Through the Eye of Katrina
Through the Eye of Katrina: Social Justice in the United States

EDITED BY
Kristin A. Bates
Richelle S. Swan

CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS
Durham, North Carolina
This book is for the victims of Hurricane Katrina
and the victims of social injustice everywhere,
and to those dedicated to the struggle
for social justice and social change.
Contents

Preface xvii
Acknowledgments xix

Chapter 1 Social Justice in the Face of the Storm: When Natural Disasters Become Social Disasters
Richelle S. Swan and Kristin A. Bates 3

A Dangerous Equation: Social Injustice Equals Social Disaster 5
Looking at Hurricane Katrina through Multiple Lenses 7
Images from the Past: Social Justice and Hurricane Katrina in Context 7
Images of the Disaster: Reactions to Hurricane Katrina 9
Images of the Future: Policy, Activism, and Justice 10
References 12

Section One Images from the Past: Social Justice and Hurricane Katrina in Context

Chapter 2 Setting the Stage: Roots of Social Inequity and the Human Tragedy of Hurricane Katrina
DeMond S. Miller and Jason Rivera 15

The Hurricane Everyone Feared 15
Social Conditions prior to Katrina 17
Katrina and Environmental Justice Concerns 21
The History of Flooding in the Mississippi Valley 22
Historical, Social, and Environmental Factors 24
Colonialism 24
viii CONTENTS

Reconstruction 26
The Creation of Redeemer Governments and Segregation 28
Civil Rights Movement 29
Conclusion 30
References 32

Chapter 3 “Revolutions May Go Backwards”: The Persistence of Voter Disenfranchisement in the United States
Michelle Inderbitzin, Kelly Fawcett, Christopher Uggen and Kristin A. Bates 37

Critical Race Theory 38
Race and the History of Voter Disenfranchisement 39
Race and Felon Disenfranchisement 42
Race and Voter Disenfranchisement after Katrina 44
Controlling Race through Disenfranchisement 49
References 50

Chapter 4 Locked and Loaded: The Prison Industrial Complex and the Response to Hurricane Katrina
Shana Agid 55

Context for Disaster: The Prison Industrial Complex 57
Before the Storm: New Orleans, Louisiana, and the PIC in Brief 65
When the Storm Hit: “Law and Order” in a Flooded New Orleans 67
Conclusion 71
References 72

Chapter 5 Social Justice Movements: Education Disregarded, Lessons Ignored
Richelle S. Swan 77

Introduction 77
Defining Social Movements 78
The Civil Rights Movement 79
The Labor Movement 82
The Environmental Justice Movement 85
Conclusion 89
References 90
Chapter 6  Reminders of Poverty, Soon Forgotten  
*Alexander Keyssar*  
95

Section Two  
Images from the Disaster:  
Reactions to Hurricane Katrina

Chapter 7  New Song, Same Old Tune: Racial Discourse in the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina  
*Ashley “Woody” Doane*  
105

Racial Ideologies and Racial Politics  
106
New Song: Hurricane Katrina and the Racial Divide  
108
Same Old Tune: Color-Blindness and the Denial of Racism  
110
And the Beat Goes On: Katrina and Racial Discourse in 2006  
112
A Final Note: Hurricane Katrina and Racial Justice  
115
References  
117

Chapter 8  “Reasonable Racism”: The “New” White Supremacy and Hurricane Katrina  
*Dreama G. Moon and Anthony Hurst*  
125

Choosing a Hate Site to Analyze  
127
*American Renaissance*  
127
White Fictions and Racial “Realism”  
128
*Civilized White/Uncivilizable Black*  
130
*No Bridge Across*  
131
*White Man’s Burden*  
132
Racial “Realism” and Common White Racial Attitudes  
134
Connecting the Dots: White Supremacist Discourse and the Everyday Expressions of White Supremacy  
136
*No Bridge Across*  
138
*White Man’s Burden*  
139
On a Closing Note  
140
References  
140
Chapter 9 Katrina’s Latinos: Vulnerability and Disasters in Relief and Recovery
Nicole Trujillo-Pagán

Method

Latinos and New Orleans
Citizenship, Vulnerability, and the Right to Aid
Relief Assistance and Federal Welfare Policy
Latinos and Disaster
Conclusion
References

Chapter 10 From Invisibility to Hypervisibility: The Complexity of Race, Survival, and Resiliency for the Vietnamese-American Community in Eastern New Orleans
Karen J. Leong, Christopher Airriess, Angela Chia-Chen Chen, Verna Keith, Wei Li, Ying Wang, and Karen Adams

A Tale of Two Communities
Beyond a Black and White Analysis of Katrina
Community Capital and Social Justice
References

Chapter 11 Disaster Pornography: Hurricane Katrina, Voyeurism, and the Television Viewer
Benjamin R. Bates and Rukhsana Ahmed

Media and the Framing of Disaster
Defining Disaster Pornography
Analysis
Concluding Remarks
References

Chapter 12 Access to Mediated Emergency Messages: Differences in Crisis Knowledge across Age, Race, and Socioeconomic Status
Kenneth Lachlan, Patric R. Spence, and Christine Eith

Introduction
Crisis Communication Basics
CONTENTS

Knowledge Gap Hypothesis 206
Evacuees and Their Experiences 208
Information Seeking Prior to the Storm 210
Primary Information Sources 210
Crisis Preparation 210
Message Adequacy 211
Analyses 211
Discussion 214
Conclusion 215
Limitations 217
References 217

Chapter 13  Discrimination, Segregation, and the Racialized Search for Housing Post-Katrina
Jeannie Haubert Weil 221

Introduction 222
Racetalk and Accounts 224
Data and Methods 226
“I know it is wrong but …”: Excuses for Race-Based Exclusions 227
Scapegoating 228
Defeasibility 229
The Sad Tale 231
“It’s not wrong because …”: Justifications for race-based exclusions 232
Denial of the Victim 232
“I prefer a black family”: Responses to White Prejudice 234
Discussion and Conclusion 235
References 236

Chapter 14  The Voices of Katrina: Ethos, Race, and Congressional Testimonials
Terence Check 239

Ethos and the Art of Persuasion 241
A Voice to the People: Congressional Hearings on Race and Katrina 243
Re-thinking Ethos and Race 251
References 254
Section Three
Images of the Future:
Policy, Activism, and Justice

Chapter 15  George Bush Does Not Care about Black People:
Hip-Hop and the Struggle for Katrina Justice
David J. Leonard  261

Introduction  261
George Bush Doesn't Care about Black People: So Says Kanye West  263
Hip-Hop to the Rescue: Mainstream Rappers and Hurricane Katrina  266
Underground Hip-Hop: The Internet and the Struggle for Justice  272
Hip-Hop and a Social Justice Imagination  275
References  281

Chapter 16  Ordinary Struggle and the “Public Good”: Navigating
Vernacular Voices, State Power, and the Public Sphere
in Quests for Social Justice
Lisa R. Foster  285

Locating Rhetoric in Relation to Social Justice  287
Textual Analysis  288
Displacement as Public Responsibility or Public Threat  289
Displacement as a Public Loss or Public Gain  294
Conclusion  299
References  300

Chapter 17  Human Rights in Disaster Policy: Improving the Federal
Response to Natural Disasters, Disease Pandemics, and
Terrorist Attacks
Hannibal Travis  303

Introduction  303
Human Rights Implications of Natural and Human-Made Disasters  304
The Lessons of 9/11: Heeding Warnings, Sharing Information,
Evacuating Victims  305
Warnings That Were Not Passed on to the Public or First Responders  306
Victims Who Were Not Evacuated  307
Civilians Whose Health and Safety Were Not Protected  309
Hurricane Katrina: Ignored Warnings, Withheld Information, and a Delayed Evacuation 310

The Warnings: Visions of Nightmares 311
The Evacuations: A Deadly Delay 311
The Relief and Reconstruction Effort: A Mammoth Effort, But Slow Improvement 315

Emerging Threats: Bird Flu, Earthquakes, Tsunamis, and Nuclear Terrorism 317

Toward Comprehensive and Forward-Looking National Disaster Policies 318
Nationalizing Responses to Inherently Interstate and Global Disasters 318
Redirecting Disaster Dollars Based on Need 320
Removing the Underlying Barriers to Self-Protection 322
Providing Better Access to Knowledge in the Service of Human Rights 324

Conclusion 325
References 326

Chapter 18 Hurricane Katrina and the Nation’s Obligation to Black Colleges
Marybeth Gasman and Noah D. Drezner 337

Background on New Orleans’ Black Colleges 338
Starting from Disadvantage 339
Damage Done 340
Are Blacks Helping Their Own? 342
Who Else is Giving to New Orleans’ Black Colleges? 343
The Individual Responsibility of Americans 344
References 345

Appendix A 347

Prominent Graduates of Xavier, Dillard and Southern 347
Xavier University of Louisiana 347
Dillard University 347
Southern University at New Orleans 347
Chapter 19  Social Justice after Katrina: The Need for a Revitalized Public Sphere
Peter G. Stillman and Adelaide H. Villmoare  349

Disaster Relief in the United States  349
The Public Sphere  352
Public Discussion of Order  353
Policing and Order  355
Care, Assistance, and Social Justice  357
Public Service as Social Justice  359
References  363

Chapter 20  Whose City Is It? Public Housing, Public Sociology, and the Struggle for Social Justice in New Orleans before and after Katrina
John D. Arena  367

What is Public Sociology?  371
Combining Sociology and Social Justice:
Research and the Pre-Katrina C3/Hands Off Iberville Campaign  373
Katrina: The Empire Strikes Back; Movements Respond  378
References  383

Chapter 21  The Disappearing Neighborhood: An Urban Planner’s Tour of New Orleans
Kim Knowles-Yáñez  387

Introduction  387
The Disappearing Neighborhood  388
The Disappearance of the Grocery Store: Lack of Access to Healthy Food  388
The Disappearance of Housing  389
The Disappearance of Schools  393
Final Thoughts  394

Chapter 22  You CAN Get There from Here, But the Road Is Long and Hard: The Intersection of Social Justice and Social Disasters Post-Hurricane Katrina
Kristin A. Bates and Richelle S. Swan  397

Where Are We? Lost on the Road to Social Justice …  398
CONTENTS xv

The Federal Government 398
Poverty and Public Policy 399
FEMA 400
Public Housing in New Orleans 401
Criminal Justice in New Orleans 401
Moving down the Road to Substantive Change 403
References 404

About the Authors 409

Index 417
Preface

The struggle for social justice and the study of social justice are not confined to a single discipline. This book is an example of the multidisciplinary nature of this struggle. The chapters of this book represent a vast array of disciplines: Communication, Criminology, Critical Studies, Education, Ethnic Studies, Geography, History, Justice Studies, Law, Political Science, Sociology, and Urban Planning. It is our hope that those who read this volume will recognize the importance of multiple perspectives in the study of and fight for social justice.
Acknowledgments

A project like this, to be successful, requires a lot of committed people. We would like to thank the authors for their dedication to social justice and their topics; Jill Watts, CSUSM History professor, for her help with the proposal; the faculty and students in the Department of Sociology at CSUSM for their understanding and support; Rachel Gragg, Federal Policy Director of the Workforce Alliance, for her helpful discussions on poverty public policy; Allison Carr, CSUSM librarian, for her invaluable research help; Jeff Henson for his help with the photographs, and Clayton Bower, Raeven Chandler, Mandi Contreras, Heather Donoho, and especially, Garrett Herr, for assisting in the first round of editing tasks. In addition, we would like to thank the staff at Carolina Academic Press—Taylor Arnold for his help with the proposal, Beth Hall for answering all those crazy questions throughout the creation of this volume, Karen Clayton for the hours she spent helping us finalize the book, and Tim Colton for his artistic eye. Thank you!

Finally, projects like these can rarely be undertaken without the commitment and sacrifices of those close to us. Kristin would like to thank her husband and son, Jeff and William, for understanding and spending so many “just the dudes” nights while Mommy finished her work; and a special thanks to Christopher for hanging out with Mommy until the bitter end. Richelle would like to thank her family and friends for all their support and patience.