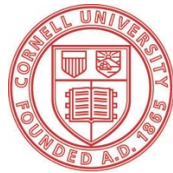


PLACING LABOUR IN THE NEW URBAN ECONOMY

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Futures,

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The Urbanization of Labour

- Unions as ‘urban entrepreneurs’
- Importance of Rent and Urban Regulation and Policy – ‘urban accumulation strategies’
- Relationships between unions, communities, the local state and developers
- Contradictions for unions as working class institutions

Hotel Trades Council New York

- Leads the sector in wages, benefits
- High rate of union density
- Industry-wide bargaining
- Membership resides in city
- Political clout
- Business unionism

Urban Strategy

Challenges

Testing of the Industry-wide agreement

Loss of luxury hotel rooms to condo conversion

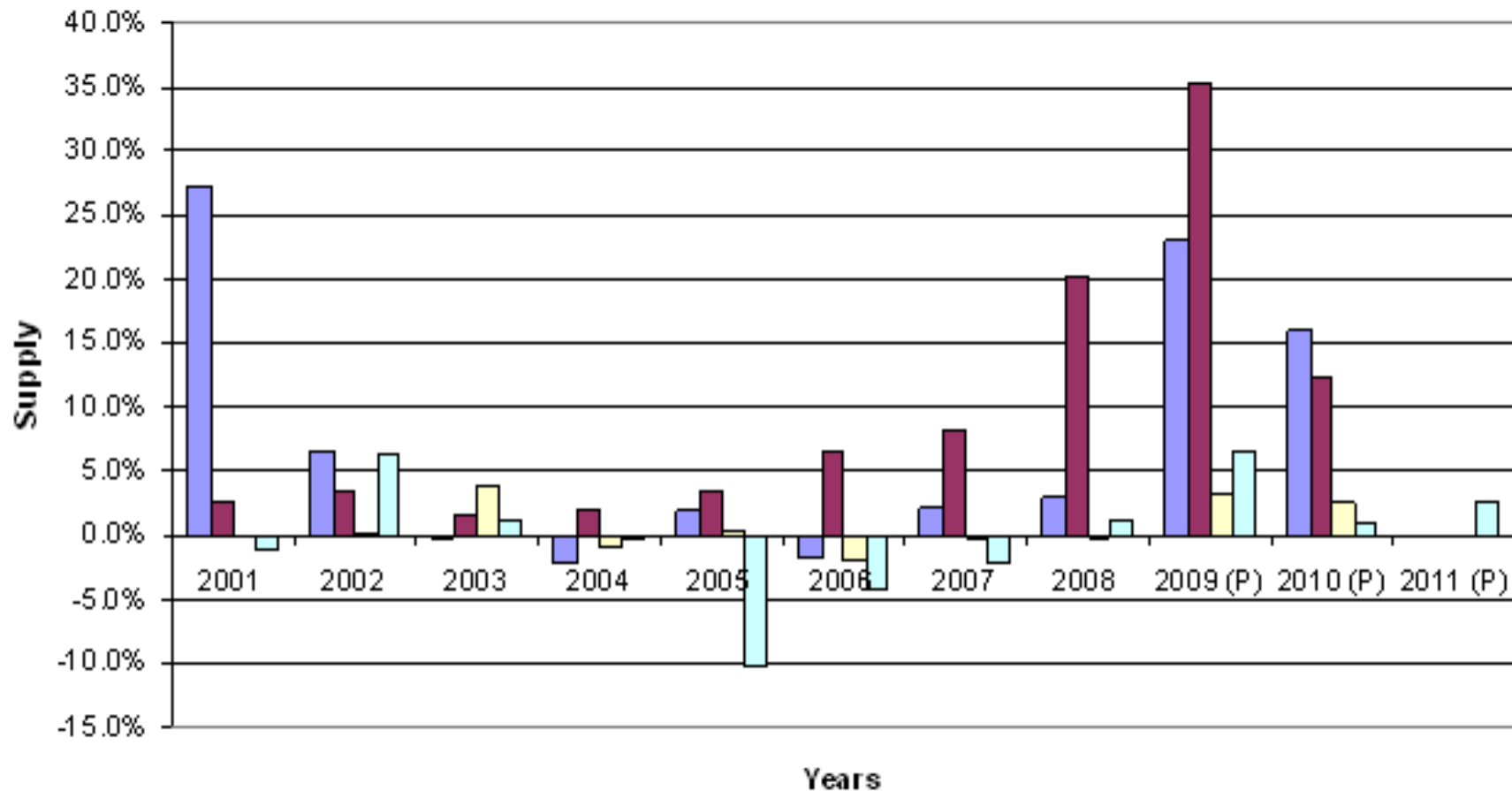
New limited-service and 'boutique' formats

Rapid increase in hotel room supply (19% in the period 2005-2010)

Opportunities

- Rezoning
- ULURP

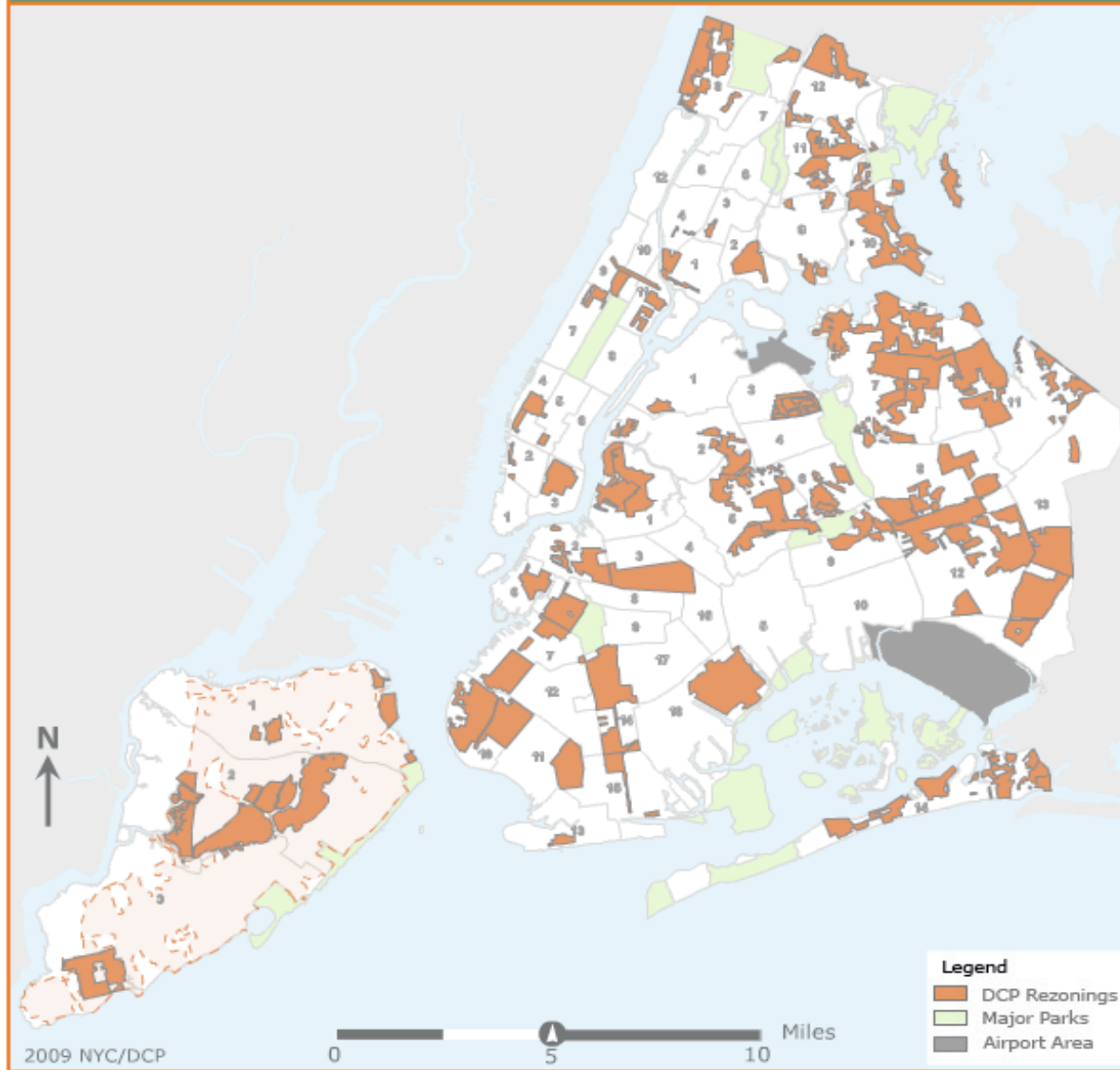
Manhattan Hotel Supply by Segment



Source: HVS (2009)

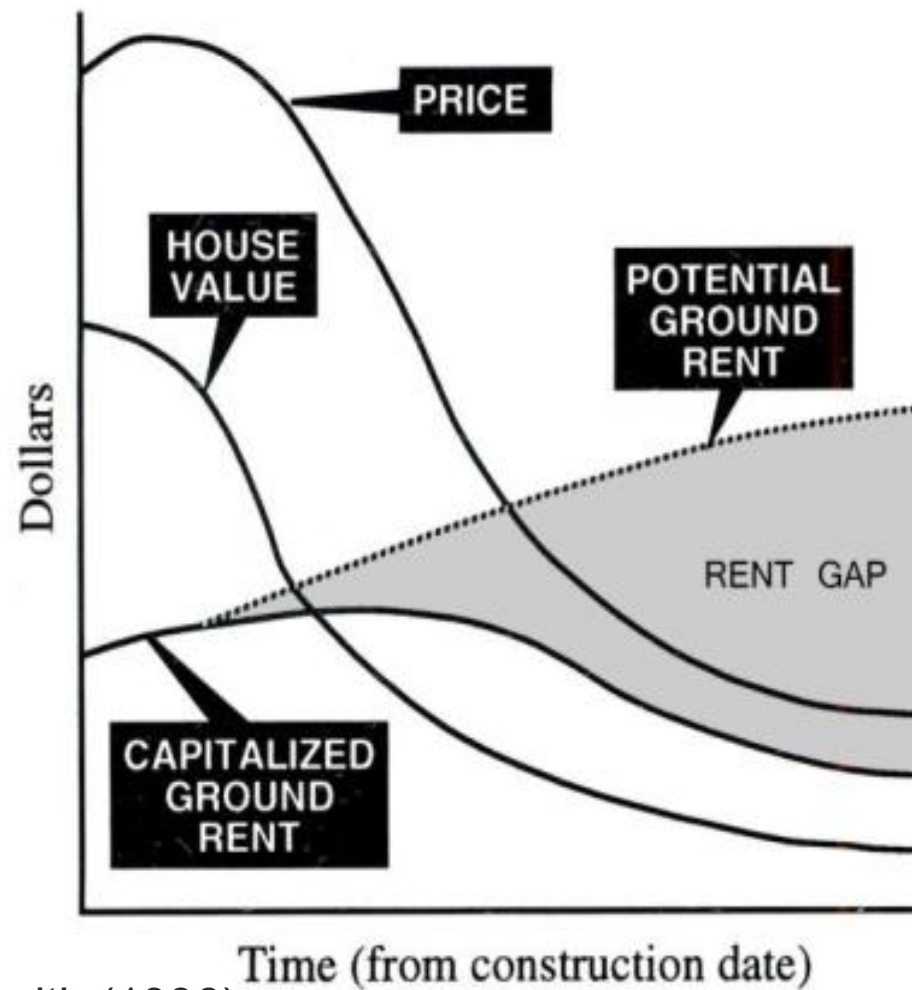
■ Boutique
 ■ Mid-scale
 ■ Full-Service
 ■ Luxury

DCP REZONINGS: 2002 - PRESENT



Source: NYC Department
of City Planning

Rent Gap



Source: Smith (1996)

Implications for Union Representation and Renewal

- Increase in political capacities at the city and sub-national scales
- Increase prominence of labour-community coalitions at the local scale
- Mobilization of union members as urban residents
- Divergent implications for the representation of class
- a) Broadening union representation to 'class in full'
- b) embedding of neoliberal politics in working class

Questions for Further Research :

- How may unions reconcile the interests of their members as urban producers with the plural and potentially conflicting interests and identities they hold as urban residents?
- How do unions advance public policies designed to further the collective workplace interests of their members through urban regulation in ways that converge with those of non-unionized workers and members of working class communities?
- And how do local unions promote place-based strategies in alliance with local firms and growth-oriented urban regimes without confronting 'geographical dilemmas' that pit workers in one place or scale against those in another, often with zero-sum outcomes?

Case selection

- Toronto/New York City
- “Creative City”
 - film industry unions
- “Tourist City”
 - hospitality unions
- “Sustainable City”
 - building trades
- “Caring City”
 - child care unions
- “Transit City”
 - transit unions

Six-part investigation

- 1) identify the impetus towards urban strategies;
- 2) model these strategies and the economic paradigms to which they are associated;
- 3) evaluate their effectiveness

Cont'd

- 4) understand how steering investment towards high road trajectories meets broader social policy objectives;
- 5) evaluate the limitations and explore the contradictions of these strategies;
- 6) establish a basis for learning and strategy/policy adoption across sectors and places.

Team members

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- Maria Figueroa – Cornell ILR
- Amanda Coles – Brock Labour Studies
- James Nugent – University of Toronto Geography
- Susanna Schaller – City College, CUNY

Contributions

- Post-renewal labour studies
- Role of labour in urban studies
- Labour geography

- Double political intervention:
Critique of neoliberal common sense, and
critique of a trade union instrumentalization
of the 'right to the city'