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**BRANDING NEW YORK:
A NEW STRATEGY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, 1967-1981**

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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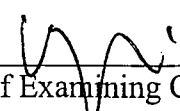
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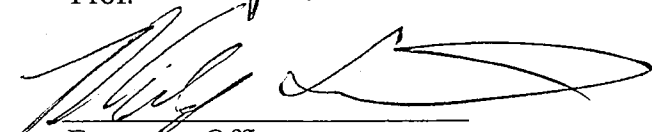
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Abstract:

BRANDING NEW YORK: A NEW STRATEGY OF
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, 1967-1981

by

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The dissertation investigates the use of new corporate style marketing techniques during the New York City fiscal crisis era, and in particular the rise of a contentious economic development strategy based in urban branding. Between 1967 and 1974, city branding responded to the perceived image crisis caused by the city's increasing financial trouble, the flight of corporate headquarters to the suburbs, and mainstream media representations of the city as "asphalt jungle." Through the creation of *New York* magazine in 1967 and the "Big Apple" campaign in 1971, groups of aspiring middle class cultural producers and elite power brokers in real estate and finance both attempted to construct an alternate city image, and in the process advance their material interests. With the fiscal crisis of 1975, and the imposition of harsh austerity measures and "planned shrinkage" policies targeting the poor and working class, a counter-branding backlash emerged, with the police and fire unions' "Fear City" campaign, and the rise of subway graffiti. This image crisis led to a coordinated stage of branding between 1976-1981, in which city and state governments joined with marketing professionals to mount the "I♥NY" campaign. This populist, up-beat campaign contrasted with the imposition of the new austerity state, and the increase in class polarization and poverty. And, in a dialectical fashion, these new conditions contributed to ever more negative representations of the city, thus eclipsing marketing efforts, and revealing the risky nature of this economic development strategy.

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Introduction: Theorizing Urban Branding

You're going to see ads on phone kiosks and bus shelters and subway entrances and street poles and open spaces in each of the five boroughs. You're going to see them on 7,000 subway cars and 4,000 city buses and 13,000 taxis. You'll hear them on the radio, you'll see them on television—newspapers, magazines, Internet—we're not going to slack on anything.

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Feb. 3, 2005, announcing the city's \$15 million dollar marketing campaign targeting the 13 members of the International Olympic Committee during their 3-day visit to New York City to consider the city's bid for the 2012 Olympic Games.¹

We are only too familiar these days with urban branding, even if we rarely call it by name, or consider its roots or consequences. The coordinated marketing of the images of cities by the media, and through “partnerships” of public and private-sector groups, is around us all the time. It has become so commonplace and common sense that it is hardly remarked upon, as though it has always been with us. Isn't branding only a matter of representation, which we as viewers are free to view or ignore by simply flipping to a different channel? And indeed, wouldn't those of us who are urban residents, scholars, or activists be wiser to worry about the material reality and everyday struggles of cities, rather than such innocent representations?

On the contrary, in this dissertation, I will argue that urban branding, as it has arisen in New York City over the last thirty years, has been a central force in the rise to dominance of a new and problematic “entrepreneurial” mode of urban economic development, in which city government becomes oriented primarily to the needs of business, rather than to notions of the public good.² Over this period, New York's image and political-

economy have become increasingly interdependent, whether in times of growth or decline. Leaders in New York's government and corporate sector have considered this inevitable, as the city has entered fierce interurban competition for image-sensitive service industries like tourism, and as the global economy has become increasingly oriented toward symbolic forms of capital. Thus, branded urban representations have been used as valuable, strategic tools not only for New York City's government, but as importantly, for a range of private sector industries and vanguard political groups that depend on the marketable image of the city.

Contrary to popular belief, in such a branded urban environment we are not entirely free to choose whether to view these images, or simply flip to a new channel. For these representations form part of an increasingly pervasive, and seemingly natural, common sense. This common sense—that, for instance, New York is the “Greatest City on Earth” where the American Dream is truly possible, or “The World's Second Home” where global tourists come to play—takes the form, like Guy Debord's spectacle, of an increasingly all-encompassing, universally positive, and unending stream of images, beyond critique and impossible to ignore. In one sense, this spectacle is similar to that of advertising in general, which as many contemporary critics have observed, has expanded throughout our media and physical landscape.³ But in another sense, the entry of spectacular visual campaigns into the public realm of the city impacts us in more fundamental ways, as they become the public face of a broader, privatizing, pro-business agenda. Such high-profile branding is almost always ‘tied in’ to unseen business incentives offered by city and state government that are designed to attract global flows

of tourists, conventions and big events, corporate office location, and speculative real estate development. These incentives range from tax breaks to zoning and rent deregulation; from government restructuring to heightened surveillance and “quality-of-life” policing; from changes in labor and welfare policy to the privatization of public services and spaces. Circumventing the democratic process, this approach turns the city into a covert agent for capital. The streets and neighborhoods of the city are transformed into an abstract space for profit-making, a backdrop for media production, and a commodity for visual consumption. In the process, I would argue, citizens are disenfranchised, and the city becomes less of an affordable, sustainable, and livable place for the majority of its residents.

Thus, urban branding helps to reinforce broader political and economic forces of the entrepreneurial city, while keeping these forces further from the public eye. Rather than being subject to debate, privatizing forces are largely hidden behind the visual spectacle of populist media campaigns and the boardroom walls of public-private partnerships. These forces, then, are perceived mainly in their effects—from escalating rents and costs of living to rising homelessness, from the increasing instability and polarization of the job market to greater unemployment and income inequality. The sources and history of these problems, on the other hand, become harder to perceive. Therefore, to address the real struggles of contemporary urban life, it is necessary to trace the links between spectacular urban representations and the poorer material reality they help, visibly and invisibly, to reproduce.

My dissertation will focus on what I consider to be a pivotal time and place in the rise of urban branding as an accepted urban economic development strategy: New York City from the late 1960's to the early 1980's, in the years directly preceding and following the city's fiscal crisis of 1975. Similar types of visual strategies had been tried earlier in other cities in the U.S. and abroad —such as Los Angeles in the early 1960's and London in the mid-1960's— or were being experimented with at around the same time —such as in Philadelphia and Boston in the early 1970's. But it was in this period, I argue, that New York set itself apart and became the paradigm for a comprehensive, marketing-led, entrepreneurial approach, particularly for older, industrialized cities.

New York's unique role was due to three factors. First was the scale of New York City's financial troubles which were far more severe than those of most other cities of the day —involving eight years of corporate exodus, escalating debt, and retrenchment by the federal government between 1967 and 1975, followed by two years of fiscal crisis between 1975 and 1977. Second was the scale of the institutional matrix of media in New York, the so-called “communications capital of the world,” which during this troubled period contributed heavily to a dominant representation of the city as “asphalt jungle,” and as the apotheosis of the nation's “urban crisis.” And finally, in an increasingly conservative time, national political leaders exploited the devastation of the crisis as a convenient object lesson on the failures of “New York-style liberalism,” thus placing a harsh spotlight on the city's troubles that was also unlike any other city.

This combination of factors pushed local media makers and finance and real estate elites faster than those in other cities to make the link between the city's image and its financial health. First, the new middle class founders of *New York* magazine used "new journalism" and "new advertising" to brand a consumer-oriented image of the New York lifestyle at a time of urban crisis, and in so doing amassed cultural capital for themselves and their city. Following this, organized corporate interests used the city-wide "Big Apple" branding campaign to both legitimize and help coordinate broader political and economic restructuring. Finally, taking advantage of the unique power of New York's media and marketing industries, entrepreneurial city and state agencies began working with some of the most cutting edge advertisers, designers, and market researchers of the day and launched what was to become the most recognized and copied city marketing campaign in history, "I ♥ NY."

Thus, I observe a shift in this period from *urban boosterism*, in which an array of disconnected entrepreneurs sold images of the city for their own benefit, to *urban branding*, whereby a coalition was formed between public agencies, private groups, and culture workers in media and marketing, so as to construct a hegemonic image of the city as part of a central mode of capital accumulation and political control. This coalition pressured both the local and state governments to restructure themselves for marketing as a strategy of recovery. As economic development officials of the day understood, this marketing campaign presented a much more positive image than did the draconian austerity measures, planned shrinkage policies, and pro-business agenda that the city was

imposing. Indeed it was this upbeat face that was shown to the world when President Ronald Reagan named New York City the “national model for urban recovery” in 1981.

But before I turn to this detailed view of the 1970’s, and the heart of my argument, I begin with an exploration of the larger social and historical forces that contributed to the emergence of urban branding in general, and in New York City in particular. To do this, I will trace the origins of city marketing with the rise of the modern 19th century metropolis, the broader forces of urban restructuring in the 1970’s, the changing institutional matrix of media and marketing in this same period, and the ways in which the branding of New York City intersected with major political, economic, and cultural shifts in the era of its fiscal crisis.

Power, Representation, and the Modern City

Since the late 19th century, with the dual rise of the industrial metropolis and modern technologies of mass media and spectacle—from film and photography to modern printing and telecommunications—there has been a powerful interrelationship between urbanization and representation. Modern theorists like Walter Benjamin perceived this, who saw in the city a dynamic and dialectical interaction between visual phenomena and material social forces, whereby the former were seen to “express” and “reproduce”—rather than simply reflect or mystify—the latter.⁴ Here the image of the city, and more broadly what Henri Lefebvre has called “representational space,” may be seen as an objective and productive social force, with real material effects, and playing an integral role in creating modern forms of production, consumption, and the collective

“dreamscape.”⁵ Further, in what some have since called the “visual turn” in social theory, 19th century technologies and experiences of visuality in the new spaces of the city, from shopping arcades to commercial boulevards, have been recognized for their transformative effect on everyday life—from structures of desire to the “human sensorium” of the urban dweller.⁶

As essential aspect of modern visuality has been its effect on the practice of power. On the one hand, as media technologies have grown smaller, cheaper and more powerful, and as mass media products have grown ever more accessible and versatile, they’ve revealed a liberatory potential—giving voice to politically underrepresented groups, spurring creativity, expressing new forms of class consciousness and solidarity, and opening doors to participation in a democratic public sphere. Yet, at the same time, as mass media ownership has grown increasingly centralized in the hands of fewer and more powerful corporations, and with print and broadcast media reaching wider audiences, the media have also revealed a potential to support the power of dominant groups through equally dominant representations, and to limit access to participation in the public sphere.

Broader social hierarchies have been reproduced by the differences in the representational power of the media technologies to which different groups have access. Thus, while the myriad, locally circulated “penny presses” of 19th century New York City helped build a sense of solidarity along lines of neighborhood, ethnicity, and class for the poor and working class, mass circulation newspapers also aided in the manipulation and standardization of these diverse “markets” by the earliest big city editors, advertising

copy writers, and amusement park impresarios. The political divergence in access to urban media was mirrored in modern urban space, as the myriad, relatively autonomous “heterotopias” that took root amidst the hidden spaces of old, winding streets and peripheral districts were increasingly destroyed to make way for the centralized surveillance and “beautification” that was made possible by the techniques of rational city planning, electric street lighting, and the scopic regime of the “panopticon.”

Beginning in the 1980’s, a group of “new urban sociologists” began to relate these spatial and cultural phenomena more systematically to urban political economy in an attempt to understand the forces that were so rapidly and radically transforming cities with the rise of deregulated global capitalism in the 1970’s.⁷ The most fruitful studies, as Sharon Zukin pointed out, are not limited to a single school, but rather combine analysis of political economy and the “symbolic economy,” seeking to understand “the interpenetration of culture and power.”⁸ Out of this interpenetration has emerged a study of what might be called the “urban imaginary.” Existing alongside, and in dialectical relation with, the physical, built city, the urban imaginary encompasses a relatively coherent, historically-based ensemble of representations drawn from the architecture and street plans of the city, the art and culture produced by its residents, and the images of and discourse on the city as seen, heard, or read in movies, on television, in magazines and newspapers, and other forms of urban mass media.⁹

In my own work, I am interested in using historical methods to uncover the shifting politics of the urban imaginary. To the extent that all cities are divided along lines of

social class, race, gender, sexuality, etc., in any given city at any given moment there will be a number of urban imaginaries coexisting with and competing against each other for dominance.¹⁰ While all residents of and visitors to the city occupy the same urban space, their imagined representations of that space are radically at odds because of their divergent social position in and experience of the city.¹¹ Yet while diverse and contradictory urban imaginaries may coexist, compete, and even engage in “symbolic battle,”¹² they do not do so on even ground. Groups with varying degrees of power have different resources available to them with which to represent, promote, and impose a version of the urban imaginary that serves their interests. This of course is not new; dating back to the ancient cities of Mesopotamia, dominant imaginaries have consistently been shaped by, and themselves helped shape, the struggle for power in those cities. Yet, over the last 150 years, and in particular the last thirty years, with the rise of a new “institutional matrix” of media and marketing, the disparity in representational power has widened. With that disparity, certain groups—from the new middle class to corporate elites—have gained more power to promote and impose a hegemonic urban imaginary that serves their own interests.¹³

Boosters and Modern City Marketing

The rise of urban branding as we know it today emerged out of the larger history of modern advertising, and with that the creation of brand name goods. As industrial capitalism, mass immigration, and urbanization grew throughout the 19th century, an economy based on both mass production and mass consumption emerged. Advertising

can be understood as an effort by capitalists to spur consumption of mass produced goods, compete with an increasing number of producers, and weather crises of overproduction and underconsumption which rocked the US economy in the 1870's, 1890's, and 1930's.¹⁴ With a flood of new goods and services entering the market, and discretionary income growing amongst an emerging working and middle class, early ads were meant to educate consumers as to why they needed new things, and how to use them.¹⁵ And, for consumers used to buying things produced and sold locally by people they knew personally, attaching a friendly brand name and image was intended to generate familiarity, good will, and trust in pre-packaged goods distributed from remote nationwide markets.¹⁶

A similar scenario is seen with the rise of early city marketing, or “boosterism.” Boosterism was largely an American phenomenon, and launched by the showmen, entrepreneurs, and chambers of commerce of frontier towns and newly industrialized cities, which by the late 19th century were caught up in fierce competition with other cities for residents, workers, industries, and investments.¹⁷ To a lesser, though still significant degree, forward-thinking European cities also competed with each other, and boosted themselves, when they built new town halls, organized large exhibitions, and opened new museums and holiday resorts.¹⁸ Beginning in this period, a contingent of urban boosters, working with local advertising agencies, newspaper publishers, and other emerging media industries created an extensive “critical infrastructure” of urban guidebooks, post-cards, reviews, and press coverage, with which to promote ever more elaborate, and visually enchanting consumer spaces.¹⁹ These spaces included a range of

new urban entertainments and spectacles—from amusement parks and department stores in New York and London to the perpetual sunshine of urban beaches and boulevards in Los Angeles—as well as new models of urban housing, planning, and design.²⁰

In addition to city-specific campaigns, the underlying goal of urban boosterism was to counter a broader anti-urban bias that had existed since the Jeffersonian era and expanded with the rise of the modern industrial metropolis, particularly amongst the bourgeoisie. Some critics were fuelled by a romantic longing for a simpler and more community-oriented rural life in the face of what they perceived as the alienation and crass materialism of the capitalist city.²¹ Others, more concerned with the issue of law and order, were terrified by what they saw as the breakdown of social mores and hierarchies brought about by rapid urbanization and the mixing of class and race.²² Still others, in particular social reformers and socialist city planners, were horrified by the inhumane living and working conditions endured by the urban poor in overcrowded neighborhoods and factories, which were seen as endemic to the large industrial city.²³

Regardless of the validity of these critiques, boosters' main concern was to distract attention from any negative perceptions of their "product," and replace them with a generically marketable image. To this end they developed a variety of visual strategies that aimed to construct their own image of the "city as a whole"—even while competing with other such totalizing images of the same city. Boosters frontier towns emphasized law and order, cleanliness, and well-managed civic life, attempting to establish the reputable "cityness" of their locale.²⁴ Others, seeking to attract new urban tourists to

older cities, developed images of cultural sophistication and historic grandeur, often alongside new, spectacular forms of shopping and entertainment.²⁵ Another popular approach was to exploit the middle class fascination with the city's poorer, ethnic quarters, and to commodify a "slumming aesthetic" through voyeuristic tours of exotic, bohemian cafes, as well as of more risqué sites of vice and debauchery like bars and brothels.²⁶ Of course, whatever superficial treatment might be given to ghettos or town halls, boosters strenuously avoided reference to underlying structural inequalities, such as the poor labor or housing conditions faced by many if not most of the working class population in these rapidly expanding cities.

This selective commodification of the city took advantage of new media technologies and highly visual advertising techniques. Using the panoptic strategies of photographic panoramas and "city view books," entrepreneurs managed to sell investors on exotically named cities in the swamps of Florida and the wilds of California.²⁷ As for the city's own residents, they became transfixed by capitalist dream-world captured by the "flaneur journalist" in "urban panoramic literature" like the *feuilleton*.²⁸ In short, 19th-century mass urban publications functioned not only as texts-on-cities, but as *texts-as-cities*, creating all-encompassing, power-laden "cities in miniature" within their stories, listings, and guides.²⁹ In newspapers and the *faits divers* press, modern novels and Victorian slum literature; and also in the nickelodeons and motion picture houses, readers and spectators of these new media experienced the fracturing of time, space, and power, of the modern industrial metropolis.³⁰ For as Peter Fritzsche has insightfully observed, by overlaying the "built city" with a "word city," these media formed a new narrative map

which “imposed coherence [on a world of] unfamiliarity and flux ..., inviting as well as containing movement through the city.”³¹

II. Global Restructuring and Social Change

Discursive practices of urban commodification and control that emerged in the age of boosterism endured through the twentieth century. Yet the cycles of capital accumulation and cultural production in which these practices were embedded changed dramatically over the course of the century, and particularly in the last 30 years. Like their 19th century mass media predecessors which arose with the modern industrial and commercial metropolis, new forms of urban media have emerged as panoramic navigational tools for a landscape of equally monumental flux: the 1960’s era of urban crisis and the 1970’s era of the post-industrial, post-Fordist, global city.

The 1960’s Urban Crisis

Over the course of the 1960’s, with post- World War II prosperity and relative peace ending, and a white, right-wing, anti-urban coalition emerging amongst suburban and rural districts, U.S. urban economies dependant upon federal government subsidies were increasingly starved for funds, and began to decline.³² In addition, as the “new left” social protest movements of the 1960’s, like the Civil Rights Movement and the Anti-Vietnam War Movement, gained increasing coherence and militancy, major cities across the U.S., Latin America, and Europe became epicenters of unrest.³³ On the one hand, urban streets and public spaces pulsed with an unprecedented sense of possibility—an

expression of people's universal "right to the city" regardless of class, color, or gender, that culminated in the international events of 1968.³⁴ On the other hand, increasing factory closings and layoffs; a new wave of post-colonial immigration; disinvestment and "white flight" to the expanding suburbs; as well as ongoing racial discrimination and police brutality, created an equally unprecedented sense of tension in city streets.³⁵ Struggles for public space became violent and were met with increasingly militaristic police response. Local and state government endorsed these police tactics, and though they often took great pains to prevent media coverage, the police provided the media with dramatic images of violence and repression that entered wide circulation.³⁶

Very quickly a decontextualized discourse of "urban crisis" began to permeate popular culture. With the increasing concentration of Blacks and Latinos in inner-cities, this crisis discourse was increasingly couched in racial terms. As Robert Beauregard has shown through his analysis of media accounts of the era, this expressed a deeper concern amongst U.S. whites, who increasingly moved outside the cities, over the growing power of the Civil Rights Movement and desegregation more broadly.³⁷ Thus as developments in media technology made scenes of urban crisis far more compelling and ubiquitous, they also evoked longstanding anti-urban and racist tropes, which were finding new justification in an era of suburbanization, desegregation, and mounting social unrest.³⁸ Old prejudices, endorsed by a growing right-wing movement, in combination with the rise of joblessness and poverty in the inner-city, allowed the easy labeling of city dwellers as a kind of urban surplus population, and as an obsolete and dangerous rabble.

The rise of street protest, radical social movements, and instability, in combination with the rapidity of technological and cultural changes, reached such proportions that many conservative thinkers predicted cities were on the brink of self-destruction. In his 1970 best-seller *Future Shock*, Alvin Toffler warns of “urban man’s impending loss of psycho-social orientation - and thus his ability to make thoughtful, rational decisions - because of the ever accelerating rate of growth and change of his environment.”³⁹ This attitude only fuelled deeper anti-urbanism amongst President Nixon’s so-called “silent majority” of suburban, Americans, already inclined to blame cities, young urban radicals, and costly social services for undermining the fortunes and values of the nation.

The 1970’s Fiscal Crisis

The social unrest and anxiety of the “urban crisis” was in large part an expression of deeper, global economic and political shifts of this period, namely the shock of rapid and widespread deindustrialization in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s, and the fiscal crisis of the state in the mid 1970’s.⁴⁰ Deindustrialization was caused by a number of factors—including competition from newly industrialized nations, deregulation of financial markets, and the rise of new communications and transportation technologies—all of which made capital more flexible and more inclined to seek investments outside of the industrialized West.⁴¹ These forces culminated in 1973 with the global oil crisis and spike in energy costs which, in combination with continuing recession and high unemployment, sent the economies of the U.S. and much of Europe into a prolonged period of “stagflation.”⁴² The immediate result of this were widespread lay-offs, rising

poverty, and increasing demands on social welfare. In addition, industrial disinvestment and growing taxpayer revolts severely limited cities' ability to raise money from real property.

The economic and social impacts of deindustrialization and inflation were compounded by a Republican federal government which increasingly refused to lend money to cities. As Stanley Aronowitz points out "this problem represented a shift in historic practice. Cities, particularly since the Depression, had to borrow to cover expenses, creditors often charged high interest, and the federal government traditionally helped them to repay these loans." But now the Republican Nixon and then the Ford administrations "felt strong enough to mount an attack on social spending, especially for the cities, regarded as bastions of Democratic political power, reflecting the still important labor movement and black and other minority communities."⁴³ These cut backs were made under the rubric of "revenue sharing," whereby federal grants that once covered social programs almost entirely now had to be matched by local spending—which was very often impossible. Thus ideological anti-urbanism was matched by economic anti-urbanism, as cities, particularly liberal cities like New York, were starved of funds, and through tax cuts and other means, these funds were then reallocated to the private sector.

Sociological analysts at the time, like James O'Connor and Giovanni Arrighi, understood "fiscal crisis" as a means of "articulation between elite class interest and the state" and a process of 'discontinuous change... where institutional arrangements are transformed or destroyed and new ones created,' to the benefit of capital.⁴⁴ In this sense, the typical

explanations for the “crises” sweeping U.S. cities in this period, which usually involved some combination of blame for overly generous municipal governments and overly demanding recipients of welfare, social services, and “public largesse,” ring hollow. For, as Eric Lichten argues, fiscal crisis should be viewed not as “a result of badly mismanaged macroeconomic policy” nor “a momentary aberration which can be set right by balancing budgets according to business rationality,” but instead as “part of and the consequence of a class-based struggle over wealth, income, and economic security.”⁴⁵

And indeed, in the wake of these fiscal crises, a profound shift in institutional arrangements privileged private capital over the public sector to degree not seen since the Gilded Era. Political economists have described the institutional and regulatory shift that ensued as a move from the rigid Fordism of the previous half century, and towards a more “flexible,” post-Fordist mode of accumulation.⁴⁶ Under Fordism capital flows were organized on a national scale, hemmed in by strong government regulation, and further contained by coordination between large national unions and large-scale manufacturers, whose production was oriented toward mass markets. In addition, following a Keynesian logic, governments believed that a large welfare state helped “prime the pump,” providing needed stimulus for constant and predictable levels of consumption, production, and employment. Under emerging post-Fordist arrangements, on the other hand, finance and commodity capital were increasingly free to roam across borders, the regulatory powers of federal governments and unions were weakened, and production was oriented towards more flexible, small batch production, niche marketing, and the cheapest possible labor costs.

Meanwhile, the welfare state was replaced by the “austerity state.”⁴⁷ As state and local governments faced increasing budgetary shortfalls and the threat of fiscal crisis—imposed by elites—an ideological realignment that mirrored that of the private sector began to occur in the public sector. The monetarist “supply-side economics” of the early 1970’s was taken up by a broader right-wing social and political movement, and used to justify both the America’s militaristic, “neoconservative” foreign policy, as well as its deregulatory, “neoliberal” social and fiscal policy. The latter entailed wide scale attacks on the welfare state, organized labor, and government itself, and by the 1980’s, under President Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, this arrangement would become dominant in the West.⁴⁸

This had a most devastating effect on U.S. cities, particularly those beneficiaries of the Great Society programs of the Sixties, and centers of leftist political movements that the rising right-wing in Washington wished to cut off. Throughout the late 1970’s and 80’s, federal aid to cities was additionally reduced and urban public services privatized or scaled back, while private industry downsized and globalized operations in search of cheaper labor and overhead. In the process, public sector jobs—which supported a large part of the urban workforce and were for the most part unionized and well paid, also began to disappear, and were replaced—to some degree—by new private sector, white collar, non-unionized service jobs.⁴⁹

Thus, for both political and economic reasons, internationally networked service industries — including FIRE, information, media, marketing, and tourism— began to replace manufacturing and the public sector as the economic base of the “post-industrial” global city,. Jobs within these new industries tended to be “bifurcated” between the very high and very low end of the skill and income spectrum.⁵⁰ The waning power and inadequate strategy of the labor movement, in combination with the increasing flexibility of capital to seek out the cheapest labor available, meant that those in the new low-end jobs tended to be unorganized, and less prepared, at least initially, to fight for wages and benefits.⁵¹ As a result, cities were rendered far more “divided” and “fractured” along lines of class, education, race and ethnicity than they ever had been. Inner cities were increasingly comprised of poor people of color whose buying power was far less, and service needs far greater, in terms of education, health, law enforcement, and housing, than those of the growing ring suburbs.⁵² And perversely, while greater numbers of urban residents were dislocated by economic restructuring, and in greater need of public assistance, the public sector was severely cut back. Indeed, the combination of market shifts and government retrenchment effectively drove many states and municipalities to the brink of fiscal crisis.⁵³

The Entrepreneurial City and Public Private Partnerships

This transformation in the urban economic base was not simply a response to structural changes and political forces at the national and international level, but was also facilitated by local elites. In particular, it was assisted by leaders of local service industries—

namely finance, insurance, and real estate [FIRE], as well as also tourism—who stood to reap huge rewards from such a shift in the city’s economic mix and tax structure, as well as in the new image and reputation of the city it would bring about in the eyes of their international clientele. Many urban power-brokers and land-owners, like the Rockefellers, had been fighting since the 1920’s to impose a “sense of order” on the diverse, mixed-use neighborhoods of Lower Manhattan by turning them into a single financial district, and boosting their property values exponentially. This helps explain why even though many of the downtown industries deemed “obsolete” were still doing a thriving business, they were forced to leave in the 1960’s and 70’s through the State’s use of zoning changes and eminent domain, in order to make way for the “post-industrial” economy.⁵⁴ Furthermore, despite claims by neoliberals that the invisible hand of the free market would ease this transition, this new era of “disorganized capitalism” led to a chronic state of instability which ultimately benefited those in the corporate and financial sectors, who were able to reorganize and sharpen their strategy in this period.⁵⁵

The combined economic and political pressures of the 1970’s brought about a transformation in the notion of urban governance itself, as cities increasingly replaced “managerial” with “entrepreneurial” development strategies, and abandoned centralized, “rational” urban planning in the process.⁵⁶ “Urban growth machines” based in the local FIRE sector, and strongly linked to city government, pushed pro-growth, free market agendas, regardless of their social or environmental sustainability.⁵⁷ One of the key institutional bases of these machines became known as “public private partnerships.”⁵⁸ These were essentially informal, unelected bodies through which new financial and

political relationships were forged between business and the public sector, including government, labor, and community groups. However, given the privileged position of the private sector, particularly under contemporary forms of uneven urban development, these partnerships were “inherently unequal,” with city government, unions and community groups playing the role, at best, of “junior partners,” and at worst, facilitating “the reallocation of public resources to fit a new agenda.”⁵⁹ Indeed, through these mechanisms, the public sector faced ever growing pressure to privatize collective goods and services, as well as to adopt the new discourse of business-like restructuring that originated in the private sector. This discourse was taught by new management texts on “reinventing government,” by retraining bureaucrats to embrace the “competitive spirit,” and perhaps most importantly, as we shall see in New York, by the actual hiring of private sector management consultants to restructure and reform public governance, policy, and goals.⁶⁰

One of the most important and lucrative elements of the “new agenda” which these partnerships advanced involved the reorganization of the urban built environment, through new, creative uses of tax breaks, subsidies, and zoning and rent deregulation. This served to accelerate the capitalist tendency towards uneven development, whereby inequalities in real estate prices and land-rents may be exploited for future gain.⁶¹ The consequence of this over time is the raising of rents, and displacing of residents, in the name of “gentrifying” derelict neighborhoods that adjoin more affluent areas.⁶²

Particularly in older, mixed-use, industrial districts and underused downtowns, both working class jobs and residents disappeared, as seen most dramatically with the rise of

“loft living” in Soho in the 1970’s and 80’s.⁶³ During the 1980’s and 1990’s these trends were to grow in scale and power, as downtowns in cities like New York and L.A. saw some of the biggest waves of real estate redevelopment in the modern period, and became “re-scaled” around globally networked, residential and commercial zones.⁶⁴

III. The Institutional Matrix: New Media, Marketing, and Tourism

As I have sought to show in the previous section, political economists, sociologists, and urban theorists have connected the fiscal crisis of the state, and the post-Fordist and neoliberal shift, to the rise of public private partnerships and entrepreneurial city governments which overwhelmingly represent the interests of FIRE elites, as against the needs of the public sector. Yet few analysts have pointed out the extent to which this new regime was also, from its earliest moments, embroiled in the new institutional matrix of media, marketing, and tourism. These industries were based in the same cities, and faced the same global pressures as FIRE. In this regard, they —and the tourist industry especially— were extremely attuned to the role that urban image played in a city’s economic competitiveness. In addition, with the rise of television, new consumer print media, and new technologies of market research, these culture industries were undergoing restructuring and becoming far more integrated and powerful. Thus, from the earliest moment of “public private partnerships” —such as the rise of the Association for a Better New York in 1971— advertisers and tourism executives were across the table from financiers and realtors. And in addition to plotting how to rezone industrial districts for high finance, they were planning marketing campaigns to sell the idea of a post-

industrial “fun city.” It was clear that in a global, image-sensitive, consumer marketplace, both the new technologies, and the astute, culture workers that wielded them, were useful to the entrepreneurial city, and to public private partnerships, in a new way.

For the entrepreneurial city was the site of two major “revolutions” in the postwar cultural realm. First the 1960’s “communications revolution” spawned a new generation of media technologies, in particular in electronics, information processing, printing, and television media, that were integrated ever more profoundly in the activity of everyday life. Second, and occurring simultaneously, the “consumer revolution” transformed urban and suburban spaces into a playground for a “new middle class,” for whom identity and politics were defined more and more in terms of consumer-oriented “lifestyles.” These two revolutions supported each other, with people consuming and using mass media technologies as never before, and with new media creating navigational and representational tools for a postindustrial landscape of image and consumption.

The Communications and Consumer Revolutions

Like its industrial predecessor, the post-industrial phase of global capitalism was facilitated, both technically and discursively, by revolutionary innovations in mass media—in this case, by the increasingly powerful and interconnected electronic and computer-based media and information technologies proliferating in the 1950’s and 1960’s.⁶⁵ Thinkers like Marshall McLuhan and Daniel Bell saw in the new “informatics”

the dawn of a “post-industrial age” which would provide a high-tech fix for the crises and conflicts of capitalism— notions to which neoliberal thinkers like Francis Fukayama and Al Gore are heir.⁶⁶ In the early 1970’s, Herbert Schiller and Hans Magnus Enzenberger, some of the rare Marxist thinkers who approached the topic in this period, looked beyond the hype and anticipated the increasing economic centrality and ideological impact of the media industry, as well as its tendency towards forming a “universal system.”⁶⁷ While full convergence between media content, computers, and telecommunications wouldn’t be fully realized until the advent of digital technology in the 1990’s, the writing was on the wall, and was avidly being read by theorists, as well as by corporations seeking a competitive edge in the global marketplace.

In the age of corporate and neo-colonial globalization, the institutional matrix of media production has adapted to the need for media resources which are faster, less capital and labor intensive, and more easily linked to transnational corporate networks, so as to feed more seamlessly into the flexible flow of finance capital.⁶⁸ This increasing integration of media and information into the economy has ushered in a new kind of “symbolic economy,” in which increasingly specialized “intellectual labor,” as Benjamin first called it, is utilized in an ever wider array of industries, that value the knowledge and analytic skills needed to encode and interpret the signs and symbols of exchange.⁶⁹

The rapid expansion of media production and consumption was facilitated by the second cultural shift in this period, the rise of consumerism as a mass phenomenon and means of identity formation among the new middle class and “new youth” of the 1960’s. The

importance of consumption for young aspirants takes us back to Thorstein Veblen's Gilded Era observations of the "conspicuous consumption" of the *nouveaux riches*, i.e. that modern middle and upper class Americans who flaunted their use of non-essential goods and leisure time much as their premodern ancestors flaunted their wealth: as an "honorific" to demonstrate their distance from the working class, and to show their "pecuniary strength."⁷⁰ Rather than the simple public display of status symbols, Pierre Bourdieu emphasizes the significance of more tacit forms of symbolic consumption, *vis a vis* the expression of "taste" and "life-style," in asserting and reproducing class position.

⁷¹ These forms constitute "cultural capital," i.e. the consumption of objects and the expression of views that communicate to others a group's level of cultivation and "class." Cultural capital contributes to economic and social capital, and is most consciously pursued by those groups —like the petite bourgeoisie or new middle class— whose hold on traditional forms of capital is tenuous and recently attained.

Yet how can one apply questions of cultural capital and symbolic consumption to the sixties generation, which was so famous for casting off mass society in the name of the "counterculture"? Most historical accounts of 1960's, whether sympathetic or not, emphasize the role of the rebellious youth "countercultural revolution" in defining and transforming that era, and when consumerism is addressed, present it as a parasitic adjunct to this more original, authentic, and fundamentally transgressive movement. While there are important truths in this "narrative of cooptation," as Thomas Frank calls it, what it leaves out is any analysis of the interrelationship between the counterculture revolution happening at the grassroots, and that which was also occurring in consumer

culture and corporate America, in the same period.⁷² This analytical void, then, elides the question of social class, i.e. the middle class basis of much of the counterculture, and the extent to which this “grassroots movement” arose on the wave of post-WWII affluence, mass consumer culture, and radically new forms of marketing—from media to music to fashion. Analyzed in this light, the rise of transgressive youth culture may also be associated with a shifting new middle class subjectivity, namely the “new sensibility” identified by Susan Sontag as early as 1961, which extolled the “campy” pleasures of exhibitionist gay culture, style, and mass consumerism.⁷³ This new sensibility of “hip” versus “square,” as Sharon Zukin has noted, marked a shift in dominant forms of cultural capital, from one associated with the conspicuous consumption of expensive goods, to one based in an appreciation of both “high and low” culture, as developed by the “honest brokers” of consumer media.⁷⁴ In making this shift, the “new youth” not only challenged white collar conservatives on political grounds, they also challenged their aesthetic, moral, and cultural hierarchies, and asserted the legitimacy of a rising class.

The desire for social mobility and cultural capital was particularly strong among the “new *urban* middle class.”⁷⁵ During this transitional era, they were caught not only between old and new economic systems, but also between city and suburb. This was the result of a massive, publicly subsidized shift in investments away from urban downtowns, and towards middle class suburbanization, as well as the decay of the urban infrastructure, rising crime rates and other quality of life issues associated with the “urban crisis.” Thus, throughout the 1960’s, the urban middle class felt increasingly embattled and at risk of losing their hard-won, post-War gains. Many more fled to the suburbs, and those who

chose to tough it out in the city felt in need of assistance. In response, a new service-oriented form of lifestyle media arose to replace the now anachronistic discourse of boosterism. This was epitomized as we shall see by *New York* magazine, which challenged the visual tropes of urban crisis through the irreverent, heavily stylized innovations of “new journalism,” and through selling the notion that the city was hip and all about consumption.

Significantly, these new media were produced *by* and *for* the same young, urban middle class segment. The honest brokers writing the advice columns, restaurant reviews, and satiric reports on “radical chic,” were generally of the same class background, dropped the same cultural references, and shared many of the same everyday concerns about life in the city, as their struggling, aspirational readers.⁷⁶ In this way, urban lifestyle magazines exemplify the use of new technologies of mass media, and new techniques of journalism and design, to express and disseminate what Antonio Gramsci called the “common sense” of an emerging social class, and thereby advance their common political interests. Significantly, this is a phenomenon Gramsci first observed in the 1920’s, when analyzing these dynamics in the rise of the bourgeois press of the 18th century, and again at the turn-of-the-19th-century.⁷⁷ It seems that the 1960’s in cities like New York represented a similar moment of a journalistic vanguard.

What’s significant about the strategy of this new urban-based media vanguard was how deeply they integrated themselves— technically, visually, and discursively— within the larger world of consumer marketing. The new journalism itself interwove critical

editorial content and graphic design in daring new ways, and in so doing mirrored a similar, irreverent interplay between text and image taking place within the countercultural “new advertising” of the day. And both advertising and lifestyle magazines seamlessly connected their forms of cultural critique to the emerging fields of “psychographic” and “lifestyle” marketing and market research— which formed the foundation upon which “branding” would later arise. These new “synergies,” as they would soon be called, were not coincidental. All of these culture industries faced similar pressures, namely the demand for greater economic and organizational flexibility in a post-Fordist economy, and mounting critiques both from consumer movements, and from a new generation of writers, editors, designers, and advertisers. Thus the 1950’s institutional hierarchies and divisions began breaking down across and between these industries, driven out by the “creative revolution” that enabled collaboration between advertising copywriters and designers, magazine editors and artistic directors, and journalists and advertisers more broadly.⁷⁸ Stylistically, a similar revolution was afoot, as magazines and marketers embraced and co-opted the broader youth counterculture, so as to more effectively sell to this new generation.⁷⁹

By making these moves, the power of the hip, young purveyors of lifestyle media, new advertising, and attitudinal research grew in proportion to the escalating anxieties of their elder clients in the public and private sectors. These clients were facing the same daunting realities of speed-up, recession, and the backlash of young consumers, and more than anything were searching for new ways to simply survive, let alone take the competitive lead. Savvy new ad agencies, marketing consultants, and magazine editors

positioned themselves to provide these ideas—both through keeping the proverbial “finger on the pulse” of the tastes and styles of the new generation, as well as through adeptly analyzing the psychology and finances of desperate CEO’s and big city mayors, and telling them what they sensed they wanted to hear. In so doing, these intermediaries were not only expressing the raw, authentic culture, or common sense, of a new urban middle class, but they were also producing, imposing, and branding a new, consumer-oriented version of this culture that was useful to anxious old-guard elites, and to marketers’ own professional aspirations.⁸⁰ Given the representational power of the emerging matrix of media and marketing, this new form of branded culture was, as we will see, to take on a life of its own.

Branding and the Society of the Spectacle

According to the usual definition, “branding” refers to the use of a trademark or distinctive name so as to identify a product or manufacturer, and the use of iron brands to mark the skin of an animal with a sign of ownership, or the skin of a criminal with a sign of permanent stigma.⁸¹ Thus in common usage today, “branding” simultaneously connotes the corporate labeling of a thing, and the permanent, physical, even violent transformation and commodification of both inanimate things and living beings. The latter meaning, associated with hot iron brands, is an ancient one going back to biblical times. The use of the verb to mean trade-marking, on the other hand, is of more recent derivation, developing with diverse methods of labeling goods and their packages as they entered into the new circuits of exchange that emerged with early forms of capitalism. With the rise of mass consumer marketing in the 19th century branding came to be

separated from simple trade-marking. Competitive pressures led to the creation of “brand-name” goods, thus further dissociating the image of the commodity seen on the package, as well as in ads, from its origins in the factory. In the past thirty years, branding has become part of an overall intensification of marketing by increasingly flexible and competitive global corporations. Now, the brand is separated not only from the point of production, but from the commodity itself, so that the disembodied image of both the corporation and the products it sells can be more free to circulate globally and to enter into a more comprehensive media landscape.

Tracing this evolution of usage reveals the rise of a new business practice. Overall, the history of branding can be seen to intensify the fetishization of the commodity under capitalism. Through fetishization, as Marx observed, the commodity, a simple product of labor, came to appear as if it were autonomous, even god-like, thus turning real social relations into the appearance of relations between things.⁸² Fetishization obscured the underlying dynamic of universal exchange, disarticulating the point of production from that of circulation,⁸³ and allowing the apparent “humanization” and empowerment of non-living commodities alongside the commodification and disempowerment of the living human beings who produce them.

Brand marketing in its current form takes this process a step further. With contemporary branding we see, in a sense, the fetishizing of the fetish, i.e. the commodification of the reified image of the commodity itself. Effectively, branding not only makes the “mystical veil” which hides the social origins of the commodity that much thicker, but

creates a veritable industry for the production and circulation of mystical veils, and devises methods for knitting these veils together to give the illusion of totality. This latter step has been facilitated by the increasingly “integrated system” of global corporate media.

Thus we come to a powerful version of what Guy Debord predicted in the 1960’s when he warned of the emerging “society of the spectacle”. As Debord puts it:

The whole life of those societies in which modern conditions of production prevail presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles. All that once was directly lived has become mere representation. Images detached from every aspect of life merge into a common stream, and the former unity of life is lost forever. Apprehended in a partial way, reality unfolds in a new generality as a pseudo world apart, solely as an object of contemplation. The tendency toward the specialization of images-of-the-world finds its highest expression in the world of the autonomous image, where deceit deceives itself. The spectacle in its generality is a concrete inversion of life, and, as such, the autonomous movement of non-life.⁸⁴

According to this view, the split between base and superstructure has been “turned on its head.” Rather than a dialectical relation between the two, Debord sees a world in which image and ideology are actually driving material social forces. Regardless of the ultimate truth of this linear claim, it does serve to highlight a new stage of reification that occurs with the dominance of the symbolic economy.

Market Research as Surveillance

One of the essential elements in this new stage of reification is the production of market research. The collection and commodification of consumer information has been central to the profitability and power of the culture industries ever since their origins in the late

19th century. As the culture industries became increasingly central to the process of capital accumulation and political governance in the post-World War II period, and as markets became larger and more varied, consumer information became increasingly valuable and specialized, and was in demand by a far wider range of clients—including, as we will see, the entrepreneurial city and state. This information gathering may be seen in the same light as other modern, statistical and social scientific techniques of surveillance—like those arising with criminology and psychiatry. As Michel Foucault has observed, these “productive disciplines” worked to define, quantify, and *produce* social differences, binarisms, and hierarchies, so as to better control and exploit diverse elements of society.⁸⁵

In this sense, the history of modern market research may be seen as one of ever intensifying surveillance and productivity. As Adam Arviddson has shown, early market research, using *a priori* categories and deductive methods, sought to “contain” all consumers within fixed notions of taste, habits, and preferences. Then, beginning in the 1960’s, a new “control paradigm” emerged that used *a posteriori* categories like consumer profiles to support inductive methods which probed ever deeper into the consumer life-world. Academics in social psychology and business merged their methodologies to found the new field of “psychographics,” which used a range of identity categories and invasive interview methods to survey—and also to produce—the new “lifestyles” and “attitudes” of American consumers.⁸⁶ As “the number of variables relating directly to consumption, such as product, brand or media choice tended to increase” in the 1970’s, and as “life itself [came] to generate value,” Arviddson argues

consumers were transformed into “data doubles” for market researchers, existing only as “raw material for information commodities.”⁸⁷ The industry standard in this field was the “Lifestyle Monitor,” an annual psychographic survey of national trends begun in 1971 by Yankelovich, Skelly and White [YSW]—who, as we shall see, are to play a pivotal role in the branding strategy adopted by New York City.⁸⁸

The related discipline of advertising followed a similar path. Mass marketed, information-filled ads appealing to consumers as rational decision makers gave way to targeted ads emphasizing emotional and psychological “linkages” between scientifically calibrated consumer lifestyles and brand-name items. As Susan Strasser points out, the split between “informational” and “suggestive” approaches to advertising has existed since the beginning of brand marketing at the turn of the century, reflecting changing attitudes towards the ability of science to manipulate human nature.⁸⁹ The victory of the suggestive approach came with the new advertising in the 1960’s, when scientific methods were seen as necessary to maintain the dominance of the U.S. market globally.⁹⁰ Thus the worlds of advertising and commercial media began integrating their production more and more with market research.

In addition, by the 1970’s, as the marketplace became more competitive and unpredictable, and critiques of the consumer movement grew more intense, corporations became preoccupied with gathering information about their own image. In this environment, psychographic research both alleviated and reproduced corporate anxieties. In an effort to show corporations how they “lived within society,” YSW developed

surveys to measure the “image” and “reputation” of a company in the minds of its “affected publics”—including its consumers, sales people, employees, stock holders, and government regulators. Through this device, and the subsequent “corporate reputation index” published in *Fortune Magazine*, YSW was the first to turn these psychological “intangibles” into a quantifiable asset that could be listed alongside a company’s financial statements. This, YSW promised, could then impact a company’s desirability to employees, the marketability of its products, and most importantly and predictably, the pricing of its stock.⁹¹

Brand Value and Counterbranding

Today, measurements of “corporate reputation” are still measured and viewed as essential to the valuation of a company’s stock, but are combined with ever more arcane, and reified, means of quantifying the total value of the corporation’s “brand.”⁹² This amorphous value extends beyond the corporation itself to the image of everything the corporation touches, from the tangible and intangible “products” it now sells, to the environments in which these products may be seen and purchased—including advertisements, feature films, live events, retail outlets, and the streets and cities in which these all are based.

On the one hand this move towards ever greater abstraction of value was instigated by manufacturers themselves. Competitive pressures and the drive to cut costs fed into a greater demand for marketing, as corporations concentrated revenue in building powerful brands, while cutting spending on production and human resources.⁹³ By the 1980’s,

most profitable global corporations shifted their resources away from production altogether, outsourcing this work to cheaper labor markets, and investing the bulk of their capital instead in marketing themselves and their products. The goal for transnationals became “weightlessness”—i.e. focusing revenue and expertise on image-making, while eschewing “the world of things.”⁹⁴ As Nike CEO Phil Knight put it in 1994, “there is no value in making things anymore. The value is added by careful research, by innovation and by marketing.”⁹⁵ This form of “value” eclipses traditional capitalist notions of supply and demand, and separates the concept even more from its roots in the labor process.⁹⁶ This move also helps maintain the contemporary contradiction of marketing, i.e. that the increasing beauty of the brand image is accompanied by increasing exploitation at the point of production. Today, this is seen—or not seen—in terms of the conditions of production and the status of workers in the *maquiladoras* and free-trade zones of the “Global South,” where the overwhelming majority of brand-name goods are produced.⁹⁷

The shift to branding is also driven by the competitive strategies of marketing and advertising firms, who have come to think of themselves as “primary producers” in the so-called knowledge economy.⁹⁸ These firms have been extremely successful at convincing manufacturers that, while “products are made in factories, brands are made in the mind,” and a new level of creative and quasi-scientific expertise is required to conquer this uncharted territory.⁹⁹ Building on the “psychographics” movement of the 1960’s and 70’s, the notion of “branding” as a formal discipline emerged in the 1980’s and 90’s. Through business publications such as *BrandMonthly*; academic journals and textbooks in business, communications, and design; and numerous conferences and

conventions,¹⁰⁰ “brand value” began to be seen as something that could be mathematically quantified, purchased and even “repurchased,” separate from the equity of the company.¹⁰¹

Seeing that a brand’s power to connote such abstract notions of exchange value depended upon the quality, rather than sheer quantity, of exposure, a new breed of “brand managers” arose to build consistent, unified brand images. Their job was to strategically associate brand-names with people, places, events, ideas, time periods, etc., which were believed to resonate with the target market. Such “brand positioning,” ultimately became more important than the actual characteristics of the product, as corporations struggled to have their brands “shout above the crowd” in an increasingly crowded brand marketplace.¹⁰² While brand positioning is targeted to appeal to a valued niche, it has also been the job of brand managers to broaden this appeal so as to continually increase the brand’s “net value” and market share.¹⁰³ This is exemplified by global “megabrands” like Nike and Coca Cola, recognizable in any language or culture, and with brand values worth \$20 and \$24 *billion* respectively. According to a 1997 study, their logos, along with those of Shell and McDonalds, are recognized by almost 90% of the global population—placing the brand value of commercial logos well above religious symbols like the Christian cross, which is reportedly recognized by only 50% of the global population.¹⁰⁴

While the statistical methods of brand managers are problematic, and may well be self-serving, they nonetheless point to the remarkable scale and scope these visual strategies

have achieved in the last thirty years. And although one should always be skeptical regarding the supposed consumer effects of branding campaigns—or advertising in general, particularly as choices are reduced in a corporate marketplace—one can’t deny the considerable equity that those brands deemed successful have brought to these corporations, the vast sums that corporations regularly spend to build such brands, or the increased dependence of corporations on the strength of their brands in the valuation of their stock. In this sense, the image has gained unprecedented prominence in economic life. And with the ever-more realistic and sparkling illusion of the autonomous image, deeper shadows are cast on the real, human world outside.

Entering so deeply into dependence on the world of images, and networks of media circulation, also poses significant risks. As Stuart Hall has taught us, the “encoding” and “decoding” of media signs and messages is never a simple correlation, but is always fraught with power. Readings may be “dominant,” “negotiated,” or “oppositional,” depending on the social situation of producers and audiences.¹⁰⁵ In this sense, brands, existing now primarily as media messages, have emerged as a new site of contestation, opposition, and corporate vulnerability. On the one hand, damage can be done to brands as a result of unforeseen events that become media spectacles—such as the incarceration of Martha Stewart, the founder and CEO of a heavily branded company named after herself.¹⁰⁶ On the other hand, damage can be done by organized anti-consumerist and anti-corporate individuals and movements which purposely subvert branded images to get media attention and send a counter message—such as the use of McDonalds terminology and imagery in the anti-McDonalds documentary “SuperSize Me!” (Morgan Spurlock,

2004), or the satirical group the Yes Men's marking of the 20th anniversary of the Bhopal disaster by impersonating a repentant Union Carbide executive on BBC-World.¹⁰⁷ In looking historically at what I will be calling *counterbranding* events, efforts, and movements, one sees that the bigger and more expensive the brand image that is projected by a corporation, or a city, the greater its vulnerability to bad publicity, and the larger the potential target for those who wish to launch a critique.¹⁰⁸ In this sense, the branded environment we now inhabit has also become a potential space for situationist *detournement* on an unprecedented scale.¹⁰⁹

IV. Branding the City

In this dissertation, I will refer to the simultaneous production and marketing of a hegemonic, consumer-oriented version of the urban imaginary: the *branding of the city*. Although, as we have seen, the notion of branding arose in the corporate and consumer world of the 1960's, 70's and 80's, with the entrepreneurial shift in municipal governance branding also entered the urban realm. During the past 30 years, and facing similar global competitive pressures and 'image crises' as corporations, city agencies, city-based businesses, and transnational media corporations, separately and in concert, began to employ almost identical strategies to recreate, market, and consistently manage their cities as brands.¹¹⁰ In the wake of wide-scale deindustrialization and federal retrenchment, new "synergies" formed between traditional city boosters (entrepreneurs, chambers of commerce, etc.) and local and transnational corporations based in advertising, media, and culture industries, as well as service industries, from finance to

real estate to restaurants.¹¹¹ By branding their location, these groups seek to forge emotional linkages between a commodified city and its consumers —potential residents, investors, corporate partners, and tourists— so that the name of the city alone will conjure up a whole series of images and emotions, and with them an impression of value. Ultimately they hope their city’s identity will merge with its commercialized image as produced by advertising, media, and cultural industries, and become the brand. In the process, the “real” material city is altered as much as possible to conform to the idealized image of the brand-name city, and to facilitate its further commodification.

With the increasing mobility of capital, commodities, information, images, and labor, cities and corporations based in them must compete as never before, and branding only adds to the competitive pressure. According to a recent cover story in *American Demographics*, the current “city branding trend” essentially forces city governments to compete against each other in an effort convince the widest range of targeted consumers to come, stay, and buy:

Municipal leaders realize that in order to survive [they must] come up with sharper, more professional strategies [and] integrated marketing approaches [to] sell their cities to diverse consumer audiences. [Thus they begin] to regard themselves as the new brands, and everyone as their customer.

Among the “customers” are corporations, who have great flexibility to choose urban or suburban locations and often hire location consultants to help them make the choice. As Shari Barnett, senior manager of global location strategies at Price WaterhouseCoopers explains, “Things like geography and tax incentives will get you on the short list, but at the end of the day, if the client doesn’t perceive your city well, they’ll move on.”¹¹² In

this situation, the branded city is represented as a site of relative fixity, a safe investment, and a strategic lure. As the *American Demographics* article concludes, “for all consumers – from skilled workers looking for new digs to CEO’s choosing business sites – a city’s image has become [the] deal breaker.”¹¹³

This move towards urban branding may be seen as the discursive component in a broader set of material strategies employed by entrepreneurial cities and local elites. These strategies, analyzed increasingly by scholars in new urban sociology and media studies, include efforts to realize profit through “monopoly rents;” the creation of new “tourist cities;” and the restructuring of urban space as a stage-set for media production.

The Battle for Monopoly Rent

As David Harvey argues, entrepreneurial cities seek the same privileges and protections that accrue to monopolies in the private sector, namely the “monopoly rents” that accompany claims to “uniqueness, authenticity, particularity and specialty.”¹¹⁴ To establish this monopolistic privilege, cities traditionally assert claims to uniqueness and authenticity in terms of their geographical advantage — something that has become increasingly difficult to assert as technological advances in transportation and communications render locational differences less significant. In desperate pursuit of new sources of monopoly rent, entrepreneurial cities, like corporations, tend to turn to the “idea of culture,” and to a collective form of Bourdieu’s notion of “symbolic capital,” to find their advantage, since “claims to uniqueness and authenticity can best be articulated as distinctive and non-replicable cultural claims.”¹¹⁵

This “cultural turn”—which has broadened the “visual turn” of the turn-of-the-century—occurs through real estate development, and the creation of unique cultural sites, a strategy that we have seen play out over and over again since the 1980’s, with the rebuilt downtown “fantasy cities” of consumption and play.¹¹⁶ Hundreds of cities have used “themed environments” as lures in a global competition for new, coveted revenue sources: tourism, high end real estate development, new middle class residents, and shopping.¹¹⁷ Such strategies are epitomized by the use of spectacular museums, malls, and stadia built by celebrity architects to anchor “urban entertainment destinations.”¹¹⁸ They generally entail the commercial “theming” and “imagineering” of urban public space, and the increasingly detailed planning of and control over the range of experiences “urban consumers” may have in this space.¹¹⁹ These new spaces of spectacle distract the viewer from the increasingly carceral infrastructure of the “fortress city,” until the moment s/he becomes a “loiterer,” and is subjected to their disciplinary force.¹²⁰

In addition to the built environment, “social and discursive elements” play a great role in branding with the use of unique historical narrative, collective memory, lifestyle, etc., attached to the city as a whole. This can be seen in the marketing of place names themselves. As Harvey explains:

The collective symbolic capital which attaches to names and places like Paris, Athens, New York, Rio de Janeiro, Berlin and Rome is of great import and gives such places great economic advantages relative to say, Baltimore, Liverpool, Essen, Lille and Glasgow. The problem for these latter places is to raise their quotient of symbolic capital and to increase their marks of distinction to better ground their claims to the uniqueness that yields monopoly rent. Given the general loss of other monopoly powers through easier transport and communications and the reduction of other barriers to trade, the

struggle for collective symbolic capital becomes even more important as a basis for monopoly rents.¹²¹

After these monopoly claims are made through the media and other cultural forms, broader forms of urban restructuring, in particular gentrification, follow swiftly. A prime example of this is offered by Neil Smith in his analysis of how real estate developers represented the Lower East Side as “wild west” and “urban frontier” in an effort to commodify and gentrify this unique, working class, and countercultural neighborhood that was famously resistant to redevelopment. Similarly, scholars have studied the “Bilbao effect,” whereby spectacular buildings by celebrity architects are used to revitalize struggling, post-industrial cities, as Frank Gehry’s dramatic new Guggenheim was used in the city of Bilbao, Spain. While concrete benefits like good jobs and increased tax revenue may be hard to prove, one proven effect is a sharp upturn in monopoly rents, and growth in the real estate market.

Tourist Cities

New “tourist city” strategies arising in the also focus intensively on image and branding.¹²² The modern travel industry has always depended upon its ability to project seductive images to lure potential consumers out of their daily routine, and inspire them to spend discretionary income in new and unknown locations.¹²³ But along with efforts to “grow” the industry in the post-War period of the consumer revolution, new attention was paid to the quantification of the “tourism product” — a notion that was inherently slippery and elusive, making the demand for and impact of it quite difficult to chart.¹²⁴ In one sense, leisure and tourism were like a range of other “lifestyle” products emerging in

the 1960's which were oriented more towards enhancing one's identity than simple fulfillment of consumer need. But unlike traditional commodities, in the case of leisure and tourism one was selling a place, and more abstractly the experience in, and image of that place.

And so perhaps more than any other single industry, travel and tourism has benefited from, and participated in, the growth in place marketing services, and in particular the application of media and marketing techniques. The industry was one of the first to use psychographics and lifestyle marketing to sell locales, alongside corrolary studies of consumer awareness and media consumption—known as “media coverage” studies.¹²⁵ In addition, they were reading “business-climate surveys” conducted by location consultancies, which specialized in ranking cities, regions, and states in terms of both “tangible” benefits to business —like tax and labor policy— as well as highly subjective “intangibles” like “life-style” and “quality of life.”¹²⁶ In addition to broader social shifts, the intensive use of tourism marketing helped accelerate, and was accelerated by, the 26-fold explosion of world tourist travel over the last 50 years, from 25 million in 1950 to 650 million in 1999,¹²⁷ an increase that has been especially marked in global cities like New York.

Along the way, the tourist industry began creating increasingly “integrated” urban brand campaigns. As a scholar of urban tourism describes: “Over the past 20 years, the strategy of urban tourism has moved from the very simple idea of advertising a few attractions to a much more comprehensive approach which seeks to develop a product, understand the

visitor markets for the product, make the city user-friendly for tourists (consumer), and create organizations which can promote and sell the city.”¹²⁸ Such comprehensive marketing means the tourist destination is branded much like any other product, i.e. “to represent a unique combination of product characteristics and added values, both functional and non-functional.”¹²⁹ With the rise of so-called “place wars,” such branding is now seen as essential by cities, regions, and nations: “In our new world economy, every place must compete with other places for economic advantage. Various communities launch drives to attract business firms... tourists and conventioners, sports teams... all of which promise increased employment, income, trade investment.”¹³⁰

City as Stage-set

Tourist destinations, monopoly rents, and branded cities in general have also benefited from the increased exposure cities receive, second-hand, through the commercial media that use them as a “location” for commercial shoots. In this sense, TV shows, films, and consumer magazines provide “free” exposure, as they seek extend their own place-based brands. Since the 1970’s, this has had a heavy impact on cities, as sociologists and market researchers identified “urban lifestyle” to be central to the identity formation of the upwardly mobile, consumer-oriented “new middle class.”¹³¹ Cities became increasingly popular locations for TV shows, films, and lifestyle magazines targeting this audience. More generally, urban backdrops in ads and TV commercials became an important marketing tool for corporations attempting to extend their brand among this highly influential and lucrative demographic. By the 1980’s, urban tourist agencies and branding coalitions began to recognize the power such media can wield, and worked

increasingly with filmmakers, TV producers, and commercial location scouts, to promote their destinations as possible shooting locations. A number of cities opened film and TV broadcasting offices to facilitate location shooting, and began sending official convention and visitor bureau delegations to film festivals like Cannes, and major “locations fairs” in Los Angeles and Las Vegas. In this increasingly close relationship, “the ultimate in tourism product placement [is to] place your location in a film or TV series.”¹³² No company has taken advantage of its high profile urban location as much as Disney in New York’s New Times Square. Its family friendly brand has been merged with the city’s reputation as entertainment capital of the world through a number of media products, and through shopping environments where consumers can imagine themselves inside this invented media space.¹³³

Thus cities seek to benefit *directly* from urban branding through employing new representational techniques, discursive strategies, and financial tactics. And in addition they have learned to benefit *indirectly* from secondary representations of their urban brand in the ever-expanding realm of commercial mass media and popular culture.¹³⁴

V. The Contributions of the Dissertation

In this dissertation, I aim to link new urban sociology with media and cultural studies through an examination of the increasingly important role of corporate media, marketing, and management strategies in the governance of New York City in the 1970’s. This historical context affords the opportunity to examine the growing power of visual culture and the culture industries with the shift to a post-industrial, post-Fordist mode of

accumulation, and the “austerity state.” In particular it is in New York at this time that a new form of commercialized visual culture, urban branding, became a strategic engine, both ideologically and structurally, for a new form of urban economic growth and political domination. Ideologically, urban branding served to legitimize and sell broader economic development schemes and austerity measures, while hiding their effects. Meanwhile, when branding took the structural form of the *coalition* and the *campaign*, branding practices became tied in to, and helped to coordinate, these broader measures. Thus, I argue that this practice of urban branding is not a new trend, nor an outcome of the entrepreneurial city strategies mentioned above, but can be seen as a key strategy in the rise of the entrepreneurial model itself.

In making this argument, my work both borrows and diverges from the various literatures discussed above. For instance, while scholars write about the important role of new, public-private partnerships in entrepreneurial urban governance, they generally trace the origins of these partnerships to financial arrangements for the sake of real estate and economic development projects, like the building of offices, rather than to the building of a hegemonic brand image.¹³⁵ And even when talking about the role of media in these projects, the discussion is generally focused on the built environment of fantasy cities, rather than discursive and ideological components of image campaigns.¹³⁶

Meanwhile, most urbanists who *have* written about urban imaging tend to see this practice in a partial ways. Urban boosterism is held up as the model for contemporary imaging campaigns, despite the fact that it is a historically specific, 19th century case.

The campaigns then are understood purely in terms of the discursive practice of image building, with little connection to the broader urban political economy.¹³⁷ Alternatively, contemporary forms of urban branding are subsumed within larger efforts to restructure the city for tourism and real estate development, and fall outside the discursive tradition of urban boosterism.¹³⁸ While there are important elements of both arguments, I believe they leave out important points-- namely, the ways in which urban branding has become a powerful political and ideological strategy that has had its own structuring effects.

When one looks at these cultural and material forces in combination, without privileging one over the other, I believe, a more complete picture arises of the changes cities underwent in the 1970's. One can see the relationship between a new matrix of media and marketing industries, the "new sensibility" of the urban middle class, and urban policy and planning geared towards "austerity" budgets and the needs of FIRE and tourism. For instance, it was in this period that the market research field was joined by "location consultants" who, like their colleagues, did as much to produce market phenomena as they did to study them. Indeed they were hired alternately by corporations looking for a more profitable and desirable locales, and entrepreneurial cities and regions seeking to turn themselves into such a locale, and wanting a credible blueprint to do so.¹³⁹ This blueprint was also found in the pages of urban lifestyle magazines, which were considered required reading by powerful city leaders wanting to appeal to this new constituency on cultural terms. This blueprint was mirrored in the plans of "urban designers," many following Kevin Lynch's prescient theories, who began to shift their focus to questions of the "imageability" of urban space—with the goal of producing

“vividly identified, powerfully structured, highly useful mental images” of entire cities in the minds of visitors, that could also be easily represented in the commercial media.¹⁴⁰

And finally, this blueprint was being applied by city marketing campaigns—which sought to combine these elements and transform their city into a mirage of the perfect middle class lifestyle, if only in the minds of tourists and business travelers.

In short, these hegemonic visual and cultural strategies—rankings, magazines, design, marketing campaigns— aided entrepreneurial city branding coalitions intent on commodifying their locales, and pushing through often painful forms of economic restructuring and austerity. They were used to “add value” to the product in the midst of tight competition with other cities, and to distract attention from the effects of exchanging blue collar jobs for the “weightlessness,” and joblessness, of the symbolic economy. Yet, as my research revealed, these strategies were not always successful. Increasingly, they met with stiff opposition from disenfranchised groups—from municipal unions facing layoffs, to the young residents of neighborhoods slated for demolition. Furthermore, the campaigns frequently backfired -- as excluded groups realized the larger stakes involved and subverted branded images, or as the damage caused by austerity measures became so severe that it stole media attention away from the campaigns. And so it was in the 1970’s that cities came to mirror the marketing-driven priorities and conflicts of the corporate sector they sought to attract, and to elevate the booster ideal of the commercialized vision of ‘the city as a whole,’ placing it at the heart of a harsh, new urban political economy. Seen in this way, it becomes clear that these cultural producers and campaigns, like other structural forces, have their own internal political dynamics,

institutional bases, contradictions and limits, that need to be analyzed as such. Yet, little writing exists that deals with this.¹⁴¹

The major exception in this regard is Mike Davis' landmark book, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future of Los Angeles*.¹⁴² In his opening chapter "Sunshine and Noir," Davis takes as seriously the "literateurs, filmmakers, musicians and artists," who are the "fabricators of the *spectacle*" as he does the "practical intellectuals—the planners, politicians, and engineers—who actually build cities."¹⁴³ Together these formed a "real estate/arts nexus" of "city-myth production" which sought to define and actually *run* the city. As he says, "It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the paramount axis of cultural conflict in Los Angeles has always been about the construction/interpretation of the *city myth* which enters the material landscape as a design for speculation and domination." This conflict in turn led to symbolic battles between the various booster factions over control of the "dream machine," as well as counter-efforts by intellectuals, artists, and the school of L.A. *noir*, to establish "authentic epistemologies"—battles that Davis sees recapitulated in L.A. in the 1980's.¹⁴⁴ Though many contemporary urbanists seek to distinguish Los Angeles from older cities like New York, I would argue that when it comes to their media matrix, and city-myth machinery, the two cities share a great deal in common, particularly in the late twentieth century.¹⁴⁵

Nonetheless, despite—or because of—its age and lack of Hollywood-scale movie studios, in this dissertation I see New York as the paradigm of the shift to entrepreneurial strategies of urban branding in the 1970's. My empirical research has allowed me to theorize urban branding more broadly in terms of three areas: first, the historic shift from

urban boosterism to urban branding, in response to larger *image crises*; second, the internal makeup and dynamics of public-private *urban branding coalitions*; and finally the tendency for *contradictions*, and political and symbolic conflicts, to arise, particularly once the public sector adopts urban branding campaigns as a strategy of economic restructuring. I will discuss each area briefly in what follows.

Theorizing the Shift from Boosterism to Branding

Urban branding and urban boosterism should be distinguished, primarily, by their historical context. Boosterism arose in the 19th century along with newly industrialized cities that were both commercial centers and tourist destinations, as well as with resort and frontier towns that needed an image to ‘put them on the map.’ Branding on the other hand, arose in the last thirty years in response to the growing radicalism of the 1960’s, and the combined crises that rocked cities in the 1970’s. These included economic crisis, from the financial crises of FIRE sectors, to fiscal crises of the state. It included the ideological and political backlash against cities known as the “urban crisis.” It included the social crises caused by deindustrialization, class divisions, and austerity. Finally, in the context of mounting inter-urban competition, and a increasingly powerful media industry that thrived on images of urban crisis, this created an “image crisis,” as negative representations of cities led to a worsening of city’s economic prospects.

Thus, given the higher stakes, urban branding differs from urban boosterism in three essential ways (see TABLE 1). First, in terms of the *coordination of campaigns*, urban

branding has attained a new level of professionalism. While boosters were often individual entrepreneurs acting independently of each other and outside formal institutional arrangements, with urban branding professional market research and marketing consultants are used. Moreover, large-scale campaigns are launched which integrate public city and/or state agencies, private civic groups, and media corporations. As such these campaigns are generally tied in to broader government restructuring and economic development efforts.

Second, as a result of this coordination, urban branding campaigns maintain a *consistency of image*. While booster imagery was highly eclectic, branding campaigns use corporate brand management techniques to ensure the dominance of specific of associations to attract the targeted demographic. Like the corporate sector, they insist upon the standardization and trademarking of logos and slogans in an attempt to enhance profitability and eliminate risk.

Finally, urban branding campaigns receive significantly higher levels of *capital investment* than their booster ancestors. Boosters mainly invested capital on a local scale, and disseminated their campaigns locally, regionally and nationally. Brand campaigns invest more widely to hire professional personnel—including administrative and legal staff, market researchers and consultants, etc—and seek exposure on a variety of media platforms—local, national, and global—to reach different demographics. Initial investment is constantly ratcheted up, because of the intensely competitive nature of the

market, the demand from elected officials to show dramatic results in order to maintain funding, and the need for aggressive legal protection of the trademarked brand image.¹⁴⁶

Other distinctions should be made. 19th century boosterism was an ancillary form of economic development undertaken entirely by the private sector, and meant only to enhance an otherwise diversified urban economy. Urban branding, on the other hand, is a centralized development strategy undertaken by partnerships between the public and private sectors; it is employed as a main engine of urban growth, becoming the iconic centerpiece of a larger *marketing-led, public-private strategy of economic development*. This strategy typically involves other key elements that are less-publicized, or completely unreported, at least to the general public. One is governmental restructuring to enable greater private-sector influence in urban governance and strategic planning—e.g. hiring management consultants to consolidate public agencies dealing with marketing and economic development, and removing their operations from public scrutiny or regulation. In addition, behind the bright lights of image campaigns one finds a raft of shadowy pro-business policies and incentives used to attract tourism and speculative real estate development. These policies range from privatizing urban land and services, to offering tax breaks, zoning variances, and/or outright subsidies to real estate developers, the local “business community,” and business travelers. The disconnect between highly visible image campaigns and largely hidden shifts in public policy and restructuring is not, I would argue, accidental. Rather, branding legitimizes and distracts attention from generally unpopular privatizing and budgetary schemes.

TABLE A: From Urban Boosterism to Urban Branding

	Urban Boosterism	Urban Branding
Time period	1870's- 1960's era of modern industrialization	1970's – 2000's era of globalization
Impetus	Economic expansion and local development	Economic crisis, urban crisis, and image crisis
Locales	Newly industrialized, commercial, and resort cities	Global cities dependent on financial and tourism flows
Coordination	Campaigns created by individual entrepreneurs and advertisers. Boosters independent of, competing against each other. Except chambers of commerce, they operate without formal ties to government or private sector. Boosters operate in the private sector	Campaigns designed with aid of professional market researchers, marketing consultants, and media producers. Integration of large-scale campaigns within and between city agencies, public private partnerships, and private media and marketing firms Public-private campaigns, tied in to broader government restructuring and economic development
Consistency of Image	Competing campaigns with various slogans and logos. Use of mass marketing techniques – i.e. ads in mass circulation media -- to reach widest possible audience.	Creation of standardized logo, slogan, and look of campaign. Official trademarking of logo and slogan. Use of brand management and niche marketing techniques to ensure appropriate message for targeted demographic.

Capital Investment	<i>Investment lower based on:</i> Limited capital sources—investors, advertisers, chambers of commerce Campaigns may range in scale, and are mostly regional or national. <i>Relatively low costs of campaign:</i> Besides key booster, part-time personnel required, not professional, e.g.: technicians, distributors, etc. Local, regional and national scale, except for semi-annual world exhibition Advertising done in-house. Relatively simple media campaign. Standard set of mass media outlets used No trademark protection required.	<i>Investment higher based on:</i> Varied capital sources from big investors—including state, private sector, and media. Large scale campaign to respond to competition and appease funders <i>Relatively high costs of campaign:</i> Full-time professional personnel required, e.g.: administrative staff, researchers, consultants, media producers, etc. Local, regional, national, and global scale of marketing maintained simultaneously. Sophisticated media production, and large-scale distribution via multi media outlets, PR events, and cross-marketing. Need for legal protection of trademark

Finally, though urban branding is considerably more capital intensive than urban boosterism, it is, nonetheless, far *less expensive* than the older, managerial forms of economic development (at least in the short-term), and thus appears attractive to cash-strapped cities. These older methods involved “priming the pump” through infrastructure projects and public works, expanding public sector employment, and investing in collective consumption goods like education, housing, and health-care. With leaner and meaner, marketing-led development strategies, budgetary priorities shift from higher-cost social services and public employment to cheaper, more profitable, and more high-profile

“campaigns.” More generally, the priorities of the branded city shift from the provision of tangible use-values, to the projection of intangible exchange values, and the city itself is transformed from a real place of value and meaning for residents and workers, to an abstract space for capital investment and profit-making, and a commodity for broader consumption.

Urban Branding Coalitions

Given their shared agenda, newly created economic development agencies, public-private partnerships, and global media and advertising firms work together with official city boosters to both market and manage the city as a global brand. While it is useful to gauge the growing influence of a variety of media and cultural sectors over the last thirty years, looking at them in isolation weakens the sense of the larger coalition of forces that have reshaped cities’ political and symbolic economies since the 1970s. To understand the new role played by media and culture industries in urban restructuring, one must understand their role in a new, coordinated strategy of economic development. This strategy represents a new kind of synergy between the public and private sectors; between services that are financial and those based in media and culture; and between local and global economic interests.

The four main groups involved in this regime include:

1. *Public and quasi-public city and state agencies devoted to cultural and economic development.* These include: Departments of Cultural Affairs, Economic Development

Corporations,, offices devoted to promoting local commercial TV and film production, and official tourism boards.

2. *Private commercial boosters that receive public subsidies.* This group mainly includes Convention and Visitors Bureaus, which have existed in certain US cities since the 1930's, but have become a global phenomenon since the 1980's. Their budgets are a combination of public funding and private members dues, and their boards are generally dominated by local and global FIRE, tourism, and media corporations with significant investments in their city.
3. *Corporate-led "civic groups" and "public-private partnerships" with influence on the public sector.* Their overlapping boards are also dominated by leaders of local and global FIRE, tourism, media corporations based and/or with significant investments in their cities .
4. *Global media, advertising, market consulting, and design firms hired by, and usually based in, the city.* In addition to sitting on the boards of private commercial boosters and civic groups, these corporations are hired by the above three groups as consultants, designers, and managers for branding campaigns. These firms also create outside campaigns for corporate clients—e.g. airlines and credit card companies—that reproduce and exploit the branded image of cities. Recently, these firms have begun to work in concert with global architecture and design firms such as Jerde Partnership International, Office of Metropolitan Architecture, and Skidmore Owings and Merrill, to extend or create corporate brand identities in urban space.

By forming urban branding coalitions, cities use media and branding not simply to sell new urban imaginaries, but to overhaul the total image and reputation of a given city, and to impose this hegemonic vision as widely and strategically as possible. As with the branding strategies of global corporations, this serves to obscure the reality of the city in terms of material conditions and internal class conflicts while it restructures its productive and organizational base.

Meanwhile, local businesses, as well as locally-based global corporations, stand to profit enormously from the increased marketing exposure. They merge their identity with that of the branded city through their own brand marketing campaigns, branded architecture, and actual products. In the interwoven realms of spectacle and political economy, urban and corporate branding support each other, and the distinction between the public and private sector becomes harder to discern.

The Contradictions of Branding

Paradoxically, I have found that increased exposure for urban locations in commercial media has exposed the city to new risks, providing as it does increased potential for controversial or negative representations which run counter to a city's marketing agenda. For cities increasingly dependent on marketing themselves for image-sensitive industries, and competing for monopoly rents, negative representations can have a disproportionately bad effect on the economy. Among other things, they can lead to the decrease in the value of monopoly rents, the decline in levels of tourism, the departure of

big name corporate headquarters, the relocation of big-budget media productions, and even downturns in the city's bond and credit ratings.

These effects are particularly intense for those large, global cities like New York in which the media corporations are themselves based, and which, as the primary stage-sets for these media corporations, receive much more attention and broader exposure than other places. These cities are also far more complex social spaces in terms of their class, race, and ethnic makeup — a complexity that commercial media, subject to the exigencies of competition and ratings, is uninterested in capturing. As New York has discovered, crimes committed on its streets are more likely to make it into national or international news broadcasts, as well as to be reenacted in the form of police dramas and films. Meanwhile, this coverage rarely captures the complexity of the events, and frequently trades in stereotypes of race and class that are associated with “crime in the city” and “street culture”— i.e. thugs, prostitutes, gangs, etc. While this can provide easy and profitable content for media corporations based in these cities, the cities themselves are less able to control the representation and dissemination of their urban brand.

Beyond crime coverage, the economic vulnerability to bad publicity that is faced by branded cities extends to many fronts. Particularly as cities make the move from managerialism to entrepreneurialism, and as the social safety net is worn away, a number of social problems emerge that are far more difficult to contain than street crime, and which nonetheless can easily be sensationalized and gain widespread media attention. As we shall see in the case of New York City, these include fiscal crisis, arson, mass

homelessness, electric blackouts, as well as protests and other forms of civil unrest. In this sense, cities that prioritize image and investor confidence over and at the expense of social needs may create material conditions that exacerbate the very image crises they sought to address.

In addition, it is only a matter of time before organized groups inclined to protest and/or expose the material reality of the branded city, and wanting media attention of their own, appropriate its most valuable symbols as a political tactic of *detournement*. This can range from groups critiquing government policies by targeting tourists with “fear city campaigns,” to young people demanding recognition by covering subway cars with graffiti murals, to profit-seeking Hollywood studio wanting a cheap, dramatic back-drop for their horror movies. Thus, as we shall see, the city has emerged as a contested visual space, and a target for various forms of *counter-branding* —from negative representations in the mainstream media, to controversial events, to organized, media-savvy oppositional and underground tactics. However, as we shall also see, these subversive visual strategies also have their limitations, and are most effective when they form part of a broader-based urban social movement.

New York as Paradigm of the Branded City

While New York has appropriately been called “The City of Superlatives”(See Appendix A), it could just as easily be named “The City of Hyperbole” for all the incredible “firsts,” “mosts,” and “greatests” that its boosters, branders, and everyday citizens have proudly claimed for their city. In a dissertation about the contradictions of city marketing I would certainly hope not to follow in this tradition. My aim is not to claim that New

York City was somehow *more* affected by the global restructuring of the 1970's, nor that 1970's New York City was the birthplace of the entrepreneurial mode of economic development, nor even that it was the first to try urban branding as a key component of this mode. To the contrary, other cities —particularly Sunbelt cities like Atlanta and Las Vegas— had been employing city branding strategies for longer periods of time. Furthermore, crucial similarities should be seen between its struggles and strategies and those of other global cities, from London and Mexico City, to Los Angeles and Cairo.¹⁴⁷

Nonetheless, I will argue that over the course of the 1970's, New York City emerged as the paradigm for a marketing-led, entrepreneurial approach to urban economic development. This was largely because of the fact that New York City in the late 1960's and 1970's was faced with a series of economic and social crises that were on a much larger scale than those facing other cities, and which led to a new scale and model of urban branding as a strategy of recovery. These interrelated crises included: the financial and fiscal crises of 1967-1974, the so-called "urban crisis" in political discourse of the 1960's and 1970's, and the image crises that built up through media coverage of the city in this period. In response to these simultaneous, and interrelated, crises, New York was to enter the greatest symbolic battle of any city to gain control over its dominant representation. This battle raged on TV and movie screens, in newspapers and magazines, and in academic and political debates both within the city and across the nation. In response to a constant stream of negative representations of the city, replenished by a constant stream of negative realities, new coalitions of the city's powerbrokers and cultural producers were formed, and a new model of the city branding

campaign was created. These campaigns —namely ‘Big Apple’ and ‘I♥NY’— took advantage of institutional matrix of media based in New York City, popular representations of the “hip” New York City lifestyle advanced by *New York* magazine, and the “new advertising,” and a range of new pro-business incentives, to try to transform the image of the city in the eyes of the world.

To understand New York’s paradigmatic position, and the distinct environment in which the city’s urban branding strategies were forged, one must understand the three major crises that it faced. First, there was the city’s *financial crisis* of 1969-1974, followed by its *fiscal crisis* of 1975-1977. While many other cities and regions faced fiscal crisis in this period, New York City’s was on the largest scale, and for this reason was the most closely watched. The initial cause was the massive size of the city’s debt, caused by a decade of profligate borrowing to fund private sector real estate development, as well as high social welfare expenses. The growing debt led to the downgrading of the city’s bonds and credit-rating, which accelerated capital divestment and the outflow of corporate headquarters. This in turn led to the flight of middle class residents and tourists, and also sped the loss of hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs, which were already facing severe structural and local pressures. The city’s economy was further hobbled by targeted, federal budget cutbacks during this period of national recession and retrenchment from the “Great Society” programs of the 1960’s. When the city was on the verge of bankruptcy, the right-wing Ford administration, wanting to use this liberal city’s plight as an example for the nation, promptly refused any bail out—eliciting the famous *Daily News* headline “Ford To City: Drop Dead.”

Secondly, the city's economic crisis was exacerbated by the ways in which it was interpreted by an increasingly conservative political consensus, endorsed by Ford, which viewed this famously liberal city as the apotheosis of the nation's so-called *urban crisis*. A discourse on "urban crisis" was, as discussed above, part of a broader national discourse, rooted in centuries-long anti-urban tradition, which blamed the protests, strikes, and countercultural movements of the 1960's on the liberal excesses of urban life, and on big cities' unhealthy concentration of the poor, working class, and people of color. Having stood for so much of its history as a "working class city" and a national model of "civic liberalism," New York now became an object lesson of the failures in this model as perceived by a growing right-wing movement. In this context the "Drop Dead" headline pointed to a real sense —held by New Yorkers and non-New Yorkers alike— that the city had been cut off from the rest of the nation not only economically, but politically and ideologically as well. It was this divide that the conservative members of the city's new unelected crisis regime would attempt to bridge.

Third, given the scale and notoriety of the city's crises, they were immediately focused on, and further sensationalized, by the locally-based, international news and entertainment media. This in turn worsened the city's debt-ridden economy, dependent as it now was on the quick-fix of image-sensitive industries like finance and tourism, as well as on appeasing bond and credit-rating services, and the federal government. Thus the city spiraled deeper into the cyclical dynamic that I will call *image crisis*. Movie studios tripped over each other to capitalize on the spectacular image and allegory of New York's

demise and devolution, from a cultural and finance capital to an “asphalt jungle” populated by vicious, semi-humans. Similarly, TV new crews covered the drama unfolding in the streets with the intimacy and shock value of footage coming back from the war in Vietnam. The fact that New York City had always been home to a unique and powerful matrix of media and marketing industries became a sharply double-edged sword in this period.

Thus these three crises —one economic, one ideological, and one visual— converged on New York City at this fateful time. How these troubles played out, and the unprecedented battle over the city’s representation they caused, will be the subject of this dissertation.

Chapter Breakdown

In Part I of my dissertation, entitled “From Image Crisis to Fiscal Crisis,” I will look at the historical forces that led up this confluence of crises in the years of 1967-1974. In addition, I will address the two most significant efforts to counter the image crisis: New York magazine and the “Big Apple” campaign launched by New York’s first public-private partnership, the Association for a Better New York [ABNY].

In Chapter 1 “The Media Matrix and the Rise of Image Crisis,” I will address the history of representations of New York City, the city’s unique institutional matrix of media and marketing, and the rise of the image crisis in the 1960’s. By the 19th century, situated at

the epicenter of the major revolutions in telecommunications, photography, film, and printing, New York became the “communications capital of the world.” In addition to accelerating broader economic growth, the presence of this massive media matrix made the city one of the most extensively recorded and imaged urban spaces on the planet. The city became world famous as a site of “sunshine and shadow”— from its reputation as a high-end cultural, financial, and entertainment capital of skyscrapers, palatial art museums, and the Great White Way, to that of a working class, polyglot “Gotham” of pushcarts, ethnic presses, and labor rallies. Then in the mid-1960’s a shift occurred, caused by the growth in the institutional matrix of media on the one hand, and the rise of “urban crisis” and corporate move-outs on the other. The city’s problems became so sensationalistically represented by locally-based, internationally networked media—in particular the local TV news and film industry— that they created a hegemonic image of the city as the apotheosis of the urban crisis. In the context of mounting debt and interurban competition, this negative representation constituted an image crisis that accelerated the city’s economic decline.

In Chapter 2, “*New York Magazine* and the Branding of the New York Lifestyle” I will look at the rise of *New York* magazine in 1967, and its attempt to counter New York’s “urban crisis” image, as well as the staid attitude of older mass circulation magazines and newspapers, by branding a “New York lifestyle” that was all about hip consumerism. The magazine’s success can largely be attributed to the talents of its founding designer and illustrator, Milton Glaser, and its vanguard of “new journalists,” like Tom Wolfe and Gloria Steinem, all of whose work came to embody the lifestyle they were selling. This

fusion was then guided by the savvy editor Clay Felker, who understood that the young, urban middle class audience they and their advertisers were trying to reach would respond to a frank and creative approach to urban problems, pleasures, and the rules of the “New York Power Game.” Over time the publication broke away from discussion of urban problems altogether, focusing instead on providing consumer-related “service” to their upwardly mobile audience. This influential approach created the perfect space for the “new advertising,” and for a depoliticized yet hip urban imaginary.

Chapter 3 “Association for a Better New York and the Big Apple Campaign” looks at the marketing innovations of the city’s first public private partnership. While *New York* was successful in branding a more profitable vision of New York City, this group of leaders from finance, real estate, and tourism wanted more than this. They were arguably the cause of the rapid decline in the city’s finances and image, having run up billions in public debt to fund unrentable office towers, and now, with sunk investments in the city, also stood to lose billions of dollars. To appeal to their international clientele, and gain larger profits from their investments, they sought a greater level of influence and access to government and mainstream media, and with this, greater control over the image of the city as it was disseminated on TV and film and in the press. Big Apple was in many ways a standard, boosterish, city-as-skyline campaign, and ABNY’s aspirations for it far exceeded what it could produce, especially without financial backing from the city or state. Nonetheless, in its level of coordination with media, marketing, and city government, its high level of private capital investment, and its consistency of image (i.e.

the ubiquitous “big apple” logo), it was New York’s first city-wide branding campaign, and positioned ABNY-members to be political players in the city.

In Part II, “The Battle to Brand New York, 1975-1980” I will look at the way in which, with the fiscal crisis of 1975, New York’s image became a site of wider contestation, not only for the new middle class and FIRE elites, but also for city workers, teenagers from the Bronx, and the governments of the city and state. First, this was due to the fact that the “New York power game” changed course. Directly following the crisis, elected municipal government was made subservient to an appointed, supra-governmental “crisis regime” of leaders from the FIRE and corporate sector, whose job it was restructure the city government and budget in order to convince Washington D.C. and Wall Street that New York had changed its ways in line with market principles. This new regime appreciated the fact that marketing alone wasn’t powerful enough: Big Apple was at its height just as the fiscal crisis came crashing down. It became popular wisdom that, to be effective, city marketing would have to be coordinated on a progressively higher scale, and coupled with ever more sweeping political and economic restructuring. Meanwhile, this elicited a constant, counter-branding backlash that was both purposeful —carried out by people with little but the city’s image to use as a mouthpiece— and caused by the chaotic unraveling of a crisis-torn, starkly unequal city.

Chapter 4, “From Fear City to Planned Shrinkage,” will look at the symbolic battle that raged in New York at the start of fiscal crisis, 1975 and 1976, between the crisis regime, public sector workers, and young residents of declining neighborhoods. The policies of

the crisis regime first involved the imposition of symbolic and extremely harsh “austerity measures,” including mass layoffs in the municipal workforce and drastic cutbacks in public services and welfare. This was met with swift and angry response by many groups throughout the city, most spectacularly the police and fire unions, who subverted the “Big Apple” brand by launching their own “Fear City” campaign warning businesspeople and tourists at train-stations and airports that due to the cutbacks in police and fire, people visit New York City “at their own risk.” The city’s and ABNY’s response to this potential image crisis was equally swift and angry, and involved attempting to arrest the leaders of the campaign, an action stopped by the courts on first amendment grounds. Ultimately, the campaign was halted, but it nonetheless served as a wakeup call to the city leadership that they had to take control of the city’s image.

Thus, in what I argue was both an economic and symbolic strategy, the city began imposing “planned shrinkage” policies in late 1975 that cut off funding from declining outer borough districts, while focusing the city’s scarce resources on a pro-business revitalization at the center. This reallocation of funds from the neediest neighborhoods, only served to worsen real conditions on the ground, and helped spark a new scale of New York City image crisis. Immediately following planned shrinkage, for instance, the graffiti movement hit its “peak” as young people from cut-off neighborhoods like the South Bronx appropriated the walls of subway cars (kept in unpoliced outer-borough yards) to spread their names and images throughout the city. This daring, graphic intervention got picked up by national and international media, allowing a few dozen

teenagers with spray-paint to launch a counterbranding campaign of their own, broadcasting to the world an image of the city falling apart.

In Chapter 5, “From Big Apple to the Summer of Sam,” I will trace the ratcheting up the battle to brand New York, and the city’s image crisis, in the years of 1976 and 1977.

While poor and working class people in neighborhoods throughout the city continued to suffer the effects of austerity and planned shrinkage, the leaders of the crisis regime began restructuring the city for greater private sector access and, for the first time, so that city funds could be used for official marketing campaigns. The city coordinated its operations with realtors and CEO’s of ABNY and the CVB, and used a revived Big Apple campaign to attract big name events to New York in the summer of 1976: the Democratic National Convention and the Bicentennial celebration. The provided lots of positive media attention as a result of the massive Op Sail extravaganza, involving thousands of boats in New York Harbor beneath a newly built World Trade Center, with views offered from its lavish new Windows on the World restaurant. But these attempts at hegemonic imaging proved no match for what was to follow. In addition to the ongoing efforts of a widening pool of graffiti writers, the city was beset by an unforeseen series of “plagues.” This included a heat wave, electric blackout, and the serial killer Son of Sam on the loose. In combination with spiraling poverty and joblessness, this led to mass paranoia, widespread arson, and looting throughout the poorest districts. It also led to international news media coverage and the rise of an increasingly violent sub-genre of what I call *New York exploitation films*. Thus 1977 became known as the “Summer of Sam,” and was the worst year yet in the ongoing New York City image crisis.

In response, the degree of coordination of official city marketing now went all the way to the state. In Chapter 6, “Hegemony Regained: The Rise of I ♥ NY,” I will discuss the moment at which the city, state, and private sector joined forces to launch “I ♥ NY.” First, they hired New York-based media and market consulting firms to help the city make what were euphemistically called “pro-business product modifications,” much like those made by any struggling corporation.¹⁴⁸ These modifications entailed the restructuring of government agencies, and the allocation of millions of dollars of scarce resources to mount national and international campaigns to market the city for tourism. This money was spent on hiring cutting edge local designers, advertisers and marketing consultants, including YSW, Wells Rich Greene, and Milton Glaser, artistic director of *New York* magazine who designed the “I♥NY” logo. While doing nothing to redress New York’s escalating poverty and homelessness, this did contribute to a remarkable shift in representations of the city by the end of the decade.

Whereas the city’s troubles were a political lightening rod and nasty media spectacle between 1967 and 1977, its marketing-led effort at recovery would become a major news story of a different stripe. Between 1975 and 1980, New York’s marketing strategy became the most visible and positive element of its larger political and economic restructuring. In this way the city facilitated greater influence and profits for business, while enhancing its “reputation,” or “brand” among the wider populace, and diverting attention from the social costs of its pro-business realignment. This approach had less in common with other city marketing operations of the day, than it did with the way “leaner

and meaner” U.S. corporations were using marketing to both build their brand and obscure the social costs of their far-reaching economic restructuring. Thus, through successful marketing campaigns like “Big Apple” and “I♥NY,” New York’s “recovery” became so widely recognized, and was believed to be so successful, that it was taken as a model for cities around the country, and indeed for the country as a whole. In particular, Glaser’s “I♥NY” became one of the most influential and copied campaigns in modern advertising history. And as the U.S. entered a wider period of economic restructuring and austerity under President Ronald Reagan in the 1980’s, this newly branded New York City, purged of its old liberal reputation, was held up by the president and the conservative wing of the Republican party as an example of how other cities, and the nation as a whole, should make the entrepreneurial shift.

Methodology

The methodology of my dissertation is sociological and historical. As such, it uses archival research and interviews, and draws on three modes of analysis: discursive, institutional, and political-economic. At the discursive level, I trace changes in the textual and visual representation of New York over thirty years, in terms of both urban branding practices and campaigns, as well as in counterbranding media and movements. At the institutional level, I chart the increasing power of and interaction between those city agencies, private civic groups, and private sector marketers which formed a coalition to launch these campaigns. And finally, I investigate how the rise of this coalition reflected and contributed to a larger political economic shift, transforming New York

from a city that was managed by a strong city government and powerful unions, and oriented towards local and national production and commerce, to one which was entrepreneurial, managed by corporate elites, and oriented towards marketing itself on a global scale.

My research focuses on the role played by public agencies that were heavily involved in the shift to marketing as a strategy of economic development. At the level of New York City this includes the Office of Economic Development [OED] and the New York City Convention and Visitors' Bureau [CVB], and at the level of New York State it mainly pertains to the Department of Commerce [DOC]. In addition, I am interested in the role played by public private partnerships in these efforts, namely the Association for a Better New York [ABNY] and the New York City Partnership [NYCP]. I pay close attention to the early role of *New York* magazine in constructing the image ultimately taken up in later campaigns. At the city level, I used the Municipal Archives to study agency annual reports, newsletters, and press releases; agency audits and reports by the Comptrollers' Office; and Mayor's Management Reports. I also drew extensively on contemporary newspapers, books, and reports.

At the state level, I read documents and conducted interviews at the Archives of the Empire State Development Corporation [formerly the DOC] and the New York State Archives in Albany.¹⁴⁹ In these archives I viewed DOC's audit reports, newsletters, and annual reports. In addition, I discovered extensive, previously unstudied reports of management consultants and marketers hired by DOC beginning in the 1970's, such as

those of YSW and WRG. To see the impact of DOC recommendations, I also read legislation in the State Archives from the Finance and Assembly Ways & Means Committees.

I also conducted interviews with the two founders of *New York* magazine, Clay Felker and Milton Glaser, and used transcripts of oral history interviews with many luminaries from the branding coalition of the fiscal crisis era.¹⁵⁰ To investigate the CVB, I used their archives, with documents from major city branding campaigns, as well as a variety of publications, like industry newsletters, and annual “Visitors’ Industry Reports.”

Secondary sources include newspapers; the academic, legal, and business press; and related reports and books, such as those written on the New York City fiscal crisis.

¹ Rutenberg, February 3, 2005, B7.

² Harvey, 2001a.

³ See e.g.: "The Brand Expands" in Klein, 2000.

⁴ Benjamin, 1999, 392 [K2.5] While scientific Marxists argued that the economic base "produced" the cultural and ideological superstructure, Benjamin, as part of the Frankfurt School of critical cultural theory, argued for a dialectical relationship between the two. Further, he associated the category of collective "dream" to the realm of ideology. As he says [ibid]: "The superstructure is the expression of the infrastructure [i.e. base]. The economic conditions under which society exists are *expressed* in the superstructure—precisely as, with the sleeper, an overfull stomach finds not its reflection, but its expression in the content of dreams, which from a causal point of view, it may be said to "condition." The collective, from the first, expresses the conditions of its life. These find their expression in the dream and their interpretation in the awakening."

⁵ ibid, 33, 39. Lefebvre, 1991. By "representational space," Lefebvre refers to the associated images and symbols through which space is perceived. This concept is part of a larger project to create a unifying theory of the production of space in urban life, showing the ways in which space is both a social product and also "serves as a tool of thought and action...[and as] a means of control and hence of domination, of power." Ibid 39.

⁶ On visual turn, see e.g.: Jameson, 1992, 164. Benjamin, 1996, and Crary, 1990.

⁷ See e.g.: Harvey, 1989; Sorkin, 1992. On the term "new urban sociology" see Zukin, 1980, and Walton, 1993.

⁸ Zukin, 2000.

⁹ De Certeau, 1997; Zukin et al., 1998; Donald, 1999

¹⁰ See Greenberg, 2000.

¹¹ Were you, for instance, to stand on a street corner in turn-of-the-century New York City and ask passersby to epitomize the essence of their city, those in the upper class might point to the palatial public spaces of the "the City Beautiful," those in the working class the nickelodeon adventures and tenement-lined streets of "Gotham," and those of the gay male subculture the speak-easies and illicit bath-houses of "the City of Bachelors." On "the City Beautiful Movement," see: Gilmartin and Montague, 1983. On the popular culture of "Gotham," see Sante, 1992, and Burrows and Wallace, 1999, chapter 1. On "the City of Bachelors," see Chauncey, 1994.

¹² Bourdieu, 1991.

¹³ On institutional matrix see Radway, 1984, chapter 2. According to this idea, successful media forms emerge within a matrix of new technologies, skillful entrepreneurs, a shifting management structure, and a demanding audience. On earlier work on the relationship between the changing institutional matrix and representational power, see Greenberg, 2000.

¹⁴ See e.g.: Baran & Sweezy, 1966 and Cohen, 2003.

¹⁵ Strasser, 1989.

¹⁶ Klein, 2000.

¹⁷ Cities like Atlanta, for example, had been "competing to attract economic growth almost from the time they were established," when the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce launched a successful promotional campaign in the 1850's to attract the first rail lines to pass through the Southeast, the construction of which was followed by a massive wave of investment of migration into the city. Law, 2002, 35-6.

¹⁸ Law ibid.

¹⁹ On critical infrastructure see: Zukin, 1994, 258-259; Rutheiser, 1998.

²⁰ Davis, 1990. See his discussion of the dialectic between "Sunshine and Noir" in Chapter 2.

²¹ Williams, 1973. and Kasinitz, 1995.

²² Stallybrass and White, 1986.

²³ See e.g., Hall, 1988, chapter 1.

²⁴ Hales, 1984.

²⁵ Schwartz, 1998.

²⁶ Stallybrass and White, *ibid*, Sante, 1992; Mele, 2001. Peter Stallybrass and Alon White (*ibid*, 137), apply Bakhtinian theories of the carnival to textual representations of the 19th century urban slum, and show how through all manner of writing, from sanitary reports, to reformer tracts, potboilers and novellas, the bourgeoisie “made the grotesque *visible* whilst keeping it at an *untouchable* distance,” allowing “the slum [dwellers]... into the bourgeois study and drawing room, to be read as objects of horror, contempt, pity, and fascination.”

²⁷ On city view books see Hales, *Ibid*, on panoramas see Boyer, 1999.

²⁸ Benjamin, 1999.

²⁹ Gillough, 1996.

³⁰ On newspapers and the *faits divers* press see Schwartz, *ibid*; Henkin, 1999; Fritzsche, 1999. On the modern novel and Victorian slum literature see Stallybrass and White, 1986. On cinema, see Hansen, 1991; Donald, 1999, chapter 3.

³¹ Fritzsche, *ibid*., 3, 7.

³² It should be noted that while the 1960's accelerated urban decline, this decline really began around 1915 with decentralization of industry and upper class residence. See: Rae, 2003.

³³ Castells, 1985. As Castells argues in *The City and the Grassroots*, many of these new social movements were defined by their common demand for equal access to “collective consumption” goods like housing, healthcare, and education. A range of urban social movements innovated strategies of civil disobedience in urban neighborhoods, welfare offices, and college campuses that pressured the State for reforms. These can be distinguished from race riots, or what many called “rebellions,” which were provoked by similarly endemic inequities, yet were largely unorganized.

³⁴ Lefebvre, (1970) 2001. See also Castells, 1979. For many historians of the 1960's, a unifying thread between disparate and often antagonistic social movements was their desire to “take it to the streets,” and make public their demands for social justice through the appropriation of public space. See: Bloom and Breines, 2003.

³⁵ New York City began to lose the bulk of its port industry which had driven the regional economy since the 19th century, while Los Angeles and Atlanta saw major layoffs in the aerospace industries that had moved there during W.W.II. New York and Los Angeles also saw increasingly militant strike activity, and all three saw protests in response to poor living conditions in the inner cities, as well as a general rise in crime. See Abu Lughod, 1999.

³⁶ Such confrontations are often epitomized by the “race riots” in the streets of cities throughout the US between 1964 and 1968 —culminating with Newark in 1967. But the political dimension of many of these battles becomes apparent when one considers the massacre of unarmed political protesters in the Plaza de Tlatelolco in Mexico City in 1968, which took place in advance of the 1968 Olympics in that city, and was carried out by the military. Similarly, the famous “hard-hat riot,” in which scores of construction workers attacked a peaceful march of anti-Vietnam protesters in Wall Street in 1971 has been found to have been largely instigated by the New York City police (Freeman, 2000).

³⁷ Beauregard, 1993.

³⁸ On racist tropes in TV news of this era, see Hall, 2000 (1992). In anti-urbanism, as Beauregard shows (1993), a number of ideological tropes came together through this discourse: the fear of mass urban populations [gesellschaft] destroying the civility and familiarity of premodern village life [gemeinschaft]; the image of “slum” neighborhoods as cesspools breeding degradation and immorality; and depictions of the residents of these neighborhoods —the poor, the foreign born, and people of color— as animalistic and inherently violent.

³⁹ Toffler, 1970.

⁴⁰ For structural causes of long-term urban decline in New York City from 1960's on, and earlier in other U.S. cities, like Detroit, see Sugrue, 1996. Some, like Douglas Rae (2003), trace the origins of the crisis in New Haven all the way back to 1915.

⁴¹ Harvey, 1989; Sassen, 1994.

⁴² Many “supply-side” economists attribute the original cause of inflation to the 1971 signing of the Bretton Woods Agreement, which detached the U.S. dollar from the international gold standard, and deprived monetary policy of a specific price reference.

⁴³ Aronowitz, “Introduction,” in Lichten, 1986. xiv.

⁴⁴ O'Connor, 1973.

⁴⁵ Lichten, 1986, 3. Giovanni Arrighi, as quoted in “A Crisis of Hegemony” in Amin, 1982, p 55.

⁴⁶ See: David Harvey, 1989.

⁴⁷ Lichten, 1986.

⁴⁸ On “supply-side” theory see: Wanniski, 1998 (1978), On the broader political and economic principles of neoliberalism see e.g.: Friedman, 1980. As an indication of the popular influence of this view, this book was also made into a ten-part television series on PBS.

⁴⁹ Bluestone and Harrison, 1988.

⁵⁰ Sassen, 2001. This created an imbalance labeled the “jobs-skills mismatch”—i.e. a dearth of skills needed for the new information-based service industries amongst the insufficiently educated resident poor and working class. This point is argued by Waldinger, 1996.

⁵¹ See: Freeman, *ibid.* A notable exception has been healthcare.

⁵² See e.g.: Abu Lughod, 1999.

⁵³ This is a reference to the Marxist notion of the surplus army of the unemployed, which he first perceived arising with the transition to industrial capitalism. The rise of this underclass, he noted, served the interests of capital in that it creates an additional, downward pressure on wages. See: Marx, 1990.

⁵⁴ See e.g. Fitch, 1992, Darton, 1999, Greenberg, 2003.

⁵⁵ Lash and Urry. 1987.

⁵⁶ See: Hall, 1988; Harvey, 2001a.

⁵⁷ Logan and Molotch, 1987.

⁵⁸ While these arrangements began in the 1960’s and 1970’s, and were called civic associations and local development corporations, they became known primarily as public private partnerships in the 1980’s.

⁵⁹ Squires, 1989. 3 The final quote comes from Bluestone and Harrison, as cited in Squires, *ibid.* 1. The full quote reads: “Leaders may call these deals “public private partnerships” and attempt to fold them under the ideological umbrella of laissez faire. But they must be seen for what they are: the reallocation of public resources to fit a new agenda. That agenda is no longer redistribution, or even economic growth as conventionally defined. Rather, that agenda entails nothing less than the restructuring of the relations of production and the balance of power in the American economy. In the pursuit of these dubious goals, the public sector continues to play a crucial role.”

⁶⁰ See e.g.: Osborne and Gaebler, 1992.

⁶¹ On uneven development see Smith, 1984. On the theory of the “rent gap,” see Harvey, 2001, and Smith, 1986.

⁶² Smith, 1999.

⁶³ On creative means of luring real estate development in the 1980’s, See Fainstein, 2001. On “loft living” see Zukin, 1994.

⁶⁴ See e.g.: Soja, 1989.

⁶⁵ One of the foremost thinkers on the relationship between globalization and media from the 1960’s to our own time is Herbert Schiller. On the relation of media to imperialism see Schiller 1976; on the relation of the information age to the “crisis economy” of the early 1970’s see Schiller, 1984. On the span of his work, see Maxwell, 2003. Also see: Herman and McChesney, 1997. As they have shown, throughout the history of global capitalism, “media systems have tended to reflect the patterns of the overall political economy.” Theutopian terms “communications revolution” and “global village,” which so many Internet marketers ascribe to the 1990’s, were actually popularized by Marshall McLuhan in 1969 in reference to the new electronic media of that era.

⁶⁶ See: Bell, 1973, McLuhan and Fiore, 1967. See also Gore, 1997, and Fukuyama, 2000.

⁶⁷ Enzenberger, 1971. Schiller, 1976 was particularly interested in links between increasingly powerful and interconnected global communications and the United States neocolonial expansion in this period. Enzenberger sought to apply a Marxist analysis of media as both a force of production and shaper of consciousness.

⁶⁸ See: Herman and McChesney, 1997; Castells, 2000. On institutional matrix see Radway, 1984 and Mattelart, 1994.

⁶⁹ Benjamin, 1999. In the contemporary context, Schiller (1973) discusses “knowledge workers,” while Lash and Urry (1994) use the term “symbolic analysts.”

⁷⁰ Veblen, (1899)1994, 68-100.

⁷¹ Bourdieu, 1984. The strategic use of cultural capital is developed more fully in Bourdieu’s discussion of “distinction” on the basis of questions of “taste,” which may be applied across a variety of cultural fields.

⁷² Frank (1997).

⁷³ Sontag, 2001 (1961).

⁷⁴ Zukin, 2004, 180-1.

As Zukin says of the significance of this period: "The sixties were, in many ways, a golden age for cultural critics—but these were no longer high-culture critics, they were honest brokers of mass consumer commodities like cars." 180

⁷⁵ On "new urban middle class," see Atlas, 1984; Goodwin, 1993; Vidich, 1995.

⁷⁶ One significant exception is Tom Wolfe, inventor of the term "radical chic," who was from a more affluent, and conservative, background.

⁷⁷ Antonio Gramsci, 1991b. 419-421. It is interesting that the place where Gramsci most clearly elaborates his idea of "common sense" is in his "Journalism" writings. Seeing the modern press as "the most prominent and dynamic part" of the "ideological front" of the bourgeoisie (ibid, 389), Gramsci endeavors to categorize its main genres, and the tactics of these. That which goes furthest in constructing the common sense is the "moralizing review" —which one might argue was the lifestyle magazine, and honest broker, of the 18th century. As he describes: "One can say that the general type [of these reviews] belongs to the sphere of 'common sense' or 'good sense' because its aim is to modify average opinion in a given society by criticizing, suggesting, mocking, correcting, modernizing, and in the last analysis, by introducing new commonplaces. If well written, with verve and a certain sense of detachment (so as not to sound like a sermon), yet with sincere interest in average opinion, reviews of this type can have a wide circulation and exert a profound influence."

⁷⁸ On "creative revolution" in advertising, see Frank, 1997, Warlaumont, 2001.

⁷⁹ On the simultaneous transformation of corporate culture and co-optation of the counterculture, see Frank, 1997.

⁸⁰ Recently, with the growing importance of the youth market, much has been written on the new quasi-anthropological sub-field within market research of "cool hunting." See e.g.: Gladwell, March 17, 1997.

⁸¹ Oxford English Dictionary, 1989.

⁸² Marx, 1990 (1867).

⁸³ Martin, 2002. Martin makes the important point that Marx's discussion of the "commodity fetish" at the start of Capital Vol. I is fundamentally about the danger of such disarticulation — and not, as is often assumed, about the "false consciousness" of the masses who bow down before the commodity like a fetish.

⁸⁴ Debord, 1999 (1971), 12.

⁸⁵ Rabinow, 1984.

⁸⁶ Levy, 2003. The academic bases of these fields in the 1950 were originally at the University of Chicago and the University of Michigan. In the 1960's many of the most important practitioners moved to New York City.

⁸⁷ Arvidsson, 2004, 464.

⁸⁸ This was the precursor to the VALS survey, which is used today.

⁸⁹ Strasser, ibid, p 158-159.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Mahoney, 2000. Arthur White in conversation with Cynthia R. Cox Roman, a former colleague, and Brooke Mahoney, VCG's Executive Director, he reflects on the ebb and flow of "business consciousness." This survey has been the longest lived of YSW's products, as YSW joined with *Fortune Magazine* to develop the Corporate Reputation Index that is still used to this day. At the time the issue of "corporate responsibility" was the key measurement.

⁹² An interesting example of this was the firm Landor Associates, which was one of the leading firms in "corporate reputation" studies in the 1960's and 70's, and today has moved on to become a leader in "corporate branding," and changed its name to the Landor Brand Management.

⁹³ Klein, 2000. This coincided with new "cultural strategies" of controlling the corporate workforce. For headquarters and service-oriented firms, a new corporate culture glorified senior managers and CEO's while emphasizing worker performance and excellence, creating incentives and regulations to condition and control workers, and discourage unionization. See: Du Gay and Hall, 2000, chapter 5.

⁹⁴ Klein, ibid, chapter 9.

⁹⁵ Katz, 1994.

⁹⁶ And, as Richard Tedlow, a Harvard Business School professor and veteran marketing researcher, puts it, this is “a way of creating *the idea* of value in a product,” explaining further, “branding is about reassurance, about consistency, about loyalty, about repurchase behavior,” regardless of the inherent usefulness of the product itself. Caylor, 1999.

⁹⁷ While branding obscures conditions at the point of production, this does not fully explain the resurgence of sweatshop labor at the end of the twentieth century. To understand this it is necessary to trace the rise of “free trade zones,” and the desperate economic conditions of countries that accept them on their territory. This in turn requires a larger discussion of neoliberal forces of globalization, and in particular the role of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization. On this see, e.g., Peet, 2003.

⁹⁸ Klein, *ibid*, 195-6.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 195. This is a quote of Walter Landor, CEO of Landor Brand Management, taken from the Landor website. A similar comment is made by Peter Schweitzer, president of advertising giant J. Walter Thompson, who says: “The difference between products and brands is fundamental. A product is something that is made in a factory. A brand is something that is bought by a customer.” (undated) Klein, *ibid*, 195.

¹⁰⁰ For standard branding textbooks see e.g.; Hart and Murphy, 1998. And in terms of conferences and conventions devoted to the topic, Elliot (1999) noted how the 90th Annual gathering of the Association of National Advertisers, the trade organization representing the nation’s largest marketers, was devoted entirely to the theme: “Brand Building for the 21st Century.”

¹⁰¹ See Kapferer, 1996.

¹⁰² Shiffman et al., 2001.

¹⁰³ In setting stock price “brand net value” is considered essential—i.e. how many consumers recognize the brand, and its average appeal amongst these consumers. On this see: Aacker, 1991.

¹⁰⁴ Morgan and Pritchard, 1998, 140. This is exceeded only by the five rings of the Olympic symbol

¹⁰⁵ Hall, 2000. 51-61.

¹⁰⁶ Note: the jury is still out on whether Stewart’s arrest and incarceration will have a negative or positive effect on the value of her company’s brand.

¹⁰⁷ “SuperSize Me!” became one of the top-grossing documentaries in history, and contributed to the growing pressure on McDonald’s to change its menu offerings—though its unclear the impact this had on corporate profits. The Yes Men stunt on BBC, in which the fake official said Dow accepted responsibility for the accident and had set-up a multibillion dollar compensation package, had immediate financial impact. In Frankfurt, Dow’s share price fell 4.2 percent in 23 minutes, wiping \$2 billion off its market value before recovering all the day’s losses three hours later. See: <http://theyesmen.org/press/#dow2004>.

¹⁰⁸ I have been influenced here by Naomi Klein’s discussion of the “brand boomerang” that threatens the reputations of disreputable corporations, and specifically the tactics of “anti-advertising” and “culture jamming.” See Klein, *ibid*, section 4. But while culture jammers are organized in their efforts, my use of counterbranding extends to unforeseen one-time events that may also damage the brand.

¹⁰⁹ On “detournement”, see Debord and Wollman, 1981.

¹¹⁰ Greenberg, 1999.

¹¹¹ see Hannigan, 1999.

¹¹² Gardyn, 2002, 38 Today, Arthur Anderson’s “Best Cities 2000” survey of 1,433 senior executives worldwide shows that “a cities suitability for business is no longer just about geographic location, tax incentives, or cheap land.” Instead the top three factors are 1) “pro-business attitudes” (20%); local availability of professionals (12%) and “entrepreneurial activity.” (10%)

¹¹³ Gardyn, *ibid*.

¹¹⁴ Harvey, 2001b. This is true whether the city functions as an urban center of production, consumption, or public or private service provision.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, 398

¹¹⁶ On downtown developments, see Frieden and Sagalyn, 1991, and Sagalyn, 2001. On the notion of “fantasy cities,” see Hannigan, 1999.

¹¹⁷ Judd & Fainstein 1999; Hannigan, 1999; Zukin, 1995. On “theming” see Sorkin, 1992, and Gottdiener, 2001.

¹¹⁸ Hannigan, *ibid*.

¹¹⁹ Featherstone, 1995. Kearns, 1993. Rutheiser, 1996.

¹²⁰ Mike Davis, 1990.

¹²¹ Harvey, 2001b, 405.

¹²² Judd and Fainstein, 1999.

¹²³ As Morgan and Pritchard put it (1998, 63): "Image emerges as a key marketing tool in an industry where potential consumers must base buying decisions upon mental images of product offerings rather than being able to physically sample alternatives." This becomes the theme of their next book on "destination branding," Morgan, Pritchard, and Pride, 2002.

¹²⁴ Law, 2002.

¹²⁵ See: Motivational Programmers, Inc., 1969. This is the earliest study I have yet found correlating lifestyle research and marketing to the tourism industry. As described by Goeldner (1971, 19): "This study discusses a new type of data in marketing research. The new technique, called "life style" information by some, and named "psychographics" by others, describes people not only by how much they make, and how much education they have, but also by their individual styles of life which makes more probable the purchase of some products and services, and reduce the changes of buying others. The study presents many interesting marketing delineations and illustrates the use of new market research techniques."

¹²⁶ see Weinstein and Firestone, 1978, and Ashworth & Voogd, 1994.

¹²⁷ As Law points out (2002, 5), this common estimate is quite conservative, as it only measures the number of people crossing borders, rather than those traveling domestically and regionally. As a result it ignores the increase in "day-trippers" and those particularly in large countries like the US traveling within their own borders.

¹²⁸ Law, 2002, 72.

¹²⁹ Morgan and Pritchard, 1998, 140.

¹³⁰ Kotler et al., 1994.

¹³¹ Greenberg, 2000.

¹³² Morgan and Pritchard, *ibid*, 73. In this sense, location marketing has fed off of the increasingly powerful product placement sub-industry, which has arisen "as Hollywood producers have sought additional sources of income to offset rising production costs, and as advertisers have searched the media horizons for underused and less resisted venues for their promotions."

¹³³ On the relation of media to shopping spaces like Disney's themed environments, See: Davis, 2001.

¹³⁴ Other researchers have dubbed such direct vs. indirect exposure as "projected" and "organic" media images, i.e. those that stem from attempts to influence consumer images of destinations through target marketing, as opposed to from a "lifetime of socialization" to popular culture, literature, and education. See: Gunn, 1972; Morgan and Pritchard, 1998, 65.

¹³⁵ E.g.: Squires, 1989 and Fainstein, 2001.

¹³⁶ E.g.: Hannigan, 1998.

¹³⁷ E.g.: Judd, 2003.

¹³⁸ E.g. Logan and Molotch, 1987.

¹³⁹ The most influential of these in the 1960's was the Fantus Company. By 1975 it began to produce its annual "State Rankings of Business Climate," which became the industry standard. For a history of these firms, see Weinstein and Firestone, 1978.

¹⁴⁰ Lynch, 1960.

¹⁴¹ For instance, while tourist city literature argues that cities must now sell themselves, they describe what happens *during* the promotion of tourism, not the institutional and conditions that *cause* the initiation of a state-directed marketing strategy of economic development, e.g. Holcomb, 1999. And when causes are discussed, this is generally in terms of the *demand* for tourism by the new middle classes. E.g.: Hoffman, Fainstein, and Judd, 2004. While all of these elements are important, what's missing is an examination of the broader history behind this city marketing strategy, the institutional arrangements and conditions in which it is initiated, or its political and ideological effects and contradictions.

¹⁴² Davis, 1990.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 22.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 23

¹⁴⁵ On those who see L.A. as *sui generis*, see work by the "LA School," i.e. Scott and Soja, 1996.

¹⁴⁶ On latter points see Law, 2001, and Morgan and Pritchard, 2001.

¹⁴⁷ I.e. "Swinging London" of 1960's and the massacres on the eve of the Mexico City Olympics of 1968.

¹⁴⁸ The language of “purging” and “product modifications” is, as we shall see, taken from the report given by the marketing consultant firm Yankelovich, Skelly and White, 1977.

¹⁴⁹ Since 1996, the former DOC has been known as the Empire State Development Corporation.

¹⁵⁰ These were initially conducted for an oral history project on the life of Lewis Rudin founder of ABNY.

PART I: FROM IMAGE CRISIS TO FISCAL CRISIS, 1967-1975

Chapter 1

Institutions and Representations:

New York's Media Matrix and the Rise of Image Crisis

Throughout its 300-year history, New York has been renowned nationally and internationally as a city of enormous contrasts and contradictions. It was a city of the nation's earliest mercantile settlements, technological innovations, and greatest wealth, as well as a site of constant waves of immigration, labor exploitation, and poverty. As one of the world's leading financial and commercial centers, it was oriented towards the exchange of information and capital, and earned its reputation as a city of power brokers and elites, epitomized by capitalist citadels like Wall Street and the skyscrapers of Manhattan. Yet as a port city with a vast manufacturing base, it was also oriented towards blue-collar jobs in trade and industry, and become known as a cosmopolitan, "working class city," with a long history of radical labor activism and social movements, epitomized by massive demonstrations in Union Square, and the teeming streets of the Lower East Side. And finally, though New York has rightfully been seen as a nodal point in the unfettered and frequently brutal flow of global capitalism, it also developed an international reputation, symbolized by the Statue of Liberty, and taking off in the era of the Great Depression and New Deal, as a liberal city, with an expansive public sector, enlightened social policies, and generous social services.

An essential force driving the spread of New York's global reputation in all its manifestations was its homegrown institutional matrix of media and marketing industries,

and its status as “communications capital of the world.” The fact that the city was the birthplace of the most important media technologies and industries of the modern period—including modern publishing, telegraphy, photography, advertising, radio, and television—accelerated its political and economic rise, and also meant that the sounds, images, and words of this city, expressing all of its diversity and contradiction, were constantly broadcast to the world. From its founding in the 17th century, the city became the printing capital of the nation. As such it was a contentious proving ground for the notions of freedom of speech and the press that were later ratified in the first amendment of the Constitution, and a haven for radical, “free-thinking” printers, artisans, and orators.¹ On the other hand, from the early days of the industrial revolution, the telegraph monopoly held by a few New York-based corporations enabled them to control the flow of financial information and spur the rapid international expansion of capital.² In this sense, New York’s media matrix represented the political contradictions at the intersection of capitalism and democracy—which the city itself embodied.

Meanwhile, the city’s cultural and class complexity, from “high” to “low,” was reflected in the diverse array of styles, motifs, and languages used in its media representations. On a daily basis, its 19th century “penny presses” printed literally thousands of different magazines, broadsheets and papers, for the consumption of myriad ethnic, political, artistic, and professional communities.³ And throughout the Gilded Era and Great Depression, the revolutionary media of photography and film exquisitely and painfully captured New York’s “sunshine and shadow.” For the first time, realistic visual representations of the contrasts of everyday life in the capitalist city were shown, and

with them the most powerful visual critiques yet seen of the city's underlying class antagonisms.⁴ This contrast was reflected further in the city's thriving culture industries—from Tin-Pan Alley to Vaudeville to Broadway—, which produced the very notion of popular culture consumed by the rest of the nation, and infused this culture with New Yorkers' "ethnic humor" and a working class "New York sensibility." In short, in contrast to other cities, throughout its history New York was unequalled in its level of national and global media recognition, and in the sheer volume and diversity of representations of its cultures and classes.

Yet in the 1960's, as both the nation and the city faced mounting financial troubles and deepening political divisions, there was a radical break in the nature of representations of New York City, and in the city's place in the popular imagination. This was due to a constellation of historic trends. First, the city's institutional matrix of media was growing and consolidating along with the increasing power of television and advertising in the post-W.W.II age of the consumer revolution, and U.S. global hegemony. Second, in response to the cultural chill of McCarthyism, these expanding media corporations, in particular television and magazines, were now trying to market themselves to more conservative, consumer-oriented, middle class, suburban audiences. Many of these audiences, and the CEO's and cultural workers themselves, were not only *not* interested in the complexity of New York's cultures and classes, but also held to a particularly virulent form of anti-urbanism. Older cities in general, and in particular the famously liberal, diverse, working class city of New York, were seen in starkly negative, and often racist, ideological terms—a stereotype that New York's own mainstream media of the

era helped to reproduce. Thus, replacing traditionally varied and complex representations of New York—its high and low cultures, its sunshine and shadow—was an increasingly simple, hegemonic representation of the city as “asphalt jungle,” and as the paradigm of the nation’s so-called “urban crisis.”

The Early Years of Media, Marketing, and Tourism in New York

In order to assess the powerful role played by any new form of media, it must be understood in terms of the “institutional matrix” in which it emerges.⁵ This includes an understanding of the changes in the means and relations of its production —i.e. the impact of technological innovations and of structural changes in media industries. It also involves an appreciation of the agency and innovations of cultural producers, entrepreneurs, and interest groups in the public and/or private sector, who play a crucial role in using these technologies and directing these industries, albeit within certain structural constraints. And finally, it involves assessing the effects of the changing tastes, habits, and interests of media consumers and audiences, the question of which plays an increasingly important role in decision making at the point of production.

Early Media and Communication Industries

The institutional matrix of media in New York City was shaped by the larger commercial, industrial, and scientific infrastructure of the city. As Armand Mattelart has pointed out, the “technical networks” and “international image markets” of mass media

are always overlaid upon, and help to facilitate, broader social networks of economic exchange and political influence.⁶ Nowhere is this truer than in New York, which arose in the 1700 to become a global center of trade in finance, raw materials, commodities, and labor, and required the most advanced technical networks and image markets in order to sustain this growth into the coming centuries. The power and scale of New York's economy grew out of the city's position as a key node in the trans-Atlantic "triangle trade" between Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean, bringing large shipments of iron ore, capital, and human slaves into its harbors, to be traded on Wall Street. At the same time, New York's power, and the class struggles it engendered, grew out of the city's place in the trans-Atlantic networks of post, telegraph, and underground newspapers that followed the same routes. Both of these networks —of capital, commodities and labor, as well as of media and information— made possible the profits and power that New York's elites accrued, and the cosmopolitan working class consciousness of so many of its citizens.

Thus, since the dawn of modern mass media in the 19th century, New York City had been the "national center," if not the global capital, of the emerging media industries.⁷

Particularly with the economic upsurge following the Civil War, New York established its central position in the three major technological revolutions then transforming the media landscape: photography and photo printing, telecommunications, and the mass, mechanized printing and publishing of books, newspapers, and magazines.⁸ The development of these industries was accelerated by their interaction with the city's powerful advertising industry, the fortunes of which skyrocketed with the 19th century rise of mass consumer marketing. It was then that advertising took advantage of the

infrastructure of print, commercial illustration, and photography to become vertically integrated, national industries.⁹ Their receipts, in turn, helped drive the profits of popular, nationally syndicated periodicals like *Harpers Weekly* and the *Illustrated American*, which were full of news, stories, illustrations, photos, and most of all advertisements.¹⁰

By the 1890's, the revolutionary electricity-based inventions of the engineer and entrepreneur Thomas Alva Edison, and his colleagues, launched entirely new, New York-based industries in illuminated advertising signs, as well as in electronic audio and motion picture recording, distribution, and camera and phonograph sales. And when Alexander Graham Bell and Guglielmo Marconi helped spark the wired and wireless revolutions in telephony and telegraphy in the early years of the twentieth century, New York-based firms like the Radio Corporation of America (RCA), the National Broadcasting Company (NBC), and the Columbia Broadcasting Service (CBS), were well-positioned to coordinate the dispatch and broadcast of these emergent, global forms of communication.¹¹ The same local radio corporations —namely NBC and CBS in 1927, and the American Broadcasting Corporation in 1948—would then be in a position to corner the market on television broadcasting as it developed over from the 1920's through the 1950's.¹² And again, the influential local advertising industry put its indelible mark on both of these emerging formats, fighting off government efforts in the 1920's and 30's to restrict advertising on the airwaves, and ultimately providing the primary financial support for a monopolistic form of both radio and TV broadcasting by the 1940's and 50's.¹³

New York City's media matrix was grounded not only in political and economic networks, but also in cultural forces, i.e. the innovations and inspirations of innumerable cultural workers and "show business" entrepreneurs. The very fact that these industries survived and thrived in the city was due to its unique agglomeration of creative talent in writing, photography, filmmaking, visual arts, commercial design, fashion, music, theatre and performance. This talent was found in abundance on the stages of Vaudeville, the Yiddish theatre, and later Broadway; in the jazz clubs of Harlem and the recording studios of Tin-Pan Alley; in downtown galleries and uptown museums; in avant-garde film and photo clubs; on the run-ways of the fashion industry; in the numerous regional colleges and art schools; as well as in the everyday street theatre of New York City neighborhoods. Thus the local cultural scene provided the material for magazines and newsweeklies, and the performers of radio and television broadcasts, and infused a New York sensibility into the national notion of mass, popular culture.¹⁴

In this way, New York was always distinctive for being both a cultural *and* media center, combining its technical infrastructure and mass market with great "cultural attractions," as well as "non-economic benefits" like a dynamic, fast-paced lifestyle and constant sources of creative stimulation. Throughout New York's modern history, these famous features of the city attracted "leaders in the communications and media industries"¹⁵ as well as an array of workers in the culture industries more broadly. And they enabled New York to become a defining force in American popular culture, and to maintain a competitive edge across the media and communications field. This was the case even as it

lost primacy in some key industries—most notably with the loss of most of its film industry to Los Angeles between the 1920's and 40's, and of much of its direct mail advertising and commercial research to Chicago and the Midwest in the 1940's and 50's. Nonetheless, New York remained an important player in these and other industries, due to its unique combination of economic, technical, and cultural advantages.

New York's historic position as media capital also meant that, from the earliest days of these new technologies, the city was one of the most heavily imaged and recorded spaces on earth. Throughout the rise of the new nation, New York's police gazettes and dime novels were the most popular and profitable of their genres.¹⁶ With the rise of photography, the most important early portraits were of New Yorkers, and the most famous "views" were of New York's architecture and street scenes.¹⁷ And with the rise of the film industry, the preeminence of representations of New York and New Yorkers only increased. Most of the first mass-produced commercial films were by Edison and his associates, and simply reproduced traditional New York stage and spectacle, employing Vaudeville dancers, Coney Island side show performers, and Bowery boxers, who were either filmed on location, or brought to perform in the Black Maria studio in New Jersey.¹⁸ Similarly the first documentary film ever made is believed to be "New York the Magnificent" (1921, later known as *Manhatta*), by the photographers Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler, who wove intertitles of Walt Whitman's poetry with scenes of everyday life so as to convey the dynamism and grandeur of "the proud and passionate city."¹⁹ And the most popular national radio broadcasts of the 1920's and 30's were of the New York Philharmonic, the Cotton Club, and Broadway comedians like Al Jolsen, Gracie Allen,

and Jack Benny. In short New York City's local culture and sensibility was inextricably linked with the very notion of mass media in the popular imagination of this country.

Sunshine, Shadow, and Tourism Marketing

Rather than produced by the city government, or orchestrated by huge corporations, early representations of New York City formed part of an immense marketplace of commodities. While these representations never managed to form a coherent representation of the "city as a whole," they nonetheless tended to express a dominant motif: the division between the "sunshine and shadow" of urban life. There are over forty citations at the New York Public Library with "Sunshine and Shadow" in the title between 1868 and 1930—including various books of poetry and song lyrics, novels, two slave narratives, and an autobiography of a civil war nurse.²⁰ This common phrase captured what Raymond Williams would call a "structure of feeling" emerging in the modern capitalist era, which was found throughout much literature of the period, whether explicitly titled as such or not.²¹ It combined a romantic nostalgia for a simpler, premodern life, with an acute observation of the increasingly stark divisions in modern society. And while it was applied to locales from Miami to Sydney, Australia, it was particularly well suited to encounters with New York City.

Amongst the representations of sunshine and shadow in New York, some that were most widely produced may be classified as booster literature and imagery.²² This mostly took the form of simple boosterism by private sector tourism impresarios, Broadway showmen, and entrepreneurial authors and photographers who wished to exploit the image of the "biggest," "greatest," and even "most degenerated" city in the world to sell

their own products and attractions. In this sense New York boosterism was distinct from other booster traditions, which focused more on generically positive views of the city.

Recent scholarship on urban boosterism has focused on the impact of the City Beautiful movement sweeping 19th century U.S. cities, and indeed early New York boosterism did in certain ways emerge out of this wider movement.²³ Inspired by the Crystal Palace design of the London world's fair of 1851, and New York's recreation of it at the first U.S. World's Fair in 1853, U.S. cities were being redeveloped to promote a highly visual and controlled form of tourism and middle class consumption, through the erection of monumental architecture and spectacular public spaces. This visual experience was heightened and commodified through the new 19th century mass media, which created dramatically angled photo reproductions of the impressive "views" these buildings and landscapes provided. As Catherine Cocks has shown in her recent history of urban tourism, these representations and physical spaces played a important role in "coaching" visitors in what to see and how to behave in cities, thus both "making cities appealing to tourists and conveying a sense of social unity."²⁴ And as Dennis Judd adds, these mediated spaces were scrupulous editors of the increasing tensions of modern urban life, "exorcis[ing] the bad and re-creat[ing] the city as a place of social harmony and physical beauty." This was true both of two-dimensional media as well as their extension via the increasingly popular city tours, which took the visitor by bus and train to view the "historic and aesthetic features of cities [while eliminating] the riffraff."²⁵ Such visual tools were particularly important sales devices for new U.S. cities that needed to display

their profitable attributes so as to sell themselves to a wider circle of investors and tourists.²⁶

Yet while New York was certainly a very important center of the City Beautiful movement,²⁷ and a huge producer of city view books, such uniformly positive imagery was hardly the only source of New York City's boosterism. Rather, early commercial representations of New York made at least as much of the city's reputation as a den of iniquity and vice as they did of its caché as a refined, cosmopolitan, money-making metropolis. In this, New York media helped popularize 19th century literary and photographic genres which, as Daniel Pick has shown, portrayed urban space as both a site of evolution towards the most civilized in modern 'high society,' as well as of "degeneration" towards the basest and most animalistic elements buried in human nature.²⁸ And, after the Civil War, once the New York City region had established itself as the national center of the modern media industry—from publishing, to photography, to filmmaking—these dueling visions of New York became some of the most widely consumed, and commercially profitable, of their genre.

Examples of these early "high and low" mass media representations are innumerable, but a few important examples stand out. In the 1850's, Foster's *New York By Gaslight*, "revealing the seamy underbelly of the city's poorer quarters," became one of the first national best-sellers, in the same decade that E. Porter Belden's *New York: Past Present and Future*, "devoted to a consideration of the causes of [New York's] prosperity, and estimates of its future increase," printed three editions and sold tens of thousands of

copies (according to its own estimate).²⁹ And by the 1910's, nickelodeons ran popular "actuality" films of 30 story "skyscrapers" being built and packed street cars racing down Broadway, followed by Edison's over-the-top portrayals of "rubes" from the countryside getting duped by fast-talking fortune tellers at Coney Island.³⁰ Alternating views of high and low culture was also a key feature of New York's guided tour business— since visitors frequently asked guides to show them, at a safe distance, the notorious streets of Five Points, of which they had read, before taking them to the equally famous theaters of Vaudeville.³¹

In addition, beginning in the late 19th century, there was a rival tradition of muckraking, documentary photo-journalism that sought to represent, and juxtapose, the "sunshine and shadow" of life in this capitalist metropolis in the form of critique. While the latter adopted many of the same tropes as booster literature, and was very often consumed as such, its intent was to inspire social reform rather than tourism and consumption. At the turn of the century, books of spectacular photographic views of Manhattan's southern tip and Fifth Avenue's neoclassical palaces competed in the public imagination with the horrific, close-up images of tenement life shot by Jacob Riis, as published in his muckraking volume, *How the Other Half Lives*, and serialized in newspapers.³²

New York's muckraking, social reform tradition can be seen to have influenced the Depression-era rise of New York's "popular" or "cultural front," a group of actors and artists; writers of plays, screenplays, songs, and novels; singers and musicians; filmmakers and photographers—all of whom sought to challenge ideas of genre and

aesthetic technique, while creating experimental, social realist work that was highly critical of the status quo.³³ Often with funding from the Works Progress Administration, these works were seen not simply as commodities, but as the seeds of a new popular culture, as well as “agit-prop” for larger leftist movements. In addition, they developed a particularly gritty and urbane “New York sensibility” that was to have a transformative effect on broader, national notions of popular culture and entertainment.

By the 1940’s, with the economic lift of WWII for New York’s economy, booster literature became increasingly sophisticated, all-encompassing, and controlling in its mode of coaching consumers in appropriate ways of seeing and behaving, whether in terms of the beautiful or the risqué sides of New York’s tourism industry. And the productions and aesthetic of the cultural front spread their critical, New York sensibility further and more effectively to Hollywood and the nation. As Michael Denning argues, the cultural front, based mainly in New York, attained cultural hegemony in the thirties for the first time in U.S. history, and brought a “deep and lasting transformation of American modernism and mass culture.”³⁴ Meanwhile, unlike some other cities at the time, nothing was ever done by private industry or at the level of New York City or State government to attempt to regulate these images in any way, to ensure they provided a complementary, or even accurate, picture of the city. Attempting to control official representations of the city, or to encourage others to do so, was simply something that did not seem to concern those in command of city government and finances.³⁵

City Hall's Attitude Toward Marketing

This reticence by New York's leadership towards centralized, publicly funded self-promotion was due primarily to three reasons. First, while New York's tourism and entertainment businesses —from Times Square to Coney Island, the Waldorf Astoria to Radio City Music Hall — were obviously significant pieces of the city's commercial mix, they were not yet understood as a separate, coherent "industry." As such, they were not viewed as a single contributor to New York's diverse economy, either directly through visitor spending, or indirectly through the image of the city they generated. That being the case, tourism and entertainment were never seen to merit subsidization or aid by the public sector, whether via coordinated marketing campaigns or real estate tax breaks.

Secondly, even *had* tourism and entertainment been seen as a vitally important, coherent industry, place marketing was not seen by established cities like New York as a public sector responsibility, or as a realistic means of stimulating economic development.

Advertising, as mentioned, had a limited, if expanding, scope in the first century of mass marketing, and was looked upon with some skepticism by those schooled in traditional, "managerial" modes of revenue generation. If this was the case amongst many in the private sector, it was only more so amongst public sector officials, for whom property taxes were the established mode of covering operating expenses, and who were not trained to seek profit beyond this in any case. This managerial mode was already beginning to make way for a more "entrepreneurial" mode of development amongst fast growing Post-War suburbs and resort cities, but not for New York City, which had grown

slowly over three centuries into an undisputed global city, depending for its operating revenue on standard forms of local taxation and private investment.

And finally, even *had* marketing been seen as a legitimate tool for economic development, it was assumed that a world-class city like New York simply didn't need it to attract visitors. Rather, it was believed, its historic, global reputation should simply be able to "sell itself."³⁶ Internationally known attractions like Coney Island had already shown their power to attract tens of millions of visitors a year without a dime of the city government's assistance. And in addition, with New York being the world's most important destination for international immigration and domestic migration up until the 1960's, city officials assumed it was already doing a good enough job —perhaps too good— of attracting people to its shores, without having to actually spend money doing so.

The main exception to the city's anti-marketing attitude came when New York City was host to major international events, namely the World's Fairs of 1938-9 and 1964-5. In preparation for the 1938 fair, the city established its first official booster, the New York City Convention and Visitor's Bureau [CVB] With half of its funding coming from the city, and half from its private members —mostly wealthy owners of local hotels, restaurants, department stores, and banks — the New York City CVB, like other CVB's across the country, worked closely with the Chamber of Commerce to help organize and promote such commercially beneficial events.³⁷ The 1938-9 fair was seen as a phenomenal success, bringing an morale boost to the city coming out of the Depression—

despite the fact that it was cancelled in its final months by the onset of World War II, and never made a profit. Most importantly, it attracted a record number of visitors to the city over the course of its run, and brought global recognition for locally based industry, and for New York itself as a modern, world city. Nonetheless, after the big event was over, the city went back to business as usual, providing no additional assistance to the CVB, and making no effort to maintain the level of tourism generated by the fair.

The Changing Institutional Matrix of Media, Marketing, and Tourism in the post-WWII period

The post-World War II era in the U.S. was both a time of economic boom, and of increasing political, ideological, and cultural conflicts. It was a time of the Cold War and McCarthyism, and of a rightwing political backlash against leftist and liberals in politics, unions, academia, media and the arts. It was a time of the entrenchment of “Jim Crow” racism in the South, and of the growth of the white supremacist movements like the Ku Klux Klan. Globally, it was a period of an imperialist and militarist U.S. foreign policy fuelled by the “Cold Warriors” of the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Nixon administrations, and the growing global hegemony of U.S. based corporations. And yet at the same time, the period directly following WWII was one of unprecedented strength and prestige for the U.S. working class and organized labor, celebrated as the key to the allied victory during WWII, and now growing along with America’s globally dominant, industrial economy. In addition, by the late 1950’s this was a time of a growing “culture war” — within the working class and middle class— between older and more conservative ideas of aesthetics, politics, and moral values, and a youth “counter-culture” that sought to

challenge these norms, and experiment with new, unorthodox identities and lifestyles.

This counterculture both fuelled and was fuelled by the rise of more radical “New Left” social movements—which by the 1960’s had become the movements for civil rights, black liberation, women’s rights and against the war in Vietnam.

To a great extent these political, cultural, and class battles played out geographically between suburban and urban America. For this was also a time of a growing divide between more affluent, conservative, and culturally homogenous suburban areas, and poorer, more liberal, and more culturally diverse cities. While suburbs help breed the rise of a powerful new right-wing movement, cities were home to New Left social movements, and the counterculture. This divide was further reinforced at a national scale, with the increasingly conservative suburbs expanding in the “Sunbelt” of the West and South, while the older northern, western, and midwestern cities were home to the growing left.

And in addition to geography, divisions were reproduced through the media and consumer culture of the day. To some extent the gains of the so-called communications and consumer revolutions were shared nationwide. With middle class expansion, the majority of Americans had greater leisure time and disposable income, and with that greater freedom to travel, shop, and consume the new media of television, radio, print, recorded music, and advertising. Yet particularly by the 1960’s, these gains were also experienced differently across political, geographic, and social lines—in terms of what media people watched or read, and how marketers targeted them. Thus, mass circulation

media —i.e. television and national magazines like *Life* and *Time*— increasingly catered to large, homogenous, suburban audiences, and carried advertising targeting these audiences. A similar growth can be seen in boosterish lifestyle magazines in Sunbelt cities and suburbs, often produced by Chambers of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureaus. Meanwhile, by the 1960's, a variety of smaller circulation media—i.e. hip, new magazines, alternative radio, independent films, and “new advertising”— began to target the youth counterculture, particularly in cities. These media sought to break away from the conventions of the “mainstream,” and to reflect the creativity and personality of the new generation, quite often so as to sell to them more effectively.

The post-War Rise of Television and Related Media in New York

New York was at the epicenter of the post-War explosion in media and marketing, and of the cultural and political divide it helped reproduce. With the city's existing technical, economic, and cultural networks, its companies were uniquely positioned to take advantage of new technologies and markets, and quickly developed as the center of the new television, magazine, radio, and marketing industries. Thus the city became a purveyor of the mass circulation media and advertising going out to suburbs across America— and with U.S. post-War hegemony, throughout the world. And in addition, by the 1960's, it became home to much of the cutting edge new film, lifestyle media, and advertising being targeted to and consumed by a local, young, urban, counterculture. As such, in the post-WWII period New York's representational power accelerated rapidly, and New York streets and sound stages became once again —for better or worse—a dominant site of representation.

This growth was led by New York's central position in the emerging television industry. By 1948, NBC and CBS had seized on this new technology, which was then growing in popularity and technical sophistication, to realize their commercial aspirations.³⁸ They, along with the new American Broadcasting Company (ABC), had used their muscle in the 1920's and 30's to fight and win a court ruling allowing the bulk of broadcasting in the U.S. to be controlled by the private sector, rather than by the public sector as it was in many other countries.³⁹ They now assumed oligopolistic dominance of this new industry, and determined its base would be in New York City. This was further ensured by the fact that Hollywood movie studios, the only major potential competitors at this point, initially refused to let their sound stages be used for television. In addition, due to time zone differences and inadequate recording equipment, it was far easier for other cities to receive live broadcasts from New York.

Television soon became the most important form of mass media consumption in the U.S.—by 1952 there were 18 million television sets and 110 commercial transmitters—and in so doing it began to drive the expansion, or decline, of other media.⁴⁰ Certain media—like radio and magazines—were forced to restructure their operations and format to remain competitive. National magazines based in New York, like *Life* and *Look*, began to include ever more dramatic photographic essays—a corollary of which was the rising stature of photo agencies like Magnum in the early 1950's. But increasingly over the coming decades, national news magazines, along with many newspapers, were put out of business by the heightened realism and immediacy of

television. This affected New York's printing industry as a whole, which underwent a major shift in this period, as periodical and newspaper publishing declined.⁴¹ While commercial publishing increased and kept many publishers afloat, by the early 1970's the industry had contracted to roughly half the size it was at its height in the 1920's. On the other hand, there was a rapid expansion of those news and entertainment media that could work synergistically with television. International news wire services, like the Associated Press and the United Press, saw rapid growth, passing up the British Reuters and the French Agence France Press to dominate the "big four" in the news wire business.⁴² They were now joined by expanding news-film distribution services, which bought stock footage from mobile television production teams, armed with new, portable, sync-sound 16 millimeter cameras. Given this infrastructure, a constant stream of international news agencies also set up their U.S. affiliates in studios in New York City.

And like in the age of radio, television took advantage of the New York's huge pool of theatrical writing and performing talent, and invented entirely new TV-entertainment genres like the situation comedy, featured drama, and the late night variety show, and brought new life to disused film sound stages. These live TV shows were initially infused with a "New York sensibility," that was both ethnic and working class, as with shows like the comedy "The Goldbergs"(1949-1954) as well as charged with ironic wit and social critique, as in the historical reenactment drama "You are There"(CBS, 1953-54).⁴³ This sensibility was based in the previous two decades of innovative theatre and film work done by the array of artists in the Cultural Front, which was largely based in New York City.

The prevalence of this sensibility in the early years of TV's "Golden Age" is due to a few factors. First, in 1948 two thirds of all TV sets in the nation were located in and around New York City, and since production costs were still low, and advertising sponsorships limited, they were the ones programmers most had to please.⁴⁴ In addition, such "heroic portrayals" of the working class in the late 1940's make sense, as Joshua Freeman points out, since "Culturally, socially, and politically, blue-collar workers loomed larger at the end of WWII than at any time before or since."⁴⁵ And last but by no means least, most of the screenwriters of these early dramas were New Yorkers returned home, after having been "blacklisted" by the House Un-American Activities Committee in the late 1940's and early 1950's.⁴⁶ For, as Paul Buhle and Dave Wagner point out, a great number of these writers and directors found work, openly and covertly, during the "remarkable grace period" of early television drama in New York between 1949 and 1954, and brought the New York sensibility back home from Hollywood.⁴⁷ The use of television for depictions of the everyday struggles of the working class continued into the late 1950's —particularly with the works like "Marty" by Paddy Chayevsky, about a butcher from the Bronx (1957), and the early work of Rod Serling; and it soon went underground, as blacklistees started writing TV series under assumed names.⁴⁸

The rise of television and the continued strength of theatre also supported the "film revival" in New York in the late 1950's and 60's, providing training for technicians, opportunities for directors like Elia Kazan and Sidney Lumet, and jobs for social realist television documentarians like Robert Drew and Richard Leacock. In the post-war

period, New York also emerged as the most important center of avant-garde filmmaking in the world, as supported by institutions like the Film Arts Society and the Anthology Film Forum, and thanks to luminaries like Maya Deren and Hans Richter, and later underground filmmakers like Andy Warhol. Thus the film and television world also intersected with the growing downtown movement of pop art, as well as soon the underground press and video arts movements. Given this media-arts infrastructure, so many national and international filmmakers were drawn to New York City that some began to predict “the return of the New York Movie” from Hollywood. This inspired Mayor John V. Lindsay, in 1966, to establish the Mayor’s Office of Television, Broadcasting, and Film to facilitate location shooting and permits. Thus, even though by the late 1960’s, most commercial television shows had departed the city for sound-stages, warmer locations, and more conservative climate of Hollywood, an extensive infrastructure of national and international television news, drama, and filmmaking had arisen in its place.⁴⁹

But this independent trend, celebrating the New York sensibility, was at odds with what was mostly being produced in Hollywood, and broadcast through New York’s big-three networks. As sales of television sets increased exponentially throughout the 1950’s, as sponsors became more vigilant, and as McCarthyite purges moved into television, a new premium was placed on TV programming and talent that was “normal” and “American.” Anything or anyone too urban, working class, non-WASP, became coded as abnormal, decidedly un-American, and potentially subversive, and was kept off of dramas, situation comedies, and variety shows—though they were increasingly fair game for the TV news.

Thus “The Dick Van Dyke Show,” “I Love Lucy,” and “The Ed Sullivan Show” replaced “You are There,” “The Goldbergs,” and “Playhouse 90” As Buhle and Wagner write:

“What was “normal”? In this view, the habits of the middle class, naturally; the suburbs, increasingly; and, for men, employment in some sort of service sector or corporate structure rather than the blue-collar production of goods. As television producers and directors soon learned, this meant few treatments of racial minorities except in some servile roles, and very few inner-city slum dramas... (except as locations for one-shot dramas).”⁵⁰

This growing conservatism and anti-urbanism was also spurred by the networks’ growing dependency on Madison Avenue’s big advertising firms, whose strength had grown along with the rise of television, suburbanization, and the global influence of corporate America. By 1954, CBS became the largest advertising medium in the world, and by 1957, television in general accounted for \$1.5 billion in spending by advertisers.⁵¹ This was to the great advantage of leading firms, like J Walter Thompson and Young & Rubicam, which became the world’s largest television commercial producers in this period. In addition, the industry had been extremely successful at responding to the rise of the youth market and counterculture in the late 1950’s and 60’s. A group of new firms like Doyle Dane Bernbach [DDB], Ogilvy Mather, and Wells Rich Greene [WRG] arose, and launched the “creative revolution” in advertising, catering to this hard-to-reach, but very consumer-oriented, demographic. Helping to lead this revolution were a number a small “psychographic” market research and consulting firms, who borrowed from the fields of marketing and social psychology to produce quasi-scientific surveys and reports that guided corporations in their restructuring, relocation, and advertising strategies.⁵² The most influential of the market research and consulting firm of the era was the New York City- based Yankelovich Skelly and White [YSW].⁵³

One of the major purchasers of advertising and media in this period was New York's expanding travel and tourism industry—including hotels, motels, restaurants, and amusement services, and real estate. Working through the city's Convention and Visitors Bureau [CVB] in the post-War period, these firms came to appreciate the increasing profits of the international leisure and tourism sector, and the power of the growing media and marketing sector as well.⁵⁴ This was catalyzed during the very successful World's Fair of 1964-5, when the city's hotel occupancy reached its post-war high of 75 percent, and when the industries of media, marketing, and tourism came together in a new way to promote New York City through films, fliers, post-cards, and television. They were interested, in their own way, in challenging the New York sensibility, and using television and advertising to present New York as a "normal," "American" city.

Thus by the mid-1960's, New York's institutional matrix of media, marketing, and tourism had reached a new scale and level of integration as a sector of the economy. By 1967, over 300,000 people were working in over 11,000 establishments in some aspect of this sector, whether in the old media of printing, radio, and motion pictures, or the new medium of television, whether in advertising and consulting, or in tourism and amusements [see Table 1.1]. The sector had come to represent 10% of the private sector workforce.⁵⁵ Consequently, dramatic increases were also seen in revenue between 1963 and 1967 [see Table 1.2].

TABLE 1.1 Media, Marketing, and Tourism in New York City in 1967^Φ

industry	establishments	employment
Printing & Publishing	4117	123,711
Radio, TV, News	59	15,643
Motion Pictures	1036	22,357
Advertising	1,341	44,649
Market Consulting & P.R.	2,155	27,647
Hotels & Motels	1,029	43,341
Amusement & Recreation	1,676	25,751
Total Media, Marketing, Tourism	11,413	303,099
Total NYC private sector	201,486	3,025,740

TABLE 1.2: Changing Revenue of Tourism, Amusements, and Marketing in New York City, 1963-1967, in Dollars^{*}

Industry	1963	1967	% change
Hotels, Motels, Tourist Courts	422,074	534,269	+27%
Amusement & Recreation Services <i>Includes motion pictures</i>	423,851	1,875,308	+342%
Advertising & Marketing Services ^β	3,570,000 ^χ	4,372,794	+22%
Total Tourism, Amusement, Marketing	4,415,925	6,782,371	+54%

^Φ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, *1967 Census of Manufactures*. January, 1971.

^{*} U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, City and County Data Books for 1963 and 1967. This refers to gross revenue, and is sometimes referred to as "value of shipments" and sometimes as "receipts."

^β Does not include direct mail advertising

^χ Approximation.

Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that despite the great possibilities this new matrix of media, marketing, and tourism presented, nothing was done to harness this representational power to sell the city. While city leaders may have begun to see the weight and power of these industries in a new light, they nonetheless saw no reason to use it to mount an expensive city marketing campaign—as many other cities were doing at this time. Following the Worlds Fair, Mayor Lindsay increased the CVB budget only slightly, and named a new, more high profile CVB Executive Vice President, Charles Gillet, who was charged with creating a more public role for the bureau. Together they sought to advance the idea of New York as a “Fun City” where young people and the middle class could come and play. Yet, in comparison to resort destinations like Miami and Las Vegas, or Sunbelt regions like Atlanta and Los Angeles, New York City’s CVB, and its marketing in general, were still extremely limited. Beyond putting out local promotions at the hotels and restaurants of its members, and via national trade publications, the New York City CVB undertook no national or international marketing campaigns and interacted little with city or state government beyond occasional promotional events. Rather, developments in media, marketing, and tourism were occurring in the private sector, without the coordination or funding of the public sector at the local or state level.

The Urban Crisis and Changing Representations of New York City

As New York’s economy and political status in the country worsened over the course of the sixties, the city’s role as media capital proved to be more of a curse than a blessing. The increasingly desperate position of many of its older industries, the nation’s

fascination with stories of New York crime and social turmoil, and the fact that so many of New York's own powerful media outlets were ready and able to supply the nation with these stories, helped feed into a spiral of bad publicity. By the late 1960's, as the city's economic fortunes fell, an increasingly monolithic urban imaginary began to dominate all others: New York as the apotheosis of the nation's so-called "urban crisis."

No metropolis was as paradigmatic of the urban crisis, whether real or imaginary, than New York City. To many observers — right- and left-wing alike — New York City was the epitome of this dangerously polarized era. As discussed in the introduction, New York had been the municipal testing ground for America's civic liberalism, as well as the heavily unionized manufacturing and commercial hub of the post-World War II boom.⁵⁶ The period of the Lindsay mayoralty, from 1966 to 1974, was arguably one of the highpoints in both New York's liberal tradition and in its demonstration of trade union strength. Between 1960 and 1970, facing mounting pressure from the emerging "welfare rights" movement, the city used federal Great Society and Model City programs to greatly expand welfare rolls and extend services more widely to its poorest residents.⁵⁷ The years between 1960 and 1973 also saw a dramatic increase in labor activism and militancy, particularly among public sector unions.⁵⁸ Meanwhile, over the course of the 1950's and 1960's, the city welcomed hundreds of thousands of African American migrants from the South and new immigrants from Puerto Rico — the latter the beneficiaries of the US government's "Operation Bootstrap" program, which provided free, one-way tickets to JFK Airport, along with a promise of good jobs and a better life. Tragically, as we shall see, the industrial economy that these new New Yorkers were

eager to enter was fast disappearing, as were the social welfare programs and services that might cushion their transition.⁵⁹ With revenue from the federal and city government getting slashed, and demands on the city's purse rising, the finances of this traditionally liberal city were being squeezed as never before.

At the same time, the city itself was running up a huge debt as a result of its poorly planned urban renewal and office development plans. In the early 1960's, the New York Port Authority, under the autocratic leadership of Robert Moses, was demolishing once thriving working class and racially diverse neighborhoods in Lower and Midtown Manhattan and the outer boroughs to make way for massive highways, upscale cultural institutions, and housing projects segregated by race and class.⁶⁰ In addition to its expense, this greatly accelerated the region's suburbanization, exacerbated race and class divisions and tensions, and undermined the economies and jobs-base of many neighborhoods, particularly in the outer-boroughs. But even Moses didn't sign on to the building spree of high-end office towers in Lower Manhattan that was endorsed by Lindsay and Governor Nelson Rockefeller in the late 1960's, and that drove the city's debt up exponentially. Increasingly, New York was forced to borrow money to cover basic operating expenses, was unable to invest in needed infrastructural improvements, and had the appearance of a city falling apart.

And so, despite Mayor Lindsay's best efforts to present New York as "Fun City," its more common monikers were to become "the ungovernable city," "the rotten apple," and the "asphalt jungle."⁶¹ These names expressed the anti-urban bias prevalent in the

country, a bias that had become a more socially acceptable form of racism, anti-Semitism, and anti-unionism among increasingly conservative, middle class, suburban whites. Such ideologically-laden representations were then broadcast via the television news—in contrast to the “normal Americans” on view during the entertainment programs. Innovation in technology and editing had made the news a more compelling format that lent itself to visually dramatic and sensationalistic reportage. A similar style spilled over into the nation’s newspapers, magazines, books, and films then seeking to compete with TV’s lurid programming. *Fortune* magazine ran a special issue in 1971 devoted to the economic and social demise of urban America, which was filled with images of nameless black and brown people “hanging out” on the streets.⁶² Popular pundits predicted cities were on the brink of complete self-destruction, and that the age of urban existence was over.⁶³ In addition, a new genre of urban horror films was becoming popular in the late 1960’s—most of which, as we shall see, were based in the imagined “asphalt jungle” of New York City neighborhoods.

In essence, such portrayals allowed outside viewers to blame American cities and their residents for their own problems. Since the problems were presented as endemic to these troubled populations, they were also incurable. This tautological notion provided a strong counter-argument for any movement seeking a political or economic approach to the deeper, structural roots of urban problems—since no deeper roots were seen to exist.

The Nightly Dramaturgy of TV News

The central media format through which the image of asphalt jungle was disseminated to the nation was on the nightly news. Crime in New York had always been over-reported to the rest of the nation. As city officials and even journalists had long complained, “a jaywalker on Broadway gets front page billing in Topeka.”⁶⁴ But this over-reporting increased dramatically with the advent of verité-style television news, the growing demand of New York based TV networks and film-news services for exciting footage to sell to the affiliates, and the apparent thrill of New York crime coverage for suburban viewers. Thus New York became a leading antagonist in what Robert Beauregard calls “the nightly dramaturgy of TV news” of the 1960’s and 70’s, in which graphic and decontextualized portrayals of urban violence became some of the most popular TV viewing of the time.⁶⁵ In addition to nightly news clips, multi-part series in the new genre of television documentary provided salacious, “in-depth” views of criminality in New York’s ghetto neighborhoods—which, as we shall see, were to become influential models for future inner-city cop dramas shot on location against the same back-drop.⁶⁶

The director Sidney Lumet took a critical look at this increasingly exploitative TV crime coverage in his 1975 film, “Dog Day Afternoon,” based on real events that happened in Brooklyn, in 1972. The film starts out as an apparently unremarkable movie about New York City. First there is a establishing montage, showing the city’s rich and poor, subways and public parks, poker players on Brighton Beach and workers on the bridges.⁶⁷ But then it segues into a bank hold up, with two sharply dressed, fast talking robbers hold up a small neighborhood bank, taking all the terrified workers inside hostage. Very quickly we discover that something is quite different about this New York

crime narrative. When the hostages and police realize that Sonny, the lead bank robber, is inexperienced and prepared to negotiate, the bank is surrounded by flocks of news crews jockeying with the police for position— NYPD helicopters competing for air space with TV news helicopters armed with cameras. With the heist covered live by all three New York networks, it becomes such a big story that thousands of spectators are drawn to the scene. Exploiting the live coverage, and anti-police sentiment of the crowd, Sonny transforms the street in front of the bank into his stage, forcing the police lines back, and whipping his audience into a frenzy, tossing wads of \$5 bills over their heads, and leading them in chants of “Attica! Attica!”—referring to the televised prison riot that focused national attention on the abuses of the prison system. When a hostage comes out with him, she is so hypnotized by the live camera that she turns down the option of escape, more excited that she’s now a “celebrity.”

Meanwhile the news media have gathered even more sensational background on Sonny: he’s actually a Vietnam vet, and a gay man, who married a transvestite upon his return to the US, and then attempted to rob a bank for money to pay for her sex-change operation. Now the story is so big that one of the networks taps into the bank’s phone line —taking it away from the police negotiators— to interview Sonny live on the air. When the newsman asks him why he’s robbing a bank instead of getting a job, Sonny is first incredulous at the stupidity of the question —even the bank tellers agree its impossible to get a good job in this economy— and then angry at being made to look a fool, yelling into the phone: “I know what this is — we’re just entertainment to you! What do you

got for us? Huh? Let's talk about something *you* know about!" The satellite transmission is suddenly cut.

As revealed by both the film and the real life events upon which it was based, the news media were now capable of covering a crime live as it was unfolding, even to the extent of obstructing the police as they were trying to do their job. Perhaps never before did a criminal get to upbraid a newscaster live on TV. In part this power was a function of new technology arising in the 1960's. TV, already the nation's primary media source, was revolutionized with the simultaneous development of both satellite transmission and smaller, more portable cameras, the combination of which created the possibility of footage that was both "live" and personal. Mobile TV crews in Vietnam were able to send home graphic, close-up coverage of the battle and its casualties, helping to create the immediacy of the first "living room war." And at the same time, roving news crews were deployed in the streets of US cities, providing similarly graphic, documentary-style coverage of the "urban crisis."

But this graphic coverage of urban crisis wasn't only a product of new technology. Unlike the real war in Vietnam War, in which hundreds of thousands actually died, the U.S. "urban crisis" was a nebulous phenomenon, produced as much by real events on the ground as by an increasingly conservative, anti-urban national sentiment. Graphic coverage was required to prove the very existence of the urban crisis, as well as to boost the ratings of the news shows catering to an increasingly suburban audience excited by such coverage. Vietnam-like imagery, and direct comparisons of New York to Vietnam,

were used to present the city as an “urban battleground,” and “America’s Vietnam.”⁶⁸ This was a reflection in part of the return to society in this period of Vietnam veterans.⁶⁹ But it also reflected a growing obsession in both suburban America and the news media with urban crime and “gang warfare.” While cities were enduring very real and increasing problems of crime, poverty, joblessness, and social unrest, these problems were used as filler by a voracious news cycle that thrived on the most sensationalistic, and easily decoded, stories it could find.

“Dog Day Afternoon” captured the surreality and powerlessness that many New Yorkers felt at that time. For in the midst of the “nightly dramaturgy” of news coverage of urban problems in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s, New York City took center stage, as the paradigm of urban crisis.⁷⁰ This was despite the fact that its streets were never the site of major race riots during the civil rights era,⁷¹ and that the city’s crime rate was consistently ranked low on the list of the country’s 20 biggest cities. Nonetheless, the major national TV networks, all of which were based in midtown Manhattan, jumped at the chance to turn a mugging in Central Park, or a neighborhood bank hold-up by an out of work gay man, into a national news story. The major overseas news agencies based in New York City, and in search of attention grabbing coverage of American current events, regularly dispatched crews to cover these same local stories for their audiences. Dramatic labor actions like the Sanitation Union and Transit Union strikes, and the rise of graffiti writing on the subways, also became huge national and international stories, providing lurid evidence of “a city out of control.” As films like “Dog Day Afternoon”

demonstrated, sometimes the media circus happening outside the crime scene could be as damaging as the crime itself.

Times Square as Site of Degeneration

Negative portrayals of New York City were by no means new. As mentioned above, since the 19th century New York had served in the popular imagination as the ultimate symbol of the modern city in all its contradictions. It was known as a site of the greatest potential for evolution to the highest of high culture, or of devolution to the lowest of low culture, and attracted visitors interested in experiencing either or both extreme ends of this spectrum. This continued to be true into the middle of the 20th century, when mass media representation produced in and about New York ranged from that of the working-class, polyglot “Gotham” of the radical ethnic press; to the sophisticated “New Rome” of modern art openings and high fashion; to the violent, brooding “Naked City” of film noir.⁷² Yet now, with the inner city deteriorating, and with social and fiscal crisis mounting, a single urban imaginary began to circulate more than others: the dystopic vision of the city as “asphalt jungle.” Unlike its own earlier representations, and in contrast to glowing, bucolic representations of the suburbs and Sunbelt, New York City now appeared as a site of pure degeneration, where people devolved to the state of animals, and where the bright lights were a thin cover for the true depravity lurking right under the surface.

No single space in New York symbolized this degeneration as well as Times Square, long the city's primary tourist destination, and red light district, and its most internationally recognized icon. The "crossroads of the world," which had always managed to strike a balance between risqué and popular entertainment, low brow and middle brow culture, had grown decidedly seedier over the preceding decade. As the number of vaudeville theaters, movie palaces, and deli-style restaurants declined for lack of business, the number of pawn shops, porn theaters, and prostitutes increased to take their place. Huge, garish, neon billboards were still a fixture, but many of the most famous and sophisticated signs —like the 20 foot tall woman blowing Camel smoke rings— shut down in the early 70's when faced with skyrocketing energy prices. These were replaced with simpler signs for foreign brands, particularly emerging Japanese companies like Aiwa and Sapporo.⁷³ These firms were content to have their name in lights above this still famous and much photographed thoroughfare, despite its deteriorating reputation. But pedestrian traffic below the bright lights, and tourist activity in general, took a nose-dive. This, it was argued, was due to the increasing association of Times Square with crime and perversion through representations in the mass media. As one anonymous sightseeing guide complained in 1971: "This is the worst summer I can remember since the war. They ought to burn down those porno joints on 42nd Street and those filthy movies and Broadway would come back to its own."⁷⁴

One of the most famous media representations of Times Square in this period was that of the Oscar award-winning, and X-rated, "Midnight Cowboy," which came out in 1969.⁷⁵ The film stars John Voigt as the strapping and naive young cowboy, Joe Buck, who takes

the long bus-ride from his small hometown in Texas to New York in hopes of excitement and a better life. Like generations of immigrants and film characters before him, he comes to the big city an innocent rube, yet unlike them, and in a sign that times have definitely changed for youth of the 60's, he seeks his fortune as a male prostitute for wealthy New York women. Quickly and tragically he finds himself no match for the utter ruthlessness of the characters he encounters, or his own desperate loneliness. After a Park Avenue woman refuses to pay him, and the hotel manager impounds his belongings, he finds himself starving and alone, and joins the junkies, hustlers, and male prostitutes under the XXX marquees of 42nd Street. The abandoned midnight spaces of Times Square prompt horrific visions of crumbled buildings and his own memories of abuse, as he becomes one with the dereliction of the streets around him. His only friend is the crippled swindler, Ratso Rizzo, played by Dustin Hoffman, who invites him to share his meager room in a condemned building. Together they steal from Italian vegetable salesmen, hustle rich bohemians, and dream of taking the "Yellowbird special" to the paradise of Florida. As the harsh winter comes and Ratso's health deteriorates, Joe goes back to the streets one last time, and when his "john" —an effete businessman in town for the paper sellers' convention—refuses to pay him, he is finally pushed over the edge to violence.

Needless to say, "Midnight Cowboy" did not inspire an increase in convention business, and nor did the spate of films that were to follow in its path. A number of award-winning, independent films —now considered the classic films of the late 1960's and early 1970's — used New York City as a backdrop to explore the growing

disenchantment, alienation, and poverty of the Vietnam War-era United States. This included most notably Martin Scorsese's debut films, both starring Robert DeNiro: "Mean Streets" (1973) and "Taxi Driver" (1976), the latter giving DeNiro his career-launching role as Vietnam vet turned vigilante, Travis Bickle.

These critical successes were joined by B-movies by little known directors, from Larry Peerce's "The Incident" (1967), in which a pair of depraved juvenile delinquents take over a subway car full of passive, terrorized passengers, to Michael Winner's "Death Wish" (1974), in which peace-loving architect Paul Kersey, played by Charles Bronson, is transformed into a serial killer when thugs murder his wife and rape his daughter. These were the first in a veritable sub-genre of low-end, hyper-violent action thrillers, based on the Hollywood tradition of the vigilante Western. Having more in common with other "cult" genres like slashers and thrillers, this new line of what I would call "New York exploitation films," produced brazenly stereotypical and dehumanizing representations of the city and its inhabitants. Here, New Yorkers were held hostage by animalistic maniacs who ruled their lawless streets, the incompetent police inevitably powerless to help them.

What united these high and low end portrayals of New York as asphalt jungle was their twisted, and ambivalent, moral message. Both genres seemed urgently to want to teach the audience a lesson: that individuals —like Joe Buck, Travis Bickle, Paul Kersey— had to be prepared to degenerate, and lower themselves to the level of these animal-like natives, if they were to "stand up" to them, and if anything like justice were to be served.

As Bickle screams into the dark, grease-slicked New York streets from his taxi-cab, before he goes out to seek murderous vengeance:

All the animals come out at night—whores, skunk, pussies, buggers, queens, fairies, dopers, junkies, sick, venal. Someday a real rain will come and wash all this scum off the streets.... Listen you fuckers, you screwheads. Here is a man who would not take it anymore. A man who stood up against the scum, the cunts, the dogs, the filth, the shit. Here is a man who stood up.⁷⁶

One can read great pathos into De Niro's performance of paranoia and bravado, and of Jon Voigt's performance of alienation and despair—particularly given their commentary on the broader social tensions of the historical moment. As a Vietnam veteran returning to a city falling apart, and as a young man who fails at every job and relationship he attempts, Travis Bickle and Joe Buck can be seen as metaphors for the increasing anxieties of the era. But *Taxi Driver* and *Midnight Cowboy* did not generally receive such a sociological response. As part of an increasingly universal set of representations, they merged with a wave of angry, bloody, and frequently racist portrayals, offering viewers the pleasurable fantasy of killing off the bad-guys, along with the degenerate city that bred them. They became metaphors for urban crisis and New York's inevitable demise.

Subway Graffiti and a City Out of Control

As negative media representations from the mainstream media were undermining the city's image from without, another major source of New York's image crisis of the early 1970's had arisen from within its own borders, in the low-tech form of graffiti writing on the walls of subway cars. While "ground work" had been done in the late 1960's in New

York as well as in cities like Los Angeles and Philadelphia, the “most important,” “pioneering” stage of graffiti’s development was in New York City between 1971 and 1974.⁷⁷ For the early writers, who sought adventure and exposure outside the confines of their deteriorating neighborhoods and schools, the subways were the most powerful exhibition space imaginable, traversing and being seen by the entire city, both rich and poor, black and white, uptown and downtown. Indeed a, if not *the*, main objective for writers in “getting up” was to gain “prestige” and “fame” by being seen on as many subway lines, and by as widely distributed an audience, as possible —also known as “going all city.”⁷⁸

Early observers of the New York graffiti scene noted these writers were pursuing the age-old dream of publicity so common in New York’s commercial popular culture, whereby visibility was associated with greater fame, and fame with greater visibility.⁷⁹

Commercial advertisement in the form of billboards, signs, and posters, had been using public space (the streets, subways, buses, etc) as a medium for broadcasting the brand names of myriad products for more than a century by the time writers appeared on the urban scene, and “borrowed” the same spaces to propagate their own names. And so too the marquees of Broadway had long offered aspiring “stars” the ultimate promise of success by “getting your name in lights.” But with graffiti there was one crucial difference. In commercial culture, name recognition was used as a means to an end — i.e. to promote greater recognition, and consumption, of the commodified face and personality of the “star,” or the commodified product behind the “brand.” For writers, whose survival depended on official anonymity, name recognition was an end in itself,

or as Norman Mailer put it in his famous essay: “the name was the faith of graffiti.”⁸⁰

Thus, New York City subways were soon filled with thousands of names, or “tags,” that circulated like floating signifiers, as ubiquitous as they were inscrutable to the majority of their viewers, who were not a part of the writing subculture.

In February, 1971, the *New York Times* published an article on the one of the writers, TAKI 183, whose “tag” was being spotted on numerous midtown Manhattan subway lines, and sparking curiosity. As the investigative article revealed, it turned out that “TAKI” was the nickname for the writer’s given name, Demetrius, and “183” the number of the street in Washington Heights where he lived. And the reason he favored the 4/5/6 lines was that his work as a foot messenger meant he was on those subways frequently. As a courier between and within New York’s central business districts, Taki had the opportunity to write his tag in places that, though less likely to be spotted by other appreciative teenagers, were more visible to the elite of the city, and in particular the media elite, who might, and did, see his work as a news-worthy story.⁸¹

The *Times* story of TAKI 183 revealed two things—at least to the uninitiated. One was the appropriation of the subway as a media technology to spread the message of a diverse, citywide movement of what some considered artists, others vandals. Between 1971-1974, hundreds of young people were getting involved, with distinctive features reflecting the different neighborhoods and cultures of the city, and “the subway system proved to be a line of communication and a unifying element for all these separate movements.”⁸² As the historian Joe Austin puts it, the subway provided these young

people, who were otherwise cut off from the city, with “an alternative public broadcast system.”⁸³ As opposed to just tagging locally, now writers and potential writers from across the five boroughs could become aware of and inspired by each other’s efforts.

And, as the TAKI 183 article proved to the writers, the subway was also a stepping stone to a even wider visibility in the mainstream media, and with it a whole new level of “fame.” As writers clearly understood, this was a period in which mass media was growing more powerful and redefining the public sphere, as new media technologies were proliferating. After Taki’s interview, it was widely accepted that dissemination in almost any form of mass media offered the fastest route to fame.⁸⁴ As Austin argues, this had a direct impact on writing strategy:

Realizing that cameras [and not just passersby] were watching and recording opened up an entirely new system of exposure. Writers immediately capitalized on this fact and utilized these watchful eyes to broadcast their own works. Writers now deliberately wrote their names in paces they thought were likely to be photographed, videotaped, or filmed. Many writers during these years could boast that they had repeatedly appeared in the newspapers and on TV although these “appearances” were usually made in the background of photos and camera shots intended for other purposes.⁸⁵

This also led quickly to citywide competition, as individual writers, and emerging “squads” of writers, sought to establish themselves, and gain “status,” as the best in terms of the quality or quantity of their tags. Of course to engage in this competition, writers had to be prepared to break the law, and found the easiest and safest way of doing this by breaking into the train yards, so that they could “bomb,” or cover, a whole train. As the graffiti historians of @149th St explain:

Writing started moving from the streets to the subways and quickly became competitive. At this point writing consisted of mostly tags and the goal was to have as many as possible. Writers would ride the trains hitting as many subway cars as possible. It wasn't long before writers discovered that in a train yard or lay up they could hit many more subway cars in much less time and with less chance of getting caught. The concept and method of bombing had been established.⁸⁶

With bombing came even greater competition, and the rapid proliferation of new writing styles. Innovations included new script and calligraphic styles, as well as tag embellishments like stars, arrows, cartoon characters, and other designs. "Probably the most famous tag in the culture's history" was STAY HIGH 149, who used a smoking joint as the cross bar for his "H," and a stick figure from the television series "The Saint." And in addition to new tag styles, came innovations in tag scale, as writers started to use wider spray paint nozzles, more colors, and take more time and precaution, to create larger "masterpieces," or "pieces." These provided more space in the interior and background of letters to "further enhance the name," and create dramatic three-D effects and other distinctive design elements. Piecing was soon extended to works spanning the entire height of a subway car, called "top to bottoms," and by 1974, to entire sides of cars, called "the mural whole car."⁸⁷ And as the size of the pieces grew, so too did their visibility to the beehive of media outlets operating in New York City at the time, and looking for graphic images of the local scene.

With far greater media attention targeted at the troubled city, these young writers were to get more publicity, and cause the city greater headaches, than they had perhaps ever anticipated—as will be discussed in later chapters. For now, it should be noted that these massive, dramatic floating signifiers they created touched an already raw nerve, and were

interpreted by many in the wider public as creating, and not responding to, the larger crises in New York City. As Austin puts it: “Those already inclined to blame urban crisis for the woes of the 1960’s found ... in “graffiti” their arch nemesis – a sign of barbarians at the gates, and a nation out of control.”⁸⁸

Corporate Exodus and Image Crisis

Perhaps the most detrimental effect of the corporate exodus is its impact on New York City’s image as the business capital of the nation.

While the impacts on employment, taxes, and general business in the City are important, they generally reduce these bases by only a small percentage and thus are not by themselves essentially crippling.

The weakening of the City’s business image, however, strikes directly at the heart of its existence.

Wolfgang Quante, 1976⁸⁹

Representations of New York as “asphalt jungle” —whether through crime coverage on the TV news, films portrayals of degenerate Times Square, or representations of subway graffiti—came at a particularly bad time for the city’s elites and new middle class. The real value of New York City’s bonds, credit rating, and real estate was declining rapidly in the late 1960’s, due primarily to decades of profligate borrowing practices, and the debt-financed development of millions of square feet of high-end office space on a scale far greater than the market could bear. Now, this bad financial situation was made far worse by increasingly negative representations of the New York in the mainstream media. This was particularly devastating in this era of mounting inter-urban competition, deindustrialization, and the city’s growing dependence on the flexible service industries.

New York was hemorrhaging manufacturing and commercial jobs, the bedrock of its working and middle class communities, losing an astounding 600,000 jobs between 1965 and 1973, with an average of 100,000 jobs lost every year from 1970 to 1975. But in addition to these “smokestack industries”—and of far greater concern to the members of the CVB and the FIRE elites—tens of corporations with headquarters in Manhattan were abandoning New York. When combined with the increasing rate of corporate mergers in the period of restructuring, depending on estimates, by 1974 New York City had a net loss of between 76 and 88 of the nation’s most important corporate headquarters, as well as tens of smaller firms, and with them tens of thousands of high-end service jobs.⁹⁰ The gain to New York’s local suburbs was massive— between 1968 and 1974, they tripled their share of Fortune 500 companies while New York lost 30% of its share. But in addition, as part of a national redistribution of corporate headquarters, New York State, in line with its Eastern and Midwestern counterparts, lost approximately 20% of its headquarters, the majority from New York City, while the “Sunbelt” of the south and west gained 100% more headquarters over the same six year period.⁹¹

These corporate move-outs were not an entirely new phenomenon. Most were moving to the suburbs of New York’s Westchester County, Connecticut, and New Jersey, as they had in earlier “waves of relocation” in 1910, 1920, and 1946-,1953, and so many initially saw the current move outs as simply another such wave. And indeed, like the earlier waves, the current move-outs were a response to “pull factors” which were created by New York City’s own regional planning practices over the previous half century, which had made the local suburbs more accessible through the construction of improved

regional public transportation, and a vast new highway system. These were constructed by public authorities under the autocratic direction of Robert Moses, the master planner who explicitly mapped rail lines and highways to tear through working and middle class neighborhoods in the South Bronx, Upper Manhattan, and Brooklyn. His rational, white-collar vision of New York City — and that endorsed in the 1960s by then Governor Nelson Rockefeller and Mayors Robert Wagner and John Lindsay— conformed to Le Corbusier’s ideal of the radiant city: a massive, symbolic downtown, dominated by office towers and centers for arts and culture, surrounded by rings of residential suburbs, all connected via arterial highways for the use of commuters and urban tourists.⁹² But what Moses and his supporters didn’t anticipate was that the highways intended to bring commuting office workers into the city would be used instead to get them out, once corporations had the will and means to vacate downtown skyscrapers for suburban office parks.

Yet despite these similarities, as the economist Wolfgang Quante warned in 1972 and again in 1974, the current move-out wave was far more damaging than any New York City had seen before. The earlier waves of relocation had involved a handful of mostly small firms, and had “started with a flash, peaked rapidly, and then quickly faded” after no more than two years. In addition, the traditional, suburban “pulls” had always been counterbalanced by the incomparable advantages of doing business in the headquarters complex of Manhattan: i.e. the greater efficiencies, opportunities, and communication provided by agglomeration, and the unparalleled “executive ambiance” of a city devoted not to a particular industry, but to offices *per se*.⁹³ In contrast, the current wave involved

hundreds of moves, from small firms to over thirty Fortune 500 companies, and after seven years, showed no sign of abating. And, amazingly to many observers, New York's unrivaled position as headquarters capital proved incapable of stopping it.

The immense scale of the wave was due in large part to the intensification of the old "pull factors" luring corporations out of town. On the one hand there were the tax incentives, bucolic corporate campuses, and aggressive ad campaigns being launched by economic development agencies in Connecticut, New Jersey, and the New York suburbs. The Connecticut Department of Commerce put out unambiguous ads showing subway tokens in the grass over the question "Turnstile or Life-style?" and a larger statewide campaign proclaiming "So Much, So Near."⁹⁴ On the other hand, there was the famous allure of the Sunbelt. As major beneficiaries of government largesse during WWII as well as in the post-war period of suburbanization, these regions had become famous not only for their sunny climes, sporty lifestyles, and vast highways, but also for their heavy security, segregated neighborhoods, low taxes, relative lack of labor activism, and conservative, pro-business politics.⁹⁵ These features proved particularly strong as motivations in the early phase of the move-outs, between 1967-1970.

But already by 1970, a new dynamic had begun, as stronger pull factors were combined with a monumental new "push factors," namely the deteriorating image and reputation of New York City itself. As Quante observed this was the result of a vicious cycle of imagery. As he argued, "perhaps *the* most detrimental effect of [New York's] corporate exodus," even greater than its effect in terms of lost jobs, taxes, and business services,⁹⁶

was “its impact on New York City’s image as the business capital of the nation.” The losses in employment, taxes, and general business, while significant, only represented a small percentage of the overall base, and thus “are not by themselves essentially crippling.” On the other hand, “The weakening of the City’s business image...strikes directly at the heart of its existence.” As he explained:

New York’s reputation as a business center has always been and remains its major attraction and selling point, the one bright area in the current sea of problems. The importance of the City’s image can be seen not only from the sheer size of its business community but from the extent of the private investment that has occurred in the Manhattan Central Business District over the past few decades.

Bad publicity is the first major image problem brought on by the current headquarter relocations. The extensive press coverage of many of the moves and the reasons given by the departing corporations have tended to focus attention on the City’s problem areas and away from its good points. This has been extremely detrimental to the City’s interests [i.e. bond ratings] and the bad publicity, if it did not actually trigger additional departures, may well have started many executives thinking about the possibilities.⁹⁷

Quante was arguing two things: that unnuanced “press coverage” of fleeing corporations and their new locations was essentially “bad publicity,” and second that this publicity set off a downward spiral of economic decline. Quante’s first point was echoed at the time by a range of New Yorkers concerned with the fate of the headquarters complex. For instance, the urban sociologist William H. Whyte noted that across mainstream media—from the “news reporting” on TV documentaries and in magazines, to crass Sunbelt marketing campaigns and brochures for new office parks—one found the same dramatically contrasting images of New York as “hell on earth” and the suburbs as “Arcadia.”⁹⁸ Telefoto shots of traffic-snarled streets and dingy offices, and close-ups on somber, white businessmen rushing out of packed, racially diverse subway cars, would be juxtaposed with awe-inspiring low angles of modernist, fortress-like “corporate

campuses,” long, slow pans of their lush, green lawns, and comfortable wide shots of young, white employees in shirtsleeves taking leisurely walks to their private cars. These stereotypes were then reinforced through the highly questionable survey techniques of location consultants, like the Fantus Company, which used skewed formulas to prove not only New York’s “tangible” disadvantages —like strong labor laws and long commutes for average (suburbanite) workers— but also the “intangible” disadvantages of its “environment” for business. Whyte’s deconstruction of this innocuous term indicates the extent to which media and market research were reproducing the old, racially-inflected, anti-urban discourse, and serving as a veritable advertisement for corporate relocation.

It is the intangibles executives say, that are the key. “Environment” is the umbrella term. Shorn of euphemism, here is what it means (1) New York City is a bad place—crime, dirt, blacks, Puerto Ricans, etc. (2) Even if it isn’t, Americans think it is a bad place and so they don’t want to be transferred here. (3) To hold and attract people a company has to offer a better setting. Thus Union Carbide concluded after a two-year study: “The long-term quality-of-life needs of our headquarters employees” were the overriding factors.”⁹⁹

The prevalence and power of such bad publicity led to Quante’s second point: that images in and of themselves were now causing real, and accelerating, financial damage to New York City. Such imagery was pushing additional CEO’s to consider abandoning the city—whether out of choice or facing pressure from employees. Once these move-outs reached a critical mass, this could then undermine the agglomeration effect that attracted corporations to York City in the first place, especially once the big names in one’s industry began to leave. Thus, for instance, Johnny Carson’s highly publicized move from Rockefeller Center in 1972 to NBC’s West Coast Studios in Burbank could result in an industry-wide shift, “a realignment of American pop culture from East Coast to West Coast, from Broadway to Hollywood,” and hundreds of New York’s TV and movie

directors, producers, actors, and technicians followed in his path.¹⁰⁰ And of perhaps even graver concern, the repeated representation of such move-outs, and of a sun-burned Carson sitting by his swimming pool in Malibu, began to affect New York's already declining bond ratings, and thus the overall value of its financial and real estate markets.¹⁰¹ This in turn created additional pressure for more companies to leave, and so on, in a vicious cycle of bad publicity, disinvestment, and corporate flight.

From the perspective of leaders in the FIRE, tourism, and media industries, a, if not the main problem underlying New York's economic decline in this period was the deterioration of the city's image. First, as mentioned, they bemoaned the relentless media coverage of the fleeing corporations, and of their luxurious new office parks, studios, and residences in Greenwich, Burbank, and suburban Atlanta. But their media-focused critique of the city's decline did not end there; rather they these saw representations as part of a larger, spiraling, image crisis. Leaving aside the impact of larger global pressures like recession and deindustrialization, and avoiding mention of the city's increasing rates of joblessness and poverty, they expressed their concern in terms of the media's increasingly negative coverage of "quality of life" in New York City as a whole, and in particular, representations of local crime. Indeed this was a legitimate complaint: though New York's crime statistics, from misdemeanors to violent offenses, were actually *down* from the previous decade, reports of such crime on television news, talk-shows, and in the newspapers was constantly on the rise.

Thus, not surprisingly, according to surveys conducted by the CVB, the crime factor was viewed as "the major deterrent" to prospective visitors to New York City, particularly

domestic tourists and business travelers.¹⁰² Psychographic surveys by marketing consultants found crime consistently high amongst the “top of the mind” associations held by CEO’s and businessmen when asked about their image of New York City—with other common associations including “dirtiness,” “traffic,” and “lack of a work ethic.”¹⁰³ Similar findings were produced through basic survey data culled by location consultancies.¹⁰⁴ Dominant media representations were only one part of such associations, joined as all such “decodings” are to already existing stereotypes, and to the social position of the viewer¹⁰⁵ — in this case, the actual experiences businessmen and tourists likely had walking the anxious midtown streets of an increasingly class and race divided city, in which garbage strikes and muggings really did happen. Nonetheless, these media-obsessed service sector scions were onto something. First, media representations of life in New York City were increasingly and exceedingly negative. And second, in the current climate of financial instability, interurban competition, and image sensitivity, these negative portrayals were having a disproportionately damaging effect on the city’s economic prospects.

• • •

Thus in New York City in the late 1960’s an *image crisis* was beginning to be recognized for the first time by a cross-section of leading players in government, FIRE, and the media and culture industries. All these groups were becoming increasingly aware that changing perceptions and images of New York City overall could have real, lasting effects on real estate rates, bonds prices, tourism numbers, consumption patterns, middle class residents, and the strength of the corporate headquarters complex. Many if not

most New Yorkers in this challenging period had little opportunity or inclination to respond to the problem of negative media representation. But in the eyes of the city's embattled new middle classes and local financial and real estate elites, these representations were extremely damaging and had to be addressed on a national scale. In this competitive, image-sensitive era, a downturn in these indicators, they believed, spelled disaster for their own political and economic prospects, along with those of their city.

Thus through different means—from *New York* magazine to the “Big Apple” campaign—they would seek to take control of the local institutional matrix of media, marketing, and tourism and re-brand New York. For the first time in New York's 300-year history, groups would start to organize amongst themselves to take coordinated control of the city's image—and ultimately pressure city and state government to join them. In contrast to the traditionally diverse representations of New York's “sunshine and shadow,” and to contemporary images of New York as “asphalt jungle,” these urban branders would construct a new, monolithic, counter-image of the city as a fun and safe place for middle class whites to consume and play. In so doing, they would visually erase many other realities in New York, and they would engage the city in a new kind of hegemonic battle between opposing urban representations.

¹ Burrows and Wallace, 1999. On the relation of New York press and early U.S. notions of democracy, see the landmark freedom of the press case of “the poor printer,” John Peter Zenger, in 1734, 153-155. And on the

rise of free-thinking radical printers and the penny press in the 1820's and 30's, see "The Press of Democracy," 509-528.

² On New York as birthplace of the telegraph, and the monopoly model of telecommunications, see Ibid, 674-9.

³ Henkin, 1999.

⁴ E.g.: Whitehouse, 1974

⁵ Radway, 1984, chapter 2.

⁶ Mattelart, 1994, chapter 1.

⁷ Citizens Budget Committee, December 8, 1998.

⁸ On New York's role in telegraphy see Israel, 1995. On New York and early photography see Whitehouse, 1974; Hales, 1984; and Rosenblum, 1995. On the print revolution, and the rise of half-tone printing in New York, see in particular Henkin, 1999. On the intersection between all of these industries, see, Burrows and Wallace, *ibid*, "Manhattan, Ink." 674-690.

⁹ Chicago was also a national center. On early advertising and marketing history see: Fox, 1984.

¹⁰ This was facilitated by the invention of half-tone lithography in the 1880's, which allowed the printing of photographs in newspapers.

¹¹ On the intersecting telephony, electrical, and the film revolutions, see Burrows and Wallace, *ibid*, "Bright Lights, Big City," 1059-1070. On the legacy of New York's early film industry, see also Musser, 1995a.

¹² see Baughman, 1995, 1160. New York's advantages for television were numerous. In particular, it benefited from TV's reliance on live performance, due to the fact that the major motion picture companies in Hollywood initially refused to work for television, and due to a lack of efficient recording technology. The consequence of this was that, due to time differences, most other cities could not practically broadcast live for Eastern time zones. With the success of shows like "I Love Lucy" and "The Honeymooners," there was 'so much demand for studio space [in New York] that theaters, private dining rooms in hotels, abandoned churches, and car barns were used as stages.'

¹³ See Barnouw, 1966-1970 and McChesney, 1993.

¹⁴ The latter ranged from live concerts by the New York Philharmonic and the Cotton Club in the 1920's, to the innovation of the "Top 40" format in popular music radio in the 1960's, and from the live theatrical telecasts of "Playhouse 90" in the 1950's to situation comedies, variety shows, and public children's television in the 1960's. See Eric Barnouw, *ibid*, 1966-1970.

¹⁵ Citizens Budget Committee, *ibid*, 1998, 1. As the report points out, "New York offers unique connections to cultural and philanthropic institutions which play a part in the personal as well as professional lives of key figures in this sector."

¹⁶ See e.g. Horatio Alger's national bestseller, *Ragged Dick, or, Street life in New York with the Boot-blacks*, 1868.

¹⁷ On the impact of Mathew Brady's portrait studio, and others like it, in New York, see Meredith, 1982.

¹⁸ Edison's films of everyday life in New York included: "Central Park," "Elevated Railway Station," "23rd Street," and "Shooting the Chutes." Location shooting was made possible by the construction in May 1896 of a portable camera, and through the use of a makeshift studio on the rooftop of 43 West 28th Street.

¹⁹ Musser, 1995a.

²⁰ Note: These constitute a large segment of material on New York City kept in the local history room of the New York Public Library for this turn of the century period.

²¹ Williams, 1977. pp 128-135.

²² See in particular: Whitehouse, 1974, and Matthew Hale Smith, 1870. The latter went through five printings between 1868 and 1886.

²³ See e.g. Cocks, 2001 and Judd, 2003.

²⁴ Cocks, *ibid*, 144

²⁵ Judd, *ibid*, 6

²⁶ See Hales, 1984.

²⁷ See history of New York's Municipal Arts Society in Stern, Gilmartin and Montague Massengale, 1983.

²⁸ See Pick, 1989.

²⁹ Foster, 1850; Belden 1850. Belden was listed as "M.A., Projector of the Model of New York," and his book was meant to accompany a traveling show of projected scenes made from a wooden scale model.

³⁰ MOMA film collection.

³¹ Luc Sante, 1992.

³² For turn of the century photographic New York City "views," see e.g.: Black, 1983; Byron, 1985; Kouwenhoven, 1953. For their the paradigm of social reform photography, see Riis, 1905. For a discussion of the "sunshine and shadow" these different perspectives of the modern city represented, see Hales, 1984 and Whitehouse, 1974.

³³ See Denning, 1996. Denning refers to this group as the "cultural front" rather than "popular front" because of the extent to which their sensibility influenced a range of cultural fields. In his encyclopedic study, Denning recovers thirties left-wing culture from fifties critics like Alfred Kazin, Irving Howe, and Warren Sussman, who described their work as sentimental and shallow agitprop produced by fellow travelers misled into serving Stalin. Denning shows that from Billy Holiday singing "Strange Fruit," to Orson Welles making *Citizen Kane*, to John Dos Passos writing *U.S.A.*, the cultural front elevated mass cultural forms to an entirely new level of both social critique and artistry.

³⁴ Ibid, xiv.

³⁵ This disinterest cannot be extended to New York's built environment, which was becoming increasingly regulated during this period. See e.g. Stern, Gilmartin, and Montague Massengale, *ibid*, 1983.

³⁶ See e.g.: Yankelovich, Skelly and White, Inc., 1977. In their study, conducted amongst 2000 CEO's, they concluded that this was once the case but has changed. "Virtually all experts and CEO(s) agree New York, historically, never had to accommodate [or] compete for business: It clearly must do so now." 21

³⁷ According to Author interview with Mary Holloway (2003), in New York City, the Chamber of Commerce was never a very powerful organization.

³⁸ This was after two decades of seeking profits through the global expansion of short-wave radio with limited success.

³⁹ McChesney, 1993.

⁴⁰ Olinger, 1995.

⁴¹ Gustafson, 1959.

⁴² McChesney and Herman, *ibid*, 19. This was also due to geopolitical shifts, with the AP and UP benefiting from dominant global role of the U.S. after WWII. The German Wolf had declined as a result of the demise of the Nazi regime in Germany. Meanwhile, the Russian Tass was growing at this point. Note: Agence France Press was formerly Havas. United Press would become United Press International in 1958.

⁴³ Baughman, 1995.

⁴⁴ As Baughman says in his *Encyclopedia of New York* entry on "Television" (1995), viewers' "affection for Milton Berle and other Jewish comedians dictated the content of network programs" in this early period. (1159). The implication here is that these metropolitan area viewers were mostly Jewish. It would seem to me, though, that this was not the only characteristic determining appreciation for the "New York sensibility."

⁴⁵ Freeman, 2000, 7. As he says: "Everywhere Americans looked—in newspapers and magazines, on billboards, television, and at the movies—blue collar workers were heroically portrayed. The sense that they had come into their own was not just the product of official and unofficial opinion makers; as the war ended manual workers had tremendous élan, a self-confidence growing out of the successful unionization campaigns before the war and their strategic position, steady work, and rising income during it."

⁴⁶ Jacobson, December 30, 1975. 40. Not only did the blacklist target a disproportionate number of New Yorkers working in Hollywood, and in particular Jewish and black New Yorkers, it also banished the "New York sensibility" from Hollywood films, and with it "the hopes of the New York crowd for a cinema of ideas in this country." This led many to believe further that, "the blacklist was aimed as much at New York as at the Communists." Prominent New York artists, writers, and filmmakers called before the HUAC included: Elia Kazan, Edward G. Robinson, Clifford Odets, Lillian Hellman, Dashiell Hammett, Lee J. Cobb. Those who were blacklisted included: Dalton Trumbo, John Howard Lawson, Langston Hughes, Abraham Polonsky, Walter Bernstein, Arnold Manoff, and Zero Mostel, Ring Lardner Jr., Martin Ritt, and Herschell Bernardi.

⁴⁷ Buhle and Wagner, 2003. 16.

⁴⁸ Notable in this genre are also Rod Serling's initial shorts for "Playhouse 90" in the early 1960's.

⁴⁹ See, e.g.: Charles Musser, 1995b.

⁵⁰ Buhle and Wagner, *ibid*. 23

⁵¹ Olinger, *ibid*.

⁵² Levy, 2003. As Levy points out, these new private sector firms were influenced by academic centers of market research, in particular the University of Chicago based Committee for Research on Consumer Attitudes and Behavior in the 1950's, which pioneered the application of behavioral psychology to the problems of business

⁵³ Arvidsson, 2004.

⁵⁴ See e.g.: Hamilton, et al., 1970. This primer on the international tourism industry states that in the previous decade, tourism had come to involve the movement of 200 million people annually with expenditures of \$15 billion. It demonstrates the general increase of travel outside national borders, particularly from the U.S. to abroad. On the latter issue, see also: Etienne H. Miller, 1968. Miller reports that U.S. tourists spent \$4.75 billion in 1967, an increase of 17% over the previous year. Meanwhile spending by foreigners traveling in the U.S. increased 6% to a record \$1.9 billion.

⁵⁵ This reflected a constant increase in employment and establishments in every industry within the sector since the 1940's, with the notable exception of printing and publishing, which was still the largest industry in the sector. Given the inconsistency in the data from the Census of Business to which I had access at the Science and Business Library, there is no single year in which I could make this earlier comparison.

⁵⁶ Freeman (7-8): "At the end of WWII, roughly half of New York's wage workers made, moved, or maintained physical objects for a living, everything from corsets to skyscrapers to aircraft carriers. In 1946, 41% of the employed labor force consisted of craftsmen, operatives, laborers, foremen, and kindred workers, the occupational groupings usually considered blue collar. Another 12 percent were service workers, many of whom performed manual labor: domestic servants, firemen, janitors, elevator operators, and the like....Similarly commercial workers were manual, working class positions." In 1950, seven of the nation's ten largest cities had a higher percentage of their workforces engaged in manufacturing than New York did. Nonetheless, in absolute terms, "New York City had a goods-producing economy unprecedented in size, output, and complexity. In 1947, NY had more man jobs than Philadelphia, Detroit, Los Angeles, and Boston put together."

⁵⁷ For the welfare rights movement, see: Piven and Cloward, 1971. As Bellush and Netzer point out (1990, 440), by 1965, an unprecedented 500,000 New Yorkers were receiving welfare.

⁵⁸ See Maier, 1987 and Freeman, 2000. As Maier documents (pp 137, and 154-5), city workers participated in some 30 strikes, and numerous other job actions, between 1960 and 1975. Most of these occurred during Lindsay's two terms in office, and were some of the most bitter strikes in the city's history, including: transit (1966), teachers (1967 and 1968), sanitation (1968), drawbridge and sewage treatment plant operators (1971), police (1971), and firefighters (1973).

⁵⁹ See Foner, 2000 and Rose, 1994, chapter 2.

⁶⁰ Caro, 1974.

⁶¹ Cannato, 2001.

⁶² As cited in Beauregard, 1993.

⁶³ e.g. Alvin Toffler, 1970.

⁶⁴ Clay Felker interview with author, 2003.

⁶⁵ Beauregard, *ibid.*

⁶⁶ These include "Saturday Night at Fort Apache" a documentary profile on the 41st Precinct in the South Bronx, and produced by New York Illustrated, aired on WNBC-TV in 1973 And "Savage Street," also on WNBC in 1973.

⁶⁷ This film was edited by the famous New York editor, Dede Allen.

⁶⁸ On such references, see e.g. Yee, 1999.

⁶⁹ As depicted in many films of Vietnam veterans recently returned home—from "Taxi Driver" to "Coming Home"—they often responded to deteriorating conditions they found in urban neighborhoods as if they were still in combat, showing symptoms of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.

⁷⁰ Beauregard, *ibid.*

⁷¹ While the "Harlem Riot" of 1964 may be considered one of the first in the wave of "race riots" that occurred in U.S. cities between 1964 and 1971, it were not considered major, and the damage caused was not on the scale of the Detroit riots or "Watts Rebellion" of 1967.

⁷² Kael, 1994; Beauregard, 1993; Sanders, 2001; Austin, 2001.

⁷³ See Sagalyn, 2001.

⁷⁴ Schumach, 1971. Schumach notes: "To a lesser extent, the growth of prostitution and pornography establishments in midtown has also kept tourists away, though there are some tourists who are drawn by pornography..."

⁷⁵ "Midnight Cowboy" was directed by John Schlesinger. It won academy awards in 1969 for Best Picture, Best Screenplay, and Best Director. It was the first X-rated film to be nominated for or to win an academy award.

⁷⁶ A direct quote from "Taxi Driver" (1976) See Appendix B.

⁷⁷ This history is related at the website www.at149st.com, which calls itself "New York City's Cyber Bench." Run by two of the major writers who got their start in New York City in the 1970's, the site is devoted to preserving the history of the art form, and its roots in New York. It is open to critique from other writers, and regularly updated, and so one of the more reliable historical sources on New York City graffiti from the perspective of its participants.

⁷⁸ Austin, 2001.

⁷⁹ See: Mailer, Kurlansky, and Narr, 1974; Stewart, 1989, 163-6.

⁸⁰ Mailer, Kurlansky, and Narr, *ibid*.

⁸¹ On this point, see Stewart, *ibid*.

⁸² @149st., *ibid*.

⁸³ Austin, *ibid*.

⁸⁴ See Castleman, 1982, pp 79-81; Stewart, 232-5.

⁸⁵ Austin, *ibid*, 50. In this context, Austin also mentions Guy Debord who, in *The Society of the Spectacle*, had observed this point earlier of the French Situationists. They saw, and sought to reveal through their "interventions," the extent to which, in the modern era, "shared urban public space is always a mass commercial spectacle, always watched by the mass media, always under surveillance in one form or another." (*ibid*)

⁸⁶ www.at149st.com, *ibid*.

⁸⁷ Some of the most famous, pioneering artists in this development included PHASE 2, BLADE ONE, and TRACY 168. As illustrated in Henry Chalfant and Peter Silver's landmark documentary "Style Wars" (1981), the mural movement, which emphasized the skill and time taken to do a piece, was opposed by the "taggers," who would do quick "throw ups" over these masterpieces, concerned only with the quantity of their coverage, leading to ever greater rivalries.

⁸⁸ Austin, *cite*.

⁸⁹ Quante, 1976. pp 76-7.

⁹⁰ Quante describes a decline from a high in 1956 of 140 firms to a low in 1974 of 64, or a loss of 76. (*ibid*, 42). The Department of Commerce's office of Metropolitan Area Operations, on the other hand estimated in 1972 that 200 of the nation's 750 largest corporations had their headquarters in New York City. In 1973, the number had dropped to 112 out of 500, or a loss of 88. See *Annual Reports* for 1972 (16) and 1973 (16). New York State Comptroller's Office, 1974. "Industrial Development" p.3. They estimated that 30 corporate headquarters had left the city between 1970 and 1974, but don't specify size.

⁹¹ *ibid*, 62-3 New York was certainly not alone in losing out to this Sunbelt shift. In a comparison with ten other eastern and midwestern cities, New York City lost the most of its corporate headquarters overall. But as percentage of the total, Detroit, Pittsburg, Philadelphia, and St. Louis lost more, dependent as they were on single industries. And New York almost tied with Chicago and Boston, cities of comparable economic diversity, if not the same stature as headquarters capitals.

⁹² See Le Corbusier's "New York is not a Completed City" in Kasinitz, 1995.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 57. Quante notes that these advantages often brought the fleeing firms back soon afterwards

⁹⁴ As cited by William H. Whyte, September 20, 1976, 88.

⁹⁵ Perry and Watkins, 1977; As Markusen notes (1997, 102-131) the combination of a non-union locale and a conservative local political climate has long been the preference, if not the requirement, of U.S. military contractors, who were some of the biggest investors in post-war Sunbelt development.

⁹⁶ See Chase Manhattan Study: Gerard and Birchall, July 1971.

⁹⁷ Quante, *Ibid*, 77.

⁹⁸ See description in Whyte, 1976, *ibid*.

⁹⁹ *ibid*, 90.

¹⁰⁰ By Severo and Carter, Jan 24, 2005.

¹⁰¹ New York's slipping bond rate, and its relationship to media coverage, was discussed in: James F. Reilly, 1972, p III-2.

¹⁰² New York City Convention and Visitors Bureau, June, 1977.

¹⁰³ Yankelovich Skelly and White, 1977.

¹⁰⁴ see Fantus, 1975.

¹⁰⁵ Hall, 2000.

CHAPTER 2

New York Magazine and the Branding of the “New York lifestyle:” 1967-1979

The first instance of branding New York City arose informally, outside the public sector, in the pages of an upstart publication called *New York* magazine. Disconnected from the established political and economic elites, *New York*'s editorial style and marketing strategy reflected an attempt by a young band of aspiring powerbrokers to use their connections and cultural capital to define, and ultimately live, the essence of the hip “New York lifestyle.” While run completely through the private-sector, and created by a group of neophyte writers and editors, the ingeniously crafted image of the city promoted by the magazine became popular and influential amongst a young and upwardly mobile audience, and helped transform a struggling media and advertising industry. So successful was its formula, I would argue, that it ultimately was appropriated by city and state-based urban branders seeking to reach the same audience through their own official marketing campaigns. Thus it is important to begin an account of the branding of New York City with a historic and discursive analysis of the magazine itself.

New York magazine was part of a new genre of literature arising in U.S. cities in the 1960's called the “urban lifestyle magazine.” I define these as magazines that aim to represent, reproduce, and fuse the “local identity” and consumption habits of the inhabitants of particular metropolitan regions.¹ Since their inception at the height of the post-war “consumer revolution,” these magazines were informed by the latest in market research, and were some of the first publications to construct a brand identity for an entire city. Their designers and editors crafted an innovative interplay between editorial and advertising content, i.e. juxtaposing feature articles

about local events, personalities, trends, and issues with promotional material—including listings, reviews, and ads—that often related directly to these features. As such they were trendsetters in selling the idea of cities as primarily places of and for consumption.

The birth of the genre occurred at a particularly decisive moment in the history of US cities. Just when the post-W.W.II boom was ending, older urban economies were shifting from a base in manufacturing and production to one in services and consumption. This shift created a new polarization in skills and income, and with it an increasing division in the urban workforce along lines of race and class. These divisions became geographically reinforced, as the white middle class abandoned cities for the growing suburbs, while older inner cities, with their largely black and Latino residents, were drained of tax-base and resources. Meanwhile, adopting the consumer-oriented notion of “lifestyle” was the vogue among middle class urban and suburban youth, and was a convenient marketing tool for advertisers. The urban lifestyle magazine both empirically reflected and discursively contributed to these historic changes, helping to construct a coherent, aspirational “urban lifestyle” for cities in the process of polarization and decline.²

This chapter will analyze *New York* magazine as a seminal text, and a key institution, in the construction of a new brand image for New York City. This magazine attempted to roll back New York City’s reputation as the apotheosis of the 1960’s “urban crisis,” by making the city hip for a new generation of upper middle class residents. By historically tracing the representation of New York City in the pages of *New York* magazine from the 1960’s through the 1970’s, we are able to chart the evolution and branding of a new urban imaginary. This will give us some insight into how later urban branding initiatives taken up by local and state government,

and inspired in part by the success of *New York* magazine, managed to sell their new vision of urban restructuring. By historically analyzing the production, content, and appeal of this new publication amongst New York's embattled middle class we are able to decipher the deeper meaning of the branded New York City lifestyle that was to come. And so I turn now to a close reading of the personal backgrounds and literary tropes that characterized *New York's* success, as a means of reflecting on the larger social transformation illustrated by the magazine.

The Creation of *New York* Magazine, 1965-1967

The flaneur is the observer of the marketplace. His knowledge is akin to the occult science of industrial fluctuations. He is a spy for the capitalists, on assignment in the realm of consumers. ... The social base of flaneurie is journalism.

Walter Benjamin, 1999³

New York magazine was created as a "survival guide" for middle class whites remaining in New York, and for those in the suburbs who still identified with the city. They were the often children of ethnic, working class New Yorkers, and of newly transplanted suburban commuters, who aspired to the American Dream in an urban context. They were hopeful homeowners who saw the real estate market plummeting in response to increasingly negative perceptions, and realities, of urban life. They were renters who found a dearth of new, quality housing and amenities being built. They were college graduates who found job markets slack and power hierarchies shifting and opaque. Overall, they were white middle class strivers who had opted to tough it out in the city, and were finding themselves increasingly isolated and at risk of losing the hard-won

gains of the post-WWII era in the face of 1970's urban crisis. And they were the most lucrative and yet hard to reach consumer markets from the perspective of advertisers.

Clay Felker and the Lessons of Magazine Marketing

Since its inception in 1967, *New York* is considered to have “set the standard” and “put into practice the ideas [which] influenced the development of the modern city magazine.” In particular this was characterized by a new style of city reporting based on the premise of providing a more radical alternative to existing city newspapers, as well as a legitimate “service.”⁴ As we shall see, the radical alternative exemplified by *New York* was mainly one of *image*, based on promoting a style of reporting and graphic lay-out in sync with the irreverent yet trend-conscious attitude of youth culture in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Underlying, and commodifying, this image were extensive listings and ratings of a range of consumer products and experiences deemed necessary to attain the authentic “New York attitude” for oneself —the “service” aspect of the magazine. This was tailored to a young readership anxious to define their place as trendsetters and powerbrokers in New York City, and to ensure their ability to climb the social ladder much as their predecessors had —or at least not fall off it entirely as their city's fortunes declined. As such, learning to participate in a new forms of urban consumption, and acquire new forms of cultural capital, was seen as crucial.

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Though launched as an independent magazine in 1967, *New York* originated in 1963 as a Sunday supplement to the *New York Herald Tribune*. Under editor Jim Bellows and publisher John Hay “Jock” Whitney, the *Tribune* was at that time trying to position itself as a “lively alternative” to the *New York Times* and also distance itself from its reputation as the paper of choice of older, Upper East Side, WASP elites.⁵ Using the advertising slogan, “Who says a good newspaper has to be dull?” Bellows’ innovation was to reimagine the Sunday edition of the *Tribune* as a local, lifestyle-oriented break from the hard, international news of the weekly editions. This was also a response to the rising competition of television news, which was siphoning off the younger generation of newspaper readers. He thus conceived of the “centerpiece” of this new Sunday edition to be *New York*— a graphically innovative magazine supplement covering the local scene from a more hip, entertaining perspective. As Bellows recounts in his autobiography:

[*New York*] contrasted nicely with the *Sunday Times Magazine*, which in those days was a little dull. *Times* readers were accustomed to spending their weekends with articles like “Brazil: Colossus of the South.” Their covers featured pictures of an ox with a Cambodian native behind it pushing a plow.

Implicit in this slight is an indictment of the scale and scope of the then dominant notion of “news” as it related to the younger reader. For Bellows, it was understood that these readers, as distinct from their parents’ generation, were focused on the local far more than the global; on lifestyle coverage far more than heavy, socio-political reports; and on themselves, or people with whom they could identify, far more than anyone else.

To this end, Bellows shrewdly hired Clay Felker as editor of his experimental supplement. Felker was an ambitious young reporter, originally from Missouri, with experience in the

fast-changing worlds of both journalism and marketing, and with an abiding passion for New York City. As Felker explained, his first job had been as a combination reporter/advertising writer/advertising seller for various sports magazines within his father's St. Louis based publishing house, Sporting News Co..⁶ Though bored by sports writing and small scale advertising, the job enabled him to travel to New York, which he considered "the imperial city of our modern civilization," and so he set himself the goal "to become a statistician on New York City." After graduating from Duke in 1951, he gained experience as a reporter for *Time* in the early 1950's, and as features editor of *Esquire* from 1957 to 1962. He thus had the opportunity to witness first-hand the heyday of the general interest magazine, and its demise with the rise of TV, and with the emergence of a new genre of niche publications targeted at a younger, more consumer-oriented audience. As he understood, this had everything to do with the larger shifts happening in U.S. consumption patterns in the post WWII era, and the 1960's. As he said:

Everybody talks about the "social justice revolution" [of the 1960's]. That was a big revolution. But the bigger revolution was the "consumer revolution." Young people went off in different directions. And when they did, magazines [shifted to cover] those issues."⁷

It was while at *Life* that Felker was to develop his winning concept of magazine marketing. First, this was due to his exposure to the media surveys of Alfred Politz Research, the leading firm in media market research in the 1950's, and which had been hired by *Life* to help it research changing market trends.⁸ Felker was probably one of the first to use Politz surveys when he was one of five consultants chosen in 1954 to help create what was to become *Sports Illustrated*. The survey that Felker believed most significant at the time showed that the fastest growing segment of the economy was that of the "moneyed middle

class,” a marketing target that was to remain a focus for Felker throughout his career.⁹

This class, similar to the notion of the *nouveau riche*, was one that had both disposable income and leisure time for the first time in their lives, and needed help in learning what to do with both. As Felker understood, general interest titles were of diminishing use to this group, while advertisers were eagerly seeking a new format with which to tap into their impressionable minds.

Felker insisted he was “not really influenced by market research” in his understanding of this new segment, either at *Life* or when he started *New York*. While the Politz findings were interesting to him, he argued that they only served to corroborate what he already knew “instinctively”, and that was why he was so useful to *Life*, and so able to exploit the research findings.

Life understood the idea of the “monied middle class.” But they didn’t understand the huge effect it would have on [the magazine]. We [at *New York*] understood instinctively. If someone told us they were picking up all these trends, we would have said they didn’t know what they were talking about. We were like the sunflower gradually turning toward the sun. That’s just what young people do.

Rather, he attributed his knack for marketing magazines to his “passion” for the subject matter—in the case of *New York*, his passion for life in the city. This made editing the magazine easy, as he explains here:

Everyone in our staff at that time lived in Manhattan. We’d have story conferences. And one day someone came in to the conference and said ‘everyone I know is desperate for an apartment. Its so damn hard to find an apartment.’ So we did a story about that. We wrote about what we saw in our lives. There were no market studies. Let me tell you something. The secret of magazines is passion. Its not market studies. Market studies only create line extensions. You need passion to create the original idea. You need somebody who comes in and feels the pulse of the city at that moment.

This passion, according to Felker, was added to the “common sense philosophy” of *Time* founder and CEO Henry Luce—namely that “magazines create a community of interest that did not know it existed.”¹⁰ Felker was to take this notion quite literally, seeking to be the ringleader joining passionate people on the editorial side with readers holding “similar values and attitudes.”

Nonetheless, as Felker went on to explain what he learned from his experience at *Life*, he emphasized the point that he always understood that “magazines are psychographic, as opposed to a newspaper which is demographic and geographic”—in other words that he had found a way to more narrowly quantify “communities of interest” as a market. I would argue that in his ability to make this early connection between magazines and “psychographically” defined readers, Felker was going beyond simple passion, and the approach of Luce. While Felker does seem to have carried on certain hallmark features of the Luce tradition—namely the shift in the role of the press from information provider to “synthesizer” of the most important stories, themes, and images of the day, he also clearly departed significantly from others—namely the focus on mainstream “American taste” and “general news.”¹¹ As far as I could find in my research, Luce never used the term “psychographics” at all, let alone to explain his approach to magazine publishing. Felker, on the other hand, seems to have somehow understood this central tenet of the new field of “niche” marketing, whether via the direct influence of the Politz market research studies, the pioneering work going on at the time by YSW or—even more likely—through his own experience amongst this target group, and prescient grasp of the market research findings.

Similarly, Felker said he developed his two “rules of journalism” from his own experience as a reporter and reader—i.e. from following his own independent vision, not that of the industry. The first: write and design from a clear “point of view,” as opposed to the bland, omniscient perspective of *Time* reporters. This point of view entailed capturing the subjectivity of the magazine’s young, aspiring writers— Felker always said, “we were writing for ourselves above all.” The second: have that subjective point of view “be on the reader’s side,” as opposed to the side of marketers, like boosterish city magazines, or on the side of snobbish reporters and cultural critics, like the *New York Times*.¹² He saw his job as editor as one of finding extremely talented writers and designers, and “getting out of the way.” Clearly Felker was a visionary in this regard, and is often credited with pioneering both this more independent voice in magazine writing, and this hands-off editorial approach—and thus shepherding the rise of “The New Journalism.”

Yet in his trust of writers and designers as free thinkers, and his direct approach to readers as sophisticated consumers, Felker was adroitly responding to the middle class *zeitgeist*: i.e. the 1960’s “consumer revolution.” Felker was not the first to pick up on the media marketing implications of this revolution—as mentioned above, hip ad agencies like DDB and WRG, and psychographic market research firms like YSW, were part of the same *zeitgeist*. But Felker’s great innovation as an editor was to combine “new journalism” with “new advertising,” and by extension the psychographic research on the “new youth” upon which it was based. *New York* incorporated “countercultural” advertising within the *editorial* side of the magazine itself, making the marketing pitch all

the more undetectable and irresistible. Design director and illustrator Milton Glaser put it succinctly: “the Great Marketing Theory [was that] you’re getting the readers to feel loyal because they feel that the magazine has been written for them, and that they are not simply victims of a conspiracy to encourage them to buy things.” This loyalty then spilled over into readers’ response to the actual advertisements. According to Glaser, a 1970’s survey on advertising believability showed that readers believed the ads in *New York* more than in any other magazine in the U.S. “And the reason for it fundamentally was that they believed the information in the editorial pages. [This showed] that there was a direct transfer of feeling [to the advertisements]— the magazine was straight with the readership and so the advertising was more believable.”¹³

Without having a background in marketing *per se*, Felker had nonetheless learned to appreciate the value of honest brokers writing opinionated prose to target a young, disaffected and aspiring psychographic. However well he understood this consciously, the wisdom of the approach was soon borne out by skyrocketing sales amongst such readers, and the highly lucrative advertising contracts attracted by such a readership. In applying his experience to *New York*, Felker merged *Life*’s synthetic news format with the lifestyle reportage and cutting edge advertising currently in vogue on the pages of *Esquire*, and those more targeted, upscale, youth-oriented upstarts like *Sports Illustrated* and *Playboy*. This magazine marketing background combined effectively with his own passion for New York City, and his extensive contacts among capable young journalists, designers, and “the new media.”¹⁴

“The New Journalism” Meets Milton Glaser

Drawing from his circle of contacts built up from years at *Life* and *Esquire*, Felker assembled what he called “a newsroom Camelot” of smart and fashionable young writers, artists, and designers who could appeal to, and mirror, the aspirations of the upwardly mobile psychographic the *Tribune* sought to attract. These included graphic designer Milton Glaser, reporters Jimmy Breslin and Pete Hamill, lifestyle writer Gail Sheehy, food writer Gail Greene, journalist and activist Gloria Steinem, and, perhaps most famously, Tom Wolfe, a combination of hard news reporter and *bon vivant*.¹⁵

Ultimately, these writers were to develop their style of “new journalism” in the pages of *New York*. This approach entailed using colorful, descriptive prose, written in vernacular, to address pressing issues of the day.¹⁶ As Breslin put it, *New York*’s style was “hip-swingy,” and was as concerned with appearance as it was with content.

The New Journalism followed Felker’s two journalistic rules: write from a “point of view,” and “be on the reader’s side.” Sometimes this approach took the form of first person reportage, sometime of writing from a “fly on the wall” perspective, but always it addressed the reader directly, without condescension, and gave them the impression of being an insider in the scene described. It also served to turn opinionated writers like Breslin, Wolfe, and Steinem into some of the first mainstream “literary stars.” They became quintessential “New Yorkers,” and official tour guides to their personal “New York.”

But to fully convey the sense of “point of view” and “being on the reader’s side,” this intimate writing style needed to merge with art director Milton Glaser’s distinctive graphics and streamlined layout. Glaser, a native New Yorker, had studied art at the High School of Music and Art and Cooper Union, graduating in 1951. He broke away from the prevailing style of Abstract Expressionism, in favor of a more eclectic, accessible, and “urban” form of design (Glaser, 2003). After a sojourn at the Academy of Fine Art in Bologna, Italy, on a Fulbright scholarship, in 1954 he founded Pushpin Studios with Seymour Chwast and other young illustrators, which exerted significant influence in the worlds of design, pop art, illustration, and advertising, over the next 20 years. Perhaps Glaser’s greatest contribution to *New York*, and *New York*’s greatest advance in the realm of lifestyle media, was in understanding the necessary synergy and consistency between text and image in the creation of a recognizable brand identity. In this Glaser owed more to the influence of the new advertising than to existing magazine design.

The synergy in design was facilitated by a synergy in the working relationship between design and editorial upon which Glaser insisted. Again, this owed more to the model of the advertising world, and to the multimedia eclecticism of the art-world at the time, than to that of contemporary magazine or newspaper publishing. As Franks has described, at around the same time, in innovative agencies like DDB, copywriters and graphic designers began to collaborate as “creative teams” for the first time.¹⁷ Similarly, Felker and Glaser’s shared equal power as editor and design director,¹⁸ and maintained a complementary, if often contentious, working relationship. As Glaser remembers:

It was an interesting combination of personalities. Clay was an out of town guy who was constantly in awe and astonished by New York, and anxious to find out where the bones were buried and who was around and what was happening. And I was born and bred in New York, in the Bronx, and so I knew New York from the point of view of an insider, never astonished about anything. And we had different strengths. I had talent at translating ideas into images and Clay had marvelous editorial ideas. And we were just a very good team.

Of course Clay and I represented very different points of view about what things should look like—I mean Clay's taste and my taste had very little in common. We were always fighting, always at each other's throats. (Let's just say his general recommendation would be "make it big and make it red"...) But what Clay did is that he gave me autonomy, which is not true for most art directors. I actually had a position equivalent to Clay. And so when it came to the final judgment about what was possible, I had power.

New York's balance of power between editorial content and graphic design represented a radical departure from the prevailing relationship between the two in the magazine and newspaper world at the time, which was one of strict hierarchy and separation. Both Glaser and Felker remembered that it was previously rare for the two sides to sit in the same room, or even work in the same building, let alone collaborate in a big, open loft space as *New York* writers and designers did in their makeshift workspaces. It seems that through the artistry and commercial savvy of Glaser, *New York* had managed to create a magazine version of the new advertising, in which image creation and design were as important as text.

Aside from the new labor relations, the fluency between visual form and written content was also facilitated by Glaser's "literary" approach to graphics. As he explains it:

The graphic is not a separate problem from editorial. Graphics are essentially an expression of an editorial idea. I'm not interested in graphics as a formalistic exercise. I'm interested in graphics in terms of communicating ideas powerfully, directly through symbolism, through metaphor —through whatever the medium is that you use. The most important thing about the graphics [in *New York*] were

that they ... tried to reflect powerfully and in the most easily understood way the ideas that were behind them. I'm always driven by the word. My interest is literary but my talent is visual.

Glaser's literary approach led him to make design distinctions between the "news" versus "lifestyle" sides of the magazine. With news he felt the style should be "straightforward, somewhat rigid, not beautiful." Partially this had to do with the tight deadlines and last minute changes needed for news, leaving "no opportunity for elaborate layout considerations." But this was also due to the need to graphically extend what Glaser termed the "directness" and "believability" of the New Journalism-style news pieces—again, an echo of the new advertisers' call for "honesty" and "respect" for the consumer. As he said: "The illusion of un-manipulated presentation [was] the goal... The more beautiful a magazine is, the less believable it becomes. In any case, *New York*'s appeal derived from its energy, not its beauty." On the other hand, the fluffier lifestyle pieces, which lacked the deadline constraints and directness of the news stories, could be more "flamboyant" both in their layout and use of illustration. [see Figure]

Thus Glaser's graphics, in collaboration with Felker's editing, and making use of the innovative writing talents of their young staff of New Journalists, were to create the split personality, and unique brand identity, of *New York* —a visual and literary cross between hard and soft, between city news coverage and urban pleasure seeking, between journalism and advertising.

Challenging the Established New York City Image

From its inception, even before its launch as an independent publication, *New York* used its high profile writing and design to position itself as a youthful challenge to the established New York press, and the image of New York City that press produced. In addition to what Bellows called their “David and Goliath” fight with the *New York Times*, they also took on the *New Yorker*, most famously through Wolfe’s hyperbolic satire: “TINY MUMMIES! The True Story of the Ruler of 43rd Street’s Land of the Walking Dead!” [April 11 and 18, 1965], replete with illustrated caricatures of the magazines’ zombie journalists.¹⁹ After being sent an advance copy, William Shawn, the venerable *New Yorker* editor, who had refused to be interviewed for the piece, “went berserk.” Within hours he sent a hand-delivered letter to Jock Whitney’s desk demanding the piece be pulled, and got a stable of *New Yorker* contributors, representing America’s cultural establishment, to write in protest as well.²⁰ Whitney gave Shawn’s letter to Jim Bellows, who promptly sent a copy to *Time* and *Newsweek*, and on the Monday following the first part of Wolfe’s article, the press sections of both magazines were dominated by the story. Adding insult to injury, *New York* also published the letters of Shawn’s irate contributors. Bellows describes it as a marketing coup:

You can’t buy that kind of publicity...*The New Yorker* made a tactical error in going through the roof about Tom Wolfe’s piece. Thanks to the boost given by their rage, within 18 months *New York* magazine became the hottest magazine in America. And Tom Wolfe was suddenly famous. All thanks to the bonfire of vanities on West 43rd Street.

As Tom Wolfe reflected afterwards, “It taught me a lesson: you can be denounced from the heavens, and it only makes people interested.”

Felker credited this incident for turning the magazine into an “overnight success.” From his perspective, the best indication of this was seen in advertising sales: immediately after the article appeared, *New York*’s average number of advertising pages *doubled*, jumping from fifteen to thirty pages per week, and never went back. Meanwhile, the *New Yorker*’s advertising pages were dropping. As Felker explained:

The New Yorker was getting too old and set in its ways... It ran too many stories by middle-aged women about growing up in India... New Yorkers were not being reached. It had become a suburban magazine for the rest of the United States.

Felker concluded, citing the Politz psychographic term, that Wolfe’s article had “brought us to the attention of the moneyed middle class.” Advertisers were well apparently well aware of this.²¹

While the strategy of *New York* was hugely successful in boosting sales for the Sunday edition, this was not sufficient compensation for the stagnant readership in the *Tribune*’s regular, weekly editions, and the paper went through a financial restructuring. In an early indication of the corporate concentration within the news industry that was to occur alongside the proliferation of new niche publications, the *New York-Herald Tribune* was bought out and merged into the hybrid *World Journal Tribune*. Yet, lacking sufficient readership to compete with the *New York Times*, the entire venture died in May 1967.

It seemed the successful supplement was to be done in by the demise of its parent paper. But, so the story goes, Felker decided to keep it alive, at the urging of Jimmy Breslin, by buying it outright for \$6,572, his severance pay from the *World Journal Tribune*, and

turning it into an independent publication. But this is only part of the story. He also had a friend who was a top partner in Loeb Rhodes, a prominent Wall Street investment bank. As Felker remembered, "This partner helped me raise the money. He raised most of it because he had the connections." Other well connected friends like Gloria Steinem helped get him meetings with investors she knew. Initial investors included major corporate financiers like Edgar Bronfman of Seagrams and Herb Seigel, and their total investment was in the tens of millions of dollars.²² All of this is to say that *New York* was never quite the small, independent start-up it was often touted to be. Indeed, many within the financial community were responsive to the magazine's deft business plan and marketing potential.

After raising the requisite capital, and hiring most of the same writers back on staff, Felker and publisher George Hirsch Jr. launched their new publication in November 1967. They announced the magazine would "concentrate on news about the arts, economics, and social problems for the sophisticated, intelligent reader who is not afraid of colorful, impressionistic journalism."²³ The first issue came out on April 4, 1968.

In many ways *New York* was, from its inception, atypical as an urban lifestyle magazine. It was a weekly as opposed to a monthly; it reported on current, hard-hitting news stories; and its local articles were of interest beyond the boundaries of New York City. For this reason, the *Standard Rate and Data Service* classifies *New York* as a "news weekly," separate from its "metropolitan/regional/state" grouping.²⁴ And *New York* was perhaps the only urban lifestyle magazine to sell its articles to wire services and nationally syndicated presses. But by establishing early on the unique "attitude" of its city, and thus of "the

publication that bears its name,” *New York* became a trendsetter in the area of branding cities, and in that sense a paradigm for other urban lifestyle magazines nationwide. It is not surprising that Felker is now almost universally credited as “the founder of the modern city/regional magazine”.²⁵

New York's Branding Strategy: Negotiating High & Low, 1967-1982

The magazine was never designed for beauty or style. It was designed for directness, clarity, impact. It was gritty, it wasn't refined, and it was never objective. It tried to be like the city itself, an odd combination between high and low, black and white, tough and soft. The truth of the matter is that the city itself is too complex to be encompassed by a single idea.

Milton Glaser, 2004²⁶

In the early 1960's... I first read Susan Sontag's "Notes on Camp." Suddenly, I knew that it was all right to be thrilled by Beckett and Ionesco and Joyce, while also loving Dean Martin. I was starting then to see the city in the same way that Sontag saw our culture. I could love the brownstones of Gramercy Park and embrace Times Square, too. I could, on the same day, travel from the Metropolitan Museum to Hubert's Flea Circus on 42nd Street.

Pete Hamill, 2005²⁷

No one has been as sensitive to the nuances and contradictions of the aspirational yet counter-cultural new middle class, and as able to capitalize on these, as was the original staff of *New York* magazine. Felker started his publication with an understanding that what was required was “a subtle, sophisticated formula for a literate and active, upwardly mobile audience, depending on constant surprise, and unique writing and visual talents.”²⁸ While YSW struggled to quantify data on this psychographic category, Felker realized that they could be gauged in part through the “savviness” – i.e. the education and cultural capital – of those who could, or more likely *wished they could*, appreciate the avant garde style of

the writing and bold nature of the content of the magazine. In addition to being the first clear articulation of what has become the prevailing strategy of all urban lifestyle magazines, this aspirational strategy also reflected, and helped spark, a broader trend within consumer marketing more broadly in the 1960's and 1970's.

One of the things that set *New York* apart from other city and consumer magazines was simply that it was *better* at aspirational marketing than they were. According to a contemporary *New York* media columnist Michael Wolff, who celebrated the magazine's success on its 35th anniversary, Felker's aspirational vision was more attainable than that of its competitors.²⁹ As he explains:

All mass-market magazines are aspirational. We call them consumer magazines. They create a world to strive for and dream about. It is however, in almost every instance a fake world. You won't ever live among the celebrities of *People* or *Vanity Fair*; you won't have sex with a *Playboy* Playmate or a *Maxim* babe; your house won't ever look like the houses in *Architectural Digest* and *HG*. Clay on the contrary, created a magazine that offered a precise map for becoming what the magazine was about.³⁰ ... He had the crass but revolutionary (revolutionary in the sense that it overthrew generations of class conceits) notion that you are what you buy. He sniffed the great consumer revolution with its social, political, and aesthetic implications. And *New York Magazine* became the first magazine to spell out where to get the goods (and the best price)...

Later, Wolff qualifies this boast:

In some sense, it was like *Playboy*. *New York's* New York didn't exactly exist—or it was only as real as a centerfold. But as it happened, the fantasy was so powerful and compelling, and every week the magazine offered such a precise social-engineering white paper, that it came to be true.

Fake or not, it is nonetheless true that *New York's* "New York," this branded version of the city created by the magazine, was ardently trusted by legions of readers. It is also true that it accomplished this better than consumer and urban lifestyle magazines had

done in the past. Rather than hyping the modernist vision of “city-as-skyline,” or of simply celebrating and instructing readers in the pleasures of the good life, as urban lifestyle magazines and their boosterish predecessors had done before, *New York’s* branding strategy captured what the readers felt was the distinctive attitude of their iconoclastic generation, and their city, from a perspective that was both sophisticated and gritty, “high” and “low”. This involved the magazine staff not only paying attention to personal style and good living, but combining this with an irreverent take on local politics, the ability to shrug off difficulties in the crisis-torn city, and the know-how to exploit the exotic, ethnic products found in its outer reaches.

This was a kind of “coolness” that transcended simple aspirational marketing or city boosterism. *New York’s* signature style managed to negotiate between insider references to elite society on the one hand, and credible familiarity with social trends originating in the street —whether amongst countercultural movements of the sixties or the best food to be found in working class, ethnically diverse neighborhoods like East Harlem and the Lower East Side. The magazine’s key innovation was to essentially find a lexicon to merge such “high” and “low” discourses, and to popularize it in such a way that readers who themselves felt caught in between these cultural worlds could learn how to climb into one, without feeling they had to leave the other behind.³¹

In the rest of the chapter I will do a close textual analysis of the specific tropes that helped make up this lexicon. I have surveyed some 100 issues of *New York*, looking closely at the January and June issues of every year between 1967 and 1982³² and

seminal articles published at other times, and extended my analysis through interviews with editor Clay Felker and art director Milton Glaser. As a result of this research, I have identified three primary tropes that served to negotiate between high and low, and that came to embody the unique “attitude” and “New York lifestyle” ultimately branded by *New York*, and appropriated later by other city marketing campaigns. These include: “radical chic,” “the urban consumer manual,” and “the New York power game.”

“Radical Chic”: From Critique to Celebration

As noted above, one of the elements that characterized *New York* from its inception was a split personality. On the one hand, it sought to provide cutting edge political and social analysis that cut through the old guard sterility of mainstream publications like the *New York Times* using journalistic feature articles. On the other, it intended to distinguish itself, and attract advertisers, through, consumer-oriented lifestyle reporting in shorter, eye-catching columns and listings. *New York*’s young journalists were all white and middle class; yet they journeyed into non-white, working class neighborhoods in Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx, and the far reaches of Manhattan to deal with issues of racism and poverty seldom featured in the mainstream press. Moreover, the magazine seemed to uphold progressive gender politics— in the types of men and women featured in its articles, the gender balance of the editorial staff, and the fact that it was one of the first mass marketed magazines to deal explicitly with issues of feminism. Yet at the same time, in a style reminiscent of Victorian slum literature, these representations were contained within a framework of voyeuristic pleasure-seeking in the city’s colorful,

working class neighborhoods which often upheld the stereotype of the bargain-obsessed female consumer.

Despite appearances, however, these two agenda were not really at odds—indeed it was one of *New York*'s innovations to show how they could support each other. *New York*'s opening issue of April 8, 1968 provides the perfect example of this dichotomy, containing some of the most politically charged reporting in mainstream magazines at that time, while also launching a number of its now famous consumer-oriented columns.

The cover image of *New York*'s first issue is a dramatic photograph of Manhattan's west side skyline, shot from New Jersey. Taken at midday, it is drenched in a glow that "makes [New York] a city of gold," yet massive storm clouds hover low in the fishbowl frame, creating a beautiful but ominous composition. Immediately, *New York* makes it clear that the old city-as-skyline booster publication is being challenged. Here's a magazine, the image seems to say, that will provide you with a city-in-miniature, but one that will reveal a complete picture, warts and all.³³

The titles of in depth feature articles are emblazoned on the cover above the photo, with their authors' names listed prominently. One is Tom Wolfe's "You and Your Big Mouth—How the Honks and Wonks Reveal the Phonetic Truth about Status," about a CCNY linguistics professor, "the Henry Higgins of New York," who can differentiate between ethnic and class divisions revealed in New York accents, and coach people who wish to hide their origins.³⁴ Another is Gloria Steinem's "Ho Chi Minh in New York,"

about a recent trip by the commander of the Viet Cong to New York, and how “the leader of the enemy forces knows us from up close.”³⁵ And a third is Jimmy Breslin’s “Life in the City of Gold” which, given its connection to the cover photo, can be taken as the cover story.³⁶

In his five page, 5000-word article, Breslin is the intrepid journalist-cum-ethnographer, taking a subway trip from Grand Central Station to the northern suburbs, along with the white stockbrokers, bankers, and other wealthy commuters who take this daily ride home. His main observation: they never look out the windows to see the poverty, and residents’ mounting anger, as they ride over the streets of Harlem. This oversight ultimately becomes a metaphor for the plight of the city and the nation as a whole, as leaders of both are characterized as willfully ignorant of mounting race and class tensions. This tale of two cities is illuminated by stark, nightmarish illustrations by Phillip Hays. One depicts train tracks disappearing into the sunset, a stack of dynamite tied to them in the foreground. Another shows blank-faced, suit- and hat-wearing commuters reading the paper, while huge black, male faces peer angrily into the windows behind them. [see figure]

Breslin alternately describes the world of the commuters and that of the Harlemites in dry, tightly worded portraits. Here is an example of two such alternating portraits [53-4], which I have excerpted at some length to convey his detailed approach:

The New Haven’s 5:51 Stamford Local-Express was at Gate 100. The sign said the first stop was Larchmont. After that, Mamaroneck, Harrison, Rye, Port Chester, Greenwich, Cos Cob, Riverside, Old Greenwich, Stamford: towns people like to say they are from. The billboards in the railroad platform dusk advertised

Avis, the Dreyfus Fund, Durene Yarn, *Time*, *Newsweek*... In the car, a poster noted that 72 per cent of New York's bank officers commute. Another poster carried the only ad for Finnair I've ever seen. "In Finland, one will get you four- One U.S. dollar equals 4.18 Finnish Marks. Fly Finnair!" ... The Smoking car began to fill up. A man with a mustache took off his topcoat and stood in a military-cut twill jacket. The shirts coming through the door were splashed with pinks and yellow stripes. Bank accounts make people bold. Four men, their faces pink from hot showers, came on with blue plastic cases which look like overly long airline bags. These were their squash cases. They had just played a round of squash at the Yale club, right across Vanderbilt Avenue from the station. The last man to come into the car was carrying a Peal's attaché case, \$125 at Brooks Brothers. The train shook and moved and the platform lights ran past the window. The 5:51 to Stamford started up the tunnel under Park Avenue.

* * *

The train comes out of the ground and becomes elevated at 96th Street, which is the street everybody in Harlem calls "The Frontier." Raul's Barber Shop is the first thing you see when the train comes up. It stands there with garbage cans lining the curb and fluorescent lights coming through smeared windows. The train moves very quickly. It comes past tenements with fire escapes where people put mattresses down and sleep in the heat of a summer night. It comes past sooty windows with cheap material tacked to the window frames to form curtains. You can see the dirt of East Harlem and Harlem better from the train than you can from the street. On the street you can't see the alleys behind the tenements. You can from the train. It goes past alley after alley, all of them long mounds of garbage running for the entire block behind the houses. The rats live inside the mounds of garbage. The rats breed litters of eight and nine at a time. The baby rats reach sexual maturity at three months and breed litters of their own. The rats share in the life of everybody in New York who lives above the Frontier.

... On the train... [everybody] reads, or stares ahead. The blocks they never see go by quickly; 105th, 108th, 111th...

Breslin is our tour guide into a strangely familiar world, one that he reveals, through contrast, to be dystopic, even inhuman. He uses rhetorical techniques of repetition and thick description to enhance this contrast. While the insulated, rarefied world of the commuter train allows one's attention to drift to the detail of shirt collars, squash rackets, travel advertisements, and other conspicuous, cosmopolitan signs of wealth and leisure, that of the street below, though more visible from the train's elevation, is an entire, dysfunctional social tableau almost impossible to take in, let alone understand. In that

world, the “smeared” windows covered with “cheap material” are opaque and uninviting, while the closest view afforded is of the generations of rats in the garbage piling in the long alleyways. As in Engels’ description of working class Manchester, or the social reform photographers’ depiction of the “sunshine and shadow” of industrial era urban America, both extremes reflect integral pieces of the capitalist city, at once mutually exclusive and mutually dependent.

Breslin’s is an unambiguously angry view, written in a tersely moral, politicized tone. It is an indictment of the race and class polarization emerging in the late 1960’s, with working class jobs declining and “planned shrinkage” policies depriving the city of essential services like garbage pick-up, and with suburbanization and rise of the FIRE-based economy benefiting the wealthy commuter class. As the train picks up speed, one can almost feel the flow of resources out of the city to the peripheral suburbs. Later in the article Breslin goes down into the Harlem neighborhood the train passed by and does a profile of the family of a black GI killed in Vietnam, and this indictment intensifies and expands to include a critique of national policy, and of the hypocrisy surrounding the national response to mounting urban unrest and anti-war protest. He argues the commuters are “like politicians in the White House,” who never look out the window to see what’s going on in the street, remaining oblivious to brewing, insurgent struggles “no different in Algeria, Newark, Detroit.” This problem reaches as high as the President in the White House:

With this going on the Report on the President’s Commission on Civil Disorders, a report which stands as a major American document, came to Lyndon Johnson’s desk last month. He made no comment on it. The president of the United States

became another man sitting in the train and not looking out the window. And if the president does no look anymore, then the country does not look.” [57]

* * *

Yet in the same first issue in which Breslin’s lengthy polemic appeared, the “slumming aesthetic” was championed in a variety of pithier, heavily illustrated columns and departments like “Best Bets,” “The Passionate Shopper,” and “The Urban Strategist.” Filled with humorous listings and guides, these pieces presented a combination of frugality and cultural sophistication which both congratulated the reader on his/her good taste and savviness, and provided a useful, efficient reference to affordable products and events. This ironic juxtaposition not only presented a lifestyle manual to those status-conscious penny pinchers who wished to adopt the “New York attitude”; it alleviated any potential embarrassment in doing so, and even validated the endeavor as socially worthwhile.

Such social value was established in two ways. First, this off-beat consumption was presented as a means of perpetuating old-world craftsmanship which was then at risk of being done in by the modern mass market. This was exemplified by the letter to the editor, “Mock Knishes and Ersatz Pickles,” which sang the praises of the rare, old-fashioned fare of Gus’s Pickles on the Lower East Side. Appearing as the first article on the first page of *New York*’s first issue, and sitting alongside the paper’s masthead and right after the table of contents, this letter, complete with a smiling picture of Isadore Guss himself donning glasses, cap, and apron and stirring a vat of pickles, presented itself as the emblem of everything the magazine stood for. It began:

...I feel it is incumbent on me to dip pen in brine to bring to your attention, sir, the necessity of speaking out to preserve the pickle. That this city, beset by so many ills, should be allowing another asset to slip into oblivion prompts my protest. In this era of mass production sanctifying the ersatz, the plight of the pickle—once this city’s peerless pinnacle of penny piquancy—bears an unhappy resemblance to that of the whooping crane. Like those grotesque jarred mutants that mesmerize tourists in the less favored recesses of the complex known as the Jardin des Plantes in Paris, something said to be a pickle—usually stillborn and embalmed in one of those ubiquitous clear plastic placentas called a Twin-Pak—is being foisted off today on a forgetful public.

Far from the short-sighted urban policy of the Johnson administration, this author decries the death of the pickle as the apotheosis of the city’s “ills.” His point is clearly made tongue in cheek, but it is, nonetheless, quite serious: the relentless forward march of the post-war mass production of food is rendering obsolete true New York “assets” like pickles, which are delicious, inexpensive, and connected to a wider, richer culture—in this case that of the Jewish Lower East Side. Arguing that, however lowly, such traditional pickles should be considered as *haute cuisine*, he points out that “mavens” from “all the opulent suburbs and exurbs, from the length and breadth of the megalopolis, even from as far off as Texas, Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee” flock to Guss’s for this unique delicacy. Yet while it may be worthwhile, as well as humorous, to “speak out to preserve the pickle” against encroaching homogenization, one senses another goal in the author’s florid prose and witty, off-hand references to Paris parks. In showing his appreciation for pickles, he is also showing off his own cultural capital—and doing so in a way that would be socially acceptable for a hip audience in the late 1960’s. His expertise and trustworthiness as an “honest broker” is based in his familiarity with this earthy food, as well as his privileged, well-traveled frame of reference— i.e. with his easy negotiation between high and low. As he says later in the article:

...here in New York is the greatest pickle maker of them all, and if you will permit me a moment of immodesty, I know whereof I speak.

No strangers to me are the pickles of the myriad delicatessens of the city's five boroughs, or the pastrami parlors—albeit leanly situated—from coast to coast and border to border and in the island territories: nor unknown to me are the *cornichons* of France, the *augerken* of the Netherlands from Amsterdam to Den Helder, or the pickled cucumbers of London's Bloom's, whose chef, you will recall, Queen Elizabeth II, attempted in vain to lure from Whitechapel High St. to Buckingham Palace.

Let me say with certitude that brooks no challenge that right here in New York we are blessed with the Botticelli of the brine—I give you Mr. Isadore Guss, of 42 Hester Street, Manhattan.

Here is an example of a new style of writing which both celebrates the working class, and strives to transcend it. A variety of readers could identify with this theme. Ethnic, working class social climbers from the Lower East Side, Brooklyn, and the Bronx could feel validated, and even a bit superior, in the idea that their birthright was so highly prized, even as they left it behind. Middle class suburbanites could indulge their nostalgia for the old neighborhood, even as they enjoyed their safe distance from it. And upper class slummers could find out about a new, tasty treat that they could hunt down and use to display their connection with the common people.

A second way in which *New York's* shorter, consumer-oriented pieces presented themselves as socially worthy was by positioning consumption as a means of mending the rifts of a race and class divided city. For by venturing outside the standard supermarkets and department stores to discover esoteric products, one ended up in underserved neighborhoods in the outskirts of Manhattan or the outer boroughs that were home to poor and working class blacks, Latinos, Asians, and ethnic whites. These were neighborhoods which were then in the process of unraveling, their resources being drained by suburban flight, their housing and infrastructure crumbling from government

neglect. These were also neighborhoods which were, for the white, middle class core readership, largely forgotten or unknown, and as such, thrillingly exotic .

This was exemplified by Milton Glaser and Jerome Snyder's short article in *New York's* first issue on East Harlem's Latin American enclosed market, "La Marqueta"—the first dispatch of what was to become the highly popular "Underground Gourmet" column. It opens with the moral: "A sad index of this city's polarization is that this extraordinary and vibrant enclave is virtually unknown beyond its immediate environs." Their tour is meant to rectify this ignorance, and thereby address the larger problem of "polarization."

As they described it:

[La Marqueta] is one of the last remaining Old World market places in New York City. Other grand-style ethnic markets have fallen and eventually given way to the changing population patterns and the onslaught of the homogenized and more efficient supermarket... The general atmosphere is exotic, lively and filled with friendly exchange. From an outsider's point of view, the most interesting stands are those which feature items indigenous to the Puerto Rican and Latin American diet. These stalls carry an intriguing spectrum of mysterious tropical roots, fruits and tubers.

While the bulk of La Marqueta's items were cheap, mass-produced clothes, utensils, rice and beans, etc., according to one paragraph, Glaser and Snyder's tour focused on those unusual products "most interesting" from "an outsider's point of view." The target reader was clearly an outsider to this world, and one not in need of standard, cheap goods.

Whereas readers may have had insiders' knowledge of the ethnic Jewish food of the Lower East Side, the Latino fare of East Harlem was another story; members of this population were not yet moving out of the neighborhood, climbing the social ladder, and buying lifestyle magazines. The article thus reads like a travel brochure to a foreign land, albeit one that is a subway stop away from the Upper East Side, New York's wealthiest

census tract. It is illustrated with colorful photographs revealing the “otherworldliness” of the market. One of these depicts the “tropical delights sold by Mr. Mazza for use in Caribbean cookery.” It is accompanied by a chart, drawn by Glaser, in which numbers are linked to itemized descriptions of the various foods —e.g.: “Yuca (*casabe*): Dark brown tapering root with starchy white interior. Used as vegetable and to make tapioca or bread. 25c/lb.” [see Figure] A similar dictionary definition was presumably not necessary for the garlic-cured pickle.

Three other photographs bring a modish style to this cross-cultural expedition. They show “Caribbean gourmet and actress Rita Moreno” doing her shopping, dressed fashionably in a fluffy-collared suede coat and newsboy hat, and serving as a kind of local celebrity tour-guide to this alien world. In one image Moreno is seen smelling what look like cinnamon sticks, with the caption, “Miss Moreno carefully picks and chooses among the various spices and extracts,” In another she is shown with her daughter Fernanda in a stroller buying red beans. These images are accompanied by her own recipes for the traditional Puerto Rican dishes *Sancocho*, *Ropa Vieja*, and *Habicheulas Rojas*. In this way one was provided with a personalized *entrada* into La Marqueta’s mysterious world that Glaser and Snyder could have never provided— and one which seemingly offered the opportunity for connection to the city’s colorful underclass.

Yet when one looks closely at *New York*’s particular contrast of political reportage and lifestyle pieces, of Jimmy Breslin and the Underground Gourmet, one begins to suspect that a larger statement is being made. Namely: the same neighborhood in which poverty

and the Vietnam War is feeding deepening resentment and potential violence, according to Breslin, is also a great place to go shopping for bargains, according to Milton Glaser and Rita Moreno. While “Life in the City of Gold” seemed to call out for a political response, the shopping tour of La Marqueta appeared to shape that response through class conscious consumerism. For though these impoverished neighborhoods had a host of serious problems, the clothes, food, and brownstone real estate they offered were cheaper and hipper than they would be on the Upper East Side. And though such “slumming” didn’t allow the targeted downtown or suburban reader to politically mobilize to address these very real problems, it did provide the opportunity for a perverse kind of conspicuous consumption, or what might be called “counter-cultural capital”: enabling them to display concern for the underclass while fulfilling their desire for bargain hunting, and even social climbing.

* * *

No single article articulated *New York*’s peculiar dichotomy like Tom Wolfe’s “Radical Chic: That Party at Lenny’s,” published in *New York* in June, 1970.³⁷ Wolfe’s piece satirized the newly arrived “culturati” and “limousine liberals” of emerging 1970’s “New York Society,” amongst whom it was in vogue to hold gala fundraisers for the most politically radical elements of the day. It seemed to critique the very tensions between the new middle class’s consumer habits and political stance that the previous issues of the magazine had themselves made manifest. To Wolfe, these “radical chic” parties were another instance in the grand tradition of *nostalgie de la boue*, or “the romanticizing of

primitive souls,” through which the *nouveau riche* had sought to distinguish itself for some 200 years.³⁸ He explains this historically and sociologically:

Nostalgie de la boue tends to be a favorite motif whenever a great many new faces and a lot of new money enter Society. New arrivals have always had two ways of certifying their superiority over the hated “middle class.” They can take on the trappings of aristocracy, such as grand architecture, servants, parterre boxes, and high protocol; and they can indulge in the gauche thrill of taking on certain styles of the lower orders. The two are by no means mutually exclusive; in fact, they are always used in combination.³⁹

This trend was epitomized for him by Leonard and Felicia Bernstein’s lavish cocktail party for the Black Panthers in 1969, which combined “Roquefort cheese morsels rolled in chopped nuts” with “white South American servants,” which were then “the cutting edge in Radical Chic,” since it would have been “unimaginable” to have Negro maids and butlers serving the likes of Stokely Carmichael (5). The brilliance of Wolfe’s essay was its ability to capture these surreal, contradictory images and, in social scientific fashion, use them to illuminate the conceits of this new class.

Here is an example from what Wolfe calls “first big Radical Chic party, the epochal event” which inspired the many others, namely the party that then 24-year-old Assemblyman Andrew Stein gave for the striking California grape workers, during the United Farm Workers’ strike led by Cesar Chavez, on his father’s estate in Southhampton on June 29, 1969:

When the fundraising began, Andrew Imutan [Cesar Chavez’s undersecretary] took a microphone upon the terrace above the lawn and asked everybody to shut their eyes and pretend they were a farm worker’s wife in the dusty plains of Delano, California, eating baloney sandwiches for breakfast at 3 a.m. before heading out into the fields... So they all stood there in their Pucci dresses, Gucci shoes, Capucci scarves, either imagining they were grape workers’ wives or wondering if the goddamned wind would ever stop. The wind had come up off the ocean and it was wrecking

everybody's hair. People were standing there with their hands pressed against their heads as if the place had been struck by a brain-piercing ray from the Purple Dimension. [39]

Wolfe made it clear that his was a critique of the hypocrisy of such scenes. His intimate narrative entered the minds of the party-goers, seeming to identify with the thrill they felt to be 'down with the cause,' but then mercilessly detailed their conspicuously displayed, obsessively hip possessions—thus coyly betraying the superficiality of their commitment. This was not all Wolfe's narrative accomplished—for his witty insights, with details only an insider could catch, also held the opposite appeal. They allowed the average young middle class reader, who would never be invited to such an A-List event, to at once feel superior to the elite, and learn how, irreverently, to emulate them. In essence, articles like Wolfe's were popular not because of their critique, but because they imparted easily digestible lessons in cultural capital. They served as guidebooks on the consumption habits of the rich and famous.

The magazine was guilty of precisely the same tendency towards Radical Chic, and *nostalgie de la boue*, that Wolfe so viciously ridiculed. And indeed it was not long before critics began to observe that this concept had turned back on its inventors, and could accurately be used to characterize what was increasingly seen as the style without substance of *New York's* own content. By 1974, when Felker joined Taurus Communications in a move to buy out the *Village Voice*, critics jokingly described the move as "the merging of radical cheek with radical chic."⁴⁰ But by this point, such criticism was not something Clay Felker and many of the other creators of *New York*

were ashamed of. Indeed they understood such a radical chic stance as part of their mission, as something that provided a vital service to style- and status-conscious readers.

“Providing a Service”: From Urban Survival Manual to Urban Consumer Manual

Do you have what it takes to survive in New York? Once all you needed was the patience of Job, the stamina of Superman, and the annual income of Louis XIV. Today you need more...you need help. That's what *New York* magazine is here to give...And when we've finally taught you how to survive, we'll teach you how to live.

New York promotional flier, 1970

The purpose of the magazine is to serve the needs of the people who struggle to live and work in New York at this time in history, when there is the chaotic development of a new urban civilization.

Clay Felker (Sheehy, 1977, 48)

New York was not only ahead of its time in targeting this new radical chic audience, but also in conceiving of the role of the urban lifestyle magazine as one of ‘service provider.’ In representing New York as both crisis-ridden and consumer-friendly, *New York* carved a unique niche for itself among new middle class readers: one which aimed to assist this group to both “survive” as well as shop. As *New York*’s sixth anniversary edition proclaimed, it was this “unique mingling of information, service, and analysis that has made the magazine a survival manual for coping with the urban mechanism.” (“Between the Lines,” 1974, 4) As the term “survival manual” implied, this service should not be fluffy or hedonistic. Rather, it should be useful in confronting the real-life issues and urban problems people of the targeted socioeconomic bracket faced, while at the same time enabling residents to locate and consume the pleasures that were still to be found in the city.

In positioning itself as a “survival manual,” *New York*’s original approach to “service” emphasized practicality, frugality, and maintaining a sense of humor in the face of adversity. This meant letting the harried New Yorker in on simple lists, usually reduced to the “top ten,” of the best bargains, information, and contacts to confront the difficulties, absurdities, and consumer pleasures of living in a recession-crunched city. A number of regular columns were created in this vein in the early years, most famously “Best Bets,” “The Passionate Shopper,” “Underground Gourmet,” “The Urban Strategist,” and “New York Intelligencer.” This assortment was presented as a package, as this promotional ad indicates (January, 3, 1972):

We tell you everything you should know about everything and everyone you have to deal with to survive in this city—cabbies, cops, mayors, muggers, doormen, garagemen, repairmen, block-busters, landlords, schools, supermarkets, antiques, hustlers, doctors, restaurants... Every week “Underground Gourmet,” “Best Bets” “Passionate Shopper,” and “Urban Strategist” tell you where to go for great meals under \$3.00 (and conversely, what \$20 meals not to go to)...

In addition to pure practicality, the titles of these columns indicated a desire to find some deeper, poetic, even spiritual experience in consumption—as opposed to purely superficial, status seeking, consumerism. Yet, in the contradictory mode of Radical Chic discussed above, anti-consumerist consumption was a trend in itself, and afforded a new kind of distinction. On the one hand, items in these columns were generally arcane, cheap, and out of the way; part of the pleasure of purchasing them was in the adventure involved in finding them. They featured Milton Glaser’s whimsical, psychedelic graphics, and emphasized hip, trusted experts who could coach the reader in “living better and cheaper.”⁴¹

On the other hand, the text of many of these articles revealed a budding consciousness of the intersection between social status and consumer choice. One such status conscious consumer and expert was food critic Gael Greene, who by the early 1970's had taken over the Underground Gourmet column from Milton Glaser. Writing in an ironic, first person style, Greene introduced a generation of upwardly mobile urbanites to the joys of being a "foodie." As Sharon Zukin has pointed out, she undercut the snobbery of the upper crust restaurants, and of imperious food writers like Craig Claibourne of the *New York Times*, only so that she could make these delicacies available to the middle class.⁴² Her first *New York* article: "The Menu Rap and How to Beat It" [60-1] detailed the "cunning, discipline, poise, and unjellied chutzpah [it takes] to make a dent in the cost of haute dining," and then offered devious strategies of getting discount lunches in "posh restaurants." This was also a "pragmatic" skill, she argued, for the goal as she put it was:

How to eat rich though poor. Or, more realistically, how to eat *with* the rich at austerity prices... Now it is no longer a matter of getting the most for the money. It is an exercise in spending the least for the ambiance. You may not get much to eat, but you can hold down a table at "21" or The Colony for hours and even quiet a few hunger pangs.

Overall, the survival guide motif added an urban angle to the middle class consumer revolution then sweeping the nation. The special year-end issue for 1970 (December 21) was devoted to this topic. It was entitled "Guerilla Guide for the Consumer: A Field Guide of Strategy and Tactics for the New York Shopper." Its cover was a full-page, three dimensional illustration of a box with its contents listed on the sides, printed in military-style block font. [see Figure] Thus the entire magazine presented itself as a no-nonsense, systematic survival guide, in which consumer products were analyzed for their inherent quality, not style.

Within the issue were a series of politically-oriented articles on the “many fronts [of the] consumer battle.” [3] The lead story was Gloria Steinem’s interview, “Ralph Nader for President,” (32-33) for which the blurb read, almost apologetically: “Compared with war or racism, the consumer issue seems tame. But it’s the one issue that get *everyone* mad, and Nader is the man everyone believes.” Following this were articles on Nader-style consumer activism, including Chris Welles’ “The Greening of James Roche,” on the attempted shareholder revolt at General Motors that year. A more local story was Jimmy Breslin’s “How to Fight City Hall” (51-55) which detailed how “the recent victory of homeowners in the Corona section of Queens over the city’s effort to condemn their property to build a high school is yet another manifestation of the power of an aroused consumership.”

The “Guerilla Guide” referred to on the cover was a 12 page, tear-out, “New York Handbook” —the inaugural installment of what was to be a monthly feature.⁴³ In contrast to the political nature of survival indicated by the full length articles of Steinem and Breslin, the guide included dizzying lists of consumer reports and advice on a wide range of products and dilemmas apparently faced by the New York City consumer. This included “a key to the mysterious coding of supermarket items, notes on vitamin C (including a comparison-shopping table), and an updated how-to-complain-and-whom-to-complain-to directory,” (3). As the description of the hand-book explained (39):

That old slogan, “Let the Buyer Beware,” has outlived its usefulness. “Beware the Buyer” is now closer to the mark as the voice of the consumer becomes audible in our land. The purpose of our monthly tear-out hand-book, of which this is the first, is to provide the sort of information and advice to keep the

consumer movement going and growing. Our emphasis, of course, will be on the particular problems of the New York City consumer, for whom special challenges lie in wait.

The listings were marginally useful, extremely dry, and illustrated with repetitive, Milton Glaser-esque drawings. They detailed how to read the labels to check the delivery date and shelf life of 15 different brands of bread and baked goods, 16 kinds of milk and dairy products, and 9 kinds of pre-packed and Vacuum packed meats . In the how to complain section, “designed to guide the hapless city dweller through the maze of city and state agencies , department store computers, physical and mental emergencies and all the other mixed blessings of city life,” they reproduced phone book listings of police precincts and the Department of Consumer Affairs offices, alongside a “Getting to the Brass” section with the names and numbers of company presidents. They conjured the vision of corporate phones ringing off the hook and cashiers besieged with expiration dates, as a battalion of angry, newly empowered shoppers took to the streets.

But over the course of the early 1970’s the tone of the Urban Survival Guide began to shift. The monthly insert concept disappeared soon after its inception, and was replaced by a short listings page. This was due to three basic changes: a change in ownership of the magazine, a change in the personal concerns and ambitions of the targeted readership, and, underlying both of these, a change in the New York City “power game.”

In 1974 Rupert Murdoch bought out the magazine, and hired a new editor, Edward Kosner, to tone down its editorial style even further, reduce the investigative reporting even more, and refocus its energies on “service” so as to take advantage of their loyal and

increasingly affluent consumers / readers. The service orientation as originally conceived, however, was shifting towards more high-end listings. In 1980 Murdoch bought CUE New York for \$5 million in order to help make the magazine even “more New York.” (Bradshaw, 1977, 13-23) As they advertised it in the magazine, these listings would enhance “New York’s editorial mix, adding a practical element ...[and providing] the essential service for New York readers because it enables them to enjoy the cultural opportunities that make their city the world’s most rewarding.”⁴⁴

The standing introduction of the weekly “Best Bets Feature” changed from “The best of all possible things to see and do” to, in 1980, “The best of all possible things to *buy*, see, and do.” Increasingly the notion of “service” the magazine used implied consumption rather than overcoming “real problems.” As Edward Kosner observed, New York had become, “oriented more towards using, enjoying, and finding, than surviving.” (Peter, 1986) By the eighties, the “urban survival manual” had become the “urban consumer manual.”

This role was widely remarked upon, somewhat derisively, in the mainstream press. *Time* referred to *New York* as a “manual” for those concerned with “avenue-smart urban-survival one-upsmanship.”⁴⁵ Similarly, what we have been provided in *New York*, as media industry correspondent David Shaw put it, is “a combination of social consciousness and handy how-to manual for the credit-card cultural consumer.”⁴⁶ *New York* was setting the pace, for better or for worse, for the style of urban lifestyle magazines to come. They innovated many of the magazine branding tactics, including

special advertising inserts that copied the design of the magazine; “special issues” - now a regular feature of the magazine - which tailored editorial content to advertising friendly themes; and “Best of New York” listings that linked reviews with the magazine’s top advertisers. The balance they had struck between “service journalism,” advertisements, and editorial content would become a model for other emerging magazines.

“The Power Game”: From Spectators to Players

Here’s the DNA of the magazine: An editor who wants to be a mogul (the word mogul, extrapolated from its Hollywood roots to include all people with outsize visions of empire, was first popularized by this magazine) comes to recognize that the driving force for the age—full of drama, pathos, and comedy— is ambition.

Michael Wolff, “35 Years: The Story of *New York*,” 2003

We were writing for ourselves. The people on the magazine were themselves aspirants. We were all trying to make it at that point. We wanted to know:

Who made the city work? Who were the powerful people?

Clay Felker, author interview, 2004

Aside from ownership, the second major change *New York* experienced was in the concerns and ambitions of their writers and targeted demographic: Felker’s “monied middle class,” and those aspiring to enter it. As discussed above, by the late 1960’s and accelerating in the early 1970’s, New York’s traditionally diverse economy, with its rich mix of manufacturing, public sector, commercial, and service sector employment, was in swift decline. Particularly hard hit was the manufacturing sector, which had seen the major gains made during and after WWII wiped away by deindustrialization, and its bedrock of high-paying union jobs eroded. This was devastating to New York’s traditional working class, which had long constituted the bulk of its population and, after WWII, the foundation of its power structure— culturally, economically, and politically.

Adding to the instability, the rightward leaning federal government was mired in its own problems in Vietnam, and domestically, with the rise of increasingly radical protest movements and deepening economic recession. Despite the traditionally close relationship New York City had enjoyed with Washington D.C., from the New Deal era of the 1930's through the Great Society and War on Poverty programs of the 1960's, the federal government was increasingly cutting off its political ties with, and economic aid to, the city. All of this led to a profound shift in traditional power arrangements in the city and the nation—presenting both new opportunities and new challenges for the aspiring middle class.

Thus not surprisingly, the “most important service” *New York* said it offered its young readers was in how to grasp, and ultimately play, New York's so-called “Power Game.” This was a topic with which, by their own admission, the editor and writers of *New York* were obsessed. Except for 1976, every New Years' issue from 1969 through 1978 featured a cover article on the theme of power, along with a list of the “top ten most powerful men [sic] in New York.” Meanwhile, a range of articles throughout the year were geared towards dissecting the shifting workings of power in all its cultural, economic, and political guises. As such, the idea and image of the “power game” as a metaphor for the city constituted a key element of the New York brand produced by the magazine.

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A fascinating series of the early articles on power was compiled by Clay Felker in 1969 in the book version, *The Power Game: from the Pages of New York Magazine*. The impetus for the book is explained in the introduction:

For years my favorite dinner conversation when I was with knowledgeable New Yorkers was a variation of the old ten-best game: name the ten men who run New York City. I soon found that The Power Game was not only popular but increasingly complex and confusing. Everyone had (and has) differing lists according to his degree of personal sophistication or point of view from the particular social and economic pyramid he occupies. This is to say, it came down to a question of how power is defined... Power of course is more than a game. The real reason it fascinates...is that power is the name we give that mysterious force which shapes our lives in the city. The thrust of this book is identical with the force that brought *New York* magazine into being. We live in an urban civilization and unless we understand it we will be overwhelmed by the scale and complexity of its problems.

Initially, New York's writers and targeted readers —i.e. new middle class, white ethnic professionals— were most interested in the possibility that there would be an opening for them in this “increasingly complex and confusing” power structure. Indeed, *New York* initially wrote about the political and economic shifts that were happening as if in an effort to speed the process, rattling the foundations to make space for their arrival. One such shift they wrote about extensively was the sectoral shift from blue to white collar jobs, and in particular the growth in importance of the “communications” industries. In addition to creating opportunities for new media ventures like *New York* —i.e. the power to define *itself* as part of this new form of power— Felker advised all those interested in achieving power in New York to consider the importance of the emerging media field.

Definitions of power change...New York is not a political capital in the way that other imperial cities of the past – such as Athens, Rome, Paris, or London – were...It is the communications capital of America and the world. In New York it isn't military might that matters but the power of ideas.

This theme was reiterated by Tom Wolfe in “Radical Chic,” when he emphasized the point that culture and media savviness played as much of a part in class succession as did larger economic shifts. He, a southern WASP from a conservative and upper class background, seemed fascinated with the swift ascent of white ethnic New Yorkers—the Jews, Italians, and Irish—to the position of tastemaker in the media industry, and in “New Society.”

By the 1960’s yet another new industry had begun to dominate New York life, namely communications—the media. At the same time erstwhile “minorities” of the first quarter of the century had begun to come into their own, Jews, especially but also Catholics, were eminent in the media and in Culture. So by 1965—as in 1935, as in 1926, as in 1883, as in 1866, as in 1820—New York had two societies, “Old New York” and “New Society.” In every era, “Old New York” has taken a horrified look at “New Society” and expressed the devout conviction that a genuine aristocracy, good blood, good bone—themselves—was being defiled by a horde of rank climbers... In the 1960’s this quaint belief was magnified by the fact that many members of the “New Society” for the first time, were not Protestant...

Today... the Social Register’s annual shuffle, in which errant socialites, e.g., John Jacob Astor, are dropped from the Good Book, hardly rates a yawn. The fact that “Old New York”—except for those members who also figure in “New Society,” e.g., Nelson Rockefeller, John Hay Whitney, Mrs. Wyatt Cooper—is no longer good copy, and without publicity it has never been easy to rank as a fashionable person in New York City. ...The press in New York has tended to favor New Society in every period, and to take seriously, of only because it provides “news.”

Thus, as Wolfe seems to imply, the change that *New York* own journalists sought to hasten was the one which would put themselves in the most influential position possible. If the “press” provides the publicity which elevates a new class, this new class was now increasingly filling the ranks of the press, and other forms of media and communication. Essentially, *New York* writers had discovered, or created for themselves, a great

advantage: they were able to write about themselves and their associates, define themselves as the new power in town, and then call this “news.”

But reporting from inside the world of the new “culturati” was only half of what *New York* did in the early power game articles. The other major component involved identifying those in the world of “Old New York,” as well as those in traditional working class power blocs, namely the unions, with whom they had less contact, but who they believed still exerted power—if only in refusing to get out of the way. Thus the early articles also served as kind of primer on the entrenched New York elites amongst the elder white male bankers, elected officials, establishment media, and union bosses. While *New York* writers and editors retained the power of naming, and defining, this group, they themselves did not yet figure amongst its high ranking power-brokers.

As I’ve laid out in chart form [see Table 2.1], *New York*’s “Top 10 Most Powerful People In New York” between 1967 and 1973, the movers and shakers identified by the magazine fit into neat and predictable lists and rank orders. They were dominated by the Rockefeller brothers, David the CEO of Chase Manhattan, and Nelson the Governor; by Mayor John V. Lindsay and other rising stars in the State Democratic and Republican parties; by the leaders of the city’s most powerful unions and labor groups, District Council 37 and the Central Labor Council; and by the *New York Times*. Generally speaking, one’s connection to government—local, state, and federal—was the obvious key to success and power. Indeed by the January 1, 1973 issue featuring Richard Reeves’ “The Boss of New York and Other Powerful People,” over half the magazine was filled

with in depth articles about the power players in different fields, public and private, legal and illegal, and how they got to where they were through government connections.⁴⁷

One saw little change over this period, except for the fact that by 1972, Nelson Rockefeller occupied *three* top slots, as opposed to just one, “in recognition of his different roles as (1) a Rockefeller, a “blender and distributor of money and ideas”; (2) “Nixon’s man in town,” the successor to John Mitchell as the surrogate heir of federal power; (3) “The conquering hero,” the all-powerful governor manipulating his political friends and punishing his political enemies.”⁴⁸

The theme of established, white, male power bridging the elite worlds of government, finance, labor, and media was carried through in the illustrations on the magazine covers and accompanying the lead articles. In looking at the reproductions of covers from 1970-1973, we see illustrations dominated by simple visual metaphors for this power. In 1970, Milton Glaser’s cartoon, entitled “The New York Power Pantheon,” pictures ten white men in suits standing on a cloud from which descends an enormous lightening bolt.⁴⁹ The following year, a white man’s fist, raised in power salute, is dressed up in a suit and tie, with a cigar clenched in the curled fingers.⁵⁰ In 1972, the year of Nelson Rockefeller’s triple listing, Paul Davis’s illustration shows a single white male hand dressed in a star spangled sleeve, with lower Manhattan clutched in the palm.⁵¹ And finally, by 1973, the headline: “Who Holds the Power in New York?” is accompanied by Paul Davis’ image of a thunderbolt clutched in a white, male cuff-linked fist, surrounded by the words “Politics, Labor, Crime, Business, Real Estate, Finance, The Arts, Communications.”⁵²

TABLE 2.1: The New York Power Game “Top Ten Lists”, 1967-1973*

1967-68 Top 10	Position	1968-69 Top 10	Position
John DeLury	Sanitation Union	John V. Lindsay	Mayor
Harry Van Arsdale	Central Labor Council	Harry Van Arsdale	Central Labor Council
Theodore Kheel	Labor mediator	Theodore Kheel	Labor mediator
Austin Tobin	Head of Port Authority	William W. Ronan	MTA Chairman
Nelson Rockefeller	Governor	Albert Shanker	Teachers' Union
Anthony Travia	State Assemblyman	Rhody McCoy	Schools Superintendent
Earl Brydges	Senate Maj. Leader	Earl Brydges	Senate Maj. Leader
David Rockefeller	CEO Chase/Man	David Rockefeller	CEO Chase Manhattan Bank
John B. Oakes	Editorial Editor <i>NYT</i>	John B. Oakes	Editorial Editor, <i>NYT</i>
Vacant		Vacant	

1969-70 Top 10	Position	1970-71 Top 10	Position
John V. Lindsay	Mayor	John V. Lindsay	Mayor
Alex Rose	Head, Liberal Party	Nelson Rockefeller	Governor
Arthur Goldberg	Labor Secretary, US Supreme Court	David Rockefeller	CEO Chase Manhattan Bank
William J Ronan	MTA chairman	Harry Van Arsdale	Labor leader
Austin J. Tobin	Head of Port Authority	Austin Tobin	Head of Port Authority
Nelson Rockefeller	Governor	Earl Brydges/Perry Duryea	Senate Maj. Leader Assembly Speaker
Earl Brydges	Senate Majority Leader	A.M. Rosenthal	<i>NYT</i> managing editor
David Rockefeller	CEO Chase/Man	Frank Hogan	Manhattan DA
Arthur Sulzberger	<i>NYT</i> Publisher	Theodore Kheel	Labor mediator
Robert Morgenthau	District Attorney	Joe Colombo	anti-mafia advocate

* Sources: *New York*, Vol. 6, No 1., January 1, 1973. p 26-29; Costikyan, January 5, 1970, 24-27; Schaap, January 4, 1971, 24-27; Reeves, January 3, 1972. 24-31.

1971-72 Top10	Position	1972-73 Top 10	Position
David Rockefeller	CEO Chase/Man	Nelson Rockefeller	Governor
Victor Gotbaum	DC37	Nelson Rockefeller	Governor
Harry Van Arsdale	Central Labor Coun.	Nelson Rockefeller	Governor
Perry Duryea/ Earl Bridges	Assembly Speaker Senate Maj. Leader	John V. Lindsay	“Martyr Mayor”
Nelson Rockefeller	Governor	Howard Samuels	OTB head, cand for Gov.
Richard Nixon	President	Abraham Beame Mario Biaggi Sanford Garelik	Comptroller Representative City Council Pres. -mayoral candidates
John Mitchell	President Aide	<i>New York Times</i>	“voice of respectable left”
Murphy	Police chief	Vincent Albano	Republican Senate leader
John V. Lindsay	Mayor	Perry Duryea/ Joseph Margiotta	Assembly speaker; represents “city’s enemies in legisl.”
William F. Buckley	<i>National Review</i> editor	Frank Hogan/ Alex Rose	Manhattan DA/ Liberal Party Head

With the Watergate scandal, oil embargo, recession, and fiscal crisis of the mid 1970's, the image of uncontested, old guard power was abruptly replaced by images of, and articles on, struggle, intrigue, and instability. Meanwhile those neat and predictable “Top 10 Most Powerful Men in New York” lists were rendered obsolete, thus revealing their obsessive and naïve —to say nothing of sexist and racist—focus on powerful, individual, white males, rather than more complex social forces. The turning point in this regard was 1974. Milton Glaser’s cover illustration of January 14 of that year shows two paunchy, mean-looking white men with horns on their head butting each other like rams, with the headline “Battling for Control of the City: Winners and Losers in the Power

Game.”⁵³ Robert Daley’s cover story on the Top 10 is scattered and incoherent, listing the following: 1) Richard Nixon, 2) Special Prosecutor’s Office, 3) Big Oil, 4) Arab Oil, 5) Arab Money Managers, 6) *The New York Times*, 7) Nelson Rockefeller and Malcolm Wilson, 8) Abraham Beame, 9) “The Stickup Man,” 10) Big Labor, Big Real Estate, Big Banking, Big Business.⁵⁴ Daley explains, almost sheepishly:

A year ago it seemed so easy. We knew most of the men who led us, and power seemed secure in their hands. But an astonishing number are gone now—some of them headed for jail. The power is still there, all around us, But in too many cases it now exists in places we had not been required to consider before, and with no individual man’s name attached.⁵⁵

Thus following 1973, we see the simple Top 10 format begin to erode further and further. Aside from hold-outs from labor, banking, and government, the lists now had to include a range of new players in FIRE, law, PR, and media who were then filling the ranks of the new private sector city agencies. As we shall soon see, these included the Municipal Assistance Corporation, the Emergency Financial Control Board, and those public-private partnerships then taking over the reigns of city power. As Nicholas Pillegi put it in 1974 the city was becoming dominated by “predatory underwriters, political manipulators, and mob loan sharks.”⁵⁶ The magazine had to contend with the fact that power was increasingly opaque, governance non-transparent, and crucial deals made behind closed doors. The 1974-5 issue again set the tone. It included two top ten lists, one for “Visible Power” and the other for “Invisible Power.”[See Table 2.2] The cover shows a photo by Dan Wynn of a mummy unraveling the plaster around its empty head with a white, male, suited hand, and the headline: “The Ten Most Powerful Men in New York And Ten Invisible Powers You Better Know About.”⁵⁷

TABLE 2.2: THE NEW YORK POWER GAME, 1974-1975⁵⁸

“Visible Power”	Position	“Invisible Power”	Position
Gerald Ford	President	William Shea	Attorney
Abraham Beame	Mayor	Harold Fisher	Attorney
Robert Morgenthau	Manhattan DA	Jack Bigel	Pension Consultant
Hugh Carey	Governor	Philip Bisceglia	Exec Council to Assembly Speaker
Patrick Cunningham	New York Democratic Chairman	Howard Rubenstein	PR executive
Arthur O. Sulzberger	<i>NY Times</i> Publisher	Richard Shinn	President Met Life
Paul Hall	Pres Seafarers Intl	Samuel DiFalco	Manhattan Surrogate
Walter Wriston	CEO Citibank	Anthony “Fat Tony” Salerno	Mob loan shark
Nelson Rockefeller	Vice President	John McGrath	CEO East New York Savings Bank
David Rockefeller	CEO Chase Manhattan	Silvio Mello	Former Chief Asst US Attorney, NY

Clearly unscientific, *New York's* power game lists were always more about name-dropping than serious analysis of the workings of power in New York—indeed a cursory perusal of the lists shows how many of the bold-faced names are completely forgotten today. Nonetheless, they serve to document power as understood, and as sought, by the magazine's aspiring writers and readers, and such are very revealing. They can also be seen as the political and economic underpinnings of the lifestyle journalism tracking the cultural vicissitudes of “high” and “low.” The lesson seemed to be: cultural capital was important, but it had to be combined with an analysis of the all the many forms of power now operating in the city, if your goal was to be a player in the power game.

The *New York* Legacy

New York crafted a unique and dichotomous formula encompassing both high and low – from the realm of “radical chic,” to the “urban consumer manual,” and “power game.” And in so doing they attracted as readers the kind of New Yorkers Felker envisioned. As commentators described them, *New York* readers were “young strivers and achievers who are committed to living in the city” and “although they are comfortable, are anxious about the challenges, complexities, and frustrations of contemporary urban existence.”⁵⁹ Circulation in the first five years rose from 50,000 to 335,000 at an average increase of 63% a year, with increases in subscription as well as single-copy sales. Advertisers soon took notice; by its sixth year, ad revenue had reached \$7 million.⁶⁰

Many of the original writers, on the other hand, made very public displays of disgust over what they considered to be the selling out of the political and literary principles of the magazine. In 1971, Jimmy Breslin, one of the star writers, left the magazine in protest over seeing the magazine had become “too dilettantish:”

...If I see one more issue with a bleeping maid on the cover and one more story about the people who have trouble getting maids, I wouldn't even read it. For Christ's sake look at the times in which we live. I think people have more on their minds than that...I left *New York* because it caused me to become gagged by perfume and disheartened by character collapse...[I foresee] a new flourishing of boutique journalism -- all frivolity and no more serious journalism.⁶¹

Similarly Gloria Steinem, Susan Brownmiller, and other feminists, who had been writing on the burgeoning feminist movement for *New York*, found themselves increasingly marginalized by the editorial slant, and quit in order to start *Ms. Magazine* in 1973. In her recent history of *Ms.*, Mary Thom curtly noted of Clay Felker, in reference to his

attitude towards feminism: “he was a good enough journalist to recognize a hot story”—and his interest extended no further.⁶² Moreover, as Steinem added, he was only willing to publish positive articles about feminist issues or events if he could then run a negative one —by another female reporter like Julie Baumgold or Gail Sheehy—beside it. “That’s really why I gradually stopped writing for *New York*,” Steinem recalled. “It was just too painful to be only able to do it in the context of two women fighting.”⁶³ In addition to this patronizing attitude, Steinem and other feminist journalists decried the fact that *New York*, for all its *avant garde* lifestyle focus and design, reified the gender bias of magazines like *Ladies Home Journal* and the other “seven sisters,” with traditional editorial content about food, home, romance, and fashion meant to appeal to female readers— while the articles about finance and the “power game” always featured and were meant to appeal to men.⁶⁴

When confronted with these political contradictions, especially for a magazine that claimed to represent the counter-culture, Felker was unapologetic. He explained his position on toning down politically left positions thus:

You have to remember the people Milton Glaser and I picked reflected us. We didn’t pick them because they agreed with us, but they did have the same attitude.

It was like directing an orchestra, we had to find harmony.

Jimmy Breslin had a different view. He had to write more about East New York. “That’s where the battle is.” And I would say, “Jimmy, we’re not writing for those people.” He had a very developed social conscience. Not that I don’t. But my view is that you reach the movers and shakers and that’s how you accomplish what I wanted to accomplish. Not by fighting for the homeless or something like that. Not that I don’t have sympathy, but that’s not who I’m aiming at... I want to talk to people that interest me. Not to social consciousness. I want to talk to the people who are going to make things run. That’s who I want to talk to.

Milton Glaser acknowledges that this reflected a fundamental ideological contradiction between the magazine's ostensibly progressive politics and the consumerism it promoted. I reproduce his analysis of this contradiction at some length, as I think it also captures the contradiction felt amongst young middle class progressives more broadly coming out of the Sixties, and the underlying marketing focus of the magazine that helped *New York's* creators to justify their response to this.

There wasn't a sense that the way to achieve social justice was by overthrowing the system. Rather there was a sense that there were benefits to being a part of the system, and that you could both achieve social justice and economic affluence and so on through the existing system. Things were much more optimistic then. About what the possibilities for capitalism were. ...We didn't see an essential conflict between ideas of materialism and consumerism and social justice and political activity. We thought that you could have it all.

I suppose that was a paradox that we never thought about. The idea that you could take advantage of capitalism in terms of affluence and having things, eating well, and still protect the rights of minorities and women, and so on. That these two things could be simultaneously pursued.

In the city at that time a lot of people were living that way. A lot of people whose inclinations were to be liberal or radical but who also wanted to live a good life that embraced culture and good times, and good clothes and whatever else. And to some degree it diminished the ideological position of the magazine. Our point of view... was full of contradictions. Such is the nature of life.

We did know that the magazine had to be bought by people who had enough money to buy things that advertisers were interested in selling. That's for sure. We had to make the magazine an attractive buy for an ad agency basically because they had to feel that the readers were sufficiently affluent to put an ad for an expensive stereo system in the thing. We always understood that.

And so regardless of high turnover amongst its "celebrity writers," and the ideological contradictions of this aesthetically radical, but fundamentally conservative publication, *New York* had found its niche. As Tom Wolfe joked in reference to the stylish but apolitical guests at the Bernstein's party for the Black Panthers—in what could be a

description of the magazine's conflicted readers and staffers, in was politically incorrect to get too political:

This is, after all, a period of great confusion among *culterati* and liberal intellectuals generally, and one in which a decisive display of conviction and self-confidence can be overwhelming. Radical Chic, after all, is only radical in style; in its heart it is part of Society and its traditions. Politics, like Rock, Pop and Camp, has its uses; but to put one's whole status on the line for *nostalgie de la boue* in any of its forms would be unprincipled.⁶⁵

* * *

Ultimately, the commercial success of Felker's strategy brought about his own demise as editor and, some would say, of the magazine itself. In the early seventies Felker sought to expand into a national magazine while purchasing other magazines, and so joined with Taurus Communications, publishers of *The Voice*, to create New York Magazine Co., handing over a third of the stock to the new corporate parent. Increasing pressure was exerted by advertisers to give free space in editorials along with paid ads, and to increase the proportion of "fluff" to actual city reporting

Jimmy Breslin was prescient about the dim future of "serious journalism." The example of *New York's* success, combined with broader political-economic changes shaping urban America, launched the urban lifestyle genre into a new branding strategy in the 1970's. *New York* became a model for how to package cultural capital for the new middle class, how to seamlessly merge advertising and editorial content, and thus how to effectively market the city as a brand in this new era,⁶⁶

Finally, it is important to place the magazine and its creators back in a longer history of city marketing and booster literature. Unlike their 19th century predecessors, these new *flaneur*-journalists were not marginal or *déclassé* figures. Rather they reflected and contributed to an urban development strategy of marketing idealized brand images of the city for those in the establishment. Meanwhile, the readers of urban lifestyle magazines were no longer neophytes, but seasoned middle class urban and often suburban dwellers. They could meander through the pages of the magazines as if through the streets of the city-in-miniature, ogling the spectacle, like their 19th century counterparts. But for the reader of the 1970's, *flaneurie* was no longer so leisurely or so playful. In the intervening century, consumption in general, and in New York City in particular, became a very serious business.

¹ Greenberg, 2000.

² While *San Diego* magazine began publication in 1948, and is thus considered the first urban lifestyle magazine, the genre of such magazines didn't arise until the late 1960's, when around ten such titles emerged. Their number grew steadily in subsequent decades, and by the late 1980's over a hundred such titles existed. See Riley and Selnow, 1991.

³ Benjamin, 1999. p 427, [M5,6] and 446 [M16,4]

⁴ Marmarelli, 1991, 220.

⁵ Bellows, 2002. Michael Barone, the editor of the *Almanac of American Politics*, coined the term "Herald Tribune Republicanism" to refer to the old guard culture and politics of the of the east side's "Silk Stocking District." [cite]

⁶ Author interview with Clay Felker, January, 2004. All quotes by and information about Clay Felker in this chapter are taken from this interview unless otherwise indicated.

⁷ Felker understood the rise in lifestyle titles to be a result of the Post-W.W.II shift in consumer spending power and taste (ibid author interview): "Up until the war, conventional wisdom was reflected in publications like *Life*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Colliers*, etc. After the war everyone came home, and suddenly there were ten glorious years of the economy. People had everything, while the rest of the world was in tatters. Americans all went in different directions... Now we had a five day, forty hour work week. People had time and money to do what they wanted. Leisure time. So that made for diverse interests. "

⁸ See: Hardy, ed. 1990, pp. 280-290.

⁹ Felker related this in his interview (ibid). Most likely, he was referring to the following study: Alfred Politz Research, Inc., 1950 and 1952.

¹⁰ This concept is so central to Felker's thinking that he used the quote to introduce his introductory lecture to students at UC Berkeley's Magazine Studies masters' program, where Felker is now director.

¹¹ Baughman, 2001. Baughman calls Luce's approach "directed synthesis." Felker was not alone in being influenced by this approach for, as Baughman argues, this "legacy" was to influence magazine writing forever after: "Luce's formula involved little more than cleverly summarizing the week's news in print

(*Time*) or pictures (*Life*) in ways that left readers with a concise, entertaining, and frequently inadequate version of an event or trend... His legacy... concerns a transformation of American journalism from information to synthesis, and another episode of what Raymond Williams has called "the long revolution," the centuries long struggle, first through literacy, to gain access to the printed word, and then, through new mass media to achieve mastery of a more complicated order." 5-6.

¹² As Felker pointed out repeatedly in his interview, too many magazine editors and publishers from the 1980's until today have forgotten the importance of such principles as passion, and taking the reader's side, and are instead completely dominated by market research studies, focus group findings, and copying the style but not the substance of earlier, successful prototypes. This issue will be discussed in later chapters.

¹³ Author interview with Milton Glaser, January 10, 2004. Unless otherwise attributed, all quotes from and information about Milton Glaser are taken from this interview.

¹⁴ A term today associated with the Internet revolution, was originally popularized by Marshall McLuhan in reference to the new electronic and visual media of the late sixties and early seventies. See e.g.: McLuhan and Fiore, 1967.

¹⁵ As Bellows described Wolfe, he was as stylish as he was talented: "His prose rollicked along with unexpected words imbedded in pages that were covered with a confetti of punctuation marks. If his prose was eye-catching, so was he—his trademark was a gleaming white suit. It didn't take editorial brilliance to put Tom Wolfe to work writing features for New York." Bellows, 2002.

¹⁶ For the original formulation of this definition, see Tom Wolfe's *New York* cover story: "The Birth of 'The New Journalism': Eyewitness Report by Tom Wolfe," 1972. See also Wolfe and Johnson, 1973 and Hollowell, 1977.

¹⁷ See Frank, 1997.

¹⁸ Indeed, Glaser was known as "president" and "design director" from *New York*'s founding in 1968 until its sale to Rupert Murdoch in 1977. As Pete Hamill (1999) remembers of their early collaboration: "I'd often find myself in the cubicle next to Felker's office, parked behind a typewriter, watching both men in action. Felker would arrive each morning, brimming with ideas he had absorbed the evening before while doing his rounds of cocktail parties, openings, dinner parties. Over coffee, he would unload his notions to an audience of one: Milton Glaser. "What we should do is..." Felker would begin, and ideas for articles would pour from him in an, excited rush. Glaser, from his totally focused silence, would fix him with those penetrating eyes and say: "That's fine, Clay, but what's the headline?" Or "I think I know what you mean, Clay, but how do I illustrate that concept?" And I realized that although Felker edited the magazine, Glaser edited Felker."

¹⁹ As to why Wolfe chose this approach, he explained that he couldn't just write straight parody about what he considered to be a boring magazine. As Bellows quoted him (2002): "Once you get the joke, it gets duller than dull. It's the Law of Parody... I thought the wilder and crazier the hyperbole, the better... I wanted to paint a room full of very proper people who had gone to sleep standing up."

²⁰ As Bellows explained (ibid): "Not one of the letters came to me (the editor), Tom Wolfe (the writer) or Clay Felker (the editor of *New York*; they were all directed to Jock Whitney, the publisher. So I suspected the outpouring was orchestrated. Jock Whitney was a leader in the cultural community—these were his friends." These writers, who all either worked at the *New Yorker* or had contracts as contributors, included J.D. Salinger, John Updike, E.B. White, Muriel Spark, Hannah Arendt, and Richard Rovere.

²¹ For Felker this was a particularly validating moment in his career. As he reflected (Author interview, ibid): "When I worked at *Esquire* I used to say to the editor, 'I want to do a story about the *New Yorker*, about Shawn.' He said 'Well, when you can put out a magazine as good as the *New Yorker* then we'll do it. ' Well, once I got in control of a magazine I did it."

I didn't hate the *New Yorker*. I was just making a point that we had discovered in our research.

²² Journalist Marshall Loeb saw this as an early indication of Felker's "fearlessness" as an editor. As Loeb says (2000): "After the *New York Herald Tribune* folded in 1966, he simply went out among the venture capitalists and raised millions to buy the rights to the paper's Sunday supplement. *New York* magazine, which he led to glory. Felker had never done anything like this before, but associates say that the idea of failure never entered his mind.

²³ New Owners, 1967, 37.

²⁴ Standard Rate and Data Service, 1997.

²⁵ Clay Felker, was one of five editors selected as the first recipients of the Editors Hall of Fame Awards created by the American Society of Magazine Editors. According to a notice distributed by the society,

Felker "broke new ground in fearlessly encouraging writers to find their own voice, and, in doing so, he reinvented and set a new standard for the city magazine. Gutsy, charming and brashly original, Felker's New York magazine became the indispensable handbook to the city that bears its name." See: "Awards," 1996.

²⁶ Author interview, *ibid*, 2004.

²⁷ Hamill, January 2, 2005.

²⁸ Felker, 1968, 9. See also Clay Felker's quote in "N.Y. Magazine Appears Again in the Spring" (1967, 13): "New York and good writing—that's what we're about. We want to be the weekly magazine that communicates the spirit and character of contemporary New York."

²⁹ Wolff, 2003.

³⁰ Michael Wolff goes on here: "I was going to say that in many ways [*New York*] was like a hobby magazine, or computer magazine, which are all about the equipment you need to pursue your interest, but those magazines, too, were influenced by this one." He thus reveals a common tendency amongst *New York* reporters to attribute all innovation in the magazine industry and popular culture to themselves. Hobby magazines, it should be noted, can be traced back to inserts in the 19th century Sears Roebuck catalogue, if not earlier.

³¹ For a broader analysis of the commodification of 1960's counterculture in the 1970's U.S., see: Frank, 1997.

³² I chose to focus on the January and June editions because they are often "special issues" devoted to articulating an urban lifestyle in a new way. In January this often involves defining the most important lifestyle trends – issues, attitudes, leisure activities, hot neighborhoods, hip restaurants, "people to watch," etc. – for the year ahead. In June, it involves identifying the most important lifestyle trends for the summer.

³³ *New York*, April 8, 1968, 1.

Note: It is also significant that the center that is pictured is of the west side of Manhattan, particularly the Upper West Side. It was at this time that this area was beginning to gentrify, despite, or because of, urban renewal (clearance) designation.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 59-61.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 87-89.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 53-57.

³⁷ Wolfe, 1970. This has been reprinted in Wolfe, 1999.

³⁸ Wolfe, 1999, 27. "Radical Chic" can be seen as an antecedent of the "politically correct" jibe, but with more of a sarcastic critique of social climbing. "*Nostalgie de la boue*" literally means "nostalgia for the mud."

³⁹ In a tone similar to Bourdieu's description of the historic evolution of the "new bourgeoisie" (1984), Wolfe goes on to describe earlier versions of this social climbing tactic (*ibid*, 27-8): "In England during the Regency period, *nostalgie de la boue* was very much the rage. London socialites during the Regency adopted the flamboyant capes and wild driving styles of the coach drivers, the "bruiser" fashions and hair styles of bare-knuckle fighters, the see-through, jutting nipple fashion of the tavern girls, as well as a reckless new dance, the waltz. Such affectations were meant to convey the arrogant self-confidence of the aristocrat as opposed to the middle-class striver's obsession with propriety and keeping up appearances."

⁴⁰ "The Odd Couple," 1974.

⁴¹ Promotional insert, January 1, 1973. For more on the tradition of the role of the trusted "expert" see Zukin, 2004.

⁴² Zukin, *ibid*.

⁴³ The feature actually lasted no more than a few months, ending in June, 1970. Ultimately, consumer hand-book concept was extended into popular *New York* Guidebooks.

⁴⁴ Promotional insert, January 1, 1973

⁴⁵ "Playing *New York*'s Power Game," 1977, 49

⁴⁶ Shaw, 1977, 184-185. The earliest Diner's Club and American Express credit card ads appeared in the pages of *New York*.

⁴⁷ Reeves, January 1, 1973, p 26. The articles in this issue included a number of variations on the theme. For instance, Kramer (1973, 30-31) wrote of "The Ten Most Powerful Labor Leaders;" Pileggi (1973, 32-33) wrote of "Criminal Power;" Tobias (1973, 33-34) wrote of "Money Power;" Diamond (1973, 42-43)

wrote of "Media Power;" Rich (1973, 44-5) wrote of "Power in the Arts;" and Schaap (1973, 46-8) wrote generally of "The Ten Most Indispensable People in Town."

⁴⁸ Reeves, *ibid.* Written in 1973, this is an explanation of Rockefeller's dominance of the previous year's list.

⁴⁹ Cover, January 5, 1970.

⁵⁰ Cover, January 4, 1971

⁵¹ Cover, January 3, 1972

⁵² Cover, January 1, 1973.

⁵³ Cover, January 14, 1974. Milton Glaser illustration is entitled "Locking Horns over Power."

⁵⁴ Daley, January 14, 1974, 29.

⁵⁵ Daley, a former police officer, offers only complaints and questions about the shift, rather than analysis. For instance on "big oil" he says (*ibid.*, 47): "The president of the United States ought to swat them down, or someone should. Is there no one strong enough in this shaky world? Where has all the power gone?" (40) His final word seems totally mystified: "How few *names* there are. One looks around to see who wields vast power, and for the moment one sees only the struggle for it." Related articles include the piece by Korda (1974, 29-30) "Time is Power, Money, Sex" and by Reeves (1974, 39) on "Powerful Ideas."

⁵⁶ Pileggi, January 13, 1975. 30-35. As Pileggi put it: "Today, with the city firing school teachers and closing firehouses, survival seems to be on the minds of most New Yorkers. It is in the nature of these times that much of the city's power shifts into the hands of any power broker, visible, invisible, or fake. Some day, when the economy is no longer a matter of primary concern the predatory underwriters, political manipulators, and mob loan sharks will no longer dominate New York so completely. But the speed with which the city recovers its economic and philanthropic balance will depend upon the shape in which it is left by the invisible men with power who are now riding high."

⁵⁷ *ibid.* The photo is entitled, "There's more to the city's invisible movers and shakers than meets the eye." A related article: Michael Korda, "Office Power—You Are Where You Sit" 36-44, was an excerpt from Korda's forthcoming book, *Power! How to Get It, How to Use It* (1975). Korda was editor-in-chief at Simon and Schuster, and clearly was aware of a topic for which there was a wide readership. His book was reissued multiple time between 1975 and 1985.

⁵⁸ Pileggi, *ibid.*

⁵⁹ Little, 1969; Marmarelli, 1991.

⁶⁰ Marmarelli, *ibid.*, 213.

⁶¹ Quoted in "Notes on People," 1971, 41.

⁶² Thom, 1997.

⁶³ *ibid.*

⁶⁴ The other "seven sisters" included: *McCall's*, *Redbook*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Family Circle*, and *Woman's Day*.

⁶⁵ Wolfe, 1999, 79.

⁶⁶ This new era in urban lifestyle magazines was exemplified by *Los Angeles Magazine*. See Greenberg, 2000.

Chapter 3

Public-Private Partnerships and the Birth of the “Big Apple” Campaign

By the early 1970s, as New York City’s economic fortunes were spiraling downward, power-brokers from the private sector began an effort to reorganize the city’s fiscal priorities, governance structure, and development strategy. The downturn itself responded to deeper political and economic shifts —some of which were affecting the nation, others specific to New York City. In addition its once robust and diversified economy was shaken by deindustrialization, rising inflation, corporate headquarters flight, mounting social welfare demands, and —as a result—growing budgetary deficits. And like many other U.S. cities, New York faced government cut-backs fueled by recession and conservative, anti-urban sentiment of the Nixon administration. Unlike other U.S. regions, over the past decade both New York City and State had borrowed heavily through quasi-public local development corporations and authorities to fund the largest private-sector building boom in its history, geared toward redeveloping the Lower Manhattan financial district. By the early 1970s, with the recession deepening, and most of this space unrentable, the municipal debt was mounting.

Thus, many in New York’s public and private sector leadership felt compelled to join the inter-urban competition to retain and attract markets in high end services, including finance, insurance, and real estate [FIRE], as well as tourism. What these coveted service industries had in common, aside from providing new sources of revenue and jobs for cash strapped cities, was their extreme *image-sensitivity*. Their revenues rose and fell in response to subtle changes in the image of the city held by potential investors,

consumers, and tourists— much like the vicissitudes of the stock market in response to rises and falls in “investor confidence.” In the eyes of New York’s embattled FIRE and tourism elites, the city’s fiscal troubles not only represented a real social and economic crisis, but also, increasingly, an *image crisis*. However capable the city might be of rectifying its underlying social and economic problems, it was imperative to them that at the very least the *perception* of this problem, and of the city, be dramatically altered.

Media and marketing played an increasingly significant role in this context—being seen by these private sector-led forces as both the root of, and the solution to, the city’s image crisis. They argued that New York City’s status as ‘media capital of the world’ was becoming a liability, focusing international attention on the move-outs of major corporations to the glistening suburbs, while causing mundane representations of local crime and economic malaise to be blown out of proportion. New York was cast as an “asphalt jungle,” and this image was projected on a national and global scale to an eager audience— making it that much harder for the city to compete. Meanwhile, competitor cities were spending many times more than New York City to increase the flow of tourism and investment through marketing and subsidies. Yet New York’s public sector appeared ill-prepared, or unwilling, to use marketing in response to the crisis, and to appeal to new service industries. The city had never endorsed large-scale, publicly funded marketing, notwithstanding Mayor John Lindsay’s media-friendly salvos. And the State’s Department of Commerce employed out-moded marketing methods focused on industrial development, and was in any case far less concerned with the fate of New York City than with the rest of the State.

The logical response to this situation, from the perspective of private sector elites, was to take the lead in countering such negative imagery, and its economic fallout. In a move that was similar in intent yet far more broad-based and coordinated than *New York* magazine, they formed what I would term a *branding coalition*, made up of public-private partnerships that worked with local media and marketing firms to create their own image campaigns. Spearheading the effort was the Association for a Better New York (ABNY), a new kind of public-private partnership. Under the activist leadership of realtor Lewis Rudin and former aide to Governor Rockefeller Alton Marshall, ABNY members identified the root cause of the city's economic problems, and their own vacant real estate, in the epidemic of "corporate move-outs," which were themselves caused by the "visual deterioration of the city" as seen on the streets and the nightly news. They sought to combat this scourge, on the one hand, through an updated version of back-room influence peddling, using the partnership to bring local and state government under their umbrella, so as to regulate the way mainstream media, particularly TV, represented the city, as well as to gain access to government decision making. And they also developed what was for New York a new form of targeted city marketing: the "Big Apple" campaign. Recasting the city as the Big Apple, the campaign took the form of massive advertisements in the pages of *New York* magazine featuring the new Lower Manhattan skyline, editorial ads in *New York Times*, as well as TV "news" spots on carefully planned Big Apple PR-events. These ranged from corporate street sweeping initiatives, awarding bulletproof vests to the NYPD, to Rudin handing out the famous "big apple lapel pin" to commuters at Grand Central Station.

ABNY and the CVB's efforts to "clean up" the city's image, however, were to prove no match for the deteriorating economic situation — a situation due in no small part to the multi-billion dollar real estate debt incurred by many of ABNY's and the CVB's leading members. Indeed, the self-serving economic priorities of these elites, in combination with other burdens the city faced, led inexorably to the tragedy of the 1975 New York City fiscal crisis. Nonetheless, the political realignment that these groups ushered in *before* the crisis, and the chaos of the crisis itself, led to the restructuring of the city's governance and economic development priorities along the lines they had advocated since 1969.

To appreciate the break from the past that such a coordinated approach to city marketing represented, I begin by tracing the history of its rise. To a large extent, as we shall see, the new approach of the 1970's was made possible by institutional shifts made over the previous two decades, namely the creation of a nationwide network of CVB's and a federal Travel Service, and the development of new discursive and quasi-scientific tools in the fields of tourism market research and location consulting. Yet in addition, the need for such a shift became common sense amongst a cross-section of New Yorkers at a time of a widely acknowledged, unprecedented "image crisis."

Tourism Marketing as a Response to Urban Crisis

By the late 1960's and early 1970's, as U.S. urban economies began to decline, and with them the economy of the nation, the federal government's attitude towards urban tourism

and tourism marketing was beginning to change. In this unstable social and economic climate, tourism and marketing were increasingly seen as a kind of panacea for the economic ills of the nation and its cities — keeping American dollars in the country, and bringing new money in, at low to no cost to local governments.¹ This was in many ways a form of wish fulfillment on the part of local, FIRE-dominated growth coalitions, who were motivated, as Dennis Judd puts it, “by the idea that tourism is an industry without smokestacks.”² This calculation was also legitimated by new, quasi-statistical means of estimating the economic impact of both tourism and marketing, activities that had become available in the 1960’s and early 1970’s.

Ever since 1941 when travel agents organized their first business association, the National Association of Travel Officials [NATO], members sought to create credible data with which to demonstrate their growing importance, advance their common interests, and launch effective marketing campaigns.³ Thus in 1944, NATO established a Research Committee, and encouraged member firms which conducted tourism research to furnish results to NATO’s national center.⁴ In the 1950’s this committee joined the nationwide Travel Research Association, which worked closely with the University of Michigan’s Institute for Social Research, and in particular George Katona’s renowned Survey Research Center, producing classic consumer research studies that measured things like the demographics, preferred modes of travel, and length of trips taken by consumers in this new market.⁵ In 1961, the Kennedy administration created the United States Travel Service [USTS], as the federal government’s lead travel and tourism advocacy group, and as a centralized means of gathering travel data.⁶ In addition, the

United States Department of Commerce conducted a series of regional, “supply side” studies that showed the potentially revolutionary impact of increased tourism capacity on economic development and job creation in some of the nations most impoverished regions, at little cost to the regions themselves.⁷ Following Washington’s lead, thousands of supply side studies were produced throughout the 1960’s by every state in the union to measure the potential consumer market for tourism, the marketability of potential tourist “attractions” and “destinations,” and the potential impact of expanding tourism, recreation, and leisure activities on the economy.⁸

But while these studies created a wealth of impressive, hard data, this data was so varied as to be inconclusive. In 1965, the marketing arm of USTS, called “Discover America,” had merged with NATO, the private sector tourism industry group, creating a new public private partnership known as Discover America Travel Organizations [DATO]. Its congressionally chartered mandate was to generate more international tourism to the US both via increased advertising and the coordinated application of survey data. Thus, savvy CVB’s, chambers of commerce, and regions dependent upon tourism and business relocation, began turning to marketing and research tools. CVB’s and tourism boards were interested in these studies because they supposedly provided a harder measurement of what business travelers, as well as relocating middle managers, were looking for. Thus they could be used not only to measure this hypothetical bracket, but also to justify the redevelopment of the city and the restructuring of its services and taxes to appeal to them.

New York's CVB seems to have picked up on the lifestyle and location marketing trend when, in 1969, DATO held its first "International Pow Wow" in New York City, at which the tourism and marketing industries were brought together in a single convention for the first time. Their goal: the production of data and marketing for urban tourism—selling cities just like boosterish urban lifestyle magazines. The target market that they were aiming for were the same "monied middle classes" Clay Felker had sought to reach through *Life* and then *New York* magazine, though in this case on an international scale. This, it was hoped, would help put a fresh and cosmopolitan face on the country as a whole at a time of increasing global competition. And so in 1969, a year of federal retrenchment and a looming budgetary shortfall, congress voted to increase the USTS budget from \$1.5 to \$4.5 billion.

With its federal mandate and increased funding, DATO unveiled its first international US tourism campaign at the Pow Wow. USTS had hired one of Madison Avenue's top "new advertising" firms, Ogilvy & Mather, to design the campaign, which promoted low budget travel to US cities, so as to "entice foreigners to America to help offset heavy spending by Americans abroad." While Ogilvy & Mather later proclaimed their most important suggestion for "writing travel copy that sells" was to "spotlight the unique differences" of the place being marketed, it must be said they created a very generic campaign, including that for New York.⁹ Aside from the use of architectural landmarks like the Statue of Liberty and the Empire State Building, New York appears not much different from that of the other cities the campaign promoted. It pictured unnamed young, white, professionals lunching at unknown restaurants, amidst blandly modern

décor, with shopping bags in tow, above the text: “What is New York City like? It is a young city — and the streets are alive with impeccable young businessmen and pretty girls with swinging hair. And a foreign tourist can see it all for less than \$17 a day....”

It was a simple “city-as-skyline” campaign, with an added emphasis on high-end shopping.¹⁰ Nonetheless, it seemed to work—along with the good exchange rate for US currency, and the increased convention business following the World’s Fair. New York City’s tourism numbers reached 16.2 million visitors in 1969, the same number generated four years earlier by the fair.¹¹ The CVB used these figures, along with DATO’s vague new statistical measures —based in part on how many of their New York City brochures had been requested by travel agents around the world — to declare tourism the city’s “second largest industry after textiles” in terms of revenue and jobs.¹²

From Image Crisis to Financial Crisis

After New York’s record tourism numbers of 1967-1969, and to the great chagrin of the CVB, the city’s tourism industry, along with its entire economy, soon fell into a severe slump. As the downward trend continued unabated into 1972, it could no longer be passed off as a temporary downturn, but had become part of a full-fledged recession. Between 1967 and 1972, tourism revenues, establishments, and employment figures had all dropped by 15% [See TABLE 3.1 and 3.2]. And according to the CVB, tourism numbers were down by 500,000 from their all time high in 1969 of 16.5 million, while hotel occupancy rates had fallen over ten percentage points, from 75.4% in 1969 to

64.3% in 1972. In three-four short years, the fortunes of this burgeoning national industry had tumbled in New York City.¹³

Part of the problem clearly lay in the “corporate exodus” New York was experiencing. In addition to its impact on the FIRE sector, corporate flight was also devastating for New York City’s would-be tourism industry, since it undercut its competitive position in luring business travelers to the city. Foreign visitors to New York were on the rise, particularly from the U.K. and Japan, but this was not enough to compensate for the overall loss from business travel, which was emerging as the most lucrative piece of the tourism economy nationally.¹⁴ Meanwhile, New York was already at a major disadvantage in attracting this segment on a number of grounds: it didn’t have a good convention center, its hotel tax was among the highest in the country, and the discounts and travel packages it could provide business travelers were less than those of cities with better funded CVB’s. What New York had long depended upon to overcome this disadvantage, as Wolfgang Quante points out, was its “executive ambiance”—i.e. the perception of the city as an unequalled site of deal making, networking and entertainment.¹⁵ But now, with so many New York City-based corporate giants racing each other out of town, and so many new downtown office towers standing empty, the city’s reputation as a place to *schmooze* in hotel lobbies was also evaporating.

And so, having learned from their counterparts in DATO, the local real estate and tourism moguls of the CVB wanted to turn to marketing. In addition, they saw that while tourism and FIRE were declining precipitously, the same was not true for media and marketing

which, overall, were still growing in this period [See TABLE 3.1]. To be sure, certain segments of each were declining, consistent with the rest of the economy. Printing and publishing laid off 15% or over 18,000 of its workers, and shut down 12% of its shops, as part of its decades-long contraction caused by new technologies, foreign competition, and the city and state's policies of deindustrializing Manhattan where most of the industry was based. Advertising, which was consolidating in this period, and losing some big contracts, laid off over 10,000 workers, or 21% of its total workforce, and lost 5% of its firms. But meanwhile, television, radio, and news services added 24% more jobs and 46% more firms, while market consulting and P.R. added 23% more workers and 16% more establishments. This would have been substantial growth in any period, but the fact that it was occurring at a time of recession and decline in almost every other economic sector indicated that something else was happening. In the case of the media, this was the continued strength and expansion of the industry nationally and internationally, from which New York, as broadcasting center, was benefiting. And in the case of marketing and PR, this was the fact that struggling industries of all kinds were buying to their services in the hopes of surviving the downturn and gaining a competitive edge.

**TABLE 3.1: Decline in Tourism, Media, & Marketing (TMM)
in New York City, 1967-1972: Establishments and Employment***

Industry	1967		1972		% change 1967-72	
	establish- ments	employed	establish- ments	employed	establish -ments	employed
Total NYC private sector	201,486	3,225,740	173,470	3,141,599	-14	-2.6
Total TMM	11,413	303,099	10,897	273,323	-4.5	-9.8
Tourism						
Hotels & Motels	1,029	43,341	787	37,345	-24	-14
Amusement & Rec.	1,676	25,751	1,540	21,539	-8	-16
Total Change					-16	-15
Media						
Printing & Publishing	4117	123,711	3,607	105,430	-12	-15
Radio, TV, News	59	15,643	83	19,372	+46	+24
Motion Pictures	1036	22,357	1,104	21,946	+7	-1
Total Change					+41	+8
Marketing						
Advertising	1,341	44,649	1,278	34,264	-5	-21
Consulting &P.R.	2,155	27,647	2,498	33,427	+16	+23
Total Change					+11	+2

* Sources for 3.1 and 3.2: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1967: "Census of Manufactures." Jan. 1971; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census: "County and City Data Book" 1972. Note: Revenue refers to gross revenue, and is sometimes referred to as "value of shipments" and sometimes as "receipts." Advertising does not include direct mail advertising.

**TABLE 3.2: Changing Revenue of Tourism and Marketing
in New York City, 1967-1972, in Dollars**

Industry	1967	1972	% Change 1967-72
Hotels, Motels, Tourist Courts	534,269	443,807	-17
Amusement & Recreation Services Includes motion pictures	1,875,308	1,664,275	-11%
Advertising & Marketing Services^a	4,372,794	4,622,986	+6

Thus it seemed only natural to the members of the CVB that media and marketing, clearly emerging as some of the city's most powerful industries, would be able to solve their problems, much as they were doing for other sectors of the economy. To do this however, they couldn't just emulate the struggling car and cigarette companies, and market individual products —i.e. their hotels or theaters or office buildings— since all of these were dependent on the image of the city as a whole. For this kind of city marketing, they assumed the state government, and in particular the Department of Commerce [DOC], would assist them, as states were doing for cities elsewhere in the country, particularly in the Sunbelt. Charles Gillette, the new Vice President, had long called on them to lend public support to sustained marketing campaigns, and not just the temporary city marketing that DATO had provided. But, as it turns out, the DOC was in no position to lend such support.

New York State Economic Development in Disarray

While the image and economy of New York City had entered desperate straits by the early 1970's little was being done at the State level to address the situation. The State's main economic development agency, whose job it was to deal with problems of corporate flight, deindustrialization, and declining competitiveness, was the DOC. The DOC was created in 1934, at the height of the nation's Great Depression, along with the U.S. Department of Commerce, and similar agencies in other states. The aim of a state's DOC was work in coordination with the federal DOC with all cities and regions in the state, as well as with the private sector, to stimulate economic growth through the development of already existing industries, the attraction of new industries, and the expansion of international trade. Its tools to do this were direct state aid, tax incentives, training and advising, and advertising. Yet none of these tools were being put to use effectively by New York State on behalf of the New York City. From the perspective of city leaders, the DOC was largely unconcerned with the fate of New York City relative to other cities and regions in the state, and in any case it was wedded to such outmoded economic development strategies that it would be of little use to the City, even if it wanted to be.

This was primarily because, while the national and global economy were undergoing major restructuring, and with them the economy of New York City and State, DOC's approach to economic development had changed little since its inception. It slightly reorganized its operations in 1959, in the wake of a brief recession, shifting some of its resources toward a "Hard Sell Industrial Development Program." This program aimed advertising and incentives at the manufacturing sector, thereby hoping to encourage existing industry to expand and new industry to

locate in the State. As for other industries, the overall “philosophy” of DOC was that “other businesses [would] locate, on their own, in a manufacturing based economy to provide retail, wholesale, finance, and other essential services.”¹⁶

By the late 1960’s and early 1970’s, the State’s fortunes were declining rapidly, and its economic development approach was turning out to be extremely ineffectual, if not damaging. Not only was it not retaining or attracting new manufacturing to the state, the state was losing these industries in droves. And while services were emerging as the driving force of the national economy, the DOC’s assumption that this sector would naturally seek to locate in the state was proving to be false. As a State Comptroller’s audit of the agency complained in 1974, since 1970 the State had fallen far behind in its competitive position *vis a vis* other states:

New York State at one time was the industrial hub of the Nation. Notwithstanding the Department’s efforts, recent economic indicators show that the State’s position of leadership is being challenged or has been surpassed in some economic sectors by other states. The State’s population has stopped growing. The State’s share of personal and per capital income has fallen as compared to the Nation, [and] growth in nonagricultural employment, particularly in manufacturing, has lagged behind the nation.¹⁷

The Outmoded Department of Commerce

You wouldn’t have known about New York City or State’s desperate situation from the DOC’s own, remarkably upbeat *Annual Report* of 1971. Under Commerce Commissioner Neal L. Moylan, the DOC saw itself as “an ‘action’ agency in which every staff and supporting unit zeroed in on results which are reflected, not in studies or proposals, but in dollar-and-cents terms of profits, payrolls, and revenues. In short: the Commerce Department is a ‘profit making’ unit of the State government.” It trumpeted the

“Highlights” of its profits in each of its major divisions in the eight opening pages of the report: \$7.9 million in state tax revenue from Travel; \$7.1 million from Industrial Development; \$4.5 million from International Commerce; \$0.8 million from its Job Incentive Program; for a grand total of \$20.3 million in new development, or from their perspective, pure profit.¹⁸ And yet this profit was coming in at a time when New York City, the economic engine of the State, was losing an average of 100,000 jobs annually, which was not mentioned.

The main factor to which the DOC attributed its successes in each division was “an effective advertising program to attract new industry and to aid in the expansion of existing industry in the State.” This was mainly focused on “Industrial Development,” and the “Hard sell Campaign” created in 1959. Yet, as the Report revealed, this campaign consisted mainly in a single New York State advertising section in the December issue of *Fortune Magazine*. Nonetheless, the DOC boasted:

[The special section was] a comprehensive wrap-up of the advantages for industrial location and expansion in New York, as well as of the State’s quality of living advantages... The impressive section was devoted to New York and the available reprints are being used by the Department to promote the State in the “Hot War” among the various states for economic activity, meaning production industries, services industries, research and development labs, and corporate headquarters... For an investment of \$9,320, the State benefited from \$226,700 worth of premium space in this prestigious publication, a “return” of 2,400 per cent on the “investment.”¹⁹

Similarly, in the case of the DOC’s other main divisions, advertising was seen to play a pivotal, almost magical role. “International Commerce” reported \$130 million in export sales, and then explained this vaguely by saying only: “The department’s success in obtaining the many thousands of new sales opportunities for the State’s industry can be

attributed to its aggressive overseas advertising campaign.” As for “travel promotion,” the department reported 1971 as “one of the best years ever for the New York State travel industry, estimated to generate \$3.6 billion per year in income for business and individuals. Tax revenue directly generated by its travel promotion program is estimated at \$7.9 million.” It backed up this unexplained figure with dramatic statistics from the sales of a “Vacationlands” travel brochure:

It was estimated that each \$1 invested in the printing and distribution of “Vacationlands” resulted in spending of \$145 in New York State by tourists. \$7.20 returned through sales, liquor, tobacco, and gasoline taxes. A 7.2 to 1 return on funds invested is certainly exceptional in State government. This does not take into account the extra tax revenue generated by increased personal and business taxes which result from a growing travel business. A study of the 1971 distribution Of 1.5 million copies of “Vacationlands” established the economic value of that distribution at \$158.7 million.²⁰

This DOC *Annual Report*, and subsequent, remarkably similar reports by the DOC from 1972-4 revealed that New York State followed what appeared to be the prevailing approach to proving the economic impact of advertising and tourism, as represented by USTS and DATO.²¹ First, it showed the extent to which marketing, and in particular tourism marketing, was seen to constitute a new form of almost ‘free money’ for economically depressed and competitively disadvantaged areas—even as these areas continued to decline. And secondly, it used a wide a range of statistical data to “prove” the importance of tourism and marketing—so much so that the number of vacation brochures sold, now called “media coverage,” could be used to indicate supposed tourism receipts, and then hypothetical tax revenues generated by those receipts.

Although the Comptroller's Office accepted "media advertising," as "the backbone of the promotional programs for industrial development, trade development and travel," it argued that DOC was not backing up this advertising with credible "research." In the section on travel promotion, the audit put it bluntly:

The Department fosters the development of the tourist industry in the State through advertising and by publishing and distributing travel literature. The effectiveness of the travel promotion could not be measured because travel research was inadequate. We recommended that the Department intensify its research efforts to determine the results of its travel programs.

It was not that DOC was completely ineffective. The Comptroller noted that "a continuous year-round publicity campaign with newspapers, magazines, radio and TV is conducted through a news release program." Yet there was no data to show that these news releases, which consisted of typed announcements of the Department's accomplishments, had been "used by the media to any appreciable extent." They thus recommended that "coordination between the Department's travel promotion editors and newspaper and magazine editors be improved to develop more newsworthy travel articles." As for the vaunted *Vacationlands* and *Ski New York* annual guides, "[their] contents remain relatively unchanged year to year," and, if anything, "they should be published less frequently, [e.g.] every 2 years."

Overall, the Comptroller's audit seemed to indicate that, from their perspective, New York's DOC was not doing enough in its marketing to follow DATO's lead, whether in terms of media campaigns or research to back them up. This, they conceded, was due in large part to the cutbacks they had incurred in their budget for advertising funding in 1970-1: from about \$1.9 million to \$1.3 million, or of about one third of their budget.

Moreover, inflation reduced the purchasing power of the advertising dollar while “other states and Canada have been competing more actively for New York State based business and tourists.” This made it all the more important “that the department use the available funds most efficiently.” To do this they advised three things. First, “evaluation techniques for advertising should be improved.” Second, since “inquiries attributable to advertising have not increased appreciably,” they should move beyond the two agencies they had used for a decade and solicit proposals “from additional advertising agencies to obtain fresh ideas and approaches.” And, finally, “market coverage should be considered when selecting media which promote the tourist attractions of the State” and should be based on “better use of data generated by the division of research and statistics.” While New York entered a severe recession, DOC was being told to devote its energies to becoming a professional marketing arm of the State.

Anti New York City Bias

The second major concern about DOC voiced by the Comptroller’s report, and echoed by the CVB and the Mayor’s Office, was the lack of attention paid to New York City. This, it might be argued, was no simple oversight, but indicated a larger bias on the part of the State. New York City had long been recognized—ever since its rise as an international commercial center in the early 1700’s— as the “engine” of economic growth for the rest of New York State, and as the “bellweather” of the State’s future fortunes.²²

Nonetheless, the relationship between Albany, the State capital, and New York City had also long been an acrimonious one, fraught by a range of political, economic, and cultural differences. Generally speaking, there was a feeling in Albany that New York City, and

the “downstate” political and economic machines, had an inordinate amount of power, which they used to support a population —made up mostly of working class, Italians, Jews, Irish, blacks and Latinos— that did not reflect the rest of the largely rural and suburban, middle class, WASP population of the State. Meanwhile, New York City officials were angered by the imbalance in the amount of assistance it received from the State government —25% of the overall budget—versus the amount the city paid Albany in the form of taxes —over 40% of the total tax receipts, reflecting both its greater economic activity as well a population that constituted over 30% of the State’s total population.

Indeed, according to critiques and recommendations found in repeated annual audits of the New York State Comptroller’s Office, DOC was doing next to nothing of significance in New York City to staunch the outflow of corporate headquarters, industry and jobs, or to increase tourism. This was due mainly to DOC’s lack of coordination with New York City agencies like the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the CVB.

DOC’s main unit dealing with New York City economic development affairs was known as Metropolitan Area Operations. This unit had initiated a “Headquarters Program” in 1970 to stem the out-migration of corporate headquarters from Manhattan. Yet according to the Comptroller’s audit, the program had done little more than conduct a survey of why CEO’s chose to leave, doing no follow-up to stop them from doing so. Noting that New York City “has lost over 30 corporate headquarters” since the Headquarters

Program was started in 1970, it recommended that the division “review the headquarters program to determine how it can be made more effective,” and strengthen “follow ups of prospect for location.” No mention was made of the fact that similar surveys and interviews were being conducted by CVB and the EDA at the time, but with no coordination between them.

The critique of the inaction of Metropolitan Area Operations was followed by the admonition that DOC deal with the larger shift in the economy from manufacturing to services. In particular the State’s economic development incentives consisted mainly in promoting the industrial sector:

From 1958 to 1972, New York’s economy moved away from manufacturing, transportation, and public utilities toward the service industries. The Department however does not have an adequate program to promote the growth and development of service industries. Such a program should be established...

The audit’s “number one” recommendation in this regard was: “Improve liaison between DOC’s New York City office and New York City’s Economic Development Administration.” It was found that DOC had resisted efforts to coordinate with city-based economic development agencies in any way. Indeed DOC and EDA were working on related activities —the former was in its “Hard Sell campaign,” the latter was developing industrial parks— but they never communicated. The same was true in Travel Promotion; DOC’s “travel info center” in New York City “does not attract visitors because of location and outside appearance,” and had no contact with the State’s travel center in Albany. This lack of coordination with New York City was combined with a “lack of coordination between departments in data collection, and between state and US

Department of Commerce.” This is corroborated by my own research into the DOC’s market research studies of the 1960’s and early 1970’s, done following USTS guidelines, which showed that no State or federal DOC study had any relation to the economic development of New York City.²³ Indeed, aside from studies conducted by the Port Authority on visitors’ travel patterns, and sporadic reports by the CVB, no significant studies had been done on New York City’s travel market at all throughout the previous decade.

In general the comptroller’s office was concerned that the DOC’s “coverage [was] inadequate,” and recommended that it “improve [its] regional strategy”—a critique that can be interpreted to mean it should stop focusing so intensively on the needs of Albany and its upstate constituency, and pay more attention to the needs of “downstate” as well. To do this, it should take advantage of “chambers of commerce and local industrial development groups”—i.e. create public private partnerships; of the “increased use of industrial facility studies”—i.e. conduct market research; as well as of the new field of “media advertising,” including “direct mailings” and “newsletters to inform business of available services”—i.e. do travel marketing.²⁴ Though DOC was ill prepared to act on these recommendations, impatient private sector groups in New York City were already making plans to take the lead on all of these issues.

The Rise of the Association for a Better New York

We were already losing the ball when [in the 70’s] the credit rating of the City slipped and the public image went south with it. The rest of the world seemed to look upon New York as an urban jungle inhabited by surly, beleaguered natives...On Johnny Carson every night you would hear jokes about muggings in

Central Park. Well, we couldn't move our buildings across the bridges. Our assets are in New York. So I decided to create a civic group.

Lew Rudin²⁵

That's why we formed ABNY – [out of a] desire inherent in Lew to try to do something to improve the lot of the city, and thus the lot of its economy, and thus the lot of the real estate people in the city.

Alton Marshall²⁶

The Role of Lewis Rudin, a New Kind of Booster

By the early 1970's, the influential realtors, hoteliers, and corporate leaders on the board of the New York City CVB were growing increasingly irate. Just as their massive, gleaming office towers and hotels were being completed in downtown and midtown Manhattan, corporations began fleeing the city in droves, and tourists were staying away in ever rising numbers. So far as they were concerned, this was due almost entirely to the city's image crisis —namely, its growing reputation as a pro-labor city unfriendly to business, and as an “urban jungle” unable to control its non-white “natives.” This should be a clear enough problem to address— especially in light of the new tools that had been unveiled at the DATO Pow Wow in the New York the previous year to sell cities and regions like never before. Yet the City and State governments, in the CVB and DOC, weren't acting decisively, or at all, to adopt these tools to counter negative perceptions.

So some CVB members got together to organize their own “civic group,” innocuously called the Association for a Better New York, to take on the task, according to former executive director Mary Holloway, of “cleaning up the image of New York City.”²⁷

The CVB member who was to play the leading role in this image clean-up was Lewis

[Lew] Rudin, CEO of Rudin Management, and ABNY's main founder. In 1967, at the age of only 40, Lew Rudin and his brother Jack had taken over the helm of one of the most powerful family-run real estate empires in New York City. The Rudins owned eight office buildings downtown, mainly in midtown and on the west side of Manhattan, as well as some 5000 residential apartments, all of which the firm both built and managed. His father, Samuel Rudin, a Russian Jew who came to the US in the early 1920's, had built the company from the ground up, following the simple principle that he should "build wherever the Rockefellers owned."²⁸ Thus, he and his sons were as concerned as the Rockefellers were with the worsening fate of the Downtown real estate market in particular, and of the city more broadly, in the early 1970's. As Holloway put it bluntly: "when people didn't sign leases, [the Rudins] got alarmed."²⁹

There was, however, a major difference between father and son in their approach to remedying this problem. Although the elder Rudin believed the family could weather the storm by keeping their heads down and focusing more intently on running the business, Lew Rudin argued they had to do something completely different—to get more involved in high-profile politicking and marketing on behalf of New York City. Leaving aside his having grown up in a more media-savvy generation than his father's, he justified this move as simply being in their "enlightened self interest." Lew Rudin saw the fate of Rudin Management as pegged directly to that of the city, and thus insisted the family business couldn't afford to stand by and watch the city fall apart. This was due to the nature of the real estate business; unlike the holdings of other more footloose corporations, as Lew Rudin said, "We couldn't move our buildings across the bridges."

And if corporations and the upper middle class, who were their main tenants, didn't feel safe walking to the subway at night, there was no way these buildings, or their firm, had any hope of survival. Making matters worse, the Rudins, along with other major real estate families like the Rockefellers and the Tishs, had borrowed heavily and invested the bulk of their assets in the building boom of the late 60's and early 70's. They stood to lose millions of dollars very quickly if they couldn't rent these new units.

Alton Marshall and the Creation of a Public Private Partnership

In 1971 Lew Rudin decided to create and run ABNY, in partnership with a few high-powered associates in the New York real estate and hotel world, and under the guidance of a man with great experience in both the public and private sector —Alton Marshall. Marshall originally came to New York from Michigan to do graduate work in public administration at Syracuse University. Afterward he worked under Governor Thomas Dewey, and then for three terms under Governor Nelson Rockefeller, ultimately as chief of staff. It was as Rockefeller's chief of staff that he first met Lew Rudin, when Rudin came to Albany in 1970 as the youngest member of a real estate industry delegation lobbying against a proposed commercial real estate tax. As Marshall recalls:

[Real estate owners] were afraid the State was going to impose commercial rent control, because the owners had been increasing rent considerably and that was affecting our business community, [who were] considering that when they moved out [of New York City]. So this delegation of gray beards came from the real estate industry to Albany and one was I remember a tall, kind of skinny, fuzzy haired young man in the group. And that was Lew Rudin, representing Rudin Management. The Governor was late to the meeting and had to go on to another meeting, and during the course he sat down with them and got the essence of the meeting. "I have to go," he said, "but Al will be here, and whatever Al says, goes." And so when the Governor walked out I had heard all I wanted to hear, and I said to the group, "there won't be

any commercial rent control.” Well, Lew never could get over that, the thought that anyone could sit there and say it with such certainty. That this was the way it was going to be. He was always very impressed about that.

Soon after this meeting, Marshall came down to New York City, at the behest of Nelson Rockefeller and the Rockefeller Family Fund, to run both the Rockefeller Group and Rockefeller Center, Inc., thus instantly becoming a very important player in New York City real estate. His combination of a background in public administration, high level contacts in government and real estate, and an ability, as Rudin had witnessed, to “cut through red tape,” and circumvent the legislature, in order to get things done for the real estate industry, had indeed greatly impressed Rudin. As soon as ABNY was created in 1971, Marshall was named its Vice-President.

As Marshall and Rudin envisioned it, ABNY would do more than already existing city and state organizations, or private sector lobbying groups, to advocate for those like them, with “sunk investments” in the New York City. ABNY was to form a new kind of “public private partnership”—more enlightened about current marketing and financial practices than out-of-touch government agencies like the DOC, unencumbered by government bureaucracy and procedures, and more coordinated than individual, private sector lobbying firms. It worked proactively to organize the private sector—primarily those in real estate, but also key players in finance, tourism, advertising, and media—to develop a coherent agenda for the city, and then to seek an equal if not greater role than the government in pursuing this agenda.³⁰ To do this, it used invitation-only ABNY meetings to position itself as an “adjunct” to the Lindsay and Rockefeller administrations,

and as a key advisor to the Ford administration in Washington D.C., and thus attempted to shape public policies according to the agenda of ABNY's private sector constituents.³¹

Aside from their desire to stem the tide of corporate move-outs, an important bond shared by Lew Rudin and many of his ABNY associates was their marginal status in the upper echelons of New York deal-making circles due to their ethnic and class backgrounds. Rudin, along with Robert Tisch of Loews Hotels, Allan Tischman of Tischman Realty, and Irving Schneider of Helmsley Spear, had all inherited businesses founded by very ambitious Jewish immigrant fathers who, within a single generation, used savvy real estate investments to launch their families into the ranks of the New York elite.³² As such they represented a *nouveau riche* class within the established, WASP world of New York finance and real estate. This old world was dominated by families like the Rockefellers, Pratts, and Dewinters whose fortunes went back three or four generations, and who were sheltered financially to a great extent by their large, diversified holdings outside of New York City. These families already had their lobbying and networking organizations, from the Regional Plan Association and Chamber of Commerce; to the boards of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Carnegie Hall; to their exclusive social clubs, fraternities, and churches. These organizations were not especially hospitable to Rudin and his friends, whom they saw as “too Jewish,”³³ nor were they necessarily sympathetic to their vision for New York City. Indeed these families, and the people they socialized with, were many of the very people who were only too happy to move out as the city declined, in favor of their palatial estates, country clubs, and more secluded office space in the suburbs.³⁴

Thus ABNY was also created as a social climbing vehicle for the young, non-WASP, aspiring elite. In addition to advancing the business interests of its members, ABNY

provided a new form of cultural capital for the young guard of the real estate world, much like the radical chic parties did for the *culturati*, as described by Tom Wolfe in the pages of *New York Magazine*. While a far cry from the *nostalgie de la boue* of Leonard Bernstein and his clique, ABNY events also served a stratum of *arrivistes* — albeit one far wealthier— by creating a new foothold for them amongst the upper classes. And like Bernstein et al., these ABNY members were not simply striving to imitate the existing elites. For they understood that their position in the increasingly competitive and unstable economy of the 1970's depended to an ever greater extent on a new, combination of influence peddling, cultural capital, and media image—or what *New York* called “playing the New York power game.”

The ABNY Approach: Lobbying Meets Marketing Campaigns

To this end they devised their organization as a vehicle for a “two-pronged approach:” behind the scenes networking, lobbying, and socializing on the one hand, and the very public use of media and marketing on the other.³⁵ The first “prong” involved providing members with unprecedented private access to public officials and other power brokers at the local, state, and federal level. Standard ABNY membership dues cost \$25,000 a year,³⁶ and bought invitations to VIP breakfasts at the Waldorf Astoria, the Plaza, and other major New York hotels (all owned by ABNY members), where a few hundred of the select could hear speeches given by movers and shakers in government and business, and then personally meet with them afterwards. On the “history” page of ABNY’s web site, Rudin explains the “advocacy group’s” beginnings in terms of these breakfast

meetings, saying simply: “We had to change our ways, become user friendly. We decided to bring people here to meet and speak to New Yorkers.”³⁷

This of course greatly benefited the invited V.I.P.’s. First, they were paid thousands and sometimes tens of thousands of dollars to speak—which, for government officials, skirted campaign finance laws, since the money was not paid as a direct campaign contribution. Second, they gained access to important players in New York City, represented by ABNY’s membership —what Rudin called “a cross section of the 300 most important New York entities.”³⁸ And finally, they got a great “photo-op” with big-name New Yorkers, since New York’s-and the nation’s- most important news organizations, like ABC News and the *New York Times*, would invariably cover the speeches they gave at the breakfasts (while politely avoiding coverage of the schmoozing afterwards). As Mary Holloway recalls, this offered a new way for federal government officials to gain media exposure.

In the beginning, no one in D.C. could care less [about ABNY breakfasts]. So they would get Senator Whosie Whatsie to come, and there they would meet the best of New York. People in the news who could make news in a ballroom for breakfast. Everybody in city and state government would be there. People didn’t realize how important media attention was. But that all changed very quickly.³⁹

In turn, doing a favor for the invited officials provided ABNY members with a mechanism to push for the pro-business policies they cared about: tax abatements, the elimination of rent control, the building of a major convention center, and “quality of life” initiatives. As Holloway puts it, political influence worked because these events “merged the social aspect of things with foundations and fundraising.” And, she adds, this was of greatest benefit to Rudin himself, who, as president of ABNY, was the one

directly giving money to the speakers: “[Rudin] would give thousands [of dollars] to a politician – therefore he had access, locally and nationally.” Not surprisingly, Rudin’s history of ABNY on the official website concludes unabashedly: “In addition to creating public forums for policy decisions through these breakfasts and meetings, ABNY has been influential in helping to shape policy behind the scenes.”⁴⁰

One of the public figures ABNY’s breakfast meeting attendees courted most assiduously in their early years was John V. Lindsay, who was then serving his second, embattled term as New York City’s Mayor. Throughout the late sixties, CVB had aggressively lobbied the city and state governments to build a new convention center in Manhattan, without which they claimed the city “stood to lose \$100 million a year in tourism-related business,” based on CVB estimates produced for the 1969 DATO International Pow Wow.⁴¹ This message was reiterated at ABNY’s first-ever breakfast meeting, in February, 1971, at which Lindsay was the keynote speaker. Soon thereafter, in March, 1971, Lindsay issued a statement which reproduced the ABNY and CVB statistics, claiming that the travel industry brought in 16 million visitors annually, and adding: “They spend some \$1.5 billion, which generates approximately \$50 million in tax revenues, creates thousands of jobs, and adds greatly to the reputation and lustre of New York.”⁴²

The Mayor then announced the creation of a new “Office of Travel Industry Assistance” which would offer “promotional, ceremonial, and technical assistance to the travel and hotel industry.” This would exist within the Department of Public Events and give the

industry “a one-stop, direct link with this administration [and] the added strength and resources of the city government in their efforts to promote New York and... assure that tourists who visit the city have an enjoyable stay.” It was to be financed from the existing budgets of the Public Events Department, the EDA, and the Mayor’s Office “so that no new expense to the city will be required.”⁴³ Despite the fact that the Office of Travel Industry Assistance was to be a short-lived, under funded, and largely ineffectual body, and despite the fact that it was not the convention center ABNY members had been fighting for, the Mayor’s action showed the new influence the real estate and tourism industry was gaining over both the city’s economic development policy and rhetoric, through ABNY’s style of public-private partnership.

Alongside ABNY’s breakfast meetings, which raised traditional forms of lobbying to a higher and more effective level, the second “prong” in the ABNY approach involved the New York elite in an altogether new activity: coordinated marketing campaigns. In short, ABNY sought to use the latest in media, marketing, and PR to change the perception of New York from “asphalt jungle” to the greatest city on earth, via its “Big Apple” campaign. There is considerable debate as to the true origins of this nickname for New York —with one camp arguing it was originally a code-name for the forbidden fruit of a certain high-end, 19th century brothel, and another that it was a slang-term invented by a jockey who wanted his horse to think that if he won, he could “take a big bite out of New York.”⁴⁴ Whatever the truth, which likely will never be known, what is clear is that, going back to the city’s origins as a Dutch colony it has been the recipient of innumerable monikers and superlatives, indeed more so than any other city in the country. [See

Appendix] ABNY and the CVB had chosen one of these to elevate above all the others, and used classic marketing techniques in their effort to do so.

In tongue-in-cheek reference to New York's hucksters and boosters of old, Mary Holloway called this element of the operation "smoke and mirrors," while Alton Marshall referred to it as "selling snake oil." And indeed much of ABNY's Big Apple campaign drew on old-fashioned and far from sophisticated marketing techniques —such as calling everything about New York either the "biggest," the "best," or, if possible, both. Alton Marshall [2002] described the general message of the Big Apple campaign:

We had to get together ... to convince people that New York City is a hell of a town. And it's a town you want to stay in. It has more of everything. It has bigger of everything. We have the greatest medical facilities in the world in New York City. Why shouldn't your employees have that available to them? We have the greatest financial center of the world. And so on... We were going to convince, reconvince in some cases, the people. It has the best transportation system in the world. Even when people were complaining about the traffic jams and this and that. We can still sell the biggest and the best. We didn't have the best, maybe, educational system, but we had the biggest. And if necessary we can sell it as the biggest... and point out those aspects of it where it was superior. [For instance] we had more Westinghouse science winners per population than any place in the United States. Right here in the city.

But as significantly, Rudin understood that simply producing positive messages about New York wasn't enough to counter all the negative ones. Along with people like Clay Felker, and with the help of some major figures in the New York advertising world, Rudin anticipated the growing importance of targeted, "lifestyle" marketing, and made use of two key principles then emerging in the industry. First, he understood that messages should be derived from professional market research, leading ABNY to commission a professional study to understand what "quality of life" elements would

keep companies in New York City.⁴⁵ And second, he saw that the distribution and placement of the messages had to be strategically coordinated so they would be pervasive and strong enough to combat negative messages on their own turf and scale—in the increasingly powerful media outlets of lifestyle magazines, national newspapers, and television.

The first location for ABNY's messages was to be in the so-called "Mobil position" of the *New York Times*, i.e. the lower right hand corner of the editorial page —so named because that was where Mobil Oil had placed its editorial-style ads since the 1950's.

Once a week, in 1971-1972, ABNY bought this space for ads that focused on the retention and recruitment of corporate headquarters in New York City, using testimonials from local corporations who had chosen to stay. ABNY would purchase the space for the standard rate of approximately \$20,000, and then resell it to a sponsoring corporation at reduced rate of \$10,000. Each spot would then be underwritten by a local corporation that had not moved out of New York, e.g. Bristol Meyers, whose name would appear at the base of the ad.

In the beginning, the ad copy was created by a Mr. Sam Norman from the public relations firm of Norman, Craig & Kummell. As Mary Holloway says, his ads had a straightforward tone that ranged from "New York —what a city!" and listed elements unattainable outside New York, to "To hell with people who wanted to leave!"

Ultimately, however, Norman, with the help of Rudin's salesmanship, recruited New York City's biggest ad firms, whose CEO's were by now members of ABNY, to donate their time and ideas to the campaign. As Marshall recalled:

In our snake oil sales department we had a man Norman who represented the public relations firms and advertising firms on our board. So one time...we actually got the heads of fourteen of the largest advertising firms in the city to a luncheon. And Lew went into one of his sales pitches, and we got them to cooperate with us [in] giving us free time and free effort in running a whole series of ads to build up New York City. And I recall, we had a real knock down drag out fight, [with them asking] why the hell should they do something for the city? And in a burst of probably too much enthusiasm, we said, 'Look, you wouldn't exist in the form you are now if you were working in Cancikey, Illinois. If your headquarters was in Illinois you wouldn't be B & O. There's no question you'd be

some tiny little local advertising firm. You're big and you've got the jobs you've got because you're in New York and New York is big. And New York makes you and you make New York. So you've got to pay back New York for what it's done for you.' And we got fabulous support from that group that otherwise felt that it was so independent that it didn't need New York.

Under the guidance of this group of advertising and PR people, Rudin got together with other ABNY members to hold high profile "Big Apple" media events that were covered by local and often national news. Responding to the survey data on why companies chose to leave the city, most of these PR events were designed to combat the image of New York as having dirty and crime-ridden streets. In one case, ABNY enlisted legions of corporate employees up and down 5th Avenue, Broadway, and Lexington, to physically sweep in front of their own buildings, allowing ABNY to then claim that 29.6 miles of sidewalk were being swept every morning by "corporations who cared about New York." Another time, as Victor Gotbaum, head of the District Council 37 public employees union remembered, Rudin and Tisch met at 5 a.m. with city sanitation workers and gave them a pep talk and spiffy new uniforms before they went out on their shift. Similarly, to challenge a pervasive notion amongst CEO's that taxicab seats were dirty, Rudin, Tisch, and other ABNY CEO's spent one evening at the Taxi and Limousine Commission's headquarters, personally hand washing the back seats of cabs. They also met with the chiefs of the police department, and in a very public ceremony gave them new, state of the art bulletproof vests, paid for by ABNY members. Most famously, ABNY produced thousands of golden apple lapel pins and cloth stickers and handed them out all over the city wherever businesspeople congregated—at taxi stands at JFK, at the Four Seasons restaurant, on the steps of City Hall, and during the evening commuting hour at Grand

Central Terminal. In addition, they hoped to get the apple image placed prominently on the clothes of TV personalities, to give it wider circulation. Here was one of the first attempts at creating a coordinated brand logo for New York City. As a New York Times account from 1975 relates:

Three years ago the bureau began passing out small Big Apple lapel stickers and, according to officials, they have become something of a worldwide craze. ...Tom Snyder, the New Yorker—he came here a few months ago from Los Angeles—wears a Big Apple on his Channel 4 news show. Alan King, the comedian, Dave DeBusschere, the basketball figure; and Louis Rudin and Preston Robert Tisch, the real estate and hotel executives, all have joined the Big Apple corps of city boosters and pass out the little stickers. Mr. Rudin, who is chairman of the Association for a Better New York, has given away about 4,000 cloth Big Apple stickers, in the three-quarter-inch version that sells for 10 cents a sticker.”⁴⁶

The Next Level: Regulating TV Content

But certainly one of the most ambitious of ABNY’s image clean-up efforts was when they attempted to pressure major New York TV stations into censoring comedy routines on their late night talk shows. As Mary Holloway recalls, Rudin would often lament, “How can we change the image of New York when Johnny Carson’s opening monologue every night is about people getting mugged in central park?” So he decided to take action by going to the station heads themselves, in an effort to get them to censor these monologues in the interest of New York’s economic well-being. As Marshall remembers it:

In those days the comedians, most of whom worked on New York [TV] stations, were having a heyday making fun of New York City and putting it down. ... [So] Lew said, why don’t you and I just go around and visit the heads of all the TV stations.... and see if we can convince these people they’re doing New York City an injustice when they criticize and put it down. And I remember out of that I think we had ten or fifteen meetings. We would take our time off of our regular work and go see these people. We’d say, “Well, comedy was one thing, but why

does it always have to be a comedy that puts New York City in a bad light?" Because this was going out all over the country. And maybe CEO's who were considering coming to New York could have been influenced. And the CEO's that were in New York could use that as general fodder for them to move out of the city. I can remember Lew's often heated discussions with the heads of these broadcasting groups, many of whom he knew. And he would come down with a real wallop and say "You just can't do this to the city. We've got to find a way for them to get their humor from somewhere else. Or at least for someone to say something positive about the city."

We may never know to what extent Rudin's pressure paid off in terms of a decrease in Central Park mugging jokes, or an increase in upbeat New York anecdotes, in talk show hosts' opening monologues. But according to Holloway, in 1973 Mayor Lindsay himself, who was by now a member of ABNY's board, convened a meeting at City Hall with prominent comedians and network heads, asking them to stop "spreading the bad word about New York City."⁴⁷ In addition, he worked to expand the Mayor's Office of TV, Broadcasting and Film in an effort to assist and encourage a more diverse range of representations of the city.⁴⁸ And one of the ways that ABNY could help with this new Office was in expediting clearances and security for location shooting since, as Rudin understood, "one of the most important things producers needed was access to real estate for shoots."⁴⁹

Thus this indicates that ABNY was actually attempting to regulate mainstream media coverage of New York City through television and film. In the grand scheme of course, this was to prove impossible. These network executives may have been based in New York, but since the late 1950's they had been more concerned with what middle-American suburbs considered "normal" and entertaining, than with what New Yorkers considered offensive or unprofitable. And regardless how well New York's economy

was doing, they still were getting lots of business from the rest of the country —as indicated by the growth of their industry in New York City in this period. And in addition, by the end of 1972, “The Tonight Show” with Johnny Carson was to leave for the West Coast, taking with it the last vestiges of live TV programming shot on sound stages in New York City. Now the most damaging thing for New York’s image was not Johnny Carson’s mugging jokes, but his poolside interview with Barbara Walters at his new home in Malibu, talking about his idyllic new west-coast lifestyle. But more significantly, ABNY efforts indicate the direction that this group envisioned: the management and policing of the city’s image, in the same way that brand managers police the identities of products and corporations.

* * *

In many ways, ABNY’s coordinated, two-pronged approach mirrored the “high and low” strategy of *New York* magazine. At the high end were the VIP breakfast meetings in lavish ball-rooms, entailing hob-nobbing and backroom deal-making with the leaders of government, business, and media, and that receiving tasteful photo-ops in the news. At the low end was the mainstream media barrage, entailing populist events in which CEO’s appeared cleaning up the city right alongside cab drivers, sanitation workers, policemen, subway riders, and the hoi polloi. And through it all, Lew Rudin was at the center, whether as behind the scenes power-broker, or the jolly face of the Big Apple campaign. This style was to earn Rudin the moniker of “Mr. New York,” and to change the name of the plaza at 52nd Street and Park Avenue to “Lew Rudin Way,” as this was where Rudin

would walk from his office to the Four Seasons restaurant, “his cafeteria,” networking all the way.⁵⁰ Rudin was very proud of his status as a quasi-statesman. As Alton Marshall characterized Rudin’s perception of himself, paraphrasing Rudyard Kipling: “[Rudin loved the fact that] he could walk amongst kings, but never lose the common touch.”⁵¹ In this sense, the leaders of ABNY, like those of *New York*, were able to exploit notions of the “common” New York experience, lifestyle, and image, in order to advance the narrow interests of their social class, and of their industry.

And so it would seem that Rudin, along with his friends in real estate, finance, advertising, and media, were finally happy about the direction the Big Apple was taking. On April 18, 1974, at the annual board meeting of the CVB at the 21 Club, Robert Tisch, CVB President, and ABNY co-founder, announced: “New York has had a lot of image problems in recent years, but we’ve fought our way back. Our image has changed—or been restored—to that of a city unmatched in the variety of its tourist attractions.” The dubious barometer of the change to which he referred was the hotel occupancy rate, which had crept up from 64.3 percent in 1972 to 66.1 percent in 1973. Though he didn’t mention the fact that this was still significantly lower than the generally accepted break-even point for large hotels in New York City, which was 70 to 75 percent, he did emphasize that it was “considerably higher” than national hotel occupancy rate of 66 percent.⁵² He was trying to be optimistic, optimism being the key element in selling snake oil.

From Financial Crisis to Fiscal Crisis, 1975-1976

When it comes to the circulation of media messages, however much one might try to control how a message is “encoded,” this will never completely correlate with the material, social context in which that message will ultimately be “decoded.”⁵³ Thus, whether or not ABNY’s coordinated image clean-up might have helped restore a degree of confidence in New York among tourists and CEO’s could never be known, since the financial activities of this advocacy group’s members in their *professional* lives were exacerbating the city’s budget deficit, undermining its credit rating, and helping to push its treasury to the brink of bankruptcy. This—in combination with the oil crisis, stagflation, and the Nixon and Ford administration’s politically motivated cut-backs on federal funding to New York City—had led the city to the brink of fiscal crisis.

In the image-sensitive world of tourism and corporate location, fiscal crisis quickly undermined any improvement to the city’s reputation that might have been caused by the Big Apple campaign. And so, in this case, the city’s dire material reality completely overwhelmed the discursive efforts—whether upbeat marketing campaigns or hip lifestyle imagery—made by both ABNY and *New York* magazine. Nonetheless, the political position that groups had carved for themselves—ABNY through its two-tier approach, and *New York* staffers through their broader cultural influence—would assure both a seat at the table, and a role to play, when the dust settled. But for now the fight would be more of a bare-fisted battle between capital, as represented by the crisis regime, and labor, as represented by New York’s municipal unions.

The Onset of the Crisis

From the mid-1960's on, the threat and ultimate reality of corporate flight to the suburbs of neighboring Westchester County, New Jersey, Connecticut, and the Sunbelt, had led ABNY members, and FIRE elites more broadly, to place great pressure on the city to convince big real estate owners, renters, and financiers to stay in New York City by providing them with incentives that the State DOC was unwilling to provide. Much of this pressure was exerted by the States's own governor, Nelson Rockefeller, whose family was one of the largest landowners in Manhattan's downtown and midtown financial districts, and whose brother David was the CEO of the family's Chase Manhattan Bank, New York's preeminent investment bank and mortgage lender. The Rockefellers had a huge stake in maintaining and developing the value of their properties, and also had the political and financial power to protect that stake in the face of, and at the expense of, fiscal crisis.

The drive to provide competitive corporate incentives helps explain the very poorly planned and short-sighted development strategy led by Rockefeller at the state level, and Lindsay at the city level, to shore up New York's real estate market. First they formed quasi-public "local development corporations"(LDCs), which enabled private companies to form financial partnerships with the city and state governments outside normal channels of public oversight.⁵⁴ They then borrowed billions of dollars in the short-term money market to enable these LDCs to get long-term mortgages, in order to finance the

greatest office tower development in the city's history. Over 66 million square feet were built between 1967 and 1973, more than double any similar period between 1960 and 1992.⁵⁵ Most of this development occurred in Manhattan's downtown—in particular with the construction of the World Trade Center's 10 million square feet of office space. This downtown development involved the active deindustrialization of New York's still thriving port district, the elimination of some 30,000 blue collar jobs, and the overall transformation of a unique, historically mixed use district into a global center for the FIRE industry. And, with the conversion in zoning from industrial to grade A commercial real estate, it served to raise real estate prices in the district up to 1000-fold. Yet, as the building boom progressed, mortgage money dried up, as did the entire market for these high end rentals, as more and more corporate tenants were leaving town. This led the extremely powerful coalition of the city's FIRE elites, including the Rockefellers and the Rudins, to lobby the city to continue subsidizing more development via mortgage underwriting and actual rental of the new office space by government agencies.⁵⁶

Though New York made up only 3% of the country's population, during the late 1960's and early 1970's it borrowed nearly half of all the money borrowed for short-term purposes by US cities. This money was used not only to cover the city government's operating expenses, already an extremely problematic practice, but also to make *mortgage payments*. The latter was a highly unorthodox, and risky, use of short-term loans—which explains why New York was alone amongst US cities in borrowing for this purpose. Not only did it contravene generally accepted accounting procedures by

borrowing money to pay mortgages, it was doing so in the amount of *\$3 billion*, equivalent to one quarter of the city's *entire* budget of that period, half of the city's debt, and over three times the size of the city's total budget deficit.⁵⁷

The city's mounting debt was compounded by national and global trends. As mentioned above, New York City's economy was extremely hard hit by the increased global competition of the 1960's, and recession of the early 1970's, tied as both were to the restructuring of all older, industrialized cities.⁵⁸ In addition, given New York's political leanings, it had been the target of extremely harsh policies of fiscal austerity from the Republican Nixon and Ford administrations. Given the increasing mobility of capital, government retrenchment, and looming fiscal crises, cities and corporations had to compete as never before for new sources of revenue. In what some called the rise of the "post-industrial" global city, internationally networked service industries — including FIRE, law, healthcare, media and marketing— began to replace manufacturing and the public sector as cities' economic base.

The problem with this shift was that jobs within these new service industries tended to be "bifurcated" between the very high and very low end of the skill and income spectrum. This imbalance created what many labeled a "jobs-skills mismatch"—i.e. a dearth of skills needed for the new information-based service industries amongst the insufficiently educated resident poor and working class. As a result, cities were rendered far more "divided" and "fractured" along lines of class, education, race and ethnicity than they ever had been. Inner cities were increasingly comprised of poor people of color whose

buying power was far less, and service needs far greater, in terms of education, health, law enforcement, and housing.⁵⁹ And yet, perversely, while greater numbers of urban residents —many of them new immigrants— were dislocated by economic restructuring, and in greater need of public assistance, the public sector was severely cut back. Indeed the combination of a new mode of production and government retrenchment effectively created wholly disenfranchised, “surplus” sectors of the urban population.⁶⁰

The issue of excessive expenditures for the poor, people of color, and union workers was seized upon by a range of critics from conservative to liberal as the fundamental cause of the fiscal crisis. In a host of books with titles like *Lessons of the Lindsay-Wagner Years*, *The Streets Were Paved With Gold*, and *The Cost of Good Intentions*, scholars and journalists blamed the city’s overly generous social spending on public education, housing, welfare, and pensions for city workers.⁶¹ However legitimate these various authors considered the population’s needs for these public goods, they argued that at a time when the state and federal government were “forced” to apply “fiscal discipline” — as Ken Auletta says— the city should have known better than to have caved into to people’s demands, and followed suit. But because Lindsay was such a weak-willed and vacillating mayor, this did not occur. As we shall see, this view became the general consensus amongst those in the city, state, and federal governments, and the private sector, who were charged with the responsibility of overhauling the city’s budget and policy in the wake of the crisis.

Seen from a broader budgetary perspective, however, it was not only, or even primarily, New York's relatively generous social policy and union contracts that created the city's financial squeeze. Rather, in addition to federal retrenchment, budget shortfall was overwhelmingly due to the city's increasing use of "corporate welfare" to placate members of the city's FIRE sector with zoning variances, tax abatements, and outright subsidies of commercial property development. For while other cities across the country were facing mounting deficits as a result of shrinking revenue and increasing need for spending on social welfare, what made New York's crisis *sui generis*, and far more serious, was, as Fisk put it, its "debt-propelled housing program to support the elites."⁶²

And so it was that under the two terms of John V. Lindsay and Nelson Rockefeller administrations, between 1966 and 1974, the city ran up massive amounts of both short and long term debt, and created a huge budget shortfall, as it borrowed to pay operating expenses and make mortgage payments, and not just to fund capital expenditures. Mayor Abe Beame, who had been the city's comptroller under Lindsay, made only modest, and often contradictory, efforts to rectify this situation once he became mayor in 1975.⁶³

Faced, by the early 1970's, with a worsening global recession, investors were no longer interested in participating in the city's increasingly shaky money markets. As a result, major banks, which had already expressed doubts about refinancing city debt in 1974, anticipated a default and sold off all New York City bonds in early 1975.⁶⁴ They then refused Mayor Beame's efforts to have them underwrite future city bonds, placing the bond market completely off limits to the city between 1974 and 1976.⁶⁵

Meanwhile, the city's 1974-5 fiscal-year budget reached \$11.9 billion, second only in size to that of the federal government, and its deficit ballooned to \$726 million.⁶⁶

Without the money even to pay off interest on its debt, the city was pushed near default. In a last-ditch effort, Mayor Abe Beame, accompanied by bankers David Rockefeller and Ellmore Patterson and realtor Lew Rudin, traveled to Washington, D.C., to appeal to President Gerald Ford and Secretary of the Treasury William Simon to provide the city with short term loans. Republicans Ford and Simon argued that any federal assistance would "merely postpone" the inevitable collapse of the city's finances, and its need to face up to its fiscal problems through budget slashing, and flatly turned them down.⁶⁷ In June, 1975, the crisis struck: the city was unable to honor \$792 million in maturing securities and, in all but legal terms, declared bankruptcy.

The Crisis Regime

Once the fiscal crisis emerged full blown in the Summer of 1975, New York's new governor, Hugh Carey, fearing for the entire state's access to credit, and its fiscal future, stepped in to take over the city's affairs. He immediately turned to the Wall Street financiers, CEO's, and realtors, who, anticipating the demise of the city and their own investments, had long been clamoring to become more actively involved in governance—whether through ABNY or through individual relationships with State government. Over the course of the summer, the public and private sectors came together to create new kinds of supra-governmental financial bodies with control over the city's budget, over its latitude to bargain with public sector unions, and, to a significant extent,

over its economic development policy. These bodies included, primarily, the Municipal Assistance Corporation [MAC], the Emergency Financial Control Board [EFCB].⁶⁸

These secretive, quasi-official bodies, in which no more than a dozen leaders of the private sector were charged with a State and ultimately Federal mandate to overhaul the city's finances, were in many ways more powerful than the broader, more media-friendly model of the public-private partnership represented by ABNY. And, as we shall see, over the course of two short years the MAC and EFCB were to seize this power to dramatically shift the priorities of city government from the public to the private sector to an extent that ABNY had only wished it could. Nonetheless, some of the major beneficiaries of the new level of private sector strength were the city's public-private partnerships, including ABNY and, ultimately, the New York City Partnership [NYCP] founded by David Rockefeller in 1979. For while the MAC and the EFCB were too small to contain all the members of ABNY and NYCP, the board members of MAC and the EFCB all sat on the boards of ABNY and NYCP, and were more accessible, and amenable to their philosophy than the wide range of officials in the State government.

As both detractors and financiers active in this period have acknowledged, these extremely powerful, non-elected bodies created a "permanent government" of the city's elites.⁶⁹ Following that metaphor, ABNY and the NYCP positioned themselves as a kind of legislature to the MAC and the EFCB's executive branch. Together, these groups fought for pro-business and anti-social welfare policies, and echoed each other's calls for the imposition of "austerity" measures as a means of disciplining the city government and

municipal unions.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, as they struggled to turn the city towards a path of fiscal recovery, they either ignored or denied that the city's practices of corporate welfare had been at all to blame for its troubles, and so they did not include their own sector in their calls for austerity.

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The first official supra-governmental body created was MAC—or “Big MAC” as it became known—in spring 1975. Governor Carey, drawing on advice from a group of prominent bankers and corporate executives, most notably investment banker Felix Rohatyn, devised MAC as a temporary financial institution which could overcome bureaucratic hurdles in order to provide the city with cash it needed to pay off its debt and meet operating expenses.⁷¹ MAC was authorized by the state legislature in early June 1975 to sell up to \$3 billion in bonds, using the proceeds to retire city notes. To defray risk faced by buyers, the MAC board—made up of an even smaller group of bankers, brokers, realtors, and business leaders—was given control over city sales and stock transfer taxes. If the board didn't feel the city was taking sufficient or appropriate steps towards reforming its budgetary practices, they could refuse to lend to the city, and hold these vital tax proceeds in arrears.⁷² At a time of fiscal crisis, this obviously gave the MAC and its board overwhelming leverage over city's affairs. However, this power was contingent upon the MAC being able to sell off the city's bonds, a task which was by no means easy.

Over the course of the summer and fall of 1975, Mayor Beame followed MAC directives to the letter, imposing austerity measures on the city, which forced deep cuts in municipal wages and services, and undermined the gains made by municipal workers, welfare rights advocates, and the working class more broadly over the previous two decades.⁷³ New York City's working class communities had already begun to unravel with the loss of the bulk of the city's unionized manufacturing jobs to deindustrialization in the sixties, which culminated in the loss of 600,000 manufacturing jobs from New York between 1965 and 1975, or over 25 percent of all such jobs in the city.⁷⁴ But now, with the austerity cuts, the rate—if not the overall numbers—of public sector unemployment began to rival those in the private sector. This was because the massive reduction in city spending demanded by the MAC was mainly met through the elimination of city jobs, primarily the layoffs of 25,000 city employees over three years.⁷⁵ When one includes jobs lost through attrition during this period, the city actually cut over 63,000 jobs, or 25 percent of total number of city jobs, between 1975 and 1980.⁷⁶ This included a three-year, 17 percent reduction in the police force, 16 percent cut in firefighting personnel, and over 25 percent layoffs in such “nonessential” services as health, higher education, and parks.⁷⁷

As these cuts began to go into effect, there were massive and increasingly radical protests by city unions, culminating with 10,000 angry members of DC 37, the city's largest public sector union, holding a mass lunchtime rally in front of Citibank's downtown headquarters. While serving to terrify Rohatyn, and Citibank CEO Walter Wriston, the rally did nothing to turn the tide of austerity. To the contrary, soon thereafter, the

leadership of the most important public sector unions, namely DC37's Victor Gotbaum, the UFT's Albert Shanker, and the sanitation workers' John deLury, having made a grand display of their militant backing, were enticed to sit down at the table and aid MAC in its project. And so it was that by August, MAC had drafted a financial plan that included a wage freeze and more layoffs for city workers, a transit fare hike for the MTA, the imposition of tuition at the City University, limits on rent control, and cuts in welfare benefits -- with Gotbaum marshaling it all through, against the will of his membership.⁷⁸ Many of these cuts saved the city little to no money, but were nonetheless seen as an essential form of "political symbolism," letting organized labor and the working class know in no uncertain terms that their days of major influence were over.⁷⁹

To ensure that these new cutbacks were put into effect, political control shifted to another new agency, the EFCB. Here elected officials —the mayor, governor, city and state comptrollers— had a nominal majority, but were subject to veto power by the three so-called "public" bank and corporate representatives, including: Rohatyn; William Ellinghouse, CEO of New York Telephone; and David Margolis, CEO of Colt Industries.⁸⁰ This group gained control over city revenue, had a mandate to develop a financial plan for the city, was given broad powers to reject city spending and labor contracts, and was even authorized to remove the Mayor and other elected officials if they defied EFCB policies. It seemed that the economic development legislation being pushed by the EFCB was to consist completely of these private sector opinions until, at the last minute Governor Carey reached out for labor support, making the calculation that this would aid in getting the bill passed by a Democratic legislature. DC37's

Gotbaum led other leaders in supporting the EFCB bill in exchange for two concessions: collective bargaining would continue, and attrition would be used before layoffs in workforce reduction. While Gotbaum won the first concession (which was of dubious value, according to labor critics), they lost the second, and the city laid off 8,000 teachers and paraprofessionals at the end of summer of 1975.⁸¹

Yet despite all these labor concessions and cutbacks, by early fall it was clear there was nothing the city, MAC, or EFCB could do to attract sufficient capital through bond sales to prevent the city's default. Again, a group of influential bankers, realtors, and politicians came to Washington to apply pressure. Among them was Lew Rudin, who had come up with a novel strategy of having major corporate tenants pay their real estate taxes at the beginning of the fiscal year, rather than the end, thus making hundreds of millions of dollars available to the city.⁸² But again, while commending MAC, EFCB, and Rudin personally for their initiatives, Treasury Secretary Simon opposed any "city bailout," and instead

supported the city's default. By early September, he had the Treasury Department develop a plan that essentially anticipated the city's bankruptcy, and then immediately gave legal authority to the federal government, on the one hand, to compensate the major banks, and on the other, to void municipal union contracts and overhaul the city's governance structure. According to his memoirs, his only two priorities for this plan were: "avoiding civil unrest, and preserving confidence in the financial structure, particularly the banking system."⁸³ President Ford accepted the proposition that bankruptcy was the way for the city to regulate its finances, letting it be known he was

“prepared to veto any bill that has as its purpose a Federal bailout of New York City to prevent default.” The following day, the *Daily News* ran its most famous, blunt, and basically accurate headline: “FORD TO CITY: DROP DEAD.”

The Union Bailout

At that point there was a shift, now famous in city lore, to using the public-sector union’s own pension funds to “save the city” by buying its unsellable bonds—in the amount of \$2.5 billion invested over a 2.5 year period. In a deal brokered by Jack Bigel, the labor lawyer in charge of the city unions’ pension funds, the threat facing the unions if they refused to give up the money was that the city would go broke. While some in labor thought this scenario would be preferable to taking such a risk with the hard-earned retirements of 350,000 workers, Bigel convinced the leadership that all the contracts they had negotiated with the city would become null and void if the city defaulted, and they would get no sympathy from the public in future negotiations, because they would see the city’s bankruptcy as the unions’ fault.

The effort to convince the city unions to contribute their pension funds had actually begun during, and accelerated after, the failed negotiations with the federal government in spring 2005. Now the unions had much less leverage, and were far less willing to risk a stalled negotiation. And with 13,500 layoffs, Gotbaum and Shanker vetoed the idea of a general strike, their major weapon. Again, this went against the will of a large segment of their increasingly radicalized membership. But the unions consented to the pension

bail-out, and the immediate crisis was averted, with the Federal Government agreeing to match the unions' contribution, giving New York \$2.3 billion in "seasonal loans."⁸⁴

Ford recalled this settlement in a recent interview.⁸⁵ In addition to failing to mention the role played by the city unions, his tone gives some indication of his disdainful attitude towards the city unions, and the city itself, at the time:

The Mayor and the council were much too generous in pay increases for city employees, with all the retirement benefits. The Mayor and governor came down to see if Uncle Sam could bail them out. Simon had [been] tough on those New York people. We came to a responsible conclusion where the federal government would, at the beginning of the New York fiscal period, loan them money, and in the end they would pay us back.⁸⁶

In striking this historic deal, however, union retirements were placed at enormous risk. As Bigel himself was to admit 20 years later: "We shot craps with the assets of 350,000 pension fund members."⁸⁷ Meanwhile, this risk was in no way shared by the wealthy private sector financiers who proposed the deal in the first place, and who themselves played next to no role in buying the city's devalued bonds. Problematically, the public sector unions were put in the politically compromised position of being the creditors to their employers in city management.⁸⁸ As Joshua Freeman points out:

City workers, having won through hard battle a massive accumulation of capital to ensure secure lives in their old ages, now saw that money being used to allow some of the world's richest institutions to disinvest from New York City. By the spring of 1978, the six major NY banks had less than 1% of their assets in city paper, while the city pension funds had 38% of their assets so invested... Though periodic crises arose over the next several years, in a wild season of capitalist creativity the banks, state government, and financial community, had found a way to retrieve the money investors had lent to New York City, in the process stripping the city government, the municipal labor movement, and working-class New Yorkers of much of the power they had accumulated over the previous three decades. The result could be seen on every street corner and in every institution of working class New York.⁸⁹

Whether out of pragmatic or self serving motivations, or both, union leadership, working with the corporate-led boards of the crisis regime, forced their members to reverse political course, bringing to a sudden end the post-war tradition of public sector labor activism. The post-fiscal crisis period was then to usher in a neo-liberal era of accommodation with city management, or what became known as a “corporatist” labor strategy. This era, as we shall see, was to involve even greater demands for austerity by the city’s working class, the rapid deterioration of inner city neighborhoods, rising social unrest, and a New York City image crisis the likes of which had never been seen before.

* * *

Before moving on to that better known, post-1975 period of crisis and restructuring, this chapter has sought to establish that it was in the years between 1967 and 1975 that New York City experienced its first financial and image crisis and, in response, its first entrepreneurial, marketing-oriented shift. It was in this period that the “corporate exodus” and overdevelopment of high end commercial real estate, particularly in downtown Manhattan, sent both the tourism and FIRE industries—including advertising and media services—into a tail-spin. And it was in this context that these industries came to recognize their shared vulnerability to negative imagery of New York City as an “asphalt jungle,” and their common interest in gaining the greatest possible control over media representations of the city.

Understanding that they couldn't do this alone, and that the city and state economic development agencies were floundering, they established the city's first public-private partnership, ABNY, and, in collaboration with CVB, launched what may be considered the city's first professional, coordinated, city branding campaign. The campaign used the latest techniques in tourism and market research, took advantage of multiple forms of mass media and PR, and re-branded the "Big Apple" icon for a new generation of tourists and corporate executives. Meanwhile, behind these high profile scenes, ABNY developed a new vehicle for networking and social climbing, as well as for lobbying public officials on a range of pro-business issues. These included: lower taxes, the elimination of rent control, public involvement in city marketing, enforcing labor union discipline, and the use of public funds for business friendly infrastructural developments, in particular a new convention center. While these strategies were to prove inadequate to confront the enormity of the fiscal crisis, ABNY nonetheless laid the groundwork for the direct participation in New York City governance by real estate, financial, tourism and media elites, and for future, larger scale, publicly funded city branding campaigns.

¹ See e.g.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1962, 1964, and 1967.

² Judd, 2003, 4.

³ NATO was established as an unincorporated non-profit association with no paid staff. See Travel Industry Association of America (2001), 1.

⁴ *ibid*, 1.

⁵ See e.g.: Lansing and Lilienstein, 1955. Lansing conducted the same nationwide travel market survey with a variety of co-authors every year between 1955 and 1965. See also, e.g.: Lansing and Blood, 1964. These extremely broad studies focused on the "demand side" of the equation, which was what Katona's classic consumer research model was geared to measure. In the early 1960's the Travel Research Association began working with the Business Research Division of the University of Colorado, in an apparent shift towards studies of the "supply" side of the question, also at a very macro level. See e.g.: L.J Crampon, 1964a and 1964b.

⁶ See: USTS, 1962

⁷ U.S. Department of Commerce, 1962, 1964, and 1967. *ibid*.

⁸ For compendia of these numerous studies, see Goeldner, 1967, and Goeldner and Dicke, 1971, Vols I-III.

⁹ See Reilly, 1980. p 69. According to this travel marketing textbook, Ogilvy and Mather took out a full page add in the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* in which they expounded on what they had learned about "writing travel copy that sells." They refer to the USTS campaign, in terms of their discovery that European tourists traveling to the U.S. were much more interested in visiting distinctive U.S. cities like

New York City, than they were in U.S. mountains and beaches, which were much like their own. Their advertising campaign, however, did not necessarily convince the Europeans of the distinctiveness of these places.

¹⁰ Shuster, 1969. In 1961, a law called the International Travel Act, signed into law by President John F. Kennedy, created the USTS, thus ensuring that both Congress and the Administration maintain an official travel promotion office. In 1981, the National Tourism Policy Act was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan, setting forth for the first time a national tourism policy for the U.S., and creating the U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration, which replaced the USTS, to carry out the federal policy.

¹¹ Despite CVB claims of a dramatic rise in tourism numbers, 1969 numbers were similar to those in 1967, which may have been caused by spillover from the Expo 67 in Montreal. See: Phillips, 1967.

¹² Adams, 1969. This dual emphasis on the production of data and marketing was to continue into the 1970's. In 1972, DATO established the US Travel Data Center. Standardization of techniques. International focus. 1975, first Travel Marketing Outlook Forum was held. In 1976 National Council of Urban Tourism Organizations was formed. It was to be an era of expanding tourism and marketing. The only domestic industry that couldn't flee overseas. Another important development of 1974 that impacted expanded international tourism was the invention of a computerized process of arranging pre-scheduled business appointments, which greatly expanded business opportunities between U.S. suppliers and international buyers. See: Travel Industry Association of America, 2001, 2.

¹³ The same it should be noted was not true of other tourist cities, particularly in the Sunbelt. New York City Convention and Visitors Bureau, 1977.

¹⁴ Travel Research Association, 1970.

¹⁵ Quante, 1976.

^α Does not include direct mail advertising.

¹⁶ New York State Comptroller's Office, 1974. p 1.

¹⁷ Ibid. p 2. The Audit cites US Census Bureau statistics to back up these claims, e.g.: "According to US Census Bureau, the State lost 224,500 manufacturing jobs from 1958-1972. The New York City area, where most of the manufacturing establishments are located, has incurred the greatest loss. The City also had the slowest rate of growth among all the economic regions in the State. These trends continued in 1973."

¹⁸ New York State Department of Commerce, 1971. p.1-8. Emphasis in original.

¹⁹ *ibid*

²⁰ *ibid*, emphasis in original.

²¹ New York State Department of Commerce, 1972-3, 1973-4,

²² See Janet Abu Lughod, 1999.

²³ According to Goeldner's bibliographies of tourism studies at the State level, (1967 and 1971, v II) of the three studies conducted by the DOC, none dealt with the New York City market.

²⁴ New York State Comptrollers, 1971, part IV.

²⁵ ABNY's web-history ABNY, 2002.

²⁶ Alton Marshall interview for Lew Rudin documentary. Tupelo Honey Productions. December 17, 2001.

²⁷ Author interview with Mary Holloway interview, March 30, 2003. Mary Holloway was executive director of ABNY for thirty years, resigning in 2002.

²⁸ *Ibid*.

²⁹ *Ibid*.

³⁰ As Alton Marshall said (*ibid*), "[There was] a recognition that we were not just about trying to convince the government to do everything... the public sector could work with the private sector and the private sector had equal responsibility. As a matter of fact, I think you'll find that in the thrust of ABNY, what developed was a sense that if anything the private sector had to take on more and more responsibility—sometimes more than the public sector was able to take on."

³¹ Alton Marshall (*ibid*) brought up this point when discussing ABNY's approach to devising "quality of life" policy for the city. He contrasted this private sector-led approach in the early 1970's to that of the Giuliani Administration in the 1990's: "Mayor Giuliani grabbed onto those quality of life things, and he did it from a public sector approach. What we were doing was primarily a private sector approach with the

assistance of the government. And we started with John Lindsay when he was Mayor. And we were an important adjunct to his administering the city.” This contrast will be discussed in the next chapter.

³² Alton Marshall and Mary Holloway, both WASP’s, are two important exceptions. Indeed, it is interesting that they were chosen to be the public face of ABNY, accompanying Rudin to all major events, meeting the press, etc.

³³ Alton Marshall (2001) recalls: “I remember one time, [Rudin] and I and Rex Tompkins—and both Rex and I are gentiles— went down to see the heads of thirteen commercial banks at J.P. Morgan’s headquarters. And we went in and made our pitch that they should join ABNY. That they should get into this program of doing what we could do about things that ought to be corrected. And telling everybody about the wonderful things that New York City still had that nobody else in the world had. And we got a very cool reception. And the next day I called Lew, and I said ‘Lew, what happened?’ And Lew said, ‘Oh, we were too Jewish.’ I said, ‘It was two to one.’ And he said ‘Well, they thought we were too Jewish.’”

³⁴ Mary Holloway, in her interview with the author, recalled how: “Rudin, along with Allan Tischman and Irving Schnieder initially approached the old Chamber of Commerce, the old organization founded downtown by Alexander Hamilton. They wanted to create a movement against rent control on commercial real estate [which was then being proposed by the State legislature]. But they found that the leadership [of the Chamber of Commerce] was made up of the same guys who were leaving,” and they were not interested.

³⁵ Alton Marshall described the approach as “two-pronged” in his interview.

³⁶ While this was the standard membership paid, Mary Holloway noted that there was a sliding scale for “a few members,” such as public universities, that paid \$2,500.

³⁷ ABNY, 2002.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Holloway, *ibid.*

⁴⁰ ABNY, *ibid.*

⁴¹ Adams, *ibid.* Adams’ article describes the annual luncheon of the CVB board at New York Hilton. Preston Robert Tisch, CVB president, president of Loews Theatres, Inc., and owner of the New York Hilton, spoke first, commenting: “More people visit New York than any other city in the world. This explains why tourism is second only to the garment/fashion industry as an income producer.” The next speaker was Mayor Lindsay, who said that “tourism is of prime importance to us” and urged business concerns to support the CVB as “a terribly good investment.”

⁴² Office of John V. Lindsay, March 1, 1971.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Popik, 2004. The self proclaimed authority on the history of the “Big Apple” moniker is local historian Barry Popik. His website details this debate: see www.barrypopik.com.

⁴⁵ Reported to me by Mary Holloway.

⁴⁶ *New York Times*, March 27, 1975, 65.

⁴⁷ Holloway, *ibid.*

⁴⁸ The Office of Television, Broadcasting, and Film was officially created in 1966..

⁴⁹ Holloway, *ibid.* According to Holloway, Rudin’s wife at the time had been married to a movie producer, and so he knew a lot of other TV and movie producers through her. As a result, many producers would try to use Rudin to “get to the mayor” in order to get the clearance and security assistance they needed to use prominent locations for shoots—a process that could be fraught with corruption, require bribes, etc. The Office of Television, Broadcasting, and Film helped streamline this process.

⁵⁰ Holloway, *ibid.*

⁵¹ Marshall, *ibid.*

⁵² “A Gain in Tourism Predicted by City,” April 19, 1974. Gillet was named the new President of the CVB at this meeting.

⁵³ Hall, 2000

⁵⁴ The largest and most disastrous of these was the Urban Development Corporation, created by Rockefeller in 1967. It went bankrupt in 1973, losing the state hundreds of millions of dollars, and leading to a federal level investigation of its practices. This scandal, however, was soon eclipsed by the 1975 fiscal crisis. Tens of other, smaller LDC’s were created in the mid to late 1960’s, and met similar fates in the real estate recession of the early 1970’s.

⁵⁵ See "Manhattan New Office Building Construction (1960-1992)" in Fitch (1993) 280. Development in other 5-6 year periods, as measured in thousands of square feet, is as follows:

1960-66: 26,281

1967-1973: 66,794

1974-1980: 5,551

1981-1986: 30,779

1987-1992: 25,722

Note: Fitch draws on data from the Real Estate Board of New York, Research Department. Totals do not include additions, reconstructions, or mixed use buildings.

⁵⁶ The greatest example of the use of rent to subsidize private real estate is the World Trade Center. When it was unable to rent its 10 million square feet of office space, the city and state governments, along with the New York and New Jersey Port Authority, stepped in to rent over half of the space.

⁵⁷ Fitch, *ibid*, ix.

⁵⁸ As Stanley Aronowitz pointed out in his introduction to Lichten's *Class, Power, and Austerity* (1986), this problem represented a shift in historic practice. Cities, particularly since the Depression, had to borrow to cover expenses, creditors often charged high interest, and the federal government traditionally helped them to repay these loans.

⁵⁹ See e.g.: Abu Lughod, 1999.

⁶⁰ This is a reference to Karl Marx's notion of "surplus population," also referred to as the "reserve army of the unemployed," which among other things serves capital's interests by depressing wages. See Marx, 531-2 and 782-98.

⁶¹ See: Horton, 1973, Auletta, 1979, and Morris, 1980.

⁶² Fitch, 1993.

⁶³ Ferretti, 1976. In October, 1974, facing unexpectedly large budget deficit, Beame ordered freeze on most city hiring and merit pay increases. By December, with the economy deteriorating and bank pressure increasing, he ordered large-scale layoffs and other cutbacks. When Municipal unions protested, Beame partially reverses himself, rehiring some laid off workers, and claiming some workers that were laid off were shifted to state-funded positions. By February 1975, only 1700 of the city's nearly 300,000 employees had been let go. By June, 1975, once the MAC had taken over, the firings were to become far larger and more permanent.

⁶⁴ See: Lichten, 1986, 95-126; Tabb, 1982, 22-25; Newfield and Du Brul, 1977; Alcaly and Mermelstien, 1977.

⁶⁵ For detailed sequence of events, see Freeman, 2000.

⁶⁶ "Fighting the Unthinkable," September 8, 1975, 9.

⁶⁷ Freeman, *ibid*

⁶⁸ Another supra-governmental body was the Business Labor Working Group [BLWG].

⁶⁹ Detractors included Village Voice journalist Jack Newfield, who coined the term in 1975, and used it as a title of his editorials. See Newfield and DuBrul, 1977. Financiers included Robert Tisch who, in his interview for ABNY (December 15, 2002), introduced himself by saying: "I've been [working] in New York 42 years now. We've been successful. We've been developers of some small degree of office buildings, housing, and particularly hotels. And we got to know a lot of people about the city, because they've been involved in city politics. We used to [be called] the "permanent government" over the years." Later, he asserted, "there's no question that [Lew Rudin and I] both believed in helping whoever was the Mayor at the time... I used a phrase, "permanent government." I remember Jack Newfield wrote it in the *Village Voice* at that time... and I said, 'What does he mean? Is he taking a shot at us?' [But] basically he was right, because we all, many of us, stayed with it over the years..."

⁷⁰ See e.g.: Lichten [1986], Tabb [1982], Rohatyn (1982), Rockefeller, Freeman, 2000.

⁷¹ In addition to Rohatyn, Carey consulted with Simon H. Rifkind, former federal judge, Richard Shinn, president of Metropolitan Life Insurance Corporation, and Donald B. Smiley, CEO of RH Macy. As Freeman observes: "In [consulting with these men], he was asking leaders of large capital, who had a national and international orientation that left them normally oblivious to day-to-day city affairs, to shape a solution to the fiscal crunch." 260.

⁷² Newfield and DuBrul, *ibid*, pp 178-82. Bailey, 1984, 27-9. Lichten, 1986, 129-34.

⁷³ Ferretti, May 24, 1975. Specifically, the city called on workers to forgo 6% pay increase scheduled for July 7 or accept, with proportional pay reductions, a four day workweek. After the unions rejected proposal, Beame called for huge reduction in CUNY admissions, closing library branches and health facilities, and immediate elimination of thirty-eight thousand city jobs.

⁷⁴ US Bureau of the Census, 1977.

⁷⁵ The city eventually rehired some of these workers, or transferred them to federally funded job training positions. But most never regained their positions.

⁷⁶ Freeman, *ibid*, 272.

⁷⁷ Maier, 1987, 171; Weitzman, 1979, 15; Anderson and London, 1983, 392.

For city employees like the police and firefighters, as well as transportation workers, sanitation workers, and teachers, the resolution of the fiscal crisis was particularly devastating. This was primarily because it so abruptly reversed, and seemed to punish them for, the unions hard-won gains of the previous two decades. After seeing a 60 percent expansion of their ranks between 1954 and 1970, they now saw a 25 percent cut in employment, in just five years. Meanwhile, the contracts they had fought for in the 1960s and early 1970s, with their constantly increasing wages, were replaced by a city-wide wage freeze, and ultimately by deep cuts in wages and pensions. (Horton, 1973, 8, Weitzman, 1979, 26,98.) And, reversing a string of victories on key workplace issues in the 1960's, those who remained on the city payroll faced decreased pay and increased workloads, combined with the frustrating inability to maintain appropriate service levels. These shifts included: increased summer work hours, one-person patrol cars for police, and decreased staffing of firefighting equipment and sanitation trucks (Maier, 1987). And since most of the leadership of the unions had personally signed off on these measures in the name of "austerity," the rank and file was left utterly demoralized. (Maier, *ibid*) The "disciplining" of city workers fought for by the financiers, realtors, and federal government, seemed to have been accomplished.

⁷⁸ On compliant union leadership, see Maier, *ibid*.

⁷⁹ Freeman, 2000.

⁸⁰ As Freeman points out (*ibid*, 265), while MAC had succeeded in selling two one-billion dollar bond issues, there was little interest in subsequent offerings. This is why Carey and his advisors: Rohatyn, Simon Rifkind, and William Ellinghouse (NY Telephone president) drafted an omnibus bill for the EFCB – in "another effort to reopen private capital markets."

⁸¹ See Maier (1987) on the role of the collective bargaining in stifling union militancy and elevating union leadership and bureaucracy.

⁸² See Koch interview for Lew Rudin Documentary, 2001.

⁸³ Orlebecke, 1993, 321

⁸⁴ "Seasonal loans" was another of Felix Rohatyn's ideas. New York City borrowed pieces of the loan from the federal government at the beginning of the fiscal year, and paid it back at the end. At this time a new piece of the loan would be made available.

⁸⁵ Interview with Robert Rudin for Lew Rudin Documentary. Tupelo Honey Productions, 2002.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*.

⁸⁷ Freeman, *ibid*, 268.

⁸⁸ As Freeman says (*ibid*), down the line, this position would "would irrevocably link the unions to the cause of city solvency, no matter what the social cost."

⁸⁹ *ibid*, 269. The new bailout package [following Simon] involved raised taxes by \$200 million, placing a moratorium on repayment of \$2.6 in debt, and a shift from short term to long term bonds [a year later found unconstitutional in state court]. In addition some cost of future pension fund contributions shifted from city to employee.

PART II: THE BATTLE TO BRAND NEW YORK, 1975-1981

CHAPTER 4

Welcome to Fear City: Fiscal Crisis, Counter-branding, and the Return of the New York Movie

The best advice we can give you is this: Until things change, *stay away from New York City if you possibly can.*

“Welcome to Fear City” pamphlet, Committee for Public Safety, 1975

In the wake of the New York City fiscal crisis, the city faced an image crisis far more severe than that associated with the corporate move-outs and declining tourism of 1971-1974. Though in that earlier period, New York’s main critics cast the city as the apotheosis of the 1960’s “urban crisis,” with all of the racist and classist associations of that epithet, beginning in the fiscal crisis years of 1975-1977, attacks on the city’s image took on even more negative dimensions. On the one hand this had to do with the city’s spectacular economic decline, from the pinnacle of financial power to the verge of bankruptcy. This provided the ultimate fodder for those outside the city already inclined to attack its reputation. But in addition, the city’s image now faced a new threat from within, due to a range of counter-branding strategies devised by those seeking to critique the city’s austerity policies by attacking the Big Apple image. By focusing on visual order and investor confidence at the expense of social needs, the city’s branders had sown the seeds of their own destruction, creating a situation in which the image and reality of New York City began to spin further out of control.

The catalyst of this cycle was a new kind of insurgent, counter-branding attack, whereby protesters of the city’s austerity budget purposely undermined New York’s image as a safe and solvent “Big Apple.” The innovation of this strategy came from the police and

fire unions, who announced plans to protest layoffs called for by the crisis regime by launching a “Fear City” campaign in June, 1975. Targeting the same audience of tourists and business travelers as did ABNY’s “Big Apple,” Fear City was to involve handing out fliers at airports, train stations, and midtown hotels, warning people to “stay away from New York if you possibly can” due to the increase in crime and arson that would result from the proposed cuts. Using low-end yet ingenious media tactics, this counter-branding effort managed to instantly send news of the planned campaign around the world, thus subverting the Big Apple image.

Though political pressures and questionable legal tactics ultimately stopped the campaign in its tracks, the vulnerability it revealed in the city’s brand image was to inform the long-term strategy of those who led the crisis regime. For, in their response to the dual assault of the fiscal crisis and the potential image crisis posed by Fear City, this leadership undertook a “planned shrinkage” policy that privileged the financial and tourist centers of Manhattan, and they hoped, protected its image and residents from further damage. Rather than imposing city-wide cuts, these policies cut vital city services in the outer-boroughs, while leaving the heart of Manhattan relatively unaffected and thus, presumably, off the nightly news.

Yet now the city’s crisis regime found itself caught in a vicious cycle. In making these cuts, they created the conditions for an even greater image crisis. The combination of planned shrinkage and austerity measures led to the abandonment of huge swaths of the Bronx, Brooklyn, and the Upper Manhattan, and created levels of poverty, crime, and

arson, far worse than anything yet seen in New York, or any of America's great cities. Much as the Fear City campaigners had forewarned, this in turn provided more visual fodder for a powerful backlash against the Big Apple image.

The backlash began with the second insurgent attack: the upsurge in 1975 of graffiti writing on the walls of subway cars that traversed the city. These immense traveling murals, which soon attracted international attention, were painted by a wide cross-section of young people, mainly from the neighborhoods targeted for planned shrinkage. To the police, the leadership of the crisis regime, and many public transit riders, these writers were senseless vandals, and a continuing blight on the image of a beleaguered city. To the writers themselves, and many who appreciated their daring and creative work, they were artists and protesters, chafing at the increasing deterioration and isolation of their abandoned neighborhoods and underfunded schools. Thus, while the constituencies and philosophies of the public safety officers behind Fear City and the inner city teenagers behind the graffiti movement were quite different, even diametrically opposed, they nonetheless shared a common strategy and target. They used the city's place in the media spotlight against itself, broadcasting the image of a city turning its back on the jobs and neighborhoods of a great many of its own citizens.

The combination of fiscal crisis, austerity, and insurgent tactics set in motion another set of attacks on New York's image from a different quarter: the commercial mass media and conservative political discourse. These forces exploited the city's fiscal crisis, and the images of "fear city," subway graffiti, and the "bombed-out" landscape of the South

Bronx, as well as sections of Manhattan and Brooklyn, to construct a terrifying representation of a city completely out of control, and deserving of its fate. This was seen in the graphic, TV news programs that cast New York City as a battleground akin to “America’s Vietnam,” and in the spill-over of these motifs into the increasingly apocalyptic and lawless images of the city on film. These ranged from serious dramas of crime and urban alienation to racist genre of what I call *New York exploitation films*, with the latter emerging as the dominant genre of movies shot on location in New York. These horrific representations were bolstered ideologically by the anti-urban animus rising in the rest of the country. Following the lead of the Ford administration and the rightwing pundits of the national press, mainstream America were portraying the city in sober and self-righteous tones as an irredeemable, doomed, and yet still very dangerous paradigm of liberalism run amok. Thus, in its draconian attempt to counter one image crisis, the city’s crisis leadership created the conditions for another that was more devastating than any the city had yet seen.

The “Fear City” Campaign: the Public Safety Unions Take on “Big Apple”

Our campaign has been to make people think of New York City
as the Big Apple, not the asphalt jungle...
There’s no question that the fear-city campaign did terrible damage.
Charles Gillet, CVB President, 1975

The Origins of the Campaign

On Friday, June 6, 1975, the leadership of 24 of New York City’s police and fire unions, representing 80,000 members, got together to devise a strategy to fight the massive

layoffs proposed by the crisis regime. All sides agreed this would be the single largest layoff in New York City's history and would deal a major blow to the municipal unions, as well as to the quality of life in the city. And so the leadership of the police and fire unions, with an anger they believed reflected that of their membership and the city as a whole, launched a swift and powerful reply. It was to be one of the most ingenious and notorious tactics ever to be employed by labor unions in New York City.

The outcome of the unions' planning was announced at a press conference on Monday, June 9. First they introduced their newly created organization, the Committee for Public Safety [CPS], representing the 24 unions, under the leadership of Ken McFeeley of the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association. Then, they introduced the protest action the CPS had planned, with the help of their own PR consultant: a media campaign called "Fear City." This was to be "a publicity drive to arouse public opinion against the proposed layoffs" —and by "public" they meant not only city residents, but also the other influential constituency concerned with public safety in New York City: tourists and business travelers. To this end, they printed one million four-page pamphlets bordered in black, emblazoned with a shrouded skull, and entitled, "Welcome to Fear City— A Survival Guide for Visitors to the City of New York." The pamphlet graphically detailed the dangers of crime, arson, and violence that people would face if they came to the city in the wake of the proposed budget cuts. These pamphlets were to be handed out by off-duty police and firemen to incoming visitors at the city's major airports, bus and train terminals, and midtown hotels, beginning on Friday, June 13. The campaign would continue until the Beame administration changed its plans for layoffs—if necessary into

the summer of 1976, when the city was hoping to attract both thousands of tourists and positive media attention as the host of the Democratic National Convention and the United States Bicentennial celebrations. As McFeeley explained, “The public is aware of the danger that massive layoffs of firemen and policemen will create. We have to alert everyone coming into New York to put pressure on them to cancel these insane layoffs.”¹

The introductory paragraph of the “Survival Guide” set the grim tone of the campaign. It advised visitors: “By the time you read this, the number of public safety personnel available to protect residents and visitors may already have been still further reduced. Under those circumstances, the best advice we can give you is this: *Until things change, stay away from New York City if you possibly can.*” And then, after warning that “the incidence of crime and violence in New York City is shockingly high,” the leaflet gave nine urgent cautions:

- Stay off the streets after 6 PM. Even in midtown Manhattan, muggings and occasional murders are on the increase during the early evening hours... If you walk in midtown at about 7:30 PM you will observe that the streets are nearly deserted.
- Do not walk. If you must leave your hotel after 6 PM...summon a radio taxi by telephone or ask the hotel doorman to call a taxi while you remain in the hotel lobby... The same procedure should be followed when leaving a theater or restaurant in the evening.
- Avoid public transportation... you should never ride the subway for any reason whatsoever. In midtown Manhattan you may, at only slight risk, ride the buses during daylight hours.
- Do not leave valuables in your hotel room and do not deposit them in the hotel vault. Hotel robberies have become virtually uncontrollable.
- Be aware of fire hazards... You may have to evacuate quarters without assistance if a fire should occur... Try to avoid buildings that are not completely fireproof.²

What made the Fear City campaign so dangerous —perhaps more dangerous than the unions themselves ever imagined— was the tactical way in which it exploited, and subverted, the increasingly organized methods for branding the image of New York City that marketers had been developing since the late 1960's. Just like the media initiatives of *New York* magazine, ABNY, and the CVB, the unions used the campaign to craft a unified, memorable, and resonant brand —or what might be called a *counter-brand*— for New York City in a time of fiscal crisis. In so doing they targeted the same “psychographic” audience of their erstwhile competitors: the middle and upper class residents, business travelers, tourists, and corporate executives whose decisions about whether to live, visit, or keep their headquarters in the city were shaped by their image of the city and its “quality of life.” Fear City drew on many of the same, time-tested tactics used by the city's boosters, but aimed for opposite effect.

Like *New York* magazine, the unions developed their brand by combining a simple and powerful visual symbol, in this case of a shrouded skull, with straightforward, and even humorous prose: “In midtown Manhattan you may, *at only slight risk*, ride the buses during daylight hours” (my emphasis). They backed this up with crime and arson statistics, and put this all in the compelling, user-friendly format of a “survival guide.” They thus provided their audience with a putative “service,” showing them that they were “on their side,” just like the bargain hunting reviewers of the magazine.

And just like the “Big Apple” drive created by ABNY and the CVB, Fear City was a centrally organized campaign involving ingenious PR stunts designed to draw the

maximum media attention —albeit negative. Hundreds of off-duty police and firemen brazenly handing out fliers warning visitors to stay away from their city would have made news anywhere, at any time. But the fact that the CPS was doing this in the media capital of the world, and at a time when the city's fiscal troubles and crime statistics were already drawing national and international coverage, ensured a far greater impact. The *coup de grace* was timing the campaign to occur in the months leading up to New York's Bicentennial celebrations, and just as the city was making its bid, in competition with other cities, to host the Democratic National Convention. Never before had New York's public and private sector leaders been so obsessed with promoting an image of the city as safe for travel and tourism, and never before had the city been so vulnerable to a media campaign like Fear City.

The Backlash

Fear City was immediately seized upon by the local, national, and international press, lambasted by government officials and business leaders, and turned into a huge, embarrassing media spectacle. The speed and anger of the reaction revealed the extent to which the leadership in New York had become —or felt themselves to be— politically and economically dependent upon the city's good image, and vulnerable to effective attacks against it. It also revealed the new priorities that had emerged with the fiscal crisis, according to which preservation of New York's *image* —as a safe place to visit and invest in— was seen to be more important than maintaining public sector salaries and services.

The announcement of the Fear City campaign immediately dominated the front pages of the city's major dailies, the *New York Daily News*, the *New York Post*, and the *New York Times*, and it continued to hold that position as the story unfolded in the coming week. The coverage tended to be very negative, emphasizing the impact of the campaign on the tourist trade rather than the unions' demands. As just one example, the *Daily News* front page headline read "Cops and Fire to 'Warn' Tourists: Will Stress 'Fear City' at Terminals," and the article focused on the fact that the unions "threatened to target 1976 bicentennial events [by meeting] incoming planes at Kennedy and LaGuardia airports [and] trains at Grand Central Terminal with crime statistics."³ While mentioning the "widespread layoffs" with which unions were faced as a result of Mayor Beame's "crisis' budget," no clear numbers were offered to back this up.

Two days later, the *New York Times* issued a scathing editorial, entitled "Unions Vs. New York," which was to set the unabashedly biased tone of their coverage of the controversy. In addition to denouncing the "irresponsibility" of the unions' campaign, they attacked the "foolishness" of the unions' demands, and argued the combination of the two were sufficient in and of themselves to destroy the entire city:

Union leaders purporting to represent the city's uniformed services have stooped to new lows of irresponsibility with their threat to dispatch off-duty police and firemen to warn tourists that they are entering "fear city" unless impossible union demands for full pay and payrolls are met....If union leaders were foolish enough to continue their present destructive course, ignoring fiscal realities and the wider public interest, they could yet destroy this still vibrant city. A ghost town offers neither pay nor payrolls for anybody.⁴

The Beame administration, caught completely off guard, responded with a hastily organized media event of its own. At a City Hall news conference on the afternoon of Thursday, June 12, Beame —flanked by Police Commissioner Michael J. Codd, Fire Commissioner John T. O'Hagan, and Transit Authority Police Director Sanford D. Garelik—said the Fear City campaign was “untrue... and seeks to undermine the economy of the city,” denounced the unions’ “brass knuckled tactics” as “an act of rank disloyalty,” and cited FBI crime statistics that ranked New York only 16th among the 20 largest American cities. Finally, Mr. Beame declared, “I wish to reassure every citizen and every visitor... that their safety and welfare are a paramount priority and will remain so regardless of temporary economic setbacks.”⁵

Directly following the news conference, they spent the night mounting a last minute legal effort to block the campaign’s scheduled launch the following day. After receiving orders from Beame to “take whatever legal means are necessary to see to it that the scandalous ‘Fear City’ literature is not distributed,”⁶ Corporation Counsel W. Bernard Richland tracked down two New York Supreme Court justices —one at a restaurant, the other in bed— and got them to sign restraining orders preventing the unions from distributing the pamphlets until Monday, June 16.⁷ To get around the sticky issue of the unions’ right to free speech, the city crafted a creative legal argument, drawing on two lofty precedents. One was the “Holmes doctrine” that the right to free speech could be abridged if the speech presented a “clear and present danger,” such as a person yelling “Fire!” in a crowded theater. The other was New York State precedent that required proof of the potential for “immediate and irreparable injury, loss, or damage” as a result of the

banned speech.⁸ Thus, the city argued that the restraining order was necessary on the grounds that the Fear City pamphlet “presents a clear and present danger to the welfare of the city,” that it “will cause irreparable harm” to the city’s “mercantile interests, tourist trade, and economy,” and finally that it “will induce fear, panic, and disruption of public services.”⁹ Furthermore, the pamphleteers would “harass” visitors and residents, “many of whom are foreigners and don’t speak English.”¹⁰ Meanwhile, the Transit Authority got a separate restraining order, based on the grounds that specific warnings in the pamphlets—such as that visitors should “never ride the subway for any reason whatsoever,” and that buses in midtown Manhattan can be ridden during daylight hours “at only slight risk”—would mean that “its efforts to maintain ridership would be irreparably damaged...leading to heavy operating deficits.”¹¹ The restraining orders led to the following media spectacle on Friday, June 13:

Only a handful of leaflets were actually passed out yesterday morning at Kennedy International Airport—and they went to airport employees and newsmen. Ken McFeeley, president of the Police Benevolent Association, and several other leaders of uniformed personnel unions were kept in fenced off area outside the international arrivals building by the Port Authority police. They had intended to give the leaflets to incoming passengers on overseas flights, but none were scheduled to arrive until early afternoon. Soon, John G. de Roos, senior executive officer of the Transit Authority, arrived to serve the restraining order he had obtained from Supreme Court Justice Louis B. Heller late Thursday.¹²

What followed was a flurry of battles in the courts and in the press. The lawyers for the 24 police and fire unions decried these attacks on their First Amendment rights to freedom of expression in State Supreme Court the following day. Judge Orrin G. Judd of Federal Court in Brooklyn found that “the plaintiff’s leaflet, although intemperate, is probably entitled to protection as an exercise of free speech.” His decision permitted rank-and-file members to distribute the four-page “Welcome to Fear City” fliers, but left

the city free to serve summonses on them if they did, and “enjoined” union leaders from doing so. This equivocation led to public outcry by a host of First Amendment lawyers. Declaring that “The First Amendment has been temporarily suspended in New York,” Barbara Shack of the New York chapter of the ACLU offered her support to the pamphleteers—while ironically noting the unusual opportunity this provided the ACLU to file a lawsuit *on behalf of* the NYPD. Floyd Abrams, a partner in the law firm of Cahill Gordon & Reindel, and lead attorney in the successful defense of the *New York Times* against the federal government’s efforts to stop publication of the Pentagon Papers one year previously, was astounded by the flimsiness of the city’s case—and the undue importance afforded to its tourist trade:

It certainly would be surprising to me that New York City is so vulnerable that the speech of its employees is akin to yelling fire in a theater...It would be an enormous expansion of the doctrine of clear and present danger not to allow city employees to speak even if the effect is to have fewer tourists. We’re ready to risk a lot more than that to protect freedom of speech.¹³

The controversy, and fact that the CPS was granted *any* rights in the case, set off the media for days, and squarely on the side of City Hall. The *New York Times*—apparently oblivious to the hypocrisy of its position in the wake of the recent Pentagon Papers case—came out with its second vitriolic editorial in as many days, acknowledging, “apparently, there is no disciplinary action open to the city for use against police and firemen who defame it, so long as they are off duty,” but nonetheless insisting, “the 25 unions ought to have enough sense of civic responsibility voluntarily to abandon their venture in terror-mongering.”¹⁴ The president of the radio station WMCA, E. Peter Strauss, broadcast his denouncement of the unions as “childish and irresponsible,” and then dispatched his talk show hosts to Kennedy, La Guardia, and Penn Station to greet

incoming tourists on the air, and tell them that “New York City is a great place to visit.”¹⁵ Meanwhile, the city’s editorial pages and TV talk shows were full of appeals to New York City patriotism by the three public safety union leaders representing fire officers, police sergeants, and police captains—the bosses, not the rank and file— that had “repudiated their associates’ intimidation tactics.”¹⁶ As Harold H. Melnick, head of the Sergeants Benevolent Association, proudly proclaimed in a letter to the editor: “Our reputation precludes involvement in any action which would place the city in a position of contempt...It is not Fear City but our city. We love it.”¹⁷

The Aftermath

Despite the massive backlash by the city and the media, it seemed the union was winning. By June 16, a week after the campaign had been announced, the State Supreme Court finally lifted all limitations on pamphlet distribution, ruling that not to do so would deny union members “the right to reasonable dissemination of opinion,” and would violate their constitutional right to freedom of expression.¹⁸ The vast majority of the membership of the public safety unions had continued to support the Fear City tactic, even when their leaders were issued restraining orders. As the *New York Times* reported, almost incredulously: “From all outward appearances, the unions participating in the campaign were not encountering broad opposition from rank and file or from delegate assemblies.”¹⁹ Other municipal unions endorsed and even embraced the tactic of their fellow workers, devising spin-off slogans like the Teachers’ “Stupid City,” and the Sanitation Workers’ “Stink City,” that they used to draw media attention to the

elimination of their own jobs.²⁰ Indeed the Sanitation Workers tied the slogan to a city-wide garbage strike in August, the hottest month of the year, when piled up garbage smelled worst, an action that caused additional, devastating damage to the city's image, to say nothing of its quality of life.

Nonetheless, the police and firemen did not distribute their one million "Welcome to Fear City" fliers to incoming tourists and business travelers. What ultimately transpired to get them to shift course is unclear. But whatever happened, it does seem that the Association for a Better New York [ABNY] played a pivotal role in the final outcome. According to the *New York Times*, "The reason given by the unions last night for postponement of the pamphlet campaign was that the Association for a Better New York, an organization of real-estate and other business executives, had promised to put pressure on the Beame administration to rescind the layoffs." According to the same article, "it is known that" on the Thursday of Mayor Beame's news conference, the CPS had met with ABNY — specifically with Lewis Rudin and Alton Marshall, as well as former Mayor Robert F. Wagner, and State Mediation Board chairman Vincent D. McDonnell, both of whom were "consultants to the association." But beyond that, ABNY's account differed markedly from that of the CPS: "After the Thursday meeting, the business representatives said they had tried to dissuade the unions from waging the "Fear City" campaign but made no mention of a commitment to intercede with the Mayor on the planned layoff."²¹

What appears to have happened is that the four high powered members of ABNY met with the leaders of the CPS the night before the Fear City pamphlets were scheduled to be distributed, and tried to convince them to stop a campaign which would completely destroy the “Big Apple” image of New York they had been carefully constructing since 1971. The unions believed they had a commitment from ABNY to negotiate on their behalf with the Mayor, and agreed to postpone the resumption of the campaign, “to give Mr. Rudin’s group and other business leaders a chance to speak out publicly against the layoffs.” Yet when they said as much to the press, Lewis Rudin quickly called his own news conference, at the associations’ offices at 1270 Avenue of the Americas, at which he “denied flatly that his group had promised to intercede with Mayor Beame.” As the *Times* described it “The Association for a Better New York, whose goal is to preserve New York’s position as the country’s business and financial capital, wasted no time yesterday in rebuffing the CPS call for help in the anti-layoff drive.”²²

ABNY’s apparent reversal likely had to do with their not wanting to appear to have undue influence on City Hall, a point Rudin underscored: “We have strongly suggested a number of means of cutting expenditures to Mayor Beame. But the final determination of where the cuts are applied must be left to the city administration, which is in possession of all the facts about the city’s fiscal condition.”²³ Maybe it also had to do with not wanting to appear in any way sympathetic to the unions’ militant tactics, as they then went out of their way to condemn and undermine the CPS, a point emphasized in the lead paragraph of the *Times*’ coverage: “The Council for Public Safety... received a sharp setback when a prominent businessmen’s organization likened the council’s “Fear

City” campaign to ‘burning down the factory in a labor dispute.’” Or maybe ABNY simply lied to the CPS as a stalling tactic. Whatever the reason, the CPS was left stranded: “Yesterday, Mr. McFeeley said he was “unable to believe” that the Association for a Better New York was unwilling to honor what he understood to be a commitment to support the 24 unions in their contention that no public-safety officers should be dismissed in the budget crisis.”²⁴ Ultimately, the Fear City campaign, powerful though it promised to be, was aborted after just one week.

Nonetheless, this short-lived campaign by a small group of labor leaders, and the budget cuts that inspired it in the first place, wreaked havoc on the city’s business and tourist-friendly image, a mess left to the custodians of that image to clean up. CVB President Charles Gillett tried to keep a stiff upper lip, claiming tourists were still “flocking” to the city in the weeks following Fear City. But he had to admit that such “adverse publicity might work against the bureau’s effort to change the city’s image.”²⁵ As he expressed it:

Our campaign has been to make people think of New York City as the Big Apple, not the asphalt jungle... Good things happen here but there’s no question that the fear-city campaign did terrible damage. News of that was carried around the world. In Germany, there were front-page headlines that read, “New York Police Warn Visitors Not to Come to New York.” It’s a black eye for the city, and we’re hoping it will be resolved.²⁶

What’s remarkable is that the CVB, ABNY, the TA, the *New York Times*, and others in the crisis regime refused to address, let alone criticize, the layoffs and service cuts themselves. This is remarkable, since it was these service and personnel cuts, and not just a lurid and overblown media campaign that publicized them to the world, that terrified so many middle class residents, potential tourists, and business travelers. Indeed in reading

a few of the accounts of Fear City in the international papers, this was what the reporters, the people they quoted, and conceivably their readers, were most concerned about.

But rather than criticize the “crisis budget,” the CVB, with increased city and now federal funds, spent hundreds of thousands of dollars creating a multi-media Big Apple presentation, and taking it on the road to four European capitals, in their own international campaign to “counter ‘Fear City.’”²⁷ Charles Gillet explained the impetus and importance of the tour:

A businessman called us from Hamburg earlier this week to ask if it was safe to bring his family to New York... What we're worried about is the people who haven't called, but may just change their minds about coming here on the basis of a very distorted picture that's been given wide circulation.”

[Gillet] referred to the now-dormant “Welcome to Fear City” leaflet drives planned by 24 unions of New York City policemen, firemen and other public safety officers seeking to persuade visitors to stay away because of what they termed rampant crime and lack of fire protection. Although the unions have shifted to other tactics in their fight against heavy layoffs scheduled by the Beame administration, worldwide publicity was generated by their attempt last weekend to distribute skull-emblazoned literature at airports and train and bus terminals.

“We expect to hear the worst,” Mr. Gillet said, “but we think we can answer the ‘Fear City’ publicity. We’ll cite the true comparative crime statistics showing that the city is far down on the list and not a place of danger for visitors.” Most of the presentation will be of a positive nature—events planned in the city in the coming months, attractions having to do with the Bicentennial and exposition of the “Big Apple” theme originated by the Convention Bureau.

In response to the question of whether “the dire predictions of decreased services voiced by city administrators and commissioners in the last few weeks of the budget crisis would have an inhibiting effect on tourism,” Mr. Gillet said simply: “Those comments don’t get broadcast outside New York... But Fear City—that went to the whole world.” This quote reveals two things. First, the perceived power —and danger — of simple brand

logos like Fear City to efficiently and effectively communicate messages to a global audience. And secondly, the attitude of the CVB that so long as such messages didn't get out, it didn't matter to them what draconian measures the city took to balance the budget.

* * *

Ultimately, the Beame administration's cuts to the police and fire departments went through as planned on July 1, 1975 —almost. While the absolute numbers of layoffs remained the same, their geographic distribution did not. Rather than the “city-wide austerity” promised by Beame, it seemed that police and fire precincts located in the financial districts and middle class neighborhoods from Lower Manhattan to Midtown to the Upper East and West Sides were relatively unaffected, while the bulk of layoffs and police and fire station closings were borne by residents in poor and working class districts—from the Lower East Side and Harlem, to the boroughs of Brooklyn and the Bronx. Thus, while it is little remembered today, it does seem that the Fear City campaign of June 1975 had a lasting impact, if not the one for which the CPS had hoped. For all it failed to accomplish, it taught the leaders of the crisis regime a lesson they never forgot: it's OK to layoff public safety workers, but do it away from the financial centers, tourist destinations, and media hot-spots of Manhattan.

The CPS did follow through on certain elements of their original campaign in the wake of the layoffs. When spikes in crime and arson happened in the neighborhoods affected by the cuts, just as they had predicted, they sent out sound trucks, and even handed out leaflets, informing residents of the statistics.²⁸ But now their tactics were local, targeting city residents, not tourists or business travelers. And the residents they targeted were in

the poorest neighborhoods—the Lower East Side, the South Bronx, and Williamsburg, Brooklyn—where the impact of reduced patrols was felt the most sharply. This drew little media attention, or reaction from the city, both of whom it seems were suddenly unconcerned by the unions' protests, so long as they stayed away from airports, train terminals, and midtown hotels—places where suburban commuters, wealthy New Yorkers, and tourists might be affected.

However short-lived, Fear City was a wake-up call to the city's leadership of their extreme vulnerability to such attacks—particularly in their efforts to attract image-sensitive industries like tourism and FIRE to downtown and midtown Manhattan. It served as a dramatic reminder that now was the time for a centralized and coordinated effort to control New York City's image, and prevent outlaw actions like this from dominating the news again. It is in this light, I believe, that one should interpret the two new directions the city was to take in its economic development policy: “planned shrinkage” of city services outside downtown and midtown Manhattan, and more effective and extensive marketing campaigns of the city center.

II. Planned Shrinkage as an Economic and Visual Strategy

The pain is just beginning. New York will now have to undergo the most brutal kind of financial and fiscal exercise that any community in the country will ever have to face.

Felix Rohatyn (on TV) 1975²⁹

The golden door to full participation in American life and the American economy is no longer to be found in New York.

Roger Starr, 1976³⁰

Planned Shrinkage

In response to the fiscal crisis and the potential image crisis of Fear City, public officials turned quickly to the long-range management of the city's devastated finances and tattered image, and in doing so were guided by a new philosophy called "planned shrinkage." This philosophy was formulated in 1976 by Roger Starr, then head of the New York City Housing and Development Administration. Given that "the central fact of New York's financial crisis is that the city government does not have enough wealth to sustain the city at the level to which its citizens have become accustomed," Starr called for a radical re-orientation of the city's priorities. Namely, rather than maintaining the city's tradition of public services, and rather than making city-wide service cuts, the government should reduce services only to the city's poorest residents, thereby driving them out of the city, and making their abandoned neighborhoods available for other economic purposes. In so doing, the city officially decentralized the impact of the fiscal crisis, placing the greatest burden on outlying areas of Upper Manhattan and the boroughs, while targeting most of the city's scarce resources towards the upkeep and policing of the central business districts and tourist destinations of Manhattan —precisely those areas targeted by Fear City.

The political impact of this geographically explicit policy was not only economic, but also visual. It narrowed the frame within which the broader public, as well as New York's own residents, were meant to imagine New York City. Those living, working and visiting within what Dennis Judd would later call the "tourist bubble" of downtown

and midtown Manhattan could feel a sense of belonging and legitimacy within an area that, relatively speaking, was cleaner, more secure, and better cared for by city workers—as well as rid of Single Room Occupancy Hotels and poor people.³¹ Meanwhile, those living in poorer neighborhoods uptown, on the Lower East Side, and in the outer boroughs very quickly got the message that they existed apart from this unified vision, and that they were less important, expendable. For many communities this created a wholly new sensation of being ostracized within their own city.

A dual economic and visual dimension also shaped the fundamental assumptions of the crisis regime that informed Starr's plan. First, there was the assumption that the root cause of New York's deficit, and subsequent fiscal crisis, lay in the city's excessive social welfare and public sector burden, rather than the corporate welfare and debt-fuelled real estate boom of the previous decade.³² Thus services for the poor and working class should be reduced or eliminated, while those for the middle classes and "business community" should be maintained. And second was the regime's assumption that the declining image of the city and its financial strength in the minds of investors, tourists, and the "business community," was playing a key role in exacerbating the crisis. Thus eliminating the most troubled neighborhoods while cleaning up the financial districts and better-off areas served a political-economic as well as a visual purpose, for it provided a far prettier and more orderly picture of the city for the world's front pages and television screens.

These ideas were consistent with, and helped reinforce, the “Blighted Areas Plan” of Felix Rohatyn and the MAC.³³ According to this plan, a zoning category of “blight” was created whereby “visual signs of decay” could be used to designate residential and commercial areas eligible for redevelopment. This plan extended the principles of 1930’s era slum clearance carried out by municipal governments, and 1960’s era urban renewal carried out under federally financed Title I grants. But here—in what was to be a prelude to the “broken windows” theory of social disorganization that fuelled the quality of life crackdowns of the 1990’s—power was assigned to the private sector to determine which areas were to be cleared and “renewed,” and for what purpose. At the same time, new quasi-public urban development agencies that were created by the OED focused their economic development dollars and tax incentives on Manhattan’s central business districts. This centralized approach was encouraged by large banks and investment houses—including those, like Rohatyn’s Lazard Freres and the Rockefellers’ Chase Manhattan—which had long placed their hopes for the city’s resurgence on the ability to attract more white-collar, service sector employers to the empty towers of the downtown and midtown business district. This in turn provided greater incentive for these and other banks to “red-line” poorer, mixed-use neighborhoods—i.e. undercutting their credit rating, and then stopping loans—thus making it far more difficult for residents or businesses to invest in, or maintain, their properties in these communities.³⁴ Thus the financiers and realtors of the MAC’s board deemed the poorest neighborhoods of Manhattan, the Bronx and Brooklyn eligible to be “blacktopped,” their remaining populations “removed,” and their land transformed into industrial and financial districts to attract corporations back to the city.³⁵

While the “blighted areas plan” was enacted through private channels, the “planned shrinkage” was devised by a public city agency, both plans were initially hidden from public view. The “planned shrinkage” concept was first made known in January 1976 in a speech to a gathering of the Real Estate Board of New York [RBNY] and subsequent interviews with the trade publication *Real Estate Weekly*, and only made known to the wider public in February 1976 in a short *New York Times* article.³⁶ In his initial statements to RBNY, Starr urged the city to solve its fiscal shortfall by following the example of private capital. Just as corporations were then eliminating unprofitable plants, the city should identify and plan for the elimination of services in the most troubled Manhattan and outer borough neighborhoods, like Brownsville and the South Bronx. Applying Darwinian reasoning to the simple logic of the free market, he argued that this process of “urban triage” would require the sacrifice of the worst slums so that the city’s scarce resources could be concentrated on more affluent areas which were more likely to survive in any case. And for those who wouldn’t or couldn’t leave, he called for the city government to aid in “population transfers” of entire neighborhoods, particularly of poor blacks and Latinos, out of New York City. This he believed would finally do the necessary job of changing the “role of the city” that had existed since the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century:

[We must] stop the Puerto Ricans and rural blacks from living in the city. [We must] reverse the role of the city ... It can no longer be the place of opportunity... Our urban system is based on the theory of taking the peasant and turning him into an industrial worker. Now there are no industrial jobs. Why not keep him a peasant?³⁷

Starr's proposals met with immediate and widespread protest.³⁸ A group of city planners issued a statement labeling his plans "genocidal" and calling for his immediate removal from office.³⁹ Chanting "Roger Starr must go" and carrying signs reading "Antihuman," the planners' group joined a cross-section of community leaders to demonstrate at a Regional Plan Association meeting where he was speaking, thus preventing the meeting and "highlight[ing] some of the volatile realities underlying the massive housing problems that the panel had been seeking to discuss with academic detachment."⁴⁰ The plan met with "a great outpouring of disgust and outrage" in the black and Latino communities that were primarily targeted for shrinkage, and moved the City Council's Minority Caucus to decry it as "genocidal, racist, inhuman, and irresponsible." They were aghast that "instead of promoting, rehabilitating, and saving these neighborhoods from decline [Starr] would leave them to die in their own prime and accelerate their death."⁴¹ This sentiment, and the call for Starr's ouster, was reiterated by New York Congressmen Herman Badillo and Charles Rangel, who made the link between the MAC's "Blighted Areas Plan" and Starr's "planned shrinkage," seeing both as "promoting the interests of bankers over those of the people." To Rangel, Rohatyn's and Starr's version of economic development were evidence of America's "third-world policy coming home":

It amounts to an attempt to deport blacks and Puerto Ricans from the regions that are vital to the commerce and transportation of our city... We cannot get away from the fact that if the cities were not inhabited by people of color, the planners would have the ingenious creativity to think of other approaches to the problem.⁴²

Starr, however, was undaunted. He responded with a 4,000-word feature in the Sunday *New York Times Magazine*, which appeared on Nov. 14, 1976.⁴³ Though New York City had a population of 7.5 million in 1975, Starr argued that, "New York would continue to

be a world city even with fewer than 5 million people." The problem then became how to get rid of at least 2.5 million people, or a third of its population. As social Darwinians were wont to do, Starr employed cold, organic metaphors in his rhetoric to explain why the city should stop encouraging investment and providing vital services in the poorest neighborhoods. "If the city is to survive with a smaller population," he wrote, "the population must be encouraged to concentrate itself in the sections that remain alive," and leave the "dead sections" to die. The latter "can be cleared away" by tax policy, making it unprofitable to invest in buildings in these districts. And finally, "the stretches of empty blocks may then be knocked down, services can be stopped, subway stations closed, and the land left to lay fallow." Poor residents would then be forced to leave, and the "change in economic and demographic assumptions [would make] the land useful once again."⁴⁴

In a city in which popular movements had historically fought for the welfare of the poor, and greater power for the working class, it seemed capitalist logic had finally trumped social justice. So far as the city's lead housing official was concerned, New York should become a white, middle and upper class capital, and literally turn away or evict anyone who wasn't educated enough to get a white collar job. According to planned shrinkage, the social geography of the city, and its image, should reflect this economic and demographic shift.

In addition to its racist implications, planned shrinkage and the blighted areas plan were glaring examples of a city government's attempt to assist the tendency of the free market towards "uneven development."⁴⁵ Understanding that land is the most stable form of

capital in times of financial recession and crises, private investors in the 1970's increasingly turned to uneven urban development as a strategy of profit-making. According to this strategy, poor land adjacent to higher rent districts was cleared and set aside by private capital so as to provide a secure site for future investment, rather than developed unprofitably in the short term. Here urban land was understood purely in terms of its future exchange value as real estate, rather than its current use value as a neighborhood — vital to residents for housing, as well as for those intangible needs of community, solidarity, and memory. Here urban land was understood in abstract and symbolic terms as space for capital, rather than in human terms as a place to live, work, and create meaning.

Planned shrinkage was the most draconian of the crisis regime's proposals, and drew so much criticism that Starr himself was forced to step down from his post by the time his article appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*.⁴⁶ Not surprisingly, most city officials publicly disavowed his controversial ideas, and never used the terms "planned shrinkage" or "population transfer" in official documents or speeches. But the public critique of Starr and his ideas was to be skin-deep and short-lived. Immediately upon leaving public office in September 1976, Starr was named Henry Luce Professor of Urban Values at New York University, assigned to the editorial board of the *New York Times*, and given a special award by the Regional Plan Association. Meanwhile, the city government and its financial overseers were busy implementing almost everything Starr's philosophy entailed. Services were drastically curtailed throughout most of the outer boroughs, and not in the more affluent areas of Manhattan. The city HDA, now under new leadership,

ceased all building of new public housing, and sold off vast stretches of publicly held land that it decided it could no longer maintain.⁴⁷ And, as we shall see, investment of public and private economic development monies into these abandoned neighborhoods was also brought to a halt. While stopping short of actual population transfers, massive displacement from underserved areas did indeed result from both public and private action.

However, to the chagrin of the incoming Koch administration, the shrinkage of New York's population was not to go as planned. While the immediate fiscal crisis may have been alleviated, nonetheless their policies were to set in motion a vicious cycle, creating the conditions for far worse social and image crises than those they were intended to solve. First, the demographics of the city's population shift fuelled by planned shrinkage was the opposite of what Starr had envisioned. Most of the approximately *one million* New Yorkers who vacated the city between 1970 and 80 were middle class whites, who relocated to the expanding suburbs of Westchester County, Connecticut, and New Jersey.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, the poor and working class whites, blacks and Latinos didn't move out, but were disproportionately amongst those who chose or were forced to stay behind in their deteriorating neighborhoods.

The combination of job loss, service cuts, and financial disinvestment led to a vicious spiral in which landlords could no longer afford to keep up their properties, renters could no longer afford to rent them, and properties in the outer boroughs were simply abandoned *en masse*. According to one study: 200,000 housing units were abandoned

between 1967 and 1977, with government officials putting the peak at 60,000 and 70,000 a year in mid 1970s.⁴⁹ Before they decided to abandon their property, many landlords realized the perverse fact that they could actually make more money burning down their buildings, and collecting the insurance, than by maintaining them. This desperate calculation led to a massive wave of arson throughout the poorest districts of the Bronx, the Lower East Side, and Brooklyn. These problems were compounded by the fact that a number of fire-houses were shut down in outer-borough areas like the South Bronx as a result of planned shrinkage.⁵⁰ The doomsday warnings of the Fear City campaign seemed to have come true.

The Creative Inspiration of the Ruins

My favorite era [was] the 70's. New York was funky and gritty and showed the world how a metropolis could be dark and apocalyptic and yet fecund. The death of disco and the birth of hip-hop all happened in our cradle of civilization, as if the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, or rather the Hudson and East Rivers, were hugging the new Mesopotamia of funk. In the Bronx, my black and Latin brothers and sisters created break dancing and rapping.

John Leguizamo, 2005⁵¹

If the city's plan in the face of fear city and impending image crisis was to push New York's "problem populations" away from the city center, and to impose a hegemonic image of white collar capital in their stead —this plan was to prove woefully naïve. The disenfranchised, underserved neighborhoods were to provide the "apocalyptic yet fecund" ground, as John Leguizamo put it recently, for homegrown artistic movements. These organic movements, in particular the youth culture phenomena of graffiti and hip hop, were to represent a far more extensive and meaningful counter-brand than the

limited Fear City campaign. And so remarkably, despite the hardship of those times, or because of it, New York was to enter one of its most creative and culturally experimental periods.

To some extent this explosion of creativity was city-wide. When the *New York Times* conducted a series of interviews for its 2005 new year's edition in which people were asked to name what they considered the "golden age" of New York City, of the artists, performers, and actors who were interviewed, almost all cited the 1970's.⁵² Most of them, like the performance artist Laurie Anderson, recalled the cheap rents and huge loft spaces available in neighborhoods like Soho and the Lower East Side, through which that the "downtown arts scene" was born.

It was a tremendously exciting time, dangerous and fun and fantastic. We helped each other all the time on our projects - I could ask someone to light a dance performance, or help paint my ceiling. That's something I'd never think of doing now. In downtown New York, there was still a little bit left of the commune spirit. I was aware we were making a scene, "we" being Gordon Matta-Clark, Philip Glass, Trisha Brown, Richard Serra, Tina Gerard, a mix of musicians, artists, performers. There was great music and everyone was broke. We all lived in cheap lofts, near each other, and we were all building stuff.

Yet while the hardships of the fiscal crisis years were to prove to be a golden era for creative expression throughout the New York City, nowhere was that more true than in the Bronx, where the hardships were the most extreme. The Bronx was the epicenter of the city's planned shrinkage policies, lost over 300,000 people in a decade, and by the end of the 1970's had passed up counties in rural Mississippi to become the poorest Congressional district in the country.⁵³ And like the extreme nature of its hardships, the creative outpouring that arose in the Bronx in that era were unlike any in the city or the

nation. This ranged from the interventions of traditional artists and arts collectives doing street photography and public sculptures, to the home-grown creation of hip hop culture—including music, dance, and graffiti. While hip hop was to serve at the time in neighborhoods across the city as its “own form of urban renewal,” it was soon to be launched beyond the five boroughs, becoming the most powerful form of urban youth culture for generations to come, and presenting an entirely new image of the New York to the world. In what follows I will briefly discuss examples of the work that came out of this terrible yet fertile period.

The South Bronx Renaissance

The sociologist Marshall Berman was born and raised in the Tremont neighborhood of the South Bronx that was destroyed by Robert Moses in the 1960's in order to build the Cross Bronx Expressway. He returned to the old neighborhood often during the following decade to survey this latest, painful cycle of creative destruction, the driving force of modern capitalism, and he describes these trips in his article “Views from the Burning Bridge,” written for the catalogue of the Bronx Museum exhibit, “Urban Mythologies,” a retrospective of representations of the Bronx going back to the 1960's.⁵⁴ Berman relates how, in his many walks through the area, he bore witness to both the mainstream media's obsession with what he called “the ruins,” and their incomprehension of the real lives of those still left living in these neighborhoods.

I spent many lonely afternoons walking through those ruins. In the 1970's, the *New York Times* had a little box, on page two or three of the Local Section, that listed all the buildings burned or destroyed the previous day or night. People called it the Ruins Section, and I knew many who, like me, read the Ruins Section first. The ruins went on and on, building after building, block after block, mile

after mile. I met people from camera crews, sometimes from the local news—working on the latest disaster—but also from Canada, England, Italy, Sweden; I missed the one from the USSR. Most of the people visible on the South Bronx streets were kids, and lots of those kids looked startlingly hungry—hungry like the ones in turn-of-the-century photographs by Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine, hungry like American kids weren’t supposed to be anymore.⁵⁵

In reaction to the “Ruins Section,” and the lurid international TV news accounts, there was a veritable renaissance of urban documentary photography in the South Bronx in this period—photography that was far more in the tradition of social reform photographers Riis and Hine, but also took this genre to a new level of artistry. As revealed in the remarkable Bronx Museum exhibit, the twenty-odd photographers who focused their lenses on the neighborhood—like Camilo Jose Vergara, Carlos Ortiz, Walter Rosenblum, and Mel Rosenthal—were to create many of the most enduring images of the Bronx, and indeed of urban America, in this period. As noted by Lydia Yee, the curator of photography for the show, despite the rise to dominance of television in this period, the photographic medium was still the most effective at capturing the many levels of “devastation and resilience,” both physical and social, that the Bronx experienced in these years:

Not surprisingly, photography has been the medium *par excellence* for representing the more recent ruins of the South Bronx, as well as the ordinary people living under such extraordinary circumstances. Though the fires were, perhaps, best captured on film or video to record the swift destruction they cause, still photographs of vacant buildings, empty lots covered with debris, and desolate streets poetically amplify the motionlessness of these ghostly scenes. It is however photography’s realism that has undoubtedly compelled many to train their cameras on both the devastatingly bleak scenes in the South Bronx... as well as more hopeful images of resilience.⁵⁶

One of the preeminent photographers of the resilience of the inhabitants of the Bronx in the face of planned shrinkage policies, was the photographer Mel Rosenthal. Rosenthal,

like Berman, grew up in the 1940's and 1950's in what was once called the East Bronx. His memories of the old neighborhood were of a vibrant, hardscrabble community made up of working class Jews, Italians, and blacks. Over the years, while he left to study and do international photography work, he would return periodically to document his old borough, always striving to sense the shifting pulse of its heart-beat. In the mid 1970's he tracked that heart-beat to the South Bronx, and founded what became known as the South Bronx Portrait Project —“pictures” being too impersonal a term to describe his approach. After starting with portraits of Vietnamese refugees then being resettled to the Bronx, in 1977 he turned his lens on the devastation wrought by the fiscal crisis, planned shrinkage, and arson. For this he took portraits of the residents living on a single South Bronx street: Bathgate Avenue. It was a street dating back to the mid 1800's, and which up until the early 1970's had been home to a stable community of apartments, churches, synagogues, schools, factories, parks, and stores. But by 1977 its residential and commercial buildings, though still inhabited, were deteriorating and being left to “die,” as Starr would put it, in order to make way for an industrial “enterprise zone” already being planned to replace them. Rosenthal devoted three years to taking hundreds of portraits of the hardy souls still living in the midst of this wreckage, becoming known throughout the area as “the picture man.”

His photographs from those days have been collected in the recent volume, *In the South Bronx of America*. As the title implies, Rosenthal saw the story of his subjects and their devastated neighborhood as at the center of the story of America in that period—despite efforts by those in city leadership to relegate them to the margins. The book consists of

over a hundred black-and-white photographs that contrast intimate portraits of local residents with their inhuman surroundings. A young boy does a graceful and jubilant back-flip off of an old mattress in the street, seeming to fly above the bombed out buildings. A laughing woman in a sundress strikes a dramatic ballerina pose against the backdrop of a shuttered gas station. These are clearly faces, and lives, that deserve to be seen at the center of the history of these times.

As part of his project, Rosenthal also studied the forces that contributed to the destruction of the Bronx, reaching the conclusion that his community fell apart because of political and economic expediency beginning in the Moses era and culminating with post-fiscal crisis planned shrinkage policies. Thus he introduces his volume with the following analysis:

The burning of the South Bronx didn't just happen by accident, but was the result of decisions made by politicians, businessmen, government officials, and urban planners. The factors we have to examine to understand the burning of the South Bronx are the building of the Cross Bronx Expressway (which cut through the homes of tens of thousands of families), the building of Co-op City (a gigantic complex of affordable housing in the East Bronx which led to "white flight")...and the migration of poor people from places where there were no jobs and hopes...But most importantly....Planned shrinkage called for the systematic withdrawal of basic services --- including police, fire, health, sanitation, and transportation --- from poor neighborhoods to make them, unlivable and thus drive the poor out of the city.

He seeks to establish this by juxtaposing various documents with his photographs. This culminates on the last page of the book with the text of an advertisement from 1977 by the Bronx Marketing Project, an off-shoot of the newly created New York City Office of Economic Development:

Your business will have room to grow in the Bronx. You don't have to worry about the spiraling rents, lack of space, congested streets, parking shortages, and

a host of other problems that plague expanding businesses elsewhere. The Bronx has prime real estate that is affordable. No inflated prices like Westchester, New Jersey, or Long Island. The City of New York is planning to sell prime parcels of real estate for retail, light manufacturing, office and industrial development. These are properties which the city has held from sale until the market was right. Now the market is right. You can own real estate in thriving, busy commercial centers, industrial enclaves, and growing residential areas.

With elegant irony, Rosenthal places this crass advertisement under one of his most arresting portraits: a mother and daughter dressed in their seventies-era best—ankle boots and A-frame coats with faux fur collars—holding hands and smiling prettily at the camera, in front of a rubble-filled lot that fills the wider frame, and an entire city block. [See Figure] In the modernist tradition of what Walter Benjamin called the “dialectical image,” all the contradictions of the era are placed face to face in this photo: the exchange value versus the use value of a neighborhood, the demand for real estate versus the human right to housing, the image versus the reality of displacement. In addition, Rosenthal’s juxtaposition of the portrait and the ad reveal the extent to which the battle over the image of the city had itself become fodder for the most clear-sighted artists of the day.

Rosenthal was only one example in a veritable artistic movement that rose up in response to the devastation of the South Bronx, and other New York City neighborhoods, in the late 1970’s. As the Bronx Museum exhibit chronicled, others artists arose with a similar interest in visually appropriating and transforming decayed public spaces —included the sculptors John Ahearn and Rigoberto Torres, painters Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring, etc . But while many of these diverse, formally trained artists established gallery outposts

and cultural centers in neighborhoods like the Bronx—including most famously the Fashion Moda gallery—nonetheless they were mainly based in relatively well-off areas of Manhattan. And while they had devoted audiences, these were largely limited to the underground, and elite, downtown arts scene. On the other hand, these individual artists were interacting with, and inspired by, the wider cultural movement of hip hop and graffiti which was being created by the mostly black and Latino young people living in the neighborhoods like the South Bronx hardest hit by the crisis.⁵⁷

Graffiti Hits a Peak, and Hip Hop is Born

If the years of 1971-4 established the fundamental styles of graffiti, the years of 1975-7, with the city's fiscal crisis, pushed what had been a renegade, underground phenomenon into a major citywide movement, with thousands, not just hundreds, of practitioners. As @149st puts it in their unofficial history, “the peak” in graffiti writing history was during these two years.

For the most part innovation in writing hit a plateau after 1974. All the standards had been set and a new school was about to reap the benefits of the artistic foundations established by prior generations and a city in the midst of a fiscal crisis. New York City was broke and therefore the transit system was poorly maintained. This led to the heaviest bombing in history...At this time bombing and style began to further distinguish themselves. Whole cars became standard practice rather than an event. And the definitive form of bombing became the throw up.

With planned shrinkage, and the infrastructure of their neighborhoods literally crumbling around them, graffiti writing became both an easier and more meaningful practice for young people—and thus hit its “peak.” It was easier, quite simply,

because far fewer police and transportation authority officials were present to guard the train yards. And it was more meaningful in a physical environment that told young people that their fate and that of their communities was unimportant to, and ignored by, the rest of the city. For many of the mostly teenage and overwhelmingly male writers “the art of getting up” was about being rebellious, free, and proving their bravado and skill in competition with other writers.⁵⁸ But in addition, many sought to respond critically and creatively to a harsh, alienating environment direly in need of beautification, and to force the rest of the city to recognize their existence, and read their names, whether they liked it or not.

Graffiti in this period became only one element in a large sub-cultural movement known as hip hop. As a cultural form it was based on four main “elements,” the first three of which pertain to hip hop music, also known as “rap,” with graffiti as the fourth, visual arts element. In terms of the first three, “DJ’ing,” was the instrumental element, provided by “sampling” grooves from prerecorded music, something which was traditionally performed live by physically “scratching” records, using the conventional turntable as a musical instrument. “Mc’ing,” or “rapping,” was the spoken word element often performed alongside the DJ, in which an MC delivered rhythmic, rhyming lyrics—whether from memory, or improvised “free-style”—as well as syncopated sounds imitating the DJ called “beat-box.” “Breakdancing,” or “b-boying,” was the highly improvisational and acrobatic dance element, traditionally done in the “break” in the music when the DJ would take over

from the MC, and using the body to channel the electronic beats of the DJ, and involving distinctive fashion: sneakers, baseball caps, and tracksuits.

These three musical elements would traditionally come together in spontaneous neighborhood events, block parties, and competitions, which helped solidify what the early MC Africa Bambataa called, in an idealistic period, “peace, love, and having a good time.” These “moments of freedom,” became opportunities to not only transcend the drudgery of both joblessness and the 9 to 5, but to infuse everyday life with spontaneity, rhythm, and even poetry, if only temporarily.⁵⁹ And, as innovated primarily by Puerto Rican and African American young people, hip hop music and dance also presented a unique opportunity for the fusion of a new afro-diasporic cultural form — linking for instance call-and-response verbal battles and the syncopation of *bomba y plena*, to electronic break beats and scratching on vinyl.⁶⁰

While the musical elements might be considered the temporal expression of this new popular cultural movement, through graffiti, or “writing” as its practitioners preferred to call it, hip hop entered the visual space of the city. In this way, graffiti helped politicize that which was shared by all four elements of hip hop, namely their urban context, and specifically the deteriorating and offensive conditions of the inner city neighborhoods in which the young members of hip hop culture were growing up.⁶¹ As such, as the cultural theorist Tricia Rose has pointed out, hip hop was “its own form of urban renewal,” based on “appropriating and alchemically transforming

resources found amidst the urban detritus.”⁶² The “found resources” from which these young people concocted their art included new techniques of mixing and dubbing via boom boxes, turntables, and prerecorded music; pirated energy from streetlights; any potential public space that could be “borrowed” for a street party; the sides of subway cars and (often stolen) spray paint; as well as the body, the voice, and language itself.

Yet graffiti, through its symbolic appropriation of public space of the entire city, was distinct from hip hop’s musical elements because of to the far greater impact it had on the city’s image, and mounting “image crisis.” Of course all hip hop, lacking other means, developed through some form of production of public space, but for MC’s, DJ’s, and breakdancers this involved very local spaces —turning stoops, streets, rooftops, basketball courts, school cafeterias, etc. into impromptu dancehalls and music studios. And unless brave downtown music producers were prepared to trek out to these isolated neighborhoods, there was little chance the rest of the city would find out about their work—this being a good decade before rap videos would appear on MTV.⁶³ Graffiti artists of this period, on the other hand, after training on neighborhood walls, “graduated” to the subway, a space that traversed and was seen by the entire city, rich and poor, black and white, uptown and downtown. Indeed a, if not *the*, main objective for writers was to gain “prestige” and “fame” by being seen on as many subway lines, and by as widely distributed an audience, as possible —also known as “going all city.”

* * *

Marshall Berman argues that despite the “misery and anguish” of this time, or because of it, “the Bronx became more culturally creative than it had ever been in its life.”⁶⁴ The evolution of hip hop culture in the South Bronx, and in particular the rise of the graffiti movement on the walls of subway cars, proved that despite the desire of the city to cut off the Bronx from the rest of the city through planned shrinkage, etc., the will of its young people to remain a vital part of the city, and to forge symbolic links between uptown and downtown, was indomitable. He cites a story by Grace Paley from this period, where a character visiting the Bronx observes: “The block is burning down on one side of the street, and the kids are trying to build something on the other.” Berman saw this too with every visit to these broken down neighborhoods—evidence of the fact that, “In the midst of dying, [the Bronx] was going through rebirth.”⁶⁵

But while this cultural rebirth may have been seen by many resilient and creative South Bronx residents, as well as other urban residents who were soon to spread the hip hop movement nationally and internationally, this was certainly not the view of city’s political leadership in City Hall, the MTA, and the crisis regime. To these official stewards of New York City, the images of the crumbling buildings on one side of the street were just as damaging as the creative responses to them on the other side of the street, in the form of hip hop and graffiti. Indeed both sides of the street were seen as part of a vicious image cycle, the one feeding into and exacerbating the other, and both driving the city further and further down into lawlessness and chaos.

New York's Descent in Mass Media and Political Discourse

The image of the burnt-out Bronx provided a blank slate on which any number of myths could be overlaid. ... As a mythical signifier, the streets of the South Bronx lose their unique history, their particular character. And consequently, the Hollywood screenwriter is able to fill the neighborhood with a fantastic cast of characters.

Lydia Yee, 1999

"It's all just a freak show to them anyway."

Sonny Wortzik [Al Pacino], "Dog Day Afternoon," 1975

From "Asphalt Jungle" to "New York Exploitation Films"

Beginning in the late 1960's, the "New York Movie" had returned to shooting in New York City, after some 60 years of residence on "the other coast." What started as a "film revival" in the 1950's, of underground film and made-for-TV movies, now blossomed into a full-fledged movie industry. For the first time since D.W. Griffiths abandoned New York for Hollywood, and after decades of making films with a canned version of the "New York sensibility," as written by New York exiles and shot on stage set versions of "Brownstone Brooklyn" and "The Lights of Broadway," producers and directors were now streaming back the other way to get access to the real streets, skyline, and faces of New York City.⁶⁶

The sudden increase in local moviemaking was in large part due to the vision and persistence of Mayor John V. Lindsay who, in 1966, took a stagnant agency called the

Mayor's Office of Film, Theater, and Broadcasting, established in 1947, and transformed it into a modern and efficient operation.⁶⁷ He named a director with a background in PR, advertising, and B-Movie production, and a coordinator with experience navigating the city's bureaucracy, and with them designed what became known as the "one stop system" for shooting films and TV programs in New York.⁶⁸ This had a revolutionary effect on the schedules and budgets of locally based productions. Before, anyone wanting to shoot in New York had to find a production manager and a local film official capable of negotiating with a Byzantine assortment of city agencies and personnel, in order to obtain signatures for the myriad required permits —the number of which changed from year to year.⁶⁹ And with the impatience of film directors facing tight budgets and deadlines, came bribes, pay-offs, and corruption. Now, with the new system, this was all reduced to one permit, one schedule, and one signature from the Mayor's Office. When asked about the impact of this shift, Lumet, then in the midst of shooting *Dog Day Afternoon*, responded:

[Before,] we used to budget for [bribes]. You'd start shooting at 7:30 in the morning and have to take care of all three shifts: the sergeant who'd stop by in his car, and the cops on the street. Nobody's on the take anymore. Now you have to force a cop to take a cup of coffee on a cold day...

As a result of this streamlining, in combination with a crackdown on police corruption, Lindsay is widely credited with having sparked a meteoric rise in local film production.⁷⁰ And indeed, over the course of his eight-year term, a whopping 366 movies were made in New York, or an average of 46 films per year. To get a sense of the enormity of this level of production, only 13 features were filmed in New York in 1965, the last year of Mayor Wagner's third term.⁷¹ And remarkably, the average of the Lindsay years

continued into the Beame administration: in 1975, at the height of the crisis, 46 films were shot in New York. With estimated revenue from the movie industry reaching \$40-\$50 million dollars a year, the MOFTB became one of the key agencies in the newly created Office of Economic Development.

Yet, with New York's unionized film crews still able to demand higher pay, slow down shooting schedules, and drive up costs, the city's one-stop system wasn't enough to account for the huge increase in local production. What really pushed New York over the top as Hollywood's location of choice was its image, being solidified in the nation's mind via the TV news, as capital of both fiscal and urban crisis. With the nightly documentary-style coverage of the city's financial and social problems came the nation's increased demand to see "realistic" movies, particularly crime dramas, shot on location in the city's streets. This helped motivate brave Hollywood movie people to abandon their stage-set version of New York, and make the trip out to the real city. As Steve Kesten, Assistant Director on the movie "Marathon Man," shot in Manhattan in 1975, explained:

New York is the greatest back lot in the world. Its being sold down the pike because Hollywood people are scared to death to come here. Its strange turf. New York may be more expensive, day by day, but New York movies are big *hits*. Eight million people live in New York, 180 million people read about New York. Its always in the headlines, whether it's the muggings or the arts.⁷²

And yet, like the OED in which it was housed, Lindsay's MOFTB still naively saw its role as buffing up the city's image in the eyes of the rest of the country. As *New York* magazine reporter Ellen Stern enthused, the devoted MOFTB would go overboard to "work miracles" for filmmakers, often at the personal urging of Mayor Lindsay himself,

so as to ensure that the real city conformed to the improved image a director had in mind. Examples included getting the Department of Highways to repave Orchard Street from Houston to Delancey so that the camera wouldn't shake during a crucial chase scene in "Thieves," having the Parks Department remove graffiti for the period drama "Hester Street," and frequently sending the Sanitation Department out ahead of a film crew to clean the streets, or hose them down to create the impression of rain-slicked concrete. These alterations were only supposed to make the city look better for the cameras. The only exception, according to the MOFTB's police liaison, was in 1966, when a scene in "Out-of-Towners," required Jack Lemmon's character to encounter a garbage strike, and the Sanitation Department had to place garbage on the street. But otherwise he said: "we won't allow anything to be done that will destroy our image."⁷³

It seems that either the MOFTB, and *New York* magazine, weren't being completely honest, or they were extremely naïve about what film crews were really doing in the streets of New York. Already by 1974, well-known graffiti writers recalled the thrill of being hired by the set designers of "The Taking of Pelham One Two Three" to cover a previously pristine train with tags, as well as the indignity of seeing fake and inartful graffiti festoon the train car in "Death Wish," which came out the same year.⁷⁴ And certainly if the piles of garbage in the streets had been cleaned up in the latter film, there would have been far less to motivate Charles Bronson's descent into madness. And in general, films about New York in this period were becoming ever darker, more violent and more apocalyptic. Ironically, these portrayals of New York were the opposite of

John Lindsay's vision for the city. In many of these movies, the *New York Times* film critic Vincent Canby wrote:

New York has become a metaphor for what looks like the last days of American civilization... It's run by fools. Its citizens are at the mercy of its criminals.... The air is foul. The traffic is impossible. Services are diminishing and the morale is such that ordering a cup of coffee in a diner can turn into a request for a fat lip.⁷⁵

Other critics sought to differentiate between the quality of the movies being made in New York, and argued that certain films, like those of John Schlesinger, Sidney Lumet, and particularly Martin Scorsese, signaled the long awaited return of the "New York Movie." For the New York-based film historian and screenwriter Mark Jacobson, Scorsese's semiautobiographical "Mean Streets" (1973) was a sign that "the New York movie would finally come home in one hellish masterpiece." After getting his hopes up that the industry would be revived after the era of New York underground film in the 1950's and 60's, only to be disappointed again and again by the "dreck" of the late 1960's and 70's,⁷⁶ Jacobson found in "Mean Streets" a true cause for celebration. Despite, or because of, the raw bravura of its characters, and its numerous technical flaws—scenes shot with "grade Z documentary footage ...left out in the sun too long" and sound so bad that "lots of time you can't even hear De Niro go into tirades"—the movie felt authentically and beautifully New York.

Raging like an oily Kong on the tenement tops of Little Italy, De Niro sprayed bullets into the New York night and threatened to shoot out the lights of the Empire State Building... [This] is the Quintessential New York Movie. It's the story of the guys you hang out with and the city you live in; the kind of stuff that when you're doing it somebody says, "Hey man, this would make a good movie." Its immediate, jagged, energetic almost to the point of entropy; full of raunch,

crazy dialogue, and with a big stiff one for you if you don't like it. But underneath there's soul and poetry too. It's like New York.⁷⁷

Jacobson's definition of a good New York movie was very similar to the notion of the gritty social realism, poetic rhythm, ironic wit, and leftist politics of the "New York sensibility" as cultivated by Cultural Front of the 1930's and 40's—from the Brechtian theatre productions of Marc Blitzstein, to the New York-trained screenwriters in exile in Hollywood, like Orson Welles. After being besieged by McCarthyite purges of the late 1940's and 50's, this sensibility returned to New York surreptitiously with the blacklisted TV-writers of the 1950's—but never again gained the national prominence of this earlier period. Now there was hope that good, authentic New York Movies would indeed be made again, what with the inspiring presence of a few gutsy directors, as well as a range of local institutions. New York University's film school, Scorsese's alma mater, had its largest enrollment ever in 1975. A whole new generation of daring, idiosyncratic actors coming out of the High School of Music and Art, and the method-acting school "The Group" was graduating stars like Al Pacino and Robert De Niro who were "completely and compellingly New York."⁷⁸ Locally-based freelancers—from cinematographers, to sound mixers, to film editors—had been considered since the early 1960's as the best film craftspeople in the business.⁷⁹ As New York producer Ed Lynch reasoned: "There's every reason to think we can start a movie version of Off-Off Broadway; in fact, you might call it Off-Off Hollywood."⁸⁰

But despite all the crews and money streaming in, prospects for the return of New York movie-making were grim. Much of the new, homegrown talent was moving to L.A.,

including directors Mike Nichols and Scorsese himself, the man who, according to Jacobson, “brought the New York Movie home after 60 years of wandering in the desert.” Replacing these directors, and their relatively complex take on the asphalt jungle drama, were B-movie directors like John Carpenter, Michael Winner, and William Lustig, who were only too happy to play up the most base and racist New York stereotypes for thrills and laughs. They created a new genre of what I would call *New York exploitation movies*, which was to grow into one of the biggest and most lucrative segments of the U.S. film industry in the 1980’s and 1990’s, and spawning New York film subgenres with cult followings like vigilante action, slasher, and horror. [See Table 4.1 and 4.2]

The first major New York exploitation film, and the one that was to set the mold for those to follow, was Michael Winner’s “Death Wish”(1974). With the lone, heroic white man, played by Charles Bronson, forced to fight bands of dark-skinned villains against a barren, lawless backdrop of New York subways, alleys, and streets, this film owed far more to Hollywood westerns than it did to any true “New York sensibility.” The only difference was that here the overpopulated city, and not the rural hinterlands, was the hostile frontier.⁸¹ Indeed now New York City was the film’s main character, and primary antagonist, a malevolent force that, as the years went by, drove its depraved inhabitants to commit ever crazier, more inhuman, and bloodier crimes, the local authorities always pathetically powerless to stop them.

TABLE 4.1: “Asphalt Jungle” Films, 1967-1976*

Title	Director	Date	Genre
The Incident	Larry Peerce	1967	Crime Thriller
Midnight Cowboy	John Schlesinger	1969	Urban Drama
Joe	John G. Avildsen	1970	Urban Drama
Desperate Characters	?	1971	Urban Drama
The French Connection	William Friedkin	1971	Crime Thriller
Panic in Needle Park	Jerry Schatzberg	1971	Urban Drama
Across 110 th Street	Barry Shear	1972	Blaxploitation
Superfly	Gordon Parks	1972	Blaxploitation
Black Caesar	Larry Cohen	1973	Blaxploitation
Hell Up in Harlem	Larry Cohen	1973	Blaxploitation
Mean Streets	Martin Scorsese	1973	Urban Drama
Death Wish	Michael Winner	1974	Vigilante Action
Law and Disorder	Ivan Passer	1974	Crime Thriller
The Seven-Ups	Phil D’Antoni	1974	Crime Thriller
The Taking of Pelham One Two Three	Joseph Sargeant	1974	Crime Thriller
Dog Day Afternoon	Sidnet Lumet	1975	Urban Drama
King Kong	Dino De Laurentis	1975	Horror
The Prisoner of Second Avenue	Melvin Frank	1975	Urban Drama
Taxi Driver	Martin Scorsese	1976	Urban Drama

* Lists compiled by the author.

TABLE 4.2: "New York Exploitation" Films, 1976-1993

Title	Director	Date	Genre
The Assault on Precinct 13	John Carpenter	1976	Vigilante Action
Driller Killer	Abel Ferrara	1979	Slasher
The Warriors	Walter Hill	1979	Vigilante Action
The Exterminator	John Glickenhau	1980	Slasher
Maniac	William Lustig	1980	Slasher
Escape from New York	John Carpenter	1981	Horror
Fort Apache, The Bronx	Daniel Petrie	1981	Vigilante Action
Wolfen	Michael Wadleigh	1981	Horror
Death Wish II	Michael Winner	1982	Vigilante Action
Ms. 45	Abel Ferrara	1982	Slasher
Q: The Winged Serpent	Larry Cohen	1982	Horror
Vigilante	William Lustig	1982	Vigilante Action
C.H.U.D.	Douglas Cheek	1984	Horror
Exterminator 2	Mark Buntzman,	1984	Slasher
Fear City	Abel Ferrara	1984	Vigilante Action
Death Wish III.	Michael Winner	1985	Vigilante Action
Death Wish IV: The Crackdown	J. Lee Thompson	1987	Vigilante Action
Maniac Cop	William Lustig	1988	Slasher
Maniac Cop 2	William Lustig	1990	Slasher
Maniac Cop 3: Badge of Silence	William Lustig	1993	Slasher

By 1976, New York exploitation films completely replaced the urban dramas and crime thrillers of the late 1960's and 70's. Those "Asphalt Jungle" films, though showing the ugly, alienating, and dangerous side of life in the city, had at least made an effort to portray the complex, human struggles of their characters. Now and for the next decades, it seemed Gotham was simply impossible to film unless it involved excessive amounts of blood and gore. This included years of derivative New York vigilante movies, like *Death Wish II* (1982), *III* (1985), and *IV* (1987), Daniel Petrie's "Fort Apache, The Bronx" (1981), and Abel Ferrara's "Fear City" (1984). These were joined by pornographically bloody slasher films, in which graphic dismemberment was invariably paired with raunchy sex scenes. This subgenre was launched by Abel Ferrara's "Driller Killer" (1979) and "Ms. 45" (1982), and continued with the "Exterminator" and "Maniac Cop" series, and of course "Friday the 13th" (1989).

Finally, the New York horror movie made a roaring come-back when *King Kong* returned to take over the World Trade Center in 1975 (courtesy of the director Dino De Laurentis), leading to the most crudely racist film depictions of New York that had yet been screened. In Michael Wadleigh's "Wolfen" (1981), an Indian curse transforms the black denizens of the bombed out Bronx into wolves that hunt the mostly white inhabitants of the rest of the city. In Douglas Cheek's "C.H.U.D" (1984), a botched government experiment transforms the swarms of mostly black homeless people living in the sewers into monsters who crave human flesh. Using the lens of science fiction, it became possible to transform the city's poorest citizens into sub-human monsters, and

thus deserving of their fate. It seemed Roger Starr's cold organic metaphors for the surplus inhabitants of these "dead zones" had finally attained a human face.

Meanwhile, to New York's real inhabitants, and especially those interested in making serious films, these representations seemed to only reinforce their sense of alienation from the rest of the country. As Jacobson lamented:

Perhaps the most visceral issue of all these days, with the specter of default and the maddening indifference of the hick government, is that a lot of people in the Big Apple are beginning to get rather militant about the city they love. Suddenly films like "Death Wish" and crud like "Kojak" are beginning to get people mad. [Cinematographer] Arthur Ornitz, who worked on "Death Wish" and then refused to see it, says, "It was an evil film. The New York Western has got to go." Its about time the media freaks in this city stood up and decided to take our image into our own hands.

Of course appropriating the image of a city, even one's own, is easier said than done. Like the 1920's, New York's independent producers and directors were once again up against the big guns of Hollywood, but this time on their own turf. Here was the ultimate, ironic indignity: rather than the New York movie coming home from Hollywood, Hollywood, and its fake version of New York, was taking over the city.

The Conservative Critique of New York City

The media's lurid coverage of New York City's troubles, and audiences' apparent eagerness to consume it, bespoke a more fundamental, and ideological animus: the country's century-old, right-wing, anti-urban bias. Within the growing conservative movement of the 1970's, this bias was already being exploited for political gain, and so

when the New York fiscal crisis arrived it provided right wing ideologues with an ideal lightning rod. As historians have since argued, President Ford and Treasury Secretary Simon's blunt refusal to accede to New York City's plea for financial assistance reflected broader interests on the part of the conservative leadership of both the public and private sectors, to eradicate "New York civic liberalism."⁸² As Simon explicitly spells out in his autobiography, his and Ford's agenda was to bring an end to "New York-style liberal self rule" which he believed had shaped so much of the national "philosophy of government" going back to the Roosevelt era.⁸³ In his mind, and in the view of the Ford administration, New York's model of welfare entitlements and labor strength had been devastating for the competitiveness of U.S. economy, and so by pillorying the city as a bloated bureaucracy, and allowing its economy to fail, they provided an unparalleled demonstration of the fate awaiting other cities who might be considering New York's approach. As Simon testified in October, 1975, any federal aid to New York should be on terms "so punitive, the overall experience made so painful, that no city, no political subdivision would ever be tempted to go down the same road."⁸⁴

Most in federal government appeared to share Simon's anti-New York animus— whether out of political conviction or careerist opportunism. Ford figured that "beating on New York might prove useful in courting conservatives," as he sought to retain the presidency he had won without election, and in the face of a challenge from the republican Right and Reagan.⁸⁵ But so unpopular was New York that the same calculation could be made across party lines. Democratic Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware told a reporter: "Cities are viewed as the seed of corruption and duplicity. There is a general negative feeling

toward New York City,” while North Carolina’s democratic representative Richardson Preyer explained simply: “New York City has a certain overtone of sinfulness about it.” This “general negative feeling” and “sinful overtone” allowed old, now unspeakable racial and ethnic fears to be dignified by righteous outrage over conniving New Yorker’s profiteering on the backs of hard-working Americans. *New York Times* reporter Fred Ferretti put it succinctly: “The resistance in Washington to helping the city was grounded largely in the view that the city was a haven for ‘welfare cheats’ (read that ‘lazy niggers’), people with an overabundance of chutzpah (read that Jews), for ‘minorities who want a free ride’ (read that Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics), for arrogant smart-asses who don’t give a damn about the rest of the country.”⁸⁶

Overall, the national news media overtly applauded the fact that New York was brought low by its troubles, and cried out for the government to impose the most drastic, punitive measures possible. *Time* ran a news article—not an editorial—that stated flatly: “If there is a silver lining somewhere in the clouds over New York, it may be that the city’s financial problem has become so serious that civil servants and other New Yorkers are willing to accept sacrifices that should have been made years ago.” The solution taken by the city, and endorsed by the magazine, was the private oversight of public expenditures, which was understood to be a “humiliating but well deserved intrusion on mismanaged home rule.”⁸⁷ Many, like *US News and World Report* editor Marvin Stone, agreed with the idea of planned shrinkage, arguing: “big cities, rather than being left to die, should be allowed to shrink to a manageable size.”⁸⁸ To many others, planned shrinkage didn’t go nearly far enough: cities like New York should simply be made extinct. William Baer,

professor of urban planning at University of Southern California, called older cities “terminal,” i.e. beyond redemption, and chastised those who couldn’t accept this harsh reality. Taking Roger Starr’s organic metaphors to their sinister conclusions, he claimed that “urban death,” as signaled by the fiscal crisis, was “very much in the natural order of things, to be taken in stride.” Indeed the disease of New York, as it were, should only be expected to spread to other large cities. “The major urban issue facing our nation in the next decade is not the cost of dying sectors of our cities, but the incidence and the timing.”⁸⁹ So common sense did this notion of urban death become that *Business Week* was able to make the following claim without offering a rebuttal: “The US, some experts believe, may become the world’s first industrialized country without important cities.”⁹⁰

* * *

It was to be a long war of attrition, as New York entered what many have referred to as the city’s “dark ages.” Throughout 1977, demonstrations were held almost weekly by city residents and activist groups to keep services, and some of the harshest aspects of planned shrinkage were scaled back. By 1978, city unions continued to mount labor actions, winning wage gains that partially recouped ground lost, and ending the EFCB’s ability to block collective bargaining agreements. Nonetheless, the ideological terrain of the city and nation was shifting inexorably to the right. As Freeman points out, despite a number of victories: “working class new Yorkers remained on the defensive, forced to justify every service and benefit in a discourse that accepted governmental solvency as the highest social goal and left unchallenged the notion that there were insufficient economic resources available to undertake even the most obviously needed and beneficial

government programs.”⁹¹ Meanwhile, the city shifted its focus to the needs of investors, tourists, and corporate location scouts.

Even so, when one considers the fact that the city bent over backward in the period to entice Hollywood filmmakers to the city to make movies like “Death Wish” using inner-city neighborhoods as back-drops, it seems strange that they reacted with such vehemence to the small, homegrown movements of the Fear City campaign, and of graffiti writing on subways. But it reflects the city’s main and growing concern in this period: to protect the image of midtown and downtown Manahattan, while containing the visual disorder to the outer reaches of the city. This border was breached when Fear City campaigners began handing out fliers at Grand Central Station, and when teenagers’ spray-painted murals were carried by subway cars through the very heart of the city. As we shall see, the city and its branders would attempt to reassert control over this central space not only through the continued imposition of selective scarcity, but also through restructuring government for professional marketing campaigns. These campaigns placed a bright spotlight on the New York culture entrepreneurial city leaders thought outsiders would want to consume: the musical theatre of Broadway and the imposing symbol of the World Trade Center. Meanwhile, they sought to shift attention from local, popular culture like hip hop and graffiti, and from the reality of life facing so many of the city’s crisis torn neighborhoods.

Yet, with the massive disinvestment from inner-city neighborhoods, in combination with the nation’s growing anti-urban sentiment, the city was to provide the backdrop for the

mainstream media's increasingly exploitative portrayal of New York. Both TV news coverage and hyper-violent films appropriated New York's "bombed out" neighborhoods as a ready-made stage-set upon which to dramatize the collapse of civilization. The combination of these elements was to create an "image crisis" far worse than any the city had yet seen.

¹ Fowler, June 13, 1975, 1.

² Ibid.

³ Patterson, June 10, 1975, 1. See also: Weitzman (1979), 71-92

⁴ "Unions Vs. New York." June 12, 1975, 36.

⁵ Fowler, *ibid.*

⁶ Fowler, June 14, *ibid.*

⁷ Fowler, June 13, *ibid.*

⁸ Goldstein, June 14, 1975. The doctrine is named after Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, who first presented it in 1919.

⁹ Goldstein, *ibid.*

¹⁰ Fowler, June 14, 1.

¹¹ Fowler, June 17, 1.

¹² Fowler, June 14, *ibid.*

¹³ Goldstein, *ibid.*

¹⁴ "Civil Libertines." June 14, 1975, 26.

¹⁵ Fowler, June 17, *ibid.*

¹⁶ "Civil Libertines," *ibid.*

¹⁷ Melnick, June 16, 1975. See also: Kihss, June 16, 1975. As the later article notes, the three unions were supported by Victor Gotbaum, leader of DC37, who termed the pamphlet "a terrible mistake" and "an awful way to present your case." He added, "Those responsible for it are doing the city a great disservice"

¹⁸ Fowler, June 18, 1975, 19.

¹⁹ Fowler, June 14, *ibid.*

²⁰ Buder, September 5, 1975, p 20.

²¹ Fowler, June 17, *ibid.*

²² Fowler, June 18, *ibid.*

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ Maitland, July 31, 1975.

²⁶ Maitland, *ibid.*

²⁷ Fowler, June 21, 1975. The USTS gave a special grant to the CVB for this purpose.

²⁸ See: Raab, July 18, 1975, 8.

²⁹ As cited in Epstein, 1976.

³⁰ Starr, 1976, 32.

³¹ Judd, 1999, pp 35-53.

³² This is despite the fact that Starr was both well aware of these costs and, initially, willing to acknowledge them. Unlike other leading officials of the crisis regime, Starr publicly detailed the detrimental role of the city's borrowing via quasi-public authorities to fund private sector real estate development, once private mortgage markets had dried up. As he says towards the beginning of his famous *New York Times Magazine* article (Starr, 1976, 1-2):

“[The money of the city’s creditors’], entrusted to life-insurance companies and major banks, was loaned by those institutions to finance the construction of office buildings, hotels, motels, and luxury apartments houses in New York. Only lately have some of the sophisticated managers of foreign money realized that they misperceived New York City’s future. Some major new mortgages have been foreclosed ; other projects were put into the deep freeze even before they were finished. When mortgages from commercial sources began to slow down, the [city’s private sector] turned to government sources. More billions of dollars, corralled from less sophisticated savers all over the nation, flowed into municipal notes and bonds that paid for revenue-producing projects developed by the Port Authority, the New York State Housing Finance Agency, the Urban Development Corporation, and the New York State Dormitory Authority. To the extent that they were based on gross underestimates of future revenues, they have increased the burdens of the [city government].”

However, this does not mean Starr saw the perpetrators of this practice as responsible for their actions. In convoluted fashion, Starr argued that the lesson that the city should learn from such over-borrowing was to make its public sector smaller, and less responsible for social welfare, rather than hold any private sector actors accountable for problems they helped cause.

It should also be noted that by 1989, when he wrote his retrospective on the fiscal crisis, *The Rise and Fall of New York*, the above analysis was completely absent. While still placing blame for the city’s deficit of the early 1970’s on its borrowing to make mortgage payments, these mortgages were now seen to be those of public housing projects for low and middle income New Yorkers, and no longer those of “office buildings, hotels, motels, and luxury apartments houses.”

³³ “Rohatyn Urges a City Plan for Industry,” March 16, 1976, 1.

³⁴ Freeman (2000, 275) cites one example, in 1975, in which the Dollar Savings Bank, then the largest mortgage lender in the city, and the fifth largest in country, issued only 32 mortgages in the entire borough of the Bronx.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Fried, 1976a.

³⁷ Starr, November 14, 1976.

³⁸ For editorials that later outlined much of the critique, see Quindlen, August 12, 1979, and Bordewich, July 23, 1979 and February 10, 1980.

³⁹ Fowler, February 11, 1976, 49. This group was created and led by Ron Shiffman, Director of the Pratt Institute Center of Community Economic Development.

⁴⁰ Fried, March 3, 1976, 31

⁴¹ “Minority Caucus Bids Starr Quit.” March 5, 1976, 13.

⁴² Johnson, March 17, 1976.

⁴³ Starr, *ibid*.

⁴⁴ *Real Estate Weekly*, January 26, 1976 and February 9, 1976. The rotation out of poor populations would ostensibly benefit both rich and poor alike, since the former would access to the abandoned properties, while the latter would be enabled—albeit against their will—to seek their fortunes more profitably elsewhere. As Starr put it, in one of his most oft-quoted remarks (November 14, 1976, *ibid*): “The poor, who need the greatest service from the city government, would be worst hurt by a failure of the city to use its resources economically... Better a thriving city of five million than a Calcutta of seven...”

⁴⁵ See: Harvey, 1999; Smith, 1984.

⁴⁶ There was debate as to whether Starr voluntarily resigned or was asked to step down by the Beame administration. In any case, his departure was a protracted process, making it seem involuntary. His possible resignation was first announced in May and confirmed in July 1976. See: Fried, May 22, 1976 and July 9, 1976. He ultimately stepped down in September.

⁴⁷ Federal funds for construction of public housing were ended by the Nixon administration in 1972.

⁴⁸ According to the City and County Data Book for 1983 (Bureau of the Census, 1983) between 1970 and 1980 New York City lost 825,000 residents, while the New York metropolitan area lost 915,000, or 20% of its population.

⁴⁹ Wallace and Wallace, 1998.

⁵⁰ Ibid. The health and safety experts Deborah and Roderick Wallace conducted the most extensive study of the history, scope, and distribution of the city’s cuts in fire service, and the relationship this had to the increase in fires in particular neighborhoods. In it they found that social engineers, some of them from the

Rand Corporation Fire Project, supervised the deliberate degradation of fire control resources in areas the engineers of shrinkage had slated for clearance. Ultimately, in the course of two years about ten percent of New York's fire companies were eliminated, 20 percent of manpower cut back, and emergency response systems whittled down. This occurred primarily in ten of the city's poorest neighborhoods, located mainly in the Bronx and Brooklyn. As response time fell in these still heavily populated neighborhoods by between five and ten minutes (a deadly amount in fire terms), an "inevitable fire epidemic" resulted. This then exacerbated the problem of housing abandonment by landlords. When the dust settled, the Wallaces calculate that about two million poor people had been uprooted by the end of the decade.

⁵¹ "Glory Days," January 2, 2005.

⁵² "Glory Days," *ibid.* These included Anderson, Leguizamo, Mary Ellen Mark, and Fran Lebowitz.

⁵³ See Yee, 1999.

⁵⁴ Berman, 1999.

⁵⁵ Berman, *ibid.* p. 72

⁵⁶ Yee, *ibid.*

⁵⁷ Hip hop, it should be noted, was arising simultaneously with the urban invention in less than a decade of basically *all* major artistic forms still underlying youth culture to this day. This includes the rise of punk in the Lower East Side and London, and skate culture in the "Dogtown" neighborhood of Venice Beach [explored and exploited in the recent documercial by Vans, "Dogtown and Z-Boys"]. All these forms can be seen as a creative and critical response to the deteriorating conditions of post-industrial neighborhoods either ignored or misrepresented by government and mainstream media.

⁵⁸ Castleman, *ibid.*

⁵⁹ Johannes Fabian, as cited by Juan Flores, 2000, 20.

⁶⁰ See Flores, *ibid.*, and Rivera, 2002.

⁶¹ Jessica Green has called the neighborhood "the fifth element of hip hop." As cited by Austin, 2001, 50.

⁶² Rose, 1994.

⁶³ This scenario was famously captured in the movie "Wild Style" (1981) in which a downtown producer, played by Debbie Harry, ventures up to the wilds of the Bronx to witness the artistry of such early giants as Fab Five Freddy and the Cold Crush Brothers. Rap music's lack of exposure was to change somewhat by the 1980's with the rise of the music video and the proliferation of film representations of break dancing, mc'ing, and dj'ing like "Wild Style" as well as "Breaking." But its image was still associated with the outer boroughs, rather than the heart of Manhattan, thus not impacting the "image crisis" directly.

⁶⁴ Berman, *ibid.*, 73.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Sanders, 2001.

⁶⁷ He named it the Office for Motion Pictures and Television, but that name never stuck. Its kept the unwieldy and slightly inaccurate name of Mayors Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting to this day.

⁶⁸ See Stern, December 30, 1975, 55. The one stop system was officially known as "Executive Order No. 10," signed in June of 1966. And according to Stern, the first director of the Office was Walter Wood, "who tells you that he has been a newspaper man, a PR man, an advertising man, and especially a movie man —having produced *The Hoodlum Priest*, *Escape from East Berlin*, and *The Todd Killings*." The real brains behind the operation was a "bespectacled gingersnap" named Mary Imperato, who'd worked for the old agency since 1956, and was an expert at how to navigate the relevant city agencies for permits.

⁶⁹ As Imperato remembered (*ibid.*, 56): If you needed a street, you came to me. Before you filmed, a messenger had to go around and get permission from Water, Gas, and Electric; from the Department of Highways and the Department of Buildings. I was the one who did the running. I'd take the train down to the Municipal Building to get the signatures from these guys. Meantime, the production people were complaining because the signing took time. The chief inspector of the Police Department had to sign, and he'd be out, and we'd have to wait for him to get back."

⁷⁰ See e.g.: Cannato, 2001, 560; Sanders, 2001, chapter 7.

⁷¹ Stern, *ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*, 60.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 56. As evidence of the concern, the article goes on to cite protests from the Port Authority over use of a subway car for a hijacking in "The Taking of Pelham One Two Three" and from the PA and JFK Airport over the use of a plane for a hijacking in the final scene "Dog Day Afternoon." In both cases the

city agencies were concerned about the image that would be presented, as well as safety hazards. In both cases the MOFTB was responsive to the agencies, promising that they would cover costs and ensure the propriety of the scene.

⁷⁴ Austin, *ibid.*

⁷⁵ Canby, November 10, 1974. See also: Stern, Mellins, and Fishman, 1995, pp 1174-1196.

⁷⁶ Jacobson, December 30, 1975, 42. Jacobson was willing to grudgingly acknowledge that there were "some great New York moments" in the spate of recent films like "Where's Poppa?," "The Taking of Pelham One Two Three," "John and Mary," "Born to Win," "Midnight Cowboy," and "The French Connection." But he also felt "something was missing" in all these movies. For instance, though "The French Connection" used "impeccable locations" to create "an aura of potential violence," and had great pyrotechnics, editing, character studies by Gene Hackman, and direction by William Friedkin, nonetheless it lacked authenticity, and the true New York sensibility. "There's still the feeling that this picture knows its way around town like an attuned and venturesome tourist. But don't ask if what school it went to."

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, 43.

⁷⁹ Independent film took off in New York City much more so than in Los Angeles in the 1960's.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, 44.

⁸¹ On the application of the American frontier mythology to the devastated inner cities of the 1970's, see Smith, 1996.

⁸² Freeman, *ibid.*, 259. See also Orlebeke, 1993, 361-4. Jewel Bellush and Dick Netszer refer to this also as "New York exceptionalism" and, to paraphrase Trotsky, "socialism in one city." (Bellush and Netszer, 1984, 3-4) As Freeman points out [259], Simon was known as a deeply conservative, free-market ideologue, whose "real beef was with the city's social policies, not its financial practices." This can be seen most obviously in the fact that Simon was himself partially responsible for the original creation of New York's debt during the Lindsay era, since before coming to Washington he had headed the municipal bond division in Solomon Brothers and served on the Comptroller's Technical Debt Management Committee. Simon later claimed he had no knowledge of the city's fiscal state, though as the nation's chief financial officer, "he felt no compunction denouncing the irresponsibility and ineptitude among city officials."

⁸³ Simon, 1978, pp 126-48.

⁸⁴ Simon, *ibid.*

⁸⁵ Freeman, *ibid.*, 260.

⁸⁶ Ferretti, 1976, 181

⁸⁷ "The Big Apple on the Brink." April 7, 1975. pp 50-51 and "How New York Lurched to the Brink" May 16, 1975. p 16.

⁸⁸ Stone, August 8, 1977, p 80.

⁸⁹ Baer, Fall 1976, p 4 and 8, respectively.

⁹⁰ Patterson, February 2, 1976, p 66. Patterson was particularly concerned with the flight of corporate headquarters. For later work on this topic, see also Muller, March/April 1986, p 46.

⁹¹ Freeman, 281.

CHAPTER 5

The Battle to Brand New York: From Big Apple II to the Summer of Sam

In the years immediately after the fiscal crisis, New York city and state government faced mounting pressure from the private sector to restructure their finances and labor policies, and transform their image. In the process New York City became an “entrepreneurial city”— and New York State became an entrepreneurial state.¹ Certain entrepreneurial strategies had always been used by modern capitalist cities. But with the global recession of the early 1970’s, and rapidly intensified interurban competition, people in urban governance felt compelled to abandon traditional “managerial” strategies, and embrace instead a “new urban entrepreneurialism.” This new approach involved the thorough merging of corporate and governmental sectors into “public-private partnerships,” the primary goal of which was to seek out new sources of investment and economic development through “the speculative construction of place rather than amelioration of conditions within a particular territory.”²

In New York City, this entrepreneurial shift was profound. It involved giving the Municipal Assistance Corporation, a.k.a. “the Corporation,” and other newly created public-private institutions of the city’s “crisis regime,” the authority to completely restructure New York’s system of governance, so as to allow greater private sector access to policy making. In particular, it involved expanding the role of the new Office of Economic Development, and its ability to use the city’s assets — land, labor, finances, and image —in speculative ventures to generate “profit” for the city and city-based businesses, while the city shouldered the bulk of the risk. It also involved turning the

city's annual budget into something more akin to business plans —replete with the free market discourse of “management efficiency,” “fiscal stimulus,” and “competitive advantage.”³ And finally, as a central strategy in the push for economic development and competitive advantage, it involved public sector, for the first time, institutionalizing, subsidizing, and coordinating the mass marketing of the city's image—namely, the commodified image of the still thriving areas of Manhattan.

City marketing was, of course, not a new phenomenon in New York. As we have seen, this grand tradition dates back to the early 19th century, with local impresarios competing to sell the lights of Broadway, the thrills of Coney Island, and even the squalor of Five Points. Yet these earlier forms of *urban boosterism* were undertaken by independent, private sector entrepreneurs, and as such were ancillary to the overall urban economy. Indeed the city and state government felt themselves to be above such brazen and costly acts of self promotion. Yet, by the late 1960's and early 1970's, city marketing efforts were taking on a more organized character, one that both shaped and was shaped by the changing political economy of the city. As discussed in the preceding chapters, *New York* magazine, and then ABNY, introduced influential new imagery, visual style, and expertise to the endeavor, in an effort to keep middle classes and corporate headquarters from fleeing the city.

But it was not until after the fiscal crisis that local government took a page from the private sector, and began to focus more intensively on the image of the city in the eyes of the market, making a marketable asset out of what Bourdieu would call “symbolic

capital.” They recognized what corporate America had long understood: that material shifts like the fiscal crisis could have real effects in terms of the image, or “brand” of a product, which the entrepreneurial city had become. And further, that a worsening brand image could have a negative effect on the political and economic viability of that basic product—the city. It was at this point that the public sector began to reach out to innovative image makers and marketing firms, and to create a powerful, integrated, public-private group dedicated to improving the brand. This *branding coalition* sought to institutionalize city marketing through ongoing, professionally researched, promotional campaigns. The current mode of urban branding was to be centrally managed by public agencies and marketing firms, integrated across a range of government initiatives, and turned into an engine of economic growth.⁴ In so doing, the city government embraced the ABNY approach to economic development —i.e. increased marketing and private sector involvement in public policymaking. Under the guidance of an emergency regime of supra-governmental decision-makers headed by leaders in finance and real estate, the city’s official recovery strategy prioritized image and investor confidence over public sector needs.

It is of course perfectly understandable that a city, or corporation, would attempt to counter harmful, negative images of itself through coordinated promotional campaigns. Yet, to the extent that such campaigns become a central element in the overall strategy of economic development, they take considerable risk. For while it may be clear that the visual can have real material effects, what is harder to appreciate is that these effects are always complex, never predictable or controllable. The effects of city branding

campaigns can and often do run counter to the intentions of the city, and of image-makers more broadly. This makes city marketing an extremely risky strategy, especially if it's the centerpiece of a city's overall strategy of economic development.

So far in my narrative, I've been highlighting two types of contradictions of official image-making. The first, which might be called *symbolic backlash*, has to do with the dangerously polysemous and subvertible nature of visual imagery itself, particularly imagery that becomes identified as dominant. An example of this, as we saw in the previous chapter, is the relative ease with which municipal employees could transform the "Big Apple" into "Fear City" in the global mass media and the public imagination. The second contradiction that arises from these campaigns might be called the *interruption of material needs*. This results when budgetary priority is given to promoting an image, and entrepreneurial development schemes involving cut-backs in public services, over and at the expense of the material needs of the city. This very often leads to the worsening of material conditions—i.e. homelessness and joblessness, burned-out buildings and trash-strewn streets—which can become a spectacle in and of itself, interrupting the flow of spectacle, worsening the city's image, and starting the vicious cycle all over again.

These contradictions work in concert. So for instance, the city's crisis regime had imposed neglectful "planned shrinkage" policies that cut vital city services in the outer-boroughs, while leaving the heart of Manhattan relatively unaffected, and "austerity measures" that cut working class jobs and benefits, and welfare for the city's poor, while

offering tax cuts and incentives to the city's business community. These, I would argue, were to a significant degree inspired by the regime's desire to repair the image of the city center as a safe site for tourism and investment —after it had been impaired by the symbolic backlash of the Fear City campaign. Yet in imposing a new image of the center at the expense of the outer boroughs, the boroughs' decline became so dramatic that it produced images of urban decay far worse than those the city initially intended to combat. The latter was a result of both material neglect, that should have been expected, as well as of unexpectedly powerful visual strategies that appropriated the devastated landscape as a kind of canvas —namely the rise of graffiti and New York exploitation movies. These in turn had additional, adverse material effects on tourism and investment.

The post-fiscal crisis campaign that I will analyze in this chapter reflects the devastating interplay of these contradictions, on an even greater scale. In 1976, a New York City - based branding coalition —including ABNY, the CVB, and the Beame administration's OED— mounted a replay of ABNY's original "Big Apple" campaign, which had been retired over the previous two years of crisis. This time, the campaign shied away from typical, contemporary images of New York, drawing instead on mythical, transhistorical representations of the city as a national and global capital, through media coverage of the city's celebration of the national Bicentennial and hosting of the 1976 Democratic National Convention. The main photo-opportunity was "Operation Sail," in which regattas of colonial era "tall ships" and luxury liners cruised New York Harbor, past the Statue of Liberty and the downtown skyline crowned by the new World Trade Center. This visual montage of New York's glorious past and triumphant future would serve, it

was hoped, to blot out the ongoing, present day horrors of the crisis. It would also present New York City, and particularly the downtown, as a family friendly tourist destination, as well as an attractive site for investment, conventions, and corporate headquarter location.

The reprise of the Big Apple campaign, however, proved not up to the task demanded by the coalition – faced as it was with both worsening material conditions on the ground, and the symbolic backlash of 1977. The “cleaned up” image presented by this local, two-month campaign was no match for the string of natural, social, and image crises the city faced against a backdrop of worsening unemployment and poverty rates, and the deterioration of public services. These crises included the rapidly expanding subway graffiti movement, the “Son of Sam” murder spree, arctic temperatures followed by New York’s hottest summer on record, garbage strikes, a 25 hour electrical blackout followed by widespread looting and arson in parts of Brooklyn, Manhattan, and throughout the South Bronx. All of these incidents proved to be captivating media spectacles, gaining front page headlines and lead TV coverage, both nationally and internationally. Collectively, they served as a counter-hegemonic visual force, undermining the dominant image and symbolic capital shored up by the Big Apple campaign, and undermining the city’s position in the competitive interurban hierarchy.

The Reprise of the Big Apple Campaign

There is a growing pride in the city on the part of New Yorkers... Boosterism is no longer an epithet to the city’s officials, civic leaders, union heads and neighborhood groups. The tourists have taught them that the city is “The Big Apple,” maybe even “Fun City,” once again.

Charles Gillet, CVB President, 1976⁵

With financiers and realtors in control of the New York crisis regime, and increasing interurban competition mirroring and intensifying the pressures then facing the private sector, the emerging strategies and contradictions of image marketing were brought into the corridors of city hall. New York, like other leading cities around the world, turned at this time to image making as a way of selling the city, and realizing quick profits. In so doing, increasing emphasis was placed on discourse, symbols, and a new scale of myth-making. Combining Big Apple with Mayor Lindsay's "Fun City," their goal was to diffuse a unique historical narrative of New York City that elided the crisis, inspired new investment, and protected their endangered "monopoly rents."⁶

Fiscal Crisis as Image Crisis

As the nation's animus towards New York grew over the course of the 1970's, those in the city's FIRE-run crisis regime found themselves in a quandary. On the one hand they disavowed the attack on the image of New York City, and the damage this dealt to their image-sensitive industries, particularly tourism. On the other hand, they agreed with the basic premise of the critique: i.e. that blame for the crisis lay with the city's overly generous social welfare policy, excessive union contracts, and high taxes —and certainly not with their own practices of receiving billions of dollars in "corporate welfare" via mortgage underwriting, tax breaks, zoning variances, and subsidies. They even joined the conservative chorus under President Gerald Ford in calling for New York's crisis to serve as a nationwide example of the irresponsibility of metropolitan governance, and a referendum on the fate of welfare policy, organized labor, and tax reform more broadly.

Thus, overall, the major players in the city's private sector were sympathetic with the draconian measures called for by the Ford administration to "finally teach New Yorkers a lesson" about what a city could and couldn't do with its budget—even though it was accompanied by a black eye for the city's image.

There was no greater apologist for President Ford and Treasury Secretary Simon's tough stance towards New York City than ABNY's founder, Lewis Rudin. In a recent interview, Ford recalled "a meeting with the Mayor, the Governor, and Lew in the cabinet room" in the Summer of 1975, at the height of the crisis.⁷ There came a point in the meeting when they reached a "deadlock." The problem as Ford saw it was simply that "the feds couldn't bail [New York City] out." According to Ford, "Lew [as opposed to Beame and Carey] was a staunch supporter" of his position. He added, "That's what I liked about Lew. He was a loyal New Yorker but understood the value of running a place responsibly." As Ford saw it, Rudin's support of his position on fiscal responsibility was rooted in his own experience in the real estate business:

Lew and I developed a very good understanding about what was responsible for a government. He understood that we in the federal government had our problems in balancing [or] not balancing the budget. And I understood the problems in New York City. That fiscal responsibility concept cemented our relationship. Anyone who handles that much property and that much money had to understand the same problem we had in the federal government.⁸

This story may serve as an illustration of the extent to which the local FIRE elites, as represented by ABNY, joined the right-wing Ford administration in fighting for the rapid transformation of the expansive role of municipal government in this period—even against the interests of local and state leaders. Indeed, they had begun to call for this shift

well before the actual fiscal crisis struck, ever since their devastating experience with the corporate move-outs of the early 1970's, when ABNY was founded. Already in 1971, they saw New York's declining competitiveness and image threatening their local investments. Thus, when hit with an even worse crisis in 1975, they placed ultimate priority on the projection of an image of "fiscal responsibility" on a national scale, regardless of the local cost.

And so it should come as no surprise that local realtors and financiers of this era saw their governmental allies in the republican White House, and not the democratic City Hall or State House, nor that they should choose to publicize this alliance to the world. Nowhere was this more explicit than with the very public "friendship" between Rudin and former President Ford, which was "cemented" when Ford was invited to speak at a heavily symbolic ABNY breakfast held at Manhattan's Federal Hall in June of 1976 as part of the city's Bicentennial Celebrations.⁹ From then on, Ford acknowledged, "[Rudin] was recognized as a great friend of mine," and whenever he visited the city, Rudin would act as his unofficial host, putting him up in an apartment in one of his own buildings.¹⁰

Chase Manhattan CEO David Rockefeller was similarly captivated by the tough stance of the Ford administration during the fiscal crisis. By this time he sat on the board of ABNY, but was so inspired by the events he witnessed as to create his own public private partnership, the New York City Partnership [NYCP] in 1979. "In retrospect," he mused, "the best thing that happened to New York may have been the famous 1975 *Daily News* headline, 'Ford to City: Drop Dead!' That really got our adrenaline going."¹¹

And yet, while local business leaders may have been supportive of Ford and Simon's economic policy, what they did not and could never agree with were the attacks on the *image* of New York and New Yorkers upon which this policy was based. Whether couched in racist terms of a crime ridden "asphalt jungle," or classist terms of government abusing "welfare queens" and "crooked union bosses," right wing attacks that blamed the crisis on average New Yorkers were scaring off tourists, conventioners, investors, corporate tenants, and other valuable sources of revenue in the new service-based economy. And so even if they agreed with the substance of the attacks, their effect was extremely threatening to high-end firms. For despite increased flexibility of capital and labor in the new global economy, these firms still had considerable sunk investments in the city—from real estate to utilities—as well as dependence on the networking advantages brought by physical proximity of financial spaces like Wall Street and Midtown. Lew Rudin, for instance, often reiterated the point he had made back in 1971 that they were still unable to "move their holdings over the rivers," or south of the border, or to simply shift to telecommunications for their deal-making. And so even if they bought the national assessments of the good-for-nothing elements of their city, and even capitalized on it for their own immediate political agendas, they didn't want this image of New Yorkers broadcast to the nation and the world, giving the entire city a bad name.

Broadly speaking, ABNY's class and corporate interests were offset by their local, place-based interests when it came to the city's image. And these place-based interests were at

graver risk than they had ever been, as reflected in the city's struggling tourism industry.

While a small number of luxury visitors were still coming to the city, the biggest and most lucrative tourist category, business travelers and conventioners, was in steep decline. By the end of 1975, the hotel occupancy rate, considered a bellwether of the industry as a whole, was down to a historic low of 65%.¹²

Of course the decline in tourism was due not only to the deteriorating image of the city, but to the harsh reality of rising poverty, worsening crime, and police layoffs faced everyday by New York's visitors and residents alike. To take just one prominent example from the period, tourists complained of what became known as "the big midtown baggage hustle." As the *New York Post* described it at the time: "When the visitor to New York gets off the Carey Transportation airport bus near Grand Central, he steps into a hustlers enclave where he may pay \$10 to get his luggage back from a street tough and twice that for a cab ride to a midtown hotel just blocks away." Governor Carey himself held five meetings with the police on this problem in 1975, "but with recent police layoffs and the apparent resourcefulness of the hustlers, the problem continues."¹³ This was creating a desperate situation, as the New York's deteriorating image and quality-of-life was not only providing additional disincentives for commuters and tourists; it was also providing additional justification for federal government and national financial institutions to continue to write-off the city.

Thus when it came to the city's image, the staunch position of ABNY, the CVB, the MAC, and EFCB as regarded fiscal responsibility and austerity was reversed. While these

institutions supported the drastic decrease in public spending for city workers and services for the poor, they supported a dramatic *increase* in public spending at both the city and state level when it came to confronting the image crisis. Essentially, their attitude about recovery prioritized image and investor confidence over public city functions. They were less concerned with how quickly the baseline of social welfare for the majority of New Yorkers improved, than with how quickly the image of New York could be transformed in the popular imagination.

Of course, this position reflected a fundamental contradiction. For while these public-private groups sought to counter the anti-New York stereotypes in the mainstream media, their own approach played right in to the anti-New York ideology that underlay these stereotypes. This contradiction was not accidental, for despite the “love” of New York they were soon to proclaim, these groups harbored deeply anti-New York feelings — insofar as the city had traditionally been represented as a bastion of liberal and working class values. This antipathy was seen plainly in the regime’s response to the crisis, i.e. the crafting of an altogether new image of New York as monolithically wealthy, almost entirely white, business-friendly, safe, and “clean.” While maintaining the veneer of the unique “New York attitude,” this whitewashed brand image was to constitute a complete departure from, and a new kind of attack on, New York’s diverse cultures and proud history as a “working class city.”

New York City Restructures Itself for Marketing

The anxieties of the FIRE and tourism elites in the aftermath of the fiscal crisis, and Fear City, helps us understand why, at the same time New York City was implementing planned shrinkage and widespread austerity measures, they were also restructuring their economic development agencies to support marketing. Following the lead of the influential members of the CVB and ABNY, and the advice of the boards of the MAC and EFCB, city officials believed that what was required to recover from the fiscal crisis was a new, more professional, and more centrally coordinated marketing effort than New York City had ever seen. The first move in this direction came from Mayor Abraham Beame and the Department of City Planning [DCP], when they devised a new plan for economic development, in 1976. In a report entitled “Economic Recovery: New York City’s Program for 1977-1981,”¹⁴ the city spelled out two substantive shifts which were to be undertaken in the city’s approach to economic development.

One was the creation of a new “Office of Economic Development”—the first city-wide administrative division devoted entirely to generating new income for the city through its dealings with the private sector. In creating this new office, akin in its mission to the State’s DOC, Beame and the DCP merged previously separate departments like Cultural Affairs, Public Events, and Budget and Finance under one roof. This Office was then placed under the jurisdiction of a new “Deputy Mayor for Economic Development,” whose position of authority was second only to that of the Mayor. The main effects of this restructuring was to streamline different aspects of what had traditionally been called “business services” under the rubric of “economic development,” and to then assign economic development a much higher priority in City Hall. Most importantly for the

business community, this included the increased provision of “incentives” —like tax breaks and zoning variances— to aid corporate location and retention, as well as enshrined the principle of “shredding red tape,” i.e. the elimination of bureaucratic hurdles for the private sector in their dealings with the city.¹⁵

The second shift in the city’s approach to economic development, which was to be carried out by the new OED, was what Beame called in his report “the marketing of the city.”¹⁶ Citing the “paradoxical” fact that, unlike so many other cities in the country, “the home of the world’s largest, most energetic communications and marketing industries should beat its own drum so seldom and so softly,” the report announced the establishment of “a comprehensive marketing program” funded by city, state, and private business. This foray into an area previously considered unnecessary was defended as now incumbent on the city in an era of stiff interurban competition. As a point of comparison the report states: “Philadelphia, for example, last year launched a three-year marketing program to attract new businesses supported by \$1.2 million in private subscriptions from fifty companies and \$495,000 in funds provided by the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation, a quasi-public agency. In recent months, the ‘New Philadelphians’ have written to many New York firms inviting them to come on down.”¹⁷

The proposed marketing program had three goals: to “convey New York’s advantages as a place to do business and to stress the City’s positive attitude toward business;” to “encourage companies to locate in the City and to stay and expand here;” and to “attract more tourists and conventions.” The report then went to great lengths to legitimize this

major new expenditure in the midst of belt-tightening in every other arena of public funding, particularly given that it was going into an area in which many people assumed government had no necessary role:

Until recently, New Yorkers tended to assume that business would take care of itself and that the City's size and natural strengths would function as an automatic magnet. Many leading business groups paid little attention to events outside their own industries. The financial crisis in particular has changed many of these attitudes—spurring the City's determination to become a self-promoter and enlisting the loyalties of local businessmen.

The “local businessmen” to whom Beame's report referred were the CEOs of New York City-based FIRE and tourism-related corporations, namely the members of the CVB and ABNY, and their “loyalties” entailed considerable sunk investments in the city's economic base. Thus, what this policy meant in practice was that the marketing efforts of these public-private entities were to be increasingly subsidized through city funds. This commitment was acted upon almost immediately. While the city had reduced its contribution to the CVB by \$200,000 in 1975, this money was restored in 1976, and increased in 1977 to \$500,000 for the remainder of the city's five year economic recovery plan in order to fund “stepped up promotional and marketing activities.”¹⁸ Once this “public contribution” was combined with the \$600,000 contribution provided by the CVB's private members, the tourism marketing agency was suddenly flush with over a million dollars in funds, more than double its budget of the early 1970's. And considering the additional funding for marketing being collected by ABNY and the PA, by early 1977, the city was already well on its way to competing with the city marketing budgets of other competitor cities.

Bicentennial Patriotism Meets the New World Trade Center

In early 1976, at the height of the fiscal crisis, over a million dollars of funds went into city marketing efforts. Most of these were channeled into the recreation of the Big Apple campaign begun by ABNY in 1971, and aborted in 1974 with the onset of the fiscal crisis. With new help from the OED and recharged private sector donors, Big Apple turned its sights on two major events taking place in New York City that summer. The first was New York's celebration of the national bicentennial, for which ABNY and the Bicentennial Committee had chosen "Operation Sail" as the main event. This was to bring a massive regatta of thousands of historic ships down the Hudson, into New York harbor, and past the new Lower Manhattan skyline, creating a dramatic visual—to be broadcast nationwide—of the modern, festive Port of New York. The second event was the Democratic National Convention, at which Jimmy Carter was to be nominated, in July. This was to be held at Madison Square Garden, and also televised live to the nation, providing three days of free publicity for the city at the height of the presidential campaign season.

The Big Apple campaign hoped to exploit these two national media events to generate tourism and promote an altogether new image of the city—one that rekindled the nation's belief in Fun City once again. New York would be cast as a safe destination for families, national delegates, and business travelers—as opposed to a crime ridden asphalt jungle and fear city. It would appear as a patriotic destination for lovers of Colonial America and Democratic party politics—as opposed to a separatist hold-out run by blacks, Latinos, Jews, and Italians. And finally, through an intensive focus on the new

lower Manhattan skyline, it would regain its image as center of global finance — as opposed to the nation's worst example of fiscal irresponsibility.

In this effort, the city's branding coalition seized on the newly completed towers of the World Trade Center [WTC] as the perfect logo for a globally resurgent Big Apple. This was a symbolically strategic campaign in both political and economic terms. It elevated the image of the Twin Towers, and of the Downtown financial district more generally, in the wake of an era of fiscal crisis and corporate move outs, both of which were closely associated with Wall Street itself. In so doing, it also provided the city as a whole with a modern new skyline that eclipsed the old midtown skyline centered on the Empire State Building, with which the old, bankrupt city was now universally associated. And finally, it contrasted this resplendent new downtown skyline with an invocation of the city's role in the American Revolution of 1776, and the founding of the country, thus creating a montage of the city's triumphant future and glorious past, deftly leapfrogging over the troubles still lingering from its more recent history.

However, to achieve this montage, the campaign needed to also change the prevailing public perception that the towers were inextricably linked to, and indeed partially to blame for, the ongoing horrors of the fiscal crisis. The WTC had been completed five years behind schedule, close to a billion dollars over budget, and was the centerpiece of a costly, publicly subsidized scheme to build up the downtown real estate market. As a result, when the recession hit in the early 1970's, the bulk of the towers expensive new office space was empty, and the city was pushed closer to the brink of fiscal insolvency.

Thus, the gleaming, modernist towers created the most jarring contrast imaginable to the day to day reality of deteriorating public infrastructure, drastic service cuts, and widespread joblessness endured by New Yorkers during the fiscal crisis. They seemed to many the perfect symbol not of the city's resurgence, but of its widening class divide, and of an irresponsible and self-serving leadership.

Edward Sorel captured this surreal contrast in a spoof in *New York Magazine*, which ingeniously associated the “asphalt jungle” stereotype with New York's rich bankers and politicians, rather than with its poor and working classes.¹⁹ Asking the question: “With New York on the brink, can epic recapturings of its decline and fall be far behind?,” he designed mock movie posters for future flics like “Metropolis of the Damned,” “The Garbage also Rises,” and, for a grand finale, “The Towering Insanity... starring David Rockefeller,” in which the CEO's mammoth head looms with a maniacal grin over the teetering towers. [See FIGURE 2] The promo reads:

Here at last is a truly original screenplay—a disaster movie in which the horror comes from watching not the destruction but the *erection* of a skyscraper. You guessed it, it's the incredible story of the World Trade Center! Action packed machinations that will leave you breathless! Mile high spectacle with suspense on every floor! David Rockefeller gives his usual suave performance as a banker who builds the city's tallest building only to discover no one wants to rent floor space in it. But—clever plot—his brother turns out to be the Governor, and all ends happily when hundreds of state agencies are moved in and the bank cleans up. A heartwarming morality play just in time for the holiday season.

Thus the project of the Big Apple campaign in 1976 became one of image clean-up not only of the seedy, crime-ridden streets of Times Square, but of the disgraced towers of the WTC. To play on the epithet often ascribed to them, the job of the branding coalition was to transform the city's “white elephant” into its “white knight.” This was to involve a

masterful separation of the interior of the buildings, still largely empty and losing money, from their gleaming exterior, presented now as a symbol of resurgence.

A key element in this strategy involved marketing the trade towers as an entertainment destination —a place not only to look at, symbolically, from the outside, but to enter and climb and use as a vista point to view the rest of the city. Unable to find paying tenants, the WTC focused instead on getting tourists to come downtown to visit the new observation decks --- in competition with the more famous Empire State Building in Midtown. In 1975-6, at the onset of the fiscal crisis, the PA paid \$225,000 to an ad agency to create a marketing campaign that turned the World Trade Center's roof into a vehicle for transcending economic woe:

“Come up to the top of the world” a Trade Center promotion says immodestly. “The world’s highest observation platform.” ... “You can’t be down when you’re up” goes the slogan, with its unmistakable reference to the local fiscal blahs. The slogan has been used on television and radio, and on municipal buses.²⁰

Ultimately the greatest tourist draw was not to be the observation decks, but the Windows on the World restaurant, built in the top five floors of the North Tower of the WTC, and opened to the public in May 1976. In addition to being one of the city’s most lavish and expensive restaurants, it was also the world’s highest, and offered some of the most spectacular views of any metropolis that had ever been seen from inside a building. As its name asserted, its purpose was not simply to be a restaurant, but to visually and symbolically position New York City, and its downtown financial district, as a global center. According to its creator Joe Baum, the entrepreneur and president of Inhilco, a subsidiary of Hilton International, the two goals for Windows were for it “to become an

instant landmark, a place that people from all over the world would come to see,” as well as to “re-establish a neighborhood” in the downtown area.²¹

In reaching these goals, Baum was assisted by ABNY and the CVB. They arranged PR events in the restaurant in early 1976, before it was officially opened to the public. These included a number of private “Operation Sail parties,” at which assorted VIPs appeared on TV and in magazine and newspaper articles, wining and dining thousands of feet above the city and its troubles, looking down like Olympian gods on the Bicentennial festivities. For the first time in years audiences around the world were offered dramatic overhead shots of New York harbor, the Statue of Liberty, and the island of Manhattan, in the place of close-ups on crime ridden streets and graffiti covered subway cars. And, of course, the burning buildings of the Bronx, and even Harlem, were too far away to be captured in the frame.

The restaurant soon became a veritable *cause celebre* for many local journalists, who had apparently gone too long without covering New York’s once-famed “Society” events. This would explain why *New York Times* metropolitan reporter, Fred Ferretti, previously of the fiscal crisis beat, wrote a gushing, two thousand word piece soon after the restaurant’s opening. In it he lavished the restaurant with praise for its “visual extravagance” and array of options for “exclusive socializing,” and touted it as the city’s next great tourist icon. In the game of interurban competition this kind of publicity could go a long way:

Seattle has its Space Needle, San Francisco has its Top of the Mark, and now New York has its Windows. And from them the city is spread out before one in

breath-taking fashion. To sit in the main dining room as dusk descends and the city begins to turn on its lights in a visual extravaganza. To wander through its many levels and its five restaurants can transmit the feeling of being aboard a vast opulent airplane or in the dining salon of the largest liner afloat.

The article went on to breathlessly proclaim over 50 names—not in bold-face, but impossible to miss—of the luminaries that were able to get past the two week waiting list to get a table. Interestingly, many of Windows' political patrons had only just recently appeared as adversaries, but now Congresswoman Bella Abzug and UFT president Albert Shanker were dining at tables across the room from Governor Hugh Carey and President Gerald "Jack" Ford. Even Theodore Kheel, the labor mediator, and inveterate critic of the wastefulness of the WTC, was won over: "he has had his disagreements with the PA but nevertheless has reserved wine bin No. 1 and says he is grateful indeed for its existence." But the guest list wasn't limited to the same old local names New Yorkers had grown tired of—now they were joined by the most "talked-about" media celebrities, politicians, and even royalty from around the world, who came to town especially to visit this new marvel:

To the 18 private suites have come Cary Grant, Henry Kissinger, Senator Jacob Javits, the King and Queen of Spain, the Queen of Denmark, the Prime Minister of Japan, Stephen Smith and an assortment of Kennedy and Lawford children, Princess Grace and Prince Rainier of Monaco, Lee Radziwill, the Crown Prince of Norway and Earl Blackwell. Most, like the actress Dina Merrill and the actor Cliff Robertson, came for private Operation Sail parties, but, entranced by the spectacular 360-degree view of New York—and on clear days New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Connecticut as well—they have returned to dine privately.

Perhaps the most over-the-top of the early promotions of Windows on the World was done in an issue of *New York* magazine devoted exclusively to the restaurant's grand opening.²² The magazine's interest in the event was two-fold. Milton Glaser, *New*

York's artistic director, had been hired by Joe Baum to design the interior of the space, along with his newly formed design firm, WBMG, and so this article offered an opportunity for cross promotion. And, in addition, the opening of this exciting, new "high society" location — as the lead article was titled—tied in perfectly with the *New York* magazine's greater purpose: to show New York City in the best possible light. In answer to a question about the importance of this article to the magazine, Glaser explained:

The magazine was essentially optimistic. There were enough downers being reported. So when we could find something to celebrate in city life, that's what we focused on. So, like the opening of a great restaurant, that became a big deal, rather than how cold people were, freezing to death on the Lower East Side. That was dutifully reported in the newspapers. We didn't see our role necessarily as replicating what the newspapers were reporting about city crisis. But rather what there was to be positive about.²³

And in 1975 there was arguably nothing to be more positive about than the WTC and its fancy new restaurant. Glaser emphasized: "It was absolutely true [that] the WTC was a symbol of resurgence, and so the opening of Windows of the World was one of the events that turned the corner of the image of New York, which the magazine was related to." He elaborated:

It was one of the greatest restaurants in the world, the most ambitious and biggest. And it happened when the city was in terrible shape, and people were moving out of the city, and people were not investing in the life of the city. And suddenly this extraordinary place opens with a tremendous amount of money invested in it, tremendous ambition. [It was] saying, "Look we are the greatest, and we're going to open the greatest restaurant." [This] had a very meaningful effect on life in the city. Because more than anything else it was a visible representation that showed that people trusted the success of the city. And the opening of a commercial enterprise with millions of dollars behind it, with the presumption that the city is going to be here for a while, [showed that] people are going to eat, drink, [that the restaurant will] attract tourists from all over the world. So, I really think that that was one of the signals to the city itself, and to all of us who

were here, that it wasn't time to move out. That the city still had things to offer that no place on earth could offer. This kind of gesture had enormous symbolic meaning... [It was] a signal that "We're still a great place."

When Glaser says "all of us who were here" he is mostly referring to his circle of friends and colleagues at *New York*, in the creative and culture industries, as well as the magazine's new middle class readers. And so here was a place—much like the old reviews by Gael Greene on "how to eat rich though poor" — where you could easily imagine yourself among the elite, even if you could only afford to eat there once a year. But he is also indicating a shift that was taking place in which many in this group started to see themselves in, and a few started to enter, these shifting upper ranks. This was a moment of the formation of a new cross-class subjectivity, in which the city's "greatness" was equated with Windows on the World, a brash symbol of extravagance and exclusivity, by those in the city's middle and upper classes who survived the crash and could keep moving up the ladder. This left the image of the working class city in the shadows of the towers, far, far below.

By 1976, the CVB and ABNY extended this resilient, celebratory theme in the "Big Apple" campaign, in which the towers and their crowning restaurant appear on posters, pamphlets and guides (see Figures). The PA, the official owner of the WTC, took out ads in business and travel magazines that associated high-end tourist entertainment with financial travel. Above a birds-eye photo of the towers, the headline hovers: "Gold Bars & Chocolate Bars, High Stakes and Thick Steaks, Bedrooms & Boardrooms: Business & Pleasure Begin at the World Trade Center." And in a two page ad that ran in *New York* magazine's inside cover for a year, a sparkling WTC rises above the Brooklyn Bridge at

night, as newly elected Mayor Ed Koch and Loews Corporation CEO Preston Robert Tisch remind tourists: “You’ll find the Big Apple to your taste whether you’re here for pleasure, for business, for a convention, or for a shopping trip.”²⁴ The city’s marketers had once again found a positive image for New York, one based entirely on consumption, and that spoke for and to its aspiring new middle class, visitors, and elites. And it was doing its best to get the rest of the world to recognize it.

The Magic Industry: A Tourism “Upsurge”

In its press releases, the CVB called 1976 a “splendid,” “excellent,” and “glowing” year for the city — and indeed the numbers bore out their claims. [See Table 5.1] According to a special report, “The New York City Visitors Industry,” produced by Mayor Beame’s office in conjunction with Victor Marrero, Chairman of the City Planning Commission [CPC], the newly recognized industry welcomed 16.5 million visitors in 1976, up 500,000 from the annual figures of the previous five years.²⁵ Hotel occupancy rates were at 73%, up from the 66%, of the previous year, finally passing the 70% mark for the first time since 1969, when the record of 75.4% was set. The city held 834 conventions, the most since the 1967 World Fair of 1967. It seemed the city had finally put the history of the fiscal crisis behind it, replacing it with the myth of the shiny Big Apple.

Table 5.1: Changes in the New York City Travel & Tourism Sector, 1969-1976*

Date	Hotel Occupancy Rate	Conventions	Number of Visitors [in millions]	Visitor Spending [in billions]
1969	75.4%	N/A	16.5	\$1.5
1971	64.3%	N/A	16	\$.4
1973	66.1%	820	16	\$.4
1975	65%	N/A	N/A	N/A
1976	73%	834	16.5	\$1.5

* Sources: Adams, *New York Times*, April 6, 1969; Office of John V. Lindsay, March 1, 1971; "A Gain in Tourism Predicted by City," *New York Times*, April 19, 1974; Ernest Dickinson, *New York Times*, February 22, 1976; Michael Sterne, *New York Times*, October 16, 1976; Auletta, 1979, 6. *New York's Visitors Industry*. Beame and Marrero, June 1977.

The most important indicator of the industry's growing power was in "overall economic impact." As an official in DATO, Gillet was armed with the travel association's calculation on the multiplier effect of tourist spending, according to which every dollar spent by a tourist turns over *three times* in the local economy. This formula allowed the CVB to put out an astounding new estimate. With tourism spending measured at \$1.5 billion, tourism was now estimated to bring in \$4.5 billion to the New York City economy, or roughly 25% of the city's total revenue. Many in the industry actually called this a conservative estimate, arguing for a multiplier of *four* or *five*. Either way, travel and tourism was now believed to be the second largest industry in the city, second only to the garment industry. Of course if impact were measured in old fashioned terms of jobs and establishments, rather than this new, creative calculation of revenue, the tourism industry was one third the size of the garment industry, and lower down on the list of the city's major industries.²⁶ But in the emerging symbolic economy, jobs and

establishments were considered less significant to the economic health of the city than things like tourist revenue, real estate values, and image.

One of the most dramatic sites of evidence for the increase in the economic impact of tourism was in the theatre district and Times Square, which had become a notorious symbol of the city's decline over the last decade. As the *New York Times* reported in November 1977, as a result of the tourism upsurge begun in 1976, "shows will be running in all 16 Schubert theatres in New York City this week and their marquees will remain lighted up at least into next year, the first time there has been such a sustained prosperity on Broadway in more than 20 years."²⁷ Bernard Jacobs who, with Gerald Schoenfeld, was head of the Schubert theatrical empire, the biggest consortium of theatres in the city, was quoted as saying, "I have never known anything like this and I've been here for 21 years."

Gillett argued that the bulk of the credit for the windfall of the Bicentennial and DNC should also go to Bureau itself, and the "cumulative effect of hard work and hard selling, day in day out, year in and year out." In particular, he credited the Bureau's "Big Apple" campaign, begun four and a half years previously, which had finally "taken firm root and is now blossoming."²⁸ The summer's big events, in combination with a long-term, professional marketing campaign, had "put a new gloss on the Big Apple," and, he added "the city's improved image undoubtedly helped."

The combination of tourism and marketing had truly become a magic industry. It reaped major benefits in revenue while costing the public sector little to maintain, all the while helping to counter the city's problems with its reputation. Thus tourism, in combination with culture and marketing, seemed capable of saving the city from both its financial and image crises.²⁹ At an event honoring the CVB, and celebrating the new found strength of the city's tourism industry, Mayor Ed Koch called for the city to join the CVB and ABNY more directly in fostering this industry. He called for increased city spending for the CVB, and for the building of a new Convention Center on the West Side, arguing: "If New York City is to expand its economic base and flourish in the years ahead, [its first priority] must [be to] not only maintain its position as a center of tourism and commerce, but expand it." Mr. Gillet proudly echoed these sentiments, and the sea-change in the public sector's attitude toward city marketing he saw it representing:

There is a growing pride in the city on the part of New Yorkers... Boosterism is no longer an epithet to the city's officials, civic leaders, unions heads and neighborhood groups. The tourists have taught them that the city is "The Big Apple," maybe even "Fun City," once again.

Indeed, New York City's public sector was changing course, focusing for the first time on the economic impact of the visitors industry, as indicated in the "Visitor's Industry" report from the Mayor's office and CPC, cited above. By integrating data from a local survey conducted in 1974 with findings from the 1972 U.S. Department of Commerce National Travel Survey, "a portrait of New York visitors began to emerge." This portrait included two main types of visitors: commercial visitors in town for business and/or conventions, and recreational visitors, or "tourists." Within these categories, conventioners and international tourists were found to spend the most on lodging and

high end shopping. It was thus incumbent on both the city and state, the report argued, to appreciate the economic impact of these types of travelers, and do more to attract them.

The report repeated the old refrain that New York City already had a great advantage in terms of its well-known cultural attractions. For both categories of travelers, business and international leisure, New York was still “the unrivaled American center of cultural affairs,”

Visitors are drawn to attractions such as the City’s superior museums and theaters, concerts, plays and art galleries. The Empire State Building, Rockefeller Center, and many fine restaurants, sophisticated department stores and boutiques and the sheer spectacle and excitement of the city serve as a magnet for throngs of visitors... Millions of visitors also come here for conventions and other business affairs.³⁰

But the report went a step further, arguing that New York’s existing attractions might not be enough in the current climate of fierce inter-urban competition to attract for the increasingly lucrative categories of business and foreign travel.

New York City strongly attracts visitors who make the greatest contribution to the economic base. However, as other cities grow in size and diversify their economies, they will offer increasingly more interesting opportunities for business and business related travel. While the total volume and value of business visitors’ trade is in large measure dependent on the level of local economic activity and private sector “mix,” additional commercial visits can be induced through deliberate strategies and programs.³¹

These “deliberate strategies and programs” the report recommended involved public private efforts at “marketing and promotion.” To achieve this, services provided by tourist bureaus at both the city and state levels would have to be improved, and their marketing and promotions budgets increased. This the city now promised to do for its own local CVB, which was seen to “compare unfavorably to other major cities.”³² In

1977, as promised, the city increased its budget by \$600,000 that year to \$1.1 million — money that was matched by private sector members. The state was called upon to do the same and increase their tourism promotion budget, especially since its tourist bureau was “one of the most underfunded in the U.S.,” ranking 46th out of the 50 states in per capita spending on tourism (though, it should be noted, at the top in total spending), and since it had long neglected New York City in the marketing it did.³³ In this way, it was hoped, the success of the Big Apple campaign could be extended statewide, even after the big events were over.

But in their exclusive focus on the visitors industry, the CVB and the Mayor’s office were seeing only one side of the story. It was true, as Gillet asserted, that a new image of the city had been successfully projected, and tourism numbers were way up. And it was also the case, as the city’s report showed, that New York City stood to benefit from an increase in business travel and foreign tourism. But what neither could prove was the ripple effect of these new visitor dollars in the rest of the city’s economy—an economy which, as all other reports were showing, continued its meteoric decline, from manufacturing and retail to finance and real estate. Indeed, according the MAC’s annual report of 1976, every other major industry in the city was still either showing no growth or was in decline.³⁴ As Felix Rohatyn himself wrote:

Despite the buoyancy of spirit in the City following Operation Sail and the Democratic Convention, and despite some lessening in the rates of decline of certain local economic indicators, the overall drain of the City economy goes on, and the corporate exodus continues. Consequently, in order to continue providing the broad range of municipal services which is necessary or desirable, the City tax base must be strengthened and the overall economy of New York City must be stimulated.³⁵

This called into question the CVB's rosy projections of the economic impact of tourism. Some, like Gillet, argued that whatever decline there was would have been far worse without this new upsurge, and without the "hard work and hard selling" of the CVB. Journalists and others in city government and countered that the upsurge might just be a fluke, due mainly to the free publicity of one-time national events held in the city that summer, as well as to the good fortune of the Yankees winning season.³⁶

As both Bourdieu and Mike Davis might have noted, through the symbolic manipulation and spectacle of the Big Apple campaign of 1976, and its use of the Bicentennial and DNC, the CVB and ABNY attempted to replace the complex and troubled mental representations of New York held by so many. In its place they hoped to implant their own objective representation of a transcendent, resurgent city. To do this, they had to create a mythical New York in which the recent history of the fiscal crisis replaced by a combination of the "Fun City" of the late 1960's, and the future world capital represented by the gleaming towers of the World Trade Center. However, as even Rohaytn observed, these efforts would be worthless if they were too much at odds with the real conditions on the ground.

II. Contradiction and Backlash: the Counter-Branding Year of 1976-7

According to Gramsci, power, particularly that of ascendant groups, can never be maintained solely by holding a monopoly on the means of force or production, though both are essential. Rather, power must be buttressed by ideological forms of legitimation.

These can take the form of the “common sense” of an age, as well as of universally accepted imagery, which naturalize new power relations, and secure the consent of the governed.³⁷ However, this imagery also provides a target for oppositional movements and individuals, who may launch “counter-hegemonic” attacks of their own, both material and symbolic. As we have seen with “Fear City” and graffiti bombing on subways, this can be done very cheaply and effectively through opposing representations of a clean and safe city with media-grabbing counter-representation of fear, spray-paint, and “visual deterioration” in urban space.

But in addition to consciously oppositional, counter-hegemonic individuals and movements, hegemonic images also set themselves up as targets for a wide range of more random, inadvertent, forms of symbolic backlash. This is due to the very nature of media codes themselves which, once they enter into circulation, are always altered in some way by the social and historical context in which audiences decode them.³⁸ The context of the Big Apple campaign changed radically over the course of just a few months of late 1976. Indeed, for both intended and unintended reasons, the fall of 1976 to the fall of 1977 was to be perhaps *the* most challenging year in New York’s history in terms of the media messages of the city received throughout the world. In this context, the marketing extravaganza of the summer of 1976 was to be reduced to distant memory, wiped away by the coming symbolic backlash, culminating in the summer of 1977. And the image of New York as a combination of Fun City and futuristic global capital was soon to appear nothing short of ridiculous, or terrifying.

The “Summer of Sam”

The year between the fall of 1976 and the fall of 1977 was one in which the problems the city faced became so terrible and widespread, they seemed to many observers, and to the media in particular, to take on the biblical proportions of “apocalypse” and “plague.”

First there was the freakish weather: a long winter of the coldest temperatures in over 40 years, followed by the hottest summer temperatures *ever* recorded for New York City, climbing to 104 degrees by July 21, with the brutal heat continuing into September. This intolerable weather then served as backdrop, and accelerant, to a string of harrowing events that provided spectacular fodder for national and international news.

The first story that began grabbing headlines in early 1977 was the revelation that a serial killer armed with a hunting rifle was on the loose in the Bronx, and had already killed three people and injured five. When it became clear that he took aim at lone women and courting couples, panic spread, and nightclubs and restaurants were deserted so that people could be home before dark. The hysteria mounted in April when the murderer revealed himself through a note left for the police after a double homicide. The note soon leaked to the media, and served to inform the public that the killer called himself “Son of Sam,” and believed he was following the orders of demons, as revealed through the barking of a dog named Harvey. The story only grew more terrifying throughout the brutal heat of June and July, as the murderous attacks continued and remained unsolved, even with a squad of 200 detectives and hundreds of police officers on the case, making it “the largest manhunt in the history of New York.”³⁹ This led many communities in the

Bronx and Queens, where the killings had taken place, to mount their own vigilante patrols, leading inevitably to even more fear and suspicion, particularly towards blacks and Latinos who ventured into white neighborhoods at night. The killer was finally caught on August 10, 1977, and turned out to be David Berkowitz, a pudgy white mailman with a maniacal grin. All told, Berkowitz had killed six people and seriously injured seven more, and earned the New York summer of 1977 the permanent moniker, “Summer of Sam.”⁴⁰

The impact of the Summer of Sam on the image of New York City was enduring. The headlines reading “City Held Hostage by Own Fear” and “Demonic Stalker on the Loose,” brought back memories of the “Fear City” campaign and horror movie images of New York that the Big Apple boosters had tried so hard to erase. But amazingly enough, the summer of 1977 had even worse events in store.

The Blackout

At approximately 9:30 p.m., on Wednesday, July 13, 1977, at the height of New York’s heat-wave, another natural disaster struck the city: four separate lightening bolts hit key electrical supply lines north of the city, causing a chain reaction that led to a massive blackout throughout the New York region, affecting more than 9 million people. It wasn’t the biggest blackout the city had seen—that occurred in November of 1965, when power went down for 25 million people throughout the entire northeast. But the blackout

of 1977 was certainly the most devastating economically, socially, and in terms of the city's image.

The 1965 blackout lasted only a few hours, and occurred on a cool winter night, during a period of relative prosperity and calm in New York City. As such, it caused relatively little problem despite its wide range. The 1977 blackout, on the other hand, continued over 25 hours of the hottest days in the city's history, and occurred during a period in which the city was still in a state of deep economic and social crisis. It was, as we have seen, a time of sky-rocketing unemployment, particularly amongst the working class and people of color, and of the physical deterioration of inner city neighborhoods throughout the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan due to drastic service cuts, housing abandonment, and arson. And so, while in most parts of the city the vast majority of residents of all backgrounds pulled together and endured the disruption with little incident, in the neighborhoods hardest hit by the fiscal crisis, this single, cataclysmic event sparked chaos, setting off what became known as the "blackout riots," or widespread looting, arson, and general lawlessness.

Though these so-called riots never got violent—many described the mood of the looting as "festive," and something akin to "Christmas in July"—nonetheless they caused deep and enduring wounds. First there was the immediate cost in terms of damages to businesses, property, and lost tax revenue. With 2000 businesses sacked and looted, in addition to the general, city-wide loss of revenue from the power outage, immediate costs of the blackout were estimated at \$1 billion.⁴¹ Long-term financial costs can be measured

in decades, with many of the lost stores and houses abandoned or burned down that night still unreconstructed to this day.⁴² Then there was the broader social cost: 3,776 people were arrested in a single night, while more seeds of distrust and division were sewn throughout the city, both within communities, between those who participated and didn't participate in the riots, as well as between communities where the riots occurred and those that were relatively peaceful.

Last but by no means least, the blackout also cost the city dearly in terms of its image in the eyes of the world, as New York's trauma became, once again, the world's leading news story. It earned front page headlines for days to come in major international newspapers, with the emphasis consistently placed on the chaos of the riots, as a sampling of headlines reveals. In the *Los Angeles Times* it was "City's Pride in Itself Goes Dim in the Blackout"; in Tokyo's *Mainichi Shimbun*, "Panic Grips New York"; in West Germany's *Bild Zeitung*, "New York's Bloodiest Night"; and in London's *Daily Express*, "The Naked City."⁴³ Similarly the spectacular visuals of this racially charged "urban warfare" earned top-billing on local, national, and international TV news programs (once New York wire services were back up and running), with mobile camera crews racing police to the scenes of looting, so they could film the worst before anybody got arrested. In addition, "special color editions" of the two major U.S. news-weeklies, *Time* and *Newsweek*, were devoted to the story, and filled with startling, often harrowing visuals.

The language and imagery used to describe New York's blackout across these media evoked the worst of the anti-urban and often racist prejudices that the city and its boosters had long been battling. In what follows I will briefly analyze these representations of the blackout using the special report from *Newsweek*, entitled "Heart of Darkness," and the special report from *Time*, entitled "Night of Terror."

A recurring theme in the coverage was of the blackout as a form of quasi-divine punishment. It didn't help that the first explanation for the blackout given by Consolidated Edison engineers, doubtless eager to avert blame, was that the multiple lightening strikes could only have been "an act of God." Conservative columnist George F. Will jumped on this in his analysis of why, in attempting to understand this and others of New York's recurring calamities, people generally "resorted to theology, not physics":

Few things are as stimulating as other people's calamities observed from a safe distance. So people relish Edward Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" and New York City's perils, technological as well as financial. Much of the nation thinks, not without reason, that the city is sunk in darkness, even at high noon, and that the blackout was a sign of disapproval from above, a foretaste of fire and brimstone and pillars of salt.⁴⁴

Here New York City is cast simultaneously as a decadent and doomed imperial city, a modern day Sodom and Gomorrah, or even a Hell on earth, depending on which of the mixed metaphors—Roman Empire, pillar of salt, or fire and brimstone—one chooses. Thus, in witnessing this latest disaster to befall the city, people around the country may be excused if they find themselves gloating from afar, and laughing at the irony of literal and symbolic darkness finally being joined. The City of Darkness having been brought

low did have a certain Manichean reasonableness to it, even divine justice, to so many in the rightward-tilting county.

This mocking, judgmental tone pervades much the issue, as in *Time*'s lead article, "Heart of Darkness." It opens with a two-page spread of an almost undetectable skyline of Manhattan by night, lit by a few scattered pin-points of light. From the photo's angle you can only just make out that it must have been shot from atop the World Trade Center. The montage of this skyline with the following text may alone have dealt a death-blow to the Big Apple campaign's most important symbol, Windows on the World:

One hundred seven stories high over Manhattan, a group of diners at the World Trade Center's skyscraping restaurant, Windows on the World downed their digestifs, took a last glance at the stunning lightshow below, and crowded into a waiting down elevator. The doors slid shut. The elevator didn't budge. Somebody stabbed irritably at the button. Nothing happened. Somebody else got the doors open and the passengers free. "The elevator's out," one of them huffily informed a white-jacketed captain. The captain shrugged towards the nightscape outside, gone suddenly inky black. "So's New York," he replied.⁴⁵

But while much of the coverage made fun of the misfortune of high and mighty New Yorkers, such as those stranded in this most opulent of New York icons, the rest sensationalized the criminality of the city's black and Latino "ghetto-dwellers" who participated in the looting, using highly charged, racialized language and images. The articles used animal metaphors to dehumanize criminal activity, as in "a band of youths swooped in like vultures,"⁴⁶ and "[they came] across Bushwick Avenue like buffalo."⁴⁷ They used standard, racist metaphors of disease and sexual depravity, as in "plague of violence," to describe the spread of the looting between different inner-city neighborhoods, "fever" to describe the mob mentality that possessed everyone in the

streets, and an “orgy of looting” to describe the pleasure perpetrators took in their acts.⁴⁸

They evoked images of terrorism and urban warfare, describing images of crowds of looters as “marauders,” questioning whether there might be a “white back-lash,” and quoting one man, a Vietnam Veteran guarding a children’s store, who associated the mangled white mannequins on the floor of the store with “the dead people I saw in Nam without legs and arms.”⁴⁹ And they constantly invoked the “blackness” and “darkness” taking over the city, terms that were historically linked in the Eurocentric imagination to fear, dirt, ignorance, and racial inferiority. Such significations were associated interchangeably with the blackout, the night, the law of the jungle, and New York’s takeover by the black and Latino population, as in the following, opening passage of “Heart of Darkness”:

There was a throaty mass scream when the lights went out, and then a little festival of blackness—bonfires in the streets, a blast of soul and salsa, a torchlight parade down under Broadway. But within minutes, the night was alight with fires, the pavement alive with looters, the music drowned out by the whooping sirens and shattering glass. The pillage ran until dawn, unchecked and unabashed. “Being that the lights are out and niggers are going hungry,” a black kid boasted, “we’re going to take what we want-and what we want is what we need.”⁵⁰

Ultimately, both *Time* and *Newsweek* interwove these associations to make an argument about the broader national symbolism of New York’s blackout of 1977, in contrast to that of 1965, Namely, it represented all that had gone wrong with New York and, by extension, urban America, over the intervening time period, beginning with the urban unrest of the late 1960’s. Unless there was a dramatic, unforeseen turnaround akin to divine intervention, the articles imply, New York and other US cities were doomed to continue to lose not only their electric power, but their political, economic and cultural power as well. Thus *Newsweek* makes the point that the blackout “underscored once

again the fragility of urban America in the last quarter of the twentieth century—a state of dependence so total that a burst of lightning could shut down the nation’s largest city as surely and nearly as completely as a neutron bomb.”⁵¹

Both articles floated different theories as to the cause of this breakdown in social control. Was it due to frustration over the increasing gap in income and rising unemployment, which the articles acknowledged had reached 40% amongst “inner-city blacks,” as opposed to 20% in 1965? While referring to some sociologists who argued this, both authors shot down this hypothesis as outmoded “sixties jargon.” Both argued that the root problems were not structural or systemic, but “social psychological,” and specifically “behavioral.” Thus both the rising unemployment *and* the riots were the result of a moral and psychological malaise afflicting the black and Latino community. As Ernest Dichter, a behavioral psychologist cited in “Night of Terror” put it: “It was just like Lord of the Flies. People resort to savage behavior when the brakes of civilization fail.” And according to “futurist” Herman Kahn, “They have no idea of what moral standards are. This suppressed rage idea is crap. This kind of reasoning will make the same thing happen again.” The author of the article concludes, dropping all pretense of objectivity:

Respect for law and authority has declined; thieves often go unpunished; crime and violence stalk the slums.... The explanation that leans on real and perceived deprivation goes only so far. It is by no means clear that most of the looters were the neediest. There was an element of glee, perhaps of revenge, of a mob gone wild.⁵²

The Impact on New York’s Image “Cannot be Tallied”

In the annals of anti-urban literature, the historic moment of the blackout riots served an invaluable purpose: it crystallized conservatives' argument in a single, searing, and heavily loaded image of a city out of control, of an urban jungle. And the fact that image was packaged and sold through the nation's leading news magazines and TV news programs—published and broadcast out of New York City itself—only made it all the more powerful. Thus, for New York City's public-private leaders who'd staked so much on marketing the city, this moment left them with their worst image crisis yet. The one possible consolation for them was that, as the media continued to fixate on the outbursts and destroyed neighborhoods of these poor people, they never made the association that the city and its policies were at all responsible for their plight. To the contrary, the media helped to pathologize the poor far more effectively than a thousand Roger Starr's could have done.

By the weekend, Mayor Beame had announced that the Small Business Administration had declared the city a "disaster area," making affected merchants eligible for long-term, low interest loans, in the hopes that some might be persuaded to rebuild. But of course this depressing designation only fuelled more debate over "how much the city might suffer from this latest blow to its reputation."⁵³ The section of *Newsweek's* special edition entitled "Impact" ended with a rehashing of this debate.⁵⁴ Predictably, those in the crisis regime downplayed the blackout's long-term consequences. Citibank chairman and MAC board member Walter Wriston insisted it constituted a "one-shot loss to the city" in terms of lost sales and taxes, adding, "We'll all be playing catch-up ball for the next few days, but we will recover." Raymond Horton, Columbia University professor

and director of the Temporary Commission on City Finances, agreed. “We should be careful not to overreact...It ain’t good, but it ain’t the end of the world.” A similar, measured appraisal was politely offered by one of the city’s key competitors, Gerald Sanderson, executive vice president of the Chicago Convention and Tourism Bureau. “I’m sure there are a lot of people in New York now that are a little unhappy about being there... but I don’t think there will be a switch of conventions out of New York any more than a snowstorm here would affect us.”⁵⁵

But this optimism was not shared by Peter Lauer, president of Lauer and Holbrook, a Chicago-based executive recruiting and placement firm—a firm which arguably had the best insight into the question of business-people’s perception of New York. In the final paragraph of *Newsweek*’s lead story, Lauer stated flatly: “We already were handling too many resumes from people who said they’d go anyplace in the country except New York. This blackout and looting will only strengthen that feeling.”⁵⁶ Following his verdict, the *Newsweek* article provided this final, sober opinion: “The eventual price may not be all that high, but even so it will be one that battered New York can ill-afford to pay.”⁵⁷ A similar editorializing conclusion on the fate of New York’s image was reached by the anonymous author of *Time*’s “Night of Terror”:

Most of [the direct economic cost] could be made up later, when banks, brokerages, and other businesses reopened. But the far more important price cannot be tallied. What had the city lost in terms of morale and image? Deputy Mayor Osborn Elliott, in charge of keeping old jobs in the city and bringing in new ones, announced the blackout at least had not caused a group of oil suppliers from Houston and New Orleans to drop consideration of moving some of their offices to the city. But how many businessmen thought of moving out? How many will become more difficult to sell on moving in? At best, Elliott’s job has been a holding action, and last week’s crisis, he said with great understatement, “doesn’t help.”⁵⁸

* * *

By the end of the Summer of Sam, the Big Apple campaign must have seemed like a distant memory, or a surreal hallucination. So much energy and resources had been spent in 1976 trying to deny and erase New York's deep troubles through the projection of a new, happy, objectified image of the city, yet when the ugly imagery resurfaced it was far more powerful and damaging. In collective psychological terms, Freud might have argued, this was like the "return of the repressed," in which untreated neurosis metamorphoses into full-fledged psychotic behavior.

In cultural and political economic terms, this crisis was the result of two intersecting contradictions inherent within this marketing led, entrepreneurial mode of economic development. The first was due to the interruption of material neglect. As the city focused on image and revenue at the expense of jobs, public services and housing, poverty and dislocation surged. Under such conditions, some people took desperate, destructive, and ultimately self-destructive measures, which also made for great media spectacle. This then undermined the original image campaign, leading to the second contradiction, based in the unpredictable nature of media circulation itself. For now the city had to live with the extremely unfortunate contrast in the popular imagination of the euphoric Big Apple image with the stream of demonic and disastrous images of the Summer of Sam— creating a nightmarish pastiche of an apple that was burning, bullet pierced, and rotten.⁵⁹ Thus, whether or not the city's leaders ever recognized it as such,

New York faced a choice in 1977: should it continue in its risky, polarizing, marketing-led entrepreneurial approach, or should it focus on the harder, long-term job of addressing the underlying social and economic needs of its looted and crisis-torn neighborhoods?

They chose the former option. In the face of an all out image crisis, CVB President Gillett called for a centralized and sustained plan for marketing the city. “Mr. Gillett believes that what is needed now *more than ever* is solid, day-in day-out professional promotion, a function of his organization.”⁶⁰ As we shall see, New York’s needs as perceived by the CVB intersected with new developments in the fields of marketing and advertising in the 1970’s, as well as with the entrepreneurial direction of New York State economic development agencies. They believed, as did Lew Rudin, that the city’s recovery was linked to the ability of its hoteliers, realtors, and financiers to maintain the monopoly rents afforded them by their unique New York location. If they couldn’t alter the material space of New York City just yet, they could still transform *the media space* it inhabited, and the urban imaginary circulating in the minds of the city’s public, and potential consumers.

¹ Harvey, 2001a.

² *ibid*, pg. 354 Harvey’s is a critical assessment of this shift. For a best-selling account by two advocates and practitioners of the new urban entrepreneurialism, see Osborne and Gaebler, 1992.

³ See e.g. the MAC’s first Annual Report: Municipal Assistance Corporation, 1976. As Felix Rohatyn says in his opening letter to Governor Carey, in the tones of a strict management consultant trying to turn around a failing corporation: “Management efficiency is not a euphemism for callousness; it is one of the few weapons the City has available to it to generate funds for the maintenance of services. Its continued upgrading is vital to the City.” (*ibid*, 4)

⁴ For a recent discussion of various strategies of public-private “integration” via city branding campaigns, and the extent to which such campaigns have become *de rigueur* for cities across the country, see Gardyn, 2002.

⁵ Schumach, 1977, p 39.

⁶ Harvey, 2001b.

⁷ Ford Interview, 2002.

⁸ Ford Interview, *ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.* [double check date], Rudin’s son Robert, who was conducting the interview with the former president recalled, in laughing reference to the *Daily News* headline, “FORD TO CITY: DROP DEAD”:

A lot of people were upset initially [with your position towards New York]. But my father knew how important it was, how much you helped the city. When you came to New York, to Federal Hall [to speak to ABNY], he was very proud.

¹⁰ It should be noted that while their relationship was solidified and recognized in this period, they had in fact first met in “the late 60’s or early 70’s playing golf,” and were to continue to golf at the same club, and participate in Ford’s “invitational” celebrity tournaments, for the next 25 years until soon before Rudin’s death in 2001.

¹¹ Rockefeller, 1986, p 122-3

It is interesting to note that the NYCP both learned and sought to differentiate itself from ABNY. Rockefeller’s public private partnership merged with the old, patrician Chamber of Commerce—which, it will be recalled, wanted nothing to do with ABNY. In doing, it created a new vehicle for the private sector, and particularly CEO’s, to take a leadership role in both promoting the city’s “business climate,” and shaping policy behind the scenes. Already by the early 1980’s, it was to eclipse the power of ABNY in these endeavors.

¹² Dickinson, February 22, 1976. It should be noted that New York was not alone in this crisis. Travel and tourism were declining nationwide with the recession of the mid 1970’s, even in the relatively well-off sunbelt region. As Dickinson points out: “The average 1975 occupancy rate for all [U.S.] hotels in the survey was 65%. In this respect, New York fared better than Atlanta, with 58.3, or Chicago, with 61.2, but not as well as San Diego, with 70.2, or Boston, Washington and New Orleans, which were ahead by lesser margins.”

¹³ Turner, July 9, 1975.

¹⁴ New York City Department of City Planning, 1976.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* See sections on “Tax Program,” 21-27, and “Office of Economic Development,” 28-33.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* “Marketing the City,” 34-37.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁸ Sterne, January 4, 1977.

¹⁹ Sorel, 1975, p 69

²⁰ See Moritz, 1976, p 4

²¹ Ferretti, 1976, 63

²² As mentioned in author Interview with Milton Glaser, 2003.

²³ *Ibid.* Glaser added: “I think that had as much to do with Clay and my personality as anything else... We thought the magazine should be essentially celebratory and life enhancing and about the power of the imagination and so on. And I think that was reflected in the kinds of stories that we did. Not that we backed off of exposés and political stories. We didn’t. But we would jump on anything that seemed optimistic or had potential in terms of life in the city.”

²⁴ New York City Convention and Visitors Bureau, 1976.

²⁵ Beame and Marrero, June 1977, 1.

In order to make this claim, this new industry cluster had first to be measured and defined. This, the report acknowledged, was not an easy task, since “visitor activities are tightly interwoven with other services, and, consequently, difficult to identify.”[1] Nonetheless, the report identified the “major components of the complex of activities labeled the “visitors industry” in New York City,” including: 400 hotels, 17,000 eating and drinking establishments, 12,000 taxis, 400 motion picture theatres, and 60 department stores.

²⁶ See: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1977.

²⁷ Schumach, November 22, 1977, p 39.

²⁸ Sterne, October 16, 1976.

²⁹ Term used in New York City Convention and Visitors Bureau report, 1977.

³⁰ Beame and Marrero, *ibid.*, 1.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 28.

³² *Ibid.*, 26. This assessment was based on the findings of a "1975 City Planning Dept Survey" of visitors bureaus in seven cities. (I need to find this....) From this it was found that while private subscription was higher in New York's CVB, the bureau's budget was less relative to total city visitors, and it received less from the city. The survey further compared New York to other cities in terms of the "quality of promotional literature," the number and use of "package tour brokers,"²⁶ and the media placement of advertisements. It was found that New York was at a disadvantage, since it didn't advertise in trade publications, magazines, or newspapers, but rather "concentrates instead on enhancing the city's image through press releases in out-of-town publications." Meanwhile, other cities were "attempting to attract foreign visitors [by] placing ads in foreign press, via the Department of Commerce Travel Service, and promotional program and tour of the city for foreign and domestic agents during "familiarization tours" organized by airlines.

³³ *Ibid.*, 27. Indeed, the Bureau was scaling back, going so far as to close its midtown offices in 1975. This was considered to be a "questionable economy," given that New York City accounted for "roughly half the visitors industry in New York State." The State's Travel Bureau was also seen to neglect New York City in its promotional literature: "For example the City is given only equal attention with 11 other vacation areas in the State."

³⁴ Municipal Assistance Corporation, 1976.

³⁵ *ibid.*, p 23.

³⁶ See: Sterne, *ibid.*

³⁷ Gramsci, 1991a.

³⁸ Hall, 2000, 51-61.

³⁹ This according to a special A&E documentary, "BIOGRAPHY: David Berkowitz: Son of Sam" (1999)

⁴⁰ The name was even more widely embedded in popular culture in 1999, with the release of the Spike Lee movie "Summer of Sam."

⁴¹ According to the *Time* article, "Night of Terror" (July 25, 1977, 21), the vast majority of this \$1 billion loss was a result of the looting. Losses directly incurred by the city include \$4 million in lost tax revenue and \$5 million in overtime to police and firemen. Estimates of business losses-beyond the looting-included up to \$15 million in lost brokerage commissions for Wall Street and \$20 million for retail stores.

⁴² For example, one of the most devastated areas was in Bushwick and Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, where a 1.5 mile section of Broadway, the main business thoroughfare, was completely gutted by looting and fires. To this day, much of the storefronts on that section of Broadway, and surrounding housing units, remain abandoned.

⁴³ "Night of Terror," *ibid.*, 21.

⁴⁴ Will, July 25, 1977, 80.

⁴⁵ Nicholson, July 25, 1977, 17. As a historical point, *Time* reported (21) that 500 Windows on the World diners finished their meals by candlelight and rode to the ground on a service elevator powered by generator.

⁴⁶ Night of Terror, 17.

⁴⁷ Nicholson, 23.

⁴⁸ In Nicholson, plague is used twice, on 19 and 26. "Fever" and "orgy of looting" are both in "Night of Terror," 16.

⁴⁹ "Night of Terror," *ibid.*, 21 and. 16. The full quote reads: "At Hearn's department store in Brooklyn, youths stripped clothing from window mannequins, broke their limbs and scattered them on the floor. Said Miguel Ten, a Viet Nam veteran who stood guarding Arnet's Children's Wear store: "This reminds me of Pleiku in 1966. There was a war out here. And the mannequins remind me of the dead people I saw in Nam without legs and arms."

⁵⁰ Nicholson, 18.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*, 17.

⁵³ Nicholson, *ibid.*, 30.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Night of Terror, 21.

⁵⁹ *New York* cover for January 1, 1978.

⁶⁰ Dickinson, *ibid*, 1976.

CHAPTER 6

“Purging New York” through “I ♥ NY,” 1977-1981

The branding coalition didn’t see the problems with the Big Apple campaign as due to its inherent contradictions, but rather to the need for greater “market saturation.” They figured the current image crisis could be addressed through the marketing plan, with revision made to overcome limitations in *geographic and political scale*, as well as in temporal scope. Big Apple had been a local campaign, launched by city-based tourism agencies and civic groups; it depended on big national events coming to town —like the DNC and Bicentennial— for it to be projected through the media on a national scale. Meanwhile, the city faced interurban competition, and the need for credit, at both a national and international scale. Thus the city’s official branding campaign “jumped scale,” and was taken over by the New York State DOC, itself recently restructured by new entrepreneurial commissioners with a background in business and marketing.¹ Their goal was to launch a national, and ultimately international, year-round tourism marketing campaign, and to use the positive images and reactions generated by this, in combination with tax cuts and other incentives, for corporate retention and business development. To do so, they hired professional, high profile advertising firms and marketing consultants to convince the State legislature to increase funding to DOC by more than 30 times. These consultants included Yankelovich, Skelly and White and Consumer Behavior Inc., marketing consultancies at the cutting edge of “psychographic” research. It also included *New York* magazine’s artistic director Milton Glaser, creator of the look of the “new journalism,” and Madison Avenue’s Wells Rich & Greene, in the vanguard of the “new advertising.” Their combined creative talents had helped brand the

image of an affluent, consumer-oriented New York in the late 1960's for the new middle class. Now, in the late 1970's, they attempted to do the same for the public sector.

With the DOC's nationwide, year-round, professionally managed "I ♥ New York" campaign, the official branding of New York City entered its second stage. It was soon to become the most expensive and well known city marketing campaign that the nation, let alone the city, had ever seen. Through a focus on Broadway shows and their captivating performers, against the backdrop of a twinkling Manhattan skyline, the campaign helped brand New York as a resurgent financial and cultural capital in such a way that the city's unique "attitude" and "lifestyle" were front and center. The DOC then continued to use images and data generated by the campaign to lobby the legislature to spend tens of millions more dollars on marketing for tourism, as well as to dramatically increase pro-business reforms, at a time of unprecedented austerity and cut-backs in public sector employment and social services.

And so emerged the contradiction between image and reality that was to underlie New York's approach to economic development for the next generation. In effect, the branding coalition took a two-pronged approach similar to that developed by ABNY in the era of corporate move outs in the early 1970's— but with far greater power and on a much wider scale with the state government at the helm. Changes in economic development policy that benefited business and tourism at the expense of workers and poorer neighborhoods would happen behind the scenes. Meanwhile high profile, publicly funded marketing campaigns would provide positive, populist and ubiquitous imagery. This imagery served to sell the city to both "tourists and middle managers," as the DOC

intended, and at the same time obscured the city's ongoing social and economic crises, thereby distracting the public from this radical shift in fiscal priorities.

Discourse, Symbol, and Tourism Marketing

Virtually all experts and CEO(s) agree ... New York, historically, never had to accommodate [or] compete for business. *It clearly must do so now...*

In symbolic terms the fiscal crisis stood for all that is wrong with New York.

[It] created a sense of insecurity that curtails investment.

Yankelovich, Skelly & White, Inc., 1977²

The interplay between space, visibility, and power is a lens for viewing the symbolic strategies of New York City's 1970's-era public private marketing and advertising campaigns. Those in the crisis regime — from city and state government officials to business leaders and civic boosters wanted to reestablish the city's image in the minds of the government and the business community, and to reassert their own tenuous position in the process. Reviving tourism, the magic industry, was the quickest and easiest way to jumpstart this process. But, to accomplish this, they needed some professional assistance.

The leaders of the crisis regime sought out two crucial sets of allies in the realm of cultural production, who could help them realize and legitimize their plans. The first were researchers with command of the latest scientific discourse of marketing and consumption, which was known as "psychographics." Collecting and commodifying information about consumer habits and desires has been central to the profitability of the culture industry ever since its origins in the late 19th century. As the culture industries became increasingly central to the process of capitalist accumulation in the 1970's, and

as consumers became both more varied and more difficult to control, consumer information became increasingly valuable and specialized, and was in demand by a far wider range of clients—including the entrepreneurial city and state. In the process, market research gained new legitimacy and power as a tool of political governance—particularly in times of crisis, such that which New York faced.

The second set of allies were producers of media and commercial art, who were key players in sectors of growing economic importance in the city, and in the global marketplace. As Michele Bogart argues, creativity and control over “the discourses of art” have increasingly become “means of acquiring authority and influence not only in a particular field but in the broader culture.” Particularly in times in which shifting economies, technologies, and social demographics challenge old power relations and ways of life, cultural claims “can result in the power to assert class and self legitimacy.”³ These hip, young taste-makers and lifestyle connoisseurs, themselves fascinated with what Clay Felker and *New York* magazine dubbed “the New York Power Game,” were more than willing to join forces with the old guard, and craft an image of the city that placed both groups at the center. Ultimately they formed what I would call a public-private *city branding coalition*.

New Branding Coalition

The new marketers and cultural producers worked with, and for, the same, powerful private sector led advocacy groups that had been laboring since the early 1970’s to

counter the city's image crisis, and to pressure city and state government to become more business friendly. These included the board members of the CVB, the city's official commercial booster; ABNY, created by realtor Lewis Rudin in 1971. New to the table in this group was the Business/Labor Working Group, created by Chase Manhattan CEO David Rockefeller and labor leader Harry Van Arsdale in 1976.⁴ Much of the leadership of these groups also served on, or worked closely with, the more prominent board members of the MAC and EFCB during the fiscal crisis, and at the state level on the New York Council on the Economy, begun in April 1976.

But two things were quite different about this current branding coalition. The first was the dominant role played by the New York State government. This new role was initiated by Hugh Carey, the newly elected democratic state governor, who took a far more active role than had any previous governor, republican or democrat, in encouraging managerial reforms and working more closely with the private sector.⁵ On his watch, the state's Department of Commerce [DOC], was taken over by new, younger administrators with background in private sector finance and advertising, and restructured to "cut red tape" and focus its energies on marketing. This new DOC also worked more closely with New York City's newly created Office of Economic Development [OED], created by Mayor Beame in 1976, as well as a restructured Department of City Planning [DCP]. This helped develop a closer relationship between "downstate" and "upstate" that had been sorely lacking in previous administrations.

And the second new element of the coalition was a battalion of cutting edge graphic designers, advertising agencies, market researchers, and PR consultants, all hired for the first time, and for unprecedented sums, by the New York State DOC and New York City OED. The main players included the hip, young advertising firm Wells Rich and Greene, at the vanguard of the “new advertising,” and *New York* magazine’s artistic director, Milton Glaser, the creator of the bold graphic style of “new journalism.” Their work was complemented by professional studies conducted by the leading psychographic market research firms, Consumer Behavior Incorporated, and Yankelovich Skelly and White. Together, they were to construct and launch “I ♥ NY,” the first “professional” city marketing campaign. This targeted, lifestyle-savvy, marketing approach, it was believed, would finally transform the image of New York City and make the city’s “product” competitive amongst a new generation of “consumers.”

Restructuring the State Department of Commerce for Tourism Marketing

In 1976, the Beame administration published its business-oriented report, “Economic Recovery: New York City’s Program for 1977-1981.” As discussed in the previous chapter, the two main demands that dominated the agency’s proposal included: 1) a dramatic change in the tax structure of the city and state, and 2) increased emphasis on marketing New York City.⁶ Between late 1976 and 1977, New York State’s DOC underwent a similarly rigorous process of restructuring, and one that was unlike any that the massive state agency had ever experienced in its 43 year history. Like the OED, the

retooled DOC sought to make itself both more accessible to business, and more capable of launching comprehensive marketing campaigns.⁷

Since its inception in 1934, the DOC had been a wide-ranging Department, comprising eight offices, and 20 smaller divisions, most of which were primarily concerned with supporting upstate industry and agriculture, which provided the bulk of jobs in the state. Now the DOC was transformed along functional lines into two main cabinet level divisions devoted to two main goals: corporate retention and the marketing of New York City and State, particularly for tourism. The first office was named the Office of Economic Development, and was devoted to “corporate interests,” “red-tape cutting,” and the promotion of international commerce.⁸ Within this office, a separate Corporate Headquarters Bureau was created to help stem the outflow of corporations, particularly from New York City —something unprecedented in a Department traditionally wary of appearing to favor the economic development needs of “downstate,” as New York City was called. The second office was called the “Office of Economic Planning, Marketing, and Tourism” and, as its name suggested, was devoted to those activities, in addition to market research to support tourism, so as “to understand and promote this vastly underdeveloped industry.”⁹

These strategic changes entailed, broadly speaking, a shift in the DOC’s priorities: away from favoring economic sectors based in manufacturing, agriculture, and the public sector, and towards retaining and attracting new, more flexible and image-sensitive services —particularly in FIRE, tourism, and the culture industries. Given the DOC’s

lack of expertise in these new areas, Governor Carey appointed two new leaders from the private sector with backgrounds in finance and marketing. The first, Commissioner John Dyson, came from a background of working on Wall Street, while the second, Deputy Commissioner Bill Doyle, had been the marketing manager at Chase Manhattan Bank.

Commissioner Dyson and Deputy Commissioner Doyle understood the role of economic development from the profit-making perspective of the private sector, and as such, did what any self respecting corporation faced with a budget crisis would have done at this time, but which no DOC commissioner had ever done. They consulted with an advertising firm, and hired two of the leading Wall Street market research firms to assess the State's "marketing potential" in the areas of corporate retention and tourism. Not only was this the first time the DOC had hired outside market consultants, it was the first and only time they spent their entire tourism budget to do so, as they did in 1976.¹⁰ The contents of these studies, based almost entirely on interviews with CEO's and tourists, were to have an enormous impact in redirecting the state's tax policies and the direction of its economic development strategies.

From Psychographics to the New Advertising

The number of variables relating directly to consumption, such as product, brand or media choice tended to increase during the 1970's as the lifestyle survey became standard marketing practice through the impact of successful service like David Yankelovich's "Yankelovich Monitor" founded in 1971.

Adam Arviddson, 2004¹¹

Why did [our clients] allow a group of Young Turks to tell them what to do? Clients who came to us at a time when they had problems ganging on them, stupefying arrays of hard decisions to make and businesses that were in danger of disintegrating—those

clients were experiencing the long dark night of the soul and they simply had to trust advisors who were reputed to be winners. There was something convincing about the adrenaline coming out of the pores of WRG and the sureness we had.

Mary Wells Lawrence, 2002

Beginning in the 1960's, corporate America faced increasing global competition, higher costs of doing business, as well as a potential crisis of underconsumption—due to a young, counter-culture generation that was increasingly resistant to traditional marketing tactics. In response to these pressures, and corporations' need to find new techniques to reach consumers, dramatically new forms of advertising and market research were gaining currency.

The firms YSW and CBI were both psychographic marketing consultant firms established in the 1950's and 1960's by young analysts with backgrounds in business and marketing as well as in social psychology. CBI was one of the original psychographic firms, created out of the University of Chicago based Committee for Research on Consumer Attitudes and Behavior in the 1950's, and pioneered the application of behavioral psychology to the problems of business.¹² YSW developed in the mid 1960's as an independent firm that became a pioneer in packaging psychographic survey data. They designed survey tools that measured “intangible” social psychological shifts and related them to consumption habits, thus providing clients with, as YSW put it, “the only logical foundation for building sound business strategies... in times of change.”¹³

YSW was ultimately the most influential marketing consultant of the 1970's.¹⁴ One of their major innovations was called the *Corporate Priorities Survey*. This survey measured

the image and reputation of a company in the minds of its “affected publics”—including its consumers, sales people, employees, stock holders, and government regulators, so as to show how “a company lives within society.” Through this device, and a subsequent “corporate reputation index” published in *Fortune Magazine*, YSW was the first to turn “intangibles” such as “reputation” and “image” into a quantifiable asset that could be listed alongside a company’s financial statements. This, YSW promised, could then impact a company’s stock price, its desirability to employees, and the marketability of its products.¹⁵ During this time of consumer activism, the issue of “corporate responsibility” was a key measurement. Today, measurements of “corporate reputation” are still viewed as essential to the valuation of a company, its stock, and now its “brand identity” —and as such I would assert “corporate reputation” studies are a key antecedent to the rise of “branding” and “brand management” in the 1980’s. Their other, equally influential invention, born in 1971, was called the *Yankelovich Monitor*. This was an annual national survey which related consumption habits to U.S. lifestyle trends and attitudes on diverse social issues. This, according to YSW could help corporations adapt their marketing strategies to changing social and cultural climates. One of the key “psychographics” measured in the *Monitor*, and the reason for which so many established companies were buying it, was of the “new youth,” defined in terms of their new lifestyles, attitudes, and buying habits. To appeal to this rising market, advertisers made the Yankelovich Monitor the industry standard.¹⁶

Wells, Rich, Greene [WRG] was one of the most famous and accomplished in the field of “new advertising,” the creative movement that sought to overturn corporate conventions,

and co-opt the counterculture, so as to appeal to hip, young consumers and the clients who wished to reach them. Many of their young attractive ad-writers, in particular the brassy, blonde Mary Wells Lawrence became celebrities in their own right. Wells was constantly interviewed about the genius of their approach, as in the following

We talk English, avoid the jargon, the techno-centered phrase, the slick phrase. We must break into his consciousness with shock approaches, with surprise... honestly, with style and grace... We avoid imparting any sense of exploitation. We show respect for his intelligence.¹⁷

While much of the innovation of firms like WRG was in response to the cultural shifts among consumers, as documented by the psychographic researchers, it was equally inspired by what might simply be called the desperation of many of the agencies' corporate clients. Many of the older companies, struggling to survive in the increasingly competitive and fast changing marketplace, were grasping at whatever marketing toehold they could find. In so doing they were vulnerable to pitches by young, confident companies like WRG that could package themselves as representing the psychographic these firms needed to reach, and which the firms knew next to nothing about. In explaining why, for instance, the American Manufacturing Company, the most staid of Detroit's car companies, would "allow a group of Young Turks to tell them what to do," in marketing a new line of "Rebel" cars to the youth market, Wells explained:

Clients who came to us at a time when they had problems ganging on them, stupefying arrays of hard decisions to make and businesses that were in danger of disintegrating —those clients were experiencing the long dark night of the soul and they simply had to trust advisors who were reputed to be winners. There was something convincing about the adrenaline coming out of the pores of WRG and the sureness we had.¹⁸

The main thing WRG, and many of the other new advertising firms, offered their desperate clients was the promise of rejuvenation through the transformation of their entire image, or “look.” The very hiring of the ad agency, which itself embodied the desired “look,” became an essential part of this process. A successful ad campaign would often garner as much media buzz for the cutting edge agency that created it, as for the campaign itself. In this sense the client was seeking to associate itself with the symbolic “brand identity” of the agency, that they hoped would spill over into the brand identity of their product and entire company. As advertising historian Warlaumont documents, “as advertising clients scrambled to modernize their image from bureaucrat to hipster, an all-too-familiar request to their ad agencies was ‘I want an ad like Bernbach’s,’ or ‘I want the Wells look, the Burnett look,’ or the “new look” in advertising.¹⁹

New York State, with “problems ganging on them” like any bureaucratic company trying to adapt to the new economy, was one of the clients that “simply had to trust” this approach, and desperately needed the promise of youth, and hip new look, that WRG provided. Governor Carey, in a documentary interview on the role played by John Dyson in the “I Love New York” campaign, said reverently, “Only John would have the audacity and the temerity to approach Mary Wells Lawrence of Wells Rich and Greene.”

²⁰ Here was an ad agency, and in particular a CEO, that were believed to be so hip, so sexy, and so associated with their rebellious generation, that even a State official had to have “audacity and temerity” just to approach them, let alone to hire them and pay them millions of dollars for the privilege.

From Carey and Dyson's perspective, what New York City and State needed more than anything to jumpstart their economic development was professional research and survey data that could establish their marketing needs, and a marketing campaign that would create media buzz and present a rejuvenated, audacious new image for the entire state. Hopefully, this could also help them convince a skeptical, old-fashioned, managerial legislature to pay for the campaign, and support their larger entrepreneurial agenda.

The YSW & CBI Reports: Amplifying the Voices of Business and Tourism

If tourists want to visit [New York City],
you can get middle managers who want to live there.
DOC Deputy Commissioner, Bill Doyle, 1977

According to key experts and CEO's ... the fiscal crisis
can and should be addressed in marketing strategy —
[as in] New York is "purging" itself and changing ways.
Yankelovich, Skelly, and White, 1977

DOC Commissioner Dyson recalls that when hired in the winter of 1976, he only had a \$400,000 budget for tourism marketing, and so "I called up Bill Doyle who was in the advertising world, and asked 'What can we do with that?'"²¹ He asked Doyle to come up with a plan for the state much like a business plan for the private sector. As Doyle recalled in a recent documentary interview, this was quite a task:

At that time businesses were leaving New York, and my job, I thought, was to get businesses to stay in NY. We had to do something bold. If we didn't do something bold we'd be sitting here with an economy that was going nowhere. It was really grim. There were more dark theaters than lit ones, meaning that there was no one to fill up the seats, so the shows all closed... So we did two huge market research projects which put together the business plan which we could sell to the legislature

According to a now legendary story, Doyle's "inspiration" for this bold approach to save New York's economy came to him at a luncheon in the Union Carbide headquarters in midtown Manhattan, during which the company announced plans to move to Danbury, Connecticut. "They said they were leaving New York because they could not get anyone to visit, let alone work here," he would recall. It was at this point that Doyle had an epiphany: by focusing on the tourism industry, and New York's image as a desirable place for the middle and upper classes to visit, he could also, simultaneously improve the business climate of the city, and New York's image as a place in which middle and upper classes could live, work, and make a profit. Doyle abruptly called a halt to all state tourism spending and used the money to finance market research instead.²² This, he hoped, would "prove" to the legislature that the state had failed to realize some \$16 billion in revenue between 1967 and 1976, by his own estimate, due to the fact that "vacationers and businesspeople alike" were deterred from New York City because of negative perceptions. For, as Doyle argued: "if tourists want to visit [New York City], you can get middle managers who want to live there."²³

Another version of the story of Doyle's inspiration to invest in market research has Marty Stern, WRG's marketing director, playing a pivotal role. This is the story as told by Mary Well Lawrence in her autobiography,

Marty Stern, the most hopeful man I knew and by then our marketing director, came to me with New York's senior deputy commissioner, Bill Doyle, and what I saw as a hopeless proposition. John [Dyson] like everybody else around the governor those days was looking for a fast buck—anything that would help get the economy going and wouldn't require serious investment by the state. He saw that tourism had everything in place to be exploited—roads, bridges, upstate beauty, museums, hotels, and above all, Broadway. "New York spends less per person on tourism than any other state. We need a plan," he told Bill Doyle. "We

have to squeeze money for tourism out of this penniless legislature with a good, foolproof plan... Bill had gone to see Marty and they had come up with the idea of spending the few thousand dollars left in the state's tourism budget for research geared to benchmarks that would measure, reliably, what an investment in tourism advertising would produce for the state's coffers in tax income. Out of respect for Marty I approved the idea.²⁴

Whatever the case, whether the reliance on professional market research was the idea of Doyle alone, or of Doyle with the aid of WRG, the DOC approved of it. And important to note, the Wells Lawrence version of events reveals that this strategy was seen largely as a way to make a "fast buck," with no major investments or apparent downsides.

Tourism, once again, was viewed as a kind of magic industry, and marketing as the spell which could unlock it.

Thus, in FY 1976-7, the DOC used its entire annual budget, or \$400,000, to hire two professional market research firms, Consumer Behavior Inc. [CBI], and Yankelovich, Skelly, and White [YSW]²⁵ Now the DOC had what Dyson called "highly regarded," quasi-scientific data, on what I will call the "voice of tourists" and the "voice of the business community." Once quantified, these voices could then be elevated above other, competing voices, such as the voices of other industries not considered to be as important as tourism and FIRE, of other public sector agencies, of social service recipients, and of the labor unions.

CBI's first step was to conduct the State's first ever "in-depth market survey" regarding tourism. This, it was hoped, could be used as irrefutable evidence in the DOC's ongoing efforts to convince the legislature to support this industry and its marketing efforts, even

at the expense of declining aid to other industries and the public sector. As the DOC explained in its annual report:

[CBI conducted this survey] because of a longstanding dearth of adequate data regarding the State's tourist industry and because of the drastic reduction in the budget during the past six years. This provided the facts and figures to prove the vital importance of the tourist industry to the economy of New York State...[as well as] a wealth of demographic and psychographic data which will permit the development of highly sophisticated advertising and marketing campaigns.²⁶

The results of CBI's study revealed "consumers" had profoundly mixed feelings about New York City, and next to no knowledge of New York State. On the one hand, New York City was seen as a "difficult," "expensive," and "dangerous" place to visit. Yet, on the other, Broadway theatre and "nightlife" were some of the most popular tourist attractions in the entire country. Thus CBI proposed that the DOC create a new marketing approach that emphasized theatre, Times Square attractions, and the lights of Broadway, and deemphasized other images of the city, including images of "crime," "traffic," and the "outer boroughs." As for New York State, CBI's research indicated that, although its "potential vacation market was great," New York was perceived as "having minimal appeal as a tourist attraction and the public was not aware of the State's substantial tourism resources." Thus CBI proposed that the State's marketing try to both show off the most spectacular natural resources in the state and, as much as possible, link travel to New York City, a known commodity, to the rest of the state.²⁷

The YSW study, meanwhile, focused on corporate retention, and the "market based strategies" New York should take both to reverse corporate flight, and to encourage new

corporations to relocate to the state.²⁸ It was based on three sources of data: an “early alert” survey of state’s 2000 largest firms, interviews with “experts and CEO’s,” and a variety of “outside data.” From these sources it constructed a simple, quasi-scientific way to quantify what I would call “the voice of the business community,” as seen in the neoliberal, market-oriented language it used, and expected government to understand, as for the recommendations it made, and asked government to follow.

The report begins by providing a detailed “business development plan” for the State. This starts with a new definition of “economic development” as primarily based in “private business” and “tourism.”²⁹ It then devotes a large section to what the business community sees as “opportunities” to “stabilize and reverse [the] crisis levels” of economic decline. In particular, it emphasizes the opportunity presented by “New York’s changing attitude towards business.”³⁰ New Yorkers traditionally viewed business as “lofty” and “exploitative,” and thus expected “business and businessmen ...to finance government spending.”³¹ The crisis, however, changed all that. Now, “it is...politically acceptable to be pro business” and “cooperation among government, management and labor are apparent and growing.” But this optimism is combined with dire warnings: “[The] danger of inaction appears great...If expectations and hopes are unfulfilled, the last chance is lost. [There will be a] renewal and acceleration of former trends and losses.” To prevent, it was necessary the state make certain “pro business product modifications.”³²

The first set of these “product modifications” would be in “marketing strategy.”

According to “key experts and CEOs,” in order to send the message that New York was serious about attracting business, it must address its faults. Namely, “the fiscal crisis can and should be addressed in marketing strategy — [as in] *New York is ‘purging’ itself and changing [its] ways.*”³³ This was followed by a special focus on marketing New York City, presumably the first and foremost place in need of “purging.” The report stressed that the “positive product attributes” of the city be emphasized – in particular its strengths as a financial center and tourist destination, while its negative attributes be downplayed—in particular its long history as a “liberal” and working class city, its high ratio of unionized workers, and its devastated areas (the South Bronx is explicitly mentioned here). The marketing strategy YSW proposed included three “major themes”: New York’s attitude toward business is changing; the cost of doing business is or can be competitive; and management’s career and leisure-time goals can both be fulfilled in New York City.³⁴

The second set of modifications involved actual political-economic restructuring —i.e. changes in laws, tax codes, bureaucratic arrangements, budgetary priorities, and real urban development plans in order to make New York more business friendly. Some of these changes were very specific. The “highest priority attention” should be given to lowering the personal income tax. “Unemployment benefits to strikers and maternity benefits” were considered “particularly onerous” and their “elimination should be strongly considered.” And it was advised that all marketing activities be “packaged” in a

single agency so that “government-business relations may be simplified and accelerated,” and so that “the features/benefits of the product can be communicated.”³⁵

Other changes proposed were more vague, such as reshaping the “work ethic [and] discipline of non-workers.” Elsewhere in the report the term “nonworkers” was used to refer to welfare recipients, while welfare payments in the state were called “overly generous.” Thus this appears to be an indirect way of recommending that existing New York State welfare laws be weakened, so as to economically and ideologically induce welfare recipients to work.³⁶

* * *

Many things can be learned from the CBI and YSW reports. At the discursive level, these reports provide an extremely detailed and idealized version of the “attitudes and values” of the tourism and the business sectors in this fiscal crisis period. It is not that the legislators reading them wouldn’t have known much of what the researchers “discovered”—many of the legislators were from the same narrow economic sectors surveyed by the reports. Rather the novelty and power of the reports was in the authoritative, psychographic data they marshaled, and in the market-oriented discourse they employed. More than anything, they read like training manuals in the proper language and strategy of entrepreneurial governance for an uninitiated public sector worker. The “intangibles” measured by the surveys—i.e. the attitudes, concerns, and lifestyle needs of CEO’s—became abstract rhetorical tools that could be used to

transform the material reality of New York City and State into commodities, to turn places of diverse use values into a space of pure exchange value. Here, New York City and State become the “product” to be sold, their “corporate reputation” the asset to be measured. The “affected publics” and “consumers” of New York that were surveyed, and those presumably of greatest import to its economic development, were limited to the tiny minority of tourists, travelers, and the “business community.” Meanwhile, the voices of this key group were articulated more powerfully than ever before, and with a new scientific and political legitimacy. Before, the business lobby had to stand outside the gates of government; now they had two of their own members at the helm of the DOC, who were actively soliciting their views on these crucial questions of economic development, and elevating them above the din of competing interest groups—whether labor, small business, or the public sector.

Reading these reports as empirical, historical documents is also revelatory, as government decision making during a period of crisis became less and less transparent, and less and less democratic. Through these reports, the only ones commissioned in the name of economic development, the business sectors received audience at the highest levels of New York State government. Thus the corporate sector played a significant role in shaping New York’s economic development policy behind the scenes. While the DOC’s new, entrepreneurial leadership was attempting a dramatic shift towards costly, publicly financed professional marketing campaigns, they needed these reports to persuade the traditional, managerial state legislature to commit the funds, particularly in a time of fiscal austerity.

As then DOC Commissioner Dyson recalls, “Mary Wells produced a fabulous [advertising] plan which required the astounding sum, for that time, of \$4 million... So I said to the staff that we’ve got to get credible evidence that if we spend this \$4 million, we’ll at least get \$4 million back for Governor Carey’s budget.”³⁷ Once the “credible evidence” of the CBI research was completed, it was then given to Stanley Steingut, the speaker of the state legislature, along with the “promise,” according to Wells Lawrence’s autobiography, that “four million in advertising would yield eight million in revenue.”³⁸ According to the DOC’s Annual Report for 1976, the CBI research ultimately “resulted in” the passage of the Omnibus Tourism Bill, appropriating \$4.3 million for the Department to undertake a “multi-media tourist advertising campaign” in June 1977.³⁹ This, according to the *Annual Report*, was done in order to hire this high profile agency:

To implement these programs, one of the nation’s outstanding ad agencies, Wells, Rich & Greene, was engaged. The agency provided valuable assistance during the interim period while the marketing survey was underway and developed the new advertising campaign based on the “I Love New York” theme.⁴⁰

As for the YSW report, according to the Department of Commerce’s subsequent “Annual Reports,” as well as legislative reports from the offices of Governor Carey, we know that it was used successfully as a lobbying device to bring about many of the sweeping changes it recommended, particularly in the area of taxation and bureaucratic restructuring.⁴¹ And as the Annual Report of 1978-9 states: In 1977, “a well researched business plan [was put in place] for expenditure control and tax reductions that included tax cuts, incentives, and fiscal programs along with some 60 pro-business measures passed by the legislature and signed into law.” The YSW recommendations also had an

impact in terms of the DOC's marketing strategy. This is true of the less well-known corporate retention campaign "New York State Votes "Yes" for Business."⁴² This campaign was geared towards informing business people of all these new pro-business measures, illustrated with glossy photos of suburban industrial parks and high-tech production facilities, and was circulated mainly at conventions and through industry publications. (This campaign was short-lived, later becoming, in 1980, the powerful "Made In New York" campaign, which is still operating today).

Finally, what is interesting about the CBI and YSW reports is their simultaneity. The fact that Deputy Commissioner Doyle commissioned them at the same time, and that legislators would have read them at the same time, says a great deal about the what was emerging as the dual economic development policy of the state, embracing both tourism marketing and business development through privatization. We saw that this strategy first appeared in 1971, with ABNY's "two pronged" approach, involving both populist PR events and the Big Apple campaign, and behind the scenes lobbying at VIP breakfasts. Now, five years later, the very public drive by the city and state agencies to increase tourism, and transform the image of New York City, through a new state-wide campaign, was accompanied by more behind the scenes campaigns and successful legislative efforts to alter budgetary priorities and tax policy towards the private sector. The enactment of what YSW refers to euphemistically as "pro-business product modifications" was actually the result of hard fought battles by pro-business forces in the state to reshape policy in favor of their agenda, and against that of organized labor and the welfare state.

Yet, in a contest between tourism and business development Commissioners Dyson and Doyle had always made clear that the perceived needs of tourists should be the one emphasized. As revealed in a subsequent audit of the agency, the DOC was quoted as making a particular case for the greater funding for tourism marketing than for business development, since tourism was seen as “a more visible and positive commodity than business development.”⁴³ In other words, the improved image associated with increased tourism made New York more marketable, and was hard to criticize from a traditional, ideological perspective. It seemed to transcend class conflict, and present a universally positive, unspoiled image of the state for all to enjoy. The image associated with Business Development on the other hand, was characterized by liberal and leftist New Yorkers to be “exploitative” and “ruthless”—if we take the CEO’s of YSW report at their word — and in any case involved selling off or giving away the assets of state to a limited group. Furthermore, cultivating this positive tourist image of the New York City and State was seen as the cheapest, easiest and quickest solution to the financial crisis. As they argued: “Our economic analysis had indicated that tourism promotion would provide the economy with a quicker injection of funds from increased sales, jobs, and tax revenues.” On the other hand, “Business Development inevitably requires a longer decision making period and planning process.” Such complex, long-term planning required “coordination between many agencies,” something that, apparently, the DOC’s leadership didn’t have the time, or inclination, to attempt.⁴⁴

Finally, one of the major benefits of tourism marketing was its usefulness as a public relations tool: the simultaneous launching of high profile, nationwide tourism campaigns distracted attention from the DOC's broader, and far more controversial, pro-business agenda. By focusing on the "more visible and positive commodity" of tourism, they presented a safe, culturally exciting, and inclusive face of New York City for everybody, rich or poor, from inside or outside the state, to enjoy. The image of tax breaks for a few big corporations at the expense of thousands on welfare, on the other hand, didn't look so nice to the general public—especially in the midst of crisis and austerity. And so the DOC devised a general strategy of 'change the image and the rest will follow.' For, as Doyle saw it, getting *both* middle managers *and* tourists to want to come to New York City – in the face of persistent negative images from the streets— was the first step in winning the larger, inter-state battle for corporate retention and investment, and making New York City "profitable" once again. Now the task fell to WRG to come up with the most "visible and positive" campaign slogan possible.

"Love" Saves the Day: WRG Develops the "I Love New York" Theme

[We were] idealistic in those days, all about hope and love, it helped paint us the way our clients wanted us to be, the way we were when we were young.

Mary Wells Lawrence, founding CEO of WRG, 2002⁴⁵

Of all the radical, countercultural themes of the 1960's, the one that survived with its hip-ness intact into the individualistic backlash of the 1970's was "love." This was a "love" with all its psychedelic, erotic, and personally liberated connotations, but presumably without the more politicized "peace" attached to it at the front. This "love" was in the air in advertising and popular culture in the 1970's, and it comes up repeatedly throughout

Mary Wells Lawrence's autobiographical reminiscences of that period. She recalls for instance that though she had no time for decorating WRG first modest office space on Madison Avenue in 1971, she did "plaster the walls with Love posters and [toss] psychedelic pillows around and...[allow] Mick Jagger to sing 'Have You Seen Your Mother, Baby?' in the waiting room."⁴⁶

This free floating form of "love" also became a highly effective marketing device —first of all, when WRG was selling its own services to "uncool," establishment clients who needed to appeal to the new "youth culture" or face extinction. Such firms were looking for an ad agency that itself embodied and could speak to this culture, and the "love" theme helped convince them WRG was such an agency. When WRG was hired by Menley & James, "a company chockablock full of elegant WASP's," to help them "break into the steaming youth market with a cosmetics line designed specifically for younger women," the product line Wells came up with was called, simply, "Love," and packaged in a series of titillating, phallic shaped bottles.⁴⁷ Similarly, when WRG landed its watershed Rebel contract with AMC, the concept Wells used to win over a board-room full of skeptical executives was "Love." As she tells it:

I talked about love in advertising, a word I always felt I had to decipher because businessmen acted as if love were an erotic Russian word they did not understand. (Love? What's love got to do with it?) I said that if we did not communicate that we loved our cars, nobody else would love them, either. I explained that love in advertising is an attitude toward the product and also toward the reader and the viewer. In some subtle way, every ad, every commercial should produce a feeling of love between the product and the potential buyer.⁴⁸

The "love" theme, along with other strategies like the elimination of what Wells called "old school logos," helped humanize and personalize the identity of both the company

and the product they were selling. Without this, the advertiser was seen as nothing more than “a big corporation advertising, not just to you, but to a million other people, thereby killing much of the personal selling impact.”⁴⁹ WRG staked its success on its ability to generate “personal selling impact” in its ads, and to turn failing companies around in the process.

Thus it was not surprising that “love” should have been the theme that both the WRG adman in charge of the account, Charlie Moss, and the Deputy Commissioner with a background in marketing, Bill Doyle, hit upon. New York was a failing city that needed to re-position itself against the competition and appeal to a younger, hipper, more affluent crowd of middle managers and tourists. The question of who actually came up with the “I Love New York” slogan is another question, with many people, from the campaign’s PR man, Bobby Zarem, to Governor Carey, claiming credit. John Dyson remembers someone trying a different slogan, and then realizing it wouldn’t work without “love” in it:

[Someone came up with] “New York New York It’s a Heck of a State.” Bill Doyle said that’s so bad I can’t even show it to John.... I remember Bill Doyle saying that the words that matter in advertising are: “new,” “free,” “improved,” and “love.”... And he comes back the next day and says well “I love New York” has “love” and “new” in it. So I got two of the four powerful words of advertising. So he says what do you think. So I said that’s terrific, let’s do that.⁵⁰

Whatever the story, the slogan “I Love New York,” was quickly embraced by all involved. Nonetheless, a good slogan, even one filled with “love,” would not be enough to turn around the image of New York in the depths of its fiscal crisis. Wells had seen this from the start. Referring to the “height of horrors” that had been reached in the city

with the “crime wave” and “garbage strikes” of 1976-7, she noted, “New York was a mess and in a lot more financial trouble than American Motors had been. I was never comfortable when clients were poor and New York was broke.”⁵¹

For any chance of success, the love slogan would have to be complemented by a powerful visual logo that would get into print media as well as onto a wide array of “collateral” products.⁵² It would have to be the first city marketing campaign whose commercials reached a nationwide TV audience, and used the latest and greatest Broadway talent, an unforgettable musical jingle, and cinematic flair. This brand franchise would be extended through “package tours,” sold through the CVB, in which visitors would combine a variety of urban and rural experiences in the state. The DOC and CVB would look for corporate partnerships with airlines and bus-lines, hotels, restaurants, and theatres to extend the campaign further and keep the price on the tours low. And together with WRG they would make use of a variety of PR techniques to build events promoting the campaign and getting it into the media. In short, New York and its cultural products would be marketed as aggressively and comprehensively as Hollywood movies or hip, new AMC automobiles.

F. Milton Glaser and the Design of “I ♥ NY”

One of the secrets of communications is to make people think, to stir the brain into action. Because when you tell people something, they don’t listen. So things that are said directly are not understood. But when you say something indirectly, and they have to figure it out, the activation of the brain causes them to understand.

That little thing is a puzzle, “I ♥ NY.” And because of that, it’s the only thing I can think of, it operated. Because there’s a satisfaction in figuring things out.

Milton Glaser, 2004.

In order for the marketing campaign to be truly comprehensive across different media platforms, and different parts of New York, the marketing experts realized a slogan, concept, and business plan wouldn't be enough. It also needed a powerful brand logo that could visually unify the different elements of the campaign, and that could symbolically unify all the diverse and even antagonistic elements of the new New York commodity in an authentic way. Given the success that Glaser had with doing just that at *New York* magazine, one of the most influential urban lifestyle magazines of the time, he was the natural choice for Bill Doyle when the latter realized the need for a "visualization" of the campaign. For not only had Glaser and his colleagues helped create the "new look" and hip, consumerist lifestyle for New York in the late 1960's, they had themselves become personally identified with this look and lifestyle. Glaser, too, understood this. When asked why he thought Doyle should have chosen him, of all people, for the job, he responded:

He had heard of me and I had a pretty good reputation. Even then I was around for a long time. I'm sure he read *New York*. Maybe he also knew I was involved in the life of the city, and was associated with the life of the city.⁵³

Glaser's role as artistic director of *New York*, as will be remembered from Chapter 2, was in developing the visual aesthetic of the "new journalism," and thus linking this iconoclastic editorial content to the "new advertising" in a way that seemed characteristically "New York." Much of this involved traveling visually between "high and low" cultural references. He believed in eschewing "beauty" for "clarity," and using bold, straightforward design, yet this design was also dominated by his rich literary sensibility. While he emphasized the need for simplicity, and loved pop culture, he

believed this should always be mixed with higher level ideas and concepts. In this sense, the genius of Milton Glaser's graphic design was to be both universally understandable, and yet to never to underestimate the intelligence of his audience. Whether with his artistic direction of *New York* magazine, his concert posters, book jackets, interior design, or logo design, he won over fans through his unique combination of bluntness and ingenuity, humor and elegance. These contradictions, he believed, mirrored the gritty yet smart "New York sensibility," and the best of city life. The simple yet complex design he made for "I ♥ NY" was very much in this spirit, and was quickly seen as somehow, authentically "New York." And so at time of fiscal crisis, anti-urbanism, and daily media attacks on New York's viability, this in-your-face, personalized, and witty approach perhaps served to remind people of a certain quality of urbanity that they admired, sympathized with, or felt solidarity for, even in the midst of decline. And in combination with a large-scale marketing barrage, this design soon became globally associated with the city, and its first official logo.

Glaser actually didn't come up with this logo on his first try. Always a fast worker, he first did something simple and quick—two lozenges, with a strip of text in the top lozenge reading "I Love," and in the bottom lozenge "New York."⁵⁴ It was immediately accepted, but didn't live up to Glaser's own high expectations. So the next day, as he tells it, he was sitting in a taxi and had the realization "there's a better way to do it," and redid the logo on a piece of paper in his pocket. Glaser then called up Doyle and told him he had a better version, to which Doyle responded, "Oh, don't bother. I've gotten all these commissioners together and its impossible to change it." But Glaser insisted, until finally Doyle consented to look at the new logo. Many, including some at WRG, thought it was

too “cryptic.” So to test its readability, Doyle had t-shirts printed with the logo and “test-marketed” them by wearing them while he and his wife were on vacation in Barbados. All the tourists there were stopping them on the street to see where they could get one. Upon return, he fully endorsed the new design. “But amazingly enough,” as Glaser says, with all the bureaucratic wrangling, “it almost didn’t happen.”⁵⁵

In addition to being an accomplished graphic designer, Glaser was, and still is, a professor of the graphic arts, with clear ideas about visual theory in relation to logo design. While some, including those at WRG, originally thought his new logo was too “cryptic,” he knew otherwise, because he appreciated the degree to which a reader of design enjoys solving the right kind of design puzzle. As he explained recently:

Challenge, puzzles, difficulty, activate the brain, but you have to be sure that they can solve them. The distance between seeing something and understanding it is very critical. And sometimes you only have a fraction of a second. If someone looks at something and they say “I don’t get it,” you’re finished. They get angry. Because they can’t figure it out. So that distance is a very critical distance, and in design that’s always the distance you’re working with. How many steps will it take for people to figure this out?⁵⁶

In this sense I ♥ NY was one of Glaser’s most successful puzzles. According to Glaser, this was not only because of the playful complexity of the iconography, but also because of the different connotations carried by the visual symbolism of the logo as a whole. This combination made solving the puzzle fun, involving both a little mental work, and an active imagination.

[It was a] funny little thing... a little complex because there’s a puzzle in the iconography. “I” is a complete word, “♥” is a symbol for an emotion, and “NY”

are initials for a place. So anybody who sees it has to do a little translating in order to get it. ... But part of it is also a purely visual phenomenon. It is the contrast of the black and the red, the softness of the heart, the voluptuous, feminine quality of the heart. And the angular, aggressive character of the type-face. Somehow it had an effect on people.

Whatever it was, somehow this design communicated something to people. Glaser invoked a central principle of his new journalism training to explain this: “talk straight,” but use as much “metaphor, symbolism, and ambiguity” as possible to drive your bigger point home. This was a powerful and popular formula and, combined with the DOC’s shrewd marketing tactic of allowing people to reproduce the logo without enforcing copyright law, it meant that it spread like wildfire. “I ♥ NY” was printed on official New York State tourist memorabilia, but also hawked on thousands of items at corner souvenir stands and in shops throughout the city. It soon became, and remains to this day, as Glaser says, “one of the most imitated ads in the history of advertising,” with thousands of places, people, and product manufacturers around the world borrowing its structure, and inserting their own name—as in “I ♥ Harare,” “I ♥ Beagles,” and “I ♥ QE2.” It also remains the closest thing New York City has ever had to an official brand icon.

From Crisis to Consensus: The Impact of I ♥ NY, 1977-1983

It was like the movie “Wag the Dog” – a fake war is created for political reasons and an anthem is created to move people and make them believe there really is a war. Watching the movie is like reliving the I ♥ NY days at WRG. Charlie [Moss] was Dustin Hoffman and I was Robert De Niro and we had New Yorkers marching right past all the garbage singing “I Love New York.”

Mary Wells Lawrence, 2002⁵⁷

1977 was a year of the most absurd extremes and contradictions. As the I ♥ NY campaign planning was underway, and as the legislature was preparing to spend unprecedented millions to fund this new breed of place marketing, the city was spiraling out of control. People were starting to feel the long-term impact of the layoffs and joblessness, of planned shrinkage and cutbacks in services, of the elimination of SRO housing, of unchecked waves of arson and strings of garbage strikes, of fear that one more problem and the whole city would erupt like a volcano, burying all its inhabitants. This was the daily, grinding reality for the majority of New Yorkers, that was starting to wear down the spirit of the city. As Glaser remembers of those fiscal crisis days: “You might say that the city was in a state of deep depression, not only financially, but psychically.”⁵⁸

I ♥ NY represented none of this messy, everyday reality that New Yorkers lived through at this time. Rather, the PR campaign sought to tap into people’s collectively held mental representations of New York as a better place, and to communicate them through the use of media. In the process, they hoped to distract attention from, and make people forget the material reality. As Sharon Zukin says, when conflict mounts over access to the public goods of the city, and when entrenched inequality prevents resolution, the use of abstract images of “freedom and power,” and the reorganization of the urban landscape for visual consumption, can make people forget their grievances, and can help construct “some degree of consensus.”⁵⁹

Glaser wistfully recalls the uplifting effect the campaign had, not only on tourists, but also on New York's beleaguered inhabitants. To him, New York was largely a state of mind, and a good marketing campaign was enough to change that state of mind.

I think originally the ILNY campaign was fundamentally driven by tourism and the loss of revenue because people weren't coming here. It was focused outwardly. But I think its most profound effect was inward, which is to say it reminded people of their own commitment to life in the city. And I actually think that that's a much more powerful instrumentality. When people felt that this is a great place, when we felt that, in a very short time the world felt that... One thing we know is that reality is conditioned by belief.... Whatever you believe turns out to be what you perceive as real. When you shift your belief reality changes. There is no reality except what you basically create in your own brain. And when people felt this is a horrible desperate place to be, it was, and the day that they felt this is a marvelous place and I want to live here, it became that.

Glaser's recollection was not isolated. Many of the WRG materials explicitly aimed for this effect, and envisioned throngs of New Yorkers wearing I ♥ NY t-shirts replacing images of the South Bronx on the nation's TV screens. This authentic enthusiasm of New Yorkers for their city would be set in contrast to representations of the city's decay.⁶⁰ The strategy did meet with some skepticism. *Time Magazine* editorialized: "if New York's morale really is better these days, it may be because so many of those who hated the place left."⁶¹

Glaser's sense of the reaction of many New Yorker's to the campaign may have been valid—many people were obviously relieved and uplifted to finally see a positive portrayal of their beleaguered city, as well as one that they could participate in directly by wearing a t-shirt. The symbol of love signified empathy, maybe even a form of solidarity amongst New Yorkers and between them and the rest of the world. But the ultimate effect of using this symbol to get locals to buy into this larger

campaign of marketing and economic development was political pacification. If you believed in the campaign, the fact that there were real crises out the window, down the street, in an adjoining borough didn't have to worry you. The fact that the majority of New Yorkers, their experiences and grievances, were outside the frame of the campaign shouldn't bother you. And the idea of protesting the ongoing segregation of entire sections of the city, essentially left to self destruct, shouldn't occur to you. The campaign should remind you only of the good, and make you believe it was so, and that in any case you, individually, could make it so through the power of your own imagination. As Wells recalled, "we had New Yorkers marching right past all the garbage singing "I Love New York." Meanwhile, it was hoped, this would diminish the pressure on the city to actually clean up the garbage, except in the midtown theater district, where tourists might see it.

The Campaign

According to my textual analysis of the print and TV campaign's advertisements, guides, and commercials, images of working class communities north of 96th Street or across the East River in Brooklyn and Queens were largely omitted, while the city's "attractions" primarily focused on three Manhattan elements: Fifth Avenue shopping, Broadway theater, and "the new downtown nightlife" around the WTC. Throughout, the media campaign combined, as Dyson intended, a sense of New York as a great place to visit and play, as well as a great place to live and make money.

WRG hired three people to work on the TV campaign: a popular commercial TV cinematographer, Charlie Moss, the advertising director, and Steve Karmen, the pop-jazz musician and jingle writer. The first two commercials they shot had to capture the two main aspects of the campaign CBI had said people would respond to: Broadway shows for the city, and natural beauty for rural, upstate areas. The Broadway focused commercials were designed to literally “star Broadway,” featuring the stars of all the best Broadway shows of that year. And, fortunately for the campaign, this was not such a hard sell. 1977 turned out to be one of the best years on Broadway in terms of the quality and popularity of its first run musicals, many of which lived on to become contemporary classics—including “A Chorus Line,” “Annie,” and “The Wiz.” Yet due to the decline in tourism, many of these shows were threatened with closure. And so, though the campaign had little money to pay the large casts, the shows were all so desperate to stay on Broadway through the rough times, they were willing to work under difficult circumstances. As Charlie Moss recalled:

We anticipated trouble with the Broadway show tourist spot. We wouldn’t be able to get all the shows in. Since we ran out of money, we worked out a deal. Where people worked for the minimum scale that was possible. We paid them I think it was \$357 dollars for their time. [The] mercenary reason [was] they all were in shows that needed business. During the course of the filming there was a snow storm. But they all came. And stayed for 27 takes.⁶²

The commercial was shot on a Broadway theater stage, using the New York City skyline by night as the backdrop in most scenes, with the WTC at the center of the set —though it was not the geographic center of the city. Thus, while the emphasis was definitely on the talent and excitement of the theatre, there was still clearly an effort to represent the office towers and skyscrapers beyond Broadway. This helped to personalize and draw

the viewer in to this larger vision of the city as a whole. This was reproduced in the cinematography which, according to Wells Lawrence, broke conventions in representation of theatre on television.

Traditionally, Broadway shows were advertised in a representational style as you would see them in a performance from somewhere in the audience. Stan wanted to do something really new, and he thought of directing the stars of the shows in a presentational style, they would present themselves to you while singing ILNY anthem. The presentational style would create an exultant connection between the Broadway stars and you, the TV viewer that would not only make you feel you absolutely had to see those shows but also remind you that you loved NY.⁶³

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All the pieces of the branding-led mode of development were finally in place. The campaign was supported by a broad-based coalition between public and private sectors, aided by reorganized economic development agencies at both the city and state levels. It was backed by credible, professional market research, that enabled it to be sold to the legislature. It was managed by a cutting edge advertising and PR firm, that knew how to tap into the concerns of the psychographic identified by the market research. And finally, it had a simple yet sophisticated logo created by one the hippest graphic designers of the era.

Measuring Success

I thought we'd do a six month campaign and it would be over... Why it became so identified with the city, so durable, I don't know. And it spread all over the world. You can't go anywhere without seeing it. It's just crazy. I've done a lot of work in my life, but some things just stick. And this just had a profound effect.

And after 30 years, it's still not dead...

Milton Glaser, 2004⁶⁴

And so it was that in 1977, a year of blackouts, rioting, massive lay-offs, and the Summer of Sam, New York increased its tourism budget from \$400,000 to \$4.3 million and hired Wells, Rich & Green, one of the hippest ad agencies in the country, to design an upbeat, Broadway-oriented campaign.⁶⁵ Additional financial support was provided by ABNY, while the New York City CVB provided travel agents and new package deals for “theater weekends” and vacations linking the city and the state. Milton Glaser, still layout editor of the trend-setting *New York Magazine*, applied techniques of the urban lifestyle genre to media spreads selling the city to a young, affluent consumer. *New York Magazine* also produced some of the campaign’s first tourist maps and guides, which it provided as inserts as well as separate editions, and ran “I ♥ NY” ads prominently in its pages.

The campaign launch was accompanied by ingenious PR events, coordinated by two of the top PR agents in the city: Bobby Zarem and Howard Rubenstein. They worked alongside the DOC to ensure that constant press releases were going out for these events—and the media dutifully covered all of them. The first of these was the campaign’s grand opening celebration of Valentine’s Day, 1978. At a gala luncheon at Tavern on the Green, Governor Hugh Carey unveiled the new Broadway-themed TV commercial with its cast in attendance, including the stars of “A Chorus Line,” “The Wiz,” “Annie,” “Grease,” and other current hits. There he announced that 32 million viewers would see the ad, which was being broadcast throughout the Northeast, and was the first of hundreds to be produced by the agency. Then the party moved to Studio 54 for a Valentine’s Dance to the new “disco version” of the “I Love NY” theme song, along with, according to the DOC’s press release, “hundreds of colorful and interesting people

who keep New York alive at night.” These included many of the hottest local film, TV, and art stars such as Carrie Fisher, Mariel Hemingway, Andy Warhol, and Gilda Radner – star of the new, hugely popular late night TV show, *Saturday Night Live*. And for the grand finale, buildings across the city lit up to spell “I ♥ NY,” most prominently the WTC, thus making the logo visible on the skyline, and creating a widely circulated image used in later commercials and promotions.⁶⁶

The “I ♥ NY” campaign proved to be an astonishing success, according to follow up studies by Consumer Behavior, Inc., in one year, it stimulated an 11.8% increase in travel receipts in New York City. The \$4.3 million tourist promotion effort reaped \$14.3 million in tax revenues, which they calculated as translating to roughly \$4 in tax revenue for every \$1 spent on the campaign.⁶⁷ This fact became one of the most circulated in the months following the launch, and seemed to contribute to the campaign’s momentum.

The CVB was amazed, and emboldened, by the results. In the two weeks following the first TV advertisement on February 14, 1978 aired in New York and 5 surrounding states, the CVB received more than 17,000 requests for tour package brochures through Commerce Department toll free number. They averaged 1,500 inquiries a day, a doubling of the past record. Because of this, they demanded greater funding from city, complaining that New York was still only 17th in the nation in tourism funding, yet was handling some of the highest call volume, and hottest tourism market, of any city.⁶⁸ According to CVB numbers, released to the press: “New York City, where tourists are counted like money in the bank, attracted a record total of 16.75 million visitors who pumped an estimated

1.6 billion into the local economy”— which led the Mayor Koch to decide to more than tripled the CVB’s budget \$2 million the following year.⁶⁹

It seemed the city was no longer dependent on one-time events; without a Democratic Convention, the city saw a major increase in tourist numbers and spending, and an unprecedented 840 conventions booked. The campaign even appeared to be putting New York State ahead of the rest of the country in tourism, according to the U.S. Travel Data Center, which sampled six private state attractions, and found visitor volume increased 56.7% between 1976-77 —as compared to only 0.1% nationally.⁷⁰

By July 1978, just four months into the campaign, the DOC deemed the trial run of the I ♥ NY TV campaign in the northeastern United States to be so successful they made it nationwide.⁷¹ Under a novel cost-sharing arrangement with four airlines —United, Eastern, Braniff, and North Central— commercials were “test marketed” in Houston, Miami, Nashville, Dallas, Chicago, and Milwaukee. The airlines agreed to set up one-stop ticket counters for hotel and theatre reservations with airline tickets.⁷² According to the marketing consultant who arranged the deal, the cost of air time for the ads would be split 50/50, and, to inaugurate the campaign, “New York celebrities will be flown to the various cities for promotional parties.”

The CVB’s VP Gillet called tourism “the city’s leading growth industry,” while ABNY’s vice president and corporate hotelier Robert Tisch called it “a sparkplug for the resurgence of our great city.”⁷³ Both groups predicted this upward trend would continue

with high inflation abroad. This made prices lower in New York, thus bringing that most coveted of consumers, foreign tourists in search of US luxury goods, flooding into New York hotels.⁷⁴ All of this they believed would spill over into other industries, and create the broader economic impact long hoped for:

People have rediscovered New York. This is the greatest visitor area in the world. Its just a combination of factors. The theatre is booming, restaurants are booming, the opera is booming, department store sales are up and the museums are crowded. There's an "up" feeling now despite all the problems we've had.⁷⁵

This was certainly the feeling amongst the League of New York Theatres and Producers. They credited the new ads for spurring "the busiest year" in the theatre district's history. According to a local survey, theatre was now the city's biggest tourist draw, four times more popular than the Empire State Building.⁷⁶ And according to seven major tour operators, package tour sales to the City increased an average of 246% over previous year.⁷⁷ Suddenly, there was a wave of new high-end hotels:

While New York was being counted down and out by many financial experts around the country, the city has been quietly giving birth to the biggest tourist hotel building boom in its history...Despite having more than 400 hotels, the demand for deluxe accommodations has far outpaced the supply.⁷⁸

The State DOC reported similarly sunny figures. Overall business activity in New York State expanded, accompanied by gains in employment and declines in both the number of unemployed and the rate of joblessness.⁷⁹ The DOC's Division of Marketing and Advertising reported: "[I♥NY] has increased travel spending in New York [between 1977 and 1978] by more than \$250 million and boosted the State's economy by nearly 8,000 new jobs and \$35.6 million in State revenue since its inception."⁸⁰ In the Spring of

1978 the legislature more than doubled state's funding for marketing, from \$4 million to \$10.2 million, making it competitive with the top funded tourism programs in the country.⁸¹ As we can see in Table 5.2, this had a profound effect on DOC's budget, as well as on the priority placed on tourism and marketing over and above all other economic development activities. Between fiscal year 1977/8 and 1978/9, the budget for the agency more than tripled, from \$4.3 to \$14.6 million, while its percentage spent on tourism and marketing jumped from 22% to 72% of total spending.⁸²

TABLE 6.1: New York State DOC Tourism & Marketing Funding: 1975-83

Fiscal Year	New York DOC Total Budget [in millions]	Allocation for Tourism & Marketing [in millions]	Tourism & Marketing as Percent of Total
1975/6	\$9.6 ¹	\$2.2 ²	23%
1977/8	\$20 ³	\$4.3 ⁴	22%
1978/9	\$20.2	\$14.6 ⁵	72%
1980/1	\$20.2	\$14.6	72%
1982/3	\$34.4	\$25.6	74.4%

¹ "Summary of Department Budgets/ Tables of Organization" in An Economic Strategy for the 1980's: A Report to the Council on State Priorities from the New York State Department of Commerce. George G. Dempster, Commissioner. 1981.

² Ibid.

³ New York State Comptroller, 1978,1.

⁴ The 1977 Annual Report of the New York State Assembly Standing Committee on Commerce, Industry, and Economic Development. December 13,1976. Saul Weprin, Chairman Stanley Stiengut Speaker

⁵ "Summary of Department Budgets/ Tables of Organization" ibid.

Note: A base of \$10.3 was allocated by the legislature for tourism marketing in 1977 for fiscal year 1978/9. See: The 1978 Annual Report of the New York State Assembly Standing Committee on Commerce, Industry, and Economic Development. December 13,1977. On top of this, the Summary of Department Budgets indicates allocations for Local Tourism Assistance, Business Development Marketing, as well as Research. The latter division was combined with Tourism and Marketing beginning with the restructuring of FY 1978/9. I have also included 50% of "On the Job Training", as employed by the Tourism Local Assistance Program.

By its second year, "I Love NY" had become the "most talked about and successful tourism program in the nation," according to the DOC.⁸³ In addition to its commercials being broadcast nationally, it received "unprecedented media coverage" through news and feature items carried on all three major national networks, wire services, newspapers, magazines and TV stations throughout the state and nation. The campaign also won major awards including the Discover America Travel Organization Marketing Award for two years running, a special Tony Award for its Broadway TV commercial, the Cue Golden Apple Award, the New York Hotel Association Award, the Ad Expo Award, and two national Clio Advertising Awards.⁸⁴ The glamorous Mary Wells Lawrence, head of WRG, was invited to speak all over the nation to represent both the campaign and the rejuvenated face of New York City.

Proving Economic Impact

By far the most important things that the DOC had to prove through its data was the overall economic impact of their activities on the New York City and State economies. As the audit by the Office of the New York State Comptroller in FY 1979/80 reminded them, this is what they had promised to do when they undertook their original restructuring.

In late 1976 , the Department of Commerce was reorganized to address the economic issues which contributed to slow economic growth, declining manufacturing employment and a moribund tourism industry . The Department's research studies on the attitude of businessmen and consumers showed a marked hostility to the City of New York and the State. To counter this attitude the Department concentrated on fostering a governmental climate which would enable business to prosper. In addition... the Department adopted a strategy aimed at reinforcing the State's strengths and highlighting its attributes which was incorporated in a marketing plan using large scale television.⁸⁵

So far as the Comptroller's Office was concerned, the above passage, taken from the Managerial Summary of the audit of 1979, represented the main responsibility of the DOC. Their job was to turn around the "hostile attitude" of businessmen and consumers towards the city and state by creating a good business climate, and by supporting that climate with positive TV advertising. The good business climate was traditionally the main concern, and this was the first time tourism marketing was used to promote it.

According to the new marketing-led approach, making their case involved first proving the economic impact of the "visitors industry" and of increasing levels of tourism, and then the impact of the I ♥ NY campaign itself in sparking these broader increases. This would allow them to argue for the overall impact of the I ♥ NY campaign itself. If they couldn't, of course, there was no way for them to justify the increased appropriations given to them by the legislature, or hope for any more in the future. Unfortunately, none of these claims were at all easy to prove, as was soon discovered by audit of the DOC by the Comptroller's Office, the agency responsible for ensuring that public funds were appropriately spent, and that state agencies were fulfilling their mandate.

The DOC's accounting problem was by no means unique—everyone in the world of tourism marketing, and in marketing in general experienced it. For how can anyone ever *prove* to a client the impact of a single advertisement, or for that matter an entire campaign? As many in the marketing world will themselves readily admit, on a fundamental level this is impossible.⁸⁶ Even after a carefully researched, test-marketed

campaign has been released, targeting all the right psychographics, and profits have gone up or down dramatically, there is simply no way to prove that there is a direct, causal correlation between these two events. This is of course a fact that clients, paying a lot of money to advertising agencies, don't like to hear, particularly public sector clients. And so, as mentioned previously, in the 1960's the national tourism and marketing industries, along with public sector economic development agencies, came up with new, quasi-scientific strategies to measure economic impact, such as visitor industry clusters and the tourism multiplier effect.⁸⁷ As discussed in the previous chapter, according to the data the New York City CVB began putting out about this magic industry in 1976, the official DATO tourism multiplier in the 1970's was a very large 3x.⁸⁸ Now, in order to separate out the economic impact of the I ♥ NY campaign itself—separate from the tourism industry as a whole—the DOC hired numerous marketing consultant firms to conduct “advertising awareness studies,” in an attempt to correlate “awareness,” of the campaign with the “appeal” of New York, and thus calculate the efficacy of public funding.⁸⁹ The concept of “appeal” was the closest the tourism marketing industry had come to measuring the image of place in the eyes of the public.

The New York State Comptroller's Office, in their DOC audit of 1979, found much to scrutinize in these creative accounting methods. While Comptroller's audits are meant to be critical, the audit of the DOC was unusually, unequivocally harsh in both content and tone.⁹⁰ It came close to saying *nothing* the Department did from the standpoint of measuring the economic impact of its efforts passed muster. Equally unusual was the detailed, ten-page response and rebuttal of the audit from Commissioner John Dyson,

stating the Department's "strenuous objections to the content, style, and conclusions" of the report, as well as its "negative tone," and calling it "unfair, unsubstantiated, and inaccurate in many respects."⁹¹

I find the exchange between the Comptroller's office and Commissioner Dyson revealing in terms of the generational conflict it indicates in approaches to economic development. In addition to representing the state's earliest major move to privatization, it reveals the considerable debate that surrounded this move. On the one hand the Comptroller, and presumably many others in the public sector, believed in established, managerial methods of evaluating economic policy—cost/benefit analyses and hard data on such things as sales, jobs, and revenue—and didn't see the DOC using any of these. On the other hand, Commissioner Dyson was trying to legitimize a new entrepreneurial approach that incorporated business methods of operation—such as marketing-led economic development and psychographic consumer research—into state governance, and felt the Comptroller simply didn't understand what the DOC had accomplished.

The audit begins with a list of the five major "claims" made by the DOC's outcomes assessment, i.e. its consultants' reports. These claims include:

- That \$5 billion in annual sales in New York State could be attributed to the travel and tourism industry, making it second biggest in the state.
- Tourism could quickly be significant sources of needed jobs, business development, and tax revenues.
- [Tourism] could be a way the state could generate increased tax revenues without changing existing facilities or burdening any segment of the population.
- An attractive, upbeat tourism image would sell the State to residents and businessmen alike as a place to live, work, and expand businesses.
- Ad spending has focused on tourism because research suggested it was a more visible and positive commodity than business development.

The main critique of the audit was of the DOC's assessment methods, which the Comptroller contended didn't substantiate any of these five claims. The original tourism marketing plan "did not define specific effectiveness measures" of the claims, in order to "evaluate whether the State received a positive return on its sizeable investment." The DOC had indicated in this plan that "tourism awareness and appeal would be surveyed while travel dollars would be supported by hard data." Yet in the view of the Comptroller, the data provided had to do only with "awareness" and "image" and were by no means hard, or quantifiable.⁹²

Dyson responded: "We agree...that is why we define in advance specific effectiveness measures to evaluate the program in the original plan." These included:

- to increase "awareness" of the state tourism resources by 10% for upstate and 7% for NYC over 5 years
- to increase "appeal" by 10% for upstate and 13% for NYC over 5 years
- to increase tourism related expenditures and their concomitant yields of tax revenues and jobs
- indicators also included: gas consumption, attraction attendance, hotel, motel, and resort occupancy, thruway traffic, state park attendance and Canadian border crossings to evaluate effectiveness of summer camp
- and for New York City: hotel/motel occupancy, theater ticket sales, Broadway show occupancy rates, and package tour sales

According to Dyson, "every single one of these indicators went up overall since the onset of ILNY" and "given these facts, all made known in extensive detail to the auditors, we fail to comprehend their statement."⁹³ Yet, with the exception of hotel and resort occupancy, and possibly Broadway ticket sales, none of the measures DOC used represented the kind of hard data the Comptroller wanted. The psychographic measures of "awareness" and "appeal" did not translate into dollars

and cents, nor did the “concomitant yields” of “tourism-related expenditures”— i.e. the tourism multiplier of the visitors’ industry revenue. Gas consumption and thruway traffic, activities, considered by the DOC to be among tourism-related activities, could just as easily be effected by other forces.

As the audit stated flatly, “Overall, the marketing plans for tourism and business development were not sufficiently detailed or specific,” either in terms of the allocation of their budgets, or the measures of effectiveness of their programs.⁹⁴

The Comptroller found the DOC’s list of data, incapable of proving that ILNY was responsible for improvements in tourism. As the audit states:

The Department’s research attributed gains in tourism to the ILNY campaign without considering any other factors which affect vacation habits. Although many indicators showed positive attitudinal changes and increased spending and travel activity the research did not demonstrate a causal relationship between the advertising campaign and these increases... The Department assumed that all economic improvements were attributable to their campaign.⁹⁵

Finally, Commissioner Dyson was forced to respond with the following admission about the limitations of their research methods, borrowed from the advertising industry:

It is impossible for anyone to precisely demonstrate causality between mass media advertising and “sales.” We can provide the auditors with expert testimony on this subject if they so desire. It is equally impossible to precisely define a causal relationship between advertising and awareness and appeal for commonly understood reasons of social science and market research methodology.

Nonetheless, Dyson held firm to his contention that marketing-led economic development, and the use of psychographic techniques to measure its impact, were both having the desired effect:

First, 70% of people surveyed had an extraordinarily high unaided recall of the ILNY tourism ads. Secondly, awareness and appeal of State tourism resources were up when measured. We continue to increase our share of the tourism market at the same time as awareness and appeal and the market share of our competitive states is down. We believe that any rational judge would conclude that the two are inextricably, if not causally, related.

C. The Pyramid Strategy

One might argue alongside the Comptrollers' Office over whether the "I ♥ NY" campaign had "caused" an increase in tourism—as opposed to other factors like a cheap US dollar, the general rise in tourism globally, the introduction of the Boeing 747 in this period, and so on. Nonetheless, it was hard to dispute the fact that tourism numbers and tourism spending continued to grow between 1976 and 1980, in New York City. [See Chart 5.3] Journalists note that this increase occurred particularly amongst international and business tourists, the most lucrative categories.⁹⁶ It would also appear—based on the tourism multiplier effect—that the amount being spent by these tourists was increasing at a far greater rate. The number of tourists increased between 1976 and 1980 by 600,000, or 4%, while spending increased \$1.7 billion over the same time period, or 340%.

TABLE 6.2: Changes in the New York City Travel & Tourism Sector, 1976-1983*

Date	Hotel Occupancy Rate	Conventions	Number of Visitors [in millions]	Visitor Spending [in billions]
1976	73%	---	16.5	\$.5
1977	---	---	16.75	---
1978	---	840	16.9	\$1.6
1979	80.2%	---	---	\$1.8
1980	78.4%	---	17.1	\$2.2
1981	73.5%	---	---	---
1982	---	933	16.9	\$2
1983	72.2%	938	17.1	---

* Sources: Sterne, 1976; Auletta, 1979, 6; McFadden, 1977 (New York Chamber of Commerce and Industry); Sterba, 1978; Fried, 1979; Pannell Kerr Foster, 1981-3, Lemoyne, 1984; Chipkin, 1988 (CVB).

By the same token, the DOC and its allies in New York City's crisis regime had been effective in pushing a myriad of incentives, tax cuts, and other "pro-business measures" through the state legislature, as well as through City Hall. This "stimulus package," recommended explicitly in the YSW report, was launched under their "New York State Votes 'Yes' for Business" campaign.

However, what was also becoming apparent by the end of the decade was that *even* with a dramatic upsurge in tourism numbers, combined with the massive "stimulus" of hundreds of millions of dollars in tax cuts, the overall economy of New York City and State were both

still flailing. In fact by 1980, both the city and state found themselves entering yet another recession. While some of this was due to what then Governor Mario Cuomo referred to as a “generally bleak national economic situation,” New York’s decline was much deeper and longer than the rest of the nation—and, in that sense similar to that of other industrialized states in the northeast and midwest.⁹⁷ This was most apparent in New York’s escalating rates of unemployment. After hovering around 6% for two years, New York’s unemployment rates rose sharply in 1979 to 7.1%, and to 7.5% in 1980 — as compared to 5.8% nationally—and would top 9% by 1982, the highest the state had seen in the post-WWII era.⁹⁸ Simultaneously, business activity hit a “plateau.” According to the Index of Business Activity, only two of seven sectors in New York’s economy advanced over the two year period, FIRE and Services (tourism, advertising, and marketing were not listed separately from general services.) This was particularly true for the New York City region, where financial services and the hotel industry were expanding, and where the outflow of corporate headquarters had finally been stopped.⁹⁹ Nonetheless, the loss by the other five sectors was so great that, in combination with the slate of tax cuts that had gone into effect, the city and state’s overall revenues went into steep decline, creating the conditions for another fiscal crisis only five years after the last one.

In 1981-2, tourism activity dropped both nationwide and in New York, with the prolonged recession and strong dollar deterring foreign visitors. [See Table 6.2] Between 1980 and 1983, the number of visitors fell from 17.1 million to 16.9, the lowest level since 1976, right after the fiscal crisis. Visitor spending declined from \$2.2 billion to an estimated \$2 billion, and hotel occupancy from 78.4 to 73.5% over the same period.¹⁰⁰ A ripple effect

was felt quickly through the visitors' industry, with numerous layoffs of its primarily non-unionized, unskilled workers. This led to what was possibly the city's first realization of its growing dependence on this volatile industry.¹⁰¹

In this light, the harsh tone of the Comptroller's audit of FY 1979/80 becomes understandable. Underlying their frustration with the DOC's creative research and accounting methods was the lack of tangible results in terms of broader economic benefits beyond the tourism sector, or any assessment of the risks of overdependence on this sector. The vaunted multiplier effect of this "magic industry" appeared deeply flawed, and the international accolades received by the I♥NY campaign inconsequential by comparison. In answer to the question of whether the State had "received a positive return on its sizeable investment," all evidence appeared to say "No" —even if the DOC would cite evidence of positive change in attitude and appeal. The main point of the audit was that the DOC should get back to basics, and focus on business development—with all of the hard data that such activity required.

Within less than a year of the Comptroller's audit, DOC Commissioner Dyson was replaced by William D. Hasset Jr. And within another year, after Governor Mario Cuomo took office in 1981 promising to turn the economy around, Hasset was himself replaced. What is clear by this point is that the DOC began to do what the Comptroller's Office recommended—to focus on business development—but they chose to do so by *expanding marketing*, integrating it more thoroughly into *all* economic sectors of the State. DOC continued to work with CBI and YSW, along with other marketing consultants, to an even greater, if less public extent.¹⁰²

By 1981 they created a “pyramid strategy,” that was reproduced in many economic development documents, and intended to “figuratively depict the Department’s broad economic strategy and tactical objectives” for the coming decade [See Figure 6.1] .¹⁰³ At the base of the entire economy was the massive service sector. Above that were agriculture and manufacturing sectors, still vital, but now combined into one sector. In the third tier was tourism, given special prominence separate from the other service industries, though pointedly less important than the bottom two tiers. At the top was the smallest tier, export, supported by all the other sectors. And finally, alongside of and supplementing all of these sectors, as an essential support for the entire pyramid, was marketing. Clearly, marketing was now meant to be integral to all aspects of the economy.



Figure 6.1: The Pyramid Strategy for the 1980's

According to this schema, marketing was seen as a means to “leverage other agendas in business development,” and used as “an integral part of [the Department’s] overall economic strategy.” The I♥NY campaign was “recognized for the stimulus and support it has provided to the important tourism and cultural segments of the state’s economy.” Going beyond this achievement, the DOC introduced a second marketing campaign geared towards general business development that would receive equal attention and funding, called “Made In New York” [MINY].

As 1981 closed, a new marketing program for business development was introduced. The Made In New York campaign was designed to leverage the recognition achieved by I Love New York. The two campaigns provide a compatible and coordinated presentation of NYS. The MINY program is part of the strategy to retain existing New York businesses. Its objective is to stimulate a renewed sense of economic self-respect in the people of New York, ... to increase the demand for products and services made in New York...[and] increase the state’s participation in the world market.¹⁰⁴

Unlike I♥NY, MINY never took off as a globally recognized campaign, despite tens of millions of dollars in funding over the next decade. Nonetheless, it served to inform businesspeople far and wide that New York City had indeed been “purged” of its old liberal ways, as the businessmen of the YSW report had asked that it do. Brochures, magazines, inserts, and TV commercials in the campaign emphasized “New York City’s love of business and the entrepreneurial spirit,” and even “New Yorker’s smarter, faster, and more flexible workforce.” Overall, the campaign devoted far less attention to New York City than to the State. Images showed male scientists in laboratories in Buffalo, IBM computer technicians in Poughkeepsie, and pretty women in period costume acting in a commercial being shot on location in some rural hamlet, and in bikinis on the beach on Long Island. In addition to its shifting priorities in economic development towards

FIRE and services, including high tech. This reflected the DOC's return to an Upstate focus, which involved both stereotypes of gender roles, as well as an all white, apparently affluent cast of characters. And when it came to business development, the brochures also included lists of the perks and tax breaks now on offer throughout the state.¹⁰⁵

Meanwhile, the I♥NY campaign continued to focus on tourism and culture, and to take seriously middle managers' lifestyle needs. Less emphasis was placed on relatively unknown Broadway performers, and more on Hollywood actors with international acclaim, like Frank Sinatra and Barbara Streisand, whether or not they were performing in an actual show. Less emphasis was placed on New York City, and far more on Upstate locations like the Adirondacks and the Finger Lakes. But clearly, the symbolic economy was entrenched in the state, as was the marketing-led model of economic development. The long-term benefit of this new economy to New York City remained questionable at best.

Whose New York?

For several years, in the late 1970's and early 1980's, more than a thousand Bronx buildings each year were destroyed by fire. The Fire Department listed the great majority as suspicious fires that left behind traces of fire accelerants. But there were even better accelerants at work in the social stereotyping process...Many people found it easier to protect themselves from the flames than from the carpet bombings of invective that blamed them for the ruin of their world.

Marshall Berman, 1999 (72)

When my friends from home come to visit, I try to show them Central Park,
the Brooklyn Bridge, the Metropolitan Museum, but they say,
"Where is the South Bronx? Where are the burning buildings?"

I want a lover from the ruins."
*Swiss art critic, early 1980's.*¹⁰⁶

Some of the worst looting of the blackout occurred in the devastated neighborhoods of the South Bronx, victim previously to the depredations of Robert Moses' urban planning, and Roger Starr's planned shrinkage policies. Perhaps because of the particularly apocalyptic backdrop they provided for the blackout riots, media attention continued to focus on the neighborhood's bombed out streets even after the long, hot summer had ended. In particular, there was international fascination in the story of the Bronx going up in flames at the hands of its own residents, as arson in the neighborhood continued unabated. What was true of almost all of this coverage was a fixation on the visual tableau of devastation, rather than an investigation into the social and historical causes for it. It seemed the behaviorist leanings of *Time* and *Newsweek* were near universal, and news reporters and audiences were more interested in vilifying the South Bronx, and by extension New York City, than in understanding the role and responsibility of the city for its plight.

The most famous representation of the fires of the South Bronx was captured in October of 1977, during the World Series match-up between the New York Yankees and the L.A. Dodgers. It was a game already freighted with heavy symbolism. The Bronx Bombers were up against the Dodgers, a team that only 20 years earlier had abandoned Brooklyn, and perhaps the most adoring fan base in the history of baseball, for the warmer, wealthier climes of Los Angeles, New York's Sunbelt arch-nemesis. New York's boosters were hoping the series would finally provide a positive image of the city after the devastating events of the preceding months, and would show that the city, like its victorious baseball team, was "still in the game," as the CVB's Gillet put it.

But in the end, that hope was to be dashed by a brief half-time cutaway during the fifth and final game of the series. The cameraman providing overhead shots from aboard a Goodyear Blimp happened to pan the South Bronx neighborhood just beyond Yankee Stadium, and captured a building on fire less than a mile away. Upon seeing the image on his monitor, the famously unflappable sports announcer Howard Cosell suddenly stopped his half-time banter and barked a shocked reaction into the microphone: “The Bronx is burning! The Bronx is burning!” When the camera then zoomed in on the building, it became clear no effort was being made to put it out, and the camera just stayed fixated on the flames. Cosell, now fuming, cried out, “What’s wrong with these people? Don’t these people have any self-respect?”¹⁰⁷

With the World Series the highest rated show on national television at the time, these images and remarks were instantly broadcast to hundreds of millions of viewers watching the game. And over the following days, they were replayed for millions more on countless news shows and newspaper front pages —getting as much coverage as the apparently less interesting fact that the New York Yankees had won both the game and the World Series. And backed by spectacular imagery, the message sent to the world was clear: “these people” were the ones responsible for this senseless, self-destructive behavior. Unlike the civil rights era of the 1960’s, full of national soul-searching and federal commissions on urban unrest, by the late 1970’s it was becoming politically correct to blame those living in segregated and impoverished US ghettos for their terrible conditions, and then forget about them. Marshall Berman remembers the effect of this

attitude, and of “Cosell’s ‘shocked, shocked’ voice,” on many Bronx arson victims, caught in the harsh spotlight of the local TV news:

What a relief it must have been to think of the fires as something “these people” were *doing to themselves*: then you wouldn’t have to worry about whether the Bronx’s troubles were somehow *your* troubles... One of the things that gave the situation a particularly sinister twist is how many Bronx people came to see themselves as ‘these people,’ how many victims of suspicious fires came to think of themselves as prime suspects. On the local news, you could see families weeping in front of their smoking buildings, and asking, “What did we do?” There were plenty of journalists and pseudo-social scientists (often subsidized by right wing foundations) only too glad to tell them their character flaws.¹⁰⁸

Of course this was hardly the first such coverage of the fires in the Bronx — the evening news had been running such imagery almost constantly. Nonetheless, Howard Cosell’s astonished half-time cry caught the nation off guard. It was followed the next month by very somber coverage of President Jimmy Carter’s visit to the South Bronx to assess the damage, and proclaim the need to repair it. This however proved to be no more than another media charade: while Carter produced a plan after his visit, no actual steps were ever taken to bring it to fruition. This image of hell was picked up on once again by the comics of late night TV. Johnny Carson’s jokes of which Rudin had complained in the early 1970’s were back with a vengeance.

* * *

New York City and State’s shift towards a marketing-led model of economic development emphasizing tourism above other economic sectors constituted a massive, dual effort to transform the image of New York City as a product in the minds of its targeted “consumers,” while resisting increasing demands for services, welfare, and public sector jobs from its own citizens. It created a deep and enduring conflict between

these two constituencies. As has been pointed out by scholars of tourism, the interests of these two categories can overlap —with citizens benefiting from some quality of life improvements, cultural enhancements, and jobs created by the tourism economy, and with consumers benefiting from public amenities like transportation and parks that citizens pay for out of their tax dollars.¹⁰⁹ But as the industry became more prominent, and as public agencies began to privatize, the fundamental interests of the two groups have increasingly been at odds. The trend in economic development has not been one of leveraging marketing, tourism, and rebranded city images to provide for broader public sector growth. Rather it has been one of leveraging, and exploiting, the public sector, to provide greater incentives for private firms to invest in as deregulated, speculative, and profitable a way as possible, while the public sector absorbs the bulk of the risk. New York may have become one of the most visited cities in this period, but it also became home to the nation's poorest census tracts, some of its most overcrowded schools, and for the first time in the city's history, a city with "mass homelessness."

The promise remaining is the same as in the days of "I ♥ NY": a bright new image for the city, a magic industry of no cost, enormous revenues, and infinite growth potential, a few product modifications that will inspire a boom in private investment. But meanwhile those vital public goods that tourists and investors do not need go wanting: affordable housing, public hospitals, public schools, outer borough parks, community arts centers, and on and on. Ultimately the question of "whose city?" becomes more and more vital to ask, as populist marketing strategies project images of inclusion, while underlying

economic development policy excludes more and more of the citizenry it is meant to serve.

But as we have seen with the contradictions of New York's first official branding campaign of the 1970's, the city abandons the public sector, and the material needs of its citizens, at its own peril. As scarce resources were diverted for international image marketing campaigns to counter the city's "image crisis," this exacerbated the real, material crisis facing hundreds of thousands, still struggling to adapt to the brutal impact of economic restructuring and divestment of public services from their communities. The counter-hegemonic images of these communities, in turn, entered into media circulation on a much more global scale and with far greater symbolic power—both because the material devastation had grown so much more graphic, and because of the intense attention the city had garnered from its multimillion dollar global marketing campaign. In the symbolic economy, these representations became abstractions, entered into wide circulation, and exerted their own voyeuristic appeal. The living inhabitants of the South Bronx and the artifacts of the Met became relatively equivalent sites of visual consumption for global tourists, exotic and erotic in their own ways.

¹ Smith, 1992, 57-79. As Neil Smith has argued, in periods of global economic restructuring and crisis, such as New York faced in the 1970s, localities often attempt to reorganize their political and economic resources on a larger regional scale in order to withstand the forces of global capital and the global market.

² See YSW, 1977, 21, 23.

³ Bogart, 1995. 7.

⁴ They were to be joined in 1979 by the NYCP, created by David Rockefeller.

⁵ Note: I was informed of this by my fellow panelists on the "Government-Business Relations" panel at *Researching New York 2004*, SUNY Albany's annual New York State history conference. All noted the tendency amongst New York State Governors, from Al Smith through Herbert Lehman, and even including Rockefeller, to play a Fordist role, seeking to regulate the relationship between organized labor, the private sector, and a large, strong government sector. This changed under Carey, New York's first post-Fordist Governor.

⁶ Beame and Marrero, 1977.

⁷ New York State Department of Commerce, 1976/7, p N/A.

⁸ The OED divisions included: Division of Industrial and Corporate Development; Ombudsmen & Small Business Services Division; Division of Foreign International Commerce; and Division of Science and Technology.

⁹ The divisions within the Office of Economic Planning, Administration, and Marketing included: Administrative and Legal Services; Division of Marketing and Advertising; Division of Tourism; and Division of Economic Research and Statistics. See: New York State Assembly, May 1 1976.

¹⁰ New York State Department of Commerce, *ibid.* This included the *entire* budget for Tourism and for the Bureau of Corporate Headquarters.

¹¹ Arvidsson, 2004, 464.

¹² Levy, 2003.

¹³ This quote was found at YSW's current website: <http://www.dyg.com/dygscan.htm>. The quote continues: "Shifts in social values - people's hopes, dreams, fears, ideas about right and wrong - have proven to be reliable leading indicators of future changes in consumer behavior, public policy and the overall social structure. Thus, understanding trends in social values has always been a logical foundation for building sound business strategies. In today's turbulent consumer environment, basing business strategies on leading edge consumer information is not only logical; it is critical for success. Business must look to the future - to the evolving social structure - to the consumer of tomorrow."

¹⁴ Arvidsson, *ibid.*

¹⁵ Mahoney, 2000. Arthur White in conversation with Cynthia R. Cox Roman, a former colleague, and Brooke Mahoney, VCG's Executive Director, he reflects on the ebb and flow of "business consciousness." This survey has been the longest lived of YSW's products, as YSW joined with *Fortune Magazine* to develop the Corporate Reputation Index that is still used to this day.

¹⁶ The Yankelovich monitor occupied this position until the early 1980's, when it surpassed by the VALS studies put out by SRI.

¹⁷ "Hip Consumers Stir Up Adfolk, Fisher tells Houston Forum." 11 March 1968, 6

¹⁸ Wells Lawrence, 2002, 88.

¹⁹ Warlaumont, 2001, 175.

²⁰ Empire State Development Corporation, 2002.

²¹ Empire State Development Corporation, 2002. This documentary was produced by the Empire State Development Corporation [the modern day DOC] to honor Dyson and the 25th anniversary of the I Love NY campaign.

²² Chipkin, 1988, C1. Chipkin is citing CVB numbers.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Wells Lawrence, 2002, 138-9.

²⁵ I am indebted for this insight to the former ESDC librarian of tourism research, Craig Wakefield.

²⁶ New York State Department of Commerce, *ibid.*, p N/A

²⁷ Consumer Behavior, Inc., August, 1977.

²⁸ Yankelovich, Skelly and White, Inc., March 1977.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 2-6

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 7-9.

³¹ *ibid.*, 22.

³² *Ibid.*, 7-9.

³³ *Ibid.*, 23.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 95

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 96.

³⁷ ESDC, 2002.

³⁸ Wells Lawrence, 2002, p 139.

³⁹ New York State Department of Commerce, 1976, p N/A.

⁴⁰ See: New York State Department of Commerce, 1981. On page 32 of this retrospective report, "An Economic Strategy for the 1980's: A Report to the Council on State Priorities," is a section of "Agency Research," which simply cites five of the YSW reports, from 1979-1981, along with six other subsequent reports by other consulting firms in the early 1980's. Thus it seems clear that the YSW reports laid the foundation of research for the Department.

⁴¹ Ibid. In the year following this report, New York's tax law was indeed dramatically altered, and its. These changes included repealing both the bond and stock transfer tax, providing tax exemption for business expansion (with particular focus on New York City); extending the Job Incentive tax credit to the entire state, and seriously reducing the personal income tax. Information provided by the YSW report was also referenced as justification for the restructuring of the DOC. As to the question of labor and welfare laws, while these did undergo significant change in the years following the report, I still am researching the extent to which this report may have had an impact.

⁴² New York State Department of Commerce, 1978-9, Introduction. N.p.

⁴³ New York State Comptrollers Office, 1979, 2.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 5.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 51-52.

⁴⁶ Wells Lawrence, 2002, 51.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 52-3. Her description of her client goes further in emphasizing their prurience: "...everyone of them had pink cheeks in winter and a perfect Massachusetts tan in summer, they were the only clients I ever had that blushed, but maybe it was something about us. They were very correct, from Philadelphia." (52)

⁴⁸ Ibid, 85.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 88.

⁵⁰ Empire State Development Corporation, 2002.

⁵¹ Ibid, 137-8

⁵² All such products are called "tourism collateral."

⁵³ Author interview with Milton Glaser, 2004.

⁵⁴ Ibid. Glaser describes the first design as: "Two lozenges with text in it. I Love [in the upper lozenge], New York [in the bottom lozenge]. It was all right. I thought we'd do a six month campaign and it would be over."

⁵⁵ According to Bill Doyle (ESDC, 2002): "First the advertising agency didn't want to use the logo. Because [Glaser] did the logo independently, and my friends at Wells Rich Green thought it was too cryptic. And I thought it was too. So I went and had two t-shirts made and my wife and I took them to Bermuda and wore them on the beach. And people stopped us on the beach and said 'Oh! I love New York too!' So we knew that it was not cryptic and it did catch on."

⁵⁶ Glaser, author interview, 2004.

⁵⁷ Wells Lawrence, 2002, 140-1.

⁵⁸ Glaser, *ibid*.

⁵⁹ Zukin, 2000.

⁶⁰ for conclusion: law point about the importance of getting locals to buy into the campaign. Frank: The moment of authenticity ...

⁶¹ As cited in Austin, 2001, 142.

⁶² Charlie Moss

⁶³ Wells Lawrence, 2002, 141-2

⁶⁴ Author interview, *ibid*.

⁶⁵ New York State Department of Commerce, 1977/8. "Division of Tourism Development," p 19:

"Something special is happening in New York State. During the last six months of 1977, ILNY became the most talked about tourism program in the nation. The program started in June 1977 when the Leg, in a bi-partisan effort, authorized \$4.3 million to revitalize the lagging tourism industry and to create additional employment opportunities within the State. The appropriation was the largest in the State's history for tourism development. Twenty days later, the first Summer commercial was on the air. ... The five year goals include: increasing top-of-mind awareness of NY as a vacation destination, and increasing the state's "vacation appeal" by 10 percent. A survey conducted by CB, Inc of NYC, showed that the 5 week summer campaign alone raised the "awareness" level by 6%, and the "appeal" factor by 10%. The nation's travel industry, through the Discover America Travel Org, selected the ILNY campaign as "the Best State Travel Promotion Campaign of 1977."

⁶⁶ New York State Dept. of Commerce, Feb 14, 1978. See also New York State Dept. of Commerce, Feb 16, 1978.

⁶⁷ Consumer Behaviour, Inc., May, 1978.

⁶⁸ Sterba, May 12, 1978.

⁶⁹ McFadden, December 24, 1977.

⁷⁰ New York State Department of Commerce, 1977b.

⁷¹ Sterba, July 7, 1978.

⁷² Negotiations were underway with other foreign carriers serving Europe and South America.

⁷³ Sterba, May 12, 1978. "Today our industry is in a stronger position than at any time in history" Tisch told business reporters at special sales forum sponsored by CVB. "Moreover our strength has become one of the major economic resources of the city. Our vitality has served as a sparkplug for the resurgence of our great city." Tisch, it should be noted, perhaps loyal to his ABNY colleagues, gave thanks to the Big Apple campaign created 7 years ago for the reason that "New Yorkers have a new image of themselves and their city."

⁷⁴ "City Quietly Becoming World Tourist Haven," August 29, 1978, p 33. The article enthused: "Dollar devaluation that has made New York City an international travel mecca. Gucci bags, Yves St Laurent suits a Charles Jordan boots sell for less in NY than they do in Tokyo, Berlin, London."

⁷⁵ Turso, March 1, 1978.

⁷⁶ Turso, *ibid.* As he notes, *Variety* also reported an increase in theatre attendance of 20% in the first eight weeks of the campaign, and of 14% fifteen weeks later.

⁷⁷ New York State Department of Commerce, 1978/9

⁷⁸ "City Quietly Becoming," *ibid.* As the article explained: "When Harry Helmsely announced plans in 1976 to build the Palace Hotel. eyebrows raised – but his 25 million investment triggered rush of activity."

⁷⁹ New York State Department of Commerce Annual Report 1978,4

⁸⁰ *ibid.*,13

⁸¹ Empire State Development Corporation, *ibid.* See also New York State Department of Commerce , 1978/9,15.

⁸² New York State Department of Commerce, *ibid.*

⁸³ *ibid.*, 15.

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, 16.

⁸⁵ New York State Comptrollers, 1979, "Managerial Summary."

⁸⁶ This point was made effectively in the recent Frontline documentary on advertising and marketing called "The Persuaders." [PBS, 2004] As PBS host, Douglas Rushkoff, noted, by the 1990's, the way around this conundrum was "saturation" —i.e. to create the most all-encompassing marketing environment possible, in which there is no space outside advertising, so that the risk of ads having no influence is eliminated. This will be very relevant in terms of what happens to the physical and symbolic space of New York City in the 1990's.

⁸⁷ The "visitor industry cluster," encompassed all of the possible industries that intersected with travel and tourism activities —restaurants, hotels, taxi-cabs, airlines, etc. The impact of this industry cluster could be measured by looking at the proportion of the economic benefits in these separate industries—including jobs, profits, and/or increases in the tax revenue—which could be attributable to tourism. Second, they estimated the size and scope of this cluster via a "tourism multiplier," i.e. measuring the ripple effect of money spent in the visitor's industry throughout the wider economy in terms of the same economic benefits

⁸⁸ In the 90's it gets reduced by half to 1.5. Yet even 3X was considered by many in the industry in the 1970's to be conservative.

⁸⁹ This emerging tool of consumer researchers used survey, interview, and focus group data to ascertain the degree to which consumers were "aware of" advertising campaigns. This question was further narrowed down according to respondents' "aided" vs. "un-aided" recall of a particular campaign, and then according to the influence this campaign had on their desire to purchase the product, or on their decision to do so.

⁹⁰ I looked over twenty years of Audits to make sure of this.

⁹¹ New York State Department of Commerce and John S. Dyson, July 2, 1979, 1.

⁹² New York State Comptroller, *Ibid.*, 3. As the audit states, with italics in the original: "The plan for business development listed improvements in the State's image and increased awareness of programs as its goals. *We believe [on the other hand] that quantifiable, marketing objectives are essential to measure overall effectiveness.*"

⁹³ New York State Department of Commerce and John S. Dyson, *ibid.* 3.

⁹⁴ The Comptroller report went on to make allegations of potential "conflicts of interest" since some employees of WRG were paid on two lines, and "ended up evaluating their own work." This however was not the main line of critique, and so I did not discuss it.

⁹⁵ New York State Comptroller, *ibid.*

⁹⁶ See e.g.: Chipkin, 1988.

⁹⁷ New York State Department of Commerce, 1981-1982b. As this Economic Review states (1): "New York State's economy appeared to be continuing its expansion resulting from the impetus of recent tax cuts and improved business incentives. Since that time, however, a faltering national economy has taken a severe toll everywhere and, although NY has fared better than most other states, our upward progress has been seriously slowed. Nationally the recovery from the brief 1980 recession was the shortest and weakest in the post-war period, and the economy fell into a uniquely far-reaching and widespread downturn in the mid-summer of 1981. This persisted in 82, and although NY fared better in this period than many other industrial states, the recession, nevertheless, took its toll."

⁹⁸ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1985.

⁹⁹ New York State Department of Commerce, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Pannell Kerr Forster, 1981-1983.

¹⁰¹ "Foreign Tourism Off as the Dollar Gains." June 29, 1981. P D7.; Purnick, August 16, 1981; "Tourism Dips in City in 1981." December 29, 1981.

¹⁰² New York State Department of Commerce, 1981.

The report states (22-3): "The tourism Marketing Program which manages the state's major marketing effort known as the ILNY campaign gave the Department its most notable success. The great popularity of this program is a testament to its effective presentation of the state's vacation attractions. The program is recognized around the nation and the world, and was chosen by Marketing and Media Decisions as one of the Top 15 Marketing Successes of 1981. Departmental and independent studies have demonstrated that since its inception, the ILNY program has generated \$2.6 billion in incremental travel revenue, which in turn has resulted in \$325 million in incremental state tax revenue. The number of jobs generated by travel and tourism expenditures is also impressive. Employment in this industry has increased over 13% since the ILNY campaign began. Tourism is now the state's second largest industry." Furthermore: "ILNY accounted for \$11 billion in revenue during 1981, which is an 11% increase over 1980 and an 83% increase since the inception of the program. The Department believes that this marketing program is an essential component to making NY's development strategy work and hopes to capitalize upon the strength of ILNY by making the spin-off MINY program just as successful in creating a positive attitude for domestic manufactured products."

¹⁰³ New York State Department of Commerce, 1981, 6. Emphasis in original

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.* Emphasis in original.

¹⁰⁵ New York State Department of Commerce, 1982.

¹⁰⁶ As quoted by Marshall Berman, 1999, 70.

¹⁰⁷ Berman notes (1999, 72 ff) that this was part of a broader phenomenon when the national TV came to the Bronx for the World Series. "The Yankees played in the World Series for three of the Bronx's most disastrous years, 1976-1978 (they won the last two). Every year the national television producers managed to find burning buildings, and every time the announcers spoke in Cosell's 'shocked, shocked' voice. By 1978, cynics wondered if the arson wasn't specially made for TV."

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ More discussion of this antagonism and overlap between citizens and visitors is found in Hoffman, Judd, and Fainstein's *Cities and Visitors*. (2004).

CONCLUSION

The Legacy of the 1970's: New York City as a Symbol of Neoliberalism

There is a new spirit of individual initiative rising in our land, and a good deal of the credit belongs to you and to your colleagues... When New York was in trouble, groups which had quarreled for years joined together to fight for the greater good of saving the city. Labor, business, government, voluntary associations all pitched in.... In your beliefs, your efforts, and your accomplishments, you are setting the course to progress and freedom that our nation must follow. You are that tough little tug that can pull our ship of state off the shoals and out into open water. You believe private initiative, the private sector are essential to economic and social progress, and so do all of us in our administration.

*President Ronald Reagan,
speaking to the New York City Partnership, January 14, 1982¹*

I want to wake up in the city that never sleeps,
to find I'm king of the hill, top of the heap.
These little town blues
are melting away,
I'll make a brand new start of it
in old New York.
If I can make it there
I'll make it anywhere...
It's up to you, New York, New York.

Lyrics of "New York, New York," by Fred Kander and John Ebb, 1977²

Reagan Loves New York

On January 14, 1982, on the first anniversary of his inaugural address, President Ronald Reagan strode up to the podium at the Grand Ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, after a glowing introduction by David Rockefeller, chairman of the board of the Chase Manhattan Bank and chairman of the New York City Partnership (NYCP). He gamely sported an "I♥NY" scarf just given to him by Mayor Ed Koch, setting off a flurry of

camera flash-bulbs and a standing ovation. Then, for about ten minutes, he spoke about “the spirit of shared sacrifice” that allowed the New York’s financial and political leadership to overcome the city’s recent troubles by trading the welfare state for “private initiative,” thus becoming a beacon for the Reagan administration’s own plans for free-market reforms— “a tough little tug that can pull our ship of state off the shoals and into open water.” It was an event imbued with paradox and political stagecraft, the crowning moment in the decade-long transformation of New York City’s image from “working class city” to a symbol for the emerging, neoliberal right-wing.

And so, ironically, Reagan could have chosen no better slogan to reinforce this free-market mission than “I♥NY.” For in the wake of the New York fiscal crisis of the mid-1970’s, the city’s marketing-led economic “recovery” was held up a compelling model for an anxious nation in transition. Here was a famously liberal city that epitomized just about everything that the long-brewing, conservative, anti-urban movement opposed. It was a city renowned for its long history of union activism and strong working class consciousness, its embrace of New Deal notions of social welfare and centralized government, its role in the radical movements of the popular front and the counterculture, its status as a cosmopolitan, racially diverse city, and as a haven for immigrants. And that is to say nothing of New York’s enduring place in popular culture as the nation’s toughest and most important proving ground—as was poignantly conveyed by “New York, New York,” Kander and Ebb’s defiant paean to “old New York” in the depths of 1977. Thus, the Republican reasoning went, if neoliberalism could make it in New York, it could make it anywhere. If New York could be transformed into a model of fiscal

conservatism and the entrepreneurial city, it would only be a matter of time before the rest of the nation fell into line. By 1985, when the Frank Sinatra version of “New York, New York” hit the top 10, and when Mayor Koch awarded it the designation of “New York’s Official Song,” the song’s poignancy was replaced with triumphalism, as the city’s brand-name became synonymous with the indomitable spirit of the individual, and of the free market itself.

New York’s association with the right was, of course, not new. Throughout its 300 year-long history the city’s identity and class system had been split between its high and low, between its image on the one hand as an elite New Rome of high finance and high culture, and its fame on the other as a diverse, working class Gotham of mass and popular culture. Yet given the size and strength of the city’s working class, and given the city’s unique institutional matrix of media industries—from print and publishing to telecommunications to film and photography—diverse representations of Gotham actually had circulated through a wider array of sources and channels. Elite periodicals had to compete with the penny press, city-view books with muck-raking journalism, Carnegie Hall with Vaudeville, The Metropolitan with Coney Island, and even the city’s booster literature trumpeted both “sunshine and shadow” to sell the city. Thus the New Rome designation had never been coordinated or powerful enough to take the upper hand. And in addition, though the broader U.S. rightwing was heavily invested in New York City economically, through their relationship to Wall Street, culturally speaking they had been increasingly at odds with the city, especially in the post-WWII period of the so-called “culture wars” and “urban crisis.”

But now, in the wake of the fiscal crisis, and with the declining power of the city's working class, New York's branding coalition imposed a new, hegemonic urban imaginary that allowed both liberal and conservative forces to identify with the city not only financially, but culturally as well. Through the international "I♥NY" campaign and a toned-down, corporatized *New York* magazine, as well as through the broader economic restructuring with which both were associated, New York's brand image became easily digestible. It was an ingenious combination of high and low, that centered on two icons. First, there was the World Trade Center, symbolizing the city's resurgent financial power, and embrace of fiscally-conservative, neoliberal economic principles. Second, there was the exciting yet (more) family-friendly Times Square, (mostly) cleaned-up and fit for hip middle-class consumerism. This representation was haunted by its 'other'—the decontextualized, often racist, and increasingly violent representations of New York exploitation films that portrayed the inhuman underbelly of this glittering metropolis. Complex, critical representations of New Yorkers—whether rich or poor, white collar or blue collar—were nearly nonexistent.

Ultimately, New York's conversion story became a new kind of *city-myth*, as Mike Davis has called such powerful, productive, and ahistorical narratives.³ Like Atlanta after the fires of the Civil War, New York in this period was cast by conservatives as a phoenix rising from the ashes of the fiscal crisis, as symbolized by the dramatic towers of the WTC, and the unblinker lights of Broadway. According to this script, for decades this weak-willed, liberal city had —much like the nation— acquiesced to excessive demands

for public spending on social welfare and labor by raising taxes and borrowing from the federal government, even in the midst of inflation. And now, as a result of suffering through the nation's worst fiscal crisis, New York had finally been "purged" and forced to "change its ways" —as the CEO's and key experts of the YSW report had long hoped.

Elided by this mythical narrative was a more balanced history of the fiscal crisis that included the causal role played by the city's elites and the federal government themselves —i.e. the debt amassed by New York City and State to fund a private sector building boom in the late 1960's, and the targeted policy of the Nixon and Ford administrations to starve the city of funds in the early 1970's. Also avoided was any mention of the benefits reaped by the FIRE and tourism sectors while most of the city faced "austerity"— i.e. the profiting of local banks when the crisis struck in 1975-6, the planned shrinkage and "blight" policies that turned over city properties to local developers, and the benefit to tourism, FIRE, media and marketing from the multimillion dollar marketing blitz of "I♥NY." Absent was any critique of the impact of their "pro-business product modifications"—i.e. the privatization of public services, the leveraging of municipal workers' pensions, the restructuring of the tax system to benefit investors, and the creation of unelected agencies, offices, and partnerships that allowed the private sector continued oversight in public affairs, long after the crisis was over.

Rather than analyze history, the city-myth was meant to prove that the "New York model" of civic liberalism had failed, and a *New York model of neoliberalism* had rightfully taken its place. As we shall see, the political-economic networks and media

infrastructure built up by the city's branding coalition helped to maintain this mythology, and its inherent contradictions, in the coming decade.

The Branding Coalition in the 1980's

This success of this new city-myth was due to a confluence of forces in the late 1970's and 80's. First, of course, was the national ascendance of the Republican party, and of the ideological hegemony of the "Reagan Revolution" nationally and globally, in the waning years of the Cold War. But in addition, and perhaps more importantly, was a new degree of coordination and identification at the local level between those groups that came together in the 1970's to form New York's branding coalition, namely: the older FIRE and tourism elites; the new middle class; the culture industries, and the entrepreneurial city and state government. This was despite the fact that the "coalition" as such stopped to function in the 1980's. With the immediate crisis averted, and the "austerity state" imposed, the specter of Fear City and image crisis no longer haunted the elites, and the urgency to mobilize behind all-encompassing marketing campaigns dissipated. Nonetheless, the strategies and alliances created in that transformative period lived on, in combination with broader shifts in New York's class structure and mode of production.

In a sense, New York in the 1980's entered a new phase of development in which marketing was no longer leading, and concealing, broader economic development, but became seamlessly integrated in a broader, unapologetically capitalist appeal. ABNY's

power would recede, to be replaced by the more behind-the-scenes model of influence maintained by NYCP. To a large extent, ABNY's populist city-marketing strategy would be assumed by the entrepreneurial governments of New York City and State, now fully convinced of the power of tourism—particularly the city's "booster Mayor" Ed Koch. But the role of government would be most important in facilitating —through tax-cuts and deregulation— the rise of a new institutional matrix of global corporate media in New York City. This media matrix would be deeply connect to the expanding field of brand marketing, as well as the rising sector of business and information services. And it would be run by the now ascendant new middle class, as predicted by *New York* magazine. Thus, the branding of the city would become even more powerful, profitable, and privatized in the years ahead.

Public Private Partnerships

When we began the NYCP in 1979, we selected partnership from a list of a dozen or so names to signify a new and greater unity among the many components of New York's private sector. While we had government and organized labor very much in mind, the word partnership had not been conceived as a new model for social problem-solving through joint public-private ventures.

David Rockefeller, 1986.⁴

President Reagan could have chosen no better podium from which to proclaim the dawning of a new era than that of the NYCP. According to their *Annual Report* of 1981, Reagan viewed NYCP as "America's most influential private sector group concerned with improving economic and social conditions in urban America."⁵ This was because NYCP represented, as David Rockefeller put it, "a new model for social problem-solving" in the 1980's—namely the use of "public-private partnerships" as channels

through which federal, state, and local monies could flow into urban economic development. Partnerships like NYCP tended to focus this financing on large scale real estate development, job placement, and other urban restructuring, while also playing a major role in the state's effort to politically constrain the demands of the private sector labor force.

NYCP was created in 1979 out of two out-moded institutions: the city's 200-year-old Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Council of New York City created in 1965. This new notion of "partnership"⁶ was clearly inspired by the city's experiments with private-sector leadership in the 1970's, with which members of NYCP had been directly involved, namely the Business-Labor Working Group, and the MAC and EFCB. But in addition, Lew Rudin's "civic organization," the Association for a Better New York (ABNY) created in 1971, also had a significant influence. This was despite the fact that old-guard elites like the Rockefeller never wanted to join ABNY,⁷ that their interests lay more in FIRE than in tourism, and that NYCP ultimately eclipsed ABNY's influence in the 1980's and 1990's. But as the event at the Waldorf revealed, NYCP adopted a key piece of the ABNY model, and took it to a new level. Namely it hosted lavish, invitation-only events that showed off the hotels of CVB members, provided valuable photo-opportunities, and enabled the city's and nation's leaders in government and business to meet and discuss mutually beneficial policy issues.⁸

Unlike ABNY and the CVB, however, NYCP was to forego the populist PR stunts, marketing campaigns, and direct attempts to regulate local media, focusing instead on

behind the scenes lobbying to influence policy and budget decisions, and on the financing of large-scale real estate development projects. The marketing of the city's image had now been taken over by the State DOC, which by 1986, under Governor Mario Cuomo, had made tourism a top economic development priority and used I♥NY as the official slogan for all the operations of the re-named Department of Economic Development. And at the New York level, the job had been embraced by Ed Koch, the city's self-proclaimed "booster mayor."

The "Economic Boom" of 1977-1986

Koch - the court jester of the fiscal crisis- reminds us
 "the job of government is to provide a climate for jobs and business."
 and "you need business to feel that they are not the enemy."
Business Week, 1984⁹

I'm king of the hill, top of the heap...
 [and] we're the most exciting place on earth.

*Mayor Ed Koch, singing, upon proclaiming "New York, New York" the city's Official Song, and awarding Kander and Ebb a Certificate of Appreciation. Feb. 20, 1985.*¹⁰

Under jubilant booster and new Mayor Ed Koch, the newly branded image of New York City seemed to have banished the "asphalt jungle," and newcomers, investments, and corporate headquarters were indeed attracted back to the city in climbing numbers. In terms of tourism, this mid 1980's were a period of growth. [See Table B.1] After reaching a high in 1980, tourism numbers plummeted during the recession from 1980-1982, and wiped out most gains of the late 1970's. But then a number of factors converged to turn the situation around. Between 1976 and 1988, city funding for the CVB increased *11 times* over, from \$300,000 in 1976 to \$3.6 million in 1987. When

combined with the far greater private contribution made by CVB members — mainly realtors, hoteliers, theater owners, department store executives, tourism operators, and restaurateurs—the funding for the CVB increased *32 times* over, rising to \$10 million by 1987.¹¹ As one local paper put it, the city was “quietly becoming [a] world tourist haven”— Global tourism was also rising sharply, which helps explain why, in 1987, one in three New York tourists were from abroad. In addition, there was an expansion in new luxury hotels and tourism facilities. Thus, hotel occupancy grew slightly, while the number of visitors and visitor spending rose appreciably. This was despite the fact that “I♥NY” campaign marketing in this period became skewed towards Upstate —while it was split close to 50/50 between New York City and Upstate, city officials argued that since New York attracted the vast majority of tourism, they deserved more.¹²

Nonetheless, according to market research, “top of the mind” awareness of the campaign, nationally and globally, was still associated with New York City, as opposed to Upstate.¹³ And so, during the 1980’s, tourism and tourism marketing became dominant industries in New York City.

TABLE B.1: Strength of New York City Travel and Tourism Industry, 1976-1988*

	Hotel Occupancy Rate [%]	Number of Visitors [in millions]	Visitor Spending [in billions]
1976	73	16.5	\$.5
1980	78.4	17.1	\$2.2
1982	73.5	16.9	\$2
1988	76.7	19.8	\$2.65

* Numbers for 1976: Sterne, 1976; Auletta, 1977, 6; Numbers from 1980-88: Pannell Kerr Foster, Brener Associates, CVB.

But what made the growth in tourism and marketing most significant to Koch and his supporters was the part it played in the larger growth in high-end services during this period of New York's "post-industrial" transformation. In particular, the post fiscal crisis period in New York City was a time of unprecedented growth and profit for New York's financial and banking sector. For example, whereas in 1970 New York City had 47 banks with assets of \$10 billion, by 1985 it had 191 banks with assets of \$238 billion, and employing 27,000.¹⁴ Concomitantly, New York saw a steady increase in its share of foreign deposits in US banks, in its number of US offices of foreign banks, and was able to maintain the city's total share of US banking assets. And most importantly for this sector, by the mid 1980's New York City based firms held a quarter of the assets of the world's 130 largest institutional investors, and was the headquarters for a quarter of all major U.S. securities firms.¹⁵

There are two main explanations for this remarkable growth in banking and finance in the wake of the New York City's fiscal crisis. The scarcity of capital for New York City during the crisis, and collapse of the city's bond market—which some of these same banks helped to cause—allowed the banks to receive high interest rates for the money they eventually loaned the city through the MAC and EFCB, and it provided them with control over the city's budget and spending priorities.¹⁶ And in addition, their continued growth can be attributed to the new "climate" for business and investment in New York City created by the Beame and then Koch administration at the city level, and the administrations of Governors Carey and Cuomo at the state level, largely under the

auspices of the city's Office of Economic Development (OED) and the state's DED. This involved billions of dollars in give-aways— including tax breaks, subsidies, development grants and zoning changes —to the real estate industry in order to stimulate rapid growth in high-end office and residential space in Manhattan.¹⁷

Remarkably, these give-aways were occurring, while much of the city was still living under harsh austerity budgets, and facing cut-backs in public services and basic infrastructural improvements. This signified a fundamental shift in the priorities of government— away from its traditional role as manager of public welfare, and towards a new, entrepreneurial role as booster for business. As Susan Fainstein points out, under Koch, “The achievement of economic growth and fiscal solvency was substituted for service provision as the test of government legitimacy.”¹⁸ Thus while the forces of global economic restructuring undoubtedly transformed New York City in this period, these forces were also “propagated” and directed by local politics.¹⁹

And so, when Koch appeared on the cover of *Time*, his arms raised in a double-fisted victory salute above the Lower Manhattan skyline, and the banner headline “America’s Mayors: Politics of Survival” stamped across his body, the WTC was associated with the rebound of the entire city.²⁰ Mayor Koch also chose a reworked version of this image for the cover of his autobiography, *Mayor: An Autobiography*. The original *Time* cover appears in the book, with the caption: “Here I am towering above the City of New York like a colossus. This was taken from a boat in the East River with me teetering at the edge of the rail.”²¹ As Koch noted, however uncritically, the image indeed captured the

combination of headiness and utter precariousness that was to characterize this period of economic rebound.

The Expanding Matrix of Media and Information Services

Another force driving the acceleration of the media revolution begun in 1960's was the increasing sophistication of computers and the Internet, and the financial and political "re-regulation" of the neoliberal era. These interconnected developments led to increased corporate control over and coordination of all stages of production, distribution, and marketing of media products through the "vertical integration" of global media firms.²² And, in the same way that 1960's lifestyle media exploited the institutional matrix of media and marketing in New York City, so too would the vertically integrated corporate media of the 1980's benefit from its proximity to the rapidly growing service sector, and in particular business services.²³ According to one study, New York City accounted for 20 percent of national employment in "information intensive industries" in this period, and had a higher ratio of such employment than any other city except Washington and Boston.²⁴

As Saskia Sassen noted at the time, the city's agglomeration of high-end services countered the conventional wisdom that with the rise of faster, global communication networks, and the off-shoring of production, corporations and services would not need to cluster, and would quickly flee the high rents, expenses, and congestion of big cities.²⁵ As it turned out, while this calculation still applied for older manufacturing-based economy,

it did not for the new “information economy.” In the latter, highly specialized “producer services” became embedded in “value-added processes of production,” and companies needed various specialists—such as those in high technology and creative fields—to remain close at hand. Thus, the specialized knowledge and creativity necessary for innovation and coordination within the media industry “[heightened] the importance of traditional centers,” and helped spur the growth of technically and socially networked “global cities.”²⁶

New York City in the 1980’s was a leader amongst global cities, becoming a global media and finance capital in a new, more integrated way. Business services took advantage of media’s growth, becoming deeply involved in film, TV, and new media activities at many levels. Banks began taking equity positions in media and entertainment ventures, accounting firms began creating entertainment or media divisions, and investment houses began handling media and entertainment related stocks and bond offerings on a far larger scale.²⁷ By the late 1980’s, with the stock market crash and the onset of recession, media and entertainment caught up with business services to become New York’s fastest growing sector, and its firms some of the biggest political and economic actors.

In addition to the merging of media with business services, this period was also one of mergers between media and marketing firms. Advertisers and market researchers established a variety of strategic, financial, and creative linkages with the media corporations which their clients could access. This transformed the production of media,

from broadcasting to publishing, and from news to entertainment, as new marketing techniques like product placement and branding increasingly blurred the line between original editorial/creative content and advertising. Media and marketing were increasingly considered to be part of the same field, and came to influence all other cultural industries with which they interacted—in particular business services, tourism and entertainment, and design.

A prime example of the neoliberal shift was the rapid rise of Bloomberg LP in the early 1980's, a company at the vanguard of both information media, and the use of branding to extend a name across media platforms. After being fired from Solomon Brothers following a merger at that company, CEO Michael Bloomberg used his \$10 million severance package, plus a \$30 million investment from Merrill Lynch, to start this financial media company. The company grew rapidly into a huge multifaceted enterprise providing real-time financial and business data, data analysis, electronic communications, as well as television and radio programs—understanding that global distribution networks were as important as content in this new age. And in a move reminiscent of the patenting obsession of Thomas Edison, Bloomberg ensured that every component, interface, network, and media product would be proprietary and carry the Bloomberg brand name. The apparent success of this strategy, in addition to the competitive pressure posed by transnational giants like Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, inspired a new scale of media mergers in the late eighties —i.e. the Time-Warner and NBC-Cablevision mergers in 1989.²⁸ This trend was to dramatically accelerate in the 1990's, as deregulation and privatization of media became even more sweeping, ultimately positioning New York

City as the most important headquarters city in the marketplace of global corporate media.

Lifestyle Media Goes Corporate

Such symbiosis of media and business services in the urban core went beyond the level of efficiency and productivity, having much to do with the urban lifestyle and culture which highly skilled, creative workers seek and thrive on. Thus New York City —along with a small list of global capitals like London, Los Angeles, and Tokyo—became a center of creative talent and a new “creative class.” In addition, consumer-oriented lifestyle media became increasingly valuable “properties” for rapidly expanding media corporations seeking to reach this influential demographic, and create a localized identity for themselves. It is against this backdrop that, in 1977, Australian media mogul Rupert Murdoch bought out *New York* magazine from Clay Felker, adding it to his stable of local magazines, newspapers, television and cable stations, and movie production studios.²⁹ At the same time, the magazine was also integrated with the I♥NY campaign, published the shopping guides to the city for the campaign, while including the DOC’s ads and promotional inserts throughout its pages.

The new corporate publisher struck on a profitable formula: toned down and reduced editorial content, increased pages of advertising and lifestyle reporting, new “special sections” filled with consumer reports, and encyclopedic high-end listings sections at the back of the magazine. Not coincidentally, a similar process was happening as News

Corporation and other competitor media companies purchased more and more city magazines nationwide. As a result, urban lifestyle became increasingly standardized, as differences *within* the magazines between editorials and advertisement, as well as *between* the magazines in terms of the "brand identities" of their namesake cities, were erased. With the jump in advertising from 55% to 75% of total content by the end of the eighties, human beings started being replaced by consumer items, particularly food, as the brand-identity of the city.³⁰ This increasing replacement of editorial with lifestyle reporting was hailed by publishers as a "boon to readers" and a more "accurate" representation of the city.³¹ Increasingly the notion of "service" espoused by the magazine implied consumption rather than overcoming real problems. As *New York* editor of the late eighties Edward Kosner observed, *New York* had become "oriented more towards using, enjoying, and finding, than surviving." By the late eighties, as the middle class target readership entered its comfortable later years, the "urban survival manual" became the "urban consumer manual."

Meanwhile, deepening economic and racial inequality and turmoil was obscured behind the celebratory, impersonal veneer of lifestyle reportage. When articles did appear on local problems, these were generally "quality of life" issues mainly affecting the white middle class.³² If they addressed problems of the rich and poor alike, it was generally only once such problems had reached a point that they could no longer be ignored—and then the coverage was limited and extremely one-sided.³³ In general, these articles pronounced the realities of these contentious situations in terms allowing no room for dialogue with people involved or analysis outside mainstream points of view. Such an

editorial approach reflects the change in urban lifestyle magazines and their namesake cities over the last 30 years. While crisis mounted, the urban lifestyle represented by the magazine has less to do with the human face of the city at all, and more takes the form of an imaginary landscape of the city as pure commodity.

In its infancy *New York* magazine served to manage the brand image of a city for a relatively marginal new middle class with the backing of civic boosters and local business and media interests. It now helped manage the brand image of the city in association with major transnational corporate players seeking a local presence in this city. In essence, *New York's* success at branding New York made it a desirable property for corporations aiming to do the same, and who by advertising in or acquiring the magazine merged an urban with a corporate imaginary. Thus when Murdoch doubled *New York's* advertising pages overnight by adding *CUE* listings to the back, he explained: "it will help make the magazine even *more New York*."³⁴ While critics argue that such a high degree of corporate control over this urban media genre limits the free exchange of ideas, in the minds of the corporate publishers and the editors they hire, the increasing commodification is not simply a good business decision but also a boon to readers, as it provides *a more accurate representation of their city*, which has itself become a commodity.

The Bloodless Revolution: The New Middle Class Wins the Power Game

The bloodless revolution... slipped in like the fog...
New York City, which used to be preoccupied with helping
the poor, is now preoccupied with winning investor confidence."
Ken Auletta, *New York* magazine, 1976³⁵

From the perspective of the new middle class staff and readers of *New York* magazine, the major effect of the fiscal crisis was to transform the “New York power game” with which, as editor Clay Felker put it, they had been “obsessed” since the late 1960’s.³⁶ The annual new year’s ritual of the magazine —and its most popular issue— between 1967 and 1978 involved listing the “most powerful people in New York City” with whom the *New York* staffers thought they and their young, aspiring middle class readers should be familiar. Between 1967 and 1973, this involved “top ten lists” at the pinnacle of the derisively-named “Old New York” power structure—i.e. the ten most powerful men, usually a combination of older elite players in New York’s government, FIRE sector, and labor unions. By 1974-5, with the onset of the fiscal crisis, these lists started to shifting and becoming opaque, doubled in size, and began to include “visible” and “invisible” forms of power. In 1975-6³⁷ and 1976-7³⁸, the top 10 was accompanied by tentative lists of “additional power” and “honorable mention”—the latter accompanied by an article by Nicholas Pileggi on younger, upcoming power-brokers: “35 people Worth Watching in 1976.”³⁹ And by 1977-8, New York scrapped the Top 10 format entirely in favor of a five page long “Top 35,” issued in “no particular order.”⁴⁰ [See: Table B.2]

Table B.2: “Top 35 Most Powerful New Yorkers—In No Particular Order,” 1977-78*

Name	Position	Name	Position
Rupert Murdoch	Media mogul	Steven Berger	Management consultant, Executive Dir. EFCB
Jack Bigel	Pension consultant, MAC negotiator	Don Wolf	Editor, <i>Village Voice</i>
David Garth	Media Consultant	Peter Ashkenazy	Restaurateur
Harold Fisher	Chairman of MTA	Allen G. Schwartz	New York City Corporation Council
Walter Wriston	CEO Citibank, MAC board member	Dr. Kevin Cahill	Governor Carey’s “Health Czar”
Hugh Carey	Governor of New York	Jerry Cummins	Political strategist, Thruway Authority chair
Felix Rohatyn	MAC Chairman, CEO Lazard Freres	John H. Hennessy	Engineering consultant, Battery Park Auth head MAC board member
William Proxmire	Chairman Senate Banking Committee	Robert Wagner	Former mayor,
W. Michael Blumenthal	Former head of Bendix Corporation	Phyllis Cerf Wagner	Society hostess, WRG consultant
Richard Menshel	Office of Economic Development	Peter Maas	Author
David Brown	Deputy Mayor, Economic Policy	Paul Hall	Seafarers’ Union
Herb Rickman	Former assistant US attorney	Anthony Scotto	ILA Local 1814
David Margolis	Pres Colt Industries, former member EFCB	Robert Morgenthau	Manhattan District Attorney
Allen Schwartz	NBC executive, former member EFCB	James J Delaney	Congressional Rep.
Ronay Menshel	Deputy Mayor, Intergovt. Relations	C.J. Schoener	AP reporter
Bess Myerson	Department of Cultural Affairs, beauty queen, Mayor’s “partner”	William Ellinghaus	Telephone exec, MAC board member
Leonard Sandler	Supreme Court judge	John Lo Cicero	Special advisor to Governor
Doris Chanin Freedman	Real estate heiress and campaign contributor		

* Pileggi, “The 36 Who Run New York”, New York, 30-33

Whether or not all the specific names are still known today —and Rupert Murdoch has clearly eclipsed Ronay Menschel— the format of the list was indicative of a change. By 1977-78, the old power structure had mostly been replaced by new (if not always younger) players in emerging fields of media, communications, and management consulting. They were joined by a new generation of “politicians” who straddled the public and private divide, working in the corporate and financial sectors while also serving in the entrepreneurial crisis regime —whether in newly created deputy mayor’s offices, economic development agencies, public agencies, or on the boards of the MAC and EFCB.

The two most astute of the power game cover stories were written in 1976-7 and 1977-8 by Ken Auletta, the first, and last, investigative reporter to author these pieces —after 1978, with the transfer of power, they abruptly ended. The first piece termed the shift “The New Power Game.” To illustrate this, the cover painting depicted an enormous, angry, white, baby boy toppling high-rise buildings like Godzilla, with the headline: “After the Bloodless Revolution: THE NEW POWER GAME.”⁴¹ Auletta analyzed this “bloodless revolution” in terms of the basic fact that “New York City, which used to be preoccupied with helping the poor, is now preoccupied with winning investor confidence.”⁴² Auletta quotes two expert witnesses on this shift:

The people we’ve been appealing to throughout this crisis,” says David Burke, secretary to Governor Carey, “are not so much the voters as the investors.” It is this fundamental shift in audience that permitted the MAC chairman, Felix Rohatyn to say to me in a recent interview, “Talk of [ending] free tuition, rent

control, open admissions, were things not discussed one year ago. Now they're discussed. Some of them are going to be changed."

"What we have witnessed is fantastic" says labor mediator, Theodor Kheel, an astute observer of power. "There was a period where what was done in the city was based on what was good for the blacks. Earlier, it was based on what was good for the immigrants. Now the question is what is good for the bond market. We have seen—in the welfare capital of the world—the bond market take control of the fiscal policies of the city with no opposition. During this period when the liberals' structure was being dismantled, liberals were silent because they did not know what to say."

The next year Auletta wrote a follow-up: "The Power Game: This Year They're Doing It With Mirrors."⁴³ This time at the top of his list Auletta placed marketing and PR guru Howard Rubenstein—the man responsible, behind the scenes, for the lavish opening of the "I♥NY" campaign, including getting the slogan placed on the WTC. Auletta explained that investor confidence was still prioritized over the needs of voters in this "drama," but that given the inconvenience of democratic elections, spin doctors were needed temporarily to convince the electorate otherwise: "New York's fiscal crisis drama continues, with essentially the same plot and leading actors. What has changed is the script, and the audience. With city and state elections coming up, the trick now is to appease voters rather than investors. Enter the PR men."⁴⁴

As the old guard was slipping into the ether of back-room dealings, the "New Society" was struggling to find footholds on which to climb. In Nicholas Pileggi's "35 People Worth Watching in 1976," for instance, we see 30-something people's heads cut and pasted onto the body of the baby taking over Manhattan, in categories of "Media," "Business," "Administration," "Academia," and in language that reads like a celebrity gossip column.⁴⁵ And climb they did. In the boom years of 1977 to 1986, many of this

new middle class were to enter the ranks of the new, dominant class of “upper professionals” in New York.

Whereas salaried professionals and managers represented only 5% of the working population, throughout the 19th and early 20th century, by the mid 1980’s they represented 30% of the labor force, and according to many were to form a new “dominant class” in New York City.⁴⁶ This largely white and disproportionately male stratum benefited directly from the development of the city’s emerging corporate economy, filling the new high-skill jobs in information-based economy. They also became the core constituency for the dominant electoral coalition—first in the Koch and later Giuliani administrations — who were to reflect their interests, values, and lifestyle. Thus, in tracing the evolution of the “power game” articles, it becomes clear that entrenched power was a target of derision and critique for this cynical generation only and until many of their own members had achieved it.

Crises to Come

New York City’s fiscal crisis was a harbinger
of crises to come in post-affluent America.
Eric Lichten, 1986⁴⁷

One of the enduring myths of the New York model of neoliberalism, and the branding campaigns that served to legitimize it, was that both came without costs. Arising like a phoenix from the ashes of the fiscal crisis, the new “cleaned up” image of the city, and the new white collar service jobs it provided, would only be a boon for the city, especially when one factored in the astronomical multipliers of finance and the “magic

industry” of tourism. These new sectors would more than replace the old, blue-collar, smokestack industries, and in any case provide a better quality of life for workers. This belief, it should be noted, echoed a sentiment long-championed by New York’s Regional Plan Association —the powerful lobbyist for urban restructuring headed by the city’s FIRE elites— that had fought since the 1920’s for the transformation of Lower Manhattan from a mixed use commercial, wholesale, and financial district to a single, homogenous business district — so as to “restore” New York’s “sense of order.”⁴⁸ This belief was only reinforced and legitimized by the successful branding of the city through the mass media and official tourism marketing campaigns in the late 1970’s.

And yet, when one looks at the economic legacy of this transitional period a very different picture emerges. Rather than cost-free, the city’s shift to branding and neoliberalism should be understood as ushering in four interrelated and troubling dynamics. One is the city’s increasing economic dependence on highly volatile and image-sensitive global markets in finance and tourism, which has increased the city’s vulnerability to crises. The second is the increasing polarization along lines of income and wealth that has coincided with the dominance of these bifurcated industries. Third is the apparent tendency for mass lay-offs among low wage workers in industries like tourism during times of crisis. And finally, along with the shift to entrepreneurialism there has arisen what Eric Lichten calls the “austerity state,” whereby rigid limits on public spending apply during crises and boom times alike. I will address each of these dynamics in turn.

The Tendency towards Crisis

The city's dependence on tourism and finance has meant both that it is more susceptible to image crises, and that when such crises does occur in these of these high profile sectors. they cause financial damage on a scale disproportionate to their size, due to their impact on such things as investor confidence, business travel, retail trade, real estate values, and the stock market. This in turn has made the city even more vulnerable than it traditionally has been to the capitalist tendency towards crisis. For though New York, as a finance capital, has always suffered during times of national and global economic downturns, it appears that in the last thirty years the city's periodic fiscal and financial crises have both sped-up and been of longer duration. Whereas 60 years elapsed between the economic crises of the 1870's and that of the Great Depression in the 1930's, and 40 years between the Depression and the fiscal crisis of the mid-1970's, since the 1970's two major recessionary crises have occurred in New York City separated by little more than a decade each. The first recession was set off by the global stock market crash of 1987 and lasted until 1991. The second began with the national recession of 2000 and, as a result of the combined economic and image crises caused by the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11th, 2001, continued through at least 2004.⁴⁹

Class Polarization

In addition to the city's increased vulnerability to crisis, the city's growing dependence on FIRE and tourism, and its use of media and marketing as a strategy of "recovery,"

may be seen to have contributed to New York's increasing class polarization along lines of wealth and income. With a deregulated service economy concentrated at the high and low ends of the skill and income spectrum, and with the decline in unionized, blue collar and public sector jobs, the city saw its middle class shrink and its upper and lower classes grow. This dynamic first became apparent in the early 1980's, and was characterized by scholars at the time as the "dual city" phenomenon.⁵⁰ Since then, their thesis has been confirmed. Much like the extremes of wealth and poverty that occurred at the height of New York's "Gilded Age" of the late 19th century, sharp differentials in earnings coincided with the "boom years" of 1977-1987, and even more so between 1992 and 2000—despite the temporary halts to growth and income that occurred during periods of downturn.

Between 1977 and 1987, New York's wealthiest 10 percent saw their incomes grow over 20 percent, and accounted for a third of all income gains of that decade, while the top 20 percent accounted for half of such gains. Meanwhile, the poorest 20 percent saw their incomes decline by 17.5 percent over the same period, and found themselves worse off not only relative to wealthier people, but also as compared to their earnings a decade earlier. At the same time, the total number of people living under the poverty level in the city increased from 1.1 million in 1975 to 1.7 million in 1987, while those living in extreme poverty accounted for most of this rise, doubling their numbers from 560,000 to 1,100,000.⁵¹ This polarizing trend was only to intensify over the coming decade.

According to Fiscal Policy Institute statistics for this 30-year period, while the poorest fifth of the city's population lost 21% of their income, the richest fifth's increased by

43%. Indeed, the income of the richest 5% increased by an astounding 67%. By 2000, this top fifth was earning roughly half of the entire income generated by the city. New York's polarizing trend reflected, though far more severely, the growing class divisions occurring on a national scale in the 1980's and 1990's.⁵² Indeed it might be argued that New York's widening socio-economic gap during this period was more similar to that of other global cities in the developing world, than to its own counterparts in the United States.⁵³

Job Instability

While few would deny the trend towards economic inequality, many contend that such inequality is not necessarily a bad thing, since it has been accompanied by job growth and improved earnings that benefit rich, middle class and poor alike— i.e. the “rising tide lifts all boats” argument.⁵⁴ In the case of New York City, this benefit for the poor and middle class has not proven to be the case. This has been shown most recently with the “recovery” of 2001-3. While it was accompanied by a rebound in jobs, particularly in service industries, there was a major problem with the *quantity and quality* of the jobs being created. Not only was the city still 77,000 jobs below where it had been in 2001, the wages of the jobs it was gaining were 38% lower than the jobs being lost, representing more than a \$20,000 difference. This was particularly the case in two of the leading sectors of job growth—“leisure and hospitality” and “retail” — whose average wages of \$21,000 were the lowest amongst all industries in the city, constituting incomes

under the poverty line for a family of three.⁵⁵ And yet these sectors were in precisely those image-sensitive “tourist industries” that the city had assiduously courted.

Part of the problem in assessing the true value of “leisure and hospitality” (which includes old SIC categories of hotels and amusements) to the local economy may be due to the way in which those industries, and the private marketing consultant firms they hire, generate their data. Since the 1970’s there has been an effort to measure and publicize the “overall economic impact” of tourism by applying unscientific “multiplier effects” to visitor spending figures, and to show in addition the impact of tourism marketing using psychographic market research. Leaving aside the veracity of these figures, which is beyond the scope of this dissertation, I have noticed that less attention is paid to traditional measurements of things like employment and salary figures on the one hand, and industry revenues on the other.

When the latter are taken into account, and placed in the historical context of economic crisis, a troubling dynamic emerges. On the one hand, these industries appear to “weather the storm” of crisis by shoring up their revenues, and on the other, they contribute to the adverse effects of crisis by cutting large numbers of jobs. [See TABLE B.3] According to census figures for the tourism, amusements, and marketing industries between 1967 and 1977, while all three were making wide-scale lay-offs and two were closing down establishments, all three saw their revenues rise throughout the period. In tourism the number of establishments declined by 31 percent and the number of employees declined by 47 percent, while in marketing, the number of establishments

declined by 5 percent, and the number of employees fell by nearly 22 percent. (The only sector with growth in these measures was amusements, which saw an increase in small establishments, with less than 5 employees). Meanwhile, the revenue in all three of these sectors grew considerably over the same time period—with a jump of 34.3 percent in tourism, 32 percent in amusements, and 18 percent in marketing.

TABLE B.3: Changing Revenue of New York City Tourism & Marketing, 1967-1977⁺

Industry	Revenue, in dollars			% Change 1967-1977		
	1967	1972	1977	Revenue (\$)	establishments	employed
Hotels, Motels, Tourist Courts	534,269	443,807	717,300	+34.3	-31	-47
Amusement & Rec, Services with motion pictures	1,875,308	1,664,275	2,475,900	+32	+14	-16
Advertising & Marketing Services^a	4,372,794	4,622,986	5,148,360 ⁵⁶	+18	-5	-22

These figures appear to indicate that during the crisis, industry consolidation occurred that boosted revenues, even while tens of thousands of people were getting laid off and hundreds of establishments closed down. Another explanation for the increased profitability of the tourism during crisis was offered after the latest national downturn in

⁺ Source: US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, *1967 Census of Manufactures*. Vol. III Area Statistics and Vol. V. Selected Services. Issued Jan. 1971. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, "County and City Data Book," 1972, and 1977.

the industry following the attacks of September 11th 2001. A study by the AFL-CIO's Working for America Institute revealed that while many small hotels and hotel chains were put out of business by the crisis, the major hotel chains, which were the hardest hit in terms of occupancy rates, were nonetheless able to maintain profits by continuing to charge high room rates, particularly in high-end markets like New York City.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, these same firms also laid off hundreds of thousands of low-wage employees. While nearly all "major hotel metropolitan areas" experienced hotel job losses between 2001 and 2002, New York's were the worst in terms of total number and percentage of jobs. This had a dramatic ripple effect on the wider regional job market. With jobs in these sectors polarized at the high and low end of the skill and salary spectrum, a large segment of laid-off workers at the low-end had little to fall back on financially, leading to increases in poverty levels and demands on social services. These tendencies that are more similar to downsizing global corporations of the 1980's than to the local public sector and blue collar industries they replaced .

The Austerity State

Eric Lichten, one of the first chroniclers of the political impact of the fiscal crisis, observed the following in 1986:

New York City became the harbinger of a new era in social policy, one that tied the fate of millions of urban dwellers closely to the international and national markets. Cities were only the first target in a still raging struggle over the size and scope of social expenditures, and it may be said that the politics and economics of what was known as the New York City fiscal crisis set the pattern for the new austerity that marks current social policy.⁵⁸

Not only have periodic crises become more regular and severe, but as Lichten argues, even during the boom years the mentality of crisis prevails in the social policy arena. This has legitimized what he calls the “austerity state,” in which new class relations based on “the current conditions of crisis, selective scarcity, and corporate domination” are “institutionalized as austerity.”⁵⁹

One of the areas where this permanent state of austerity has been seen most starkly is in the city’s approach to housing and the homeless. Since the early 1970’s, no significant investment has been made in public or affordable housing. Meanwhile, the city’s existing stock of affordable housing was seriously eroded. Whereas in 1970 there was actually a *surplus* of affordable housing of 270,000 units, by 1999 there was a shortage of some 390,000 apartments.⁶⁰ This was a result of shrinking federal, state and city money spent on rehabilitating and building affordable housing, combined with active policies of rent deregulation, gentrification, and the rezoning of poor and working class neighborhoods. This caused median gross rents to shoot up 700% between 1970 and 1999.⁶¹ Thus beginning in 1979, a period of “modern homelessness” began in New York City that was unlike any seen before. As a report by New York’s Coalition of the Homeless documents:

An old saying tells us that “the poor are always with us.” However, regardless of the wisdom of that time-worn phrase, it is decidedly untrue about the homeless poor. While homelessness is certainly not a new phenomenon in the United States or in New York City, where it dates back to at least the colonial era, there is no question that modern homelessness is a unique historical occurrence. Indeed, one must go back to the Great Depression to find another period in New York history when homelessness was such a routine, persistent, visible feature of urban life....From the end of World War II until the late 1970’s it was a rare sight, outside of familiar “skid row” precincts like the Bowery, to see New Yorkers sleeping in the streets and other public spaces, or to witness tens of thousands of

children and their families cycling each year through emergency shelters and welfare hotels.⁶²

Since its emergence in 1979, when there were 2000 homeless people tallied in shelters, modern homelessness in New York City has become more entrenched.⁶³ In 2004, the number of homeless New Yorkers living in shelters each night reached 36,930, *the highest point in New York City's history*.⁶⁴ And while this reflected a constant rise in the intervening years, spikes in this growth occurred during the “boom times” of the 1980’s and 90’s.⁶⁵ In addition to falling incomes for the poor, this was also due to the escalating cost of buying and renting living space in the city—and to the seemingly permanent state of austerity imposed on the city’s spending on homeless services and housing.

The Contradictions of Urban Branding

To ask “Whose city?” suggests more than a politics of occupation; it also asks who has a right to inhabit the dominant image of the city. This often relates to real geographical strategies as different social groups battles over access to the center of the city and over symbolic representations in the center. At stake are not only real estate fortunes, but also “readings” of hostility or flexibility towards those groups that have historically been absent from the city center or whose presence causes problems: women, racial minorities, immigrants, certain types of workers, and homeless people.
Sharon Zukin, 1996.⁶⁶

All this is so vast, so impressive that a man cannot collect himself, but is lost in the marvel... the sacrifices which all this has cost become apparent later.
Frederic Engels,

One of the most influential writings on the visual space of the city is Frederic Engels’ harrowing account of his travels through 1840’s London and Manchester. Engels analyzes the class divisions created by the new industrial mode of production, and

reproduced geographically through the sharply inequitable urban plan of the capitalist city. To do this, Engels plays the role of spectator, and thus reveals the extent to which the city's political and economic divisions are inscribed and experienced as visual phenomena, as a separation between those included in and excluded from the dominant image of the city. He encounters this dominant image in his first, inspiring view of London—and of England, and of modern capitalism itself—from a boat entering London harbor: “I know nothing more imposing than the view which the Thames offers during the ascent from the sea to London Bridge... All this is so vast, so impressive that a man cannot collect himself, but is lost in the marvel of England's greatness before he sets foot upon English soil.”⁶⁷ As Engels observes, simply the sight of the city center with its mass of monumental architecture served to legitimize the power of the new capitalist class. And yet this vision is illusory, and depends for its legitimacy on its distance from the material reality being viewed. As he adds, “the sacrifices which all this has cost become apparent later,” when one visits, and sees close-up, the impoverished, unsanitary, overcrowded slums of the industrial city. It is only then that “one realizes for the first time that these Londoners have been forced to sacrifice the best qualities of their human nature, to bring to pass all the marvels of civilization which crowd their cities.” As Engels understood, the dominant image of the city both reflected and concealed the broad class divisions emerging in its shadows.

In this sense Engels sees the illusory totality of the “city view” much like Marx was to see the appearance, and deceptive power, of the commodity fetish. Through fetishization, as Marx observed, the commodity, a simple product of labor, came to appear as if it were

autonomous, even god-like, thus turning real social relations into the appearance of relations between things.⁶⁸ To relate this to Engels, one could say that the city was also becoming a fetish under capitalism. It appeared as an autonomous image, and symbol of the greatness of the ascendant bourgeoisie, while obscuring and mystifying both the real conditions of its own production, and the far from beautiful conditions in which the majority of its residents were forced to live.

This insight helps us to perceive the spectacular power of urban branding in our own times. And it underscores the importance, as Sharon Zukin puts it, of asking not only Lefebvre's question, who has the right to the city?, but also the related question: who has a right to inhabit the dominant image of the city? The latter question offers an opportunity to expose the interdependent ways through which people and populations may be excluded from the city discursively and ideologically, as well as in material terms.

In our own day, the inhuman conditions of urban life have themselves become a hugely profitable spectacle—and offer a perverse version of inclusivity in the dominant image of city. Given the increasing number of picturesque backdrops of urban decay that were created by the planned shrinkage and austerity programs of the late 1970's-2000's, it should come as no surprise that New York became a capital of such anti-urban spectacles in the last thirty years. It should also be no surprise that the worst of these B-movies created images that are still as much of a fixture in popular culture and consciousness, if not more so, than the best of the I♥NY TV commercials. By 1989, when the promotion

poster for “Friday the Thirteenth Part 8: Jason Takes Manhattan” showed its demonic Jason character slashing through a I ♥ NY logo with a butcher knife, this was widely interpreted by cult movie fans as an homage to a city that had by then become the “capital of slasher thrillers” and the “city the world loves to fear.” This is perhaps why fans were baffled when the DOC sued the producers for copyright infringement —wasn’t this the kind of publicity the city’s film industry had thrived on for a decade?⁶⁹

The dual contradictions of the city’s economic development policies has come full circle. Emphasis on image and investor confidence at the expense of material needs had indeed created a new and vibrant symbolic economy, but one that exploits the city’s growing poverty and desperation, and played on racist stereotypes and fears of urban life. Meanwhile, in the expanding media market of the era, these images circulate far more widely, and gain a wider audience, than the I ♥ NY campaign ever did.

This was not because more critical “counter branding” media have not been created at the grassroots. To the contrary, the 1970’s and 80’s saw the flowering of neighborhood based media and arts movements, which took advantage of new consumer media in creative response to the struggle to survive in a deteriorating city.⁷⁰ The rise of graffiti writing on New York subways in the early 1970’s is just one, important example of this backlash. As Joe Austin says: “Writers saw themselves as embodying an (illegal) urban beautification and education program for a fading city bent on denying its own magnificent cultural dynamics and destroying its own ‘local color,’ both figuratively and literally. In taking the trains, writers created a new mass media, and in that media they ‘wrote back’ to the city.”⁷¹

Yet such iconoclastic images and texts were scrupulously edited out of the increasingly controlled urban image presented in official media. While City Hall turned a blind eye to Hollywood's violent fantasies, it saw these acts of youthful rebellion and self expression as tantamount to a full blown image crisis, inspiring a two decade, \$500 million "War on Graffiti." Over the course of the campaign, graffiti writers evolved from "juvenile delinquents" to "terrorists;" and graffiti from a misdemeanor to a criminal offense. "Anti-graffiti coalitions" were institutionalized across city agencies; "image enhancing" citizen actions were sponsored citywide; anti-graffiti ad campaigns were launched; and paramilitary technologies were developed to clean the trains and secure the yards. This multimillion dollar assault on a few hundred kids with spray paint by a cash-strapped city was vigorously defended and financially supported by the MTA, the *New York Times*, and ABNY, all of whom saw graffiti as an assault on "quality of life" that increased crime and triggered economic crisis.⁷²

Their idea, both reactionary and postmodern, was that collective order is based in surface appearance as opposed to social and economic conditions. As such it was an extension of the Regional Plan Association's demand for a "sense of order" in the visual urban fabric, of ABNY's obsession with cleaning up signs of "visual deterioration," of Rohaytn and Starr's focus protecting the center city from "visual blight." It was also a prelude to the "Broken Windows" theory to be embraced by the administration of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani in the 1990's. According to this theory, promoted by the Manhattan Institute, crime in a neighborhood will continue to increase if the visual evidence of minor

infractions is left unchecked.⁷³ Regardless of whether increased poverty and joblessness may have caused them, such minor infractions would be met with increased policing rather than new social programs. This helped maintain the image of a tourist-friendly city free of petty crime—with all of its race and class-based associations—while ignoring the root causes of such problems. It also worked—both discursively and in reality—to deny a great many people their right to the city.

Multiple urban imaginaries may coexist and compete, but only those with the requisite political, economic, and cultural capital will have the power to brand an imaginary which will have enduring impact on the social life of the city. And, as the political economic structure of the post-Fordist city has changed, the impact such image branding can have, and the power it can bestow, has increased. These facts were not lost on the visionary urban lifestyle entrepreneurs of the 60's and 70's who, if they initially lacked political and economic capital, possessed the cultural capital to advance a new middle class vision of the city, and in the process, rise to the top of a new urban power game dominated in large part by the media.⁷⁴ And, as they rose, these entrepreneurs joined the ranks of transnational media corporations and entrepreneurial city governments increasingly dominated by such corporations. This created one of the first spaces for the now common practice of “place-based” urban marketing, whereby particular “authentic” urban lifestyles, public spaces, and local traditions are used uncritically as vehicles for corporate branding.⁷⁵

Thus, over the last thirty years, the clean, glossy image of the Twin Towers and Times Square have contrasted starkly with the social divisions rising in their shadows. And unlike New York's earlier "gilded age," when New York's photographers, journalists, and filmmakers captured both "the sunshine and shadow" of the capitalist city for mass audiences, the subjective realities of the rising underclass remained largely ignored by New York's mainstream media in the 1980's, 1990's, and 2000's. Thus the branded icons of this *new* New York should be seen as highly ambivalent symbol to say the least. The city's "broken windows" may have been fixed, and a "sense of order" maintained, attracting outsiders and their money in droves. Yet the increase in the beauty and power of New York as a brand for global consumption has coincided with, and contributed to, the decrease in the real standard of living for far too many of its own citizens. It has been my goal through this dissertation to shed light on this underlying dynamic in New York's recent history, so that we may begin to critically assess the role of urban branding, and imagine a more sustainable, equitable, and culturally representative path for our great city.

¹ New York City Partnership, *Annual Report*. New York: The Partnership, 1981/2.

² “New York, New York,” by composer John Kander and lyricist Fred Ebb was written for the 1977 Martin Scorsese film, *New York*. The film starred Robert De Niro and Liza Minnelli (who sang the song). A Frank Sinatra recording of “New York, New York” brought the song much wider fame.

³ Davis, 1990

⁴ David Rockefeller, 1986

⁵ New York City Partnership, 1981/2

⁶ According to David Rockefeller’s chapter, “Ingredients for Successful Partnerships: The New York City Case,” in Perry, 1986, NYCP invented the notion of “partnership.” As he says, before they used the term, “many people thought of partnerships only in terms of law firms, tax shelters, or perhaps living arrangements.”

⁷ As Rudin and Alton Marshall implied, the Rockefellers and their old money, WASP cohort had never been interested in joining ABNY—which was in many ways a social climbing vehicle for a rising class of non-WASP, FIRE elites.

⁸ Following this meeting for instance, Reagan moved to overhaul the nation’s jobs program, the last vestiges of the 30’s era WPA, by eliminating all public-sector employment programs—long derided by private sector critics, like NYCP, as “government make-work.” Under the new Job Training and Placement Act, the shrunken pot was focused on less expensive training and placement of workers, and also required business involvement through newly created Private Industry Councils. One of the first of these councils, receiving funding from the federal government, was the NYCP. See Kleiman, 2000.

⁹ *Business Week*, 23 July, p 99.

¹⁰ “Singing the Official Song.” *New York Times*, 20 February 1985. pg. B4.

¹¹ Metler Lavan, April 30, 1991.

¹² This point was made to me by Mary Holloway, former executive director of ABNY [interview conducted 3/30/03].

¹³ Davidson-Petersen Associates, 1984.

¹⁴ Mollenkopf and Castells, 1991, 7.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Shefter. 1992, 153; Brash, 2003.

¹⁷ Fainstein, 2001, 55-62.

¹⁸ Ibid, 2001, 95

¹⁹ As Mollenkopf and Castells put it (1991, 7) “No other city has done more to propagate the forces of global economic change and none has felt their impact more strongly.”

²⁰ Cover, *Time*, June, 15 1981.

²¹ Koch, 1984.

²² McChesney and Herman, 1997, 107-109.

²³ This was aided by New York's growing cluster of media and culture industries. Public and private groups issued a range of reports analyzing the cluster's growing influence. Some focused on New York's "media and communications sector," a combination of old media – motion pictures, advertising, and book publishing – and new media based in web design (Citizens Budget Committee, 1998.) Others emphasized the "entertainment arts complex," or the burgeoning economy based in theatre, film, restaurants, and support services (Exploring the Metropolis Inc., 1997.) Still others saw the nexus in "cultural tourism" and the "media and culture sector," i.e. businesses from media and advertising to popular entertainment and museums, linked to expanding waves of leisure and business travel (see Port Authority, 1994; Comptroller, 1993, 17.) Yet all agreed that some integrated form of media and cultural production was becoming as powerful as the once dominant financial service sector.

²⁴ Drennan, 1986, tables 6 and 7.

²⁵ Sassen, 1994, Sassen and Roost, 1999.

²⁶ Ibid, 1994, 66. Thus the need for spatial proximity was not only about face to face interaction, but was also due to the fact that "economies occur in such specialized firms when they locate close to others that produce key inputs or whose proximity makes possible joint production of certain service offerings."

²⁷ Exploring the Metropolis, 1997.

²⁸ Beschloss, Sept 11, 1989. 27

²⁹ *Los Angeles* magazine was purchased by the American Broadcasting Corporation in 1977 (which itself was acquired by Disney in 1996), while *Atlanta Magazine*, after being bought by Communication Channels Inc. in 1977, was to change hands five times in the next fifteen years. After C.C.I, AM's corporate publishers included: Argus Press in 1981, MetroCorp in 1987, American Express Publishing Corporation in 1990, and Ennis Publication in 1995.

³⁰ For instance, the image chosen for every January cover of both *New York* and *Atlanta Magazine* from 1990 to 1995 were glossy close-ups of platters of gourmet delicacies prepared in one of the "top ten area restaurants."

³¹ Rupert Murdoch, as quoted in John Bradshaw and Richard Neville, 1977.

³² see Pileggi, 1981a; Pileggi 1981b

³³ For instance, in 1989, *New York* devoted a special issue to "The Race Problem" in the wake of the racially biased reporting of the Central Park jogger case, in which black youths were the defendants, and the Howard Beach murder case, in which white youths were the defendants. In the lead article the author said he understood "the anger and resentment on both sides." He continued, however, to argue that people could no longer claim racism was the problem, and that "the only possible goal for the black underclass [could be] a new model [based on] integration—that is assimilation into the middle class economy" (Diamond, 1989).

³⁴ Bradshaw and Neville, 1977. emphasis in original.

³⁵ Auletta, 1976 32-3.

³⁶ A quote from the Felker's retrospective book, *The Power Game*, 1969.

³⁷ Auletta, January 12, 1976, 32-44.

³⁸ Auletta, January 10, 1977, 31-37.

³⁹ Pileggi, January 12, 1976, 51-54.

⁴⁰ Pileggi, January 9, 1978, 30-33.

Pileggi explains (33): "In looking at the emerging power scene... an interesting pattern has developed. Up front there are, as usual, the people who made the headlines—here, in Albany, and in Washington. But there is also another power structure: the people around and behind the key power figures, who advise, suggest, and manipulate the actions of the public figure. In a sense this hidden structure is the real New York power..."

⁴¹ This Jan. 10, 1977 Melinda Bordelon illustration is entitled, "A new power game is born, and it is no bundle of joy..."

⁴² Auletta, 1977 ibid 32-3.

⁴³ ibid

⁴⁴ ibid, 32

⁴⁵ See also related article by Reeves, January 12, 1976, 45-50.

⁴⁶ See Mollenkopf and Castells, 1991, 16-17; Brint, 1991, 155.

⁴⁷ Lichten, 1986, xv.

⁴⁸ Darton, 1999; Greenberg, 2003.

⁴⁹ While the recession officially ended in 2004, many consider its primary effects —high levels of joblessness and poverty combined with an economic slowdown— to have continued to this day.

⁵⁰ Mollenkopf and Castells, 1991.

⁵¹ See *ibid.*, 11. By extreme poverty is meant those earning less than 75 percent of the poverty level.

⁵² According to Barry Bluestone (1998), between 1978 and 1986, income in the bottom 20 percent in the U.S. declined only 1 percent, while that of the upper 20 percent increased by 12 percent. On inequality in U.S. in the 1990's see Economic Policy Institute, 2001.

⁵³ See e.g.: Galbraith and Berner, 2001.

⁵⁴ See e.g.: "Global economic inequality," March 11, 2004.

⁵⁵ Fiscal Policy Institute, January 21, 2004. Jobs in "Leisure and Hospitality" were the absolute lowest, averaging \$21,184. Broad trend in the substitution of lower-paying jobs for good-paying jobs is not new for New York. FPI's "The State of Working New York" biennial publications identified a similar pattern during the last recovery and expansion period from 1992 to 2000 and using annual average employment data, for the 2000 to 2002 period. Deterioration in the quality of jobs was evident for nine out of ten regions in NYS for the 2000 to 2002 period. See Fiscal Policy Institute, 2001 and 2003.

⁵⁶ Does not include direct mail advertising.

⁵⁷ This figure added some business services not included in original figures, so I reduced it by 10% of business services. It is already a conservative figure, as it does not include the Bronx or Staten Island.

⁵⁸ Working for America Institute, 2002.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, viii

⁶¹ Markee, July, 2002. 517,345 low cost units were lost out of a total of 1,008,114 between 1990 and 2000. Between 1990 and 2000 alone, New York City had lost over 50% of its stock of apartments affordable to low-income renters.

⁶² Median gross rents (including rent and utilities) increased from \$509 to \$700 in current dollars between 1991 and 1999. Markee, *ibid.*, 1.

⁶³ Coalition for the Homeless, November 2004.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ For instance in 1998 at the height of the 90's boom, the number spiked 58% to 21,000.

⁶⁷ Zukin, 1996, 81.

⁶⁸ Engels, 1990 (1867) 36.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ "New York Keeps 'Love' from Knife – A Movie Slasher Will leave the City's Logo Alone." July 28, 1989.

⁷¹ Greenberg, 2003.

⁷² Austin, 2001.

⁷³ Austin, 2001; ABNY, 2002. As Austin puts it: "Writing on the walls were in effect [seen as] assaults and riots waiting to happen." This common sense was tested when, in 1984, using razor wire, guard dogs, and infrared sonar, the city finally reached its goal of "graffiti free" subways (in a "historic achievement" publicized worldwide), and crime on the subways actually *worsened*. Thus it seems crime was not simply a response to visual cues, but to escalating unemployment and citywide recession, which remained unchecked. (Austin, 2001)

⁷⁴ For an elaboration of this theory see Kelling and Coles [1996]. For a critical view on how policies based on this theory exacerbated race and class tensions in New York, see McArdle and Erzen [2001].

⁷⁵ To cite Felker's introduction to *The Power Game* once more: "Definitions of power change...New York is not a political capital in the way that other imperial cities of the past – such as Athens, Rome, Paris, or London – were...It is the communications capital of America and the world. In New York it isn't military might that matters but the power of ideas."

⁷⁶ Hannigan, 1998; Ward, 2000

Afterword:

Re-branding New York after 9/11

We're going to imaginatively, aggressively, and relentlessly market our cultural attractions and all our competitive advantages ... We're confident (this) will win us attention from businesses around the world that are looking for new markets and opportunities for growth. And we'll take advantage of our brand. New York is the best-known city on the planet. Our skyline is recognized worldwide. News from our streets reaches homes around the globe. At last count, more than 340 songs have been written about New York. Yet, as a city we've never taken direct coordinated custody of our image. By changing that, we can realize additional city revenues immediately.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg, "State of the City" address, 2003¹

In looking at how New York City power brokers have responded to the economic crisis following the recession of the 1999-2001, and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, it would seem that no lessons were learned from the contradictions that emerged from the city's marketing-led recovery strategy of the late 1970's. Today, a central component of Mayor Michael Bloomberg's economic development agenda, as formally laid out in his State of the City address of 2003, is to "take direct coordinated custody" of New York's image, and to "re-brand the city." This is of course a booming echo of the Beame administration's effort to create a "comprehensive plan to market the city," and to finally turn New York into a "self-promoter."² As in the 1970's, this marketing agenda is only the public face of a much more profound effort to spur market rate real estate and business development through increasing the value of the New York City product, as well as by offering direct give-aways to the private sector. If anything, it would seem that New York's current recovery strategy is a replay of the fiscal crisis era, except for it being on a much wider scale, with a far more sophisticated business plan, and with some of the business world's most experienced marketers ensconced at the highest levels of

city government—as opposed to partnering with City Hall from the outside. Indeed, once laughable economic development strategies —based on notions of the infinite, no-cost rewards of the magic industries of image marketing and tourism— have arguably become the common sense of our times. Keeping this broader historical context in mind, in what follows I will critically explore the particularities of our current era of branding New York.

The New Image Police

One of the city's very first recovery strategies following 9/11 was to “re-brand” the WTC site, and thereby the city as a whole, as a safe, profitable, and patriotic tourist destination and corporate location. This entailed mounting massive advertising and PR campaigns, while also offering real economic incentives to shoppers, tourists and corporations tied in to September 11th. As reported in the *Wall Street Journal*, ‘for the city’s official marketers New York isn’t just a wounded city, but a challenged brand [...and] like all challenged brands, it needs...an overarching scheme to reposition itself in the American popular consciousness.’³ And as in profitable corporate branding campaigns, this overarching scheme should involve *both* the symbolic transformation of the product’s image in the eyes of consumers and simultaneously, if less publicly, the material restructuring of the entrepreneurial city itself in the interest of its shareholders, if not its citizens.

The patriotic re-branding of New York City was only the most visible side of a dual economic development strategy being pushed by the city's public and private sector leadership. In addition to marshalling scarce public funds for a wide-scale city marketing campaign, efforts were also quickly underway to restructure the city and state's tax code and budget to make New York more appealing and profitable for business. Behind the scenes of the media and marketing blitz, the city was crafting an equally creative array of tax breaks and incentives for the corporate sector, thus continuing the much criticized corporate retention strategy of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's Economic Development Corporation [EDC] of the 1990's. The most egregious of these private subsidies, and one scarcely covered by the media, was when New York Governor George Pataki and Mayor Bloomberg allowed \$5.5 billion of the \$20 billion in federal disaster aid to be siphoned off for corporate tax breaks, regardless of whether companies actually stayed in the city, or had ever intended to leave in the first place.⁴ This proved short-sighted when, three years later, New York State Senators Hillary Clinton and Charles Schumer were still petitioning the Republican congress for over half of the remaining money to be delivered.

Meanwhile, the public face of this costly pro-business approach was intensive, corporate-style brand marketing. To mount this effort, a little known but extremely powerful political network was quickly mobilized. Leading the way were "public private partnerships" — the New York City Partnership and the Association for a Better New York — representing some of the biggest financial and real estate interests in the city. They worked alongside entrepreneurial city and state economic development agencies (all of which 'corporatized' their names and missions in the mid 1990's). These

included: New York City & Co., (formerly known as the New York's Convention and Visitors' Bureau); New York City's Economic Development Corporation (formerly known as the Office of Economic Development); and, at the State level, the Empire State Development Corporation [ESDC] (formerly known as the Department of Commerce). And in a pivotal role was a new quasi- public agency appointed by the ESDC and Governor Pataki called the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, 80% of whose members represented major business interests. With the assistance of major media and marketing firms, many of whose CEO's sat on the boards of the above organizations and donated their services pro bono, the coalition quickly created influential new city marketing groups such as New York Rising and the Crisis Communications Committee.

Divisions within the re-branding effort revealed the coalition's careful attention to corporate techniques of branding and niche marketing. As the *Wall Street Journal* put it, those behind the re-branding originally fell into two camps, the 'pile fetishizers' and the 'pile minimizers', with the former seeking to market quasi-spiritual pilgrimages to 'ground zero,' emphasizing human suffering and the need for healing, and the latter seeking to downplay the tragedy itself and focus instead on New York's victorious spirit and ability to stand up to the terrorists.⁵ The specificity of the debate was not accidental. It was informed by a 600 page, three-part, nationwide market research report, purchased by ESDC, and conducted by D.K. Shifflet & Associates, Ltd. in the months immediately following 9-11.⁶ In this report, different "traveler types" were identified according to their psychographic reaction to events, ranging from "focused business travelers" to "the sad and anxious." Over three months, the numbers of trips taken by the former, mostly

male upper income earners, were found to increase, while those of the latter, mostly low to middle income earning women, were slightly decreasing. Thus public sector city marketers were trained in the same psychographic market research techniques, and bottom line calculations, as their colleagues in the corporate sector.

A balance was tentatively struck between the pile's minimizers and fetishizers. For a brief moment, marketers emphasized the city's unflagging strength and patriotism in the face of attack, while also highlighting, and capitalizing on, the flood of sympathy evoked by the tragedy. But over time, the balance shifted decisively away from expressions of sympathy and references to tragedy. This move indicated the coalition's desire to target the more lucrative "focused business travelers," and its disregard for the "the sad and anxious." It also signified the coalition's attention to the essential principle of branding which, as marketing experts all know, is to unify divergent strands of meaning into a monolithic, controlled, and *positive* image. Since the goal of all branding is to saturate a product with these unified visual and emotional meanings so as to inspire consumption, the coalition undoubtedly understood that consumption would be far more difficult to inspire if their product was saturated with grief, horror, and anxious memories of the past— rather than strength, valor, and clear visions of future triumph.

A further sign of the corporate mentality of the coalition was in their understanding that constant *brand management* —or what might be called *image policing*— was required to sustain this subtle and yet all-encompassing marketing approach. For instance, while the branding coalition helped fund a multimillion-dollar "ground zero viewing platform" on

Church Street, and included the logos of sponsoring corporations on the official signs, they explicitly forbade the posting of any of the original missing posters created by loved ones of those trapped in the towers, or of the myriad hand-written notes, placards, and mementos that honored the deceased and sent condolences to New Yorkers. Image policing was also extended to charity drives—as when ESDC forbade Milton Glaser from using a newly created logo—‘I ♥ NY More Than Ever’, with a black mark over the heart—as a fund-raising device for victims’ families. As owners of the original logo designed by Glaser, David Catalfamo, ESDC senior deputy commissioner, explained, “We think the heart of New York is bigger and stronger than ever. We don’t want to show a damaged heart.” Instead they launched two upbeat campaigns: a 25th anniversary version of ‘I ♥ NY’, emphasizing Manhattan shopping and entertainment, and ‘New York Stronger than Ever’, accompanied by a red, white and blue infinity symbol, which became the city’s new official logo. Through branding partnerships with global corporations like American Express, Mercedes Benz, and AOL Time Warner, this logo, slogan, and sentiment were extended through giant billboards and glamorous TV commercials promoting both the city and the sponsoring corporations. As Glaser responded, when his less easily commercialized design was rejected: ‘There isn’t a lot of poetry in politics or marketing.’⁷

Understanding that such policing required leadership that was strong and centralized—if not publicly accountable—Bloomberg took steps in the following year to bring brand management into the core of city administration. He established a top-level position of ‘Chief Marketing Officer’ (a title borrowed from the corporate sector) to oversee all of

the city's promotion and marketing efforts and to seek out sponsorship, merchandising and other such revenue-generating opportunities for the city.⁸ The mayor has also assembled a "special task force" of leaders in business and advertising to help the city encourage investment, attract jobs and expand tourism, and which reported directly to him.⁹ And finally, Mayor Bloomberg formed a "permanent host committee," to help New York attract major events (such as the Republican National Convention and the Olympics).¹⁰ The committee's offices were placed in the city's own EDC headquarters, and as such it worked closely with the sympathetic Deputy Mayor and EDC chairman Dan Doctoroff— who previous to taking this public office had been the chairman of "NYC 2012," the public-private bid to win the Olympics in international competition.

All of these efforts packaged and sold post-9/11 New York City as a symbol of the nation's indomitable spirit. The economic development pitch was essentially that, through buying an association with New York City, its new-found symbolic capital could easily be extended to enhance the brand value of a range of commodities, and thus increase profits. As Deputy Mayor Doctoroff explained, "'Whether it is the [city's] energy and the excitement, or more recently the resiliency and courage, those are attributes that companies want to associate with.'" ¹¹ And according to the *Daily News*, "Most independent advertising executives yesterday agreed [with Doctoroff], suggesting that New York could reap tens of millions of dollars" through selling its courageous, resilient, patriotic post-9/11 image.¹²

Grief as a Cry for War -- and Commerce

Even before the beginning of the Republican convention, producers at the major television news networks said this weekend that they knew this much: ... the prevailing image of the Republican convention would be President Bush with his arm around a New York City fireman, holding a bullhorn, atop the still smoldering rubble of the twin towers.

*Jim Rutenberg, New York Times, August 30, 2004.*¹³

Our Grief is Not a Cry for War.

Common slogan of New Yorkers who opposed the use of 9/11 as justification to take the US to war.

The city's upbeat yet macabre approach to branding itself after 9/11 was successful in many ways. The city attracted a growing wave of 'patriotic tourism', and by the summer of 2002 had channeled two dozen meetings to New York at least in part because of 9/11. In general, the rise in convention business since 9/11 had been met with a dramatic rise in tourism to Downtown Manhattan to visit "the ruins" of the WTC — a shift that became an oft-cited economic indicator. According to the Downtown Alliance, already by September, 2002, the site of the fallen towers was drawing an astonishing 3.6 million visitors a year, doubling the number drawn to the observation deck atop the actual WTC.¹⁴ As a *New York Times* article noted: 'the fallen trade center site has done what it could not do when standing: turn the financial district into one of the city's top attractions.'¹⁵ Hotel occupancy rates downtown also saw a dramatic increase, from 52.5% in the fourth quarter of 2001 to 74.06% by the same period in 2002, and by 2003, a remarkable 78.8%.¹⁶ This was, for the first time, even better than rates for New York City as a whole, which in 2003 had rebounded to only 76%.¹⁷

Given this surge in patriotic tourism, which many saw, symbolically, leading New York's overall economic recovery, it is not surprising that New York should have the two biggest and most coveted tourist industry conventions: the American Society of Tourist Agents convention and the Travel Industry of America's "International Pow Wow."¹⁸ William Maloney, ASTA executive vice president, saw this resurgent New York as "a metaphor for our industry," as well as a symbolic tool for turning around this industry's fortunes. The deciding factor in choosing New York for their convention was "the symbolism of helping our compatriots in New York, but also the symbolism that travel agents must lead the way to travel. Travel is an inherent right, and we cannot let it be taken away."¹⁹

A similar tone of national unity, breast-beating, and profiteering was struck when New York was chosen to host its most high profile and controversial post 9/11 convention yet: the Republican National Convention [RNC], at which George W. Bush was to be nominated for a second term as President. From the moment of New York's selection, masterminded by Republican strategist Karl Rove, "the symbolism was apparent."²⁰ The Republican party would be "rallying around its nominee in the city that had come to embody the nation's resolve in the wake of the 9/11 attacks." This unity would be echoed by images of the president "rallying the nation to unite in the war on terror"—as epitomized by the photograph of "Bush with his arm around a New York City fireman, holding a bullhorn, atop the still smoldering rubble of the twin towers."²¹

Use of images of 9/11 by Republicans had already proven controversial, as it gave the appearance of exploiting a national tragedy for political gain. When the Bush campaign put out its first commercial containing a *split-second* clip of firefighters dragging a flag-draped coffin from the rubble of the fallen towers, resulting protests led the campaign to edit the ad. This symbolic allusion became even more controversial once the Bush administration invaded Iraq in April 2003, and used unsubstantiated evidence linking Saddam Hussein to Al Qaeda's attacks of 9/11 as justification for the invasion. Thus the choice of New York City for the *four day-long* RNC—which at over \$100 million was the most expensive convention in US history—was seen by the president's supporters and detractors alike as extremely risky. Not only did the use of the city at a time of deteriorating conditions in Iraq create an even greater impression of political profiteering, New York City's own residents were overwhelmingly Democratic and opposed to the Bush administration's policies—particularly the war in Iraq.²² This was a city where, almost immediately after 9/11, thousands of New Yorkers embraced the slogan "Our Grief is Not A Cry for War," in anticipation of the possibility that their suffering would be used to justify a war that they themselves did not support.

Nonetheless, exploiting the symbolic and political capital of New York's courageous and resilient brand was an opportunity that the Republicans couldn't pass up. This was particularly the case in a close race against Senator John Kerry, a decorated war hero, and with the President's own military credentials and judgment being daily called into question. In this tenuous situation, image was everything—for as the major news agencies were constantly reporting, "Polls show that perhaps Mr. Bush's greatest strength

over Mr. Kerry is the *perception* that he is protecting the nation from terrorist attacks.”²³ And the image of Bush atop the smoking ruins of the WTC was the best, if not the only evidence the campaign had to back up this questionable perception. While RNC organizers were loathe to admit it publicly, delegates spoke enthusiastically about using the city as a “stage,” arguing this symbolism was vital to the President’s reelection strategy, and by extension his defense of the war. As Richard Aguilar, a delegate from Minnesota, said: “We absolutely need to invoke Sept. 11 in the convention. This election will determine how we fight a war on terror that began right here in this city.”²⁴

Yet, as we have seen, it is in the contradictory nature of media symbols to be subverted by groups with sufficient political power and creativity to do so, and urban brand images are no exception. In what may be remembered as one of the most carefully orchestrated acts of counter-branding, or *detournement*, in history, over one million people came to New York City to protest over the four days of the convention, and to turn the New York City symbols appropriated by the RNC on their head. Myriad forms of creative resistance became part of the “counter-convention.” These ranged from a massive, permitted march of over 500,000 people past the convention site at Madison Square Garden—the largest in the history of U.S. political conventions—to an array of smaller acts of civil disobedience and direct action situated and designed to gain maximum media attention.²⁵

These protesters sought coverage from the hive of spectacle-hungry mainstream media, who were being dispatched to cover events with military-like precision from their “media

command center,” in the luxuriously re-tooled main post office, connected via a specially constructed bridge to the Convention Center itself.²⁶ In addition, activist groups were aided by independent media makers who, having learned from past protests, took advantage of inexpensive new text-messaging and digital media technology to both coordinate and cover the many events. Dubbed “the New York Model,” indymedia’s innovation involved posting a live newswire to inform activists, legal observers, and the media—as well as the police— of what was happening simultaneously in multiple locations.²⁷ This media saturated environment lent itself to highly symbolic, satirical, and spectacular forms of protest, and often attracted more cameras than participants. Thus, Billionaires for Bush donned tuxedos, ball-gowns, pig snouts and Dick Cheney masks, and threw their own party in front of an exclusive Halliburton fundraiser, in which they jubilantly dove into a trough of money. Meanwhile, the Axis of Eve held a demonstration in which lines of women ceremonially stripped to reveal panties emblazoned with risqué, anti-Bush slogans, and then marched military-style through Battery Park, the Statue of Liberty in the background. These political performances received international coverage—if only in the form of single, eye-catching photographs and colorful sound-bites.²⁸

Ultimately, however, the predominant image shown on network television, the primary news source for most Americans, was of the meticulously orchestrated convention itself. In addition to the media networks’ own actions,²⁹ this emphasis was made possible by the unprecedented level of image policing provided by the Bloomberg administration and its high powered RNC host committee. The first such move took place in the federal

courts, where a “First Amendment show-down” took place in the week prior to the convention over whether the main UFPJ march would have access to Central Park's Great Lawn. At the eleventh hour, the courts ruled against the protest coalition and for the Bloomberg administration. Consequently, the big march of the day before the convention brought out historically large numbers but concluded anti-climactically with no symbolic rally in the heart of Manhattan showing the full scale of the protest. Once the convention week began, image policing was enforced by tens of thousands of NYPD officers, as well as private security and national guard units, who turned several blocks around Madison Square Garden into a “frozen zone,” closed to all pedestrian and vehicular traffic except for delegates and credentialed media. While this security level had federal mandate and some degree of popular support due to the threat of terrorism, nonetheless the extent of policing and the paramilitary, “zero tolerance” tactics employed by the police led to critiques of chilling political speech, and of symbolically equating protesters with terrorists.

Intimidating police tactics included the use of scooters as a form of crowd control; pervasive surveillance of lawful activity, which could result in political dossiers or files of critics of the government; and the use of pens, barricades and netting to make mass arrests that often engulfed uninvolved bystanders. Ultimately, a total of 1,821 arrests were made over four days, more than during any other convention in US history.³⁰ Those arrested were searched and held without due process and for extended periods in overcrowded conditions in a makeshift jail set up in a bus depot at Pier 57, which appeared to be contaminated with harmful chemicals. Meanwhile, the NYPD made no

meaningful efforts to facilitate their processing and many people were not released until a court ordered the city to do so, under threat of heavy fines, in response to a complaint filed by the New York chapter of the ACLU.³¹ According to many legal observers and protesters, neither the dangerous and invasive police tactics, nor the excessive delays in processing arrestees, were accidental, but rather were part of the city's plan to keep unruly protesters "out of sight" of the delegates and news cameras by any means necessary, even if it meant denying them their civil liberties.³²

In historic terms—if not in the eyes of the host committee and image police—the symbolic impact of the week of convention and counter-convention was one of montage rather than monologue, as New York became a complex site of conflict and controversy, rather than a simple brand icon of strength and unity. A similarly complex picture emerges when one tries to evaluate the economic impact of the RNC, and of the marketing-led strategy of economic development more broadly.

The upsurge of tourism to Lower Manhattan and the WTC site continued into 2004. In the week of the RNC, typically one of the year's slowest weeks for tourism, PriceWaterhouse-Coopers estimated hotel occupancy rates to reach a record-breaking 87%, while some of the City's biggest hotels are reporting occupancy rates of more than 90%.³³ Using the tourism industry's complicated multiplier effects, the Mayor and the host committee estimated the overall economic impact of the RNC at \$255 million.³⁴ Many argued the result was ultimately a wash, when one considers the \$100 million amount the city spent on the convention — over 75% of which went for security—and then adds the lost business, commerce, and tourism caused by the convention, which

drove tens of thousands to leave town and turned much of the city into a ghost town. Nonetheless, the enduring value of the convention from the perspective of City Hall was that the “overwhelming majority of convention visitors now have a favorable opinion of the city” and claim they will return to New York for a vacation.³⁵

Yet even if one wants to make the argument that New York’s image improved in the eyes of tourists, Republicans, Texans, corporate location scouts, and the high-end real estate market, many of the city’s more fundamental economic and social indicators remain far from rosy. In the three months of 2003 before the Mayor made his celebratory State of the City speech, the city’s unemployment averaged 9%, or double the rest of the state, and much higher than rest of the country. All told, New York City total job loss, which began with the recession of December 2000, had ballooned to 240,000 jobs lost by June 2003, a 6.4% decline and more than three times the national decline.³⁶ While this rising unemployment poses a threat to all New Yorkers, this is particularly so for New York’s low-and moderate-income families, many of whom are only a paycheck away from hardship or poverty.³⁷ Meanwhile, New York City’s social safety net for such families (including federal, state, and city aid) provided much less of a cushion than it had during the last recession period of 1990-1992, and less still when compared to the fiscal crisis era of the 1970’s.³⁸

As of this writing, these trends have not abated. New York City is in the midst of a severe and prolonged economic and housing crisis. Its marketing-led strategy of economic development, focused on polarized, image-sensitive service industries,

promises to create the conditions for more such crises in the future. And yet, to the outside observer, and even to many residents, the city appears to be on the up and up. Hotels are filling up, movies are being shot on location across the city, Broadway is booming, the WTC site remains a must-see tourist attraction, and “bold new plans” are being proposed to expand the capacity of Javitz Convention Center and to connect it a lavish new stadium on the West Side to win the Olympics for the city in 2012. It would seem that the contradiction between image and reality in New York City has never been greater, nor more well maintained. And so never has there been a better time to address these contradictions head on.

¹ Mayor Michael Bloomberg, 2003.

² Beame and Marrero, 1977,

³ Shalit, *ibid*.

⁴ Bowles, 2001; Bagli, 2002; Fitzgerald, 2002

⁵ Shalit, 2001, W17.

⁶ D.K. Shifflet & Associates Ltd, December 3, 2001-February 15, 2002.

⁷ Purnick, 2001.

⁸ One of the more controversial aspects of this job involved devising opportunities to sell “naming rights,” whereby corporations could pay to replace the name of New York City landmarks and institutions with their own brand name, and/or use public property for their own marketing. The first major deal the CMO signed was with Snapple, who bought the right to be the exclusive beverage vendor in New York public schools, and to do spin-off ads using Board of Education students and property. This deal has been temporarily suspended by the city Comptroller due to possible conflict of interest. See Commercial Alert [find cite]

⁹ The taskforce, convened in March, 2003, includes Kathryn Wylde of NYCP, as well as advertising luminaries Rochelle Lazarus, head of Ogilvy & Mather Worldwide and Mike Dolan, head of Young & Rubicam, Inc.

¹⁰ Stohr, March 17, 2003.

To the amusement of New York editorial writers, Bloomberg put the former president of the Miss Universe pageants, Maureen Reidy, in charge of the host committee. As quoted in Stohr, Reidy “breathlessly” proclaimed: “We want to secure the biggest deals to bring the best events to the greatest city in the world...There’s nothing I would rather do than be showing people how great New York is.” As reported in the Sun, [find cite] this move was also significant because previously the city established ad hoc committees to woo such events. According to Jonathan Tisch, CEO of Loews hotels, chairman of NYC & Co, and co-chair of the new permanent committee, New York City had to “reinvent the wheel” each time it bid on an event. “We would have to set up an office, set up a fundraising operation, find people to do a million different things,” he told the *Sun*. “Now there will already be a mechanism in place.”

¹¹ New York Daily News, April 2, 2003.

¹² New York Daily News, April 2, 2003.

¹³ Rutenberg, August 30, 2004.

¹⁴ Blair, 2002: B1. The number put the site in the same league as the city’s two major tourist attractions, the Metropolitan Museum of Art — at 4.6 million visitors— and the Statue of Liberty — at 4.2 million, when

open This was an unprecedented accomplishment for the area of the WTC, where developers had tried and failed since the towers' inception to create a 24-hour tourist and entertainment destination. On this point see Greenberg, 2004.

¹⁵ Blair, *ibid.*

¹⁶ Downtown Alliance, Winter 2003 and April 2004.

¹⁷ NYC&Co., *ibid.*

¹⁸ Scott, 2002.53.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Many also believed the choice of dates was significant. The convention season was traditionally in June and July, but the RNC was pushed back to August 30-September 2, 2004, possibly so that it would coincide with the beginning of celebrations commemorating the third anniversary of the attacks of September 11th, 2001. Republican Governor George Pataki also planned a special ground-breaking ceremony for the rebuilding of the WTC site so that Republican delegates could attend.

²¹ Slackman, April 10, 2004, b1, and Rutenberg, *ibid.*

²² Slackman, *ibid.* Slackman interviewed Democrats and Republicans alike before the RNC who speculated on the fall-out from the Bush administration's current political and military difficulties — namely: "Richard A. Clarke, the 9/11 commission and a rising insurgency in Iraq"— in terms of the symbolic value of New York City as site for the RNC. "Now, as the administration faces increasing scrutiny of its handling of pre-9/11 terror threats and the wisdom of extending the war on terrorism into Iraq, the question has emerged whether New York is the best place for the Republicans to be gathering this summer." The premise for coming to New York "is no longer valid," said Roger Stone, a longtime Republican political strategist who supports President Bush. "Karl Rove's master stroke idea may turn out to be an unmitigated disaster. It has the potential to highlight an issue that may be a negative by the time he gets to the convention."

²³ Rutenberg, *ibid.* My emphasis.

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ The path and ultimate destination of this march, organized by the coalition United for Peace and Justice, itself became a symbolic battle... discuss briefly attempt to shunt the marchers to the West Side Highway, and ultimate denial of a permit to use Central Park for a post march rally, due to concern for the grass.

²⁶ Mayor Bloomberg designed this command center with all the possible amenities—including gourmet buffet representing New York City's international cuisine—in part to positively dispose the national and international media to New York City. As he said in an interview "it can't hurt to have reporters eating pastrami sandwiches before they run out to cover a story with a local backdrop."

²⁷ Scahill, 08 Sep 2004. As Scahill says: "This groundbreaking campaign of direct action and comprehensive news reporting... was one of the many creative, guerilla tactics employed by the decentralized resistance movement in North America that grew out of the WTO protests in Seattle in 1999. In contrast to the multi-million dollar security budgets for the Democratic and Republican conventions and at the recent FTAA meetings in Miami, activists are using existing technology that is virtually cost free to mobilize hundreds of actions and thousands of activists."

²⁸ See links to news coverage, both independent and mainstream, at www.axisofeve.org and www.billionairesforbush.org.

²⁹ The limited coverage of protests on mainstream channels was exacerbated by the fact that all of the major TV networks, except PBS, joined in limiting coverage of both parties' conventions to four hours a day. This was the first time such caps were set since conventions had been televised. Supposedly this was done because ratings were not expected to be high.

³⁰ Anya Kamanetz, *Village Voice*. "The widely reported figure [of 1821 arrests] is a measure not of the strength of the protest movement, but of the very real chill on activists ... and, indeed, anyone who voices an unpopular belief in public. The actions that became grounds for arrest during that highly charged week included walking down the sidewalk during a march, riding a bicycle virtually anywhere in the city, and in the case of those arrested inside Madison Square Garden, expressing an opinion different from those around you."

³¹ ACLU cite. On September 3, a state judge found the city to be in contempt of court, and imposed a \$1,000 fine for each of the 470 still being held. There was no report of final payments.

³² Testimony at City Council Hearing on Police Practices During the Republican National Convention September 14, 2004, held by Deputy Majority Leader William Perkins and the Government Operations Committee.

³³ That compares to 74% during the same period last year, slowest period of the year.

³⁴ NYC Host Committee 2004 Press Release, September 3, 2004. The "title" of this press release reads: "MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG DELIVERS 2004 REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION WRAP-UP AND ASSESSES \$255 MILLION IMPACT ON CITY'S ECONOMY. New York City Police Department Kept Entire City Safe While Allowing Free Speech. Overwhelming Majority of Convention Visitors have Favorable Opinion of City and will Return to New York for Vacation."

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ As FPI studies document, the loss of about 100,000 jobs, or 40% of the city's total decline, can be traced directly to 9/11. The bursting of the Wall Street and dot-com bubbles, together with the effects on closely related industries such as business services and management consulting, cost the city roughly another 100,000 jobs. See Fiscal Policy Institute, 2002.

³⁷ Boushey, February 14, 2002. Boushey cites statistics from the Economic Policy Institute to show that for families in the lower 40% of the wage scale, the decline in family earnings in a recession is twice as great as for higher paid workers. This creates a downward spiral. As wages fall, the working poor fall behind in mortgage payments, and credit card debt mushrooms. This helps explain why personal bankruptcies rose by 25% in New York City between 2001 and 2003.

³⁸ Parrott and Cooke, December 3, 2002..

APPENDIX A. The City of Many Names

The largest selection of New York City nicknames can be found in *Names and Sobriquets of U.S. Cities and States* (second edition 1970) by Joseph Nathan Kane and Gerard L. Alexander. pages 132-133, with numbers added:

1. America's Leading Tourist Resort
2. America's Mecca
3. Father Knickerbocker (referring to the type of trousers worn by the early Dutch settlers)
4. Gotham (name given to by Washington Irving in the *Salmagundi Papers*, 1907)
5. The Bablyonian Bedlam (allusion to confusion of tongues at Babel, described in Genesis XI)
6. The Bagdad of the Subway
7. The Bagdad on the Hudson
8. The Banking Center of the World
9. The Big Apple
10. The Big Burg
11. The Big City
12. The Big Town
13. The Biggest Gateway to Immigrants
14. The Burg
15. The Business Capital of the Nation
16. The Business Capital of the World
17. The Capital of Finance
18. The Capital of the World
19. The Center of the World (Trygve Lie, first United Nations general secretary, Sept. 7, 1962)
20. The City
21. The City at the Crossroads of High Diplomacy
22. The City of Cities (book by Hulbert Foothier)
23. The City of Friendly People
24. The City of Golden Dreams
25. The City of Islands
26. The City of Light
27. The City of Orchestras (music center and "Tin Pan Alley")
28. The City of Skyscrapers
29. The City of Superlatives
30. The City of the World
31. The City of Towers
32. The City that Belongs to the World
33. The City that Never Sleeps
34. The City with Everything
35. The Cleanest Big City in the World
36. The Coliseum City
37. The Commercial Capital of America
38. The Commercial Emporium
39. The Corporate Capital of America
40. The Crossroads of the World

41. The Cuisine Capital of the World
42. The Cultural Capital of America
43. The Cultural Center of the Nation
44. The Cultural City
45. The Empire City
46. The Entertainment Capital of the World
47. The Fashion Capital of the World
48. The Fear City
49. The Financial Capital of the World
50. The Financial Hub
51. The First City of the World (the most populated city in the U.S., approximately 8 million)
52. The Friendly City
53. The Frog and Toe
54. The Front Office of American Business
55. The Fun City
56. The Fun City on the Hudson
57. The Greatest All-Year Round Vacation City
58. The Greatest Industrial Center in the World
59. The Headquarters of World Banking
60. The Hong Kong of the Hudson
61. The Host of the World
62. The Hub City of the World
63. The Hub of Transport
64. The Information City
65. The Land of Surprising Contrasts
66. The Mecca for Young Adults
67. The Media City
68. The Melting Pot (drama by Israel Zangwill, 1908)
69. The Metropolis
70. The Metropolis of a Continent
71. The Metropolis of America
72. The Metropolitan City
73. The Mighty Manhattan
74. The Modern Gomorrah (one of the cities of the plains destroyed by fire and brimstone because of wickedness, mentioned in the Old Testament)
75. The Money Town
76. The Most Colorful Exciting City in the World
77. The Movie-Making City
78. The Nation's First City
79. The Nation's Greatest City
80. The Nation's Largest Communications Center
81. The Nation's Largest Port
82. The Port of Many Ports
83. The Printing Capital of the World
84. The Restaurant City
85. The Science City

86. The Seat of Empire (named in 1784 by George Washington)
87. The Super City
88. The University of Telephony
89. The Vacation City
90. The Wonder City
91. The Wonder City of the World
92. The Wonderful Town
93. The World Capital of Fashion
94. The World's Capital City
95. The World's Fair City
96. The World's Financial Capital
97. The World's Metropolis
98. The World's Most Exciting All Year Round Vacation Center

APPENDIX B: Tourism, Media, & Marketing (TMM) in New York City, 1967-1982: Establishments and Employmentⁱ

Industry	1963		1967		1972		1977		1982	
	establish- ments	employed	establish -ments	employed	establish -ments	employed	establish -ments	employed	establish -ments	employed
Total NYC private sector	N/A	N/A	201,486	3,225,740	173,470	3,141,599	139,082	2,714,385	161,236	2,896,979
Total TMM	N/A	N/A	11,413	303,099	10,897	273,323	10,589	234,503	10,693	280,201
Hotels & Motels	654	N/A	1,029	43,341	787	37,345	549	22,984	442	29,902
Amusement & Rec.	4,045	N/A	1,676	25,751	1,540	21,539	1,786	21,943	1,965	27,380
Printing & Publishing	N/A	141,200	4117	123,711	3,607	105,430	3,398	99,255	3,090	103,997
Radio, TV, News	N/A	N/A	59	15,643	83	19,372	210	15,252	175	24,914
Motion Pictures	1,285	N/A	1036	22,357	1,104	21,946	1,313	18,283	1,320	19,101
Advertising	4,231	N/A	1,341	44,649	1,278	34,264	1,237	33,258	1,326	38,600
Consulting & P.R.	[combined]	N/A	2,155	27,647	2,498	33,427	2,096	23,528	2,375	36,307

ⁱ US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1963-1982.

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- Former ABNY Vice President Alton Marshall
- Former Mayor Edward Koch
- Former President Gerald Ford
- Preston Robert Tisch, CEO of Loews
- Former DC 37 President Victor Gotbaum

Author interviews:

- Mary Holloway. Former Executive director of ABNY [interview conducted 3/30/03]
- Milton Glaser, Graphic Designer, Artistic Director of NYC [interview conducted 8/30/04]
- Clay Felker, founder and editor of NYM [interview conducted 8/27/03]

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