UNDERSTANDING PLACE AFTER KATRINA:

PREDATORY PLANNING AND CULTURAL RESISTANCE IN NEW ORLEANS TREMÉ NEIGHBORHOOD

By

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Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
In partial fulfillment of requirements for the Degree of
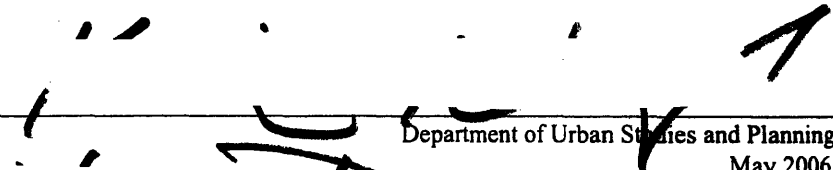
Master in City Planning

at the

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
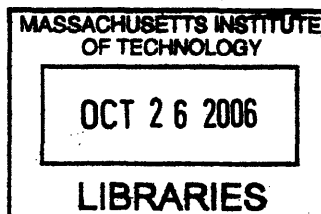
June 2006

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ABSTRACT

The fate of New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina is uncertain. The rebuilding of the Gulf Coast presents the nation with the most massive redevelopment project in a single location ever. Reminiscent of the Urban Renewal changes between the late 1940s and early 1970s. Urban Renewal redevelopment projects were touted as being beneficial to the city by providing easier access to downtown and the construction of new housing. However, hindsight and scholarship coupled with the experience of thousands of residents, has taught us that the lasting effects of urban renewal included displacement of residents, disruption of community ties, and extensive psychological traumas associated with these shocks. In New Orleans, for example, the heart of the black business district along Claiborne Avenue in the Tremé neighborhood, one of the oldest African American neighborhoods in the country, was cleared for the construction of the I-10 Expressway. The Storyville section, arguably the birthplace of jazz, was broken apart to make room for the Iberville Housing Projects. The fight against Armstrong Park continued for several decades, eventually ending in defeat with the displacement of over 400 families.

Now, Hurricane Katrina has uprooted hundreds of low-income residents, many of whom were victims of Urban Renewal, others of whom are the children of those victims, raised on their stories. The neighborhood's history of cultural resistance is rooted in the public commons, once again under threat in the redevelopment process. New Orleans residents and organizers are scrambling for a foothold in the process despite widespread trauma and limited capacity. Planners have an opportunity to rethink their role in the context of synergistic damage accumulation, widespread trauma, and a new level of predatory planning. The time ripe to examine the lessons of the past and explore the implications they may have for the current rebuilding process in post-Katrina New Orleans.

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Acknowledgements:

Background

New Orleans' fate, and that of its communities, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina is uncertain. The rebuilding of the Gulf Coast presents the nation with the most massive redevelopment project since the Urban Renewal period between the late 1940s and early 1970s. In examining major action periods of urban planning history, such as Post Civil War Reconstruction, Urban Renewal of the 1960s, common patterns begin to emerge. Planning as a field is emerging from a long legacy of shaping cities to sustain white supremacy and control of resources. With major shifts in economy, reshuffling of power has resulted in massive redevelopment and reshaping of cities. These times of flux are characterized by upsurges in community organizing and social movement building in response, resistance to large-scale changes affecting neighborhoods. Today, the power shift is met by a diminished local government and community capacity, stagnation in the process of relief and support funds to affected regions, and virtually no voice for residents in the planning process. This post-Katrina planning crisis is easily the greatest challenge ever undertaken by planners and community builders. The time is ripe to examine what lessons we have learned from Urban Renewal and how those lessons will be applied to the current process.

Although Urban Renewal redevelopment projects were touted as being good for the city by providing easier access to downtown and the construction of new housing, scholarship coupled with the experience of thousands of residents, has taught us that among the lasting effects of urban renewal were the displacement of residents, the disruption of community ties, and psychological traumas associated with these shocks. In New Orleans, for example, the heart of the black business district along Claiborne Avenue in the Tremé neighborhood, one of the oldest African American neighborhoods in the country, was cleared for the construction of the I-10 Expressway. The Storyville section, arguably the birthplace of jazz, was broken apart to make room for the Iberville Housing Projects. The fight against Armstrong Park continued for several decades, eventually ending in defeat with the displacement of over 400 families.

Now, Hurricane Katrina has uprooted hundreds of low-income residents, many of whom were victims of Urban Renewal, others of whom are the children of those victims, raised on their stories. New Orleans residents and organizers are scrambling for a foothold in the process despite widespread trauma and limited capacity. As planners, policymakers, and appointed commissions set up the rules for the planning process, low-income African American residents are again at risk for disruptive and traumatic outcomes.

One thing that's certain through Reconstruction, Urban Renewal, and the current Post-Katrina

redevelopment: what happens in Tremé affects the national agenda. In examining its particular history in search of a contextual understanding of the current challenges, what lessons can we harvest that can be applied to current and future work?

This paper will trace these historical tensions between urban planning and neighborhood organizing during these major periods of change. New Orleans, and specifically the Tremé neighborhood, is a place that has continuously been at the forefront of this negotiation posing the question of what is the relationship between planners and organizers, between cultural geographers and cultural resistance movements? In some ways unique unto its self, in other ways a clear articulation of larger patterns, Tremé's evolution makes for excellent case study but, "local history must be much more than a vehicle for "local color" or a handy geographic limitation: it should be a constructive analytic tool (Fairclough 1995, xix)." Through this research, I seek to understand the significance Tremé's history and development holds for the current redevelopment process. What is important for planners engaged in community planning processes to pay attention to in this place? What does it mean to plan in a place where people have sustained ongoing trauma and continuously severed trust with public officials over time? What infrastructure is needed to genuinely engage people in a planning process that best serves their needs? How can the onslaught of outside interests and investment be managed and potential accountability structures be enacted to best serve local residents and low-income communities of color in times of shifting reinvestment? What is the importance of the commons in providing community stability? What mechanisms can we create to value and preserve anchoring neighborhood places and institutions under pressures to privatize and sell off public space and institutions? What lessons from the past should influence the future of this neighborhood and its longtime residents?

To this end, Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature on urban renewal, redevelopment history, planning's history of racial inequality, community protest traditions and responses to improve communities. In Chapter 3, I examine the case of Tremé, from early history through the urban renewal-era projects that affected Tremé. I explore the impact of those projects and the shifts that occurred in the following decade. I look at what struggles the neighborhood faced before Katrina. Then in Chapter 4, I take you through the storm and what has happened in the neighborhood in the 9 months since Katrina. Finally, in chapter 5, I conclude by reviewing major mechanisms of predatory planning, a new phenomenon that is crystallizing in this time and place. By analyzing the historical trajectory of the neighborhood and juxtaposing it with a rapid appraisal on the ground in the months after Katrina, lessons begin to emerge that offer insight from the perspective of residents with implications for planners seeking to implement a vision for rebuilding.

Research Methods

This study, which was conducted between October 2005 and March 2006, sought to understand the historical impact of planning on the Tremé, during Urban Renewal and in the current post-Katrina context. I chose a particular blend of qualitative methods that would provide the most complete understanding, given the research scope and time, of the lived experience of residents, particularly longtime black residents who experienced both past and current waves of redevelopment. Qualitative research tends to be descriptive, using the natural setting as a direct source of data. Qualitative researchers develop grounded theory by analyzing their data using inductive reasoning, acting from the bottom up to determine their results (Glaser 1967).

A growing school of thought in qualitative research argues one cannot understand particular ways of life solely in the local context; one must analyze them in the context of regional or even global political and economic relations. Looking at culture as embedded in macro-constructions of a global social order and understanding the impact of world systems on local and global communities requires an interdisciplinary approach to fieldwork. Proponents of these ideas include Akhil Gupta, George Marcus, and James Clifford. I made use of Situation Analysis, a specific process that lays out four clear stages, each with a different methodology to reach its proposed objective. The stages use a myriad of qualitative techniques to increase understanding of a complex state of affairs – a situation – in the context of the larger narrative of which it is apart – embedded context – in order to understand the complexity of relationships and circumstances that are driving a series of events (Fullilove, 2005). The phases of Situational Analysis seemed to best capture the steps I wanted to undergo to fully understand the place, the people, the context, the history and culture and the impact of planning decisions of past and present. Because I wanted to incorporate a historical and power analysis perspective into understanding the place, I found this technique covered the bases of what I needed to explore.

The following are the four steps of Situation Analysis and what I did in each stage to collect and analyze data.

1. Master the story of the play

In this stage, I collected historical data, both from primary and secondary sources. I gathered quantitative, demographic, and economic statistics on the neighborhood and on the city as a whole. I conducted a literature review on urban renewal, federal policies, and urbanization in the South. I reviewed examples of Urban Renewal in other cities, including Root Shock (2000) and Saunders and Shackleford's Death of Black Culture in Charlottesville, VA (1998). I looked at critiques of urban renewal and the change in planning theory that emerged in response from

Krumholz, Goodman, Hartman, and Mohl.

To learn about the Tremé neighborhood, I collected maps and photographs, read local newspaper articles, and tried to learn more about the culture of the people and place. I gathered census data and examined trends and changes in the neighborhood. I tracked down planning documents, such as the 1976 CADT Study which was the result of a community-led planning process to address the impacts of the I-10 on Tremé and surrounding neighborhoods. Creole New Orleans by Arnold Hirsch and Joseph Logson (1992) provided an excellent background on the role of Creoles in the evolution of New Orleans. New Orleans Architecture: Volume VI by Christovich and Toledano (1980) provided a lot of detail on early architecture and development in the Tremé. I drew from published accounts of the areas history and made use of dissertations from local Universities that were focused on the Tremé neighborhood. Michael Crutcher (2001) did an extensive analysis of Tremé history and the development of Armstrong Park. Daniel Samuels (2002) looked at the impact of I-10 on North Claiborne Avenue.

2. Listen to what characters have to say

Next, I identified key stakeholders and informants. Using a snowball sampling technique, I tapped my own relationships and gathered referrals from grassroots organizing networks to reach people. I outlined a series of learning objectives and questions to ask in semi-structured interviews. I wanted to understand the impact of urban renewal and the ways redevelopment efforts post-Katrina were connected to the history of planning and power. I looked for people who could tell the story of what happened during urban renewal, what the neighborhood was like before and after, and what the process of change was as experienced by residents. I also targeted leaders who were involved in current organizing, planning or community building that could speak to both past and current challenges. In the end, more than half of the sample could speak to both urban renewal era and more current redevelopment challenges.

I spoke to over 50 stakeholders around the city who provided important pieces of the play. This larger sample included community organizers, resident families, teachers and university professors, business owners, city council members, and neighborhood planners, local and State officials, representatives from HUD and FEMA, writers, reporters, students, and revolutionaries. I was able to link into several social networks that were focused in the 6th and 7th Wards. I visited Mama D's camp on N. Dorgenois Street and met the neighbors and volunteers who have been gathering there. I spent time with Rick Mathieu's in Treme and met the friends and neighbors that come and go in his network. Michael D. Woods, an author doing research for a book and collecting footage for a film on the aftermath of Katrina, drove me around for several days and

introduced me to the people and places he had been observing and investigating for months. I sat with the vigil crowd at St. Augustine's Church in the days of resistance to the church's closing and spoke with them.. The interviews that followed were naturalistic and mainly unstructured but centered on several key themes. I asked people to talk about the rebuilding process, what challenges they were facing. This usually led to descriptions of their family and their property contenting with post-Katrina situation. I asked about their perception of the planning process and, whenever possible, what the role historical context played in the current situation.

I spent more time with ten core informants who, through more semi-structured interviews coupled with ethnographic study, provided more comprehensive data on the day-to-day specifics of the post-Katrina landscape as it relates to Tremé.   By this I mean I interviewed them on their history, perspective and experience in semi-structured interviews. Some of the key questions asked were: What do you remember about the neighborhood before the I-10 went in? Before Armstrong Park was built? What changes have you seen as a result of urban renewal project? How did people react/respond to the redevelopment projects? What do you think we can learn from the past that can inform decisions being made now? What are the current challenges facing the neighborhood and longtime residents? How has Katrina affected or changed those challenges? What do you hope for the future of the Treme? What do you want people to know or remember about your neighborhood? In your view, what have been the top five most critical moments in Treme history?

But I also remained with them, sometimes for several days or weeks, accompanying them on daily activities and participating in their rituals. I met their friends and families and was a participant observer in these interactions. Since many of them were more non-institutional agents not directly affiliated with any organization, I would attend planning or community meetings and report back to them on what I was observing in these more formal conversations. They would offer feedback and further insight to enhance what I was learning about the planning process and what the implications were for real people on the ground. This smaller sample of key informants included mostly long time black neighborhood residents, elders, organizers, church and cultural workers, most of which had family rooted in the Tremé for more than one generation. Most of these residents were people who did not evacuate or leave during the flood. For this reason, they offer a specific perspective and represent a type of resident, oftentimes ones who are very rooted and connected to the place with explicit self-determination. To balance this perspective, I also interviewed younger organizers and white residents, some younger and more recently settled, involved in neighborhood associations and more formal organizational structures. They offered a different perspective on the situation within the city and the

neighborhood. My findings are grounded in the perspectives—the lived experience—of the people I spoke to, the things they told me, my observations from time spent with them in their space. Their reality is a challenging one, and it offers many lessons for planners, especially those who are interested in planning for and with communities under situations of great turmoil.

In an effort to understand the implications of the planning process beyond the boardroom of decision-making or planning charrette, I collected data with a focus on unofficial agents and residents affected by the planning and development process, rather than developers, investors, or government planning officials who tend to drive the process. To compensate, I studied the planning documents coming out of the Commissions to better understand their vision and perspective. I also heard dissenting voices in heated neighborhood planning meetings. I also used the literature and newspaper coverage to supplement the limited focus with alternative perspectives. In the end, the study focuses on the informal agents and their experience.

Over time, clear themes emerged of trauma, violations of rights and trust, marginalization, overwhelmed with information, bureaucracy, corruption, and lack of clarity in the defined rules of the planning and rebuilding process. As these themes emerged, I dug deeper in these areas for background data, historical context, and specific evidence. City planners and policymakers seeking a rational truth about people, neighborhoods and planning processes may find an irrational path in this research. Given the large disjuncture between the experience of these key informants and those of more official capacity positions, there is little communication between the two separate realities. My research does not offer ample opportunity for those outside of my key informants' point of view to assert their position. The fact is the reality my informants occupy does not lend itself easily to a clear policy dialogue and direct recommendations for planning. The research is my attempt to reach a place often neglected by mainstream planners and offer recommendations and insights to those outside this reality.

My interviews took place in a range of locations from offices to restaurants and bars, doorsteps, outside of a church or inside a residence. A lot of interviews happened late in the evening, often over drinks or in a bar, coffee shop, or music hall. This was where a lot of business was conducted. It was also where people were able to unwind and talk about what they were experiencing, spending much of the day with phone calls, bureaucracy, meetings, and struggles to gain a foothold in rebuilding both personally and collectively. Whenever possible, I took notes during interviews and was also able to record (audio tape) some of the discussions if the interviewees agreed. The reasons for not taping all interviews were either that my interview requested this or indicated hesitation or that I decided that taping would add stress to the

interviewee.

3. Study the Stage set

Once in New Orleans, I resided in the area and walked the streets everyday, observing the Tremé at different times of day. I frequented businesses in the area and photographed the area with special attention to the lingering impacts of urban renewal and planning decisions. I was a regular at neighborhood and cultural events. I went to Sunday services at St. Augustine's Church, St. Peter Claver Church, participated in 2nd line parades , and witnessed the Mardi Gras Indians in action. I also attended a public meeting of the Mayor's Bring New Orleans Back Commission, a Neighborhood Planning Council meeting, and Downtown Neighborhood Initiative Association meeting. and others. I worked on a film being made on the history of the Tremé for two days. As I got to know people, I began to spend time with people, on their stoops, in their homes, talking about history, culture, family, politics, daily life and struggles. As time went on, I was able to draw from historical background and first hand observation to ask more pointed questions to my key informants. I kept detailed fieldnotes on my daily observations in this stage.

4. Watch the Action

In this stage, I triangulated the data to analyze the results and cross-check the validity of the findings. I was able to identify emerging themes and compare and contrast across the range of data.

Special Considerations

Research in a Post Disaster Context

Part of the rationale for using Situation Analysis is to understand the complexity of the situation. The unprecedented complexity of post-Katrina New Orleans affected nearly every aspect of my research. To begin with, several Universities and public facilities were closed leaving libraries and research collections in various stages of operation. Information from public officials was difficult to obtain due to closings, layoffs, and capacity challenges. I faced some initial difficulty in locating people who were displaced and affected by the storm. In the end, my social networks led me to each contact I had identified, and more. The people I did speak with, almost without exception, illustrated symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. People are overwhelmed with the trauma of losing their homes and their roots. Now they are being asked to face the future of rebuilding, which seems to many an overwhelming task. They were eager to tell the story of what happened to them during the storm. I heard countless accounts of rescue, loss, witnessing

of death and human desperation, resilience, and resourcefulness. The stories went beyond the scope of the immediate post-Katrina flood to include treatment from FEMA and other officials, relocations processes, search for family members, and the ongoing challenges of reassembling normalcy with very little governmental support. People wanted to talk about what was happening. Bearing witness as an outsider was one of the major roles I played in my relationship to the people and the place.

I was affected by a second hand trauma from my times of immersion. I was often overwhelmed by the enormity of what had occurred in terms of neglect for human life and injustices, which were the focus of much of the conversation. I began suffering from headaches, exhaustion, and a loss of a sense of time throughout the day.

The enormity of the situation in the Gulf Coast region is the forefront of every interaction. I made listening my main priority and allowed conversations to stray from the subject matter outlined in the learning objectives. I allowed myself to be taken on adventures with my key informants. A simple ride home frequently turned into a meandering tour, with stops at bars, businesses, and residences to meet friends. People usually took us to see the condition of their former home. I interpreted this as a routine activity in the wake of Katrina, sometimes prefaced by "have to check on things." But when we got there, we would just stand around and look, telling stories of survival and escape. A discussion of the history of planning often emerged through these interactions.

The idea that, "Katrina ain't nothing new," and "We been through hurricanes and injustices before," were frequent segues into conversations about the history of planning in this neighborhood.

Building Relationships

There were a lot of 'outsiders' on the ground in New Orleans post-Katrina, which added to the stress of local leaders and, in some cases, contributed to mistrust. In addition to many students, practitioners, and journalists who descended on the city, MIT was having an institutional presence during the time of my research. This had an affect on my work and my identity as a researcher in this environment. It also contributed to my understanding of the vast disjuncture between the access and capacity of my academic professors and student colleagues and those of my key informants. In my case, the boundaries between researcher and subject were often blurred. My participant action research was also laying down the groundwork for future work in solidarity with the people I was meeting. While this influenced the results, it also opened up access to places and conversations that were not shared with many outside researchers or

practitioners and led to discovery of additional findings I hadn't anticipated. I believe all of these tactics made my research stronger. The deeper I got into relationships, the more I understood the experience, prevalence and historical relevance of planning in New Orleans and, specifically, Tremé.

There were other clear dynamics of race, age, and gender at play as well. I talked to many elders and knew how to approach elders and 'request an audience.' Humility was a major part of my methodology both in the research and in my larger community work. I respected how I entered, the relationships between key informants and myself. Some of the references came from a longstanding relationship I have with the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond. The organization, headquartered in the Tremé, emerged out of the very struggle between local residents and urban renewal projects that informs the heart of my research. They conduct trainings around the country that help understand institutional racism as a system that affects all people and places. They look for structural solutions and support organizing as a means to overcome racial injustice. An evaluation by the Aspen Institute, found the People's Institute to be one of the few, trainings that look at structural racism and seek solutions through community organizing (Shapiro 2002).

The Research Team:

Some of the limitations I faced, being a young white woman from up North, doing academic research were addressed with the help of a team of colleagues with which to dialogue through the research project. My partnership with people such as Najma Naz'yat, a woman of color, a seasoned organizer, and an ally in the research project, provided access to places that I might not otherwise have been granted. Michael D. Woods also provided support in research methods and documentation. Each of us had our own piece of work, for me the planning thesis research, for Nazy'at outreach for the Southeast Social Forum and peer support to organizers, for Woods research for a book and film project on the aftermath of Katrina. At times we explored themes together as well as with others around us. The dialogue that resulted was rich and interdisciplinary and enhanced each of our projects' end results.

Chapter II:

Review of Urban Renewal History

Neighborhood Impact and Organized Response

Federal housing policy has historically upheld a systemic two-track program in shaping urban and suburban development. Both the New Deal and post-war urban renewal subsidized homeownership and suburbanization for whites and offered slum clearance and redevelopment for urban neighborhoods and predominantly poor communities of color. Slum clearance disproportionately affected African American neighborhoods, often further segregating by race and class, and dismantling social network in the process. Progressive models such as advocacy planning and equity planning emerged in reaction to destruction of urban neighborhoods for redevelopment. The growth machine concept emerged from studies of the unequal political economy of urban development in America, which saw cities as dominated by powerful business elites who pursued growth and profit (exchange value) at the expense of users of urban space. These periods of massive redevelopment are also met with a legacy of community organizing and response from affected local communities. Direct action and resistance grew in sophistication into a network of community organizations positioned to address local needs and improve neighborhoods. As community infrastructure grew in sophistication, it was met with private disinvestment and planned shrinkage from government programs.

The New Deal set into place a two-track policy system split along racial lines that is still evident in planning and policymaking today. The Housing Act of 1934 established the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) to improve housing conditions and standards and, later, it would become the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Act also developed redlining practices by regulated the targeting of certain areas of the city for different racial groups. Cooperation between banks, lending institutions, and real estate developers determined which areas minorities could secure mortgages and secured racial segregation across the board. The practice of redlining came with the creation of the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) in the Housing Act of 1934. An increase in FHA mortgage insurance and loans fueled postwar boom in housing construction and homeownership (Lang 2000, 295) for whites only. Exclusion from the GI Bill, FHA mortgages, and restrictive covenants virtually shut out African Americans out of postwar suburbanization. Katznelson's When Affirmative Action was White reveals how policy decisions during "Jim Crow's last hurrah of the 1930s and 1940s largely excluded

African Americans." He also points out how policy and analysis has not taken into account this inequality that came at the insistence of Southern Democrats in Congress and the complicity of other congressional colleagues (Katznelson 2005, x)

Federal urban renewal was launched under Housing Act of 1949, with the stated goal of improving housing for low-income Americans. It proposed tearing down areas that were determined blighted with government money, selling the land to private developers at greatly reduced prices, thus enabling them to erect affordable new housing. City officials loved the concept, since local government put up less than one-third of the cash. Real estate developers loved it also since they got development sites at far below market rates (Hanchett, 1998). From the outset, urban renewal had to contend with a conflicted mission. The Housing Act of 1949 declared the goal of, "decent housing for every American," but it destroyed the only housing affordable to some. (Lang 2000, Fullilove 2004)." It claimed to relieve housing shortages but its urban redevelopment policies led to more housing units being torn down then built (Lang, 2000), 293). African Americans were uprooted and displaced in a time of terrible segregation when they couldn't move freely in the rest of the city (Fullilove 2004, Saunders, 1998).

The legislation required residential use before and after, but rarely enforced construction after clearance or required replacement housing for low-income people displaced. In the end, the details tended to be interpreted by local authorities and shaped by growth interests (Fang, 2004, 288). The National Association of Real Estate board helped broaden the original goals and pressured Congress to pass a 1954 amendment to the Housing Act. This amendment permitted ten percent, a figure that was increased in again in 1959 and 1961, to be used for non-residential purposes, allowing housing to be torn down and replaced with public facilities such as a park or convention center (Hanchett 1998, 249). As the programs went on, local governments used it to rejuvenate downtown business districts and boost the tax base. The definition of 'blight' was expanded to include inappropriate land use. The ever-increasing proportion of urban renewal funds for nonresidential use also resulted from the realtor-develop-financer's lobbying for maximum flexibility in controlling and developing central city land (Fang 2004, 289)." Despite its supposed aim to improve housing for the poor, "no more than 20% of 3 billion of federal urban renewal funds have been earmarked for projects intended to improve the living accommodations of lower income families (Bellush 1967, 373)."

The effects of urban renewal were compounded by the Federal Highway Act of 1956, which was also known as the National Interstate and Defense Highway Act. The main goal of the highway construction was to get people in and out of center cities easily. The federal government agreed

to pay 90% of project costs for highway construction in cities across the nation, another example of federal support that benefited whites in suburbanization. The result was massive construction of freeways, dissecting cities, typical gutting and isolating poor, black, and Latino neighborhoods from the rest of the city. Commuters bypassed urban commercial districts, whites fled to suburbs and people of color, left with few options, moved into public housing in mass numbers.

"From 1949 to 1974 the Federal Urban Renewal Administration offered a cash bonanza that encouraged cities to undertake redevelopment on an unheard-of-scale (Hanchett 1998, 248-9)." This was a time that also changed the expectations of federal government to intervene and respond to urban problems on a local level. They helped support the development of local 'growth machines. Peter Marcuse said that with urban renewal, for the first time, government powers were clearly and openly placed at the service of private interests (Halpern, 1995, 224).

The growth machine concept put forth by Logan and Molotch (1987) views cities as being dominated by coalitions of elites whose business and professional interests are linked to local development and growth. These elites use public authority and private power as a means to stimulate economic development and thus enhance their own local business interests. The result is their transformation of cities into growth machines that further generate wealth for the elites. Within growth machine theory, the inherent conflict between the spaces of cities as enacted space, used by the people, and space as potential revenue generated is highlighted. Molotch refers to this tension as the use value vs. exchange rate of urban space. Economic growth became the underlying motivation for political alliances between local government and local enterprises (Fang, 2004, 287). Local elites used the urban renewal programs to acquire land as a commodity for accumulating wealth (Exchange value) at the expense of the local communities that view these sites as necessities for everyday life (Use value).

Critique of urban renewal came early from conservatives who objected to cost failures of big government, social engineering and even socialist policymaking. Martin Anderson's The Federal Bulldozer criticized the massive projects for the long time they took to implement, sometimes stretching out over decades and the mismanagement of funds that was frequently evident. Liberals supported federal involvement in addressing needs of the poor and they did not tend to trust private developers to provide high quality low-income housing without government assistance. Eventually, however, the liberals turned on the program, attacking its devastating effects on diversity and vibrancy of neighborhoods (Jacobs, Hartman, Gans, Fang 2004, 287). In 1961, Jane Jacobs wrote The Death and Life of Great American Cities, a critique of urban renewal, focusing on the importance of the social fabric of urban life, which was being destroyed

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by urban renewal's wholesale clearance and redevelopment.

Urban Renewal had a disproportionate impact on African Americans and poor communities of color. Anderson estimated between 1957 and 1961 almost two-thirds of persons displaced by urban renewal projects nation-wide were Black or Puerto Rican (Shipp 1997, 188). Dr. Mindy Fullilove researched the destruction of African American communities by Urban Renewal in her book Root Shock: How Tearing Up Cities is Bad for America and What we can do about it. She found that, "Between 1949 and 1973, this federal program, spearheaded by business and real estate interests, destroyed 1,600 African American neighborhoods in cities across the United States (Fullilove 2000)." Pittsburgh's Hill District, Roanoke and Charlottesville, VA are some of the most famous examples of prominent African American neighborhoods that were severed by urban renewal projects. As protest of the program grew the expression, "Urban renewal is Negro removal," was popularized.

A 1954 amendment included requirements for citizen participation, in part a response to the mounting opposition between neighborhood groups and development agencies. The law stated, in reference to participation, "And we mean by that not just a passive acceptance of what is being done, but the active utilization of local leadership and organizations which can profitably assist in the community's efforts (Thomas 1997)." However there was no specificity as to how this should occur or what participation would look like. In his examining of 12 cities' renewal projects, Teaford found some input in decision-making but in general African Americans had little or no effect on the implementation of redevelopment projects that razed their neighborhoods (Shipp 1997, 189). In Richmond, VA and Atlanta, GA protests to prevent redevelopment projects in black neighborhoods were unsuccessful (Mohl 2002).

"Urban Renewal became a powerful tool to clear land and convert it to whatever politicians deemed a 'better use (Mohl 2002, 249). Huge numbers of families displaced – 30,000 a year in 1961 and growing. In response, a growing resistance across cities is growing in strength. The parallel track of community organizing and social movement building is significant to understanding the larger implications of urban renewal. Community organizing, with a tradition of building localized mobilization to address specific local issues, responded to urban renewal. Social movement building, on the other hand, is understood to be more broad-based national or international change efforts (Stoecker 2001). Goffman recognizes community organizing can be the "backstage" work needed to build a public social movement (1959), developing leadership and staging a groundswell of resistance that can support a broader change agenda. Organizers have long talked about the process of building a constituency that can create a larger social

movement (People's Institute). Mollenkopf points out that neighborhood activism created a new political space' which allowed, and sometimes forced, urban politicians and administrators to interact with new contenders of power" (Fang 2004, 293). In Boston, organizers were able to resist highway construction and secure locally driven control of affordable housing development. Residents and organizers successfully resisted urban renewal redevelopment of the Mission District in San Francisco (Castells).

Local slum clearance of black neighborhoods came at a time when a national social movement was growing for civil rights, equality, and justice. These neighborhoods had infrastructure to support the national agenda: mixed neighborhoods, cultural traditions, spaces for socializing, celebrating, and accumulation of wealth and political power. On the one hand, the Civil Rights Movement builds a national movement for legal equality and voting rights. On the other, urban renewal steadily invaded black neighborhoods and tore them up in redevelopment projects, dislocating thousands of African Americans around the country, furthering segregation and disconnecting them from social networks, destabilizing political and cultural institutions. Fullilove describes the 'root shock' as the devastation to the human ecosystem caused by urban renewal, and links this phenomenon to disease and epidemics endangering the actual health of people who have been uprooted from their social networks. There are also clear implications from destabilizing a social or political movement. The violence that swept U.S. cities in 1968 riots was seen as many as an explosion of frustration in reaction to the reorganization of urban space, and continued injustices in urban policy. For many white Americans, rioting in the 1960s, gave an excuse to recategorize blacks as undeserving since they rioted in spite new programs and passage civil rights legislation (Halpern 1995, 120).

Urban renewal determined the formation of urban space and neighborhood struggles for the next several decades. In response to urban renewal, neighborhood organizers figured out how to build infrastructure that would support a voice in local development agendas.
As new poverty programs emerged, community organizations developed more formal structures as 501(c) 3 non-profits including community development corporations (CDCs). Many CDCs emerged out of protest traditions and community organizing but evolved into community development. They sought to work "within the system" to create infrastructure, funnel resources, and access a voice in decision-making. Similarly to civil rights movement seeking equity through legal system and winning equity legislation through the courts, community development seeks gains for local communities through the system of urban development. CDCs have had an incredible impact on neighborhoods and become quite sophisticated at funneling federal funds through CDBG funds, housing tax credits, building affordable housing, and, in some cases,

generating economic development.

This period of conflict also spawned a new generation of planners and planning theory. "In the 1960s, Model Cites program, the War on Poverty, and planners such as Davidoff, Gans, Hartman sought aid to minority, poor, and working class urban populations victimized by urban renewal and other policies (Krumholz 1997, 111)." Equity Planning emerged as a conscious attempt by some professional urban planners to devise and implement redistributive policies that move resources, political power, and participation towards low-income groups. Planners began to consider racial justice an important priority since deprivation and discrimination disproportionately affected low-income communities of color (Krumholz 1997, 109).

With the end of urban renewal came a new era of government sponsored redlining which evolved into Planned Shrinkage. As more affluent populations fled to the suburbs, they took the tax base with them. Private investment followed them and fiscal crisis set in urban centers that had lost much of their industrial job base. A process of essentially starving off neighborhoods deemed undesirable, Planned Shrinkage was implemented through a variety of policy mechanisms, including diminished public transit, cutbacks in police and fire protection, reduced housing assistance programs, and curtailed sanitation services (Fullilove 2005, 10)." Rod and Deborah Wallace look at the South Bronx, perhaps the clearest example of the devastating results of planned shrinkage in their book, A Plague on Your Houses. Here, the denial of services, including fire department, caused fire to ravage NYC neighborhoods. As disinvestment fell below the threshold required for sustainability, the results were "Disinvestment-induced human ecosystem collapse" (Fullilove 2005, 10). Their work found two alarming results:
1. Planned shrinkage had real affects on people's health: found increased infant mortality, addiction, HIV infection, violence, asthma and obesity
2. These affects were evident both in the affected area and in the surrounding areas, linking the fate of different neighborhoods as part of a whole system.

In response, planned shrinkage, CDCs tightened their neighborhood organizing work and looked to other mechanisms to improve their communities in the context of disinvestment and conservative government spending. They developed community economic development strategies and development of affordable housing. By 1986, CDCs produced more low-income housing than HUD (Halpern 1995, 140). Community development began to look at mixed-income, market driven strategies for neighborhood development. Their work required more professional and technical skill sets and their staff began to professionalize the field. Some argue that in the process, organizing has slowed and the professionalizing of community development

work forced CDCs to grow distant from their resident base, appearing more as extensions of government service providers than organizing groups. Stoecker points to the context surrounding CDCs that force them into dealmakers and service providers rather than agents of political change. "Community development corporations, or CDCs, while not for profit, must operate in cooperation with for profit actors--banks, real estate, insurance, contractors. And in contrast to building a community-based organization, community development is about building expert-based organizations that can manage the highly technical aspects of housing construction and management, and job and business development (Stoecker 2001)."

In A Brief History of Neo-Liberalism, David Harvey identifies the rise of neo-liberalism as a response to a dual crisis that emerged in the mid-1970s for the ruling class: one, capitalists faced a 'crisis of accumulation' – compared to the postwar boom, the capitalist system was growing stagnant and profits plummeting; and, secondly, a rising tide of workers' struggle and resistance in the 1960s and 1970s posed a threat to the political power of the ruling elite (Choonara 2006). He warns that it is not a monolithic historical change but plays out differently in different historical-geographical settings but it has contributed to uneven development on a global scale, growing social polarization, and the rise of new elites and the impoverishment of those on the bottom of society. Harvey also points to the upsurge of NGOs during the rise of neo-liberalism. Like CDCs on the global stage, NGOs mission and efficacy can vary greatly, but they can sometimes become a Trojan horse for privatization, because of their ability to step into the vacuum created by withdrawal of the state from social provision (Choonara 2006).

Urban neighborhoods that were the sites of resistance in the 1960s have been or are being sanitized through displacement of existing residents. In other words, "The original 'slum clearance' project of urban renewal is finally being completed a half-century later (Newman 2006, 57)." As cities became viable once again, we saw a shifting of whites back into urban centers, forcing another churning process for poor communities of color. HOPE VI represented another large federal program to address housing needs for low-income public housing residents in the 1990s. The idea of poverty deconcentration to reduce the problems of ghetto neighborhoods, creating more mixed-income neighborhoods and better opportunities for the poor, helped spark the HOPVE VI program. With varying results the program sought to transform aging public housing sites near downtowns into mixed-income market viable neighborhoods. But tension surfaced again between the social agenda of making better housing opportunities for the poor and economic agenda of making cities more economically viable. Problems arose when many more units were destroyed than rebuilt. Nationally HOPE VI led to a loss of 50,000 public housing units of much-needed housing. Efforts to remove criminal

elements from public housing projects resulted in strict re-entry guidelines and Section 8 vouchers helped displaced former residents relocate, at times further concentrating poverty by moving into existing, crowded and poor neighborhoods. In New Orleans, people are quick to reference the HOPE VI project of St. Thomas, where a strategically located public housing site, near the Garden District, was demolished to make way for a mixed-use, mixed income, New Urbanist plan of townhouses and stores, including a Wal-Mart. Bagert notes that despite the HOPE VI mission to deconcentrate poverty, the St. Thomas project deconcentrated poverty *in that area,* while actually increasing poverty concentration through the city as a whole, actually making it more dangerous and violent than it is already (Bagert 2002, 5). Building off growth machine theory, Bagert uses the term urban mercantilism to describe, "the active intervention of local governments in the economic, most frequently through tax incentives, direct subsidies to businesses, political support and land-use decisions, to promote those activities that contribute most to economic growth within their jurisdictions (Bagert 2002)." As evidence, Bagert analyzes the project's official HOPE VI application vs. the actual outcomes that occurred in St. Thomas. According to St. Thomas resident council documents, "The buildings were not the most critical things in St. Thomas, it was the land that was truly valuable and that the residents of St. Thomas most needed to defend (Bagert 2002).

The 1960s struggle for cultural identity, political empowerment and collective consumption were, by 2000, nearly defunct, or they have been transformed into defenses against gentrification or reformulated as development or service delivery (Newman, 2006, 45). Over time the celebration of difference, which defined the 1960s protest movements, has proven antithetical to the dynamics of urban capital investment, the exchange value denomination of urban neighborhoods, and the operational requirements of bureaucratized community development institutions (Newman 2006, 45).

Today, new levels of 21st Century complexity are applied to planning and economic growth machines that began developing in the 1970s and 1980s. In tracing the genealogy of predatory planning, you might find globalization, privatization, and neoliberalism as the parents, urban renewal and highway construction as the grandparents, a great uncle in the New Deal and the great-greats of Reconstruction, Jim Crow and legacy of slavery and colonialism. Today the offspring are coming closer together, playing out faster in compounded, genetic hybrid forms. In New Orleans, we can identify planned shrinkage strategies in the snail's place of relief and recovery funds to reach those affected by Hurricane Katrina and conversations about "shrinking the footprint" of the city. The federal government continues to deny basic services and relief funds, defending their actions with claims of efficiency. The effect is certainly a starving off of

resistance, forcing especially poor and black residents to give up efforts to return, elect political representatives, and reestablish a healthy, stable life for their families. At the same time, the globalized growth machine is gearing up for massive redevelopment, and investment is lining up; deals are being made and enormous profits being rendered off the rebuilding efforts. The agency of people to interact with and interrupt a system of this distance and complexity is yet to be determined. When your growth machine is rooted in multi-national corporations and global system of capitalism, racism, profit and growth, what is the new level of sophistication needed to develop a globalized social movement capable of response and intervention?

This research does not answer all the questions of how to build new social movements or the interplay between global and local politics. Instead, it is largely in conversation with organizers and resident leaders about their perceptions of planning as a historical legacy and current damage accumulation. This historical context and the voice of key informants is used to better understand the broader nexus of issues the neighborhood and its residents are undergoing in the aftermath of Katrina. The case demonstrates the role of trauma in shaping perception in communities and what is means to plan in a place that has such severed trust, corruption, and broken systems on all levels. The theme of connection between the neighborhood, culture, and organized resistance is staged on the public commons in the neighborhood's history. Following the historical trajectory of this theme has presented cultural resistance as a form of community building, a spatial process in which the, "neighborhood becomes a central hinge on which a city's ability to maintain participation in a global political economy (Newman 2006, 50)." This speaks to the role of the commons in generating the staging ground for healthy resistance through cultural production and social interaction. While the full understanding of cultural resistance as a community building process is beyond the scope of this research, it is certainly important for understanding communities such as Tremé. But to address such broad questions, one needs to begin with a meaningful account of experience and value a local place--their place--and mobilize to protect it.

CHAPTER 3:

UNDERSTANDING PLACE: THE EVOLUTION OF TREMÉ

CULTURAL INTERSECTIONS, RACE, AND PLANNING

What is not explicit in the growth machine literature is the intersection of race with class power in local development politics. It is important clearly link power, race, and urban development when applicable throughout U.S. history and are also especially relevant to understanding New Orleans. You cannot discuss this region's history and development without incorporating the power of Southern Democrats control over labor, growth and economic development throughout the South. In some cases, a conservative patrician past may hinder development, as old families with social pedigrees suffocate dynamic growth initiatives. This sort of situation, quite unusual in the U.S., seems to have characterized New Orleans up to the 1970s (Fainstein 1983). Equally challenging in New Orleans, manipulation of the natural environment played a key role in the growth and was, historically, one of the most significant obstacles to development and a key point for manipulating racial dynamics within the city. Swamplands and water surround New Orleans, forming a natural boundary that controlled growth and created challenges for colonization and control. The natural environmental and the presence of free blacks and Creoles complicated the clear boundaries of race and economic power in the city's history. All of these made NOLA difficult to control and colonize from its earliest days. These intersections of the growth patterns, race, class, power elites, and the natural environment are the forces that shaped the trajectory of development and implicated the progress of Tremé.

After the Civil War, Southern white business leaders, needed to restore cotton and sugar plantations and reinstate their economic and political leadership, which had been significantly compromised. To do this, they needed safety from flooding, to secure the port, and maintain control over the black labor force. They were forced to ask federal government for two things: to secure the city from flooding and back off their efforts to assist former slaves (Morris 9/3/05). Over the next half century, the federal government worked to protect the land and businesses of whites, which in turn used their control over the land to control black laborers (Ibid). This reconstitution of white Southern power over black laborers was met with a response in what many call the First Civil Rights Movement, in which Creole New Orleans and, specifically Tremé, was a central component.

In the 1920s, using modern technology to further accelerate a process of segregation, the Orleans

evee District pursued a plan to build a seawall and infill to extend the lakeshore that made up the city's northern border along Lake Pontchtratrain. They created 2,000 acres of prime real estate that could be developed along what was no longer a threatening waterfront and led to a boom in city growth northward to the lake throughout the 1920s (Hirsch and Logson 1992, 198). New Orleans historians, Logson and Hirsch, point out that this growth took place when the South was obsessed with Jim Crow and redistribution of New Orleans' population was hardly random (Ibid). The new areas were too expensive for the poor to access and explicit racial prohibitions made certain of exclusive white neighborhoods (Ibid). Black neighborhoods did expand, but along the edges of existing enclaves that already crowded the backswamp – areas that were the first to flood and last to be pumped dry (Ibid). In the 1960s and 70s, the construction of the I-10 through the Tremé provided new access out to the East and West of New Orleans. Newly developed suburbs were expanding in areas that were had previously suffered drainage problems and not been seen as viable for growth. This was occurring in the context of desegregation struggles. School desegregation helped fueled white flight out to the suburbs. New Orleans began to resemble other U.S. cities with an increasingly black core surrounded by white suburban areas. The white population declined 155,627 between 1960 and 1980, while it gained 85,854 in its nonwhite population (Hirsch and Logson 1992).

The Evolution of Tremé

Tremé neighborhood, located in New Orleans' Sixth Ward, adjacent to the French Quarter, is truly unique. With its distinctive legacy of ownership by free people of color, Creole families, jazz and brass band traditions, Mardi Gras Indians, and civil rights activists, these few small blocks that hold so much history cast a spell. The complex nexus of race, ethnicity, and culture have created equally complex political struggles enacted in a contested urban place. My aim in this chapter is to uncover the roots of those struggles and show how contested the Tremé had become, in recent years, even *before* Katrina hit in late August 2005.

It is often said that New Orleans has an island culture, with a racial hierarchal understanding that has more semblances to Brazil or Latin America than the binary U.S. black-white race construct. This is in part due to the role of Creoles and free people of color throughout New Orleans' history, as well as the fact that it was colonized first by the French and Spanish, before being annexed to the U.S. as part of the Louisiana Purchase. Intermarriages among Creoles, free people of color, and Native Americans were frequent. This generated a class of mixed ethnicity persons and an ethnic identity that is unique to New Orleans. It also forged powerful political alliances that spoke back to colonizers and resisted slavery in a way that is distinct
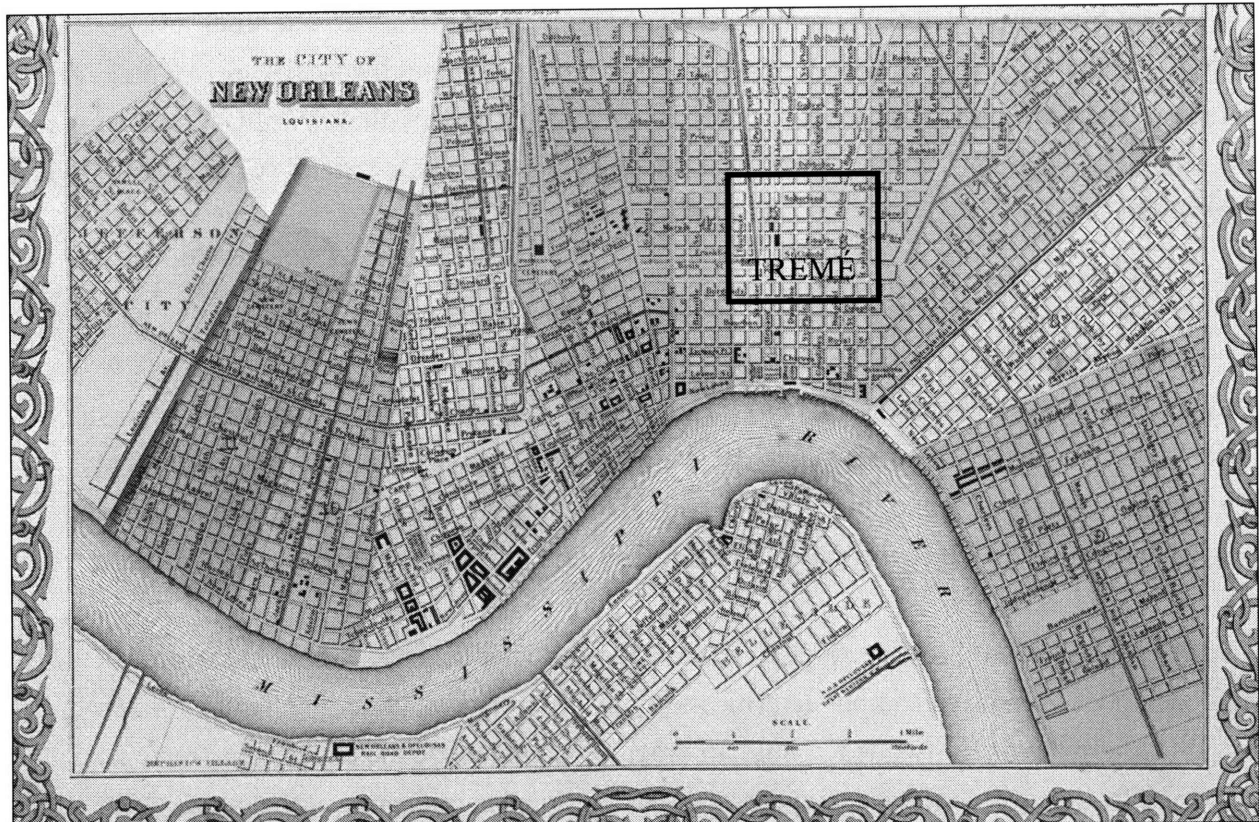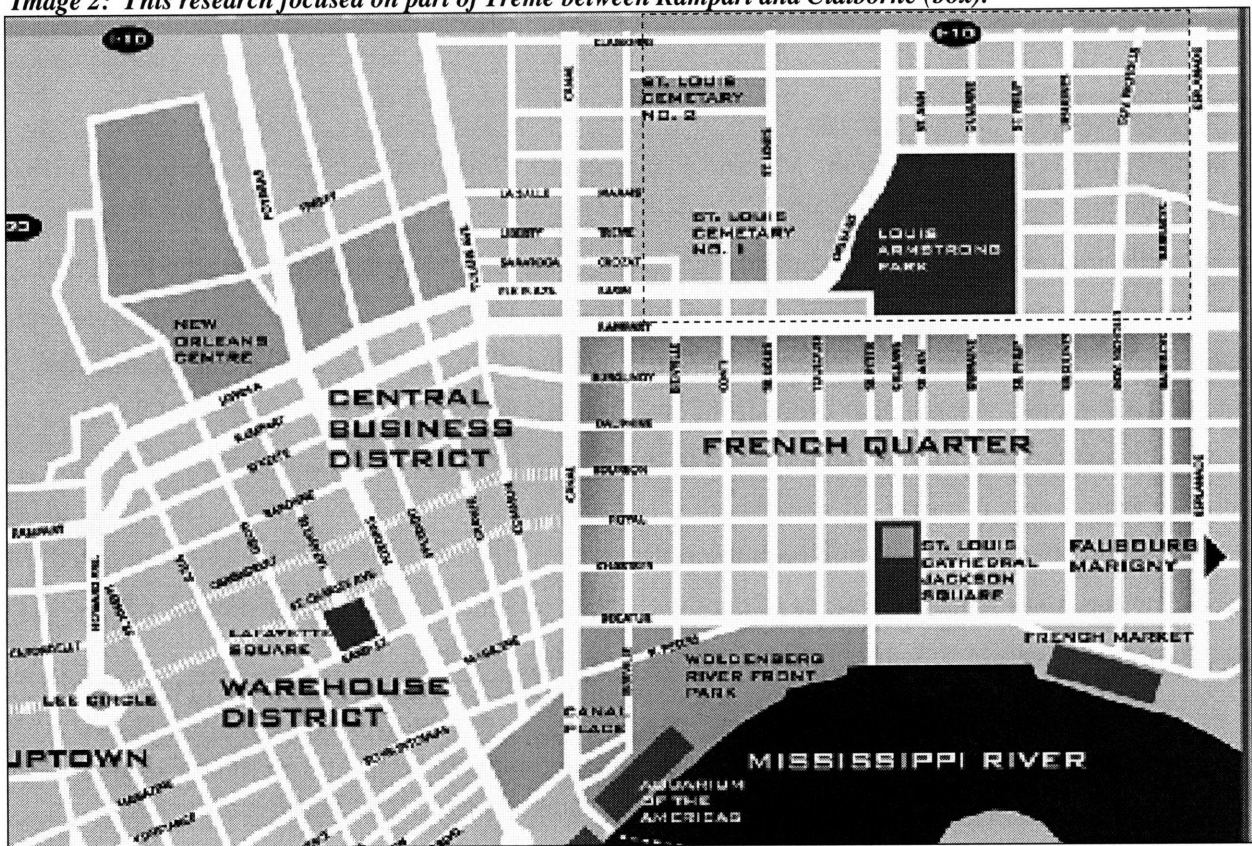
Image 1: Map of New Orleans in 1856 and location of Treme neighborhood

Image 2: This research focused on part of Treme between Rampart and Claiborne (box).

from other Southern territories. From the time of Tremé's earliest settlement, to its urbanization, free persons of color played a predominant role with the geographic area. Because of their integrated participation in the social, economic, architectural, agricultural, military, and religious development, they created an area unique in the history of the United States (Christovich; CUPA 1995).

"In the nineteenth century, this area was the site of a teeming residential, commercial, and entertainment district; a place where slaves, free persons of color, and Caucasians lived, worked, and played (CUPA 1995, 16)." It was a thriving community with rich cultural and folk history. But by the 20th century, Tremé became the site for large civic and transportation projects that sliced and diced the neighborhood. This severely affected the descendants of and others who settled the area, grew investment, and developed the unique cultural character of Tremé.

The neighborhood, still reeling from this shock decades later, has had to contend with encroachment from privatization, gentrification, casinos and now, under the nation's watchful eye, the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. In order to contextualize the challenges Tremé is currently facing, it is necessary to understand the historical significance of this place. Within the city, the people and places of Tremé have had a long and contested relationship with urban planning, race, and redevelopment.

Part I: Early Roots

Claude Tremé bought much of the Morand Plantation in 1780 with an inheritance from his wife, and established a plantation along Bayou Road. The land became more attractive when canals were built, including one that the Spanish governor of Louisiana built connecting the French Quarter and Bayou St. John in 1794. Between 1789 and 1810, Claude Tremé began to divide up and sell off pieces of the land (Jones 1984; Christovich 1980). In 1812, the Tremé became the first official suburb when, under order from city council, the city surveyor subdivided the lots and made a street grid to match the pattern in the French Quarter. What is notable about this subdivision process is the detail with which it is documented. In orderly fashion, each presold lot from Rampart to Claiborne, along both the right and left side of Bayou Road was documented, including measurements, the names of the purchasers, and the date of the transaction, often including pertinent facts to aid in identification (Christovich 1980, 17).

> Jean Louis Dolliole, free man of color and noted builder, was established in the 1500 block of Bayou Rd, on the left side, from the year 1807 (Ibid, 19). One of the finest houses built on 1253-55 N. Villere was designed by architectural firm of Gurlie and Guillot in 1839 for Nancy or Jane Milne, former slaves. Milne had freed the two

women in his will with directions that hour houses were to be constructed and that these would provide, through rental, for their support. Subsequently, Jame Milne married Gustave Auguste Dauphin, the free man of color who owned a small habitation nearby (Christovich 1980, 20)."

These records illustrate the building of a free black neighborhood in the early 19th century. Since the Spanish colonial period, eighty percent of the lots between Dumaine and St. Bernard, N. Rampart and N. Broad were owned by persons of mixed heritage one or more times (Christovich 1980). The free people of color who settled Tremé were considered some of the city's finest craftsman, artisans and musicians. Haitians fleeing a bloody revolution, where a slave uprising led to the Haitian Revolution of 1791, also filled the neighborhood in the early days (www.savestaugustines.org). Later their descendants excelled as teachers, writers, and doctors. It has been described as "a neighborhood united by common situation, interests, and interrelationships," and "Settled in part by freemen of color and skilled black craftsmen who produced the finest of the city's architecture (Wright 1997, 132)." The high level of craftsmanship of the citizens is visible in the neighborhood's architecture and design. Today, skills in the building trades continues to be an important skills passed through the generations of many Tremé families. As evidence of the art and culture of the architecture, "Sidewalks commonly referred to as 'banquettes,' were made of bricks laid in beautiful geometric designs and sights of local women using red or yellow ocher clay, a bucket of water and a broom to clean and change the colors of the banquette (Christovich 1980)."

Before the Civil War, Blacks owned over $2.2 million in real estate ($100 million in today's dollars), and much of that in the center city (www.gnocdc.org). This created a strong economic base of free people of color that influenced politics, culture, economics, business and all aspects of the city and region. Growth and development were rapid in this period and by the late 1880s, there were very few available plots in the neighborhood to develop. Creole cottages and double shotgun houses were erected, inspired by African and Caribbean architecture styles. The influence of this history is still visible in the neighborhood of today since nearly 70% of the current housing stock was built before 1949, (www.gnocdc.org).
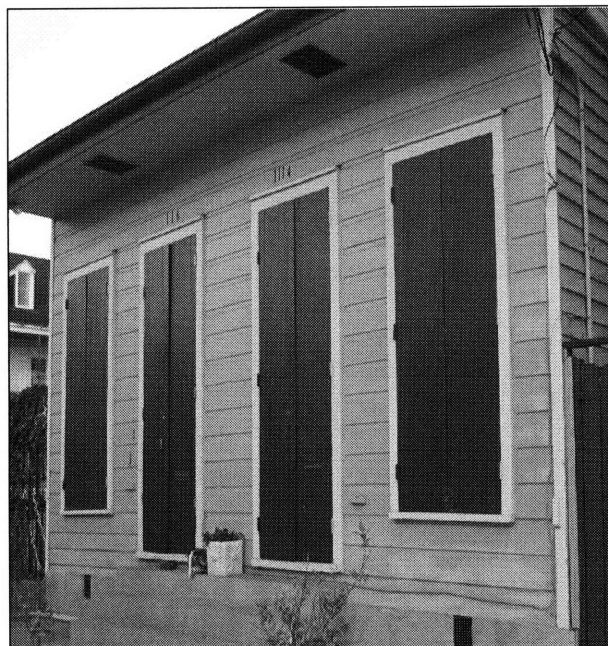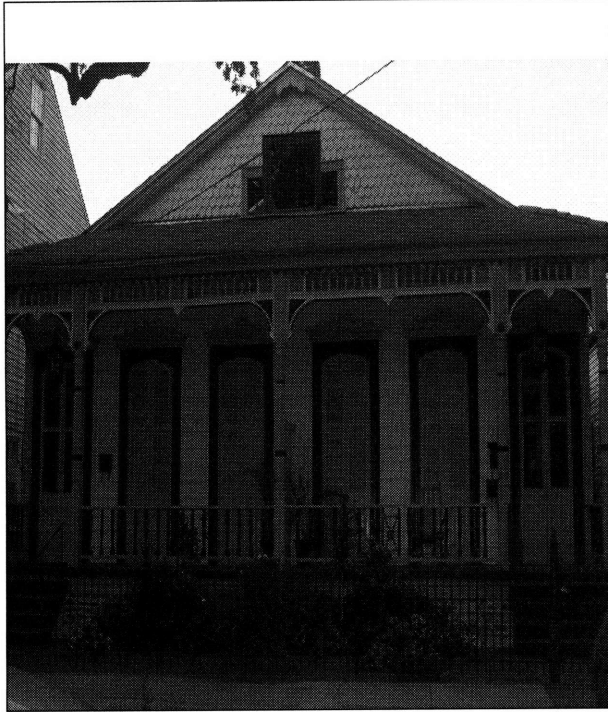
Images 3, 4, and 5:
Examples of architecture craftsmanship, Creole cottages in the Treme.

Part II. Early Institutions and Neighborhood Places

From this base of community stability and growth, a significant array of cultural and religious institutions, as well as other community foundations were able to grow. Important landmarks that developed in this early period include Congo Square, St. Augustine's Church, and the public Markets, and music halls. **Congo Square**, with its swirling brick patterns, was made famous as the place slaves were able to gather on Sundays for the purpose of worship, funerals and dances. Unlike English colonies that imported slaves from West Indians, Louisiana's first slaves were brought directly from African and, under French and Spanish rule, specifically from one area of Senegambia (Fairclough 1995, 2). Through the use of this space African traditions were able to continue and mix with other cultural influences to develop a distinct musical sound and cultural tradition that is still evident today is evidence of cultural resistance. Much of our colonial history of slavery and segregation has stripped people of their cultural practices and political resistance. Tremé was able to establish spaces of cultural resistance, such as Congo Square (and other to follow) that provided an outlet for traditions and cultural practices to carry on and political resistance to develop. Hence, my use of the term "places of cultural resistance" will be applied to Tremé in reference to this process.
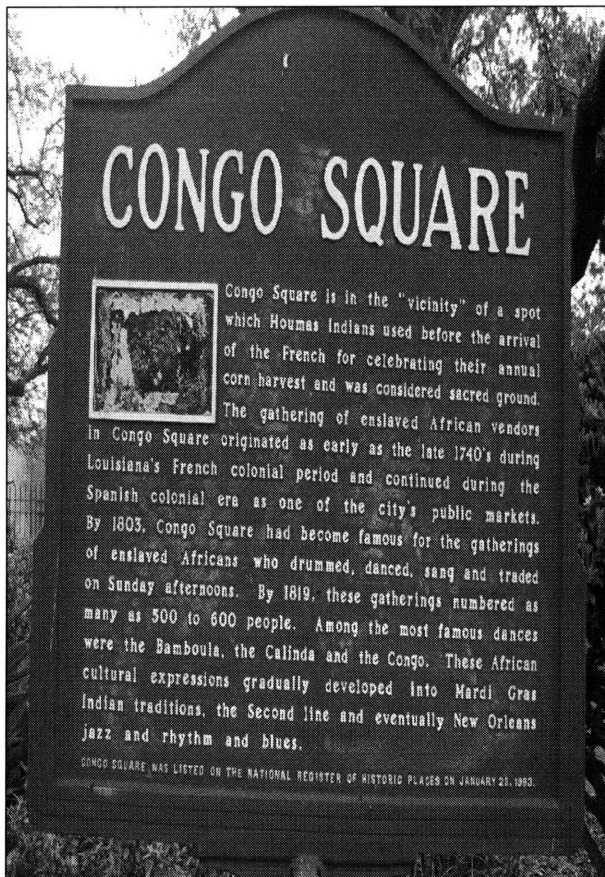
Images 6 and 7: Congo Square

The Catholic Church, **St. Augustine's**, built in 1841, served as the most important church for Creoles during its 1st century of existence. The diversity of its founding residents is often cited as evidence of the neighborhoods unique mixed heritage. The dynamics of this church reflect the Tremé neighborhood even in its earliest days.

> *A* few months before the October 9, 1842 dedication of St. Augustine Church, the people of color began to purchase pews for their families to sit. Upon hearing of this, white people in the area started a campaign to buy more pews than the colored folks. Thus, The War of the Pews began and was ultimately won by the free people of color who bought three pews to every one purchased by the whites. In an unprecedented social, political and religious move, the colored members also bought all the pews of both side aisles. They gave those pews to the slaves as their exclusive place of worship, a first in the history of slavery in the United States. (www.staugustinecatholicchurch-neworleans.org).

St. Augustine's provided a critical foundation for Creole New Orleans. The history of this parish has reflected and absorbed the conflicts and changes at every stage of redevelopment: during Reconstruction, the Civil Rights movement, and the aftermath of Katrina. Famous parishioners have included Homer Plessy, jazz great Sydney Bechet, civil rights activist AP Tearaud, and Alison "Tootie" Montoya, a notable Mardi Gras Indian chief. "They would sit here and sing. Pray in his name. After church they'd walk over to Congo Square, and they'd do their thing," said the Rev. Jerome LeDoux. Doing their thing, he explained, meant drumming, bartering, making music, exchanging memories and recipes -- fashioning a culture, a cuisine and a sound that would uniquely characterize New Orleans (Nolan 3/10/6).
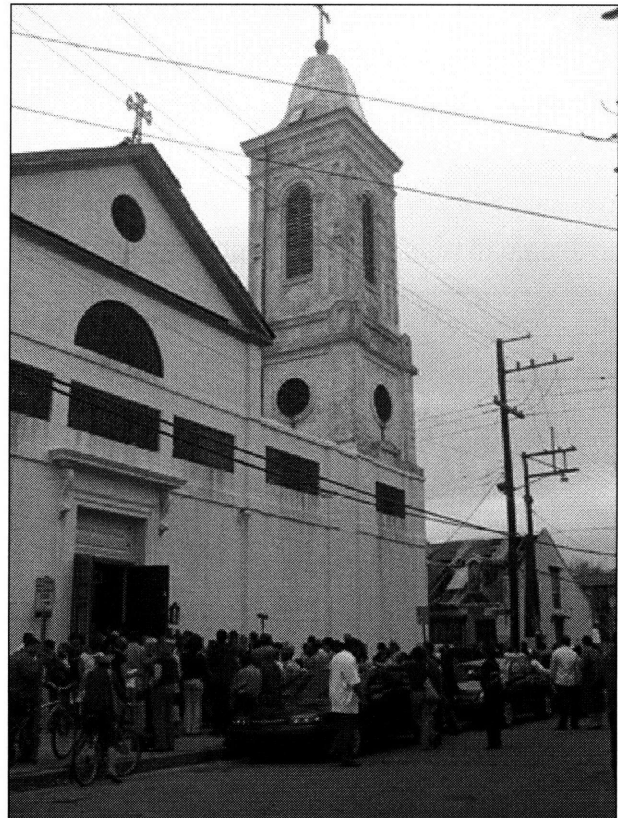
Image 8:
St. Augustine's Church after Sunday mass.

A sense of the Commons: The Tremé was well known for its public markets, which were part of the original subdivision plan. Between 1841 and 1911, the Tremé Market and Rocheblave Market were thriving spaces of public commerce. Tremé also became known for the numerous music venues and local talents that sprung up in the neighborhood. Storyville, Congo Square, and Tremé jazz clubs, benevolent halls and social clubs were places where national jazz and brass band talents were nurtured and showcased. The Indians, the Brass bands and the Social &

Pleasure Clubs are each distinct cultures that operate independently of each other but depend on the other two to exist (http://www.mardigrasdigest.com). It is through this magical combination that you can still encounter a second line on the backstreets of Tremé on any given Sunday. This culture of community building became the staging ground for mobilizing leadership and developing a resistance to political oppression.

Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs: African-American neighborhood organizations began to spring up in the city in the 1880s. Beginning as mutual aid foundations, they took on a new function after the Civil War for newly free slaves by helping with burial costs and other social support. Blacks were shut out of commercial health and life insurance services so social and pleasure clubs filled a much-needed gap by providing members with theses services. The mutual aid evolved into Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs, where members paid monthly dues and, in some cases, could borrow against them. They also had another purpose, which linked the clubs to the musical traditions of the people and the culture of the neighborhood. "The purposes of social and pleasure clubs were to provide a social outlet for its members, provide community
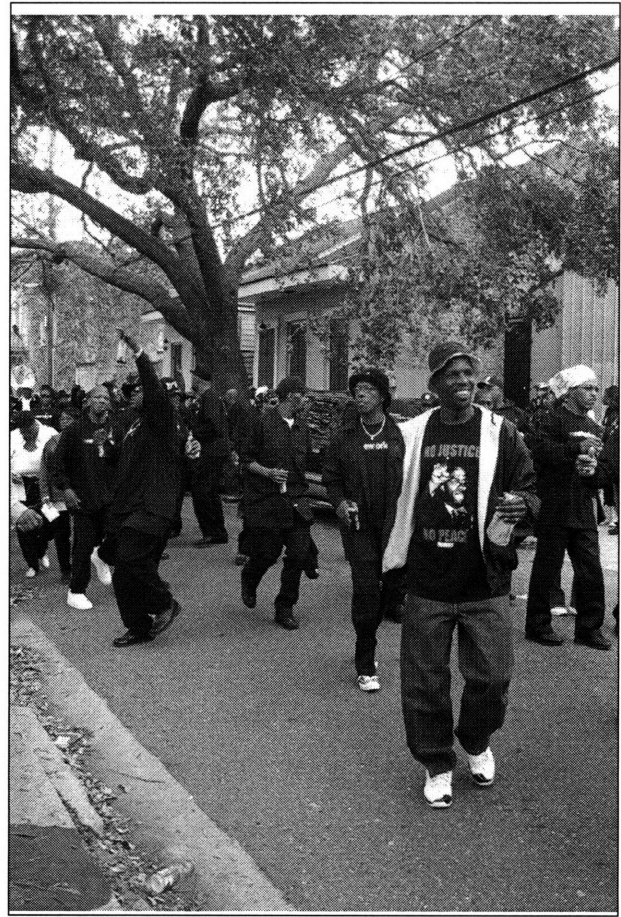
Images 9 and 10 ABOVE: Tremé 2nd Line, during MLK Weekend January 2006.

service, and parade as an expression of community pride. This parading provided dependable work for musicians and became an important training ground for young musical talent (New Orleans Jazz National Park)." While many organizations in New Orleans used brass bands in parades, concerts, political rallies, and funerals, African-American mutual aid and benevolent societies had their own expressive approach to funeral processions and parades, which continues to the present. Community celebrants would join in the exuberant dancing procession. This phenomenon of community participation in parades became known as "the second line," (Ibid).

Mardi Gras Indians: Even though they have paraded for well over a century, their parade is perhaps the least recognized Mardi Gras tradition (www.mardigrasindains.com). Mardi Gras celebrations in New Orleans were traditionally segregated and blacks were excluded from the festivities. The black neighborhoods in New Orleans gradually developed their own style of celebrating Mardi Gras, which included Mardi Gras Indian "Krewes" that were named for imaginary Indian tribes according to the streets of their ward or gang (Ibid). It was often local Indians who accepted slaves into their society when they made a break for freedom and this support has never been forgotten. In honor of this solidarity in opposition to the tyranny of slavery, black Mardi Gras Indians maintain tribes and dress in intricate costumes. After investing thousands of hours and dollars in the creation of his suit, Indian tribes parade and confront each other on carnival days with Krewe formations, songs, chants, and dances. This tradition, rich with folk art and history, is now appreciated by museums and historical societies around the world (Ibid).

Many original structures of informal, decentralized networks have been preserved through second line culture, which provides opportunity for participatory public action. In this way, the social aid and pleasure clubs served as localized community support institutions and part of larger cultural resistance and social movement building. In effect this becomes a mechanism for reclaiming space for people who may not be landowners and are in constant territorial stress from an oppressive police force and gentrifiers (Crutcher 2001). With subsidized medical care, membership in benevolent societies became less important. But people still tap social and pleasure clubs as the keepers of cultural traditions, identity politics, and social networks. In their own way, each of these 'neighborhood places' played a role in strengthening social networks. The cultural practices they engaged in were laced with tools for empowerment work and resistance tactics stemming from the cultural separation of slavery, segregation and racism. The traditions were passed down through the generations until we saw jazz musicians, Mardi Gras Indian tribes, and Social and Pleasure Clubs that extended through family lineage in black Creole New Orleans, much of which was rooted in Tremé's neighborhood places.

Part III. Cultural Resistance as Roots of Organizing

According to Crutcher, identifying Tremé as a counter public space and community of resistance does not necessarily make it unique among New Orleans neighborhoods, but linking it to Creole history increases the Tremé's identity as an oppositional community (Crutcher 2001). From the Civil War to the present day, Creoles of color and their descendants have furnished many of the most militant leaders in the black struggle for racial equality (Fairclough 1995, 3). Examples of this Creole-led cultural resistance are evident throughout local and national history.

America's first civil rights movement was in full swing in the 1860s in Louisiana, its progress chronicled in the New Orleans Tribune, the nation's first African American daily newspaper (www.tremedoc.com). In response to enactment of Jim Crow laws by state legislature, Creoles of Tremé and 7th Ward founded Comite des Citoyens in 1891 (Samuels 2002, 38). Homer Plessey, whose home was in Tremé, was selected by the Comite to test the segregation conveyances and, fifty years before Rosa Parks, he would challenge segregation laws on public transit. His case went all the way to the Supreme Court and *Plessy v. Ferguson* resulted in 'separate but equal' legislation that would prevail for the next half century.

Martin Luther King visited New Orleans in the 1950s and recognized the city as a center for the civil rights movement, a role model for other Deep South communities. In 1961, when Mayor Victor H. Shiro prevented King from speaking at a city-owned auditorium, he spoke instead at a black church, with crowds overflowing into the street (Katz, 23). King talked of the need for a biracial civil rights movement that would free blacks and whites of the burdens of segregation and allow them to work together to forge a better life for "all children." Soon after this, the city indeed became a center of civil rights activity and the birthplace of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (Katz, 23). During this time, The Tremé gave rise to nationally prominent civil rights workers, members of Congress of Racial Equity (CORE), musicians, and politicians. The rise of civil rights activity and integration of public schools and transit sparked white flight to suburbs and turbulence on a national level. Jerome Smith explains the linkages between the culture and the organizing of resistance and a movement for racial justice:

> *"I was fortunate to be born in the area of town where the dominant cultural expression of creativity was on the block where I lived. Alison "Tootie" Montana, who was the chief of the Yellow Pocahontas Indian tribe, afforded me great opportunity when I was a youngster, to understand the sense of bringing about expressions that would bring magic to our streets. Anything we made was an expression of the self. And if it was applauded, we were gracious. And it not, we were cramped in the kind of misery for the rejection. So that, in fact, prepared me to deal with the journey. In relation to the struggle, in relation to the whole civil rights campaign, the whole universal struggle for betterment (Jerome Smith)."*

Sacred Neighborhood Places: Neutral Ground on North Claiborne Avenue

The neutral ground along the central median of North Claiborne was the center of black New Orleans life. Black Mardi Gras was held each year along North Claiborne's neutral ground. A site of cultural celebration, the neutral ground was also the site of daily social interactions and cultural practices. The neutral ground was a large green strip along the median of North Claiborne, stretching over 13.5 acres with mature live oaks and grass, and a paved strip in the middle for promenading. The neutral ground area was the center of the neighborhood, the center of Black New Orleans economic, social, political and cultural life. On either side of the neutral ground, North Claiborne Avenue served as the major black business district running through the heart of the Tremé. Over 200 businesses were thriving at its peak, including the first black pharmacy, restaurants, social clubs, and groceries. Smith talks about women cutting grasses for cooking, children playing, school children en route to school, men working on cars, listening to radio. Elderly women would come out and cut different grasses to make tea and children coming from school would, "sit and witness so much of their soul." It was clearly "the place to be seen" and the central gathering place for neighborhood activity.

Part IV: Urban Renewal In New Orleans

Through the act of Urban Renewal and the Housing Act of 1949, the Tremé became the site of several major changes:

1. 30 square blocks of the Tremé were removed from the neighborhood in total for urban renewal projects.
2. Elimination of critical places of cultural production and political resistance.
3. Destruction of the thriving black business district along Claiborne Avenue.
4. Decimation of the central gathering social space of the neighborhood.
5. Displacement of hundreds of residents, many of who were descendants of original free black settlers.

The following section will outline the implementation of these major projects and their impact on the Tremé during the urban renewal period.

Storyville to Iberville Housing Project

Storyville, on the edge of the Tremé, was a significant part of New Orleans' history and early economic development. The district was established when Alderman Sydney Story, concerned about vice in the city, passed legislation creating a red light district that limited prostitution to this area. Ironically, the district was memorialized with his name, forever remembered as Storyville. In addition to legal prostitution and gambling, from 1897-1917, Storyville boasted many prominent benevolent halls, music venues, and social clubs where musicians honed their craft and emerged on the national music scene. Some family fortunes still powerful in New Orleans can trace their roots to Storyville business and real estate.

Serving as an autonomous economic zone and a place of crime and sin, vice has proven a complicated element, especially to early free black settlements. Cha Jua discusses the role of vice businesses in Brooklyn, Illinois, a free black town. He points out how the district is often tolerated and patronized by elites and whites, hence, filling a niche market. Hand in hand with corruption and politics, the legitimate and illegitimate, a red light district can establish an economic base for blacks to accumulate wealth and excel in politics (Cha Jua 2000).

Despite objections by city government, the red light district in Storyville was closed down in 1917 by the federal government. New Orleans Mayor Martin Behrman's final pronouncement concerning the District's vices is fondly remembered by some locals: "You can make it illegal, but you can't make it unpopular (http://storyville.wikiverse.org)." After Storyville closed down, the city tried to obliterate the excesses of Storyville. Within a year of the founding of the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) in 1939, it purchased and demolished Storyville. While much of the housing stock was old, some of the finest structures of the time were found along Basin Street in Storyville. The mansions along Basin were leveled to make way for a new public housing project.

Image 11: Depiction of old Storyville neighborhood.

Image 12: The Iberville Public Housing Project that was built on the Storyville site.
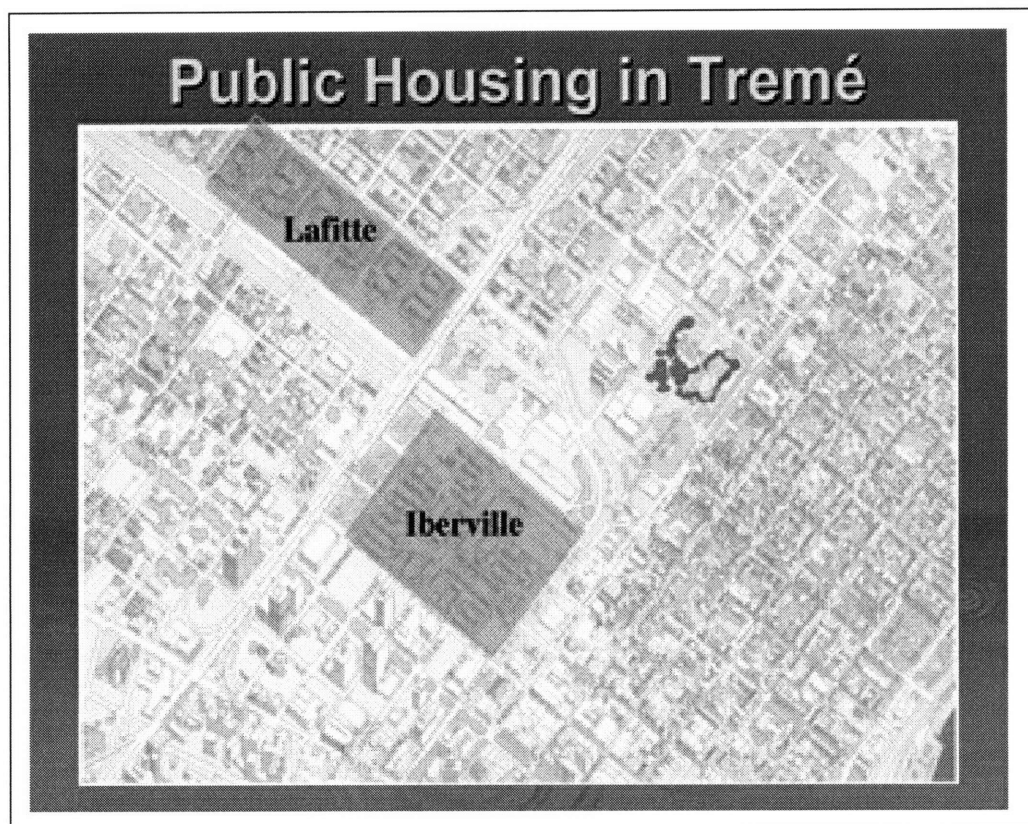
Image 13: Location of Iberville and Lafitte Public Housing Developments built in Tremé in 1941.

The housing authority evicted over 800 African American families from the Storyville neighborhood to build the then all-white complex (Arena). As HANO's first housing complex, it was carefully built to scale and remains the most aesthetically pleasing of all subsequent efforts (Christovich 1980, 73). Iberville's 896 units had 100% occupancy by 1941 (Jones 1984, 40). Lafitte, a few blocks away, was built between 1939-1941 for blacks.

The Highway Comes

The Federal Highway program, coming in tandem with Urban Renewal, further compromised the neighborhood. In 1946, Robert Moses concluded that the principle traffic problem in New Orleans was "getting in and out of the heart of city from the east and west (Wright 1997, 124)." He advocated for the Riverfront Expressway and sparked debate that lasted for quite some time, affected national legislation and illustrated the divide between black and white historical New Orleans. White preservationists led the resistance against the Riverfront Expressway plan, which would separate the water from the French Quarter. They had powerful ties to national interests and gained attention at a series of public meetings. They called the whole controversy the Second Battle of New Orleans. In the end, U.S. Secretary of Transportation, John A. Volpe refused federal funds for part of an Interstate Highway System that would "seriously impair the

historic quality of New Orleans's famed French Quarter (Blair 1969)." His ruling was the first denial of federal funds on the basis of preserving a historic area. The fight over the Riverfront Expressway resulted in the National Preservation legislation in 1966. This legislation created the National Register of Historic Places and the list of National Historic Landmarks with the intent of preserving historic sites across the country. It clearly demonstrated the power of white preservationists.

All of this had no bearing on the highway project that was launched only a few blocks away in the Tremé. The Louisiana Highway Department announced in 1956 its plans to build the I-10 along North Claiborne Avenue (Wright 1997, 133). The contrast between the I-10 in the Tremé and the Riverfront Expressway is articulated in Beverly Wright's, *"Neighborhoods under Siege (1997)."* The final route that would sever Tremé in half was seen to cause the least amount of damage as it would be built over the neutral ground and, save for the on and off ramps, would require less residential demolition. There were not visible public meetings held; there were not national allies who would lobby federally to protect the Tremé. The white preservations did nothing to prevent this highway project that would disrupt an equally important and historic district. In New Orleans, coalition based on cross-race and cross-neighborhood interests was not occurring in 1950s and support from national interest group was not something the Tremé could mobilize at that time. In the 1990s, Tremé community activist Jim Hayes spoke of the lack of solidarity between preservationists and the Tremé community. "I don't have too much

*Image 14: Location of I-10 Highway corridor in **Tremé** neighborhood along North Claiborne Avenue*
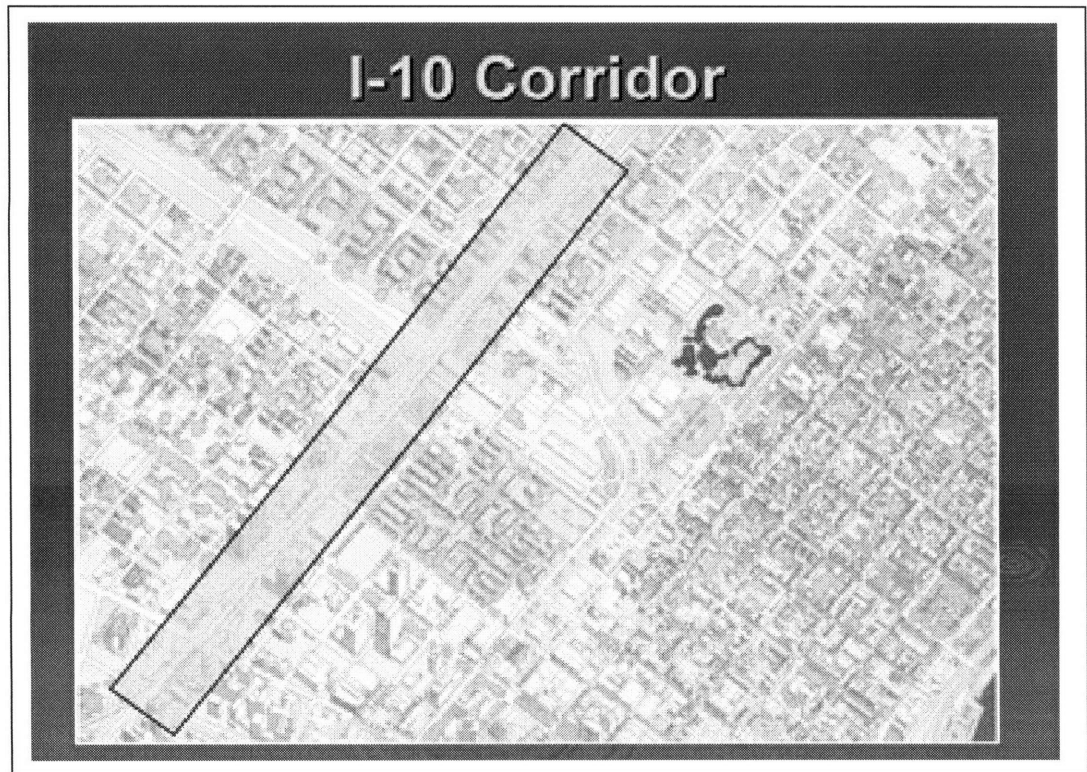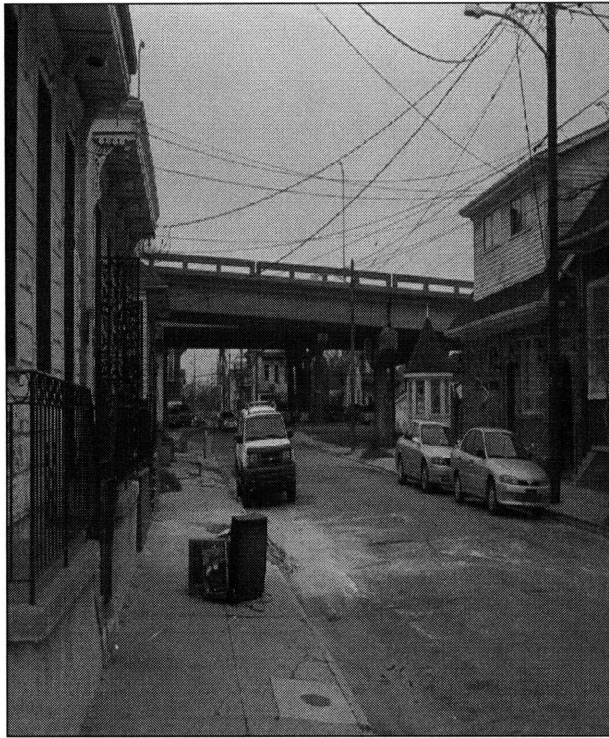
Images 15 and 16:
What does it mean to build a highway through the
neighborhood? The impact of I-10 on Treme.

confidence in preservationists. Not one spoke out when some of the finest homes this city ever had were torn down (Wright 1997, 139)." Not much has moved beyond this in the current climate and severed trust between white power and black neighborhoods continues to affect the Tremé neighborhood. Accounts of this history frequently refer to the lack of political power in Black neighborhoods to resist highway construction. Other accounts, however, connect Tremé leaders to national organizing, integrating busing and schools, while building the national civil rights agenda. In reality, the importance of this cultural epicenter social space and business district was invaluable to Black New Orleans and completely devalued and ignored by white New Orleans.

Like other instances of urban renewal, the neighborhood was actually more integrated and diverse before urban renewal. Highway construction occurred at a time of desegregation and white flight to the suburbs. In New Orleans, within the downtown neighborhoods, the most dramatic outflow of whites occurred between 1950 and 1960. By 1970, tract 39 in the Tremé, which had been fairly balanced racially, was nearly 90% black (Samuels 2002). Today the massive concrete structure of the I-10 supports six lanes of traffic, an estimated 54,000 vehicles/day, racing by on the elevated track (Samuels 2002). The abandoned area beneath the highway was become polluted, unsafe, and unused.

Image 17:
Today the business
district along North
Claiborne Avenue-
shows obvious signs
of disinvestment.
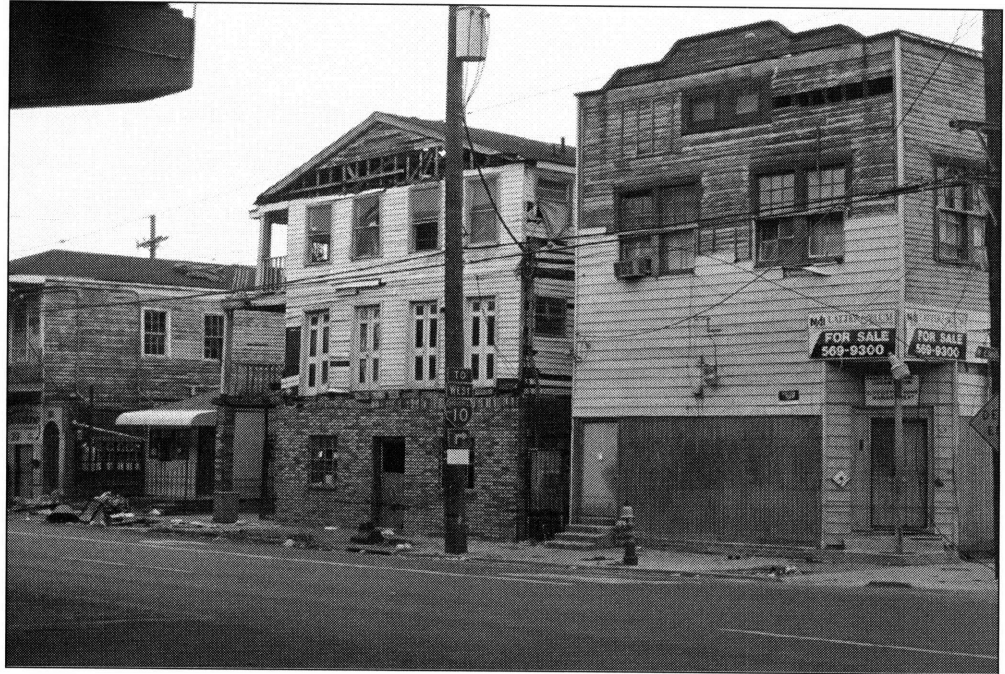
Claiborne Avenue had been considered one of the most prosperous African American business district in the country. The number of businesses along North Claiborne Avenue dropped from 115 in 1965 to 64 in 1971 to 35 in 2000 (Samuels 2002, 94). Real estate values plummeted and business owners struggled to remain viable after the highway went in. The highway provides access from suburbs in the east to the Central Business District. But the "I-10, of course, further diminished the desirability of the neighborhood, generating even more abandoned properties. The irony of destroying this area in order to facilitate access to the suburbs is not lost on residents (Greater New Orleans)."

Image 18:
Today, the neutral
ground where tho
oak trees once grew is
concrete under the
highway.

Louis Armstrong Park

The development of Armstrong Park spanned several decades and was a contested urban renewal project in the neighborhood. Tremé was chosen as the site for the Municipal Auditorium in 1926 but opposition and insufficient funds delayed construction until the 1960s (CUPA 1995). The plans went through three different concepts and millions of dollars before the Park was built in its current form. "Between 1956-1973, 9 square blocks of first class 19th century neighborhood was cleared to build a cultural center. Financing fell through and the park was built instead (Wright 1997, 139)." In 1961, plans for the complex were changed to meet urban renewal guidelines and capture federal funds (Jones 1984, 52). The City made available $20,444,562 to acquire land seen as "acres of blight and rundown housing (Jones 1984)." By the time the third attempt to complete the cultural complex came around in 1968, HUD had changed urban renewal eligibility to include a citizen participation requirement. Still, little room was given for residents to have an active role in the decision-making process. Instead, public hearings tended to be places where public officials informed residents of what changes would be taking place (Jones 1984, 53). Following the death of Louis Armstrong in 1971, Mayor Landrieu appointed a committee that approved the site for his memorial and began construction. The Center for the Performing Arts was completed in 1973 with an $8 million price tag, but the rest of the site remained empty (Pontchartrain 2004). Finally, in 1974, another $8.2 million was authorized by City Council for redevelopment and improvement of entire 31 acres owned by the city. It was at
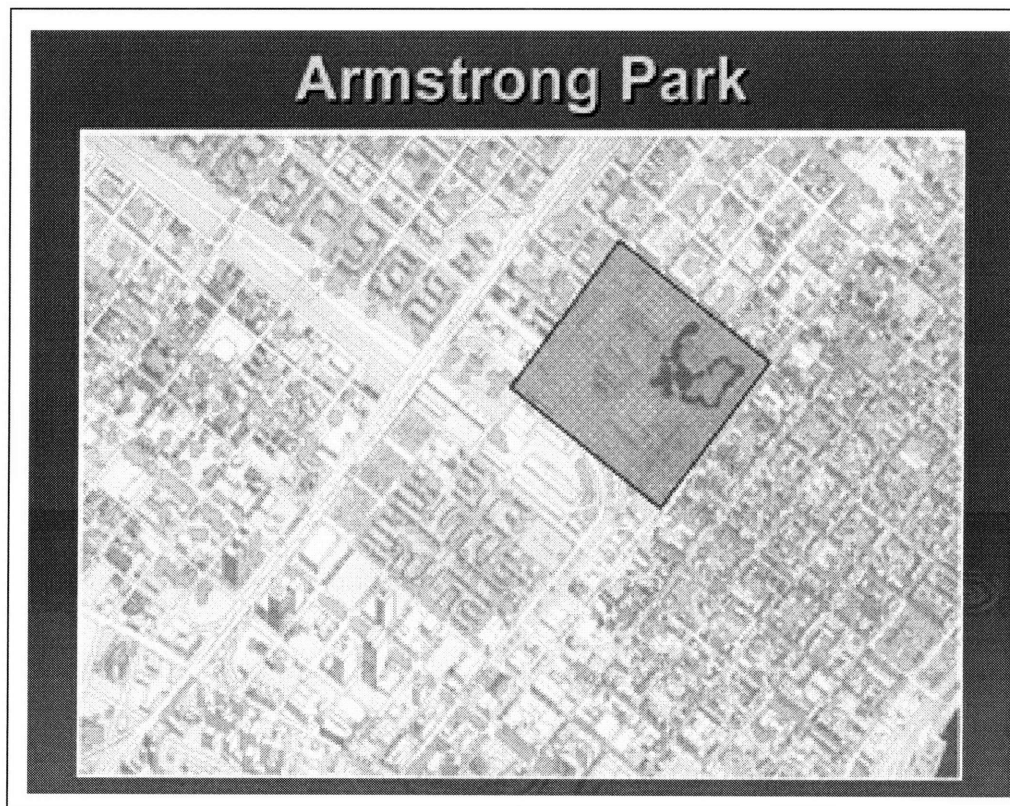
*image 19: Location of Louis Armstrong Park in the **Tremé** neighborhood.*

this time that entire park was enclosed by a concrete and steel fence (Pontchartrain 2004).

A total of 410 families were displaced to make room for the new development, eighty percent of who were low-income black residents, with average incomes of less than half the average for Orleans parish (Jones 1984, 53). The city funded relocation for these residents, many of whom were descendants of early settlers. Information booklets were sent out to inform residents of the plans and their rights. Seventy percent of residents did not receive them (Pontchartrain 2004). Those who did receive them could not decipher the complex procedures. The confusing process caused problems for landlords and renters alike. Renters were notified of the impending destruction. Even though plans were not immediate, renters got nervous and mistrustful of the process, and left in a hurry. Residents fled in many cases without an understanding of the relocation payments they were entitled to and, in the end, many moved without receiving compensation or assistance. They relied instead on their own personal networks and moved in with family or doubled up in already dense areas (Christovich 1980). Some were moved into Lafitte, the nearby public housing development. Many absentee landlords found that when they finally received the notification their tenants were already gone. They waited nearly a year for the city to complete appraisals on the properties and begin negotiating sales with the owners. During this time, owners were not able to collect rent but were expected to meet mortgage payments, hire lawyers, and maintain properties (Christovich 1980).

Tremé Community Improvement Association was founded in 1967 to mobilize the community against conditions that encourage addiction and violence (Petra foundation). They shifted their focus in the wake of Armstrong Park planning to address questions of rights in the community. TCA became actively involved in informing residents of their rights and in attempting to prevent further destruction of their neighborhood. TCA, aware that plans would continue regardless of community opposition, began making demands on city government. Protesting injustices being committed against their community, they demanded jobs in the complex and space for community center. In 1969, city council passed resolutions assuring no residents would be forced into public housing against their will. This also brought to light how the city had failed to include a relocation plan in their original plans for the Cultural Center Complex.

"Unobserved by members of the City Planning Commission was the fact that the area, which had appeared to them a slum, was in reality a living history of the city, reflecting one and three quarter centuries. Hundreds of the brick-between-post Creole cottages and center-hall, side-gable houses had been designed, built, owned and living in by the prosperous free black community of the first half of the nineteenth century (Christovich 1980)." In addition to

Images 20, 21, 22:
Armstrong Park today

historic architecture, Historical jazz sites such as Economy Hall and Gypsy Tea Room were leveled along with 150-year-old Creole cottages to make way for the park. The media termed it the 'urban sin of the century and it is not uncommon to hear people say the Louis Armstrong would be spinning in his grave over what happened to Tremé (Wright). "Not only were those who lived in the area displaced, but also many whose ancestry was rooted in Tremé pulled up stake, traumatized by the 'site of landmarks of their long colorful history turned into rubble and carted away in dump trucks (Wright 1997, 143)."

In a 1995 assessment study of the neighborhood, the College of Urban and Public Affairs found, "many in the community will not go to Armstrong Park because they feel that the fence represents a barrier between the community and the park. Some are still angered that sixteen blocks of the neighborhood were torn down to build the park (CUPA 1995, 9)." Despite the community's continued efforts to take it down, the cement and wrought iron fence remains. Encircling the park, it creates a border and keeps people from accessing the park all along the Tremé borders in every direction. Essentially, Armstrong Park acts as a buffer between the French Quarter and the Tremé. By turning its back on Tremé and facing the main gate along Rampart it keeps people on that side of Rampart, and keeps people of Tremé in the back 'o town, as it has historically been called. The gates are often locked and the space is

rarely well used. Occasionally you may see some dog walkers or bench sleepers but it is rarely an active neighborhood park. Despite some positive design elements the park has some serious flaws that restrict neighborhood access and give the message of exclusion and unsafe space with no eyes on the street. Tourists are told to avoid the area and, locals don't use the space well either. For some, there is still the soar memory of what used to be there and resentment over how the Park came to be.

Part V. Urban Renewal Impact on Tremé

"The city has visited upon the Tremé neighborhood a number of demolition and construction projects supposedly in the name of benefiting the larger community. Although some of these projects have had some benefit, they have wreaked havoc on what was once a very prosperous New Orleans neighborhood" (Greater New Orleans). In an interview, Jerome Smith said, "There's really been no renewal. There's been consistent loss. This has been accelerated by the onslaught of Katrina, the intrusion of the expressway."
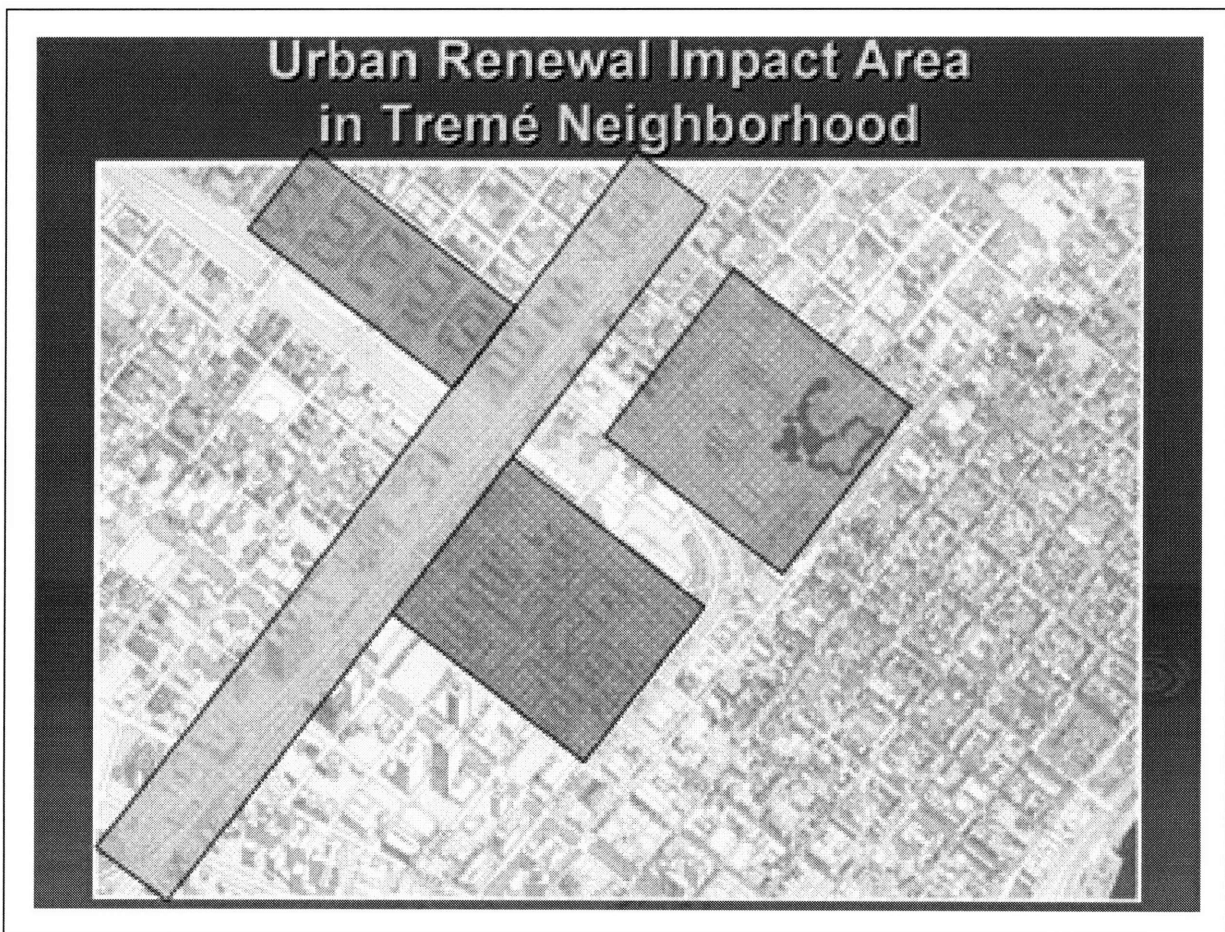
Image 23: Land mass area and location of urban renewal era projects that were carried out in the Tremé neighborhood.

Impact to Scale of Neighborhood:

Before the highway, the neighborhood consisted mainly of single story architecture, with walkable streets and nicely laid out block pattern and a healthy commons. Samuels identified how North Claiborne served all three major uses for the street, as identified by Kevin Lynch: 1) a place of commerce, 2) a place for recreation and social interaction, and 3) a place for cultural celebration. North Claiborne was commonly identified as the major path linking the downtown communities of Tremé and the 7th Ward to Canal Street and Central Business District in a path marked by clearly defined edges, commonly recognizable landmarks and nodes. (Samuels 2002, 87). It offered an immediate sense of one's position relative to the whole. The highway was a drastic disruption of pathways and scale in the neighborhood. Slicing through the neighborhood along Claiborne divided the 6th Ward (from Claiborne back to Broad) from the rest of Tremé. Before the center district pulled people into the center as a meeting place, whereas now it propels

Image 24:
The highway upsets the scale
of the neighborhood.

people away, polarizing the neighborhood on either side away from the center. One resident spoke of her childhood school route, in which she had to cross Claiborne, as being a major source of anxiety for her as a child. The factions that existed in the community were heightened by the divide and continued to grow polarized across this divisive border, as represented by the split between St. Augustine's Church and St. Peter Claver today.

Impact to Semi-Autonomous Zone:

Samuels also points to North Claiborne's status as a zone of autonomy within the partitioned space of the city under Jim Crow. "Confluence of cultural, economic and political institutions on and around North Claiborne that existed until the mid 1960s...offered a symbolic answer to these enclaves of white power (Samuels, 87-88)." Similarly, Crutcher offers, "The section of Tremé lost to the urban renewal/cultural center project compromised a landscape of agency resistance, community, and tradition in a time of violence and oppression toward Blacks (Crutcher 2001, 117)."

The idea that urban renewal removed a symbol of autonomy and self-determination for AA communities has been discussed in the literature. In describing the affect of urban renewal on Pittsburgh's Vinegar Hill, black newspaper editor Sherman White points out, "It removed a symbol. While it wasn't much, it was all we had. So it took away the image of blacks in business, the importance of blacks in decision-making positions (Saunders 1998, 19)." In his exploration of the I-10 impact to Claiborne, Samuels interviewed Mrs. Sybil Morial, whose husband was, Dutch Morial and many others were actively pushing the boundaries within which African Americans could feel comfortable and working to secure a place within the political dialogue of the city. "It was out street, the place where we felt comfortable." Dutch would become first black mayor but progress would come too late to save North Claiborne and much of the Treme from destruction (Samuels 2002, 47-48). The metropolitanization of New Orleans finally wrote into the city's spatial relationships the same uncompromising dualism that had conditioned political and legal rights for the past century (Logson and Hirsch 1992, 198)."

In honor of this real and imagined autonomous zone, the tradition of cultural resistance demonstrated by the black Mardi Grad Indians continues. Today they can still be seen gathering beneath the I-10 overpass, in commemoration of the place that was once their neutral ground. Others in the Tremé continue to be caretakers of this sacred space. Community organizations are actively planting trees throughout the Tremé and artists are painting cold cement pilings that support the roaring interstate overhead with murals that "depict people, places and events that have defined the area's soul (Greater New Orleans)." But it is a challenging task to transform the

Image 25: Depiction of members of CORE Freedom Riders, are commemorated on the mural

Image 26: Mardi Gras Indians on the mural remembers the importance of this space.
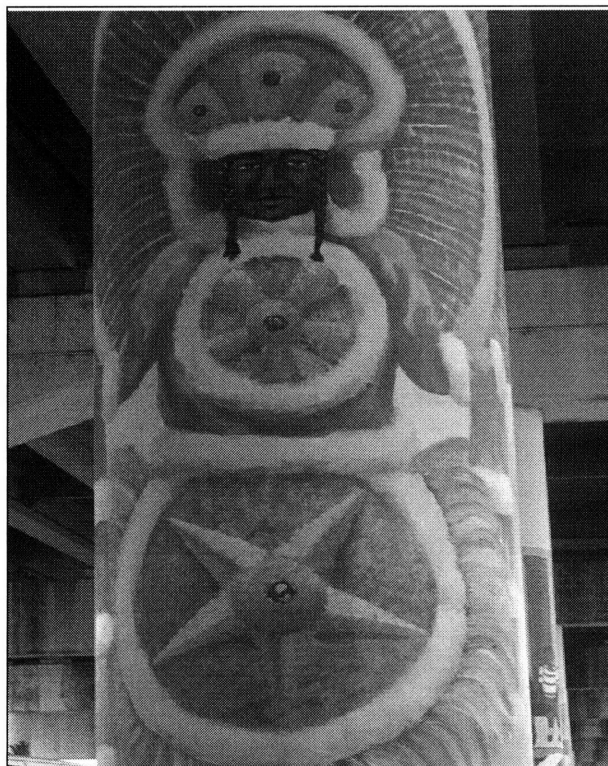
dark underbelly of a freeway back into a viable place.

Impact to Organizing

"Several historically specific conditions converged during the early 1970s in New Orleans to absorb the political energies that had been unleashed by the civil rights revolution of the 1960s, channeling discontent into conventional routines of electoral politics, patronage, and neighborhood services (Fainstein 1983, 156)." The experience of government-imposed massive clearance, displacement, and relocation occurred prior to civil rights awakening, without much resistance (Fainstein 1983, 156). Thus more subtle and incremental displacement that occurred in the 1970s produced only localized resistance and did not garner a more visible, citywide coalition to mobilize wider discontent. "New Orleans neighborhoods have a strong tradition of community based political activism (Hirsch, 1992, Crutcher 2000)." "Since the 1960s, the Tremé has organized itself into community units to help combat further destruction of their neighborhood and influence of the decisions about the park (Crutcher 2000, 11)." What public participation was possible came through cultural and civic organizations. Tremé Community Center building was a concession the city offered in response to pressures from neighborhood organizers. As Armstrong Park took time to implement, Tremé residents and organizers grew strength in their ability to intervene in decision-making.

Jerome Smith, who had been a member of CORE and prominent in civil rights work across the South turned his focus more local at this time. He started Tambourine and Fan, a youth social and pleasure club and dedicated the next forty years of his life's work to addressing issues of youth, culture and community building in the Treme neighborhood. The neighborhood-based education and cultural organization of Tamborine and Fan began engaging the city and the larger community in a conversation on the impact of the highway and other infrastructure projects on the Treme. They joined others in a larger community planning process that resulted in the 1976 CADT I-10 Mutli-Use Study. The comprehensive planning document grounded their analysis in the historical and cultural context of the neighborhood, highlighting the unique assets of the Tremé before discussing the damage done by the I-10 construction. They offered three scenarios, including detailed plans, renditions, and financing options for addressing the negative impact of the I-10 on the neighborhood and surrounding areas. They did not only look within the borders of the 6th Ward but instead included the surrounding neighborhoods and addressed linkages, connections and repairing the severed links between neighborhoods. They also proposed real planning directives, included financing in phases for each plan and clear pictorials of what each scenario would look like in use. Little if any of the CADT Study's innovative solutions to a planning disaster were taken up directly and implemented by the city, State, or private developers and "nearly 30 years since the construction of the I-10, the community finds itself still reeling from its effects (Wright 1997, 139)." But the organizations that grew out of response to mediate the destruction of their community and demand a voice in the planning process remain to this day. Tamborine and Fan still exists in Tremé and Jerome Smith still works with young people around the neighborhood. Ron Chisom's actions with TCIA eventually grew into the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond which developed a training curriculum to teach organizers and citizens around the country to identify and address systemic racism in their own communities and still remains a presence in Tremé today.

There is an old adage of the South "If you want to find the black community, just cross the railroad tracks." In my interviews, several persons commented, "Find a thriving black community and you'll find where they built the highway through it." Michael Crutcher adds to this saying, "I cannot think of a thriving black community that survived desegregation intact (personal interview)." Fullilove talks about the intergenerational health repercussions of the root shock that was enacted on African American neighborhoods affected by urban renewal. Jerome Smith, calls urban renewal in Tremé, "a rupture that destroyed this possibility for generations who came after us. We had the richness of that grass in the mists of our neighborhood, and what we had, it was deeply involved in a sort of linkage because generations prior to that had the same kind of experience, it anchored the great moments of celebration (Smith, personal interview)."

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Part VI: After Urban Renewal: The Growth Machine takes Shape

The city's interlocking social, civic, business and political oligarchies actually stifled growth by perpetuating a series of myths about the local economy such as economic development protected the city from national recessions and low wages benefit the masses by keeping down the cost of living (Katz 1991, 22). The myths, reinforced by the media, served to stifle growth and maintain power of local elites, while protecting the city from corporate investment and outside control. An illustration of this can be found in the traditional structure of Mardi Gras. "Local elites maintained a dominant position in a traditional social structure through their control over access to prestigious Mardi Gras organizations ("krewes") and downtown social clubs and for new members to gain access to these organizations it was necessary to gain favor with traditional leadership through business and professional concessions (Fainstein 1983, 132).

This has contributed to the corruption and old boy networks of wealth that run the city. At the same time, those same networks have also excluded corporate business elites from investment and positions of prominence in Mardi Gras. A double-edged sword, some see this as halting progress and economic development in New Orleans as a whole (Fainstein 1983, 133). Others see this as another interesting layer in the history, which secured Mardi Gras as an anti-corporate entity controlled by exclusive local elites, but also allows for a grassroots practices of cultural resistance to continue undeterred by corporate America. Anthony Mumphrey, a member of Morial's administration, suggests that while other southern cities like Houston, Atlanta, and Dallas chose to join the national economy by emphasizing growth, New Orleans ruling class – believing their own myths -- held back (Katz 1991, 22)." The three decades following urban renewal saw the demise of the old ruling oligarchy. "Almost all port related businesses were now owned by out of state firms, and the city's energy business became dominated by Texans (Katz 1991, 25)."

Moon Landrieu served two terms as Mayor of New Orleans between 1970-1978. Moon Landrieu was one of the few white legislators to vote against segregationist hate bills. In 1969, four years after Civil Rights Act, Moon Landrieu, in his post as City councilmen, led a push for a city ordinance outlawing segregation. As mayor he oversaw desegregation of city government and public facilities. But there was another piece of Landrieu's administration's legacy. He was lucky in that his tenure of the city coincided with the Arab oil boycott of 1973, which escalated oil prices and set off a boom in domestic drilling. Louisiana was suddenly inundated with money and between 1975-1983, $2 billion went to construction in downtown New Orleans (Katz 1991, 24). "A state and local political system that thrived on jobs and contracts comprised a fertile milieu for the forging of a curious alliance of "liberal" politicians, national property developers,

local land speculators, suppliers of skilled services, and black political-interest groups arrayed against a traditional social elite, conservative bankers, and "good government" interests upset by the normal political practices of patronage politics (Fainstein 1983, 136)." Landrieu opened New Orleans to national hotel chains, which had been kept out by the few local families who had controlled the city's hotel business (Katz 1991, 24). Pushing real estate prices sky-high brought gentrification to the forefront for the first time as a visible issue in the city's neighborhoods. Moon Landrieu carried out the Superdome construction project, a mega-structure that set the stage for the tourist-based growth strategies for future development of New Orleans' downtown (Fainstein, 134). Using a lease financing policy, common practice in Louisiana, the state absorbed extraordinary mounting costs ($35 million proposed in 1966, actually more like $165 million in today's dollars) and allowed general taxpayers of the state to absorb all of the cost and all of the risk of a deficit-ridden project that may never become self-financing (Fainstein 1983 136). Lots of friends and former associates of Mayor Landrieu made money on the deal. James Jones was a national banking executive, with aggressive real estate lending practices, able to secure financing from out of state firms (Ibid). Architects, contractors, insurance, lawyers, and Jones' own bank made $100,000. At a time when the old oligarchy was losing power, Landrieu exchanged large-scale contracts for political support, opened up the city to outside investment, and used the boom in oil economy to put into place the foundations of a growth machine.

After two terms as mayor, Moon went on to become HUD Secretary under President Carter and Ernest "Dutch" Morial became the 1st black mayor of New Orleans. Morial, a Creole, faced shrinking local power in favor of State's rights during his term. Unlike Landrieu, Morial inherited plummeting oil prices as OPEC raised production costs (Katz 1991, 24). The city lost 50,000 people between 1980-1990 and the city lost 20,000 jobs between 1984-89 (Ibid). New Orleans faced its highest poverty rates and those census tracts with low-income residents contained 90% of black New Orleans (Fainstein 1983). As evidence of uneven urban development, whatever economic development had occurred in the 1970s had failed to provide employment to the bulk of city residents. "Poverty had become even more widespread among New Orleans black residents, who also were more geographically concentrated, and hence spatially segregated, within central-city core than had been true at the beginning of the decade (Fainstein 1983, 144)."

New Orleans neighborhoods adversely affected by gentrification or poor level of city services were organized into neighborhood associations that provided the institutional base of support for both Landrieu and Morials political base. The rise of federal dollars made these political relations possible. Both were aggressive mayors that went after federal dollars and this,

combined with uneven economic development exasperating poverty for black New Orleans, steadily increased the share of the city's formula based CDBG funds (Fainstein 1983, 157). These funds were then distributed back to neighborhoods that provided political support. For these reasons, when organized activity by discontented social forces did occur, it was localized, issue-specific, and short-lived (Fainstein 1983, 157).

Compared to massive government-imposed clearance and displacement, the more subtle and incremental displacement that occurred in the 1970s was seen as privatized economic development initiatives. Generally, they produced only localized resistance and did not garner a more visible, citywide coalition to mobilize wider discontent (Fainstein 1983, 156). Many community organizations were established to represent the different interests within the neighborhood. Tremé Community Center at the rear corner of Armstrong Park continues to host a range of community events and youth recreation activities. Tambourine and Fan and other Social and Pleasure clubs continue their activities in and around the neighborhood and the Backstreet Cultural Museum serves as a central headquarters and keeper of Mardi Gras Indian traditional and regalia. Many churches are active in the neighborhood, including historic St. Augustine's Church. St. Peter Claver is a large congregation on the other side of Claiborne. Their CDC, Ujama, has become active in the last five years in housing development in the area between Claiborne and Broad Street. Newer neighborhood associations, such as DNIA have sprung up to have a place at the decision-making table in Tremé. Esplanade Ridge continues to represent more affluent members of community. Property owners and developers have become active buying up and converting property.

Part VII. Selling Tremé, Before Katrina

A decade before Katrina, Tremé was already struggling with new issues of marketability of its location, history and place. In a repeat episode of history, Harrah's casino opened a temporary location in Municipal Auditorium in 1995. Jim Hayes, who had seen first hand the struggles of urban renewal, was wary of the costs sudden growth and development can have for an older neighborhood (Wright 1997, 137). That year saw an $8,000 jump in property values and many renters were suddenly priced out as owners had to meet higher property tax payments. Before Katrina, 92% of the people living in Tremé were African American and over 35% had lived there for more than 25 years. Nearly 80% of neighborhood residents were renters, with rents averaging $264/month. The 2000 Census reported that over half the population of Tremé is not in the labor force. This does not account for musicians and other informal economy activity. Musicians tend to make money in tips and under the table and are frequently listed

as unemployed or below poverty. They also tend to take second jobs in service economy. Of those employed, the highest percentages were found working in accommodation and food services (19.7%) and Health Care and Social Assistance (14.4%). The biggest concerns for Tremé residents identified in a 1995 CUPA report, were the displacement of long-term renters, preservation of history and culture, and mediating the effects of the aforementioned urban renewal projects.

Threat of Gentrification and Displacement

Gentrification leading to displacement is a real fear expressed by renters and long-term homeowners. "They fear that the increase in property values will cause property owners to sell to outsiders, driving out long-term residents and changing the character of the neighborhood (CUPA 1995, 8)." There is no denying that Tremé properties were going up in value before Katrina. Like other neighborhoods on the fringes of the French Quarter, Tremé was gaining attention from developers. According to Marie Marcal of Esplanade Ridge, who is renovating a place to rent on Barracks Street, there is a lot of money to be made in Tremé and the neighborhood was undergoing the most redevelopment she's ever seen. A home that sold for $35,000 in 1995 could suddenly demand between $85-100,000. (Roberts 2005). Colonial Condominiums, a $10 million, 49,000-square foot project was called the first large-scale

Image 27:
Advertisement for condominium project on
Esplanade and N. Rampart in Tremé.

condominium development project in the Tremé neighborhood's history by Elliot Perkins, acting deputy director for the Historic District Landmarks Commission (Roberts 2005). The proximity to the French Quarter, the city's most popular tourist destination, was a key marketing point Carimi used to sell his condos. In addition to condos, houses were being refurbished and sold or rented. In 2004, Historic District Landmarks Commission approves 195 certificates for construction facades in Tremé (Roberts 2005). Real estate agent from Latter and Blum Inc. Realtors says she got a lot of interest from people outside New Orleans who have heard of the Tremé's vibrant jazz culture. Her friend bought house for $20,000 and soon it was worth $250,000. Adolph Bynum bought up the entire 1200 block of St. Claude, renovating old properties and renting them to university professors, students, attorneys for $640/month, where the average rent for Tremé in 2000 was $264/month (Kamerick 2002). Even Councilwoman Jackie Clarkson agreed, in reference to the Bed and Breakfasts, "There are those trying to clear the neighborhood of people who have been here for generations so their guests feel safe (Kamerick 2002)."

Preservation of History and Culture

Before the storm hit in August 2005, many were concerned about preserving affordability or, more critical still, preserving culture. Residents and outsiders alike believe the culture of the Tremé is something that must be preserved, much like the Vieux Carre's, and forcing folks to move out will cause "erosion of indigenous culture." Ron Chisom of The People's Institute says, "When you do a deal you have to protect the culture. Tremé is more than just a dollar. It has given life to the city." (Kamerick 2002) Many I spoke to shared this sentiment. Rick Mathieu recognizes there is a lot of pressure to sell, if you're about greed. "Me I'm not into the greed. I'm into a legacy. I'm going to pass it. A lot of people all over the city share that with me. If you ain't got no where to go, you got your own home. Where you can be like you want to be." One point of contention between cultural preservation and change is evident in the tensions emerging between newcomers and old Tremé residents over live music venues. New residents don't want loud late night music and activity next door to them. But older Tremé residents recognize the small clubs and 2nd line parades as part of the neighborhood fabric that define their culture and historic neighborhood and make Tremé what it is. The people, culture, and character of the place are deeply rooted in the neighborhood's history and critical to defining the fate of its future.

CHAPTER 4:
Tremé Post Katrina

In all of New Orleans, it was the Tremé neighborhood that was most affected by urban renewal. Now it is positioned in the center of an enormous rebuilding process and preparing to "take the hit" in the 21st Century as well. Chapter 3 outlined the multiple urban renewal projects that re-shaped the Tremé neighborhood in the 60's and 70's. While the larger context of rebuilding the Gulf is beyond the scope of this research, it is important to outline this new phase of development that the Tremé neighborhood must contend with.

What follows in this chapter is a four part rapid assessment of development politics and practice in New Orleans after Katrina, with a focus on the Treme. In Part I, I provide a brief indication of what occurred during and in the days following the storm including government failures and what that experience was like for residents who remained in the city, as it was told to me. In Part II, I survey the issues surrounding land and potential displacement: property, insurance, FEMA, rezoning, and rebuilding work. In Chapter 3, the history of Tremé focused on the importance of neighborhood places and a sense of the commons in creating a strong foundation for the neighborhood. I pick up on these themes in Part III of this chapter by discussing the neighborhood places that are "disappearing" in the wake of Katrina. Part IV examines the planning process as it is unfolding, covering local commissions, varied planning agendas, and neighborhood-level planning processes. Here I assess the capacity of residents and community institutions and potential readiness to respond, recover, and facilitate the rebuilding process. The data are from a range of first person sources, interview, observation, and my own field notes, supplemented by newspaper reports and secondary assessments. I have not tried to lend this setting an order that does not, in fact, exist there. The post-Katrina landscape is one of confusion and mixed messages, a vacuum of leadership and government, a climate of trauma, mistrust, and unanswered questions. It is in this landscape that the phenomenon I have termed *predatory planning* is emerging.

Part I: The "Not So Perfect" Storm

The U.S. acknowledges the Katrina crisis as the "worst natural disaster" in its history; the United Nations characterized the cataclysmic storm as one of the world's worst natural disasters in terms of property damage, even outstripping the December tsunami in Asia that killed 180,000 people and caused $10 billion in destruction. (Seper September 4, 2005) The damage to life and property was made worse by the government's response to Katrina before, during and after the storm. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell criticized the response to Hurricane Katrina, saying "a lot of failures" occurred at all levels of government (CBS News September 9, 2005). As the storm approached, the government failed to notify residents appropriately and to provide adequate means of evacuation for the nearly half million who lacked their own means to evacuate. FEMA became notorious for its inefficient bureaucracy at a time when people remained desperately in need of relief and response.

After the levees were breached, it was days before people saw any relief or response from FEMA or any public or private entity. When relief finally did arrive, it was sporadic, chaotic and—from the perspective of many residents—rife with racism and terrorist tactics. Residents who remained in the city gave numerous reports of armed officials, such as the Texas Fish and Wildlife Department, pilfering homes, arresting, and harassing people throughout the neighborhoods. "Somewhere rescuers crossed the line from being rescuers to being vigilantes." The vernacular of war was something I encountered all throughout the black community in New Orleans. From checkpoints to enter the city in the aftermath, harassment, accusations of looting, getting "jacked up" by National Guard, and "those Texas boys," many young men told me of arrests in the days following the storm under accusations of violating curfew while they were out searching for family members or accusations of looting for carrying supplies to a neighbor. In the absence of government response, neighborhood camps arose. People bonded together, foraging for food and basic survival in the toxic floodwater. Water, ice, and gas became precious commodities. Many interactions with residents began with stories of where they were doing to storm and what they saw and expereinces. Oftentimes, they would repeat the stories, revealing slightly different details each time. A common theme among people who experiences the aftermath of Katrina was the water. "That water was black," or "the water just kept rising so fast, it was everywhere." Another interview revealed what many did not mention. "There was everything in that water with us, we saw so many dead bodies. We seen terrible things no one should ever see (Young resident, personal interview)."

Tremé during Katrina

As opposed to other areas that were completely decimated, the Tremé neighborhood fared relatively well in the immediate aftermath of the storm. Some areas within Tremé remained dry, while others took in 3-7 feet of water, and wind and roof damage were found throughout the neighborhood. In a surreal irony, the highway that nearly destroyed a way of life for Tremé when it was constructed was seen on national and international news saving the lives of thousands of residents who sought refuge on the raised expressway awaiting airlift or evacuation by buses.

Since Katrina, 65% of New Orleans population has not yet returned and much of Tremé's 8,853 pre-Katrina residents are not back in the neighborhood. People who evacuated have been scattered around the country. Many residents I spoke to who remained in the city during the flood, did not know where their neighbors were or how to get in touch with them. Rick Mathieu, who deployed boats and personally rescued many people in the 6th and 7th Wards, does not know where his closest neighbors ended up. After twelve days of survival and rescue work in the flood, he was forced onto a plane without knowledge as to the destination until they announced, "You are now landing in Omaha, Nebraska." His brother was sent to a FEMA camp in Wisconsin and only returned in late March.

The lack of accountability in post-Katrina New Orleans includes gross mismanagement of federal funding intended for Katrina victims. According to a Brookings study, of the $62 billion earmarked by Congress, only $4.4 billion has gone to direct aid to victims in the form of cash and rental assistance, $3.1 billion for trailers and mobile homes, and $6.7 billion in debris removal and infrastructure repair (Myers, 12.22.05). "The big surprise here is how little money has actually gone out the door. The demand on the ground is absolutely immense today; unfortunately that demand has not been met," says Brookings reconstruction expert Matt Fellowes (Myers). Congress has grown increasingly frustrated with FEMA and, in December, took $24 billion away from FEMA and sent it directly to Gulf States and other agencies, hoping to speed the recovery (Myers).

While relief was notoriously slow to come, other aspects of the rebuilding process came at a more rapid pace. FEMA got $1.5 billion in the month after Katrina. Another $9.4 billion in contracts was awarded to private out of state companies through no-bid contracts to Bush administration associates. Attention has also focused on Joe Allbaugh, Bush's former campaign manager and former Director of FEMA. Allbaugh has two corporate clients, the Shaw group and Halliburton. With Allbaugh providing general consulting on business matters, Shaw has received

$100 million in FEMA contracts, mostly in housing management and construction (Crichton, 2/11/05). The company increased their profits 200% over the last year thanks in large part to "significant hurricane recovery work (Watch 2006). " The Shaw group was the largest recipient of roof contracts, charging 42% more for repairs than a minority-owned business contractor in Alabama doing the same work (Watch 2006). The major Halliburton subsidiary on the scene, Kellogg Brown and Root, secured $29.8 million in Pentagon contracts rebuilding Navy bases in Louisiana (Crichton, 2/11/05). Some 600 federal investigators are in the gulf region doing audits and investigating possible waste and corruption (Lisa Myers and NBC 12.22.05).

An estimated over 150,000 jobs were lost in New Orleans due to Katrina (Watch 2006). The perception on the ground is that these corporate contracts are forcing local labor out of the market. This is most tangible in the divide between longtime black unemployment, which has increased since the storm, and the pretense of new immigrant labor in New Orleans. Babatunji Ahmed, a craftsman, said construction contracts were going to major corporations such as Halliburton instead of to local workers. Babatunji, representing local contractors and skilled workers in the building trades, spoke up at the Mayor's Bring New Orleans Back Commission meeting. "Immigrant labor was lined up even before the flood waters were down. It is our city, it's up to us to rebuild. You are talking about rebuilding our city without us (3/20/06)." This particularly impacts Tremé, where many residents have a tradition of skills in the building trades. He proposed a temporary housing plan for workers, "60 days, tools, food, housing and get to work."

Bureaucratic difficulties within FEMA have been exacerbated by local resistance, from predominantly white parishes, to the deployment of temporary housing in FEMA trailers in their areas. Only 8 out of Louisiana's 64 parishes granted FEMA unconditional permission to site the trailers (Watch 2006). Of the 21,000 trailers requested by New Orleans residents, only 3,000 had been installed as of February (Watch 2006). FEMA blamed the slow deployment on NIMBYism (Not in my back yard). At the Maple Leaf Jazz Bar, the Rebirth Brass Band gets the crowd to call out, "Hey, FEMA where's my trailer?" and early this year New Orleans rapper 5th Ward Weebie released his latest hit, "What's your FEMA number?"

Image 28: Contractors clearing debris off the streets

Image 29: Nine months after the storms, damage and debris are still visible; whole neighborhoods are still largely abondoned.

Image 30: A FEMA trailer installed in front of a house in the 7th Ward.

Part II: The Land Up for Grabs

For neighborhood residents, renters and homeowners, the binding issue is the land that has been their home. For developers, investors, governments, universities, and corporations, the focus is on real estate and potential opportunities. The conflict between exchange value and use value of New Orleans neighborhoods is heightened by the post-disaster context. Below, I draw on my participant observation and interviews with people from these stakeholder groups to understand the questions being posed about property in Tremé within the larger context of rebuilding New Orleans.

An estimated 207,000 of 434,216 of homes in the parishes that make up New Orleans Metropolitan Statistical Area are deemed uninhabitable by the storm. The residential replacement costs for Orleans Parish alone is estimated at $22 million (Watch, 2006). Complications with insurance, segmented mortgage and housing markets, dissolving public services, and new zoning guidelines have created a complex nexus within which land decisions are maneuvered.

While Katrina has clearly given cause for an enormous rebuilding effort, the centrally located neighborhood of the Tremé was already poised for investment and redevelopment. "For the first quarter of the 2006, sales of single-family homes in the greater New Orleans area zoomed to $826 million, a jump of 60 percent over the first quarter of 2005, according to New Orleans Metropolitan Association of Realtors. Experts say there's nothing to be surprised about: One of the ironies of natural disasters is they're often good for real estate (Callimachi 2006)." In Tremé, property values have increased sharply since Katrina and Sotheby's Realty and For Sale signs can be found throughout the neighborhood. In an extreme version of the growth machine, the neighborhood will clearly be deemed viable, but the question remains, for whom? Many new stakeholders have entered the picture and are engaged in the struggle for land, control of development, and profits. The sense of predation is palpable and widespread.

Insurance

Even before the storm, the National Association of Independent Insurers (NAII) was lobbying to modernize the state's insurance laws and attract more insurance companies to the Louisiana market. "Companies have found it difficult to conduct insurance business in the state because of its... prior approval rate regulatory law, extremely high loss costs, rigorous statutory requirements of the FAIR Plan and the struggle to make a profit in recent years...This stringent rate and filing requirement is part of why Louisiana boasts the second highest average property premium in the nation —second only to Texas (Insurance Journal March 31, 2003)."

FEMA administers the National Flood Insurance Program, but it pays back recoverable depreciation only on policies that involve single-family, owner-occupied homes that carry flood insurance coverage equal to at least 80 percent of the replacement cost of the building. If your flood insurance policy does not equal 80 percent of your home's replacement cost, your depreciation is non-recoverable (Quillian 4/9/06). As far as the dealings with private insurance companies, resident Rick Mathieu says, "drips and drabs". Like many others, he is still waiting. "The state has a mediation board, but nothing comes of that. You have to get a private adjuster or lawyer and give them their 10% so they will go after your claims." Mathieu is also concerned about the waiting time for reporting and getting an adjuster. Referring to a hailstorm they had four or five years ago, when his friend was a week late calling the adjuster, he had to pay out of pocket to redo the roof on his house.

In many cases, the slow pace of the whole process of insurance and FEMA settlements has forced bankruptcy and foreclosure. A woman in the Mayor's meeting offered, "I am 77 years old; I've paid All State Insurance for over 50 years. I have 35 years of flood insurance. Why did I buy insurance all those years?" Another Tremé resident pointed out that some people may not have insurance because their house has been passed down from generation to generation and they may own it outright, and not need insurance. Rick

Image 31: Residents doing their own repairs. Image 32: Debris in Treme streets in five months after the storm.
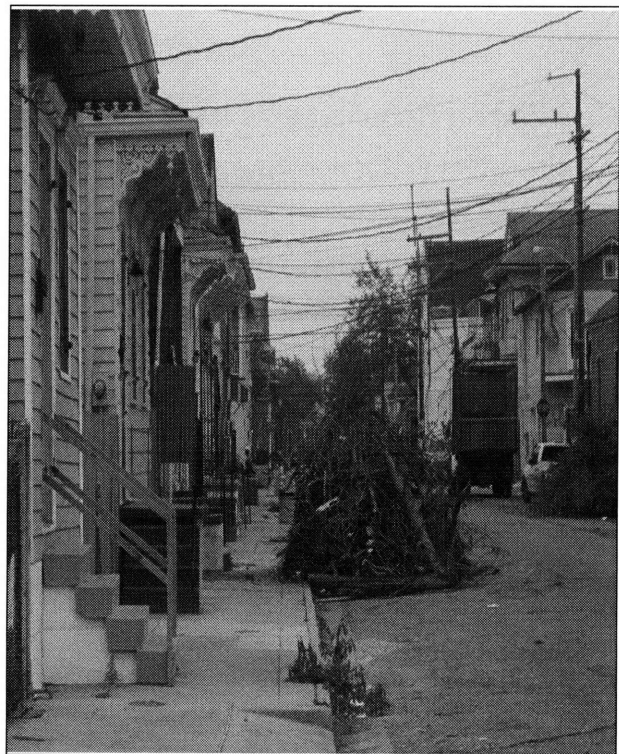
Mathieu is a Tremé homeowner. He thinks people with no flood insurance will likely sell their houses. FEMA money is not enough to stabilize them. There was amnesty on payments until January 2006 but after that, "There are sharks in the water, and they are smelling blood. A lot of people are going to be left homeless. People with notes are going to foreclose. A lot of people will lose their house (Mathieu, personal interview)." The latest obstacle is that for now, nationally recognized insurance companies, including All State and State Farm, are not willing to offer any new policies in the region.

Mortgage Relief

One factor excluding tens of thousands of homeowners from highly publicized mortgage relief is the segmentation of the market between prime and sub prime lending. According to HUD, sub prime loans are typically for persons with blemished or limited credit histories. The loans carry a higher rate of interest than prime loans to compensate for increased credit risk (HUD). ACORN found that sub prime mortgage lending accounts for 46% of all loans to African Americans in the New Orleans area as opposed to 15.8% of loans to whites (Chang, 9/26/05). Wells Fargo Financial, a major sub prime-lending unit, is only offering relief to its sub prime clients on a case-by-case basis. It is estimated that over 25% of mortgage loans in Louisiana are 30 days or more past due. Sub prime clients are more likely to face foreclosure. In addition, bad credit is mounting on victims' permanent credit reports, which will have repercussions for people trying to acquire loans, buy a house, or finance a college education for generations to come.

New Zoning Requirements and Rebuilding Policies

Another obstacle for homeowners is the new zoning from FEMA that says those in a floodplain, which includes Tremé, will have to raise their houses three feet before they can rebuild. Those that don't will face a three or four times increase the cost of flood insurance. One resident told me, "You had to go before March 15th to be grandfathered in or else you're stuck, and thousands and thousands of people are going to be stuck. FEMA is giving $30,000 grants, but you can only jack up certain sized houses with that and the rest has to come out of pockets." When I asked what will happen to those that do not have the money, he responded, "Take $150,000 and tear your house down and you're gone, you're out of here." Another longtime resident with family in the neighborhood for generations and a clear understanding of the larger politics offers, "I tell people, if you can wait, wait. Don't go and give out your property yet, just hold on (Anonymous Treme resident, personal interview)."

Deadlines

On April 19th the City Council voted unanimously to approve a bill that would give residents an August 29th deadline for gutting, cleaning, mold remediation, and securing their homes (Eggler, 4/21/06). Those that are unable to complete the job will face buyouts or bulldozing. Councilman Batt, who introduced the ordinance, called the homes that sit ungutted and remediated "environmental biohazards" rather than the traditional "blighted." Many homeowners have not begun cleaning out homes because they either are uncertain about the fate of their neighborhoods, or are still addressing their own displacement issues, or have yet settle with insurance and do not have the money to invest right now.

In response to homeowners who need financial assistance to remediate their property, Batt says a website will list nonprofit organizations that can work with them. With 200,000 flood damaged homes, people are being forced to rely on groups like People's Hurricane and Common Ground who deploy students and volunteers to gut homes. These groups do not have the capacity to address this level of need.

Large-scale Property Buyout

New Orleans is about to face an enormous increase in vacant, abandoned and blighted properties. Many owners will soon stop paying taxes on neighborhoods that have not been redeveloped. The tax base is struggling, and the city can't provide basic services. This will further depress property values. When and if the state orders federally funded buyout of damaged homes, many properties will be up for grabs. The fate of these properties will determine future development and shape the city as whole. As the Associated Press recently warned, "Hurricane Katrina may prove to be the biggest, most brutal urban-renewal project Black America has ever seen (Davis, 10/25/05)."

At the moment, the city has far too many agencies and entities with overlapping responsibilities and contradictory procedures involved in handling this at-risk property (Lovitt, 3/11/06). In 2004, national experts studied New Orleans' tax adjudication system and recommended the city unify the agencies and programs dealing with vacant and abandoned property into one administrative body with a transparent, internet accessible database (Lovitt, 3/11/06).

Use of eminent domain to deal with neighborhoods that are deemed non-viable is part of the BNOB plan. Another plan was to use powers of 'usufruct' to obtain properties from willing

owners, rather than eminent domain, setting up a redevelopment authority with an extensive rebuilding role. Rep. Richard Baker has been the main proponent of a bill to create the Louisiana Recovery Corporation (LRC) for usufruct purposes. The way usufruct works is that LRC would buy the rights to private property, rebuilding, profiting, and then negotiating with the owner years later (Welch 2/1/06). The bill states, however, that if the owner doesn't like the government's terms, the corporation may exercise the power of eminent domain. Perhaps this is why the term "usufruct" was cleverly referred to as the "U So F***ed" policy by folks on the ground (Organization staff, personal interview)." Residents talked extensively about mistrust for the government and corruption at all levels, especially at the state level. They expressed fear over the implications of the Louisiana government becoming the largest construction firm and residential real estate company on the Gulf Coast (Ibid, and personal interviews).

In the meantime, concepts of eminent domain and government redevelopment corporations are being expanded through US Congress. While use of eminent domain could be used to fight off speculators, others worry about people being forced from their homes. This occurred during the storm as people who tried to stay behind were forced to leave by armed officials. There is also the historical relevance of forced displacement through urban renewal and the recent experience during the storm to contend with. Mama D gained national attention for her refusal to evacuate her home on N. Dorgenois Street. Mathieu says, "Why should you be forced to evacuate? If you don't have any money as long as you were "high and dry" (meaning high ground, not flooded out). Also, if they had the self-determination, food, water, gas, a boat, supplies, and their family close by.

The problem of mistrust between community and government, and among different community factions, is a major obstacle in the rebuilding process. Specifically with respect to the idea of land banking, which has been floated but have not made much progress. Land banking is simply the practice of acquiring land and holding it for future use. Land trusts can be set up so communities have control over what that future use becomes. Community organizations with the leadership capacity to act as acquisition, ownership, and land management entities on the scale required simply do not exist in the region, and residents mistrust those that might be capable. One woman referred to the concept of owning the house but not the land as "modern-day sharecropping." This sentiment makes land banking a difficult sell to residents, some of who are old enough to remember firsthand experience with sharecropping.

Historical Uses of Rezoning, Insurance Post-Disaster

Rezoning and pricing out have been used historically as mechanisms for clearing populations deemed undesirable to make way for redevelopment. Tremé's historic and current challenges hold parallels to a case from Tulsa, OK in 1921. Alfred Brophy's book, <u>Reconstructing the Dreamland</u> (2002) tells the story of what happened to the black neighborhood of Greenwood in Tulsa after mounting racial tension exploded when city officials armed an angry white mob. In the violence that followed, many people were murdered, and the upwardly mobile Greenwood neighborhood, once called Black Wall Street, was burned to the ground.

Within days of the violence, the Real Estate Exchange put together a proposal for Greenwood. The group, made up of Chamber of Commerce members, saw that the area would be three times more valuable as a commercial district. They suggested forced relocation for the black neighborhood farther north, putting more separation between volatile race relations in the area. To accomplish this, they enacted a zoning change that required burned properties be rebuilt using fire proof materials and be at least two stories high. This effectively priced out the African American residents, who were also tied up in courts with claims on insurance companies. Insurance was refusing to pay fire damages claiming that the riot caused the fire, hence relieving them of any liability. The resistance was substantial and Greenwood residents began rebuilding despite the ordinance. They enacted the slogan, 'I'll hold what I have until I get what I lost.' Residents began rebuilding despite the ordinance. "The property owners argued that the city was depriving them of their property by such restrictive building regulations. They argued, in addition, that the city could not interfere with property owners in a way that left them homeless, thus endangering their health (Brophy 2002, 94)." The legal fight eventually overturned the new zoning laws, but the city provided little support for rebuilding. Many community members had already relocated. Sympathy from white Tulsa turned to resentment and eventually threats of continued violence. Hundreds of insurance claims were tied up in courts and appeals for decades and very few saw any settlement as a result.

This story foreshadows what New Orleans may have to face nearly 85 years later. To hear Rick Mathieu tell it, Tremé and New Orleans also experienced a violent suppression of black residents while the floodwaters were high and their neighborhoods came under attack from vigilante officials. In Tulsa, during the riot, violence and fire, many residents reported having seen planes overhead, and people were convinced the neighborhood had been bombed from overhead. In New Orleans, the idea that the levees were blown is common belief among neighborhood people and a frequent topic of conversation. They implicate the Army Corps of Engineers, convinced they blew up the levees in order to save the rest of the city. This has been documented in the

1927 Mississippi River flood, and believed to be true in 1965 when Hurricane Betsey flooded the Lower 9th Ward.

In the aftermath of Katrina, real estate boards and the Chamber of Commerce were coming together to create plans. Nagin put together his commission to lead the local planning process. Ordinances and rezoning are stressing local residents, pricing people out, and forcing people to move or foreclose. Insurance is not paying out claims easily and homeowners are forced to sue and pursue claims through the courts. The parallels between 1927 Tulsa and 2006 New Orleans is unavoidable.

Part III: Disappearing Neighborhood Places

In Tremé, critical neighborhood places and cultural institutions are disappearing. Restaurants and businesses remain largely closed in Tremé, even nine months after the storm. Musical venues are struggling without patrons. The New Orleans economy is largely driven by small businesses, and these owners are facing real struggles in reopening their businesses and staying open. Many have lost their employees and their customer base. Bridge loans are needed to support business owners to recover. A bar and restaurant owner in the 7th Ward explained his situation by saying, "I got 3 contractors, a roof guy, an electric guy, and I have to sue the insurance company just to see some money from them and that's costing me legal fees." The Small Business Administration, which was efficient in recapitalizing post San-Fernando Valley quake, has been slow to offer support despite desperate pleas from tens of thousands of homeowners and small business people facing imminent foreclosure or bankruptcy (Vasquez 2005). Barbara Major, chair of the BNOB Commission, has worked to secure investment to specifically support minority-owned businesses, which she sees as the backbone to stabilize the black middle class ("Real Voices of Katrina" Town Hall, Roxbury, MA, December 10, 2005).

Hospitals

Only 7 out of the 22 Orleans Parish hospitals have reopened. Despite the community's best efforts to organize a resistance, University Charity Hospitals, which were set up under Huey Long in the 1930s and served 66% of the city's uninsured patients, have now closed (Watch 2006). Rick Mathieu had had good experiences with Charity hospital when he had a medical emergency. He points out Charity was a state hospital so they could afford to have the best equipment. "They had the million-dollar equipment and the best doctors, since all the doctors had to float through charity before they went on to other hospitals (Mathieu, personal interview)."

Schools

Tremé has three school buildings labeled as expiring use, meaning they could be converted to other uses. The fact that schools do not show signs of reopening, save for a few that serve mostly white neighborhoods, has remained a critical issue. Only 20 of the 117 pre-Katrina New Orleans public schools have reopened and 16 of them have reopened as charter schools (Watch 2006). But with the majority of schools still closed nine months out, many families have been prevented from returning home. A school system that was struggling, even taken over by the State at one point before Katrina, now faces the possibility of dissolution. While school failure has prevented folks from returning home, it has also been a main obstacle to redevelopment and attracting new residents to the city. Now the school district may begin auctioning off its final asset: prime real estate. According to Lolis Elie of the Times Picayune, "Plans to sell off low performing schools under Senate Bill 308, have a provision that allows the state to sidestep public bid requirement. Private developers or entities could outbid educational institutions. Even private schools could buy up properties and sell them off to the private developers at a handsome profit. What we are seeing is the slow dismantling of the public school system in favor of an ever-growing private system (Elie 4/15/06)." With three expiring use schools in the Tremé neighborhood and such desired land, this will certainly have an impact on the neighborhood's future.

Renters

Schools are only one example of the many deals being wagered in the land grab for Tremé. One big question is how renters will survive the recovery planning process. Renters comprised 53% of the city's population pre-Katrina, with a high level of 80% in pre-Katrina Tremé. Many of them were long time neighborhood residents 2000 Census recorded over 32% of residents had lived there since before 1989 and my personal interviews revealed many in the 6th and 7th Wards had lived in the neighborhood or in the specific house for more than one generation. Since the storm, the rental market that had already been heating up has gotten very tight. Rents have skyrocketed, especially in high ground neighborhoods where land values have increased sharply. In Louisiana, Attorney General Charles Foti Jr.'s office has fielded more than 450 complaints of housing-related price gouging since Katrina, said spokeswoman Kris Wartelle (Kunzelman 2006). Landlords galvanized by rumors of gentrification and soaring land values are beginning to institute mass evictions (Vasquez 2005). 10,000 New Orleans residents were evicted from their homes when Blanco's 2-month moratorium on legal proceedings expired in November (Index 2006).

One pressure on landlords to increase rent is that the post-Katrina support earmarked for them is

coming in the form of loans and tax credits that must be repaid, not grants or relief. This is part of a 2-track system in which homeowners are supposed to receive government grants to rebuild, while landlords get tax credits and loans. This is to be considered "investment not compensation" (Gosselin, 12/4/05). Another pressure on smaller landlords, who make up the majority of landlords around the city and especially in Tremé, is that unlike larger apartment complexes, many of their properties were not necessarily insured. The Mayor's Executive Assistant for Housing and Neighborhood Development, Tony Faciane, identified one of the reasons why renters in large multi-unit rental housing will face difficulties if redevelopment is purely market driven "Large multi-unit owners made out good with the storm. If they had 300 units, they may have gotten $3 or $3.5 million in insurance. What incentives are there to put that money back in and rebuild rather than take it somewhere else?"

Public Housing

The discussion of renters and landlords is also connected to public housing, a key point of contention in the rebuilding process. One of the major questions on the table is what will happen to the nine public housing developments in New Orleans post-Katrina and a reported 36,000 displaced public housing residents. In circular logic that is indicative of the stagnant rebuilding efforts, the Times Picayune was quoted as saying HUD is waiting on word from Nagin and Blanco, who are waiting on HUD to give an answer as to what is about to happen with over 7,000 public housing units in the city (Times Picayune 3/28).

During the storm, public housing residents were forced to leave their homes even if flooding was not devastating. In Tremé, the Lafitte public housing development was quickly boarded and sealed with metal over windows and doors to keep people from returning or reinhabiting. "Public housing and Section 8 residents recently protested that the agencies in charge of these housing complexes (including HUD) are using allegations of storm damage to these complexes as a pretext for expelling working-class African Americans, in a very blatant attempt to co-opt our homes and sell them to developers to build high-priced housing (Davis 2005)."

Tremé is ripe for reinvestment, but it is still home to two public housing developments: Iberville and Lafitte. Jay Arena is a vocal proponent of "Hands Off Iberville/C3,"a tenant-led initiative to resist redevelopment of the Iberville Housing Development since long before Katrina. According to Arena:

> Real estate sharks and the tourist industry, and their servants at city hall, and HANO, have been working to destroy Iberville for many years. In the late 1980s a "task force" was formed, led by corporate lawyer Donald Mintz, to co-opt the tenants' leadership to support "redevelopment". In 2001 New Orleans Saints owner Thomas Benson floated a plan to demolish Iberville and build a new stadium on the site. In 2004, real estate developer Pres Kabacoff has presented a "final solution" for Iberville. His plan for a "revitalized" Canal Street includes massive displacement of the existing community. The housing authority is cooperating. In October 2004 they released a plan that would reduce Iberville from 853 to only 200 public housing units (Arena 2005).

Like many longstanding challenges in Treme, their struggles have intensified and accelerated post-Katrina. In addition, Faciane commented on the Lafitte dilemma, centered on the pressure of real investment because it is so close to the French Quarter. "Keep your eyes on that. That will set the tone for how HANO and HUD will deal with public housing throughout the city." This speaks to how the results of rebuilding in Tremé will set the tone for the rest of the city.

Image 33:
"Repping the cause."

In addition to the lack of incentives to owners of rental units to rebuild and return, Faciane says it's difficult to get large-scale rental units because of the negative stigma of public housing residents. This is evident in public housing and social policy historically, but even more so since public housing and the poor have grown increasingly non-white. New Orleans public housing was notorious before Katrina. Public housing sites were frequent sites of crime and violence in New Orleans, and contained the poorest of the city's residents. The census block containing Lafitte had an income of $5,000/yr in 2000. Rep. Baker's comments that, "God having finally cleaned up public housing in New Orleans", and Barbara Bush assuring the nation that many Katrina victims are better off, demonstrate the weight of the stigma of ghetto poverty and dealing with public housing residents of the city. Discouraging large complexes of poor people by encouraging builders to create mixed income development is a popular strategy for dealing with this issue. In the context of New Orleans, this reminds people of the HOPE VI redevelopment of St. Thomas, which severed trust between planners and the community in very public way.

St. Augustine's Church

In addition to the church's status as the oldest black Catholic Church in the country, it is also a central cultural institution and symbol of pride for Creole New Orleans. The Archdiocese announced plans to close the parish in the wake of Katrina. Attempts to shut down St. Augustine's Church were met with local direct action and resistance and national media attention. Father LeDoux had become a beloved community figure and fundamental piece of Treme neighborhood. He had reintroduced many of the traditions of resistance and culture back into the church. He built a Tomb of the Unknown Slave in the garden of the church in memory of the nameless Africans slaves who met an untimely death in Treme. His jazz mass was attended my musicians and neighborhood folks and many community elders who aren't regular church attendees support Father LeDoux and St. Augustine's.

St. Augustine regained its status as a critical neighborhood place once again in the aftermath of Katrina. Church supporters point out, "St. Augustine's Parish has partnered with numerous community education, human service, and government institutions to provide free groceries, health care services, home repairs, and technical assistance to our community members post-Katrina… As we struggle to rebuild our lives, families, homes and communities we need our spiritual leaders to support us now more than ever (flyer)."
Attendance shot up as volunteers and outsiders came to support the church. I attended Father LeDoux's last mass and the crowd overflowed out into the street, some in tears, some in anger and frustration.

The following week Father Jacques, a white priest in charge of St. Peter Claver church, attempted to take control of the parish. He came with ten plainclothes security men who were allegedly armed but was driven from the church by young protesters who carried signs and picketed the service. The St. Augustine's conflict helps illustrates a number of points about the current climate. The divide between St. Augustine's and St. Peter Claver represents the polarized community on either side of Claiborne, a divide that grew stronger with the I-10 dissection. More than church politics, the conflict is also about real estate development. St. Peter Claver church has a development arm in the form of a CDC called Ujama. They are equipped to deal in acquisition and redevelopment of archdiocese properties. St. Augustine's, on the other hand, holds the culture, history, musicians, and traditions of resistance in Creole Tremé. The mobilization of community and church elders alongside student volunteers and organizers from around the country was a demonstration of what is possible with alliances and direct action organizing. They occupied the church rectory and kept a 24-hour vigil. Their complaints included the lack of communication and fair process, since St. Augustine's was given 72 hours notice, and the decision was published in the newspaper before the pastor was informed. The appeal hearing was categorized by the Archdiocese as merely a 'listening session' (flyer). To provide further disruption at a time when the community is clearly destabilized is experienced as an assault on their culture and
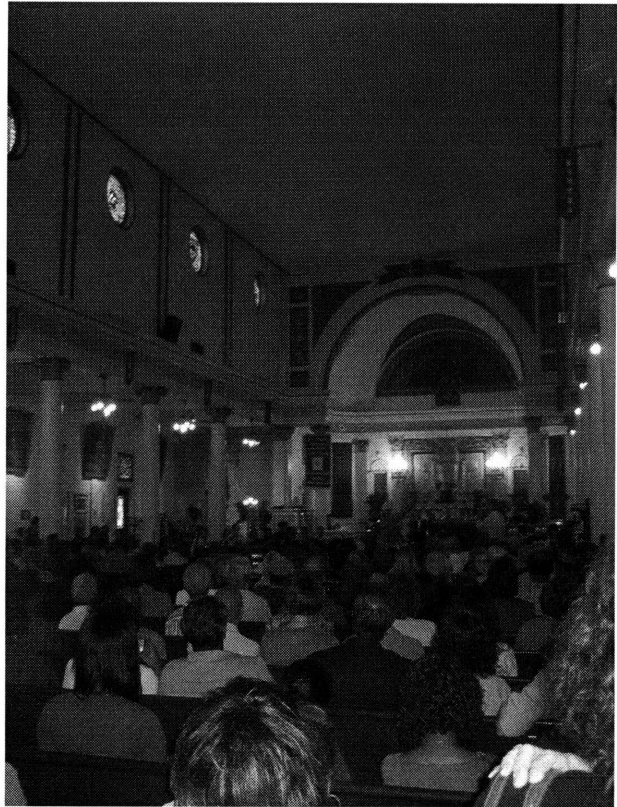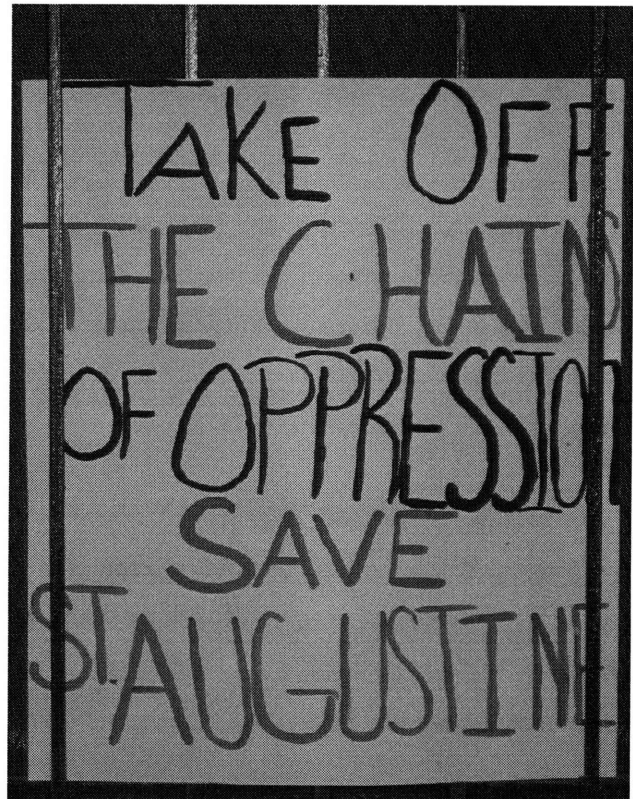

Image 34: Father LeDoux's last service.
Image 35: A sample of the protest signs to Save St. Augustine's Church.

viability as a cohesive community.

In the end, the action was successful and received national media attention. The Church will remain open and while, Father LeDoux is not returned, another priest from his order has been placed at St. Augustine's. This success, while it may seem small to some, was celebrated as a positive example of residents, volunteers, and organizers pulling together to fight for their neighborhood places in the face of so much destruction.

Opportunities?

For some, disappearing neighborhood places represent a loss of assets and a further blow to social capital networks. For others, this shifting landscape represents opportunities. Lafitte corridor was sold in public auction for more than $100 million to site a 320,000 square foot movie studio development project called Louisiana Institute of Film Technology (LIFT). "Some neighborhood residents now have begun questioning the proposed sale…the residents say they don't understand why neighborhood associations were not informed of the proposal before the commission and council voted (Eggler, May 2006). With such a major investment deal going in right next to Lafitte Housing Development, it may be an indication that the answer to the question of what will happen to Lafitte has already been decided. National labor unions are looking to invest in the neighborhood through acquisition and development of Tremé property including the Lafitte Housing Project. Enterprise Foundation, a national subsidiary, has linked up with Catholic Charities to support large-scale investment and development deals. The Catholic Church has set up CDCs to absorb CDBG funds and manage the development of Archdiocese-owned properties. Universities from across the country are coming down to do demonstration architecture and planning projects for different pieces of the neighborhood. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard, Wentworth Institute of Technology, and Tulane University have all become active in the Tremé since Katrina. Thousands of college students have made a pilgrimage to the South to gutting houses and perform a range of alternative Spring Break service projects.

Despite some of the good intentions behind these outside parties, the sense of trauma and mistrust on the ground places them in the context of predation. "The market here, it's a gold mine. The houses are worth gold. That house behind me, they just sold it for $495,000. Of course you got Harvard and all those people coming in here trying to get something for nothing (Rick Mathieu)." At times people may have a positive model with efforts at local partnership. Mistrust for outsiders makes it difficult for these external players to plug into local planning and

projects in a way that supports local people. Without clear guidelines for accountability or a structure for building local partnerships and capacity on the ground, it is all too easy to fall into a place that contributes to further displacement and disruption of already devastated local networks and places.

Part IV: The Planning Process

It seems that, all at once, everyone has a plan and yet no one has a plan. There are numerous bodies established to take on the rebuilding process, yet none have clear actionable items or clear power to implement their vision. There is Governor Blanco's Louisiana Recovery Association, Mayor Nagin's Bring New Orleans Back Commission, the City Council has a plan, and now some neighborhood council districts are starting to create their own plans. Different nongovernmental groups, academics and outside planners have been involved in this process. But there is little to no oversight or coordination as to who is involved and how they are carried out.

In addition to various levels of government planning, there is much private planning as well. "You got developers that are entrenched in BNOB process, so of course you don't want to be totally inclusive because you don't want it to be, you want it to be cloak and dagger so you don't know what's going on. In terms of real estate, depends on how it's played out. This is the opportunity of a lifetime for developers. It's a land grab (Planning official, personal interview)." Andres Duany and the Congress for the New Urbanists are on the scene advocating for their vision of development. He completed a neighborhood plan for St. Bernard Parish and, more recently, the Gentilly neighborhood of New Orleans. Private redevelopers and architects such as Reid Korloff and Ray Manning were also competing for multi-million dollar planning contracts. Joseph Canizaro is a leading figure involved in the planning process. A wealthy property developer who is a leading Bush supporter with close personal ties to the White House inner circle and Nagin's election (David 2006). He was also centrally involved in the St. Thomas redevelopment. "As the former president of the Urban Land Institute, Canizaro mobilizes the support of some of the nation's most powerful developers and prestigious master planners (Ibid)."

The theme of exclusion and marginalization from the process was a saturated theme throughout my data. Rick Mathieu talks about the exclusion of local knowledge in the planning process. He believes local labor should be used and local know-how in rebuilding climate and culturally appropriate housing. He believes that much of the new building technology and design ideas

do not make sense on the ground. "You can't be an architect or engineer if you don't dirty your hands," he says, "Tell them from a person that did the work that they designed on paper, it didn't work. We had to do it the way we know from using your hands."

Mayor Nagin and The Bring New Orleans Back Commission:

Driven by a pro-business platform, Nagin was elected on a 70% white vote in 2002. Post-Katrina, he quickly assembled a commission of private developers and business elites to address rebuilding. His appointment of Barbara Major, a grassroots leader with affiliation to the People's Institute, as co-chair of the committee was seen as placating dissent from the black community.

The most glaring oversight in the Bring Back New Orleans plan, despite its name, is its lack of any measurable steps to actually bring people back. It also assumes a level of capacity from local people, neighborhoods and organizations. The plans assume that people can find their neighbors, orchestrate a return, and carry out neighborhood plans to prove viability of their areas. Ironically, the plan also uses people's struggles to do all this efficiently to justify ideas such as: the creation of a new redevelopment authority that would have decision power over city council and other elected representatives; moratoriums on rebuilding for residents in affected areas; and scheduled buyout dates for whole neighborhoods.

Within Nagin's plan, remnants of urban renewal and planned shrinkage are both evident. Also clear is the continuation of uneven development. There is talk about shrinking the footprint of the city, and leaving former residential neighborhoods as the innocuous 'green space.' Planners are also excited about a new light rail system that would run between the airport and the Central Business District. While important to secure investment and business, the light rail represents an example of the ongoing disconnect between planners' ideas and community needs. As some sit without water and electricity, others are proposing the latest trends in green technology trends and new light rail rapid transit systems.

One discernable fact about the plans is that they have few tangible steps. Some practical plans that are noticeably absent from the dialogue include:

1. **Clear protocol on how to safely gut a house and remediate mold.** There are many people providing this service, including droves of student volunteers, but no one is quite sure what the protocol or safety factor is.
2. **A plan for finding residents and providing support for them to return home.** There needs to be clear cooperation between federal government, FEMA, state, and

local agencies around the country to see to it that this is a possibility and a clear process. Other than a few small, non-profit initiatives, virtually no steps have been made to that end and no resources are available to support it.

3. **A system for disseminating information across the region and the Diaspora.**

4. **Deployment plan for mental health services** have been noticeably absent from the rebuilding efforts in New Orleans. Contrasted with 9/11 when mental health services were was on the scene immediately for residents and relief workers, there is no trace of this visible in New Orleans and no funds to support it should mental health professionals want to provide the services. Several residents mentioned that they had not "talked to anyone about what they saw," and "I know I'm messed up about what happened." Another resident told me they had some mental health services for FEMA workers and official staff but not for residents.

5. **A process plan for restoring a functioning education system.**

6. **Scope and guidelines for what components must be covered in a neighborhood plan,** and details as to what criteria will render them acceptable and valid.

7. **A plan to address uneven capacity and uneven development among neighborhood councils, associations, and groups.** Neighborhood planning processes are occurring in some neighborhoods but not others. Neighborhoods whose residents are scattered around the country or who do not have resources to secure technical assistance are far from being able to assemble and lead their own autonomous planning process. Neighborhoods such as Broadmore, Gentilly, Lakeview and others have brought together their own residents, hired consultants in some cases, and embarked on planning for their neighborhoods. Some see this as a model for other neighborhoods, but many feel they will simply be left behind in the planning process. There is no accounting for the uneven development that is being continued through this process.

"Public Comment"

An example of the process for engaging the voices of the residents is illustrated in the Mayor's public Commission meeting on March 20, 2005. The crowd was large and overflowing into the hallways, with at least 400 people in attendance. It was a mix of elected officials, neighborhood representatives, media people, college volunteers and relief workers, with not much representation at the organizational level. There was a mix of race and interests there, although in general a professional class and homeowners from a range of different neighborhoods were well represented. I attended the meeting and most of the following description and comments from residents were captured in my field notes.

Nagin began the meeting by highlighting the priorities of the plan. We are going to prioritize investment in East and mid business district, he said. We are looking for private sector alignment, high skill, and high wage jobs to east of industrial canal. We are going to see New Orleans as a world-class tourist destination and what New Orleans can contribute to the international arena. We will provide tax credits to digital media and movie industry. There are plans to create an industry, design and construction cluster. He also assured everyone that non-profits are important as well and named some of the universities and consultant firms working with the city.

Two large screens projected a PowerPoint with text and bullet points that summarized the finding from each subcommittee. There were no maps, graphics, or diagrams to help make the plans more understandable to the public. Half of the Commission's members were absent but those that were in attendance sat at a panel 30 feet from the audience, and remained difficult to see from where we sat. The public comment portion of the meeting was orchestrated as follows: Upon entering the meeting, you were required to write down on a paper your comment, should you wish to make one, even though you had not yet heard what the Commission had to report. Then, when they called you, you got three minutes to make a comment, standing at a microphone-equipped podium 30+ feet from the panel. Comments could not take the form of a question and the committee members being addressed were not allowed to respond. If you went past the three-minute mark or made a poignant dissenting comment, they thanked you and ushered you off. Residents waited on line to make comments like, "This is a racist, no good committee that represents the rich!"

The people who got up and spoke were mostly local residents, between 40-60 years old, concerned with insurance, homeownership, and issues of representation and rights. People raised concern over taking away of the power of elected officials and depriving people of constitutional rights "We had bad experience with regulatory bodies." People recalled the historical context of taking away rights and voting power from a population that fought for the Voting Rights Act. Different comments included, "We won't vote for you. We have rights. We know the law here. I know how to write grants, we see what you are doing."

The Neighborhood Planning Process:
The Commission's public meetings are not the only way for New Orleans residents to provide input on the future of their homes. Council districts are each supposed to complete their own neighborhood-based plan. $3 million is supposed to be set aside for planning in each district.

These plans are going to be important in providing an alternative vision to the BNOB and LRA commissions, but the capacity to carry out neighborhood plans varies greatly across neighborhoods. Some areas have strong neighborhood associations that were able to come together and begin the process of planning for their neighborhood. Others are too devastated, disconnected, exhausted, and diminished in capacity to carry out a neighborhood visioning process.

A visioning process in Tremé would have been hard even without Katrina, since it was already suffering from generations of disempowering planning decisions and resident displacement. Additionally, formal community organizations before the storm were mostly small, single issue-based or direct action focused with modest operating budgets (Gus Newport). There were very few CDCs across the city and a relatively weak non-profit sector. The largest CDC in New Orleans before Katrina had a staff of 12 persons (Ibid).

Even as new coalitions and organizations emerged post Katrina, they were forced into a fast-paced evolution to respond to the enormous need in their neighborhoods and throughout the city. In Chapter 2, we outlined the evolution of CDCs over four decades, from the 1960s to the present, responding to different national political and economic climates, seeking to improve neighborhoods, access resources, and have a voice in decision-making. Organizations, new and old, in New Orleans have had to go through a similar process in a matter of months.

Beginning with relief work and distribution of basic needs during the storm, they then moved into the massive effort of clearing debris, gutting houses, and cleaning up after the flood. On top of this, they are being asked to lead neighborhood planning processes, be involved in city politics, find residents, advocate for equity and justice, do community organizing, start a community health center and any other issue or project you could think of around the city. As they take on all of this, they are exploring new forms of organizational structure, purging old leadership for new, incorporating, grant-writing, and strategic planning, virtually all at once. The People's Hurricane Relief Fund has been a prime example of this. During Spring Break alone, they hosted several student groups, coordinated the gutting of houses, organized a series of educational planning workshops, underwent their own organizational growth conflicts, wrote proposals and initiated a number of other projects.

Finding our Folk is a small youth agenda that has traveled to cities around the country to reach out to displaced residents. These community organizations seem to be the only ones addressing the issue of locating the displaced and working out communication strategies, and seeking

support for right to return agendas. But they are ill equipped to handle such a massive job on their own. I liken the task to asking the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative to take on the Big Dig in Boston, single-handedly. Now they are excellent organizers with significant capacity and constituent base, and no doubt they would get out there with their shovels and start digging. But the disjuncture is laughable. No community organization in Boston could take on such a massive public works and infrastructure project.

Informal community networks have also been pushed to their limits. Community organization tends to be decentralized and coalition building is not easy work in New Orleans. Community factions, in fighting between groups, and turf battles already plagued the local landscape. Relationships, based on social networks drive the politics of organizing and government. These relationships sometimes date back generations, combining old civil rights and labor organizing networks that have shaped the community organizing landscape pre and post-Katrina. Churches, Social and Pleasure Clubs, and cultural institutions function as community support systems and organizing hubs, as they have historically. After Katrina, many of these were pushed to expand what they do to respond to the many needs their community faced. Citizens set up survival networks, assisting their communities by rescuing people, cooking food, distributing water, information, and medical care. Some of the most prominent examples are Malik Rahim's Commons Ground camp, Soul Patrol, and Mama D's camp in the 7th Ward. New coalitions emerged out of this and we are still seeing a shifting in formal and informal networks. New organizations are emerging and others are reinventing themselves. Bars also served as important
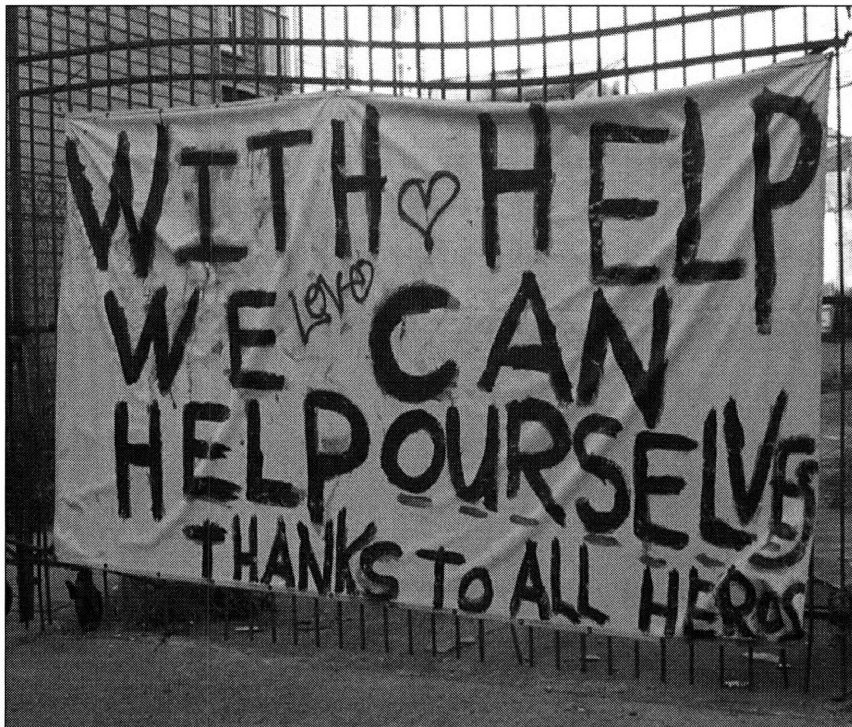

Image 36: Sign advertises the spirit of New Orleans

neighborhood places during the storm and after. Bullets Bar in the 7th Ward was one of the only placed in the neighborhood where people could get ice during those first days and Gentilly's was rebuilt shortly after the storm with the help of 7th Ward residents from around Mama D's camp. Both bars continue to serve as central hubs of information and networking, hosting parties and events, and daily meeting places for residents. People turn to these places for support, connection, healing and information.

Months later, Social and Pleasure Clubs are struggling to remain a functioning support to members scattered across the nation. But the task is overwhelming and the budget is minute. In addition many of these people are suffering from PTSD in the wake of their own experiences during Katrina. One example of their work was the second line that took place on Martin Luther King Day in January. It was the first since Katrina, and the first time that so many groups collaborated. There were 37 Social and Pleasure Clubs represented. The event drew people back to the neighborhood from as far as Texas and Georgia. This speaks not only to the desire of residents to return and reunite but also to the potential of the Social and Pleasure Clubs in supporting this effort. In March, however, the Super Sunday celebration, an important annual event for Mardi Gras Indians, was postponed, in part, because the children of the city were still largely missing, according to Jerome Smith. Very little effort has been made by outsiders to support and connect to the cultural infrastructure of the place.

Without an existing CDC network, funneling resources and supporting action that really reaches those in need is difficult. In Tremé, for example, Ujama is a CDC connected to St. Peter Claver church that emerged in the last 5 years. Despite a small staff and limited capacity, they have been successful in acquiring land, completing housing development projects, and accessing resources. The city is committed to funding Ujama in their rebuilding efforts. Yet, they do not identify any other neighborhood groups to prioritize for CDBG funding because other groups, which may have more of a constituent base but, do not fit the typical organizational structure or be positioned to broker deals. There are layers of corruption and a pattern of money disappearing and local politics are rife with cronyism and favors. On top of this, national organizations, private foundations and public funders are looking for large-scale investment. There is a mismatch between these entities and grassroots community institutions in their ability to absorb or operationalize the resources. Even with national funders interested in supporting a progressive agenda and stabilizing a vision for the city that includes former residents, the disjuncture is bewildering. "We can't understand the ground in New Orleans," is most often heard from outside investors, philanthropist and practitioners. No one has a conception of how to work with non-institutional entities and many of the organizing structures have been stressed beyond capacity.

CHAPTER 5:

PREDATORY PLANNING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

"Welcome to the Terrordome!" they told me,
Here, it's not blight, but environmental biohazard.
It's not eminent domain, but usufruct.
It's not local private developers but national subsidiaries and multi-national corporations.
It's not local lending and financing institutions but national and international investors.
It's the closing of schools, hospitals, and public housing, culture -- essentially the commons -- and then
selling them off as real estate to the highest bidder.
It's not large slum clearance projects, followed by planned shrinkage, or reinvestment and gentrification,
each taking decades to implement.
In fact, we are seeing all of the above simultaneously.
It's the aggregate of multiple forces,
It has a history.

People appear to be experiencing a new dimension in predation in post-Katrina New Orleans, accelerated by compounded disasters and neglect. My methodology, sampling, and relationship building allowed for a kind of weak-signal detection, reaching people that other post-Katrina planners were not able to reach. From this, I have the sense that there might be something new going on with people's interpretation of the current climate as a new level of predatory planning, a term that I have coined for this occasion. While my results cannot prove this as an objective reality, it is the reality of my informants, and I have laid the groundwork that would allow me to return and gather more evidence to answer whether or not this is truly a fair and accurate naming.

The idea of 'predatory planning' emerged during my time in New Orleans. It fits with the language of war and siege that was frequent among grassroots leaders, residents, and public officials. People have the sense that they are at war, but it is not clear whom they are at war with. Rick Mathieu says, "It is clear things are messed up all over. The question is why? And who is benefiting from it? That is the question." What follows is an effort to identify why the persons I spoke to are experience the post-Katrina rebuilding as a predatory process.

I will summarize the findings of the post-Katrina predatory planning conditions as a problem of disjuncture, scale, speed, and phantom politics. Just as mold grew exponentially in the wet environment following Katrina, predation has flourished in an environment in which local capacity and leadership were overwhelmed by the compounded nature of multiple forces (natural, political, social, historical, and economic) hitting at once.

Disjuncture

In the previous chapter, I outlined numerous examples of disjuncture evident in the rebuilding process of New Orleans. The triangulated analysis of my data revealed countless examples of disjuncture from city and neighborhood planning meetings, to MIT client projects, to campfire and stoop front conversations in the 6th and 7th Wards. Huge segments of the population remain displaced and there is no clear effort to reach them, assess and assist their needs, provide for right of return, and involve them in the planning of their city or electing of their representatives. There is widespread trauma among residents, leaders, and organizers, as well as local officials and municipal leaders. There is an explosion of stakeholders on the scene, numerous planning bodies, professionals, academics, and consultants. Architects, investments, and private developers largely drive the planning process. The scope of the rebuilding task proved too broad for pre-existing players that were capable and trusted.

Information is a precious commodity that is not made available evenly. FEMA has not released information that would allow the public to locate where evacuees have been dispersed to, and lack of access to information or satellite voting prevented the displaced from voting in the recent mayoral election. There is a lack of capacity among community organizations, yet they are expected to perform a wide variety of functions and represent all neighborhood needs and interests.

Disjuncture on multiple levels was perhaps the most distinct revelation my research allowed. There is political disjuncture when displaced persons are prevented from voting and cut off from political representation as regulatory commissions take control of the planning processes and decision-making. There is economic disjuncture when large-scale landlords are making millions while many lifelong homeowners can't even rebuild and the poor are starved off from resources that would support them in returning to the city. There is emotional disjuncture when local residents and leaders are experiencing widespread trauma, while developers and architects are moving with full speed and uncontained excitement about all their new work. Predatory planning also offers critical disjunctures between scale and speed, which I will explain below, which serve to further fragment and destabilize.

Synergistic Damage Accumulation

Looking back, we can see decades of damage accumulation for neighborhoods like the Tremé. From the legacies of slavery and Jim Crow through decades of urban renewal and institutional racism, and up to the present real estate development happening in the wake of Katrina, this

damage accumulation contributes to its vulnerability and weakening of capacity and local infrastructure. In the current incarnation, however, there are multiple planning processes that historically took decades to implement: urban renewal, planned shrinkage, real estate development, and gentrification, all occurring simultaneously. Each contributes to potential displacement of neighborhood residents and dislocation of local culture. The "shrinking of the footprint" is a form of planned shrinkage, as are the slow relief resources, now drying up for those still living in cities or FEMA villages around the country. The increased marketability of neighborhoods like Treme means it is undergoing a rapid gentrification process. The hurricane damage allows for massive buyouts and bulldozing for redevelopment in certain areas that looks like rapid urban renewal. Plans to redevelop public housing in HOPE VI mixed income redevelopment are being discussed that would further prevent the city's poorest residents from returning.

The co-existence of all these forces at once is a new level of complexity. Robert Kaplan has called 'combination warfare' that which would no longer choose one single glacis to dominate as in the past but would seek to dominate all of them simultaneously (Virilio 2000). For residents who feel they are literally in a war zone, the new Battle of New Orleans, the multiple planning forces are experienced as combination warfare, or the predatory planning machine.

I asked physicist Rod Wallace what term he would use to describe the phenomenon of multiple large-scale processes playing out with the speed of instaneity. To this end, Wallace offers the term 'synergistic damage accumulation.' Rather than an A + B + C scenario of damage accumulation over time, we are seeing an A x B x C situation where they are all playing out simultaneously. Even if you had seen A and B and C before, the simultaneous and accelerated nature is a new phenomenon. The effect of the multiplication and the interplay between the components remains unknown. What we do know is that the ability to respond to multiple global-political growth machines acting in one locale is far beyond the current capacity on the ground in New Orleans.

To provide another parallel, just as doctors struggle when treating multi-strain diseases or multiple diseases in one body, local planners and organizers are not prepared to deal in this level of multi-nodal, compounded complexity. And just as doctors must first recognize that they are indeed treating multiple diseases which act on each other (with multiple medicines which also complicate matters), we must also create a new understanding of the whole in terms of redevelopment, community response, the role of planners and the role of organizers. If we don't, we will be treating each action and issue separately and missing the implications of the way they

play off each other. Therefore, synergistic damage accumulation becomes a critical piece in understanding this notion of predatory planning.

Scale

The scale of the project at hand is perhaps the most overwhelming piece of the rebuilding work. The scale of the damage and rebuilding tasks, the level of need, number of projects, players, stakeholders, affected citizens, and properties is staggering. The scale of the job in comparison to the capacity to carry it out is one of the most critical points of disjuncture at all levels. To place it in other more discernable terms, let me offer an analogy. What if Boston decided to take on the massive infrastructure project called the Big Dig that would essentially bury a six-lane highway underground and mitigate the adverse affect of urban renewal-era projects, but asked the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) to carry out the project? DSNI is a well-organized, full capacity community organization with a strong resident base. They may be able to mobilize people to come out with shovels and attack the task of rerouting the Central Artery, but the metaphor is clearly laughable. In New Orleans, community groups are being asked to take on tasks of similar proportions, and the level of disjuncture and asymmetry of scale and capacity is as unrealistic given the level of institutional and governmental support.

Urban renewal was typically manifested intensively on one neighborhood, as we saw in the Tremé. 9/11 destroyed a few square blocks in lower Manhattan. This current reincarnation of disaster redevelopment is occurring to a whole region, stretching across several states at once. As urban renewal critique gained resistance from local organizing, it grew increasingly difficult to legitimize the disruption caused by urban renewal through the results of the projects. Progressive planners and scholars reacted by reconstituting planning theory to incorporate new ideas of advocacy and equity planning. In the same way the new acceleration is forcing organizers to rapidly expand capacity and mobilize, now is another historical time for planners to move their practice forward. This redevelopment era may not face a legitimacy crisis and pressure of organized resistance and, therefore, provide another opportunity for narrowing the scope of power. If planners do not move their practice forward, in tandem with organizers, the repercussions could be felt for decades to come.

Speed

One of the challenges of predatory planning is the acceleration of speed in the development

process and the disjuncture of speed throughout different pieces of the process or places within the city. Access to information in a highly networked society has allowed for rapid precision in communication, information, technology, and software for those who have it. In response, community organizations are going through a fast-paced evolution similar to the evolution of CDCs over the past 50 years, but in a mere matter of months. They are racing to address the needs around them, but also to keep pace with the speed of deal making in global politics in the information age. Virilio adds that with the build up of information superhighways, we are facing a new phenomenon: loss of orientation (Virilio 2000). Immediacy and instaneity also cause disorientation. There is a sense of rapid pace and slowness at the same time. Slow moving relief, slow moving government bureaucracy, slow moving insurance companies vs. fast moving real estate development, investment deals and clean-up and restoration of more attractive neighborhoods.

When cultural theorist Paul Virilio discusses these ideas, he introduces the term dromology, meaning: the 'science (or logic) of speed'. Dromology is important when considering the structuring of society in relation to warfare. If speed can be another competitive advantage, Virillio has argued for a long time that there is a real need not only for a political economy of wealth, but also for a political economy of speed. Possession of territory is not primarily about laws and contracts, but first and foremost a matter of movement and circulation (Virilio 2000). "What is so astonishing about the war in Kosovo was that it totally bypassed territorial space. It was a war that took place almost entirely in the air (Virilio 2000)." If the rebuilding process is also just as much about movement, information, and speed as it is about territory, then who is doing the moving …and who is winning the war?

Phantom Power Moves or Power Vacuum?

The People's Institute teaches the 'foot identification' process which is essentially an analysis of the flow of power and institutional racism throughout systems. The foot has becoming increasingly harder to identify with the introduction of ghost politics. This "ghostliness" makes accountability measures nearly impossible to enact. In disembodied power hierarchies, agency becomes trickier. Even if informants in New Orleans indicate they know they are dealing with something new, there does not seem to be clarity as to what it is exactly. Those that control the movement are difficult to identify; they seem to transcend local, state and national government and play on a larger sphere of influence. Planners, organizers, and residents are all paying attention to the land and real estate rooted in territory and space but it is difficult to identify leverage points or linkages to systemic change. The government seems largely unperforming. Some are arguing that there is no power structure at all, but an absence of power. What if there is, in fact, no man behind the curtain? Burns and Thomas (2006) offer the analysis that Katrina exposed New Orleans as a non-regime city characterized by lack of stable, long-term public and private

resource providers, but rather transient issue based coalitions in the place of more permanent government arrangements. This makes them ineffective at targeting resources and prevents stakeholders from developing a broader community agenda. Burns and Thomas conclude with the idea that coordination and implementation in disaster requires a speed, which is not possible in the context of regimeless structures. Mobilization and resistance are difficult to mount against phantom politics, as they are in regimeless management. In reality, it is a system, even if it is a regimeless system or non-system system. People are falling victim to it, spun out, and swallowed up by it. Whether there is anyone in the driver's seat, it moves on its own and it is extractive.

Even those from outside who come with a vision of partnership and progressive work find it is frustrating work going against the grain of a system. Without clear guidelines for accountability or a structure for building local partnerships and capacity on the ground, it is all too easy to fall into a place that contributes to further displacement and disruption of already devastated local networks and places. Working against this system is difficult and frustrating and people easily fall into the wave of predatory planning. It is difficult to reach non-institutional entities or imagine how to funnel resources to help a cultural group. There is pressure for groups to incorporate into CDCs to be able to receive resources through traditional channels, such as CDBG funds. But what new models are we able to imagine, especially given the nature of history and context of New Orleans. I talked about the importance of Bars and Music Halls, even now as central neighborhood places, centers of information and social networks. How will a new CDC acquiring land and building affordable housing leverage and support these assets? What leverage points are possible in this decentralized informal system of self-determination for building capacity and new forms of community support structures?

Prescriptive Measures

Chester Hartman and Dennis Keating examined tactics for preventing displacement in their book, Displacement: How to Fight It. They recommended the following tactics in responding to and preventing displacement (203-205). 1) Make sure you have fully analyzed the displacement problem you are facing and understand the broader economic, political, and social forces at work. Without this, it is unlikely you will be able to develop effective strategies to counter the displacement push; 2) Build coalitions and alliances. The problem is not an isolated problem affecting one neighborhood or one block. Understanding the forces at play require linking up with other neighborhoods, city, regional, national groups, trade unions, religious organizations, social action agencies that share your interests; 3) Employ a wide range of strategies and act now as timing is critical and intervening early and creatively can make all the difference in the outcome; and finally 4) A real paradigm shift is needed to understand affordable housing as a human right.

This research is a contribution towards these suggestions. I try to fully analyze the nature of the problem, through historical research, grounded theory, and situation analysis. By juxtaposing the voice of marginalized people and non-institutional players with the planning process and influential policies, I try to revisit the question: "What is possible?" Many of my recommendations address the need for coalition building, understanding the forces at play, respecting history, acting now, and exploring different strategies for alternative outcomes.

Build Capacity and Leadership

The predation is made possible, in part, because of an absence of leadership and overstretched capacity on the ground. As one informant put it, "The absence of leadership is chaos, and that's basically what you've had for the last six months. You have a runaway ship that's going around in circles. Until we get some true leadership, some direction, you're going to have a ship going around in circles (Anonymous Treme residents, personal interview)." Despite the difficulty in this regimeless climate, the void also offers new opportunities for positive change.

At all levels in this system, there are opportunities to grow new leadership, develop local capacity, and experiment with change. The local government and grassroots leaders are so clearly overwhelmed. There are very few leaders who can act as liaisons between "the ground" and larger national subsidiaries. Civil rights leaders are clearly still at the helm of the grassroots organizations, and they are aging, exhausted, steeped in politics, and struggling to keep up with scale and speed in the current climate of predatory planning. Grassroots leaders such as Jerome Smith, Mama D, and Gus Newport are still at the forefront of the struggle as they move into their late 60s and 70s. The younger generation of leaders is attempting to step into new leadership positions. They expressed frustration at the old factions and feuds and are deliberately reaching out to other young leaders to forge more regional links. But as of yet, they are ill equipped to step into positions of leadership and handle that level of strategizing and response. There is little infrastructure to support and advise them as they make inexperienced mistakes in their tactics, decisions, and actions. (Interview, Community organization staff)) However, the younger leaders *are* in a position to re-imagine ways of contending with the new predatory planning phenomenon, as this is the context within which they have developed ways of knowing. Again, linkages between old and new leadership are critical. There is talk about putting together elder advisory boards to support new leadership development.

People on the ground have a sense that they are dealing with something beyond their capacity, yet it is unclear how to act. If predatory planning is emerging with new strength, how do we reimagine of the mechanisms to counter its forces? In *Speed and Politics*, Virilio argues that

'history progresses at the speed of its weapons systems'. What will be our next weapons? What will our next social movement look like?

I also recognize the need for a jump in sophistication among organizers right now. With elder Civil Rights and labor leaders at the helm of grassroots movement-building in the South, the tools they are using are similar if not the same as the tools they used in the 1960s. Direct action, grassroots network building, and renewed efforts to hold Freedom Summers in the South are just a few examples of this. Experienced organizers are aiming to teach organizing skills to young leaders and build campus movement among the reams of college students coming to volunteer. Yet there is the sense that new strategies are already taking shape. For May Day 2006, millions of immigrant workers took a visible stand and boycotted workplaces, schools and businesses for the day, all across the country. On a different front, the hip-hop movement has entered into political debate, voting registration and direct action. And the South is not being left out of this new movement. Organizers across the country are refocusing attention on the post-Katrina South and looking to support each other in the work on a larger scale.

Clearly the time is ripe to pass on lessons of organizing history to the next generation. But what of a parallel process for planners? In fact, senior scholars, academics and fathers of progressive planning fell into camps in the aftermath of Katrina, representing different faction of ideas and analysis, just like the factions of community organizers in the neighborhoods. To face these challenges, planners need to take their own steps to support capacity building and new innovation in their midst. Designing a similar infrastructure to support the passage of lessons from elder scholars, academics, and progressive planners to a younger generation of planners could be an important action in this current phase. This would allow younger, innovative planners to bring new ideas and challenge old ideas, while learning from the history of progressive planning past. Both planning practice and organizing craft is being pressured to jump a level of sophistication. What if they were able to do so together?

Some of these ideas have emerged from an on-going dialogue between community organizer Najma Nazy'at and myself throughout the research process. As a planner and an organizer on a journey of experience, ideas, and dialogue, we explored what was lacking in each of our sectors and what potential there was for future mobilization within those groups and across the sectors of planning and organizing. I believe there is a lot more research that could be explored along these ends. What does an education training module look like in which elder planners and organizers work in advisory positions to young planners and organizers? Dialogue both across the generations and across the sectors would develop skills and leadership in tandem and partnership

with each other.

Another perspective on addressing new problems in new ways comes from the Design Studio for Social Innovation. "DS4SI" was founded to expand the progressive arm of the nonprofit sector's ability to create new forms of effective social intervention and to explore new ways to be interventionists. The creation of new forms of social intervention requires not just new tools, but a new stance. The designer's stance is experimental and generative, propelling us beyond merely addressing existing problems with existing forms to imagining entirely new terrains of possibility. This stance, along with the shared perspectives of old and new planners and organizers could truly create new terrains of post-Katrina possibility. I believe a large-scale design studio concept could allow for incubation of new ideas and new innovation. But the difference between this kind of design charrette and those of Andres Duany must be understood more deeply.

Linkages

In his work on the Freeway revolts in cities across the country that were the neighborhood organizing response to urban renewal and federal highway construction, Raymond Mohl points out how the various revolts had diverse outcomes. The ones that did succeed had the following components in common: broad alliances, strong support from at least some local politicians, backing from influential journalists and newspapers, and legal action over highway routing (Mohl 2002). Litigation was a particularly useful ingredient since it could delay land acquisition and construction for years, and final shut down of projects had to come from the highest level of courts of highway bureaucracy. "A grassroots populist struggle against the urban interstates was crucial but without these other ingredients there was not much chance of resistance (Mohl 2002)."

The idea of linkages between neighborhood organizing and broader social movement building is an idea I have explored throughout this paper. It is what separated the case of the Riverfront Expressway from the I-10 Highway construction through Tremé. In the post-Katrina context, links between the grassroots and national interest groups are critically lacking. Given the cavernous disjuncture discussed earlier, these connections between localized players and national intermediaries have been difficult to establish. Additionally, with the displaced Diaspora so far flung, and with very little information or communication strategies, linkages between displaced residents and decision-makers are noticeably absent. To overcome disjuncture we need to forge linkages between planners and residents, government and constituents, private investment, philanthropy, national subsidiaries and local partners and needs.

Capacity on the ground before Katrina was already disabled and decentralized. In part, this is due to the ongoing neglect of the South in national policymaking and progressive agendas. This has created a sustained trauma over time, not simply trauma from the hurricane and flood of Katrina, but trauma from decades of enacted planning and uneven development. Now a lot of people from outside are coming in and trying to act in partnership with local leadership, but the diminished capacity and widespread trauma is hindering efforts. Most frequently heard from progressive funders and national progressives is, "We can't understand the ground in New Orleans." (The underlying meaning being, 'we would like to invest, but factions and confusion make it too difficult to sort out.') When I asked a local resident, now working for FEMA, about people having trouble understanding the local landscape, he responded, "And they're going to stay baffled if they're lucky to get hooked up with people who know what's going on. But a lot of people are very hesitant to talk to people, because we're not stupid. We don't need someone to come in here. This is our homes, and we don't need you to come in and tell us how to do things in our house."

In order to address issues of coalition building and linkages, we must first address the trauma, suspicion, and mistrust in the ability for the process to serve the needs of those most negatively affected in the past. Mistrust for outsiders makes it difficult for powerful external players to plug into local planning and projects in a way that supports local people. Third party conflict resolution planning could be a new explorative tactic that would help create new leadership and move the process forward. Mediators and border crossers are critical in this environment. Liaisons who can move across sectors and across disciplines are invaluable to the process. High conflict and high trauma require certain skills such as these that are largely overlooked.

A healing process is needed both individually and as a collective community in New Orleans. I listened to people in the Mayor's public comment meeting—including elected officials and prominent leaders—who sounded traumatized, frustrated, frightened, and unsupported. I sat with community organization staff and heard their desperation and sense of being completely overwhelmed by the work. There was a clear sense of urgency all around. People seemed to have a sense that big changes were coming but that they had no clear way to gain a foothold in this process. If planners in New Orleans right now do not understand the trauma piece, they cannot function in this place. One resident summarized the extent of the issue as follows:
> "My family is the single most important thing to me. Forget this property. I'd cut it loose in a second. They are the most important things, and if I'm not by them, if I'm not with them, then it's like I'm a soulless person. And when your whole city is basically gone, it looks like a bombed out country or a sci-fi movie you drop off and nobody's there. And

if you're accustomed to seeing your family everyday for 36 years, you don't see them anymore, that's a very lonely feeling. And I'm only one of 350 or 400,000 people that are experiencing the same issues, the separation issues. One day you at your house, one day you lost everything you own. You try that on and see how you would feel (Anonymous Treme resident, personal interview)."

A Future for Cultural Resistance?

At the same time that trauma and devastation are all around, people are also filled with a sense of their own power and self-determination. It is often said that it is the people of New Orleans who make up the city. The people hold the history and cultural traditions. These are the people who refused to leave when the flood came, who struggled every day before, during, and after Katrina to provide for their families and their communities. These are the people who make a neighborhood a place. Former University of New Orleans planning professor David Gladstone said, "Culture is sold in the French Quarter, but it is produced elsewhere in many of the neighborhoods that have been devastated by the storm (Democracy Now, 9/7/05)." The conflict between the two was made particularly visible in February when families were evicted from downtown hotels to clear space for tourists. Given the history of cultural resistance, what is the state of the future of this culture and potential for resistance to predatory planning tactics?

What is evident in the history of Tremé is the intergenerational process of devaluing a community and disassembling a culture, even as it is parroted for tourists nearby. Recent architecture in the Tremé is a good example, and a literal embodiment, of this devaluing of local skills and culture. Rick Mathieu spoke of the new building materials and architecture that is lacking in aesthetics. Local knowledge built houses that have natural heating and cooling features and which could withstand hurricanes. Across the street from his house on Tremé Street, he points out a house that was built for $350,000 before the storm. It was completely leveled by Katrina, while his hundred and fifty year old cottage has withstood many hurricanes and floods. In Treme, people passed down skills in the building trades. "Sheetrock, carpentry, air conditioner, electric, plumbing, bricklaying, jacking up houses. You name it, there's a niche for it all. You can take your skill and do anything at anytime in life (Mathieu, personal interview)." Support for this intergenerational process came from elders but also from the commons and public education. Certainly the aesthetics of the architecture, the craftsmanship with which Tremé was built, is something that will not be replaced by new developers and stick-build modular housing models.

In another example of how New Orleans culture is rooted in—and now being uprooted from—

local communities, several people told me how children used to learn marching band in the public schools. "They cut all that out of the schools. They cut industrial trades. They wanted to cut out music, down here." It leaves the question as to where the famous brass bands will be in twenty or fifty years? Already this year, Lolis Eric Elie's column in the Times Picayune, "Jazzfest should live up to its name," asked the question as to where all the jazz acts were at this year's New Orleans Jazz Festival and Louisiana Heritage Fair (Elie, Times Picayune, May 1, 2006). Jerome Smith talks about how the commons, the places of cultural celebration and resistance, linked the generations over time. He saw culture and the commons intrinsically linked to the connection between generations of elders and youth and the passing of knowledge through celebration and culture.

Food is another very important link to the traditions and culture of the people, and it regularly took center stage with interactions in the field. People were more than happy to feed me and share their culture and cuisine with me. "That's New Orleans," they would say, offering another helping of red beans and rice. However, the keepers of the culinary secrets are disappearing. The fate of Dookie Chase's Keith's Place, and other Tremé favorites are uncertain. These places were not just local restaurants, but intrinsically linked to the culture and resistance of the place. Dookie Chase served Civil Rights workers and literally fed the revolution. Where will New Orleans cuisine be in the future? Will Emeril's new presence usurp the local culture, or will local chefs still fuel a commons-based cultural resistance?

Survival of the Commons:

Tremé residents suggested that land is the new gold or the new oil, but connected to the value of land comes the consumption of place and culture. Place as a commodity of experience leads to the importance of the tourist economy for selling the culture of New Orleans. Lolis Elie identified the components of New Orleans culture as architecture, food, and music. Each of these cultural components are connected to people, place, neighborhoods and, as I have argued, the commons. One of the crises I have pointed to is the destruction of the commons. In Treme, it is particularly poignant as so much of the cultural resistance is rooted in the commons: the 2nd lines, the fluidity of Congo Square, Mardi Gras Indians, Social and Pleasure Clubs, jazz mass at St. Augustine's Catholic Church. These interactions and informal interdependency would not be possible without a viable public commons. Franchisement of culture and marketing cultural tourism does not preserve the commons but privatizes them and charges exchange value to those from outside the community. It pays no attention to the users or producers of the authentic culture. It does not recognize the value of this. There is an old folk poem used to understand the

concept of the commons. Peter Marcuse used it at the recent Just Cities Conference at Columbia University.

They hang the man and flog the woman
Who steal the good from off the common
Bet let the greater villain loose
Who steals the commons from the goose.

David Bollier also uses the saying to ask, "Is the Commons a Movement?" Bollier points out the ways the commons is gaining attention across disciplines—from software to librarians, scientists and creative artists. The commons movement insists that there are other powerful sources of value-creation. Marcuse used it to make the point that planners and planning education generally teaches planners to deal with the geese. Dealing with the commons is beyond the scope of what planners do. From my perspective, herein lies the fatal flaw of planning as a practice that is meant to built communities. Not that it is the responsibility of planners alone to ensure the survival of the commons, but certainly we as planners are meant to play a role. For the Treme, cultural resistance is rooted in the commons. Destruction of the commons means destruction of a culture of a people.

They hang the man and flog the woman
Who steal the good from off the common.
And geese will still a common lack
'Til we go out and steal it back

Progressive planners can play a critical role in shaping this future. Will they work to "steal the commons from the goose," or build coalitions to work with communities "to go out and steal it back"? It is far too easy to become part of the predatory planning machine, which is rapidly becoming the dominant paradigm for development. But they could also reconceive of their role in planning for and with people, creating healthy cities, and using the skills they have as equitable redistributive tools. Planners can help ensure transparency in the process, access to clear information and technical assistance to the people who need it most. They can work with national subsidiaries and progressive funders to intervene in ways that build local capacity and support coalition building, rather than contribute to competition between organizations or neighborhoods for resources and support. Historical redevelopment has gutted cities and drawn borders and barriers. How can new actions re-knit places, repair the scars, and bring people together?

In order to interrupt predatory planning through their practice, planners will have to listen to people and work to understand place. They will need to be in conversation with social

movements and respect when and how they enter communities. They may have to reconsider planning as a non-linear approach. And they will need to distinguish nuances such as selling culture of place and supporting cultural resistance. In short, planners have a long legacy to overcome to emerge in a future of vibrant, healthy communities.

I have focused on New Orleans and the Tremé, but there are many different stories in different neighborhoods all over the Delta. Each offers a piece of the true picture of what is happening on such an enormous scale all at once. The importance of storytelling, ethnography, and situation analysis to inform planning is found throughout my research findings. In measuring outcomes and planning effective, grounded communities, we must pay attention to history, local knowledge, culture, and current trauma. In this way we can help to re-knit the fabric of communities: this is what progressive planning is about in the 21st Century.

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** *All photographs taken by the author unless otherwise noted.*

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GUS NEWPORT AT MIT KATRINA PRACTICUM, CAMBRIDGE, MA

FLYER, ST. AUGUSTINE CHURCH, DISTRIBUTED MARCH 2005

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ANONYMOUS PLANNING OFFICIAL

MALLOT, OWNER OF CLUB GENTILLY

COMMUNITY ELDER #1

COMMUNITY ELDER #2

COMMUNITY ELDER #3

COMMUNITY ELDER #4

YOUNG TREME RESIDENT #1

YOUNG TREME RESIDENT #2

ANONYMOUS TREME RESIDENT #1

ANONYMOUS TREME RESIDENT #2

ANONYMOUS TREME RESIDENT #3

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6TH WARD RESIDENT #1

6TH WARD RESIDENT #2

6TH WARD RESIDENT #3

6TH WARD RESIDENT #4

7TH WARD RESIDENT #1

7TH WARD RESIDENT #2

7TH WARD RESIDENT #3

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