that now regularly cut
> across the territorial boundaries of local and national political space. These transnational
> networks do not operate in a pure space of flows. They locate on the ground in particular
> localities at particular times. When they do so, they intersect with more purely local
> networks of meaning and power, significantly shaping the character of the local politics
> of place-making.[32]

Here, Smith challenges commonly held notions of global forces. Indeed, Smith critiques the

likes of David Harvey, Saskia Sassen and Manuel Castells. Though he approaches each of their

arguments with the requisite specificity, a theme emerges: these theorists, to greater and lesser

extents, posit capital and its global accumulation as the ultimate driving force behind

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[28] Ibid., 11.
[29] Ibid.
[30] M.P. Smith, *Transnational Urbanism*, 5.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid., 106.

transnational connections.[33] Smith admits that Castells "thinks local identities still constitute a

viable space of resistance to global capitalist hegemony," but the problem, according to Smith,

lies in the fact that these theorists are reifying the global-local binary by treating them as separate

entities.[34]

It is important to consider, however, that an argument from a "globalization" theorist like

Saskia Sassen does not blindly propagate the preeminence of capital as a global force. Indeed, in

her introduction to her edited volume *Deciphering the Global*, Sassen acknowledges and even

touts a localized methodology when analyzing the global power structure. Though Sassen admits

that, in her opinion, "the fact of the preeminence of the national scale and of the exclusive

authority of the state over its territory is [...] one of the key contexts within which the current

phase of globalization takes off," she does not forward an exclusively macroscopic or top-down

approach to the study of transnationalism.[35] "Studying the global," Sassen continues, "entails

not only a focus on what is explicitly global in scale. It also calls for a focus on locally scaled

practices and conditions articulated with global dynamics."[36] Among these practices and

conditions, Sassen mentions the expatriate enclave.[37] While she emphasizes nationality by using

the term "expatriate" as opposed to "ethnic" – highlighting political instead of cultural ties,

perhaps – her overarching point does not diverge so radically from that espoused by the likes of

Smith, Guarnizo, and Datta. These commonalities between theoretical "camps" are important to

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[33] While a detailed treatment of David Harvey, Manuel Castells and Saskia Sassen would be redundant with Smith's work, it is important to understand how he deconstructs their arguments. Smith compares and criticizes David Harvey and Manuel Castells' representations of "the local as a cultural space of communal understandings, a space where meaning is produced entirely outside the global flows of money, power, and information" (Smith, *Transnational Urbanism*, 106). In terms of Saskia Sassen's work, Smith deconstructs her "tendency to reify the global city as a fabricated by-product of the structural transformations of global capitalism in the late twentieth century" because such a framework disregards "questions of culture and agency" (Ibid., 50).
[34] Ibid., 102, 106.
[35] Saskia Sassen, "Introduction: Deciphering the Global," in *Deciphering the Global: Its Scales, Spaces, and Subjects*, ed. Saskia Sassen (New York: Routledge, 2007), 5.
[36] Ibid., 7.
[37] Ibid.

note because they underline the fact that transnational theorists have converged in emphasizing the local as an integral aspect of the global.

Perhaps the epitome of a local manifestation of transnationalism is the ethnic enclave. Ivan Light and Steven J. Gold were instrumental in formalizing the discussion of ethnic enclaves as economic engines in their work, *Ethnic Economies.* They also employ transnationalism to indicate the agency of immigrants. Through certain economic activities such as remitting finances and "importing or exporting goods and/or capital," "migrant families [...] are key actors in transnational processes."[38] Thus, though their book is devoted to the study of capital accumulation, Light and Gold do not necessarily *privilege* capital over translocal agency. Moreover, they provide a helpful operational definition of an ethnic enclave economy as "an ethnic ownership economy that is clustered around a territorial core [...obtaining] economic strength that small business firms normally lack, but that monopolies enjoy."[39] Here, they describe exactly what Smith and others have theorized, that of the transnational migrant engaging in a multi-directional relationship with global hegemonic structures. Finally, Light and Gold's definition provides the requisite background to understand Little Senegal as a dynamic and discrete economic zone, which will be crucial as the community is studied in the context of recent gentrification.

My project abides by this ideology and forwards the goal of illuminating the everyday aspects of transnational life. Specifically, I have aimed to describe one manifestation of "how actors," says Smith, "situated in such transnational political networks interact with actors, networks, and structures of power that are more locally and nationally based."[40] By asking Senegalese immigrants about their perceptions of the neighborhood, an image of a gentrified

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[38] Ivan Light and Steven J. Gold, *Ethnic Economies,* (San Diego: Academic Press, 2000), 151.
[39] Ibid., 24.
[40] M.P. Smith, *Transnational Urbanism,* 18.

116th Street emerges. The way in which Senegalese immigrants are enmeshed with the process

of gentrification will be detailed through the case studies and discussion.

To reconcile the Senegalese community's diverse methods of engaging with a gentrified

landscape, I turned to Michel de Certeau's work, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, and his concept

of strategies and tactics. In his second chapter, "Popular Cultures: Ordinary Language," de

Certeau introduces *la perruque* (lit. French for "wig") to describe some ways in which

disenfranchised people employ tricks and cunning to appropriate the resources of the powerful

for their own use. For example, "*la perruque* may be as simple a matter as a secretary's writing

a love letter on 'company time' or as complex as a cabinetmaker's 'borrowing' a lathe to make a

piece of furniture for his living room."[41] De Certeau extends the metaphor of *la perruque* to an

operational definition of strategies and tactics in his next chapter, "'Making Do': Uses and

Tactics." Strategies, he summarizes, "are able to produce, tabulate, and impose" whereas

"tactics can only use, manipulate and divert."[42] The tactic, in other words, is "an art of being in

between" that "draws unexpected results from [a] situation."[43] He elaborates on his definitions,

explaining how a strategy represents "*a triumph of place over time* [emphasis his]," a "*panoptic

practice,*" and, ultimately, "the power to provide oneself with one's own place."[44] Tactics

represent the response to these strategies; "the space of the tactic is the space of the other," which

is why the tactic is a particularly apt metaphor for Senegalese actions in their enclave.[45] Indeed,

a tactic "takes advantage of 'opportunities' and depends on them, being without any base where

it could stockpile its winnings," for "what it wins it cannot keep."[46] These concepts will be

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[41] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 25.
[42] Ibid., 30.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid., 36.
[45] Ibid., 37.
[46] Ibid.

grounded and exemplified through the stories of the Senegalese enclave that unfold in rapidly

gentrifying Harlem.

Gentrification, however, is a process that extends beyond ethnically affiliated

communities and thus merits further explanation. Through this clarification, the process

occurring (or that which has already occurred) in Harlem will appear less ominous and thus

easier to engage with, even more closely abiding by the theoretical framework presently

established. Richard Lloyd helpfully frames gentrification as a development of neo-bohemia in

his contribution to Sassen's anthology. Throughout "Postindustrial Bohemia," Lloyd elaborates

on his concept of neo-bohemia, which he explains as an imitation (but not a replication) of the

modernist bohemian tendencies of "social alterity and economic marginality."[47] Instead of

actual marginality, however, neo-bohemia is characterized by the way in which it "abets new

accumulation dynamics in an economy predicated on mechanisms that extract value added from

aesthetic dimensions at multiple scales, local and global."[48] In other words, these "accumulation

dynamics" are ways in which artists contribute to capital gains through aesthetic production.

They can be seen as part of "the breakdown of the institutions of the urban industrial order,

replacing welfare state liberalism with a more entrepreneurial, or neoliberal, mode of local

governance."[49] Albeit circuitously, Lloyd thus explains the cycle of privatization and the myth

of bohemia, both of which propel the accumulation of capital in previously neglected

neighborhoods – the process commonly known as gentrification. Helpfully, he contests and

thereby clarifies the common wisdom that names artists as "unwitting shock troops of

gentrification paving the way for nebulously defined yuppies to follow on their heels," arguing

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[47] Richard Lloyd, "Postindustrial Bohemia: Culture, Neighborhood, and the Global Economy," in *Deciphering the Global: Its Scales, Spaces, and Subjects*, ed. Saskia Sassen (New York: Routledge, 2007), 23.
[48] Ibid., 32–33.
[49] Ibid., 26.

that "this mode of analysis does not adequately address changes in the urban occupational structure and the often contradictory processes of the aesthetic economy. Instead, gentrification is reified as a natural process."[50] What is crucial here is that Lloyd elucidates the way in which gentrification is seen as an unstoppable phenomenon when in actuality it is a process caused by specific economic trends and political actions. He interrupts this way of thinking by defining the artist as both a consumer and a worker in a "reconstituted urban occupational structure."[51]

Though he writes, "competing interests of local residents are either ignored or rendered grossly simplistic," Lloyd does not manage to include any voices from the community he cites in his essay, Wicker Park in Chicago.[52] This is where Lloyd's effort falls short. His chapter ostensibly derives from the use of an alternative methodology – neighborhood-specific ethnography – to illuminate the dynamics of neo-bohemia and gentrification. Instead, Lloyd's chapter comes across as dismissive of the everyday, exactly the opposite of his intention to localize the study of the global. Perhaps his overarching goal, however, was not to disrupt the dominant order of capital accumulation and gentrification in cities but simply to point it out. This, in turn, demands projects like my thesis where the narrative of the subaltern can be centered, demonstrating the power of the tools Lloyd describes.

Additionally, by dismissing the typical understanding of gentrification as the "most obvious contribution made by the artist in the city to capital valorization," Lloyd erases the validity and importance of more traditional arguments.[53] Neil Smith's *The New Urban Frontier* is one of these seminal works. Smith elucidates the way in which urban centers have been framed as "frontiers," focusing his work on New York City: "the social meaning of gentrification

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[50] Ibid., 30.
[51] Ibid., 22.
[52] Ibid., 31.
[53] Ibid., 22.

is increasingly constructed through the vocabulary of the frontier myth, and at first glance this appropriation of language and landscape might seem simply playful, innocent."[54] This is all too evident in the *New York Times* article that opens my introduction; the frontier mentality has galvanized gentrification in Harlem. Smith links the frontier mentality and subsequent real estate development with the "unprecedented commodification of art in the 1980s" to further explain the development of gentrified urban pockets, which is exactly the reasoning that Lloyd minimizes.[55] Importantly, Smith argues that "systematic gentrification since the 1960s and 1970s is simultaneously a response and a contributor to a series of wider global transformations," among which is the establishment of a "global hierarchy" of cities.[56] Thus, Smith positions gentrification as a localized phenomenon that has global causes and effects, abiding by a transnationalist framework. While Smith's argument is, of course, far more complex, this snapshot portrays the fundamental process of gentrification and its immediate consequences for those excluded from its rising tide.

Through an exploration of transnational (and translocal) theory, strategies and tactics, and gentrification, I have aimed to conceptually situate the Senegalese ethnic enclave. Theory, however, must be grounded – the way in which I incorporated these ideas into a field-based investigation will be detailed through the following chapter on methodology.

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[54] Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London: Routledge, 1996), 13.
[55] Ibid., 19.
[56] Ibid., 6, 8.

//methods//

Studying transnational communities has been, over the past thirty years, a burgeoning field of research. As such, methods are inevitably interdisciplinary and under constant scrutiny. In conducting my project, the goal to illuminate mental images of Little Senegal was modeled on the work of Kevin Lynch, while I also strove to incorporate more contemporary, postmodern ethnographic methods in order to highlight both the agency and the macro-structures present in the Senegalese transnational community.

Kevin Lynch's 1960 book, *The Image of the City*, was the most influential in galvanizing my research. As mentioned in the preface, I conducted an independent research project in Saint-Louis, Senegal, during which I also followed Lynch's work. I was first introduced to *The Image of the City* through Professor Tyrone Simpson's Urban Theory class at Vassar College, during which we were charged with completing an "imageability" study of Poughkeepsie. Kevin Lynch defines "imageability" as "that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer."[57] Lynch suggests that imageability "might also be called *legibility* [emphasis his], or perhaps *visibility* in a heightened sense, where objects are not only able to be seen, but are presented sharply and intensely to the senses."[58] Methodologically, Lynch approaches his study in a localized and ethnographic way. He considers "the visual quality of the American city by studying the mental image of that city which is held by its citizens."[59] To elicit such an image, Lynch conducts "lengthy interview[s] with a small sample of city residents."[60] Abiding by this methodology, I aim to validate the Senegalese right to the city by acknowledging their unique and plural ideas of Harlem. This is

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[57] Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, MA: Joint Center for Urban Studies, 1960), 9.
[58] Ibid., 9–10.
[59] Ibid., 2.
[60] Ibid., 15.

not to say that I, as a privileged White man, hold the "key" to validating Senegalese people's experiences. My own subject position as an ethnographer must be critically examined at every juncture, as discussed in my introduction.

Lynch, however, is very much a product of his era. He employs an antiquated (and misguided) developmentalist perspective when he writes, "primitive man was forced to improve his environmental image by adapting his perception to the given landscape [...] Only powerful civilizations can begin to act on their total environment at a significant scale."[61] He thus implies a hierarchy of cities, which fits with his overarching goal of making a value judgment on the legibility of the metropolis. In fact, Lynch's goal, "to show how [legibility] might be used in rebuilding our cities," betrays his inextricable modernist lens; the reconstruction of the central city, or "urban renewal," is synonymous with the modernist movement.[62] Despite these modernist missteps, Lynch helpfully dictates a series of what he calls urban "types" that guided the formulation of my survey questions. I explain Lynch's definitions in my independent study from Senegal, *The Constructs of Coexistence:*

> Paths are often "the predominant elements in [people's] image [because they] observe the city while moving through it." (Lynch 47). Edges, on the other hand, are "the boundaries between two phases," perhaps connected by a path (47). Districts, Lynch explains, are "recognizable as having some common, identifying character" and might be comprised of one or many nodes, "strategic spots in a city into which an observer can enter" (47). Landmarks, the last of Lynch's categories, are "another type of point-reference, but […] the observer does not enter within them," thus acting as a more distant or intangible node (48).[63]

Beyond these helpful categories of urban elements, for a modernist, Lynch is remarkably prescient about what might be in the pipeline in the field of urban studies. He states, "it is clear

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[61] Ibid., 12–13.
[62] Ibid., 3.
[63] Isaac Lindy, "The Constructs of Coexistence: Visualizing Contemporary Saint-Louisien Identity Among the Architectures of a Colonial Past," *School for International Training, Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection* 2012, Paper 1401, http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/1401, 9.

that the form of a city or of a metropolis will not exhibit some gigantic, stratified order [...] It must be plastic to the perceptual habits of thousands of citizens, open-ended to change of function and meaning, receptive to the formation of new imagery."[64] Thus, Lynch underlines the importance of privileging the urban user and emphasizes what can be construed as a bottom-up approach to studying the city, both of which are more contemporary trends in urban studies. Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nutall confirm in their article, "Writing the World from an African Metropolis," how progressive (in certain respects) Lynch's work is. They write, "one way of invoking the city, of fashioning it, of bringing Johannesburg into being as a metropolis, is to make it talk."[65] My task, then, was to find the most theoretically sound and practically grounded methods to illuminate the Senegalese voice in the city.

Postmodern ethnography has emerged as a favored method to approach such a goal. In citing Doreen Massey's work, Michael Peter Smith supports the idea of tracing "the trajectories of both residents' and non-residents' routes through a place, as well as identifying 'their favorite haunts within it, the connections they make [...] between here and the rest of the world.'"[66] I aim to elucidate just those aspects of transnational life through a series of structured interviews. Before articulating my specific methodology, however, a more thorough treatment of postmodern ethnography is necessary.

Smith summarizes the work of several scholars who have contributed to the field of postmodern ethnography. In a parallel to the pitfall of exoticized "validation" as mentioned above, Smith explains how some postmodern ethnographic work, specifically that of anthropologist Stephen Tyler, tends to "consecrate the postcolonial subject, as adduced by the

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[64] Lynch, *Image of the City*, 119.
[65] Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall, "Writing the World from an African Metropolis," *Public Culture* 16:3 (2004): 369.
[66] M.P. Smith, *Transnational Urbanism,* 107.

ethnographer, thereby making this subject's voice into the measure of all things."[67] Not only can

the subject be paternalistically validated, then, but such a perspective can also erase contextual

and historical forces acting upon the subject. This can lead to "decontextualized" narratives, by

giving free reign to the "populist voices 'from below.'"[68] Smith discusses George Marcus and

Michael Fischer and their methodological bent, "'anthropology as cultural critique,'" which

seeks to "unearth the hybrid or recombinant possibilities of contemporary life" by studying both

accommodation and resistance.[69] "This mode of ethnography," according to Smith, "opened up

a discursive space for contextually *situated* [emphasis his] ethnographic narratives that captured

the emergent character of transnational social practices."[70] This method, then, ameliorates the

problems found in venerating the postcolonial subject as a decontextualized authority. Smith

finally synthesizes these methodological camps into his own suggestions for methods. His

preferred methodology "requires a provisionality premised on a willingness to suspend binary

thinking [...and] to critically rework the representations and intellectual constructs through which

we have come to know our cities and our world."[71] My objective resonates with this

methodological direction by striving to illuminate a contextualized representation of 116th Street

through Senegalese narratives that are not typically broadcasted. More specifically, by invoking

de Certeau's lens of tactics, I will strive to avoid the binary of "accommodating" or "resistant"

actions, further connecting my work with Smith's methodological suggestions. Overall, Smith

suggests the following: "1) thinking locally while acting globally; 2) living bifocally, i.e.

thinking transnationally while acting multilocally; and 3) thinking and acting simultaneously at

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[67] Ibid., 137.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid., 138.
[71] Ibid., 139–140.

multiple scales."[72] I attempt, to the best of my abilities, to practice this multifaceted way of thinking in investigating and analyzing the Senegalese community.

      In Smith's co-edited anthology with Luis Eduardo Guarnizo, there is an increased emphasis on the local as a critical site of postmodern ethnography. They write, "one of the main contributions of postmodern ethnography and critical theory has been the redefinition of the local as a dynamic source of alternative cosmopolitanisms and contestation."[73] Their argument resonates with Smith's individual work cited above in that both passages refer to the local as a site of potential resistance to hegemonic forces. "The challenge," according to Smith and Guarnizo, "is twofold, namely: to integrate macro- and micro-determinants into analysis, and to develop an appropriate research strategy capable of capturing the complexity of transnational processes."[74] Here we can see that the approach to transnational issues is perpetually debated – the authors are still beckoning for a cohesive and consistent research method. Perhaps this continual state of flux is fitting for a field as dynamic as transnational studies. Regardless, Smith and Guarnizo warn that "it should be kept in mind that it is impossible to study unmediated agency; structural factors are omnipresent."[75] Thus, they underline the necessity of acknowledging broader structural forces as opposed to exclusively focusing on micro-narratives. Finally, Smith and Guarnizo offer some direction for future research projects, including "comparing the consequences of neo-liberal [*sic*] policies in different places where they have been 'localized' to tease out new spaces of domination, accommodation, and resistance."[76] Though I will not be abiding by such a binary of accommodation and resistance, my project – to

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[72] Ibid., 142.
[73] Smith and Guarnizo, *Transnationalism from Below*, 11.
[74] Ibid., 24.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid., 28.

discuss Senegalese immigrants' perceptions of their neighborhood in the face of rampant gentrification – is thereby implicitly demanded.

In order to take into account Smith and Guarnizo's directions, I employed a multi-pronged research effort, stressing both the importance of theory to explain macro-structures and field research to ground my discussion in the translocal. I did not, however, "pursue a multilocational research strategy," as most contributors' to Smith and Guarnizo's volume do.[77] Because my project was devoted to the description of local dynamics acting in Little Senegal – and because my time and budget for field research was limited by my undergraduate schedule – my fieldwork was based exclusively in the ethnic enclave in Harlem. Technically speaking, my fieldwork began in August, 2013, when I wanted to share a meal with my family so that I could show them how we typically ate while studying in Senegal. Traipsing along 116th Street, scouring the various storefronts for our destination, I was struck with the overwhelming scent of Senegalese streets – an irreproducible amalgam of warm, pungent West African spices. Upon entering the restaurant, I was transported – back to the neighborhood of Point E in Dakar, back to lunch breaks from Wolof classes, back to the "plat du jour" (special of the day) cafés hidden down each side street. I do not mean "transported" in a culturally appropriative way, though; I do not want to imply that I, as a White man, was experiencing some misplaced "back to Africa" urge. Indeed, I was viscerally reminded of Senegal, but my emotional reaction was intellectually tempered. I made a commitment at that moment: I would strive to better understand how, to what extent, and why 116th Street felt like a street in Dakar.

I did not return to Little Senegal for three months, during which time I conducted secondary source research to ground my exploration in the extant literature. While engaging with the secondary sources, I prepared for my fieldwork by receiving IRB approval from Vassar.

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[77] Ibid., 26. See also M.P. Smith, *Transnational Urbanism*, 144.

 Because the Senegalese immigrant population is largely undocumented, the IRB approval process was arduous. Ultimately, we compromised so that the documented or undocumented status of the participants would not be a factor; the IRB permitted me to obtain verbal as opposed to written consent so that no names would be attached to the interviews, ensuring adequate confidentiality. There was also a clause added to the consent form that asked participants not to mention their status as documented or undocumented immigrants. This clause did not detract from my intended research because my overriding goal was to compile a portrait of the immigrant enclave, regardless of official status. Of course, the legal status of immigrants impinges on the ways in which they engage in the community, but the variable needed to be eliminated from analysis for legal reasons. This is, then, the first limitation of the study; as Smith and Guarnizo (among others) have suggested, all studies of the local should be connected with broader structural forces. Liability prevented me from addressing a major structural force – immigration legality – affecting Senegalese lives. Indeed, to secure confidentiality, I use pseudonyms in place of real names for each participant in the study. While this limits the "truth" of the Senegalese migrants' narratives, it abides by IRB regulations.

When I finally returned to Little Senegal on December 30, 2013, the first field-based research method I employed was quite informal: I walked around the neighborhood. During this initial "scoping," I contacted the Association des Sénégalais d'Amérique (Association of Senegalese in America, or ASA). Most Senegalese people suggest this immigrant association as a starting point to learn more about the ethnic enclave. I set up an appointment to meet with one of the leaders of the organization, Cheikh, who eventually became my first interviewee. As discussed with my advisors, another key access point to the community would be the restaurants lining 116th Street. Even before heading to the ASA for my appointment, I visited one of the

longest-standing Senegalese culinary establishments in the enclave. As I ate my *thu yapp*

(stewed lamb in a tomato and onion sauce with various vegetables, served with White rice), I

opened my notebook and began to write field observations of the restaurant. This admittedly

unusual behavior sparked the curiosity of the server, Ibrahima, who then asked me about my

project. During our conversation, I was able to tell him that I had studied in Dakar and Saint-

Louis for four months, establishing a common area of knowledge. He told me a little bit about

where he was from – he was born in Côte d'Ivoire, but moved to Dakar when he was three.

When I described the participatory aspect of my thesis, Ibrahima was interested and offered me

his phone number so that we could set up an interview time. With my newfound acquaintance at

the restaurant and my upcoming appointment at the ASA, I could nearly see the interview

transcripts unfolding.

     I had thought that the design of the project, elegant and simple, would speak for itself: I

wanted to conduct structured interviews, using a questionnaire based on Kevin Lynch's concept

of imageability as well as Smith's definitions of postmodern, contextualized ethnography.[78] As a

follow-up activity, I wanted to have participants draw mental maps of Little Senegal, marking

any places of personal or geographic significance, this method also modeled on Lynch's work. I

had printed my consent forms. I had translated each document into French. All I had to do was

introduce myself as a student writing a senior thesis who had studied in Dakar and Saint-Louis,

and from there, I would set up a convenient time to conduct the interview with whomever I was

speaking to.

     My confidence quickly faded as I reexamined (and re-realized) my subject position as a

White boy wandering the streets of Little Senegal with an ominous tape recorder, intimidating

consent forms, and severely limited Wolof. Relatively speaking, I had no credibility – nor

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[78] The questionnaire as well as the mental maps can be found in the Appendix.

should I have had any. Though Mitchell Duneier describes in his landmark study, *Sidewalk*, how "participant observers need not be fully trusted in order to have their presence be at least accepted," it still takes a significant amount of time to develop relationships and cultivate acceptance in a community when you are an outsider, especially when the power structure privileges you, the ethnographer.[79] This introduces another limitation of my study: time. Because I was not living in New York City and because my interviews had to take place during winter break, I only had three trips to Little Senegal to scope, make connections, take field notes, and conduct interviews. I attempted to maximize these brief visits, spending between five and six hours at a time in the neighborhood. While this was not by any means an adequate amount of time to establish deep relationships, I was able to connect with several Senegalese migrants enough to conduct eight formal interviews. The rest of my time was split between contacting each Senegalese-owned business that I could find and taking field notes at the ASA and other Senegalese establishments.

The regulations set by the IRB, while unavoidable from a legal standpoint, limited my ability to engage in casual conversations with Senegalese migrants. Some of the most informative and honest exchanges I had were "off the record" – that is, I was not able to preface the conversation with a formal description of my project in order to receive verbal consent. While these encounters will inform my discussion of the ethnic enclave, I am not permitted to officially cite or quote from them, further narrowing the emergent narratives. Based on my experience in Dakar and Saint-Louis, Senegalese ideology regarding "official" knowledge is predicated on accessibility to a much greater extent than it is in the U.S. This means that conversational norms are more informal than in the U.S. because most people are willing to share their expertise. Paul Stoller confirms this difference and resulting difficulty in his work,

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[79] Mitchell Duneier, *Sidewalk* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1999), 338.

Money Has No Smell, stating that he adopted "an unassuming research strategy" because "more invasive methods, including the use of a tape recorder, might have made [West African participants] uneasy."[80] Unfortunately, since my time was so limited, I felt the need to use a tape recorder during my formal interviews to maximize the accuracy with which I would depict the narratives. The tape recorder and IRB regulations were noticeable obstacles. For example, though I was quite literally invited to eat off a Senegalese man's lap as he waited for his son to get his hair cut, I was not able to offer him or the other patrons the consent form. Since our conversation was viewed in a casual manner, the men dictated a rich history of the neighborhood, articulating their encounter with the forces of gentrification. It would have been socially uncouth to ask them to repeat their stories on tape for my benefit.

In addition to these power dynamics, official regulations and cultural understandings, the fact remains that it was winter – people are not outside as much, which added to the difficulty of finding participants. Moreover, my limited time in New York City typically fell during the work week when people were busiest; some suggested that I return on a weekend to conduct the interview, which was unfortunately impossible due to time constraints.

In sum, my methodology demanded both theoretical contextualization as well as praxis to abide by the structure of postmodern ethnography. Before recounting the lived experiences of the residents of Little Senegal as told through structured interviews, I will historically situate the community to more fully illustrate why it exists on 116th Street today. To portray Little Senegal's urban context, it is vital to have a more holistic understanding of Harlem's history. These topics – Harlem's renaissance(s) and Little Senegal's provenance – will comprise the next chapter.

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[80] Paul Stoller, *Money Has No Smell: The Africanization of New York City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), x.

//cultivating context: a history of Little Senegal//

Though the numbers are impossible to pinpoint, the Senegalese community is unequivocally visible and dynamic, existing (in part) amidst Harlem's complexities and contradictions as a Black urban center. To fully understand the provenance of Little Senegal and to historically support the upcoming case studies, it is crucial to situate the ethnic enclave alongside its transnational ties while also emphasizing its localized presence. Through an examination of recent Senegalese immigration, the stage will be set for a more detailed discussion of the Senegalese community's dispersal throughout New York City. This narrative will be coupled with snapshots of Harlem's history, for it is no accident that the Senegalese community ended up in New York's historic Black neighborhood.

//contemporary Senegalese immigration//

The community deserves closer scrutiny and more of an academic spotlight. Population figures on the Senegalese community in this neighborhood and in New York City at large are unconfirmed – estimates range between 2,000 and 20,000.[81] It is likely, because of the high number of undocumented Senegalese immigrants, that the larger estimate is more accurate. Thus, there is an immigrant community in the tens of thousands that remains on the margins of academic literature. Though this thesis intentionally focuses on the urban experience of Senegalese immigrants rather than immigration policy and practice, it is necessary to, at the very least, provide a background of demographics and contemporary laws regarding immigration. For this background, three edited volumes regarding recent immigration to New York will be used as points of departure, with updated information provided when necessary.

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[81] Stephanie Linning, "Harlem's Little Senegal Struggles with Change," *Columbia Journalist,* December 21, 2012.

The first, Nancy Foner's *New Immigrants in New York*, explains how immigration policy in the second half of the twentieth century allowed for more African emigrants to "legally" arrive in the United States. In their contributed essay "Immigration to New York: Policy, Population, and Patterns," Ellen Percy Kraly and Ines Miyares begin with formal definitions of the terms "immigrant" and "nonimmigrant." According to their definitions, an "immigrant" is someone "who [is] legally admitted with an immigrant visa to the United States for permanent resident status" as opposed to a "non-immigrant" who is "admitted on [a] temporary visa for specific purposes for a defined period."[82] Tourists and people traveling on business are included in this second category and "are usually authorized to remain in the United States for six months before an extension of stay is required."[83] Though Kraly and Miyares concede that the length of nonimmigrants' stays "may be significant, often several years," I find the term problematic in that it obscures the inarguable permanence of many of these migrants.[84] For rhetorical clarity, immigrant and nonimmigrant will be used herein, but not with wholehearted support of the categorical definitions.

In 1965, the landscape of U.S. immigration policy radically changed. As Kraly and Miyares explain, "the 1965 amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act represented a dramatic shift in policy. The principle of national origins as a basis for selecting immigrants was explicitly rejected. Instead, immigrant visas were to be issued on a first-come, first-served basis according to the visa preference system."[85] The visa preference system set up criteria to privilege certain applications for admission to the U.S., either family-sponsored preferences

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[82] Ellen Percy Kraly and Ines Miyares, "Immigration to New York: Policy, Population, and Patterns," in *New Immigrants in New York*, ed. Nancy Foner (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 35.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid., 37.

(allowing for the reunification of families in the U.S.) or employment-based preferences.[86] In

1990, the Immigration Act added another category to the previously established system of

preferences called "diversity" immigrants.[87] Kraly and Miyares illustrate how visas issued under

the "diversity" clause make "55,000 permanent resident visas available by lottery to

[immigrants] from countries with low immigration rates."[88] This total has been reduced to

50,000 in recent years.[89]

Subsequently – though there were other causes – "the number of black Americans born in

sub-Saharan Africa nearly tripled during the 1990s," as John R. Logan illuminates.[90] In the

introduction to that same volume, *The Other African Americans*, Yoku Shaw-Taylor explains

that 28 percent of African immigrants who came to the U.S. between 1990 and 1998 arrived

because of a diversity visa.[91] There are endless statistics that enrich this portrait of a growing

tide of Africans migrating to the U.S. Kwado Konadu-Agyemang and Baffour K. Takyi offer a

compelling description of the shifting demographics in the introduction to their edited volume,

The New African Diaspora in North America, on which they collaborated with John A. Arthur.

According to the Department of Justice statistics that they cite, only 47,140 Africans immigrated

to the U.S. between 1841 and 1960, an average of 396 per year.[92] This trend was upended by the

diversity visa allotment – in just four years, between 1995 and 1998, "184,000 Africans were

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[86] Ibid., 38.
[87] Ibid., 38–39.
[88] Ibid., 39.
[89] "DV 2014 – Selected Entrants," U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, accessed April 20, 2014, http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/immigrate/diversity-visa/dv2014-selected-entrants.html
[90] John R. Logan, "Who Are the Other African Americans? Contemporary African and Caribbean Immigrants in the United States," in *The Other African Americans: Contemporary African and Caribbean Immigrants in the United States*, ed. Yoku Shaw-Taylor and Steven A. Tuch (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 49.
[91] Yoku Shaw-Taylor, "The Intersection of Assimilation, Race, Presentation of Self, and Transnationalism in America," in *The Other African Americans: Contemporary African and Caribbean Immigrants in the United States*, ed. Yoku Shaw-Taylor and Steven A. Tuch (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 9.
[92] Kwado Konadu-Agyemang and Baffour K. Takyi, "An Overview of African Immigration to U.S. and Canada," in *The New African Diaspora in North America: Trends, Community Building, and Adaptation*, ed. Kwado Konadu-Agyemang et al. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 3.

admitted to the U.S. as legal immigrants," representing "about 6 percent of all immigrants admitted over the four-year period."[93] At the time that *The New African Diaspora in North America* was published in 2006, it was estimated "that African immigrants in the U.S. amount[ed] to over 500,000 and represent[ed] 2 to 3 percent of the immigrant population."[94] Evidently, the diversity visa program significantly augmented the number of Africans migrating to the United States.

Included in those countries defined as having low immigration rates is Senegal. Especially for a country like Senegal that sends hundreds, not thousands, of documented immigrants with residential permits to the U.S. each year, the program contributes a noteworthy amount of visas. Indeed, the diversity visa program is remarkably visible in Senegal, specifically in the capital city of Dakar. While living with my host family in the Ouakam neighborhood of Dakar, on many afternoons I would stroll past a booth with an American flag emblazoned on its banner, advertising applications for the diversity visa program. While statistics are not available for the number of Senegalese admitted specifically under the auspices of this allotment, the immigrant data confirms that there has been an uptick in Senegalese arrivals. For lack of a more accurate source, I turned to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) – which, needless to say, has an inevitably xenophobic slant to its policies and reporting – for statistics on contemporary Senegalese immigration. According to the DHS, in 2003, only 522 Senegalese citizens obtained permanent legal status in the U.S., while in 2012, 1,615 Senegalese garnered permanent visas – the total increased threefold.[95] 537, or 33 percent, of these 1,615 immigrants listed the New York City metropolitan area as their destination, also known as the Core-Based

[93] Ibid., 4.
[94] Ibid., 4.
[95] "Table 3: Persons Obtaining Legal Permanent Resident Status by Region and Country of Birth: Fiscal Years 2003 to 2012," Department of Homeland Security, Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, 2012, https://www.dhs.gov/yearbook-immigration-statistics-2012-legal-permanent-residents.

Statistical Area, which includes northern New Jersey and Long Island.[96] In other words,

approximately a third of all documented Senegalese immigrants either resided or planned to live

in the New York City area. This figure represents about 4 percent of the total number of African

immigrants who received their legal status in 2012 while residing in or near New York City.[97]

The DHS also lists the number of Senegalese immigrants who received their American

citizenships, or were "naturalized." In 2003, only 274 Senegalese were granted citizenship,

while in 2012, the number increased to 790.[98] Of these 790, 176 were in the metro area of New

York, which was the highest concentration out of all metropolitan regions listed (other than the

'unknown' category).[99]

The statistics increase dramatically when looking at the "nonimmigrant" or non-resident

visa admissions to the U.S. Each year, approximately 10,000 Senegalese arrive in the U.S. with

temporary visas but, as mentioned above, may stay for much longer. In 2012 alone, 9,824

Senegalese disembarked in the U.S.[100] Unfortunately, the DHS does not disaggregate this data

by region, revealing its tendency to focus on and encourage only documented avenues of

immigration. Therefore, I cannot say how many of these thousands of Senegalese settled in New

York City, let alone in Little Senegal, the neighborhood being currently addressed. Kraly and

Miyares indicate such difficulties of immigration research. They explain how the often nebulous

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[96] "Supplemental Table 2: Persons Obtaining Legal Permanent Resident Status by Leading Core Based Statistical Areas (CBSAs) of Residence and Region and Country of Birth: Fiscal Year 2012," Department of Homeland, Security Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, 2012, https://www.dhs.gov/yearbook-immigration-statistics-2012-legal-permanent-residents.

[97] Ibid.

[98] "Table 21: Persons Naturalized by Region and Country of Birth: Fiscal Years 2003-2012," Department of Homeland Security, Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, 2012, https://www.dhs.gov/yearbook-immigration-statistics-2012-naturalizations.

[99] "Supplemental Table 2: Naturalizations by Leading Core Based Statistical Areas (CBSAs) of Residence and Region and Country of Birth: Fiscal Year 2012," Department of Homeland Security, Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, 2012, https://www.dhs.gov/yearbook-immigration-statistics-2012-naturalizations.

[100] "Table 26: Nonimmigrant Admissions (I-94 Only) by Region and Country of Citizenship: Fiscal Years 2003-2012." Department of Homeland Security, Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, 2012. https://www.dhs.gov/yearbook-immigration-statistics-2012-nonimmigrant-admissions

boundaries of metropolitan areas, the process of distinguishing new arrivals from adjustments of legal status, the elusive data on out-migration, and the ambiguous role of undocumented or "temporary" immigrants all coalesce to obscure a holistic portrait of immigrant data.[101]

This does not mean that the Senegalese people who have immigrated to the U.S. with a time-limited visa should simply be ignored in demographic data (e.g. the low estimate of only 2,000 Senegalese immigrants living in New York). The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) passed in Congress in 1986 authorized "legalization for [undocumented residents] who could prove they had resided in the United States continually, although without appropriate visas, since January 1, 1982."[102] The contentious implication of this bill was, evidently, to incentivize undocumented immigrants to stay in the United States long enough to procure legal resident status. IRCA, however, also introduced a fine for employers "who hire immigrants without documentation."[103] The legislation thus elicits criticism from opposing camps. Paul Stoller illuminates the debate quite succinctly: "Advocates of immigrant rights, on the one hand, claimed that IRCA discriminated against undocumented workers. Nativist groups opposed to immigration suggested that IRCA employer sanctions would be hard to enforce [and] that recently arrived undocumented immigrants could easily produce papers, however bogus."[104] Such a policy underlines the ethical importance of recognizing, dignifying and including undocumented immigrants in any study of migration patterns. It is shortsighted to focus only on the 537 Senegalese immigrants who gained or arrived with permanent legal status in New York City in 2012. If the same proportion of Senegalese nonimmigrants as immigrants chose New York City as their destination in 2012, then approximately 3,242 undocumented people may

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[101] Kraly and Miyares, "Immigration to New York," 45.
[102] Ibid., 40.
[103] Stoller, *Money Has No Smell*, 106.
[104] Ibid.

have settled in the metropolitan area. This would indicate a possible accumulation of tens of thousands of Senegalese in the region over the past several years, potentially surpassing even the higher estimate of 20,000 Senegalese in New York City.

//navigating New York//

Immigration policy alone does not explain how the Senegalese community appeared at 116th Street in Harlem. A confluence of demographic shifts and political interventions motivated the formation of the immigrant enclave. Ousmane Oumar Kane describes the various factors that contributed to the creation of a Senegalese community in his book, *The Homeland is the Arena*. Kane's work is crucial for multiple reasons, chief among them the fact that his is the only book devoted solely to the discussion of Senegalese immigrants in New York City. There are, however, two other key works that more generally describe the West African presence in New York, Paul Stoller's *Money Has No Smell* and Zain Abdullah's *Black Mecca*. Each of these three books serves to situate the contemporary West African population in New York demographically, politically, and culturally and thus fundamentally inform my study. Moreover – and more importantly – each of these books characterizes the West African enclave as a continuous phenomenon rather than an endangered space, an argument that I will temper and adjust through an analysis of eight interviews in the following chapter.

Before presenting an updated and subsequently alternative portrait of the gentrified ethnic enclave, it is first necessary to delve into these three works. One of the most central ways in which Kane's book impacts my project is his definition of an "'ethnic enclave'" as "an environment in the host society, which co-ethnics can claim as their own because of the overwhelming presence of most vital service providers that make the migrant feel at home including ethnic-friendly housing, grocery shops, places of worship, schools for religious

education, cultural centers, entertainment places, and restaurants."[105] Thus, Kane employs the

concept developed by Light and Gold, as referenced in my theoretical framework. In this

passage, Kane essentially asserts the cultural significance of Little Senegal – and of similar

ethnic enclaves – and thereby invites more scholarly attention.

Kane also explains the history of the Senegalese presence in Harlem and, more broadly,

in New York City. He begins by offering the reasons for which New York City is a favorable

place for immigration, specifically that it is a "'majority minority city.'"[106] In other words, "the

racial diversity and the high percentage of New Yorkers with foreign connections make the city a

relatively friendly place for immigrants."[107] As discussed above, national immigration policy

since 1965 allowed for New York City to become a place where, by 1998, a third of the

population was foreign-born, a level that had not been reached since the early twentieth

century.[108] Despite the fact that, according to Kane, "the local governments of the city of New

York provide a whole range of social services to impoverished communities, including

immigrants," he also provides a more holistic portrait of how difficult it is to integrate into a host

society and navigate institutional prejudices.[109] When Senegalese immigration to the U.S. first

began in earnest during the 1980s, "Senegalese and other West African street vendors began to

set up tables to sell various goods on the sidewalks in front of expensive stores and office

buildings in Lower Manhattan."[110] Stoller describes how these early Senegalese migrants

"continued their operations outside the regulatory aegis of New York City […] By 1985, scores

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[105] Oumar Ousmane Kane, *The Homeland is the Arena: Religion, Transnationalism, and the Integration of Senegalese Immigrants in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 58.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid., 59.
[108] Nancy Foner, "Introduction: New Immigrants in a New New York," in *New Immigrants in New York*, ed. Nancy Foner (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 1.
[109] Kane, *The Homeland is the Arena,* 59.
[110] Ibid., 64.

of Senegalese had set up tables in front of some of 5th Avenue's most expensive stores."[111]

Established merchants in the community were upset by this emerging West African commercial

corridor; then-Mayor Edward Koch responded to these complaints by forcing the Senegalese to

move to less expensive neighborhoods.[112] To put it succinctly: "In 1985, the police drove [West

African merchants] from New York City's most prestigious space."[113]

This cycle repeated itself, resulting in a repetitive displacement of Senegalese merchants

until they settled at 125th Street in Harlem.[114] 125th Street, a commercial artery of the historically

Black neighborhood, "had always been friendlier toward street vendors than most other places in

Manhattan, [partly] because of Harlem's long history of African American street vending,

religious proselytizing, and soapbox speech making *[sic]*."[115] Moreover, there was less of a

threat of authoritarian crackdowns in Harlem. Stoller includes an excerpt of an interview with

Boubé Mounkaila, a merchant from Niger, to illustrate this point. Stoller quotes Mounkaila

saying, "'I miss the money that I could earn in midtown, but I don't miss the police pressure.

When I was there, I also missed the camaraderie of brother Africans.'"[116] Thus, Mounkaila

articulates some of the benefits reaped from the move to Harlem.

The move to Harlem demands an investigation of the historical context of the

neighborhood. Not surprisingly, Harlem's image as a Black destination in the early to mid-

twentieth century was only popularized after Black Americans in New York experienced a

similar cycle of displacements. Jonathan Gill presents a historical narrative to contextualize the

Black presence in Harlem. "By the end of the nineteenth century," Gill explains, "twenty-

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[111] Stoller, *Money Has No Smell,* 88.
[112] Kane, *The Homeland is the Arena,* 64.
[113] Stoller, *Money Has No Smell,* 129.
[114] Kane, *The Homeland is the Arena,* 64–65.
[115] Ibid., 65.
[116] Stoller, *Money Has No Smell*, 93.

thousand African-Americans were living in what is today Chelsea and Hell's Kitchen," coping with squalid living conditions.[117] The move from these downtown neighborhoods to the northern reaches of Manhattan was spurred by several factors. Construction of the subway line inspired real estate speculation, a characteristically American recipe for financial ruin.[118] As if sticking to the preordained script of speculation, White developers – who had invested in the neighborhood by building luxury apartments – failed to attract tenants because of a national financial crisis. Gill recounts the rest of this commonly told tale: "The story then goes that [the] crisis from 1904 to 1907 was taken for an opportunity by a black realtor named Philip Payton, whose idea of filling empty apartments with Negroes was as financially successful as it was racially progressive."[119] In her introduction to *Harlem on My Mind,* Candace van Ellison echoes this narrative by cataloguing the setting for the Black settlement of Harlem, writing about how "financial institutions no longer made loans to Harlem speculators, mortgages were foreclosed, the land depreciated, and prices lowered. These conditions of ruin created the proper atmosphere for Black settlement in Harlem."[120] In *The Making of the Gay Male World*, George Chauncey asserts that the "construction of Pennsylvania Station" contributed to this uptown migration as well because Black people "were being forced out of their old neighborhood in the West Thirties."[121]

Despite the seemingly perfect combination of push and pull factors, the Black occupation of Harlem would not have occurred without the coalescence of a few crucial external circumstances. Even before Payton incorporated his new Afro-American Realty, a fatal squabble

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[117] Jonathan Gill, *Harlem: The Four Hundred Year History from Dutch Village to Capital of Black America* (New York: Grove Press, 2011), 171–172. See also Candace van Ellison, Introduction to *Harlem on My Mind: Cultural Capital of Black America, 1908-1968,* ed. Allon Schoener (New York: Random House, 1968).

[118] Ibid., 171.

[119] Ibid.

[120] van Ellison, Introduction to *Harlem on My Mind*.

[121] George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890 – 1940* (New York: BasicBooks, 1994), 245.

sounded the alarm for Black people to move uptown. The conflict occurred in the Tenderloin district when, during an evening stroll, a Black man named Arthur Harris briefly departed from his girlfriend in search of a cigar.[122] When he returned, he saw a White man aggressively propositioning his girlfriend.[123] Harris became incensed and took hold of the man, who happened to be a plainclothes cop.[124] The confrontation quickly escalated to the point where the cop, Policeman Thorpe, struck Harris and then Harris retaliated with two quick jabs with a pocketknife.[125] As the *New York Tribune* reported, "not wanting to get locked up, [Harris] got on a train and went to Washington."[126] The authorities eventually found him, and "it was not until after he had been put in a cell that he was told of the officer's death."[127] This seemingly marginal tale was "a turning point," according to Gill.[128] It incited mass riots in the neighborhood and, coupled with Jacob Riis' *How the Other Half Lives*, made Black people aware of more tranquil living situations uptown.[129] With "vacancy rates in black neighborhoods elsewhere in Manhattan [dropping] to the extraordinarily low rate of 3 percent by 1914," Black New Yorkers had every reason to relocate to Harlem.[130]

If not for the Great Migration, these external factors still may not have motivated the creation of an entire neighborhood that, by the 1930s and 40s, was almost exclusively Black. At the time of the Policeman Thorpe and Arthur Harris incident, there were an estimated 35,000 Black people in Manhattan, compared to the total population of 1,950,000.[131] *Harper's Weekly* did not find such figures to be anything more than negligible; apparently, two percent of the

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[122] "Policeman's Murderer Arrested," *New York Tribune*, August 17, 1900, in *Harlem on My Mind*, 19.
[123] Ibid. See also Gill, *Harlem: The Four Hundred Year History*, 172.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Gill, *Harlem: A Four Hundred Year History,* 172.
[129] Ibid., 174.
[130] Ibid., 184.
[131] "The Negro in New York," *Harper's Weekly,* December 22, 1900, in *Harlem on My Mind,* 21.

population did not merit "any race feeling."[132] It became more difficult, however, to ignore the

waves of incoming Black people from the South, a mass movement that would later be deemed

the Great Migration. Though the process began long before 1917, the *New York World* reported

on November 5 of that year that 118,000 Black people had migrated over the course of the past

12 months.[133] Not all of those 118,000 settled in New York City, but such numbers (including

those emigrating from the Caribbean) imply an accumulation that undeniably augmented the

Black population of Manhattan.[134] The Great Migration, then, provided the human capital for a

citywide migration toward Harlem.

Predictably, White residents of Harlem – many of whom were immigrants themselves –

were less than pleased about their new neighbors. Gill notes that "organizations such as the Save

Harlem Committee, Anglo-Saxon Realty, and the Protective Association for 130th to 132nd

Streets all fought to keep Harlem white."[135] These efforts were, of course, in vain, as "the

conversion of Harlem into a Black neighborhood in the years before World War I was something

that no one man could achieve or prevent."[136] Gill also explains how uptown landlords became

enticed at the prospect of overcharging Black people for rent, a phenomenon that actually finds

its roots in Philip Payton's real estate practices. The *New York Times* described this trend, telling

the "story of how Charles Klein of 164 St. Nicholas Avenue […] had altered a quiet residential

section of Harlem by turning nine apartment houses into one-room lodgings for Negroes who

paid $100 and $125 for apartments that formerly rented for $40."[137] Evidently, this was amoral,

but the reported ethical outcry was based on the influx of Black people into the neighborhood

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[132] Ibid.
[133] "118,000 Negroes Move from the South," *New York World*, November 5, 1917, in *Harlem on My Mind*, 29.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Gill, *Harlem: A Four Hundred Year History*, 182.
[136] Ibid., 184.
[137] "Landlord Brings in Negroes to Get High Rents," *New York Times*, January 27, 1920, in *Harlem on My Mind: Cultural Capital of Black America*, 51.

rather than the discriminatory real estate practices.[138] The *Times* ran this story on January 27,

1920, but it was barely news by that point – "the expiration of many racial housing covenants in

1904 [had already] doomed block-by-block resistance to the arrival of African-Americans."[139]

80 years later, Harlem has presented its own set of problems for the Senegalese

community as they engage with the Black American residents. Such conflicts are sometimes

spurred by debates over the right to vending space.[140] Indeed, the diaspora of Senegalese

immigrants around the boroughs of New York City strained relations with various New Yorkers.

In the Bronx specifically, an emerging and visible West African community along Webster

Avenue has caused conflicts with locals, especially between emigrants and Black American

residents of the neighborhood.[141] Similar tensions have flared in Harlem, though not to such an

extent as to elicit media attention. In *Black Mecca*, Zain Abdullah provides first-hand

descriptions and quotes Harlem residents about the underlying friction between Black West

Africans and Black Americans. He describes one specific instance of a fight outside of a salon

between two women, one Black and one West African, and the ensuing social commentary from

two Harlem residents who blame the quarrel on cultural differences.[142] Interestingly, Abdullah

proceeds to clarify how "cultural differences in and of themselves do not create boundaries,

forcing people to see themselves as separate or distinct. What creates and maintains a divide is

the social importance or cultural meanings people attach to these differences."[143] In other words,

the cultural differences between Black West Africans and Black Americans are not

insurmountable, but the connotations of certain cultural characteristics prove divisive. Thus, the

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[138] Ibid.

[139] Gill, *Harlem: A Four Hundred Year History*, 181.

[140] Kane, *The Homeland is the Arena,* 66.

[141] Sam Dolnick, "For African Immigrants, Bronx Culture Clash Turns Violent," *New York Times,* October 19, 2009.

[142] Zain Abdullah, *Black Mecca: The African Muslims of Harlem* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 48–49.

[143] Ibid., 49.

integration of Senegalese emigrants – and, more broadly, West Africans – into various New York neighborhoods has by no means been seamless.

//decline and disinvestment//

The contentious and marginal presence in Harlem of Senegalese immigrants (and Senegalese vendors in particular) begs additional questions regarding the off-limits nature of the neighborhood. Harlem has been historically a more impoverished neighborhood due to structurally oppressive forces. The living conditions of the Black population in the early to mid-twentieth century were difficult to believe. Central Harlem's population had increased to 200,000 by 1929, with Black residents comprising almost 97 percent of that total.[144] Gill quotes Langston Hughes in saying that the "'Ordinary Negroes hadn't heard of the Negro Renaissance.'"[145] Even before the Great Depression, poverty was a reality for many Black residents of Harlem. Gill explains how, "in the 1930s, well before the uptown economy hit bottom, only 15 percent of Harlemites could be considered middle class."[146] The *Amsterdam News* echoed that sentiment, writing, "not even in the days of the 'golden era,' sometimes called the 'renaissance,' was Harlem on a sound economic or political footing."[147]

Two riots, separated by eight years, erupted out of the frustration over these inequitable conditions. The *New York Times* described the first riot, which occurred on March 19, 1935 – it started after Lino Rivera, a 16-year-old Puerto Rican adolescent, was caught shoplifting from the "notoriously racist" S. H. Kress five-and-ten.[148] Rumors of police brutality against Rivera

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[144] Gill, *Harlem: A Four Hundred Year History*, 281.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Ibid., 283.
[147] Julius J. Adams, "Harlem Must Share Riot Blame," *Amsterdam News,* August 7, 1943, in *Harlem on My Mind,* 178.
[148] "Troops Guard Harlem: Mayor Pleads for Peace," *New York Times*, March 21, 1935, in *Harlem on My Mind*, 133. See also Gill, *Harlem: A Four Hundred Year History,* 303.

swirled madly, inspiring rampant looting of Harlem stores.[149] Though the *Times* reported that

only one person was killed, Gill corrects the historical record: "three blacks had been killed,

more than two hundred people were injured—including eight police officers—and more than one

hundred were arrested."[150] The *Amsterdam News* published a long-awaited report by the

Mayor's Commission that convened to investigate the riots. In the report, the painfully usual

suspects emerged – "long-felt hostility to the police, resentment at the inability to get economic

opportunities in the midst of plenty, were some of the reasons for the rioting," as summarized by

the *Amsterdam News*.[151] Even though prominent community activist Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.

patiently illustrated the "wall of subtle prejudice, veiled discrimination and faintly concealed

antagonism" that undergirded the riot, Gill explains that "nothing less than a social restructuring

that took into account labor, housing, schools, and health care could prevent" another uprising.[152]

Such an incident arrived with the infamous riots of 1943, which mark what Gill calls "a

point of no return" for Harlem.[153] The *New York Post* ran the story on August 2, 1943,

describing an altercation between a Black military policeman, Private Robert Bandy, and a

White cop, Patrolman James Collins.[154] Collins was attempting to arrest a prostitute at the

Braddock Hotel, and Bandy intervened; Bandy's subsequent arrest incited a riot that many –

including Langston Hughes himself – had already predicted.[155] The riot was more massive than

the last – at press time for the *Post*, "forty policemen and 155 civilians were listed by police as

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[149] Ibid.
[150] "Troops Guard Harlem," *New York Times,* in *Harlem on My Mind,* 132; Gill, *Harlem: A Four Hundred Year History,* 304.
[151] "Riot Report that Mayor Hid," *Amsterdam News*, July 18, 1936, in *Harlem on My Mind*, 144.
[152] Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., "Powell Says Men Can't Get Jobs," *New York Post*, March 27, 1935, in *Harlem on My Mind,* 134; Gill, *Harlem: A Four Hundred Year History,* 304.
[153] Gill, *Harlem: A Four Hundred Year History*, 329.
[154] "195 Hurt, 500 Held in Looting," *New York Post,* August 2, 1943, in *Harlem on My Mind,* 176.
[155] Ibid.

injured," while the ultimate total was closer to seven hundred casualties.[156] Gill reports that "six people were killed, all black, five of them shot by police."[157] Nevertheless, the *Post* quoted then-Mayor La Guardia asserting, "'this is not a race riot.'"[158] During the riot, "only stores owned by white persons were looted," according to *Invisible Man* author Ralph Ellison, who was on the scene.[159] Evidently, as a White Italian-American, Mayor La Guardia had the privilege to erase the racial component of the evening's tumult. Even the *Amsterdam News*, a less radical Black newspaper, ran a column by Julius J. Adams in which he admitted an understanding of "the fundamental causes that make such an affair as that which occurred last Sunday night and Monday morning possible."[160] Thus, years of continual struggle in the face of systematic racism manifested themselves in the riots.

Change could not come quickly enough to Harlem, which throughout the twentieth-century began to lose its alluring popular image as a Black haven and instead emerged as a neighborhood to avoid at all costs. Gill details demographic shifts, explaining, "between 1952 and 1965 the city lost almost ninety-thousand manufacturing jobs, which had been a key source of economic stability uptown."[161] In fact, "more than one out of every seven Harlemites was jobless, which was twice the figure for New York City as a whole."[162] Physical destruction matched deplorable social conditions with the arrival of aggressive of modernist solutions to urban squalor. New York City urban planner (and de facto czar) Robert Moses introduced housing projects, which then excluded exactly those residents who had been displaced by

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[156] Ibid., 175. See also Gill, *Harlem: A Four Hundred Year History*, 330 – 331.
[157] Gill, *Harlem: A Four Hundred Year History*, 331.
[158] "195 Hurt, 500 Held in Looting," in *Harlem on My Mind,* 175.
[159] Ibid., 177.
[160] Adams, "Harlem Must Share Riot Blame," in *Harlem on My Mind,* 177.
[161] Gill, *Harlem: A Four Hundred Year History*, 354.
[162] Ibid., 357.

construction.[163] "Urban renewal, the saying went, meant Negro removal," writes Gill, "though things were more complicated than that: the city actually steered black applicants toward projects in Harlem and White applicants elsewhere."[164] These urban conditions provided the backdrop for continued violent protests in Harlem, not to mention what are known as the "'quiet riots'" of the "rise in poverty, population loss, and deteriorating health statistics."[165] During Mayor Ed Koch's tenure, "the one-two punch of abandonment and arson meant that [by] 1990 the city had been forced to take control of some one thousand buildings in central Harlem."[166]

Therefore, it seems prejudicial – if not downright racist – that the successive mayors of New York would continue to push for the relocation of the Senegalese community until they settled in a neighborhood that had been condemned and shunned by most. Indeed, Stoller confirms the marginal status of West African immigrants in Harlem when he writes of the "multiple invisibilities" they face.[167] In describing a merchant under the pseudonym of Issifi, a man who grew up in Niger and Côte d'Ivoire, Stoller explains how Issifi "is one of thousands of black men who blend into the background of Harlem."[168] The coalescence of various factors – abandonment, disinvestment, poverty, and real estate takeovers – paved the way for what is now recognizable as the contemporary gentrification of Harlem.

//gentrified corridors//

The official condemnation of informal Senegalese commercial activities came with the election of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, an event Kane describes as sounding "the death knell for

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[163] Ibid., 359. See also Anthony Flint, *Wrestling with Moses: How Jane Jacobs Took on New York's Master Builder and Transformed the American City* (New York: Random House, 2009).
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid., 410.
[166] Ibid., 420.
[167] Stoller, *Money Has No Smell,* 6.
[168] Ibid.

the African illegal market in Harlem."[169] When Giuliani unilaterally "banned unlicensed street

vending on 125th Street," he paved the way for the contemporary commercial corridor we now

see on 116th Street.[170] This is because vendors responded in myriad ways, and one method of

coping with Giuliani's new law was to move to the Malcolm Shabazz Market on 116th Street, a

marketplace associated with and partly administered by the Sunni Malcolm Shabazz Mosque.[171]

Stoller illuminates how "city hall and the Masjid [Malcolm Shabazz Mosque] came to an

agreement about the new market," deciding "to split the vendor rent thirty-seventy. City hall

also elected to recognize the 'legality' of the vendors."[172] "In many respects," writes Stoller,

"the market [at 125th Street] reproduced markets in West Africa. There were no formally

assigned market stalls and no one paid a fee for market space."[173] This assertion, however, needs

to be nuanced. My understanding of Senegalese market spaces that I developed during my

semester abroad does not correspond with the claim that West African markets are completely

informal. Quite the contrary: while markets in Dakar do not abide by a Western notion of order,

there is a complex system of rules and a great deal of permanence that define the vending model.

The former stalls and salespeople at 125th Street most likely resembled those in West Africa

because they followed a more *indigenous* – not informal or impermanent – model of selling

goods.

It is clear, then, how Senegalese vendors exercised agency within the bounds of the strict

neoliberal climate of 1990s New York City. While the move to 116th could be touted as an

example of collaboration between city officials and marginalized immigrants, Stoller explains

how "most of the West African traders […] seemed like powerless pawns in the chess game of

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[169] Kane, *The Homeland is the Arena*, 66.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Stoller, *Money Has No Smell,* 94.
[173] Ibid., 134.

New York City's cultural politics."[174] After all, the Harlem Business Alliance and the Harlem

Urban Development Corporation both endorsed the move away from indigenous vending on

125th Street toward a more official model at the Malcom Shabazz Market. But, as Stoller deftly

illustrates, the story is not one of unilateral disapproval for the move to 116th Street, as "some

Senegalese, most notably those well established in various businesses, supported the move of the

market to 116th Street," while others "opposed the mayor's crackdown."[175] This is an early

example of the employment of tactics in the Senegalese expatriate community.

Several popular news sources have detailed the Senegalese cooperation with the

government to move the market, which resonated with the larger gentrification strategy.[176]

According to "a Malian vendor" that Stoller interviewed, "the move to 116th Street was nothing

more than a plot to profit the Masjid Malcolm Shabazz and its putative Senegalese cohorts."[177]

Some went as far as to suggest that, after a year, "'the Masjid will have gotten enough money to

build a new mosque on the site.'"[178] The question on many merchants' minds was all too clear:

"'What will happen to us then?'"[179]

The forcible removal of the informal African market from 125th Street and its

reincarnation as the city-condoned Malcolm Shabazz Market at 116th Street signified the

gentrification of the 125th Street corridor in Harlem. Stoller explains the process by which this

happened:

> The inclusion of Harlem in a Federal Empowerment Zone, the agenda of the Harlem
> business and political establishment, brought in $300 million in federal, state, and city

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[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid., 122.
[176] See Portia Crowe, "In Little Senegal, a Shrinking Business Community," *Northattan*, October 8, 2013, http://northattan.com/2013/10/08/in-little-senegal-a-shrinking-business-community/. See also Sabine Cessou, "Little Sénégal: La Communauté Qui Fait Bouger Harlem," *SlateAfrique,* July 28, 2011, http://www.slateafrique.com/14205/new-york-little-senegal-la-communaute-qui-fait-bouger-harlem.
[177] Stoller, *Money Has No Smell*, 134.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid.

funds earmarked for economic expansion. The availability of these considerable funds helped to trigger the corporatization of 125th Street—both the Body Shop and Haagen-Daaz, for example, have opened stores on the 'One Twenty Five.'[180]

As a consequence, "rents have soared, and some of the small businesses that struggled through the lean years have been squeezed. Others are unsure if the influx of money will benefit or harm them."[181]

This is not the first time, however, that White arrivistes have come to Harlem. George Chauncey explains that "Harlem's elegant and lively nightlife […] made it the Paris of New York [in the early twentieth century], one of the city's most popular entertainment districts."[182] Shane Vogel, in his work *The Scene of Harlem Cabaret*, summarizes the factors that contributed to this aspect of Harlem's identity: "Growing White and corporate interest in and engagement with black music and culture, postwar economic expansion, and the relocation of vice, along with the advance of the speakeasy during National Prohibition converged to make Harlem an entertainment district."[183] Race figured prominently into the question of who had access to which clubs. Ironically, in the heart of what was already a "black metropolis unlike anything America had seen before," some establishments barred Black people from entering, the proprietors bent on creating predominantly White clubs.[184] Vogel specifies that "two of Harlem's largest, upscale, primarily segregated cabarets [were] the Cotton Club […] and Connie's Inn."[185]

The booming nightlife invited the practice of "slumming," when White residents of downtown trekked to Harlem in pursuit of "authentic" pleasures. Chauncey explains how "the

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[180] Ibid., 139–140.
[181] Ibid., 140.
[182] Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 246.
[183] Shane Vogel, *The Scene of Harlem Cabaret: Race, Sexuality, Performance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 2.
[184] Chauncey, *Gay New York,* 246.
[185] Vogel, *The Scene of Harlem Cabaret*, 66.

liquor and sensational floor shows available at Harlem's clubs attracted White visitors."[186]

Slumming was so widespread that the *Sunday News* published a guide to terminology that White

people would encounter in Harlem's speakeasies. Among the 32 definitions provided, notable

expressions included "funkey *[sic]*, the odor of perspiration," "passing […] the act of a colored

person passing for White," and "honey man […] a man who is kept by a woman."[187] Chad Heap

describes the practice and how it was, in many cases, motivated by a White obsession with

otherness and, more specifically, queerness. Heap illuminates how the "atmosphere of black

queer amusements" attracted a White crowd that was "hoping to skirt the post-Prohibition

regulations that had halted the proceedings of the pansy and lesbian craze in White entertainment

districts of Chicago and New York."[188] These slummers can be characterized as "jaded White

heterosexual thrill seekers who longed for the latest in urban adventure."[189] The visitors, then,

embodied racial and as well as heteronormative dominance, exercising their social mobility in

order to observe and peripherally participate in a culture distinct from their own. Eventually, "an

increasing desire for more 'authentic' black nightlife […] meant more informal and explicitly

sexualized entertainment that drew on stereotypes of black primitivism and sensuality."[190] But

these slummers at the "cabarets and small after-hours clubs in Harlem where blacks

predominated" were by no means the norm, as Chauncey clarifies.[191] Instead, events such as the

acclaimed Hamilton Lodge ball attracted hordes of visitors – both White slummers and Black

residents.

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[186] Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 246.
[187] Frank Dolan, "'Speaks' Whoop After Clubs Pipe Down," *Sunday News,* November 3, 1929, in *Harlem on My Mind*, 85.
[188] Chad Heap, *Slumming: Sexual and Racial Encounters in American Nightlife, 1885-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 255.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Ibid.
[191] Chauncey, *Gay New York,* 246.

Slumming can be seen as the precursor to contemporary gentrification in the way that it forwarded a frontier mentality like Neil Smith describes in *The New Urban Frontier* (see theoretical framework). White middle- to upper-class folks festishized Harlem as the exotic edge of the metropolis – this is undeniably similar to how real estate developers are bussed up to Harlem to speculate today. When the West African vendors moved to officially condoned stalls at the Malcolm Shabazz Market, they became a part of the strategic project to gentrify that particular Harlem corridor. The Senegalese were key actors in that process and tout the gentrification as an indicator of their success in the neighborhood. At the moment, however, Little Senegal is excluding many of those for whom it is named due to skyrocketing rents and backdoor real estate deals. The Senegalese opinion about contemporary gentrification in their ethnic enclave will be illuminated through the following case studies. Their compelling stories will reveal a crucial question: does Little Senegal still exist? What are the tactics used that change the contemporary meaning of Little Senegal?

//eight Senegalese narratives//

I am not the first person to privilege the voices of Senegalese immigrants in Little Senegal in the context of rampant gentrification – but I may be the third. Portia Crowe on the Northattan blog emphasizes how the Senegalese community "takes credit for cleaning up a once-dangerous and unpopular neighborhood," which has led to their dismay at the way in which "landowners are pushing out the Senegalese in order to plan ahead."[192] For *Slate Afrique*, Sabine Cessou also explains the dissonance between the Senegalese immigrants who boast of gentrifying 116th Street and the reality of Harlem becoming more and more exclusive.[193] These articles directly contradict a CNN piece, "Little Senegal in the Big Apple," that does not depict Little Senegal as being threatened whatsoever; evidently, some people tout Little Senegal's success while others warn of its demise. Through the following case studies, eight Senegalese voices are featured in order to add nuance to this emergent conversation.

CHEIKH[194]

Originally from Thiès, Senegal – home of a renowned textile factory as well as an artists' commune – Cheikh has lived in the U.S. for 25 years. "I was a student coming here," Cheikh explained to me, "I went to school and all that. And uh, I did get my life together in here." Cheikh was referring to his 22-year career in the airline industry, after which he began an aviation consulting business. Aside from a stint in Columbus, Ohio, Cheikh has lived in New York City since emigrating from Senegal. He has not, however, always lived in Harlem. Cheikh used to live in Queens, which was a convenient arrangement because of the borough's proximity

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[192] Crowe, "In Little Senegal, A Shrinking Business Community."

[193] Cessou, "Little Senegal: La Communauté Qui Fait Bouger Harlem."

[194] Interview, January 7, 2014, 5:09 pm. English. For each case study, I have limited the citations to reduce redundancy – I list the date of the interview and whether it was conducted in English or French in the footnote attached to the subheading. All quotations under each subheading come from the respective interviewee. For quotations translated into English from French, a corresponding footnote with the original quotation is provided.

to the airport, but in 2010, he returned to Harlem. Aside from his professional life, Cheikh

serves as an official of the Association des Sénégalais d'Amerique (ASA), spending many

afternoons at the ASA headquarters on 116th.

His post at the ASA might have encouraged him to provide the following cheery portrait

of "Little Senegal." By Cheikh's measure, Little Senegal is "just 116th between 8th Avenue up

through Lenox Avenue – it's just about three blocks, that's it." The neighborhood deserves its

title: "it's called Little Senegal because we live here, we got the businesses, we all live here."

Cheikh extended his description of the neighborhood to include "all the Africans," painting a

unified portrait of the enclave. Indeed, his Little Senegal is predicated on a certain level of racial

utopia. "It's a mixed, White and Black in [the neighborhood] now," described Cheikh. "That's

what we're looking for, we have to be together and live together and be safe, that's what

happening right now in Harlem."

There was a hiccup, however, when Cheikh candidly stated that, "because of the

gentrification right now, a few people are moving out […] further up to 152, 158 and 8th Ave" or

even to the Bronx. He recovered his diplomatic tone almost immediately: "other than that, really

good family in [Little Senegal]." He proceeded to frame the changes wrought by gentrification

in a positive light, emphasizing "a lot of new restaurants, a lot of new businesses." The

economic development has been so profound that "you can find anything now in Harlem. You

don't need to go all the way to downtown." Cheikh rattled off an impressive list of Harlem's

amenities, focusing on the presence of many major banks and also pointing out the fact that "all

the buses and trains pass through here."

Perhaps more importantly, gentrification has correlated with a significantly reduced

crime rate about which Cheikh was pleased. "Cab drivers," Cheikh revealed, "many, many years

ago they used to be robbed and all that […] or store being robbed or stuff like that. Those things are over." He credited the around-the-clock police presence with the reduction in crime.

Cheikh's favorite part of the neighborhood is a Black-owned office of Harlem tourism. He assured me that "a lot of people come from outside Harlem" to visit the store.

MAMADOU[195]

Mamadou and I had a fascinating conversation that did not adhere even remotely to the questionnaire I had prepared. Instead, I learned about his experience as a young civil servant in Dakar, in the Grand Dakar neighborhood. He immediately boasted of his role in an "overall improvement [in Grand Dakar] from the status of a village to that of a modern city" – he was involved with these changes while he was the youngest elected official. In addition to his civic duties, Mamadou owned several properties and practiced financial speculation and investment. People would be surprised, he said, if they saw everything that Senegal has to offer. "We have it all," he exclaimed, undermining the popular images of Africa as deficient.

Based on this framework, Mamadou made some comparisons between Senegalese and American culture, highlighting the differences between the more communal in Senegal and the more individualistic in the U.S. In Senegal, you do not have to be invited to dinner, he explained, whereas in the U.S., you cannot simply drop by for dinner unannounced. "Everything is planned,"[196] he complained. Fortunately, Mamadou feels connected to his culture when in Little Senegal. "We are not *dépaysé,* you see, because here we speak our language, we eat with our hands, we cook the same way we do in Senegal."[197] He even pointed to the ASA as the most

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[195] Interview, January 8, 2014, 4:45 pm. French.
[196] "Tout est programmé, quoi"
[197] "On n'est pas dépaysé, vous voyez, parce que ici on parle notre langue, on mange nos mains, on cuisine les mêmes plats au Sénégal." A note on the word *dépaysé*: it translates literally as "disoriented," but the supposed

important spot in the ethnic enclave because "everyone convenes there."[198] In fact, Mamadou

elaborated, as soon as you receive your consular card, you essentially are simultaneously offered

membership to the organization.

Especially with his background in real estate, Mamadou was poised to make comments

about the gentrification of the neighborhood. When discussing the displacement of Senegalese

Harlem residents, he outlined, "it's because the city is expanding, New York is growing." He

continued: "I think that […] the city […] is pushing up all the way to Harlem. It's normal […]

It's called a 'demographic push.' Natural."[199] He clarified: "The population renews itself. Some

arrive, some leave […] It's how life works, it's natural."[200] Mamadou recognized that, while

Harlem used to be a "ghetto," it is transforming into a modern city in a similar fashion to Grand

Dakar. This transformation is encouraged by real estate owners who offer large sums to people

if they leave their Harlem apartments – none of this escaped Mamadou. "Financial speculation,"

he stated unequivocally. "They buy early to sell high."[201]

BABACAR[202]

Babacar hails from Mbour, a Senegalese seaside town on the "petite côte" (small coast),

about 50 kilometers south of Dakar. From Senegal, he first immigrated to Toulouse, France

where he spent six years pursuing his studies. He did not arrive in the U.S. until 2007. Since

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converse, "paysé," does not exist in the French language. Thus, *dépaysé* is a specific state of being that does not have a positive opposite. The way that my interviewees used *dépaysé* connoted a sense of being uprooted or ethnically isolated – they posited the opposite of *dépaysé* as Little Senegal itself. There is evidently a rich connotation that would have been lost if I translated it directly, so I chose to leave it in the original French throughout the thesis.

[198] "Tout le monde convive ici"

[199] "Je pense que […] de la ville […] pousse jusqu'au Harlem. […] On l'appelle poussée démographique. Naturelle."

[200] "La population se renouvèle. D'autres sont venus, d'autres sont partis […] C'est le droit de vie, c'est naturelle"

[201] "La spéculation foncière […] Ils achètent tôt pour vendre chère."

[202] Interview, January 8, 2014, 7:00 pm. French.

immigrating, Babacar has worked assiduously – he called himself a "hermit": "Work, sleep, seeing friends, but I never go out at night, no."[203] He works as the manager of a French-style patisserie that is staffed and patronized by West Africans and New Yorkers alike.

Babacar called the concentration of Senegalese-owned businesses on 116th, "'le Senegal,'" omitting "Little" from the title altogether. "There's a heavy concentration of the community, especially Senegalese – there are Africans, but in particular there are Senegalese – it's really nice, we do well […] no complaints," affirmed Babacar.[204] He compared his experience in France with his time in the U.S. In France, "to speak to someone in Wolof, it was necessary to go see friends," he explained, "but here, you speak Wolof to people even if you don't know them. There's a strong Senegalese community in New York City."[205]

The prominence of the community, however, does not conceal the changing demographics in the neighborhood. Babacar was unequivocal in stating that he has noticed changes in the enclave. "Specifically the buildings," he noted, "because when I had just arrived here, that apartment building was not here, even two, three years ago."[206] Babacar could not provide an explanation for these recent shifts: "I don't know why, [but] Harlem has markedly changed, you must see that […] Everyone who used to live downtown wants to live here now. [The people who were here before] have moved toward the Bronx."[207]

Interestingly, when asked about the Black history of the neighborhood, Babacar emphasized the inextricability of Blackness from Harlem. "Harlem, first and foremost, has its

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[203] "Je suis casanier [….] Travail, dodo, aller voir les amis, mais je ne sors pas, le soir non."

[204] "Il y a une forte concentration de la communauté surtout sénégalaise – il y a africaines mais particulièrement les sénégalais qui sont là-bas – c'est vraiment bon, on se porte bien […] on ne se plaigne pas."

[205] "Pour parlez quelqu'un parlez Wolof, il faut que j'aille [par] des amis, mais ici, tu [speak to someone in Wolof] si tu ne le connais même pas. Il y a une forte communauté sénégalaise à New York City."

[206] "Au niveau des immeubles, parce que quand je venais d'arriver, là n'était pas, à moins de deux ans, trois ans."

[207] "Je ne sais pas pourquoi, Harlem a tellement changé, il faut le voir […] Tout ce qui habitaient à downtown, ils veulent maintenant ici. [The people who were here before] sont allés vers le Bronx."

Black history," Babacar said.[208] "We cannot talk about Harlem without talking about Black

people."[209] He even went as far as to liken the Black presence in this area of New York to "the

soul of Harlem – it's what makes Harlem live."[210]

MAGHED[211]

Maghed had immigrated the most recently out of all the interviewees. At the time of our

discussion, he had only been in the U.S. for five months. Back in Senegal, he attended

Université Gaston-Berger in Saint-Louis, the former colonial capital of Senegal (coincidentally,

also the city where I conducted my independent study in 2012). He now works at a pharmacy in

Little Senegal and is taking classes to earn his associate's degree.

"It really touched me to see my community here," he explained, "to be living in a

community where they associate with one another, discussing national politics, day-to-day issues

– I find this to be a wonderful thing."[212] Maghed also justified the title of Little Senegal: "we

call it 'Little Senegal,' we often speak Wolof, French – there's a culture here, the Senegalese

culture is here."[213] Culturally, Maghed indicated the differences between Senegalese and

American lifestyles. "It's different in the U.S., where everybody minds their own business," he

remarked.[214] This diverges from the Senegalese communal way of living that has been

replicated in Little Senegal – Maghed described the Senegalese way as "a good idea."[215]

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[208] "Harlem, en premier, c'est l'histoire noire"
[209] "On ne peut pas parler d'Harlem sans parler des noirs"
[210] "L'ame d'Harlem – c'est ce qui fait vivre Harlem."
[211] Interview, January 8, 2014, 8:00 pm. French.
[212] "Ca m'a beaucoup touché de voir mon communauté ici, de vivre dans un communauté ils s'associent […] discutent la politique du pays, des problèmes de la vie – moi, je trouve que c'est une bonne chose."
[213] "On l'appelle le petit Sénégal, on parle souvent le Wolof, souvent le français – il y a la culture, quoi, la culture Sénégalaise ici."
[214] "C'est différent que les Etats-Unis, ou chacun est dans son propre business."
[215] "C'est une bonne idée."

Maghed continually reminded me that, since his recent arrival, he had not developed an intimate knowledge of the city, so he would not be able to fully answer my questions. "I'm at home, and as soon as I leave the house, I go to school and to work here," attested Maghed.[216] "That's not to say I don't live well – I don't have problems with anyone."[217] Maghed, however, was still able to discuss Harlem. "Harlem is known across the world," he explained, "through films, we get to know Harlem."[218] He even commented on the demographic shifts occurring in the neighborhood: "Historically, it's a Black neighborhood. Life changes, the world evolves. Now, you see White people here. You see Latino/as. Personally, I don't make much of the difference."[219]

Aside from mingling with other Senegalese people on 116th, Maghed has enjoyed his trips to Central Park: "It's enthralling, it's beautiful – it's really beautiful. It's one of my favorite places here."[220]

ZEYNABOU[221]

Zeynabou was less forthcoming with information during the interview – or, rather, she answered the questions in the most efficient way. I interviewed her just after she had finished her shift at work, which likely affected our conversation. She also immigrated fairly recently, having been in the U.S. only a year at the time of our discussion. Though she is a server in a Senegalese restaurant on 116th, Zeynabou lives in the Bronx.

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[216] "Je suis à la maison, une fois je quitte la maison, je vais à l'école et au travail ici"

[217] "Quand même je vive très bien – je n'ai pas de problèmes avec n'importe qui."

[218] "Harlem c'est connu [everywhere] au monde, les films, on connaît Harlem."

[219] "C'est un, historiquement [peuplée par des noirs]. La vie change, le monde évolue. Maintenant, on voit des blancs ici. On voit des espagnols […] Personnellement, je ne fais pas la différence."

[220] "C'est passionnant quand même, c'est beau – c'est très beau. C'était une place favorite pour moi."

[221] Interview, January 16, 2014, 6:30 pm. French.

Like Maghed, Zeynabou emphasized that she only spends time at work and does not explore other places – she takes the bus and the 6 train to get to work. "I really like this neighborhood and the place that I work," she told me.[222] In fact, she even pointed to her job as her favorite part about the neighborhood. Though she did not draw a directly causal link, she also highlighted the Senegalese character of the neighborhood that pleases her: "when you see Senegalese people, when I see things that come from Senegal […] it makes me happy."[223] She elaborated, saying that in a "big country like the United States, to have a neighborhood with a occupied by Africans, that impresses me."[224]

IBRAHIMA[225]

Currently a server at one of the trademark Senegalese restaurants in the enclave, Ibrahima has lived in various places in New York City as well as in Detroit. Though he was born in Côte d'Ivoire, his family returned to Senegal when Ibrahima was only three years old; he spent the majority of his life in Senegal being raised by his grandparents. After they passed away, he moved to Dakar and eventually enrolled at Université Cheikh Anta Diop before immigrating to the U.S. in 2005. In the U.S., Ibrahima attended Wayne State University for two years and hopes to return to his studies as soon as he can. "Looking to move back," said Ibrahima, "next move, maybe go back to school, or go see something…something new I can do."

Ibrahima was the first person I met in Little Senegal – I had my notebook on the table as I was eating lunch and he asked me about my project. All of our discussions were in English, as Ibrahima has been speaking the language for years. "There's a school called Britannic School,

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[222] "J'aime beaucoup ce quartier et cela ou je travaille."
[223] "Quand tu vois les Sénégalais, quand je vois le truc qui vient du Sénégal […] ca me plait beaucoup."
[224] "Les grands pays comme les Etats-Unis, on a un quartier occupé par les africains, ca m'impressionne."
[225] Interview, January 17, 2014, 12:45 pm. English.

British, it's, like, behind the United States Embassy," he described. "I went there like three years […] that helped me a lot before I came here […] 'cause sometimes the English they speak there and the English they speak in the United States kind, like, a little bit different, but this one is faster, so if you don't pay attention you know, you get lost."

Little Senegal reminds Ibrahima of Marché Sandaga in Dakar, a massive marketplace with an infinite array of stalls selling every possible ware. Ibrahima offered a joke about Sandaga: "sometimes I say, if you want a little baby, you go to Sandaga. Mostly every transaction, whatever you have, whatever you want to sell, whatever you want, you go there, you find it." Ibrahima augmented this comparison when he explained, "if you miss Senegal, you came here [to 116th,] you feel like you're in Senegal. You know, the smell, the ceeb ujen […] And if you walk by, everything you say, 'Salaam alekum,' 'Nanga def?' […] it's kinda like being in Senegal." Indeed, people even spend time in ways that are reminiscent of neighborhood hangouts in Dakar. "You go to the ASA," Ibrahima continued, "a lot of people over there, so, some time, not just doing nothing 'cause they have a day off or they're waiting for someone or they go to work later, so […] there are always people there." Though, according to Ibrahima, the boundaries of Little Senegal are fluid – "yeah, it's pretty big […] it depends where you're at and where you wanna go" – he also underlined the symbolic centrality 116th as the node of the ethnic enclave. "If you want to meet someone, you tell them, 'Yo, I'm going to 116th.' Yeah, they know exactly where it is. They know exactly where it is."

With a different country comes a different culture, however, which affects, in Ibrahima's opinion, the way that Senegalese people can interact with each other. "People don't have time to sit in front their porch or, maybe, in their house," he admitted, unlike the Senegalese practice of

having tea and spending time with neighbors. Though he depicted 116th as the central commercial artery of Little Senegal, people do not really live there.

Ibrahima's perceived lack of Senegalese residents on what has been the de facto Senegalese boulevard brings up the question of gentrification; though we did not actually use that word, Ibrahima and I discussed its effects. "I used to live in Harlem, but I moved in the Bronx," he explained. "A lot of people moving, 'cause you know, the rents are going higher and higher. You renew your lease, they could raise it." This implicated the changing demographics in the neighborhood: "They say, Harlem is Black people's neighborhood, but now, I see lots and lots of White people coming." I sheepishly raised my hand at the mention of White arrivistes – we drily laughed at the irony. Ibrahima justified, to an extent, the arrival of White gentrifiers: "Also, you know, when the rent go high, rising, in [Harlem], you know it's rising downtown too, so people who live in downtown who used to like $5,000 or $3,000 a month, you find the same place in Harlem – Harlem and downtown is like 10, 15 minutes – so, like half of what you used to pay. So, you move." Furthermore, Ibrahima continued, the neighborhood is safer now, the dope houses are shut down and now "lights is on, you can go by there any time you want. I think it's basically security, you know, people move in the area when they feel safe."

These former downtown residents move into apartments vacated by people that, by Ibrahima's account, are offered money in return for their displacement. Ibrahima, however, did not bemoan this trend but instead articulated the preeminence of competitive principles of business. "We all here for business, like, for money," he elaborated. Some people think that they will only be here temporarily, just until they make enough money, but according to Ibrahima, "they will never. They will never go back [to Senegal]. That's their plan, but sometimes, you know, plans don't go the way you want it." Instead, they have to cope with the

competitive landscape: "it's kind of like a competition, so who do better, you know, sell the most. So, if you're not doing better, gotta close." Ibrahima offered a series of business strategies that he has been pondering, from franchising to developing a faster way to make traditional Senegalese dishes. "Everything is like something you're studying," he illustrated. "You try and you try and you try until you find a way."

AMI[226]

Ami emigrated from Senegal in 1997 and has lived in Harlem ever since. "So that's it," she said of her background – we did not speak any more about her history. I interviewed her at the beauty store where she presumably works (since I saw her answering the phone and catering to customers), but she did not explicitly mention her occupation.

As for the ethnic enclave, by Ami's estimation, "it's not Little Senegal. I don't think they should [call it Little Senegal], because, at the beginning, yes, but right now, no. Right now, no, because before, all the businesses were from Senegalese people, but right now – look at the 116th, most of them are closed because of the rents.

"The high living," Ami continued. "No money. People are moving, the rent be high, stores are closing, so people are moving around" – even to other states, in pursuit of lower rents. Nevertheless, Ami enjoys seeing familiar cultural elements displayed on the street and is often reminded of home: "when I see my people, the clothing, the food, a lot of Senegalese food here." Indeed, she maintained that her favorite thing about the neighborhood was seeing her people everyday and getting whatever Senegalese goods she wanted.

However, Senegalese goods do not suffice – Ami expressed the need (and the desire) to go downtown for "real stuff" because "all of the big stores are downtown. But for little things,

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[226] Interview, January 17, 2014, 4:45 pm. English.

we have in the neighborhood." Though she takes the train to go downtown, Ami tends to drive her car between places in Harlem.

BINETTE[227]

Binette is from the Centenaire neighborhood of Dakar, but did not immigrate directly to the U.S. First, Binette spent 15 years in France, during which time she studied insurance. She lives in the neighborhood, just several blocks from 116th. Binette is a server and Ibrahima's colleague at the restaurant.

Perhaps coincidentally, she and Ibrahima were the two respondents who gave the most expansive definitions of Little Senegal's boundaries. "I think it starts […] at 116th and 8th Avenue, because on the other side of 8th Avenue, it's Morningside," Binette clarified.[228] "Or maybe it's a Latino neighborhood. Anyway, Little Senegal […] continues over to the East Side, I'm not sure where, maybe 1st Avenue or 2nd Avenue."[229] In Binette's ethnic enclave that stretches all along 116th, she emphasized that she and other Senegalese immigrants are not *dépaysé*. "The food that we have back in Senegal, we sell it here – just like in this restaurant – so you are not *dépaysé* for your cuisine," asserted Binette.[230] "It's what really impressed me when I came here for the first time," she recounted.[231] "When I came to 116th, I thought of Medina [a Dakar neighborhood…] Everyone wears African clothing (Senegalese), you don't

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[227] Interview, January 17, 2014, 5:55 pm. French.
[228] "Je pense que ca commence […] à la 116 et 8ieme avenue, parce qu'au delà de la 8ieme avenue, c'est Morningside."
[229] "Ou peut-être c'est un quartier espagnol, je pense. Alors, le Little Senegal […] v avers jusqu'à East Side, je ne sais pas ou, peut-être 1st Avenue or 2nd Avenue."
[230] "Le mangé qu'on a chez nous, on vend ca ici – comme ici dans un restaurant – donc tu n'es pas dépaysée pour tes cuisines."
[231] "Ce qui m'a marqué quand je suis venue la première fois."

hear anyone speaking English, everyone speaks Wolof, so you are not *dépaysé*."[232] Such a

cultural rootedness allows "everyone to understand you, and you get what you want."[233]

Binette did not, however, express a dynamic connection with the Black population of the

neighborhood. "They're Black, and we're Black," she admitted, and "they like our food."[234] But

"Black people, they appreciate history and what is related to history, since they come from

Africa, but it stops there […] Even if they came to do errands in our markets, they could not

make *ceeb* or even make *mafé*. There's not a culinary connection […] Historically, yes, but it

ends there."[235] Binette proceeded to criticize the fact that many Black people that she has

encountered have not experienced the world enough – "we, at least, have traveled in coming

here."[236]

Arriving in Little Senegal was evidently a culturally affirming experience for Binette, but

she fears for the future of the enclave. While we never mentioned gentrification by its name,

Binette described its effects. At first, she focused on positive changes and the continuity of the

enclave. Even though people are moving out of the neighborhood because of the high rents,

Binette assured me that "the main thing is that it has not changed. [The restaurant] has been here

for a long time – that has not changed."[237] More broadly, Binette told me that change is good

because "in a city, we evolve with what's there. We can't always be in the same stage of life."[238]

Binette specifically lauded the increased security in the neighborhood: "Before, I'm told,

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[232] "Quand je suis venue à la 116 je me pensais à la Medina […] Seulement les gens sont avec les habilles africaines (sénégalais), tu n'entends pas quelqu'un parler anglais, tout le monde parle Wolof, donc tu n'es pas dépaysé."
[233] "Tout le monde te comprend, et tu as ce que tu veux."
[234] "Qu'ils sont noirs, et qu'on est noir […] Ils aiment notre mangé."
[235] "Ils aiment ce qui est histoire, ce qui est apparenté à histoire, parce qu'ils viennent d'Afrique, mais ca s'arrête la. […] Même s'ils viennent pour faire le marché ici, ils ne peuvent pas faire le ceeb ou bien faire le mafé. Il n'y a pas de connexion cuisine, quoi. […] C'est historiquement, et puis ca s'arrête la."
[236] "Nous, au moins, avons voyagé en venant ici, quoi."
[237] "Sinon, le 'main thing' c'est ca n'a pas changé, [le restaurant] est la depuis longtemps – ca n'a pas changé."
[238] "dans une ville, on evolue avec ce qu'il y a. On ne peut pas etre toujours dans le meme stat de vie."

Harlem, in its day…you couldn't come here it was so dangerous and violent."[239] Since her

arrival, Binette "has not seen violence or anything. Little things always happen in the street," but

the police prevent anything from escalating.[240] "We feel good in this neighborhood," she

added.[241]

In the same breath, however, Binette articulated a deep-seated ambivalence. A changing

neighborhood means that "someone who arrives – and like me, for example, who had just

immigrated but was not *dépaysé* – someone who comes now, he will be a little *dépaysé* because

he will not see all the Senegalese that we saw before, he will not see the products that we had

before that [would have] reminded him of home. If he wanted to make a *ceeb*, he comes, and no

one is selling anything here. So, that's negative."[242]

This hypothetical narrative differs from what Binette would like to see. "We would love

it if it continued like this, that it be truly Senegalese-owned so that it would deserve the name

Little Senegal," she said hopefully.[243] "But there's a sense that, with the passing of time, this

won't be Little Senegal any longer."[244] Explaining the demographic shift that other interviewees

also described, Binette expressed her dismay. "It's too bad," she declared.[245] "Because it's

something that we acquired and that we should have kept for ourselves. I think that [since] we

had a portion of the street for Senegalese people, we should have continued to own that section

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[239] "Avant, que m'en disait, Harlem, dans le temps…on ne pouvait pas venir ici, c'etait dangereux et violent."
[240] "Je n'ai pas vu de violence et tout. Les petites choses est tous les jours dans les rues…"
[241] "On se sent bien dans ce quartier."
[242] "Quelqu'un qui vient, et comme moi, par exemple, qui venait d'arriver, qui n'était pas dépaysée, quelqu'un qui vient maintenant, il sera un peu dépaysé parce qu'il ne verra pas tous les sénégalais qu'on voyait avant, il ne va pas voir les produits qu'on avait avant qui lui rappelait le pays. Il voulait faire un ceeb, il vient, personne marchait ici […] Alors, ca c'est négatif."
[243] "On aimerait bien que ca continue comme ca, que ca soit vraiment [Senegalese-owned…] ca va meriter son nom de Little Senegal."
[244] "Mais on sent que dissipe de temps, ca ne va être plus le Little Senegal."
[245] "C'est dommage."

for good."[246] Unlike other ethnic enclaves that, according to Binette, were more effectively

insular (patronizing only ethnically affiliated establishments in the enclave), Little Senegal was

not managed properly – this is Binette's explanation for its demise. "It's certain that Chinatown

will be Chinatown," she illustrated.[247] On the other hand, Binette predicted that "we are not

going to talk about Little Senegal like, in the present."[248]

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[246] "Parce que c'est quelque chose qu'on a acquis et qu'on devait garder pour nous, quoi. Je pense qu'on a eu une portion de rue pour les sénégalais, donc on devait continuer à avoir cette portion pour de bon"
[247] "C'est sur que Chinatown va être le Chinatown."
[248] "On ne va pas parler de Little Senegal, *like, in the present*"

//discussing the conclusion: a paradoxical exploration//

Through these eight Senegalese narratives, it is clear that Little Senegal, a beacon of cultural solidarity, is significantly "threatened" by structural forces of gentrification. This echoes the contradiction in the popular media and reveals the paradox of New York's Senegalese community: neither the grounded significance of 116th as a place of cultural importance nor its rapid deterioration (and/or redefinition) can be denied. The Senegalese proudly participated in the gentrification of their enclave, but that is widely known. The preceding narratives, however, have just confirmed Little Senegal's liminality. Positioned amidst agency and victimhood, these eight Senegalese immigrants navigate the paradox of gentrification in order to "make do" – they employ tactics, they argue for assimilation, and they predict the loss of the neighborhood while they tout its vibrancy and continued importance.

Little Senegal remains a crucial cultural stronghold for the Senegalese expat community, even with its ostensibly "diminished" status. Ibrahima provided perhaps the most pointed illustration of this continued cultural importance when he said, "If you want to meet someone, you tell them, 'Yo, I'm going to 116th.' Yeah, they know exactly where it is. They know exactly where it is." Ibrahima thereby emphasized the universal understanding that 116th is coterminous with and even symbolic of the Senegalese community. This cultural symbolism has not faded even in the face of displacement due to high rents (and financial coercion). While not everyone symbolically connected 116th Street to Little Senegal in the way that Ibrahima did, most of the interviewees echoed his general sentiment by voicing their cultural affinity toward the neighborhood. Cheikh, of course, was effusive about the fact that "everybody know each other, everybody talk to each other, everybody invite everybody when it's Christmas or New Year's or any Muslim holiday," even extending this characterization to the non-Senegalese

population of the neighborhood. Even respondents who were more cynical, however, were still positive when talking about the cultural importance of the enclave. Ami from the beauty store admitted that she was often reminded of home in the neighborhood – "of course, when I see my people, the clothing, the food – a lot of Senegalese food here."

Stores may be closing and people may be moving, but Little Senegal possesses a continued importance as a welcoming environment for recently arrived immigrants; Maghed's interview revealed this to be true. His actions spoke louder than his words. When deciding where to conduct our interview, he suggested the Association des Sénégalais d'Amérique (ASA) headquarters. I was tentative – they were not expecting us and there were English lessons taking place. I did not want to interrupt. In a move that exuded comfort and acceptance, Maghed strode confidently through the door and invited me to sit down next to him. In this simple action, he implicitly highlighted the ASA's accessibility as a resource and surrogate home for new immigrants. The ASA – and Little Senegal – evidently still serve a cultural function.

This function underlines the extent to which Little Senegal deserves to be characterized as a translocal site on which transnational forces act. As Mamadou explained, the immigration process for Senegalese people is so entwined with the ASA to the extent that there is a popular notion of automatic induction into the association upon arrival in the U.S. The ASA, then, underlines translocal forces as defined by Michael Peter Smith in *Transnational Urbanism* – localities across national borders are connected through a grassroots, citizen-centered organization.[249]

Transnationally speaking, because the cultural importance and corollary translocal identity was highlighted through eight immigrants' narratives, this thesis adheres to Michael Peter Smith and Luis Eduardo Guarnizo's framework of "transnationalism from below." While I

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[249] M.P. Smith, *Transnational Urbanism*, 3.

provided "analysis at the microstructural level" through these eight case studies, I have also contextualized the Senegalese community within regional (and national) trends of gentrification, abiding by Smith and Guarnizo's idea that "transnational practices […] are embodied in specific social relations, situated in unequivocal localities, at historically determined times."[250] Little Senegal is embodied in the relationships between Senegalese people as well as between immigrants and the city, is situated in the unequivocal locality of 116th Street, and has been historically determined by the influx of West African immigrants during the late twentieth century. Simultaneously, however, these Senegalese narratives have illuminated the extent to which the translocality of Little Senegal is threatened with spatial *dis*location because of gentrification.

These paradoxical circumstances reflect the tension in the literature surrounding transnationalism versus globalization. Focusing too much on the microstructural forces and applying a strictly bottom-up lens obscures the broader threats to the community (i.e. gentrification) while globalization theory minimizes the agency of those affected. As discussed in my theoretical framework, Michael Peter Smith articulates this discord when he presents a critique of globalization theorists. This tension is crucial to note because it is not confined to the realm of academe – it is representative of the paradox that currently characterizes the Senegalese experience in Harlem, according to these eight narratives.

While Little Senegal remains a bastion of Senegalese culture, it is changing – if not altogether disappearing – in gentrification's wake. The interviewees presented their appreciation for the cultural importance of the enclave in the same breath as they mourned its loss. All but one of the respondents answered affirmatively when asked if they had noticed changes in the neighborhood – the one respondent who did not, Zeynabou, had only been living in the U.S. for a

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[250] Smith and Guarnizo, *Transnationalism from Below*, 11, 25–26.

year – and all either explicitly or implicitly targeted gentrification as the root cause of these changes. This is not surprising; the changing nature of the neighborhood has already appeared in the popular media, as described earlier. It is worthwhile and indeed necessary to highlight the way in which a couple of the respondents, namely Mamadou and Ibrahima, expressed an acceptance of gentrification as an irrefutable fact of life. Mamadou explicitly underlined the inevitability of the gentrification process, while Ibrahima likened it to natural competition. Interestingly, while Binette did not depict the rising rents and changing demographics as unstoppable phenomena, she did place the blame squarely on the Senegalese community when she said that they should have better managed the ethnic enclave.

The acceptance of gentrification as a fact of life extends far beyond these eight case studies. In unrecorded conversations with Senegalese immigrants at the ASA or just at various stores along 116th, the same sentiment was expressed: before, there was an insular enclave of mostly West Africans, but now there are White people and, along with their arrival, rising rents. One woman – who must remain anonymous because we were unable to exchange the official consent form – told me resignedly that it's a grave issue, but there's nothing to do about it. Another man with whom I had an informal conversation described the current state of the enclave as a "mini-mini-Senegal." 116th is a good commercial setting because everyone still thinks of it as a central artery, he continued, but little by little, stores are closing down, even though the community is strategically situated near public transportation. Richard Lloyd, as cited in my theoretical framework, states that gentrification has been "reified as a natural process," explaining and echoing the way in which many Senegalese immigrants have accepted gentrification as the norm.[251] Such an acceptance, however, does not nullify the continued

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[251] Lloyd, "Postindustrial Bohemia," 30.

dynamism and cultural importance of the enclave as discussed above. It illustrates the paradox, the liminal space from which Senegalese emigrants invoke tactics.

Throughout the case studies, these eight Senegalese immigrants described these various tactics to cope with the "strategy" of gentrification. I call up on Michel de Certeau's concept of both strategies and tactics to lend coherence to my observations of Senegalese actions in the enclave. The gentrification of Harlem and more specifically Little Senegal abides almost exactly by de Certeau's definition of a strategy. With the official establishment of the Malcolm Shabazz Market, which was a primary impetus for the development of Little Senegal along 116th, city officials promoted the "*triumph of place over time*."[252] The earlier iteration of the market at 125th Street was unofficial and thus unregulated in terms of opening and closing hours. The opening of the Malcolm Shabazz Market demarcated an officially condoned place of business in lieu of the more opportunistic vending models that West African vendors previously practiced. In other words, a regulated place superseded the street space and the more flexible vending hours accompanying a more indigenous model. In the "new" market, all stalls are neatly numbered in ordered rows with transparent, sliding glass doors, promoting a "*panoptic practice*," yet another criterion of a strategy.[253] Finally, the Malcolm Shabazz Market is devoted solely to the selling of West African goods, satisfying the final prerequisite, that a strategy establish its "own place" within the city.[254] When Senegalese immigrants played a central role in relocating the market, they were cooperating with a hegemonic strategy. This is by no means a value judgment – indeed the opposite. Through this cooperation, the Senegalese community (while not a monolithic entity) became tactically positioned to develop a spatially bounded, broadly

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[252] de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 36.
[253] Ibid.
[254] Ibid.

recognizable, culturally specific ethnic enclave, what has been known over the past 15 years as Little Senegal.

De Certeau, however, offers that painfully prescient qualifier alongside his definition of tactics: "what it wins it cannot keep."[255] This claim unfortunately resonates with the contemporary status of the enclave, for, as Ami said, "it's not Little Senegal." Ami's assertion is admittedly radical – the community is vibrantly embedded in the fabric of Harlem today. Nevertheless, she presented *a* truth, if not *the* truth, about the community: because of gentrification, it is changing, and spatial dislocation is a real threat, especially considering the countless tales of displacement. The tactics, then, have also changed, signaling what could be the redefinition and/or the demise of the Senegalese ethnic enclave.

Babacar and his French bakery represent one version of tactically engaging with a gentrified urban area. Gleaming croissants and crisp baguettes line the walls in the foyer, which houses the bakery and take-out portion of the establishment. The delectable sheen of the French pastries serves as a beacon, drawing visitors into the neighborhood eatery. A sleek yet welcoming dining room with full table service extends beyond the entry where customers can sip café au lait – or indulge in ceeb ujen. By emphasizing French pastries that might be familiar to a Whiter, more upwardly mobile clientele (of whom I saw many while taking field notes at the patisserie), Babacar's establishment is certainly catering to the demands of gentrification, but he is profiting from the opportunity, exemplifying a tactical approach. Moreover, the patisserie pairs French food with Senegalese specialties, which reflects Senegal's colonial relationship with France through cuisine. This represents a sort of tactical transnationalism – Babacar is marketing and thus perpetuating his transnational situation. Thus, Babacar holistically capitalizes on his environment, both its gentrified aspects and its transnational identity.

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[255] Ibid., 37.

Ibrahima presented perhaps the most fitting example of a tactic when he hypothesized about how to make ceeb ujen more quickly:

> If there was, like, a really good businessman, he would know exactly how to break down the ceeb ujen so you can cook it faster. Because ceeb ujen, when you cook it, it takes a long time to cook…sometime, ceeb ujen [is done] before 4 or 5 [in the afternoon]. People asking, "Why don't you cook more?" If it was me, anytime you came to this restaurant, you want something, you have it […] I'll try to find a way to do it, so you can have it anytime you want.

Ibrahima illustrated a tactical reformulation of time, another of de Certeau's criterion for defining a tactic.[256] Similar to Babacar, Ibrahima also implied a careful observation and understanding of his clientele – if they want something, Ibrahima is sure to capitalize on that desire.

The cultural importance of ceeb ujen – the national Senegalese dish – cannot be overstated. Ibrahima explained how people come from states far and wide to sample his restaurant's authentic ceeb ujen. "Some people came, say, 'Yo, I didn't eat ceeb for five years' […] because they're busy, they didn't have time to drive [from] D.C. or Philadelphia," he told me. Thus, in the face of a gentrifying enclave, Ibrahima portrayed how Little Senegal's centrality has a culturally meaningful reach far beyond New York City. Its symbolism exceeds its boundaries. This was underlined when he fantasized about franchising opportunities: "[…] it's just like one business in one location. Yeah, that brings money, but not the kind of money you want […] For example, this restaurant has been here [x] years. So, at this time, you could have one in Harlem, one in the Bronx, or go out of city, out of town, one in Philadelphia – why not, a lot of Senegalese, a lot of Africans – go LA maybe, or Jersey." Thus, Ibrahima imaginatively transported Little Senegal across the country in order to capitalize on its image of ethnic and cultural solidarity. Hypothetically, he would spatially dislocate Little Senegal on his

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[256] Ibid., 38.

own terms, redefining displacement as a choice. Ami demonstrated a similar tactic in shopping for goods downtown. She asserted her place in the city as a whole, not just in Little Senegal.

When placed in the context of Binette's critique (that Little Senegal should have remained more insular), Ami's shopping habits reveal a central question: when assimilation and (imagined) spatial broadening/dislocation are among the tactics used to navigate a gentrified landscape, what does the future of Little Senegal look like? This demands comparative studies of other ethnic enclaves and their engagement with gentrification.

For the time being, Little Senegal remains a hotbed of Senegalese cultural connection and activity. Amidst transnational forces, the enclave demonstrates its irrefutable translocal identity. This identity has been consciously formed alongside the official project (or strategy) to gentrify Harlem. Thus, Little Senegal is irrevocably a part of Harlem's tumultuous and dynamic history of declines and ascents – depending on whose perspective is centered – and a crucial element of the most current chapter: neoliberal gentrification. After moving from place to place throughout New York City, the opening of the Malcolm Shabazz Market signaled a temporary respite from displacement. De Certeau's tactical framework, however, reveals the inevitable impermanence of such a spatial victory. Eight Senegalese narratives – eight of thousands, most undocumented – illuminate the nuanced recognition of gentrification and the employment of tactics to potentially redefine the enclave. The definition has yet to be finalized. Only time – the essence of the tactic – will tell.

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Statistics, 2012. https://www.dhs.gov/yearbook-immigration-statistics-2012-
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//appendix//

figure 1. the questionnaire.

1) Please tell me a little bit about your background and your history in this specific neighborhood. For example, where are you originally from? How long have you lived in this neighborhood? What do you do for a living? Please do not, under any circumstances, reveal your status as documented or undocumented.
2) What places do you visit most frequently in your neighborhood? What paths/modes of transportation do you take to get between these places?
3) Where does the neighborhood stop and start, in your opinion? What are its boundaries, if any?
4) When I say, "Little Senegal," what images immediately come to mind?
5) Are there elements of this neighborhood that remind you of your hometown?
6) Have you noticed any changes in the neighborhood since you've been living here? If so, where have you noticed these changes? To what do you attribute these changes? If not, what do you think is keeping the neighborhood the same?
7) Does it resonate with you at all that Harlem is a historically Black neighborhood? In other words, to what extent do you feel connected with the Black history of this area?
8) What is your favorite thing about your neighborhood?
9) Please draw a mental map of your neighborhood, including as much or as little detail as you'd like.

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1) S'il vous plait, dîtes-moi un peu de votre histoire personnelle. Par exemple, d'où venez-vous? Depuis quand habitez-vous aux Etats-Unis? Depuis quand habitez-vous à Harlem, New York? Quel est votre métier? S'il vous plait, ne dîtes jamais votre statut d'immigration, certifié(e) ou pas certifié(e).
2) Quels endroits fréquentez-vous le plus souvent dans votre quartier? Quelles routes/modes de transport prenez-vous pour y arriver?
3) Où est-ce que le quartier se commence et s'arrête, à votre avis? Quelles sont les frontières du quartier, s'il y en a?
4) Quand je dis "Little Senegal," quelles images apparaissent pour vous?
5) Est-ce qu'il y a des éléments du quartier qui vous rappellent des éléments de votre ville d'origine?
6) Avez-vous remarqué des changements dans le quartier depuis vous vous trouvez ici? Où est-ce que vous avez remarqué ces changements? A votre avis, quelles sont des causes pour ces changements? Sinon, pourquoi pensez-vous que le quartier reste sans les changements fondamentaux?
7) Est-ce que le fait que Harlem est un quartier qui est historiquement peuplée noir vous parlez? Vous sentez-vous lié à cette histoire?
8) Quelle est votre chose favorite de votre quartier?
9) S'il vous plait, à l'envers de cette fiche, dessinez une carte de votre quartier en ajoutant la quantité de détails que vous voulez.

figure 2. Cheikh's map.
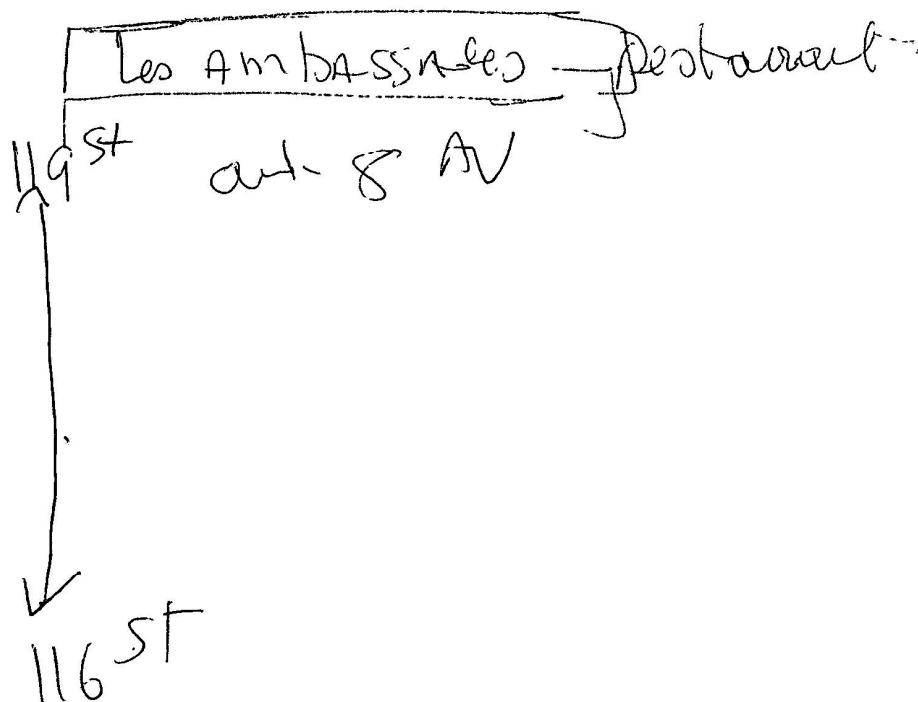orientation: north is at the top of the page.

figure 3. Babacar's map.
orientation: north is at the bottom of the page.

116 st.
Lieu de Rencontre

Manhattan

8 Ave

work

Amis

125 st
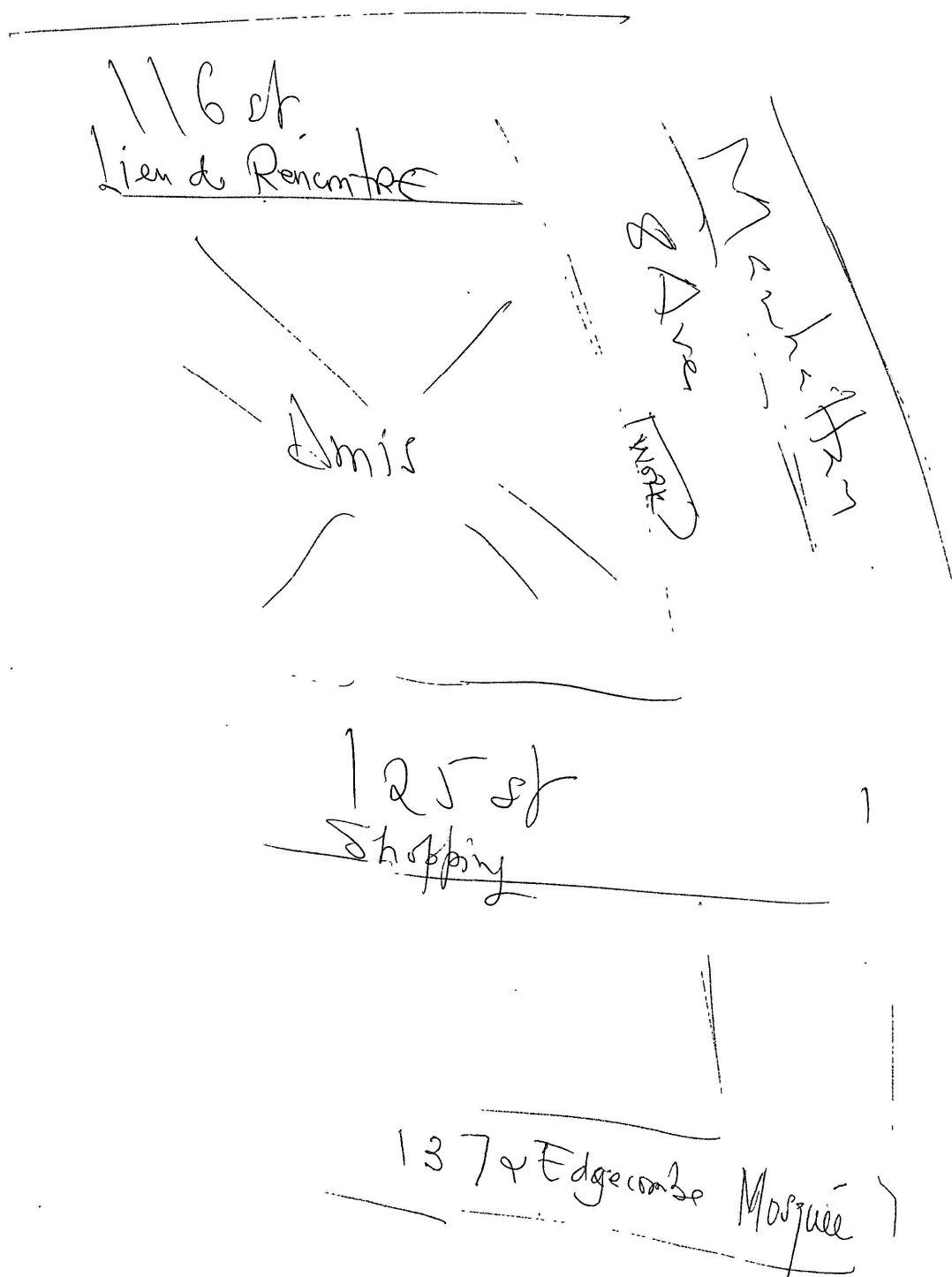Shopping

137 & Edgecombe   Mosquée

figure 4. Maghed's map.
orientation: north is at the top of the page.

figure 5. Zeynabou's map.
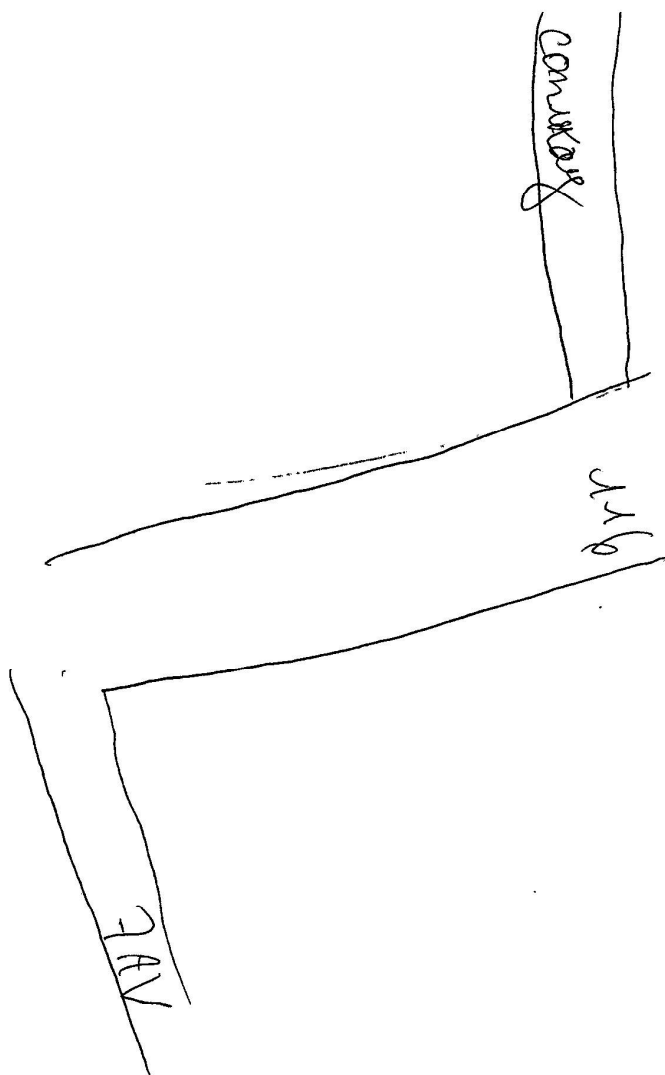orientation: north is at the top of the page.

figure 6. Ibrahima's map.
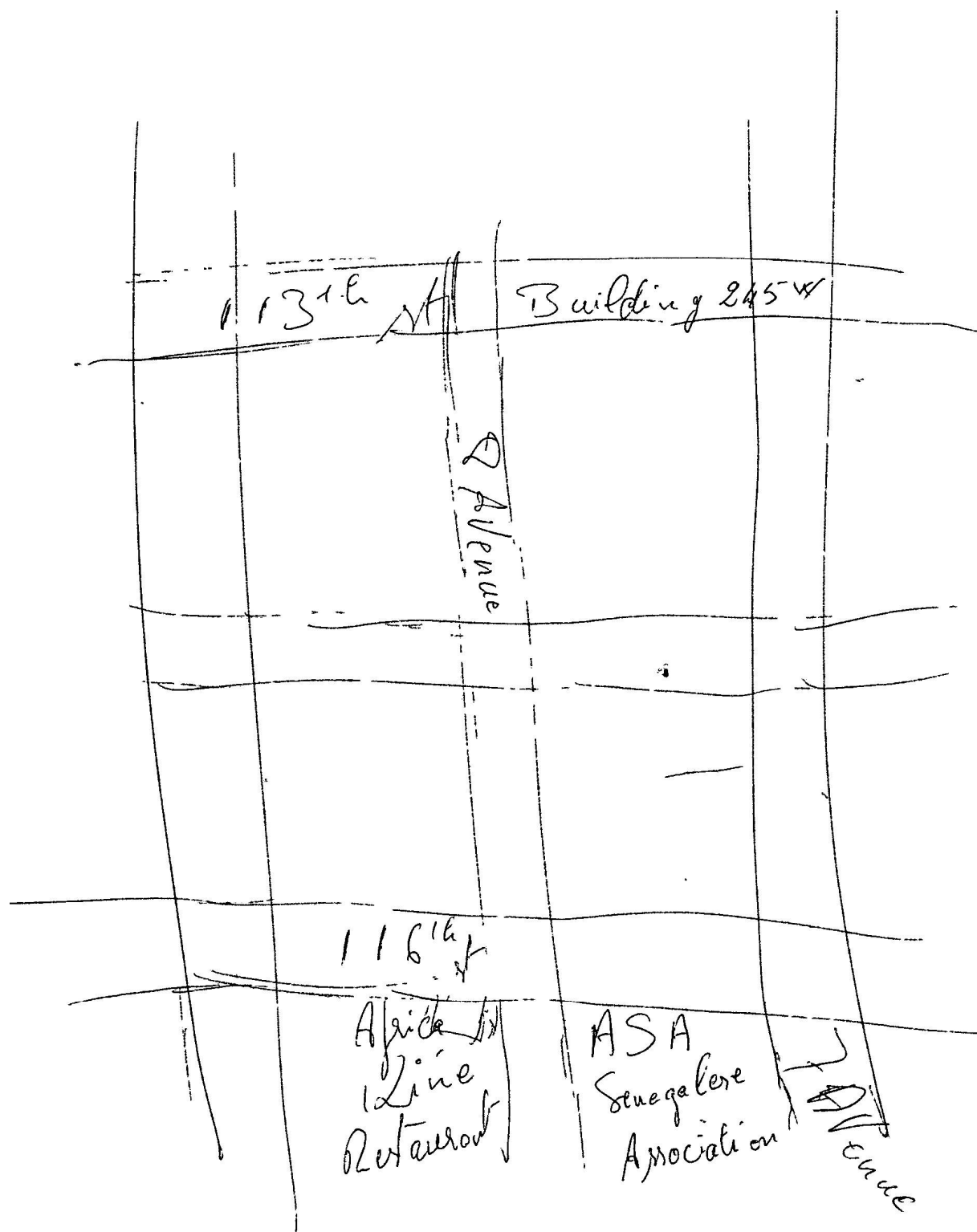orientation: north is at the bottom of the page.

figure 7. Binette's map.
orientation: north is at the top of the page.