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Tourism Gentrification: The Case of New Orleans' Vieux Carre (French Quarter)

Kevin Fox Gotham

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Summary. This paper examines the process of 'tourism gentrification' using a case study of the socio-spatial transformation of New Orleans' Vieux Carre (French Quarter) over the past half-century. Tourism gentrification refers to the transformation of a middle-class neighbourhood into a relatively affluent and exclusive enclave marked by a proliferation of corporate entertainment and tourism venues. Historically, the Vieux Carre has been the home of diverse groups of people. Over the past two decades, however, median incomes and property values have increased, escalating rents have pushed out lower-income people and African Americans, and tourist attractions and large entertainment clubs now dominate much of the neighbourhood. It is argued that the changing flows of capital into the real estate market combined with the growth of tourism enhance the significance of consumption-oriented activities in residential space and encourage gentrification. The paper contests explanations that view gentrification as an expression of consumer demands, individual preferences or market laws of supply and demand. It examines how the growth of securitisation, changes in consumption and increasing dominance of large entertainment firms manifest through the development of a tourism industry in New Orleans, giving gentrification its own distinct dynamic and local quality.

Introduction

Recent years have witnessed the growth of a vast and expanding scholarly literature concerning the novelty, causal dynamics and socioeconomic impact of gentrification (for an overview, see Atkinson, 2003). Since the early 1990s recession, researchers have noted a 'third wave' of gentrification in many cities, including the formation of new alliances between private developers and local government, a 'reinvention' of public institutions, and a 'restructuring' of the gentrification process itself (Wyly and Hammel, 1998, 2004; Wyly, 2002). According to Hackworth (2002), the growth of large corporate developers, real estate investment trusts (REITs) and new networks of mortgage brokers is creating new forms of 'corporatised gentrification'. For Smith (2002), the impulse behind gentrification is no longer restricted to the US or Europe, but is a global and generalised process. As a "global urban strategy", gentrification is now "densely connected into the circuits of global capital and cultural circulation" (Smith, 2002, p. 80). Whatever the differences of emphasis and interpretation, common to analyses of gentrification is a focus on new mechanisms of commercial reinvestment, new public subsidies for private investment and a greater interconnectedness of local and global forces (for an overview, see Brenner and Theodore, 2002). A key feature of recent research on gentrification is the attempt to situate gentrification within larger economic and political processes,

Kevin Fox Gotham is in the Department of Sociology, Tulane University, 220 Newcomb Hall, New Orleans, LA 70118, USA. Fax: (504) 865 5544. E-mail: kgotham@tulane.edu.

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including the deregulation of national markets, shifting patterns of global finance and the power of transnational corporations (TNCs) and global production networks (Wyly, 2002; Wyly and Hammel, 1999, 2000). Yet despite much research and debate, few scholars agree on how analysts should conceptualise gentrification, what should be the appropriate levels of analysis for assessing the causes and consequences of gentrification and what data sources researchers should use to measure gentrification empirically. While many scholars contend that gentrification today is different from that of the 1970s and 1980s, they disagree over its form, incidence and impact.

This paper contributes to recent urban scholarship on the causes and consequences of gentrification, using a case study of the transformation of New Orleans's Vieux Carre (French Quarter) since the 1950s. Since at least the 1930s, the Vieux Carre has been a site of intense conflicts over commercial revitalisation, historical preservation and neighbourhood integrity. In 1937, the neighbourhood was designated as a historical district and remained the city's only landmark district until the 1970s. In the 1960s, the local environmentalists and neighbourhood activists joined forces with a burgeoning national anti-expressway movement to halt the planning and construction of an elevated expressway along the Mississippi River (Baumbach and Borah, 1981; Lewis, 1997). Since this time, residents and businesses have teamed with historical preservationists and other activists to protest the growth of fast-food restaurants, mall-like shops and chain-like clothing stores that cater almost exclusively to tourists (Foley, 1999; Foley and Lauria, 2000, 2003). In 1995, the National Trust for Historical Preservation identified the Vieux Carre as one of the 10 most endangered places in the country due to the threat that commercial business growth posed to the residential character of the neighbourhood. In recent years, residents and neighbourhood organisations have lamented the increase of hotels, bed and breakfasts, time-shares, condominiums and large entertainment clubs (Vesey, 1999; Kaufman, 1999). Both median incomes and property values have increased, especially during the 1990s, and escalating rents and conversion of affordable single-family residences to expensive condominiums have pushed out lower-income people and African Americans. As I point out, for most of its history, the Vieux Carre functioned as a residential neighbourhood composed of diverse groups of people. Since the 1960s, however, the area has been transformed into an entertainment destination, marketed vigorously by tourism promoters and redesigned to bring visitors into the city. As a central component of New Orleans' promotion as a tourist and entertainment city, the analysis of gentrification in the Vieux Carre offers a unique case for understanding the connection between global economic process and local actions in the transformation of urban space.

In this paper, I situate the gentrification of the Vieux Carre within the larger transformation of New Orleans into a tourist city. I first specify the conceptual problem and outline a theoretical framework that will guide my analysis. I then provide an overview of residential and commercial change in the Vieux Carre over the past 60 years using data from the US Census Bureau and other government reports. I then focus on the connection between tourism and gentrification. My analysis focuses on the *why* and *how* questions regarding the motivation for using tourism as a strategy of urban regeneration, both of which are central to explaining the process of gentrification. I develop the concept *tourism gentrification* to highlight the role of state policy in encouraging both gentrification and tourism development; and the actions of large corporate entertainment firms in redeveloping the Vieux Carre into a space of entertainment and consumption. I argue that flows of capital in the real estate market combined with the shift to tourism explain gentrification more fully than do alternative accounts that focus narrowly on consumer demand or cultural preferences for upscale neighbourhoods. Tourism is about the production of local difference, local cultures and different local histories that appeal to visitors' tastes for the exotic and unique (Coleman and Crang, 2002; Hoffman *et al.*, 2003; Urry, 2002). At the same time, the tourism industry is one of the largest industries in the world and is increasingly dominated by global hotel firms and entertainment companies—Disney, Universal, Sony, etc.—who have the ability to exploit a wide range of 'brand synergies' to transform locales into spaces for consumption (Hollands and Chatterton, 2003; Fainstein and Judd, 1999; Meethan, 2001). Hannigan's (1998) discussion of the 'maverick' developers of the new entertainment-based 'fantasy city' points to how national or international corporations today dominate urban redevelopment and have the economic and political power to take their investments elsewhere should local officials not prove compliant, a trend observed by Feagin and Parker (1990), Smith (1996) and others. In this light, I view tourism as a globalised process that connects the exogenous forces of multinational corporations and capital flows, with the locally based powers of residents, élites and consumers.

Tourism Gentrification

Research on gentrification has exploded over the past two decades. Economists, geographers, sociologists and other urban scholars have studied the causal dynamics, consequence and trajectories of gentrification using diverse sources of data and theoretical orientations (for overviews, see Atkinson, 2003; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Feagin and Parker, 1990, ch. 5; Gotham, 2001b; Hutchison, 1992; Smith, 1996; Wittberg, 1992; Wyly and Hammel, 2001). In the US, scholars have identified three waves of gentrification (Hackworth, 2002; Smith, 2002). The first wave, beginning in the 1950s and lasting to the 1973 recession, was an outgrowth of the Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954 that provided federal funds for local redevelopment authorities to designate 'blighted' areas, acquire and clear land, and then sell the land to private developers (Gotham, 2000, 2001a). In the process, city governments and federal monies supported private efforts to build new upscale urban housing, thereby allowing a new urban 'gentry' to move into areas previously dominated by the poor and the working class. A second wave followed in the 1970s and 1980s as new public–private 'partnerships' and market-centred subsidies (such as tax abatements and tax increment financing (TIFs)) financed gentrification (Squires, 1989). Two significant features marked this second wave. The first was the integration of gentrification with new 'cultural strategies' of economic redevelopment, including new investments in museums, art galleries and historical preservation (Zukin, 1997, 1995). A second significant feature was the increasing enmeshment of gentrification into global systems of real estate and banking finance. This enmeshment was evident in the creation of new, massive developments including New York City's South Street Seaport, Boston's Faneuil Hall, Baltimore's Inner Harbor and Philadelphia's Society Hill.

In recent years, scholars have argued that inner cities are experiencing a third wave of gentrification and a resurgence of investment but disagree on the sources and causes of this gentrification and reinvestment (for overviews, see Bondi, 1999; Lees, 2000; Ley, 1996; Smith, 1996). Wyly and Hammel (1999, 2001), for example, maintain that the resurgence of gentrification in many cities emanates from recent transformations in federal regulatory policy and mortgage financing. Specifically, local efforts under the federal HOPE VI programme that decentralises public housing administration and establishes public–private ventures to fund public housing redevelopment have helped spur a new round of gentrification in many cities. In this conception, the federal government's more decentralised and privatised low-income housing policy has altered key facets of the gentrification process itself, opening new markets for low-income and minority borrowers and neighbourhoods, and increasing access to conventional mortgage capital through automation and standardisation (see also Kasarda, 1999; Marcuse, 1999). In a case study of New York City's Lower East

Side, Smith and DeFillippis (1999) argue that the 'economics of gentrification' was transformed in the 1990s as brand-name firms, international developers and multinational banks increasingly supplied the capital to finance corporate-led gentrification. Lees' (2003) study of Brooklyn Heights, New York, suggests that a "new generation of super-rich 'financiers' fed by the fortunes from global finance and corporate service industries" is the leading edge of "super-gentrification" which refers to "the transformation of already gentrfied, prosperous and solidly upper-middle class neighbourhoods into much more exclusive and expensive enclaves" (p. 2487). In a comprehensive survey of the literature, Hackworth (2002) argues that four novel changes distinguish the gentrification process in the 1990s and later: corporate developers are now the leading initiators of gentrification, federal and local governments are more open and assertive in facilitating gentrification; anti-gentrification movements have become more marginalised than in earlier decades; and, gentrification is diffusing to more remote neighbourhoods. Overall, according to Hackworth (2002, p. 839), gentrification now is "more corporate, more state facilitated, and less resisted than ever before".

In this paper, I develop and apply the concept of *tourism gentrification* as a heuristic device to explain the transformation of a middle-class neighbourhood into a relatively affluent and exclusive enclave marked by a proliferation of corporate entertainment and tourism venues. Scholars have noted that gentrification is a "chaotic concept" (Lees, 2003, p. 2491) that lacks theoretical and empirical specificity. In a critique of the empirical literature on gentrification, Wyly and Hammel (1998) observed that "recent criticisms of the coherence of theories of gentrification, ... and methods for assessing its extent and significance have cast doubt on the utility of further research on the subject" (p. 303). Five years later, in a comprehensive review of the literature on gentrification, Atkinson (2003, p. 2343) noted that "the map of gentrification appears to be extending steadily" with dozens of scholars around the world undertaking a variety of case studies, comparisons and statistical analyses of gentrification. A major objective of this paper is to contribute to this burgeoning literature by examining the process of tourism gentrification. Following Wyly and Hammel (1998, p. 302), I argue that research on tourism gentrification is warranted not by the intensity or magnitude of gentrification, "but by the *distinctiveness* of the patterns inscribed by the *process*" (original emphasis). Specifically, I maintain that there are at least two reasons to consider the nature of tourism gentrification.

First, tourism gentrification highlights the twin processes of globalisation and localisation that define modern urbanisation and redevelopment processes. On the one hand, tourism is a 'global' industry dominated by large international hotel chains, tour operators, car rental agencies and financial services companies (American Express, Visa and so on). In addition, tourism sustains many occupations, advertising campaigns, recognisable attractions and diverse forms of financial investment.[1] On the other hand, tourism is a 'local' industry characterised by grassroots cultural production, spatial fixity of the tourism commodity and localised consumption of place. T. C. Chang and colleagues' research on Singapore and Montreal suggests that various public agencies, private firms and tourism interests deploy locally specific images, themes and motifs to stimulate tourist demand to buy and consume local products and services (Chang, 2000a, 2000b; Chang *et al.*, 1996). These points buttress studies by Teo and Li (2003) and Teo and Yeoh (1996) who find that while tourism may be a 'global' force, it is also a locally based set of activities and organisations involved in the production of local distinctiveness, local cultures and different local histories that appeal to visitors' tastes for the exotic and unique. As I point out below, the nexus of globalisation and localisation is apparent in the Vieux Carre where corporate entertainment firms and retail chains are plugged into global financial circuits to leverage capital to redevelop residential and commercial space. In the process, entertainment and retail firms accentuate the place-theme in their commodities and activities by valorising the milieu where they are located, using place images and symbols that connect the locale with pleasurable experiences. At the same time, the growth of tourism has an 'elective affinity' with widespread cultural and aesthetic changes including the emergence of style as identity, the proliferation of advertising images and media, and development of sophisticated marketing schemes that seek to create demand for gentrified housing (Ley, 1996, 2003).

Secondly, the concept of tourism gentrification presents a challenge to traditional explanations of gentrification that assume demand-side or production-side factors drive the process. During the 1970s and 1980s, scholars developed differing explanations of the etiology, process and consequences of gentrification. Clay (1979, pp. 57–60), Berry (1985; 1999, p. 783) and Kasarda (1999, p. 779) outlined a series of demand-side factors, including demographic and economic factors, and individual preferences and consumer choice for gentrified housing. A second production-side perspective emphasised the importance of state policy and regulation, the role of disinvestment and the actions of powerful actors and organised interests in the gentrification process. This later approach, focused on "capitalist roots of gentrification" (Smith, 1996, p. 41) and viewed gentrification "as part and parcel of the class dynamics of urban transformation associated with capital investment and disinvestment" (Betancur, 2002, p. 781). The example of tourism gentrification provides the conceptual link between production-side and demand-side explanations of gentrification while avoiding one-sided and reductive conceptions. On the production side, for example, tourism is about shifting patterns of capital investment in the sphere of production, new forms of financing real estate development and the creation of spaces of consumption. On the demand side, the socio-physical spaces associated with gentrification are also the "highly visual expression of changing patterns of consumption in cities" (Carpenter and Lees, 1995, p. 288). Analysing tourism gentrification sheds light on the complementary nature of the differing explanations, provides an important opportunity for theoretical development and offers a unique perspective on tourism and urban redevelopment dynamics. While my empirical analysis is specific to New Orleans and the Vieux Carre, I argue that the analysis has broader theoretical generality and applicability to understanding gentrification.[2]

Building a Tourist City

During the immediate post-World War II years, New Orleans city officials and élites began devising strategies to increase tourist travel to enhance the economic prosperity and fiscal status of the central city. In the 1960s, dwindling urban population and burgeoning suburban development raised the spectre of economic stagnation and created the context for city leaders to further the development of tourism in the city. From 1967 to 1977, manufacturing jobs in New Orleans declined in every year except one. By 1977, only 11 per cent of the labour force was employed in manufacturing, a situation that placed the city among the lowest in industrial employment in the nation (Smith and Keller, 1986). In 1974, the Louisiana State legislature passed several statutes that significantly reduced the ability of local governments in the state to raise revenue. These fiscal constraints included: a reduction in the ability of local governments to collect income taxes, thereby increasing their reliance on revenue from sales taxes; a statute that two-thirds of both houses of the state legislature had to approve any increase in an existing local tax; and, 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, pp. 150–154). At the local level, New Orleans' 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 (Knopp, 1990a; Lauria, 1984). At the federal level, urban outlays declined from 12.4 per cent of all federal expenditures in 1978 to 7.8 per cent in 1984 (Gaffikin and Warf, 1993, p. 73). In short, reduced federal monies, fiscal constraints imposed on the city by the state government and the suburbanisation of people and businesses caused a significant erosion in the ability of the city to raise revenue to fund basic government operations and provide public services. As a result, by the late 1970s, New Orleans was experiencing a fiscal crisis, forced to slash funding for public services while financially pressured to expend greater funds to leverage capital investment and develop new strategies for engineering urban redevelopment.

During the 1980s, New Orleans gained attention as an economically declining city in the prosperous Sunbelt region (Hirsch, 1983). The oil market crash from 1982 to 1987 depressed the local jobs market, causing a dramatic increase in housing foreclosures and the out-migration of thousands of middle-class families from the city and metropolitan area (Lauria and Baxter, 1999). While the suburban areas grew in population, the population of Orleans Parish dropped from a high of 627 525 in 1960 to an all-time low of 484 674 in 2000. The city lost more than 34 000 residents during the 1960s, more than 35 000 during the 1970s, more than 60 000 in the 1980s and more than 10 000 from 1990 to 2000 (see Table 1). In recent years, local public officials, scholars and journalists have acknowledged the deleterious effects of the racial segregation in area schools and housing, the loss of manufacturing jobs

Table 1. Population and demographic trends for Orleans Parish, Louisiana, 1940–2000

	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Total population	494 537	570 445	627 525	593 471	557 515	496 938	484 674
White population (percentage)	69.7	68.0	62.6	54.5	42.5	34.9	26.6
Black population (percentage)	30.1	31.9	37.2	45.0	55.3	61.9	66.6
Other (percentage)	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.5	2.2	3.2	3.7
Median household income ($)	N/A	2 267	3 822	7 445	11 814	12 239	19 453
Median household income, 2000 ($)	N/A	14 914	20 439	31 021	24 715	16 125	19 453
Poverty status							
Families (number)	N/A	N/A	N/A	30 996	29 359	32 616	26 988
Families (percentage)	N/A	N/A	N/A	21.6	21.8	27.3	23.7
Individuals (number)	N/A	N/A	N/A	156 776	143 793	152 042	130 896
Individuals (percentage)	N/A	N/A	N/A	26.8	26.4	31.6	27.9
Median household value ($)	3 033	9 711	16 000	21 000	50 600	69 600	87 300
Median household value, 2000 ($)	N/A	63 888	85 562	87 500	105 858	91 700	87 300
Median rent ($)	15.38	25.18	60.00	67.00	153.00	277.00	378.00
Median rent, 2000 ($)	N/A	165.66	320.86	279.17	320.08	364.95	378.00
Total housing units	137 165	173 608	202 643	208 524	226 452	225 573	215 091
Owner-occupied	31 552	56 091	71 297	73 517	81 970	82 279	87 589
Renter-occupied	101 488	109 962	118 504	117 846	124 465	105 956	100 662
Number vacant	4 125	7 555	12 842	17 161	20 017	37 338	26 840
Percentage vacant	3.0	4.4	6.3	8.2	8.8	16.5	12.5

Source: Census of Population and Housing (1940–2000).

and increasing blight and rising poverty while downtown redevelopment and suburban growth have been taking place (Lauria *et al.*, 1995; Whelan and Young, 1991; Brooks and Young, 1993). As of 1995, more than half the children living in New Orleans, 51.6 per cent, were living below the federal poverty level. In a survey of 216 counties and parishes in the US with at least 250 000 residents, the Census Bureau found that the Orleans Parish was one of the poorest, ranking fourth, with 25 per cent of its working population living in poverty. Only 5 other counties in the nation had a poverty rate of 25 per cent or greater in 2000. In a study of median household incomes in those 216 counties and parishes, Orleans Parish again ranked among the poorest, third from the bottom at 213, with $27 111 (*New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 2001).

Over the decades, the city of New Orleans has pursued tourism as a strategy to generate urban revitalisation and bolster the tax-base. The various components of this tourism strategy have included the building of a domed stadium, a festival mall, a massive convention centre, new office towers in the central business district, a major theme park and a World War II museum. The city has also staged 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. According to data gathered by the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau, there were 8.2 million visitors to New Orleans in 2003, including 485 216 international visitors. Total visitor expenditures amounted to $3.8 billion with $198.34 million in tourism tax revenues.[3] The hotel industry has grown considerably over recent decades as indicated by the skyrocketing number of hotel rooms in the metropolitan area. In 1960, the city had a total of 4750 rooms. This number increased to 10 686 in 1975, 19 500 in 1985, 25 500 in 1990 and almost 34 000 by 2000. The convention market has also grown from 764 conventions in 1976 to more than 3260 conventions in 1999. Other tourism developments in the 1990s include the legalisation of gaming in Louisiana, the creation of the New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation, the establishment of the New Orleans Multicultural Tourism Network, the creation of the Mayor's Office of Tourism and Arts, and the expansion of Convention and Visitor's Bureau efforts to market the region to international tourists (City of New Orleans, 2000).

In sum, the erosion of both federal and state government revenue over the past few decades means that New Orleans is more reliant on sales tax revenue than ever before. This constrained fiscal environment has pressured the city government to intensify partnerships with private capital to promote the growth of a consumption-based tourism infrastructure. Today, the locus of New Orleans' multibillion dollar tourism business is in the downtown and the Vieux Carre. Tourism is a way of importing spending and exporting the tax burden to generate the revenue to facilitate urban redevelopment and gentrification.

Demographic and Population Changes in the Vieux Carre

The Vieux Carre, or old French Quarter of New Orleans, is probably one of the most famous historical districts in the US. Established in 1718, the area is bounded by Canal, Rampart and Esplanade Streets, and the Mississippi River. The neighbourhood itself consists of a mix of residential and commercial land uses in a rectangle grid of approximately 120 blocks along the Mississippi River (see Figure 1). This area formed the original French colonial town that had been designed by Pierre L Blond de la Tour, engineer-in-chief of Louisiana, and laid out by his assistant, Adrien de Pauger, in March 1721. The early history of the Vieux Carre was that of a French trading centre and later, after 1762, a Spanish colonial outpost. With the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the US inherited a thriving commercial centre supported by river trade. During the first half of the 19th century, growth in New Orleans expanded beyond the Vieux Carre, but the

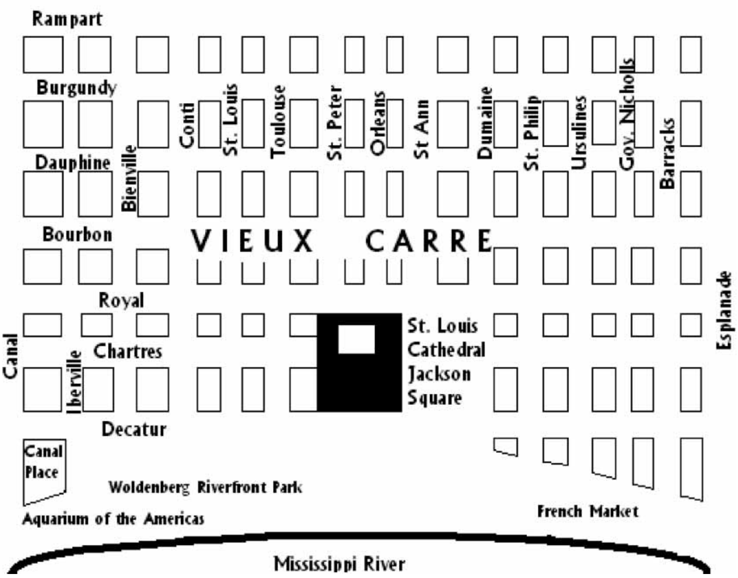

Figure 1. The Vieux Carre, New Orleans.

neighbourhood continued as a centre of cultural and social life during the century. By the mid 19th century, the city rivalled New York as a commercial and financial hub. The Civil War devastated the city and resulted in a period of protracted economic decline that would last into the 20th century. By the mid 20th century, the Vieux Carre had acquired a reputation as a charming residential neighbourhood with a unique historical background and architectural styles. Today, the Vieux Carre includes all the land within the original French and Spanish city. It functions as a speciality shopping area, an entertainment complex, a centre for arts and crafts, a residential area and a focus of culture and historical preservation of regional and national importance.

Historically, the Vieux Carre has been the home of diverse groups of people. Yet over the past few decades the neighbourhood has become more socially homogeneous. Demographic trends presented in detail in the Appendix (Table A1) show the social transformation of the Vieux Carre from 1940 to 2000. According to the US Census Bureau, the Vieux Carre consists of census tracts 38, 42 and 47 (see Figure 2). Between 1940 and 1970, the population of the Vieux Carre plummetted from 11 053 to 4176, a loss of more than 50 per cent of its population. In comparison, the City of New Orleans grew by approximately 26.9 per cent from 1940 to 1960, from 494 537 to 627 525, while losing population over the next four census periods. While the percentage of Whites living in the Vieux Carre increased from 79 per cent in 1940 to 91.9 per cent in 2000, the percentage of Blacks dropped from 19.7 per cent to 4.3 per cent. Interestingly, as the White segment of population has increased in the Vieux Carre, it has declined for the city of New Orleans. In 1960, Whites made up 62.6 per cent of the city's population and Blacks were 37.2 per cent. As of the 2000 census, Blacks made up 67.3 per cent of the city's population and Whites were 28.1 per cent. Today, almost 11 per cent of the population of the Vieux Carre lives below the poverty level, compared with 27.9 per cent for the city of New Orleans.

From 1940 to 2000, the percentage of vacant housing units in the Vieux Carre increased from 9.5 per cent to almost 38 per cent. According to a 1992 University of New Orleans study, the high vacancy rate in 1990

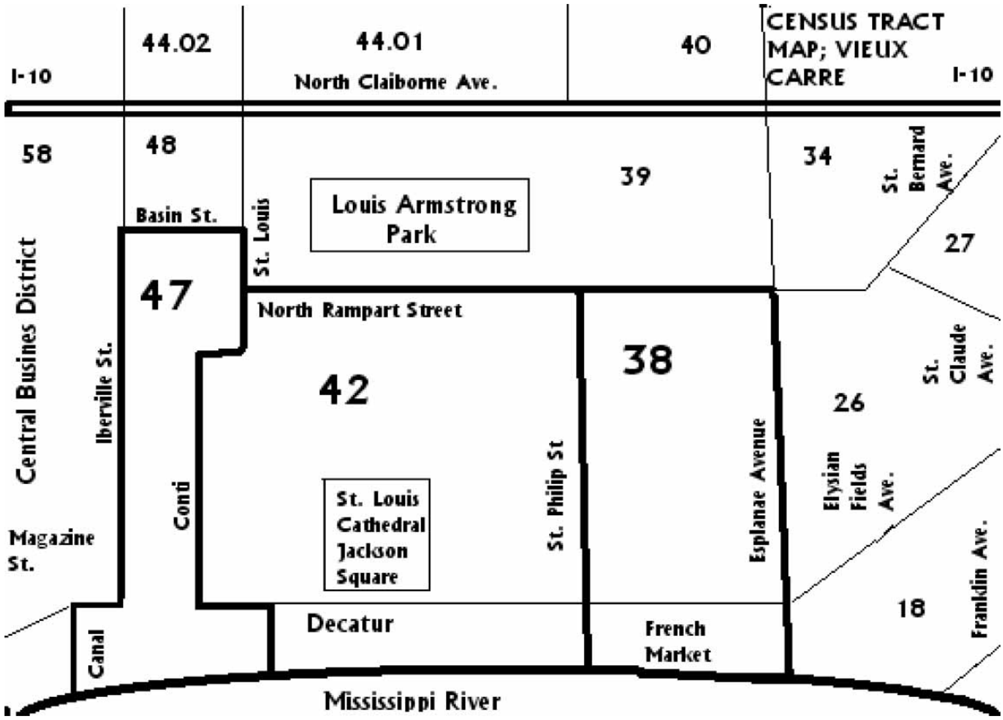

Figure 2. The census tracts of the Vieux Carre.

was concentrated in speculative apartments constructed during the 1984 World's Fair (University of New Orleans, College of Urban and Public Affairs, 1992, ch. 2, p. 10). The continuing high rate of vacancy in the 1990s is because the high rental cost of commercial units discourages property owners from maintaining residential apartments above the first floor.

In census tract 38, median housing value in constant 2000 dollars increased more than seven times, from \$64 474 in 1950 to \$460 000 in 2000. The cost of rent also increased dramatically after 1950, from \$193.82 per month in census tract 38 to \$549 per month in 2000. Census tracts 42 and 47 show similar trends. As Table A1 shows, median household income, median housing value and median rents are higher in the Vieux Carre than Orleans Parish as a whole. Overall, the census data show a slight decline in median household income (in constant dollars), a loss of population, a decrease in percentage of minority residents and huge increases median household value and cost of rent, from 1940 to 2000—changes associated with gentrifying areas.

Today, only 116 children less than 18 years of age live in the Vieux Carre. This number represents only 2.7 per cent of the total population of the neighbourhood. Of the almost 3000 households in the Vieux Carre, more than 97 per cent do not have children less than 18 years of age. This is in contrast to 64.7 per cent for Orleans Parish, 60.8 per cent for the state of Louisiana and 63.9 per cent for the entire US.[4]

The demographic and population transformation of the Vieux Carre coincides with a dramatic restructuring of the commercial base of the neighbourhood. Vesey (1999), for example, found that from 1950 to 1999, the number of souvenir and t-shirt shops increased from 26 to 110; retail apparel stores increased from 14 to 42; music clubs increased from 7 to 27; hotels increased from 21 to 40; and art galleries increased from 10 to 40. In addition, from 1950 to 1999, the number of groceries decreased from 44 to 4; miscellaneous food stores declined from 44 to 19; hardware stores from 31 to 1; laundry services from 24 to 2. During this time, several 'mom-and-pop' operations that had been stable fixtures in the neighbourhood for decades closed including, LaNasa Hardware, Reuter's Feed and Seed and Puglia's grocery store. Interestingly, the number of warehouses, industrial services, freight distribution and manufacturing services plummetted from 131 to 2. Today, souvenir shops are the most prevalent retail business in the area. Overall, from 1950 to 1999, residential-oriented businesses, such as barbers, department stores, shoe shops, small groceries and laundry services, decreased by more than 15 per cent, while tourist-oriented business, such t-shirt shops, poster shops, *daiquiri* shops, and commercial tourism information centres expanded by 32 per cent.

The huge increase in median household value and median rent in the Vieux Carre during the 1990s suggests that the neighbourhood may be experiencing a new round of intensified gentrification, or what Lees (2003) calls 'super-gentrification'—for example, the movement of even wealthier residents into a previously gentrified neighbourhood. While the data in Table A1 show upward trends in median household income, median household value and median rent, they do not imply that gentrification is a crescive process nor that it has a stable outcome or specific end-point. Quantitative data do not provide an explanation for the underlying causes of the population, demographic and commercial transformation of the neighbourhood. As I show below, the promotion of tourism has been a major strategy for encouraging commercial development, attracting high-income residents and bolstering gentrification in the Vieux Carre.

The Local State and the Role of Real Estate Investors

In the past, reinvestment in the Vieux Carre was associated with the activities of individual gentrifiers, small commercial firms (art galleries, museums and so on) and small property developers (Knopp, 1990a, 1990b; Lauria, 1984). Before the 1980s, federally insured and regulated savings and loans and small banks supplied much of the capital for commercial and residential construction and investment. As a result, only a limited amount of capital funds were available for new construction and renovation. In contrast, the 1980s and 1990s have seen the development of national and global markets for mortgage-backed securities (MBS) and commercial-backed securities (CMBS) that have expanded the investor-base to finance residential and commercial real estate, and have allowed more funds to flow into the mortgage market and commercial real estate sector from broader capital markets. Securitisation implies the transformation of illiquid financial assets into liquid capital market securities and has been the critical financial innovation that has enabled private and public actors to finance local property development in global markets (Logan, 1993; Sassen, 2001, pp. 71–74). The liquidation of real estate capital through securitisation received added impetus in the 1990s with the growth of real estate investment trusts (REITs), shareholding companies that invest in different types of real estate including shopping centres, office buildings, apartments and hotels. While urban redevelopment involves many small players using local finance mechanisms, they are increasingly operating in a larger context of global capital markets dominated by large investors, a trend documented by Weber (2002), Dymski (1999) and Smith (2002). In this globalising context of local property development, it is the supply and demand for housing and commercial development *funds*, rather than the supply and demand itself that determine the value of local properties. In short, the growth of securitisation and the development of new sources of financing have made it possible for a substantial portion of the commercial real estate industry to invest in entertainment, tourism and leisure-based consumption activities (Hannigan, 1998; Nevarez, 2002; Chatterton and Hollands, 2003; Wyly and Hammel, 2004, pp. 8, 35).

This long-run and complex restructuring of the real estate industry connects with institutional changes on the local level to encourage commercial development and gentrification in the Vieux Carre. Three developments have been important. First, in the 1970s, the city government reorganised the French Market Corporation, one of the oldest public markets in the nation, as a *de facto* private corporation to promote commerce and entertainment in the Vieux Carre. The rationalisation of the leasing structure and tenant mix, the construction of several parking lots and the renovation of buildings focused on restaurants and shops frequented by tourists (Reeves, 2000, pp. 40–43). At this point in the market's history, as the website of the City of New Orleans government mentions, "entertainment and tourism became primary aspects of market life" (www.frenchmarket.org/history.html). While the French Market had been a public–private entity since the 1930s, privatisation in the 1970s and later attempted to reconstitute the organisation as a for-profit organisation under the label of entrepreneurial government. Secondly, the mid to late 1970s saw the building of Canal Place, a high-rise mixed-use retail development on the upriver side of the Vieux Carre. The planning and construction of Canal Place reflected trends towards privatisation and the restructuring of the public sector to promote economic competitiveness, attract investment capital and create a favourable 'business climate' (Brooks and Young, 1993; Lauria *et al.*, 1995). Thirdly, in 1992, city planners rezoned the first two blocks of Decatur Street as a Vieux Carre Entertainment District, a move meant to spur redevelopment of several vacant commercial properties and create an anchor of commercial revitalisation that could have spillover effects into surrounding areas. Large firms such as the House of Blues, Coyote Ugly Bar, Planet Hollywood, Jimmy Buffet's Margaritaville Cafe, Audubon Institute's Aquarium for the Americas and Harrah's Casino have all opened since the early 1990s.

The creation of new real estate financing mechanisms through securitisation combined with local state action to encourage tourism have together promoted the growth of chain-like entertainment venues in the Vieux Carre. Bourbon Street began to experience a new wave of investment with the opening of the Chateau Sonesta Hotel in 1995, Larry Flynt's Hustler Club (225 Bourbon) in 1996, Redfish Grill in 1997 and the Storyville District Jazz Club in 1999. In 1998, Don Kleinhans, a national adult entertainment investor, opened Utopia, a music and dance club at 227 Bourbon, and Opulence, a nightclub a few doors away. Bourbon Street has long been one of New Orleans' most valuable commercial real estate strips (Marks Lewis Torre and Associates, 1977). Nevertheless, space on the street has become more desirable as the tourism industry has expanded since the 1980s. The construction of upscale hotels along Canal Street and in the central business district has increased foot traffic within the Vieux Carre and encouraged investors to renovate properties in the first few blocks of Canal and turn old bars on Bourbon Street into upscale themed music clubs. As a result, rents on the street have risen by at least 50 per cent since the mid 1990s and in some cases have more than doubled. As of 2002, real estate agents were selling space on the street for $175–$250 per square foot.

Real estate agents admit to waging bidding wars with each other to accelerate property turnover and some meet with families who have owned property for generations to see if they would be interested in selling. If so, they go and find national investors who want to invest (*New Orleans Times–Picayune*, 2002). Outside investors and entertainment firms are attracted to the Vieux Carre because of many diverse kinds of tourists that visit the area. Tourism officials note that tourists who come to the Vieux Carre are of varying age levels, have high levels of affluence and exhibit different types of lifestyle. The chance to gain international visibility through the annual Mardi Gras celebration, the ability to do business 7 nights a week and sell drinks 24 hours a day, and the constant flow of tourists allow businesses to achieve quick profits. As large entertainment firms have become the mainstay of capital investment in the area, they have broken down the barriers between residential and commercial use on particular streets—a trend also observed by Chatterton and Hollands (2002) in their analysis of night-time urban playscapes in the UK. Where there used to be a buffer between the retail commercial zone of Canal Street and the entertainment zone of Bourbon Street, these two streets are now fused together in their use of entertainment and tourism to attract consumers. What is important is that the enmeshment of entertainment and tourism with different land uses and spaces elides the distinction between consumption-based activities and other social activities, opening new contexts and opportunities for powerful actors to market the Vieux Carre for profit and economic gain. Local and national businesses produce and sell Vieux Gras souvenirs and paraphernalia; multinational companies use Vieux Carre and New Orleans imagery and themes to sell their products; and, public–private organisations (tourism marketing corporations and task forces) promote Vieux Carre to support inward investment and economic growth. In the latter case, public and private sectors overlap and place marketers and tourism boosters increasingly emphasise 'synergistic' opportunities for creating commercial value (Hannigan, 1998).

Sharon Zukin (1991) and David Ley (2003, p. 2538) suggest that "learning the field of gentrification is facilitated by a cadre of cultural intermediaries in real estate, travel, cuisine, the arts" who create and reproduce knowledge, transmit images and disseminate information about 'cool' and 'trendy' neighbourhoods. Cultural intermediaries do not exist in a cultural or economic vacuum, but operate through organised networks involving public relations firms, advertising and marketing corporations, festival promoters and city agencies. Thus, organisations like the Arts Council of New Orleans, French Quarter Festivals, Inc., the New Orleans Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau, the New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation, the New Orleans Multicultural Tourism Network and the Mayors Office on Art and Tourism, produce advertisements, attractive brochures and information packages, provide funding and render services to stimulate consumer demand to travel to or live in the Vieux Carre. For example, tourism websites, vertical banners and billboards that advertise Vieux Carre also promote restaurants, shops and hotels. Streets in the Vieux Carre are laden with historical allusions to a traditional and nostalgic view of the city as a friendly and coherent place, lined with red-brick town houses, cast-iron galleries over public sidewalks and enchanting back-yard gardens and slave quarters. Other streets are ornamented with neon signs and punctuated by antique lamp-posts and cajun and zydeco music. These symbols and motifs are selectively incorporated into tourist guides and promotional materials to represent certain visual images of the city. One aim of these advertisements is to conjure up emotionally satisfying themes of past times, to promote an image of nostalgia to attract tourists. Another aim is to remake residential space into commercial space by interlocking visual attractions with profit-making consumption-based opportunities such as eating, drinking and shopping, thereby expanding the repertoire of consumption.

Images and symbols of romance, nostalgia, public sexuality, music, dancing and shopping have long attracted tourists to the Vieux Carre. Before the 1970s, the use of advertising, marketing and other promotional efforts to increase tourism was *ad hoc*, unco-ordinated and lacked sophistication compared with the present. Not only was the socioeconomic context different from that of today, but also the intensity and scale of advertising and the organisation of aesthetic production were vastly different. Today, public and private groups such as the New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation, the New Orleans Multicultural Tourism Network, the Mayor's Office of Tourism and Arts and the Convention and Visitor's Bureau 'simulate' the Vieux Carre using sophisticated advertising techniques aimed at promoting desire and fantasy, art and design directed to the production of desirable tourist experiences and other highly refined techniques of image production and distribution. In the process, tourism interests and advertising agencies thematise local traditions, famous buildings and landmarks and other heritage sights to the point that they become 'hyperreal', with the production of 'illusions' overriding descriptions of 'reality' (Baudrillard, 1983). The implication is that tourism institutions are not necessarily engaged in promoting and advertising what the city has to offer. They are involved in adapting, reshaping and manipulating images of the place to be desirable to the targeted consumer. Advertising the Vieux Carre as a site of famous architecture, romance, cultural heritage, music and other entertainment activities affects the production and consumption of urban space for tourism. The same symbols, motifs and themes that relate to tourist advertising are equally applicable to people interested in purchasing a gentrified lifestyle.

The growth of tourism in the Vieux Carre has not been without negative consequences and neighbourhood coalitions have opposed the transformation of the neighbourhood into an entertainment destination. The entry of large multinational hotel firms into the Vieux Carre—for example, has sparked much local unrest, leading several neighbourhood groups to launch lawsuits aimed at halting construction. The lure of tourist profits, low labour costs and anti-union sentiment have long attracted large hotels to New Orleans. On the other hand, local preservationists and neighbourhood groups have long fought the intrusion of large hotels in the Vieux Carre. In 1969, the City Council imposed a moratorium on new hotel building to protect the historical district. The City Council enacted the moratorium into law in a comprehensive zoning ordinance in 1976, along with height restrictions. In 1982, the City Council revised the moratorium to allow new hotels on Canal Street and in the Vieux Carre but in existing buildings only. Over the past few years, the City Council has issued permits that allow hotel firms to exceed the height restriction of 70 feet and purchase residential buildings next to hotels and convert them into lodging. Despite vehement opposition from business owners and residents, in August 2004, the New Orleans City Planning Commission voted 6–1 to grant a single exception to the 35-year-old prohibition against new or expanded hotels in the Vieux Carre (Eggler, 2004). Local residents and lawyers representing the French Quarter Citizens for the Preservation of Residential Quality and the Vieux Carre Property Owners, Residents, and Associates VCPORA argue that these recent developments essentially nullify the original moratorium, encourage unrestricted development that is not open to public comment and give hotel developers unbridled freedom to build hotels and ignore the historical integrity of the neighbourhood (*City Business*, 23 October 2000, 11 December 2000).

Changing Patterns of Consumption and Conflict in the Vieux Carre

Over the past decade, patterns of consumption have changed in the Vieux Carre. New tastes in food, music and architecture have been aligned with gentrification. High-class fashion outlets and expensive retail stores have taken over the old Jackson Brewery, transforming an old factory into a suburban-style shopping mall. Designer bars, chain restaurants and tourism-oriented souvenir shops have gradually replaced former working-class corner cafes and food shops. Many small antique dealers and art galleries have moved out of the Vieux Carre and moved to Magazine Street where they can afford the rents. On Royal Street, a proliferation of private art galleries and antique dealers have opened, often displaying works at expensive prices. New dance bars that never close have replaced the old jazz clubs on Bourbon Street. Streets and buildings valued and protected for their architectural and scenic effects are juxtaposed with areas of corporate tourist development and privatised areas of retail shopping and entertainment. Indeed, the last of the corner cafes and local coffee shops are today competing for space with some of the largest corporations in the world. According to two long-term residents

> The nature of the entertainment is fundamentally different today than it was in the 1950s and 1960s along Bourbon Street. . . . You do not find traditional jazz on Bourbon Street anymore; and local clubs and local music joints have been replaced by DJ type music. The doors to the bars are always open so everyone on the street hears the music and it is playing all the time, morning or evening or night time. And it is pretty loud on Bourbon Street. And this has caused any legitimate business like a jazz-oriented club to go find places that are quieter and cheaper (interview with Matthew Thompson).

> I have lived in the French Quarter since the 1950s, and when we think about the French Quarter we have to remember that there used to be all kinds of service stores, hardware stores and small grocery stores. They are all gone. We can't even find a cleaners anymore. We have to go about six blocks to get something cleaned. The drugstores are now all run by national chains. They are too expensive for us, especially now that we are in our retiring years. You have to have a car to get out to the supermarkets. We used to have grocery stores, the A and P, and they were small stores. But no more (interview with Samuel Stevens).

One illustration of shifting consumption patterns in the Vieux Carre is the creation of new expensive condominiums and escalating property values, a development that drives out people of modest incomes and portends a class transformation of the neighbourhood. Since the 1980s, low interest rates, new sources of financing and new mortgage instruments have enhanced capital availability to finance renovations of upscale housing in the neighbourhood. In 2003, condominium prices ran in the $300 per square foot range, up from $117 per square foot a decade earlier (*City Business*, 12 June 2000). In 2003, 107 condominiums sold for an average sale price of $187 165 according to the New Orleans Metropolitan Association of Realtors. This is a 12 per cent rise in average sales price in 2002 on top of a 10 per cent increase in 2001. In 2000, the average price of a home in the Vieux Carre was $595 125 compared with $183 719 for Orleans Parish (Ragas, 2003). Today, there are few unrehabilitated residential places for sale and virtually no low-income housing to rent in the neighbourhood. The asking price for single-family homes is far beyond the means of low-income housing tenants, although residents claim that the Vieux Carre continues to be an affordable community with a mix of different classes of people. A study by Kaufman (1999) identified 78 residential rental properties, including apartments and houses, that had been converted to condominiums as of November 1999. The study found that 100 units were converted between 1980 and 1995, about 6–7 a year. Yet condominium conversions increased dramatically after the mid 1990s, to 27 a year between 1996 and 1999, bringing a total of 81 new condominiums in that 3-year period. City policies and tourism promotion efforts encourage real estate agents, firms and developers to convert buildings and single-family homes into condominiums to accommodate tourists and non-residents. Residents, on the other hand, claim that transient condominium-dwellers are causing the Vieux Carre to lose its neighbourhood feel (*New Orleans Times–Picayune*, 2003).[5] As one person told me

> The proliferation of condos is not good for the French Quarter, all these wonderful houses and buildings are just going condo. Everybody who lives in the condo units comes in from some other far away city, and they only come a few times a year. So, they don't care about whether the plants are watered; they let their friends use the building but the friends may not know what days to put the trash out. They just have a really nice place to crash in every now and then. So, I think it is more important to have places occupied; it's safer for people, it is more of a sense of pride to

> people, it's more of a sense of neighbourhood (interview with Denise Starbuch).

According to another resident

> It's becoming where only a millionaire can afford to buy in the Quarter. They have to have a big income. And its usually for a second home. There are people putting almost a million dollars into renovating buildings. They spend a hefty amount to buy a place then put another half million dollars into restoring it. And then they may only live here only part of the year (interview with Samuel Stevens).

A second illustration of changing consumption patterns in the Vieux Carre is the movement of Hollywood celebrities into the neighbourhood, a movement that reinforces the transformation of the area into an entertainment destination. Actors such as Nicholas Cage, Delta Burke and Gerald McRaney, movie-makers such as Francis Ford Coppola, Taylor Hackford and Ron Shelton have all bought buildings in the Vieux Carre in the 1990s. Some residents I interviewed argue that the entrance of celebrity home-owners into the Vieux Carre is a positive development. Their presence raises the prestige of the neighbourhood, encourages tourists to visit and spend money, and gives real estate agents a new selling tool to convince people that they are buying a 'lifestyle' as well as a neighbourhood. Others, however, argue that celebrities and other high-income people rob the Vieux Carre of one of its defining characteristics—diversity. In my interviews, some residents claim that increasing rents and commercial homogenisation may be wiping out the very charm, character and distinctiveness that have historically made the French Quarter appealing. As one person put it

> I think you will find that if the French Quarter loses it's small town nature, village look and bohemian look, that everything will be same, that the buildings become occupied by tourists and not residents, I doubt that people would want to visit. Who wants to go somewhere that you think is a famous neighbourhood and then find when you get there that all there is are lots of tourists and the same things you could find in other cities, like a Hard Rock Cafe, national retail stores and so on? (interview with Matthew Thompson).

Some residents, mostly younger people who moved into the Vieux Carre during the 1980s and 1990s, recognise that the neighbourhood is becoming less socially diverse. However, these people do not believe that diversity itself is what attracts people to the Vieux Carre. They also do not believe in the claim made by older residents that as the area loses its diversity it will become a less desirable place to visit. For more recent residents, people will always want to visit the Vieux Carre and while gentrification may be unfortunate, it is inevitable and it raises the quality of life in the neighbourhood. As one person put it

> Somebody is investing in the French Quarter and buying these old places, the old groceries, the old stores. . . . Somebody can obviously afford the rents in the area even if they are going through the roof. What it means I think is that people are willing to pay a lot of money to live and do business in the French Quarter. How can you battle that? There is no question that the French Quarter has and will continue to become a more expensive place to live. . . . This is a fact of life. And I do not necessarily think that this is a horrible thing. I think there are lots of great places to live in the city. There are lots of great places in New Orleans that can develop and improve as well. If things work out like they should then it will create opportunities for people to gentrify those areas as well. It is just the natural order of real estate (interview with Robert Aronson).

One person, who has lived and owned businesses in the Vieux Carre for decades, has a similar interpretation. As he put it

> I am a businessman and I believe in the free market concept. I believe that anybody has a right to be in the French Quarter and do business if they are doing things legally, if they obtain the proper permit; everyone

> has the same legal access to the same piece of real estate to the same spot. I don't see any reason to keep say the House of Blues out versus Snug Harbor. I think it is a question of doing your business smarter and being on top of your industry, and being competitive. So, I am not necessarily against large, out-of-state corporations coming into the French Quarter (interview with Steve Johnson).

As the above excerpts show, some Vieux Carre residents welcome gentrification and the movement of large entertainment firms into the neighbourhood. According to these people, the large firms help to bolster the tourism industry, raise property values and create a higher quality of life for residents. Gentrification is a positive development for the neighbourhood because as the real estate market turns upscale, the population turns upscale. Other residents are defiant and extremely cynical. They view tourism as a pathological force that corrupts local culture and heritage by commercialising and staging it for tourist consumption. Still others welcome and accept the inevitability of change but fear being oversaturated with tourist venues. These points suggest that gentrification is a multidimensional process that is fraught with conflict and tension. On the one hand, gentrification is a strategy of economic development that connects global-level socioeconomic transformations with the production of commercial and residential land use for affluent users. On the other hand, gentrification is a "cultural practice" (Zukin, 1987, p. 143) that expresses an upscale lifestyle and conspicuous consumption habits and is a form of social reproduction for an upper or middle class (Miles and Paddison, 1998). In both cases, gentrification reflects the trends towards the standardisation and rationalisation of consumption spaces as ruled by the dictates of tourism and commodified entertainment culture.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have examined the case of tourism gentrification in New Orleans' Vieux Carre. To date, most research on gentrification has focused on issues of spatial differentiation, class transformation of urban neighbourhoods and the displacement of former residents by an incoming gentry. By contrast, tourism gentrification is commercial as well as residential and reflects new institutional connections between the local institutions, the real estate industry and the global economy. Thus, the phenomenon of tourism gentrification presents a challenge to traditional explanations of gentrification that assume demand-side or production-side factors drive the process. Gentrification is not an outcome of group preferences nor a reflection of market laws of supply and demand. One particular myth is the claim that consumer desires are forces to which capital merely reacts. Consumer taste for gentrified spaces is, instead, created and marketed, and depends on the alternatives offered by powerful capitalists who are primarily interested in producing the built environment from which they can extract the highest profit. As I have shown, the transformation of the Vieux Carre into an entertainment destination enhances the significance of consumption-oriented activities in residential space and encourages gentrification. On the one hand, entertainment and tourism have brought a more upscale and affluent population to the neighbourhood, have increased property values for home-owners, and have attracted national retail chains. On the other hand, entertainment and tourism have priced out working-class residents and have eroded the bohemian character of the Vieux Carre. Finally, the growth of corporate tourism and the increasing penetration of global entertainment firms bespeak a shift in property ownership away from many small groups and individuals towards a more transnational corporate influence in the Vieux Carre. The pretentious and widely promulgated claim that the 'creative class' and 'cultural intermediaries' drive gentrification elides the complex and multidimensional effects of global-level socioeconomic transformations and the powerful role corporate capital plays in the organisation and development of gentrified spaces.

For New Orleans and other US cities, major socioeconomic changes over the past few decades have created a new competitive environment in which cities are increasingly forced to develop new tools and subsidies to attract new investment and, more important, market themselves as tourist destinations. In this new context, more residential and commercial spaces become centres of spectacle and tourist consumption rather than places of material production, a development noted by Lloyd and Clark (2001) in their discussion of the "city as an entertainment machine". Thus, in many urban neighbourhoods there has been a proliferation of varied but similarly themed tourist enclaves including historical districts, cultural districts, redevelopment zones and entertainment destinations (Bures, 2001; Gottdiener, 1997, 2000; Reichl, 1997, 1999; Zukin, 1997). What is important is that local or even national real estate markets cannot generate the huge amounts of capital needed to finance urban revitalisation drives and forms of tourism development. The growth of securitisation in the 1980s and 1990s and the development of new sources of real estate financing have drawn large institutional investors into financing urban entertainment destinations and private residential development. As a result, gentrification and tourism are largely driven by mega-sized financial firms and entertainment corporations who have formed new institutional connections with traditional city boosters (chambers of commerce, city governments, service industries) to market cities and their neighbourhoods. As local élites use tourism as a strategy of economic revitalisation, tourism services and facilities are incorporated into redevelopment zones and gentrifying areas. In this new urban landscape, gentrification and tourism amalgamate with other consumption-oriented activities such as shopping, restaurants, cultural facilities and entertainment venues. That blurring of entertainment, commercial activity and residential space leads to an altered relationship between culture and economics in the production and consumption of urban space.

Finally, this paper is an attempt to widen tourism analysis and move the study of tourism beyond a narrow concern with flows, impacts and forms. It is also an attempt to understand the broader social forces that affect gentrification and to shed light on critical issues such as urban restructuring and socio-cultural change in cities. Thus, according to Smith and DeFilippis (1999, p. 651), "the frontier of gentrification is more than ever co-ordinated with the frontiers of global capital investment" making the newest wave of gentrification in cities "one part of a larger spatial restructuring of urban areas associated with the transformations of production, social reproduction and finance". Following this line of thinking, I believe that tourism analysis can shed light on the causes and consequences of gentrification better than existing accounts that focus on identifying the population and demographic variables responsible for residential and commercial change in cities. Hackworth (2002) has noted that direct displacement no longer seems to have as much meaning in the context of new forms of state action, corporate-led gentrification and larger political-economic shifts. Tourism is about consumption-led growth and the increasing importance of the production of cultural goods, heritage images and other simulacra. Also, tourism development is a dynamic process involving social interactions, relations and conflicts that are global in scale and highly complex in character. As contemporary cities increasingly turn to tourism as a means of economic development, and as gentrification expands in many cities, we need more critical accounts of the nexus of tourism and gentrification. Indeed, tourism studies can contribute much to on-going debates of urban ethnic transformation, globalisation and gentrification. The investigation of the Vieux Carre as a contested landscape takes up this challenge of broadening tourism analyses and in doing so contributes to a more critical urban sociology of gentrification.

Notes

1. In the past decade or so, tourism has emerged as the dominant sector within the contemporary service economy in the US and around the

world. According to US Tourism Industries, tourism's export contributions grew by nearly 250 per cent between 1986 and 1996, from $26 billion to $90 billion (http://tinet.ita.doc.gov/). Despite the recent economic slowdown and September 11, tourism is a $600 billion industry, representing a more than 5 per cent of the nation's GDP and employing over 17 million people. Tourism is also a major services export, producing a $14 billion positive balance of trade in 2000 (US House of Representatives, 2002; for overviews, see Hoffman *et al.*, 2003; Fainstein and Judd, 1999).

2. I employ both primary and secondary data to develop my arguments. The secondary data come from documents and planning reports issued by the New Orleans Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau (NOMCVB) and the New Orleans City Planning Commission, among other agencies. Furthermore, I consulted the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* newspaper annual index, 1972–present, for references to newspaper articles on the Vieux Carre, tourism in New Orleans and other information on the local real estate industry and the role of business élites in redevelopment efforts. I also performed a Lexis–Nexis search of the *Times-Picayune* newspaper for information on the Vieux Carre in the 1990s. The primary data come from 7 years of participant observation (as a resident of New Orleans) and in-depth semi-structured interviews with 36 local residents who have had first-hand knowledge and experience with the socio-spatial transformation of the Vieux Carre. I gathered these interviews through a snowball sample. To protect the confidentiality of interviewees, I use pseudonyms for non-public persons quoted in the paper.
3. Figures come from the New Orleans Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau (NOMCVB) (www.neworleanscvb.com/new_site/visitor/researchfacts.cfm).
4. Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000 Full-Count Characteristics (SF1). Compilation by the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center (www.gnocdc.org).
5. Condominium growth also encourages the conversion of small dwellings into bed and breakfast operations and time-shares. A 1992 Report by the College of Urban and Public Affairs at the University of New Orleans found that

> illegal bed and breakfast accommodations continue to expand throughout the area. Operators are often not residents of the buildings so that these establishments become more like time shares than hotels or guest houses (University of New Orleans, 1992, ch. 1, p. 30).

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Appendix

Table A1. Population and demographic trends for the French Quarter (census tracts 38, 42, 47 and total), 1940–2000

	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Census tract 38							
Total population	4 747	3 622	2 889	2 096	2 039	1 685	1 726
White population (percentage)	80.6	92.2	92.2	97.7	96.1	95.9	91.9
Black population (percentage)	17.7	6.6	6.1	1.3	2.2	2.3	3.2
Other (percentage)	1.8	1.2	1.8	1.0	1.8	1.8	4.9
Median household income ($)	N/A	2 048	3 917	9 053	12 291	21 923	27 616
Median household income, 2000 ($)	N/A	13 474	20 947	37 721	25 713	28 884	27 616
Poverty status							
Families (number)	N/A	N/A	N/A	32	16	13	N/A
Families (percentage)	N/A	N/A	N/A	9.5	5.0	7.1	N/A

(*Table continued*)

Table A1. *Continued*

	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Individuals (number)	N/A	N/A	N/A	320	195	304	182
Individuals (percentage)	N/A	N/A	N/A	15.1	10.1	19.2	11.3
Median household value ($)	2 941	9 800	25 000	44 100	117 500	190 200	460 000
Median household value, 2000 ($)	N/A	64 474	133 690	183 750	245 816	250 593	460 000
Median rent ($)	10.22	29.46	63.00	106.00	228.00	368.00	549.00
Median rent, 2000 ($)	N/A	193.82	336.90	441.67	476.99	484.85	549.00
Total housing units	1 526	1 613	1 709	1 624	1 672	1 692	1 684
Owner-occupied	158	227	208	204	232	234	384
Renter-occupied	1 295	1 208	1 195	1 105	1 133	936	754
Number vacant	73	178	306	315	307	522	546
Percentage vacant	4.8	11.0	17.9	19.4	18.4	30.9	32.4
	1 940	1 950	1 960	1 970	1 980	1 990	2 000
Census tract 42							
Total population	5 426	4 734	3 982	2 786	3 049	2 024	2 055
White population (percentage)	77.8	77.7	79.6	90.0	91.7	91.1	92.8
Black population (percentage)	21.1	20.7	18.8	8.3	6.8	6.2	4.1
Other (percentage)	1.0	1.5	1.7	1.7	1.4	2.7	3.1
Median household income ($)	N/A	1 703	4 305	8 196	10 147	23 603	31 903
Median household income, 2000 ($)	N/A	11 204	23 021	34 150	21 228	31 098	31 903
Poverty status							
Families (number)	N/A	N/A	N/A	16	42	47	N/A
Families (percentage)	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.8	10.3	23.0	N/A
Individuals (number)	N/A	N/A	N/A	464	433	382	186
Individuals (percentage)	N/A	N/A	N/A	16.7	14.5	19.3	9.0
Median household value ($)	3 766	10 000	12 100	37 100	100 000	203 600	353 800
Median household value, 2000 ($)	N/A	65 789	64 706	154 583	209 205	268 248	353 800
Median rent ($)	13.63	38.85	65.00	95.00	202.00	354.00	559.00
Median rent, 2000 ($)	N/A	255.59	347.59	395.83	422.59	466.40	559.00
Total housing units	2 206	2 236	2 790	2 336	2 763	2 512	2 519
Owner-occupied	160	214	191	174	212	211	311
Renter-occupied	1 790	1 780	2 126	1 654	1 865	1 176	1 191
Number vacant	256	242	473	508	686	1 125	1 017
Percentage vacant	11.6	10.8	16.9	22.7	24.8	44.8	40.4
Census tract 47							
Total population	880	1 174	798	375	508	282	395
White population (percentage)	78.0	73.8	67.7	94.9	87.8	91.1	86.8
Black population (percentage)	22.0	25.6	31.1	4.3	11.0	8.9	10.1
Other (percentage)	0.0	0.6	1.3	0.8	1.2	0.0	3.1

(*Table continued*)

Table A1. *Continued*

	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Median household income ($)	N/A	1 493	2 610	8 500	11 382	14 830	21 250
Median household income, 2000 ($)	N/A	9 822	13 957	35 417	23 812	19 539	21 250
Poverty status							
Families (number)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	19	13	N/A
Families (percentage)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	20.0	26.5	N/A
Individuals (number)	N/A	N/A	N/A	73	139	63	69
Individuals (percentage)	N/A	N/A	N/A	24.2	25.6	22.3	18.3
Median household value ($)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	52	137 500	N/A
Median household value, 2000 ($)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	109 833	181 159	N/A
Median rent ($)	N/A	39.40	38.00	114.00	346.00	395.00	514.00
Median rent, 2000 ($)	N/A	259.21	203.21	475.00	723.85	520.42	514.00
Total housing units	229	376	571	338	430	298	439
Owner-occupied	6	23	23	19	11	12	21
Renter-occupied	175	326	473	243	347	202	247
Number vacant	48	27	75	76	72	84	171
Percentage vacant	20.9	7.2	13.1	22.5	16.7	28.2	38.9
All census tracts							
Total population	11 053	9 530	7 669	5 257	5 596	3	4 176
White population (percentage)	79.0	82.7	83.1	93.4	93.0	93.1	91.9
Black population (percentage)	19.7	16.0	15.3	5.2	5.5	4.8	4.3
Other (percentage)	1.3	1.3	1.7	1.4	1.5	2.1	3.8
Median household income ($)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Poverty status							
Families (number)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	77	73	N/A
Individuals (number)	N/A	N/A	N/A	857	767	749	437
Median household value ($)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Median rent ($)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total housing units	3 961	4 225	5 070	4 298	4 865	4 502	4 642
Owner-occupied	324	464	422	397	455	457	716
Renter-occupied	3 260	3 314	3 794	3 002	3 345	2 314	2 192
Number vacant	377	447	854	899	1 065	1 731	1 734
Percentage vacant	9.5	10.6	16.8	20.9	21.9	38.4	37.4

Source: Census of Population and Housing (1940–2000).