

# Through the Eye of Katrina

# Through the Eye of Katrina

---

## *Social Justice in the United States*

Second Edition

Edited by

**Kristin A. Bates**

**Richelle S. Swan**

CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS

Durham, North Carolina

Copyright © 2007, 2010  
Kristin A. Bates  
Richelle S. Swan  
All Rights Reserved

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Through the eye of Katrina : social justice in the United States / [edited by]  
Kristin A. Bates, Richelle S. Swan. -- 2nd ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-59460-735-6 (alk. paper)

1. Hurricane Katrina, 2005--Social aspects. 2. Social justice--United States.  
3. Disaster relief--Social aspects--Louisiana--New Orleans. 4. Marginality,  
Social--Louisiana--New Orleans. 5. Poor--Government policy--United States.  
6. New Orleans (La.)--Race relations. 7. United States--Race relations. I.  
Bates, Kristin Ann. II. Swan, Richelle S. III. Title.

HV636 2005 .N4 T47 2010

976.3'35064--dc22

2009050356

CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS  
700 Kent Street  
Durham, North Carolina 27701  
Telephone (919) 489-7486  
Fax (919) 493-5668  
www.cap-press.com

Printed in the United States of America

*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	xv
Acknowledgments	xvii
<b>Chapter 1 • A Dangerous Equation: Social Injustice = Social Disaster</b>	
<i>Richelle S. Swan and Kristin A. Bates</i>	3
The Birth of the Project: In/Justice Talk after the Disaster	5
Social Disaster as an In/Justice Concept	6
Looking at Hurricane Katrina through Multiple Lenses	8
Images from the Past: Social Justice and Hurricane Katrina in Context	9
Images of the Disaster: Reactions to Hurricane Katrina	10
Images of the Future: Policy, Activism, and Justice	11
References	14
<b>Section One</b>	
<b>Images from the Past: Social Justice and Hurricane Katrina in Context</b>	
<b>Chapter 2 • Setting the Stage: Roots of Social Inequity and the Human Tragedy of Hurricane Katrina</b>	
<i>DeMond Shondell Miller and Jason David Rivera</i>	17
The Hurricane Everyone Feared	17
Social Conditions Prior to Katrina	19
Katrina and Environmental Justice Concerns	23
The History of Flooding in the Mississippi Valley	24
Historical, Social, and Environmental Factors	26
Colonialism	26
Reconstruction	28
The Creation of Redeemer Governments and Segregation	30
Civil Rights Movement	31
Conclusion	32
References	34

<b>Chapter 3 • “Revolutions May Go Backwards”: The Persistence of Voter Disenfranchisement in the United States</b> <i>Michelle Inderbitzin, Kelly Fawcett, Christopher Uggen, and Kristin A. Bates</i>	39
Critical Race Theory	40
Race and the History of Voter Disenfranchisement	41
Race and Felon Disenfranchisement	44
Race and Voter Disenfranchisement after Katrina	46
Controlling Race through Disenfranchisement	51
References	52
<b>Chapter 4 • Locked and Loaded: The Prison Industrial Complex and the Response to Hurricane Katrina</b> <i>Shana Agid</i>	57
Context for Disaster: The Prison Industrial Complex	59
Before the Storm: New Orleans, Louisiana, and the PIC in Brief	67
When the Storm Hit: “Law and Order” in a Flooded New Orleans	69
Conclusion	73
References	74
<b>Chapter 5 • Social Justice Movements: Education Disregarded, Lessons Ignored</b> <i>Richelle S. Swan</i>	79
Introduction	79
Defining Social Movements	80
The Civil Rights Movement	81
The Labor Movement	84
The Environmental Justice Movement	87
Conclusion	91
References	92
<b>Chapter 6 • Reminders of Poverty, Soon Forgotten</b> <i>Alexander Keyssar</i>	97
<b>Section Two</b>	
<b>Images from the Disaster: Reactions to Hurricane Katrina</b>	
<b>Chapter 7 • New Song, Same Old Tune: Racial Discourse in the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina</b> <i>Ashley (“Woody”) Doane</i>	107
Racial Ideologies and Racial Politics	108
New Song: Hurricane Katrina and the Racial Divide	110

Same Old Tune: Color-Blindness and the Denial of Racism	112
Katrina and Racial Discourse: And the Beat Goes On . . .	114
A Final Note: Hurricane Katrina and Racial Justice	118
References	120
<b>Chapter 8 • “Reasonable Racism”: The “New” White Supremacy and Hurricane Katrina</b>	
<i>Dreama G. Moon and Anthony Hurst</i>	129
Choosing a Hate Site to Analyze	131
American Renaissance	131
White Fictions and Racial “Realism”	132
Civilized White/Uncivilizable Black	134
No Bridge Across	135
White Man’s Burden	136
Racial “Realism” and Common White Racial Attitudes	138
Connecting the Dots: White Supremacist Discourse and the	
Everyday Expressions of White Supremacy	140
No Bridge Across	142
White Man’s Burden	143
On a Closing Note	144
References	144
<b>Chapter 9 • Katrina’s Latinos: Vulnerability and Disasters in Relief and Recovery</b>	
<i>Nicole Trujillo-Pagán</i>	149
Method	151
Latinos and New Orleans	153
Citizenship, Vulnerability, and the Right to Aid	154
Relief Assistance and Federal Welfare Policy	156
Latinos and Disaster	161
Conclusion	166
References	167
<b>Chapter 10 • From Invisibility to Hypervisibility: The Complexity of Race, Survival, and Resiliency for the Vietnamese-American Community in Eastern New Orleans</b>	
<i>Karen J. Leong, Christopher Airriess, Angela Chia-Chen Chen, Verna Keith, Wei Li, Ying Wang, and Karen Adams</i>	171
A Tale of Two Communities	174
Beyond a Black and White Analysis of Katrina	175
Community Capital and Social Justice	180
References	184

<b>Chapter 11 • Disaster Pornography: Hurricane Katrina, Voyeurism, and the Television Viewer</b>	
<i>Benjamin R. Bates and Rukhsana Ahmed</i>	189
Media and the Framing of Disaster	190
Defining Disaster Pornography	191
Analysis	193
Concluding Remarks	199
References	200
<b>Chapter 12 • Access to Mediated Emergency Messages: Differences in Crisis Knowledge across Age, Race, and Socioeconomic Status</b>	
<i>Kenneth Lachlan, Patric R. Spence, and Christine Eith</i>	205
Introduction	205
Crisis Communication Basics	207
Knowledge Gap Hypothesis	208
Evacuees and Their Experiences	210
Information Seeking Prior to the Storm	212
Primary Information Sources	212
Crisis Preparation	212
Message Adequacy	212
Analyses	213
Discussion	216
Conclusion	218
Limitations	219
Three Years Later: Hurricane Ike	219
References	220
<b>Chapter 13 • Discrimination, Segregation, and the Racialized Search for Housing Post-Katrina</b>	
<i>Jeannie Haubert Weil</i>	223
Introduction	224
Racetalk and Accounts	226
Data and Methods	228
“I Know It Is Wrong but . . .”: Excuses for Race-Based Exclusions	229
Scapegoating	230
Defeasibility	232
The Sad Tale	233
“It’s not wrong because . . .”: Justifications for Race-Based Exclusions	234
Denial of the Victim	235



“I Prefer a Black Family”: Responses to White Prejudice	237
Discussion and Conclusion	238
References	239
<b>Chapter 14 • Katrina’s Indecorous Voices: Ethos, Race, and Survivor Testimonials</b>	
<i>Terence Check</i>	241
Ethos and the Art of Persuasion	243
A Voice to the People: Congressional Hearings on Race and Katrina	245
Listening to Indecorous Voices	253
References	256
<b>Section Three</b>	
<b>Images of the Future: Policy, Activism, and Justice</b>	
<b>Chapter 15 • George Bush Does Not Care about Black People: Hip-Hop and the Struggle for Katrina Justice</b>	
<i>David J. Leonard</i>	263
Introduction	263
George Bush Doesn’t Care about Black People: So Says Kanye West	265
Hip-Hop to the Rescue: Mainstream Rappers and Hurricane Katrina	268
Underground Hip-Hop: The Internet and the Struggle for Justice	274
Hip-Hop and a Social Justice Imagination	277
References	283
<b>Chapter 16 • Ordinary Struggle and the “Public Good”:     Navigating Vernacular Voices, State Power, and the     Public Sphere in Quests for Social Justice</b>	
<i>Lisa R. Foster</i>	287
Locating Rhetoric in Relation to Social Justice	289
Textual Analysis	290
Displacement as Public Responsibility or Public Threat	291
Displacement as a Public Loss or Public Gain	296
Conclusion	301
References	302
<b>Chapter 17 • Human Rights in Disaster Policy: Improving the Federal     Response to Natural Disasters, Disease Pandemics, and     Terrorist Attacks</b>	
<i>Hannibal Travis</i>	305
Introduction	305
Human Rights Implications of Natural and Human-Made Disasters	306

The Lessons of 9/11: Heeding Warnings, Sharing Information, Evacuating Victims	307
Warnings That Were Not Passed on to the Public or First Responders	308
Victims Who Were Not Evacuated	309
Civilians Whose Health and Safety Were Not Protected	311
Hurricane Katrina: Ignored Warnings, Withheld Information, and a Delayed Evacuation	312
The Warnings: Visions of Nightmares	313
The Evacuations: A Deadly Delay	314
The Relief and Reconstruction Effort: A Mammoth Effort, but Slow Improvement	317
Emerging Threats: Bird Flu, Earthquakes, Tsunamis, and Nuclear Terrorism	319
Toward Comprehensive and Forward-Looking National Disaster Policies	321
Nationalizing Responses to Inherently Interstate and Global Disasters	321
Redirecting Disaster Dollars Based on Need	323
Removing the Underlying Barriers to Self-Protection	325
Providing Better Access to Knowledge in the Service of Human Rights	326
Conclusion	327
References	328
<b>Chapter 18 • Hurricane Katrina and the Nation’s Obligation to Black Colleges</b>	
<i>Marybeth Gasman and Noah D. Drezner</i>	343
Background on New Orleans’ Black Colleges	344
Starting from Disadvantage	345
Damage Done	346
Are Blacks Helping Their Own?	348
Who Else Is Giving to New Orleans’ Black Colleges?	349
The Individual Responsibility of Americans	350
References	351
Appendix	352
<b>Chapter 19 • Social Justice after Katrina: The Need for a Revitalized Public Sphere</b>	
<i>Peter G. Stillman and Adelaide H. Villmoare</i>	353
Disaster Relief in the United States	353

The Public Sphere	355
Public Discussion of Order	357
Policing and Order	359
Care, Assistance, and Social Justice	360
Public Service as Social Justice	363
References	368
<b>Chapter 20 • Whose City Is It? Public Housing, Public Sociology, and the Struggle for Social Justice in New Orleans before and after Katrina</b>	
<i>John D. Arena</i>	371
What Is Public Sociology?	375
Combining Sociology and Social Justice: Research and the Pre-Katrina C3/Hands Off Iberville Campaign	377
Katrina: The Empire Strikes Back; Movements Respond	382
References	387
<b>Chapter 21 • Redistribution of Responsibility: The Gendered Division of Labor and Politics of a Post-Disaster Clean-Up Project</b>	
<i>Emmanuel David</i>	391
Introduction	391
Katrina Krewe: Trash Issues, Street Sweeps, and Debris Clean-Ups	394
Disaster Recovery and the Gendered Division of Labor	399
Privatization, State Restructuring, and the Redistribution of Responsibility	403
Conclusion	406
References	407
<b>Chapter 22 • The Disappearing Neighborhood: An Urban Planner's Tour of New Orleans</b>	
<i>Kim Knowles-Yáñez</i>	413
Introduction	413
The Disappearing Neighborhood	414
The Disappearance of the Grocery Store: Lack of Access to Healthy Food	414
The Disappearance of Housing	415
The Disappearance of Schools	419
Final Thoughts	420
<b>Chapter 23 • Social Justice, Planning, and Opportunity Post-Katrina</b>	
<i>Kim Knowles-Yáñez</i>	423
Introduction	423

Poverty and the Return to Neighborhoods	425
Historic Distrust	426
University Collaborations	428
Celebrity Non-Profits and Planning	434
Conclusion	435
References	436
<b>Chapter 24 • You CAN Get There from Here, But the Road Is Long and Hard: The Role of Public, Private and Activist Organizations in the Search for Social Justice</b>	
<i>Kristin A. Bates and Richelle S. Swan</i>	439
From the Welfare State to Neoliberalism: Does This Road Go Anywhere?	440
The Welfare State	440
Neoliberalism	441
Roadblocks, Roadblocks Everywhere: Shifting Risk and Responsibility as an Impediment to Social Justice	442
The Trend from “Social Spending” to “Punitive Spending”	442
Risky Shifts from the Collective to the Individual	443
From Roadblocks to the Expressway: Moving Down the Road to Substantive Change	445
Connecting Your Path to the Collective Road: Suggestions for Social Justice	445
Collective Movement and Hurricane Katrina: Activism and Agitation	446
Conclusion	448
References	448
<b>About the Authors</b>	451
<b>Index</b>	459

# 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, Urban Planning, and Women's Studies. 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, staff, 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—Beth Hall for answering all those crazy questions throughout the creation of both volumes (and for encouraging a second edition), Karen Clayton for the hours she spent helping us finalize both editions, and Tim Colton for his artistic eye. A special thank you to those who embraced the first edition and gave us such wonderful encouragement and feedback—we appreciate the opportunity to engage in this social justice dialogue.

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, Jeff, and her sons, William and Christopher, for reminding her to spend some time in the land of bad sci-fi movies and dinosaurs; and Richelle, her “daytime partner” for making her a better scholar. Richelle would like to thank Kristin for being such an inspiring collaborator, Chendo for his encouragement throughout the creation of both editions of this book, and her family, friends, and students for all of their support.

Thank you!