Urban Affairs Review

(Re)Branding the Big Easy: Tourism Rebuilding in Post-Katrina New Orleans

Kevin Fox Gotham

The online version of this article can be found at:

Additional services and information for *Urban Affairs Review* can be found at:

Email Alerts: http://uar.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts

Subscriptions: http://uar.sagepub.com/subscriptions

Reprints: http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav

Permissions: http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav

Citations (this article cites 28 articles hosted on the
SAGE Journals Online and HighWire Press platforms):
http://uar.sagepub.com/cgi/content/refs/42/6/823

(Re)Branding the Big Easy

Tourism Rebuilding in Post-Katrina New Orleans

Kevin Fox Gotham
Tulane University

This article draws on primary and secondary data to provide insight into the processes and conflicts over efforts to *brand* New Orleans as an entertainment destination from the 1990s to the present. The author identifies the key actors and organized interests involved in branding New Orleans, the rationale and logic of branding, and marketing strategies used to enhance place distinctiveness. The second half of the article describes the impact of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans's tourism sector and examines efforts to rebrand the city. The article points to the problems, contradictions, and unpredictabilities of urban branding. This analysis provides an important opportunity for theoretical development and offers a unique perspective for understanding urban branding as a contested and conflictual process of homogenization and diversification.

Keywords: tourism; branding; New Orleans.

Recent decades have witnessed an explosion of urban scholarship on the changing role of tourism, place marketing, and entertainment in U.S. cities. Scholarly treatments of the subject of urban tourism, demographic analyses of tourist behavior, and studies on the increasing proliferation of entertainment destinations now dominate the urban literature (for overviews, see Judd and Fainstein 1999; Hoffman, Fainstein, and Judd 2003; Rath 2007). John Urry's (2002) concept of "tourism reflexivity" suggests that we now live in a global society permeated by the logic of entertainment and tourism whereby cities are increasingly developing procedures and criteria for monitoring, evaluating, and cultivating their tourist potential. Mark Gottdiener and colleagues' (1999) investigation of Las Vegas, John Hannigan's (1998) analysis of the rise of "fantasy city," Paul Chatterton and Robert Hollands's (2003) examination of urban nightscapes, and Richard Lloyd and Terry Nichols Clark's (2001) concept of the "entertainment machine" all draw attention to how cities around the world are attempting to redefine themselves as sites of fun, leisure, and entertainment. These accounts reflect

823

a broader interest in the political economy of tourism, the transformation of public spaces into privatized "consumption" spaces, and the latest attempts by urban leaders to provide a package of shopping, dining, and entertainment within a themed and controlled environment—a development that scholars have called the "Disneyification" of urban space (for overviews, see Sorkin 1992; Eeckhout 2001; Bryman 2004). Yet despite much research and debate, few urbanists agree on how analysts should conceptualize tourism, what should be the appropriate levels of analysis for assessing the causes and consequences of tourism, and what data sources researchers should use to measure tourism empirically. Around the world tourism-oriented urban regeneration remains a source of much debate and controversy. Some scholars claim that tourism is a global force of rationalization and homogenization that hollows out the rich texture and uniqueness of social relations and their creations and thereby corrupts authentic cultural spaces.[1] Others maintain that tourism is an amalgam of global-local connections that promotes both cultural homogeneity and heterogeneity, but they disagree over the form, process, and trajectory (Gotham 2005a; Teo and Li 2003; Chang 2000a, 2000b; Thorns 1997; Gladstone 1998).

This article has two goals. First, I examine how urban *branding* techniques have become important elements in the development of tourism in New Orleans since the 1990s. In the realm of place promotion, urban branding is the frequent use of a specific name, symbol, logo, or design (or combination of these) to identify a place, to distinguish it from its competitors, and to prompt tourists in their decision making (Greenberg 2000, 2003; Hannigan 2003). Successfully branded leisure spaces play on people's desires for comfort and certainty and provide a point of distinction and identification for consumers (Blain, Levy, and Ritchie 2005). New Orleans has long been called "The City That Care Forgot," "The Big Easy," a destination where visitors can "*Laissez Les Bons Temps Roule*" or "Let the Good Times Roll." In recent decades, local tourism organizations have elaborated and extended these and other slogans through a series of strategic branding campaigns that aim to define New Orleans as a major entertainment center. Over the years, city leaders and tourism boosters have used a variety of themes, sophisticated marketing devices, and other advertising techniques to enhance urban distinctiveness and differentiate New Orleans from other destinations around the world. Themes such as "authenticity," "uniqueness," and "distinctiveness" provide symbolic unity to diverse tourist attractions while also encouraging the proliferation of a range of attractions, first to attract tourists and then to keep them occupied. I identify the key actors and organized interests involved in branding New Orleans, the rationale and logic of branding, and examine the key

marketing strategies tourism organizations have used to stimulate travel and enhance place distinctiveness. As I show, urban branding campaigns are constituted by cross-cutting prerogatives and contradictory goals that reflect local struggles over meanings of New Orleans. Urban branding's lack of clear conceptualization and inconsistent meaning make it difficult for organizations to implement branding campaigns. In addition, the heterogeneity of urban reality and volatility of tourist behaviors and travel trends complicate efforts to evaluate the effect or success of urban branding.

Second, I elaborate on local efforts to rebuild New Orleans's tourism infrastructure in the eighteen months since the Hurricane Katrina disaster. For tourism professionals and city leaders, Hurricane Katrina caused major damage to the city's long cultivated image—or brand—as a tourist destination. "We need to restore the brand that is New Orleans," according to Alfred Groos, general manager of the Royal Sonesta Hotel, "that is the biggest challenge that we all have" (*New York Times* 2006). In addition, the disaster has exposed to a global audience New Orleans's chronic poverty, strained race relations, and intense inequalities (Comfort 2006; Burns and Thomas 2006; Dreier 2006). "We have an image challenge throughout the country," according to Mayor C. Ray Nagin. "You ask what New Orleans is like today, and many people only have images of a city in crisis. And that's a concern, that they don't see the rebuilding that is going on" (Thevenot 2005, 1). Since the disaster, local elites have attempted to counter negative images of destruction and advertise New Orleans as a come-back city that is regaining its vibrancy, style, and confidence. At the same time, city leaders have clashed over the role tourism should play in the city rebuilding process. Since 2005, elite efforts to attract corporate sponsors to underwrite the cost of staging Mardi Gras and the Jazz and Heritage Festival have generated bitter conflict and opposition (Eggler 2005; Mowbray 2005a, 2005b). Moreover, the uncertainty and devastation unleashed by Hurricane Katrina has reinvigorated old debates and stimulated new arguments about the meanings and definitions of local culture. New conflicts and struggles are emerging between local groups and neighborhoods over what constitutes New Orleans culture, who should define what culture means, and how local culture should be expressed. My goal is to explore how the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina is leading to the rebranding of New Orleans and the marketing of urban rebuilding.

I address these issues using a multi-method approach and a combination of primary and secondary data sources as part of a larger book project on the historical development of tourism in New Orleans. The secondary data come from archival collections, government documents, planning reports, and newspaper articles. The primary data come from more than seven years

of continuous ethnographic field work, participant observation, and forty-six qualitative interviews. These interviews were with a variety of long-term residents, including city planners, civil rights activists, neighborhood coalition leaders, current or former tourism professionals, leaders of historic preservation societies, and others who have had first-hand knowledge and experience with the transformation of New Orleans over the decades. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted from 2003 to 2006 and were gathered through a snowball sample that included fifteen white males, sixteen white females, nine Black males, five Black females, and one Asian female. All my interviews lasted between one and three hours and all interviews were transcribed. To protect the confidentiality of my interviewees I have changed their names and do not reveal the organizations they are affiliated with.

I used interviews to compare and contrast experiences, understandings, and framing strategies that tourism professionals and local residents have employed to interpret the development of tourism in New Orleans and recent efforts to rebuild the city in the months since Hurricane Katrina. In my interviews, I asked questions about the history and organization of the tourism industry, the role of local culture and historical preservation in the development of tourism venues, conflicts over tourism in New Orleans, and the impact of tourism on local culture. I also asked different tourism boosters and neighborhood leaders about their views of Katrina's impact on neighborhoods, the public school system, the tourism industry, the economic base, and state and local governments. I focused my research on asking "process" questions to illuminate how people construct meaning about events and activities, and how social structure and local context shape action and decision making. Process questions lend themselves to the use of interpretive inquiry to seek out information about intentions, motivations, constraints, opportunities, and consequences of social action. Thus, I used a loosely structured interview protocol that contained a set of general and specific questions. Intensive semi-structured interviews gave participants room to articulate their experiences, to speak about past events and happenings, and elaborate at length on different points. This interviewing format also allowed me to probe for clarification when needed, and helped create an opportunity to uncover rich data. Broadly, the interview data provided an added resource for triangulating data sources—archival data, government documents, newspaper articles, and other data sources—to enhance validity and reliability and contribute to scholarship on tourism and urban branding.

Although general works by Hoffman, Fainstein, and Judd (2003), Rath (2007), and Sheller and Urry (2004) are extremely important because of the

broad and generalized perspective they bring to the study of urban tourism, the kind of rich detail and investigative specificity of case studies and qualitative interviewing can offer a researcher empirical and theoretical gains in understanding the interconnectedness of local actions and global processes. Scholars have recognized that contextual factors specific to the city under study complicate cross-city generalizations about tourism. Susan Fainstein and Dennis Judd (1999, 16) suggest that local contextualities render the tourism process to have a relevant degree of place specificity: "variation in the impacts of tourism and its multiple meanings. . .call for an examination of individual cases." As far as tourism is an expression of larger social, economic, and political relations, the development of tourism in any particular city will express the particularities of the place in the making of its urban space. In short, place matters in the study of tourism because an analysis of *why* and *how* tourism develops must take into account *where* (and when) it develops.

Urban Branding and the Promotion of Place

Urban branding stands at the nexus of global forces of transnational flows and networks of activity, and local forces of territorial embeddedness and place particularity. Unlike other brands that people buy and sell in markets, a branded place is spatially fixed, non-transportable, and consumed by people at the point of production. On one hand, branding is a global process of homogenization and standardization with numerous powerful corporate brands circulating in the international market place. Economically, branded goods are extra-local, generic, and not constrained by local habits or idiosyncrasies. Corporate brands like Coca-Cola, Nike, and McDonalds are centrally conceived and lack locally based networks and communal ties. On the other hand, urban branding is a process of differentiation and diversification whereby local tourism organizations, arts and cultural facilities, museums, and historic preservation groups harness and construct place images and help produce tourist sites to attract consumers and investment to a particular locale. According to Destination Marketing Association International, an international network of more than six hundred convention and visitor bureaus in more than twenty-five countries,

> A brand is more than a name, logo, or slogan and it is not built only through advertising. Genuine brands are the result of a comprehensive strategy that encompasses the entire destination *experience* from the visitor and prospective

visitor point of view . . . . Brand names are well known but similar, like supermarkets, car dealerships, and fast-food restaurants. The distinguishing factor that sets a "real" brand apart from others is its set of distinctive characteristics and its experience . . . . You get to be a real brand *only* when your customers (visitors) say you are distinctive. (Brand Strategy Inc. 2004)

Around the world, convention and visitor bureaus have embraced and implemented branding strategies to clearly define their local attractions, differentiate them from competitors in the minds of visitors, and create a "promise" that frames the destination experience for visitors. Slogans like "Live Large, Think Big" (Dallas), "City of Angels" (Los Angeles), and "Country Music Capital of the World" (Nashville) are part of the repertoire of local urban branding and represent strategic efforts to identify a city's image and establish a singular personality (International Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus [IACVB] 2005; Stafford 2005; Miroff 2006). In contrast with the homogeneity and standardized nature of corporate brands, branded spaces and cities valorize cultural diversity and project images that attempt to convince people that they are relatively unique, distinctive, and original.

The main goals of urban branding are to reimagine a city, forge place-based identities, and control consumer impressions and understandings of a particular locale (Evans 2003). Yet branding is more than a strategic and rationalized form of place promotion and marketing. According to Greenberg (2000, 228), urban branding is about constructing and shaping an "urban imaginary" understood as a "coherent, historically based ensemble of representations drawn from the architecture and street plans of the city, the art produced by its residents, and the images of and discourse of the city as seen, heard, or read in the movies, on television, in magazines, and other forms of mass media." Urban imaginaries are not uniform or coherent but are plural, conflicting, contested, and power-laden. For this reason, urban branding aims to create a clear, singular, and consumer-oriented version of the urban imaginary capable of "attracting desirable consumers, repelling undesirable ones, and maximizing consumer spending" (Chatterton and Hollands 2003, 26). Seen in this way, urban branding is a form of place-based "impression management" (Goffman 1957) that relies on evocative storytelling to manage and control the interpretations people have about a city, and socialize visitors and residents to view the city in a particular way. Unlike conventional place promotion that is concerned with selling place images to get the consumer or investor to travel to or invest in the city, urban branding is geared to adapting, reshaping, and manipulating (i.e., simulating) images of the place to be desirable to the targeted consumer. Moreover, the significance of branding as opposed to advertising is that the

former seeks to obliterate distinctions between commodities and their representations to the extent that the image becomes the reality (Gibson 2006; Moor 2003, 7). Insofar as possible, tourism boosters employ branding to generate an infinite set of referentials in which one product and activity refers to another through a set of intense associations and pleasurable experiences across time and space.

Another major component of urban branding involves the use of sophisticated niche marketing techniques. As reflected in the work of Lily Hoffman (2003) David Harvey (2001), J. Allen Scott (2004, 2000), and other urban scholars, niche marketing refers to the development of new forms of cultural fragmentation, differentiation, and specialization that split consumers and markets into ever smaller segments or niches, resulting in heterogeneity rather than homogeneity. Unlike mass marketing which advertises products for mass audiences, the goal of niche marketing is to produce images and other referents that appeal to the tastes and expectations of particular niche groups or market segments (Cohen 2003; Slater 2002). According to Novelli (2005, 5):

> The clear premise is that the market should not be seen as some simplistic homogeneous whole with general needs, but rather as sets of individuals with specific needs relating to the qualities and features of particular products. Thus we can speak of a "niche market" as a more narrowly defined group whereby the individuals in the group are identifiable by the same specialized needs or interests and are defined as having a strong desire for the products on offer.

Niche markets do not exist a priori but are created by erasing the diversity of social groups and defining and thus homogenizing families, baby boomers, senior citizens, gays and lesbians, and African- and Hispanic-Americans as consumers. In tourism marketing, all groups and subcultures—except non-consumers—are scrutinized as possible niche markets. Branding aids in the production and reproduction of niche markets by constructing and disseminating images of local culture and cultural products that reflect travel trends and niche tourists' ways of viewing the world. That is, the different representations of local culture including what is distinctive and unique about different places are chosen among a variety of vocabularies, symbols, and codes to convince specific niche groups to travel to particular locales to consume the markers of local culture. Indeed, profit making and organizational survival dictate that tourism agencies create more and more niches because each new niche group amounts to a new market to tap into to create consumer demand to travel and spend money. The rise of ethnic heritage tourism, cultural tourism, ecotourism, geo-tourism, gastronomic tourism, and adventure tourism,

among many others, reflect the growth of niche marketing in tourism promotion (Lin 1998; Urry 2002; Sheller and Urry 2004; Yuen 2006).

A further element of branding is the attempt to blur the boundaries between tourist and nontourist practices and make different and disparate social activities indistinguishable from tourism.[2] Early urban work by Michael Sorkin (1992) and colleagues expressed concern that the growth of tourism and related spread of theme-park characteristics to cities was eroding past distinctions between tourism and other aspects of urban culture. More recent urban research by Clark (2004), Gottdiener (2001), and Lloyd (2005), among others, draws attention to broad sociocultural transformations that have spearheaded the development of new highly themed and regulated entertainment spaces characterized by liminality, staging, and fantasy—all commonly identified with tourist sites. In these and other accounts, tourism amalgamates with consumption practices and urban entertainment activities to become part of the broader urban culture with no clear boundaries. Over the last decade, tourism organizations around the world have launched strategic branding campaigns to elide the distinction between residents and tourists, to urge residents to acquire the consumption practices and visual orientation characteristic of tourists. Local advertisements in New Orleans and elsewhere encourage residents to be tourists in their own hometown. Yet, unlike tourists, residents are locked into everyday local struggles and conflicts, shared experiences of the mundane and commonplace, and collective practices to create stable rules and traditions to give meaning to their lives as members of a community. Such actions are the antithesis of touristic experiences that are explicitly designed to be worry-free, spectacular, extraordinary, and short-term. These inherent problems complicate the branding process and make it difficult to evaluate whether branding is "successful," produces intended outcomes, or generates unforeseen and negative consequences. As I show, the implementation of urban branding in New Orleans has faced an array of conflicting prerogatives and expectations because the object of branding consists of many stakeholders with diverse and divergent interests and concerns. Like all places, New Orleans cannot be represented as a consistent brand because perceptions, interpretations, and understandings of the city vary among residents and local organizations.

Branding New Orleans: Tourism Development Before Hurricane Katrina

Tourism in the New Orleans metropolitan area has grown tremendously in the postwar era. In 1960, local leaders formed the Greater New Orleans

Tourist and Convention Commission (GNOTCC), a forerunner to the current New Orleans Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau (NOMCVB), to promote New Orleans on an international scale and plan for long-range tourism development. During the 1970s and 1980s, political and economic elites joined forces to build the Louisiana Superdome, the Riverfront Mall, the Ernst Morial Convention Center, the Aquarium of the Americas, and a variety of other tourist attractions. Since the 1980s, the city has hosted many mega-events, including the 1984 World's Fair, periodic Super Bowls and (Nokia) Sugar Bowls, the NCAA basketball tournaments, the Jazz and Heritage Festival, and the Essence Festival (Lauria, Whelan, and Young 1995). The hotel industry has grown considerably over the last few decades as indicated by the skyrocketing number of hotel rooms in the metropolitan area. The number of hotel rooms increased from 4,750 in 1960; to 10,686 in 1975; and 19,500 in 1985. In 1990, the metropolitan area had approximately 25,500 hotel/motel rooms. This figure increased to 28,000 in 1999 and more than 33,000 by 2004. As of December 2006, approximately 180 metropolitan area hotels and motels were operating with 28,500 rooms in inventory. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, 265 hotels had an inventory of 38,338 rooms (New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation [NOTMC] 2006). Much of the increase in hotels and hotel rooms has been fueled by the growth in the convention market and industry. New Orleans hosted 172 conventions in 1960; 1,000 conventions in 1975; 1,453 conventions in 1990; 2,485 conventions in 1995; and 3,556 conventions in 2000. In recent years, lackluster economic growth and the lingering effects of the September 11, 2001, disaster have depressed the convention industry. Nevertheless, overall convention attendance increased more than twenty times from 1960 to 2001, a development that reflects the growth of a vast tourism infrastructure of restaurants, festival promotions, professional sports, hotel and motel accommodations, university programs in tourism management and service, and so on.[3]

The development of a tourism infrastructure in New Orleans can be situated with reference to wider economic and sociocultural changes that affected the city and the state of Louisiana in the postwar decades. Economically, New Orleans's status as a military shipbuilding port and center of chemical and petroleum processing underwent a major decline in the 1950s and later (Lewis 2005). During the 1970s, a statewide coalition of business leaders formed the Council for a Better Louisiana (CABL) to remedy the state's lagging economic growth and attract new sources of capital investment. "In the economic outlook for Louisiana, a hard fact is that the production of oil and gas which has supported much business activity is on the downturn," lamented the CABL in 1977. "Reserves are being depleted, and the state

needs to promote other bases for economic growth such as tourism" (Craig 1977). Demographically, massive losses in urban population in the decades after 1960 coincided with beginnings of a long-term erosion of the tax base of the city. Various studies and newspaper reports from the mid-1960s forward document the city's revenue problems.[4] In the two decades after 1964, the percent distribution of property taxes for New Orleans dropped from 33.3% of total revenue to 9.8%. During the same time, the city became more reliant on sales tax revenue with the percent distribution of sales tax increasing from 33.5% of total revenue in 1964 to 57.3% in 1984.[5] The loss of revenue from property taxes and increased dependence on sales taxes reflect the passage of several statutes by the state of Louisiana during the 1970s that significantly reduced the ability of local governments to raise revenue.[6] Fiscal constraints imposed by the state government combined with the suburbanization of people and businesses weakened the ability of New Orleans to fund government operations and provide public services. As a result, by the late 1970s, the city was facing a fiscal crisis, financially pressured to develop new policies and strategies to leverage consumption-based investment focusing on tourism and entertainment.

Since the 1970s, New Orleans has engaged in various forms of place promotion and marketing to enhance local distinctiveness and project a favorable image to a global audience to attract visitors and tourism investment. What is different in the 1990s and later, however, is the creation of specialized tourism organizations and the strategic use of branding to fragment and diversify tourists and insinuate tourism practices more deeply into the everyday life of New Orleans. In the late 1990s, political and economic elites created the New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation (NOTMC), the New Orleans Multicultural Tourism Network (NOMTN), and the Mayor's Office of Tourism and Arts to represent local tourism businesses, create new business opportunities, and capitalize on the burgeoning niche market industry. The opening of NOMCVB offices in several foreign countries, the legalization of gambling in Louisiana in the 1990s, and the building of a Harrah's casino also reflect concerted efforts to expand tourism and promote the city on a global scale. In 2001, the NOTMC launched a major marketing campaign to brand New Orleans as a place of "authentic fun." The NOTMC's Annual Report of 2002 noted:

> The new comprehensive branding campaign focused on the food, music, ambience, and good times New Orleans offers any time of the year. It marks a shift from the purely direct-response approach of prior years by adding a strong image component. In our creative testing in 2001, the concept of

"authentic fun" and the message "happenin' every day" got very positive
responses. In 2002, it delivered as tested. Our Summer Campaign pushed
traditional inquiries 10% beyond the previous year's campaign.

During this time, the NOTMC and the NOMCVB established a synergistic
"marketing partnership" that included public relations, e-mail campaigns, and
direct marketing to generate awareness of New Orleans as a holiday destina-
tion, and as a place of year-round and all-day and night entertainment. In 2003,
the NOMCVB began "disseminating a strategically crafted set of core mes-
sages that 'brand' the city as a premier destination." According to the
NOMCVB's 2003 Annual Report, "The NOMCVB is branding New Orleans
. . . as an energetic and vibrant city not only to visit but also in which to live,
work, and do business. The CVB's communication emphasizes New Orleans's
unique blend of European, African, and Caribbean culture and its preeminence
as a center for art, music, and food." At the same time, the NOMCVB is
"branding itself as the national leader in best practices and customer service."

Many urban researchers view urban branding as a process of simplifying
and reducing the complexity of urban reality to a few transparent and easily
understood themes, symbols, and slogans. Yet it is important to note that dis-
tinguishing a place is only one component in the larger process of branding
local attributes, activities, and products. In the 1990s, major companies began
branding themselves and their products as expressions of New Orleans cul-
ture. Hotel Monteleone, the city's oldest hotel, has attempted to brand itself as
a New Orleans literary landmark (Hotel Monteleone 2006). Advertisements
from the Brennan family restaurants proclaim that they are "responsible for
fostering a culinary tradition that many regard as the epitome of New Orleans
fine dining . . . and Brennan-branded restaurants are now in business in
Houston, Las Vegas and Anaheim, California" (McNulty 2005). In addition,
Southern Comfort has launched a major branding campaign to brand itself as
an "authentic" New Orleans tradition by emphasizing that the Southern
Comfort secret formula was developed on Bourbon Street. In these and other
cases, companies seek to merge their commercialized images with New
Orleans imagery to forge emotional connections between the city and visitors.
The goal of these corporate promotions is to convince consumers that by buy-
ing their products they are, in fact, receiving the New Orleans experience and
with that an impression of value.

One of the so-called "benefits" of effective urban branding, according to
the World Tourism Organization (WTO 2006), is that a branded place can
"serve as a base for the promotion of other products" including film brands,
music brands, and other cultural product brands. We can see this brand

extension and brand amplification process in the attempt by city officials and tourism boosters to brand jazz music as authentically New Orleans to generate inward investment and stimulate the growth of a local music industry. In 2002, local leaders established the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra as a nonprofit jazz education and performance organization that had as its purpose "the celebration, proliferation, and structured branding of New Orleans jazz" and the development of a "New Orleans based jazz tourism programming." Central to this initiative has been the emphasis on "building national awareness about the role New Orleans has played and continues to play in American culture." Advertisements proclaim "New Orleans jazz is a way of life for New Orleanians" and New Orleans's "spirit created America's only indigenous music" (New Orleans Jazz Orchestra 2005). These strategic efforts supplement a major branding campaign launched by the mayor's Office of Economic Development in August 2004 to "facilitate future collaboration among the businesses and entities that promote Jazz." As New Orleans Mayor C. Ray Nagin puts it, "New Orleans is the birthplace of Jazz and Jazz is the foundation for all music in America. We need to capitalize on this and begin branding the world-wide appeal of Jazz as a uniquely New Orleans experience" (City of New Orleans 2004).

The attempt to brand New Orleans as the birthplace and home of jazz music intersects with other organized efforts to brand food and history as signs of local authenticity. In my interviews, tourism professionals proclaim that food, music, and history constitute the "holy trinity" of New Orleans tourism that unites the diverse cultural attributes of the city into a set of easily recognized and evocative themes. Urban branding is about identifying the most relevant associations between these three elements and strengthening their links to the New Orleans brand. The triad's lack of specificity leaves it open to diverse interpretations while creating a chain of signifiers to interconnect diverse leisure activities. Branding New Orleans as site of delicious food, quality music, and rich history fulfills several strategic tourism objectives including attracting diverse kinds of niche tourists and generating business opportunities within the local tourism industry. Another objective is to minimize the uncertainty of urban reality by presenting a transparent and understandable image of New Orleans and its cultural products. Overall, branding seeks to enhance the calculability, predictability, and efficiency of consuming places. Producing and circulating brand values—food, music, and history—is tantamount to rearranging commodity-images into chains of meaning and cultural signification to make New Orleans attractive and accessible to the imagination. Yet as Hollands and Chatterton (2003, 367) note, the branding of products and services on the basis of their physical attributes

have increasingly given way to distinguishing them through their expressive or " 'product surrounding' qualities—aesthetic and emotional elements." In short, a distinctive feature of urban branding is the production of interconnected signs, images, and evocative themes that have the capacity to provide memorable and entertaining experiences. This in turn relates to a point made by Judd (2003) that urban branding and related urban place building campaigns are a process of symbolic differentiation and specialization to "coach" tourists on what to do, where to go, and how to feel.

Rebranding New Orleans: Tourism Rebuilding in the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina

In the aftermath of the Katrina disaster, the NOMCVB, NOTMC, and other tourism organizations have elaborated on their past branding campaigns and/or created new campaigns to alter people's perceptions and images of New Orleans using brand elements such as new slogans and logos. Table 1 lists several tourism agencies and other organizations that have developed strategic branding campaigns to attract visitors and investments since Katrina. The novel slogans and themes seek to counter negative imagery and publicity, and reconstitute and amplify New Orleans's brand identity. In April 2006, the Louisiana Recovery Authority earmarked $30 million for tourism and convention marketing. The NOMCVB is using a portion of this money to "reimage and rebrand" the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, the site of an internationally televised humanitarian crisis in the days after Hurricane Katrina (Mowbray 2006). The NOTMC, whose hotel tax-dependent budget was negatively affected by the Katrina disaster, has joined forces with the Louisiana Office of Tourism to launch a new branding campaign with "Fall in Love with Louisiana All Over Again" as the main slogan. The NOTMC is continuing its "New Orleans: Happenin' Every Day" slogan while establishing new institutional collaborations to leverage funds and seek new sources of financing. The New Orleans Multicultural Tourism Network (NOMTN) has adopted the slogan "Do You Know What it Means to Miss New Orleans? We Know You Do" to rebrand New Orleans as a multicultural destination. These slogans project a conflict-free and nostalgic image of New Orleans, divert attention from the reality of human suffering and physical destruction, and construct a narrative of past grandeur to stimulate consumer desires to travel to the city. To paraphrase Greenberg (2000), recent post-Katrina urban branding campaigns function not only as "texts-on-cities" but power-laden "texts-as-cities" that position tourism professionals and organizations as

important voices in the articulation of the city's collective identity and thus ultimately the urban brand.

Before Katrina, local tourism organizations and city leaders focused on attracting international hotel chains and entertainment corporations such as Harrah's casino, Planet Hollywood, and House of Blues, among others, as expedients to branding New Orleans as a music and entertainment city. These branding efforts have accelerated in the aftermath of Katrina as city and state leaders announced in May 2006 their desire to create a twenty-acre performance arts park to be anchored by a new National Jazz Center in downtown New Orleans (New Orleans Jazz Orchestra 2006; Mowbray, Krupa, and Thomas 2006). In addition, preeminent developers such as Donald Trump have planned major condominium developments while Harrah's casino has launched a major expansion of its 450-room hotel. In particular, Harrah's has joined with the NOMCVB and city leaders to redevelop the area from the French Quarter to the Morial Convention Center into an urban entertainment destination anchored by new restaurants, a themed jazz club, upscale bars, and global retail firms. In 2005, the city of New Orleans hired a marketing firm to seek corporate sponsors for future Mardi Gras celebrations and contract with television networks to broadcast carnival parades nationwide. In September 2006, The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) approved $28.5 million to distribute to seventeen tourism offices and organizations in Louisiana to promote their venues. State and local leaders and tourism officials have earmarked this money to finance a national tourism campaign similar to one used by New York City after the September 11, 2001 disaster (Scott 2006). These developments compliment the $185 million spent to repair and improve the Superdome stadium, which reopened in September 2006.

Much of the impetus for the development of tourism in post-Katrina New Orleans involves planning for branded and standardized entertainment experiences, commodifed and privatized spaces to maximize consumption, and a strong desire to increase the value of corporate brands. Three recent developments reveal the way in which new types of tourism planning and rebuilding are altering the New Orleans landscape. First, tourism professionals are implementing new urban rebranding campaigns to present an image of "authentic" New Orleans as clearly demarcated, disconnected, and segregated from flooded neighborhoods. Indeed, promotional efforts depict the French Quarter and other tourist spaces as hermetically sealed enclaves that are safe and crime-free. Tourism boosters are seeking to attract new visitors, especially those like Dorothy Washington from Philadelphia who told a wire-service reporter in July 2006, "Really, I haven't seen any sign of the hurricane or

Table 1

Major New Orleans Tourism Organizations Engaged in Post-Katrina Branding Campaigns

Tourism Organizations	Mission and Objective	Image-Building Themes and Slogans
New Orleans Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau (NOMCVB)	Offer convention services Provide information to visitors	"Fall in Love with New Orleans All Over Again" "Still America's Most Romantic, Walkable, Historic City, New Orleans" "Authentic and Real: Like No Other Place" "The Rebirth of New Orleans: Ahead of Schedule" "You'll Love the New New Orleans"
New Orleans Tourism and Marketing Corporation (NOTMC)	Foster jobs and economic growth by developing the New Orleans tourism industry Promote New Orleans as a leisure tourism destination, especially during the winter and summer months	"New Orleans: Happenin' Every Day" "Fall in Love with Louisiana All Over Again" (in collaboration with the Louisiana Office of Tourism)
New Orleans Multicultural Tourism Network (NOMTN)	Promote New Orleans as a multicultural destination Increase meaningful participation for people of color in the tourism industry	"Do You Know What it Means to Miss New Orleans? We Know You Do"
New Orleans Jazz Orchestra (NOJO)	Provide information, education, and performances to advance jazz's role in American culture and New Orleans's role in jazz	"Jazz at the Center of Rebirth" "We Lift Our Instruments to Lift Our City"

837

crime. The French Quarter's a whole world to itself" (Foster 2006). Second, Katrina has inspired a new industry of "disaster tourism" that involves the circulation of people to flooded neighborhoods in the safety and security of a guided tour bus. Beginning in January 2006, Gray Line New Orleans Bus Tours began offering its "Hurricane Katrina: America's Worst Catastrophe!" tour through devastated neighborhoods. The bus tour presents flooded neighborhoods as spectacular and entertaining sites to visit. Like other tours and place marketing efforts, Gray Line invests ordinary places with the status of tourist attractions that have historical and cultural significance thereby mobilizing travelers to visit them. New Orleans neighborhoods affected by Katrina are remade into abstract representations, with viewers constituted as consumers and disaster constructed as a consumable spectacle. What is important is that the constitution of flooded neighborhoods as tourist sites reflects conscious and strategic efforts to capitalize on the tourist's desire for the dramatic, spectacular, and unusual. Disaster tourism depends on the commodification of leisure and the transformation of tragic events into entertaining attractions that can deliver extraordinary experiences. Katrina bus tours compose New Orleans's urban landscape into a collage of fixed and static images that are marketed and interpreted for tourists.

Third, political and economic elites have pushed for the development of lucrative tax subsides to attract corporate brands to invest in New Orleans and help finance the rebuilding effort. Indeed, urban branding is corporate-driven to the extent that international firms possess the institutional capacity to leverage huge amounts of capital to invest in some places rather than others. State and local officials and elites are looking to the passage of tax credits by the state of Louisiana in 2005 and 2006 to spur the development of a music and film industry. In addition, tourism professionals are seeking to leverage incentives provided through the federally created Gulf Opportunity Zone (GO Zone) to subsidize the planning and building of new entertainment spaces and attractions along Canal Street and near the French Quarter.[7] According to Stephen Perry, president of the NOMCVB,

> New Orleans has, over the last 10 years, made food its dominant brand. If we were able to rebrand the city, not only nationally but internationally, and put the food brand on one pillar and create one of the most dynamic live music centers of all sorts—with theater, cabaret, live local and national jazz—combined with the GO Zone, which goes towards infrastructure, plus the historic tax credits, that's the future. . . .What draws customers now in America is entertainment product. We can combine that with our natural authenticity. We can reach a level that we've never been to before. . . .We know it works in San Diego,

Memphis, Austin, Nashville, and we know it changed the face of Las Vegas. This for us should not be a dream. This is something we can't live without. . . . [We] will not only restore confidence of locals but we'll realize dreams of what we always thought it could be. And we can do it in 36 to 48 months. (Coviello 2006)

Perry and other tourism professionals are looking to the example of Branson, Missouri, on how to brand New Orleans as an entertainment destination. With little prior existence as a tourism or entertainment center, Branson has become a major magnet for visitors with musicals, comedy, and variety shows. "I believe people yearn for culture. I believe that it's a matter of 'if you build it, they will come,'" according to entrepreneur Roger Wilson who is working with the NOMCVB to revitalize downtown New Orleans (Coviello 2006). These remarks suggest that branding is not only designed to attract affluent and upscale consumers and visitors to spend money in the city, but is driven by the need to increase the value of corporate brands and to legitimate urban branding as necessary and imperative to rebuilding New Orleans.

The above points draw our attention to the ways in which tourism professionals and urban boosters are marketing an entertainment-based version of the New Orleans's urban imaginary to attract investment and rebuild the city. This branding strategy bears witness to the way in which new representations are being inserted into the lexicon of urban place promotion to align local political interests with transnational corporate entertainment to orchestrate urban rebuilding. Yet it is important to recognize that the post-Katrina urban rebranding is not just a question of attracting tourists or engineering tourism growth. Rebranding New Orleans is also about socializing residents to view the city as a brand and imagining an urban future that conforms to a semiotic script. According to Evans (2003, 420), branding is a mode of identification and integration that attempts to provide "a link between the diverging individual and collective culture and identity, reconnecting the locale with a sense of socio-cultural 'belonging,' whether to a city, neighborhood, or nation." As I point out below, the rebranding process in New Orleans reflects organized attempts to insinuate tourism practices and discourses into the repertoire of urban culture and inspire residents to embrace the visual orientation and consumption practices of tourists. Yet this process is not without conflict and opposition. Who represents New Orleans and how the city should be represented reflect underlying power relations and struggles over different meanings of the city and its urban imaginaries.

Contradictions of Urban Branding

In my interviews with tourism professionals in New Orleans, the perspective of "internalizing the brand" is mentioned as a major ingredient in the successful rebranding of the city as a major entertainment destination. This idea is based on the assumption that rebuilding New Orleans is incumbent on local people coming to accept the branded image as their own and learning to "live" the brand. Internalizing the brand follows the World Tourism Organization's (WTO 2006) guidelines that local leaders implement strategies to "communicate and advocate the brand internally," develop "practical ways of instilling the brand values within the community," and "capacitate and enable leadership figures to live the brand and infuse the population." "For the brand to be authentic and deliver on its promise," according to the WTO, "local community and stakeholders should believe in it and live it." There are several contradictions inherent to this understanding of urban brands as uniform scripts. The first is the lack of a clear and comprehensible object capable of being branded. By their nature, cities and places are complex and multifaceted systems of organization that contain a variety of different groups, conflictual social relations, and diverse identities. One international brand consulting organization that has specialized in urban and regional branding, Wolff Olins (2002, 2), described the difference between branding a product and region:

> There's a big difference between branding a region and a company or product. Product brands only have to please one audience, consumers. You don't have to ask the beans in the can how they feel about the label. Corporate brands have more audiences to please, such as owners, managers, workers, and customers. Branding a geographical entity is still more complex, especially when it involves national characteristics and loyalties. Brands that involve whole populations need popular permission.

Second, in contrast to corporate branding efforts, the organizations doing the urban branding do not have complete control over the practice or the place images transmitted to the public. This lack of control emanates from the fact that urban branding campaigns and branding organizations deal with an uncertain and volatile environment of many stakeholders with diverse interests, different place-based use-values, and contending perceptions and urban visions (O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy 2004; Mundt 2002; Park and Petrick 2005). In my interviews, tourism professionals describe their branding work as informed by the latest market research and tourist trends, but they do not know whether their campaigns are effective

and successful. This is not to deny the very strategic, concerted, and rational planning that goes into branding. Rather it is simply to note that the process of branding is fraught with instability and uncertainty. The inherent unpredictability of urban branding derives in part from the fact that knowledge gained about visitors through surveys and other methods is always partial and incomplete as consumer desires and preferences change.

Third, tourism professionals always face the risk that visitors and residents may reject the brand images and view them as inauthentic, irrelevant, or affronts to local culture. Indeed, the WTO (2006) warns tourism professionals that although the "best brand champions are our citizens," they "could also be worst enemies if they don't subscribe to brand essence." Over the last two decades, as tourism has come to dominate more areas of social life within New Orleans, urban branding has become a contested process. Some local residents view urban branding and related tourism growth as a harbinger of social instability, a threat to local culture, and a mechanism for commercializing heritage. Others view tourism as a potential resource for preserving local culture and heritage by showcasing the city and its attractions to an international audience. Still others maintain that the problem is not tourism per se but the management, regulation, and control of tourism. For these people, the city government needs to safeguard the unique cultural authenticity of New Orleans by making sure the city does not become "over-saturated" with tourists and large entertainment chains. This sentiment has become more forceful and provocative over the years with the expansion of chain restaurants and entertainment firms in the French Quarter and, more recently, in response to Mayor C. Ray Nagin's October 2005 proposal to create a downtown casino district. Nagin's casino plan was quickly retracted in the face of vehement local and state government opposition. Such opposition reflects a powerful undercurrent of skepticism and mistrust shared by New Orleanians toward corporate-driven tourism and its negative effects on neighborhoods (for an overview, see Gotham 2005b).

For the residents I interviewed, there is no consensus on the meaning of tourism, whether tourism has positive or negative effects, or what should be done about tourism in the city. The lack of consensus does not break down to a clear demarcation between those in favor of tourism and those against it. Indeed, many of the residents I interviewed noted that tourism is a major sector of the metropolitan economy and that New Orleans is dependent on tourism for rebuilding the city. Yet many locals, especially residents of the French Quarter, assert that tourism in recent decades has changed to a point where corporate brands are taking over large areas, and thereby homogenizing space and destroying the cultural fabric of the city. According to one leader, J. B., of a French Quarter residents' group,

All the entertainment clubs have pushed residents out. You cannot live in a block with all-night loud music every night of the week. Some of the businesses that claimed they were going to open up as restaurants have, over time, become more and more like bars and less like restaurants. They call themselves restaurants but only serve hot dogs and popcorn. It is all part of the French Quarter losing its uniqueness. Who wants to visit a place where you can see the same things in every other city? These large entertainment corporations can bring a lot of pressure on the city. Individual business owners do not have as much power as a big corporation and therefore cannot get as much. We've lobbied the city government to try to stop the intrusion of large corporations on Bourbon Street and have lost. These bars are great donors to the politicians. We have fought valiant battles but ended up losing the war.

As L. R., another French Quarter resident, put it,

Right now, tourism is about the almighty dollar. In the name of the almighty dollar, city leaders have dragged big corporations like Harrah's Casino, the House of Blues, and others into New Orleans. Did we really need the House of Blues, the Hard Rock Cafe, the Planet Hollywood? They all look the same everywhere you go. The one here looks like the one in Los Angeles that looks like the one in New York. Do we really need that? Commercialism drives it.

Other French Quarter residents express similar anticommercial viewpoints and maintain that tourism is a force of cultural homogenization and standardization. According to G. S.,

I always tell people from out of town, "hey, we have a nice zoo," and they say, "we have a nice zoo too." Same with an aquarium and a domed stadium; every city has one of those now or is getting ready to build one. But what nobody else has is a French Quarter and tourism is destroying the French Quarter. I have this bumper sticker, it says, "think locally, act locally," and what that means is that we need to think about ourselves first, not compare ourselves to San Francisco, Atlanta, New York City, or somewhere else USA. Once we understand our unique assets and learn to appreciate and care for them, then we can act in using them to help others, maybe show people how they are valued and appreciated. The tourism industry cannot do this. It's all about entertaining people in the most unenlightened and superficial way. And why? Because they are only interested in generating money. Over the long-term, this single-minded focus on money will destroy our unique culture and heritage.

The above quotes communicate a powerful message of opposition to tourism and related attempts to persuade local people to "internalize the brand." Although these voices express an intense undercurrent of skepticism

concerning corporate entertainment, their cynical sentiments are not uniform but are varied and contested. They may not be "representative" of the population of the French Quarter or New Orleans and may represent a vocal subgroup rather than a norm. Nevertheless, the interviews suggest that residents are not simply passive recipients of urban branding nor do they unconsciously internalize the brand produced by tourism professionals and other local boosters. They are actively involved in the construction of urban reality and produce meanings, some of which challenge the dominant urban imaginary and brand image. Indeed, urban branding is a cultural battlefield, a site of struggle where powerful economic and political interests are often forced to defend what they would prefer to have taken for granted. In this conception, the process of rebranding New Orleans reflects the different meanings that residents have about tourism, evinces conflicts over representations of local culture, and expresses the different bases for people's acceptance or resistance to dominant tourism images. In short, urban branding has a Janus-faced quality. Internalizing the brand is by no means ensured or guaranteed because residents' views of New Orleans are not singular, fixed, or uniform. Even to the extent that some residents may incorporate some affective links with the New Orleans brand into their lives, it is unclear and questionable whether this partial internalization will ever be realized as a vehicle for encouraging urban revitalization or enhancing brand value.

Conclusion

Debates and conflicts over tourism and branding are likely to intensify as New Orleans rebuilds in the aftermath of Katrina. Hurricane Katrina has destabilized the tourism industry, displaced tens of thousands of people, and problematized meanings of community identity. Major debates are erupting over who will lead the rebuilding, how the city should be rebuilt, which neighborhoods should be revitalized, and who will be allowed to return to the city to reclaim their former homes and neighborhoods. On one hand, the website of the NOMCVB proudly proclaims that New Orleans is "open for business" and advertisements celebrate "The rebirth of New Orleans: Ahead of Schedule," "You'll Love the New New Orleans," "Welcome to America's most romantic, walkable, historic city, New Orleans." Yet city leaders and elites recognize that the ongoing competition for tourist dollars and the devastation of Hurricane Katrina complicate efforts to attract tourists and revitalize the city. Thus, New Orleans is currently being reimaged and rebranded, a process that involves the deployment of symbols and imagery to neutralize

negative publicity, counter stigma, and project globally a coherent and transparent image of urban rebirth and vitality. On one hand, the latest branding and reimaging efforts express a larger process of "semiotic warfare" (Gibson 2006, 84) waged against the image of poverty and inequality that dominated national and global news coverage of New Orleans during September 2005. On the other hand, reimaging and branding are about communicating a sense of "community," "uniqueness," and place "distinctiveness" to unite disparate groups of residents and galvanize support for tourism rebuilding. In both cases, urban branding is now a fundamental feature of New Orleans's rebuilding efforts and reflects an integrated and organized network of economic development and tourism organizations devoted to the task of cultivating, projecting, and regulating urban images.

Like all variants of urban place promotion and marketing, urban branding is particularly silent about issues of social justice, equity, and inclusion. For tourism professionals, the question of how to represent post-Katrina New Orleans does not include poor people, the homeless, or displaced. The rebranded city increasingly reflects a series of carefully crafted branded images of rich history, delicious cuisine, and entertaining music. New logo design, brand (re)positioning, image segmentation and targeting, and other place marketing strategies fabricate an entertaining image that is insulated from the reality of life on the street. These points resonate with Greenberg's (2003, 413) observation that urban branding campaigns "purposely reveal precious little about the material reality behind the commodity they promote." In this sense, we can view urban branding as a critical form of power whereby tourism professionals attempt to define and legitimate themselves as urban planners and community experts. Although clear profiteering motives and networks of power operate behind the promotion of brands, it is important to recognize branding as a conflictual and contradictory process whose outcome is unpredictable and may breed unforeseen consequences. The intense planning and work that goes into defining a "credible" brand is inevitably based on partial information, deliberate omissions, and inevitable exclusions. These inherent problems may cause problems for the urban brand, particularly in cases where the urban imagery fabricated by tourism professionals does not correspond with the urban reality of residents who are coaxed to "live the brand." Although we may expect to see more branding activity led by New Orleans's tourism sector, the growth of corporate entertainment in the city and the production of branded spaces as profitable exchange-value remains a contingent and uncertain project.

Finally, future research might explore the outcomes or consequences of urban branding campaigns on urban identities, community self-esteem, and

constructions of urban culture. Could promotional strategies urging residents to "live the brand" alter community perceptions in the direction of more commodified and market-centered thinking about the city? Could branding become an important mechanism for generating new definitions and conceptions of urban culture? These questions suggest a conception of branding as an amalgam of both homogenizing forces of sameness and uniformity *and* diversifying forces of difference and variability. Critics often charge that branding is a form of "serial monotony," "homogenized diversity," or mechanical reproduction that hides the powerful role of public policy, global entertainment firms, and corporate interests in commodifying and rationalizing space for profit and economic gain (Chatterton and Hollands 2003, 24, 25; Hollands and Chatterton 2003; Gottdiener 2001; Evans 2003; Ritzer 2004, 3, 180). Could it be that the very activity of the tourism industry in commodifying local culture serves, in the process, to disseminate aesthetic codes and other expressive resources that other groups can reconfigure to create new cultural inventions? Just as art, musical styles, and other cultural products are diffused and recycled through film, advertising, and television, could it be that the appropriation of indigenous cultural forms in tourism makes them widely available for recontextualization and reinterpretation? If this tentative and conjectural view is plausible, it suggests a dynamic feedback relationship between urban tourism and urban culture: for instance, the process of city branding may expand and enrich understandings of particular locales that, in turn, may stimulate localized aesthetic creation that the tourism industry will likely attempt to commodify and (re)brand. Thus, it may be that the greater the intensity and extensiveness of city branding, the greater is the opportunity for transmission and reconfiguration of aesthetic codes and cultural resources, and subsequent cultural invention at a grassroots level.

Notes

1. The view that tourism undermines local culture and destroys the authenticity of place through the processes of commodification and bureaucratic rationalization is shared by many scholars in diverse disciplines. For examples, see MacCannell (1976, 1992), Greenwood (1989), Britton (1991), Kearns and Philo (1993), Watson and Kopachevsky (1994), and Alsayyad (2001). For critical assessments, see Cohen (1988), Shepherd (2002), and Fainstein and Gladstone (1999).

2. Tourism "practices" can include the socialization of locals to view their hometown as a tourist site, the aestheticization of space, and the development of promotional strategies to project a nostalgic view of local history and place. In the realm of law and public policy, tourism practices involve the development of legal and regulatory forms to facilitate the circulation of

people to particular places, the growth of a hospitality industry, and the development of a transportation and cultural infrastructure to accommodate visitors. In this sense, tourism practices are multidimensional and can include forms of migration and mobility, flows of people and commodities, and different modes of consumption. In addition, tourism practices are about the production of cultural difference and the valorization of local authenticity to stimulate people to visit a place to consume its distinct characteristics including, for example, music, cuisine, culture, history, and identities. For overviews, see Gladstone (2005), Hoffman. Fainstein, and Judd (2003), Judd and Fainstein (1999), Desmond (1999), and Sheller and Urry (2004).

3. Figures on the growth in numbers of hotel rooms and conventions come from the New Orleans Metropolitan Convention and Visitor Bureau (NOMCVB), Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans Aviation Board, Louisiana Office of Tourism, U.S. Travel Data Center, and Louisiana Hotel-Motel Association.

4. Local newspapers began to document the revenue problems of New Orleans as early as 1966. Media coverage continued throughout the decade. See *New Orleans States-Item* 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969; New Orleans Office of Policy Planning and Analysis 1976.

5. The changing ratio of tax revenue is reported in the City of New Orleans Operating Budget, 1964 and 1984. Calculations are by the Commission on the Future of the City (1985).

6. These fiscal constraints included (1) a reduction in the ability of local governments to collect income taxes, thereby increasing their reliance on revenue from sales taxes; (2) a statute that two-thirds of both houses of the state legislature had to approve any increase in an existing local tax, and (3) an expanded exemption on home owners' property taxes. The state legislature increased this homestead exemption from $50,000 of assessed valuation in 1974 to $75,000 in 1982 (Smith and Keller 1986, 150-154). On the local level, New Orleans's long tradition of elected assessors who owned their assessor databases and distribution of assessed property values meant that assessors appraised few homes over $75,000 (Smith and Keller 1986; Knopp 1990; Lauria 1984).

7. The specific subsidies of the GO Zone include tax-exempt bond financing, accelerated depreciation deductions of 50% for new development, an extension that allows carrying net operating losses for five years instead of two, allowances for demolition and clean-up expenses, plus other targeted tax breaks related to labor and restoration of commercial spaces.

References

Alsayyad, Nezar. 2001. Global norms and urban forms in the age of tourism: Manufacturing heritage, consuming tradition. In *Consuming tradition, manufacturing heritage: Global norms and urban forms in the age of tourism,* edited by Nezar AlSayyad. London: Routledge.

Blain, Carmen, Stuart E. Levy, and J. R. Brent Ritchie. 2005. Destination branding: Insights and practices from destination management organizations. *Journal of Travel Research* 43 (4): 328-38.

Brand Strategy, Inc. 2004. The brand science guide for destination research: The handbook to help convention and visitors bureaus manage tourism research for destinations. Brand Strategy, Inc. http://www.destinationmarketing.org (accessed September 6, 2006).

Britton, S. 1991. Tourism, capital, and place: Towards a critical geography of tourism. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 9:451-478.

Bryman, Alan. 2004. *The Disneyization of society*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Burns, Peter, and Matthew O. Thomas. 2006. The failure of the nonregime: How Katrina exposed New Orleans as a regimeless city. *Urban Affairs Review* 41:517-27.

Chang, T. C. 2000a. Renaissance revisited: Singapore as a "global city for the arts." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 24, no. 4 (December): 818-31.

———. 2000b. Singapore's little India: A tourist attraction as a contested landscape. *Urban Studies* 37 (2): 343-366.

Chatterton, Paul, and Robert Hollands. 2003. *Urban nightscapes: Youth cultures, pleasure spaces, and corporate power*. London and New York: Routledge.

City of New Orleans. 2004. Mayor builds music industry. Mayor Nagin's Office of Communications, August 9.

Clark, Terry Nichols, ed. 2004. *The city as an entertainment machine*. New York: Elsevier Press.

Cohen, Erik. 1988. Authenticity and commodification in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research* 15:2371-2386.

Cohen, Lizabeth. 2003. *A consumer's republic: The politics of mass consumption in postwar America*. New York: Random House.

Comfort, Louise K. 2006. Cities at risk: Hurricane Katrina and the drowning of New Orleans. *Urban Affairs Review* 41:501-516.

Commission on the Future of the City. 1985. Recommendations for the future of New Orleans, Blanche F. Mysing papers, Louisiana Collection. (Box 3, Folder 86. MS 804-A.) Howard-Tilton Memorial Library. New Orleans: Tulane Univ.

Coviello, Will. 2006. Roger Wilson's "Broadway South" initiative could rebuild downtown New Orleans as a theater district. *Gambit Weekly,* November 14.

Craig, Frank. 1977. Letter from the President of the Council for a Better Louisiana, to the Honorable Secretary of Commerce, Washington, DC, January 31. Records of the 1984 Louisiana Exposition, City Archives, New Orleans Public Library.

Desmond, Jane C. 1999. *Staging tourism: Bodies on display from Waikiki to Sea World.* Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

Dreier, Peter. 2006. Katrina and power in America. *Urban Affairs Review* 41:528-49.

Eeckhout, Bart. 2001. The "Disneyification" of Times Square: Back to the future? In *Critical perspectives on urban redevelopment,* edited by Kevin Fox. Gotham. New York: Elsevier Press.

Eggler, Bruce. 2005. Carnival plan calls for 8 days of parades. *New Orleans Times-Picayune,* November 24.

Evans, Graeme. 2003. Hard-branding the cultural city—from Prado to Prada. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27, no. 2 (June): 417-440.

Fainstein, Susan S., and David Gladstone. 1999. Evaluating urban tourism. In *Tourist city,* edited by Dennis R. Judd and Susan S. Fainstein. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.

Fainstein, Susan S., and Dennis R. Judd. 1999. Global forces, local strategies, and urban tourism. In *Tourist city,* edited by Dennis R. Judd and Susan S. Fainstein. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.

Foster, Mary. 2006. Shootings tarnish New Orleans image. Associated Press report, July 30.

Gibson, Timothy A. 2006. City living, D.C. style: The political economic limits of urban branding campaigns. In *Urban communication: Production, text, context,* edited by Timothy A. Gibson and Mark Douglas Lowes. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.

Gladstone, David L. 1998. Tourism urbanization in the United States. *Urban Affairs Review* 34:3-27.

———. 2005. From pilgrimage to package tour: Travel and tourism in the Third World. New York: Routledge.

Goffman, Erving. 1957. *The presentation of self in everyday life.* Edinburgh: Univ. of Edinburgh Press.

Gotham, Kevin Fox. 2005a. Tourism from above and below: Globalization, localization, and New Orleans's Mardi Gras. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29, no. 2 (June).

———. 2005b. Tourism gentrification: The case of New Orleans's Vieux Carre (French Quarter). *Urban Studies* 42, no. 7 (June): 1099-1121.

Gottdiener, Mark. 2001. *Theming of America: Dreams, visions, and commercial spaces.* 2nd ed. Westview Press.

Gottdiener, Mark, Claudia C. Collins, and David R. Dickens. 1999. *Las Vegas: The social production of an all-American city.* Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Greenberg, Miriam. 2000. Branding cities: A social history of the urban lifestyle magazine. *Urban Affairs Review* 36, no. 2 (November): 228-262.

———. 2003. The limits of branding: The World Trade Center, fiscal crisis, and the marketing of recovery. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27, no. 2 (June): 386-416.

Greenwood, Davydd. 1989. Culture by the pound: An anthropological perspective on tourism as cultural commodification. In *Hosts and guests: The anthropology of tourism,* edited by Valene Smith. Philadelphia, PA: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press.

Hannigan, John. 1998. *Fantasy city: Pleasure and profit in the postmodern metropolis.* New York: Routledge.

———. 2003. Symposium on branding, the entertainment economy, and urban place building: Introduction. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27, no. 2 (June): 352-60.

Harvey, David. 2001. Spaces of capital: Towards a critical geography. New York: Routlege.

Hoffman, Lily K. 2003. The marketing of diversity in the inner city: Tourism and regulation in Harlem. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27, no. 2 (June): 286-299.

Hoffman, Lily K., Susan S. Fainstein, and Dennis R. Judd, eds. 2003. *Cities and visitors: Regulating people, markets, and city space.* New York: Blackwell Publishing.

Hollands, Robert, and Paul Chatterton. 2003. Producing nightlife in the new urban entertainment economy: Corporatization, branding, and market segmentation. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27, no. 2 (June): 361-385.

Hotel Monteleone. 2006. Hotel Monteleone kicks off its literary luncheon series. News release, June 14.

International Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus (IACVB). 2005. Developing a genuine destination brand. In *Nation's Cities Weekly.* May 9. http://www.iacvb.org/ (accessed September 25, 2006).

Judd, Dennis. 2003. Visitors and the spatial ecology of the city. In *Cities and visitors: Regulating people, markets, and city space,* edited by Lily K. Hoffman, Susan S. Fainstein, and Dennis R. Judd. New York: Blackwell Publishing.

Judd, Dennis, and Susan Fainstein, eds. 1999. *The tourist city.* New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.

Kearns, Gerry, and Chris Philo. 1993. *Selling places: The city as cultural capital, past and present.* Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Knopp, Lawrence. 1990. Exploiting the rent gap: The theoretical significance of using illegal appraisal schemes to encourage gentrification in New Orleans. *Urban Geography* 11(1): 48-64.

Lauria, Mickey. 1984. The implications of Marxian rent theory for community-controlled redevelopment strategies. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 4:16-24.

Lauria, Mickey, Robert K. Whelan, and Alma H. Young. 1995. Revitalization of New Orleans. In *Urban revitalization: Policies and programs,* edited by Fritz W. Wagner, Timothy E. Joder, and Anthony J. Mumphrey, Jr. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Lewis, Pierce F. 2005. *New Orleans: The making of an urban landscape*. 2nd ed. Univ. of Virginia Press.

Lin, Jan. 1998. Globalization and the revalorizing of ethnic places in immigration gateway cities. *Urban Affairs Review* 34:313-339.

Lloyd, Richard. 2005. *Neo-Bohemia: Art and commerce in the postindustrial city*. New York: Routledge.

Lloyd, Richard, and Terry Nichols Clark. 2001. The city as an entertainment machine. In *Critical perspectives on urban redevelopment,* edited by Kevin Fox. Gotham. New York: Elsevier Press.

MacCannell, Dean. 1976. *The tourist: A new theory of the leisure class*. New York: Schoken Books.

———. 1992. *Empty meeting grounds: The tourist papers*. New York: Routledge.

McNulty, Ian. 2005. The Brennans family: A luscious legacy. www.frenchquarter.com/dining/brennans.php (accessed December 6, 2005).

Miroff, Nick. 2006. Taking a tip from Madison Avenue, towns buy into branding. *Washington Post* B1, July 17.

Moor, Elizabeth. 2003. Branded spaces: The scope of "new marketing." *Journal of Consumer Culture* 3 (1): 39-60.

Mundt, J. 2002. The branding of myths and the myths of branding: Some critical remarks on the branding of destinations. *Tourism* 50:339-48.

Mowbray, Rebecca. 2005a. Mardi gras to seek its first sponsor. *Times-Picayune*, December 8.

———. 2005b. Tourism chief takes Nagin to task: Mayor impeding rebound, he says. *Times-Picayune,* December 8.

———. 2006. $30 million for tourism OK'd: It's a good start, Visitors Bureau says. *Times-Picayune,* April 22.

Mowbray, Rebecca, Michelle Krupa, and Greg Thomas. 2006. Plan would reshape downtown to build Jazz Center. *Times-Picayune,* May 30.

New Orleans Jazz Orchestra. 2005. http://www.thenojo.com/mission.html (accessed December 12, 2005).

———. 2006. Hyatt-Superdome area to be redeveloped into new Hyatt Jazz District: Finished site to generate more than 6,500 permanent jobs. Press release, May 30. http://www.thenojo.com/ (accessed July 28, 2006).

New Orleans Office of Policy Planning and Analysis. 1976. *The New Orleans economic outlook, 1976–1981,* compiled by Marjorie Fox Larson. (Box 121, folder 5. MS 2.) Moon Landrieu Collection. New Orleans: Loyola Univ.

New Orleans States-Item. 1966. 4 Researchers here to study financial crisis, July 19.

———. 1967. City revenues short, September 30.

———. 1968. Financial outlook dim, April 30.

———. 1969. City spending frozen; Budget slash blamed, January 6.

New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation (NOTMC). 2006. New Orleans's recovery as of December 1, 2006. News release, http://www.neworleansonline.com/ (accessed Jan. 15, 2007).

New York Times. 2006. Year after the storm, business remains unusual, August 25.

Novelli, Marina. 2005. *Niche tourism: Contemporary issues, trends and cases.* Oxford, England: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Olins, Wolff. 2006. Øresund: The human capital case study. http://www.wolff-olins.com/Oresund.htm (accessed January 19, 2007).

O'Shaughnessy, J., and N. O'Shaughnessy. 2004. Treating the nation as a brand: Some neglected issues. *Journal of Macromarketing* 20:56-64.

Park, Sun-Young, and James F. Petrick. 2005. Destinations: Perspectives of branding. *Annals of Tourism Research* 33 (1): 262-5.

Rath, Jan, ed. 2007. *Tourism, ethnic diversity and the city*. London: Routledge.

Ritzer, George. 2004. *The globalization of nothing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Scott, J. Allen. 2000. *The cultural economy of cities: Essays on the geography of image-producing industries*. London: Sage Publications.

———. 2004. Cultural-products industries and urban economic development. *Urban Affairs Review* 39 (4): 461-90.

Scott, Robert Travis. 2006. LA gets $28.5 million for tourism; Area agencies get lion's share of aid. *Times Picayune,* September 20.

Sheller, Mimi, and John Urry, eds. 2004. *Tourism mobilities: Places to play, places in play*. New York: Routledge.

Shepherd, Robert. 2002. Commodification, culture, and tourism. *Tourist Studies* 2 (2): 183-201.

Slater, Don. 2002. Capturing markets from the economists. In *Cultural economy: Cultural analysis and commercial life,* edited by Patrick D. Gay and Michael Pryke. London: Sage.

Smith, Michael Peter, and Marlene Keller. 1986. "Managed growth" and the politics of uneven development in New Orleans. In *Restructuring the city: The political economy of urban redevelopment,* edited by Susan Fainstein, et al. New York: Longman.

Sorkin, Michael, ed. 1992. *Variations on a theme park: The new American city and the end of public space*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Stafford, Leon. 2005. Las Vegas: Gambling. Orlando: Disney. New Orleans: Bourbon Street. Atlanta: Hmmm... *Atlanta Journal-Constitution,* May 10.

Teo, Peggy, and Lim Hiong Li. 2003. Global and local interactions in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research* 30 (2): 287-306.

Thevenot, Brian. 2005. Nation has blurry image of city. *New Orleans Times-Picayune,* December 18.

Thorns, David C. 1997. The global meets the local: Tourism and the representation of the New Zealand city. *Urban Affairs Review* 33:189-208.

Urry, John. 2002. *Tourist gaze*. 2nd ed. London: Sage Publications.

Watson, G. Llewellyn, and Joseph P. Kopachevsky. 1994. Interpretations of tourism as commodity. *Annals of Tourism Research* 21 (3): 643-660.

World Tourism Organization (WTO). 2006. Destination positioning, branding and image management. Addis Abada, March 27-29. http://www.world-tourism.org/destination/ethiopia/session_6.pdf (accessed January 19, 2007).

Yuen, Belinda. 2006. Reclaiming cultural heritage in Singapore. *Urban Affairs Review* 41, no. 6 (July): 830-54.

Kevin Fox Gotham is associate professor of sociology at Tulane University, in New Orleans. He is currently serving as a program director for the Social and Political Sciences Cluster of the National Science Foundation (NSF). His research focuses on the political economy of real estate, tourism, and urban redevelopment. He is author of the forthcoming book *Authentic New Orleans: Race, Culture, and Tourism in the Big Easy* (New York Univ. Press).