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**Historic Preservation, Urban Revitalization and Value
Controversies in New Orleans' French Quarter**

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Historic Preservation, Urban Revitalization and Value Controversies in New Orleans' French Quarter.

Historic preservation is seen frequently as a neutral and beneficial activity important in its attempt to protect for future generations the links with their cultural past. When a population is marked by diversity, however, it becomes necessary to consider how different racial or ethnic groups perceive historic preservation so that what is being preserved is not just a reminder of a history of segregation. Preservation cannot be based only on the values of particular groups who may have no special connection with the area in which they live. When this is so, it may further reinforce inequalities with regard to access to privileged places.

The French Quarter of New Orleans is a heterogeneous mixture of buildings of different periods, persons and activities. In it, black population contributed to its construction, was formally an important group of property owners but over time their presence, as residents, has been almost eliminated. This reduction in black population has taken place at a time when the French Quarter was being regenerated from the abandon that marked the earlier part of this century and was being accepted as a respectable place to live for more affluent persons. Thus, preservation has had the effect of reducing the racial diversity of the Quarter.

Through the analysis of extended conversations with a diverse group of denizens, it has become clear that the segregated past of the Quarter still affects the perception of the black majority population of the Quarter, and it is not a place where they feel comfortable to live. Likewise it affects the priority given to the whole issue of preservation, particularly when in discourse it is viewed as a barrier to economic development perceived as beneficial to a majority black population through job generation. Similarly, in the Quarter problems such as music making in public spaces and the imposition of 'zero tolerance' as a police strategy, generate further racial tensions. Such tensions put the development/preservation debate in particularly dichotomous terms, and tend to reinforce racial tensions and stereotypes.

Historic Preservation in New Orleans' French Quarter: Tolerance and Unresolved Racial Tensions

This chapter deals with the controversies which surround a minority's efforts to confront development pressures in a historic area—the French Quarter (Vieux Carré) in New Orleans. Their efforts seek, as well as preservation, the maintenance of a diverse residential base. They see this as challenged both by the standardizing tendencies generated by tourist development and through the displacement caused by increasing property values in general. However, the aims of this minority have to be seen in the context of the values of other minorities even when such generally accepted issues as historic preservation are involved. Controversies remain as to the preference that should be given to preservation over development.

Historic Preservation, Urban Revitalization: Controversies

Historic preservation has not always been an accepted theme (Gamson 1988, 220), around which groups organize. Now it is a respectable cause, the defense of which has entered the mainstream (Lofland 1996, 9). Opposition to such causes is usually muted and generates little openly expressed resistance. However, preservation activism can still be interpreted as oppositional to traditional concepts of development (Caufield 1994, xiv; Thomas 1994, 69) as typified in the theoretical constructions of growth machines (Logan and Molotch 1987) and developmental regimes (Stone 1993). For this reason, groups defending preservation appear in opposition to economic and political interests promoting their vision of economic development.

In New Orleans' French Quarter, groups and individuals defending preservation, despite their affluence and dominantly white membership, see themselves as an under-represented minority confronting a dominant discourse favoring development.

At the same time, the oppositional character of this 'minority' has to be seen in the context of their defense of certain forms of capital. This occurs without those involved being fully aware that they are seeking to maximize their specific profits (Bourdieu 1993, 76). As such, there is a defence of determined values about the way the world should be, always in some measure reflecting the social class origins (Barthel 1996, 3) of activists. Thus, establishment of historic areas' identity is "likely to reflect the perceptions and interests of the powerful and well-established" (Thomas 1994, 71). Given these circumstances, the defence of preservation has to be seen in the context of the values of other 'minorities.'

In New Orleans the black population is a minority in the French Quarter but is a majority in Orleans Parish¹ as a whole. The racial composition of the City Council reflects this dominance as all but one of the representatives is/are black, as is the Mayor. These groups represent a continuum in the priority given to tourist development. There is no significant difference between policies of black and white political administrations as far as tourist development is concerned. The present administration does, however, promote a discourse supportive of policies which generate opportunities for the less affluent black community and in turn receive its ample popular support. Such policies can be seen in the context of a city increasingly dependent on tourism as a source of economic growth (Brooks and Young 1993, 268) and employment opportunities.

The French Quarter is an essential part of this promotion of New Orleans as a tourist and

convention center. Along with the Warehouse District (a former industrial area being converted to residential, cultural and tourist activities) and the CBD, it is the site of major investments. This includes most recently the construction of an aquarium, extension of the convention center, a new stadium alongside the Superdome, and in November 1999 the opening of the huge Harrah's casino, only one block from the French Quarter. Such development has placed considerable pressures on the Quarter because of the scale of adjacent development (Brooks and Young 1993, 254), the rapid increase in the number of tourists, and the threat to its diverse residential and commercial base.

The development discourse legitimates decisions that do not give priority to preservation interests. Decisions appearing to promote tourist (and other forms of economic development) frequently alienate the white minority favoring preservation, particularly of the historic residential areas in the city. The idea that the mainly white groups, aligned to the preservation ideal, are treated like a minority—although obviously not an unprivileged one—is reinforced. They portray themselves as facing a black majority with different values in relation to the relative importance of preservation and development. Conflicts remain unresolved but cannot be seen in dichotomous terms of a classic struggle between classes or between an underprivileged minority confronting an all powerful majority (or a majority facing an all powerful minority).

To continue with the racial aspects, historic preservation is often associated with processes of urban renovation, described variously as gentrification, the back-to the-city movement, or urban revitalization. Frequently, the process is portrayed as causing expulsion of poor and minority people. No sooner was this type of urban revitalization identified that concern was expressed for the way existing residents were progressively displaced by newcomers who

had the economic resources necessary to buy, restore and maintain historical areas. Black residents were often the victims (Spain 1980, 39), reducing diversity and creating new forms of segregation (Laska & Spain 1980b, 132 - in New Orleans; Tournier 1980, 174 - in Charleston; Gale 1980, 96 - in Washington).

In New Orleans' French Quarter census figures for the last fifty years show clearly a process of displacement. For instance, the proportion of black population in the Quarter declined from almost 20 percent in 1940, to just under 5 percent in 1990. In absolute terms, these figures show an even more dramatic decrease. By 1990 only 190 black residents lived there while in 1940 there were 2,179. Such a decline is part of the substantial loss of residential population as a whole in the Quarter. Population has decreased from around eleven thousand to two thousand in the same period. So black residents appear disproportionately affected by the changes that have occurred in the Quarter. As a point of reference, in this period, the proportion of black population in the Orleans Parish has increased from around 30 percent to more than 60 percent of a total population of almost half a million (CUPA 1992 A-10, see also Wilkenson 1985). Similarly, Quarter residents now come from much higher income groups (CUPA 1992, A-15)

Nonetheless, the regeneration process is interpreted as benefitting the resurgence of US inner cities. Shirley Laska and Daphne Spain (1980a, xiii) point specifically to the increased tax base and the greater trust in the viability of inner cities. Similarly, when these are areas of architectural and historic significance, the effect of securing their preservation is an additional positive argument. Such aims have been achieved in the French Quarter. Thus, the substantial decrease in racial diversity has to be seen in the context of the Quarter's change from the 'giant slum' of the 1920s and 30s. Today, it is a preserved mixed development area attractive to upper

income residents and a unique historic area magnet to millions of tourists.²

The benefits and costs of such processes of revitalization can be seen, then, from different points of view. Whatever interpretation is given, what is clear is the role of French Quarter preservationists in the conservation of this unique area. As one resident puts it, “some of these people really probably saved the place . . . it would have been long gone if these preservationists in the 20s and 30s hadn’t turned things round.”³ Walter Gallas (1996) substantiates this positive interpretation of the vital role of neighborhood activists in the preservation of the Quarter.⁴

Thus, the implicit negative interpretation of gentrification is modified by the need to balance positive and negative aspects of the preservation of historic areas and to consider the important role played by preservationists. Jon Caufield (1994), following a social movement interpretation of neighborhood revitalization,⁵ suggests the need to place middle class resettlement in historical context that takes into account the opposition to certain groups’ growth policies. This is one justification for the social movement interpretation (Klandermans & Tarrow 1988). For Caufield, for instance, “middle-class settlement of older inner-city neighborhoods has, in part, constituted an urban social movement.” For although incrustated in the logic of property capital it represents “an immanent critique of key facets of contemporary city-building” (xiv). Such findings are supported in the French Quarter where it is also sustained that alternative lifestyle development, and the protection of the safe space for certain minorities, particularly the gay community, justifies this social movement interpretation (see Foley 1999).

Despite these positive interpretations, the question of race and the values involved in

preservation movements cannot be totally evaded. The following discussion will point to the potentially conflicting visions that show the need for us all to look at structures of meaning. As Patsy Healey (1997, 93) points out, we should look at the “‘deep structures’ of power embedded in our ways of thinking and organizing.” Not doing so “could have the effect of unwittingly reinforcing the power relations and driving forces that are constraining the invention of new practice.” So when diversity marks a population, it becomes necessary to consider how different racial, ethnic or lifestyle groups perceive historic preservation so that what is being preserved in not just a reminder of a history of prejudice and segregation. It points, also, to the need to consider a more ample context for the practice of historic preservation.

The French Quarter: A Celebration of Diversity

The French Quarter consists of a 97-block area hugged by the Mississippi’s curving crescent. In an intensely mixed-use area, of diverse character, tourist, commercial and residential activities exist in close proximity. Such diversity is embedded in a physical structure, equally varied, fashioned by builders during more than two hundred years.⁶ Despite this, residential activity still dominates.⁷ Alongside the diversions, especially associated with world-renowned Bourbon Street, people live permanently. Houses and a large variety of commerce mix in a fascinating jumble. One part of a street will house sex and tee-shirt shops while nearby are antique shops, art galleries and designer clothing stores for the most refined tastes. Neighbors and visitors can appreciate this mixture of spaces and activities, allowing pedestrian access to most of the needed daily services as well as to extraordinary diversions satisfying disparate

passions. Meanwhile, behind the commerce people live around their patios. Above, balconies give constant access to a passing world. The scale is modest and domestic. A variety of architectural styles, an abundance of detail, buildings, patios and public spaces, coalesce into an appealing whole.

It becomes easy to see why those connected to the Quarter credit the physical structure as being exceptionally important in making the area what it is today. Within this shell successive generations of activities and people have shaped a fascinating place. Space, people and activities join inextricably and form a past that cannot be separated from a consciousness of the present. Quarterites are imbued with a history that comfortingly places them in relation to the ordinary and extraordinary personalities who have been living there. So neighbors are conscious of this connection between the physical structure, activities and the existence of diverse lifestyles. They understand that preservation of the historic district demands attention to all these aspects and insist that preservation be not just ‘bricks and mortar’ but include the maintenance of population diversity. Diversity of population, in terms of occupational groups, races, ethnicities and lifestyles, is understood by many to be one of the principal features which makes the Quarter unique. As one resident, Andrew, expresses it, “people do whatever they do as long as it doesn’t affect the public well-being if you will.” Tolerance of lifestyles is part of a concern for the maintenance of diverse occupational groups. He adds, “it’s really the only place that I have ever found were, you know, bank presidents live next to bar tenders.” For Danny such tolerance includes racial tolerance. “It is just a place where everyone is welcome, regardless of who they are, what their race, and what their economic status.”

This mixture of activities and people brings certain problems, however it instills the Quarter with a very special character. It makes it not just a static museum-like place, but, as one resident calls it, “a living, breathing, historical district.” She points out, “We don’t open up at nine o’clock in the morning and put on costumes and then close at five o’clock in the afternoon, and go home. We live here.” With these sentiments she represents the view that this is ‘home’ and it is a home that will be defended. It is a home with permanent occupiers, where people live who are constantly active in the neighborhood. It contrasts with “most historical districts in other cities” where, “it’s a couple of store front buildings . . . maybe they even got a couple of people working during the day in a blacksmith shop, or making baskets . . . Mostly for show.” Resulting from such sentiments, the battle cry for Quarterites becomes: “This is a living, breathing neighborhood.” So their aim is to oppose what Michael Thomas (1994, 65) calls a process where certain cities become museums, functioning only as tourist attractions. Neighbors value their role as defenders of this vitally active neighborhood and, merely by living there, can be considered as upholding its residential tradition.

The Neighborhood Organizations

It is in this context that the struggle for preservation of the French Quarter has been organized. For this the Vieux Carré Property Owners Association was formally consolidated in 1938 (Gallas 1996), although activism can be traced back earlier. Lyle Saxon (1995, 273), writer and chronicler of the Quarter, illustrates this and the fact that historic preservation was considered, at best, a pursuit of cranks. He writes of an early preservation effort in which he was involved. “At the corner of Royal and St. Louis streets . . . the old St. Louis Hotel . . . was torn

down in 1917 . . . It should have been preserved, for it was a beautiful building. I remember how a group of us tried to save it from destruction and how we were laughed at for our pains.”

Present day activists assign much credit for the consolidation of a preservation group to such individuals.⁸ They legitimized preservation as a valid concern at a time when it was not a commonly accepted value. As one put it, these were the “people who saved the butt of the city by protecting this neighborhood years ago.” Similarly, it was pressure from such individuals that persuaded the State to establish institutional oversight in 1925. The first Vieux Carré Commission was consolidated in New Orleans to oversee development in its jurisdiction. They established a new Vieux Carré Commission in 1937 with enabling legislation that allowed it to control modification to existing buildings and new construction.

The early preservation group had been consolidated, under its 1976 name, as the Vieux Carré Property Owners, Residents and Associates. It has been a leading voluntary organization that represents preservation interests in the French Quarter. It has a membership of about 550, its own office, a halftime official and regularly defends the preservation ideal. Today, a number of other groups have formed concerned with particular issues, for instance Crime Watches, or with specific spacial areas within the Quarter: Jackson Square or the Upper Quarter.⁹

Nonetheless development pressures have continued throughout this century. An early commentator on the French Quarter, Lyle Saxon complained that for the present Agriculture and Fisheries Building on the 400 block of Chartres “a whole square of delightful old houses was destroyed” (Saxon 1995, 271). The redevelopment was a symbol to local boosters who saw it as an example that would encourage development.¹⁰ Not even in the postwar years did development pressures cease. One informant, remembers that around the end of the decade of the 50s, the

city's then mayor, Morrison, still supported his Safety and Permits' director who stated that "they should bulldoze the whole Quarter."

Despite the increasing acceptance of the preservation doctrine, in the 1960's preservation groups fought a major battle against a proposed elevated freeway that would have passed between the French Quarter and the Mississippi River. Richard Baumbach and William Borah (1981) called it the "Second Battle of New Orleans." It "became more than just a conflict between environmentalists and downtown developers over a freeway: it was a clash of values, a clash in attitudes, a difference in priorities and perspectives about the character of the city" (3). This struggle became a 'cause celebre' and drew to it many organizations, including those at a national level. When the proposal was withdrawn in 1969, the US Secretary of Transportation justified the decision as the beginning of a new tradition of preserving the nation's heritage (Baumbach and Borah 1981, xiii). Preservationists considered it a landmark victory.

Thus groups and individuals defending preservation have been an essential part of the way the Quarter has been transformed from the 'giant slum' of earlier times. What has changed is the concern not just for preservation of the physical structure but for the quality of life issues and the recognition that much of the Quarter's character is derived from its diversity both of population and activities. In recent times it is through pressures such as street demonstrations that regulations banning large buses have been introduced. Similarly, activists demanding stop signs to control traffic speeds have been successful in getting them erected. Now an important preoccupation for these organizations is the decline of permanent population in the Quarter, seen as derived from the uncontrolled proliferation of commercial uses. Confronting these processes becomes more difficult because they become embroiled in legal proceedings that require

professional legal representation (as will be seen later when discussing the problems of enforcement of city ordinances).

At the same time, the very success of the historic preservation of the physical structure brings increasing commercial pressures from tourist activities. These pressures represent a threat to both the diversity of activities and population. A 'delicate balance' is achieved that is innately unstable. Not surprisingly, balance between commercial and residential activities is not easy to maintain and differences exist as to where the fulcrum should be.

Divergent Visions and Unresolved Racial Tensions

The priority given to different world views becomes clearer in the analysis of conversations with a group of denizens. The segregated past still affects the perception of Quarter by the citywide black majority population, and it is not a place where they feel comfortable living. In the treatment of certain issues close to the hearts of Quarterites, such as noise and crime, more racial tensions are generated. Even the very discourse of development is given racial connotations.

The Black Community in the Quarter

We have already described the displacement of black population. Residents are aware of this and, because there are few black residents, they tend to 'stand out' and be known. Informants speak of their black neighbors with affection, worried they will be displaced, converting the Quarter into a truly white residential ghetto. Fear exists both of losing diversity

and the political consequences of being seen as a ‘white elite enclave.’

Some residents point to the important role played by the black population, particularly black Creole artisans, in the construction of the Quarter. Not only were they important as artisans but they also owned a substantial number of properties. One neighborhood activist speaks of doing research and finding many buildings owned by free persons of color. She found it “was unbelievable. I am talking about a very high percentage of the whole Quarter, even the elite homes.” So, for her, black people “did have their niche here.”

White residents feel no disharmony between black and white people living in the Quarter. This coexistence is illustrated by one home owner who tells how the presence of black people is not thought of as a threat when he speaks of the clients of a black gay bar: “it’s just a loud crowd . . . I don’t mind that in as much as I feel like if people are out on the sidewalk, they’re keeping it safe, and it’s not a criminal crowd at all.” In fact, their presence is felt a symbol of security. However, he does make it clear that it is not his “social crowd.” Such a comment intimates that, generally, there still exists a clear division between racial groups in their social activities. The separation between ‘us’ and ‘them’ remains.

A woman who owns property in the Quarter also wants to see the positive side and states that “despite the politicians there is a great deal of goodwill between the races, don’t you think?” However, she can note the hostility that does exist toward her: “Well I do think there are young blacks who have a lot of hostility and I see this mostly in the grocery store, where they are really are not as nice as they should be.” Clearly tensions exist and the established white population may see young black men, who they do not recognize from the neighborhood, as a potential threat. Resentment builds up on both sides. As groups we depend upon our individual

characteristics and resent the fact that we too are essentialized as racists at the same time that we essentialize the other. Our defense against racism is our individual tolerance. She goes on: “And I think that sometimes I may be perceived by these people to be someone, because of my age, that I am a racist, which is something I have never been at all. I sent my children to public schools in the Mississippi delta that are primarily black.” She adds that, “White people live here by choice and if they hated black people, they wouldn’t be here.” Such comments show that racism is seen in terms only of outright hatred and not in the way the dominant culture maintains predominance in determining what are acceptable values. She finishes saying “it’s sort of absurd for black people to see me as an enemy.” Remembering that we have responsibilities both as a class, and as individuals, is difficult.

Another theme is the need to educate black people so that they will come to appreciate the same things as the white population, such as the historic value of preservation of the French Quarter. Education sounds often like the desire to instill values without reflexion on their cultural bias. This is an extreme interpretation, but when remarks are extracted from their context they can be interpreted this way. For instance, people speak of “educating black people about their history and the history of the city,” or meeting Tremé¹¹ people “over the children musicians and dancers . . . To give them an education and all, so that they cannot be the banned from hell.”

Nonetheless, open expressions of racism are rarely observed.¹² Respondents prefer to speak of other people’s racism. For some ‘real antipathy’ still exists. One spoke of a neighborhood effort to improve the local McDonough School’s garden and those that did not want to participate because “it was for black kids,” but she does say that they are in a minority now.

As mentioned, the organized community worries that they could be seen as racist and elitist by a black political establishment and the public overall. For David, “There are race and class issues for this, because to own is very expensive, as well as the maintenance, so for lower income families it is impossible. Even for renting it is not affordable for such families. This means that at times the French Quarter is seen as a white enclave of elitists who are trying to keep out the riffraff. Some of this is true. It is true that it is elitist.”

Such a reputation could be the reason why black people, even those with the resources, do not choose the Quarter as a place to live. Some of this could be because the Quarter was once out of bounds for black people as an area of diversion. A black resident tells this story. “I was born in Tremé. . . In that period [I calculate in the late 60s¹³], people who were considered colored, nonwhites, weren’t actually allowed in the Quarter, because everything was segregated. So even growing up here, the Quarter for me, was not user-friendly until the days of desegregation . . . I was barred legally from going in there unless I said I was white and not a person of color. For that one reason, the Quarter was always off bounds to me. Even until today there are many African-Americans who see Rampart Street as the Mason-Dixon Line.”¹⁴ He points to the existing legacy of this segregation. “You are always going to experience discrimination, even like recently, you know I was in a [French Quarter gay] bar one night, and you see black people coming in at the door and they were asking for three or four ID’s so I went over to the manager and said; ‘you’ve got the wrong person on the door. Where is this idiot from?’ Well he had been trained to do that at another straight bar up the street. And so the manager called him on the side, in front of me, and said, ‘we don’t do that down here.’ And he

apologized.” So there is an increased awareness that discrimination does exist and on these occasions something is done about it.¹⁵

The reference to Tremé and the existence of a ‘Mason Dixon line’ can be further examined through its relationship to the Quarter. Consciousness of physical separateness and racial segregation persists. Initially, a Quarter activist points to the fact that relations between the neighborhood groups are ‘shaky.’ Within Tremé there are competing interests: those following conventional processes of upgrading historic structures are seen as “gentrifiers who try to push out the local residents.” The informant adds, “There’s a sort of racial divide that hasn’t been bridged very well at all.”

In fact, Quarterites feel a strong boundary between the Quarter and Tremé, and the physical boundary does exist. As a Tremé resident explains. “Armstrong Park¹⁶ you know is sort of a physical barrier.” She goes on to point out, however, that many people from Tremé work service industry jobs in the Quarter. Similarly, she points out, “my kids went to school in the Quarter at McDonough 15, so we’ve spent a lot of time there. So, even then we walked to school from Tremé to the French Quarter . . . So, my neighborhood includes Tremé and the French Quarter.” Imagining that Quarter residents could say the same is difficult.

A black informant explains that these are the reasons why not many black people live in the Quarter. He thinks it is “both a combination of the psychology of growing up and the rules of segregation and leaving those things behind you and wanting to experience a new life.” Besides this he does not see the Quarter as ‘user-friendly’ for black people, making it a “situation where every day is a challenge because the only things that white people from here see in the Quarter

are many bad things like the kids tap dancing on the street, all the problems.” It seems that New Orleans’ black population, too, shares the general idea that the Quarter is a ‘bad’ place. Another black resident links this to the other issues discussed. “I don’t know, I think it’s looked at more or less as being a place where a . . . where a lot of the rich white people live or a place that is not real, it’s not a place that has played an important role for black people here in the city. Most of them think that is a place of bad people.”

In synthesis the French Quarter is defended by neighborhood groups and individuals both for its historical physical structure and for its diversity of population. Tolerance is displayed toward most groups and open racism is not frequent. Underlying this tolerance is a tension caused by the existence of physical and cultural barriers and controversy over whose values should dominate. This becomes particularly notable when linked to a commonly felt resentment toward the black political establishment and its assumed indifference to the concerns of the mainly white and relatively affluent population who live in the Quarter.

Crime: Stricter Enforcement a Threat to Diversity?

Events such as the O.J.Simpson trial have made many white people aware of the profound schisms that exist between different racial groups with relation to the confidence in the US justice system. Black people have constantly complained of harassment by the police, but it is only recently that leading US political figures, such as President Clinton and Vice-President Gore, have denounced publicly the widespread existence of racial profiling in relation to those stopped by police. In this context, crime is an issue that moves profound emotions and is bursting with racial tensions. It is not surprising that some of these emerge in an inner-city area

like the French Quarter.

For Quarterites, crime is considered an issue which threatens the essential pedestrian scale and diversity of the Quarter. The street is their arena and its safety contributes to the liberty of movement that they so value. In the fight against crime, neighbors could be seen as confronting disembedding mechanisms that alienate them from their ‘place’ and threaten their ontological security (Giddens 1990, 1991). The struggle for the right to the free use of public space can be interpreted as a liberating phenomenon. It represents a defense of the street for unplanned social interaction with diverse groups of people. This has parallels with feminist organizations calls to “Take Back the Night” (see Taylor & Whittier 1995, 178).¹⁷ Nonetheless, in the examination of this issue, the oppositional nature of the neighborhood preservation movements is less easy to sustain. Calls for zero tolerance have an implicit repressive character and may discriminate against certain groups such as blacks and street people, so furthering racial and social tensions. Furthermore, in the treatment of crime, the antagonisms between city government and the residents are further elaborated and expand the tensions implicit in the enforcement of zero tolerance. Residents frequently claim that the police turn a blind eye to infractions, especially by tourists (‘out-of-towners’), related to public sex, exposure of breasts and genitals, drunkenness and public urination.

Criticism of the police and the city—seeds of resentment and racial tension

Residents and business people in the Quarter are frequently critical of the effectiveness of the police,¹⁸ aligned with antipathy toward the local politicians in power. Lack of confidence is part of the dissatisfaction with City Government overall. One principal criticism comes from the

perception that the police do not enforce zero tolerance in the Quarter. One resident expresses it this way: “I want the Chief of Police to take a look and say zero tolerance. That should apply everywhere. He can't have the nerve to say that you cannot apply it in the French Quarter. It's like saying that my home has to be less than others.” Others assign this lack of enforcement on a policy that sees the Quarter as a ‘free for all zone’ The city is blamed and some feel it represents a conflict between black and white interests: “it’s just a very short sighted policy on behalf of the city, and I think a lot of it is probably racially motivated.” A clearer connection is established to the political and racial aspects of the problem, and an explicit criticism of the Mayor.

Contradictions, then, are generated between the self-identified tolerance of Quarterites and the call for zero tolerance, which is customarily repressive in nature.

Perhaps the clearest criticism of the police, and of Mayor Morial, can be seen in relation to the December 1, 1996, “Pizza Kitchen” (a Quarter restaurant near to the French Market) killings and the reaction of neighbors to that event. There, one morning the assassination of three restaurant workers, well known by Quarter residents, unleashed a flood of distress and sympathy. The senselessness of three untimely deaths outraged neighbors. Seemingly spontaneously they organized a vigil in Jackson Square with a march to the restaurant where the deaths occurred to leave flowers. Flowers and messages filled the pavement outside for many months after the event. This led to the organization of a march on City Hall to express the frustration of residents at the continuing occurrence of such senseless deaths. The problem was that in New Orleans the black population suffers this phenomenon daily. It was not until three white people were killed that any protest was organized. So it was a white march, protesting for the deaths of whites,

killed by black young men.

The Mayor interpreted the protest as racially motivated and refused to understand that it contained an expression of revulsion and concern. Instead of meeting the marchers another countermarch was organized, causing a great deal of resentment and compounding the animosity and distrust residents feel for the Mayor. It was felt the response of the Mayor was unfair. One respondent was particularly resentful saying, “just because, for example the French Quarter decides to march on City Hall because three whites . . . have been shot it doesn’t mean that it is racially based.” Another more conciliatory person put the situation into perspective, saying that Mayor Morial “made that a racial thing, it was not a racial thing but it was when he got through with it. He could have come out smelling like a rose on that deal but instead he dropped a great big pile on him. That was very sad, sad for him and sad for us, sad for the city.”

In the calls for stricter police enforcement, especially the policy of zero tolerance, while aiding the liberty of movement of many, may result in resentment for those who do not appear to fit into the dominant view of who belongs in the French Quarter. It affects also those who do not conform to the socially acceptable image (*habitus*). A fertile ground for racial tensions is created especially when built upon longstanding perceptions that racial profiling persists.¹⁹ At the same time, the city is criticized, by some, as not wishing to step up police enforcement because it could affect tourist development. This is a further source of racial tensions.

Noise or Music?

Noise, both from music clubs and street musicians, is considered an issue that threatens the residential quality of the Quarter. More than crime, it is a factor that eventually results

intolerable, from which certain people can find no escape. Frequently, neighbors speak of persons who have been driven out by noise. It threatens the stability of the permanent residential population and is a further disembedding mechanism that alienates them from their ‘place.’

Again, as seen in relation to crime, the struggle against invasive noise can be interpreted as a tendency to exclusion when it affects street musicians of class and racial origins different from the majority of the residents. For some, music is an essential part of the ambiance of the Quarter. Seeking its control or elimination represents for them a neglect of the Quarter’s cultural history, especially of the black jazz tradition. Some, less sympathetic to street musicians, particularly those

who are directly affected by it, want them excluded from the Quarter. Again, the city administration is blamed, this time for not enforcing noise controls because they are felt to be deleterious for tourist development.

Racial tensions in relation to street musicians

From the perspective of a black woman, active in Quarter affairs, both race and class issues are involved in the discussion about noise. For her, “it ends up being a class confrontation as well [as a race issue], you know. People in general feel that the French Quarter has sort of upper class, and then you have the people that work who are considered to be lower class and unfortunately, in spite of the way we feel about musicians and the historical treasure, they’re also sort of part of the lower class. And, artists sort of fall into that category too. So you had this kind of confrontation, you know between people.”

Without wishing to argue for any essentialist characteristics associated with race²⁰ it is interesting to refer to an interchange in a February 1997 meeting to discuss changes in the zoning ordinance that show a different appreciation of noise as a problem:

White woman: “they are all turning into bars.”

Black man: “but this is New Orleans not Slidell. Perhaps this isn't the place for you . . . you want to put the whole city to adjust to you.”

Black woman: “if you worry so much about the noise why don't you put up double glazing. I don't mind the noise. It doesn't worry me. I can sleep through it. Lots of musicians need bars for work.”

White representative of bars: “there are 300 black bars and only a handful have music zoning. They don't have anywhere to play. There are a lot of musicians here and we want to keep them. They feel very disenfranchised. The music culture of this city is important, you're overlooking a very important segment of the population.”

Black man: “and entertainment pays more taxes.”

A black woman from Treme gave me her perception of music that displays a more diverse situation in the black community.

Now, in Tremé, music is really an integral part of the community. I mean I'm awakened many, many days by my neighbors. I mean, I live around the corner from this musical family, and the little kids, they started out before they had instruments, playing anything that they could find, you know . . . that's an important part of the musical heritage of the city to preserve. Now, I have teenagers, and they're not as much into history and culture, so the music that these little kids, that I liked to hear in the mornings, my daughters . . . they don't want to hear the brass band in the morning. I don't mind, you know . . . there's always a second line, and you open your windows . . . I enjoy the passings, of the band, and the second line. So, it's an integral part of the community now. We have a lot of people in Tremé who have the same adverse feeling about music all the time, anytime, people want to play. Also, people that have chosen to live in Tremé, but that's just not a part of the historical heritage that they want to accept and keep perpetuating. But, it's the

birthplace of a lot of musical traditions, so, as somebody that's just interested in the history and culture of the city, that's really important for me, you know. I think it's important for the city. I think it's important as a part of our artistic contributions to the world, you know.

This long extract points to the fact that noise can be a problem for the black community but cultural elements need to be assessed. Again racism is a question not just of discriminating against black people as individuals but of not understanding that different groups may have differing interpretations of what is acceptable and what is not. It can revolve around conflicts about whose value system should dominate in decision making. For this woman at stake is a pride

in a whole history of her people's culture and tampering with its freedom of expression could be seen as an affront. Music culture is essential to the projection of New Orleans and must be an eternal source of self-esteem for those involved in its evolution.

Neighbors feel that the city turns a blind eye because street musicians are seen also as a tourist attraction and their protection is also part of the economic and development discourse. When asked why he thought the musicians were largely left uncontrolled one person very involved with the noise issue replied that, "They [the City] see that activity [street performances] as being part of the street life of the Quarter and an attraction to the tourists." Additionally, the elected political establishment is sympathetic to the performers²¹ this being an alternative source of employment for local minority musicians and performers. Another noise activist puts the City clearly on the side of the performers. He claims a "hidden agenda" with class and racial elements involved. A racial factor is reintroduced and demonstrates the distrust the Quarter's residents

feel about the motives of black politicians.

So again, as with crime, deep animosities are aroused over whose values should prevail and these are presented frequently in racial terms. In the struggle for a peaceful environment for permanent homes, neighbors promote a confrontation that makes them appear insensitive to the cultural, and economic, values of musicians of a race and class different from theirs.

A Black Political Establishment Favoring Development?

Constantly repeated is the perception that tourist development is the prime objective in the Quarter. Residents hold responsible a political establishment, siding with ‘greedy’ commercial interests. Together, these interests give preponderance to a development vision thought damaging to the long term preservation of the Quarter as a living neighborhood (and as a tourist attraction). The ‘golden goose’ will be killed and the Quarter will become a ‘Disneyworld’ This vision fomenting tourist development can be related to the characteristics of growth machines or development regimes especially regarding the expansion of the tax base and the concern for generating jobs (references if needed). In the residents opinion, the political establishment’s agenda, at this time personified in Mayor Morial, and a predominantly black political representation in city government, function to placate the black population with short-term job generation. In the city’s pursuance of this objective, denizens feel marginalized by the city administration. Despite this Quarterites are sensitive to the political dilemmas implicit in this social reality. Most are antipathetic to racial confrontation but the preservation ideal of mainly white affluent residents, and the black population’s need of decent jobs, creates a fertile context for racial tensions.

A white elite marginalized? “Everything is sort of done behind our backs.”

So, though considered by some as a white elite, residents feel marginalized by city government. Some see this as a symptom of black/white confrontation. The common sentiment is that the City does not inform neighbors. It does not care for them. Decisions are taken as though purposefully at the margin of their concerns. Residents complain that only by their constant monitoring can they know what is going on. “Everything is sort of done behind our backs, behind the public’s back.” This translates into feeling of being ‘terrified’ and ‘frightened,’ and of being ‘closed in’ or ‘run out.’ The City ignores “hotel expansion, businesses, bars coming in,” and “instead of realizing it is against the law, looks upon it as an irreversible tendency and want to simply rezone everything commercial.” Victor speaks of a “free-for-all” which will “kill the heart of the Quarter” seeing it only as “something to exploit.” City officials foment this vision. “Many of them tend to think ‘if you don’t like it, get out.’” Feelings of being excluded from decision making and of basic distrust between politicians and residents translates into a neighborhood animosity toward City politicians and their administration.

Residents resent the Quarter being treated like any other area in the City. They label it the “jewel in the crown” of the city, the principal attraction to the millions of tourists that come to New Orleans. For them it deserves special treatment. One vents this feeling. “Well, politicians and government, politics say a lot and do very little for this area. We have more than ten million people that come in our village, in our neighborhood, every single year. Then Marc Morial says; ‘Oh well, the French Quarter is no more important than any other place in the City.’ To a degree

that's true but not to a very large degree because people don't come to New Orleans to go to Uptown or to Gertown or to any of those places.” Another resident is more understanding of the difficulties of asking for special attention in a majority black city. She realizes that other parts of the city have problems which are felt by their residents to be equally—if not more—important. What makes the Quarter distinct is its economic and cultural value. “If you don't preserve this quality, you are going to kill the goose. Now that is a simple as that.”

Neighbors, however, feel this as a deliberate policy of neglect. They say that the Mayor and the city administration feel animosity toward Quarter residents. Andrew considers that city government perceives the residents as an elite, demanding privileges not granted to other neighborhoods. What is more, it is seen as a white elite. Politicians manipulate the electorate on the principle of ‘divide and rule,’ characterizing Quarterites as rich and white. Meanwhile, it is a white elite that sees itself as unsupported by other white elites in the city. As such, it is a minority with no political clout. It feels it neither has a wider support through solidarity with similar class groups nor does it have voting power to influence political action. Furthermore, it does not have the economic power to compete with commercial and business interests for political support.

Cultural differences. “They don't understand.”

Residents complain that the City administration just does not understand the problems of the Quarter. They feel they come from a different culture and have not taken the effort to understand the particular circumstances attached to living in, and defending the neighborhood as an essential part of the preservation of the Quarter. Residents say that politicians “just don't get

it, they don't understand about the French Quarter." They do not care if the Quarter becomes a caricature of itself. They do not realize that tourists come to New Orleans because it is 'real.' The City administration lets it happen through 'ignorance.' "They are not enlightened as to what this really is and how we should measure this treasure that we have."

This lack of understanding is related to race, and the perception that historic preservation is a white elite concern. The political aspect of the black leaders not being concerned with preservation is linked to what is seen as a general indifference of the black population for the preservation of the built environment. A preservation activist explains that this can be linked to the historical association with slavery. "I think the black governmental leadership . . . they don't understand . . . Sometimes they look at it in terms of the slavery issue and they think a lot of this was built by slave labor, which is not really true. I think a lot of this was built by free men of color who were artisans, craftsmen. And, but even it was built by slaves should be immaterial." Then he refers to what "they" should do. "They should take a pride in knowing that their ancestors did build this and did have the talent and the skills to do it." And that "we" need to educate "those people on that level." Reflecting, he admits that this is not necessarily a racial problem either because many white people, too, do not value the historic significance of the Quarter. Again we return to the theme of 'us' educating 'them.'

Beryl understands this dilemma. "If you are a black person, and you are poor and you need a job to feed your children, saving buildings is not a priority, and I can understand this." Her comments are tinged with an implicit criticism of the black community. She continues; "one of the problems is that we are in a majority black city now and the black community does not see the French Quarter as any part of theirs, although there are blacks who live here, it is not viewed

with any great pride except as a place to make money for the black community.”

Some people are more explicit in their disdain for the capacity of both leaders and constituents in the black community. One says “there is a great mass of people here that think they cannot make any changes or they rely upon their ministers to tell them, or their politicians to tell them what to do, they are not going to take any independent civil action.” She goes on, “the constituency don’t have opinions. If the constituency can’t read the newspaper, if the constituents are like blocked from having an education by the deplorable level of New Orleans Parish schools then they are not going to have opinions except ones fed to them by their so-called leaders who are only elected because their skin color is the right shade. I mean that is exactly what one has when one has a thoughtless constituency, and not bad people, but people who are not capable of having any kind of defining intellect.”

The previous comments show that many residents recognize cultural differences between the black and white communities. Some seem to see this lack of valuation of the historical importance of the Quarter, however, as indicating a general lack of education. Implicit is the assumption that not appreciating historic preservation shows ignorance and cultural deprivation.

There is an awareness that the city does have many serious problems and politicians must attend to them. One political activist expresses this dilemma clearly. He says it is “difficult in a City where you have got people killing one another. I’d leave a meeting at housing development where I’d see a thirteen-year-old child sprawled across the cement, and then I would go into a meeting with twelve little old white ladies talking about the different color of the paint on a building. It’s mind boggling.” Consequently, as one resident puts it, “preservation has always

had to fight being seen as white and rich.” He feels that the neighborhood groups are not racist but he thinks there may be that perception and that “may be one of the things that hurts us politically.” This is not an easy issue for Quarter organizations because, as another person points out, in a majority black city “if you go in and say you’re lilly white so where’s your black membership, but there are no blacks living here. That’s not good, especially for getting anything done, I can guarantee you.” So there is an understanding of political priorities.

Neighborhood organizations try to be inclusive of racial diversity but there are elements of tokenism that can make it uncomfortable for black minority membership especially when there is a clear animosity toward the black political establishment, by many of the white majority. This is particularly noticeable with relation to perceptions of Mayor Morial. The words of David put such feelings clearly into relief. “A lot of people here say that the politicians have got the blacks [their political support] and that what Morial really wants is to get rid of the whites.” Mayor Morial carries the brunt of the animosity. At one neighborhood group meeting, they started to joke about the Mayor and spoke of painting an effigy of Marc Morial on the pavement and having a “pissing contest” to see who could “piss” on it from the balcony of the apartments. The clear animosity toward Morial expressed by many people was surprising. Why is this so? Is it just because he is from a different class or a different race?

Queenie goes some way toward illustrating possible answers to these questions and explains it by the entrenched attitudes instilled in people in their upbringing that does not fully allow them to accept a black leader. She implies that she feels this is overt racism. To overcome this “it takes a conscious effort to change yourself and see things that you don’t like about

yourself and figure out a way to change them. A lot of people haven't had to face that." This leads many people brought up in the South that have a "buffer zone of lots of money think that they can just say things about..Marc's a big racist, and it's a black thing." What they do not see, she says, "He is black, maybe not very dark, but he is black and he can't have the black people feeling like he's all for the white people either."

Nonetheless, not everybody believes in this black/white conflict and see it more as a political ploy to set group against group. In fact both black and white politicians have protected commercial interests in the Quarter and both have, at times, been indifferent to preservation interests. As Wendy caustically puts it, "all they did was change the color. We have put different people at the trough that is all."

The black population, too, are including the preservation of historic buildings in their struggle for recognition of their cultural history. In a neighborhood meeting, Beverly Kilbourne of the New Orleans Preservation Resource Center made a presentation in which she spoke of the increasing recognition of the black past in historic built structures. She said there was a need to get African/Americans to understand preservation making it an important aspect of community revitalization, an aid to fight crime, a means of generating employment, etc. She referred, also, to a national association of African/American preservationists. An African/American Preservation Council²² has been formed in the city. It is part of a general trend for the black community to consider architecture with the other cultural elements of black culture, such as music, food, dancing and style. They see it as an important part of strengthening communities.

The Gay Community: Celebrating Diversity

It is interesting to contrast the more equivocal attitudes toward the values of the black minority/majority with attitudes toward another minority: the gay community. Here a uniform tolerance is observable. Overall, respondents show some reservations with the more commercial and extreme gay behaviors—but no prejudice is expressed openly. We observed that respondents were not self-conscious about discussing this subject, their corporal expression did not show any distaste, and often they brought the subject up spontaneously in conversation.

They generally recognize the gay presence in the Quarter as important. It has become a center for gay culture along with concentrations of gay population and social life in other major cities. Lester traces gay identification with the Quarter from the 1920s seeing its growth as similar to other early gay concentrations such as the North East area of San Francisco, Greenwich Village and West Hollywood. Based upon this historical development local gay men frequently call it “our home base.” It has been the “spiritual home” for the development of the gay community,²³ and is most definitely the center of its (commercial) social scene. Gay people feel little prejudice against them there. Although the Quarter may only be one of many options for gay people to live, gay cultural institutions concentrate there (Knopp 1989, 1).

The non gay respondents talk openly about gay people and are universally tolerant. Edmund White, already in 1983, spoke of his local informant’s views that in the Quarter “homosexuality is quite free and accepted even by straights. Gay tourism is undeniably big business (237).” Today, people like Beryl fully accept this sector of the population and in her usual expressive way states that, “I am probably the least anti-gay person that anybody could find, without being gay themselves . . . The only people’s sexuality that’s of concern, was my husband’s.” In fact, it is felt that people who live in the Quarter must be prepared to tolerate

gays. Victor speaks of people knowing that this is a “major gay haven,” and it would be unrealistic to come with the attitude that “well I don’t want to have anything to do with the gay community. Because they know that they’re moving into one of the most concentrated areas of it.”

The bohemian ‘live and let live’ attitude that we had seen generally in relation to diversity, extends to the gay community, and attitudes vary from those who simply see it as none of their business and consider the behavior of others as a private concern, to those who recognize the role gay people have played in the preservation of the Quarter and the value of the gay community to the area. For many it is just not an issue. For others the contact with the gay community has been enriching for their own lives.

Thus, some residents appreciate how the presence of the gay community somehow has a positive effect on their own lives by introducing them to an unknown diversity or giving them access to different points of view, different experiences. Roberta, who came to the Quarter many years ago, expresses something of her acknowledgment of gay people despite a previous ignorance: “I did not know when I came to New Orleans that there were such people as gay people. It was not long before I began to think that there might be, and then concluded that there were. That was a different time, the early fifties. They were nice people, and they had the right to their lives as well.”

This section shows that the recognizable efforts of gay people to preserve the Quarter, establish gay social activities and businesses (not necessarily gay-orientated), together with the existence of a population which is generally tolerant or learns to be tolerant, results in the formation of a place where gay lifestyles can be developed relatively free from the acid gaze of

intolerance and from the real dangers of the violence of homophobia. Lawrence Knopp (1989) has indicated that “The French Quarter’s long tradition as a relatively open center of gay culture afforded New Orleans gays a much greater opportunity to create integrated gay identities and lifestyles than was available in most other U.S. cities” (65, footnote 2). Various authors have pointed to the importance of certain urban areas as important for the growth of gay identity.²⁴ As Ken says, they are places where “you can recognize that you’re not the only one.” The importance of a sympathetic environment is very important to gay self-identity. Stanley Siegel & Ed Lowe, Jr. (1994), referring to the negative role models often perceived by males who recognize themselves as gay, say that: “Contact with the gay subculture usually provides him with the kind of information he needs about homosexuality to challenge the image he receives and has received from the straight world, and he may begin to see more acceptable possibilities for his future self in homosexual personalities that he finds acceptable” (100). In such circumstances, places like the French Quarter can be especially important for development of gay identities, as well as being enriching for non-gay identities.

Nonetheless, there are people who feel there are problems that arise from the commercialization of gay lifestyles and the behavior of some individuals is offensive. Ken speaks, for example of the fact that “we have reached our peak as far as the commercialism of the gay community, both in terms of the numbers of people and in terms of what we can accommodate.” He feels that there are certain problems in areas where there are concentrations of gay bars, exacerbated in the time of festivities which attract gay people from many parts of the country. A neighbor in this area speaks of the “big gay weekends like Gay Pride, Southern Decadence” when the “people are out in Bourbon, into the street, and will not even let cars pass

sometimes. People are fornicating on the street. It is so outrageous.”

Final Comments

The preceding arguments indicate that the activism of a minority promoting historic preservation of a diverse environment can be interpreted in different ways. Certainly the idea that this is a marginalized minority confronting a dominant majority is clearly inaccurate. The very definition of what constitutes a minority becomes a complex issue. What is even more difficult is to decide if such minorities, because of their status as minorities, have some intrinsic right to be protected and supported in their struggles. Here no clear conclusions can be made because this minority does defend diversity and, as such, counterposes standardized tourist development. In some ways it appears as a model for the heterogeneity of peoples promised by late modernity. At the same time, minorities defend value systems that negatively interpret some alternative world views and forms of behavior.

Given the delicate nature of the history of racism in the US, the situation becomes particularly complex when the minority that defends preservation is one that has traditionally wielded political, ideological and economic power. In this context, preservation of historic structures can be associated with preservation of previously hegemonic white cultural values. While very little open racism is expressed, an underlying current of paternalism suggests that few white people question the underlying assumptions of their culture, that is to say, the white cultural norms are adopted in relation to evaluations about what is acceptable. The defense of such norms represents an attempt to maintain those forms of capital, particularly social and

symbolic capital, associated with historic preservation activism. Additionally, clear physical barriers appear between the Quarter and adjacent black neighborhoods which make the Quarter unattractive as a place for black people to live, creating real, or perceived, prejudice against them. Finally, the issue is tied to politics and the fact that local politics is dominated by black politicians who could represent groups different to those of the predominantly white residents of the Quarter.

As we have seen before, residents are mindful to display tolerant attitudes toward the black population, but tensions surface in relation to events such as the Pizza Kitchen march. Racial issues are clearly present in the crime and noise issues. The development discourse is also linked to race. In a city with serious economic and social problems which have a disproportionate effect on the black population, the development discourse centered upon generating jobs predominates.

When these seemingly different visions are placed in dichotomous and oppositional terms, as some has seen as more of a political proselytism than reality, opposing preservation for a white elite minority to development and jobs, racial antagonisms are maintained on all sides. Achieving compromise in such a situation is difficult, though the majority do not support explicitly such stereotypical reasoning (and in fact are opposed to it). Such questioning is not carried out. More often the reasoning is based upon moral judgements that businesses and politicians are motivated by greed and short-term interests. It is a moral problem where both sides have internalized the negative stereotypes assigned to the opposing sides. Each side abuses the other.

Such antagonisms cannot be eluded, but understood and confronted. The preservation

discourse cannot be accepted a priori as superior. Like all interventions in the city, it must be subjected to an ample discursive process that takes into account all interested parties. Inevitably basic conflicts persist that cannot be resolved. The central conflict of short-term versus long-term interests is a constantly repeated theme typified by the discussion of what should take priority; job creation/economic growth or preservation? The opposition between these two discourses is not necessarily antagonistic, but often seems so in the public and private discourses of the actors involved. The question must be asked: Is there anything intrinsically valuable about preservation? We think there is, based on the need not to destroy historical structures about whose relevance future generations should have the right to decide. But did the youth of Berlin think that when they tore down the Berlin Wall, or when Lenin was tumbled from the middle of public squares all across Eastern Europe? Buildings and physical artifacts do have profound symbolism for people and are intimately associated with dominant discourses. The French Quarter and its denizens symbolize both exclusion and inclusion. There is great potential constructed on the tolerance of denizens for making the Quarter inclusive. In that way it could justifiably be preserved as a proud symbol of diverse cultures open to them all. On the other hand, if exclusionary tendencies become dominant, the Quarter will come to symbolize inequality and its preservation could be questioned.

Endnotes

1. New Orleans is located in Orleans Parish but the urban area spreads over a number of other parishes of contiguous development such as Jefferson, St. Bernard and St. Charles. These adjacent parishes have accommodated a great deal of the suburban development generated, in part, by the outward movement of residents previously located in the Orleans Parish. Consequently, the population of Orleans Parish was in 1990, almost identical to the population in 1940 (almost half a million) although it rose to 628,000 in 1960.
2. Many figures are presented, and exact numbers of visitors is not recorded, but estimates put the figures between 12 and 15 million tourists per year.
3. The principal sources of information are conversations (Kvale 1966) with thirty-three persons (residents, business people and officials). Data was also obtained from participant observation of in events concerning the Quarter during a period spanning 1997 and 1998. The quotations here are taken from this data. Pseudonymous are used.
4. Although he does point to the role of other city-wide organizations.
5. As delineated by Bruce London - 1980, 87 - as a potentially fruitful form of analyzing the process.
6. New Orleans was destroyed by fire on March 21, 1788 leaving very few buildings standing so that "the French Quarter of today, is that Spanish city which rose from the ashes of the French New Orleans" (Saxon 1988, 149).
7. A 1992 report claimed that 78% of units in the Quarter were residential (CUPA 1992, 3-2)
8. At the above 60th anniversary of the Vieux Carré Commission, the panel of preservation activists was generally of the opinion that although preservation is generally given lip-service it is still difficult to achieve especially when it enters into conflict with economic considerations.
9. It should be pointed out that VCPORA is not the only organization in the French Quarter. Reacting to the conflicts, other organizations have been established, that represent particular physical areas or interests in the Vieux Carré. As an introduction, this description, given by an activist, explains something of the main groups in the Quarter. "The biggest organization, for instance, is the Vieux Carré Residents and Property Owners and Associates, it includes residents and businesses. The Friends of Jackson Square is small . . . most of the members come from around Jackson Square . . . We have another group, fairly recently formed, which is the French Quarter Citizens for Preservation of Residential Quality. There is the St. Peter's Street group and then you have various business organizations." While creating a greater dynamism considerable conflicts have developed regarding the priorities which should be pursued by the neighborhood movements.

10. Comments presented on June 11, 1998 at the 60th anniversary meeting of the VCPORA by John Magill, curator of the New Orleans' Historic Collection .

11. Treme is what is considered the first black urbanization in the United States. It is adjacent to the French Quarter, only separated by a four lane local distribution road, North Rampart Street. It is still a mainly black residential area but despite its privileged location has not been renovated like the French Quarter although pockets of "gentrification" do exist, mainly generated by whites.

12. In a meeting to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the VCPORA a member of the audience made some comments using a racist vocabulary. The rest of the people at the meeting became extremely uncomfortable and did their best to stop her from continuing. There were at this time no black people present so the embarrassment was limited.

13. Ken says that "even as late as that 73 or something like that. Even though laws were passed in the 60s they were not complied with. It took some time for these things to work themselves through."

14. The boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland established in the late 18th century and regarded as separating North from South.

15. An informant told me that I had a far too 'rosy' picture of this situation and that there is considerable discrimination against black people who dress in a certain more casual way and tend to be younger. Many black people have told me of the constant discrimination to which they are subject in public places, mainly undetectable to white observers.

16. Armstrong Park is part of the Treme neighborhood and in fact part of it was demolished to make way for it. This created a resentment that has not been forgotten to this day. Nonetheless, it is a potential facility for both neighborhoods. It is, though, often considered unsafe, is fenced, so allowing limited access, and is closed at night. So it is a strong barrier to pedestrian circulation.

17. Such defense of the street as a safe space at all times is of course important for all minority groups who may be subject to harassment because of their difference.

18. Some criticism has been tempered by the recent reorganization of the New Orleans Police Department, under Police Chief Pennington. Previously, the Police Department had a deplorable reputation for corruption. A resident says how she now trusts the police department, whereas she says, "I didn't trust the previous one because even if the police were there, I didn't trust them." Thus, generally, there is an acceptance that things have improved

19. It should be pointed out that such profiling not only affect blacks but also young people in general particularly street people, the so-called grungies.

20. Janet L. Smith (1997, 78) points to the dangers of fixing racial identity when employing racial classifications to examine social issues.

21. Norman also says there links between the musicians groups and Mayor. "They used to be represented by the Mayor and his brother. There are personal relationships there."

22. The African American Heritage Committee was formed in May 1997 as an extension of the activities of the Preservation Resource Center. For example Frank Browning (1996), who points to gayness as a particularly urban phenomena, where there is the possibility of creating, "Gay community" "gay ghetto" "gay space", "the place gay people have carved out for their survival" (2)

23. Lester also points out the need to distinguish between gay men and lesbians because it is much less a center for women. He indicates that there are no lesbian bars in the French Quarter rather the two which exist are located in the Marigny. He again feels that younger lesbians tend to live dispersed for the city. Frances concurs with this opinion saying that, "There doesn't seem to me to be very many lesbian couples, in the French Quarter. I think they tend to have less money than gay men and so it is a less attractive area for them to live in." This corresponds to the other reports on the location of lesbian women where they were found to favor more dispersed locations, and less expensive property because of generally lower incomes than gay men. See for instance, Valentine (1995) who found that the lesbian community tends to locate in a cluster of homes interspersed with heterosexual homes - without alternative institutions that cater specifically for the lesbians (99). However, other authors while agreeing that lesbians do have lower incomes find that there is evidence of some concentration in "counter culture areas." (Adler & Brenner 1992, 24, 29).

24. For example Frank Browning (1996) points to gayness as a particularly urban phenomena where there is a possibility of creating a "Gay community," "Gay ghetto," or "Gay space," the space gay people have carved out for their survival (2).

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