Bushwick: emerging innovations in a dramatically gentrified neighbourhood

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Located in the northern portion of Brooklyn, Bushwick is a 5.2 km^2 neighbourhood home to 112 600 inhabitants. Over recent generations, changes in the area have mirrored those taking place in many 'outer borough' neighbourhoods. Bushwick was a mixed residential-manufacturing area which underwent major demographic changes in the 1960s, and 1970s[1]. It has since seen a decline in manufacturing through a process of deindustrialization and its landscape has been changed as a result both of fires in the 1970s and 1980s and the development of some public housing projects during the 1990s.[2]

Between Bushwick and the East River lies Williamsburg, a neighbourhood that followed broadly similar trends until the 1990s, when artists from lower Manhattan began to rapidly gentrify the housing blocks of Brooklyn lying across the Williamsburg Bridge. To the south of Bushwick lies the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighbourhood, a historically African-American area known as the 'Harlem of Brooklyn.' To its northeast, Bushwick extends into Ridgewood, a highly residential neighbourhood, and to its southeast lie a large cemetery and park.

The 'public square' of Bushwick is Maria Hernandez Park, occupying the equivalent of several blocks in the neighbourhood's northwest quadrant. Formerly 'Knickerbocker Park', in 1989 the park was renamed after Maria Hernandez, a Bushwick resident who struggled against, and was shot and killed by, local drug dealers. The park today is a lively centre of social activity for the neighbourhood, where young people come to play sports and games.

Primarily, Dominican and Puerto Rican, with lots of street life. People bring out giant speakers: gospel music, borique. Playing music on the street, not afraid to offend someone. Super friendly neighbourhood. You may be walking along and pass a table, people giving away free bread; block parties; a pot-luck on the stoop, kids hanging out. (…) Maria Hernandez Park is a super friendly place, skateboarders, and where local youth come and do rapping, kids playground, volleyball games into which anyone can jump into them (MAYDAY, Executive Director).

The neighbourhood's central commercial street is Knickerbocker Avenue, dominated by small businesses and with few chain stores. Bushwick does not have a Business Improvement District (BID)[3]. Mom-and-Pop shops are prevalent, largely run by Spanish-speaking immigrants. Spanish is the neighbourhood's most widely-spoken language. The housing stock is mostly brownstones, with occasional public housing projects, and new and taller apartment buildings on the sites of formerly burned-out lots.

One of the local City Council members describes the Bushwick neighbourhood as historically being where immigrants can come 'to stay' and raise families. Unlike other neighbourhoods in NYC that are 'transitory' - with newcomers moving in and then the population churning over - Bushwick is '*a family place, where families can stay and raise their family'* and where, historically, newcomers did not push out longstanding residents. From the perspective of the City Council member, one of the biggest concerns in Bushwick is that the community will become divided and that the area will lose its character as a result.

Bushwick, like many other neighbourhoods in NYC, has a long history of immigration. Around 1840, a large influx of German immigrants began arriving in Bushwick, bringing with them a brewing industry and offering jobs not only to Germans but also to later-arriving

English, Irish, Russian and Polish immigrants. They also constructed a number of mansions in the neighbourhood. However, between Prohibition and the Depression, most of the breweries were forced to close down and the German population began to decline. In the 1930s and 1940s Italian Americans began moving into Bushwick, finding jobs in the still-vibrant Brooklyn Navy Yard and other manufacturing concerns. During 1950s African Americans and Puerto Ricans, many displaced by population clearances associated with urban renewal in nearby areas, began moving into the area, while most of the Italian Americans lost their jobs and left the neighbourhood. At that time Bushwick was a prominently working-class neighbourhood, but the manufacturing economy in New York was declining dramatically and by the mid-1960s Bushwick was considered among the poorest neighbourhoods of the city (Marwell, 2007).

Throughout the 1960s the rate of residential fires climbed steadily, especially in African American and Puerto Rican areas. This happened not only in Bushwick, but also across many other poor areas of the city, such as Williamsburg, Harlem, the South Bronx and Bedford-Stuyvesant. At the same time, the city's impending fiscal crisis led to major cutbacks in public services, which reinforced the devastating effect of this period on many NYC neighbourhoods (Wallace & Wallace, 1998). In this context, Bushwick was one of the principal areas of decline and suffered a significant population decrease.

In 1966 Bushwick was included in the Community Action Program (CAP), which offered not only federal support but also a new strategy for confronting its intensifying poverty. The program ended in 1970 and the community-based organizations started through the program largely failed to sustain themselves after funding was cut. Many of the area's community-based organizations (both those created through the CAP and those developed after its end) soon benefited from a general trend towards the privatization of public services during the 1970s and 1980s (Marwell, 2004). The Ridgewood-Bushwick Senior Citizens Council (RBSCC), founded by Vito Lopez in 1973, was the principal community-based organization to take advantage of this situation in Bushwick and remains one of the main service providers in the area.

Since then, the Spanish-speaking population in the area continually increased to the point of the area becoming wholly Latino with a strong sense of neighbourhood belonging. Although black-Puerto Rican was initially the most prominent demographic, Latinos from other nationalities then began to populate the neighbourhood; these nationalities include Dominicans, Ecuadorians and, more recently, Mexicans. According to the NYU Furman Center, in 2000 Bushwick had a population that was 68 per cent Hispanic and 23 per cent black.

It's a vibrant neighbourhood (…) It's my home, where I grew up… this is what people from here will tell you (CUFFH, Activist).

This large, established and consolidated Latino community has for the past few years been facing a major threat emanating from new dynamics of demographic, social and urban transformation in the area: gentrification. As we will see throughout this report, the wave of gentrification has most definitively arrived in Bushwick. In fact, gentrification has been, and remains, the driving force behind a pronounced transformation in the neighbourhood over the past decade. The white population in Bushwick has increased from 3 per cent in 2000 to 11 per

cent in 2011-13 while, in the same period, the Hispanic population decreased from 68 per cent to 65 per cent and the black population dropped from 23 per cent to 18 per cent.

New luxury apartments, art studios and restaurants are spreading across the neighbourhood, bringing a new young, white middle-class population to the area. The traditional Latino Bushwick is progressively being substituted by young millennials, artists and hipsters arriving in the neighbourhood as a result of urban renewal projects and transforming the small business landscape with new bars, cafes and vintage clothing stores. Consequently, Bushwick is demographically and sociologically shifting, clearly dividing in two Bushwicks; the old and the new, the Latino community and the white gentrifiers. Rent increases, tenant harassment and displacement are the tough problems now challenging the Latino community.

In this context, the Latino community is producing innovative responses to cope with the effects of gentrification while, at the same time, very different but nonetheless creative socially innovative initiatives are flourishing as a result of the efforts of new residents. Between these conflicting worlds, several social organizations and actors are trying to bridge differences, but such efforts remain few and in early stages.

1. Gentrification in Bushwick: before and after the Great Recession

The Great Recession resulted in foreclosures, wage stagnation and unemployment across the United States, affecting the poor, middle and wealthy economic classes. However, the recovery began relatively early with respect to the wages and assets of the rich, while low-income wages and jobs stagnated for longer and have recovered more slowly, widening the wealth gap in the country. Bushwick, like other low-income neighbourhoods, has had to absorb these effects.

Bushwick had a high foreclosure rate[4] even before the recession (35.3 in 2006). The depression had a significant impact with respect to this issue, leading to a significant rise in foreclosures; by 2013 the foreclosure rate was 44.4. This led to outside developers acquiring properties, gutting and renovating the buildings, and then raising the rents. According to the NYU Furman Center Report (2015), the median rent in the area rose by 23 per cent between 2005-07 and 2011-13. The economic recession led to a reduction of working hours, wage stagnation and unemployment, resulting in affordability issues for residents, especially in the face of high rental prices. In this context, even though the growth of the real-estate market stopped temporarily, it rapidly returned after the Great Recession. In fact, in some urban areas like Bushwick real-estate developers took advantage of the vulnerable conditions caused by the recession.

In short, the recession facilitated the continuing expansion of gentrification across NYC. While some neighbourhoods, especially in Manhattan and some relatively nearby areas such as Williamsburg, had already been gentrified before the recession, in Bushwick gentrification started just before the recession hit and came back after it.

In the last 5 years of so, if you ask someone who is not from here [about Bushwick], they'll probably say: it's where all hipsters are moving (CUFFH, Activist).

Being well connected to Manhattan through the M, L, J and Z metro lines, Bushwick is continuing the wave of gentrification that developed in Williamsburg in the 1990s. Hence, Bushwick's gentrification is a product of both geographical location (with the area desirably placed) and the vulnerable economic situation of Bushwick's residents – a characteristic exacerbated by the effects of the Great Recession. In other words, the Great Recession has notably accelerated the process of gentrification. In fact, we were told by multiple interviewees that gentrification intensified and became more visible around 2010, just a few years after the collapse of the market.

It's cheaper and only 15 minutes away from Manhattan (…) They [hipsters] just want cheaper rent. They are not intentionally into it [gentrification] (…) But they don't understand the neighbourhood (…) their coffee shops, their bicycles, their composting, their farms on the roof… (CUFFH, Activist).

Gentrification in Bushwick began in the manufacturing area but is now beginning to take place in the more residential area of the neighbourhood, producing two different sets of social lives, two different communities sharing – or competing for - the same space, the same neighbourhood.

Now, it's changed somewhat; fewer speakers out in the park, don't know why. There are two different social lives now: the bars, hipsters, bar culture; and then the street life (MAYDAY, Executive Director).

Ortega (2010) discusses three stages of gentrification. The first is fostered by rogue or marginal gentrifiers: students, artists and other groups seeking affordable housing in a culturally diverse area and close to the commercial centre of the city. Then the neighbourhood begins to become desirable and further gentrifiers are attracted. This is the second stage; the neighbourhood becomes an up and coming area. Thus, new residents arrive, rents rise and the vulnerable long-term residents are displaced. In the third stage – the current stage of gentrification in Bushwick - wealthier residents arrive, the structure of property ownership shifts (with new landlords and real-estate companies buying buildings speculatively), tenants suffer not only rent increases but also harassment, and a new demand for services and amenities arises from the newcomers.

The real estate, new buyers are very aggressive, active in displacing tenants, especially tenants who live in rent stabilized apartments. Years ago some predatory equity, started buying in Bushwick like Cayuga, capital management, invercionistas voraces [predatory equity investors], buy rent stabilized buildings, and evict tenants who are paying low rent and put in tenants with higher rents and sell the building (MTRNY, Housing Organizer).

Gentrifiers began to move to Bushwick because it is a predominantly rental neighbourhood[5] where, as a result of the recession, rents remain relatively affordable. On the other hand, rents are increasing extremely quickly because of this process; again, as a result of the recession local long-term residents cannot afford this rise. The landlords of these residents drive them

out of their homes either through increases in rent or harassment. Low-income residents are left, therefore, with only two options: either living in overcrowded apartments or displacement.

Bushwick has never been a problem-free neighbourhood. It has traditionally been a working class and poor area historically with high unemployment. According to the NYU Furman Center Report (2015), Bushwick had an unemployment rate of 16.1 per cent in 2013, making it the neighbourhood with the 6th highest rate in the city[6]. While NYC as a whole has already recovered following the recession (the unemployment rate city-wide was 6.4 per cent in 2014), Bushwick and other low-income areas have not overcome the effects of recession at the same pace. In 2007, just before the recession, unemployment in Bushwick was just 9.8 per cent, showing that the recession is still taking its toll on the neighbourhood.

At the same time, however, the statistics suggest that Bushwick is wealthier now than it was before the recession. The poverty rate has fallen from 32.9 per cent in 2007 to 30.4 per cent in 2013; a fall which can be explained by the gentrification process. If we consider household income distribution (2014$) we observe that the percentage of households with an income of more than $60 000 grew from 26 per cent in 2000 to 34 per cent in 2011-13. Even though the percentage of poor people has decreased in Bushwick, such figures hide the way that the poverty rate has fallen: through displacement, tenant harassment and new social dynamics associated with poverty. Poverty in contemporary Bushwick is now being manifested in two new ways; through the increase in the informal economy and through the displacement of economically distressed residents to other areas.

Gentrification is having a very significant effect on Bushwick's Latino community. As millennials moved into the area and rents increased, wages generally remained at the same level while the working hours of many low-income Hispanic residents were reduced. As a result, poverty and homelessness increased in the community. With less money to spend, the long-term residents of Bushwick curtailed their spending, meaning that local small businesses were also affected.

One local clergy member called this 'the domino effect'; reduced economic resources led to more informal employment and street sellers, which then negatively impacted on small retailers. As one interviewee mentioned, '*there is an underground economy that has been increasing since 2008*'. At the same time, families moved in with relatives, leading to overcrowding which in turn led to relationship conflicts, giving incentives to landlords to either evict residents or to trick them into leaving. That then enabled landlords to raise rents and to select new tenants from millennials with more resources.

Persons are paying higher amounts of their income to pay for rent, going from 30 per cent, 50 per cent, to 80 per cent of their income, lots of people have started to leave, going to Ohio, Pennsylvania, a lot to Pennsylvania (MTRNY, Housing Organizer).

One interviewee disclosed a particularly blatant attempt by a property-owner to accelerate this process:

A neighbouring property owner had artists come in and paint murals on his property to bring prices up; these murals are different from older graffiti murals because they are void of social issues (CUFFH, Activist).

A similar process has affected small, locally-owned businesses: rising rents without a commensurate rise in sales has put pressure on small businesses leading to their closure and replacement by new businesses catering to the gentrifiers. This is a trend we will analyse in depth when we examine Small Business United (SBU), a socially innovative initiative addressing the effects of gentrification on the small businesses of immigrants.

To sum up, Bushwick was vulnerable to the effects of the Great Recession because of its low-wage population and consequent foreclosures. In that context the neighbourhood has been dramatically gentrified in the period immediately following the economic downturn. As we will see in the next section, the community has made efforts to 'manage' gentrification and population displacement, but without cross-organizational nonprofit activity it has been difficult to do this successfully. Bushwick is at present a divided neighbourhood, although, as we shall see, some social dynamics have recently begun to change in this regard.

2. Two Bushwicks and a shifting civic capacity

The social structure of contemporary Bushwick is characterized as 'the two Bushwicks': on the one hand there is the Hispanic population and the African-American population; on the other hand there are the gentrifiers. There is a palpable tension between these two worlds: '*We don't work with gentrifiers',* said one interviewee from an established neighbourhood nonprofit.

As (Ortega, 2010) has noted, through the gentrification process two physical spaces and competing aesthetics have developed in Bushwick. This distinction is evident with respect to housing, in particular, and in local businesses.

The long-term residents can be characterized as being notably immigrant, low-income, Spanish-speaking and relatively old. Many of them are undocumented immigrant small business owners. The fact that they are not legal migrants obviously makes them a vulnerable population. However, they have strong family and community ties. The Latinos of Bushwick are considered a highly religious community with a strong sense of family, sharing not just language and cultural overlap, but also various modes of social interaction, which extend to the street.

The newcomers are mainly young, English-speaking people from the 'millennial' generation. They have a strong visual presence, identifiable through public art, art studios, bars and cafes, as well as through racial and age indicators. Most of them are white and young students or professionals. They are not rich, although they tend to have higher levels of educational qualifications, racial and language privilege, and greater job opportunities. One of the neighbourhood's City Council members referred to them as the new immigrants from the Midwest of the US: '*Now we're seeing a new face coming in: "Middle America" meaning midwesterners'.* Some of them, especially those who arrived first, are young artists but most of them are students. Although they clearly pay higher rents than the Latino community, many of them live in shared apartments.

If the divide between the two Bushwicks was bridged, the resources of the new residents could help the community through, for example, access to the resources of nonprofits or links with universities. One Latino organizer described the new residents as *'adaptable and open to sharing with other cultures'*. However, at least until now the dominant situation is that these two Bushwicks run along parallel tracks.

As we have seen, the dynamics of gentrification prompt rent increases for tenants and small businesses, harassment of tenants by landlords and crowded apartments. It is for these reasons that long-term residents tend to perceive the millennials moving to Bushwick as gentrifiers that are pushing them out of their neighbourhood, even if that is not the intention of the newcomers. As such, the conflict between the two Bushwicks is not based on prejudice and cultural insensitiveness. The tension is felt, rather, in the issues of housing (rising rents and displacement), commercial spaces, and language (Spanish and English).

The distinction between the two Bushwicks is sharp and clearly visible when walking around the area. However, since 2013 a number of social organizations have been making efforts to bridge the divide between the two communities, holding joint events and hiring specialized staff for outreach to whichever 'half' of Bushwick the organization fails to serve. How successful these efforts will prove to be in terms of 'integrating' these communities remains to be seen.

Despite the process of gentrification and the social split in Bushwick, resilience can be found in Bushwick's strong sense of community, especially among Latinos. Solidarity is especially robust across the Spanish-speaking community, both at the family level and also through churches. The Latino community demonstrates trust within itself, tying individuals to each other. Individuals in this group tend to be relatively equal in terms of socio-economic status and similar in cultural practices, which make it very much a bonding community.

Many of social and community-based organizations in Bushwick are 'identity-based' - helping specific communities within the neighbourhood. In part this explains why they are characterized by 'bonding' rather than by 'bridging' social capital. However, we also found some degree of bridging social capital beginning to develop as some traditional organizations are starting to work with organizations launched by newcomers, while some other organizations that are trying to link the two Bushwicks are beginning to emerge. Examples of this new trend are the North West Bushwick Community Group (a small organization focused on housing justice started in September 2013 in response to the Rheingold rezoning) and Ecostation, an initiative that will be analysed in depth in this report.

Views of the operation of the public authorities in the neighbourhood are predominantly neutral or positive, without a strongly negative camp. This stands in contrast to perceptions of the neighbourhood's largest and most established nonprofit – RBSCC - which has attracted conflict. RBSCC has become a political base for Vito Lopez as a State Assemblyman – a political entity providing social and housing services to the community (Marwell, 2007) – which seems to have crowded out social organizational and coalitional development that we might have expected to see in the years leading up to the Great Recession.

Until recently, the major nonprofit organizations have worked independently from one another. There are three main strands of nonprofit organizations identifiable in the longstanding element of Bushwick's residents: RBSCC, Make the Road NY and other Latino-

oriented organizations providing community services and advocacy, and several church-based coalitions.

RBSCC provides a wide range of local services, has a strong presence and is deeply embedded in the neighbourhood. As one interviewee stated, *'RBSCC is a neighbourhood feature'*. At the same time, several in interviewees has shown that it is also a very controversial organization.

Make the Road NY (MTRNY) is a medium sized grassroots advocacy nonprofit in Bushwick that also provides a range of services. While there have been links between the two major organizations - for example, MTRNY refers people to RBSCC, and these organizations utilize one another as resources for service delivery - they develop their programs, services and advocacy efforts 'in parallel' rather than collaboratively. Moreover, until recently they have not formed advocacy coalitions. The other nonprofits in Bushwick are smaller in size and are focused on one type of activity.

With respect to third strand of nonprofit activity in Bushwick, most of the civic engagement in the area has a connection to the church. The long-standing organizational coalitions in Bushwick can be understood as 'coalitional organizations' such as East Brooklyn Congregations (EBC) and Churches United for Fair Housing (CUFFH). These are faith-based in nature, particularly address the needs of the long-standing Latino community, and they result in organizational forms that reflect a broader institution; groups of churches also comprise the EBC. These coalitions are not examples of nonprofits bridging across different domains but are rather the result of organization-building processes. Once these coalitional forms have been created, there is little collaboration between them.

Nevertheless, now that the dominance of RBSCC in Brunswick is less pronounced, we identified newer coalitions starting to take shape. The Allied Communities Against Buy-Outs (ACABO) and a group of organizations working together to influence the Reinhold rezoning process are examples; these organizations, which are 'bridging' together, represent a new process of coalition building in Bushwick in the wake of the decline of RBSCC's hegemony.

Regarding this complex map of actors and relationships, we could state that civic capacity in Bushwick is highly constrained but shifting in nature. In the pre-gentrification Bushwick, a small universe of civic organizations operated: RBSCC, Make the Road and several church-based coalitions. These organizations did not work together, however, and there is a history of competition between them. Most notably, RBSCC functioned as a political machine for the State Assembly member, Vito Lopez, until he was forced from office in 2013. The story of how this political machine was created is explained in depth by Nicole Marwell in 'Bargaining for Brooklyn' (2007). Vito Lopez was an Italian American social worker who, in 1970, began to work at Bushwick's recently opened community centre for the elderly. Lopez began putting his community organizing skills to work with Bushwick's senior citizens, and his main goal was to make stronger claims on the city government by organizing the neighbourhood's elderly to speak the language that politicians understand best: voting.

In 1973 Lopez founded RBSCC. This new community-based nonprofit shaped its programs on the basis of the availability of government funds to support them, thus choosing to focus on relatively few of the many problems facing the neighbourhood, such as housing. The discourse of RBSCC focused on 'helping people' and, according to this rationale, they aggressively pursued government funding. Over the years RBSCC expanded its services to local

residents and also employed local people as organizational staff. As a result, Lopez built up a loyal following of clients and employees. Bushwick residents - poor and living in a neighbourhood with few local service organizations - previously had little access to the kinds of services the growing enterprise provided. It was in early 1980s, as he witnessed again and again the link between political influence and access to public funds, that Lopez realized the importance of running for elected office (Marwell, 2007). Lopez ran for Assemblyman in 1985, winning the Bushwick-Williamsburg seat.

Lopez was member of the New York State Assembly from 1985 to 2013 and, from 2006 to 2012, also served as Chairman of the King County Democratic Party. In 2012, he was forced to step down as Chairman of the Brooklyn Democratic Party after it was revealed that he settled a lawsuit with two of his female staff members who alleged that Lopez sexually harassed them. Up until that point, RBSCC had taken advantage of Lopez's position – getting government contracts - while Lopez himself won assembly elections with votes from RBSCC clients and employees, and sat in 15 New York State Legislatures. Marwell describes the workings of this political machine in Bushwick over the past three decades (Marwell 2007: 112):

In this triadic exchange, the CBO serves as the fulcrum through which patronage resources are distributed and client/voters are organized. The CBO thus becomes a necessary component of the primary exchange between the political entity - the elected official - and the individual client/voter. Unlike their counterparts in the era of the political machine, today's elected officials themselves no longer directly control patronage jobs or other significant divisible benefits. Instead, the CBO holds and distributes benefits to client/voters - but the elected official is the conduit through which these resources come to the CBO. In essence, community-based organizations – offering as they do jobs in the CBO and its related enterprises; preferential access to CBO services; and other kinds of assistance, including help with navigating public service bureaucracies - are structurally positioned to replace political party organizations.

Much of the conflict we detected within the civil society in Bushwick was related to RBSCC. We did not ask interviewees about RBSCC directly but a number of informants nonetheless mentioned RBSCC as 'controversial', as having harmed collaborative relations, or as existing in its own sphere apart from other organizations. Furthermore, the members of the City Council were uncomfortable with Lopez's network. The area's member of the State Assembly (Maritza Davila) remains closely tied to RBSCC while the City Councillors have empowered coalition-building that, in at least one important case, has excluded RBSCC (the Reinhold rezoning efforts). However, things seem to be changing and one City Council member (Antonio Reynoso[7]) is now organizing a planning process that brings RBSCC and MTRNY together.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the two main realms of civic action in Bushwick have been 'run' by RBSCC and MTRNY since most of the public that has flowed into the neighbourhood has done so through one of the two organizations. However, different governmental and non-governmental stakeholders have not demonstrated the ability to work together to cope with neighbourhood problems. Rather, what we found in Bushwick in terms of civic capacity was a dominant client-based model that operated as a political machine and

that excluded and competed with an alternative Latino constellation of social change organizations. This competitive and conflictive relationship was reflected in the area's electoral politics, both through Vito Lopez's relationship with RBSCC and through the political mobilization of the alternative Latino world. In 2011 the District 54 City Councillor Rafael Espinal, who had the endorsement of Vito Lopez, almost lost against Jesus Gonzalez, an independent from the CUFFH and who was closer to MTRNY. In 2013, Vito Lopez ran in primaries for the District 34 City Council elections and lost to Antonio Reynoso.

Neighbourhood actors generally perceive Bushwick's Community Board[8] as a facilitator of coalitions, even while the Community Board manages conflict over rezoning and gentrifying organizations that are seeking licenses to operate. The Community Board and the Council of Community Affairs serve as forums for community participation, and elected officials or their representatives are always present in meetings. In other words, multilateral coordination happens when a government official or institution is involved. The Community Board is an emerging mechanism that enables the reorganization of the civil-society system in Bushwick; Lopez was not able to extend his influence to the Board (Assemblymen are not able to appoint board members), and RBSCC has lost its monopoly on civic capacity. One innovative organization, North West Bushwick Community Group, describes Bushwick's Community Board and the representatives of the city council as as accessible and praises the Board's outreach teams that work in the community.

In short, there is not a tradition of collaboration between organizations in Bushwick; they do not have a history of working together, although they are now starting to do so. The organizer of Bushwick's first public event to showcase the neighbourhood's various social organizations, which took place in spring 2015, disclosed her perception that collaboration between organizations has been poor and bilateral, rather than multilateral. Thus, several years after the shake-up at RBSCC, we are now seeing an emerging process, a transition to a new system. The nature of civic capacity in Bushwick is changing, but driven by leadership processes rather than by the older system of civic capacity 'partitioned' into church-based, machine-based, and single nonprofit based spheres.

3. Sparks of creativity in a threatened neighbourhood

Bushwick is a neighbourhood where socially innovative initiatives are beginning to emerge. Some of these initiatives are 'free-standing' or, in other words, small organizations or coalition-efforts, while others are programs crated by Bushwick's larger nonprofits. However, as we will see, Social Innovation in Bushwick is not something easy to achieve as there is no tradition of collaboration at a community level. In essence what we found were some sparks of creativity, which were either reactions from below to the effects of gentrification or were emanating from the neighbourhood's new middle class residents.

We noticed a number of clusters of issues that were prominent in the area. Tenants' rights are the most pressing issue evident across the civil society organizations, an issue which includes organizing and empowering small business owners. Another important issue-cluster relates to initiatives aimed at creating a more integrated community; in other words, mechanisms to bring together both the gentrifying millennials and the long-term Hispanic residents. Social innovations in Bushwick respond to the crisis of gentrification by trying to

integrate the new and the old. For example, the organization MayDay aims to facilitate discussion about gentrification among stakeholders, between long-term residents and newcomers. Another example is North West Bushwick Community Group's story-building project which consciously involved both old and new residents.

On one hand, then, traditional social change organizations are producing novel responses in the face of new threats; for example, Small Business United, which was launched by MTRNY, was created to cope with small business displacement and harassment. On the other hand, creative initiatives are also flourishing in the area that are driven by some of the newcomers, who aim to become integrated in the neighbourhood through offering new and alternative solutions to unmet social needs. Ecostation is a good example of that trend: an urban farm project developed by two new residents which aims to empower young people and address some other community issues. In this report we will analyse these two socially innovative initiatives in depth to show how Bushwick's old and new worlds can produce interesting responses to current social needs.

3.1. Small Business United

An oddity in US immigration law allow immigrants who cannot yet legally work on the payrolls of established organizations to open their own businesses, a legal situation which has led to a rich fabric of Mom-and-Pop immigrant-owned businesses in Bushwick. As one interviewee noted:

You can't legally work but you can open a business, so a lot of people say this is how I'm going to provide a livelihood for myself (MTRNY, SBU Organizer).

Entrepreneurs among millennials can pay higher rents than traditional immigrants to Bushwick and so, as part of the process of gentrification, establish new small businesses: bars, restaurants and clothing stores, for example. As a result, newly-arrived millennials do not spend money in the Latino businesses. Thus, the rent increases in Bushwick have not only affected residents but also the neighbourhood's many small businesses.

Small businesses in Bushwick reflect both the vulnerability of Bushwick's immigrant communities and their potential for economic development. Currently, there is no rent-stabilization for small businesses in Brooklyn.

Landlords are doubling or tripling our rents. Most of us have short lease agreements: one, two, or five years; and when the lease ends, if you are paying $1,000 now they then say 'You are gonna pay $2,000'. And then 'los blanquitos' [white people] come, and they pay these high rents (SBU, Community Leader).

In addition to facing unaffordable rent increases, immigrant-owned small businesses in Bushwick face a language barrier when dealing with city institutions and are usually unfamiliar with business rights. Small Business United (SBU) is an innovative project launched in 2008 by MTRNY which aims to collectively organize Bushwick's small businesses to address their difficulties.

MTRNY is a huge nonprofit aiming to *'build the power of Latino and working class communities to achieve dignity and justice through organizing, policy innovation, transformative education, and survival services.'* It was created in the fall of 2007 through the merger of Make the Road by Walking and the Latin American Integration Center, two of NYC's most innovative and effective grassroots organizations. The merger was a natural partnership that built on proven successes and created a new state-level organization that combines democratic accountability to low-income people and an innovative mix of strategies to confront inequality and economic injustice, while fostering deep and active community roots. The Latin American Integration Center was founded in 1992 by a group of Colombian immigrants who had recently escaped the political violence that ravaged their home country; they arrived in Jackson Heights and founded LAIC to promote and protect the human and civil rights of Latino immigrants and encourage their civic participation in NYC. Make the Road by Walking was founded in 1997 in Bushwick to help immigrant welfare recipients who suffered illegal disruptions to their receipt of public benefits in the wake of welfare reform. MTRNY now has more than 16 000 members and organizes civil society action around a range of issues such as immigration, affordable housing, the use of commercial space, LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer) issues, youth issues and policy changes. It carries out its work in several neighbourhoods in Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and Long Island. Bushwick is one of the areas where it is more visible and active.

We deal with harassment and displacement, housing discrimination and higher rents. But real estate owners, brokers happy to rent to this new people, some landowners have told our tenants that they don't want Latinos, Latinos with kids [families], they prefer young white people with dogs. That's what's happening (MTRNY, Housing Organizer).

SBU is a specific MTRNY project focused on organizing immigrants' small businesses. As well as in Bushwick, SBU is also being implemented in Jackson Heights, though they are separate projects. It is socially innovative because a) it has emerged to address the effects of recession, b) it fosters new social relationships among a vulnerable group, and c) it offers an alternative response to the problems of small businesses in a neighbourhood where there is no Business Improvement District.

One of SBU's first activities was to create a guide to workplace safety and to advocate for healthcare reform that works for small businesses. Since its inception, it has been involved in various campaigns to aid small businesses in Bushwick. For example: successfully opposing the opening of a giant Walmart superstore in Brooklyn and the nearby neighbourhood of East New York; eliminating the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers; supporting legislation for paid sick days (aiding the economic situation of low-income communities and thereby improving the customer base for small businesses in Bushwick); and joining the state-wide fight against tax-abatement legislation that would subsidize big developers. Beyond its advocacy for policies favourable to the low-income residents of Bushwick, SBU is particularly focused on advocating commercial rent stabilization as a long-term goal. To improve affordability, SBU responds to the vulnerability of Bushwick's immigrant-owned small businesses by collectively organizing small businesses and strengthening their network with information and training. The core of SBU's work is organizing the small businesses of

Bushwick, tapping the informal networks among these businesses and their stakeholders, strengthening these relationships, and bringing the business owners into a cohesive, coordinated network. Monthly meetings are staffed by an organizer who works full-time for SBU. Beyond sharing information and identifying shared objectives, SBU provides training sessions that build the skills of members to enable them to talk with and recruit other small businesses as well as teach them how to talk with policy-makers.

Collective organization among immigrant small-business owners responds innovatively to the problem of stabilizing the employment of Bushwick's Hispanic community's in the face of gentrification and the post-2008 economic downturn. There are few precedents for group organizing among immigrant small business owners. This organizing leads to the development of an advocacy program aimed at both city and state policy-making bodies. SBU has also sent members to Washington D.C. to lobby the national legislature.

While SBU's advocacy aims to improve the policy environment in which small businesses operate, the organization also provides immediate assistance to Bushwick's small businesses by training owners in skills needed in their immediate neighbourhood environment. For example, SBU offers workshops on business skills tailored to immigrant business owners, such as how to negotiate with the police, how to comply with New York City and New York State labour laws, and how to implement the newly legislated paid sick leave. Thanks to SBU, small business owners know when they do and do not have to buy certifications for public notice of various business specifications. One SBU member made this point quite clearly:

We learn about new regulations, they tell us which new regulations have been passed, we are always informed there and we feel that they [MTRNY] helps us, they support us (SBU, Community Leader).

SBU bridges with the public sphere, enjoying good relations with the neighbourhood's Community Board, the members of the City Council and the Housing Preservation Commission. However, characteristic of Bushwick's 'silos' of civic capacity, SBU exhibits little in the way of collaboration with other major nonprofits in Bushwick and shows some distrust of and disagreement with Vito Lopez and the RBSCC world.

To date, SBU has fought several successful campaigns (for example, preventing Walmart from opening in Brooklyn and campaigning for paid sick leave), while other policy advocacy efforts remain incomplete and therefore difficult to evaluate (for example, legislation to stabilize commercial rents). The initiative has, however, quickly grown in Bushwick, now encompassing most of the neighbourhood's immigrant businesses.

The leadership practices exhibited by SBU can be characterized as typical of initiatives of collective organization. A great deal of the initiative's ways of operating - such as convening meetings and distributing tasks and roles - depend on the efforts of a paid organizer. However, the initiative falls somewhere between command-and-control and collective leadership since the SBU members shape the organization's agenda through deliberation and by voicing concerns at monthly meetings.

My role [SBU organizer] is primarily organizing non service provision, listen to people who are saying 'I can't pay my rent, my landlord doesn't want to renew the lease and wants to charge

double, I'm about to be kicked out'… We say that's big problem, and then say that if you and enough neighbours care about that then we are going to fight on that, then build collective power to win broad systemic solutions (…) Those who are affected [by difficulties] are engaged and can explain to others a real problem in the first person (MTRNY, SBU organizer).

SBU exhibits several salient aspects of collective leadership we often find in social innovations that engage multiple stakeholders. SBU consciously reframes the discourse surrounding Hispanic employment. It fights against an image of immigrants who create difficulties for Americans seeking employment and foster an alternative view which highlights the Hispanic contribution to the local economy. They clearly articulate the idea that migrants are not guilty as a result of being migrants but rather that they are a vulnerable group that are victims of tenant harassment and other injustices. At the same time, SBU sustains that they could be self-organized and empowered. As one SBU member explained:

Some people believe that we don't contribute, that we come to take employment or opportunities from others… Sometimes we are not well seen… There are those who try to take advantage of our vulnerability… And we say: No, we are organized, we can be prepared small business owners (SBU, Community Leader).

Through SBU's activities, Hispanic small businesses emerge as a visible employment network, as a sector in its own right in Bushwick. The 'for-profit' sector need not be large corporations. In Bushwick's case, the for-profit sector is comprised of hundreds of immigrants, many without legal status, providing employment and products for the community and from within the community. SBU works to re-frame these immigrant businesses as contributing much to the social fabric of the family-centred and long-term residents.

By giving voice to previously marginalized immigrant business owners, and by strengthening their collective identity, SBU unleashes their human energy. As one SBU member conveyed:

We know that our voice could be heard there… We can make politicians listen to us. We can make changes happen. That's what I tell to other small business owners when I want to engage them in SBU… We have learned to speak, to defend ourselves when somebody wants to harass us, to know our rights and duties (MTRNY, SBU Organizer).

The organizing endeavour itself can be understood as making use of human energy, as it brings together previously isolated actors, provides training in outreach and advocacy, and then supports residents in articulating their individual stories with a unified voice.

In empowering immigrants through collective organization, SBU is carrying out a power-based strategy. Even though SBU is run by a MTRNY professional organizer, it is focused on developing community leaders among the neighbourhood's residents. Each small business owner can become a community leader through SBU. Thus, it is a community-based initiative aiming to build community power and which assumes a conflictive relationship between haves and have-nots. It is focused on organizing residents, empowering them to confront elites and demand changes in the distribution of power. From this perspective, neighbourhood problems

stem from the community's lack of power within the political decision-making process. The solution is to build the community's weight so that its interests are better represented in the public sphere.

To sum up, SBU is an innovative response in Bushwick to cope with gentrification effects and harassment in the Latino community's small business. It was launched by a large, traditional nonprofit (MTRNY) and takes advantage of professional staff. At the same time, though, this nonprofit has traditionally had a proactive and power-based approach, assuming a conflictive relationship between haves (landlords and gentrifiers) and have-nots (immigrants). They are focused on empowering immigrants and they utilize various leadership practices to achieve that. However, they have little capacity to network with other neighbourhood actors, a fact that constrains their effectiveness in solving the tough problems faced by small businesses in Bushwick.

3.2. Ecostation

In 2009, two Bushwick residents who were active in the neighbourhood's community gardens decided to start an organization to open new farmers' markets. The founders were quickly hindered by a lack of funding and also sensed the community's needs for development and education about food, its need for jobs, and the need bridge between Bushwick's largely separate communities. As such, their initial goal of growing food was superseded by the vision of becoming an organization for education and community development. As we will see, the initiative has gone beyond the initial idea which inspired it. It has been effective in empowering young Latinos, has transformed social relations and is providing a new solution to the food needs of Bushwick's low-income community.

We dove in heart-first… knew what we wanted to do, open some markets, and make it accessible, grow food, and open discussion about and around food (Ecostation, Executive Director).

Ecostation is neither a large coalition nor a huge organization emerging from grassroots. Rather, it is a socially entrepreneurial initiative launched by two 'social innovators'; it is a small social change organization working on the issue of 'food justice' and combining a global discourse with local practices at a community level.

Even though the founders of Ecostation were two newcomers to the area, they clearly aim to work with and for the local community in Bushwick. Their target population is the Latino community and they select the vegetables they grow according to the culture and tastes of the Latino community. Ecostation is, in fact, now a mixed organization where newcomers and long-term Bushwick residents work together.

We try to work with Make the Road and first generation immigrant families, because this is the majority of the people who live in Bushwick (Ecostation, Farm Manager).

The core aim of Ecostation is to address the issue of sustainability, prompting dialogue about the interconnectedness of human and environmental health, and the effects of our current food system upon both. In the span of just six short years, Ecostation has started several

major, innovative, interrelated projects in Bushwick. First, a 'Campus Farm' (along with a greenhouse) was developed in Bushwick Campus High School. In the Campus Farm they grow organic food and also train the next generation of leaders with respect to environmental and food justice[9]. Ecostation's purpose also speaks to the basic needs of the low-income Hispanic community. Their message is *'grow your own food to survive, and to make ends meet'*. Thus, they are teaching young people how to grow food, paying particular attention to Bushwick's low-income population and aiming to develop community leadership skills. This initiative is coordinated with the four high schools located at Bushwick Campus and the NYC Department of Education.

Second, Ecostation launched the Bushwick Farmers' Market, which aims to supply a community in need of fresh, local produce and to support the regional family farms that grow such food[10]. Ecostation also provides organic food to the *bodegas*[11] and aims to make this food affordable. In this vein, Ecostation began accepting food stamps even before the city's farmers markets started accepting them. One interviewee stated:

A lot of these nonprofits tend to provide a sort of service. We also try to ensure that people who might not have the same resources as others are also participating (Ecostation, Director of Markets).

A third Ecostation project is Farm-in-the-Sky. This is a new project which is exploring traditional and experimental low-cost and scalable do-it-yourself technics at the rooftops[12]. Beyond these three main projects, Ecostation also carries out community events and is involved in local campaigns, such as a campaign to make healthy lunches available in schools.

Today, Ecostation is still a small organization in the formal sense: it has three part-time salaried staff and relies on 'farmer-educators' and on local public school administration (high school teachers and administrators from the host school campus), as well as on volunteer and student apprentices. Supportive relationships with the city's Department of Education are also valuable (it was the Department of Education that allowed Ecostation to set up its farm on the campus of a public school). The organization stands at the intersection of the three major sectors, with Ecostation itself being a nonprofit but one which collaborates with the public sector (public schools and the Department of Education) and which sells produce from both community gardens and for-profit upstate farms.

Ecostation approaches its work with a 'community building' philosophy. For instance, one farm manager shared his vision for how the organization can both use and transform the social fabric of the neighbourhood:

The community connections that you need for this project have always been there, you just need to take them and value them (Ecostation, Farm Manager).

With this community building philosophy, Ecostation has positioned itself in a creative position vis-a-vis the 'two Bushwicks' in that it contributes to integrating the two different cultures of, on the one hand, the gentrifiers and, on the other, the long-term Hispanic residents. For instance, millennials bring gardening knowledge and skills to the community, and volunteers and mentors are also enlisted from the gentrifiers; they then engage and train Latino young

people, ushering them into a larger world of city-wide organizations and entrepreneurial practices. Ecostation is also sensitive to the tastes of the Latino residents, growing foods with respect to the Hispanic cultures of the long-term residents.

Structurally, Ecostation builds relationships across Bushwick's cultural divide, engaging both local artisans - who sell their crafts at the farmers' market - and neighbourhood *bodegas*. It partners both with organizations oriented toward the Hispanic community - such as Make the Road, el Puente, and RBSCC - and with the newer universe of gentrifying organizations - such as MayDay and BKRot - as well as with the public sector. In fact, more than perhaps any other organization we examined, what characterizes Ecostation is its position at the confluence of the two Bushwicks, for-profit organizations (upstate farms) and the public sector (schools and city agencies). The collaborative texture of Ecostation's leadership practices are well suited to the organization's position at the crossroads between these various constituencies being bridged together.

Ecostation understands itself as an 'Educational Farm', with the objective of community building. They primarily train residents from Bushwick, although increasingly from other neighbourhoods too, to learn how to manage an urban farm, thereby accelerating the growth of the urban agricultural movement.

Operationally, Ecostation blends formal organizational elements (part-time staff, fundraising, training procedures, a small board of directors and physical sites) with an informal approach to its day-to-day organizing. With respect to the leadership continuum (from command-and-control at one end to collective leadership on the other) Ecostation falls near the collective end of the spectrum, though it is not without some elements of command-and-control; their three person staff and board influence decision-making throughout the different areas of Ecostation's activities. Ecostation exhibits many features of collaborative leadership, and principal-agent decision making coexists with self-consciously cooperative and consensus-based practices. Ecostation's philosophy of leadership stresses multiple decision-makers: '*[t]here is no one person leading that',* most of its members say. One Ecostation participant related:

We work together, different stakeholders, but separate, trying to learn from each other (…) We don't wait for an order. We say, ok, this is happening, how can we handle that collectively (Ecostation, Farm Manager).

When interviewing the leaders of Ecostation, we identified several distinctive aspects of the organization's leadership practices. As mentioned above, the most prominent of these was the way in which Ecostation is bridging differences between the 'two Bushwicks.' However, this is not the only practice we detected. We also found Ecostation reframing discourse through a universal food justice paradigm, holding the growing of food as simultaneously both a project for social justice and as economic development for the local community. Hence, Ecostation's scalability can best be understood in terms of its capacity to expand the relevance of the 'micro' activity of growing food on small plots of land into the 'macro' social justice issue of changing a system that works only for some into a system that works for Bushwick's Hispanic community:

The system doesn't work for a lot of people, so we want to change the system in a food justice way (…) This is not only about the food we eat but also about the environment we need. This affects all of us (Ecostation, Practician).

Thus, growing healthy food is presented as a project based on three rationales: a) it is part of a broader food justice movement; b) it seeks for endogenous economic development in a stigmatized local community; and c) it could find its own way to move forward autonomously. This new contestatory but pragmatic discourse is developed through Ecostation's everyday activities.

A clear example of how this discourse shapes Ecostation's practices could be seen in how the organization unleashes human energy. We found evidence of this occurring at different levels: for example, knowledge regarding food justice, expertise in growing food and community leadership skills. It is training young people, and realising their potential is one of its main goals. Through youth workshops, Ecostation mentors connect a wide range of social justice movements together with food '*pointing out issues of class, gender, sexuality and race.*' At the same time, participants in Ecostation undergo the realization that growing one's own food is possible:

When you grow your own food… that realization for many people is unbelievable. Also connecting to your ancestors… A lot of them are third generation and it's fun to connect the food we grow to their cultures… (Ecostation, Farm Manager).

Ecostation intentionally engages in the development of youth leadership. As the Farm Manager says: '*we co-facilitate with new youth that are becoming community leaders, involving them in participation on the board*.'

In response to the effects of the Great Recession, Ecostation is notable for how its programs move residents, particularly young Latinos, from an underground, informal and illegal economy into the daylight of a legal economy: growing food and selling what they grow in the farmers' markets and to local restaurants.

Ecostation creates a public space [the Farmers Market] to sell products in a way that's legal and improves the health of the public (Ecostation, Director of Markets).

Ecostation brings larger neighbourhood social processes to bear on their work by hosting large-scale community events every year, and by providing job-training sessions for young people. Further, Ecostation's cross-sector organizational partnerships lead to young people becoming familiar with a larger universe of organizations, both in Bushwick and across NYC, thereby broadening their horizons and preparing them for entering into the city's employment network. Ecostation also strengthens the young people's ties to their schools, because the food they grow on the school campus farm supplies their school cooking classes.

In general, the activity of Ecostation's social entrepreneurs, who hail from the group of newly-arrived millennials, is oriented toward the established Latino community. These gentrifiers bring to the community their knowledge of gardening, their connections to organizations across the city and their financial resources. While providing training and

mentoring for the local youth, they also understand their work in terms of constructing a model for others, aiming to encourage the development of similar types of organizations in other neighbourhoods across the city.

Is Ecostation proving effective? In 2014 they harvested 3000 lbs of fresh produce, managed a 12 000 ft^2 area of organic food production, grew 65 different crops, held 20 cooking workshops, hosted 20 visiting field trips, provided 2750 job training hours and staged three large-scale community events. Beyond the figures, by providing access to farm-fresh food from local farms and educating a new generation excited to learn about the crucial links between human and environmental health, Ecostation and their allies are helping build a healthier, stronger community. It would be premature, however, to evaluate Ecostation's actual level of enlargement, which is more latent and potential than actual. However, it seems to be the case that their projects could easily be replicated in other parts of the city.

This socially innovative project shows us how some specific leadership practices - bridging differences between the two Bushwicks, reframing the food justice discourse and empowering young people – can result in a successful initiative, even in a context where social innovation is not prominent in the community. Ecostation is obviously related to its geographical context, but the features of Bushwick do not explain its emergence; Ecostation did not take advantage of Bushwick's civic capacity but rather is probably helping to build civic capacity in the area.

In short, civic capacity is a community resource that can be created and built. Some socially innovative initiatives and some leadership practices can be highly useful for building that capacity. The creative and collective leadership practices we identified in Ecostation have not only made the initiative successful but are also helping to build a new form of civic capacity in the neighbourhood. Ecostation is bridging the two Bushwicks at the same time as engaging the opposed worlds of Make the Road and RBSCC. On top of that, Ecostation is working with state and city agencies. By pulling different actors together to work for a common neighbourhood goal the organization is fostering a process of civic capacity building.

4. Conclusions

The main features of Bushwick - its dominant Hispanic immigrant community, gentrification, the 'two Bushwicks' and its dense residential nature - together create a context in which, under the conditions of economic crisis post-2008, we see various struggles for social innovation; efforts to stabilize employment for the low-income, Hispanic population, action to stem the tide of housing displacement (aggravated by stagnant and falling incomes), and struggles to integrate the neighbourhood's major constituencies – to keep the neighbourhood whole, as one Bushwick rather than two.

The neighbourhood's social fabric, we noted, could be characterized as structured according to several spheres of influence: the large, entrenched service-provision and development nonprofit RBSCC; the organizing and development nonprofit MTRNY, which is directed toward immigrants and social justice campaigns and advocacy; and several substantial church-based coalitions. RBSCC was a political vehicle for State Assemblyman Vito Lopez and worked closely with numerous government agencies and funding mechanisms. MTRNY, on the other hand, worked with the City Councillors. There was little collaboration between these

spheres of influence, a situation that constrained the emergence and effectiveness of social innovation in Bushwick. When investigations pushed Lopez from office in 2013, thereby weakening RBSCC's role as a political machine, this system of separate spheres began to change: numerous new nonprofits have begun to emerge as a result of both the new population of gentrifiers and the increased opportunity for collaboration in the wake of the decline of RBSCC's hegemony of Brunswick's civil society.

In past years, Brunswick's existing civil society organizations have not been hugely facilitating of social innovation; the dominance of RBSCC was a major constraint. Collaborations tended to function either between public bodies, several dominant nonprofit enterprises, or church-based coalitions. However, social innovation could not grow from the soil of inter-organizational collaborations within Bushwick because RBSCC, in particular, precluded an ecology of nonprofit organization that might have fostered a network of inter-organizational partnerships.

SBU shows how social innovation can emerge even when the context is not favourable to it. Through leadership practices characterized by power-based community organizing, SBU is fostering new community leaders and is empowering immigrants in the area. However, it is a very specific and reactive form of social innovation, focused on advocacy, which has limited effectiveness in solving the complex problems facing small businesses.

We observed that, more recently, new coalitions are being formed and, notably, this is taking place in a way that suggests an interesting phenomenon: 'third parties' tend to be sparking the newer coalitions. In other words, existing social organizations are hesitant to directly approach each other and 'self-organize' new coalitions but will, by contrast, work together when prompted by other actors. For example, one City Councillor has recently convened a planning process which draws RBSCC and MTRNY into the procedure as the principal nonprofit forces. In another example, a doctoral student and recent resident of Bushwick convened the first collaborative social organization 'expo' to showcase the different organizational actors in Bushwick. A third example is that of a new organization, MayDay, which has recently opened a community space with the intention of bringing together representatives of the different spheres of influence. To some degree these processes are endogenous to the community of Bushwick but, to a large extent, we are witnessing the genesis of new patterns of inter-organizational coalitions prompted by social entrepreneurs and interested actors rather than by the older expressions of civic capacity in Bushwick.

While the SBU innovation was focused on a power-based but classical organizing approach (sponsored by an experienced, skilful organization) to a neighbourhood problem (employment instability in the wake of the Great Recession), many other innovations are emerging from below through collaborative leadership processes. Ecostation is a clear example of that. It shows how, using collaborative leadership practices based on bridging differences, the two Bushwicks could not only be linked but that civic capacity could also be built. Social Innovation, thus, could also be understood as a driving force for capacity building.

Bushwick has been dramatically gentrified during the last few years and it has not proven easy to deal with its effects in this complex neighbourhood. However, Bushwick is starting to evolve. It is precisely Bushwick's community that, through building networks and experimenting with new ways of doing, is leading this emerging process of social change.

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Notes

1 Brunswick shifted from housing a population of largely European immigrants (Irish, German and Polish) to being an

2 In 2011, 11.4 per cent of Bushwick rental units were public housing (NYU Furman Center Report, 2014).

3 A business improvement district (BID) is a defined area within which businesses are required to pay an additional tax (or levy) in order to fund projects within the district's boundaries.

4 Notices of Foreclosure Rate: per 1,000 1-4 family and condo properties (NYU Furman Center Report, 2014).

5 The rate of homeownership in Bushwick was 13.5 per cent in 2013 (NYU Furman Center Report, 2015).

6 The unemployment rate in NYC was 7.5 per cent in 2013 (NYU Furman Center Report, 2015).

7 Vito Lopez ran in primaries against Antonio Reynoso in 2013 and lost.

8 http://www.nyc.gov/html/bkncb4/html/home/home.shtml

9 The Campus Farm engages four high schools located at Bushwick Campus as well as MTRNY's Youth Power Project and Just Food's Farm School NYC.

10 The Farmers' Market engages local and regional family-owned farms, many from GrowNYC's New Farmer Development Project.

11 Bodegas are mini-marts or gorcery stores run by Latinos.

12 This Project is carried out in partnership with RBSCC and MayDay.