



## Priced Out: Stuyvesant Town and the Loss of Middle-Class Neighborhoods

By Rachael A. Woldoff, Lisa M. Morrison, Michael R. Glass



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On an average morning in the tree-lined parks, plazas, and play-areas of Manhattan's Stuyvesant Town housing development, birds chirp as early risers dash off to work, elderly residents enjoy a peaceful morning stroll, and flocks of parents usher their children to school. It seems an unlikely location for conflict and strife, yet this eighteen-block area, initially planned as middle-class affordable housing, is the site of an ongoing struggle between long-term, rent-regulated residents, younger, market-rate tenants, and new owners seeking to turn this community into a luxury commodity. *Priced Out* takes readers into this heated battle as a transitioning neighborhood wrestles with contemporary capitalist strategies and the struggle to preserve renters' rights. Since the early 2000's, Stuyvesant Town's owners have sought to transform this iconic Manhattan housing development into a luxury destination for those able to afford the higher price tag. Attempting to replace longtime residents with younger, more affluent tenants, they have disrupted native residents' sense of place, community, and their perceived quality of life. Through resident interviews, the authors offer an intimate view into the lives of different groups of tenants involved in this struggle for prime real estate in New York, from students experiencing the city for the first time to baby boomers hanging on to the vestiges of middle-class urban life. A compelling, fascinating account of changing urban landscapes and the struggle for security, *Priced Out* offers a comprehensive perspective of a community that, to some, is becoming unrecognizable as it is upgraded and altered.



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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"*Priced Out* tells a true story about how hard it is for renters of modest income to make a home in the center of America's biggest city. Both historical and timely, it documents in lively detail how the largest, postwar, private-sector, urban housing development in the U.S. turned into one of the most notorious real estate deals of the early 21st century, and how developers' pursuit of 'luxury' projects threatens New York's middle class."-Sharon Zukin,author of *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*

"We increasingly think of Manhattan as a place of the very rich and the very poor. Yet thanks to modest, non-market rate post war housing developments, tens of thousands of middle class New Yorkers who might otherwise have decamped to the suburbs continue to live in the heart of the City. Over the decades they have built communities, raised families, aged in place and helped to keep New York diverse and vital. *Priced Out* tells the story of what happens when a community's "right to the city" collides with the forces of the "free" market. It is a "must read" for anyone concerned about the future of the urban middle class."-Philip Kasnitz,co-author of *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age*

#### About the Author

**Rachael A. Woldoff** is Associate Professor of Sociology at West Virginia University. She is the author of *White Flight / Black Flight: The Dynamics of Racial Change in an American Neighborhood*, winner of the 2013 Best Book in Urban Affairs Award given by the Urban Affairs Association.

**Lisa M. Morrison** is a Social Affairs Officer at the United Nations in New York City and a contributing author to the *Report on the World Social Situation*.

**Michael R. Glass** is Lecturer of Urban Studies at the University of Pittsburgh and the co-editor of *Performativity, Politics, and the Production of Social Space*.

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