STATE OF BLACK NEW ORLEANS
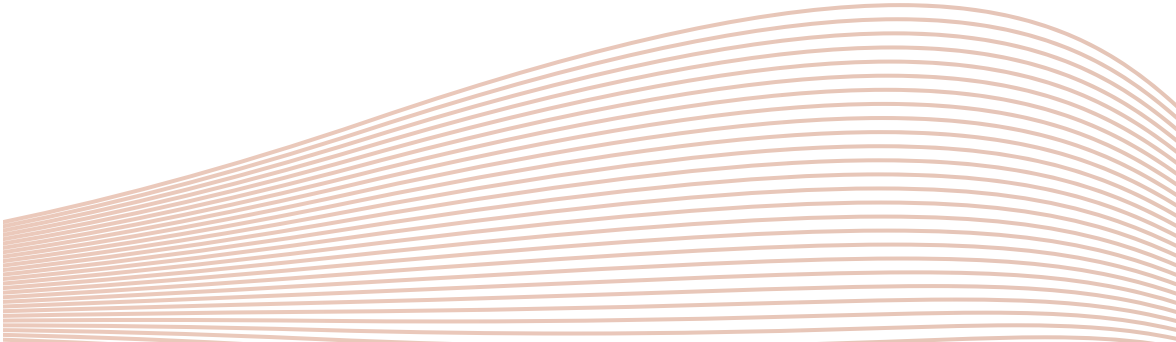
10 YEARS POST-KATRINA

Urban League of
Greater New Orleans

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Greater New Orleans

STATE OF BLACK NEW ORLEANS
10 YEARS POST-KATRINA

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FOREWORD

THE FABRIC OF NEW ORLEANS

Keith Weldon Medley

IT HAS BEEN **10 YEARS SINCE** HURRICANE **KATRINA** DEVASTATED NEW ORLEANS. SINCE THAT TIME, THERE HAVE BEEN UNPRECEDENTED CHANGES IN NEW ORLEANS AND ITS PEOPLE.

It has been 10 years since Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans. Since that time, there have been unprecedented changes in New Orleans and its people.

The events of August 29, 2005 proved horrific for the lives and neighborhoods of those unable to evacuate. At 4:30 a.m., leaks in the floodgates began flooding areas such as Pontchartrain Park. By 5:00 a.m., storm surges from the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet crumbled levee sections and the waters started seeping in toward St. Bernard Parish and the Lower Ninth Ward. At 6:30 a.m., storm surges pushed the water in the Industrial Canal over the levees and flooded all of New Orleans East, where large numbers of Black professionals and entrepreneurs resided. At 6:50 a.m., the same surge began flooding the Lower Ninth Ward once more, as well as the mixed race Gentilly area and Pontchartrain Park, which had already flooded. Then the levee walls on the west side of the Industrial Canal failed, sending water cascading into New Orleans neighborhoods miles away including Treme. By the end of the day, 80% of the city was underwater.

Those who study New Orleans without seeking its African and African-American influences invariably miss what it means to know New Orleans. People of African descent – enslaved and free – willingly or unwillingly have been here since its earliest days. Between the years 1718 and 1722, boatloads of Africans from the Senegambia region of Western Africa and outcasts from French

society arrived in New Orleans for forced toil in the Louisiana marshes. They hacked and drained swamps, constructed buildings and levees and dug canals. For the French indentures, the term was three years. For most of the African laborers, it was a life sentence.

Even with the backdrop of Katrina, 2007 marked a sense of resiliency and renewal and heightened civic involvement. In Pontchartrain Park and Gentilly Woods, residents signaled their return with bright yellow ribbons wrapped around trees and mailboxes even as Katrina dust still hung in the air. In the Lower Ninth ward, volunteers from around the country cleaned a flood-ravaged Martin Luther King School that the school system had virtually abandoned. Neighborhood groups and civic associations raised their voices and confronted the powers that be over the state and future of their beloved city. As an old Creole proverb stated, "Little by little, the bird built its nest."

There are always fears about the suppression of New Orleans Black street culture. These consist of the parading groups, jazz funerals, brass bands and offshoots that give New Orleans its cultural vibrancy and worldwide appeal. Those cultural groupings offer many young people the opportunity for structure and recognition. During the week, they may be dockworkers, bricklayers, or truck drivers. During the parades and Mardi Gras related events, they are Chiefs, Grand Marshalls, Kings, Bandleaders and Flag Boys. Similar to the sentiment expressed by the Houma Indians, a group of Native Americans

who settled in Dulac, Louisiana after their land was appropriated, "Salvation Culture" is the same concept in play in New Orleans. The expressions that appear to be being suppressed in the city are beautiful and revered around the world. Louis Armstrong and Mahalia Jackson came from those traditions.

The streets of New Orleans and its on-beat music, cultures, and traditions provide a cultural safety net. So, even though systems and social forces may line up against Black youth, the cultural expressions provide self-esteem and purpose beyond what could be found in mainstream society. In many ways, this psychological safety net existed in the olden days of Congo Square where Africans would gather on Sundays and play their drums and perform ancient rituals that, for a few hours, shrouded every Sunday from the reality of their weekdays. And it still exists today in the traditions of the brass bands, social and pleasure clubs, and Mardi Gras Indians.

These cultural expressions are transmitters of New Orleans cultural history. The practitioners are cultural preservationists that hold tightly to the tradition set forward by those who initiated them. And even though the meaning behind some of the expressions may get lost over the years, the current day practitioners can still commune in a poetic sort of way with those who went before them. They walk the same streets, chant the same chants, and wear the same type of garments of those who went before them.

There are well-founded fears that these expressions—coupled with the absence of many of the adherents—may fall victim to those who prefer a more vanilla New Orleans. At a seminar for the 164th Anniversary of St. Augustine Church in the Tremé neighborhood, cultural activists expressed alarm at efforts by the City to suppress the cultural life of Black New Orleans and to expel Father Ledoux from the St. Augustine Church. He was instrumental in erecting an evocative sculpture garden at the church that recalled the anonymous slaves who built the city's first levees and buildings in old New Orleans. This "Tomb of the Unknown Slave" sculpture garden, along a wall of St. Augustine Church in the Tremé neighborhood, features a 1,500 pound cross welded from a discarded marine chain that had been used to anchor a buoy in the Mississippi River. Although people of African descent have been in New Orleans for nearly 300 years, the "Tomb of the Unknown Slave" was the only public monument affirming their roots in New Orleans history.

African Americans histories were integral in the development of New Orleans. There were philanthropists such as Thomy Lafon who lived in Faubourg Treme his entire life and funneled money to the Anti-Slavery Society and the Underground Railroad. Dr. Louis Charles Roudanez published the New Orleans Tribune in the middle of the Civil War. His defiant newspaper pushed for equality and the right to vote. And then, there was a free man of color named Arnold Bertonneau who organized a petition drive for voting rights for people of color that was delivered to Abraham Lincoln and the United States Congress. Despite the efforts and successes of African Americans during Reconstruction, White supremacy took hold but not without continued opposition.

Even in 1880, not even 20 years from emancipation – in the houses of the former slaves who had been barred from marriage or literacy, Black males were heads of household in eighty percent of those homes in New Orleans. Similarly, for the formerly, plantation-bound enslaved who were forbidden from reading, education became almost a lust. A Presbyterian minister who visited Louisiana following the Civil War observed that "in any direction, you meet Negroes on horses, Negroes with oxen, Negroes on foot…men, women, and children, Negroes in uniform, Negroes in rags; all hopeful… They are never out of our rooms, and their cry is for 'Books! Books! And 'when will school begin?'"

In 1890, African Americans comprised nearly 50% of Louisiana's voting population. There were 18 black members of the Louisiana legislature. By 1900 with the passage of White supremacist legislation – Blacks comprised only 4% of the voting population and there were

zero Black members of the legislature. This all happened in 10 years. The most egregious policy, however, was the quashing of hopes and dreams of New Orleans Black school children seeking education.

In 1900, the Orleans Parish School Board stopped public education for African American children after the fifth grade. Generations of Black public school students were banned from higher education. There would be no public high school for Blacks until 1917 when McDonogh #35 opened in New Orleans. The 1900s were largely crafted by White supremacy and it is still a large part of Louisiana as the city's monuments attest. It wasn't that long ago we lived in a state where 60% of white voters voted for Nazi and White Supremacist David Duke. Of course, there are plenty of things to be angry about when viewing New Orleans tortured but gloriously redeeming history. Still, anger, bitterness, and recrimination are unstable foundations from which to view the past or to build a future.

The city's African American character is not defined by slavery or Jim Crow or caste. Its character has been defined by their transcending the many attacks on their humanity, battling back against them and finding the strength to live another day, raise families, and shatter each tenet of White Supremacist thought by forming a sense of community, educating the next generation and possessing a hell of a lot of faith and grit.

There are many times in a peoples' history where leadership may be weak or absent and role models are few. But for New Orleanians and their allies, they can always look for inspiration in a remarkable and storied past. Their fore parents faced adversity with accomplishment. They stood up to segregation and fought Jim Crow with civil disobedience, newspapers and rallies, and rose to the hope of another day. New Orleans will RISE from Katrina, and its people will have an indelible footprint on our future. From the roots of our earliest ancestors to the trumpet blows of our youngest musicians, our culture will always be our strength and resilience.

INTRODUCTION

THE STATE OF BLACK NEW ORLEANS: 10 YEARS POST KATRINA

Erika McConduit-Diggs, Esq.

10 YEARS AFTER THE STORM OF THE CENTURY DECIMATED OUR BELOVED CITY, WE PAUSE TO REFLECT ON WHERE WE HAVE BEEN AND WHERE WE ARE GOING.

Devastation. Awe. Pure and utter raw emotion pulled on the heartstrings of native New Orleanians as we watched our city drown, forced to figure out next steps for stabilizing our lives and families. Amid government disruption, downed communication, mass citizen displacement, and crumbled infrastructure, New Orleans was a city in shambles with its future in question.

Ten years after the storm of the century devastated our beloved city, we pause to reflect on where we have been and where we are going. We must honor and recognize the lives that have been lost and those that have been changed forever, as well as the countless hours and the enormous energy expended by people near and far to "bring back New Orleans." This moment of reflection allows us to count the lessons learned and apply them to the next ten years of this recovery so that we can achieve the goal of a stronger, sustainable and more equitable New Orleans.

Over the past 10 years, tremendous progress has been made in New Orleans - homes, roads, schools, playgrounds, and hospitals have been rebuilt; streetcar lines expanded; airport remodeled; commercial development; and the people of this city have proven that we are resilient. More students are going to college from New Orleans public schools, our jail size has been reduced by more than half, and we are the first major city in America to eliminate veteran homelessness. But on our road to recovery, have we reproduced some of the same inequities that existed prior to the storm and impeded people's ability to quickly recover? The wealth gap continues to widen between African Americans and Whites, too many of us are paying unaffordable housing costs, Black men are still targeted and disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system, and health disparities continue to threaten the well-being of African Americans in the city. Are we seizing this

opportunity to transform the city into a better version of itself, one in which all its residents can prosper and thrive?

The *State of Black New Orleans: 10 Years Post-Katrina* hopes to answer these questions (and more) through its analysis of the impact of post-Katrina recovery on the African American community. The publication also offers recommendations to address noted disparities impacting the African American community and to transform the systems that allow these disparities to persist. After all, New Orleans cannot thrive if African Americans, who are the majority of the city's residents, are not thriving as well.

Using an equity framework, *the State of Black New Orleans: 10 Years Post-Katrina* focuses on civic engagement, criminal justice, economic and workforce development, education, the environment, health care and housing, in chapters authored by some of the city's finest scholars and practitioners. It is a comprehensive examination of the issues that impact the quality of life for African Americans, paying close attention to opportunities for improvement in order to chart a new course towards a more equitable New Orleans in 2025.

As you delve into these chapters, consider "What does a successful recovery in New Orleans look like by 2025?" I imagine a city where every family has the power to access real choice in a landscape of quality school options; where children are educated in classrooms where teachers spark and ignite learning and creativity. I imagine a city where African Americans are the power base with a real seat at the proverbial table. I imagine a New Orleans where all residents can access work opportunities that pay a livable wage and where entrepreneurs are all able to take their big ideas and transform them into lucrative, sustainable businesses that create jobs and secure futures. I imagine a New Orleans where all residents can live in quality affordable homes, where life expectancy is not linked to zip codes, and where every neighborhood has access to the resources and experiences that promote their health and well-being. And, I imagine a city where better education and more jobs result in smaller jails and safer communities. How do we get to the New Orleans you envision in 2025? As the sun sets on the 10 year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, blueprints like the *State of Black New Orleans* provide strategies for continued recovery with refocused efforts toward equity.

HOUSING **CRIMINAL JUSTICE**
ENVIRONMENT HEALTH
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
WORKFORCE EDUCATION

ADVOCATE, AGITATE, ACTIVATE: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TRENDS IN POST-KATRINA NEW ORLEANS

BY WESTLEY BAYAS, III & VINCENT SYLVAIN

ON DECEMBER 10, 2005, THE STREETS OF NEW ORLEANS WERE FILLED WITH **5,000 ANGRY AND DETERMINED PROTESTERS.** BOTH SURVIVORS OF HURRICANE KATRINA AND THEIR SUPPORTERS CHANTED **"WE'RE BACK TO TAKE IT BACK"** AND **"NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE!"**

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic engagement is one pathway for communities of color to access much needed opportunities and resources to achieve equity with their White counterparts. This chapter discusses the civic engagement landscape in pre- and post-Katrina New Orleans and the ways in which it facilitates and/or hinders participation of communities of color in the areas of voter participation, volunteerism, youth community organizing and organization membership. It also provides a brief history of recent decades of civic engagement specifically within the African-American community in New Orleans, paying special attention to political organizing and African-American political organizing groups in the city and how they interfaced with a corporate structure dominated by the predominately White business sector.

The evacuation spread the residents of the city across the country months before the City was to hold its municipal elections. While local elected leadership worked to piece the city back together, community activists battled to ensure that all citizens of the city had an opportunity to cast a ballot. Large-scale voter rallies led to the establishment of satellite voting precincts in cities across Louisiana, with the NAACP providing shuttle buses for evacuees from major Southern cities. While the mass organizing efforts helped to keep then-incumbent Mayor Ray Nagin in office, the results of the election were a sign of the future struggles of African-American political power.

The Dallas Meeting and the "Shadow Government"

On September 8, 2005, 10 days after the storm, accompanied by Dan Packer, Entergy New Orleans' then-president & CEO, Nagin flew to Dallas, Texas to participate in a meeting arranged by Jimmy Reiss and other members of the Business Council (Rivlin, 2015). That Saturday, the mayor drove himself to the giant Loews Anatole Hotel just north of downtown Dallas for what he later described as "my meeting with the shadow government" of New Orleans (Rivlin, 2015, p. 73). In spite of political gains, "Uptown (Whites) still retained its economic clout despite the shifts in majority from White to African-American. Its people were still the city's CEOs, top lawyers, bankers, and real estate developers. Whites controlled the business community and dominated philanthropic circles" (Rivlin, 2015, p. 80). It was individuals from this sector who would largely serve as the make-up of those attending the 'Dallas Meeting.' "By Reiss's count, fifty-seven members had shown up. Almost everyone in the room was white" (Rivlin, 2015, p.86).

On December 10, 2005, the streets of New Orleans were filled with 5,000 angry and determined protesters, both survivors of Hurricane Katrina and their supporters, who chanted "We're back to take it back" and "No justice, no peace!" A crowd estimated at 5,000 marched from the historic Congo Square to City Hall for a rally, where they demanded "Justice after Katrina" (Dowell, 2005).

In 2002 New Orleans elected C. Ray Nagin to succeed Marc Morial as mayor. Black himself, Nagin would still take on the African-American political establishment, promising to eliminate the City's living-wage ordinance and the City's set-aside program for minority- and women-owned businesses (Russell, 2002). Both the city's only daily newspaper at the time, The *Times-Picayune*, and the city's influential political weekly, *Gambit*, endorsed Nagin's candidacy (Russell, 2002). That helped solidify Nagin's standing in the White community, garnering him 86% of the White vote, enough to compensate for his 40% showing in the Black community. He was sold as a reform-minded, business candidate who would turn New Orleans around. Plus, it did not hurt that Nagin's run-off opponent, while having successfully served as the most recent Police Superintendent, was not from New Orleans.

Nagin would preside as mayor during Hurricane Katrina and would get re-elected in 2006; Reverend Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition along with the National Coalition for Black Civic Participation and others would play a prominent role in helping to ensure that Katrina survivors, who had been dispersed to over 44 states in the country, would have their voting rights protected and not face massive disenfranchisement in the upcoming New Orleans election on April 22, 2006.

In a moment captured from a page of the civil rights movement in the 1960s, thousands of disenchanted citizens marched across the Crescent City Connection Bridge on Saturday, April 8, 2006 in "The March for Our Right to Return, Vote and Rebuild," seeking the right of displaced New Orleans citizens to vote in the election. After fiery speeches delivered on the grounds of the Ernest M. Morial Convention Center by leaders of the civil rights movement, politicians and celebrities, such as Rev. Jesse Jackson, Rev. Al Sharpton, and celebrity Judge

Greg Mathis, the marchers crossed the Crescent City Connection Bridge, spanning the Mississippi River, where thousands of New Orleans citizens were stranded after Hurricane Katrina and the floodwaters of the Gulf of Mexico caused devastation in the city the summer before. Other speakers included former New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial, president of the National Urban League. They charged that to not meet their demands would result in a clear violation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Rainbow PUSH, 2006). Louisiana's Governor Blanco met their demands and issued an executive order to put in place satellite voting places in cities and states where Katrina survivors were now residing. Her orders also required the Secretary of State and Attorney General to make an updated voter roll. This work helped to spur Mayor Nagin's reelection in 2006.

As citizen groups began to mark their territorial battleground, advocacy organizations such as Common Ground Collective/Relief and ACORN would lay claim to protecting other neighborhoods, the Lower Ninth Ward and additional underserved minority neighborhoods, impacted by Katrina. In March 2006, Common Ground commandeered Martin Luther King Elementary School as an act of defiance and to stake claim on behalf of returning Katrina survivors (Flathery, 2010).

ACORN focused most of its efforts towards rallying against Mayor Nagin's threats to use his powers of eminent domain to seize vacant and damaged properties; particularly those located in the Lower Ninth Ward. ACORN also brought attention to the double standards that were taking place in regards to loan repayments of damaged homes. While the average Lower Ninth Ward resident only earned an average of $16,000 a year when Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005, homeownership in this part of the city was still higher than many other parts of New

Orleans (Etheridge, 2005). And it would be the Lower Ninth Ward- a mixed-race community before school desegregation but 98% African-American at the time of Katrina- that stood as a synecdoche for anyone debating the rebuilding question starting to dominate the discussion a few weeks after the storm (Rivlin, 2015).

While still in the midst of evaluating and developing a recovery plan from the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans would experience a transformation of its political landscape; one in which it had become accustomed to for thirty years. Back in the 1970s as African-Americans began to gain a greater political foothold in New Orleans elective offices, an "unwritten rule" between African-American political leaders and the White corporate and political leaders decided that the City's interest was best served if it had a racial balance in the at-large seat, a similar courtesy that existed in regards to the many civil/criminal/municipal judicial seats. In honor of that commitment, there had not been any organized attempts by major African-American political organizations to win the second at-large council race even as demographics began to favor the African-American population.

An unforeseen resignation only two years after Katrina threatened to change that balance. Oliver Thomas, an African American who held one of New Orleans' two Councilman-at-Large seats, resigned his council seat after pleading guilty on August 13, 2007 to bribery charges for actions taken prior to Hurricane Katrina (Donze, 2007). Thomas' legal situation would test the will of Whites to honor the decades old "unwritten rule" which had been in place.

New Orleans had always maintained an African-American and a White individual in the two at-large positions since the Reverend A.L. Davis, who had been a Civil Rights

leader, became the first African American to serve on the City Council. Reverend Davis was appointed to the District "B" seat on the City Council in 1975 to fill the unexpired term of White Councilman Eddie Sapir, who had been elected judge of Municipal Court. Reverend Davis was eventually elected to the seat in 1976 along with Joseph DiRosa, a long-time political fixture in the White community. The pattern of racial balance in the at-large council seats continued up until the 2006 municipal elections when then newcomer Arnie Fielkow joined Councilmember At-Large Thomas.

The combination of the unexpected exit by Thomas from the council seat; a high number of African-American voters who had not been able to return to the city following Hurricane Katrina; and the challenge of raising necessary funds to launch a campaign created a new paradigm for New Orleans, a paradigm that would create new opportunities for Whites to gain a greater foothold in elective office. This would be the case especially during "special elections" where traditionally African-Americans had historically turned out in fewer numbers even under normal circumstances.

The October 2007 election to select a replacement for Councilman Thomas placed sitting District Councilwoman Jacquelyn Clarkson, a White Democrat from Algiers, a neighborhood which had largely escaped the flooding of Katrina, in a run-off, against Councilwoman Cynthia Willard-Lewis, an African American Democrat who represented the mostly devastated areas of New Orleans East and the Lower 9th Ward. Clarkson won the election, creating a 5-2 majority in favor of Whites and seemingly began a run of White/Asian elected officials on the City Council, Orleans Parish School Board, several judgeships, the District Attorney's office and ultimately former African American Congressman William

Jefferson's seat as well as that of the Mayor. Over the next few years, the African American political establishment would stew over the loss of those seats; particularly the inability to win at least one of the two Council-at-Large seats.

A level of blame for loss of voting strength was also attributed to the local city council members and Mayor Nagin who in 2007 made the decision to tear down the 'Big Four' existing public housing developments in New Orleans; St. Bernard, C.J. Peete (Magnolia Projects), Lafitte, and B.W. Cooper. Some former residents and advocates protested that the Housing Authority of New Orleans' (HANO) plan would not provide enough housing for the number of people who formerly lived in those units prior to the hurricane. Another level of blame could be assigned to the deterioration in strength of the Black-led political organizations that rallied political support in minority neighborhoods. Groups like the Black Organization for Leadership Development (BOLD), the Southern Organization for Urban Leadership (SOUL), the Community Organization for Urban Politics (COUP), the Louisiana Independent Federation of Electors (LIFE), and the Progressive Democrats were considered critical to the election of any candidate in New Orleans (Mock, 2010b). Many of these groups split up the city by neighborhood, focusing on the housing projects in their area as a concentration of votes (Mock, 2010a). With the destruction of the housing developments, along with federal public corruption efforts decimating many leaders of the groups, the Black-led political organizations have suffered from a severe loss of political power and patronage. Without these so-called "alphabet soup" (Moseley, 2012) groups to drive voter education and turnout efforts, many Black and Black-supported candidates would begin to struggle with maintaining their base.

Social activists charged that this was all part of a plan to create a "new New Orleans." They pointed to statements such as those reported by the Wall Street Journal that then Republican Congressman Richard Baker of Baton Rouge (1987 to 2008) was overheard telling lobbyists: "We finally cleaned up public housing in New Orleans. We couldn't do it, but God did" as evidence of such a plan (Babington, 2005, para. 2). Pre-Katrina, the combination of a large African-American middle-class and public housing residents had become an impenetrable political force for African-Americans seeking elective office.   In September 2005 that political advantage was gone. A sense of abandonment and betrayal would become the topic of discussion among African-American politicians and political players in private gatherings.

While African-Americans were able to hold on to the mayor's seat by re-electing Mayor Nagin in 2006, they would lose the super-majority control of the council when Stacy Head was able to parley with BOLD to garner their support leading to a 54% – 46% victory over the Progressive Democrat-backed, and Congressman Jefferson-supported African American incumbent Councilwoman Renee Gill Pratt.   The predominately low-income neighborhoods of Central City were heavily impacted by the hurricane while large slivers of highly White-populated areas along the river were mostly untouched, thus providing White candidates a demographic advantage among "active voters" that did not exist prior to the hurricane. African-Americans found comfort in maintaining control of the dual Sheriff's Offices, with both Civil Sheriff Paul Valteau and Criminal Sheriff Marlin Gusman winning reelection during the 2006 municipal election.

Congressman   Jefferson's   defeat   to Vietnamese-American   Republican   Ahn "Joseph" Cao two years later was attributed

to a combination of his legal issues and the fact that Hurricane Gustav had pushed the election to one month after the 2008 presidential election in which African-Americans turned out in record numbers in New Orleans to cast their vote for Senator Barack Obama's run for the presidency. Subsequently during the *Jefferson verses Cao* run-off, African-American voter turnout was only 12%.

As   the   number   of   African-Americans retuning to New Orleans began to grow, the fall elections of 2008 would begin to show signs of African-Americans ability to regain political power in offices outside of City Hall. This time period also coincided with HUD's ground breaking on a $138 million mixed-use community at the site of the old St. Bernard complex. Redevelopment plans were also announced for the replacement of the C.J. Peete and Lafitte housing developments (Krupa, 2008).

While 2008 elections for seats on the Orleans Parish School Board resulted with a 4-2-1 White majority school board with victories by African American candidates Ira Thomas and Cynthia Cade, and Hispanic candidate Lourdes   Moran,   the   judicial   elections produced much different results along racial terms. When Judge Nadine Ramsey stepped down to run for mayor in 2010, Paula Brown was able to chalk up another victory on the African American side of the ledger with her run for Civil District Court Judge in February 2009.   Even though Brown won against overwhelming odds, many in the political circle still saw Judge Brown's victory, which avoided a run-off against a White opponent and perennial candidate and former judge Morris Reed, merely as a political fluke and not a true signal that African-Americans were once again in a political advantageous position to win special elections or run-offs with limited issues on the ballot.   To become believers that African-American voting strength were

returning to pre-Katrina numbers, everyone would need to see more proof.

Additional evidence would soon follow. Monique Morial, the daughter of New Orleans' first African American mayor and sister of former Mayor Marc Morial was elected to the First City Court in July 2010 with no opposition. Earlier that August, the Louisiana Supreme Court appointed Judge Morial to serve Pro Tempore in the First City Court for retired Judge Sonja Spears until December. In January 2011, Judge Morial began her term as judge of First City Court, Section "A", actually succeeding retiring Judge Charles Imbornone.

While Mitch Landrieu won his third attempt at the Mayor's Office in 2010, additional signs that Black political strength continued to grow began to arise. In the first election where Orleans Parish would have a unified sheriff to handle civil and criminal matters, Criminal Sheriff Marlin Gusman successfully won reelection and established himself as the foundation of Black political support in New Orleans. While the election of African American Congressman Cedric Richmond in 2010 would provide additional redemption and a feeling of optimism in the African-American community, still the lack of racial balance on the City Council would continue to burn. In April 2012 voters would get another chance to restore racial balance to the New Orleans City Council and the White political and corporate establishments would be provided another opportunity to help "do the right thing."

However once again, the outcome produced results outside the boundaries of the old "unwritten rule" agreement. This time it would be Councilmember Stacy Head defeating Councilmember Willard-Lewis for the Council-at-large seat by a total of 281 votes, unofficial returns showed Head receiving 27,787 votes to Willard-Lewis' 27,506 (WWL-TV, 2012).   Head was able to garner the endorsement of State Representative Austin Badon, an African American who had finished a strong third in the primary, while another handful of prominent African American leaders remained silent on the race. This allowed Head to build momentum in pockets of the African-American community. It appeared that a new formula for victory for White officials was emerging, one that could last decades if African-Americans did not grow their ranks among the population base.

The fall 2012 elections saw several new trends develop with two new African-Americans, Nolan Marshall, Jr. and Leslie Ellison, winning seats on the Orleans Parish School Board, returning the racial majority to 4-3. African American Councilwoman LaToya Cantrell's victory over Dana Kaplan restored the District B Council seat to the hands of an African-American elected official for the first time since 2006. In fact, prior to 2006, the Central City seat had been held by an African American elected official for 31 years. An even more stunning development took place on the West Bank of Orleans Parish with unexpected victories by four African American candidates in Algiers. For the first time since pre-Katrina a newer pattern emerged; White elected officials were no longer able to count on the voter differential being in their favor. Rather, if that is the case permanently, then White candidates would have to do as Mayor Mitch Landrieu did in the 2010 elections; show that one had a demonstrated record of being sensitive to the causes of the African American community in order to earn their vote.

In the 2014 elections, for the first time in the city's history, the two seats were separated and council-at-large candidates now would have to declare in advance which of the two seats they are seeking. Under the old rule all candidates ran under one race and the top

two vote gatherers receiving more than 25% of the votes were determined the winners. If the second place finisher failed to receive 25% of the vote, then a runoff was held between the second and third place finisher.

Under the new rule, each candidate would have to receive 50% plus one of the total number of votes cast in order to be declared the winner during the primary in each individual race.   If no one received the required 50% plus one then a runoff would be held. This provided for some interesting dynamics and created speculation that perhaps African-Americans would now be able to win both at-large seats.

The 2014 elections would result in victories maintaining the old racial balance, African American lawyer Jason Williams would win one seat while Councilmember Head carried the other at-large race. Victories in five of the seven council seats by African American candidates, was evidence that the African-American voting population was returning to pre-Katrina levels, thus restoring a super-majority in favor of the African American community.

How the Recovery Planning Process Spurred Community Civic Engagement

After Hurricane Katrina passed over New Orleans and the rainwaters subsided, hundreds of thousands of residents began the process of rebuilding their homes and lives. With almost all forms of communication paused due to lack of infrastructure, New Orleanians were at a loss about how they would be able to get critical information about the recovery. Residents were also in the dark about how the city would be rebuilt, and which neighborhoods would be considered for rehabilitation. These conditions served as a catalyst to a civic engagement movement that has transformed how neighborhoods, NGOs,

and government agencies interact and execute their missions.

The impetus for change started in the immediate days following Katrina. While residents were still reeling from the effects of the storm surge that overtook homes, local business leaders began to plan the city's future. Initial private planning meetings held out of state led to then-Mayor Ray Nagin's September 2005 creation of the Bring Back New Orleans Commission, a 17-member mayoral appointee committee designated to build a master plan for the rebuilding of the city (CNN Wire Staff, 2005). The Commission's work culminated in early 2006 with the unveiling of a plan that shrunk the footprint of the city, placing many low-lying neighborhoods under a ubiquitous "green dot" that represented residential areas that would be converted to park space (The Times-Picayune Staff, 2005). Community uproar over the next few months lead to the shelving of the Commission's plan, but it planted the seed for future community endeavors into urban planning and the rebuilding of New Orleans.

Shortly after the Bring Back New Orleans Commission unveiled their plan, a group of residents came together to create an organization that could leverage community power to influence the rebuilding process. Known as the Neighborhood Partnership Network (NPN), this organization focused on neighborhood organizing and information outreach to bring groups together to collaborate and advocate for community needs. NPN also played a role in connecting residents to the numerous rebuilding master planning processes that followed.

In the wake of the plan, the New Orleans City Council launched a second attempt at creating a rebuilding master plan. Called the Lambert Plan, the final product had additional community input, but still lacked much of the needed credibility from

the entire city. The Louisiana Recovery Authority, with support from the Rockefeller Foundation & the Greater New Orleans Foundation, launched a third process. Known as the United New Orleans Plan (UNOP). This effort (which also had support from the Mayor's Office & the City Council) led to the first community-accepted master plan (Williamson, 2007). While the ideas from UNOP were later expanded upon in the official City-accepted Master Plan, a need for expanded community voice in civic engagement efforts was identified.

The Committee for a Better New Orleans (CBNO) picked up efforts that started with a 1992 City Master Plan to develop a formalized citizen participation process (CPP) that would ensure residents would have voice in planning and zoning developments in their neighborhoods. CBNO launched a CPP campaign to inform and unite neighborhood leaders around a governance structure that would create a resident-led entity to facilitate conversations between government agencies and neighborhood leaders (Committee for a Better New Orleans, n.d.). Concurrently, NPN began advocating for City Government to create an Office of Neighborhoods that would formalize the relationship between the executive branch & neighborhood associations, while creating a conduit for dialogue between residents of New Orleans and city officials. These ideas, among others from a variety of neighborhood groups, became the foundation for recommendations delivered to then Mayor-elect Mitch Landrieu from the Neighborhood Development Task Force that was commissioned by his transition team (Transition New Orleans, 2010).

Thanks to the efforts of NPN & neighborhood organizations, the City of New Orleans created the Office of Neighborhood Engagement in response to the task force recommendations within the first year of

the Landrieu administration (Krupa, 2011). By the end of 2012, the City had adopted a formalized CPP process that ensured residents received notification of planning and zoning changes in their area and required developers to hold meetings with residents to get approval for their projects (City Planning Commission, 2012). Community groups such as Ride New Orleans, the Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance, and the New Orleans Kids Partnership have also taken on critical advocacy roles in the areas of transportation, affordable housing, and youth and family engagement.

Other post-Katrina organizations that spurred activism and action for representative causes included Women of the Storm, Beacon of Hope, Citizens for 1 New Orleans, African American Women of Purpose and Power, Jutice and Beyond, and Puentes NOLA. While issue constituency and community groups helped to lead the planning process, youth organizations were beginning to create opportunities for young people to be engaged in civic endeavors.

Youth community organizing in New Orleans found root in the Hurricane Katrina recovery as residents emphasized that all voices needed to be heard. Prior to the storm, the idea of youth community organizing was nascent with few established outlets that promoted or created space for youth voice. In the aftermath of the storm, numerous organizations were established to began organizing various constituencies within the New Orleans youth community. Using the rapidly changing Orleans Parish education system as additional leverage, youth-led organizing in the city has not only grown exponentially but has continued to stay nimble to meet the needs of young people while achieving crucial policy victories.

VAYLA, formerly known as the Vietnamese American Young Leaders Association, is one such example. Started in 2006 to mobilize

Vietnamese residents around environmental concerns in New Orleans East, VAYLA has grown into a multi-racial, multi-issue, youth-led organization with significant influence in the New Orleans community. Best known for the "Raise Your Hand" campaign that used youth action participatory research on the conditions of local public schools, VAYLA has garnered national acclaim for its ability to organize youth around critical issues such as school closures, education equity, and language access.

Kids Rethink New Orleans Schools is another example of nimble youth organizing to address critical needs. Started in 2006 to assist middle school students in having a meaningful voice in the city's school reform, Kids Rethink has taken on issues such as food justice & restorative justice. The work of the Rethinkers has lead local school leaders to consider restorative justice practices in their disciplinary procedures, and their food justice program was the focus of a HBO documentary on school nutrition. Kids Rethink also used interactive projects such as school gardens and community theater to further their organizing goals and expand their reach.

BreakOUT! is among the newer youth constituency organizing groups in the city, focused on ending the criminalization of LGBTQ youth aged 13-25 in New Orleans. Founded in 2011, BreakOUT! launched their "We Deserve Better" campaign to end discriminatory policing practices in New Orleans. BreakOUT! also co-developed a "Get Yr Rights" toolkit designed to equip LGBTQ youth with legal knowledge to protect themselves during police interactions. Their work in a short amount of time has increased awareness of LGBTQ youth issues, and has influenced policy.

While Hurricane Katrina forced residents to start over, it also allowed communities to dictate how development would proceed in their neighborhoods. Neighborhood associations began to demand ownership of their fate, issue groups ensured that critical policies were implemented to create equitable growth, and youth organizations have created a pathway for future leadership. Civic engagement has improved in the city, but without the continued efforts and support of the myriad of organizations that have been involved, the gains made will be lost.

New Orleans Voting Engagement by the Numbers

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans was considered a bastion of Democratic and African-American votes. The vaunted voting machine of New Orleans helped Senator Mary Landrieu win her first term in office, and ensured that African-American residents of New Orleans played an integral role in citywide and statewide elections (Rothenberg, 1997), Louisiana Secretary Of State files show that African-Americans made up almost two-thirds of the registered voters in the city in the months preceding Katrina, and the elected political leadership of Orleans Parish was overwhelmingly African-American. After August 2005, African-American political and civic leadership in the city was in a state of flux for almost 10 years.

Voter registration trends have revealed the large drop of registered voters post-Katrina, with African-Americans suffering an almost 25% drop in total registered voters between August 2005 and December 2014. In comparison, the drop in voter registration for White voters has stayed under 10% and there has been very little drop among registered voters of other races (See Figure 1).

VOTER REGISTRATION & PARTICIPATION IN NEW ORLEANS MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS				
	Registered Voters by Race			
	Black	White	Other	Total	Black % of Vote
2014 Total Registered Voters	142,835	82,178	18,396	243,409	58.68%
2014 Total Voted	49,028	32,303	4,289	85,620	
2014 Turnout % By Race	34.32%	39.31%	23.31%	35.18%	57.26%
2010 Total Registered Voters	168,851	84,626	19,762	273,239	61.80%
2010 Total Voted	47,549	37,184	4,622	89,355	
2010 Turnout % By Race	28.16%	43.94%	23.39%	32.70%	53.21%
2006 Total Registered Voters	188,316	90,909	19,287	298,512	63.08%
2006 Total Voted	58,474	46,061	5,444	109,979	
2006 Turnout % By Race	31.05%	50.67%	28.23%	36.84%	53.17%
2002 Total Registered Voters	184,798	94,087	16,165	295,050	62.63%
2002 Total Voted	83,164	47,246	4,553	134,973	
2002 Turnout % By Race	45.00%	50.22%	28.17%	45.75%	61.62%

Figure 1

Voter registration by itself does not tell the entire story of how African-Americans temporarily lost political power. Participation played a key role, especially between 2006-2011 as African-American New Orleanians focused on the Katrina recovery. For example, in the 2006 municipal election, African-American voters dropped in turnout by 30% from the 2002 election, while turnout in White and other communities stayed flat. The 2007 gubernatorial election furthered the erosion, when African-American voter turnout in Orleans Parish dropped 48% from the previous gubernatorial election in 2003, while White turnout dropped only by 21% (See Figure 2). The 2008 presidential election saw turnout down across the board, despite the election setting national turnout records. (See Figure 3) Participation continued to lag throughout the beginning of the decade, and it was not until the 2012 presidential election when African-American turnout percentages began to near pre-Katrina numbers. The improvement was aided by the voter purge conducted by the Louisiana Secretary of State's office in early 2011, which rid the rolls of voters who had not voted since 2005.

VOTER REGISTRATION & PARTICIPATION IN ORLEANS PARISH DURING GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS

	Black	White	Other	Total	BLK % OF VOTE
	Registered Voters by Race				
2011 Total Registered Voters	**137,393**	76,799	17,124	231,316	59.40%
2011 Total Voted	**30,844**	22,272	2,462	55,578	
2011 Turnout % By Race	**22.45%**	29.00%	14.38%	24.03%	55.50%
2007 Total Registered Voters	**176,277**	83,962	18,539	278,778	63.23%
2007 Total Voted	**38,738**	33,937	3,879	76,554	
2007 Turnout % By Race	**21.98%**	40.42%	20.92%	27.46%	50.60%
2003 Total Registered Voters	**184,578**	91,452	17,020	293,050	62.99%
2003 Total Voted	**74,204**	43,071	4,566	121,841	
2003 Turnout % By Race	**40.20%**	47.10%	26.83%	41.58%	60.90%
1999 Total Registered Voters	**182,807**	94,846	13,802	291,455	62.72%
1999 Total Voted	**76,196**	39,374	3,135	118,705	
1999 Turnout % By Race	**41.68%**	41.51%	22.71%	40.73%	64.19%

Figure 2

While the voter purge may have condensed the number of voters, there is still a clear trend line of African-American political voting power improving. By comparing the percentage of African-American voters registered among total registered voters to the percentage of African-American voters among total voters in an election, it can be determined if African-Americans are fully represented in a particular election (represented as Black or BLK % of Vote in Figures 1-3). An equal number represents equal representation in an election, with higher numbers meaning overrepresentation and lower numbers meaning underrepresentation. In the last major election prior to Hurricane Katrina, the 2004 Presidential election, African-American voter share almost equaled African-American voter registration share. In comparison, the 2006 mayoral election saw a 16-percentage point difference in African-American voter share, and the 2007 gubernatorial election showed a 20-percentage point difference. This trend continued through the 2010 mayoral election, which saw an African-American voter share difference of 14 percentage points.

Starting in 2012, the previous trend lines in voter participation and African-American voter share began to shift back in favor of

VOTER REGISTRATION & PARTICIPATION IN ORLEANS PARISH DURING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS				
	Registered Voters by Race			
	Black	White	Other	Total	BLK % OF VOTE
2012 Total Registered Voters	**148,096**	83,213	18,945	250,254	59.18%
2012 Total Voted	**96,077**	52,995	9,701	158,773	
2012 Turnout % By Race	**64.87%**	63.69%	51.21%	63.44%	60.51%
2008 Total Registered Voters	**177,282**	86,240	20,200	283,722	62.48%
2008 Total Voted	**90,380**	50,082	8,986	149,448	
2008 Turnout % By Race	**50.98%**	58.07%	44.49%	52.67%	60.48%
2004 Total Registered Voters	**201,052**	98,523	20,678	320,253	62.78%
2004 Total Voted	**122,082**	64,462	10,569	197,113	
2004 Turnout % By Race	**60.72%**	65.43%	51.11%	61.55%	61.94%
2000 Total Registered Voters	**187,691**	97,713	15,998	301,402	62.27%
2000 Total Voted	**112,586**	61,927	7,581	182,094	
2000 Turnout % By Race	**59.98%**	63.38%	47.39%	60.42%	61.83%

Figure 3

African-American residents. The 2012 Presidential election saw African-Americans set local turnout percentage records, and the African-American voter share reached 60%. Due to the increased voter participation numbers from African-Americans, the Orleans Parish School Board returned to a 4-3 African-American/White majority & African-American candidates in Algiers were able to upset a slate of White incumbent candidates in local judicial races. The expansion of African-American elected political power has continued, with the New Orleans City Council currently holding a 5-2 African-American/White majority & African-American

candidates winning judicial races over more established White candidates. While Katrina has certainly affected the makeup of the New Orleans voting population, we are starting to see a return to normalcy when it comes to the city's elections.

The last 10 years of voter registration and voter participation in New Orleans represented an era of flux for African-American political power in New Orleans, but there are three takeaways from the data and observations of that time.

1. Lower voter registration numbers have affected our statewide influence.

New Orleans lost 53,000+ registered voters because of Hurricane Katrina, 86% of which were African-American. This loss has affected the city's ability to swing statewide elections, and a net loss of five seats in the legislative delegation. While Democratic statewide campaigns were built on turning out large numbers of African-Americans in New Orleans, the sheer number loss has turned many potential candidates off from taking a chance.

2. Voter participation dropped significantly, but has recovered to almost pre-Katrina levels.

Immediately following Katrina, African-American voter participation rates tumbled. Reductions between 20% to 50% were observed in elections during 2006 to 2011. Starting with the 2012 presidential election, African-American participation rates have started to rise to levels that match pre-Katrina numbers.

3. African-American elected political power in New Orleans is reestablishing itself.

While the downturn in registration & participation contributed to a rapid shift in political power from African-American officials to White, the last three years have seen a renaissance of leadership. With local boards returning under control of African-American majorities, there seem to be opportunities in the future for the African-American community to advance their political presence and influence.

With the 2015 Gubernatorial Election on the horizon, we will soon see if African-American voters in New Orleans have finally reestablished themselves as a potent voting block and if New Orleans as a whole can swing elections again. What role will African American-led and focused organizations do to encourage continued civic participation within the African American community? These organizations will need to make African American civic engagement a priority in their work in order to strengthen African American voting power and advocacy efforts to bring about equity in the "new New Orleans."

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HOUSING EDUCATION HEALTH
ENVIRONMENT
CRIMINAL JUSTICE
WORKFORCE CIVIC
ENGAGEMENT

OVER-REPRESENTATION IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM: #BLACKLIVESMATTER

BY D. MAJEEDA SNEAD, ESQ AND RASHIDA GOVAN, PH.D.

ALTHOUGH **AFRICAN AMERICANS** ARE ONLY 32% OF LOUISIANA'S POPULATION, THEY **MAKE UP MORE THAN 67% OF THE STATE'S PRISON POPULATION.** NEW ORLEANS HAS THE HIGHEST INCARCERATION RATE PER CAPITA THAN ANY OTHER JURISDICTION AND ALMOST **90% OF ITS PRISON POPULATION IS AFRICAN AMERICAN.**

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Hurricane Katrina unleashed its wrath on the city of New Orleans in 2005. The rising waters caused massive destruction and revealed systemic failures throughout the city. One of the many inequities exposed by Hurricane Katrina was the economic and social disadvantages suffered by many New Orleans residents. Most notably, the storm and flood exposed the long-existing failures of the city's criminal justice system. Once the waters receded and the lights were restored, the city began the daunting task of rebuilding. Ten years later, these inequities in the criminal justice system still exist and continue to impact the African American community most significantly. This chapter examines the disparities that exist in the city and the effects those disparities have had on African American communities in the criminal justice system.

There are more than 2.2 million people incarcerated in the United States, a rate higher than that of any other industrialized nation (The Sentencing Project, 2015). That is a 500% increase in the number of people in prisons and jails in this country over the past thirty years (The Sentencing Project, 2015). Of the 50 states, Louisiana is number one in incarceration rates. Regrettably, in 2005, the city had the highest number of incarcerated citizens in the State of Louisiana (See Figure 1) (Gray, 2015). This is not a statistic that should illicit pride.

The high incarceration rate in this state clearly has a disparate impact on the African American community.

Figure 1: Ten most incarrerated US Jurisdictions, 2005 Jail Incarceration Rate Per 1,000 Residents

Source: BJS, Jail Inmates at Midyear 2007, U.S. Census Bureau

Although African Americans are only 32% of Louisiana's population, they make up more than 67% of the state's prison population (Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013a). New Orleans has the highest incarceration rate per capita in the world and almost 90% of its prison population is African American (Rainey, 2015). In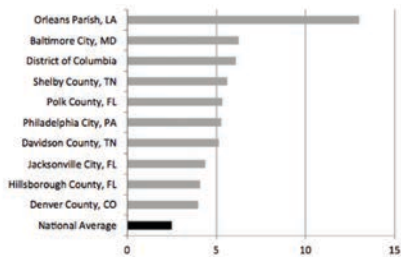 New Orleans, one out of seven African American males in the city has either been in prison, on parole or on probation (See Figure 2) (Chang, 2012).

The disparity existing between the numbers of young African American males incarcerated in the city and their White counterparts is consistent with the national trend of high arrest and incarceration rates of African American males. The implementation of the "War on Drugs" in this country offers a clear example of this trend. African Americans are arrested three times more than Whites on drug possession charges and convicted 10 times more than Whites although they are no more likely to use illicit drugs than Whites (Fellner, 2013). These disparities in arrests and convictions are due in large part to drug policies influenced by racially biased perspectives on the "drug problem" in America and on law enforcement decisions to concentrate their efforts in low-income, communities of color (Fellner, 2013). This disparity is even more disturbing considering African Americans are only 13.2% of the national population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).

Percentage of African Americans in Louisiana — **32%** — **State**

Percentage of African Americans in Louisiana prison population — **67%** — **Prison**

Percentage of African Americans in New Orleans — **59%** — **City**

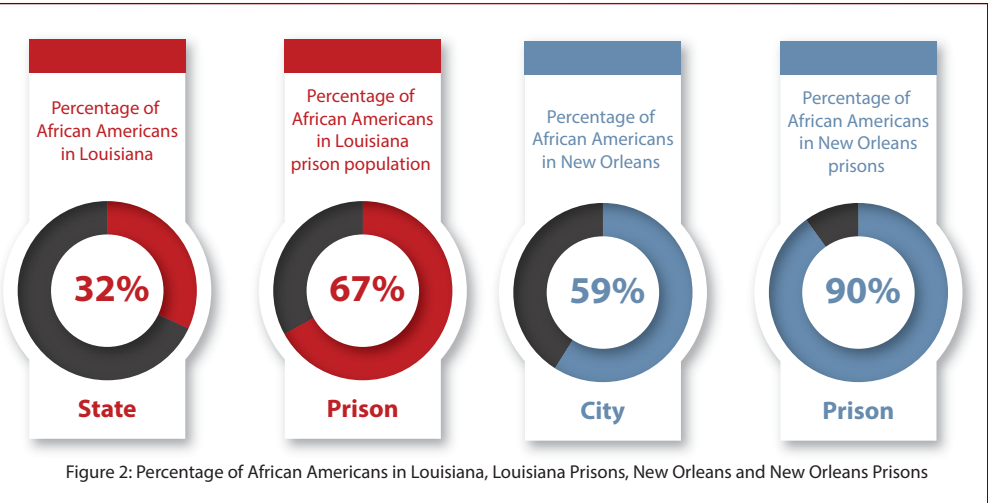Percentage of African Americans in New Orleans prisons — **90%** — **Prison**

Figure 2: Percentage of African Americans in Louisiana, Louisiana Prisons, New Orleans and New Orleans Prisons

Drug offenses are not the only type of crime where these disparities exist. While the media reports of crime in the city suggest that crime is primarily violent and victim-oriented, pre- Katrina reports of crime data reveal 86% of all arrests in the city were for nonviolent offenses during the period between 2003 and 2004 (Johnson, Laisne & Wool, 2015). African Americans comprised 67% of the city's population pre-Katrina (Shrinath, Mack & Plyer, 2014). However, of the 140,000 arrests that occurred in 2004, African Americans made up an overwhelming majority of those arrests (Austin, Ware, & Rocker, 2011).

Based on the statistical data documenting the disproportionate number of African Americans arrested and incarcerated in this country, anyone could infer that African Americans are more likely than any other race to commit crimes. Of course that would be an inaccurate inference. Statistics alone do not tell the entire story. In order to explain the disparities in the number of African Americans arrested and imprisoned one must probe further to learn the root causes which account for their presence in the criminal justice system.

Poverty

Poverty is one of the many predictors that may determine if someone will end up in the criminal justice system (Poverties.org, 2013). A child's future success or failure can be directly tied to what resources are available to them. If resources are limited the likelihood of success is much more challenging. For many African Americans in the city, resources have been extremely limited. Many in this group lack basic services such as quality education, health care, community services, playgrounds, social experiences and employment opportunities. Currently, 59% of the population in New Orleans is African American and 35% of them live in poverty (Shrinath, Mack & Plyer, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013b). The New Orleans-Metarie area ranked 14th in the nation for its share of the poor population living in concentrated poverty at 62.1% (Kneebone, 2014).

While economic growth has occurred in the city post Katrina, economic advantage for African Americans has lagged behind. In 2011, 52% of African American men in the city were not in the labor force or employed (Sams-Abidoun & Rattler, Jr., 2013). The number of African American children living below the poverty level in the city grew by seven percentage points from 2007 to 2013 to 50.5% (Mack, 2015). More broadly, across all racial demographics, those living below the poverty level in New Orleans – unable to provide food, shelter and transportation for themselves – are 27% of the population (Shrinath, Mack & Plyer, 2014). These statistics are not encouraging for creating solutions that address disparities that exist for African Americans in all aspects of life in the city. Isolated by race and economic status, most African American residents are deprived of basic quality of life opportunities, which serve to limit their life chances.

Historically, African Americans have had to survive in the face of the most daunting challenges. And, even though most survive in these depressed communities without succumbing to a life of crime – with many overcoming insurmountable obstacles – some who live in conditions of poverty do engage in and become victims of crime. The multigenerational existence of families in poverty-ridden neighborhoods has deleterious consequences on the physical and emotional health of their residents.

The effects of poverty, as exemplified by blighted and substandard housing, lack of quality schools and recreational outlets and access to social services can lead to the disillusionment of residents. Oftentimes

driven by the desire to obtain material possessions, which many are taught to believe is the ultimate symbol of success and measure of their worth as human beings, young men in these impoverished neighborhoods suggest they see few paths to achieving the American Dream other than becoming involved in the drug trade and the violence that accompanies it.

As noted by then-U.S. Attorney Jim Letten in 2006, the city's crime rate was the fault of poor public schools and neighborhoods where poverty is rampant and the disenfranchised are highly concentrated together, creating an economy where drug dealing is considered a step up (Filosa, 2006). Consequently, many poverty-stricken neighborhoods are plagued with drug abuse and violence. Community violence is especially harmful to children who are exposed to pervasive and very public gunfire, murders, and other acts of violence that they all too often witness first-hand (Child Trends, 2013). This cycle of violence is perpetuated when children growing up in poverty-ridden neighborhoods live in fear, despair and grief due to their own conditions and turn to delinquent and criminal behavior as a means of survival (Child Trends, 2013).

In 1979, U. S. Surgeon General Julius B. Richmond declared violence to be a public health crisis (Listenbee et al., 2012). Despite the Surgeon General calling attention to the dangers of violence and its deleterious effect on public health, New Orleans – one of the most violent cities in America – failed to invest in these economically and socially depressed communities to address and alleviate the conditions of poverty that would have reduced crime. The very systems that should have received resources to address this public health crisis – education, employment, medical and social services – continued to suffer defunding and decline.

Schools

At the time of the storm and the flood, the education system in the city was one of the lowest functioning systems in the United States (IRP, 2010). Prior to Hurricane Katrina, 46% of the schools in the city were deemed "academically unacceptable" (Cowan & Parker, 2008). Although there were a few public schools that provided excellent education, the majority of the African American population attended public schools in the city that were woefully inadequate (Sims & Rossmeier, 2015). Consistent with the segregated poverty-stricken neighborhoods, the public education system was also segregated (IRP, 2010). Those who lived in depressed communities attended schools that were underfunded and lacked basic resources. A lack of quality education is a strong predictor of socioeconomic and criminal justice outcomes. It is clear that poverty has a direct correlation to academic performance: High school students living in poverty perform 25% lower than those who do not (BMBI, 2011).

A comparison of the standardized testing scores by ethnicity of New Orleans Public School students in 2014 reveals that 95% of White students scored at or above basic on state standardized tests as compared to 59% of African American students, a 36-percentage point difference (LDOE, 2015b). Nearly 90% of New Orleans Public school students are African American, yet there is an alarming disparity between those schools attended by White students and those attended by African American students (Sims & Rossmeier, 2015). Because many of the schools failed to provide adequate education and services to students who had learning disabilities and other challenges, many African American males drop out of school by the 10th grade. Consequently, most African Americans

who are arrested do not have a high school diploma and almost a third test below a fifth-grade level (Chang, 2012).

Interactions with New Orleans Police

In 2010, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) began investigating the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) due to continued complaints of a pattern and practice of unlawful police misconduct and constitutional violations by its members (DOJ, 2011). The investigation involved extensive community engagement and an in-depth review of NOPD practices. On March 16, 2011, the DOJ issued a written report of its findings, which were startling. The DOJ found there were unconstitutional practices and violations of federal law in the use of excessive force against its citizens, unconstitutional stops, searches and arrest as well as biased police practices such as racial and ethnic profiling (DOJ, 2011). On July 24, 2012, the City of New Orleans entered into a consent decree to reform and implement existing police policies and procedures in the hope of preventing these unconstitutional practices (City of New Orleans, 2015).

Historically, the African American community in the city has suffered from discriminatory and abusive practices by members of the NOPD. NOPD's reputation for violence long ago approached legendary status on a national stage (Keegan, 1996). New Orleans ranked near the top of American cities for police brutality for decades. Within an 18-month period in the 1990s, four NOPD officers were charged with murder, and dozens of officers were arrested on felony charges (Herbert, 1995, 4). As noted in the New York Times article, "For most of the past 20 years New Orleans has been the national champion in complaints of police

brutality" (Herbert, 1995, para. 4). One of the most infamous cases involved NOPD Officer Len Davis, who ordered a hit on African American New Orleans resident Kim Groves, a mother of three (Mustian, 2014). Ms. Groves had filed a complaint against Officer Davis after she witnessed him pistol-whip a 17-year-old African American male. Ms. Groves believed she had filed her complaint anonymously, but Davis found out about the complaint less than 24 hours later. At the time the hit was successfully executed, Officer Davis, along with a confederacy of nearly a dozen corrupt police officers, was the subject of a drug investigation by the FBI. Davis was ultimately convicted of Ms. Groves' murder and sentenced to death (Mustian, 2014).

Less than a week after Hurricane Katrina hit, two unarmed African American men were shot and killed on the Danziger Bridge by New Orleans Police Officers (Times- Picayune Staff, 2011). Five officers were tried and convicted of civil rights violations but their convictions were overturned in 2013 and a new trial ordered due to prosecutorial misconduct (Thompson, 2013).

Unconstitutional police practices do not always take the form of brutality that results in death. Pervasive discriminatory practices have also had an adverse effect on the African American community. While police claim that they concentrate their crime prevention efforts in what are typically referred to as "high crime areas" the results are that police stop and frisk African American males in their segregated communities at a higher rate than they stop and frisk White males in their segregated communities. As the DOJ found in its own investigation, NOPD effected unconstitutional stops as well as racial and ethnic profiling of African Americans in the city (DOJ, 2011).

The 2011 DOJ investigation found that almost 99% of all children arrested in the city were African American (LCCR, 2015). The report concluded that "[t]he level of disparity for youth in New Orleans is so severe and so divergent from nationally reported data that it cannot plausibly be attributed entirely to underlying rates at which youth commit crimes, and unquestionably warrants a searching review and a meaningful response from the Department" (LCCR, 2015, para. 2). Not much has changed since 2011: in 2015, 99% of the children arrested in New Orleans are still African American (See Figure 3) (LCCR, 2015).

As a result of young African American males being stopped more frequently, young African American men are arrested at an alarming rate for minor violations, while similarly situated White males are less likely to be stopped and frisked (LCCR, 2015). And even when young White men are stopped, they are less likely to be arrested for the same minor violations as their African American peers (LCCR, 2015).

In 2002, a Police Civilian Review Task Force recommended the formation of a civilian police oversight agency (New Orleans Independent Police Monitor, 2015). Again, in 2006, a coalition of community groups went before the city Council to express their concerns about NOPD. Finally, in 2008 the City Council passed a resolution supporting the formation of an independent police monitor. The Office of the Independent Police Monitor (OIPM), along with the Office of Inspector General, were voted into the city charter in 2008 (New Orleans Independent Police Monitor, 2015). OIPM was created in August of 2009 and in June of 2010 Police Monitor Susan Hutson took office (Hutson, 2015).

99%
of All Juveniles Arrested in New Orleans
are African American

Figure 3

The first official recommendation of OIPM was to establish a new "critical incidents" investigation team that would be under the leadership of the Deputy Superintendent of the Public Integrity Bureau (PIB) (Hutson, 2015). PIB is the city agency that investigates citizen as well as police initiated allegations of police misconduct. The 2014 Annual Report of OIPM noted that in 2014 there were 17 critical incidents, the same number of critical incidents as in 2013 (Hutson, 2015). OIPM found that 28 of the officers involved in Officer Involved Shooting (OIS) incidents had a significant complaint and use of force history over the last five years (Hutson, 2015). OIPM continues to focus its outreach not only on local reforms but also on national and international discussions about the future of policing and police reform (Hutson, 2015).

Another major policy change that is focused on improving policing in New Orleans, is NOPD policy 402, a policy measure that informs officers on how to interact with LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) members of the community (Fernandez & Williams, 2014). The policy focuses on eliminating bias-based profiling and outlines expectations for filing reports, for interactions between NOPD officers and LGBT community members, arrest protocols and protocols for acquiring medical treatment for LGBT community

members should it be needed (New Orleans Police Department, 2013). This measure is a direct response to findings from the U.S. Department of Justice (2011) investigation of the NOPD, in which it notes that NOPD officers engaged in biased policing including LGBT discrimination, as well as a response to advocacy work from organizations like BreakOut!, a youth organization that works to end criminalization of LGBTQ youth of color and other organizations (Fernandez & Williams, 2014).

In 2014, BreakOut! published the "We Deserve Better" report that presented findings highlighting the extent of discrimination queer youth in New Orleans experience at the hands of the police. Findings from their study indicated that queer youth of color, especially transgender youth, are subjected to a range of abusive behavior by police including being called homosexual expletives, unconstitutional stops, assumptions that they are in the sex trade, and harassment as compared to their White and Cisgender counterparts (Fernandez & Williams, 2014). Through their "We Deserve Better" campaign (launched in 2011) to end discriminatory policing, and their "Get YR Rights Toolkit," a guide to challenging discriminatory policing against LGBTQTS youth, they have helped to educate LGBTQS youth of their rights and improved training of NOPD officers to improve their interactions with LGBTQ youth of color in the city (Fernandez & Williams, 2014; Oaks, 2015).

While policing remains a critical piece of the disparate effects of the criminal justice system on African American communities, there are indications that some within New Orleans' power structure have begun to see the value of minimizing the risk of arrest. Over the past several years, the City Council enacted several ordinances in an attempt to reduce pretrial detention (Johnson, Laisne & Wool, 2015). NOPD officers

were encouraged to issue summonses as opposed to arresting persons charged with nonviolent municipal offenses such as disturbing the peace and possession of marijuana. Pre-Katrina municipal arrests for non-violent offenses were approximately 70% of all those arrested. Subsequent to the new ordinances, the trend has completely reversed itself and now 70% of those municipal charges are initiated by the issuance of a summons (Johnson, Laisne & Wool, 2015).

Courts

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, almost 85% of those criminally prosecuted in the city were indigent and therefore represented by the Orleans Parish Indigent Defender Program (OIDP) (Orleans Public Defenders, 2011). Prior to Hurricane Katrina, OIDP was staffed by approximately 40 part-time attorneys who represented adults in Criminal District Court, six part-time attorneys assigned to Traffic and Municipal Court and six part-time Juvenile Court attorneys. All of the attorneys had extremely high caseloads and lacked resources to handle the volume and types of cases that were assigned to them. OIDP's annual budget was approximately $2 million, with most funds primarily derived from local fines and fees from Traffic Court (Orleans Public Defenders, 2011). The aftermath of the storm and flood left the city without a functioning court system for months. There were no revenues to pay the part-time lawyers employed by OIDP and consequently most of those attorneys were left without a job and their clients without lawyers.

One of the many things Hurricane Katrina revealed was that the criminal justice system was broken. It was necessary to reorganize the way legal services were provided to the city's indigent population who needed representation

in Criminal, Traffic, Municipal and Juvenile Courts. In 2006, the office of the Orleans Public Defenders (OPD) was created. (Lewis & Goyette, 2012). The office hired full-time attorneys to represent its clientele. Previously, attorneys were assigned to courtrooms rather than to clients. The attorneys did not meet their clients until charges were accepted and the clients' case was allotted to the courtroom in which that attorney was assigned. It was not uncommon for an adult charged with a felony punishable by death or life imprisonment to remain in jail and not meet his public defender for 60 to 120 days, which is the maximum amount of time an arrestee can be held in custody without the institution of prosecution (Louisiana Code of Criminal Procedure, Article 701). Now, with the restructuring of OPD, attorneys are assigned to represent their clients at the initial appearance, which occurs within 24 to 48 hours of arrest, and continue to represent that client notwithstanding the courtroom to which the case is ultimately allotted.

The result has been that cases are being investigated more promptly by their lawyers. Currently, the vision for services provided by OPD has broadened to include a more holistic approach to clients. There are over 51 full-time attorneys, as well as court support personnel, client services specialists, social workers and investigators to represent 80% of the individuals with a legal case in Orleans Parish. (Orleans Public Defenders, 2014).

The city's criminal court system has implemented pretrial services, electronic monitoring and other alternatives to detention to reduce pretrial incarceration. In spite of the improvements in pretrial detentions that focus on a risk analysis as well as early appointment of counsel, unfortunately, 85% of those detained while awaiting trial in 2010 were African

Americans even though African Americans made up only 59% of the city's population at that time due to the inability of many arrestees to post bond (Johnson, Laisne & Wool, 2015). (See Figure 2)

Juveniles arrested in New Orleans were previously represented by OIDP. However, in 2006, Juvenile Regional Services (JRS) was created to fight for the rights of children in juvenile court (JRS, n.d.). That office merged with Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana in 2014 and the Louisiana Center for Children's Rights was created (LCCR, n.d.). The office uses an innovative model of holistic, team-based, cross-disciplinary advocacy to win both legal and life successes for its vulnerable youth clientele. Its goal is to ensure each child receives fairness, dignity and an opportunity to become a productive member of society.

Orleans Parish Prison

Another feeder of dismal outcomes for African Americans was the Orleans Parish Prison (OPP). Here also, there have been reforms post Katrina. In 2005, the Parish Prison population was approximately 6,300

(Johnson, Laisne & Wool, 2015). In 2015, the average daily population is approximately 1,900 (See Figure 4) (Johnson, Laisne & Wool, 2015).

Orleans Parish Average Daily Prison Population

2005 — 6,300
2015 — 1,900

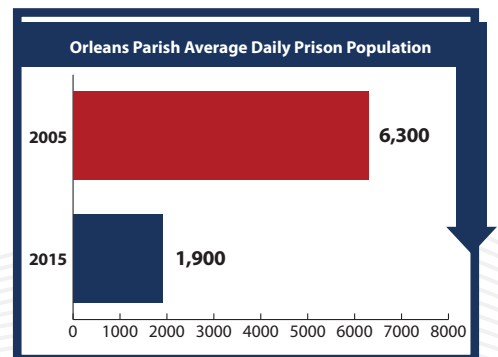0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 8000

Figure 4

The Orleans Parish Sheriff proposed in 2010 to rebuild certain facilities of the jail that would increase the number of available beds to 5,832 (Johnson, Laisne, & Wool, 2015). Opposition from the community was fierce, voicing the sentiment of many that the city could ill-afford to build and sustain such a large jail complex. The idea that the city could incarcerate its way out of its crime problem was not sound. Many believed that such a large jail complex would in fact continue to drive up the over-incarceration rate of local African Americans, which was already five times the national average (Johnson, Laisne & Wool, 2015). What the city needed was not an oversized jail complex but a more focused approach to addressing the core issues of crime. On February 3, 2011, the City Council enacted an ordinance, which allowed for only a 1,438 bed facility (Eggler, 2011). The fight to keep the jail size small is still being waged.

In addition to challenging the size of the jail, there were also challenges addressing the unconstitutional and inhumane treatment of inmates in OPP. A class action lawsuit was filed on April 2, 2012 by the Southern Poverty Law Center on behalf of current and future inmates housed in OPP (SPLC, n.d.). The jail had been the subject of a comprehensive investigation by the Civil Rights Division of DOJ that began in 2008, pursuant to the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act (U.S. Department of Justice, 2012). Following its investigation, DOJ informed Sheriff Gusman of its findings in a letter dated September 11, 2009, stating,

> "We find that OPP fails to adequately protect inmates from harm and serious risk of harm from staff and other inmates; fails to provide inmates with adequate mental health care; fails to provide adequate suicide prevention; fails to provide adequate medication

> management; fails to provide safe and sanitary environmental conditions; and fails to provide adequate fire safety precautions" (WWL Staff, 2009, para. 4).

In September, 2012, DOJ intervened in the Jones v. Gusman case, after conditions at the jail had not improved (U.S. Department of Justice, 2013). An agreement was reached in December 2012, and approved by a federal judge in June 2013. The federal consent decree outlined steps that Orleans Parish Sheriff Marlin Gusman must take to ensure prisoner safety and adequate staffing of the facility. The agreement required that an independent monitor be appointed to oversee the agreement and ensure compliance. Any new facilities built to replace the jail shall also be covered by the consent agreement (U.S. Department of Justice, 2013).

Juvenile Transfer

Juveniles are transferred to adult court at alarming rates in New Orleans (Reckdahl, 2015). In Louisiana, children as young as 14-years-old can be tried as adults, transferring their cases to adult court. While this does not require youth charged as adults to be confined in adult facilities, juveniles transferred to adult courts in New Orleans have been held in the notoriously, dangerous Orleans Parish Prison (until recently). Since District Attorney Leon Cannizzaro took office in 2009, this once rarely used policy has now become the standard for 15 and 16 year olds charged in the city (Reckdahl, 2015). Cannizzaro has transferred 75% of all eligible juvenile cases to adult court and 90% of all juveniles ages 15 and 16 charged with armed robbery (See Figure 5). On average, the DA's office transfers 32 juvenile cases to adult court each year. Compare that to Jefferson Parish that transfers an average of eight juveniles per year and East Baton Rouge, a larger parish

3 out of 4

Eligible Juvenile Cases Are Transfered to Adult Court

Figure 5

This ordinance only applies to youth not charged with murder, aggravated rape or kidnapping. The Youth Study Center now has 12 beds set aside for these pretrial juveniles charged as adults. Criminal Court judges have the discretion to determine where pre-trial juveniles in their court will be housed. While this measure is helpful, it does not address the DA's ill-advised practice of transferring youth to adult court. There is no evidence that transferring youth to the adult system reduces violent crime. In fact, transferred youth are more likely to commit criminal acts than those that remain in the juvenile justice system (Mulvey & Schubert, 2012).

The practice of transferring youth to adult facilities subjects adolescents to disruptions to their development through increased exposure to antisocial behaviors in adult facilities, and denies them access to appropriate, youth development practices implemented in juvenile facilities (Mulvey & Schubert, 2012). This is yet another practice that almost exclusively impacts African American youth in New Orleans. In essence, the underlying belief that is expressed through this problematic practice is that these youth are not worth a continued investment in their development and rehabilitation. This point was confirmed by the DA's statement, "As the district attorney for the Parish of Orleans I am not going to risk the safety of the law-abiding citizens of this community on a hope" (Reckdahl, 2015, para. 69). This perspective ignores the enormous barriers of poverty, low quality education and mental health issues faced by many youth in the juvenile justice system and denies both the youth and the community the benefit of their unlocked potential to contribute positively to the community.

with more armed robberies, transfers an average of seven juveniles per year (Reckdahl, 2015).

Juvenile transfer to adult court is a serious issue given the risks associated with youth transfer to adult facilities. Juveniles in adult facilities are more likely to be sexually and physically assaulted, are at greater risk for suicide, and are often deprived of education (Louisiana Center for Children's Rights, 2014). Juveniles in Orleans Parish Prison are also often held in isolation, sometimes in lockdown for 23-24 hours per day with no meaningful human interaction. This can lead to paranoia, depression and anxiety. What's worse, 38% of youth transferred are found not guilty, have their charges dismissed or get probation (Louisiana Center for Children's Rights).

In June of 2015, an ordinance sponsored by City Councilwoman Susan Guidry to set aside beds at the Youth Study Center, the city's juvenile detention facility, for some pretrial juveniles charged as adults was unanimously passed (White, 2015).

Recommendations

Despite all of the reforms implemented post Hurricane Katrina, African Americans are still the vast number of those arrested and prosecuted in Orleans Parish. Sixty-four percent of those prosecutions are for nonviolent offenses. As discussed earlier, the causes of crime are primarily poverty and all its subset issues, including quality of life. Unfortunately, those factors are still prevalent in African American communities.

What Now?

- *Access to quality educational opportunities for all public students should be required by law.*

- *Vocational job training programs should be made available to all students who are not college-bound.*

- *Invest in the lives of youth through active mentoring programs, recreational centers and other intervention services.*

- *Ensure access to quality medical care, including expanding drug rehabilitation and mental health services.*

- *Incentivize economic investment in poverty-stricken neighborhoods to increase the presence of private-sector businesses that would encourage employment of those residents.*

- *Develop job training programs for the unskilled labor force.*

- *Rebuild a police department that will ensure integrity in police practices, using best practice models such as mandatory body cameras, community policing, trainings focused on police – community engagement and race and gender equity.*

- *Work with communities to develop community policing programs with a focus on crime prevention and intervention.*

- *Expand the use of diversionary programs and specialty courts – such as mental health and drug courts.*

- *Fully fund implementation of the NOPD and OPP consent decrees and insist on constitutional practices outlined therein.*

- *Dedicate funding to support pre-trial services, the OIPM and OIG offices, providing the autonomy required for the maximum productivity of each entity.*

- *End the practice of charging juveniles as adults as standard practice rather than a practice for extreme cases for juveniles 14-16 years of age.*

Although this chapter focused on the disparities that exist for African Americans that contribute to their experience with the criminal justice system, what must not be overlooked, even though not stated, are the many successes of African Americans and their contributions to the city of New Orleans. This chapter focused on the marginalized African American citizens who continue to suffer from socioeconomic and racial disparities. These disparities manifest in continued poverty, inadequate schools, lack of employment opportunities and over incarceration. Clearly, a significant portion of the African American population in the city is still stifled. Addressing these inhumane disparities is essential to the future success of this city.

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HOUSING CRIMINAL JUSTICE ENVIRONMENT HEALTH ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

EQUITY IN THE ECONOMY: THE GROWING WEALTH AND ECONOMIC DIVIDE

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THERE MUST BE CLARITY AND CHOREOGRAPHY BETWEEN OUR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS. WHERE THERE HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN A TENDENCY TO OVERLOOK OR MARGINALIZE MANY OF OUR ECONOMIC ASSETS, WE CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO HAVE THE LONG SHADOW OF EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY REMAIN THE LEGACY OF THIS COMMUNITY.

ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

In its immediate aftermath, Hurricane Katrina could count as one of its many victims, the economy of New Orleans. The social and infrastructural devastation following the catastrophe literally stopped New Orleans in its tracks. Businesses were buried, schools were suspended and livelihoods were lost as individuals and families were forced to ignore long-term economic success in favor of short-term survival.

As with many other pillars of society, the city's economy slowly and resiliently rebuilt. While some jobs and sectors have never recovered (Plyer, Ortiz, Horwitz & Hobor, 2013), they are being, to some degree, replaced by newer and more sustainable career and business opportunities. New Orleans' recent drive to diversify its revenue streams and reduce its reliance on traditional hospitality and production sectors has led to investment and involvement in technological and medical innovation for the promise of new opportunities for recent and future graduates (Plyer, Ortiz, Horwitz & Hobor, 2013).

The hope for a progressive financial future is justifiable considering some of New Orleans' recent economic performance. In fact, in 2013, New Orleans' annual unemployment rate of 5.1% was below the national rate of 6.7% as of December that year (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015a; U.S. Department of Labor, 2015b). However, the most recent statistics are less cheerful and distinctly more worrisome. An economic summary published by the U.S. Bureau of

Labor for the period May 2014-May 2015 indicates that the city's economic vibrancy is at a state of susceptibility. While U.S. unemployment decreased from 6.1% to 5.3%, for the corresponding period unemployment in the New Orleans-Metarie area increased from 5.9% to 6.3% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015c).

Despite the concerns of recent years, many view New Orleans as a city primed for economic opportunity and prosperity. But the question remains: "Who will be the winners as the city transitions to a knowledge-based economy?" Have the economic inequalities and disparities, particularly those based on ethnicity, dissipated or do they continue to make life difficult for those already economically disadvantaged?

The crux of this chapter will be to uncover the present state of affairs for African Americans in New Orleans with respect to aspects of economic and workforce development, and will illustrate what the future may hold for African Americans in this 'new' economy of information and innovation. Our numbers and analysis suggest that the future isn't bright for all in the "Big Easy" and much work is necessary to allow equitable access to the city's entire populous, especially those that have been economically marginalized.

We focus on three broad aspects that all correlate with economic and workforce development for African Americans in New Orleans. The first, *employment*, discusses the rate of employment and unemployment in the city, considers job growth rate as well as occupations by categories. The second section, *education*, identifies the trends related to educational attainment, job training and career qualification and further illustrates the linkages between

these, earnings and poverty levels. And finally, the third section, *entrepreneurship and enterprise*, looks at the involvement, or lack thereof, of African Americans in this new wave of innovation and small business development in New Orleans. Issues regarding opportunities and access are uncovered to highlight the possible future for African Americans in the city's new economy.

Employment

"You take my life when you take the means whereby I live." (William Shakespeare)

The rate of unemployment in New Orleans has, throughout much of the recession, stayed relatively comparable with the national figures, at times demonstrating better performances than the national average (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015a). But dissecting the overall data reveal that job growth and consequential unemployment reduction has not been uniformly or equitably manifested across the races.

For example, in 2013, the unemployment rate for African Americans in New Orleans was 13%, more than twice that of the 6% unemployment rate for Whites (See Figure 1) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013b). For African American males, aged 16-64, this number was even higher at 14%, substantially higher than the corresponding unemployment rate for White males in the city (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013b). Not only was this unemployment rate higher than the national unemployment rate of 6.7% in December 2013, but it was significantly higher than the 5% unemployment rate for Caucasian males in New Orleans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013b). Further, in New Orleans in 2013,

**2013 Unemployment Rate for African Americans
in New Orleans as compared to Whites and the National Average**

Figure 1

only 54% of African American males in this age group were employed, compared to 78% for Caucasians, a 24-percentage point difference (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013b).

These inequities are by no means idiosyncratic to New Orleans. At the national level, African Americans continue to face more challenging employment prospects compared to other racial and ethnic groups. While the national unemployment percentage has recently dipped to below 6%, unemployment rates for African Americans in the United States are approximately 10%, a discouraging statistic for those either unemployed or underemployed (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015).

While the unemployment rate for African Americans in New Orleans is alarming, the percentage of African American males not in the labor force is of significant concern. According to a report published by the Lindy Boggs Center for Community Literacy, 52% of African American males in New Orleans were nonemployed (Sams-Abidoun & Rattler, 2011). This statistic represents the percentage of African American males who are both unemployed and those who are not in the labor force. In 2011, 40% of African

American males were not in the labor force as compared to 21% of White males (Sams-Abidoun & Rattler, 2011).

The "not in labor force" category includes the incarcerated population, which might explain the 19-percentage point difference between African American males and White males. In New Orleans, one in 14 African American males is incarcerated, leaving a major gap in the workforce in New Orleans (Chang, 2012). According to Chang (2012), one in seven African American males in New Orleans are under the supervision of the criminal justice system. Could the common practice of requiring individuals to disclose felony convictions on employment applications hinder African American males in New Orleans from pursuing formal employment? "Ban the box" policy measures that restrict the use of such practices may help to open the door for the formerly incarcerated to access more employment opportunities in New Orleans. Other factors associated with a departure from the labor force include discouragement over job prospects, ill health or disability, family responsibilities, and other issues such as transportation and childcare problems (Desilver, 2014). All of these issues are

2005 and 2013 Median Income Disparities Between African Americans and Whites in New Orleans

Figure 2

exacerbated for African Americans and the poor who face greater challenges in each of these areas than their White and more affluent counterparts.

Income disparities between African American and White households are pronounced. In 2013, African American households had a median income of $25,102 a whopping $35, 451 difference in the median household income for Whites of $60,553 (See Figure 2) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013c; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013d). The income disparity has grown significantly since 2005, when African Americans had a median income of $23,394 and Whites hadan income of $49,262 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2005b). A major contributor to this inequity is the type of occupations African Americans typically have access to in the city's industrial sectors.

As of 2013, only 27% of African Americans held management and professional related occupations, which include jobs in the scientific, leal, financial, and business fields (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013e). Comparatively, 60% of Whites,

held managment positions in these sectors, which reflects their access to higher wages. (See Figure 3) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013f).

New, high paying jobs are expected to come from areas such as health care, insurance services, legal sectors and the burgeoning film industry, a prediction corroborated by recent job growth reports (Plyer, Ortiz, & Hobor, 2013; U.S. Department of Labor,

2013 Percentage of Management and Professional Related Occupations by Race

Figure 3

2015c). And while New Orleans' average wages continue to lag behind U.S. national averages in almost every occupation type category, the gap in wages between high paying professional and managerial jobs and those in the hospitality, retail and construction is substantial (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015c). What can be easily surmised by the figures and reports is that African Americans are currently underrepresented in professional and managerial categories and are thus excluded from the significantly higher wages that accompany this type of employment.

One of the factors that is preventing African Americans from middle and high-skilled jobs in New Orleans is a skills gap (Sellers, Ortiz, & Plyer, 2013). In the region, 27% of the labor force are low-skilled. According to a report published by the Data Center, 51% of the labor force is African American and 83% of high school dropouts are also African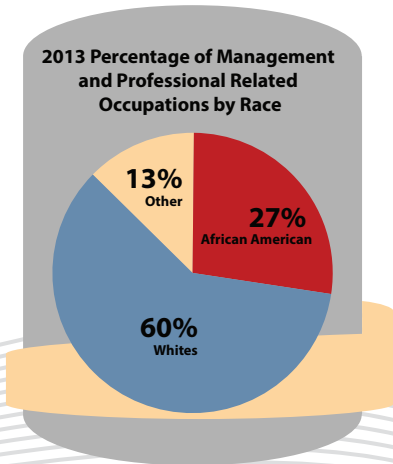 American (Sellers, Ortiz, Plyer, 2013). Thus, low educational attainment is a barrier preventing African Americans from gaining access to higher wage employment. Educational pathways for adults in the labor force to gain additional skills and training may help to improve access for African Americans relegated to low-skilled, low-wage employment opportunities. One policy measure that may help to position African Americans and low-income individuals for greater economic prosperity is an increase in the minimum wage to a living wage. Low educational attainment, lack of work experience, minimal employment opportunities, and experience with the criminal justice system have disadvantaged African Americans competing in the local labor force (City of New Orleans, 2014a).

In response to some of the inequities that permeate the city's economic and workforce landscape, Mayor Mitch Landrieu announced the City's Economic Opportunity Strategy, an comprehensive initiative to expand opportunities for the city's disadvantaged job seekers and business (City of New Orleans, 2014b). The Strategy includes efforts to build partnerships with some of the region's largest employers and anchor institutions including those in industries like healthcare, education, government, engineering and aviation. The strategy also introduces initiatives to connect New Orleanians to the city's economic growth opportunities through value-driven relationships with training providers, social service agencies, and community advocates. Furthermore, this strategy is also geared towards expanding outreach towards growth and expansion of strong small businesses with incentives for relocation, and to create collaborative projects with larger corporations. This effort will start building the bridge to create employment opportunities for local communities. Finally, the plan also invests in the creation of more contractual opportunities with the City for qualified small businesses (City of New Orleans, 2014b).

A significant part of the Mayor's economic opportunity framework is an investment in foundational skills and job training for disadvantaged job seekers, a sensible response to the skills gap within the local workforce. Educational attainment remains a consistent factor impacting African American's economic outcomes. The next section will examine this issue more closely.

Education

"The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches, but reveal to them their own."- (Benjamin Disraeli)

In 2004, a report titled *A Haunted City, the Social and Economic Status of African Americans and Whites in New Orleans*, readers were reminded that "the dominant theme from the 2000 census data is, New Orleans remains a city divided – divided by economics, education and opportunity. For a disproportionate share of this city's

population, particularly African Americans, the hammer of inequality continues to pound them deeper into the grave of economic inequality.

The educational chasm between the "haves" and "have-nots" and its related impact on income is especially visible when one considers the significant wage disparities between high school and college graduates. A 2014 report by the Pew Research Center reports that for millennials ages 25-32, employees with four-year college degrees earned almost $20,000 more than those with high school diplomas (Pew Research Center, 2014). This data is particularly troublesome for African Americans in New Orleans who continue to lag behind Whites in this critical aspect. For example, in 2013, only 14% of African American males and 21% African American females in New Orleans had a bachelors degree or higher as compared to 60% of White males and 65% of White females (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013g; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013h).

As one of the primary agents of socialization, education is a complex system that intersects and impacts the socioeconomic destinations of a person's life. In today's knowledge-based economy, which emphasizes analytical and communication skills, education and occupation are still considered the two pathways to the middle class. And, every succeeding generation should attain a better quality of life than the previous one. However, for many African Americans in this city, that pathway is often congested with obstacles. This data reflects more than just the disparities in education attainment by race in New Orleans, but the multiple intersecting factors contributing to the inertia in social mobility among African Americans and the long-term consequences.

Non-involvement and non-attainment of tertiary education and college degrees can therefore help explain some of the worrying economic trends and inequalities facing African Americans in New Orleans. Along with the gaps in median income and unemployment already mentioned, indicators such as poverty rates and even housing ownership are impacted by disparities in education. These disparities also exist in homeownership, where 42% of African Americans in New Orleans owned their homes as compared to 53% of whites (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013i; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013j). Poverty levels confirm these disparities since 35% for African Americans in New Orleans live below the poverty line as compared to 12% of Whites (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013m; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013n).

The collateral damage and intergenerational impact from the gap in education attainment fuels inequality and contributes to a decline in social and economic capital for African American families. Unfortunately, this leads to a cycle of entrenched poverty and social disinvestment that negatively impacts perceptions of residents and the outlook on living in New Orleans for future generations. This reality was reinforced in a study by Chetty and Hendren (2015). In this study, New Orleans ranked 99th out of 100 metro areas with respect to income mobility. Chetty and Hendren (2015) noted that children from low-income households in metro New Orleans can expect their household income to decline by nearly 15% when they reach 26 years of age. This decline can be attributed to low-income families being excluded from social and economic opportunities because of education and social isolation (Chetty and Hendren, 2015). Thus, inequality and poverty (rather than financial assets) are transferred from one generation to the next.

Entrepreneurship

"The worst form of inequality is to try to make unequal things equal." (Aristotle)

As our nation recovers from a recession, the gap in both entrepreneurship and workforce development between African-American entrepreneurs and their White counterparts, as well as other minorities, is still far and wide. Particularly in the city of New Orleans, where the population is majority African-American, yet the presence of African American businesses is low with even fewer of these businesses being sustained for at least three years (Yang, 2015). As of 2014, the average income of African American-owned businesses in the New Orleans metropolitan area was $56,647. This is consistent with data that indicates that minority-owned businesses represent 27% of businesses in New Orleans, yet only account for 2% of gross receipts (Plyer, Ortiz, & Hobor, 2013). Only 16.7% of the New Orleans area businesses are African American-owned with 4.1% of those businesses having paid employees. Per 100,000 residences, there were 8.7% African American-owned businesses in the area (Yang, 2015). Yang notes that there is realistic optimism regarding the growth of African American-owned businesses in the city, but this growth is gradual compared to all of the other racial groups.

Disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) programs help minority and women-owned businesses access economic opportunities. In New Orleans, a major DBE opportunity that promotes inclusion of minority-owned businesses in economic opportunities related to the New Orleans recovery is Orleans Parish schools rebuilding projects. Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) and the Recovery School District (RSD) set a goal of 35% and 25% respectively for DBE contract participation, yet in 2012 only had 2% combined DBE participation (Recovery School District, 2014). As of May 2015, OPSB had 32% DBE participation and RSD had 26% (School Construction Industry Connection, 2015).

Some of the slow growth of African American enterprises can be attributed to the lack of involvement of African Americans in funding opportunities and business incubators. The Idea Village, one of New Orleans' entrepreneur incubators, reported a minority participation rate of 16% in the organization's entrepreneurship startup program since 2009 (A.L. Johnson, personal communication, June 3, 2015). The local business community is working to address entrepreneurial inclusion by leveraging the achievements of existing African American entrepreneurs to spur future engagement of this demographic in entrepreneurship.

PowerMoves.NOLA, is a national initiative based in New Orleans that uses innovative approaches to remove barriers to minority entrepreneurship. The mission of the initiative is to increase the number of "venture-backed, minority-founded companies." The initiative is currently serving five fellows, three of whom are based in New Orleans, and 57 small businesses.

PowerMoves.NOLA and Idea Village are among a small cadre of providers of small business assistance programs in New Orleans that can support African American enterprises. Organizations such as the Urban League's Women's Business Resource Center, Southern University at New Orleans Small Business Development and Management Institute, Goodwork Network and the Louisiana Small Business Development Center offer a broad spectrum of services that are critical to create the eco-system necessary for minority businesses to not only survive, but thrive.

Recommendations

First and foremost, to reverse the entrenched effects of these disparities, the community must invest in the potential of its greatest

resource --- its people. Full civic, social and economic participation of its citizens is the key to any competitive and socially stable community. Schools must become more than just places to transmit knowledge, but facilitators to cultivate the personal and professional network. As such, schools can become one of the social escalators lifting many out of poverty. Educated citizens are innovative and more adaptable to withstand economic disruptions.

In a hyper-competitive national and global economy, the ability of a community to nurture its human capital ensures its long-term sustainability and the resiliency of its citizens.   The protracted and entrenched disparities expose socially and economically fragile residents to recurring survival stress and anxiety.   The psychological effects of trying to survive and navigate an environment with diminished resources produces a plethora of social maladies.
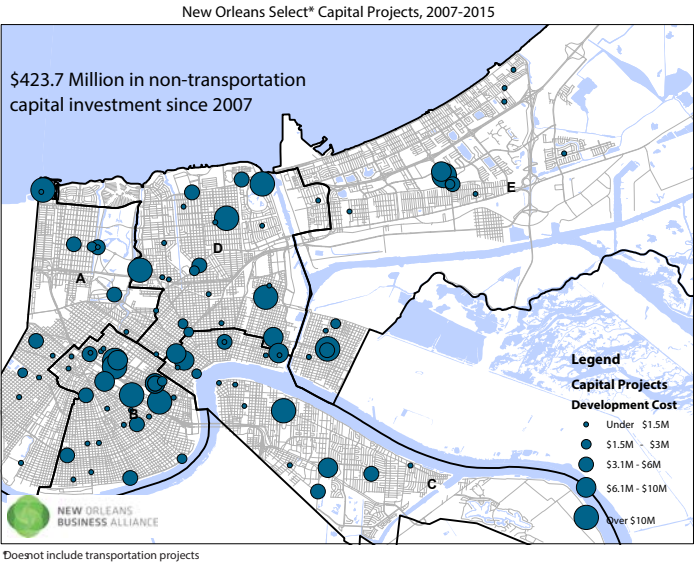
Finally, there must be clarity and choreography between our political, economic and social institutions.   Where there has previously been a tendency to overlook or marginalize many of our economic assets, we can no longer afford to have the long shadow of educational and economic inequality remain the legacy of this community.

Ultimately, we must unlock access to opportunity. Policies such as tax incentives should be established with direct returns that spur economic development in marginalized communities. Public projects should mandate equitable participation, with the establishment of Community Benefits Agreements attached.   Private companies must reform recruitment and hiring practices to not just increase access to jobs, but diversify at all levels throughout the enterprise, particularly manager and executive levels. One way to stem the tide is to more aggressively connect incentives to diversity outcomes.

Workforce development programs must be comprehensive in providing case management, workforce fundamentals and technical skills, and produce an actual pipeline to employment. Small business programs must be better resourced and coordinated via data systems to provide a continuum of services and access to capital and investment at the various stages of business growth. Accountability for inclusive outcomes on development projects should also be strengthened via increased monitoring and enforcement.

A practical/tactical solution is to engage these issues aggressively by establishing a strong program that is laden with activities promoting a concept of "the better opportunity". This would involve promoting college education with practical (or real world) experience to prepare African Americans with a strategic combination of knowledge and skills within in their field of interest, particularly within the demand sectors. From the economic position, it would be essential to grow business and commerce from "home base" or within New Orleans by taking advantage of the resources that we have, particularly in areas such as real estate. Within New Orleans East alone, there are significant opportunities to build and develop, providing access to high wage jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities.

As a community, we share an inter-locking destiny.   The continued social and economic displacement of a disproportionate share of our population will result in excessive under-employment and unemployment, producing on-going economic stagnation. Instead of families transferring economic assets to succeeding generations, poverty and economic inequality will become the family heirloom.

New Orleans Select* Capital Projects, 2007-2015

$423.7 Million in non-transportation capital investment since 2007

Legend
Capital Projects
Development Cost
- Under $1.5M
- $1.5M - $3M
- $3.1M - $6M
- $6.1M - $10M
- Over $10M

*Does not include transportation projects

This map highlights public investment in non-transportation capital projects across the city between 2007-2015. City council district boundaries are labeled to highlight investments by district. Capital projects include libraries, police and fire stations, recreation facilities, and other related projects. Total amount for publicly-funded capital projects is $423.7 million with $34.3 million in District A, $115.9 million in District B, $94.3 million in District C, $110.5 million in District D, and $69.7 million in District E.

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HOUSING CRIMINAL JUSTICE ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION HEALTH WORKFORCE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

THE STATE OF BLACK EDUCATION: TEN YEARS AFTER THE STORM OF REFORM

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CROSSING CRITICAL THRESHOLDS LIKE COLLEGE DEGREE ATTAINMENT IS ULTIMATELY IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT IS THE FOREMOST MEANS OF GAINING SOCIAL MOBILITY. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE FOR PEOPLE IN POVERTY. CONSEQUENTLY, EDUCATORS MUST MEASURE GROWTH AGAINST TRUE TO LIFE THRESHOLDS STUDENTS AND FAMILIES MUST CROSS IN ORDER TO CLIMB THE SOCIAL LADDER.

EDUCATION

Discussions and research on post-Katrina education reforms and their impacts on student learning, political participation and community cohesion most often focus on whether or not improvements or declines have occurred in those areas since the storm. But debates about growth do not plainly declare whether or not students are prepared for college or for a career. Crossing critical thresholds like college degree attainment is ultimately important because it is the foremost means of gaining social mobility. This is especially true for people in poverty. Consequently, educators must measure growth against true to life thresholds students and families must cross in order to climb the social ladder.

How are schools preparing young people to pursue and access a better quality of life? What role is our system of education playing in improving broad economic, health and other outcomes for our children? How can school leaders leverage education systems to maximize the quality of life for children and their families?

This chapter hopes to respond to these basic questions by examining early childhood, K-12 and postsecondary educational issues. The chapter also examines the large number of young people neither working nor in school.

Early Childhood Care and Education

Today children are expected to enter kindergarten knowing more than they

did a decade ago (Curwood, 2007). As expectations continue to rise, the lagging achievement gap between low-income, African American children and their high-income, White peers still begins long before children enter school (Hutchison, Morrissey, & Burgess, 2014). Consequently, what steps have school leaders taken to eliminate this gap, facilitate healthy early childhood development and promote school readiness for low-income and African American children in New Orleans?

Several key factors that promote school readiness during early childhood include access to quality childcare, health facilities, parks and playgrounds; health care visits, and home literacy activities (Karoly, Kilburn, Cannon, 2005a). Children in poverty often face barriers to these important early childhood development opportunities. At last count, 39% of children in New Orleans live in poverty and 50.5% of African American children in New Orleans live in poverty (Mack, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013b). In order to assess children's risks to school readiness, proxy measures are used such as maternal educational attainment (linked to home literacy activities), median income, female-headed households (and other economic indicators), and access to health care, insurance and other resources (LSU/Tulane Early Childhood Policy and Data Center, 2012).

In the *Early Childhood Reach and Risk in Louisiana* report published in 2012, Orleans Parish received a moderate to high-risk rating, indicating the level of risk children face for gaps in school readiness (LSU/Tulane Early Childhood Policy and Data Center, 2012). Orleans Parish earned a rating of moderate to high risk or high risk for all five economic factors including

female-headed households, maternal educational attainment, poverty rate, and unemployment (LSU/Tulane Early Childhood Policy and Data Center, 2012). As previously noted, these factors impact young children's access to important early childhood opportunities and resources. According to a 2013 report by the City of New Orleans Department of Health, 19 out of 72 neighborhoods lacked adequate public transit, 12 lacked green space, and 19 lacked childcare facilities within the neighborhood (New Orleans Health Department & Healthy Start New Orleans, 2013). The deficiency of resources limit opportunities children need during early childhood to stimulate healthy development.

There are local programs that help to lessen the impact of poverty on early childhood outcomes. Included among them is the Early Steps program, which serves a relatively high percentage of young children with developmental delays (LSU/Tulane Early Childhood Policy and Data Center, 2012). Early Steps serves children from birth to three with developmental delays or medical conditions that cause delays. The program assists children with services such as assisted technology, therapy and special instruction within their homes to help facilitate healthy development (Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, n.d.).

Orleans Parish also has high percentages of three- and four-year-olds enrolled in pre-school programs from high-risk neighborhoods such as the Desire Area, the Florida Area and Holy Cross, all of which had 100% of their three- and four-year-olds enrolled in pre-school programs (New Orleans Health Department & Healthy Start New Orleans, 2013). The expansion of community health centers in New Orleans

has also increased access to primary health care facilities in high need neighborhoods (New Orleans Health Department & Healthy Start New Orleans, 2013). The aforementioned assets help to expand opportunities for healthy early childhood development for children in New Orleans.

High quality early childcare and education programs are related to numerous positive outcomes including school readiness, increased likelihood of graduation, employment, higher income, improved health outcomes and decreased likelihood of involvement with crime (Calman & Tarr-Whelan, 2005; Karoly, Kilburn, & Cannon, 2005). Data is not destiny, and thus, it is important that programs and services aimed at improving early childhood development for vulnerable children consider the broad factors impacting their children's development.

A 2012 policy measure called the Early Childhood Education Act, or Act 3, was designed to address some of the challenges in the early childhood care and education system in Louisiana to better prepare children for kindergarten readiness (Office of the Governor, 2013). In 2012, Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal signed into law Act 3, a legislative measure that brought about the coordination of early childhood care and education services and programs under the auspices of the Department of Education. The state's early childhood care and education system was previously described as "fragmented," and almost half of the state's young children entered kindergarten unprepared (Office of the Governor, 2013). Act 3 established the Early Childhood Care and Education Network, a coordinated system of early childhood providers participating in the central enrollment system and quality rating system (LDOE, n.d.a). Additionally, the Act calls for the alignment of standards in early

childhood care and education that facilitates kindergarten readiness. The measure is intended to increase accountability and quality of publicly funded early childhood care and education programs. It introduced a revised rating of childcare providers and programs to make it easier for parents to select quality programs for their children. Other components of Act 3 focus on improving professional development for early childhood providers, introduces an accountability system that includes "age-appropriate" assessments of children, and eliminates "red tape" that would free up provider resources to attract high quality professionals (Office of the Governor, 2013).

Although the Early Childhood Education Act intends to improve quality, coordination and accountability in the early childhood care and education system, several major critiques of the policy measure suggest that unintended consequences could make increased access and quality more challenging for the state's most vulnerable children. Coordination of early childhood care and education system addresses the issue of fragmentation, however some believe that placing the system under the auspices of the Department of Education may lead to a developmentally inappropriate application of a K-12 lens on early childhood development. The implementation of standardized tests and a focus on numeracy and literacy do not meet the broad developmental needs of children during early childhood (e.g., socio-emotional development) (Bassok, Latham, & Rorem, 2015). Findings from a national study of early childhood education programs indicate that play-based learning, a popular and appropriate early childhood education approach is quickly being replaced by more traditional K-12 teaching models that focus on academic skills (Bassok et al., 2015). This trend has resulted in a reduction in opportunities for

play, a more age-appropriate pedagogical approach to early childhood education (Bassok et al., 2015). This is especially true in districts that educate high proportions of low-income children and children of color. Consequently, Act 3 may be facilitating this shift without a full awareness of its impact on the development of Louisiana's children.

Another critique of Act 3 is that it increases standards for early childhood program providers but does not increase funding for key early childhood care and education programs (Gray, 2014). That is a significant shortcoming, given that the cost of compliance can be burdensome for already strained providers in low-income communities. Over the past five years, state funding for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) has been cut by 58% to $1750, while actual childcare costs are upwards of $6000 annually (Policy Institute for Children, 2015). Low-income families are expected to make up the difference, which further serves as a barrier for vulnerable children to access high quality early childhood programs. Since these cuts went into effect, the number of children served by through CCAP has been cut in half (Policy Institute for Children, 2015). The state's largest, publicly funded pre-K program LA4, is also grossly underfunded at $4580 per student when the actual cost of an LA4 classroom is $5500 per student (Policy Institute for Children, 2015). These budget shortfalls are perhaps the biggest threat to increased access to high quality early childhood care and education for low-income children and children of color. Without adequately addressing these issues, gaps in school readiness for low-income children and children of color may continue to persist, making the goal to close the achievement gap in New Orleans continuously out of reach.

System Reforms

New Orleans underwent a number of reforms post-Katrina. Broadly, some of the reforms we will examine are school choice, changes within the educator workforce, the Louisiana Scholarship program, school closures and expulsions.

School Choice

As families returned to New Orleans and schools re-opened after Katrina, public school attendance zones were eliminated (Sims & Vaughan, 2014). Public schools instituted "open enrollment" policies allowing students to apply and enroll in schools across the city no matter where they lived. In New Orleans, school choice was born of necessity given the nature of destruction caused by Katrina and due to the fact that many schools re-opened as charter schools (didn't allow for attendance zones). However, in many other urban areas across the country, public education systems have adopted school choice policies to diversify schools and allow families to "opt out" of failing neighborhood schools (Liu & Taylor, 2005).

Families exercised an informal system of choice prior to Katrina. Schools primarily served families within their zoned neighborhood. However, magnet schools in New Orleans enrolled students from across the city regardless of where they lived.

Because there are no "default" neighborhood schools post Katrina, all parents must actively choose a school for their child. To encourage fairness and transparency in the selection process, community and school leaders developed a centralized enrollment process called the Common Application, which later evolved into *OneApp* (Dreilinger, 2013). *OneApp* is an application process that allows parents to rank in order of preference up to

eight schools for their child. *OneApp* was created by the Recovery School District (RSD) and first implemented for the 2012-13 school year. A computer program matches students with available seats in the school based on their parents' choices. Preference is given to students who have a sibling attending the school and to those transitioning from a failing school. In addition, geographic priority is given to those living within neighborhood boundaries of the school of their choice, often referred to as geographic catchment areas.

All RSD charter schools, OPSB direct-run schools, and newly authorized OPSB charter schools are required to participate in *OneApp*. Nine OPSB charter schools and NOCCA do not participate; they require students to apply at the school and independently run their schools' lotteries for placement (Dreilinger, 2015a). Upon their charter renewal, however, the nine OPSB charter schools will be required to use *OneApp* for student placement. Of the nine, six will be up for renewal and join *OneApp* in 2017-18 and three will join in the 2021-22 school year. But currently, some of the nine are the most sought after and competitive schools, and they do not participate in the *OneApp* process making it more cumbersome to fill out separate applications for schools. In addition, the most coveted schools have very limited seats so many parents do not get their first choice. For the 2015-16 school year, 4,000 new students applied to schools using *OneApp* and 6,300 students used *OneApp* to change schools (Drielinger, 2015).

For the 2012-13 school year, *OneApp* match results showed that 84% of students were placed in one of their top 3 schools and 75% in their number one choice. For the 2013-14 school year, 71.5% of students were placed in one of their top 3 choices and 55% in their number one choice (Sims & Vaughan, 2014).
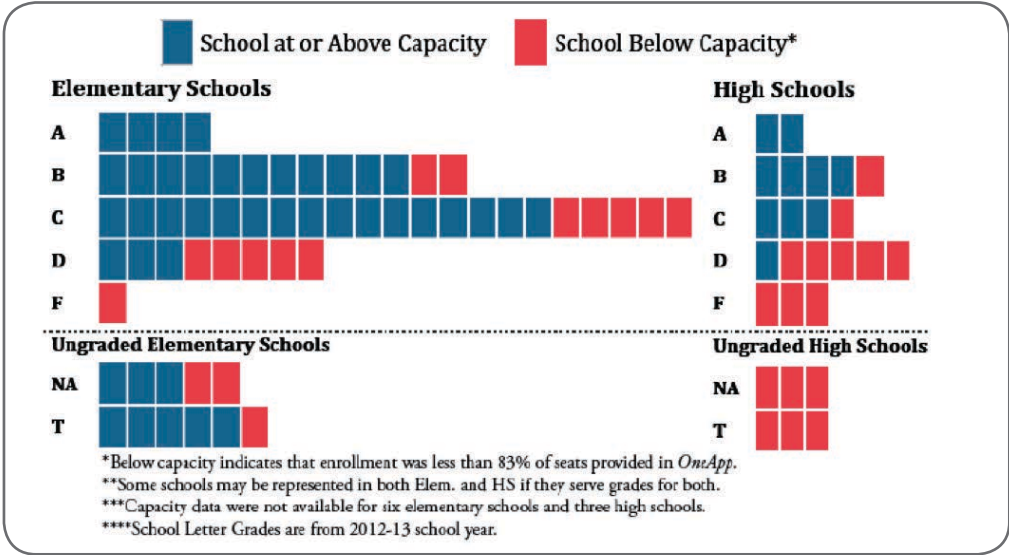

Figure1: School Capacity by Letter Grade

Sources: Sims, P. and Vaughan, D. The State of public education in New Orleans:2014. *Cowen Institute.*

How Parents Choose?

When asked about the characteristics of schools that are important, parents cite things like academic performance, teacher quality, extracurricular offerings (especially in high school), and school location. The Urban League of Greater New Orleans (ULGNO) report (2013), *Parent Perspectives: Parental Engagement and Education Reform in New Orleans* found that parents consider many factors and tend to look at a school holistically rather than as a set of isolated characteristics. While parents are interested in a school's academic ranking and test score results, they want to be sure their own child's academic needs are met and look for additional support such as test prep, tutoring, and enrichment programs. Also, parents recognize the importance of an engaging and challenging curriculum and value specialized programs that appeal to their child's interests.

The aforementioned ULGNO report (2013) and the 2013 Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives (Cowen Institute) report found that location or proximity to home or work was another factor parents consider when selecting a school for their child. A study by the Education Research Alliance for New Orleans at Tulane University analyzed enrollment patterns before and after Katrina and *OneApp* priorities (Harris & Larsen, 2015). Tulane researchers confirmed that distance from home to school was important and suggested that some families still view the nearest school or neighborhood school as the "default" choice. They noted that even when a higher performing option was only slightly farther away, parents ranked the closer school higher in priority on *OneApp.*

In order for school choice/open enrollment to adequately serve the needs of families and increase educational outcomes for all students, there must be ample quality options and parents must have access to

information. An analysis of enrollment and capacity conducted by the Cowen Institute shows that elementary/middle and high schools with a School Performance Score (SPS) of "A" are at or above capacity (Sims & Vaughan, 2014). Of the schools earning an SPS of "B" nearly all are at capacity. Conversely most schools reporting an SPS letter grade of "D" and all schools reporting a letter grade of "F" are below capacity. (See Figure 1) This analysis indicates that there is a high demand for higher performing schools and that demand exceeds supply.

With so many options available to parents, access to information is vital in the decision making process. The Cowen Institute study in 2013 found that parents rely on family and friends for information about schools and that many parents were misinformed about their options and the process. Organizations such as the New Orleans Parents Guide (NOPG) and the Urban League of Greater New Orleans (ULGNO) are actively addressing the needs of families to gather accurate and appropriate information about schools and the application/enrollment process. New Orleans Parents Guide is a nonprofit organization providing quality and transparent information to families through the annual *New Orleans Parents' Guide to Public Schools* as well as a Parents Guide phone app.

The Urban League of Greater New Orleans, through the Family Resource Centers, provides families with information and support to select and navigate the application/enrollment process. Three Family Resource Centers are located throughout the city and are open daily to accommodate families as needed. Language assistance in Spanish and Vietnamese is also available at the Centers. Additionally, each year, ULGNO publishes the *New Orleans Guide to High School and Beyond* providing parents with information about both their

public and nonpublic high school options. ULGNO also hosts a large-scale annual Schools Expo where thousands of attendees interface with school representatives to learn about the full spectrum of local school options.

Louisiana Scholarship Program

Families with students in public schools with a letter grade of "C,""D", "F" or "T" (transition) or with children entering kindergarten can apply for a scholarship or voucher to send their child to a participating private school. In addition, eligible families must have a family income that does not exceed 250% of the federal poverty guidelines (Sims & Vaughan, 2014). Parents in Orleans Parish apply using the *OneApp* and can rank up to eight schools in order of their preference including both public and participating private schools. For the 2015-16 school year, 1,500 students of 10,300 applicants included at least one private school as a choice on *OneApp*; about one-third of those students selected only private schools. (Dreilinger, 2015a.)

The voucher program was piloted in New Orleans in 2008 and expanded statewide in 2012. The state reports that 131 private schools are participating in the program statewide. There are 42 private schools accepting the voucher in the Greater New Orleans region and 29 of these schools are located in Orleans Parish (LDOE, n.d.c.).

Questions remain about the quality among private schools in the voucher program. Students receiving publicly funded scholarships to attend private schools are required to take state assessments. Statewide, in 2013-14 40% of scholarship students tested in grades 3 through 8 scored basic or above; the state average was 69% (Dreilinger, 2014b). Because of low levels of student academic achievement, 23 schools are no longer allowed to accept new students through the voucher program; 10

of these "failing schools" are in New Orleans (Dreilinger, 2015a).

Educator Workforce

Teacher quality is also important to parents and they define it in a variety of ways. Parents are looking for teachers that are dedicated, caring, can differentiate instruction, etc. Some parents value teacher certification and experience. In both the Urban League study (2013) and research conducted by the Cowen Institute (2013), some parents expressed concern about the shift in teacher demographics post-Katrina. In the wake of Katrina, approximately 7,500 public school employees were fired. Many veteran teachers reapplied to teach in OPSB or RSD schools; however, most newly opened charter schools enlisted organizations such as Teacher For America (TFA) and The New Teacher Project, TeachNOLA, bringing in predominately younger, non-local, less experienced White teachers. For some parents, a quality teacher was described as someone who looked like them, grew up like them, and had a deep appreciation for local culture and traditions, in part a response to the vastly different demographic profile of the current NOPS educator workforce post-Katrina (Cowen Institute, 2013).

According to a report proffered by EducateNOW! (2015) in the 2003-04 academic year, 74% of teachers in public schools in New Orleans were African American. In 2012-13, 51% of teachers in public schools in New Orleans (OPSB and RSD) were African American. The social and economic effects of the drop in African American teachers remain an ever present, tense, but scarcely studied topic. An examination of the impact of this demographic shift within the educator workforce must be studied with respect to its impact on children and its impact on the shrinking, African American middle class in New Orleans.

School Closures

During the 2014-2015 school year, 26 charter schools (30%) in New Orleans were up for renewal or extensions (Dreilinger, 2014a). The state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) renewed or extended charters for 22 of the schools; charters for two schools were extended with some probationary stipulations and two schools were slated to close (Dreilinger, 2014d).

Since Katrina, 19 charter schools have closed, surrendered their charters, changed management, or merged with another school. In addition to charter school closures, the RSD has closed 34 traditional direct-run schools and authorized charter schools to operate in many of the school buildings, and OPSB closed three alternative schools. (Louisiana Department of Education, n.d.b).

Closures are usually based on the schools' report card grades and performance scores, which are mostly made up of student test scores and graduation rates for high schools, financial viability, and organizational (legal and contractual) obligations. In more extreme cases, schools have been closed because of incompliance with state regulations, BESE policy and charter contracts, special education violations, and other violations that compromise the safety and well-being of children (Jewson, 2015; Tidmore, 2011).

Although school closures are a direct result of increased accountability in public education in New Orleans, the impact of school closures on families must be examined. Children of color have almost exclusively been impacted by this education reform strategy leaving families scrambling to find new schools for their children. Empirical evidence suggests that student mobility has a negative impact on young children (Beatty, 2010). As a policy,

school closures should be a method of last resort and every effort possible must be made to improve schools before school closures are enforced.

Expulsions

The decentralization of the public school system following Hurricane Katrina left little consistency and oversight of student discipline and expulsions. In 2012-2013, the Orleans Parish School Board and the Recovery School District established a centralized expulsion hearing office, a set of standard policies, and single review team to hear all cases for students enrolled in public schools located in New Orleans (including all RSD and state-authorized charter schools, OPSB charter schools, and OPSB direct-run schools.) The new expulsion handbook identifies three levels of offenses; levels one and two include actions that result in expulsions while level three offenses lead to a "disciplinary conference" (Dreilinger, 2015b). Having more students referred to a disciplinary conference has led to fewer expulsions.

A comparison of mid-year 2013 and 2014 expulsion rates and counts shows a decrease. In December 2013, 114 public school students were expelled (.26%) and 75 students received a conference (Dreilinger, 2015b). By mid-year 2014, the number of students expelled declined to 100 (.22%) and 201 students received a conference. Overall, the RSD saw a 45% drop in the number of students recommended for expulsion by mid-year 2014-2015 and a citywide decrease of 25% (RSD, 2015).

These changes to the expulsion process in New Orleans Public Schools are a step in the right direction in addressing the school-to-prison pipeline. School expulsions disproportionately impact African American and Hispanic students who are 10 and four times (respectively) more likely than

White students to be expelled (Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools, 2012). In New Orleans 46% of the children that the Louisiana Center for Children's Rights (LCCR) represents have been expelled or suspended, 25% have been arrested for something that happened in school, and 98% of them are African Americans (Perry, 2015). LCCR's Children Defense Team represents 1200 juvenile cases each year. These statistics illustrate the pervasiveness of the school-to-prison pipeline on African Americans in New Orleans and should influence schools to identify additional alternatives to disciplining African American youth.

Secondary Education

Over the past 10 years significant gains have been made in secondary education in New Orleans. Public school graduation rose from 54% in 2004 to almost 73% in 2014 (LDOE, 2015b). Dropout rates have almost been cut in half, moving from12.2% in 2004 to 6.5% in 2014 (LDOE, 2014c). And 59% of the class of 2014 enrolled in college the fall semester after graduation (LDOE, 2015b). These data points are frequently used to highlight the progress that has been made in New Orleans schools, but what do they really tell us? Have gains in secondary education been equitable? Are students exiting high school ready for college and career?

A few details must be mentioned to put this discussion in perspective. First, despite the fact that RSD-NO manages more than 80% of public schools in New Orleans, they only educate about half of public high school students in the city (LDOE, 2015a). In addition, OPSB high schools include a few selective admissions high schools, two of which enroll a higher proportion of White students and a lower proportion of low-income students than most public high schools in the city. Benjamin Franklin High School and Lusher Charter School (upper school) graduate less than 25% of the OPSB senior class, but have the highest ACT composite scores for the district (LDOE, 2015a; LDOE, 2014a). Finally, New Orleans and Louisiana have one of the highest private school enrollments in the nation, with 25% of its students attending private and parochial schools (Davidson, 2014). Thus, the state of Black education will include data, where possible, on private and parochial high school outcomes.

The question has been posed, "How are high schools in New Orleans preparing their students to succeed in career and college?" We will use ACT data to examine schools' success at preparing students for college, given that scores on the ACT are predictors of first year college performance. A brief analysis of NOPS student performance over the past 10 years will be offered in this section. In addition, we will also present TOPS eligibility data available from the Louisiana Department of Education to provide a snapshot of private and parochial school students' achievement in comparison to public school student achievement. An analysis of inequities within private and parochial schools is provided as well using TOPS data to provide some insight on how much families are benefitting from the investment in private school education. Data analysis on college enrollment by school type for NOPS is also presented in this section. Very little data is available on career readiness initiatives in NOPS. However, a discussion on Jump Start, the statewide career readiness initiative, will be discussed in brief.

ACT Performance

High school grade point average (GPA), ACT and SAT scores, and non-cognitive variables are among several valid predictors of college success (Richardson, Abraham, & Bond, 2012). Although standardized tests alone are insufficient predictors of college success, they are valid predictors of first year college

performance and they are used nationally to gauge college readiness (in addition to other variables including high school GPA) (Noble, 2003). ACT scores do not provide a holistic view of college readiness, but they are used to determine remediation and college entry for colleges and universities in Louisiana. An ACT composite score of an 18 (minimum) is an indicator of college readiness and an ACT below an 18 is used as an indicator that students need remediation (Louisiana Connect, 2014).

In 2014, seven out of 24 public high schools in New Orleans (29%) with reported ACT scores for seniors had an ACT composite score of 18 or better (LDOE, 2014a). In the RSD the numbers are significantly lower than OPSB with only two schools out of 17 (12%) with a reported ACT composite score of 18 or better. This means that an overwhelming majority of schools in the RSD-NO are graduating students who are deemed underprepared for college. To be exact, 33% of RSD-NO students had a composite score of 18 or higher (Dreilinger, 2014c). Within OPSB, all but one of their high schools had an ACT composite score above 18 (LDOE, 2014a). In total, 66% of students in OPSB schools had an ACT composite score of 18 or better (Dreilinger, 2014c). Compare this to the state average of 59% and OPSB appears to be performing well. But how does this compare to NOPS before the state takeover?

In 2005, 19 schools had reported ACT composite scores for their graduating seniors (LDOE, 2005). Of those 19 schools, five of them were selective admissions high schools. Yet only three schools (Franklin, Karr and McMain High Schools) in the entire district had ACT composite scores above 18. Two of the five selective admissions schools fell short of graduating students on average that met the benchmark for college readiness. However, composite ACT scores for both Edna Karr High School and Eleanor McMain High School were higher in 2005 than they were in 2014 (LDOE, 2005; LDOE, 2014a). The ACT composite score for Edna Karr High School in 2014 was an 18.5 down from 19.7 in 2005 (LDOE, 2005). For McMain the drop was more significant, with a 2014 composite score of 19.1, down from 20.6 in 2005 (LDOE, 2005; LDOE, 2014a). Both of these schools have moved from being selective admissions schools to open enrollment high schools.

ACT scores give us a snapshot of student achievement and college readiness for young people in New Orleans public schools, but what do we know about the student achievement of young people graduating from New Orleans private and parochial schools? The investment that families make in private and parochial education ranges approximately $7000 to nearly $23,000 per year (Jesuit High School, 2014). Is this investment paying off? Data from the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students, the state's merit-based scholarship program for postsecondary education, suggests that the payoff varies.

TOPS Eligibility

Students at private and parochial schools are outperforming students in NOPS in TOPS eligibility (LOFSA, 2014). In 2014, 73% of nonpublic high school graduates in New Orleans were TOPS eligible as compared to 37% of NOPS graduates (LOFSA, 2014). This means that students met the grade point average and ACT composite score requirements to receive one of four of the state's merit-based scholarships. That is a 36-percentage point difference between nonpublic and public schools in New Orleans (LOFSA, 2014). It would seem that the investment in private education is paying off for the vast majority of graduates in local, nonpublic schools since almost three quarters of nonpublic high school graduates are earning scholarships to state public

Figure 2: Nonpublic TOPS eligibility 2014
Source: Source: LDOE, 2014 High School Graduates (including alternate eligible) eligible f
or a TOPS award by school, school district and parish TOPS eligibility report

Figure 3: TOPS eligibility district comparison 2005
Source: Louisiana Office of Student Financial Aid [LOFSA]. (2005). 2005 High school graduates
(including alternate eligible) eligible for a TOPS Award by school, school district and parish

institutions.   However, deep disparities exist between predominately Black and predominately White nonpublic schools.

In 2014, there was a 30-point difference in TOPS eligibility between predominately Black and White private and parochial schools (LOFSA, 2014). Among Black private schools, 47% of graduates were TOPS eligible as compared to 77% of White private school graduates (See Figure 2). This performance gap appears to be closing between predominately Black and White private schools, albeit slowly. In 2009 there was a 34-percentage point difference in TOPS eligibility between predominately Black and predominately White nonpublic high schools. The difference between these schools in 2005 was 38% (LOFSA, 2005; LOFSA, 2009; LOFSA, 2014).

In 2005, the difference in TOPS eligibility between Black private schools and New Orleans public schools was only five-percentage points (See Figure 3) (LOSFA,

2005). In 2005, New Orleans public schools were the second lowest performing school district in Louisiana. What do 2005 TOPS eligibility data suggest about the quality of Black nonpublic schools in New Orleans ten years ago? Since 2005, the gap between NOPS and Black nonpublic schools grew by 10-percentage points, with 32% TOPS eligibility in NOPS as compared to 47% for Black nonpublic schools (See Figure 4) (LOFS, 2014).   What does the growing gap in TOPS eligibility between NOPS and Black nonpublic schools tell us about how well NOPS are preparing students to compete in college and the workforce?

A closer look at TOPS eligibility by school type reveals that OPSB TOPS eligibility was one percentage point higher than Black nonpublic schools in 2014 (LOFSA, 2014). That same year RSD-NO was 23- percentage points lower than Black nonpublic high schools and 24-percentage points lower than OPSB schools (See Figure 4). Do these extensive gaps suggest that there is an

Figure 4: TOPS eligibility by school type and scholarship level 2014
Source: Louisiana Office of Student Financial Aid [LOFSA]. (2014). 2014 High School Graduates
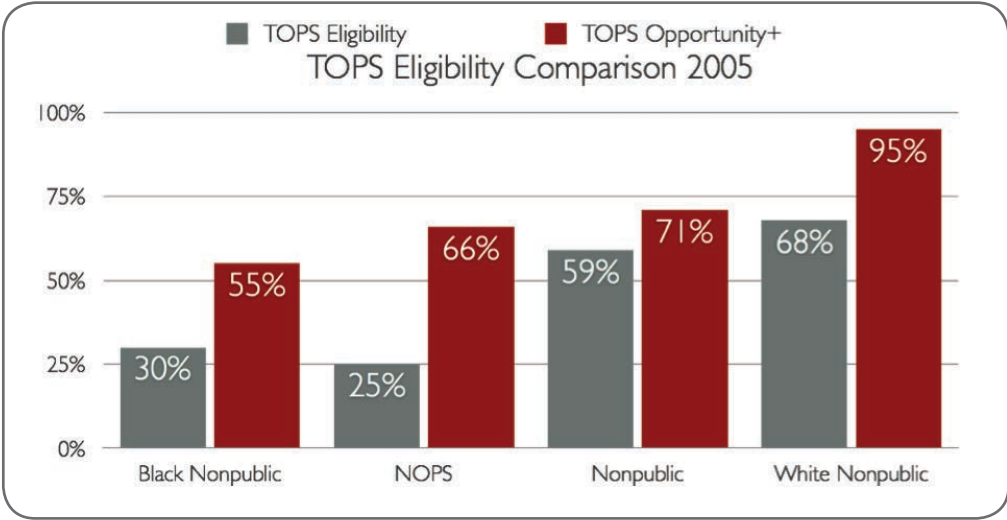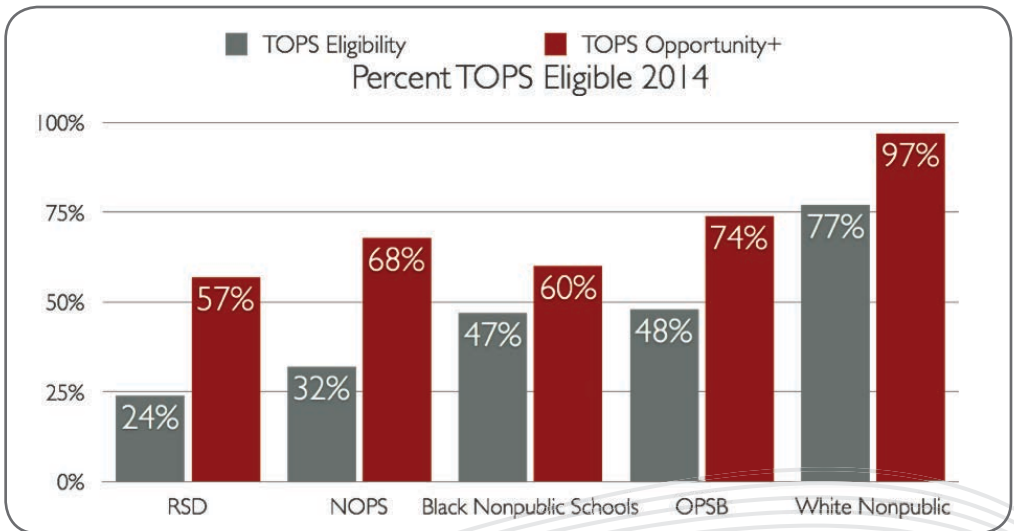(including alternate eligible) eligible for a TOPS award by school, school district and parish TOPS eligibility report.

educational caste system in New Orleans? Have education reforms in New Orleans inadvertently established a more complex system of social stratification in local schools? More importantly, what can be done to accelerate the closing of the achievement gaps between RSD-NO schools and other school districts, as well as gaps between predominately Black and predominately White schools in New Orleans?

Differences in the percentage of TOPS Opportunity (or higher) scholarships between districts are better markers of college readiness than TOPS eligibility alone. These scholarships require at minimum an ACT score of 20, which exceeds the college readiness benchmark of 18, and requires a minimum of a 2.5 grade point average. Gaps between Black and White private schools in New Orleans are more pronounced when looking at TOPS eligibility type. For instance, there was a 37-percentage point difference between predominately Black and predominately White nonpublic high schools in the percent of students eligible for TOPS Opportunity scholarships or higher (see Figure 2). This gap is down from a 40-percentage point gap in 2005. It is also worth noting that almost all TOPS eligible students at White nonpublic schools earned TOPS Opportunity scholarships or higher.

In comparing TOPS Opportunity eligibility or higher amongst public and nonpublic high schools, NOPS schools outperformed Black nonpublic schools by eight percentage points in 2014 (LOFSA, 2014). OPSB outperformed Black private schools by 14-percentage points, and RSD-NO fell just three percentage points below Black nonpublic schools in the percentage of TOPS Opportunity (or higher) eligibility (See Figure 4). So, among students who are TOPS eligible in New Orleans schools, there is a higher percentage of TOPS Opportunity or better in NOPS than in Black nonpublic

schools (LOFSA, 2014). If college readiness is an important factor influencing African American families school choices, could OPSB schools be a better investment for African American families than Black nonpublic schools in New Orleans?

Despite gains in TOPS scholarship eligibility in public and nonpublic, predominately Black schools in New Orleans, the achievement gap between predominately Black and predominately White schools remains significantly wide. To what can these disparities be attributed? Could it be that the environmental barriers to development young children face during early childhood continue to disadvantage children well into high school? How can schools help eliminate disparities in student achievement and college and career readiness without also examining and addressing root causes of these disparities? How are these disparities impacting African American students' capacity to compete in postsecondary education and in the workforce? The next section examines African American students' college enrollment trends to shed light on this issue.

College Enrollment

College enrollment appears to be on the uptick for New Orleans public high school graduates. Almost 60% of the class of 2014 is reported to have enrolled in college in the fall of 2014 (LDOE, 2015). This statistic represents both in-state and out-of-state college enrollment. Prior to 2012, the Louisiana Department of Education only reported on students who went to college in-state, thus we present in-state college enrollment over the past decade to examine college enrollment trends.

Using current college enrollment reports, we were able to determine that 48% of public high school graduates from the class
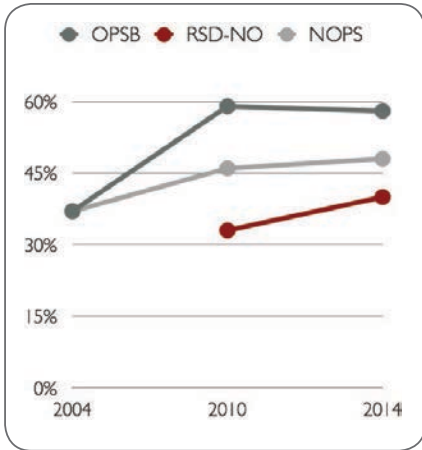
Figure 5: NOPS college enrollment 2004-2014
Source: Louisiana Department of Education [LDOE]. (2004). Louisiana first time college freshman state ; Report: Fall 2004;Louisiana Department of Education [LDOE]. (2010). Louisiana first time college freshman state: Report: Fall 2010; Louisiana Department of Education [LDOE]. (2014b). College enrollment data for 2013- 2014 high school graduates

of 2014 enrolled in in-state colleges and universities in the fall of 2014 as compared to 37% in 2004 (LDOE, 2014b; LDOE, 2004). This represents an 11-percentage point increase in 10 years and a one-percentage point increase since 2010 (LDOE, 2010). Figure 5 highlights changes in in-state college enrollment for New Orleans public school graduates by district from 2004-2014.

A closer look at the postsecondary education enrollment trends among NOPS graduates reveals a series of peaks, valleys and plains in student outcomes throughout the past ten years. NOPS experienced its greatest gains in college enrollment between 2004 and 2010, when RSD-NO district still directly ran most RSD-NO high schools. (LDOE, 2004; LDOE, 2010). The exceptions were Algiers Charter Schools Association high schools and the Capital One UNO Charter School (Thurgood Marshall Early College High School). RSD-NO is currently experiencing

the most growth in the city, having increased college enrollment by seven percentage points since 2010. RSD-NO continues to experience growth while OPSB growth has slowed at almost 60% (LDOE, 2014b). Although OPSB contains a few selective admissions schools all but one of their high schools had college-going rates in 2010 above the state average of 52% (LDOE, 2010). That suggests that OPSB did a fairly good job of helping their students access postsecondary education opportunities.

Although college-going rates in NOPS experienced a nine percentage point increase between 2004-2010, developmental education rates for both OPSB and RSD-NO schools indicate that many NOPS students entered school underprepared for college coursework (LDOE, 2004; LDOE, 2010). In 2010, 44% of first time freshman from OPSB schools required remediation at in-state colleges, and 60% of students at RSD-NO schools required remediation (LDOE, 2010). Approximately 51% of NOPS students entering in-state schools in the fall of 2010 required remediation. Nearly one-third (31%) of first time freshman from Louisiana required remediation in 2010.

In 2004, 53% of first time freshman from NOPS required remediation, as compared to the 29% remediation rate for the state (LDOE, 2004). So, between 2004 and 2010, NOPS remediation rates dropped two percentage points. Between 2010 and 2014, NOPS college-going rates increased by two percentage points. In 2010, the state adopted the Louisiana GRAD Act, which phased out remedial courses at four-year colleges and increased admissions requirements across the state's public institutions (Office of the Governor, 2010). Since remediation data is no longer reported, we use ACT scores of 18+ to gauge college readiness.

Career Readiness

At the start of this section, we asked, "How are high schools in New Orleans preparing their students to succeed in career and college?" We know that more than half of RSD-NO graduates who enrolled in college in 2014 attended two-year colleges (LDOE, 2014b). Although we cannot assume that all students in that number attended two-year colleges because they were not college ready, the RSD-NO ACT composite score of 16.4 suggests that many RSD-NO students were not prepared to pursue college coursework without remediation (LDOE, 2014a). Regardless, 47% of RSD-NO students attended college in 2014 (both in and out-of-state) (LDOE, 2014a). What happened to the 53% of students who did not pursue postsecondary education? In OPSB, 72% of students enrolled in college in 2014, with 28% attending two-year colleges (LDOE, 2014a). For the 28% of graduating seniors from OPSB that did not attend college, were these students prepared to pursue careers in fields that would provide them with a livable wage? Could it be that schools' focus on college enrollment may be preventing them from serving the needs of the students who do not transition into postsecondary education institutions after high school? And for those that do transition to college, do they have the basic skills required to excel in the workforce?

There are currently no available data that capture the level of career readiness of students graduating from public schools in Louisiana. In addition, very few students in NOPS have access to career and technical education coursework according to school profiles. Of those that do offer career and technical education courses, are they preparing students for high-wage, high demand industries? These are important questions because career pathways for students leaving high school may currently be leading to employment without a livable wage. This means that the school systems are falling short of preparing students for postsecondary options that will actually improve the quality of life and career trajectory of African American students. Could schools be reinforcing social stratification by graduating students ill-prepared for career success?

The Louisiana Department of Education responded to this crisis by launching Jump Start, the state's career and technical education initiative (LDOE, 2014d). This initiative is meant to provide Louisiana's students with access to resources, facilities and opportunities to prepare them for careers in high growth sectors in Louisiana. This program includes opportunities for students to earn industry-based credentials in high growth sectors before they graduate, positioning them for immediate employment in these industries upon graduation (LDOE, 2014d). The state also offers career readiness and career exploration courses through its Course Choice program and will begin using the Work Keys exam to evaluate students' workforce readiness and literacy (LDOE, 2014e). These initiatives will help to ensure all students have a pathway to success in college and career and will hopefully address existing gaps in school curriculum in NOPS.

Opportunity Youth

As mentioned, the cost of not completing a college degree can be devastating to individual and family wellbeing. The high school diploma simply will not secure job opportunities that lead to a middle-class lifestyle. Unfortunately, many young people have dropped out of school and/or not working as a result. Opportunity youth, also referred to as disconnected youth, are young adults 16 to 24 years old who are neither in school nor working.

They are called opportunity youth because of the opportunity their reconnection to school or employment could bring to their communities.

Nationally, 13.8% of all youth 16 to 24 years old are considered opportunity youth (Sims, 2015). Among the four regions of the US, the South reports the highest rate of opportunity youth at 15.2%. In Louisiana, nearly one in five young adults (between 16 and 24 years) are opportunity youth. With a rate of 19.8, Louisiana has the highest percentage of opportunity youth in the country. Of youth in the New Orleans area, 18.2% (approximately 26,000 young people) are disconnected from school and work. This rate places New Orleans third from the highest behind Memphis (21.6%) and Las Vegas (19.6%) (Sims, 2015).

Nationally, 28.5% of opportunity youth have dropped out of high school; 23.7% of opportunity youth, however, have some college (Sims, 2015). Opportunity youth in the New Orleans metro area have similar educational attainment trends. The relatively high rates of opportunity youth with some college highlight the limited economic prospects for young people in the region. In spite of some encouraging improvement in the K-12 sector, many young people still find it difficult to find work or continue their education. The New Orleans job market is particularly difficult for Black youth. In the US, 23% of opportunity youth are African American. In the New Orleans metro area, the majority of opportunity youth are African American (Sims, 2015).

The issues associated with opportunity youth place financial burdens on US taxpayers resulting from increased government spending (on crime, healthcare, and welfare) (Sims, 2015). Each opportunity youth represents an annual cost of $13,000. These costs accumulate each year and represent a lifetime cost of $235,680 for every young person who remains disconnected. If the 26,000 opportunity youth in the New Orleans metro area are not re-connected to school or work during their lifetimes, the costs to taxpayers in New Orleans is $360 million. More sobering, individuals become more vulnerable to a criminal justice system, violence, impoverished living conditions and unsafe neighborhoods (Sims, 2015).

There are initiatives that reconnect opportunity youth to jobs and schools. For instance, the city of New Orleans' Job1/YouthWork targets youth ages 14 to 21 years old and provides participants with employment, tutoring, skills training, and counseling. The Urban League of Greater New Orleans' Suits for Hire mentoring program provides youth ages 17 to 24 years with professional attire, mentoring, skills training, and other supports, and its Urban Youth Empowerment Program provides case management, skills development, education attainment, and job placement services. Partnership for Youth Development and the Cowen Institute's EMPLOY (Employment and Mobility Pathways Linked for Opportunity Youth) is a 20 member collective including government, nonprofit, and workforce development organizations facilitating a continuum of services that link and support education, employment, health, and well-being. The Cowen Institute at Tulane University offers the Earn and Learn Career Pathways program. For one year, opportunity youth work at Tulane University and take courses toward a career credential through the Accelerating Career Education (ACE) program at Delgado Community College. Upon completion, the youth will receive an industry-based certificate and long-term employment. In addition, the Youth Empowerment Project's The Village provides out of school youth ages 16 to 24 years with GED/HiSET preparation and wrap-around case management services. And its NOPLAY (New Orleans Providing

Literacy to All Youth) program provides GED/ HiSET and basic literacy instruction to youth between the ages of 16 and 24 years. Liberty's Kitchen, Café Reconcile, and Café Hope provides young adults between the ages of 16 and 22 with workforce development and life skills training within the culinary environment to become employed and self-sufficient.

Still these programs meet a fraction of the need. Quality jobs must be available so an education can realize its value. Unfortunately, the large number of opportunity youth reflect the real life context which many Black students face. Educational improvement in New Orleans' schools does not easily predict a better quality of life in New Orleans.

College Success

As schools strive for and actualize growth in state level achievement test scores, national standardized tests data as well as high school graduation rates are crucial

and encouraging. However, these are intermediate goals – means to a bigger end: college access and degree attainment. In an increasingly global and competitive environment, the consequences of not getting a college degree can be devastating to individuals, communities and the national economy. But a high school diploma is worth less than in the past. The Pew Research Center found that the value of a college degree is increasing with time while high school diplomas are depreciating. Today, 22% with only a high school diploma from the U.S. are living in poverty, compared to 7% of Baby Boomers who had only a high school diploma in 1979 when they were in their late 20s and early 30s (Pew Research Center, 2014). At an absolute minimum, individuals need some post-secondary experiences if they are to have any reasonable opportunities to earn a living wage.

Institution Name	Grand tot	Black	Hispanic	White	Asian
Southern University and A & M College	5746	94%	1%	3%	0%
Grambling State University	4155	91%	1%	1%	0%
Dillard University	1183	90%	1%	0%	0%
Southern University at New Orleans	1809	83%	1%	2%	1%
Xavier University of Louisiana	2504	77%	2%	4%	10%
Virginia College-Shreveport Bossier City	264	75%	1%	23%	0%
Strayer University-Louisiana	132	63%	5%	20%	2%
University of Phoenix-Shreveport-Bossier Car	131	60%	1%	17%	0%
ITT Technical Institute-Saint Rose	470	57%	7%	33%	1%
Herzing University-Kenner	316	57%	5%	32%	1%
ITT Technical Institute-Baton Rouge	656	56%	3%	38%	2%
University of Phoenix-Baton Rouge Campus	893	52%	3%	13%	0%
University of Phoenix-Lafayette Campus	85	47%	1%	21%	0%
Northwestern State University of Louisiana	7836	27%	5%	57%	1%
Our Lady of Holy Cross College	878	26%	6%	52%	4%
University of Louisiana at Monroe	7276	25%	2%	64%	2%
Our Lady of the Lake College	1486	25%	2%	66%	4%
Louisiana State University Health Sciences Ce	44	25%	2%	48%	7%
Louisiana College	1116	22%	2%	68%	1%
University of Louisiana at Lafayette	15053	21%	3%	69%	2%
Louisiana State University-Shreveport	3674	20%	4%	62%	2%
Nicholls State University	5888	20%	3%	68%	1%
McNeese State University	7575	18%	2%	73%	1%
Loyola University New Orleans	2946	16%	16%	51%	4%
University of New Orleans	7144	15%	10%	56%	8%
Southeastern Louisiana University	13730	15%	5%	67%	1%
Centenary College of Louisiana	586	15%	6%	70%	3%

Table 1: Fall 2014 enrollment data for Louisiana colleges & universities by race. Source: Source: Source: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education 2013; Data Note: This data reflects undergraduate enrollment; Not all institutions are shown in this table due to missing data, but the averages included institutions when applicable.

As was mentioned, more Black students from New Orleans are qualifying and enrolling in college. However, data suggest that serious disparities exist in the higher education setting. The capability to track New Orleans high school graduates by race in the Louisiana institutions of higher learning is limited. But we can extrapolate from enrollment and graduation rates that the journey to a higher education degree is difficult for Blacks in the state.

Data from the US Census Bureau suggest that as of 2013 the total population five-year estimate for Louisiana is approximately 4,567,968 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013a). Of this population 32% (1,463,345) are Black and 62.9% (2,874,235) are reported as White. Approximately 7.6% of Louisiana's population is in the age range of 20-24, which is in line with the traditional age of students entering and attending colleges and universities.

Institution Name	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White
Tulane University of Louisiana	78	65	70	78
*Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College	69	59	63	67
Centenary College of Louisiana	63	54	44	60
Loyola University New Orleans	57	49	45	60
Xavier University of Louisiana	69	47	33	0
Dillard University	N/R	45	N/R	0
*Louisiana Tech University	46	42	38	51
Louisiana College	50	35	25	45
*Northwestern State University of Louisiana	33	35	38	40
*University of Louisiana at Monroe	35	34	20	43
*University of Louisiana at Lafayette	60	33	31	47
*Southern University and A & M College	N/R	32	N/R	29
*Grambling State University	50	31	20	13
*Nicholls State University	38	31	12	45
*Louisiana State University-Shreveport	27	30	38	34
*McNeese State University	50	30	60	38
*University of New Orleans	32	26	25	33
*Southeastern Louisiana University	30	25	47	38
University of Phoenix-Baton Rouge Campus	50	17	N/R	17
University of Phoenix-Louisiana Campus	50	17	N/R	17
*Southern University at New Orleans	N/R	10	N/R	N/R
Our Lady of Holy Cross College	67	7	29	23
*Louisiana State University-Alexandria	0	5	0	25

Table 2: Six-Year graduation rate for Louisiana public colleges & universities by race Rank order by Black (highest to lowest)
Source: Source: National Center for Education Statistics – http://nces.ed.gov
U.S. Department of Education 2013 DataN/R – None Reported
*Public, Some institutions not shown because of missing data.
due to missing data, but the averages included institutions when applicable.

Enrollment data were collected for each of these institutions by race as a way of highlighting the racial profile of Louisiana's colleges and universities.   A closer examination of these results revealed that in aggregate - that is when the institutions in this sample are collapsed to a single variable (Louisiana Colleges & Universities) - Black student enrollment for Fall 2013 was 25% compared to their White counterparts at 59% in Louisiana Colleges and Universities. It can easily be discerned from Table 1 which institutions are traditionally Black and White e.g. Louisiana State University and A&M College (75%) White, Southern University and A&M College (94%) Black.

In further describing the profile of Louisiana public colleges and universities and the differences in Black and White students, six-year graduation rates were collected and compared using the institutional comparison tool in IPEDS (NCES, 2015). Graduation rates reveal more than 41% of Whites who enrolled in Louisiana colleges and universities in 2007 graduated in six years compared to 34% of Blacks.   Both numbers are wanting and a gap exists nonetheless (See Table 2).

These data culminate into racial difference among those who have college degrees in New Orleans and the metro area. The White subgroup is twice as likely to have at least an associate degree than the Black cohort in the metropolitan area (See Figure 6).

In the New Orleans metro, smaller shares of white and black adults regardless of gender, have bachelor's degrees than in aspirational metros.

Bachelor's degree or higher by race/ethnicity and gender
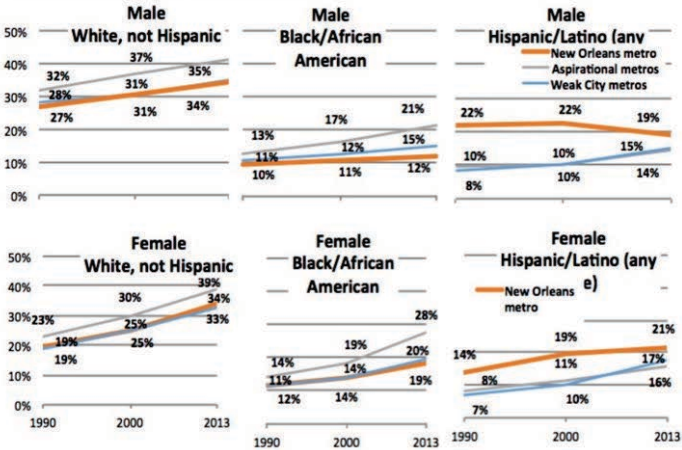for the population 25 years and older

Figure 6: Population with at least an associate's degree by race/ethnicity for the population 25 years and older
Source: Louisiana Office of Student Financial Aid [LOFSA]. (2014). 2014 High School Graduates
(including alternate eligible) eligible for a TOPS award by school, school district and parish TOPS eligibility report.

Closing

For the last 10 years, New Orleans has played the blame game in education. Reformers have shamed the past to argue for change. In return, reform has been charged with destroying traditional public education for future children. The aftermath of Katrina should incite passions. Everyone seemingly profits from the debate except for public school families – the people who need more than words. However, durable arguments have concretized into an immovable tableau that gets in the way of both justice and progress. Regardless of whose side you're on, pointing fingers to say who did what to who doesn't solve problems. Progress forces us to ask where do we go from here.

Based on this report, the authors recommend the following:

- Increase funding and slots for early childhood programming including CCAP and LA4 programs, while maintaining much-needed tax incentives.

- Increase support to early childhood care and education providers to improve quality.

- Use appropriate play-based learning approaches during early childhood education and abandon a focus on standardized testing of children during early childhood.

- Maintain a holistic focus on early childhood development rather than simply focusing on kindergarten readiness.

- Examine the impact of a Whiter educator workforce on academic and socioeconomic outcomes for African American children, as well as its impact on the African American middle class.

- Align K-12 curriculum with college and career readiness standards to better support students in successfully accessing college and career opportunities.

- Expand career and technical education programs in NOPS.

- Continue to hold all schools accountable for exceptional outcomes (for all subgroups of youth), and require action for patterns of sub-performance.

- Increase capacity (seats) at high-performing and high-demand schools, while also strengthening all schools to provide high quality educational options in every neighborhood.

- Provide parents with meaningful and appropriate information that allows all families to select the schools that are the best fit for their children.

- Mandate the inclusion of all NOPS in the centralized enrollment system.

- Create a centralized Student Information System (SIS) that would hold data on all public school students, track mobility, support services, and monitor outcomes.

- Develop programs that infuse the local diversity into all levels of school staff, faculty, vendors, administration and governance.

- Implement restorative justice practices in schools to reduce the rates of suspension and expulsion. Produce uniform guidelines for school suspensions, considering appropriate behavior modification strategies for the varying age and grade levels.

- Expand and improve school accountability practices to provide schools in crisis with support to address areas of deficiency, reserving complete school closure for emergency circumstances or as a means of last resort.

- Place more focus on undergraduate student success, with an expanded strategy to provide stackable credentials/certifications to students while in high school and also promote the viability of two-year degrees for demand sector jobs in the region.

- Build partnerships between NOPS and the local business community to strengthen career readiness initiatives.

These and other reforms should not be done to communities. We should constantly build capacity of others so members can improve themselves. In the next 10 years, we have an opportunity to pass a test that has challenged our nation for decades—to create schools that authentically represent the public and compel us to learn together. But we will miss this opportunity if we reform in spite of community. It is harder, and it certainly takes longer, but the rewards and gains will be greater if we build upon our current reforms in an inclusive manner.

When we remove our eyes from the higher standard of community, we also remove our personal responsibilities for improving it. When we have faith in community, we will begin to understand fully that we can uplift communities while reforming - together.

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HOUSING CRIMINAL JUSTICE HEALTH EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT WORKFORCE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

DISASTER PLANNING AND EQUITY:LESSONS LEARNED IN POST-KATRINA NEW ORLEANS

ROBERT A. COLLINS

WHILE THE KATRINA **DISASTER RESPONSE** HAS BEEN EXTREMELY WELL DOCUMENTED AND ANALYZED MANY TIMES, MOST ANALYSES DO NOT LOOK SPECIFICALLY AT ISSUES OF **EQUITY.**

ENVIRONMENT

Hurricane Katrina did more than expose the weaknesses in the flood control structures around New Orleans. It also exposed the weaknesses in the social fabric of the city by demonstrating how the impacts of disasters are not shared equally among all social groups. This essay will examine this issue by first describing the history of the challenge. It will then look at the Katrina disaster response through the lens of equity. After looking at the Katrina disaster response, it will examine improvements in disaster planning implemented since Katrina. Finally, the essay will conclude by making recommendations on how disaster planning can be improved in the future.

The History of the Challenge

The city of New Orleans is, by nature and by design, a vulnerable geographic location. It was already vulnerable to flooding at the time it was founded by the French in 1718, due to its location in the natural floodplain of the Mississippi River (Colten 2005). Generations of settlers and governments have attempted to make the city more livable by draining the soils and building levees and floodwalls higher with each passing generation. Paradoxically, while these structures make the city habitable to humans, they also increase human exposure to catastrophic flooding during a hurricane.

The levees intended to protect the city also locked out the sediment and nutrients that built the land up over millions of years of natural Mississippi River flooding. The locking out of sediment and nutrients

began a process of subsidence, or sinking land. The vast majority of modern soil subsidence, however, was caused by the installation of drainage systems, originally designed to drain swamp water, and then designed to drain rainwater. These modern drainage structures built to pump rainwater out of the city have the effect of denying the land of natural hydration and lowering the water table, which soils need to maintain organic character and shape. The result of pumping out rainwater is constantly sinking land (Campanella, 2015a). This process of constantly sinking land has turned areas of the city that were at or slightly below sea level a century ago, to currently being several feet below sea level in some parts of the city – enough to drown a human being.

No levee system is perfect, and levees are occasionally breached. Subsidence makes recovery from a catastrophic flood more difficult because when levees are breached a "bowl effect" is created, containing the standing water in the low-lying areas of the city and making draining floodwater from the city much more difficult. While much of the land mass of New Orleans is below sea level, there is a great deal of variation in the number of feet below sea level, and about one half of the city is actually at or above sea level due to natural geologic ridges.

The beginning of inequity in disaster planning began with the earliest settlement of the city. The early wealthy settlers had access to the surveyors' maps and knew the location of the geologic ridges that were above sea level. Once the early wealthy settlers bought up the land above sea level, the lower income residents had to settle on what was left. This began the process of the upper classes being

settled on the higher land and the lower income residents settling in the lower elevations (Colten, 2005). This pattern was repeated over many generations and as a result there is a direct correlation between income level and flood level. This is not simply caused by the upper income citizens buying up all the available land. There was, and is, land available for purchase at the higher elevations. However, because of the economic principle of scarcity, that land is also the most expensive, pricing it out of range for many working class families.

In general, the phenomenon of the highest elevation land being the most expensive in the city has continued until the present day. There are a few exceptions to this rule. The primary one being that land bordering Lake Pontchartrain is more valuable since land close to a lake tends to demand a higher price in any city. However, in general, the land affordable to poor and working class families will tend to be at the lower elevations, meaning poor and working class families will have the greatest exposure to flooding.

The issue of racial discrimination amplified the inequities in the land and housing market. After World War II, when the VA Housing Loans in the GI bill allowed many veterans to purchase their first home, many Black veterans found their benefits either delayed or denied. By the time many Black veterans received their housing benefits, the safest neighborhoods in the city had already been filled up. Add to this the well-documented processes of "Redlining:" Banks rejecting mortgage applications to Black applicants in certain desirable neighborhoods; real estate agents steering Black homeowners into low elevation areas; blatant racial discrimination in the sale of

homes, and a historic pattern developed whereby Black homeowners ended up living, by and large, in the lowest and most flood prone areas of the city.

Insurance is another area where inequities of income and race are exposed. While mortgage holders require flood insurance in lower elevation areas, acquiring flood insurance adequate enough to insure a home against a total flood loss is beyond the financial means of most working class families, making them unable to replace a home lost to a catastrophic flood.

All of the above factors formed a nexus of historical circumstances whereby poor and working class Black families were steered into the most vulnerable areas of the city with the highest probability of catastrophic flooding, then left without sufficient resources to rebuild when that catastrophic flooding took place.

The Katrina Disaster Response

While the Katrina disaster response has been extremely well documented and analyzed many times, most analyses do not look specifically at issues of equity. All residents of New Orleans suffered during Katrina, however some residents suffered more because they were in more vulnerable conditions prior to the storm (Tierney, 2006). The first inequitable condition was the greater geographic vulnerability of Black and low-income residents, discussed above. Black and low-income residents were hit hardest by the flooding because they tended to live in the lowest elevations.

Perhaps the most striking inequities from a disaster planning perspective are those of transportation and shelter. When the mayor calls for a mandatory evacuation of the city, middle and upper-income residents simply get in their cars and drive out of the city. Upon reaching their destination city, they

The Poverty Rate in New Orleans is

27%

rent a hotel room, or stay with relatives, and monitor the news media for word as to when they can return to the city. These options are simply not available to the poor and many working class families.

The poverty rate in New Orleans is 27%, considerably higher than the national rate of 16%; and 19% of New Orleans households do not have access to a car, compared to 9% nationwide (Shrinath, Mack, & Plyer, 2014). If working class families do own a car, quite often the car is old and not in good enough condition to make a long evacuation trip. Even among those citizens who own reliable cars, evacuation is not an option for many because they simply have nowhere to go. They may not have relatives or friends outside of the city. And a hotel room for these families is out of the question due to high cost. Evacuating before a hurricane can cost hundreds or even thousands of dollars, resources that poor and working class families do not have.

In some cases, the inequity of transportation and shelter access had a lethal effect, causing some residents to stay and drown in the floodwaters. Also, many of the residents who stayed found themselves trapped in a city with no access to fresh water, food, or sanitary living conditions. The plight of the citizens trapped in the Superdome and Convention Center is well documented, and those conditions were replicated all

over the city at many other locations. The fact that none of the government agencies charged with protecting the city had a comprehensive plan in place to evacuate and shelter the most vulnerable citizens was an egregious disaster planning failure. Basically, there was no truly comprehensive plan. The response was made up on site. This resulted in citizens being scattered all over the US after they finally were rescued and evacuated from New Orleans. The rental assistance funding offered by the federal government for evacuees to rent housing was slow in coming and difficult to access, unless, of course, one had a computer, internet access, and a bank account ready to receive an electronic direct deposit, all markers of the middle class and not available to the poor.

Once citizens were able to return to the city, the disaster recovery process was also not equitable. The poor and working class areas were likely to have the most damage to housing stock from flooding, due to the fact that they were in lower elevations. Also, these houses were likely to be the oldest, and the weakest in terms of ability to withstand a flood (wood instead of brick construction.)

In terms of insurance coverage, many of these homeowners did not even know that they were in a floodplain due to old, outdated maps being used by the mortgage banks and insurance industry. As a result, they had never been required to buy flood insurance. So, when the flooding occurred, many found themselves with no flood insurance to cover the loss. Those working class families who did have flood insurance tended to have very little, due to the high cost. Very few had insurance sufficient to cover a total loss.

The disaster recovery process was much quicker for middle class families who either had minimal flooding due to neighborhood location and flood elevation, or, even if they did experience catastrophic flooding, they were more likely to be fully insured and were able to recover most of the value of the house from the flood policy. Flood insurance rates are predicted to continue to go up, further straining the resources of the low-income residents (Campanella, 2015b).

The federally-funded, state-administered "Road Home" program, intended to assist homeowners with financial reconstruction assistance, was slow to deliver funds, and had a tedious and complicated application process. Once again, favoring the middle class with access to computers, lawyers, and accountants.

Improvements to Disaster Planning since Katrina

Although New Orleans remains a vulnerable city, there have been key improvements since Katrina. First, the US Army Corps of Engineers made billions of dollars in improvements to the levee, floodwall, and drainage systems protecting the city. Most of the flooding in the city was caused by the breach of floodwalls connected to rainwater drainage canals. The floodwall breaches were caused by storm surge that came in from the Gulf of Mexico, passed through Lake Borgne, then into Lake Pontchartrain. Once in Lake Pontchartrain, the storm surge travelled into the drainage canals (their function is normally carrying rainwater out to Lake Pontchartrain). Due to flawed engineering and shoddy construction, the canal floodwalls breached in several areas, flooding the city.

The Army Corps of Engineers has installed "Lock and Dam" systems at the mouth of every drainage canal. These locks will be closed before a hurricane threatens the city, protecting the drainage canals from storm surge. Although levees can still be over-topped by a large storm surge, the

most vulnerable aspect of the flood control system has been repaired. The city is much better protected than pre-Katrina, and should be able to withstand a Category 3 Hurricane (111-129 mph wind speed); however, a storm with higher wind speeds will still overtop the levees and flood large sections of the city, so there is more work to be done.

In the area of urban planning, the city recently completed a 10 process of post-Katrina city planning that included a master plan and comprehensive zoning ordinance. Although the current comprehensive zoning ordinance passed in May of 2015 does not include all of the recommendations written into the master plan passed in 2010, it is a work in progress. The post-Katrina master plan began the work of designing a more sustainable flood control plan for the city (Collins, 2011).

Disaster planners contracted by the city have designed a comprehensive flood control system based on the globally respected "Dutch Model" of flood control, first used by the Government of the Netherlands to protect that country from the North Sea. The Dutch Model does not simply rely on levees. Instead, it relies on a system of inundation canals, which essentially carry storm surge through a city and move it along within the canals, pushing it out the other end of the system. It would pass in, through, and out of the city without flooding. Also, the flood control plan included in the city's master plan, called the "Urban Water Plan," proposes to fight subsidence by absorbing as much rainwater runoff as possible through porous surfaces, retention ponds, and open drainage canals built into the natural landscape. (In terms of city topography, think: A version of the Venice canal system). This plan to "live with water" is popular with city planners, but there is no

implementation funding at the moment.

In the area of assisted-evacuation, there is now a comprehensive plan in place to evacuate residents who do not have access to transportation: The City-Assisted Evacuation Plan or CAEP (City of New Orleans, 2015). It is assisted by a non-profit organization that provides volunteers to the city as part of a cooperative agreement (Evacuteer, 2015). Once the mayor calls an evacuation, residents in need of evacuation assistance will report to a large number of designated pick-up points around the city, called "evacuspots." Buses provided by the city will pick citizens up and transport them to Union Passenger Terminal, at which time they will be transported out of town. This plan was effective during Hurricane Gustav in 2008, however that was only a short-term evacuation, as Gustav was not a direct hit. The most recent hurricane to threaten the city, Isaac in 2012, was not large enough to call a mass evacuation.

The plan has not yet been tested with a large-scale, long-term evacuation event the size of Katrina. Also, it is unclear whether or not comprehensive long-term shelter plans have been improved since Katrina, since the city evacuation plan simply states that residents will be transported to "State and Federal shelters" (City of New Orleans, 2015).

Recommendations for future Disaster Planning

Based on lessons learned from Katrina, the following recommendations should be considered in making preparations for the next hurricane more equitable:

1. Affordable housing at higher elevations: Although current market forces will conspire with a history of race and class discrimination to keep most poor and working class families in the most flood

prone neighborhoods, inclusionary zoning can be used to require that any new multi-family residential development on land above sea level include some affordable housing, thereby improving access to higher elevations for low-income residents.

2. Funding to complete flood protection: Congress should approve the Army Corps of Engineers' full funding request to complete the upgrade of the city's flood control network, and provide funding to begin work on the Dutch Model of flood control in the "Urban Water Plan" by installing inundation canals to handle storm surge, and building drainage canals into the natural landscape to return rainwater to the ground, re-hydrating the soils, which is the only plan that will fight subsidence in the long run and stop the city from sinking even further below sea level.

3. Assisted Evacuation: Although the city now has a robust city-assisted evacuation plan, it is unclear whether or not residents will avoid the problems with long-term evacuation shelter that occurred during Katrina once they are outside of the city and delivered to state shelters. The state government should publish a specific plan for long-term evacuation shelter so that each resident knows what to expect when evacuated.

4. City Planning: The city can mitigate flood risk by zoning for higher population density at higher elevations, with inclusion of affordable housing as mentioned in recommendation number one. Also, the City's most recent master plan calls for "Comprehensive stormwater management systems that include natural drainage methods and potential use of Dutch-style canals as amenities" to allow residents to

"live with water" (City of New Orleans, 2010). A high priority should be given to efforts to directly fight soil subsidence by absorbing or retaining as much stormwater runoff as possible through retention ponds and open drainage canals built directly into the natural landscape. The next round of amendments to the city's new comprehensive zoning ordinance will need to begin specifically implementing and enforcing designs to allow the city to live in harmony with the water, so that regardless of race, income, geographic location, or elevation, residents can avoid the damage of flood inundation. Only then will the New Orleans landscape become a truly equitable environment.

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HOUSING CRIMINAL JUSTICE HEALTH EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT WORKFORCE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE AND THE STATE OF BLACK NEW ORLEANS

BEVERLY WRIGHT, PH.D.

HURRICANE KATRINA MADE CLEAR THE LINKAGES BETWEEN RACE, PLACE, AND VULNERABILITY. WHAT PEOPLE OFTEN TERM **"NATURAL" DISASTERS OR "ACTS OF GOD" ARE OFTEN ACTS OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE** PERPETUATED BY GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS ON THE POOR, PEOPLE OF COLOR, THE MOST VULNERABLE OF OUR SOCIETY—GROUPS LEAST ABLE TO WITHSTAND SUCH DISASTERS.

ENVIRONMENT

A rising concern in recent years for societies across the globe is the impact of extreme weather on coastal areas, natural habitats and the species that inhabit them. Extreme weather events have impacted agriculture and natural resources with devastating and long lasting effects. While managing weather impacts has always been difficult for societies, survival before, during and after these impacts has always been more difficult for some than others. Disadvantaged populations around the world already bear inequitable environmental burdens, and that fact rings true, even in today's society.

While United States citizens have not experienced the devastating impacts of climate change on the same scale as the citizens of Haiti after the earthquake in 2010, or the people of Asia after the tsunami of 2004, the footprint for recovery is quite similar in content. In all of these examples the issue of equity in recovery is central, especially to marginalized communities.

Katrina Left Behind

In its wake, Katrina left behind toxic contamination and health threats as well as debris and hazardous waste. Six storm-caused oil spills released 7.4 million gallons of oil, or 61% as much as the 11 million gallons that leaked into Alaska's Prince William Sound from the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989 (The New York Times, 2010). Waters from the storm surge hit 60 underground storage tanks, five Superfund sites and 466 industrial facilities that stored highly dangerous chemicals. More than

1,000 drinking-water systems were disabled, leaving the dreaded e. coli in floodwaters at levels far exceeding EPA's safe standards. Twelve million of 21 million tons of debris from Hurricane Katrina was left in Orleans Parish. Sixty thousand boats, 300,000 underground fuel tanks, and 42,000 tons of hazardous waste were left for collection and proper disposal at licensed facilities (Bullard & Wright, 2009). Katrina left behind 350,000 automobiles to be drained of oil and gasoline and then recycled, with 145,000 left in New Orleans alone (Bullard & Wright, 2009). But that is not all Katrina left behind.

One of the remnants of Hurricane Katrina was the question of who would survive the storm, and who would be rescued and protected by society and government. The storm illustrated how pointed a political question that was. Katrina exposed the hard truth that groups within society are valued differently as is evidenced by the consistent, differential effects of natural disasters on low-income and minority communities. Vulnerable populations by definition already suffer from both higher socio-economic stress and greater exposure to environmental toxins, hazardous wastes and experience other environmental burdens (Boyce, 2000).

Such is the case for the city of New Orleans, Louisiana. The incomes of the poor did not afford many citizens the luxury of evacuating, so they remained in peril of a killer storm. Those left behind were people already living in low-lying areas with less than adequate levee protection, and in proximity to landfills and Toxic Release Inventory reporting facilities, thus compounding their exposure to toxins released in the air and floodwaters after the hurricane. It was largely African-American,

Vietnamese and poor populations who lived in the areas most vulnerable to the collapse of the levees, who were unable to secure transportation for evacuation, and who scrambled in frightening conditions to secure scarce resources and aid for their families and themselves.

As the city began to recover, the question became, "How equitable was the plan and who would recover?" Ten years after Katrina, New Orleans has become more separate and less equal than before the storm. There are huge disparities emerging in income, housing, jobs and education. The city today is undeniably Whiter and richer in terms of individually-earned income than before the storm.

An examination of data shows that the impact of this recovery on the Black middle class has been devastating. These data indicate that only 5% of African American compared to 29% of White households fall within the highest income categories (Plyer, Ortiz, Horowitz, & Hobor, 2013). The gap is widening. African Americans of all income groups were hit hardest by Hurricane Katrina. These data seem to indicate that they have also benefited least from its recovery.

Ten years after Katrina laid waste to this historic and culturally diverse city, what we have learned is that race still matters. What we have yet to learn is how the city will be transformed and to what extent African Americans will benefit from this transformation.   History does not paint a positive picture of how the African American community, particularly its poor, survive large-scale changes made towards "progress" in the city. History records a culture of metropolitan progress resulting in

the displacement of African American New Orleanians (Long, 2007).

There is an adverse relationship between city progress, as defined by developers and city leaders, and the displacement of Black, urban neighborhoods in New Orleans. After Hurricane Katrina, many traditionally African American neighborhoods were decimated (Long, 2007). When this result is coupled with the tear down of public housing, we now find that New Orleans is a city where gentrification is running rampant in traditionally African American neighborhoods. (Long, 2007)

Disaster Capitalism

Immediately after the flood, billions of no-bid contracts were awarded to a handful of politically connected national contractors; the federal Davis-Bacon Act, which mandates workers be paid the prevailing wage, was suspended; and a host of environmental waivers were granted (Bullard & Wright, 2009). Some policy analysts and elected officials presented the plight of the city's displaced citizens as a "silver lining" in dispersing New Orleans' poor in Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Memphis, and Jackson. They spin it as an unintended positive effect of the storm - breaking up concentrated poverty— something that government officials had been trying to achieve for decades (Bullard & Wright, 2009). However, the best way to break up concentrated poverty is not displacement, but concentrated employment at a livable wage.

Disaster capitalism, or the embracing of Milton Friedman's free market policy as a deliberate strategy for political leaders, is argued as being a prominent strategy in some developed countries (Klein, 2007). Disaster capitalism is the exploitation of crises by leaders to push through controversial exploitive policies while citizens are too emotionally and physically distracted by disasters or upheavals to mount an effective resistance (Klein, 2007).

The situation is described as synonymous with the process by which prisoners are softened up for interrogation by the shock of their captivity (Klein, 2007). Massive disasters could serve to soften up citizens for radical free market crusades. Politicians are advised that they should immediately after a crisis push through all the painful policies at once before people could regain their footing. Such practices are akin to an economic shock treatment. The state of shock is, by definition, a temporary state; shock wears off. The best way to stay oriented to resist shock is to know what is happening to you and why. Klein calls it the "shock doctrine" (Klein, 2007).

Hurricane Katrina made clear the linkages between race, place, and vulnerability. What people often term "natural" disasters or "acts of God" are often acts of social injustice perpetuated by government and business on the poor, people of color, the most vulnerable of our society—groups least able to withstand such disasters (Squires & Hartman, 2006). Decades of government neglect, denial, and old-fashioned greed created a nightmare in the aftermath of the storm, and Katrina allowed "disaster capitalism" to shift into high gear.

Perilous Consequences of Policy Decisions: A Plan for the Future of New Orleans

As the pumping stations in the city were restored, and the massive breaches in the levees were finally plugged with tons of sand bags, the gravity of the situation became real for New Orleans residents and for the rest of the world. The sobering newscasts elicited quite different responses as a matter of perspective for those who remained in the city, those who left the city and people

watching the disaster play out around the globe. While New Orleans natives grieved and were obsessed with the complicated nature of how to return home, or how to rebuild their lives living in a devastated city; urban planners around the world saw this tragedy as an opportunity to plan and build their version of the perfect city. It was almost as if the hurricane waters that had washed away the lives of New Orleans citizens had also washed away the knowledge that this city, with a settlement history that is older than the United States, was home to thousands of people. Developers and planners approached the crippled city as an artist would a new canvas, ready to display his latest artistic strokes of genius for the world to admire. Katrina presented them with an opportunity of a lifetime; the ability to start anew and build their dream city.

New plans for the city abounded and planners and developers from all over descended on the city wrangling for their piece of the rebuilding pie. Ultimately, the plan selected, entitled "Plan for the Future," was put forth by the Bring New Orleans Back Commission (Times-Picayune Staff, 2006). Despite the attempt to engage community representatives in the planning process, the completed plan was not well received by the community (Warner, 2006).

The Plan for the Future proposed to significantly reduce the "footprint" or size of the city of New Orleans, reasoning that a significantly resource-constrained city would not be able to efficiently serve all neighborhoods when only a fraction of the pre-storm population and tax base had returned (Times-Picayune Staff, 2006). The citizens of New Orleans largely rejected this plan and spoke against it at numerous city council and town hall meetings following its introduction to the public (Randall, 2006; Krupa, 2010). The plan was rejected by citizens for many reasons, but

the most significant was the perception of inappropriate and heavy-handed government intrusion into the private lives of citizens effectively denying their individual right of self-determination and the right to return to the city in which they lived (Warner, 2006).

Ironically, most areas slated for immediate rebuilding and redevelopment were predominantly White and affluent, while areas identified for conversion into green space and parks and areas required to prove their viability were predominantly African-American and less affluent (Mohai & Lee, 2010). The plan also appeared to ignore the fact that New Orleans started losing population in the 1960s, resulting in significant blight and an insufficient tax base decades before Hurricane Katrina (Plyer, 2011). This only fueled the feeling among residents that the storm was being used as an excuse to prevent certain neighborhoods from returning (Warner, 2006). The citizens of New Orleans were actively engaged in a process to determine the direction, size, and scope of the rebuilding, including the allocation of recovery funding. A preliminary equity analysis reveals a key feature of New Orleans' recovery. Principles for ensuring equitable distribution of recovery funds were not in effect. To this day, parts of the city are "back" while others are still languishing.

It is difficult to identify any action taken by government as a response to the enormous devastation that befell New Orleans than the Bring New Orleans Back Commission (2006) unveiling its plan for rebuilding New Orleans. Mayor Ray Nagin's commission presented the city with a $17 billion plan that would significantly change the city's neighborhood and housing patterns. The plan presented specific directions on who could rebuild and where building was allowed (Bring New Orleans Back Commission, 2006).

The hot button prescriptive, however, was that all renovation was to be stopped in the flooded areas. Persons most affected by this moratorium on rebuilding were African Americans. In New Orleans alone, 61% of the population (484,674) lived in areas that were flooded (Campanella, 2007; Plyer, 2014). African Americans resided in these areas with numbers far greater than Whites by nearly 4 to 1 (220,970 to 57,469) (Campanella, 2007). African Americans also outnumbered Whites even before the storm by nearly 2.5 to 1 (323,868 to 134,120). Asian and Hispanic residents citywide totaled 10,751 and 14,663 respectively (Plyer, Ortiz, Horowitz, & Hobor, 2013).

The Bring New Orleans Back Commission plan (2006) had four levels of specificity relative to rebuilding, They included   (1) areas where rebuilding was allowed,   (2) areas where a building moratorium would exist until neighborhoods proved viability, (3) approximate areas expected to become parks and green space; and (4) areas to be redeveloped, some with new housing for relocated home owners. The map, infamously known as the green dot map, became a bone of contention for African Americans and Vietnamese in particular, but clearly, the largest number of persons to be affected were African Americans (Krupa, 2010).

In response to the panic and fury of the community, by many neighborhoods that were overlaid with green dots, the plan was dismissed (Krupa, 2010). And, while it was suggested that the city deny citizens permits to rebuild over a large area of the city, residents finalized their rebuilding plans, and the city granted permits to all who applied (Krupa, 2010). Today, most areas earmarked for green space, by the infamous green dots, have rebounded to at least 60% of their pre-Katrina population (Krupa, 2010).   There has even been improvement in two green zones in New Orleans East that were zoned commercial.

After nearly 10 years of recovery since Hurricane Katrina, the city of New Orleans is showing strong resilience in efforts to rebuild damaged and flooded housing. According to a University of New Orleans survey, 81% of both single and double family residents have begun or completed rebuilding or renovating their homes (University of New Orleans, 2015). Fifteen percent of homes have been demolished and four percent are gutted or derelict (Louisiana Weekly Staff , 2015).

The dreaded green dots seem to have little consequence for community resettlement. But, in light of the slow recovery in some areas versus speedy progress in others, many wonder if the *Plan for the Future* is still the plan. A real test of this hypothesis could be to embrace the old adage "Follow the Money."

The Unwritten Plan – Following the Money

In a preliminary study conducted by the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, the planned distribution of hurricane recovery funds was analyzed for New Orleans' thirteen planning districts (Mohai & Lee, 2010). The analysis was based on publicly-available information provided in the *Unified New Orleans Plan* (City of New Orleans, 2007), a planning document that offers only a snapshot of an ongoing process, yet served as one of several post-disaster recovery plans with widespread community involvement (City of New Orleans, 2007). The plan presented 95 recovery projects at a total cost of over $1.55 billion. Thirty-three percent of this amount was planned for recovery projects located in Planning Districts 1, 2, and 3 (i.e., the French Quarter/Central Business District, Garden District, and Uptown), which were among the least

storm-damaged neighborhoods in New Orleans. The remaining 67% of recovery expenditures were planned for Planning Districts 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13; districts that include the greater proportion of the city's population and the hardest hit neighborhoods of Lakeview, Lower 9th Ward, and New Orleans East (City of New Orleans, 2007).

To put these facts into context, there are 13 planning districts in New Orleans, four of which are predominantly White (Planning Districts 1, 5, 11, and 13) (Mohai & Lee, 2010). Eight planning districts are majority Black (Planning Districts 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 12). The four predominantly White planning districts were allocated a combined total of $208 million for redevelopment, which exceeds the $204 million allocated to a total of eight predominantly Black planning districts (Mohai & Lee, 2010). These findings, while disturbing, are not surprising to researchers, activists, and scholars who routinely illuminate environmental injustices and who regularly monitor governmental disaster response actions. Hurricane Katrina placed a magnifying lens on the environmental injustices suffered by the people of New Orleans immediately prior to, during and after the storm (Pastor, et al., 2006).

Place Matters

Place matters. In fact, where one lives is the best determinant of one's health and how long one will live (Policy Link, 2007). A community's physical, social, economic and service environment are important factors in the quality of life for its residents (Policy Link, 2007). Poor communities and communities of color are often home to dangerously polluting facilities in addition to other maladies that accompany poverty. High crime rates, inadequate housing, poor transportation and under-funded schools are commonplace to many poor communities.   Citizens are locked into a life of poverty by segregation, which is often due to their race or skin color, and are excluded from the decision-making process.

Hurricane Katrina revealed to the nation (and developers in particular) that the area in New Orleans known as the "sliver by the river," (i.e., an area of the city that did not flood after the levee failures that resulted in the flooding of most of the rest of the city). This area is replete with the quintessential architecture of New Orleans on display in neighborhoods lined with grand mansions and modest shotgun houses shaded by old-growth trees. Real estate values have skyrocketed as the market of buyers and renters for these houses has swelled to include thousands of people relocating from other states (White, 2015).

Since Hurricane Katrina, African American residents have demanded that the New Orleans City Council, Mayor, and legislative representatives establish rent controls and high-rise development zoning restrictions; stop the closure of public housing; ensure adequate funding through an equitable process for repairing Katrina-damaged homes; make property taxes affordable; as well as other measures to prevent their displacement from homes and neighborhoods. More recently, a growing number of White residents are now demanding high-rise developing zoning restrictions and property tax relief. However, none of these demands have resulted in legislation, regulation, or even a policy. As a result, developers are setting the standards in New Orleans and targeting the streets and neighborhoods for gentrification (Goodyear, 2014).

For example, the Walter L. Cohen High School building is located two blocks from mansion-lined St. Charles Avenue in New Orleans' famed Garden District. The value of properties that share the same

zip code (70115) with the school has on average increased by more than 40% since Hurricane Katrina (White, 2015). Before Katrina, properties were sold at $173/sq. ft. However, in 2013 those values rose to $233/sq. ft. and by 2014, it had reached $240/sq. ft. (White, 2015).

The Recovery School District ("RSD"), a special school district in Louisiana that assumed control of the majority of New Orleans public schools in the weeks after Hurricane Katrina, as prescribed in the School Facilities Master Plan and ultimately ratified by the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) and the La. Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), decided to land bank or close this school building that was assessed to be in fair condition (Lawton, 2014). The RSD has not convened a process for informing the public of its rationale for closing the school building and inviting public input on this rationale (Lawton, 2014). The school is currently attended by nearly 500 African American students (Lawton, 2014).

The proposed plan for Cohen College Prep, currently operating out of the Walter L. Cohen High School site, is to build a school for those students on the site of the former Booker T. Washington school, which was constructed on the site of the former Silver City Dump. While the RSD has asserted that its plan met or exceeded the remediation requirements for environmental standards of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LaDEQ), ongoing tension ensues.

Children are one of the most vulnerable segments of the population when it comes to being harmed by exposure to toxic chemicals. Because they spend so much of their time at schools, these environments must be as toxin free as possible. Not surprisingly, schools that serve low-income students of color are more frequently built on contaminated

sites (Cohen, 2010). School siting has thus become a serious problem not only in New Orleans, but across this nation as advocates for children's environmental health and environmental justice galvanize around this issue. It has also become abundantly clear that this fight is a continuing one in New Orleans as the practice of siting schools serving low-income children of color on toxic landfills is repeated.

The City of New Orleans operated the Agriculture Street Landfill from 1909 until the late 1950s and reopened it to burn debris from Hurricane Betsy in 1965 (Webster, 2015). During the 1970s and 1980s, residential neighborhoods and Moton Elementary School were built over more than 40 acres of the site. In 1984, Robert Moton Elementary School opened for kindergarten through sixth grade. There were about 900 children enrolled in the school. The Orleans Parish School Board did not tell its employees or parents that the school had been built on a part of the City's landfill or that environmental testing had identified the presence of toxic chemicals on the school site. The EPA added the site to its national list of Superfund sites in 1994, after arsenic, lead and other hazardous materials were found on the property (Webster, 2015).

We are now more knowledgeable of the consequences of building schools on municipal landfills, and have a better scientific knowledge of what harm could occur to our children if schools are built on these sites. What lessons have we actually learned from our past behaviors if we are willing to continue to build our schools on contaminated sites?

The RSD proposes to build a new school for the students on a former city waste dump, where the land remains highly contaminated with lead, arsenic, mercury, and cancer-causing chemicals (Jacobs CSRS Program Management, 2015; Dall,

2015). According to the RSD's plan, at least 12 feet of the contaminated soil would remain on the school site with lead levels 24 times above the standard for residential land use (Leaaf Environmental, 2012; Leaaf Environmental, 2013).   Several parents, school alumni, public education advocates, environmental justice organizations, and other New Orleanians have condemned the RSD's plan (Dall, 2015). State legislation was introduced by Representative Joseph Bouie to prohibit the RSD from building the school on the waste dump. The legislation passed unanimously by the Louisiana House of Representatives, but died in the Louisiana Senate after school officials and building contractors testified in opposition to the bill (Campbell-Rock, 2015). The RSD publicly announced that it will proceed with its plan to build the   school for students whose current school is now "hot" property in post-Katrina New Orleans (White, 2015).

Disaster Increased Vulnerability

Research is replete with data supporting the disproportionate exposure of minority and poor communities to hazardous waste facilities and the disparities in clustering waste facilities within three kilometers of these communities (Bullard, Mohai, Saha, & Wright, 2007). After Katrina, New Orleans East, a largely African American and Vietnamese community was chosen for the disposal of debris from the storm. There were four landfills in the community with River Birch Landfill taking on the lion's share of the waste along with the Old Gentilly Landfill being reopened for that purpose after Katrina (Russell, 2012).

Additionally, vulnerable communities have become increasingly more endangered by the threat of new and risky technologies for waste disposal. An Eastern New Orleans community was targeted for the location of a risky technology waste disposal

facility in 2009. Over the past ten years, plasma arc technology has emerged as a potential trend for renewable energy in waste management (Solena Group, n.d.). It is a waste disposal technology with critical environmental health implications in the waste management industry. Such a gasification facility was proposed by the Sun Energy Group, LLC, for development at the site of the Regional Business Park on Jourdan Road (Elie, 2009; Buchanan, 2010). It would be the first facility of its size to be built in the United States and the largest of any existing facility in the world.

"Sun Energy (Sun Energy Group, LLC), in partnership with Air Products, through a joint venture company, Louisiana Gasification Facility, LLC (LGF), proposed to build, own and operate what they call an 'energy from waste . . . facility' in New Orleans East (Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, 2011). The LGF would use 'Plasma Arc Gasification" (Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, 2011). Sun Energy claims that the technology is not incineration, per se (Sun Energy Group, LLC., n.d.). However, though company websites, diagrams, and process descriptions claim the technology is a renewable energy facility, the proposed technology would in fact have the same polluting effect as a two-stage incinerator (Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, 2011; Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice, 2011).

While there are differences between traditional incineration technologies and plasma arc technology, the system proposed by Sun Energy involves incineration/combustion as an essential component (Greenaction for Health & Environmental Justice, 2011). One difference is that while traditional incinerators burn the waste directly, plasma arc heats the waste in the gasification stage, creating a synthetic gas (or "syngas"). Key to the technology

proposed by Sun Energy is the burning of the syngas in a turbine or boiler. This combustion process is the incineration that results in emissions of toxic and criteria air pollutants into a neighborhood already overloaded with air pollution. These emissions would include dioxins and furans, highly toxic chemicals linked to a wide range of profound illnesses including cancer, reproductive, developmental, and immunological diseases. Plasma arc facilities around the country have been plagued with failed equipment and no merit of energy production from the syngas technology has been shown (Greenaction for Health & Environmental Safety, 2011). This new and risky technology represents the latest threat to New Orleans' vulnerable communities.

The selected site for the project is the neighborhood of New Orleans East, the largest African-American community in the city located in Planning District 9 (Bennett, et al., 2011). New Orleans East has an industrial park that is zoned as heavy industrial, and for a long time, the neighborhood has served as a garbage-dumping site for the city and surrounding parishes (Bennett, et al., 2011). The neighborhood currently has 23 illegal dumpsites and numerous inactive and active landfills (Bennett, et al., 2011). The city of New Orleans does not have a comprehensive waste management plan to effectively manage this problem. African American and Vietnamese residents living near the site opposed the location of the facility there (Elie, 2009). To date, the community has been able to stop the development of the project.

Collateral Damage in the Melia Community

Policies and projects implemented to mitigate the damages of climate change impacts sometimes come with consequences as was the case with a New Orleans community,

Melia, that was negatively impacted by the Southeast Louisiana (SELA) Dwyer Road Drainage Project (Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, 2012). The purpose of the Southeast Louisiana Urban Flood Damage Reduction Project (SELA) is to reduce the risk of flood damage due to rainfall flooding in Orleans, Jefferson and St. Tammany Parishes. The Army Corps of Engineers led the implementation of the project with the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans as the local sponsor. Homes, some newly constructed and renovated after Katrina, were severely damaged in this predominantly African American community of mostly elderly and retired residents. The damage was extensive, including structural property damage, cracked slabs, shifted windows and doors, sewer flies, and broken plumbing pipes. Since May 2011, residents of the Melia community have complained of structural damage to their property. In an effort to resolve their problems, residents solicited assistance from Dillard University's Deep South Center for Environmental Justice (Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, 2012).

For nearly four years, the DSCEJ assisted the Melia community in navigating the complicated terrain required for redress of damages caused by the drainage project. A class action lawsuit was filed to further progress in the resolution of their claims (Rainey, 2015). On May 15, 2015, 10 Melia residents along with assistance from the DSCEJ and Advocates for Environmental Human Rights staff attended a meeting with the Federal District Court judge assigned to this case to address issues blocking the SWBNO processing of damage claims. After four years of living in substandard conditions due to property damage caused by the SELA project, SWBNO was given the green light to continue their claims process with the Melia residents. It is important to note that while it took four years for the Melia community

to get redress, the Uptown community complaining of similar damages to their property due to another SELA project in the mostly White affluent community, received front page coverage in the Times-Picayune of their plight (Rainey, 2015).

Conclusions

There are perilous consequences that stem from policy decisions that do not have equity as a foundational principle. All of the policy decisions in response to Hurricane Katrina discussed herein to some degree are stimulating changes and movement towards the total transformation of the city of New Orleans. Sadly, this transformation has largely lacked inclusion and equity for the poor and middle class African American citizens of this city.

While New Orleans is being applauded for a remarkable comeback, a close look reveals some deeply troubling facts. While showing improvements in many quality of life index areas (New Orleans Recovery Index), its lowest scores come in the areas of equity and inclusion (Plyer, Ortiz, Horowitz, & Hobor, 2013; Rainey, 2013). This inequitable legacy of Katrina must be addressed.

Asking different questions will generate different answers. Comparing the city of New Orleans to other cities suffering from the same structural and systemic problems due to race and income does not get us on the road to equitable recovery. New Orleans has been touted as a model for city recovery after a major disaster. The question is whether this model should be replicated in other communities suffering post-disaster recovery challenges. Is the New Orleans model inclusive and equitable for all citizens? Or is it a model of dispossession and forewarning for indigenous communities whose very survival is threatened not only by the disaster, but by post-disaster policies favoring exclusion and gentrification?

The city of New Orleans' progress towards prosperity should have at its foundation an examination of the lack of inclusion of African Americans in this new prosperity. We would then have a truer picture of where we should be and plan to prioritize efforts in needed areas. The city has made progress in some areas, but it is those areas where we have not made progress that need the most attention in order to better plan for the future. If issues of equity in recovery as well as emergency preparedness and response are not adequately addressed, there will be an ongoing disaster that will result in the permanent, systematic depopulation of New Orleans' African American communities and neighborhoods (Wright, 2006).

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HOUSING CRIMINAL JUSTICE HEALTH EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT WORKFORCE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

DOUBLING DOWN: GETTING TO RESILIENCE IN NEW ORLEANS

JOHN M. BARRY AND MARK S. DAVIS, J.D., M.L.T.

WE REMAIN **DEEPLY VULNERABLE TO HURRICANES,** RISING SEAS, SINKING SOILS, A VANISHING COAST, AND JUST PLAIN HEAVY RAINS. THOSE ARE HARD THINGS TO DEAL WITH AND NEW ORLEANS IS BY NO MEANS ALONE IN FACING THEM.

7

ENVIRONMENT

There is something about anniversaries that focuses our thinking and makes us reflect on, mourn, and celebrate those people and events that shape our lives. It is fitting that we do that. And if ever there was an occasion worth marking it is the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina's landfall along the coasts of Louisiana and Mississippi. But amid all the speeches, vigils, and memorials some space needs to be made to ask ourselves just what we learned from that largely induced tragedy—and whether we are applying those lessons.

Since we have all chosen to make our homes in New Orleans, we clearly have a stake in this being a smarter, safer place. We deeply hope it is and there is evidence that says it. But being safer and smarter is not the same thing as being safe and smart enough. By almost every measure we have a long way to go before our levels of protection and resilience are where they need to be. Most of the vulnerabilities and the consequences thereof fall disproportionately on the disadvantaged. We remain deeply vulnerable to hurricanes, rising seas, sinking soils, a vanishing coast, and just plain heavy rains. Those are hard things to deal with and New Orleans is by no means alone in facing them. But there is a positive: Plans and options exist that give New Orleans and coastal Louisiana a better chance at a decent future than many other places.

But plans and technically feasible actions don't implement themselves to create vibrant

resilient communities and ecosystems. That takes community, a community able and willing to honestly invest in itself and to face the fact that, when you are working at this scale, a community's prospects for survival and prosperity are measured not by how prepared and engaged its most affluent and privileged members are, but how well its least are. Katrina revealed that in spades. Those most likely to die, lose their jobs or homes, and to miss out on the post storm recovery work were African Americans, the elderly, the poor and the civically estranged. This is what makes Katrina an event of global and enduring importance. It was not just a storm, it was an unraveling of society in a way that few have seen and fewer expected, especially in the richest nation on Earth.

So, how are things? What lessons have been learned? The truth is, it depends on who you ask. The city has been hailed as a successful comeback story with a surging economy, housing market and a bold approach to reforming public education. But there is still entrenched poverty, racism, and unemployment and a persistent trust-gap between those making it and those who are not (and who historically were not allowed to). The region struggles to remain insurable and attractive to investors in the face of advancing seas and a pervasive disinvestment in the public sector. In short, New Orleans remains a fascinating but troubled place and one that grapples daily with its own identity and sustainability. Considering that the City and its surrounding coast were decidedly unsustainable 10 years ago, perhaps this is progress but without much more it will not be enough.

Whether New Orleans can make it or not is probably not a question most people outside of Louisiana ask. After all, after Hurricane Sandy, western droughts, eastern blizzards, and urban unrest, there are other places to think about, not the least of which are those thousands of places where everybody else lives and that New Orleanians surely don't spend much time thinking about. But New Orleanians should always keep these issues in mind, and others should keep their finger on the pulse of New Orleans. Because if one thing is now clear it is this: New Orleans is one of the handful of places on the planet that are bellwethers of our ability to manage our way out of the mess we are in.

For all the talk of resilience, sustainability, inclusion, and no more "business as usual," no place that we know of has marshaled the options, resources and civic and political will to squarely face the future. Maybe that is because you cannot face the future if you do not honestly own up to the past, for the keys to crafting a future lie in learning about and from the past. The disasters of Fukashima, Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and earthquakes in Haiti, Mexico City, Christ Church New Zealand, and most recently Nepal teach one relentless lesson. And that is that too many people in too many places are living at profound and well-understood risk, and that it is policy to trust more to luck than any sense of real management to reduce or alleviate those risks.

There is a brief window following a disaster when systemic change may be possible but it passes quickly, replaced by excuses, platitudes and plans that have little chance of being implemented. That is particularly true where solutions depend more on social change than engineering. It is easy to call for change but when change means

things really being different, or costing too much in terms of money or how we see and treat our neighbors, things get dicey.

The problem is not just people's attitudes. In fact, people's attitudes may be the most straightforward piece of the puzzle. People are teachable and capable of caring and learning. You can move them to thought, action or tears with a message or experience. Not so long ago, when our communities were smaller and more compact, this was where the action was. This is no longer the case , at least not in some very important ways. The more intractable part of getting more sustainable societies lies in the fact that our communities are less and less the masters of their destinies. There has been a pronounced shift from the personal and local sphere to the institutional and global realm. The issue is not whether that is good or bad. This is simply a fact. New Orleans offers a good example.

When Hurricane Betsy hit New Orleans in 1965 many neighborhoods flooded in ways that Katrina repeated in 2005. At that time hurricane protection was a local, mostly personal, thing.   There were no federal hurricane defenses to protect the City, much less to fail. The decision to return and rebuild was assisted from Washington DC, but mostly shaped by locals.   Most of the drug and grocery stores, retailers, banks were locally-owned. The decision for them to reopen was inseparable from the recovery of the neighbors they served.

By 2010, that had changed dramatically. Flood protection was heavily the province of the Army Corps of Engineers. Federal government had a commitment to protect the region from the worst storm it was likely to see, a once in 200 to 300 year storm to use the current terminology. That made people feel safe but it turns out to have been illusory. The hurricane science the Army Corp of Engineers relied on in designing

that system had evolved and by 1972 it was clear even to the Corps that the worst likely storm would be worse than the one they had planned for (St. Bernard Parish et al. v United States, 2015). New information like that tends to make a sensible person reflect, learn and adapt their plans. That is not what the Corps, which is full of sensible people, did. No, the Corps felt absolutely bound to build the system they pitched to Congress in 1965 and no new information about the real storm risk was going to change what they saw as their legal mission.   Unfortunately for the people in New Orleans that meant the Corps' legal mission had become defending an outdated metric instead of a city. That is hardly an aberration.   In addition, their engineering designs were in critical places so deeply flawed it could not perform even to the Corps's old standards.

The truth of the matter is that for every law empowering someone or some agency to promote greater public safety and environmental resilience, there are passels of other laws and policies that run counter to it. Not intentionally, of course, and not without some justification, but the result is the same. Immunity laws intended to protect the public purse also can inoculate government against accountability, as can laws intended to encourage (and then shield) private investment. Narrow agency and organization missions can be useful to focus expertise and limit overreaching, but they also can defy comprehensive planning and action. And lending, housing and education policies that can elevate communities, can also be used to trap people in poverty and high-risk locations.

By the time Katrina hit, many of the banks, grocers, and retailers had been bought out or replaced by national chains, organizations with no ties to the

community.   For them the decision to return, rebuild and reopen was a business decision driven by metrics and policies set in cities far away. They needed customers first, customers who often could not return until they had a place to shop, bank and worship. Their duty was to their shareholders and business models, duties that did not reward compassion or local roots.

One of the most compelling lessons from New Orleans and Katrina is that the very nature of our communities has changed. The notion that community is defined by who lives nearby must now be expanded to include persons and institutions at a distance whose decisions can control the fate of places and their residents. When those persons and institutions are unknown or faceless to locals, and when the locals are mere abstractions or metrics to those out-of-towners, the challenges of building any sense of real community should be obvious. But nobody said this was going to be easy.

Which brings us to the second lesson from New Orleans. The enemy is also us. New Orleans has made tremendous strides and by almost every measure, is well ahead of any post-storm projections of where the region would be 10 years after the storm. People in every segment of the metro region have worked hard and accomplished far more than expected by almost anyone. Yet, to an unfortunate extent, our very success has made us complacent about the greatest threat: The all too real risk that we can flood again.

Too many people believe that so-called "100-year protection" is something with which we should be content. But that term just means is that we are protected against a storm with a 1% chance of striking any particular year. This is the lowest standard in the civilized world for densely populated areas. In fact, that standard was set by and

for flood insurance. It may make perfect sense to insure a single building to that standard. Unfortunately, when floods hit entire cities not just a few buildings it's comparable to designing medical care to handle a single person sick with influenza, when the threat is actually an influenza pandemic. In the first case, a single doctor can handle it. In the second case, an entire society can be knocked out or even all but wiped out.

The real chances over the next 100 years of escaping a hurricane that could overwhelm the 100-year standard are not good. Facts communicate more than probability statistics. The Mississippi River levees were built to protect against what was perceived to be the worst probable flood, and not to protect against some arbitrary mathematical projection.   And that is a good thing: in the last 88 years there have been at least four and possibly more floods that broke the standard for a 100-year flood on the river, most recently during the 2011 Mississippi River Floods.

Much better protection is closer than it might seem. The existing protection system can keep the city dry against the "still-water" storm surge of a "500-year storm," i.e., the surge if waves can be knocked off the top of it. How can that be accomplished? Greater protection can be accomplished by restoring areas outside the levees and by honestly partnering with the people and communities who live and work on the "wet" side of the levees. This strategy can raise the standard of protection to "500-year." That standard is achievable, at least for much of the metro area.

But it cannot be accomplished unless we face a number of truths, some of them uncomfortable. Our window of opportunity is shrinking and the temptation to delay or compromise to avoid making hard decisions will be immense. But we must keep after it,

keep the faith and be honest with ourselves. We must make it our business to not let our community be divorced from those who have the power to make decisions that will determine its future. We must make it our business to empower every resident in civic life. And we must make sure that we do not ever assume that the institutions that now dominate our governments and economies have our best interests at heart. None of this will be easy or cheap. There will be friction. There has to be if you are doing anything worthwhile. But if it is friction that is fueled by a true sense of purpose and that produces traction and not just heat, then there is indeed hope.

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HOUSING CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION
ENVIRONMENT
HEALTHCARE
WORKFORCE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

HEALTH OUTCOMES IN POST-KATRINA NEW ORLEANS: PLACE AND RACE MATTER

PHARISSA ROBINSON, J.D. AND LILA ARNAUD, M.P.H.

IN NEW ORLEANS PLACE AND RACE ARE CLOSELY LINKED, BECAUSE STRUCTURAL BARRIERS SUCH AS HOUSING DISCRIMINATION, HISTORICALLY HAVE RELEGATED AFRICAN AMERICANS TO NEIGHBORHOODS THAT ARE POORLY RESOURCED, WHILE RESIDENTS IN MAJORITY-WHITE NEIGHBORHOODS ENJOY BETTER RESOURCES AND HEALTH OUTCOMES.

HEALTHCARE

The neighborhoods in which people live have a profound impact on their health behaviors and health outcomes (World Health Organization, n.d.). In New Orleans, the concept that *place matters* is literally life and death. People residing in high poverty, high crime communities where the educational attainment of residents is low and unemployment is high, have a much lower life expectancy rate than their counterparts in communities where the reverse is true (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2012). In New Orleans *place and race* are closely linked, because structural barriers such as housing discrimination, historically have relegated African Americans to neighborhoods that are poorly resourced, while residents in majority-White neighborhoods enjoy better resources and health outcomes. For instance, individuals living in zip code 70112 (predominately Black) have a life expectancy 25 years lower than those in zip code 70124 (predominately White) (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2012).

This chapter will examine the social and structural forces that impact health equity for African Americans in New Orleans. These social determinants of health, or the conditions in which people live, work and age and the systems in which they interact, are examined in this chapter using neighborhood comparisons of health outcomes. More specifically, the health disparities between African American and White New Orleanians are highlighted with

neighborhood-level analysis of the rates of chronic illness. Included in this chapter are discussions on the natural and manmade forces that impacted the health care infrastructure in New Orleans and its effect on African Americans. Finally, an analysis of structural and social issues in health care is provided that includes recommendations to improve health and wellness for African Americans in post-Katrina New Orleans.

Health Care Infrastructure

Hurricane Katrina severely damaged the health care infrastructure in New Orleans and exposed the vast vulnerabilities in the system at the expense of low-income, African Americans. Charity Hospital, a state-run hospital that primarily served the city's indigent, lay vacant after the storm, leaving a major gap in health care access for low-income African Americans in the city (Gratz, 2011). The closure of Charity Hospital had severe consequences for African Americans in the city as 75% of the hospital's patients were African American before the storm (Save Charity Hospital, n.d.). In the absence of Charity Hospital, African Americans' access to health care in New Orleans diminished significantly, and the city saw a 50% increase in its death rate following the hospital's closure (Save Charity Hospital, n.d.). To highlight the importance of Charity Hospital in the New Orleans landscape, 51% of uninsured individuals in New Orleans reported their usual source of care was the emergency room (New Orleans Health Department, 2012). Without Charity Hospital, more than half of the city's uninsured, lacked access to their usual source of care.

In 2012, at a time when the city was still recovering from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, Governor Jindal made $34 million dollars in cuts to the public hospital system (Deslatte, 2012). LSU Public Hospital prisoner services and the city's already crippled mental health infrastructure were hit hardest, representing half the financial cuts. The hospital's chemical detoxification unit and nine out of 38 psychiatric inpatient beds at the DePaul campus were also closed (Maldonado, 2012). The Jindal administration had already closed the New Orleans Adolescent Hospital (NOAH) in 2009, which had provided psychiatric care to indigent children (Barrow, 2009). These cuts dealt a serious blow to the already fractured health care infrastructure in the region and impacted some of the most vulnerable populations in the city, most of whom are African American.

Despite these severe cuts to the hospital system in Louisiana, several post-Katrina recovery projects are expected to help improve access to medical care for residents of the city. These projects include the University Medical Center New Orleans (opened August 2015), the VA Hospital downtown medical complex (opening in 2016) and New Orleans East Hospital (opened July 2014). These projects cost over $2 billion dollars much of which came from hefty allocations from the federal government (Adelson, 2015; Buchanan, 2012; Jacobson, 2013). The federal government also awarded a $10 million grant to the City of New Orleans Health Department for its Healthy Start New Orleans Initiative to improve birth outcomes in communities with the high rates of low weight babies (City of New Orleans, 2014). Federal support has been essential to the recovery and rebuilding of the health care infrastructure in the city.

The rebuilding of these hospital projects are important steps in the recovery of the health care infrastructure of the city. Not only do they expand access to health care for New Orleans residents, but they also have a positive impact on the economic and workforce development in the city. The completion of the New Orleans medical complex and Biodistrict are projected to create over 17,000 jobs and generate $630 million in personal earnings by 2030 (Hollier, 2011). This underscores the importance of the health care system to the local economy in New Orleans. While these key projects are coming online, federal policies and local efforts are helping to address health care access issues that may help address health care disparities for African Americans.

Access

Access to health care is an important factor influencing health disparities across the nation. This is particularly true for African Americans who are more likely than Whites to be uninsured in New Orleans, are more likely than Whites to not see a doctor because of cost in Louisiana, and are less likely than Whites in Louisiana to have a primary care physician (The Kaiser Family Foundation State Health Facts, n.d.; New

Orleans Health Department, 2013). It follows then that Blacks die from diseases at a higher rate than other racial groups, thus widening racial disparities (Culp-Ressler, 2013).

Like many other southern states, Louisiana opted out of the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion provisions, denying coverage to otherwise ineligible residents who earn up to 138% of the federal poverty level (Schuler, 2015). Notwithstanding this, the Affordable Care Act has the potential to reduce racial disparities throughout New Orleans. In particular, the city's African American community is already significantly benefitting from some of its reforms through insurance coverage for more than 60,000 in the New Orleans Metropolitan Area (Advocate Staff, 2015). Many of the city's African Americans who were ineligible for Medicaid now have coverage and access to treatment that was once only available to them in the city's hospital emergency rooms.

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, 21% of New Orleans residents were uninsured, giving the city one of the highest uninsured rates in the country (Rudowitz, Rowland & Shartzer, 2006). As previously mentioned African Americans have higher uninsured rates than Whites, with uninsured rates of 32.3% as compared to 16.6% for nonelderly adults from 2009-2011

African-American Unisured Rate in New Orleans from 2009 - 2011 and 2013-2014
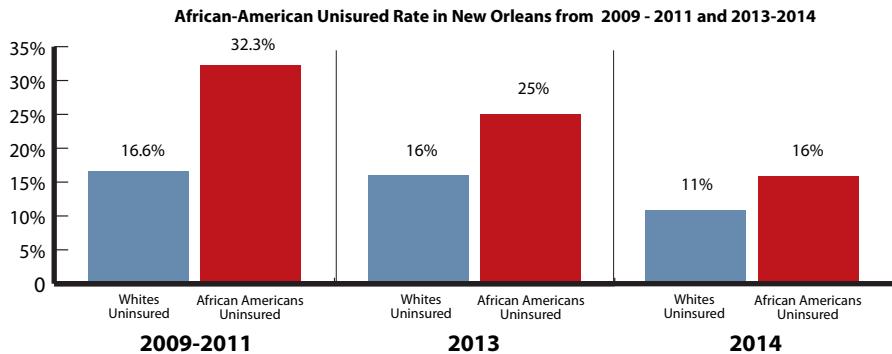
Figure 1

(New Orleans Health Department, 2013a). The Affordable Care Act has made a noticeable impact in reducing this disparity, by helping reduce the number of uninsured in the city. Between 2013 and 2014, the percent of uninsured African Americans dropped from 25% to 16%, while the percent of uninsured Whites dropped from 14% to 11% (Number of uninsured, 2015). That's a difference of just five percentage points between African Americans and Whites in the percent of uninsured in 2014, down from an almost 16 percentage point difference in 2009- 2011 (See Figure 1) (Number of uninsured, 2015; New Orleans Health Department, 2013a). The impact of the Affordable Care Act is expected to play a continual role in decreasing the number of uninsured African Americans in New Orleans.

While uninsured rates are dropping in New Orleans, the city faces the difficult challenge of addressing the shortages in mental health care providers.   Pre-Katrina, the mental health care provider shortage was an issue that was exacerbated by inadequate funding to address mental health and substance abuse needs (Reckdahl, 2012). Before the storm, the city's shortage of psychiatric inpatient beds was at a rate of 46.5 per 100,000 population or 364 total inpatient psychiatric beds for the entire city (City of New Orleans, 2010). Of those beds, 100 were at Charity Hospital. The hospital that served the needs of the city's low-income African Americans, no longer served as a primary source of both inpatient and outpatient mental health care (The Kaiser Family Foundation State Health Facts, n.d.). African Americans in New Orleans were hardest hit because they are most likely to be misdiagnosed or not diagnosed at all, thus ending up in jail or avoiding treatment altogether (Simpson, 2015).

By 2010, the number of available mental health and substance abuse hospital beds remained critically low at about 17.5 adult beds per 100,000 (The Kaiser Family Foundation State Health Facts, n.d.). Although the number of available emergency room beds increased to 159 in 2010, a shortage in psychiatric beds still remains a challenge in the city (City of New Orleans, 2010). While the outpatient infrastructure has benefited from the influx of federal funding, inpatient psychiatric facilities still face a shortage of inpatient beds. The new University Medical Center, provides 80 inpatient psychiatric beds today (Hays, 2015). One of the unfortunate results of this mental health care shortage crisis in the city is the criminalization of mental illness. The combination of poverty, the unaffordable housing and a fledgling psychiatric healthcare system led to a disproportionate number of mentally ill African Americans falling through the cracks and ultimately showing up in city jails, morgues and emergency rooms (Simpson, 2015). But the New Orleans East Behavioral Health Center opened their doors June 2015 brining a much-needed mental health care service to the metropolitan area (Barbarin, 2015). A continued increase of mental health care providers is crucial to increasing access to mental health care in New Orleans, but other options may also help to address the needs of residents in New Orleans. Another strategy to address the mental health needs of New Orleanians is to follow the national trend of increasing the provision of home-based psychiatric care to stabilized patients as an alternative where psychiatric admissions are not feasible.

An important improvement to health care access in New Orleans is the expansion of community health centers. Community health centers provide much needed primary care and mental health care to low-income residents, including those that are uninsured (504HealthNet.org, 2015). Today, over 70 neighborhood-based, community

health centers serve 59,000 working class individuals throughout the Greater New Orleans area (City of New Orleans, n.d.). The Affordable Care Act has accelerated the growth of these centers encouraging the development of patient-centered medical homes that are well-coordinated systems in which clinicians and patients work together to provide patients with appropriate care (Freundlich, 2013). These Centers are designed to reduce emergency room visits and avoidable hospitalizations, reduce health disparities and improve health outcomes for its patients. In July of 2014, two community health centers in New Orleans were awarded federal funds made available by the Affordable Care Act to expand or establish mental health services (Catalanello, 2014). In May 2015, the City of New Orleans was awarded a $175,000 grant to help community health centers encourage residents to use the centers (McClendon, 2015). The Affordable Care Act and the health care delivery reforms in New Orleans are helping to rebuild a health care system that may help change health care decisions and behaviors of residents by increasing their access to primary care. Community health centers in New Orleans are serving many of the low-income African American residents who previously would be served by Charity Hospital, and providing much needed primary care and mental health care that can help turn the tide on health disparities for African Americans in New Orleans.

In New Orleans East, the city also opened New Orleans East Hospital in July 2014, an 80-bed facility that serves nearly 80,000 residents (Catalanello & Myers, 2014). The facility is located on the former old Methodist Hospital site. Neighborhood clinic initiatives and the reopening of a hospital in New Orleans East may be contributing to improved health outcomes that have been experienced across the city

Today, over **70** neighborhood-based, Community Health Centers serve **59,000** working class individuals throughout the Greater New Orleans area.

for the past three consecutive years (City of New Orleans, 2015). Today, the services the City offers through New Orleans East Hospital and its community health centers play a crucial role in increased health care access for African Americans and other New Orleans residents.

Social Determinants of Health & Chronic Diseases

The conditions in which people live, work and age and the systems at play that shape their daily lives are referred to as the "social determinants of health" (World Health Organization, n.d.). Conditions like neighborhood income, crime rates, access to supermarkets and educational attainment are social determinants that can each create disparity in the health outcomes observed in a neighborhood. Income, for example, directly affects health outcomes as families living below the Federal Poverty Line (FPL) become almost four times more likely to report poor health than families living at least two times above the FPL (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2014). The disparity in health outcomes is most dramatically observed across zip code 70112 (a predominantly Black area) and 70124 (a

predominantly White area) and leads to a drastic difference in life expectancy (over 25 years), with residents in 70112 living an average of 54 years and residents in 70124 living an average of 85 years (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2014).

Residents in zip code 70112, for example, are five times more likely to die from heart disease than are those living in zip codes like 70124, with 1,945.2 people/100,000 in 70112 dying from cardiovascular disease as compared to the 190/100000 people in zip code 70124 (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2014). Residents living within zip code 70112 also experience the highest rates of mortality due to stroke and diabetes. Between 2008 and 2010, African Americans were also three times more likely than white New Orleans residents to die of diabetes and twice as likely to die of kidney disease (New Orleans Health Department, 2013b). Risk factors like obesity, hypertension and diabetes all of which are driven by the cycle of poverty, also persist at the highest disparity levels in the neighborhoods represented under 70112 (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2014).

Obesity

Social determinants like the concentration of corner stores and fast food restaurants coupled with the lack of supermarkets and fresh food options, all can impact a person's decision making around their food options and can lead to obesity. In spite of a growing number of supermarkets and fresh food venues in the city since the storm, access to these venues for African American residents has decreased. Pre-Katrina census tracts showed that African Americans were 40% less likely to have access to more than one supermarket in their neighborhood as compared to residents of other neighborhoods. By 2009, lack of access

increased to 71% (New Orleans Health Department, 2015).

Crime and neighborhood safety are intrinsically linked to obesity. Unsafe neighborhood spaces deter people from becoming physically active. Exposure to stress also signals the body to release hormones like cortisol and adrenaline in the bloodstream, which have been linked with obesity and metabolic disease (Bose, Laferrere & Olivan, 2009). Obesity is a major risk factor of increased risk of diabetes, heart disease, stroke and certain kinds of cancer. A report by the New Orleans Health Department (2012) indicates that New Orleans has a 30% adult obesity rate. More recent numbers show that 42% of African Americans reported living with obesity as compared to 30% of Whites in Louisiana, giving Louisiana the sixth highest rates of adult obesity in the nation (Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2013; Levi, Segal, St. Lauren, & Rayburn, 2014).

Diabetes

Disparities in health outcomes due to diabetes can be observed across race, income lines, and educational backgrounds (Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals [DHH], 2004b). The disease can be prevented and managed with healthful eating, regular physical activity and management of other risk factors such as high blood pressure, high levels of body fat and tobacco use (CDC, 2014). With decreased access to healthy food options, safe, walkable neighborhoods, and continuous health care access, African Americans are at a social disadvantage for preventing and managing diabetes. On a national level, 13.2% of Blacks live with the disease as compared to almost 8% of Whites (CDC, 2014). In New Orleans, Blacks are three times more likely to die from diabetes related complications than their White

counterparts (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2012).

Due to limited local data, this section extrapolates state data to talk about trends in health disparity of diabetes across time.

In 2004, the prevalence of diabetes in Louisiana had increased steadily from 5% of the adult population in 1994 to 80% (DHH, 2004a). In pre-Katrina Louisiana, 10.9% of African Americans lived with diabetes as compared to 7% of White Americans (DHH, 2004a). Residents who reported an annual household income less than $13,000 were at higher risk of developing diabetes than residents who reported an annual household income of over $50,000 (14% versus 9%). Residents who had not attained a high school diploma were also twice as likely to develop diabetes than residents who had graduated from college (14% versus 7%) (DHH, 2004).

By 2010, the prevalence of diabetes had increased to 10% of the adult population in Louisiana as compared to almost 7% in 2000 (CDC, 2010). African Americans still had the highest prevalence of diabetes with a 13% diagnosis rate compared to approximately 9% diagnosis rate among White Americans. Residents who reported an annual income of less than $15,000 were still at higher risk than residents who reported an annual income of over $50,000 (a prevalence of 20% versus approximately 6%). Residents who had not attained a high school diploma experienced higher prevalence of diabetes than residents who attained a college degree at 16% and 8% respectively (CDC, 2010).

Maternal Health Indicators

Unfortunately not all pregnancies in the US today result in a live or healthy birth. Infant mortality rates (IMR) and rates of low birth weight (LBW) are maternal health indicators used to gauge the overall health of mothers and their babies. Some will argue that accessing prenatal care within the first trimester of pregnancy is the greatest indicator of low infant mortality rate, premature births, neonatal mortality, infant mortality and maternal mortality (Funke, Tran, Mather & Kieltyka, 2006).

Black communities throughout the US, including Orleans parish, report more adverse birth outcomes, than any other group (DHH, 2006). This is due in part to much higher rates of low birth weight and higher rates of infant mortality before the first year of life. Black communities also report less utilization of prenatal care early in pregnancy (first trimester), which has been linked to healthy pregnancy (DHH, 2006).

From 2004-2006, the Department of Health and Hospitals (2006) estimated that in Orleans Parish, 16% of live Black births compared to 8% of live White births resulted in babies with low birth weight. The infant mortality rate in Black communities was 11.5 deaths/1,000 live births compared to 4.8 deaths/1,000 live births in White communities. There was a wide disparity in utilization of prenatal care, with 72% of Black women reporting they received prenatal care in the first trimester compared to 92% of White women (DHH, 2006).

Immediately after the storm, from 2005-2007, the disparity in rates of low birth weight widened slightly from 16% of Black live births compared to 8% of live White births (DHH, 2007). Infant mortality rate in Black communities was 11 deaths /1,000 live births compared to 4.3 deaths/1,000 live births in White communities; and 76.5% of Black women reported accessing first trimester care, compared to 92.2% White women (DHH 2007).

Most recent numbers show that the disparity in maternal health outcomes continues to widen across racial groups in New Orleans.

Fourteen percent of live Black births result in low birth weight and 7% of live White births result in low birth weight (DHH, 2011). While infant mortality rates between both Black and White communities each decreased, the disparity observed across groups increased with 10.7 deaths/1,000 Black births compared to 1.9 deaths/1,000 White births (DHH, 2011).

HIV/AIDS

The differences in rates of HIV transmission are the most extreme health disparity for African Americans in New Orleans given that African American residents are twice as likely to be diagnosed with HIV than their White counterparts (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012). The Louisiana Public Health Institute identifies high-risk heterosexual sexual activity and injection drug use as major modes of HIV transmission for women and same sex sexual activities followed by high-risk heterosexual activity as major modes of HIV transmission for men (Louisiana Public Health Institute, 2010).

In 2004, 1,113 new HIV/AIDS cases were diagnosed in the state of Louisiana, 32% (353) of which were in New Orleans. Of the 1,113 new HIV/AIDS cases diagnosed in the state, 872 were new AIDS cases, indicating late diagnosis (DHH, 2004b). New Orleans had the highest number of new HIV/AIDS cases diagnosed in 2004 and 76% of the new HIV/AIDS diagnoses were AIDS diagnoses. In 2004, 5,148 people were living with AIDS in New Orleans (DHH, 2004b). Although African Americans made up 33% of the Louisiana population, they represented 76% of new HIV cases diagnosed and 79% of new AIDS cases diagnosed in the state. African Americans' HIV rates were seven times higher than Whites in Louisiana in 2004 (DHH, 2004b).

In 2004, there were 15,068 people living with HIV/AIDS in Louisiana, 50% of whom were living with AIDS (DHH, 2004b). By December 2014, there were a total of 20,013 people living with HIV/AIDS in Louisiana, 53% of whom were living with AIDS (DHH, 2014). In New Orleans, 4,901 people were living with HIV/AIDS in 2014. Of those living with HIV/AIDS, 2,596 had AIDS (53%). Across the

7%

31%

62%
of the People
in New Orleans
Metro Living with
HIV/AIDS are African
American

Other
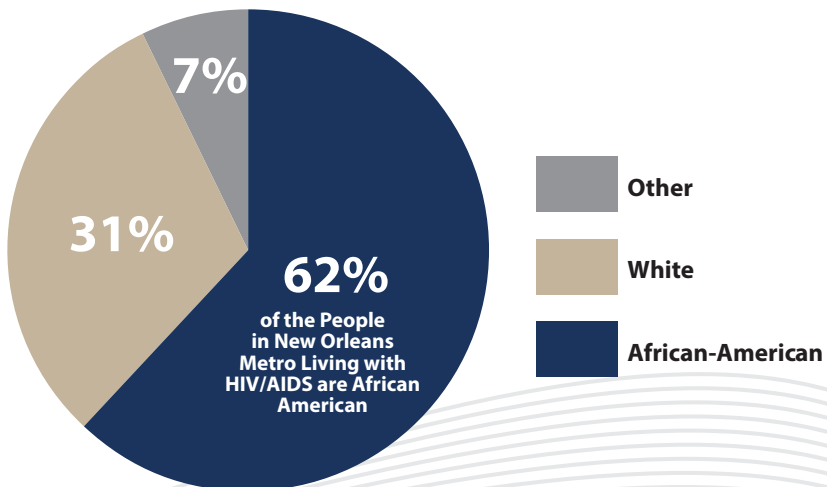
White

African-American

Figure 2

state, disparities in HIV/AIDS rates were extreme in 2014. In Louisiana, 68% of people living with HIV/AIDS were African American as compared to Whites who made up 23% of people living with AIDS (DHH, 2014). In 2014, African Americans represented 32% of the population in Louisiana. Those disparities held up in the New Orleans Metropolitan Statistical Area, where 62% of people living with HIV/AIDS were African American and 31% of those living with HIV/AIDS were White (See Figure 2) (DHH, 2014). The New Orleans metropolitan area includes Jefferson, Orleans, St. Tammany, St. John the Baptist, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. James and St. Charles parishes.

Cancer

Louisiana's rates of cancer are close to the national average or higher. From 2008-2012, per 100,000 people, the incidence of breast cancer rates averaged 121.9 compared to the national average of 123; lung cancer rates averaged 73 compared to the national average of 63.7; and rates of kidney cancer averaged 20.9 compared to national average of 16.0 (National Cancer Institute, 2012). Overall, cancer disproportionately affects people of color in Louisiana, with age-adjusted incidence rates for Whites at 486.7/100,000 compared to 508.8/100,000 for people of color including Latinos living in the state (National Cancer Institute, 2012). With less access and utilization of health care, African Americans are at an increased risk of morbidity caused by cancer. Black women, for example, are less likely to survive cancer following a diagnosis, compared to White women (Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, 2013). In New Orleans, African Americans are also disproportionately affected by cancer, with rates of death caused by cancer averaging 245/100,000 among African American communities compared

CANCER MORTALITY RATES

AFRICAN AMERICAN 245

WHITES 150

D E A T H S   P E R   1 0 0 , 0 0 0

Figure 3

to the death rate average of 150/100,000 seen among White New Orleanians. African Americans are 1.55 times more likely to die from cancer than their White counterparts (See Figure 3) (New Orleans Department of Health, 2013).

Social Determinants of Health and Smoking

One of the most egregious examples of structural and social forces that promote poor health outcomes for African Americans is the tobacco industries' targeting of young people and low-income communities of color. An unpublished report by the Louisiana Public Health Institute (LPHI) found that the tobacco industry spends $215 million annually to market their products to these populations, resulting in tobacco-related disparities. LPHI conducted a study of the product, placement, pricing and promotion (4Ps) of tobacco, alcohol and food in New Orleans, surveying 465 stores throughout the city. They found a significant relationship between socioeconomic status and access.

Specific findings of the unpublished LPHI study suggest that the 4Ps are major social determinants that impact health choices and influence health outcomes. Findings of the study indicate that tobacco and alcohol products were cheaper and health foods were more expensive in African American neighborhoods. The reverse was true in more affluent, White neighborhoods. Study findings also indicate that African American neighborhoods had 2.5 times more tobacco advertising than more affluent, White neighborhoods where they had almost no tobacco ads in stores. These findings highlight the disparate strategies implemented by the tobacco industry in African American neighborhoods and illuminate some of the structural forces that promote poor health outcomes and health disparities for African Americans.

For added clarity, smoking is linked to 20% to 30% of low birth rates in the United States and public smoking and lack of access to fresh foods are risk factors for obesity and chronic disease (New Orleans Health Department, 2013b). It is safe to say that product, placement, pricing and promotion of tobacco, alcohol and healthy foods in African American neighborhoods in New Orleans is contributing to higher rates of low birth rates, obesity and chronic diseases among African American New Orleanians. While the aforementioned structural and social forces continue to facilitate poor health outcomes for African Americans, the New Orleans City Council passed a smoke-free ordinance banning smoking in bars, restaurants and casinos in the city that appears to be yielding positive health results (Berenson, 2015; City of New Orleans, 2015). A new study found a 96% decrease in fine particle air pollution in the 100 days since the ordinance passed (Travers &Vogl, 2015).

Disaster Preparedness

How much mayhem and loss of life could the city have avoided during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina had officials at all three levels of government executed an effective communication or disaster preparedness plan is unknown. Hindsight is 20/20. However, there are lessons learned regarding where the city stands today in its disaster preparedness and readiness plan should another storm or disaster strike. The government has infused billions of dollars into the city to shore up its levees, and has since made several repairs to address constant sinkage problems. However, some still worry the levees may not hold up if another storm makes a direct hit. Local providers and hospitals are still tasked with the challenge of caring for its sickest ventilator dependent patients during power outages. Lessons learned from Katrina include moving critical equipment like generators to higher floors and revamping hospital communication lists. No plan is ever exhaustive, which is why the greatest lesson learned from Hurricane Katrina is eradicating complacency such that residents heed evacuation warnings and alerts in a timely and orderly fashion and that disaster plans are regularly checked and updated for maximum preparedness. This is particularly critical for the city's most ill and vulnerable populations who will more likely rely on public transportation and other mass transit for evacuation purposes.

Conclusion

Like other major cities in America, where you live in New Orleans strongly correlates with the condition of your health and life expectancy. Thus, despite having a greater number of providers, residents in some of the most income and

resource poor areas of the city experience more persistent, frequent & severe health problems than those living in zip codes that are predominantly White and have higher income rates. Large disparities in diseases in only certain areas of the city are too disproportionate to ascribe it only to poor decision-making, particularly when considering how high the deck is stacked against residents living in some of the most violent areas of the city, like Treme and Central City.

Neighborhoods with low crime rates, quality schools, libraries, nutritious food outlets, safe workout facilities, parks and community centers, as well as, trusted relationships, and equal access to resources, strongly influence healthier lives just as much as access to quality healthcare. In applying this to New Orleans as a solution for addressing health disparities, we should take a different approach by looking more closely at the city's neighborhood infrastructure, land use and housing policies and not just the African Americans who live in them. The density of liquor stores and commercial to residential space, as well as the number of banks versus check-cashing places are as much drivers of health outcomes as is access to healthcare and neighborhood clinics.

Although riddled and beleaguered by epidemic, systemic failures, the city has nonetheless undergone a major transformation since Hurricane Katrina. But too many struggling areas of the city still sit bruised and battered not just from the waters of Katrina, but also from an almost daily spray of bullets and gun violence that remind us of the plight of New Orleans. If ever there was an opportunity to rectify substandard neighborhood conditions known to perpetuate the cycle of violence, desperation and health

disparity in New Orleans, the recovery period in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina was it. Yet, 10 years after one of the worst disasters ever unleashed onto the banks of the Mississippi, the health of many African American residents is no better off than it was before Hurricane Katrina, as compared to White residents. These disparities are sometimes seen as aggravating problems that are near impossible to fix. When the city honestly addresses its issues with neighborhood diversity and inclusion, and couples that with healthcare access interventions, it will have a more realistic and comprehensive picture on which to base decisions and an equitable strategy. Until New Orleans applies lessons learned from Katrina by addressing the relationship between zip code and morbidity, no amount of beds or providers alone will eliminate the health disparities between its African American and White residents. Closing the disparity gap between predominantly White communities like 70124 and predominately Black communities like 70112 requires an equitable practice of prioritizing Black health and healing in the city, which includes neighborhood diversity. The strategies employed throughout Columbia Parc represent one such approach the city can adopt in truly desegregating its communities as a step towards closing the health outcomes disparity gap.

Recommendations

Adopt strategies that diversify resources and funding streams and make them available to historically marginalized New Orleans communities to improve health equity.

Review the city's neighborhood infrastructure, and not just the African Americans who live in them, for land use and housing policies that promote a cycle of poverty, i.e., density of

liquor stores, commercial to residential space, number of banks versus check-cashing places, food deserts and limited service restaurants.

Advocate for increased funding and access to primary care and mental health services, exploring alternatives such as the national trend of increasing the provision of home-based psychiatric care to stabilized patients.

Regularly check disaster plans and update for maximum protection.

In hurricane preparedness plans, ensure critical equipment like generators are moved to higher floors.

Ensure hospital communication lists are periodically updated and alerts, educational outreach programs and warnings are regularly tested.

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EDUCATION CRIMINAL JUSTICE ENVIRONMENT HOUSING HEALTH WORKFORCE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

THE CHALLENGES OF GETTING HOME QUICKLY AND FAIRLY: SUCCESSES AND FAILURES OF POST-KATRINA HOUSING RECOVERY EFFORTS

KELLY D. OWENS, PHD.

THE QUESTION OFTEN ASKED BY THOSE OUTSIDE OF NEW ORLEANS IS, **"IS NEW ORLEANS BACK?"** ALTHOUGH THIS INQUIRY IS SEEMINGLY STRAIGHTFORWARD, A NUMBER OF COMPLEXITIES PRECLUDE THE ABILITY TO PROVIDE A SIMPLE ANSWER. IN GENERAL, **78% OF THE PRE-KATRINA NEW ORLEANS POPULATION COUNT IS BACK WITH 88%** OF HOUSING INVENTORY RESTORED.

HOUSING

The question often asked by those outside of New Orleans is, "Is New Orleans back?" Although this inquiry is seemingly straightforward, a number of complexities preclude the ability to provide a simple answer. In general, 78% of the pre-Katrina New Orleans population count is back with 88% of housing inventory restored (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). On the surface, the numbers suggest that the immediate post-Katrina concern around housing New Orleanians has been resolved. However, digging deeper unveils that while the quantity of housing units is not an issue, the affordability and quality of housing in New Orleans is a major concern, particularly to individuals and organizations vying for fairness, equality, and the provision of decent places to live for all citizens. Further, if "being back" is defined as the return of New Orleanians to their pre-Katrina neighborhoods, a thorough response has to be qualified with reference to race because of the disparate recovery of predominantly white versus predominantly Black neighborhoods. The fact that the answer to "Is New Orleans back?" elicits responses that have to be qualified based on affordability, housing quality, and race suggests that an analysis about equity and the fair distribution of disaster recovery resources for the rebuilding of New Orleans neighborhoods is warranted.

Bringing families back to New Orleans necessitated swift action to restore housing to pre-Katrina levels in order to stabilize neighborhoods. However, housing recovery

became an arduous task, complicated by the limitations of insurance companies, pre-Katrina poverty rates at 28%, and challenges such as neighborhood blight associated with a steadily declining population. Moreover, the city/state had to equally prioritize several needs: housing its labor force; safeguarding tax-based revenue from higher income households; preserving its tourist economy; and forestalling increased homelessness. These considerations meant that a comprehensive housing recovery plan would have to be developed and executed quickly. Under a national spotlight, the city of New Orleans and the state of Louisiana with support from the federal government had the opportunity to demonstrate how disaster recovery should be conducted. However, many lessons can still be gleaned from the mistakes made during the housing recovery. However, once the dust settled, housing recovery in New Orleans would become a case-study complete with lessons on what could and should have been done differently.

Housing and Race

Hurricane Katrina did not discriminate. Homes belonging to families of all racial backgrounds were affected by the devastating effects of the storm. Thousands of families were displaced and given that New Orleans had a majority African American population, when looking at raw numbers, more African American households were affected than any other racial group. Yet, when analyzing devastation and housing recovery percentage-wise, while disaster did not discriminate, disaster did expose major inequities. Of New Orleans' 14 planning districts, five areas experienced less than 13% severe housing damage as a result of Katrina while eight districts

encountered severe damage to at least 40% of their homes. In the Uptown/Carrollton area, one of the larger districts, 27% of homes were severely damaged (see Table 1). Of those eight, New Orleans East, the Lower Ninth Ward, Mid-City, Gentilly, and Village De l'est were the hardest hit, with 64% to 69% of homes severely damaged. All of these areas were predominantly occupied by African American families (see Table 1). Related to this observation is the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) finding that Blacks were less likely to return than were individuals in other racial groups. According to BLS, only 54% of Black evacuees returned to their pre-Katrina communities, compared with 82% of White evacuees. BLS concluded that Black net out-migration was tied to geographical patterns of storm damage, income, and educational attainment rather than race (Groen & Polivka, 2008). While it is apparent that geography determined which communities were more damaged and socioeconomic status dictated the capacity for residents to return, BLS's suggestion that race did not factor into which residents were able to return ignores the vestiges of racially discriminatory practices (e.g., redlining, steering, blockbusting, and exclusionary zoning) that established racially segregated communities. The suggestion also ignores that life chances are tied to geography.

It is because of residential segregation that predominantly Black communities in New Orleans were more susceptible to destruction caused by Katrina, which can be correlated to the rate of return of African Americans to New Orleans. New Orleans' population count dropped by 197,792 people from the 2000 census count to 2006, the period immediately

following Katrina, and estimates are that 64% of this population loss was African American (Shrinath, Mack, & Plyer, 2014; U.S. Census, 2000). As anticipated, the hardest hit neighborhoods suffered the most population loss. In 2010, five years after Katrina, the Lower Ninth Ward and the Little Woods neighborhood in New Orleans East were still experiencing population declines of more than 10,000 people (see Table 2).

These findings make it hard to circumvent race as a unit of analysis with respect to housing recovery. Since the onset of recovery efforts, policy analysts and academicians have been grappling with the finding that African American

neighborhoods have been recovering at slower rates than white neighborhoods despite the influx of state and federal funding earmarked for recovery (Gotham, 2014; Ehrenfeucht & Nelson, 2011; Rose, Clark, & Duval-Diop, 2008; Rivera & Miller, 2007; Quigley, 2007a).

While these results may not have been intentional, it is important to bring such critiques and analyses forward if we are to inform and shape future practices that are equitable and fair for all groups.

Damage by Neighborhoods

New Orleans' City Planning Commission divides New Orleans into 14 planning districts comprised of neighborhoods.

	HOUSING UNITS	% UNITS SEVERELY DAMAGED	PERCENT OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN SPECIFIED NEIGHBORHOOD POPULATION COUNT PRE- AND POST-KATRINA		
			Neighborhood	2000	2010
French Quarter/CBD (1a)	2,896	0%	French Quarter	4.3%	4.4%
Warehouse/CBD (1b)	1,552	2%	Warehouse	DNA	DNA
Central City/Garden District (2)	19,737	12%	Central City	87.1%	72.4%
Uptown/Carrollton (3)	28,213	27%	Audubon	5.1%	4.8%
Mid-City (4)	24,247	64%	Mid City	64.3%	55%
Lakeview (5)	12,666	57%	Lakeview	.7%	3.4%
Gentilly (6)	16,902	67%	Gentilly Terrace	69.7%	77.8%
Bywater (7)	15,416	42%	St. Roch	91.5%	86.8%
Lower Ninth Ward (8)	6,802	69%	Lower Ninth Ward	98.3%	95.5%
Eastern New Orleans (9)	28,865	68%	Little Woods	86.1%	92.6%
Village d L'est (10)	3,820	67%	Village De l'est	55.4%	43.4%
Lake Catherine/Venetian Isles(11)	829	62%	Venetian Isles	76.5%	61.4%
Algiers (12)	18,973	1%	Old Aurora	30.9%	54.9%
English Turn (13)	1,712	12%	New Aurora/English Turn	68.1%	63.4%

Table 1: Damage by Neighborhoods
Source: The Data Center, Neighborhood Statistical Area Data Profiles

Sample Neighborhoods	POPULATION		Change Number	Change Percent
	2000	2010		
French Quarter	4,176	3,813	(363)	-8.69%
Central City	19,072	11,257	(7,815)	-40.98%
Audubon	14,898	15,865	967	6.49%
Mid City	19,909	14,633	(5,276)	-26.50%
Lakeview	9,875	6,394	(3,481)	-35.25%
Gentilly Terrace	10,542	8,210	(2,332)	-22.12%
St. Roch	11,975	6,632	(5,343)	-44.62%
Lower Ninth Ward	14,008	2,842	(11,166)	-79.71%
Little Woods (New Orleans East)	44,311	31,698	(12,613)	-28.46%
Village De l'est	12,912	8,008	(4,904)	-37.98%
Venetian Isles	1,883	840	(1,043)	-55.39%
Old Aurora	15,807	16,781	974	6.16%
New Aurora/English Turn	5,672	5,769	97	1.71%

Table 2: Population Count in Select Neighborhoods in 2000 and 2010
Source: The Data Center, Neighborhood Statistical Area Data Profiles

Table 1 indicates the amount of severe damage in each planning district and indicates the percentage of African Americans represented in the most populated neighborhoods of the planning districts.

Pre and Post-Katrina Housing Landscape

At the time of the last census (2000) before Katrina, housing inventory accommodated New Orleans' population of 484,674 residents with a total of 215,091 units. Of these units, 188,251 were occupied and renters inhabited 53.5% of them. The median home value was $87,300 and median gross rent was $488. The U.S. Census found that 26.7% of Orleans Parish homeowners and 42.7% of renters were paying 30% or more of their income toward housing costs (housing cost burden). Racial demographics before Katrina showed a majority Black/African American population of 66.6%. White residents represented 26.6% and the Asian population 2.3%. Hispanics of any race numbered 3.1% while American Indian and others were at 1.4% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

By 2013, the population of New Orleans was estimated at 378,715-- indicating that New Orleans had lost 105,959 residents since 2000. The 2013 American Community Survey counted 190,127 housing units in the city of New Orleans, 24,964 fewer units than in 2000.[1] Additionally, by 2013, the median gross rent had increased by 89% and home

	2000	2010	2013
POPULATION	484,674	343,829	378,715
Black/African American	66.6%	60%	59.8%
White	26.6%	30%	33.6%
Asian American	2.3%	3%	3%
Hispanics (any race)	3.1%	5%	5.3%
HOUSING			
Housing Units	215,091	189,896	190,127
Occupied Units	87.5%	74.9%	78.1%
Renter-occupied Units	53.5%	52.2%	52.7%
Vacant Units	26,840	47,738	41,729
Median Home Value	$87,300	$184,100	$183,700
Median gross rent	$488	$899	$926
Homeowners paying ≥ 30% of income toward housing costs	26.7%	46.2%	43.9%
Renters paying ≥ 30% of income toward gross rent	42.7%	61.6%	61.3%

Table 3: Demographic and Housing Characteristics of New Orleans in 2000, 2010, and 2013
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census & American Community Survey 2013, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

median values increased by more than $95,000 compared to 2000 values. Median gross rent at $926 explains the significant increase—from 42.7% to 61.3%--in number of renters experiencing housing cost burden of 30% or more. Another notable difference is the African American population, which in 2000 measured at 323,392, and was estimated at 213,632 in 2013 – a significant boost after having experienced a low of 125,600 in 2005. 2013 numbers show a decrease of 6.8% in Black residents since 2000 while White and Hispanic representation has increased by 7% and 2.2%, respectively (see Table 3).

Housing Recovery: Slow but Steady

Ten years post-Katrina, 99.9% of the 46,922 households that applied for financial assistance through Road Home, the state's housing disaster recovery program, have been granted funding (State of Louisiana, 2015a). While this is an encouraging finding, the pace by which the program operated substantially slowed down the rate by which neighborhoods recovered. It was not until August 2006, one year after Hurricane Katrina, that the Road Home program was officially launched.

Road Home, the state's response to damage caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita[2], has been a major component of the disaster housing programs that garnered $11.5 billion of the $13.3 billion in Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding from HUD[3] (State of Louisiana, 2015b). According to Governor Blanco, Road Home was established to "help Louisiana residents get back into their homes or apartments as quickly and fairly as possible" (Louisiana Recovery Authority, 2006). With grants of up to $150,000 to homeowners, New Orleanians would finally receive the assistance needed to rebuild their damaged homes. In partnership with the newly created Louisiana Recovery Authority, HUD signed off on the Road Home program as the mechanism to deliver much needed funding to distressed homeowners. The reliance on federal assistance was necessitated by the tremendous gaps created by the refusal of insurance companies to cover damage that was deemed to have been caused by flooding rather than wind. In other cases, homeowners were under- or uninsured (King, 2007; Buckley, Doroshow, Hamdan, & Hunter, 2006).

Unfortunately, Road Home was riddled with a number of challenges. Administrative execution of the program was slow and haphazard, eventually leading to the firing and replacement of the lead subcontractor of the program. Disbursement of funds was hindered by bureaucratic inefficiencies creating financial hardship for families waiting to rebuild (Finger, 2008). One troubling finding was that most Road Home grants were insufficient. Even after receiving financial assistance, many homeowners were still faced with major funding gaps making it impossible to complete work on their homes. By 2008, the average Road Home grant of $60,000 meant a shortfall of nearly $50,000 for

Neighborhood Impact of the Road Home Program

New Orleans East, a predominantly African American, middle-class neighborhood is about eight miles east of Lakeview, a neighborhood with a majority of White households. In New Orleans East and Lakeview, pre-storm home values averaged $146,216 and $336,064, respectively. Average home damage estimates were $224,303 in New Orleans East and $281,537 in Lakeview. In 2008, the average Road Home grant for the 13,908 applicants in New Orleans East was $69,196 while 4,735 Lakeview applicants received an average of $109,777. This created an average funding gap of $69,196 for New Orleans East applicants compared to a $44,405 gap for Lakeview applicants. (Rose, Clark, & Duval-Diop, 2008).

46.7% of applicants rebuilding in place (Rose, Clark, & Duval-Diop, 2008).

The shortfall of funding was a direct result of Road Home's policy in determining how much funding homeowners could receive. The formula was based on the pre-Katrina assessed value of the home or the actual cost to repair the home – whichever amount was less. For example, a home valued at $70,000 with $90,000 of home rebuilding costs would only receive $70,000 thus creating a $20,000 shortage. This policy created an even more deleterious effect for African American communities dealing with the nationwide trend of depressed market value attributed

to homes located in predominantly Black neighborhoods. PolicyLink (2007) found that African American households had an almost 35% higher shortfall than White households. A neighborhood-by-neighborhood analysis showed that in predominantly Black areas such as New Orleans East and the Lower 9th ward, 60% of homeowners ended up with average gaps of $65,000 and $68,000 respectively (Duval-Diop, 2009).

It could be argued that housing inequities were being further exacerbated by Road Home's policies and racial preferences. In 2008, HUD and LRA were sued for the disparate outcomes of Road Home in a class action lawsuit filed by several African American homeowners, the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and the National Fair Housing Alliance. The suit was settled six years after the storm in 2011 with remedies that included amending grant formulas to provide full relief to over 13,000 homeowners. Over 45,000 low and moderate-income homeowners across the state received supplemental grants based on damage costs rather than home values and one year extensions to occupy the homes were granted to homeowners whose original grants were based on pre-storm market value (NAACP Legal Defense Fund, 2011). To date, over $2 billion has been provided through Additional Compensation Grants (State of Louisiana, Office of Community Development, 2015).

LRA's failure to apply principles of equity and utilize actual renovation costs as a basis for funding from the start resulted in a delayed recovery process. In the meantime, lower- and middle-income families were indefinitely displaced or were forced to sell rather than rebuild due to delayed and insufficient funding. Slowly getting the program on par came at the expense of tax dollars being spent on building and maintaining temporary housing units ("FEMA trailers") or completely losing families—mostly Black families—to other cities and states. In addition to African American neighborhoods being disparately impacted by the government's policies and processes, government inefficiencies led to millions of wasted federal tax dollars and lost tax revenue for the city. As recent as 2014, LRA was continuing to implement new measures to deal with issues related to applicant compliance and recovery of grant dollars from homeowners due to non-compliance (Road Home, 2014).

Affordable Housing

High poverty rates, low wages, a preponderance of single-parent households, and high unemployment in New Orleans created the need for substantial affordable housing units in the city prior to Katrina where 42% of tenant households and over 25% of homeowners were excessively burdened (according to HUD standards) by paying 30% or more of their income towards gross rent and/or housing costs (U.S Census, 2000). This amount of burden demonstrated that affordable housing was extremely insufficient before Katrina.

Hurricane Katrina worsened the affordable housing situation for the city of New Orleans with severe damage to over 51,000 units (PolicyLink, 2007). The shortage of rental housing—market-rate or affordable— placed a premium on livable units resulting in median gross rents soaring from $488 right before Katrina to the current median gross rent of $926. Of the housing units damaged or lost due to the hurricane, 37,790 of these units fell in a price range officially considered affordable for low-income residents (less than 30% of household income).

Expediency and strategy were required in order to bring residents, including lower-income New Orleanians, back to the city. The primary affordable housing providers—the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO), the Louisiana Housing Corporation (which had been preceded by the Louisiana Housing Finance Authority), state and city-sponsored affordable homeownership programs, state and city-based tax incentives for private developers, and non-profit community development corporations—would have to thoughtfully address affordable housing gaps that were now deeper than before Katrina.

Rehabilitation Aid for Small Rental Properties

One of the state's responses to the affordable rental housing crisis was the Small Rental program launched in January 2007 and administered through the Louisiana Recovery Authority's Road Home program. To date, LRA has allocated $649 million of the $11.5 billion Community Development Block Grant (for housing programs) towards rental housing for extremely low- and very-low-income people (State of Louisiana, 2015b). The intent of the program was to provide forgivable loans to landlords of one to four-unit properties in the hardest hit neighborhoods. Landlords had to agree that rents would be capped for the next 10 years. In doing so, affordable rental units would be made available to residents. However, policy became a barrier for substantial progress being made during the initial phases. The program operated on a reimbursement basis with the expectation that landlords would front the money for repairs and then get compensated for expenditures up to $72,000 per unit. This policy initially delayed the replenishment of affordable units because many landlords did not have the resources to obtain upfront capital. Revisiting the policy, LRA

decided to provide gap financing to eligible landlords. As of 2015, incentives for 6,169 small rental loans have been committed including 5,407 affordable rental units available in New Orleans. Just over $295 million of Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Funds have been committed specifically in New Orleans (Louisiana Recovery Authority, 2015).

Public Housing

Prior to August 2005, HANO reported 5,146 households living in public housing apartments. Currently, the city has a total count of 1,976 public housing units (HANO Fact sheet, 2015). The reduction in available units may have been more related to the timing of the storm rather than the storm itself. Katrina hit New Orleans during an era of nationwide redevelopment via the HUD-sponsored HOPE VI program launched in 1992. By 2005, HOPE VI had already transformed over 200 major housing developments in cities across the nation, including Chicago and Washington, DC as well as the Desire, St. Thomas, and Fischer housing developments in New Orleans.[4] HOPE VI was the federal government's solution to deconcentrate poverty whereby public-private partnerships leveraged funding to physically and socially alter public housing sites into mixed-income developments. Housing middle-class residents along with a substantially smaller subsidized tenant population in newly redeveloped sites was intended for new, higher-income individuals to model behavior that would encourage government-subsidized residents to adopt mainstream values such as self-sufficiency (Owens, 2012). However, HOPE VI bore with it some controversy, namely the failure to replace units on a one-on-one basis and allow all former residents to return upon completion of the new developments. This created the permanent displacement of

poor, Black residents with what appeared to be government-sanctioned gentrification (Lees, 2008; Hackworth & Smith, 2001).

The four housing developments—C.J. Peete, St. Bernard, Lafitte and B.W. Cooper—that were slated for redevelopment (using the HOPE VI mixed-income model)[5] survived the storm. This fueled protest against HUD and HANO's plan to demolish the buildings.[6] Redevelopment opponents pointed to the increased demand for affordable housing sparked by Katrina as rationale to merely renovate the developments, which could have housed more low-income households more quickly and more affordably than if they were razed and redeveloped. Protesters also made accusations of racism as the buildings had been occupied by Black families who faced permanent displacement.[7] The city cited unlivable conditions and an estimated $1 billion renovation cost as major impediments to renovate rather than redevelop (HANO, 2015). The New Orleans City Council unanimously voted in favor of demolition, resulting in 3,170 fewer public housing units in New Orleans. Mitigation for residents displaced by redevelopment included HANO's issuance of 2,987 tenant-protection vouchers.

Under President Obama's Administration, HOPE VI was modified into the HUD Choice Neighborhood Initiative, which requires one-to-one replacement of public housing units along with comprehensive services for subsidized residents. HANO was awarded a HUD Choice grant and is currently transforming the Iberville public housing site into a mixed-income community, which upon completion will bring the city's total to 2,748 public housing units. However, completion is not expected until 2017 and HANO's leadership has raised questions about the agency's capacity to deliver as originally planned. [8]

Since Katrina, the displacement of poorer households by redevelopment efforts and Hurricane Katrina more than doubled the demand for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, which provides housing assistance to enable low-income families to rent from private landlords. HANO has responded to demand via scattered site public housing and the inclusion of affordable units (in addition to public housing units) in a number of housing developments.[9]   As an indication of the compelling need for affordable housing, consider that 17,800 families receive Section 8 vouchers and 20,000 families are currently on the waiting list (HANO, 2015).

Affordable Rentals Via Tax Credits

In addition to mixed-income developments resulting from the redevelopment of public housing, mixed-income housing is also made possible by private developers incentivized by public support in the form of tax credits. Investors have been building and rehabilitating multi-unit developments in areas such as the Tulane Avenue corridor, where affordable units funded by Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) funds comprise at least 30% of these newer developments. LIHTC is an indirect federal subsidy administered through the state-run Louisiana Housing Corporation (LHC). Affordable units are delivered through partnerships with private developers, non-profit organizations and public agencies. As enforced by the IRS, LIHTC units in these developments must remain affordable for 15 years. This timeframe can extend to a total of 30 years dependent upon continued enforcement by the city and state.

Despite a slow start, the production of affordable units made possible through LIHTC's did increase in response to Katrina, resulting in a total of 10,187 affordable tax credit units.[10]   LIHTC units could have been made available sooner,

but several issues delayed or disrupted development. A number of neighborhood coalitions, driven by NIMBY-ism,[11] made it difficult for developers to come into their communities. Another barrier was the rising cost of insurance for apartment buildings, particularly right after Katrina. With higher insurance costs, opportunities to build equity and ensure profitability were diminished. Furthermore, the Great Recession[12] further hampered progress as stricter underwriting laws came into effect. LIHTC production was eventually aided by an allocation of $595 million in CDBG/Piggyback funds, which saved a number of developments under construction facing additional loan restrictions and scrutiny. As of May 2015, all but $272,000 of the CDBG/Piggyback fund had been obligated to the LIHTC program (State of Louisiana, 2015; Rose, Clark, & Duval-Diop, 2008; Schrayer, 2007).

The Impact of Mixed-Income Housing

To date, the combined efforts of public-private partnerships have created a modest dent when considering the overall housing affordability needs of low-income residents. Even with efforts such as the Greater New Orleans Foundation's Community Revitalization Fund that supported the development of 9,500 affordable housing units, affordable housing continues to be in great need.

While the affordable housing situation continues to be addressed, there is concern about where poorer families are being housed and for how long. Under certain conditions, developers are able to opt out of the LIHTC program in 15 years. This means that affordable housing units put in service beginning in 2010 could be drastically reduced by 2025 with subsequent conversions from affordable to market-rate units in the years thereafter, thus creating waves of affordable housing unit shortages. Moreover, the effects of NIMBYism and housing discrimination by Section 8 landlords are pushing lower-income residents into certain pockets of neighborhoods, reinforcing racial segregation and creating new areas of concentrated poverty.[13]

Affordable Homeownership

As an indication of housing cost burden, 26% of homeowners were paying 30% or more of their income towards home ownership costs in 2000. In 2013, 43.9% were paying more than 30% towards owner costs (e.g., mortgage, insurance, taxes, utilities, etc.), however, in 2013, there were 17,414 fewer owner occupied units than in 2000. In raw numbers, the number of "burdened" households has increased by over 600 families when compared to 2000 rates despite lower population numbers. One explanation for the increase in burdened households is the rising cost to buy homes. The average purchase price in May 2015 was $347,212 compared to $253,502 in May 2005 based on information from the Gulf South Real Estate Information Network. Other explanations are tied to institutionalized trends and market forces (discussed in next section).

While the rate of owner-occupied units has remained steady when comparing 2000 to 2013 (46.5% vs 47.3%), there were over 17,000 fewer owner occupied units by 2013. Still, the fact that owner occupancy is on par with previous rates despite the substantial displacement of previous homeowners is commendable and largely attributed to the collective efforts of government agencies, funders, volunteers, and organizations that have supported affordable housing programs and clean-up campaigns. Their efforts have helped neighborhoods recover and have made homeownership possible

for lower- and middle-income families. Efforts include the Crescent City Community Land Trust, which committed to providing 1,000 affordable housing units by 2024; Make it Right has built 150 homes averaging $150,000; NORA's administration of the HUD Neighborhood Stabilization program has delivered 236 affordable homes; the New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity helped over 3,200 families since 2006 by building 500 homes and gutting 2,400 buildings; HANO has placed 340 first-time buyers into homes; and the City of New Orleans and the Louisiana Housing Corporation have administered funds for homeownership programs including first time buyer and soft second programs, which received $120.9 million of CDBG-DR funds (Greater New Orleans Foundation, 2015; HANO, 2015; Make it Right, 2015; New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity, 2015; State of Louisiana, 2015; NORA, 2013). Although these efforts are laudable, there is still much work to be done if New Orleans' homeownership rates are to compete with those of Louisiana and the U.S.—which are 19.7 and 17.6 percentage points higher, respectively— and with a majority African American population, increasing homeownership may prove to be a challenge.

Challenges to Homeownership

Current homeownership rates in New Orleans are consistent with Pre-Katrina rates at about 46%, which is 17% lower than national homeownership rates. African American homeownership in New Orleans is more consistent with the national African American homeownership rate of 43.2%, however, New Orleans falls short in comparison to other predominantly Black cities such as Mobile, AL; Memphis, TN; and Virginia Beach, VA where Black homeownership is at least 48%. When examining predominantly Black neighborhoods in New Orleans prior

to Katrina, higher than average African American homeownership rates were found in The Lower Ninth Ward (54%), New Orleans East (55%) and Gentilly (72% homeownership rate). Post-Katrina homeownership for African Americans have fallen in these neighborhoods mostly due to lack of flood and hazard insurance, compounded by delays, inefficiencies, and inequitable distribution of Road Home funding (Washington, Smedley, Alvarez, & Reese, 2006).

The African American homeownership rate is largely attributable to discriminatory practices that have always existed in the real estate and mortgage industries, and recent market forces have added complications. The Great Recession brought with it foreclosures and tighter loan restrictions that have thwarted homeownership rates for families of all racial backgrounds. Upon factoring in predatory lending and other discriminatory loan practices in minority communities, the disparate impact on families of color is significant. Still today, the threat of foreclosure looms over many African American households in New Orleans and FHA foreclosed properties in Black neighborhoods are more likely to be neglected than those in white neighborhoods, consequently bringing down home values in African American neighborhoods. According to the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Center, between 2008 and 2010, African Americans held more high-yearly-percentage-rate home loans than whites, meaning that because they were paying off interest rather than principal, building equity was occurring at a much slower pace (Buchanan, 2015).

Additional findings that explain challenges to homeownership for African American households include the National Community Reinvestment Coalition's 2008 reporting that African Americans were 2.59 times

more likely to receive high cost home loans when compared to whites immediately following Katrina in 2006. Forty-one percent of all home loans received by African Americans were high cost, compared to just 16% of loans received by whites. Also, African Americans were nearly twice more likely to be denied loans than whites. In 2010, the Louisiana Office of Community Development conveyed that the home loan denial rate for Whites was 20.7%, for African Americans 37.9%, and for Hispanics 26.8% (Buchanan, 2015; Louisiana Office of Community Development, 2010).

Herein lies one of the major equity issues further compromised by the hurricane, levee failures, and government recovery efforts. Threats to homeownership, particularly for racial minorities, means delaying the building of equity and generational wealth. The associated implications are far-reaching when considering how home equity can be leveraged to handle financial emergencies or finance education, small business development, and other investments with potentially positive returns. In 2011, the median white household had $111,146 in wealth holdings, compared to just $7,113 for the median Black household. Homeownership is key to addressing the racial wealth gap (Sullivan et al., 2015).

Progress toward Eliminating Residual Effects of Katrina

Blight reduction. Another major issue confronting New Orleans recovery has been urban decay— also known as blight. Already a problem that precipitated Katrina due to population decline, blight became a barrier to neighborhood recovery in that many homeowners were reluctant to rebuild in neighborhoods experiencing higher percentages of blighted properties such as in the Lower 9th ward. While pre-storm blight figures are not available, it

has been estimated that in 2010, the rate of blighted homes in New Orleans was 25%, with approximately 43,755 blighted homes and empty lots coupled with 9,356 vacant but habitable housing units (one of the highest rates of abandonment in the country) (Plyer et al., 2011). In many instances, blight resulted from Road Home funding shortages, denied insurance claims, and contractor fraud. In essence, blight disparately impacted African American neighborhoods where there was the most damage and the widest funding gaps (Southern United Neighborhoods, 2013).

Peter Yaukey, geography professor at UNO, estimates blight reduction at a range of 10,328 to 14,591 units between 2010 and 2013 –an indication that Mayor Landrieu's blight reduction goal of 10,000 units was met. The city credits blight reduction to code enforcement, aggressive demolition policies, and a soft second finance program that tacked both blight and the affordable housing issue. Another blight reduction strategy has been the Lot Next Door program (LND) administered by the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA). Through this program, homeowners were able to purchase adjacent vacant properties that were part of the 5,000 properties acquired by the state through the Road Home program [14]. At least 1,300 homeowners have participated in LND and NORA is continuing to offer properties through this program (City of New Orleans, 2014a; NORA, 2014; Yaukey, Knaggs, & Wise, 2013).

Housing for homeless individuals and families. Homelessness in New Orleans was certainly worsened by Hurricane Katrina. Before Katrina, only 2,051 people lived in literal homelessness on any given night. In 2007, the homeless population surged to 11,619 homeless people. UNITY of Greater New Orleans—a nonprofit organization that leads a collaborative effort of 60 agencies

helping individuals who are homeless or at risk of being homeless—determined the 2014 homeless population to be at 1,981 people, 3% less than pre-Katrina.[15] This count is 15% less than the previous year and 83% less than 2007 (City of New Orleans, 2014b). Steady declines in the homeless population from 2007 to 2014 have been attributed to the combined efforts of the city's Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program funded with federal dollars and the UNITY homeless collaborative. UNITY doubled the amount of clients initially served in 2004, leased private rentals, and reunited homeless individuals with their families. UNITY also surpassed HUD's national requirement to permanently house at least 65% of transitional clients by finding permanent homes for 90% of clients in transitional housing programs. Even more recent developments include the abolishment of homelessness for veterans (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2015; Unity of Greater New Orleans, 2012; City of New Orleans, 2015).

Did Katrina Spur Gentrification?

Anxiety around the idea of New Orleans becoming more and more gentrified has been expressed by long-time residents since the beginning of initial planning talks. Apprehension may have been well founded given commentary from city officials and scholars. For example, Jimmy Reiss, the chair of the Regional Transit Authority for New Orleans, asserted that Katrina had changed New Orleans for the better if low income African Americans were not able to return; conclusions by over 200 social scientists indicated that the displacement of low-income residents presented the opportunity to deconcentrate poverty (Ehrenfeucht & Nelson, 2011).

While housing practitioners debate whether gentrification is an issue, an observation of redevelopment activity and soaring housing costs suggest that conditions for gentrification exist. Using the definition provided by Neil Smith, a preeminent geographer and scholar on the topic of gentrification, conditions for gentrification include the influx of private capital, homeowners, and renters as a means to refurbish poor neighborhoods (Smith, 1996). In the instance of post-Katrina recovery, it can be argued that both private and public capital has been poured into the redevelopment of lower-income neighborhoods, particularly in areas where public housing developments have been replaced with mixed-income developments, bringing in higher-income individuals as new renters and homeowners (Owens, 2012). Private and public redevelopment dollars have also contributed to improvements in several corridors bringing about more restaurants, retail hubs, and mixed-use developments. CDBG-DR dollars have contributed to redevelopment efforts with funding coming from an economic development allocation of over $317 million and/or from the nearly $1.4 billion dedicated to infrastructure programs (State of Louisiana, 2015b).

What is obvious to long-time residents is the influx of White transplants (Campanella, 2013), particularly into neighborhoods that are becoming less black, such as Central City, Mid City, and St. Roch. Neighborhood change is also prevalent along the Mississippi River where Bywater, Marigny, the Lower Garden District, St. Thomas, the Irish Channel, and East Riverside have all statistically become Whiter (see Table 2). Displacement in favor of mixed income development, neighborhood composition changing from one race to another, and huge capital investment clearly point to neighborhoods in the process of being gentrified.

Conclusion: Equity in the Rebuilding Process

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, African Americans comprised 67% of the population with one-third of those individuals living under the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Blacks were overrepresented as residents of public housing and affordable housing units. The economic status and housing patterns of New Orleanian Blacks is what made them more vulnerable to Hurricane Katrina, thus making their post-disaster experience quite different from more affluent populations (Fothergill & Peek, 2004; Bolin, 1998). Similar to policy-backed housing patterns in other urban areas across the U.S., African American New Orleanians resided in multi-family dwellings, in homes with weak infrastructures, in racially segregated sections of town, and in poor land-use areas (Kamel & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2004). These conditions made it possible for Katrina to uproot a disproportionate number of Black people, causing the involuntary displacement of mostlyBlack communities (Rivera & Miller, 2007). In essence, Katrina intensified the racial inequities that had predicated her arrival.

A number of scholars (Biles, 2000; Hirsch, 2000; Radford, 2000; Wilson, 1987) make it clear that residential segregation patterns are deliberate outcomes of housing policies and programs, including government subsidies for White flight to suburbs, redlining, and restrictive covenants. African Americans were further disadvantaged by sections of the Federal Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954 that "cleared slums" to embark upon urban renewal projects that, more often than not, were private development projects that resulted in the displacement of Blacks and rehousing of Blacks into public housing developments and neighborhoods plagued with concentrated poverty (Biles, 2000; Hirsch, 2000). In total, these policies helped to crystallize racially segregated ghettos (Hirsch, 1998), subjecting African Americans to substandard land such as the case in New Orleans.

With respect to post-Katrina recovery, the state employed a number of tactics that placed African American neighborhoods at a disadvantage to recover as quickly as other neighborhoods. The demolition of four public housing developments and displacement of poor residents, the establishment of uninformed policies to govern distribution of government recovery dollars, and slow decision-making were crucial deterrents to recovery for all New Orleanians and particularly for African Americans. While unintended, the policy implications of initial recovery efforts have been reminiscent of slum clearance, urban renewal, and institutionalized racism. Essentially, when new policies are created without regard to preexisting disparate conditions, they are ineffective for intended minority groups, create more advantages for Whites, or create further harm to non-Whites. In the case of post-Katrina New Orleans, leveling the playing field for African American households may have been an unrealistic goal, however, the dire housing situation in New Orleans presented the city with the opportunity to design and build stronger communities, ensuring less exposure to future natural disaster. Ideally, housing recovery would also present an opportunity to ensure equity while restoring both Black and White neighborhoods.

Future housing recovery plans are encouraging. A group of concerned citizens and housing advocates are currently positioning New Orleanians for long-term development including plans for recovery should the city face another catastrophic disaster. HousingNola was launched in 2014

as a result of the Foundation for Louisiana's convening of a working group of community residents, housing advocates, for-profit and non-profit developers, and representatives of elected officials and city agencies. The Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance (GNOHA) serves as the lead agency of the coalition, which also includes the Urban League of Greater New Orleans and the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center. Collaborative efforts will produce a 10-year comprehensive housing plan, funded by the Foundation for Louisiana and a number of partners including the City of New Orleans and the Greater New Orleans Foundation. Of most importance is HousingNola's commitment towards equitable results undergirded by goals that include preventing displacement, promoting fair housing, encouraging sustainable design, improving quality of life in neighborhoods, and increasing accessibility for all residents, including special needs residents (HousingNola, 2015). The HousingNola plan intends to address *permanent* affordable housing, which is not fully addressed in the city's current master plan. The impact of HousingNola is dependent upon city leadership and is sure to be an important resource as housing recovery continues to be evaluated.

Data-based evaluation will continue to play a critical role in Katrina recovery efforts. Policy analysts, academicians, think tanks such as PolicyLink and the Brookings Institution, in addition to The Data Center (formerly the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center) have been instrumental in providing statistics, highlighting progress, exposing inequity, demonstrating the impact of policies and programs, and reporting important findings through data analyses. The level of transparency that these individuals and organizations have created ensures that agencies remain accountable and provide a clear picture of what still needs to be done.

Consistent with the saying that "hindsight is 20-20," it is recognized that Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath presented numerous unforeseen challenges, and many responses resulted from creating a recovery playbook in the process of trying to recover. The incapacity to administer recovery programs using fair and equitable practices may speak to a larger issue, not just in New Orleans but across the nation. Allowing policies and programs to be developed without considering historical and institutional biases has and will continue to place traditionally marginalized groups in vulnerable positions. Post-Katrina recovery efforts provide many lessons for cities and states that will have to respond to disaster-related neighborhood damage. In the same manner that environmental impact assessments are utilized to predict program and policy outcomes, cities and states will need to consider the social and racial implications of policy decisions and recovery processes. Taking the time to gauge overall equity and effectiveness prior to implementation not only ensures fairness but also saves long-term costs associated with lost wages, lost tax revenue, mismanagement, litigation, duplication of efforts, etc.

Having had this experience means that the city of New Orleans now has the playbook to ensure that in the event of future catastrophes, every effort will be made to make sure that the city fully and equitably recovers, and we will all be able to provide a resounding "Yes!" if ever asked the question, "Is New Orleans back?"

Endnotes

[1]Count does not take into consideration the number of housing units that were still uninhabitable. Because the Census Bureau defines housing units as long as they are not open means that many boarded up houses are in the census count. Examining the number of vacant units is therefore important in determining available housing stock.

[2]Hurricane Rita hit coastal Louisiana three weeks after Hurricane Katrina.

[3]CDBG-DR funding also supported infrastructure programs, economic development initiatives, planning and technical assistance, and administrative costs.

[4]HOPE VI awards to the Housing Authority of New Orleans occurred in 1994, 1996, and 2003

[5]HANO received a $20 million HOPE VI grant for redevelopment of C.J. Peete.

[6]HANO was under HUD receivership at the time due to operational challenges, mismanagement, and poor housing conditions.

[7]See http://www.nola.com/news/index.ssf/2007/12/city_hall_girds_for_public_hou.html

[8]See http://neworleanscitybusiness.com/blog/2015/02/16/top-construction-projects-8-iberville-redevelopment-2/ and http://nextcity.org/features/view/10-years-after-katrina-new-orleans-public-housing-still-in-limbo-iberville

[9]These are affordable units in addition to public housing units. The LIHTC program, which provides tax-based incentives to developers, is one of the mechanisms used to create affordable rental housing.

[10]Number includes units in service and units in development. Verified by LHC administrator via email, July 2015.

[11]NIMBY is the acronym for Not In My Backyard and describes the rationale for protest of proposed development that existing residents believe will create undesired effects

[12]The economic downturn between the years 2007-2009 precipitated by disproportionately high foreclosure rates

[13]See http://www.gnofairhousing.org/2009/09/16/housing-choice-in-crisis/

[14]5,221 homeowners opted not to rebuild and sold their properties to the state via the Road Home program.

[15]According to UNITY's point-in-time count conducted March 31, 2014 for Orleans and Jefferson parishes.

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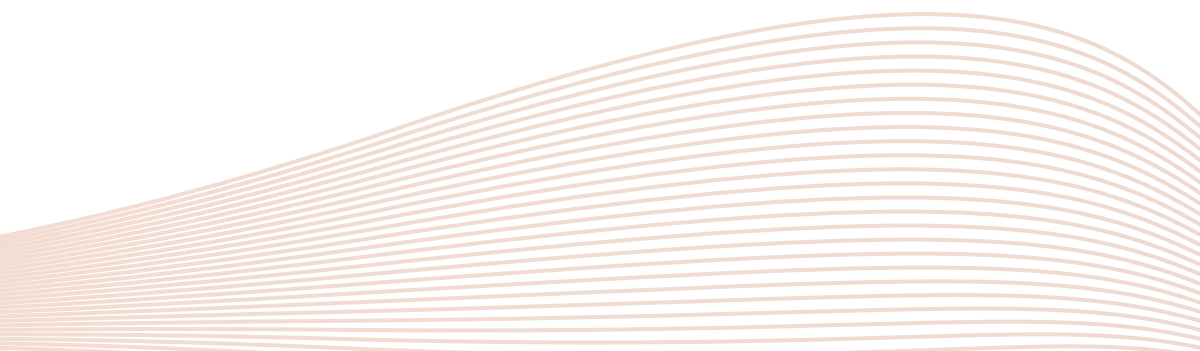
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KATRINA REFLECTIONS

SYBIL MORIAL

We all thought New Orleans would never be the same after Hurricane Katrina ravaged it beyond one's imagination. Nor would the lives of thousands ever be the same. Homes were destroyed by wind and floodwaters. Jobs disappeared, medical services and schools were crippled and in some areas non-existent. Family and neighborhood networks and churches, the bedrock in many areas, were gone as people fled to safe ground, some to cities all over the United States. The homes of three of my children and I were uninhabitable.   Ten years later, we have recovered.

My family's losses were devastating to us, but they cannot be compared with the financial loss and emotional trauma that thousands of New Orleanians had to live through. Everyone who was affected by Katrina has their own story.   However at this 10 anniversary of the disaster, I have chosen to recall the thousands of people who came to our aid, unsolicited, to help in so many ways that seemed miniscule in the whole scheme of the tragedy but meant a lot to the victims they helped.   Aid came from good people from around the globe, from individuals and diverse organizations, from church groups, and   college students in the months and years after Katrina to lend their time, their hands and talents and their treasure.

I cite just two examples of the help that came.   A group of college students from the northeast came during their Christmas vacation, secured free paint, and painted every room from ceiling to floor in a public school.

Katrina victims who had no place to go nor the means to get away from their flooded homes and neighborhoods went to inadequate public shelters. They suffered pain and humiliation beyond description, and from which they were transported to cities all over the country. Families in some of the cities opened their homes to the victims who were virtual strangers to them and allowed them to live there until they could figure out a plan of recovery.

Many opened their wallets over and over. Some made the journey over and over to help in ways that not only assisted in victim recovery, but lifted their spirits when their faith was at its lowest. I am sure there are more stories that should be recorded about the generosity of others during this horrific disaster.   It is this generosity of care and giving that has sustained my faith in the goodness of human beings.

Sybil H. Morial
Educator and wife of the late
New Orleans mayor, Dutch Morial

KATRINA REFLECTIONS

PASTOR TOM WATSON

I continue to see our beloved city like many other natives as we deem it the "Tale of Two or maybe Three Cities." A recent local news article (Times Picayune) on August 2, 2015 describes New Orleans economic expansion and job growth as strong, but wages and education funding lagging. New Orleans is a very different place 10 years post the storms. Because I was born, raised and educated here, I can really feel and see the difference. I believe we are even more segregated than before as a community in spite of all the great efforts to bring about a so-called "one voice." There are many Black churches still trying their best to be restored. Many Black pastors and leaders along with many Black citizens never returned and there is very little discussion or strategic efforts to aid in their return that I am aware of since August 2005. In my humble opinion, I believe the biggest crisis in the Black community (and maybe the White community) is one of effective, credible leadership at many tiers (religiously, politically, civically, socially etc). It's one of the reasons I offered myself to run for the mayor's seat in 2006. I thought and still believe that the profile of an effective city leader should be (but not limited to) a very spiritually grounded, governmentally experienced and militarily and culturally conscious individual considering the "times" in which we live.

In the midst of all of the basic challenges to return to New Orleans after hurricane Katrina, our church doors reopened with worship services on the first Sunday in November 2005 with full participation from so many worshippers who had no place to have church services. This reopening was under the leadership of Rev. Pat Watson, who now serves as the Executive Pastor of Watson Memorial Teaching Ministries and CEO of the Family Center of Hope Social and Educational agency. I returned to our city on the first Sunday in January 2006 and we have been non stop since that time with rebuilding, restoring and making ongoing contributions to our beloved community. I hope and pray that our city will move forward over the next ten years with some since of "equity" so that we don't leave so many others behind. Our goal for the next 10 years is to hold hands with partners throughout this region and beyond as we train and pave the way for the "next generation." We want to ensure to the best of our ability that the next generation is a lot better off than this one. Last but certainly not least, I hope that the people of God in this city and nation would continue to seek His divine direction as we march on 'til victory is won!

Pastor Tom Watson
Senior Pastor
Watson Memorial Teaching Ministries

KATRINA REFLECTIONS

JAY H. BANKS

2015 New Orleans is much more affluent, much more white, much more brown and far less black. Traditional black neighborhoods such as Central City, the Lower Ninth Ward and many other parts of uptown are being gentrified at a rocket pace. While the population numbers have risen to those similar to pre-Katrina, those numbers reflect new residents and the number of displaced natives who are unable to return home is alarming. Housing prices and escalating rent are forcing native residents out of neighborhoods that their families have populated for generations.

The one glaring fact about New Orleans that has not changed is the economic disparity between Blacks and Whites. Billions of dollars have been spent in rebuilding and reconstruction but very few Black New Orleanians have participated in capacities other than laborers. Atlanta created a black middle class with the construction of its airport and we had a much bigger opportunity to create black wealth here. Unfortunately, to-date, we have failed miserably.

The population will most certainly benefit from the construction of the new schools, drainage, infrastructure systems, hospitals and transportation systems, but those benefits would have still been realized if there had been significant minority participation in making some of the billions spent.

Our people, food, culture and way of life make New Orleans a wonderful place to live, but erasing the economic disparity would only make it better. I would never want another Katrina, but I sure would like another chance to fix this and truly build back stronger and more equitably for all New Orleanians

Jay H. Banks
King-elect 2016 and Recording Secretary, Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club; and Director of the School of Commerce, Dryades YMCA

KATRINA REFLECTIONS

REBUILDING: BLACK LIVES DIDN'T MATTER AS MUCH

LLOYD DENNIS

Whenever I think about post Katrina New Orleans, I reflect on how racism was woven into the very fabric of Road Home - Homeowner Assistance Program distributions and how that negatively impacted the ability of too many black homeowners to restore their lives and property.

The inclusion of *pre-Katrina property values* into the calculations for claims rather than the more equitable *cost to rebuild* meant that the more Black and poor the neighborhood was, the less money Road Home provided for a home's repair, whereas similar size homes in more White and affluent neighborhoods received the maximum... because real estate values in New Orleans are heavily weighed by race. Even middle class, recently turned Black neighborhoods like New Orleans East felt the discrimination as their pre-Katrina property values were a fraction of the value before the collapse of the oil business and White flight from what was a primarily White homeowner community before 1986.

Now, 10 years later, in the name of blight removal, land is being taken from people as a result of their inability to recover, as many are disgustingly self-righteous about people who didn't renovate their property... since many have to remain away with no resources to keep up land that has lost almost all its value.

So once again, those that have are those that got and can now grab land that is a bargain because those who didn't get couldn't afford to keep it.

What bothers me is there are no media stories, no acknowledgment, no reparation for this inclusion of an easily identifiable racial and demographic factor into a disaster relief program. Why property values? There were no loans, no need for collateral, no federal requirement, just an assumption that some homes deserved to be rebuilt more than others and the inclusion of property values insured that race and demographics would determine which. But actually we are talking about rebuilding lives and in the Road Home program it seems rebuilding Black lives just didn't matter as much.

Lloyd Dennis
Executive Director
The Silverback Society

KATRINA REFLECTIONS

ANN DUPLESSIS

During this decade of rebirth following Hurricane Katrina, one of the more remarkable transformations has been New Orleans' K-12 education landscape. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, public education in New Orleans was experiencing its own mini-disaster. We had a school board that was completely dysfunctional, the system's finances were a mess and worst of all children were not learning.

While significant education reforms were enacted just prior to Hurricane Katrina, it took this tragedy that claimed the lives of more than 1,000 Louisianans to force us to make changes that we all knew needed to be made. The things that held us back for so many years – politics, turf wars, and the desire by many to maintain the status quo – were washed away by Katrina. The disaster thrust upon stakeholders – parents, school boards, lawmakers, unions, and reform advocates – the urgency to come together to create an educational environment that would put children and families at the forefront.

What's ahead in the next 10 years for education in New Orleans? We must look to parents, who are now more informed, empowered and engaged in the education of their children. They are saying loudly and unequivocally, "Don't go back!" This is a window of opportunity, opened by Hurricane Katrina, that cannot be closed.

During the recent *NOLA PARENTS PERSPECTIVE: A Conversation About New Orleans Public Education 10 Years Post-Katrina*, I listened as parents demanded that our schools continue to improve. They all agreed that the we won't reach the finish line until all choices are good choices; where every school is an excellent school, in every New Orleans neighborhood.

Ann Duplessis is president of the Louisiana Federation for Children and former state senator.

KATRINA REFLECTIONS

BEVERLY STANTON MCKENNA

My look back at Hurricane Katrina is one of death and dying, grieving and goodbyes as exemplified by the funeral of my mentor and the former Urban League of Greater New Orleans CEO, Clarence Lyle Barney. It was Saturday, August 27, 2005-- just two days before Katrina made landfall and the levees broke--when the Black community gathered at Dillard University Chapel to lay Barney to rest.

Ten years after "the" cataclysmic storm ripped our community asunder, forever changing the city, the defining event which, to me, symbolizes the mournful leave-taking of a people and their way of life is the funeral of our good friend and leader.

For 30 years, he had been the stalwart president of the local affiliate of the Urban League. He was determined and committed, a daring trailblazer. With his feet planted firmly on the ground, Barney understood the challenges of the everyday New Orleanian. He was at ease in every sector of our community. Whether conferring with the well-heeled uptown establishment or with the regular men and women whose culture, hard work and spirit are woven together to create the very fabric of the city, he was comfortable; he was unapologetic and authentic.

At this time— the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina and 10 years after Barney's death, I find myself asking over and again, "What would Clarence Barney think; what would he say about the state of our city now?" Interestingly enough, I need only to turn pages in *The New Orleans Tribune* to find the answers. You see, Barney had been a frequent *Tribune* contributor— writing one of his last commentaries in the August 2002 edition of the paper, an issue emblazoned with the headline "Yell Fire"—a headline that he had animatedly suggested for that issue.

Facing the daunting reality that there was an effort afoot to take New Orleans back, to wrestle influence and political muscle from the Black leadership that had steered its course during the previous 24 years, in that article he contemplated what he saw, an African American community in dire trouble.

And as usual, Barney was right. In fact, anxiety and angst envelope me as I reread his column. With uncanny prescience, he laid out the steps the establishment would employ to take New Orleans back.

He warned of the consequences Black New Orleans would face if it waited or did nothing or even worse—aided the establishment in their mission that he forewarned would:

"Proclaim that a certain group of citizens is morally, socially, culturally and intellectually superior and deserves to control New Orleans."

Is this not exactly what happened when the "shadow government" met in the days and weeks after Katrina with their plans for green space in New Orleans East and the Ninth Ward and their plans for redeveloping public housing into mixed income dwellings that provide fewer options for the city's poorest residents?

"Organize a network of private, quasi-public and volunteer institutions and supply them with a core ideology and message."

How long after Katrina were our public education system and neighborhood schools seized and subsequently turned over to outside management organizations? How long after Katrina before talk of privatizing our public recreation system began?

"Identify Blacks to carry that message and put them in positions of power."

To be sure, sadness washes over me when I consider the number of our leaders who have either co-signed these disastrous ideologies and messages or those who have sat silently saying and doing nothing as our communities, our schools, and our neighborhoods are placed on a modern-day auction block and sold to the highest bidders.

I know Clarence Barney would be troubled by this New Orleans. It may be new and different…revitalized. But it isn't right. With too many poor, mostly Black people still left out, left behind, locked out and stranded—just as they were in those haunting days after Katrina—it could never be right.

In the 30 years that *The New Orleans Tribune* has been in existence and particularly since Katrina, we at McKenna Publishing have taken seriously our mission to be an unfettered voice for the community. We remain undeterred in that mission. In so doing, we will strive to honor the legacy of our friend Clarence Barney. And personally, I, who served a term as vice chairman of the local Urban League board during his tenure, will challenge those who celebrate now to genuinely reimagine New Orleans as a city that refuses to leave anyone behind. Ours should be a richer city—not because we priced out and locked out the poor, but because we did everything in our power to eliminate the conditions that create poverty. Our city cannot be made stronger—truly stronger—by turning its back on the weak.

Yes, certain areas of the city have made progress since those precarious weeks and months immediately following the storm. And as we commemorate the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, those strides should be observed. But let's not confuse progress for certain areas with success.

As I look back to the 10 years since Katrina and then look to the future, I want a better New Orleans for all of our citizens—not just a different one.
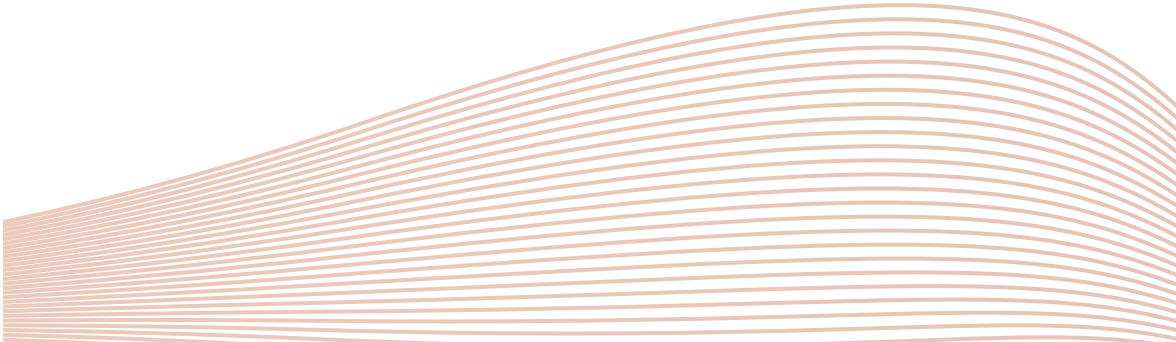
Beverly Stanton McKenna
Publisher, The New Orleans Tribune

STATE OF BLACK NEW ORLEANS

10 YEARS POST-KATRINA

Urban League of
Greater New Orleans

STATE OF BLACK NEW ORLEANS
10 YEARS POST-KATRINA

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THE FABRIC
OF NEW ORLEANS

Keith Weldon Medley

IT HAS BEEN **10 YEARS SINCE** HURRICANE **KATRINA** DEVASTATED NEW ORLEANS. SINCE THAT TIME, THERE HAVE BEEN UNPRECEDENTED CHANGES IN NEW ORLEANS AND ITS PEOPLE.

It has been 10 years since Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans. Since that time, there have been unprecedented changes in New Orleans and its people.

The events of August 29, 2005 proved horrific for the lives and neighborhoods of those unable to evacuate. At 4:30 a.m., leaks in the floodgates began flooding areas such as Pontchartrain Park. By 5:00 a.m., storm surges from the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet crumbled levee sections and the waters started seeping in toward St. Bernard Parish and the Lower Ninth Ward. At 6:30 a.m., storm surges pushed the water in the Industrial Canal over the levees and flooded all of New Orleans East, where large numbers of Black professionals and entrepreneurs resided. At 6:50 a.m., the same surge began flooding the Lower Ninth Ward once more, as well as the mixed race Gentilly area and Pontchartrain Park, which had already flooded. Then the levee walls on the west side of the Industrial Canal failed, sending water cascading into New Orleans neighborhoods miles away including Treme. By the end of the day, 80% of the city was underwater.

Those who study New Orleans without seeking its African and African-American influences invariably miss what it means to know New Orleans. People of African descent – enslaved and free – willingly or unwillingly have been here since its earliest days. Between the years 1718 and 1722, boatloads of Africans from the Senegambia region of Western Africa and outcasts from French

society arrived in New Orleans for forced toil in the Louisiana marshes. They hacked and drained swamps, constructed buildings and levees and dug canals. For the French indentures, the term was three years. For most of the African laborers, it was a life sentence.

Even with the backdrop of Katrina, 2007 marked a sense of resiliency and renewal and heightened civic involvement. In Pontchartrain Park and Gentilly Woods, residents signaled their return with bright yellow ribbons wrapped around trees and mailboxes even as Katrina dust still hung in the air. In the Lower Ninth ward, volunteers from around the country cleaned a flood-ravaged Martin Luther King School that the school system had virtually abandoned. Neighborhood groups and civic associations raised their voices and confronted the powers that be over the state and future of their beloved city. As an old Creole proverb stated, "Little by little, the bird built its nest."

There are always fears about the suppression of New Orleans Black street culture. These consist of the parading groups, jazz funerals, brass bands and offshoots that give New Orleans its cultural vibrancy and worldwide appeal. Those cultural groupings offer many young people the opportunity for structure and recognition. During the week, they may be dockworkers, bricklayers, or truck drivers. During the parades and Mardi Gras related events, they are Chiefs, Grand Marshalls, Kings, Bandleaders and Flag Boys. Similar to the sentiment expressed by the Houma Indians, a group of Native Americans

who settled in Dulac, Louisiana after their land was appropriated, "Salvation Culture" is the same concept in play in New Orleans. The expressions that appear to be being suppressed in the city are beautiful and revered around the world. Louis Armstrong and Mahalia Jackson came from those traditions.

The streets of New Orleans and its on-beat music, cultures, and traditions provide a cultural safety net. So, even though systems and social forces may line up against Black youth, the cultural expressions provide self-esteem and purpose beyond what could be found in mainstream society. In many ways, this psychological safety net existed in the olden days of Congo Square where Africans would gather on Sundays and play their drums and perform ancient rituals that, for a few hours, shrouded every Sunday from the reality of their weekdays. And it still exists today in the traditions of the brass bands, social and pleasure clubs, and Mardi Gras Indians.

These cultural expressions are transmitters of New Orleans cultural history. The practitioners are cultural preservationists that hold tightly to the tradition set forward by those who initiated them. And even though the meaning behind some of the expressions may get lost over the years, the current day practitioners can still commune in a poetic sort of way with those who went before them. They walk the same streets, chant the same chants, and wear the same type of garments of those who went before them.

There are well-founded fears that these expressions—coupled with the absence of many of the adherents—may fall victim to those who prefer a more vanilla New Orleans. At a seminar for the 164th Anniversary of St. Augustine Church in the Tremé neighborhood, cultural activists expressed alarm at efforts by the City to suppress the cultural life of Black New Orleans and to expel Father Ledoux from the St. Augustine Church. He was instrumental in erecting an evocative sculpture garden at the church that recalled the anonymous slaves who built the city's first levees and buildings in old New Orleans. This "Tomb of the Unknown Slave" sculpture garden, along a wall of St. Augustine Church in the Tremé neighborhood, features a 1,500 pound cross welded from a discarded marine chain that had been used to anchor a buoy in the Mississippi River. Although people of African descent have been in New Orleans for nearly 300 years, the "Tomb of the Unknown Slave" was the only public monument affirming their roots in New Orleans history.

African Americans histories were integral in the development of New Orleans. There were philanthropists such as Thomy Lafon who lived in Faubourg Treme his entire life and funneled money to the Anti-Slavery Society and the Underground Railroad. Dr. Louis Charles Roudanez published the New Orleans Tribune in the middle of the Civil War. His defiant newspaper

pushed for equality and the right to vote. And then, there was a free man of color named Arnold Bertonneau who organized a petition drive for voting rights for people of color that was delivered to Abraham Lincoln and the United States Congress. Despite the efforts and successes of African Americans during Reconstruction, White supremacy took hold but not without continued opposition.

Even in 1880, not even 20 years from emancipation – in the houses of the former slaves who had been barred from marriage or literacy, Black males were heads of household in eighty percent of those homes in New Orleans. Similarly, for the formerly, plantation-bound enslaved who were forbidden from reading, education became almost a lust. A Presbyterian minister who visited Louisiana following the Civil War observed that "in any direction, you meet Negroes on horses, Negroes with oxen, Negroes on foot…men, women, and children, Negroes in uniform, Negroes in rags; all hopeful… They are never out of our rooms, and their cry is for 'Books! Books! And 'when will school begin?'"

In 1890, African Americans comprised nearly 50% of Louisiana's voting population. There were 18 black members of the Louisiana legislature. By 1900 with the passage of White supremacist legislation – Blacks comprised only 4% of the voting population and there were

zero Black members of the legislature. This all happened in 10 years. The most egregious policy, however, was the quashing of hopes and dreams of New Orleans Black school children seeking education.

In 1900, the Orleans Parish School Board stopped public education for African American children after the fifth grade. Generations of Black public school students were banned from higher education. There would be no public high school for Blacks until 1917 when McDonogh #35 opened in New Orleans. The 1900s were largely crafted by White supremacy and it is still a large part of Louisiana as the city's monuments attest. It wasn't that long ago we lived in a state where 60% of white voters voted for Nazi and White Supremacist David Duke. Of course, there are plenty of things to be angry about when viewing New Orleans tortured but gloriously redeeming history. Still, anger, bitterness, and recrimination are unstable foundations from which to view the past or to build a future.

The city's African American character is not defined by slavery or Jim Crow or caste. Its character has been defined by their transcending the many attacks on their humanity, battling back against them and finding the strength to live another day, raise families, and shatter each tenet of White Supremacist thought by forming a sense of community, educating the next generation and possessing a hell of a lot of faith and grit.

There are many times in a peoples' history where leadership may be weak or absent and role models are few. But for New Orleanians and their allies, they can always look for inspiration in a remarkable and storied past. Their fore parents faced adversity with accomplishment. They stood up to segregation and fought Jim Crow with civil disobedience, newspapers and rallies, and rose to the hope of another day. New Orleans will RISE from Katrina, and its people will have an indelible footprint on our future. From the roots of our earliest ancestors to the trumpet blows of our youngest musicians, our culture will always be our strength and resilience.

INTRODUCTION

THE STATE OF BLACK NEW ORLEANS: 10 YEARS POST KATRINA

Erika McConduit-Diggs, Esq.

10 YEARS AFTER THE STORM OF THE CENTURY DECIMATED OUR BELOVED CITY, WE PAUSE TO REFLECT ON WHERE WE HAVE BEEN AND WHERE WE ARE GOING.

Devastation. Awe. Pure and utter raw emotion pulled on the heartstrings of native New Orleanians as we watched our city drown, forced to figure out next steps for stabilizing our lives and families. Amid government disruption, downed communication, mass citizen displacement, and crumbled infrastructure, New Orleans was a city in shambles with its future in question.

Ten years after the storm of the century devastated our beloved city, we pause to reflect on where we have been and where we are going. We must honor and recognize the lives that have been lost and those that have been changed forever, as well as the countless hours and the enormous energy expended by people near and far to "bring back New Orleans." This moment of reflection allows us to count the lessons learned and apply them to the next ten years of this recovery so that we can achieve the goal of a stronger, sustainable and more equitable New Orleans.

Over the past 10 years, tremendous progress has been made in New Orleans - homes, roads, schools, playgrounds, and hospitals have been rebuilt; streetcar lines expanded; airport remodeled; commercial development; and the people of this city have proven that we are resilient. More students are going to college from New Orleans public schools, our jail size has been reduced by more than half, and we are the first major city in America to eliminate veteran homelessness. But on our road to recovery, have we reproduced some of the same inequities that existed prior to the storm and impeded people's ability to quickly recover? The wealth gap continues to widen between African Americans and Whites, too many of us are paying unaffordable housing costs, Black men are still targeted and disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system, and health disparities continue to threaten the well-being of African Americans in the city. Are we seizing this

opportunity to transform the city into a better version of itself, one in which all its residents can prosper and thrive?

The *State of Black New Orleans: 10 Years Post-Katrina* hopes to answer these questions (and more) through its analysis of the impact of post-Katrina recovery on the African American community. The publication also offers recommendations to address noted disparities impacting the African American community and to transform the systems that allow these disparities to persist. After all, New Orleans cannot thrive if African Americans, who are the majority of the city's residents, are not thriving as well.

Using an equity framework, *the State of Black New Orleans: 10 Years Post-Katrina* focuses on civic engagement, criminal justice, economic and workforce development, education, the environment, health care and housing, in chapters authored by some of the city's finest scholars and practitioners. It is a comprehensive examination of the issues that impact the quality of life for African Americans, paying close attention to opportunities for improvement in order to chart a new course towards a more equitable New Orleans in 2025.

As you delve into these chapters, consider "What does a successful recovery in New Orleans look like by 2025?" I imagine a city where every family has the power to access real choice in a landscape of quality school options; where children are educated in classrooms where teachers spark and ignite learning and creativity. I imagine a

city where African Americans are the power base with a real seat at the proverbial table. I imagine a New Orleans where all residents can access work opportunities that pay a livable wage and where entrepreneurs are all able to take their big ideas and transform them into lucrative, sustainable businesses that create jobs and secure futures. I imagine a New Orleans where all residents can live in quality affordable homes, where life expectancy is not linked to zip codes, and where every neighborhood has access to the resources and experiences that promote their health and well-being. And, I imagine a city where better education and more jobs result in smaller jails and safer communities. How do we get to the New Orleans you envision in 2025? As the sun sets on the 10 year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, blueprints like the *State of Black New Orleans* provide strategies for continued recovery with refocused efforts toward equity.

HOUSING **CRIMINAL JUSTICE**
ENVIRONMENT HEALTH
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
WORKFORCE EDUCATION

ADVOCATE, AGITATE, ACTIVATE: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TRENDS IN POST-KATRINA NEW ORLEANS

BY WESTLEY BAYAS, III & VINCENT SYLVAIN

ON DECEMBER 10, 2005, THE STREETS OF NEW ORLEANS WERE FILLED WITH **5,000 ANGRY AND DETERMINED PROTESTERS.** BOTH SURVIVORS OF HURRICANE KATRINA AND THEIR SUPPORTERS CHANTED **"WE'RE BACK TO TAKE IT BACK"** AND **"NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE!"**

1

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic engagement is one pathway for communities of color to access much needed opportunities and resources to achieve equity with their White counterparts. This chapter discusses the civic engagement landscape in pre- and post-Katrina New Orleans and the ways in which it facilitates and/or hinders participation of communities of color in the areas of voter participation, volunteerism, youth community organizing and organization membership. It also provides a brief history of recent decades of civic engagement specifically within the African-American community in New Orleans, paying special attention to political organizing and African-American political organizing groups in the city and how they interfaced with a corporate structure dominated by the predominately White business sector.

The evacuation spread the residents of the city across the country months before the City was to hold its municipal elections. While local elected leadership worked to piece the city back together, community activists battled to ensure that all citizens of the city had an opportunity to cast a ballot. Large-scale voter rallies led to the establishment of satellite voting precincts in cities across Louisiana, with the NAACP providing shuttle buses for evacuees from major Southern cities. While the mass organizing efforts helped to keep then-incumbent Mayor Ray Nagin in office, the results of the election were a sign of the future struggles of African-American political power.

The Dallas Meeting and the "Shadow Government"

On September 8, 2005, 10 days after the storm, accompanied by Dan Packer, Entergy New Orleans' then-president & CEO, Nagin flew to Dallas, Texas to participate in a meeting arranged by Jimmy Reiss and other members of the Business Council (Rivlin, 2015). That Saturday, the mayor drove himself to the giant Loews Anatole Hotel just north of downtown Dallas for what he later described as "my meeting with the shadow government" of New Orleans (Rivlin, 2015, p. 73). In spite of political gains, "Uptown (Whites) still retained its economic clout despite the shifts in majority from White to African-American. Its people were still the city's CEOs, top lawyers, bankers, and real estate developers. Whites controlled the business community and dominated philanthropic circles" (Rivlin, 2015, p. 80). It was individuals from this sector who would largely serve as the make-up of those attending the 'Dallas Meeting.' "By Reiss's count, fifty-seven members had shown up. Almost everyone in the room was white" (Rivlin, 2015, p.86).

On December 10, 2005, the streets of New Orleans were filled with 5,000 angry and determined protesters, both survivors of Hurricane Katrina and their supporters, who chanted "We're back to take it back" and "No justice, no peace!" A crowd estimated at 5,000 marched from the historic Congo Square to City Hall for a rally, where they demanded "Justice after Katrina" (Dowell, 2005).

In 2002 New Orleans elected C. Ray Nagin to succeed Marc Morial as mayor. Black himself, Nagin would still take on the African-American political establishment,

promising to eliminate the City's living-wage ordinance and the City's set-aside program for minority- and women-owned businesses (Russell, 2002). Both the city's only daily newspaper at the time, The *Times-Picayune*, and the city's influential political weekly, *Gambit*, endorsed Nagin's candidacy (Russell, 2002). That helped solidify Nagin's standing in the White community, garnering him 86% of the White vote, enough to compensate for his 40% showing in the Black community. He was sold as a reform-minded, business candidate who would turn New Orleans around. Plus, it did not hurt that Nagin's run-off opponent, while having successfully served as the most recent Police Superintendent, was not from New Orleans.

Nagin would preside as mayor during Hurricane Katrina and would get re-elected in 2006; Reverend Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition along with the National Coalition for Black Civic Participation and others would play a prominent role in helping to ensure that Katrina survivors, who had been dispersed to over 44 states in the country, would have their voting rights protected and not face massive disenfranchisement in the upcoming New Orleans election on April 22, 2006.

In a moment captured from a page of the civil rights movement in the 1960s, thousands of disenchanted citizens marched across the Crescent City Connection Bridge on Saturday, April 8, 2006 in "The March for Our Right to Return, Vote and Rebuild," seeking the right of displaced New Orleans citizens to vote in the election. After fiery speeches delivered on the grounds of the Ernest M. Morial Convention Center by leaders of the civil rights movement, politicians and celebrities, such as Rev. Jesse Jackson, Rev. Al Sharpton, and celebrity Judge

Greg Mathis, the marchers crossed the Crescent City Connection Bridge, spanning the Mississippi River, where thousands of New Orleans citizens were stranded after Hurricane Katrina and the floodwaters of the Gulf of Mexico caused devastation in the city the summer before. Other speakers included former New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial, president of the National Urban League. They charged that to not meet their demands would result in a clear violation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Rainbow PUSH, 2006). Louisiana's Governor Blanco met their demands and issued an executive order to put in place satellite voting places in cities and states where Katrina survivors were now residing. Her orders also required the Secretary of State and Attorney General to make an updated voter roll. This work helped to spur Mayor Nagin's reelection in 2006.

As citizen groups began to mark their territorial battleground, advocacy organizations such as Common Ground Collective/Relief and ACORN would lay claim to protecting other neighborhoods, the Lower Ninth Ward and additional underserved minority neighborhoods, impacted by Katrina. In March 2006, Common Ground commandeered Martin Luther King Elementary School as an act of defiance and to stake claim on behalf of returning Katrina survivors (Flathery, 2010).

ACORN focused most of its efforts towards rallying against Mayor Nagin's threats to use his powers of eminent domain to seize vacant and damaged properties; particularly those located in the Lower Ninth Ward. ACORN also brought attention to the double standards that were taking place in regards to loan repayments of damaged homes. While the average Lower Ninth Ward resident only earned an average of $16,000 a year when Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005, homeownership in this part of the city was still higher than many other parts of New Orleans (Etheridge, 2005). And it would be the Lower Ninth Ward- a mixed-race community before school desegregation but 98% African-American at the time of Katrina- that stood as a synecdoche for anyone debating the rebuilding question starting to dominate the discussion a few weeks after the storm (Rivlin, 2015).

While still in the midst of evaluating and developing a recovery plan from the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans would experience a transformation of its political landscape; one in which it had become accustomed to for thirty years. Back in the 1970s as African-Americans began to gain a greater political foothold in New Orleans elective offices, an "unwritten rule" between African-American political leaders and the White corporate and political leaders decided that the City's interest was best served if it had a racial balance in the at-large seat, a similar courtesy that existed in regards to the many civil/criminal/municipal judicial seats. In honor of that commitment, there had not been any organized attempts by major African-American political organizations to win the second at-large council race even as demographics began to favor the African-American population.

An unforeseen resignation only two years after Katrina threatened to change that balance. Oliver Thomas, an African American who held one of New Orleans' two Councilman-at-Large seats, resigned his council seat after pleading guilty on August 13, 2007 to bribery charges for actions taken prior to Hurricane Katrina (Donze, 2007). Thomas' legal situation would test the will of Whites to honor the decades old "unwritten rule" which had been in place.

New Orleans had always maintained an African-American and a White individual in the two at-large positions since the Reverend A.L. Davis, who had been a Civil Rights

leader, became the first African American to serve on the City Council. Reverend Davis was appointed to the District "B" seat on the City Council in 1975 to fill the unexpired term of White Councilman Eddie Sapir, who had been elected judge of Municipal Court. Reverend Davis was eventually elected to the seat in 1976 along with Joseph DiRosa, a long-time political fixture in the White community. The pattern of racial balance in the at-large council seats continued up until the 2006 municipal elections when then newcomer Arnie Fielkow joined Councilmember At-Large Thomas.

The combination of the unexpected exit by Thomas from the council seat; a high number of African-American voters who had not been able to return to the city following Hurricane Katrina; and the challenge of raising necessary funds to launch a campaign created a new paradigm for New Orleans, a paradigm that would create new opportunities for Whites to gain a greater foothold in elective office. This would be the case especially during "special elections" where traditionally African-Americans had historically turned out in fewer numbers even under normal circumstances.

The October 2007 election to select a replacement for Councilman Thomas placed sitting District Councilwoman Jacquelyn Clarkson, a White Democrat from Algiers, a neighborhood which had largely escaped the flooding of Katrina, in a run-off, against Councilwoman Cynthia Willard-Lewis, an African American Democrat who represented the mostly devastated areas of New Orleans East and the Lower 9th Ward. Clarkson won the election, creating a 5-2 majority in favor of Whites and seemingly began a run of White/Asian elected officials on the City Council, Orleans Parish School Board, several judgeships, the District Attorney's office and ultimately former African American Congressman William

Jefferson's seat as well as that of the Mayor. Over the next few years, the African American political establishment would stew over the loss of those seats; particularly the inability to win at least one of the two Council-at-Large seats.

A level of blame for loss of voting strength was also attributed to the local city council members and Mayor Nagin who in 2007 made the decision to tear down the 'Big Four' existing public housing developments in New Orleans; St. Bernard, C.J. Peete (Magnolia Projects), Lafitte, and B.W. Cooper. Some former residents and advocates protested that the Housing Authority of New Orleans' (HANO) plan would not provide enough housing for the number of people who formerly lived in those units prior to the hurricane. Another level of blame could be assigned to the deterioration in strength of the Black-led political organizations that rallied political support in minority neighborhoods. Groups like the Black Organization for Leadership Development (BOLD), the Southern Organization for Urban Leadership (SOUL), the Community Organization for Urban Politics (COUP), the Louisiana Independent Federation of Electors (LIFE), and the Progressive Democrats were considered critical to the election of any candidate in New Orleans (Mock, 2010b). Many of these groups split up the city by neighborhood, focusing on the housing projects in their area as a concentration of votes (Mock, 2010a). With the destruction of the housing developments, along with federal public corruption efforts decimating many leaders of the groups, the Black-led political organizations have suffered from a severe loss of political power and patronage. Without these so-called "alphabet soup" (Moseley, 2012) groups to drive voter education and turnout efforts, many Black and Black-supported candidates would begin to struggle with maintaining their base.

Social activists charged that this was all part of a plan to create a "new New Orleans." They pointed to statements such as those reported by the Wall Street Journal that then Republican Congressman Richard Baker of Baton Rouge (1987 to 2008) was overheard telling lobbyists: "We finally cleaned up public housing in New Orleans. We couldn't do it, but God did" as evidence of such a plan (Babington, 2005, para. 2). Pre-Katrina, the combination of a large African-American middle-class and public housing residents had become an impenetrable political force for African-Americans seeking elective office.   In September 2005 that political advantage was gone.   A sense of abandonment and betrayal would become the topic of discussion among African-American politicians and political players in private gatherings.

While African-Americans were able to hold on to the mayor's seat by re-electing Mayor Nagin in 2006, they would lose the super-majority control of the council when Stacy Head was able to parley with BOLD to garner their support leading to a 54% – 46% victory over the Progressive Democrat-backed, and Congressman Jefferson-supported African American incumbent Councilwoman Renee Gill Pratt.   The predominately low-income neighborhoods of Central City were heavily impacted by the hurricane while large slivers of highly White-populated areas along the river were mostly untouched, thus providing White candidates a demographic advantage among "active voters" that did not exist prior to the hurricane. African-Americans found comfort in maintaining control of the dual Sheriff's Offices, with both Civil Sheriff Paul Valteau and Criminal Sheriff Marlin Gusman winning reelection during the 2006 municipal election.

Congressman   Jefferson's   defeat   to Vietnamese-American   Republican   Ahn "Joseph" Cao two years later was attributed

to a combination of his legal issues and the fact that Hurricane Gustav had pushed the election to one month after the 2008 presidential election in which African-Americans turned out in record numbers in New Orleans to cast their vote for Senator Barack Obama's run for the presidency. Subsequently during the *Jefferson verses Cao* run-off, African-American voter turnout was only 12%.

As the number of African-Americans retuning to New Orleans began to grow, the fall elections of 2008 would begin to show signs of African-Americans ability to regain political power in offices outside of City Hall.   This time period also coincided with HUD's ground breaking on a $138 million mixed-use community at the site of the old St. Bernard complex. Redevelopment plans were also announced for the replacement of the C.J. Peete and Lafitte housing developments (Krupa, 2008).

While 2008 elections for seats on the Orleans Parish School Board resulted with a 4-2-1 White majority school board with victories by African American candidates Ira Thomas and Cynthia Cade, and Hispanic candidate Lourdes Moran, the judicial elections produced much different results along racial terms. When Judge Nadine Ramsey stepped down to run for mayor in 2010, Paula Brown was able to chalk up another victory on the African American side of the ledger with her run for Civil District Court Judge in February 2009.   Even though Brown won against overwhelming odds, many in the political circle still saw Judge Brown's victory, which avoided a run-off against a White opponent and perennial candidate and former judge Morris Reed, merely as a political fluke and not a true signal that African-Americans were once again in a political advantageous position to win special elections or run-offs with limited issues on the ballot.   To become believers that African-American voting strength were

returning to pre-Katrina numbers, everyone would need to see more proof.

Additional evidence would soon follow. Monique Morial, the daughter of New Orleans' first African American mayor and sister of former Mayor Marc Morial was elected to the First City Court in July 2010 with no opposition. Earlier that August, the Louisiana Supreme Court appointed Judge Morial to serve Pro Tempore in the First City Court for retired Judge Sonja Spears until December. In January 2011, Judge Morial began her term as judge of First City Court, Section "A", actually succeeding retiring Judge Charles Imbornone.

While Mitch Landrieu won his third attempt at the Mayor's Office in 2010, additional signs that Black political strength continued to grow began to arise. In the first election where Orleans Parish would have a unified sheriff to handle civil and criminal matters, Criminal Sheriff Marlin Gusman successfully won reelection and established himself as the foundation of Black political support in New Orleans. While the election of African American Congressman Cedric Richmond in 2010 would provide additional redemption and a feeling of optimism in the African-American community, still the lack of racial balance on the City Council would continue to burn. In April 2012 voters would get another chance to restore racial balance to the New Orleans City Council and the White political and corporate establishments would be provided another opportunity to help "do the right thing."

However once again, the outcome produced results outside the boundaries of the old "unwritten rule" agreement. This time it would be Councilmember Stacy Head defeating Councilmember Willard-Lewis for the Council-at-large seat by a total of 281 votes, unofficial returns showed Head receiving 27,787 votes to Willard-Lewis' 27,506 (WWL-TV, 2012).   Head was able to garner the endorsement of State Representative Austin Badon, an African American who had finished a strong third in the primary, while another handful of prominent African American leaders remained silent on the race. This allowed Head to build momentum in pockets of the African-American community. It appeared that a new formula for victory for White officials was emerging, one that could last decades if African-Americans did not grow their ranks among the population base.

The fall 2012 elections saw several new trends develop with two new African-Americans, Nolan Marshall, Jr. and Leslie Ellison, winning seats on the Orleans Parish School Board, returning the racial majority to 4-3. African American Councilwoman LaToya Cantrell's victory over Dana Kaplan restored the District B Council seat to the hands of an African-American elected official for the first time since 2006. In fact, prior to 2006, the Central City seat had been held by an African American elected official for 31 years. An even more stunning development took place on the West Bank of Orleans Parish with unexpected victories by four African American candidates in Algiers. For the first time since pre-Katrina a newer pattern emerged; White elected officials were no longer able to count on the voter differential being in their favor. Rather, if that is the case permanently, then White candidates would have to do as Mayor Mitch Landrieu did in the 2010 elections; show that one had a demonstrated record of being sensitive to the causes of the African American community in order to earn their vote.

In the 2014 elections, for the first time in the city's history, the two seats were separated and council-at-large candidates now would have to declare in advance which of the two seats they are seeking. Under the old rule all candidates ran under one race and the top

two vote gatherers receiving more than 25% of the votes were determined the winners. If the second place finisher failed to receive 25% of the vote, then a runoff was held between the second and third place finisher.

Under the new rule, each candidate would have to receive 50% plus one of the total number of votes cast in order to be declared the winner during the primary in each individual race. If no one received the required 50% plus one then a runoff would be held. This provided for some interesting dynamics and created speculation that perhaps African-Americans would now be able to win both at-large seats.

The 2014 elections would result in victories maintaining the old racial balance, African American lawyer Jason Williams would win one seat while Councilmember Head carried the other at-large race. Victories in five of the seven council seats by African American candidates, was evidence that the African-American voting population was returning to pre-Katrina levels, thus restoring a super-majority in favor of the African American community.

How the Recovery Planning Process Spurred Community Civic Engagement

After Hurricane Katrina passed over New Orleans and the rainwaters subsided, hundreds of thousands of residents began the process of rebuilding their homes and lives. With almost all forms of communication paused due to lack of infrastructure, New Orleanians were at a loss about how they would be able to get critical information about the recovery. Residents were also in the dark about how the city would be rebuilt, and which neighborhoods would be considered for rehabilitation. These conditions served as a catalyst to a civic engagement movement that has transformed how neighborhoods, NGOs,

and government agencies interact and execute their missions.

The impetus for change started in the immediate days following Katrina. While residents were still reeling from the effects of the storm surge that overtook homes, local business leaders began to plan the city's future. Initial private planning meetings held out of state led to then-Mayor Ray Nagin's September 2005 creation of the Bring Back New Orleans Commission, a 17-member mayoral appointee committee designated to build a master plan for the rebuilding of the city (CNN Wire Staff, 2005). The Commission's work culminated in early 2006 with the unveiling of a plan that shrunk the footprint of the city, placing many low-lying neighborhoods under a ubiquitous "green dot" that represented residential areas that would be converted to park space (The Times-Picayune Staff, 2005). Community uproar over the next few months lead to the shelving of the Commission's plan, but it planted the seed for future community endeavors into urban planning and the rebuilding of New Orleans.

Shortly after the Bring Back New Orleans Commission unveiled their plan, a group of residents came together to create an organization that could leverage community power to influence the rebuilding process. Known as the Neighborhood Partnership Network (NPN), this organization focused on neighborhood organizing and information outreach to bring groups together to collaborate and advocate for community needs. NPN also played a role in connecting residents to the numerous rebuilding master planning processes that followed.

In the wake of the plan, the New Orleans City Council launched a second attempt at creating a rebuilding master plan. Called the Lambert Plan, the final product had additional community input, but still lacked much of the needed credibility from

the entire city. The Louisiana Recovery Authority, with support from the Rockefeller Foundation & the Greater New Orleans Foundation, launched a third process. Known as the United New Orleans Plan (UNOP). This effort (which also had support from the Mayor's Office & the City Council) led to the first community-accepted master plan (Williamson, 2007). While the ideas from UNOP were later expanded upon in the official City-accepted Master Plan, a need for expanded community voice in civic engagement efforts was identified.

The Committee for a Better New Orleans (CBNO) picked up efforts that started with a 1992 City Master Plan to develop a formalized citizen participation process (CPP) that would ensure residents would have voice in planning and zoning developments in their neighborhoods. CBNO launched a CPP campaign to inform and unite neighborhood leaders around a governance structure that would create a resident-led entity to facilitate conversations between government agencies and neighborhood leaders (Committee for a Better New Orleans, n.d.). Concurrently, NPN began advocating for City Government to create an Office of Neighborhoods that would formalize the relationship between the executive branch & neighborhood associations, while creating a conduit for dialogue between residents of New Orleans and city officials. These ideas, among others from a variety of neighborhood groups, became the foundation for recommendations delivered to then Mayor-elect Mitch Landrieu from the Neighborhood Development Task Force that was commissioned by his transition team (Transition New Orleans, 2010).

Thanks to the efforts of NPN & neighborhood organizations, the City of New Orleans created the Office of Neighborhood Engagement in response to the task force recommendations within the first year of

the Landrieu administration (Krupa, 2011). By the end of 2012, the City had adopted a formalized CPP process that ensured residents received notification of planning and zoning changes in their area and required developers to hold meetings with residents to get approval for their projects (City Planning Commission, 2012). Community groups such as Ride New Orleans, the Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance, and the New Orleans Kids Partnership have also taken on critical advocacy roles in the areas of transportation, affordable housing, and youth and family engagement.

Other post-Katrina organizations that spurred activism and action for representative causes included Women of the Storm, Beacon of Hope, Citizens for 1 New Orleans, African American Women of Purpose and Power, Jutice and Beyond, and Puentes NOLA. While issue constituency and community groups helped to lead the planning process, youth organizations were beginning to create opportunities for young people to be engaged in civic endeavors.

Youth community organizing in New Orleans found root in the Hurricane Katrina recovery as residents emphasized that all voices needed to be heard. Prior to the storm, the idea of youth community organizing was nascent with few established outlets that promoted or created space for youth voice. In the aftermath of the storm, numerous organizations were established to began organizing various constituencies within the New Orleans youth community. Using the rapidly changing Orleans Parish education system as additional leverage, youth-led organizing in the city has not only grown exponentially but has continued to stay nimble to meet the needs of young people while achieving crucial policy victories.

VAYLA, formerly known as the Vietnamese American Young Leaders Association, is one such example. Started in 2006 to mobilize

Vietnamese residents around environmental concerns in New Orleans East, VAYLA has grown into a multi-racial, multi-issue, youth-led organization with significant influence in the New Orleans community. Best known for the "Raise Your Hand" campaign that used youth action participatory research on the conditions of local public schools, VAYLA has garnered national acclaim for its ability to organize youth around critical issues such as school closures, education equity, and language access.

Kids Rethink New Orleans Schools is another example of nimble youth organizing to address critical needs. Started in 2006 to assist middle school students in having a meaningful voice in the city's school reform, Kids Rethink has taken on issues such as food justice & restorative justice. The work of the Rethinkers has lead local school leaders to consider restorative justice practices in their disciplinary procedures, and their food justice program was the focus of a HBO documentary on school nutrition. Kids Rethink also used interactive projects such as school gardens and community theater to further their organizing goals and expand their reach.

BreakOUT! is among the newer youth constituency organizing groups in the city, focused on ending the criminalization of LGBTQ youth aged 13-25 in New Orleans. Founded in 2011, BreakOUT! launched their "We Deserve Better" campaign to end discriminatory policing practices in New Orleans. BreakOUT! also co-developed a "Get Yr Rights" toolkit designed to equip LGBTQ youth with legal knowledge to protect themselves during police interactions. Their work in a short amount of time has increased awareness of LGBTQ youth issues, and has influenced policy.

While Hurricane Katrina forced residents to start over, it also allowed communities to dictate how development would proceed in their neighborhoods. Neighborhood associations began to demand ownership of their fate, issue groups ensured that critical policies were implemented to create equitable growth, and youth organizations have created a pathway for future leadership. Civic engagement has improved in the city, but without the continued efforts and support of the myriad of organizations that have been involved, the gains made will be lost.

New Orleans Voting Engagement by the Numbers

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans was considered a bastion of Democratic and African-American votes. The vaunted voting machine of New Orleans helped Senator Mary Landrieu win her first term in office, and ensured that African-American residents of New Orleans played an integral role in citywide and statewide elections (Rothenberg, 1997), Louisiana Secretary Of State files show that African-Americans made up almost two-thirds of the registered voters in the city in the months preceding Katrina, and the elected political leadership of Orleans Parish was overwhelmingly African-American. After August 2005, African-American political and civic leadership in the city was in a state of flux for almost 10 years.

Voter registration trends have revealed the large drop of registered voters post-Katrina, with African-Americans suffering an almost 25% drop in total registered voters between August 2005 and December 2014. In comparison, the drop in voter registration for White voters has stayed under 10% and there has been very little drop among registered voters of other races (See Figure 1).

VOTER REGISTRATION & PARTICIPATION IN NEW ORLEANS MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS					
	Registered Voters by Race				
	Black	White	Other	Total	Black % of Vote
2014 Total Registered Voters	142,835	82,178	18,396	243,409	58.68%
2014 Total Voted	49,028	32,303	4,289	85,620	
2014 Turnout % By Race	34.32%	39.31%	23.31%	35.18%	57.26%
2010 Total Registered Voters	168,851	84,626	19,762	273,239	61.80%
2010 Total Voted	47,549	37,184	4,622	89,355	
2010 Turnout % By Race	28.16%	43.94%	23.39%	32.70%	53.21%
2006 Total Registered Voters	188,316	90,909	19,287	298,512	63.08%
2006 Total Voted	58,474	46,061	5,444	109,979	
2006 Turnout % By Race	31.05%	50.67%	28.23%	36.84%	53.17%
2002 Total Registered Voters	184,798	94,087	16,165	295,050	62.63%
2002 Total Voted	83,164	47,246	4,553	134,973	
2002 Turnout % By Race	45.00%	50.22%	28.17%	45.75%	61.62%

Figure 1

Voter registration by itself does not tell the entire story of how African-Americans temporarily lost political power. Participation played a key role, especially between 2006-2011 as African-American New Orleanians focused on the Katrina recovery. For example, in the 2006 municipal election, African-American voters dropped in turnout by 30% from the 2002 election, while turnout in White and other communities stayed flat. The 2007 gubernatorial election furthered the erosion, when African-American voter turnout in Orleans Parish dropped 48% from the previous gubernatorial election in 2003, while White turnout dropped only by 21% (See Figure 2). The 2008 presidential election saw turnout down across the board, despite the election setting national turnout records. (See Figure 3) Participation continued to lag throughout the beginning of the decade, and it was not until the 2012 presidential election when African-American turnout percentages began to near pre-Katrina numbers. The improvement was aided by the voter purge conducted by the Louisiana Secretary of State's office in early 2011, which rid the rolls of voters who had not voted since 2005.

VOTER REGISTRATION & PARTICIPATION IN ORLEANS PARISH DURING GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS				
	Registered Voters by Race			
	Black	White	Other	Total	BLK % OF VOTE
2011 Total Registered Voters	**137,393**	76,799	17,124	231,316	59.40%
2011 Total Voted	**30,844**	22,272	2,462	55,578	
2011 Turnout % By Race	**22.45%**	29.00%	14.38%	24.03%	55.50%
2007 Total Registered Voters	**176,277**	83,962	18,539	278,778	63.23%
2007 Total Voted	**38,738**	33,937	3,879	76,554	
2007 Turnout % By Race	**21.98%**	40.42%	20.92%	27.46%	50.60%
2003 Total Registered Voters	**184,578**	91,452	17,020	293,050	62.99%
2003 Total Voted	**74,204**	43,071	4,566	121,841	
2003 Turnout % By Race	**40.20%**	47.10%	26.83%	41.58%	60.90%
1999 Total Registered Voters	**182,807**	94,846	13,802	291,455	62.72%
1999 Total Voted	**76,196**	39,374	3,135	118,705	
1999 Turnout % By Race	**41.68%**	41.51%	22.71%	40.73%	64.19%

Figure 2

While the voter purge may have condensed the number of voters, there is still a clear trend line of African-American political voting power improving. By comparing the percentage of African-American voters registered among total registered voters to the percentage of African-American voters among total voters in an election, it can be determined if African-Americans are fully represented in a particular election (represented as Black or BLK % of Vote in Figures 1-3). An equal number represents equal representation in an election, with higher numbers meaning overrepresentation and lower numbers meaning underrepresentation. In the last major election prior to Hurricane Katrina, the 2004 Presidential election, African-American voter share almost equaled African-American voter registration share. In comparison, the 2006 mayoral election saw a 16-percentage point difference in African-American voter share, and the 2007 gubernatorial election showed a 20-percentage point difference. This trend continued through the 2010 mayoral election, which saw an African-American voter share difference of 14 percentage points.

Starting in 2012, the previous trend lines in voter participation and African-American voter share began to shift back in favor of

VOTER REGISTRATION & PARTICIPATION IN ORLEANS PARISH DURING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS					
	Registered Voters by Race				
	Black	White	Other	Total	BLK % OF VOTE
2012 Total Registered Voters	148,096	83,213	18,945	250,254	59.18%
2012 Total Voted	96,077	52,995	9,701	158,773	
2012 Turnout % By Race	64.87%	63.69%	51.21%	63.44%	60.51%
2008 Total Registered Voters	177,282	86,240	20,200	283,722	62.48%
2008 Total Voted	90,380	50,082	8,986	149,448	
2008 Turnout % By Race	50.98%	58.07%	44.49%	52.67%	60.48%
2004 Total Registered Voters	201,052	98,523	20,678	320,253	62.78%
2004 Total Voted	122,082	64,462	10,569	197,113	
2004 Turnout % By Race	60.72%	65.43%	51.11%	61.55%	61.94%
2000 Total Registered Voters	187,691	97,713	15,998	301,402	62.27%
2000 Total Voted	112,586	61,927	7,581	182,094	
2000 Turnout % By Race	59.98%	63.38%	47.39%	60.42%	61.83%

Figure 3

African-American residents. The 2012 Presidential election saw African-Americans set local turnout percentage records, and the African-American voter share reached 60%. Due to the increased voter participation numbers from African-Americans, the Orleans Parish School Board returned to a 4-3 African-American/White majority & African-American candidates in Algiers were able to upset a slate of White incumbent candidates in local judicial races. The expansion of African-American elected political power has continued, with the New Orleans City Council currently holding a 5-2 African-American/White majority & African-American candidates winning judicial races over more established White candidates. While Katrina has certainly affected the makeup of the New Orleans voting population, we are starting to see a return to normalcy when it comes to the city's elections.

The last 10 years of voter registration and voter participation in New Orleans represented an era of flux for African-American political power in New Orleans, but there are three takeaways from the data and observations of that time.

1. Lower voter registration numbers have affected our statewide influence.

New Orleans lost 53,000+ registered voters because of Hurricane Katrina, 86% of which were African-American. This loss has affected the city's ability to swing statewide elections, and a net loss of five seats in the legislative delegation. While Democratic statewide campaigns were built on turning out large numbers of African-Americans in New Orleans, the sheer number loss has turned many potential candidates off from taking a chance.

2. Voter participation dropped significantly, but has recovered to almost pre-Katrina levels.

Immediately following Katrina, African-American voter participation rates tumbled. Reductions between 20% to 50% were observed in elections during 2006 to 2011. Starting with the 2012 presidential election, African-American participation rates have started to rise to levels that match pre-Katrina numbers.

3. African-American elected political power in New Orleans is reestablishing itself.

While the downturn in registration & participation contributed to a rapid shift in political power from African-American officials to White, the last three years have seen a renaissance of leadership. With local boards returning under control of African-American majorities, there seem to be opportunities in the future for the African-American community to advance their political presence and influence.

With the 2015 Gubernatorial Election on the horizon, we will soon see if African-American voters in New Orleans have finally reestablished themselves as a potent voting block and if New Orleans as a whole can swing elections again. What role will African American-led and focused organizations do to encourage continued civic participation within the African American community? These organizations will need to make African American civic engagement a priority in their work in order to strengthen African American voting power and advocacy efforts to bring about equity in the "new New Orleans."

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HOUSING EDUCATION HEALTH
ENVIRONMENT
CRIMINAL JUSTICE
WORKFORCE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

OVER-REPRESENTATION IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM: #BLACKLIVESMATTER

BY D. MAJEEDA SNEAD, ESQ AND RASHIDA GOVAN, PH.D.

ALTHOUGH **AFRICAN AMERICANS** ARE ONLY 32% OF LOUISIANA'S POPULATION, THEY **MAKE UP MORE THAN 67% OF THE STATE'S PRISON POPULATION.** NEW ORLEANS HAS THE HIGHEST INCARCERATION RATE PER CAPITA THAN ANY OTHER JURISDICTION AND ALMOST **90% OF ITS PRISON POPULATION IS AFRICAN AMERICAN.**

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Hurricane Katrina unleashed its wrath on the city of New Orleans in 2005. The rising waters caused massive destruction and revealed systemic failures throughout the city. One of the many inequities exposed by Hurricane Katrina was the economic and social disadvantages suffered by many New Orleans residents. Most notably, the storm and flood exposed the long-existing failures of the city's criminal justice system. Once the waters receded and the lights were restored, the city began the daunting task of rebuilding. Ten years later, these inequities in the criminal justice system still exist and continue to impact the African American community most significantly. This chapter examines the disparities that exist in the city and the effects those disparities have had on African American communities in the criminal justice system.

There are more than 2.2 million people incarcerated in the United States, a rate higher than that of any other industrialized nation (The Sentencing Project, 2015). That is a 500% increase in the number of people in prisons and jails in this country over the past thirty years (The Sentencing Project, 2015). Of the 50 states, Louisiana is number one in incarceration rates. Regrettably, in 2005, the city had the highest number of incarcerated citizens in the State of Louisiana (See Figure 1) (Gray, 2015). This is not a statistic that should illicit pride.

The high incarceration rate in this state clearly has a disparate impact on the African American community.

Figure 1: Ten most incarrerated US Jurisdictions, 2005 Jail Incarceration Rate Per 1,000 Residents

Orleans Parish, LA
Baltimore City, MD
District of Columbia
Shelby County, TN
Polk County, FL
Philadelphia City, PA
Davidson County, TN
Jacksonville City, FL
Hillsborough County, FL
Denver County, CO
National Average

0   5   10   15

Source: BJS, Jail Inmates at Midyear 2007, U.S. Census Bureau

The disparity existing between the numbers of young African American males incarcerated in the city and their White counterparts is consistent with the national trend of high arrest and incarceration rates of African American males. The implementation of the "War on Drugs" in this country offers a clear example of this trend. African Americans are arrested three times more than Whites on drug possession charges and convicted 10 times more than Whites although they are no more likely to use illicit drugs than Whites (Fellner, 2013). These disparities in arrests and convictions are due in large part to drug policies influenced by racially biased perspectives on the "drug problem" in America and on law enforcement decisions to concentrate their efforts in low-income, communities of color (Fellner, 2013). This disparity is even more disturbing considering African Americans are only 13.2% of the national population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).

Although African Americans are only 32% of Louisiana's population, they make up more than 67% of the state's prison population (Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013a). New Orleans has the highest incarceration rate per capita in the world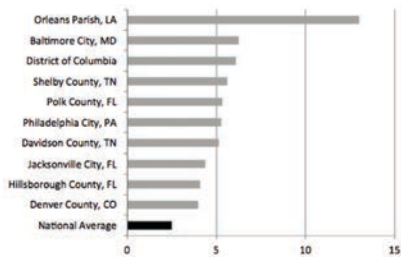 and almost 90% of its prison population is African American (Rainey, 2015). In New Orleans, one out of seven African American males in the city has either been in prison, on parole or on probation (See Figure 2) (Chang, 2012).

Percentage of African Americans in Louisiana

32%

State

Percentage of African Americans in Louisiana prison population

67%

Prison

Percentage of African Americans in New Orleans

59%

City

Percentage of African Americans in New Orleans prisons
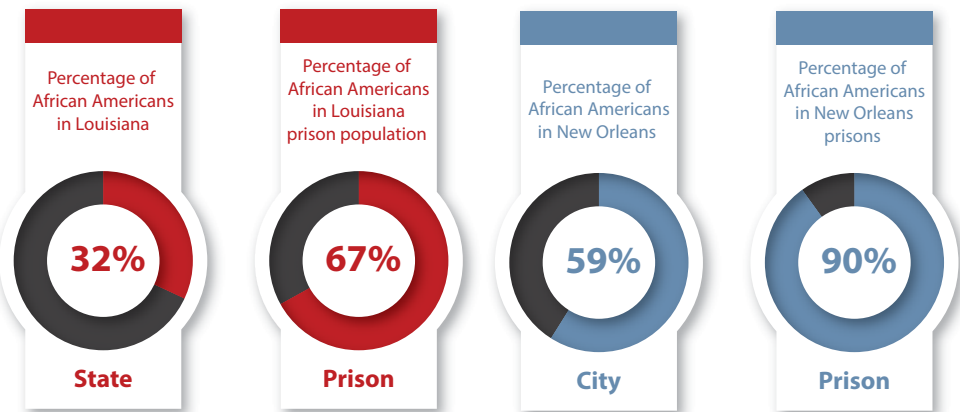
90%

Prison

Figure 2: Percentage of African Americans in Louisiana, Louisiana Prisons, New Orleans and New Orleans Prisons

Drug offenses are not the only type of crime where these disparities exist. While the media reports of crime in the city suggest that crime is primarily violent and victim-oriented, pre- Katrina reports of crime data reveal 86% of all arrests in the city were for nonviolent offenses during the period between 2003 and 2004 (Johnson, Laisne & Wool, 2015). African Americans comprised 67% of the city's population pre-Katrina (Shrinath, Mack & Plyer, 2014). However, of the 140,000 arrests that occurred in 2004, African Americans made up an overwhelming majority of those arrests (Austin, Ware, & Rocker, 2011).

Based on the statistical data documenting the disproportionate number of African Americans arrested and incarcerated in this country, anyone could infer that African Americans are more likely than any other race to commit crimes.   Of course that would be an inaccurate inference. Statistics alone do not tell the entire story. In order to explain the disparities in the number of African Americans arrested and imprisoned one must probe further to learn the root causes which account for their presence in the criminal justice system.

Poverty

Poverty is one of the many predictors that may determine if someone will end up in the criminal justice system (Poverties.org, 2013). A child's future success or failure can be directly tied to what resources are available to them. If resources are limited the likelihood of success is much more challenging. For many African Americans in the city, resources have been extremely limited.   Many in this group lack basic services such as quality education, health care, community services, playgrounds, social experiences and employment opportunities.   Currently, 59% of the population in New Orleans is African American and 35% of them live in poverty (Shrinath, Mack & Plyer, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013b). The New Orleans-Metarie area ranked 14th in the nation for its share of the poor population living in concentrated poverty at 62.1% (Kneebone, 2014).

While economic growth has occurred in the city post Katrina, economic advantage for African Americans has lagged behind. In 2011, 52% of African American men in the city were not in the labor force or employed (Sams-Abidoun & Rattler, Jr., 2013). The number of African American children living below the poverty level in the city grew by seven percentage points from 2007 to 2013 to 50.5% (Mack, 2015). More broadly, across all racial demographics, those living below the poverty level in New Orleans – unable to provide food, shelter and transportation for themselves – are 27% of the population (Shrinath, Mack & Plyer, 2014). These statistics are not encouraging for creating solutions that address disparities that exist for African Americans in all aspects of life in the city. Isolated by race and economic status, most African American residents are deprived of basic quality of life opportunities, which serve to limit their life chances.

Historically, African Americans have had to survive in the face of the most daunting challenges. And, even though most survive in these depressed communities without succumbing to a life of crime – with many overcoming insurmountable obstacles – some who live in conditions of poverty do engage in and become victims of crime. The multigenerational existence of families in poverty-ridden neighborhoods has deleterious consequences on the physical and emotional health of their residents.

The effects of poverty, as exemplified by blighted and substandard housing, lack of quality schools and recreational outlets and access to social services can lead to the disillusionment of residents.   Oftentimes

driven by the desire to obtain material possessions, which many are taught to believe is the ultimate symbol of success and measure of their worth as human beings, young men in these impoverished neighborhoods suggest they see few paths to achieving the American Dream other than becoming involved in the drug trade and the violence that accompanies it.

As noted by then-U.S. Attorney Jim Letten in 2006, the city's crime rate was the fault of poor public schools and neighborhoods where poverty is rampant and the disenfranchised are highly concentrated together, creating an economy where drug dealing is considered a step up (Filosa, 2006). Consequently, many poverty-stricken neighborhoods are plagued with drug abuse and violence. Community violence is especially harmful to children who are exposed to pervasive and very public gunfire, murders, and other acts of violence that they all too often witness first-hand (Child Trends, 2013). This cycle of violence is perpetuated when children growing up in poverty-ridden neighborhoods live in fear, despair and grief due to their own conditions and turn to delinquent and criminal behavior as a means of survival (Child Trends, 2013).

In 1979, U. S. Surgeon General Julius B. Richmond declared violence to be a public health crisis (Listenbee et al., 2012). Despite the Surgeon General calling attention to the dangers of violence and its deleterious effect on public health, New Orleans – one of the most violent cities in America – failed to invest in these economically and socially depressed communities to address and alleviate the conditions of poverty that would have reduced crime. The very systems that should have received resources to address this public health crisis – education, employment, medical and social services – continued to suffer defunding and decline.

Schools

At the time of the storm and the flood, the education system in the city was one of the lowest functioning systems in the United States (IRP, 2010). Prior to Hurricane Katrina, 46% of the schools in the city were deemed "academically unacceptable" (Cowan & Parker, 2008). Although there were a few public schools that provided excellent education, the majority of the African American population attended public schools in the city that were woefully inadequate (Sims & Rossmeier, 2015). Consistent with the segregated poverty-stricken neighborhoods, the public education system was also segregated (IRP, 2010). Those who lived in depressed communities attended schools that were underfunded and lacked basic resources. A lack of quality education is a strong predictor of socioeconomic and criminal justice outcomes. It is clear that poverty has a direct correlation to academic performance: High school students living in poverty perform 25% lower than those who do not (BMBI, 2011).

A comparison of the standardized testing scores by ethnicity of New Orleans Public School students in 2014 reveals that 95% of White students scored at or above basic on state standardized tests as compared to 59% of African American students, a 36-percentage point difference (LDOE, 2015b). Nearly 90% of New Orleans Public school students are African American, yet there is an alarming disparity between those schools attended by White students and those attended by African American students (Sims & Rossmeier, 2015). Because many of the schools failed to provide adequate education and services to students who had learning disabilities and other challenges, many African American males drop out of school by the 10th grade. Consequently, most African Americans

who are arrested do not have a high school diploma and almost a third test below a fifth-grade level (Chang, 2012).

Interactions with New Orleans Police

In 2010, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) began investigating the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) due to continued complaints of a pattern and practice of unlawful police misconduct and constitutional violations by its members (DOJ, 2011). The investigation involved extensive community engagement and an in-depth review of NOPD practices. On March 16, 2011, the DOJ issued a written report of its findings, which were startling. The DOJ found there were unconstitutional practices and violations of federal law in the use of excessive force against its citizens, unconstitutional stops, searches and arrest as well as biased police practices such as racial and ethnic profiling (DOJ, 2011). On July 24, 2012, the City of New Orleans entered into a consent decree to reform and implement existing police policies and procedures in the hope of preventing these unconstitutional practices (City of New Orleans, 2015).

Historically, the African American community in the city has suffered from discriminatory and abusive practices by members of the NOPD. NOPD's reputation for violence long ago approached legendary status on a national stage (Keegan, 1996). New Orleans ranked near the top of American cities for police brutality for decades. Within an 18-month period in the 1990s, four NOPD officers were charged with murder, and dozens of officers were arrested on felony charges (Herbert, 1995, 4). As noted in the New York Times article, "For most of the past 20 years New Orleans has been the national champion in complaints of police

brutality" (Herbert, 1995, para. 4). One of the most infamous cases involved NOPD Officer Len Davis, who ordered a hit on African American New Orleans resident Kim Groves, a mother of three (Mustian, 2014). Ms. Groves had filed a complaint against Officer Davis after she witnessed him pistol-whip a 17-year-old African American male. Ms. Groves believed she had filed her complaint anonymously, but Davis found out about the complaint less than 24 hours later. At the time the hit was successfully executed, Officer Davis, along with a confederacy of nearly a dozen corrupt police officers, was the subject of a drug investigation by the FBI. Davis was ultimately convicted of Ms. Groves' murder and sentenced to death (Mustian, 2014).

Less than a week after Hurricane Katrina hit, two unarmed African American men were shot and killed on the Danziger Bridge by New Orleans Police Officers (Times- Picayune Staff, 2011). Five officers were tried and convicted of civil rights violations but their convictions were overturned in 2013 and a new trial ordered due to prosecutorial misconduct (Thompson, 2013).

Unconstitutional police practices do not always take the form of brutality that results in death. Pervasive discriminatory practices have also had an adverse effect on the African American community. While police claim that they concentrate their crime prevention efforts in what are typically referred to as "high crime areas" the results are that police stop and frisk African American males in their segregated communities at a higher rate than they stop and frisk White males in their segregated communities. As the DOJ found in its own investigation, NOPD effected unconstitutional stops as well as racial and ethnic profiling of African Americans in the city (DOJ, 2011).

The 2011 DOJ investigation found that almost 99% of all children arrested in the city were African American (LCCR, 2015). The report concluded that "[t]he level of disparity for youth in New Orleans is so severe and so divergent from nationally reported data that it cannot plausibly be attributed entirely to underlying rates at which youth commit crimes, and unquestionably warrants a searching review and a meaningful response from the Department" (LCCR, 2015, para. 2). Not much has changed since 2011: in 2015, 99% of the children arrested in New Orleans are still African American (See Figure 3) (LCCR, 2015).

As a result of young African American males being stopped more frequently, young African American men are arrested at an alarming rate for minor violations, while similarly situated White males are less likely to be stopped and frisked (LCCR, 2015). And even when young White men are stopped, they are less likely to be arrested for the same minor violations as their African American peers (LCCR, 2015).

In 2002, a Police Civilian Review Task Force recommended the formation of a civilian police oversight agency (New Orleans Independent Police Monitor, 2015). Again, in 2006, a coalition of community groups went before the city Council to express their concerns about NOPD. Finally, in 2008 the City Council passed a resolution supporting the formation of an independent police monitor. The Office of the Independent Police Monitor (OIPM), along with the Office of Inspector General, were voted into the city charter in 2008 (New Orleans Independent Police Monitor, 2015). OIPM was created in August of 2009 and in June of 2010 Police Monitor Susan Hutson took office (Hutson, 2015).

99%
of All Juveniles Arrested in New Orleans
are African American

Figure 3

The first official recommendation of OIPM was to establish a new "critical incidents" investigation team that would be under the leadership of the Deputy Superintendent of the Public Integrity Bureau (PIB) (Hutson, 2015). PIB is the city agency that investigates citizen as well as police initiated allegations of police misconduct. The 2014 Annual Report of OIPM noted that in 2014 there were 17 critical incidents, the same number of critical incidents as in 2013 (Hutson, 2015). OIPM found that 28 of the officers involved in Officer Involved Shooting (OIS) incidents had a significant complaint and use of force history over the last five years (Hutson, 2015). OIPM continues to focus its outreach not only on local reforms but also on national and international discussions about the future of policing and police reform (Hutson, 2015).

Another major policy change that is focused on improving policing in New Orleans, is NOPD policy 402, a policy measure that informs officers on how to interact with LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) members of the community (Fernandez & Williams, 2014). The policy focuses on eliminating bias-based profiling and outlines expectations for filing reports, for interactions between NOPD officers and LGBT community members, arrest protocols and protocols for acquiring medical treatment for LGBT community

members should it be needed (New Orleans Police Department, 2013). This measure is a direct response to findings from the U.S. Department of Justice (2011) investigation of the NOPD, in which it notes that NOPD officers engaged in biased policing including LGBT discrimination, as well as a response to advocacy work from organizations like BreakOut!, a youth organization that works to end criminalization of LGBTQ youth of color and other organizations (Fernandez & Williams, 2014).

In 2014, BreakOut! published the "We Deserve Better" report that presented findings highlighting the extent of discrimination queer youth in New Orleans experience at the hands of the police. Findings from their study indicated that queer youth of color, especially transgender youth, are subjected to a range of abusive behavior by police including being called homosexual expletives, unconstitutional stops, assumptions that they are in the sex trade, and harassment as compared to their White and Cisgender counterparts (Fernandez & Williams, 2014). Through their "We Deserve Better" campaign (launched in 2011) to end discriminatory policing, and their "Get YR Rights Toolkit," a guide to challenging discriminatory policing against LGBTQTS youth, they have helped to educate LGBTQS youth of their rights and improved training of NOPD officers to improve their interactions with LGBTQ youth of color in the city (Fernandez & Williams, 2014; Oaks, 2015).

While policing remains a critical piece of the disparate effects of the criminal justice system on African American communities, there are indications that some within New Orleans' power structure have begun to see the value of minimizing the risk of arrest. Over the past several years, the City Council enacted several ordinances in an attempt to reduce pretrial detention (Johnson, Laisne & Wool, 2015). NOPD officers

were encouraged to issue summonses as opposed to arresting persons charged with nonviolent municipal offenses such as disturbing the peace and possession of marijuana. Pre-Katrina municipal arrests for non-violent offenses were approximately 70% of all those arrested. Subsequent to the new ordinances, the trend has completely reversed itself and now 70% of those municipal charges are initiated by the issuance of a summons (Johnson, Laisne & Wool, 2015).

Courts

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, almost 85% of those criminally prosecuted in the city were indigent and therefore represented by the Orleans Parish Indigent Defender Program (OIDP) (Orleans Public Defenders, 2011). Prior to Hurricane Katrina, OIDP was staffed by approximately 40 part-time attorneys who represented adults in Criminal District Court, six part-time attorneys assigned to Traffic and Municipal Court and six part-time Juvenile Court attorneys. All of the attorneys had extremely high caseloads and lacked resources to handle the volume and types of cases that were assigned to them. OIDP's annual budget was approximately $2 million, with most funds primarily derived from local fines and fees from Traffic Court (Orleans Public Defenders, 2011). The aftermath of the storm and flood left the city without a functioning court system for months. There were no revenues to pay the part-time lawyers employed by OIDP and consequently most of those attorneys were left without a job and their clients without lawyers.

One of the many things Hurricane Katrina revealed was that the criminal justice system was broken. It was necessary to reorganize the way legal services were provided to the city's indigent population who needed representation

in Criminal, Traffic, Municipal and Juvenile Courts.   In 2006, the office of the Orleans Public Defenders (OPD) was created. (Lewis & Goyette, 2012).   The office hired full-time attorneys to represent its clientele. Previously, attorneys were assigned to courtrooms rather than to clients.   The attorneys did not meet their clients until charges were accepted and the clients' case was allotted to the courtroom in which that attorney was assigned. It was not uncommon for an adult charged with a felony punishable by death or life imprisonment to remain in jail and not meet his public defender for 60 to 120 days, which is the maximum amount of time an arrestee can be held in custody without the institution of prosecution (Louisiana Code of Criminal Procedure, Article 701). Now, with the restructuring of OPD, attorneys are assigned to represent their clients at the initial appearance, which occurs within 24 to 48 hours of arrest, and continue to represent that client notwithstanding the courtroom to which the case is ultimately allotted.

The result has been that cases are being investigated more promptly by their lawyers. Currently, the vision for services provided by OPD has broadened to include a more holistic approach to clients. There are over 51 full-time attorneys, as well as court support personnel, client services specialists, social workers and investigators to represent 80% of the individuals with a legal case in Orleans Parish. (Orleans Public Defenders, 2014).

The city's criminal court system has implemented pretrial services, electronic monitoring and other alternatives to detention to reduce pretrial incarceration. In spite of the improvements in pretrial detentions that focus on a risk analysis as well as early appointment of counsel, unfortunately, 85% of those detained while awaiting trial in 2010 were African

Americans even though African Americans made up only 59% of the city's population at that time due to the inability of many arrestees to post bond (Johnson, Laisne & Wool, 2015). (See Figure 2)

Juveniles arrested in New Orleans were previously represented by OIDP. However, in 2006, Juvenile Regional Services (JRS) was created to fight for the rights of children in juvenile court (JRS, n.d.). That office merged with Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana in 2014 and the Louisiana Center for Children's Rights was created (LCCR, n.d.). The office uses an innovative model of holistic, team-based, cross-disciplinary advocacy to win both legal and life successes for its vulnerable youth clientele. Its goal is to ensure each child receives fairness, dignity and an opportunity to become a productive member of society.

Orleans Parish Prison

Another feeder of dismal outcomes for African Americans was the Orleans Parish Prison (OPP). Here also, there have been reforms post Katrina. In 2005, the Parish Prison population was approximately 6,300

(Johnson, Laisne & Wool, 2015). In 2015, the average daily population is approximately 1,900 (See Figure 4) (Johnson, Laisne & Wool, 2015).
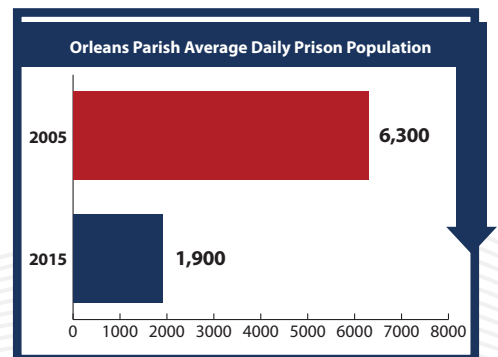

Figure 4

The Orleans Parish Sheriff proposed in 2010 to rebuild certain facilities of the jail that would increase the number of available beds to 5,832 (Johnson, Laisne, & Wool, 2015). Opposition from the community was fierce, voicing the sentiment of many that the city could ill-afford to build and sustain such a large jail complex. The idea that the city could incarcerate its way out of its crime problem was not sound. Many believed that such a large jail complex would in fact continue to drive up the over-incarceration rate of local African Americans, which was already five times the national average (Johnson, Laisne & Wool, 2015). What the city needed was not an oversized jail complex but a more focused approach to addressing the core issues of crime. On February 3, 2011, the City Council enacted an ordinance, which allowed for only a 1,438 bed facility (Eggler, 2011). The fight to keep the jail size small is still being waged.

In addition to challenging the size of the jail, there were also challenges addressing the unconstitutional and inhumane treatment of inmates in OPP. A class action lawsuit was filed on April 2, 2012 by the Southern Poverty Law Center on behalf of current and future inmates housed in OPP (SPLC, n.d.). The jail had been the subject of a comprehensive investigation by the Civil Rights Division of DOJ that began in 2008, pursuant to the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act (U.S. Department of Justice, 2012). Following its investigation, DOJ informed Sheriff Gusman of its findings in a letter dated September 11, 2009, stating,

> *"We find that OPP fails to adequately protect inmates from harm and serious risk of harm from staff and other inmates; fails to provide inmates with adequate mental health care; fails to provide adequate suicide prevention; fails to provide adequate medication*

> *management; fails to provide safe and sanitary environmental conditions; and fails to provide adequate fire safety precautions" (WWL Staff, 2009, para. 4).*

In September, 2012, DOJ intervened in the *Jones v. Gusman case, after conditions at the jail had not improved (U.S. Department of Justice, 2013).* An agreement was reached in December 2012, and approved by a federal judge in June 2013. The federal consent decree outlined steps that Orleans Parish Sheriff Marlin Gusman must take to ensure prisoner safety and adequate staffing of the facility. The agreement required that an independent monitor be appointed to oversee the agreement and ensure compliance. Any new facilities built to replace the jail shall also be covered by the consent agreement (U.S. Department of Justice, 2013).

Juvenile Transfer

Juveniles are transferred to adult court at alarming rates in New Orleans (Reckdahl, 2015). In Louisiana, children as young as 14-years-old can be tried as adults, transferring their cases to adult court. While this does not require youth charged as adults to be confined in adult facilities, juveniles transferred to adult courts in New Orleans have been held in the notoriously, dangerous Orleans Parish Prison (until recently). Since District Attorney Leon Cannizzaro took office in 2009, this once rarely used policy has now become the standard for 15 and 16 year olds charged in the city (Reckdahl, 2015). Cannizzaro has transferred 75% of all eligible juvenile cases to adult court and 90% of all juveniles ages 15 and 16 charged with armed robbery (See Figure 5). On average, the DA's office transfers 32 juvenile cases to adult court each year. Compare that to Jefferson Parish that transfers an average of eight juveniles per year and East Baton Rouge, a larger parish

3 out of 4
Eligible Juvenile Cases Are
Transfered to Adult Court

Figure 5

This ordinance only applies to youth not charged with murder, aggravated rape or kidnapping. The Youth Study Center now has 12 beds set aside for these pretrial juveniles charged as adults. Criminal Court judges have the discretion to determine where pre-trial juveniles in their court will be housed. While this measure is helpful, it does not address the DA's ill-advised practice of transferring youth to adult court. There is no evidence that transferring youth to the adult system reduces violent crime. In fact, transferred youth are more likely to commit criminal acts than those that remain in the juvenile justice system (Mulvey & Schubert, 2012).

The practice of transferring youth to adult facilities subjects adolescents to disruptions to their development through increased exposure to antisocial behaviors in adult facilities, and denies them access to appropriate, youth development practices implemented in juvenile facilities (Mulvey & Schubert, 2012). This is yet another practice that almost exclusively impacts African American youth in New Orleans. In essence, the underlying belief that is expressed through this problematic practice is that these youth are not worth a continued investment in their development and rehabilitation. This point was confirmed by the DA's statement, "As the district attorney for the Parish of Orleans I am not going to risk the safety of the law-abiding citizens of this community on a hope" (Reckdahl, 2015, para. 69). This perspective ignores the enormous barriers of poverty, low quality education and mental health issues faced by many youth in the juvenile justice system and denies both the youth and the community the benefit of their unlocked potential to contribute positively to the community.

with more armed robberies, transfers an average of seven juveniles per year (Reckdahl, 2015).

Juvenile transfer to adult court is a serious issue given the risks associated with youth transfer to adult facilities. Juveniles in adult facilities are more likely to be sexually and physically assaulted, are at greater risk for suicide, and are often deprived of education (Louisiana Center for Children's Rights, 2014). Juveniles in Orleans Parish Prison are also often held in isolation, sometimes in lockdown for 23-24 hours per day with no meaningful human interaction. This can lead to paranoia, depression and anxiety. What's worse, 38% of youth transferred are found not guilty, have their charges dismissed or get probation (Louisiana Center for Children's Rights).

In June of 2015, an ordinance sponsored by City Councilwoman Susan Guidry to set aside beds at the Youth Study Center, the city's juvenile detention facility, for some pretrial juveniles charged as adults was unanimously passed (White, 2015).

Recommendations

Despite all of the reforms implemented post Hurricane Katrina, African Americans are still the vast number of those arrested and prosecuted in Orleans Parish.   Sixty-four percent of those prosecutions are for nonviolent offenses.   As discussed earlier, the causes of crime are primarily poverty and all its subset issues, including quality of life.   Unfortunately, those factors are still prevalent in African American communities.

What Now?

- *Access to quality educational opportunities for all public students should be required by law.*

- *Vocational job training programs should be made available to all students who are not college-bound.*

- *Invest in the lives of youth through active mentoring programs, recreational centers and other intervention services.*

- *Ensure access to quality medical care, including expanding drug rehabilitation and mental health services.*

- *Incentivize economic investment in poverty-stricken neighborhoods to increase the presence of private-sector businesses that would encourage employment of those residents.*

- *Develop job training programs for the unskilled labor force.*

- *Rebuild a police department that will ensure integrity in police practices, using best practice models such as mandatory body cameras, community policing, trainings focused on police – community engagement and race and gender equity.*

- *Work with communities to develop community policing programs with a focus on crime prevention and intervention.*

- *Expand the use of diversionary programs and specialty courts – such as mental health and drug courts.*

- *Fully fund implementation of the NOPD and OPP consent decrees and insist on constitutional practices outlined therein.*

- *Dedicate funding to support pre-trial services, the OIPM and OIG offices, providing the autonomy required for the maximum productivity of each entity.*

- *End the practice of charging juveniles as adults as standard practice rather than a practice for extreme cases for juveniles 14-16 years of age.*

Although this chapter focused on the disparities that exist for African Americans that contribute to their experience with the criminal justice system, what must not be overlooked, even though not stated, are the many successes of African Americans and their contributions to the city of New Orleans.   This chapter focused on the marginalized African American citizens who continue to suffer from socioeconomic and racial disparities. These disparities manifest in continued poverty, inadequate schools, lack of employment opportunities and over incarceration. Clearly, a significant portion of the African American population in the city is still stifled.   Addressing these inhumane disparities is essential to the future success of this city.

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HOUSING
CRIMINAL JUSTICE
ENVIRONMENT
HEALTH
ECONOMIC AND
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
EDUCATION
CIVIC
ENGAGEMENT

EQUITY IN THE ECONOMY: THE GROWING WEALTH AND ECONOMIC DIVIDE

RICHARD C. PETERS, PH.D., SILAS H. LEE, PH.D.
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THERE MUST BE CLARITY AND CHOREOGRAPHY BETWEEN OUR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS. WHERE THERE HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN A TENDENCY TO OVERLOOK OR MARGINALIZE MANY OF OUR ECONOMIC ASSETS, WE CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO HAVE THE LONG SHADOW OF EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY REMAIN THE LEGACY OF THIS COMMUNITY.

ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

In its immediate aftermath, Hurricane Katrina could count as one of its many victims, the economy of New Orleans. The social and infrastructural devastation following the catastrophe literally stopped New Orleans in its tracks. Businesses were buried, schools were suspended and livelihoods were lost as individuals and families were forced to ignore long-term economic success in favor of short-term survival.

As with many other pillars of society, the city's economy slowly and resiliently rebuilt. While some jobs and sectors have never recovered (Plyer, Ortiz, Horwitz & Hobor, 2013), they are being, to some degree, replaced by newer and more sustainable career and business opportunities. New Orleans' recent drive to diversify its revenue streams and reduce its reliance on traditional hospitality and production sectors has led to investment and involvement in technological and medical innovation for the promise of new opportunities for recent and future graduates (Plyer, Ortiz, Horwitz & Hobor, 2013).

The hope for a progressive financial future is justifiable considering some of New Orleans' recent economic performance. In fact, in 2013, New Orleans' annual unemployment rate of 5.1% was below the national rate of 6.7% as of December that year (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015a; U.S. Department of Labor, 2015b). However, the most recent statistics are less cheerful and distinctly more worrisome. An economic summary published by the U.S. Bureau of

Labor for the period May 2014-May 2015 indicates that the city's economic vibrancy is at a state of susceptibility. While U.S. unemployment decreased from 6.1% to 5.3%, for the corresponding period unemployment in the New Orleans-Metarie area increased from 5.9% to 6.3% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015c).

Despite the concerns of recent years, many view New Orleans as a city primed for economic opportunity and prosperity. But the question remains: "Who will be the winners as the city transitions to a knowledge-based economy?" Have the economic inequalities and disparities, particularly those based on ethnicity, dissipated or do they continue to make life difficult for those already economically disadvantaged?

The crux of this chapter will be to uncover the present state of affairs for African Americans in New Orleans with respect to aspects of economic and workforce development, and will illustrate what the future may hold for African Americans in this 'new' economy of information and innovation. Our numbers and analysis suggest that the future isn't bright for all in the "Big Easy" and much work is necessary to allow equitable access to the city's entire populous, especially those that have been economically marginalized.

We focus on three broad aspects that all correlate with economic and workforce development for African Americans in New Orleans. The first, *employment*, discusses the rate of employment and unemployment in the city, considers job growth rate as well as occupations by categories. The second section, *education*, identifies the trends related to educational attainment, job training and career qualification and further illustrates the linkages between these, earnings and poverty levels. And finally, the third section, *entrepreneurship and enterprise*, looks at the involvement, or lack thereof, of African Americans in this new wave of innovation and small business development in New Orleans. Issues regarding opportunities and access are uncovered to highlight the possible future for African Americans in the city's new economy.

Employment

"You take my life when you take the means whereby I live." (William Shakespeare)

The rate of unemployment in New Orleans has, throughout much of the recession, stayed relatively comparable with the national figures, at times demonstrating better performances than the national average (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015a). But dissecting the overall data reveal that job growth and consequential unemployment reduction has not been uniformly or equitably manifested across the races.

For example, in 2013, the unemployment rate for African Americans in New Orleans was 13%, more than twice that of the 6% unemployment rate for Whites (See Figure 1) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013b). For African American males, aged 16-64, this number was even higher at 14%, substantially higher than the corresponding unemployment rate for White males in the city (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013b). Not only was this unemployment rate higher than the national unemployment rate of 6.7% in December 2013, but it was significantly higher than the 5% unemployment rate for Caucasian males in New Orleans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013b). Further, in New Orleans in 2013,

**2013 Unemployment Rate for African Americans
in New Orleans as compared to Whites and the National Average**
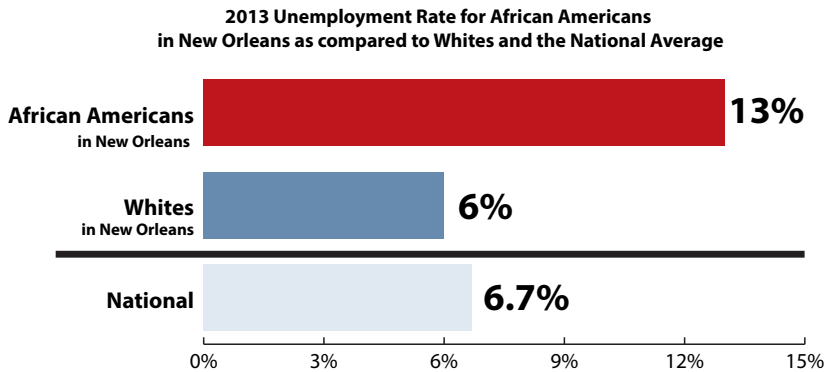

Figure 1

only 54% of African American males in this age group were employed, compared to 78% for Caucasians, a 24-percentage point difference (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013b).

These inequities are by no means idiosyncratic to New Orleans. At the national level, African Americans continue to face more challenging employment prospects compared to other racial and ethnic groups. While the national unemployment percentage has recently dipped to below 6%, unemployment rates for African Americans in the United States are approximately 10%, a discouraging statistic for those either unemployed or underemployed (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015).

While the unemployment rate for African Americans in New Orleans is alarming, the percentage of African American males not in the labor force is of significant concern. According to a report published by the Lindy Boggs Center for Community Literacy, 52% of African American males in New Orleans were nonemployed (Sams-Abidoun & Rattler, 2011). This statistic represents the percentage of African American males who are both unemployed and those who are not in the labor force. In 2011, 40% of African

American males were not in the labor force as compared to 21% of White males (Sams-Abidoun & Rattler, 2011).

The "not in labor force" category includes the incarcerated population, which might explain the 19-percentage point difference between African American males and White males. In New Orleans, one in 14 African American males is incarcerated, leaving a major gap in the workforce in New Orleans (Chang, 2012). According to Chang (2012), one in seven African American males in New Orleans are under the supervision of the criminal justice system. Could the common practice of requiring individuals to disclose felony convictions on employment applications hinder African American males in New Orleans from pursuing formal employment? "Ban the box" policy measures that restrict the use of such practices may help to open the door for the formerly incarcerated to access more employment opportunities in New Orleans. Other factors associated with a departure from the labor force include discouragement over job prospects, ill health or disability, family responsibilities, and other issues such as transportation and childcare problems (Desilver, 2014). All of these issues are

2005 and 2013 Median Income Disparities Between African Americans and Whites in New Orleans

Figure 2

exacerbated for African Americans and the poor who face greater challenges in each of these areas than their White and more affluent counterparts.

Income disparities between African American and White households are pronounced. In 2013, African American households had a median income of $25,102 a whopping $35, 451 difference in the median household income for Whites of $60,553 (See Figure 2) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013c; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013d). The income disparity has grown significantly since 2005, when African Americans had a median income of $23,394 and Whites hadan income of $49,262 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2005b). A major contributor to this inequity is the type of occupations African Americans typically have access to in the city's industrial sectors.

As of 2013, only 27% of African Americans held management and professional related occupations, which include jobs in the scientific, leal, financial, and business fields (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013e). Comparatively, 60% of Whites,

held managment positions in these sectors, which reflects their access to higher wages. (See Figure 3) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013f).

New, high paying jobs are expected to come from areas such as health care, insurance services, legal sectors and the burgeoning film industry, a prediction corroborated by recent job growth reports (Plyer, Ortiz, & Hobor, 2013; U.S. Department of Labor,

2013 Percentage of Management and Professional Related Occupations by Race

Figure 3

2015c). And while New Orleans' average wages continue to lag behind U.S. national averages in almost every occupation type category, the gap in wages between high paying professional and managerial jobs and those in the hospitality, retail and construction is substantial (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015c). What can be easily surmised by the figures and reports is that African Americans are currently underrepresented in professional and managerial categories and are thus excluded from the significantly higher wages that accompany this type of employment.

One of the factors that is preventing African Americans from middle and high-skilled jobs in New Orleans is a skills gap (Sellers, Ortiz, & Plyer, 2013). In the region, 27% of the labor force are low-skilled. Accord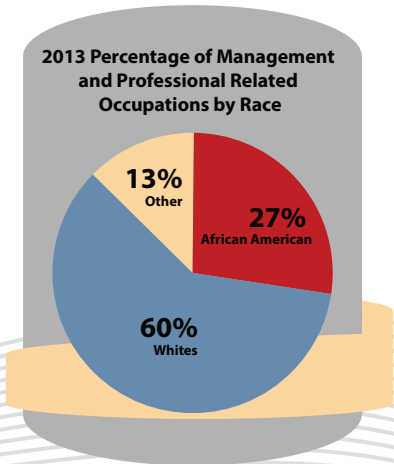ing to a report published by the Data Center, 51% of the labor force is African American and 83% of high school dropouts are also African American (Sellers, Ortiz, Plyer, 2013). Thus, low educational attainment is a barrier preventing African Americans from gaining access to higher wage employment. Educational pathways for adults in the labor force to gain additional skills and training may help to improve access for African Americans relegated to low-skilled, low-wage employment opportunities. One policy measure that may help to position African Americans and low-income individuals for greater economic prosperity is an increase in the minimum wage to a living wage. Low educational attainment, lack of work experience, minimal employment opportunities, and experience with the criminal justice system have disadvantaged African Americans competing in the local labor force (City of New Orleans, 2014a).

In response to some of the inequities that permeate the city's economic and workforce landscape, Mayor Mitch Landrieu announced the City's Economic Opportunity Strategy, an comprehensive initiative to expand opportunities for the city's disadvantaged job seekers and business (City of New Orleans, 2014b).   The Strategy includes efforts to build partnerships with some of the region's largest employers and anchor institutions including those in industries like healthcare, education, government, engineering and aviation. The strategy also introduces initiatives to connect New Orleanians to the city's economic growth opportunities   through   value-driven relationships with training providers, social service agencies, and community advocates. Furthermore, this strategy is also geared towards expanding outreach towards growth and expansion of strong small businesses with incentives for relocation, and to create collaborative projects with larger corporations. This effort will start building the bridge to create employment opportunities for local communities. Finally, the plan also invests in the creation of more contractual opportunities with the City for qualified small businesses (City of New Orleans, 2014b).

A significant part of the Mayor's economic opportunity framework is an investment in foundational skills and job training for disadvantaged job seekers, a sensible response to the skills gap within the local workforce. Educational attainment remains a consistent factor impacting African American's economic outcomes. The next section will examine this issue more closely.

Education

"The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches, but reveal to them their own."- (Benjamin Disraeli)

In 2004, a report titled *A Haunted City, the Social and Economic Status of African Americans and Whites in New Orleans*, readers were reminded that "the dominant theme from the 2000 census data is, New Orleans remains a city divided – divided by economics, education and opportunity. For a disproportionate share of this city's

population, particularly African Americans, the hammer of inequality continues to pound them deeper into the grave of economic inequality.

The educational chasm between the "haves" and "have-nots" and its related impact on income is especially visible when one considers the significant wage disparities between high school and college graduates. A 2014 report by the Pew Research Center reports that for millennials ages 25-32, employees with four-year college degrees earned almost $20,000 more than those with high school diplomas (Pew Research Center, 2014). This data is particularly troublesome for African Americans in New Orleans who continue to lag behind Whites in this critical aspect. For example, in 2013, only 14% of African American males and 21% African American females in New Orleans had a bachelors degree or higher as compared to 60% of White males and 65% of White females (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013g; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013h).

As one of the primary agents of socialization, education is a complex system that intersects and impacts the socioeconomic destinations of a person's life. In today's knowledge-based economy, which emphasizes analytical and communication skills, education and occupation are still considered the two pathways to the middle class. And, every succeeding generation should attain a better quality of life than the previous one. However, for many African Americans in this city, that pathway is often congested with obstacles. This data reflects more than just the disparities in education attainment by race in New Orleans, but the multiple intersecting factors contributing to the inertia in social mobility among African Americans and the long-term consequences.

Non-involvement and non-attainment of tertiary education and college degrees can therefore help explain some of the worrying economic trends and inequalities facing African Americans in New Orleans. Along with the gaps in median income and unemployment already mentioned, indicators such as poverty rates and even housing ownership are impacted by disparities in education. These disparities also exist in homeownership, where 42% of African Americans in New Orleans owned their homes as compared to 53% of whites (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013i; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013j). Poverty levels confirm these disparities since 35% for African Americans in New Orleans live below the poverty line as compared to 12% of Whites (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013m; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013n).

The collateral damage and intergenerational impact from the gap in education attainment fuels inequality and contributes to a decline in social and economic capital for African American families. Unfortunately, this leads to a cycle of entrenched poverty and social disinvestment that negatively impacts perceptions of residents and the outlook on living in New Orleans for future generations. This reality was reinforced in a study by Chetty and Hendren (2015). In this study, New Orleans ranked 99th out of 100 metro areas with respect to income mobility. Chetty and Hendren (2015) noted that children from low-income households in metro New Orleans can expect their household income to decline by nearly 15% when they reach 26 years of age. This decline can be attributed to low-income families being excluded from social and economic opportunities because of education and social isolation (Chetty and Hendren, 2015). Thus, inequality and poverty (rather than financial assets) are transferred from one generation to the next.

Entrepreneurship

"The worst form of inequality is to try to make unequal things equal." (Aristotle)

As our nation recovers from a recession, the gap in both entrepreneurship and workforce development between African-American entrepreneurs and their White counterparts, as well as other minorities, is still far and wide. Particularly in the city of New Orleans, where the population is majority African-American, yet the presence of African American businesses is low with even fewer of these businesses being sustained for at least three years (Yang, 2015). As of 2014, the average income of African American-owned businesses in the New Orleans metropolitan area was $56,647. This is consistent with data that indicates that minority-owned businesses represent 27% of businesses in New Orleans, yet only account for 2% of gross receipts (Plyer, Ortiz, & Hobor, 2013). Only 16.7% of the New Orleans area businesses are African American-owned with 4.1% of those businesses having paid employees. Per 100,000 residences, there were 8.7% African American-owned businesses in the area (Yang, 2015). Yang notes that there is realistic optimism regarding the growth of African American-owned businesses in the city, but this growth is gradual compared to all of the other racial groups.

Disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) programs help minority and women-owned businesses access economic opportunities. In New Orleans, a major DBE opportunity that promotes inclusion of minority-owned businesses in economic opportunities related to the New Orleans recovery is Orleans Parish schools rebuilding projects. Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) and the Recovery School District (RSD) set a goal of 35% and 25% respectively for DBE contract participation, yet in 2012 only had 2% combined DBE participation (Recovery School District, 2014). As of May 2015, OPSB had 32% DBE participation and RSD had 26% (School Construction Industry Connection, 2015).

Some of the slow growth of African American enterprises can be attributed to the lack of involvement of African Americans in funding opportunities and business incubators. The Idea Village, one of New Orleans' entrepreneur incubators, reported a minority participation rate of 16% in the organization's entrepreneurship startup program since 2009 (A.L. Johnson, personal communication, June 3, 2015). The local business community is working to address entrepreneurial inclusion by leveraging the achievements of existing African American entrepreneurs to spur future engagement of this demographic in entrepreneurship.

PowerMoves.NOLA, is a national initiative based in New Orleans that uses innovative approaches to remove barriers to minority entrepreneurship. The mission of the initiative is to increase the number of "venture-backed, minority-founded companies." The initiative is currently serving five fellows, three of whom are based in New Orleans, and 57 small businesses.

PowerMoves.NOLA and Idea Village are among a small cadre of providers of small business assistance programs in New Orleans that can support African American enterprises. Organizations such as the Urban League's Women's Business Resource Center, Southern University at New Orleans Small Business Development and Management Institute, Goodwork Network and the Louisiana Small Business Development Center offer a broad spectrum of services that are critical to create the eco-system necessary for minority businesses to not only survive, but thrive.

Recommendations

First and foremost, to reverse the entrenched effects of these disparities, the community must invest in the potential of its greatest

resource --- its people. Full civic, social and economic participation of its citizens is the key to any competitive and socially stable community. Schools must become more than just places to transmit knowledge, but facilitators to cultivate the personal and professional network. As such, schools can become one of the social escalators lifting many out of poverty. Educated citizens are innovative and more adaptable to withstand economic disruptions.

In a hyper-competitive national and global economy, the ability of a community to nurture its human capital ensures its long-term sustainability and the resiliency of its citizens.   The protracted and entrenched disparities expose socially and economically fragile residents to recurring survival stress and anxiety.   The psychological effects of trying to survive and navigate an environment with diminished resources produces a plethora of social maladies.
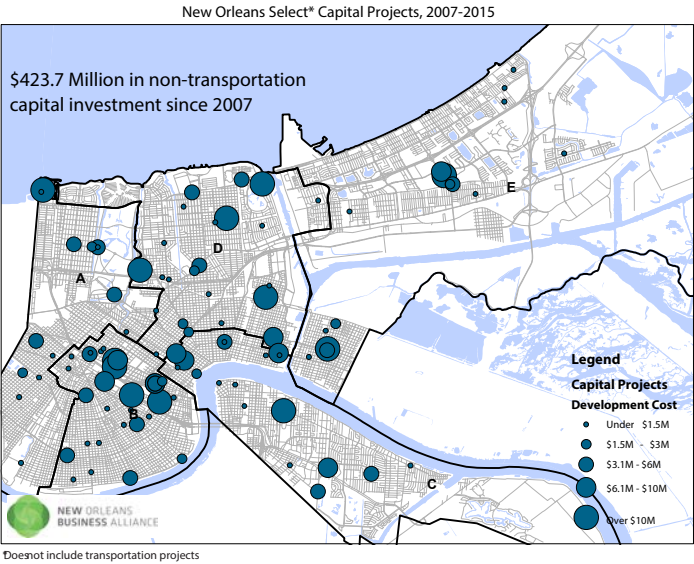
Finally, there must be clarity and choreography between our political, economic and social institutions.   Where there has previously been a tendency to overlook or marginalize many of our economic assets, we can no longer afford to have the long shadow of educational and economic inequality remain the legacy of this community.

Ultimately, we must unlock access to opportunity. Policies such as tax incentives should be established with direct returns that spur economic development in marginalized communities. Public projects should mandate equitable participation, with the establishment of Community Benefits Agreements attached.   Private companies must reform recruitment and hiring practices to not just increase access to jobs, but diversify at all levels throughout the enterprise, particularly manager and executive levels. One way to stem the tide is to more aggressively connect incentives to diversity outcomes.

Workforce development programs must be comprehensive in providing case management, workforce fundamentals and technical skills, and produce an actual pipeline to employment. Small business programs must be better resourced and coordinated via data systems to provide a continuum of services and access to capital and investment at the various stages of business growth. Accountability for inclusive outcomes on development projects should also be strengthened via increased monitoring and enforcement.

A practical/tactical solution is to engage these issues aggressively by establishing a strong program that is laden with activities promoting a concept of "the better opportunity". This would involve promoting college education with practical (or real world) experience to prepare African Americans with a strategic combination of knowledge and skills within in their field of interest, particularly within the demand sectors. From the economic position, it would be essential to grow business and commerce from "home base" or within New Orleans by taking advantage of the resources that we have, particularly in areas such as real estate. Within New Orleans East alone, there are significant opportunities to build and develop, providing access to high wage jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities.

As a community, we share an inter-locking destiny.   The continued social and economic displacement of a disproportionate share of our population will result in excessive under-employment and unemployment, producing on-going economic stagnation. Instead of families transferring economic assets to succeeding generations, poverty and economic inequality will become the family heirloom.

New Orleans Select* Capital Projects, 2007-2015

$423.7 Million in non-transportation capital investment since 2007

E

D

A

B

C

Legend
Capital Projects
Development Cost
· Under $1.5M
● $1.5M - $3M
● $3.1M - $6M
● $6.1M - $10M
● Over $10M

NEW ORLEANS
BUSINESS ALLIANCE

*Does not include transportation projects

This map highlights public investment in non-transportation capital projects across the city between 2007-2015. City council district boundaries are labeled to highlight investments by district. Capital projects include libraries, police and fire stations, recreation facilities, and other related projects. Total amount for publicly-funded capital projects is $423.7 million with $34.3 million in District A, $115.9 million in District B, $94.3 million in District C, $110.5 million in District D, and $69.7 million in District E.

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HOUSING CRIMINAL JUSTICE ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION HEALTH WORKFORCE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

THE STATE OF BLACK EDUCATION: TEN YEARS AFTER THE STORM OF REFORM

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AND DEBRA VAUGHAN

CROSSING CRITICAL THRESHOLDS LIKE COLLEGE DEGREE ATTAINMENT IS ULTIMATELY IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT IS THE FOREMOST MEANS OF GAINING SOCIAL MOBILITY. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE FOR PEOPLE IN POVERTY. CONSEQUENTLY, EDUCATORS MUST MEASURE GROWTH AGAINST TRUE TO LIFE THRESHOLDS STUDENTS AND FAMILIES MUST CROSS IN ORDER TO CLIMB THE SOCIAL LADDER.

EDUCATION

Discussions and research on post-Katrina education reforms and their impacts on student learning, political participation and community cohesion most often focus on whether or not improvements or declines have occurred in those areas since the storm. But debates about growth do not plainly declare whether or not students are prepared for college or for a career. Crossing critical thresholds like college degree attainment is ultimately important because it is the foremost means of gaining social mobility. This is especially true for people in poverty. Consequently, educators must measure growth against true to life thresholds students and families must cross in order to climb the social ladder.

How are schools preparing young people to pursue and access a better quality of life? What role is our system of education playing in improving broad economic, health and other outcomes for our children? How can school leaders leverage education systems to maximize the quality of life for children and their families?

This chapter hopes to respond to these basic questions by examining early childhood, K-12 and postsecondary educational issues. The chapter also examines the large number of young people neither working nor in school.

Early Childhood Care and Education

Today children are expected to enter kindergarten knowing more than they

did a decade ago (Curwood, 2007). As expectations continue to rise, the lagging achievement gap between low-income, African American children and their high-income, White peers still begins long before children enter school (Hutchison, Morrissey, & Burgess, 2014). Consequently, what steps have school leaders taken to eliminate this gap, facilitate healthy early childhood development and promote school readiness for low-income and African American children in New Orleans?

Several key factors that promote school readiness during early childhood include access to quality childcare, health facilities, parks and playgrounds; health care visits, and home literacy activities (Karoly, Kilburn, Cannon, 2005a). Children in poverty often face barriers to these important early childhood development opportunities. At last count, 39% of children in New Orleans live in poverty and 50.5% of African American children in New Orleans live in poverty (Mack, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013b). In order to assess children's risks to school readiness, proxy measures are used such as maternal educational attainment (linked to home literacy activities), median income, female-headed households (and other economic indicators), and access to health care, insurance and other resources (LSU/Tulane Early Childhood Policy and Data Center, 2012).

In the *Early Childhood Reach and Risk in Louisiana* report published in 2012, Orleans Parish received a moderate to high-risk rating, indicating the level of risk children face for gaps in school readiness (LSU/Tulane Early Childhood Policy and Data Center, 2012). Orleans Parish earned a rating of moderate to high risk or high risk for all five economic factors including

female-headed households, maternal educational attainment, poverty rate, and unemployment (LSU/Tulane Early Childhood Policy and Data Center, 2012). As previously noted, these factors impact young children's access to important early childhood opportunities and resources. According to a 2013 report by the City of New Orleans Department of Health, 19 out of 72 neighborhoods lacked adequate public transit, 12 lacked green space, and 19 lacked childcare facilities within the neighborhood (New Orleans Health Department & Healthy Start New Orleans, 2013). The deficiency of resources limit opportunities children need during early childhood to stimulate healthy development.

There are local programs that help to lessen the impact of poverty on early childhood outcomes. Included among them is the Early Steps program, which serves a relatively high percentage of young children with developmental delays (LSU/Tulane Early Childhood Policy and Data Center, 2012). Early Steps serves children from birth to three with developmental delays or medical conditions that cause delays. The program assists children with services such as assisted technology, therapy and special instruction within their homes to help facilitate healthy development (Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, n.d.).

Orleans Parish also has high percentages of three- and four-year-olds enrolled in pre-school programs from high-risk neighborhoods such as the Desire Area, the Florida Area and Holy Cross, all of which had 100% of their three- and four-year-olds enrolled in pre-school programs (New Orleans Health Department & Healthy Start New Orleans, 2013). The expansion of community health centers in New Orleans

has also increased access to primary health care facilities in high need neighborhoods (New Orleans Health Department & Healthy Start New Orleans, 2013). The aforementioned assets help to expand opportunities for healthy early childhood development for children in New Orleans.

High quality early childcare and education programs are related to numerous positive outcomes including school readiness, increased likelihood of graduation, employment, higher income, improved health outcomes and decreased likelihood of involvement with crime (Calman & Tarr-Whelan, 2005; Karoly, Kilburn, & Cannon, 2005). Data is not destiny, and thus, it is important that programs and services aimed at improving early childhood development for vulnerable children consider the broad factors impacting their children's development.

A 2012 policy measure called the Early Childhood Education Act, or Act 3, was designed to address some of the challenges in the early childhood care and education system in Louisiana to better prepare children for kindergarten readiness (Office of the Governor, 2013). In 2012, Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal signed into law Act 3, a legislative measure that brought about the coordination of early childhood care and education services and programs under the auspices of the Department of Education. The state's early childhood care and education system was previously described as "fragmented," and almost half of the state's young children entered kindergarten unprepared (Office of the Governor, 2013). Act 3 established the Early Childhood Care and Education Network, a coordinated system of early childhood providers participating in the central enrollment system and quality rating system (LDOE, n.d.a). Additionally, the Act calls for the alignment of standards in early

childhood care and education that facilitates kindergarten readiness. The measure is intended to increase accountability and quality of publicly funded early childhood care and education programs. It introduced a revised rating of childcare providers and programs to make it easier for parents to select quality programs for their children. Other components of Act 3 focus on improving professional development for early childhood providers, introduces an accountability system that includes "age-appropriate" assessments of children, and eliminates "red tape" that would free up provider resources to attract high quality professionals (Office of the Governor, 2013).

Although the Early Childhood Education Act intends to improve quality, coordination and accountability in the early childhood care and education system, several major critiques of the policy measure suggest that unintended consequences could make increased access and quality more challenging for the state's most vulnerable children. Coordination of early childhood care and education system addresses the issue of fragmentation, however some believe that placing the system under the auspices of the Department of Education may lead to a developmentally inappropriate application of a K-12 lens on early childhood development. The implementation of standardized tests and a focus on numeracy and literacy do not meet the broad developmental needs of children during early childhood (e.g., socio-emotional development) (Bassok, Latham, & Rorem, 2015). Findings from a national study of early childhood education programs indicate that play-based learning, a popular and appropriate early childhood education approach is quickly being replaced by more traditional K-12 teaching models that focus on academic skills (Bassok et al., 2015). This trend has resulted in a reduction in opportunities for

play, a more age-appropriate pedagogical approach to early childhood education (Bassok et al., 2015). This is especially true in districts that educate high proportions of low-income children and children of color. Consequently, Act 3 may be facilitating this shift without a full awareness of its impact on the development of Louisiana's children.

Another critique of Act 3 is that it increases standards for early childhood program providers but does not increase funding for key early childhood care and education programs (Gray, 2014). That is a significant shortcoming, given that the cost of compliance can be burdensome for already strained providers in low-income communities. Over the past five years, state funding for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) has been cut by 58% to $1750, while actual childcare costs are upwards of $6000 annually (Policy Institute for Children, 2015). Low-income families are expected to make up the difference, which further serves as a barrier for vulnerable children to access high quality early childhood programs. Since these cuts went into effect, the number of children served by through CCAP has been cut in half (Policy Institute for Children, 2015). The state's largest, publicly funded pre-K program LA4, is also grossly underfunded at $4580 per student when the actual cost of an LA4 classroom is $5500 per student (Policy Institute for Children, 2015). These budget shortfalls are perhaps the biggest threat to increased access to high quality early childhood care and education for low-income children and children of color. Without adequately addressing these issues, gaps in school readiness for low-income children and children of color may continue to persist, making the goal to close the achievement gap in New Orleans continuously out of reach.

System Reforms

New Orleans underwent a number of reforms post-Katrina. Broadly, some of the reforms we will examine are school choice, changes within the educator workforce, the Louisiana Scholarship program, school closures and expulsions.

School Choice

As families returned to New Orleans and schools re-opened after Katrina, public school attendance zones were eliminated (Sims & Vaughan, 2014). Public schools instituted "open enrollment" policies allowing students to apply and enroll in schools across the city no matter where they lived. In New Orleans, school choice was born of necessity given the nature of destruction caused by Katrina and due to the fact that many schools re-opened as charter schools (didn't allow for attendance zones). However, in many other urban areas across the country, public education systems have adopted school choice policies to diversify schools and allow families to "opt out" of failing neighborhood schools (Liu & Taylor, 2005).

Families exercised an informal system of choice prior to Katrina. Schools primarily served families within their zoned neighborhood. However, magnet schools in New Orleans enrolled students from across the city regardless of where they lived.

Because there are no "default" neighborhood schools post Katrina, all parents must actively choose a school for their child. To encourage fairness and transparency in the selection process, community and school leaders developed a centralized enrollment process called the Common Application, which later evolved into *OneApp* (Dreilinger, 2013). *OneApp* is an application process that allows parents to rank in order of preference up to

eight schools for their child. *OneApp* was created by the Recovery School District (RSD) and first implemented for the 2012-13 school year. A computer program matches students with available seats in the school based on their parents' choices. Preference is given to students who have a sibling attending the school and to those transitioning from a failing school. In addition, geographic priority is given to those living within neighborhood boundaries of the school of their choice, often referred to as geographic catchment areas.

All RSD charter schools, OPSB direct-run schools, and newly authorized OPSB charter schools are required to participate in *OneApp*. Nine OPSB charter schools and NOCCA do not participate; they require students to apply at the school and independently run their schools' lotteries for placement (Dreilinger, 2015a). Upon their charter renewal, however, the nine OPSB charter schools will be required to use *OneApp* for student placement. Of the nine, six will be up for renewal and join *OneApp* in 2017-18 and three will join in the 2021-22 school year. But currently, some of the nine are the most sought after and competitive schools, and they do not participate in the *OneApp* process making it more cumbersome to fill out separate applications for schools. In addition, the most coveted schools have very limited seats so many parents do not get their first choice. For the 2015-16 school year, 4,000 new students applied to schools using *OneApp* and 6,300 students used *OneApp* to change schools (Drielinger, 2015).

For the 2012-13 school year, *OneApp* match results showed that 84% of students were placed in one of their top 3 schools and 75% in their number one choice. For the 2013-14 school year, 71.5% of students were placed in one of their top 3 choices and 55% in their number one choice (Sims & Vaughan, 2014).
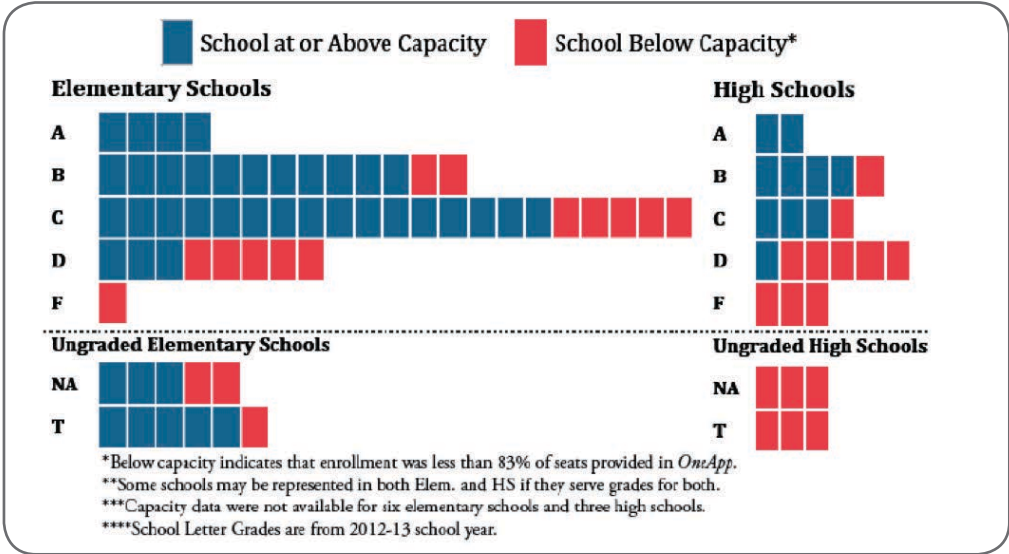

Figure1: School Capacity by Letter Grade

Sources: Sims, P. and Vaughan, D. The State of public education in New Orleans:2014. *Cowen Institute.*

How Parents Choose?

When asked about the characteristics of schools that are important, parents cite things like academic performance, teacher quality, extracurricular offerings (especially in high school), and school location. The Urban League of Greater New Orleans (ULGNO) report (2013), *Parent Perspectives: Parental Engagement and Education Reform in New Orleans* found that parents consider many factors and tend to look at a school holistically rather than as a set of isolated characteristics. While parents are interested in a school's academic ranking and test score results, they want to be sure their own child's academic needs are met and look for additional support such as test prep, tutoring, and enrichment programs. Also, parents recognize the importance of an engaging and challenging curriculum and value specialized programs that appeal to their child's interests.

The aforementioned ULGNO report (2013) and the 2013 Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives (Cowen Institute) report found that location or proximity to home or work was another factor parents consider when selecting a school for their child. A study by the Education Research Alliance for New Orleans at Tulane University analyzed enrollment patterns before and after Katrina and *OneApp* priorities (Harris & Larsen, 2015). Tulane researchers confirmed that distance from home to school was important and suggested that some families still view the nearest school or neighborhood school as the "default" choice. They noted that even when a higher performing option was only slightly farther away, parents ranked the closer school higher in priority on *OneApp.*

In order for school choice/open enrollment to adequately serve the needs of families and increase educational outcomes for all students, there must be ample quality options and parents must have access to

information. An analysis of enrollment and capacity conducted by the Cowen Institute shows that elementary/middle and high schools with a School Performance Score (SPS) of "A" are at or above capacity (Sims & Vaughan, 2014). Of the schools earning an SPS of "B" nearly all are at capacity. Conversely most schools reporting an SPS letter grade of "D" and all schools reporting a letter grade of "F" are below capacity. (See Figure 1) This analysis indicates that there is a high demand for higher performing schools and that demand exceeds supply.

With so many options available to parents, access to information is vital in the decision making process. The Cowen Institute study in 2013 found that parents rely on family and friends for information about schools and that many parents were misinformed about their options and the process. Organizations such as the New Orleans Parents Guide (NOPG) and the Urban League of Greater New Orleans (ULGNO) are actively addressing the needs of families to gather accurate and appropriate information about schools and the application/enrollment process. New Orleans Parents Guide is a nonprofit organization providing quality and transparent information to families through the annual *New Orleans Parents' Guide to Public Schools* as well as a Parents Guide phone app.

The Urban League of Greater New Orleans, through the Family Resource Centers, provides families with information and support to select and navigate the application/enrollment process. Three Family Resource Centers are located throughout the city and are open daily to accommodate families as needed. Language assistance in Spanish and Vietnamese is also available at the Centers. Additionally, each year, ULGNO publishes the *New Orleans Guide to High School and Beyond* providing parents with information about both their

public and nonpublic high school options. ULGNO also hosts a large-scale annual Schools Expo where thousands of attendees interface with school representatives to learn about the full spectrum of local school options.

Louisiana Scholarship Program

Families with students in public schools with a letter grade of "C," "D", "F" or "T" (transition) or with children entering kindergarten can apply for a scholarship or voucher to send their child to a participating private school. In addition, eligible families must have a family income that does not exceed 250% of the federal poverty guidelines (Sims & Vaughan, 2014). Parents in Orleans Parish apply using the *OneApp* and can rank up to eight schools in order of their preference including both public and participating private schools. For the 2015-16 school year, 1,500 students of 10,300 applicants included at least one private school as a choice on *OneApp*; about one-third of those students selected only private schools. (Dreilinger, 2015a.)

The voucher program was piloted in New Orleans in 2008 and expanded statewide in 2012. The state reports that 131 private schools are participating in the program statewide. There are 42 private schools accepting the voucher in the Greater New Orleans region and 29 of these schools are located in Orleans Parish (LDOE, n.d.c.).

Questions remain about the quality among private schools in the voucher program. Students receiving publicly funded scholarships to attend private schools are required to take state assessments. Statewide, in 2013-14 40% of scholarship students tested in grades 3 through 8 scored basic or above; the state average was 69% (Dreilinger, 2014b). Because of low levels of student academic achievement, 23 schools are no longer allowed to accept new students through the voucher program; 10 of these "failing schools" are in New Orleans (Dreilinger, 2015a).

Educator Workforce

Teacher quality is also important to parents and they define it in a variety of ways. Parents are looking for teachers that are dedicated, caring, can differentiate instruction, etc. Some parents value teacher certification and experience. In both the Urban League study (2013) and research conducted by the Cowen Institute (2013), some parents expressed concern about the shift in teacher demographics post-Katrina. In the wake of Katrina, approximately 7,500 public school employees were fired. Many veteran teachers reapplied to teach in OPSB or RSD schools; however, most newly opened charter schools enlisted organizations such as Teacher For America (TFA) and The New Teacher Project, TeachNOLA, bringing in predominately younger, non-local, less experienced White teachers. For some parents, a quality teacher was described as someone who looked like them, grew up like them, and had a deep appreciation for local culture and traditions, in part a response to the vastly different demographic profile of the current NOPS educator workforce post-Katrina (Cowen Institute, 2013).

According to a report proffered by EducateNOW! (2015) in the 2003-04 academic year, 74% of teachers in public schools in New Orleans were African American. In 2012-13, 51% of teachers in public schools in New Orleans (OPSB and RSD) were African American. The social and economic effects of the drop in African American teachers remain an ever present, tense, but scarcely studied topic. An examination of the impact of this demographic shift within the educator workforce must be studied with respect to its impact on children and its impact on the shrinking, African American middle class in New Orleans.

School Closures

During the 2014-2015 school year, 26 charter schools (30%) in New Orleans were up for renewal or extensions (Dreilinger, 2014a). The state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) renewed or extended charters for 22 of the schools; charters for two schools were extended with some probationary stipulations and two schools were slated to close (Dreilinger, 2014d).

Since Katrina, 19 charter schools have closed, surrendered their charters, changed management, or merged with another school. In addition to charter school closures, the RSD has closed 34 traditional direct-run schools and authorized charter schools to operate in many of the school buildings, and OPSB closed three alternative schools. (Louisiana Department of Education, n.d.b).

Closures are usually based on the schools' report card grades and performance scores, which are mostly made up of student test scores and graduation rates for high schools, financial viability, and organizational (legal and contractual) obligations. In more extreme cases, schools have been closed because of incompliance with state regulations, BESE policy and charter contracts, special education violations, and other violations that compromise the safety and well-being of children (Jewson, 2015; Tidmore, 2011).

Although school closures are a direct result of increased accountability in public education in New Orleans, the impact of school closures on families must be examined. Children of color have almost exclusively been impacted by this education reform strategy leaving families scrambling to find new schools for their children. Empirical evidence suggests that student mobility has a negative impact on young children (Beatty, 2010). As a policy,

school closures should be a method of last resort and every effort possible must be made to improve schools before school closures are enforced.

Expulsions

The decentralization of the public school system following Hurricane Katrina left little consistency and oversight of student discipline and expulsions. In 2012-2013, the Orleans Parish School Board and the Recovery School District established a centralized expulsion hearing office, a set of standard policies, and single review team to hear all cases for students enrolled in public schools located in New Orleans (including all RSD and state-authorized charter schools, OPSB charter schools, and OPSB direct-run schools.) The new expulsion handbook identifies three levels of offenses; levels one and two include actions that result in expulsions while level three offenses lead to a "disciplinary conference" (Dreilinger, 2015b). Having more students referred to a disciplinary conference has led to fewer expulsions.

A comparison of mid-year 2013 and 2014 expulsion rates and counts shows a decrease. In December 2013, 114 public school students were expelled (.26%) and 75 students received a conference (Dreilinger, 2015b). By mid-year 2014, the number of students expelled declined to 100 (.22%) and 201 students received a conference. Overall, the RSD saw a 45% drop in the number of students recommended for expulsion by mid-year 2014-2015 and a citywide decrease of 25% (RSD, 2015).

These changes to the expulsion process in New Orleans Public Schools are a step in the right direction in addressing the school-to-prion pipeline. School expulsions disproportionately impact African American and Hispanic students who are 10 and four times (respectively) more likely than

White students to be expelled (Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools, 2012). In New Orleans 46% of the children that the Louisiana Center for Children's Rights (LCCR) represents have been expelled or suspended, 25% have been arrested for something that happened in school, and 98% of them are African Americans (Perry, 2015). LCCR's Children Defense Team represents 1200 juvenile cases each year. These statistics illustrate the pervasiveness of the school-to-prison pipeline on African Americans in New Orleans and should influence schools to identify additional alternatives to disciplining African American youth.

Secondary Education

Over the past 10 years significant gains have been made in secondary education in New Orleans. Public school graduation rose from 54% in 2004 to almost 73% in 2014 (LDOE, 2015b). Dropout rates have almost been cut in half, moving from12.2% in 2004 to 6.5% in 2014 (LDOE, 2014c). And 59% of the class of 2014 enrolled in college the fall semester after graduation (LDOE, 2015b). These data points are frequently used to highlight the progress that has been made in New Orleans schools, but what do they really tell us? Have gains in secondary education been equitable? Are students exiting high school ready for college and career?

A few details must be mentioned to put this discussion in perspective. First, despite the fact that RSD-NO manages more than 80% of public schools in New Orleans, they only educate about half of public high school students in the city (LDOE, 2015a). In addition, OPSB high schools include a few selective admissions high schools, two of which enroll a higher proportion of White students and a lower proportion of low-income students than most public high schools in the city. Benjamin Franklin High School and Lusher Charter School (upper school) graduate less than 25% of

the OPSB senior class, but have the highest ACT composite scores for the district (LDOE, 2015a; LDOE, 2014a). Finally, New Orleans and Louisiana have one of the highest private school enrollments in the nation, with 25% of its students attending private and parochial schools (Davidson, 2014). Thus, the state of Black education will include data, where possible, on private and parochial high school outcomes.

The question has been posed, "How are high schools in New Orleans preparing their students to succeed in career and college?" We will use ACT data to examine schools' success at preparing students for college, given that scores on the ACT are predictors of first year college performance. A brief analysis of NOPS student performance over the past 10 years will be offered in this section. In addition, we will also present TOPS eligibility data available from the Louisiana Department of Education to provide a snapshot of private and parochial school students' achievement in comparison to public school student achievement. An analysis of inequities within private and parochial schools is provided as well using TOPS data to provide some insight on how much families are benefitting from the investment in private school education. Data analysis on college enrollment by school type for NOPS is also presented in this section. Very little data is available on career readiness initiatives in NOPS. However, a discussion on Jump Start, the statewide career readiness initiative, will be discussed in brief.

ACT Performance

High school grade point average (GPA), ACT and SAT scores, and non-cognitive variables are among several valid predictors of college success (Richardson, Abraham, & Bond, 2012). Although standardized tests alone are insufficient predictors of college success, they are valid predictors of first year college

performance and they are used nationally to gauge college readiness (in addition to other variables including high school GPA) (Noble, 2003). ACT scores do not provide a holistic view of college readiness, but they are used to determine remediation and college entry for colleges and universities in Louisiana. An ACT composite score of an 18 (minimum) is an indicator of college readiness and an ACT below an 18 is used as an indicator that students need remediation (Louisiana Connect, 2014).

In 2014, seven out of 24 public high schools in New Orleans (29%) with reported ACT scores for seniors had an ACT composite score of 18 or better (LDOE, 2014a). In the RSD the numbers are significantly lower than OPSB with only two schools out of 17 (12%) with a reported ACT composite score of 18 or better. This means that an overwhelming majority of schools in the RSD-NO are graduating students who are deemed underprepared for college. To be exact, 33% of RSD-NO students had a composite score of 18 or higher (Dreilinger, 2014c). Within OPSB, all but one of their high schools had an ACT composite score above 18 (LDOE, 2014a). In total, 66% of students in OPSB schools had an ACT composite score of 18 or better (Dreilinger, 2014c). Compare this to the state average of 59% and OPSB appears to be performing well. But how does this compare to NOPS before the state takeover?

In 2005, 19 schools had reported ACT composite scores for their graduating seniors (LDOE, 2005). Of those 19 schools, five of them were selective admissions high schools. Yet only three schools (Franklin, Karr and McMain High Schools) in the entire district had ACT composite scores above 18. Two of the five selective admissions schools fell short of graduating students on average that met the benchmark for college readiness. However, composite ACT scores for both Edna Karr High School and

Eleanor McMain High School were higher in 2005 than they were in 2014 (LDOE, 2005; LDOE, 2014a). The ACT composite score for Edna Karr High School in 2014 was an 18.5 down from 19.7 in 2005 (LDOE, 2005). For McMain the drop was more significant, with a 2014 composite score of 19.1, down from 20.6 in 2005 (LDOE, 2005; LDOE, 2014a). Both of these schools have moved from being selective admissions schools to open enrollment high schools.

ACT scores give us a snapshot of student achievement and college readiness for young people in New Orleans public schools, but what do we know about the student achievement of young people graduating from New Orleans private and parochial schools? The investment that families make in private and parochial education ranges approximately $7000 to nearly $23,000 per year (Jesuit High School, 2014). Is this investment paying off? Data from the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students, the state's merit-based scholarship program for postsecondary education, suggests that the payoff varies.

TOPS Eligibility

Students at private and parochial schools are outperforming students in NOPS in TOPS eligibility (LOFSA, 2014). In 2014, 73% of nonpublic high school graduates in New Orleans were TOPS eligible as compared to 37% of NOPS graduates (LOFSA, 2014). This means that students met the grade point average and ACT composite score requirements to receive one of four of the state's merit-based scholarships. That is a 36-percentage point difference between nonpublic and public schools in New Orleans (LOFSA, 2014). It would seem that the investment in private education is paying off for the vast majority of graduates in local, nonpublic schools since almost three quarters of nonpublic high school graduates are earning scholarships to state public

Figure 2: Nonpublic TOPS eligibility 2014
Source: Source: LDOE, 2014 High School Graduates (including alternate eligible) eligible f
or a TOPS award by school, school district and parish TOPS eligibility report

Figure 3: TOPS eligibility district comparison 2005
Source: Louisiana Office of Student Financial Aid [LOFSA]. (2005). 2005 High school graduates
(including alternate eligible) eligible for a TOPS Award by school, school district and parish

institutions.   However,   deep   disparities exist   between   predominately   Black   and predominately White nonpublic schools.

In 2014, there was a 30-point difference in TOPS   eligibility   between   predominately Black   and   White   private   and   parochial schools   (LOFSA,   2014).   Among   Black private schools, 47% of graduates were TOPS eligible as compared to 77% of White private school graduates (See Figure 2). This performance gap appears to be closing between predominately Black and White private schools, albeit slowly. In 2009 there was a 34-percentage point difference in TOPS   eligibility   between   predominately Black and predominately White nonpublic high schools. The difference between these schools in 2005 was 38% (LOFSA, 2005; LOFSA, 2009; LOFSA, 2014).

In 2005, the difference in TOPS eligibility between Black private schools and New Orleans   public   schools   was   only   five-percentage points (See Figure 3) (LOSFA,

2005). In 2005, New Orleans public schools were the second lowest performing school district   in   Louisiana.   What   do   2005   TOPS eligibility   data   suggest   about   the   quality of Black nonpublic schools in New Orleans ten years ago? Since 2005, the gap between NOPS   and   Black   nonpublic   schools   grew by   10-percentage   points,   with   32%   TOPS eligibility   in   NOPS   as   compared   to   47% for Black nonpublic schools (See Figure 4) (LOFS, 2014). What does the growing gap in TOPS eligibility between NOPS and Black nonpublic   schools   tell   us   about   how   well NOPS are preparing students to compete in college and the workforce?

A closer look at TOPS eligibility by school type reveals that OPSB TOPS eligibility was one   percentage   point   higher   than   Black nonpublic schools in 2014 (LOFSA, 2014). That same year RSD-NO was 23- percentage points   lower   than   Black   nonpublic   high schools   and   24-percentage   points   lower than OPSB schools (See Figure 4). Do these extensive   gaps   suggest   that   there   is   an

Figure 4: TOPS eligibility by school type and scholarship level 2014
Source: Louisiana Office of Student Financial Aid [LOFSA]. (2014). 2014 High School Graduates
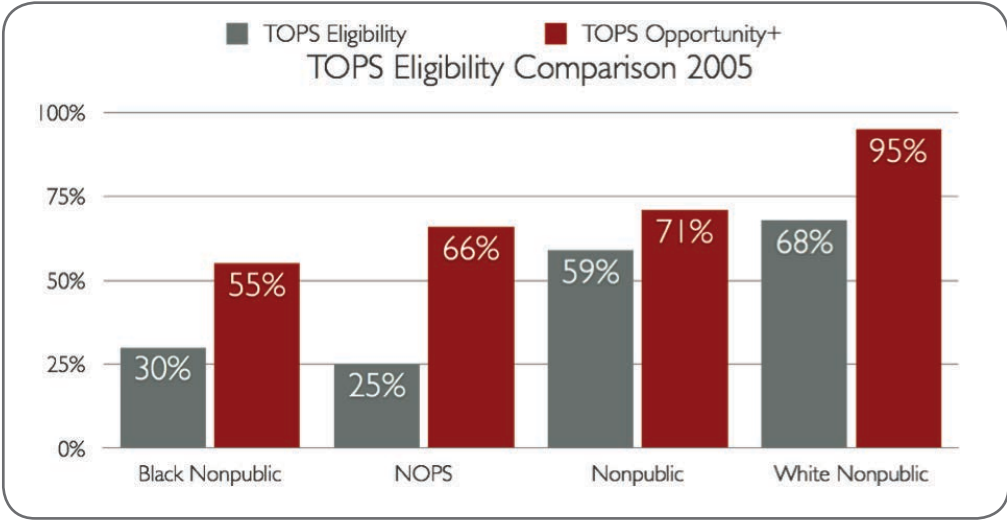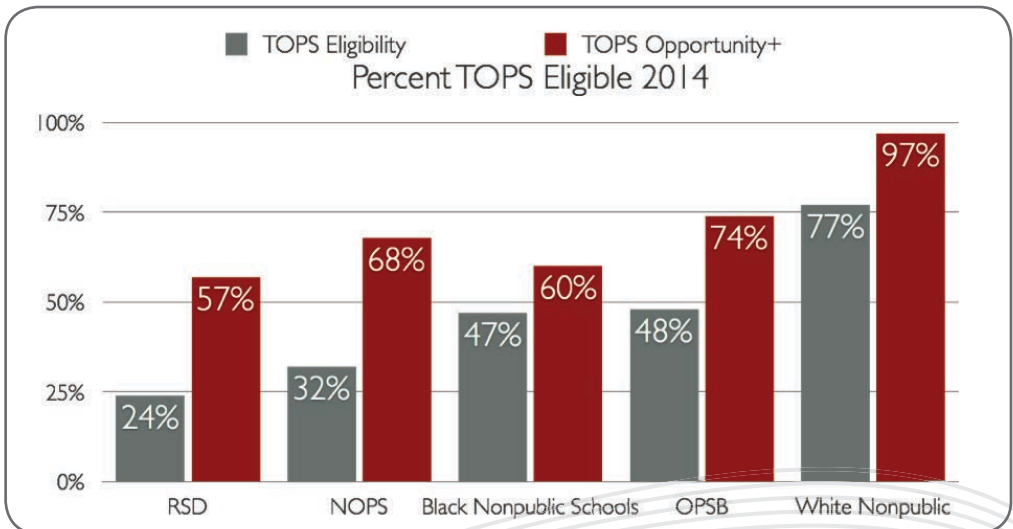(including alternate eligible) eligible for a TOPS award by school, school district and parish TOPS eligibility report.

educational caste system in New Orleans? Have education reforms in New Orleans inadvertently established a more complex system of social stratification in local schools? More importantly, what can be done to accelerate the closing of the achievement gaps between RSD-NO schools and other school districts, as well as gaps between predominately Black and predominately White schools in New Orleans?

Differences in the percentage of TOPS Opportunity (or higher) scholarships between districts are better markers of college readiness than TOPS eligibility alone. These scholarships require at minimum an ACT score of 20, which exceeds the college readiness benchmark of 18, and requires a minimum of a 2.5 grade point average. Gaps between Black and White private schools in New Orleans are more pronounced when looking at TOPS eligibility type. For instance, there was a 37-percentage point difference between predominately Black and predominately White nonpublic high schools in the percent of students eligible for TOPS Opportunity scholarships or higher (see Figure 2). This gap is down from a 40-percentage point gap in 2005. It is also worth noting that almost all TOPS eligible students at White nonpublic schools earned TOPS Opportunity scholarships or higher.

In comparing TOPS Opportunity eligibility or higher amongst public and nonpublic high schools, NOPS schools outperformed Black nonpublic schools by eight percentage points in 2014 (LOFSA, 2014). OPSB outperformed Black private schools by 14-percentage points, and RSD-NO fell just three percentage points below Black nonpublic schools in the percentage of TOPS Opportunity (or higher) eligibility (See Figure 4). So, among students who are TOPS eligible in New Orleans schools, there is a higher percentage of TOPS Opportunity or better in NOPS than in Black nonpublic

schools (LOFSA, 2014). If college readiness is an important factor influencing African American families school choices, could OPSB schools be a better investment for African American families than Black nonpublic schools in New Orleans?

Despite gains in TOPS scholarship eligibility in public and nonpublic, predominately Black schools in New Orleans, the achievement gap between predominately Black and predominately White schools remains significantly wide. To what can these disparities be attributed? Could it be that the environmental barriers to development young children face during early childhood continue to disadvantage children well into high school? How can schools help eliminate disparities in student achievement and college and career readiness without also examining and addressing root causes of these disparities? How are these disparities impacting African American students' capacity to compete in postsecondary education and in the workforce? The next section examines African American students' college enrollment trends to shed light on this issue.

College Enrollment

College enrollment appears to be on the uptick for New Orleans public high school graduates. Almost 60% of the class of 2014 is reported to have enrolled in college in the fall of 2014 (LDOE, 2015). This statistic represents both in-state and out-of-state college enrollment. Prior to 2012, the Louisiana Department of Education only reported on students who went to college in-state, thus we present in-state college enrollment over the past decade to examine college enrollment trends.

Using current college enrollment reports, we were able to determine that 48% of public high school graduates from the class
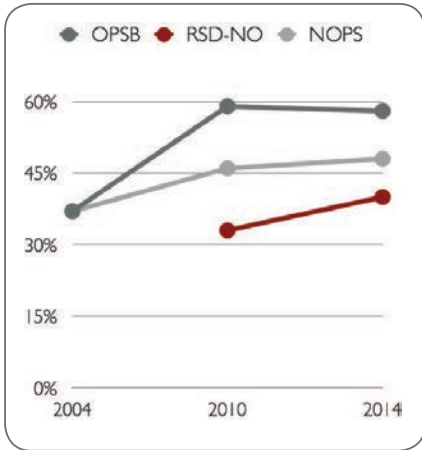
Figure 5: NOPS college enrollment 2004-2014
Source: Louisiana Department of Education [LDOE].
(2004). Louisiana first time college freshman state ;
Report: Fall 2004;Louisiana Department of Education
[LDOE]. (2010). Louisiana first time college freshman
state: Report: Fall 2010; Louisiana Department of
Education [LDOE]. (2014b). College enrollment data for
2013- 2014 high school graduates

the most growth in the city, having increased college enrollment by seven percentage points since 2010. RSD-NO continues to experience growth while OPSB growth has slowed at almost 60% (LDOE, 2014b). Although OPSB contains a few selective admissions schools all but one of their high schools had college-going rates in 2010 above the state average of 52% (LDOE, 2010). That suggests that OPSB did a fairly good job of helping their students access postsecondary education opportunities.

Although college-going rates in NOPS experienced a nine percentage point increase between 2004-2010, developmental education rates for both OPSB and RSD-NO schools indicate that many NOPS students entered school underprepared for college coursework (LDOE, 2004; LDOE, 2010). In 2010, 44% of first time freshman from OPSB schools required remediation at in-state colleges, and 60% of students at RSD-NO schools required remediation (LDOE, 2010). Approximately 51% of NOPS students entering in-state schools in the fall of 2010 required remediation. Nearly one-third (31%) of first time freshman from Louisiana required remediation in 2010.

of 2014 enrolled in in-state colleges and universities in the fall of 2014 as compared to 37% in 2004 (LDOE, 2014b; LDOE, 2004). This represents an 11-percentage point increase in 10 years and a one-percentage point increase since 2010 (LDOE, 2010). Figure 5 highlights changes in in-state college enrollment for New Orleans public school graduates by district from 2004-2014.

A closer look at the postsecondary education enrollment trends among NOPS graduates reveals a series of peaks, valleys and plains in student outcomes throughout the past ten years. NOPS experienced its greatest gains in college enrollment between 2004 and 2010, when RSD-NO district still directly ran most RSD-NO high schools. (LDOE, 2004; LDOE, 2010). The exceptions were Algiers Charter Schools Association high schools and the Capital One UNO Charter School (Thurgood Marshall Early College High School). RSD-NO is currently experiencing

In 2004, 53% of first time freshman from NOPS required remediation, as compared to the 29% remediation rate for the state (LDOE, 2004). So, between 2004 and 2010, NOPS remediation rates dropped two percentage points. Between 2010 and 2014, NOPS college-going rates increased by two percentage points. In 2010, the state adopted the Louisiana GRAD Act, which phased out remedial courses at four-year colleges and increased admissions requirements across the state's public institutions (Office of the Governor, 2010). Since remediation data is no longer reported, we use ACT scores of 18+ to gauge college readiness.

Career Readiness

At the start of this section, we asked, "How are high schools in New Orleans preparing their students to succeed in career and college?" We know that more than half of RSD-NO graduates who enrolled in college in 2014 attended two-year colleges (LDOE, 2014b). Although we cannot assume that all students in that number attended two-year colleges because they were not college ready, the RSD-NO ACT composite score of 16.4 suggests that many RSD-NO students were not prepared to pursue college coursework without remediation (LDOE, 2014a). Regardless, 47% of RSD-NO students attended college in 2014 (both in and out-of-state) (LDOE, 2014a). What happened to the 53% of students who did not pursue postsecondary education? In OPSB, 72% of students enrolled in college in 2014, with 28% attending two-year colleges (LDOE, 2014a). For the 28% of graduating seniors from OPSB that did not attend college, were these students prepared to pursue careers in fields that would provide them with a livable wage? Could it be that schools' focus on college enrollment may be preventing them from serving the needs of the students who do not transition into postsecondary education institutions after high school? And for those that do transition to college, do they have the basic skills required to excel in the workforce?

There are currently no available data that capture the level of career readiness of students graduating from public schools in Louisiana. In addition, very few students in NOPS have access to career and technical education coursework according to school profiles. Of those that do offer career and technical education courses, are they preparing students for high-wage, high demand industries? These are important questions because career pathways for students leaving high school may currently

be leading to employment without a livable wage. This means that the school systems are falling short of preparing students for postsecondary options that will actually improve the quality of life and career trajectory of African American students. Could schools be reinforcing social stratification by graduating students ill-prepared for career success?

The Louisiana Department of Education responded to this crisis by launching Jump Start, the state's career and technical education initiative (LDOE, 2014d). This initiative is meant to provide Louisiana's students with access to resources, facilities and opportunities to prepare them for careers in high growth sectors in Louisiana. This program includes opportunities for students to earn industry-based credentials in high growth sectors before they graduate, positioning them for immediate employment in these industries upon graduation (LDOE, 2014d). The state also offers career readiness and career exploration courses through its Course Choice program and will begin using the Work Keys exam to evaluate students' workforce readiness and literacy (LDOE, 2014e). These initiatives will help to ensure all students have a pathway to success in college and career and will hopefully address existing gaps in school curriculum in NOPS.

Opportunity Youth

As mentioned, the cost of not completing a college degree can be devastating to individual and family wellbeing. The high school diploma simply will not secure job opportunities that lead to a middle-class lifestyle. Unfortunately, many young people have dropped out of school and/or not working as a result. Opportunity youth, also referred to as disconnected youth, are young adults 16 to 24 years old who are neither in school nor working.

They are called opportunity youth because of the opportunity their reconnection to school or employment could bring to their communities.

Nationally, 13.8% of all youth 16 to 24 years old are considered opportunity youth (Sims, 2015). Among the four regions of the US, the South reports the highest rate of opportunity youth at 15.2%. In Louisiana, nearly one in five young adults (between 16 and 24 years) are opportunity youth. With a rate of 19.8, Louisiana has the highest percentage of opportunity youth in the country. Of youth in the New Orleans area, 18.2% (approximately 26,000 young people) are disconnected from school and work. This rate places New Orleans third from the highest behind Memphis (21.6%) and Las Vegas (19.6%) (Sims, 2015).

Nationally, 28.5% of opportunity youth have dropped out of high school; 23.7% of opportunity youth, however, have some college (Sims, 2015). Opportunity youth in the New Orleans metro area have similar educational attainment trends. The relatively high rates of opportunity youth with some college highlight the limited economic prospects for young people in the region. In spite of some encouraging improvement in the K-12 sector, many young people still find it difficult to find work or continue their education. The New Orleans job market is particularly difficult for Black youth. In the US, 23% of opportunity youth are African American. In the New Orleans metro area, the majority of opportunity youth are African American (Sims, 2015).

The issues associated with opportunity youth place financial burdens on US taxpayers resulting from increased government spending (on crime, healthcare, and welfare) (Sims, 2015). Each opportunity youth represents an annual cost of $13,000. These costs accumulate each year and represent a lifetime cost of $235,680 for every young

person who remains disconnected. If the 26,000 opportunity youth in the New Orleans metro area are not re-connected to school or work during their lifetimes, the costs to taxpayers in New Orleans is $360 million. More sobering, individuals become more vulnerable to a criminal justice system, violence, impoverished living conditions and unsafe neighborhoods (Sims, 2015).

There are initiatives that reconnect opportunity youth to jobs and schools. For instance, the city of New Orleans' Job1/YouthWork targets youth ages 14 to 21 years old and provides participants with employment, tutoring, skills training, and counseling. The Urban League of Greater New Orleans' Suits for Hire mentoring program provides youth ages 17 to 24 years with professional attire, mentoring, skills training, and other supports, and its Urban Youth Empowerment Program provides case management, skills development, education attainment, and job placement services. Partnership for Youth Development and the Cowen Institute's EMPLOY (Employment and Mobility Pathways Linked for Opportunity Youth) is a 20 member collective including government, nonprofit, and workforce development organizations facilitating a continuum of services that link and support education, employment, health, and well-being. The Cowen Institute at Tulane University offers the Earn and Learn Career Pathways program. For one year, opportunity youth work at Tulane University and take courses toward a career credential through the Accelerating Career Education (ACE) program at Delgado Community College. Upon completion, the youth will receive an industry-based certificate and long-term employment. In addition, the Youth Empowerment Project's The Village provides out of school youth ages 16 to 24 years with GED/HiSET preparation and wrap-around case management services. And its NOPLAY (New Orleans Providing

Literacy to All Youth) program provides GED/ HiSET and basic literacy instruction to youth between the ages of 16 and 24 years. Liberty's Kitchen, Café Reconcile, and Café Hope provides young adults between the ages of 16 and 22 with workforce development and life skills training within the culinary environment to become employed and self-sufficient.

Still these programs meet a fraction of the need. Quality jobs must be available so an education can realize its value. Unfortunately, the large number of opportunity youth reflect the real life context which many Black students face. Educational improvement in New Orleans' schools does not easily predict a better quality of life in New Orleans.

College Success

As schools strive for and actualize growth in state level achievement test scores, national standardized tests data as well as high school graduation rates are crucial

and encouraging. However, these are intermediate goals – means to a bigger end: college access and degree attainment. In an increasingly global and competitive environment, the consequences of not getting a college degree can be devastating to individuals, communities and the national economy. But a high school diploma is worth less than in the past. The Pew Research Center found that the value of a college degree is increasing with time while high school diplomas are depreciating. Today, 22% with only a high school diploma from the U.S. are living in poverty, compared to 7% of Baby Boomers who had only a high school diploma in 1979 when they were in their late 20s and early 30s (Pew Research Center, 2014). At an absolute minimum, individuals need some post-secondary experiences if they are to have any reasonable opportunities to earn a living wage.

Institution Name	Grand tot	Black	Hispanic	White	Asian
Southern University and A & M College	5746	94%	1%	3%	0%
Grambling State University	4155	91%	1%	1%	0%
Dillard University	1183	90%	1%	0%	0%
Southern University at New Orleans	1809	83%	1%	2%	1%
Xavier University of Louisiana	2504	77%	2%	4%	10%
Virginia College-Shreveport Bossier City	264	75%	1%	23%	0%
Strayer University-Louisiana	132	63%	5%	20%	2%
University of Phoenix-Shreveport-Bossier Car	131	60%	1%	17%	0%
ITT Technical Institute-Saint Rose	470	57%	7%	33%	1%
Herzing University-Kenner	316	57%	5%	32%	1%
ITT Technical Institute-Baton Rouge	656	56%	3%	38%	2%
University of Phoenix-Baton Rouge Campus	893	52%	3%	13%	0%
University of Phoenix-Lafayette Campus	85	47%	1%	21%	0%
Northwestern State University of Louisiana	7836	27%	5%	57%	1%
Our Lady of Holy Cross College	878	26%	6%	52%	4%
University of Louisiana at Monroe	7276	25%	2%	64%	2%
Our Lady of the Lake College	1486	25%	2%	66%	4%
Louisiana State University Health Sciences Ce	44	25%	2%	48%	7%
Louisiana College	1116	22%	2%	68%	1%
University of Louisiana at Lafayette	15053	21%	3%	69%	2%
Louisiana State University-Shreveport	3674	20%	4%	62%	2%
Nicholls State University	5888	20%	3%	68%	1%
McNeese State University	7575	18%	2%	73%	1%
Loyola University New Orleans	2946	16%	16%	51%	4%
University of New Orleans	7144	15%	10%	56%	8%
Southeastern Louisiana University	13730	15%	5%	67%	1%
Centenary College of Louisiana	586	15%	6%	70%	3%

Table 1: Fall 2014 enrollment data for Louisiana colleges & universities by race. Source: Source: Source: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education 2013; Data Note: This data reflects undergraduate enrollment; Not all institutions are shown in this table due to missing data, but the averages included institutions when applicable.

As was mentioned, more Black students from New Orleans are qualifying and enrolling in college. However, data suggest that serious disparities exist in the higher education setting. The capability to track New Orleans high school graduates by race in the Louisiana institutions of higher learning is limited. But we can extrapolate from enrollment and graduation rates that the journey to a higher education degree is difficult for Blacks in the state.

Data from the US Census Bureau suggest that as of 2013 the total population five-year estimate for Louisiana is approximately 4,567,968 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013a). Of this population 32% (1,463,345) are Black and 62.9% (2,874,235) are reported as White. Approximately 7.6% of Louisiana's population is in the age range of 20-24, which is in line with the traditional age of students entering and attending colleges and universities.

Institution Name	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White
Tulane University of Louisiana	78	65	70	78
*Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College	69	59	63	67
Centenary College of Louisiana	63	54	44	60
Loyola University New Orleans	57	49	45	60
Xavier University of Louisiana	69	47	33	0
Dillard University	N/R	45	N/R	0
*Louisiana Tech University	46	42	38	51
Louisiana College	50	35	25	45
*Northwestern State University of Louisiana	33	35	38	40
*University of Louisiana at Monroe	35	34	20	43
*University of Louisiana at Lafayette	60	33	31	47
*Southern University and A & M College	N/R	32	N/R	29
*Grambling State University	50	31	20	13
*Nicholls State University	38	31	12	45
*Louisiana State University-Shreveport	27	30	38	34
*McNeese State University	50	30	60	38
*University of New Orleans	32	26	25	33
*Southeastern Louisiana University	30	25	47	38
University of Phoenix-Baton Rouge Campus	50	17	N/R	17
University of Phoenix-Louisiana Campus	50	17	N/R	17
*Southern University at New Orleans	N/R	10	N/R	N/R
Our Lady of Holy Cross College	67	7	29	23
*Louisiana State University-Alexandria	0	5	0	25

Table 2: Six-Year graduation rate for Louisiana public colleges & universities by race Rank order by Black (highest to lowest)
Source: Source: National Center for Education Statistics – http://nces.ed.gov
U.S. Department of Education 2013 DataN/R – None Reported
*Public, Some institutions not shown because of missing data.
due to missing data, but the averages included institutions when applicable.

Enrollment data were collected for each of these institutions by race as a way of highlighting the racial profile of Louisiana's colleges and universities.   A closer examination of these results revealed that in aggregate - that is when the institutions in this sample are collapsed to a single variable (Louisiana Colleges & Universities) - Black student enrollment for Fall 2013 was 25% compared to their White counterparts at 59% in Louisiana Colleges and Universities. It can easily be discerned from Table 1 which institutions are traditionally Black and White e.g. Louisiana State University and A&M College (75%) White, Southern University and A&M College (94%) Black.

In further describing the profile of Louisiana public colleges and universities and the differences in Black and White students, six-year graduation rates were collected and compared using the institutional comparison tool in IPEDS (NCES, 2015). Graduation rates reveal more than 41% of Whites who enrolled in Louisiana colleges and universities in 2007 graduated in six years compared to 34% of Blacks.   Both numbers are wanting and a gap exists nonetheless (See Table 2).

These data culminate into racial difference among those who have college degrees in New Orleans and the metro area. The White subgroup is twice as likely to have at least an associate degree than the Black cohort in the metropolitan area (See Figure 6).
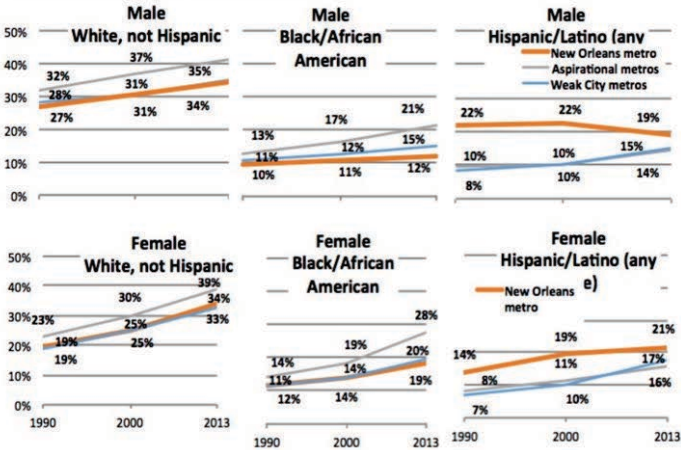

Figure 6: Population with at least an associate's degree by race/ethnicity for the population 25 years and older
Source: Louisiana Office of Student Financial Aid [LOFSA]. (2014). 2014 High School Graduates
(including alternate eligible) eligible for a TOPS award by school, school district and parish TOPS eligibility report.

Closing

For the last 10 years, New Orleans has played the blame game in education. Reformers have shamed the past to argue for change. In return, reform has been charged with destroying traditional public education for future children. The aftermath of Katrina should incite passions. Everyone seemingly profits from the debate except for public school families – the people who need more than words. However, durable arguments have concretized into an immovable tableau that gets in the way of both justice and progress. Regardless of whose side you're on, pointing fingers to say who did what to who doesn't solve problems. Progress forces us to ask where do we go from here.

Based on this report, the authors recommend the following:

- Increase funding and slots for early childhood programming including CCAP and LA4 programs, while maintaining much-needed tax incentives.

- Increase support to early childhood care and education providers to improve quality.

- Use appropriate play-based learning approaches during early childhood education and abandon a focus on standardized testing of children during early childhood.

- Maintain a holistic focus on early childhood development rather than simply focusing on kindergarten readiness.

- Examine the impact of a Whiter educator workforce on academic and socioeconomic outcomes for African American children, as well as its impact on the African American middle class.

- Align K-12 curriculum with college and career readiness standards to better support students in successfully accessing college and career opportunities.

- Expand career and technical education programs in NOPS.

- Continue to hold all schools accountable for exceptional outcomes (for all subgroups of youth), and require action for patterns of sub-performance.

- Increase capacity (seats) at high-performing and high-demand schools, while also strengthening all schools to provide high quality educational options in every neighborhood.

- Provide parents with meaningful and appropriate information that allows all families to select the schools that are the best fit for their children.

- Mandate the inclusion of all NOPS in the centralized enrollment system.

- Create a centralized Student Information System (SIS) that would hold data on all public school students, track mobility, support services, and monitor outcomes.

- Develop programs that infuse the local diversity into all levels of school staff, faculty, vendors, administration and governance.

- Implement restorative justice practices in schools to reduce the rates of suspension and expulsion. Produce uniform guidelines for school suspensions, considering appropriate behavior modification strategies for the varying age and grade levels.

- Expand and improve school accountability practices to provide schools in crisis with support to address areas of deficiency, reserving complete school closure for emergency circumstances or as a means of last resort.

- Place more focus on undergraduate student success, with an expanded strategy to provide stackable credentials/certifications to students while in high school and also promote the viability of two-year degrees for demand sector jobs in the region.

- Build partnerships between NOPS and the local business community to strengthen career readiness initiatives.

These and other reforms should not be done to communities. We should constantly build capacity of others so members can improve themselves. In the next 10 years, we have an opportunity to pass a test that has challenged our nation for decades—to create schools that authentically represent the public and compel us to learn together. But we will miss this opportunity if we reform in spite of community. It is harder, and it certainly takes longer, but the rewards and gains will be greater if we build upon our current reforms in an inclusive manner.

When we remove our eyes from the higher standard of community, we also remove our personal responsibilities for improving it. When we have faith in community, we will begin to understand fully that we can uplift communities while reforming - together.

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HOUSING CRIMINAL JUSTICE HEALTH EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT WORKFORCE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

DISASTER PLANNING AND EQUITY:LESSONS LEARNED IN POST-KATRINA NEW ORLEANS

ROBERT A. COLLINS

WHILE THE KATRINA **DISASTER RESPONSE** HAS BEEN EXTREMELY WELL DOCUMENTED AND ANALYZED MANY TIMES, MOST ANALYSES DO NOT LOOK SPECIFICALLY AT ISSUES OF **EQUITY.**

ENVIRONMENT

Hurricane Katrina did more than expose the weaknesses in the flood control structures around New Orleans. It also exposed the weaknesses in the social fabric of the city by demonstrating how the impacts of disasters are not shared equally among all social groups. This essay will examine this issue by first describing the history of the challenge. It will then look at the Katrina disaster response through the lens of equity. After looking at the Katrina disaster response, it will examine improvements in disaster planning implemented since Katrina. Finally, the essay will conclude by making recommendations on how disaster planning can be improved in the future.

The History of the Challenge

The city of New Orleans is, by nature and by design, a vulnerable geographic location. It was already vulnerable to flooding at the time it was founded by the French in 1718, due to its location in the natural floodplain of the Mississippi River (Colten 2005). Generations of settlers and governments have attempted to make the city more livable by draining the soils and building levees and floodwalls higher with each passing generation. Paradoxically, while these structures make the city habitable to humans, they also increase human exposure to catastrophic flooding during a hurricane.

The levees intended to protect the city also locked out the sediment and nutrients that built the land up over millions of years of natural Mississippi River flooding. The locking out of sediment and nutrients

began a process of subsidence, or sinking land. The vast majority of modern soil subsidence, however, was caused by the installation of drainage systems, originally designed to drain swamp water, and then designed to drain rainwater. These modern drainage structures built to pump rainwater out of the city have the effect of denying the land of natural hydration and lowering the water table, which soils need to maintain organic character and shape. The result of pumping out rainwater is constantly sinking land (Campanella, 2015a). This process of constantly sinking land has turned areas of the city that were at or slightly below sea level a century ago, to currently being several feet below sea level in some parts of the city – enough to drown a human being.

No levee system is perfect, and levees are occasionally breached. Subsidence makes recovery from a catastrophic flood more difficult because when levees are breached a "bowl effect" is created, containing the standing water in the low-lying areas of the city and making draining floodwater from the city much more difficult. While much of the land mass of New Orleans is below sea level, there is a great deal of variation in the number of feet below sea level, and about one half of the city is actually at or above sea level due to natural geologic ridges.

The beginning of inequity in disaster planning began with the earliest settlement of the city. The early wealthy settlers had access to the surveyors' maps and knew the location of the geologic ridges that were above sea level. Once the early wealthy settlers bought up the land above sea level, the lower income residents had to settle on what was left. This began the process of the upper classes being

settled on the higher land and the lower income residents settling in the lower elevations (Colten, 2005). This pattern was repeated over many generations and as a result there is a direct correlation between income level and flood level. This is not simply caused by the upper income citizens buying up all the available land. There was, and is, land available for purchase at the higher elevations. However, because of the economic principle of scarcity, that land is also the most expensive, pricing it out of range for many working class families.

In general, the phenomenon of the highest elevation land being the most expensive in the city has continued until the present day. There are a few exceptions to this rule. The primary one being that land bordering Lake Pontchartrain is more valuable since land close to a lake tends to demand a higher price in any city. However, in general, the land affordable to poor and working class families will tend to be at the lower elevations, meaning poor and working class families will have the greatest exposure to flooding.

The issue of racial discrimination amplified the inequities in the land and housing market. After World War II, when the VA Housing Loans in the GI bill allowed many veterans to purchase their first home, many Black veterans found their benefits either delayed or denied. By the time many Black veterans received their housing benefits, the safest neighborhoods in the city had already been filled up. Add to this the well-documented processes of "Redlining:" Banks rejecting mortgage applications to Black applicants in certain desirable neighborhoods; real estate agents steering Black homeowners into low elevation areas; blatant racial discrimination in the sale of

homes, and a historic pattern developed whereby Black homeowners ended up living, by and large, in the lowest and most flood prone areas of the city.

Insurance is another area where inequities of income and race are exposed. While mortgage holders require flood insurance in lower elevation areas, acquiring flood insurance adequate enough to insure a home against a total flood loss is beyond the financial means of most working class families, making them unable to replace a home lost to a catastrophic flood.

All of the above factors formed a nexus of historical circumstances whereby poor and working class Black families were steered into the most vulnerable areas of the city with the highest probability of catastrophic flooding, then left without sufficient resources to rebuild when that catastrophic flooding took place.

The Katrina Disaster Response

While the Katrina disaster response has been extremely well documented and analyzed many times, most analyses do not look specifically at issues of equity. All residents of New Orleans suffered during Katrina, however some residents suffered more because they were in more vulnerable conditions prior to the storm (Tierney, 2006). The first inequitable condition was the greater geographic vulnerability of Black and low-income residents, discussed above. Black and low-income residents were hit hardest by the flooding because they tended to live in the lowest elevations.

Perhaps the most striking inequities from a disaster planning perspective are those of transportation and shelter. When the mayor calls for a mandatory evacuation of the city, middle and upper-income residents simply get in their cars and drive out of the city. Upon reaching their destination city, they

The Poverty Rate in New Orleans is

27%

rent a hotel room, or stay with relatives, and monitor the news media for word as to when they can return to the city. These options are simply not available to the poor and many working class families.

The poverty rate in New Orleans is 27%, considerably higher than the national rate of 16%; and 19% of New Orleans households do not have access to a car, compared to 9% nationwide (Shrinath, Mack, & Plyer, 2014). If working class families do own a car, quite often the car is old and not in good enough condition to make a long evacuation trip. Even among those citizens who own reliable cars, evacuation is not an option for many because they simply have nowhere to go. They may not have relatives or friends outside of the city. And a hotel room for these families is out of the question due to high cost. Evacuating before a hurricane can cost hundreds or even thousands of dollars, resources that poor and working class families do not have.

In some cases, the inequity of transportation and shelter access had a lethal effect, causing some residents to stay and drown in the floodwaters. Also, many of the residents who stayed found themselves trapped in a city with no access to fresh water, food, or sanitary living conditions. The plight of the citizens trapped in the Superdome and Convention Center is well documented, and those conditions were replicated all

over the city at many other locations. The fact that none of the government agencies charged with protecting the city had a comprehensive plan in place to evacuate and shelter the most vulnerable citizens was an egregious disaster planning failure. Basically, there was no truly comprehensive plan. The response was made up on site. This resulted in citizens being scattered all over the US after they finally were rescued and evacuated from New Orleans. The rental assistance funding offered by the federal government for evacuees to rent housing was slow in coming and difficult to access, unless, of course, one had a computer, internet access, and a bank account ready to receive an electronic direct deposit, all markers of the middle class and not available to the poor.

Once citizens were able to return to the city, the disaster recovery process was also not equitable. The poor and working class areas were likely to have the most damage to housing stock from flooding, due to the fact that they were in lower elevations. Also, these houses were likely to be the oldest, and the weakest in terms of ability to withstand a flood (wood instead of brick construction.)

In terms of insurance coverage, many of these homeowners did not even know that they were in a floodplain due to old, outdated maps being used by the mortgage banks and insurance industry. As a result, they had never been required to buy flood insurance. So, when the flooding occurred, many found themselves with no flood insurance to cover the loss. Those working class families who did have flood insurance tended to have very little, due to the high cost. Very few had insurance sufficient to cover a total loss.

The disaster recovery process was much quicker for middle class families who either had minimal flooding due to neighborhood location and flood elevation, or, even if they did experience catastrophic flooding, they were more likely to be fully insured and were able to recover most of the value of the house from the flood policy. Flood insurance rates are predicted to continue to go up, further straining the resources of the low-income residents (Campanella, 2015b).

The federally-funded, state-administered "Road Home" program, intended to assist homeowners with financial reconstruction assistance, was slow to deliver funds, and had a tedious and complicated application process. Once again, favoring the middle class with access to computers, lawyers, and accountants.

Improvements to Disaster Planning since Katrina

Although New Orleans remains a vulnerable city, there have been key improvements since Katrina. First, the US Army Corps of Engineers made billions of dollars in improvements to the levee, floodwall, and drainage systems protecting the city. Most of the flooding in the city was caused by the breach of floodwalls connected to rainwater drainage canals. The floodwall breaches were caused by storm surge that came in from the Gulf of Mexico, passed through Lake Borgne, then into Lake Pontchartrain. Once in Lake Pontchartrain, the storm surge travelled into the drainage canals (their function is normally carrying rainwater out to Lake Pontchartrain). Due to flawed engineering and shoddy construction, the canal floodwalls breached in several areas, flooding the city.

The Army Corps of Engineers has installed "Lock and Dam" systems at the mouth of every drainage canal. These locks will be closed before a hurricane threatens the city, protecting the drainage canals from storm surge. Although levees can still be over-topped by a large storm surge, the

most vulnerable aspect of the flood control system has been repaired. The city is much better protected than pre-Katrina, and should be able to withstand a Category 3 Hurricane (111-129 mph wind speed); however, a storm with higher wind speeds will still overtop the levees and flood large sections of the city, so there is more work to be done.

In the area of urban planning, the city recently completed a 10 process of post-Katrina city planning that included a master plan and comprehensive zoning ordinance. Although the current comprehensive zoning ordinance passed in May of 2015 does not include all of the recommendations written into the master plan passed in 2010, it is a work in progress. The post-Katrina master plan began the work of designing a more sustainable flood control plan for the city (Collins, 2011).

Disaster planners contracted by the city have designed a comprehensive flood control system based on the globally respected "Dutch Model" of flood control, first used by the Government of the Netherlands to protect that country from the North Sea. The Dutch Model does not simply rely on levees. Instead, it relies on a system of inundation canals, which essentially carry storm surge through a city and move it along within the canals, pushing it out the other end of the system. It would pass in, through, and out of the city without flooding. Also, the flood control plan included in the city's master plan, called the "Urban Water Plan," proposes to fight subsidence by absorbing as much rainwater runoff as possible through porous surfaces, retention ponds, and open drainage canals built into the natural landscape. (In terms of city topography, think: A version of the Venice canal system). This plan to "live with water" is popular with city planners, but there is no

implementation funding at the moment.

In the area of assisted-evacuation, there is now a comprehensive plan in place to evacuate residents who do not have access to transportation: The City-Assisted Evacuation Plan or CAEP (City of New Orleans, 2015). It is assisted by a non-profit organization that provides volunteers to the city as part of a cooperative agreement (Evacuteer, 2015). Once the mayor calls an evacuation, residents in need of evacuation assistance will report to a large number of designated pick-up points around the city, called "evacuspots." Buses provided by the city will pick citizens up and transport them to Union Passenger Terminal, at which time they will be transported out of town. This plan was effective during Hurricane Gustav in 2008, however that was only a short-term evacuation, as Gustav was not a direct hit. The most recent hurricane to threaten the city, Isaac in 2012, was not large enough to call a mass evacuation.

The plan has not yet been tested with a large-scale, long-term evacuation event the size of Katrina. Also, it is unclear whether or not comprehensive long-term shelter plans have been improved since Katrina, since the city evacuation plan simply states that residents will be transported to "State and Federal shelters" (City of New Orleans, 2015).

Recommendations for future Disaster Planning

Based on lessons learned from Katrina, the following recommendations should be considered in making preparations for the next hurricane more equitable:

1. Affordable housing at higher elevations: Although current market forces will conspire with a history of race and class discrimination to keep most poor and working class families in the most flood

prone neighborhoods, inclusionary zoning can be used to require that any new multi-family residential development on land above sea level include some affordable housing, thereby improving access to higher elevations for low-income residents.

2. Funding to complete flood protection: Congress should approve the Army Corps of Engineers' full funding request to complete the upgrade of the city's flood control network, and provide funding to begin work on the Dutch Model of flood control in the "Urban Water Plan" by installing inundation canals to handle storm surge, and building drainage canals into the natural landscape to return rainwater to the ground, re-hydrating the soils, which is the only plan that will fight subsidence in the long run and stop the city from sinking even further below sea level.

3. Assisted Evacuation: Although the city now has a robust city-assisted evacuation plan, it is unclear whether or not residents will avoid the problems with long-term evacuation shelter that occurred during Katrina once they are outside of the city and delivered to state shelters. The state government should publish a specific plan for long-term evacuation shelter so that each resident knows what to expect when evacuated.

4. City Planning: The city can mitigate flood risk by zoning for higher population density at higher elevations, with inclusion of affordable housing as mentioned in recommendation number one. Also, the City's most recent master plan calls for "Comprehensive stormwater management systems that include natural drainage methods and potential use of Dutch-style canals as amenities" to allow residents to

"live with water" (City of New Orleans, 2010). A high priority should be given to efforts to directly fight soil subsidence by absorbing or retaining as much stormwater runoff as possible through retention ponds and open drainage canals built directly into the natural landscape. The next round of amendments to the city's new comprehensive zoning ordinance will need to begin specifically implementing and enforcing designs to allow the city to live in harmony with the water, so that regardless of race, income, geographic location, or elevation, residents can avoid the damage of flood inundation. Only then will the New Orleans landscape become a truly equitable environment.

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HOUSING CRIMINAL JUSTICE HEALTH EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT WORKFORCE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE AND THE STATE OF BLACK NEW ORLEANS

BEVERLY WRIGHT, PH.D.

HURRICANE KATRINA MADE CLEAR THE LINKAGES BETWEEN RACE, PLACE, AND VULNERABILITY. WHAT PEOPLE OFTEN TERM **"NATURAL" DISASTERS OR "ACTS OF GOD" ARE OFTEN ACTS OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE** PERPETUATED BY GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS ON THE POOR, PEOPLE OF COLOR, THE MOST VULNERABLE OF OUR SOCIETY—GROUPS LEAST ABLE TO WITHSTAND SUCH DISASTERS.

ENVIRONMENT

A rising concern in recent years for societies across the globe is the impact of extreme weather on coastal areas, natural habitats and the species that inhabit them. Extreme weather events have impacted agriculture and natural resources with devastating and long lasting effects. While managing weather impacts has always been difficult for societies, survival before, during and after these impacts has always been more difficult for some than others.   Disadvantaged populations around the world already bear inequitable environmental burdens, and that fact rings true, even in today's society.

While United States citizens have not experienced the devastating impacts of climate change on the same scale as the citizens of Haiti after the earthquake in 2010, or the people of Asia after the tsunami of 2004, the footprint for recovery is quite similar in content. In all of these examples the issue of equity in recovery is central, especially to marginalized communities.

Katrina Left Behind

In its wake, Katrina left behind toxic contamination and health threats as well as debris and hazardous waste. Six storm-caused oil spills released 7.4 million gallons of oil, or 61% as much as the 11 million gallons that leaked into Alaska's Prince William Sound from the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989 (The New York Times, 2010). Waters from the storm surge hit 60 underground storage tanks, five Superfund sites and 466 industrial facilities that stored highly dangerous chemicals. More than

1,000 drinking-water systems were disabled, leaving the dreaded e. coli in floodwaters at levels far exceeding EPA's safe standards. Twelve million of 21 million tons of debris from Hurricane Katrina was left in Orleans Parish. Sixty thousand boats, 300,000 underground fuel tanks, and 42,000 tons of hazardous waste were left for collection and proper disposal at licensed facilities (Bullard & Wright, 2009). Katrina left behind 350,000 automobiles to be drained of oil and gasoline and then recycled, with 145,000 left in New Orleans alone (Bullard & Wright, 2009). But that is not all Katrina left behind.

One of the remnants of Hurricane Katrina was the question of who would survive the storm, and who would be rescued and protected by society and government. The storm illustrated how pointed a political question that was. Katrina exposed the hard truth that groups within society are valued differently as is evidenced by the consistent, differential effects of natural disasters on low-income and minority communities. Vulnerable populations by definition already suffer from both higher socio-economic stress and greater exposure to environmental toxins, hazardous wastes and experience other environmental burdens (Boyce, 2000).

Such is the case for the city of New Orleans, Louisiana. The incomes of the poor did not afford many citizens the luxury of evacuating, so they remained in peril of a killer storm. Those left behind were people already living in low-lying areas with less than adequate levee protection, and in proximity to landfills and Toxic Release Inventory reporting facilities, thus compounding their exposure to toxins released in the air and floodwaters after the hurricane. It was largely African-American,

Vietnamese and poor populations who lived in the areas most vulnerable to the collapse of the levees, who were unable to secure transportation for evacuation, and who scrambled in frightening conditions to secure scarce resources and aid for their families and themselves.

As the city began to recover, the question became, "How equitable was the plan and who would recover?" Ten years after Katrina, New Orleans has become more separate and less equal than before the storm. There are huge disparities emerging in income, housing, jobs and education. The city today is undeniably Whiter and richer in terms of individually-earned income than before the storm.

An examination of data shows that the impact of this recovery on the Black middle class has been devastating. These data indicate that only 5% of African American compared to 29% of White households fall within the highest income categories (Plyer, Ortiz, Horowitz, & Hobor, 2013). The gap is widening. African Americans of all income groups were hit hardest by Hurricane Katrina. These data seem to indicate that they have also benefited least from its recovery.

Ten years after Katrina laid waste to this historic and culturally diverse city, what we have learned is that race still matters. What we have yet to learn is how the city will be transformed and to what extent African Americans will benefit from this transformation. History does not paint a positive picture of how the African American community, particularly its poor, survive large-scale changes made towards "progress" in the city. History records a culture of metropolitan progress resulting in

the displacement of African American New Orleanians (Long, 2007).

There is an adverse relationship between city progress, as defined by developers and city leaders, and the displacement of Black, urban neighborhoods in New Orleans. After Hurricane Katrina, many traditionally African American neighborhoods were decimated (Long, 2007). When this result is coupled with the tear down of public housing, we now find that New Orleans is a city where gentrification is running rampant in traditionally African American neighborhoods. (Long, 2007)

Disaster Capitalism

Immediately after the flood, billions of no-bid contracts were awarded to a handful of politically connected national contractors; the federal Davis-Bacon Act, which mandates workers be paid the prevailing wage, was suspended; and a host of environmental waivers were granted (Bullard & Wright, 2009). Some policy analysts and elected officials presented the plight of the city's displaced citizens as a "silver lining" in dispersing New Orleans' poor in Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Memphis, and Jackson. They spin it as an unintended positive effect of the storm - breaking up concentrated poverty— something that government officials had been trying to achieve for decades (Bullard & Wright, 2009). However, the best way to break up concentrated poverty is not displacement, but concentrated employment at a livable wage.

Disaster capitalism, or the embracing of Milton Friedman's free market policy as a deliberate strategy for political leaders, is argued as being a prominent strategy in some developed countries (Klein, 2007). Disaster capitalism is the exploitation of crises by leaders to push through controversial exploitive policies while

citizens are too emotionally and physically distracted by disasters or upheavals to mount an effective resistance (Klein, 2007).

The situation is described as synonymous with the process by which prisoners are softened up for interrogation by the shock of their captivity (Klein, 2007). Massive disasters could serve to soften up citizens for radical free market crusades. Politicians are advised that they should immediately after a crisis push through all the painful policies at once before people could regain their footing. Such practices are akin to an economic shock treatment. The state of shock is, by definition, a temporary state; shock wears off. The best way to stay oriented to resist shock is to know what is happening to you and why. Klein calls it the "shock doctrine" (Klein, 2007).

Hurricane Katrina made clear the linkages between race, place, and vulnerability. What people often term "natural" disasters or "acts of God" are often acts of social injustice perpetuated by government and business on the poor, people of color, the most vulnerable of our society—groups least able to withstand such disasters (Squires & Hartman, 2006). Decades of government neglect, denial, and old-fashioned greed created a nightmare in the aftermath of the storm, and Katrina allowed "disaster capitalism" to shift into high gear.

Perilous Consequences of Policy Decisions: A Plan for the Future of New Orleans

As the pumping stations in the city were restored, and the massive breaches in the levees were finally plugged with tons of sand bags, the gravity of the situation became real for New Orleans residents and for the rest of the world. The sobering newscasts elicited quite different responses as a matter of perspective for those who remained in the city, those who left the city and people

watching the disaster play out around the globe. While New Orleans natives grieved and were obsessed with the complicated nature of how to return home, or how to rebuild their lives living in a devastated city; urban planners around the world saw this tragedy as an opportunity to plan and build their version of the perfect city. It was almost as if the hurricane waters that had washed away the lives of New Orleans citizens had also washed away the knowledge that this city, with a settlement history that is older than the United States, was home to thousands of people. Developers and planners approached the crippled city as an artist would a new canvas, ready to display his latest artistic strokes of genius for the world to admire. Katrina presented them with an opportunity of a lifetime; the ability to start anew and build their dream city.

New plans for the city abounded and planners and developers from all over descended on the city wrangling for their piece of the rebuilding pie. Ultimately, the plan selected, entitled "Plan for the Future," was put forth by the Bring New Orleans Back Commission (Times-Picayune Staff, 2006). Despite the attempt to engage community representatives in the planning process, the completed plan was not well received by the community (Warner, 2006).

The Plan for the Future proposed to significantly reduce the "footprint" or size of the city of New Orleans, reasoning that a significantly resource-constrained city would not be able to efficiently serve all neighborhoods when only a fraction of the pre-storm population and tax base had returned (Times-Picayune Staff, 2006). The citizens of New Orleans largely rejected this plan and spoke against it at numerous city council and town hall meetings following its introduction to the public (Randall, 2006; Krupa, 2010). The plan was rejected by citizens for many reasons, but

the most significant was the perception of inappropriate and heavy-handed government intrusion into the private lives of citizens effectively denying their individual right of self-determination and the right to return to the city in which they lived (Warner, 2006).

Ironically, most areas slated for immediate rebuilding and redevelopment were predominantly White and affluent, while areas identified for conversion into green space and parks and areas required to prove their viability were predominantly African-American and less affluent (Mohai & Lee, 2010). The plan also appeared to ignore the fact that New Orleans started losing population in the 1960s, resulting in significant blight and an insufficient tax base decades before Hurricane Katrina (Plyer, 2011). This only fueled the feeling among residents that the storm was being used as an excuse to prevent certain neighborhoods from returning (Warner, 2006). The citizens of New Orleans were actively engaged in a process to determine the direction, size, and scope of the rebuilding, including the allocation of recovery funding. A preliminary equity analysis reveals a key feature of New Orleans' recovery. Principles for ensuring equitable distribution of recovery funds were not in effect. To this day, parts of the city are "back" while others are still languishing.

It is difficult to identify any action taken by government as a response to the enormous devastation that befell New Orleans than the Bring New Orleans Back Commission (2006) unveiling its plan for rebuilding New Orleans. Mayor Ray Nagin's commission presented the city with a $17 billion plan that would significantly change the city's neighborhood and housing patterns. The plan presented specific directions on who could rebuild and where building was allowed (Bring New Orleans Back Commission, 2006).

The hot button prescriptive, however, was that all renovation was to be stopped in the flooded areas. Persons most affected by this moratorium on rebuilding were African Americans. In New Orleans alone, 61% of the population (484,674) lived in areas that were flooded (Campanella, 2007; Plyer, 2014). African Americans resided in these areas with numbers far greater than Whites by nearly 4 to 1 (220,970 to 57,469) (Campanella, 2007). African Americans also outnumbered Whites even before the storm by nearly 2.5 to 1 (323,868 to 134,120). Asian and Hispanic residents citywide totaled 10,751 and 14,663 respectively (Plyer, Ortiz, Horowitz, & Hobor, 2013).

The Bring New Orleans Back Commission plan (2006) had four levels of specificity relative to rebuilding, They included (1) areas where rebuilding was allowed, (2) areas where a building moratorium would exist until neighborhoods proved viability, (3) approximate areas expected to become parks and green space; and (4) areas to be redeveloped, some with new housing for relocated home owners. The map, infamously known as the green dot map, became a bone of contention for African Americans and Vietnamese in particular, but clearly, the largest number of persons to be affected were African Americans (Krupa, 2010).

In response to the panic and fury of the community, by many neighborhoods that were overlaid with green dots, the plan was dismissed (Krupa, 2010). And, while it was suggested that the city deny citizens permits to rebuild over a large area of the city, residents finalized their rebuilding plans, and the city granted permits to all who applied (Krupa, 2010). Today, most areas earmarked for green space, by the infamous green dots, have rebounded to at least 60% of their pre-Katrina population (Krupa, 2010).   There has even been

improvement in two green zones in New Orleans East that were zoned commercial.

After nearly 10 years of recovery since Hurricane Katrina, the city of New Orleans is showing strong resilience in efforts to rebuild damaged and flooded housing. According to a University of New Orleans survey, 81% of both single and double family residents have begun or completed rebuilding or renovating their homes (University of New Orleans, 2015). Fifteen percent of homes have been demolished and four percent are gutted or derelict (Louisiana Weekly Staff , 2015).

The dreaded green dots seem to have little consequence for community resettlement. But, in light of the slow recovery in some areas versus speedy progress in others, many wonder if the *Plan for the Future* is still the plan. A real test of this hypothesis could be to embrace the old adage "Follow the Money."

The Unwritten Plan – Following the Money

In a preliminary study conducted by the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, the planned distribution of hurricane recovery funds was analyzed for New Orleans' thirteen planning districts (Mohai & Lee, 2010). The analysis was based on publicly-available information provided in the *Unified New Orleans Plan* (City of New Orleans, 2007), a planning document that offers only a snapshot of an ongoing process, yet served as one of several post-disaster recovery plans with widespread community involvement (City of New Orleans, 2007). The plan presented 95 recovery projects at a total cost of over $1.55 billion. Thirty-three percent of this amount was planned for recovery projects located in Planning Districts 1, 2, and 3 (i.e., the French Quarter/ Central Business District, Garden District, and Uptown), which were among the least

storm-damaged neighborhoods in New Orleans. The remaining 67% of recovery expenditures were planned for Planning Districts 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13; districts that include the greater proportion of the city's population and the hardest hit neighborhoods of Lakeview, Lower 9th Ward, and New Orleans East (City of New Orleans, 2007).

To put these facts into context, there are 13 planning districts in New Orleans, four of which are predominantly White (Planning Districts 1, 5, 11, and 13) (Mohai & Lee, 2010). Eight planning districts are majority Black (Planning Districts 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 12). The four predominantly White planning districts were allocated a combined total of $208 million for redevelopment, which exceeds the $204 million allocated to a total of eight predominantly Black planning districts (Mohai & Lee, 2010). These findings, while disturbing, are not surprising to researchers, activists, and scholars who routinely illuminate environmental injustices and who regularly monitor governmental disaster response actions. Hurricane Katrina placed a magnifying lens on the environmental injustices suffered by the people of New Orleans immediately prior to, during and after the storm (Pastor, et al., 2006).

Place Matters

Place matters. In fact, where one lives is the best determinant of one's health and how long one will live (Policy Link, 2007). A community's physical, social, economic and service environment are important factors in the quality of life for its residents (Policy Link, 2007). Poor communities and communities of color are often home to dangerously polluting facilities in addition to other maladies that accompany poverty. High crime rates, inadequate housing, poor transportation and under-funded schools are commonplace to many poor communities. Citizens are locked into a life of poverty by segregation, which is often due to their race or skin color, and are excluded from the decision-making process.

Hurricane Katrina revealed to the nation (and developers in particular) that the area in New Orleans known as the "sliver by the river," (i.e., an area of the city that did not flood after the levee failures that resulted in the flooding of most of the rest of the city). This area is replete with the quintessential architecture of New Orleans on display in neighborhoods lined with grand mansions and modest shotgun houses shaded by old-growth trees. Real estate values have skyrocketed as the market of buyers and renters for these houses has swelled to include thousands of people relocating from other states (White, 2015).

Since Hurricane Katrina, African American residents have demanded that the New Orleans City Council, Mayor, and legislative representatives establish rent controls and high-rise development zoning restrictions; stop the closure of public housing; ensure adequate funding through an equitable process for repairing Katrina-damaged homes; make property taxes affordable; as well as other measures to prevent their displacement from homes and neighborhoods. More recently, a growing number of White residents are now demanding high-rise developing zoning restrictions and property tax relief. However, none of these demands have resulted in legislation, regulation, or even a policy. As a result, developers are setting the standards in New Orleans and targeting the streets and neighborhoods for gentrification (Goodyear, 2014).

For example, the Walter L. Cohen High School building is located two blocks from mansion-lined St. Charles Avenue in New Orleans' famed Garden District. The value of properties that share the same

zip code (70115) with the school has on average increased by more than 40% since Hurricane Katrina (White, 2015). Before Katrina, properties were sold at $173/sq. ft. However, in 2013 those values rose to $233/sq. ft. and by 2014, it had reached $240/sq. ft. (White, 2015).

The Recovery School District ("RSD"), a special school district in Louisiana that assumed control of the majority of New Orleans public schools in the weeks after Hurricane Katrina, as prescribed in the School Facilities Master Plan and ultimately ratified by the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) and the La. Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), decided to land bank or close this school building that was assessed to be in fair condition (Lawton, 2014). The RSD has not convened a process for informing the public of its rationale for closing the school building and inviting public input on this rationale (Lawton, 2014). The school is currently attended by nearly 500 African American students (Lawton, 2014).

The proposed plan for Cohen College Prep, currently operating out of the Walter L. Cohen High School site, is to build a school for those students on the site of the former Booker T. Washington school, which was constructed on the site of the former Silver City Dump. While the RSD has asserted that its plan met or exceeded the remediation requirements for environmental standards of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LaDEQ), ongoing tension ensues.

Children are one of the most vulnerable segments of the population when it comes to being harmed by exposure to toxic chemicals. Because they spend so much of their time at schools, these environments must be as toxin free as possible. Not surprisingly, schools that serve low-income students of color are more frequently built on contaminated

sites (Cohen, 2010). School siting has thus become a serious problem not only in New Orleans, but across this nation as advocates for children's environmental health and environmental justice galvanize around this issue. It has also become abundantly clear that this fight is a continuing one in New Orleans as the practice of siting schools serving low-income children of color on toxic landfills is repeated.

The City of New Orleans operated the Agriculture Street Landfill from 1909 until the late 1950s and reopened it to burn debris from Hurricane Betsy in 1965 (Webster, 2015). During the 1970s and 1980s, residential neighborhoods and Moton Elementary School were built over more than 40 acres of the site. In 1984, Robert Moton Elementary School opened for kindergarten through sixth grade. There were about 900 children enrolled in the school. The Orleans Parish School Board did not tell its employees or parents that the school had been built on a part of the City's landfill or that environmental testing had identified the presence of toxic chemicals on the school site. The EPA added the site to its national list of Superfund sites in 1994, after arsenic, lead and other hazardous materials were found on the property (Webster, 2015).

We are now more knowledgeable of the consequences of building schools on municipal landfills, and have a better scientific knowledge of what harm could occur to our children if schools are built on these sites. What lessons have we actually learned from our past behaviors if we are willing to continue to build our schools on contaminated sites?

The RSD proposes to build a new school for the students on a former city waste dump, where the land remains highly contaminated with lead, arsenic, mercury, and cancer-causing chemicals (Jacobs CSRS Program Management, 2015; Dall,

2015). According to the RSD's plan, at least 12 feet of the contaminated soil would remain on the school site with lead levels 24 times above the standard for residential land use (Leaaf Environmental, 2012; Leaaf Environmental, 2013). Several parents, school alumni, public education advocates, environmental justice organizations, and other New Orleanians have condemned the RSD's plan (Dall, 2015). State legislation was introduced by Representative Joseph Bouie to prohibit the RSD from building the school on the waste dump. The legislation passed unanimously by the Louisiana House of Representatives, but died in the Louisiana Senate after school officials and building contractors testified in opposition to the bill (Campbell-Rock, 2015). The RSD publicly announced that it will proceed with its plan to build the school for students whose current school is now "hot" property in post-Katrina New Orleans (White, 2015).

Disaster Increased Vulnerability

Research is replete with data supporting the disproportionate exposure of minority and poor communities to hazardous waste facilities and the disparities in clustering waste facilities within three kilometers of these communities (Bullard, Mohai, Saha, & Wright, 2007). After Katrina, New Orleans East, a largely African American and Vietnamese community was chosen for the disposal of debris from the storm. There were four landfills in the community with River Birch Landfill taking on the lion's share of the waste along with the Old Gentilly Landfill being reopened for that purpose after Katrina (Russell, 2012).

Additionally, vulnerable communities have become increasingly more endangered by the threat of new and risky technologies for waste disposal. An Eastern New Orleans community was targeted for the location of a risky technology waste disposal

facility in 2009. Over the past ten years, plasma arc technology has emerged as a potential trend for renewable energy in waste management (Solena Group, n.d.). It is a waste disposal technology with critical environmental health implications in the waste management industry. Such a gasification facility was proposed by the Sun Energy Group, LLC, for development at the site of the Regional Business Park on Jourdan Road (Elie, 2009; Buchanan, 2010). It would be the first facility of its size to be built in the United States and the largest of any existing facility in the world.

"Sun Energy (Sun Energy Group, LLC), in partnership with Air Products, through a joint venture company, Louisiana Gasification Facility, LLC (LGF), proposed to build, own and operate what they call an 'energy from waste . . . facility' in New Orleans East (Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, 2011). The LGF would use 'Plasma Arc Gasification" (Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, 2011). Sun Energy claims that the technology is not incineration, per se (Sun Energy Group, LLC., n.d.). However, though company websites, diagrams, and process descriptions claim the technology is a renewable energy facility, the proposed technology would in fact have the same polluting effect as a two-stage incinerator (Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, 2011; Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice, 2011).

While there are differences between traditional incineration technologies and plasma arc technology, the system proposed by Sun Energy involves incineration/combustion as an essential component (Greenaction for Health & Environmental Justice, 2011). One difference is that while traditional incinerators burn the waste directly, plasma arc heats the waste in the gasification stage, creating a synthetic gas (or "syngas"). Key to the technology

proposed by Sun Energy is the burning of the syngas in a turbine or boiler. This combustion process is the incineration that results in emissions of toxic and criteria air pollutants into a neighborhood already overloaded with air pollution. These emissions would include dioxins and furans, highly toxic chemicals linked to a wide range of profound illnesses including cancer, reproductive, developmental, and immunological diseases. Plasma arc facilities around the country have been plagued with failed equipment and no merit of energy production from the syngas technology has been shown (Greenaction for Health & Environmental Safety, 2011). This new and risky technology represents the latest threat to New Orleans' vulnerable communities.

The selected site for the project is the neighborhood of New Orleans East, the largest African-American community in the city located in Planning District 9 (Bennett, et al., 2011). New Orleans East has an industrial park that is zoned as heavy industrial, and for a long time, the neighborhood has served as a garbage-dumping site for the city and surrounding parishes (Bennett, et al., 2011). The neighborhood currently has 23 illegal dumpsites and numerous inactive and active landfills (Bennett, et al., 2011). The city of New Orleans does not have a comprehensive waste management plan to effectively manage this problem. African American and Vietnamese residents living near the site opposed the location of the facility there (Elie, 2009). To date, the community has been able to stop the development of the project.

Collateral Damage in the Melia Community

Policies and projects implemented to mitigate the damages of climate change impacts sometimes come with consequences as was the case with a New Orleans community,

Melia, that was negatively impacted by the Southeast Louisiana (SELA) Dwyer Road Drainage Project (Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, 2012). The purpose of the Southeast Louisiana Urban Flood Damage Reduction Project (SELA) is to reduce the risk of flood damage due to rainfall flooding in Orleans, Jefferson and St. Tammany Parishes. The Army Corps of Engineers led the implementation of the project with the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans as the local sponsor. Homes, some newly constructed and renovated after Katrina, were severely damaged in this predominantly African American community of mostly elderly and retired residents. The damage was extensive, including structural property damage, cracked slabs, shifted windows and doors, sewer flies, and broken plumbing pipes. Since May 2011, residents of the Melia community have complained of structural damage to their property. In an effort to resolve their problems, residents solicited assistance from Dillard University's Deep South Center for Environmental Justice (Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, 2012).

For nearly four years, the DSCEJ assisted the Melia community in navigating the complicated terrain required for redress of damages caused by the drainage project. A class action lawsuit was filed to further progress in the resolution of their claims (Rainey, 2015). On May 15, 2015, 10 Melia residents along with assistance from the DSCEJ and Advocates for Environmental Human Rights staff attended a meeting with the Federal District Court judge assigned to this case to address issues blocking the SWBNO processing of damage claims. After four years of living in substandard conditions due to property damage caused by the SELA project, SWBNO was given the green light to continue their claims process with the Melia residents. It is important to note that while it took four years for the Melia community

to get redress, the Uptown community complaining of similar damages to their property due to another SELA project in the mostly White affluent community, received front page coverage in the Times-Picayune of their plight (Rainey, 2015).

Conclusions

There are perilous consequences that stem from policy decisions that do not have equity as a foundational principle. All of the policy decisions in response to Hurricane Katrina discussed herein to some degree are stimulating changes and movement towards the total transformation of the city of New Orleans. Sadly, this transformation has largely lacked inclusion and equity for the poor and middle class African American citizens of this city.

While New Orleans is being applauded for a remarkable comeback, a close look reveals some deeply troubling facts. While showing improvements in many quality of life index areas (New Orleans Recovery Index), its lowest scores come in the areas of equity and inclusion (Plyer, Ortiz, Horowitz, & Hobor, 2013; Rainey, 2013). This inequitable legacy of Katrina must be addressed.

Asking different questions will generate different answers. Comparing the city of New Orleans to other cities suffering from the same structural and systemic problems due to race and income does not get us on the road to equitable recovery. New Orleans has been touted as a model for city recovery after a major disaster. The question is whether this model should be replicated in other communities suffering post-disaster recovery challenges. Is the New Orleans model inclusive and equitable for all citizens? Or is it a model of dispossession and forewarning for indigenous communities whose very survival is threatened not only by the disaster, but by post-disaster policies favoring exclusion and gentrification?

The city of New Orleans' progress towards prosperity should have at its foundation an examination of the lack of inclusion of African Americans in this new prosperity. We would then have a truer picture of where we should be and plan to prioritize efforts in needed areas. The city has made progress in some areas, but it is those areas where we have not made progress that need the most attention in order to better plan for the future. If issues of equity in recovery as well as emergency preparedness and response are not adequately addressed, there will be an ongoing disaster that will result in the permanent, systematic depopulation of New Orleans' African American communities and neighborhoods (Wright, 2006).

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HOUSING CRIMINAL JUSTICE HEALTH EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT WORKFORCE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

DOUBLING DOWN: GETTING TO RESILIENCE IN NEW ORLEANS

JOHN M. BARRY AND MARK S. DAVIS, J.D., M.L.T.

WE REMAIN **DEEPLY VULNERABLE TO HURRICANES,** RISING SEAS, SINKING SOILS, A VANISHING COAST, AND JUST PLAIN HEAVY RAINS. THOSE ARE HARD THINGS TO DEAL WITH AND NEW ORLEANS IS BY NO MEANS ALONE IN FACING THEM.

7

ENVIRONMENT

There is something about anniversaries that focuses our thinking and makes us reflect on, mourn, and celebrate those people and events that shape our lives. It is fitting that we do that. And if ever there was an occasion worth marking it is the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina's landfall along the coasts of Louisiana and Mississippi. But amid all the speeches, vigils, and memorials some space needs to be made to ask ourselves just what we learned from that largely induced tragedy—and whether we are applying those lessons.

Since we have all chosen to make our homes in New Orleans, we clearly have a stake in this being a smarter, safer place. We deeply hope it is and there is evidence that says it. But being safer and smarter is not the same thing as being safe and smart enough. By almost every measure we have a long way to go before our levels of protection and resilience are where they need to be. Most of the vulnerabilities and the consequences thereof fall disproportionately on the disadvantaged. We remain deeply vulnerable to hurricanes, rising seas, sinking soils, a vanishing coast, and just plain heavy rains. Those are hard things to deal with and New Orleans is by no means alone in facing them. But there is a positive: Plans and options exist that give New Orleans and coastal Louisiana a better chance at a decent future than many other places.

But plans and technically feasible actions don't implement themselves to create vibrant

resilient communities and ecosystems. That takes community, a community able and willing to honestly invest in itself and to face the fact that, when you are working at this scale, a community's prospects for survival and prosperity are measured not by how prepared and engaged its most affluent and privileged members are, but how well its least are. Katrina revealed that in spades. Those most likely to die, lose their jobs or homes, and to miss out on the post storm recovery work were African Americans, the elderly, the poor and the civically estranged.   This is what makes Katrina an event of global and enduring importance. It was not just a storm, it was an unraveling of society in a way that few have seen and fewer expected, especially in the richest nation on Earth.

So, how are things?   What lessons have been learned? The truth is, it depends on who you ask. The city has been hailed as a successful comeback story with a surging economy, housing market and a bold approach to reforming public education. But there is still entrenched poverty, racism, and unemployment and a persistent trust-gap between those making it and those who are not (and who historically were not allowed to). The region struggles to remain insurable and attractive to investors in the face of advancing seas and a pervasive disinvestment in the public sector.   In short, New Orleans remains a fascinating but troubled place and one that grapples daily with its own identity and sustainability. Considering that the City and its surrounding coast were decidedly unsustainable 10 years ago, perhaps this is progress but without much more it will not be enough.

Whether New Orleans can make it or not is probably not a question most people outside of Louisiana ask.   After all, after

Hurricane Sandy, western droughts, eastern blizzards, and urban unrest, there are other places to think about, not the least of which are those thousands of places where everybody else lives and that New Orleanians surely don't spend much time thinking about. But New Orleanians should always keep these issues in mind, and others should keep their finger on the pulse of New Orleans. Because if one thing is now clear it is this: New Orleans is one of the handful of places on the planet that are bellwethers of our ability to manage our way out of the mess we are in.

For all the talk of resilience, sustainability, inclusion, and no more "business as usual," no place that we know of has marshaled the options, resources and civic and political will to squarely face the future. Maybe that is because you cannot face the future if you do not honestly own up to the past, for the keys to crafting a future lie in learning about and from the past. The disasters of Fukashima, Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and earthquakes in Haiti, Mexico City, Christ Church New Zealand, and most recently Nepal teach one relentless lesson. And that is that too many people in too many places are living at profound and well-understood risk, and that it is policy to trust more to luck than any sense of real management to reduce or alleviate those risks.

There is a brief window following a disaster when systemic change may be possible but it passes quickly, replaced by excuses, platitudes and plans that have little chance of being implemented. That is particularly true where solutions depend more on social change than engineering. It is easy to call for change but when change means

things really being different, or costing too much in terms of money or how we see and treat our neighbors, things get dicey.

The problem is not just people's attitudes. In fact, people's attitudes may be the most straightforward piece of the puzzle. People are teachable and capable of caring and learning. You can move them to thought, action or tears with a message or experience. Not so long ago, when our communities were smaller and more compact, this was where the action was. This is no longer the case , at least not in some very important ways. The more intractable part of getting more sustainable societies lies in the fact that our communities are less and less the masters of their destinies. There has been a pronounced shift from the personal and local sphere to the institutional and global realm. The issue is not whether that is good or bad. This is simply a fact. New Orleans offers a good example.

When Hurricane Betsy hit New Orleans in 1965 many neighborhoods flooded in ways that Katrina repeated in 2005. At that time hurricane protection was a local, mostly personal, thing. There were no federal hurricane defenses to protect the City, much less to fail. The decision to return and rebuild was assisted from Washington DC, but mostly shaped by locals. Most of the drug and grocery stores, retailers, banks were locally-owned. The decision for them to reopen was inseparable from the recovery of the neighbors they served.

By 2010, that had changed dramatically. Flood protection was heavily the province of the Army Corps of Engineers. Federal government had a commitment to protect the region from the worst storm it was likely to see, a once in 200 to 300 year storm to use the current terminology. That made people feel safe but it turns out to have been illusory. The hurricane science the Army Corp of Engineers relied on in designing

that system had evolved and by 1972 it was clear even to the Corps that the worst likely storm would be worse than the one they had planned for (St. Bernard Parish et al. v United States, 2015). New information like that tends to make a sensible person reflect, learn and adapt their plans. That is not what the Corps, which is full of sensible people, did. No, the Corps felt absolutely bound to build the system they pitched to Congress in 1965 and no new information about the real storm risk was going to change what they saw as their legal mission. Unfortunately for the people in New Orleans that meant the Corps' legal mission had become defending an outdated metric instead of a city. That is hardly an aberration. In addition, their engineering designs were in critical places so deeply flawed it could not perform even to the Corps's old standards.

The truth of the matter is that for every law empowering someone or some agency to promote greater public safety and environmental resilience, there are passels of other laws and policies that run counter to it. Not intentionally, of course, and not without some justification, but the result is the same. Immunity laws intended to protect the public purse also can inoculate government against accountability, as can laws intended to encourage (and then shield) private investment. Narrow agency and organization missions can be useful to focus expertise and limit overreaching, but they also can defy comprehensive planning and action. And lending, housing and education policies that can elevate communities, can also be used to trap people in poverty and high-risk locations.

By the time Katrina hit, many of the banks, grocers, and retailers had been bought out or replaced by national chains, organizations with no ties to the

community.   For them the decision to return, rebuild and reopen was a business decision driven by metrics and policies set in cities far away. They needed customers first, customers who often could not return until they had a place to shop, bank and worship. Their duty was to their shareholders and business models, duties that did not reward compassion or local roots.

One of the most compelling lessons from New Orleans and Katrina is that the very nature of our communities has changed. The notion that community is defined by who lives nearby must now be expanded to include persons and institutions at a distance whose decisions can control the fate of places and their residents. When those persons and institutions are unknown or faceless to locals, and when the locals are mere abstractions or metrics to those out-of-towners, the challenges of building any sense of real community should be obvious. But nobody said this was going to be easy.

Which brings us to the second lesson from New Orleans. The enemy is also us. New Orleans has made tremendous strides and by almost every measure, is well ahead of any post-storm projections of where the region would be 10 years after the storm. People in every segment of the metro region have worked hard and accomplished far more than expected by almost anyone. Yet, to an unfortunate extent, our very success has made us complacent about the greatest threat: The all too real risk that we can flood again.

Too many people believe that so-called "100-year protection" is something with which we should be content. But that term just means is that we are protected against a storm with a 1% chance of striking any particular year. This is the lowest standard in the civilized world for densely populated areas. In fact, that standard was set by and

for flood insurance. It may make perfect sense to insure a single building to that standard. Unfortunately, when floods hit entire cities not just a few buildings it's comparable to designing medical care to handle a single person sick with influenza, when the threat is actually an influenza pandemic. In the first case, a single doctor can handle it. In the second case, an entire society can be knocked out or even all but wiped out.

The real chances over the next 100 years of escaping a hurricane that could overwhelm the 100-year standard are not good. Facts communicate more than probability statistics. The Mississippi River levees were built to protect against what was perceived to be the worst probable flood, and not to protect against some arbitrary mathematical projection.   And that is a good thing: in the last 88 years there have been at least four and possibly more floods that broke the standard for a 100-year flood on the river, most recently during the 2011 Mississippi River Floods.

Much better protection is closer than it might seem. The existing protection system can keep the city dry against the "still-water" storm surge of a "500-year storm," i.e., the surge if waves can be knocked off the top of it. How can that be accomplished? Greater protection can be accomplished by restoring areas outside the levees and by honestly partnering with the people and communities who live and work on the "wet" side of the levees. This strategy can raise the standard of protection to "500-year." That standard is achievable, at least for much of the metro area.

But it cannot be accomplished unless we face a number of truths, some of them uncomfortable. Our window of opportunity is shrinking and the temptation to delay or compromise to avoid making hard decisions will be immense. But we must keep after it,

keep the faith and be honest with ourselves. We must make it our business to not let our community be divorced from those who have the power to make decisions that will determine its future. We must make it our business to empower every resident in civic life. And we must make sure that we do not ever assume that the institutions that now dominate our governments and economies have our best interests at heart. None of this will be easy or cheap. There will be friction. There has to be if you are doing anything worthwhile. But if it is friction that is fueled by a true sense of purpose and that produces traction and not just heat, then there is indeed hope.

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HOUSING CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

HEALTH OUTCOMES IN POST-KATRINA NEW ORLEANS: PLACE AND RACE MATTER

PHARISSA ROBINSON, J.D. AND LILA ARNAUD, M.P.H.

IN NEW ORLEANS PLACE AND RACE ARE CLOSELY LINKED, BECAUSE STRUCTURAL BARRIERS SUCH AS HOUSING DISCRIMINATION, HISTORICALLY HAVE RELEGATED AFRICAN AMERICANS TO NEIGHBORHOODS THAT ARE POORLY RESOURCED, WHILE RESIDENTS IN MAJORITY-**WHITE NEIGHBORHOODS ENJOY BETTER RESOURCES AND HEALTH OUTCOMES.**

HEALTHCARE

The neighborhoods in which people live have a profound impact on their health behaviors and health outcomes (World Health Organization, n.d.). In New Orleans, the concept that *place matters* is literally life and death. People residing in high poverty, high crime communities where the educational attainment of residents is low and unemployment is high, have a much lower life expectancy rate than their counterparts in communities where the reverse is true (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2012). In New Orleans *place and race* are closely linked, because structural barriers such as housing discrimination, historically have relegated African Americans to neighborhoods that are poorly resourced, while residents in majority-White neighborhoods enjoy better resources and health outcomes. For instance, individuals living in zip code 70112 (predominately Black) have a life expectancy 25 years lower than those in zip code 70124 (predominately White) (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2012).

This chapter will examine the social and structural forces that impact health equity for African Americans in New Orleans. These social determinants of health, or the conditions in which people live, work and age and the systems in which they interact, are examined in this chapter using neighborhood comparisons of health outcomes. More specifically, the health disparities between African American and White New Orleanians are highlighted with

neighborhood-level analysis of the rates of chronic illness. Included in this chapter are discussions on the natural and manmade forces that impacted the health care infrastructure in New Orleans and its effect on African Americans. Finally, an analysis of structural and social issues in health care is provided that includes recommendations to improve health and wellness for African Americans in post-Katrina New Orleans.

Health Care Infrastructure

Hurricane Katrina severely damaged the health care infrastructure in New Orleans and exposed the vast vulnerabilities in the system at the expense of low-income, African Americans. Charity Hospital, a state-run hospital that primarily served the city's indigent, lay vacant after the storm, leaving a major gap in health care access for low-income African Americans in the city (Gratz, 2011). The closure of Charity Hospital had severe consequences for African Americans in the city as 75% of the hospital's patients were African American before the storm (Save Charity Hospital, n.d.). In the absence of Charity Hospital, African Americans' access to health care in New Orleans diminished significantly, and the city saw a 50% increase in its death rate following the hospital's closure (Save Charity Hospital, n.d.). To highlight the importance of Charity Hospital in the New Orleans landscape, 51% of uninsured individuals in New Orleans reported their usual source of care was the emergency room (New Orleans Health Department, 2012). Without Charity Hospital, more than half of the city's uninsured, lacked access to their usual source of care.

In 2012, at a time when the city was still recovering from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, Governor Jindal made $34 million dollars in cuts to the public hospital system (Deslatte, 2012). LSU Public Hospital prisoner services and the city's already crippled mental health infrastructure were hit hardest, representing half the financial cuts. The hospital's chemical detoxification unit and nine out of 38 psychiatric inpatient beds at the DePaul campus were also closed (Maldonado, 2012). The Jindal administration had already closed the New Orleans Adolescent Hospital (NOAH) in 2009, which had provided psychiatric care to indigent children (Barrow, 2009). These cuts dealt a serious blow to the already fractured health care infrastructure in the region and impacted some of the most vulnerable populations in the city, most of whom are African American.

Despite these severe cuts to the hospital system in Louisiana, several post-Katrina recovery projects are expected to help improve access to medical care for residents of the city. These projects include the University Medical Center New Orleans (opened August 2015), the VA Hospital downtown medical complex (opening in 2016) and New Orleans East Hospital (opened July 2014). These projects cost over $2 billion dollars much of which came from hefty allocations from the federal government (Adelson, 2015; Buchanan, 2012; Jacobson, 2013). The federal government also awarded a $10 million grant to the City of New Orleans Health Department for its Healthy Start New Orleans Initiative to improve birth outcomes in communities with the high rates of low weight babies (City of New Orleans, 2014). Federal support has been essential to the recovery and rebuilding of the health care infrastructure in the city.

The rebuilding of these hospital projects are important steps in the recovery of the health care infrastructure of the city. Not only do they expand access to health care for New Orleans residents, but they also have a positive impact on the economic and workforce development in the city. The completion of the New Orleans medical complex and Biodistrict are projected to create over 17,000 jobs and generate $630 million in personal earnings by 2030 (Hollier, 2011). This underscores the importance of the health care system to the local economy in New Orleans. While these key projects are coming online, federal policies and local efforts are helping to address health care access issues that may help address health care disparities for African Americans.

Access

Access to health care is an important factor influencing health disparities across the nation. This is particularly true for African Americans who are more likely than Whites to be uninsured in New Orleans, are more likely than Whites to not see a doctor because of cost in Louisiana, and are less likely than Whites in Louisiana to have a primary care physician (The Kaiser Family Foundation State Health Facts, n.d.; New

Orleans Health Department, 2013). It follows then that Blacks die from diseases at a higher rate than other racial groups, thus widening racial disparities (Culp-Ressler, 2013).

Like many other southern states, Louisiana opted out of the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion provisions, denying coverage to otherwise ineligible residents who earn up to 138% of the federal poverty level (Schuler, 2015). Notwithstanding this, the Affordable Care Act has the potential to reduce racial disparities throughout New Orleans. In particular, the city's African American community is already significantly benefitting from some of its reforms through insurance coverage for more than 60,000 in the New Orleans Metropolitan Area (Advocate Staff, 2015). Many of the city's African Americans who were ineligible for Medicaid now have coverage and access to treatment that was once only available to them in the city's hospital emergency rooms.

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, 21% of New Orleans residents were uninsured, giving the city one of the highest uninsured rates in the country (Rudowitz, Rowland & Shartzer, 2006). As previously mentioned African Americans have higher uninsured rates than Whites, with uninsured rates of 32.3% as compared to 16.6% for nonelderly adults from 2009-2011

African-American Unisured Rate in New Orleans from 2009 - 2011 and 2013-2014
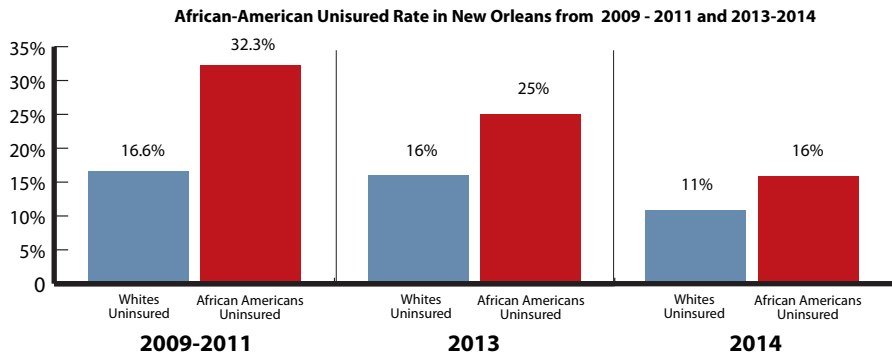
Figure 1

(New Orleans Health Department, 2013a). The Affordable Care Act has made a noticeable impact in reducing this disparity, by helping reduce the number of uninsured in the city. Between 2013 and 2014, the percent of uninsured African Americans dropped from 25% to 16%, while the percent of uninsured Whites dropped from 14% to 11% (Number of uninsured, 2015). That's a difference of just five percentage points between African Americans and Whites in the percent of uninsured in 2014, down from an almost 16 percentage point difference in 2009- 2011 (See Figure 1) (Number of uninsured, 2015; New Orleans Health Department, 2013a). The impact of the Affordable Care Act is expected to play a continual role in decreasing the number of uninsured African Americans in New Orleans.

While uninsured rates are dropping in New Orleans, the city faces the difficult challenge of addressing the shortages in mental health care providers. Pre-Katrina, the mental health care provider shortage was an issue that was exacerbated by inadequate funding to address mental health and substance abuse needs (Reckdahl, 2012). Before the storm, the city's shortage of psychiatric inpatient beds was at a rate of 46.5 per 100,000 population or 364 total inpatient psychiatric beds for the entire city (City of New Orleans, 2010). Of those beds, 100 were at Charity Hospital. The hospital that served the needs of the city's low-income African Americans, no longer served as a primary source of both inpatient and outpatient mental health care (The Kaiser Family Foundation State Health Facts, n.d.). African Americans in New Orleans were hardest hit because they are most likely to be misdiagnosed or not diagnosed at all, thus ending up in jail or avoiding treatment altogether (Simpson, 2015).

By 2010, the number of available mental health and substance abuse hospital beds remained critically low at about 17.5 adult beds per 100,000 (The Kaiser Family Foundation State Health Facts, n.d.). Although the number of available emergency room beds increased to 159 in 2010, a shortage in psychiatric beds still remains a challenge in the city (City of New Orleans, 2010). While the outpatient infrastructure has benefited from the influx of federal funding, inpatient psychiatric facilities still face a shortage of inpatient beds. The new University Medical Center, provides 80 inpatient psychiatric beds today (Hays, 2015). One of the unfortunate results of this mental health care shortage crisis in the city is the criminalization of mental illness. The combination of poverty, the unaffordable housing and a fledgling psychiatric healthcare system led to a disproportionate number of mentally ill African Americans falling through the cracks and ultimately showing up in city jails, morgues and emergency rooms (Simpson, 2015). But the New Orleans East Behavioral Health Center opened their doors June 2015 brining a much-needed mental health care service to the metropolitan area (Barbarin, 2015). A continued increase of mental health care providers is crucial to increasing access to mental health care in New Orleans, but other options may also help to address the needs of residents in New Orleans. Another strategy to address the mental health needs of New Orleanians is to follow the national trend of increasing the provision of home-based psychiatric care to stabilized patients as an alternative where psychiatric admissions are not feasible.

An important improvement to health care access in New Orleans is the expansion of community health centers. Community health centers provide much needed primary care and mental health care to low-income residents, including those that are uninsured (504HealthNet.org, 2015). Today, over 70 neighborhood-based, community

health centers serve 59,000 working class individuals throughout the Greater New Orleans area (City of New Orleans, n.d.). The Affordable Care Act has accelerated the growth of these centers encouraging the development of patient-centered medical homes that are well-coordinated systems in which clinicians and patients work together to provide patients with appropriate care (Freundlich, 2013). These Centers are designed to reduce emergency room visits and avoidable hospitalizations, reduce health disparities and improve health outcomes for its patients. In July of 2014, two community health centers in New Orleans were awarded federal funds made available by the Affordable Care Act to expand or establish mental health services (Catalanello, 2014). In May 2015, the City of New Orleans was awarded a $175,000 grant to help community health centers encourage residents to use the centers (McClendon, 2015). The Affordable Care Act and the health care delivery reforms in New Orleans are helping to rebuild a health care system that may help change health care decisions and behaviors of residents by increasing their access to primary care. Community health centers in New Orleans are serving many of the low-income African American residents who previously would be served by Charity Hospital, and providing much needed primary care and mental health care that can help turn the tide on health disparities for African Americans in New Orleans.

In New Orleans East, the city also opened New Orleans East Hospital in July 2014, an 80-bed facility that serves nearly 80,000 residents (Catalanello & Myers, 2014). The facility is located on the former old Methodist Hospital site. Neighborhood clinic initiatives and the reopening of a hospital in New Orleans East may be contributing to improved health outcomes that have been experienced across the city

Today, over **70** neighborhood-based, Community Health Centers serve **59,000** working class individuals throughout the Greater New Orleans area.

for the past three consecutive years (City of New Orleans, 2015). Today, the services the City offers through New Orleans East Hospital and its community health centers play a crucial role in increased health care access for African Americans and other New Orleans residents.

Social Determinants of Health & Chronic Diseases

The conditions in which people live, work and age and the systems at play that shape their daily lives are referred to as the "social determinants of health" (World Health Organization, n.d.). Conditions like neighborhood income, crime rates, access to supermarkets and educational attainment are social determinants that can each create disparity in the health outcomes observed in a neighborhood. Income, for example, directly affects health outcomes as families living below the Federal Poverty Line (FPL) become almost four times more likely to report poor health than families living at least two times above the FPL (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2014). The disparity in health outcomes is most dramatically observed across zip code 70112 (a predominantly Black area) and 70124 (a

predominantly White area) and leads to a drastic difference in life expectancy (over 25 years), with residents in 70112 living an average of 54 years and residents in 70124 living an average of 85 years (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2014).

Residents in zip code 70112, for example, are five times more likely to die from heart disease than are those living in zip codes like 70124, with 1,945.2 people/100,000 in 70112 dying from cardiovascular disease as compared to the 190/100000 people in zip code 70124 (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2014). Residents living within zip code 70112 also experience the highest rates of mortality due to stroke and diabetes. Between 2008 and 2010, African Americans were also three times more likely than white New Orleans residents to die of diabetes and twice as likely to die of kidney disease (New Orleans Health Department, 2013b). Risk factors like obesity, hypertension and diabetes all of which are driven by the cycle of poverty, also persist at the highest disparity levels in the neighborhoods represented under 70112 (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2014).

Obesity

Social determinants like the concentration of corner stores and fast food restaurants coupled with the lack of supermarkets and fresh food options, all can impact a person's decision making around their food options and can lead to obesity. In spite of a growing number of supermarkets and fresh food venues in the city since the storm, access to these venues for African American residents has decreased. Pre-Katrina census tracts showed that African Americans were 40% less likely to have access to more than one supermarket in their neighborhood as compared to residents of other neighborhoods. By 2009, lack of access

increased to 71% (New Orleans Health Department, 2015).

Crime and neighborhood safety are intrinsically linked to obesity. Unsafe neighborhood spaces deter people from becoming physically active. Exposure to stress also signals the body to release hormones like cortisol and adrenaline in the bloodstream, which have been linked with obesity and metabolic disease (Bose, Laferrere & Olivan, 2009). Obesity is a major risk factor of increased risk of diabetes, heart disease, stroke and certain kinds of cancer. A report by the New Orleans Health Department (2012) indicates that New Orleans has a 30% adult obesity rate. More recent numbers show that 42% of African Americans reported living with obesity as compared to 30% of Whites in Louisiana, giving Louisiana the sixth highest rates of adult obesity in the nation (Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2013; Levi, Segal, St. Lauren, & Rayburn, 2014).

Diabetes

Disparities in health outcomes due to diabetes can be observed across race, income lines, and educational backgrounds (Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals [DHH], 2004b). The disease can be prevented and managed with healthful eating, regular physical activity and management of other risk factors such as high blood pressure, high levels of body fat and tobacco use (CDC, 2014). With decreased access to healthy food options, safe, walkable neighborhoods, and continuous health care access, African Americans are at a social disadvantage for preventing and managing diabetes. On a national level, 13.2% of Blacks live with the disease as compared to almost 8% of Whites (CDC, 2014). In New Orleans, Blacks are three times more likely to die from diabetes related complications than their White

counterparts (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2012).

Due to limited local data, this section extrapolates state data to talk about trends in health disparity of diabetes across time.

In 2004, the prevalence of diabetes in Louisiana had increased steadily from 5% of the adult population in 1994 to 80% (DHH, 2004a). In pre-Katrina Louisiana, 10.9% of African Americans lived with diabetes as compared to 7% of White Americans (DHH, 2004a). Residents who reported an annual household income less than $13,000 were at higher risk of developing diabetes than residents who reported an annual household income of over $50,000 (14% versus 9%). Residents who had not attained a high school diploma were also twice as likely to develop diabetes than residents who had graduated from college (14% versus 7%) (DHH, 2004).

By 2010, the prevalence of diabetes had increased to 10% of the adult population in Louisiana as compared to almost 7% in 2000 (CDC, 2010). African Americans still had the highest prevalence of diabetes with a 13% diagnosis rate compared to approximately 9% diagnosis rate among White Americans. Residents who reported an annual income of less than $15,000 were still at higher risk than residents who reported an annual income of over $50,000 (a prevalence of 20% versus approximately 6%). Residents who had not attained a high school diploma experienced higher prevalence of diabetes than residents who attained a college degree at 16% and 8% respectively (CDC, 2010).

Maternal Health Indicators

Unfortunately not all pregnancies in the US today result in a live or healthy birth. Infant mortality rates (IMR) and rates of low birth weight (LBW) are maternal health indicators used to gauge the overall health of mothers and their babies. Some will argue that accessing prenatal care within the first trimester of pregnancy is the greatest indicator of low infant mortality rate, premature births, neonatal mortality, infant mortality and maternal mortality (Funke, Tran, Mather & Kieltyka, 2006).

Black communities throughout the US, including Orleans parish, report more adverse birth outcomes, than any other group (DHH, 2006). This is due in part to much higher rates of low birth weight and higher rates of infant mortality before the first year of life. Black communities also report less utilization of prenatal care early in pregnancy (first trimester), which has been linked to healthy pregnancy (DHH, 2006).

From 2004-2006, the Department of Health and Hospitals (2006) estimated that in Orleans Parish, 16% of live Black births compared to 8% of live White births resulted in babies with low birth weight. The infant mortality rate in Black communities was 11.5 deaths/1,000 live births compared to 4.8 deaths/1,000 live births in White communities. There was a wide disparity in utilization of prenatal care, with 72% of Black women reporting they received prenatal care in the first trimester compared to 92% of White women (DHH, 2006).

Immediately after the storm, from 2005-2007, the disparity in rates of low birth weight widened slightly from 16% of Black live births compared to 8% of live White births (DHH, 2007). Infant mortality rate in Black communities was 11 deaths /1,000 live births compared to 4.3 deaths/1,000 live births in White communities; and 76.5% of Black women reported accessing first trimester care, compared to 92.2% White women (DHH 2007).

Most recent numbers show that the disparity in maternal health outcomes continues to widen across racial groups in New Orleans.

Fourteen percent of live Black births result in low birth weight and 7% of live White births result in low birth weight (DHH, 2011). While infant mortality rates between both Black and White communities each decreased, the disparity observed across groups increased with 10.7 deaths/1,000 Black births compared to 1.9 deaths/1,000 White births (DHH, 2011).

HIV/AIDS

The differences in rates of HIV transmission are the most extreme health disparity for African Americans in New Orleans given that African American residents are twice as likely to be diagnosed with HIV than their White counterparts (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012). The Louisiana Public Health Institute identifies high-risk heterosexual sexual activity and injection drug use as major modes of HIV transmission for women and same sex sexual activities followed by high-risk heterosexual activity as major modes of HIV transmission for men (Louisiana Public Health Institute, 2010).

In 2004, 1,113 new HIV/AIDS cases were diagnosed in the state of Louisiana, 32% (353) of which were in New Orleans. Of the 1,113 new HIV/AIDS cases diagnosed in the state, 872 were new AIDS cases, indicating late diagnosis (DHH, 2004b). New Orleans had the highest number of new HIV/AIDS cases diagnosed in 2004 and 76% of the new HIV/AIDS diagnoses were AIDS diagnoses. In 2004, 5,148 people were living with AIDS in New Orleans (DHH, 2004b). Although African Americans made up 33% of the Louisiana population, they represented 76% of new HIV cases diagnosed and 79% of new AIDS cases diagnosed in the state. African Americans' HIV rates were seven times higher than Whites in Louisiana in 2004 (DHH, 2004b).

In 2004, there were 15,068 people living with HIV/AIDS in Louisiana, 50% of whom were living with AIDS (DHH, 2004b). By December 2014, there were a total of 20,013 people living with HIV/AIDS in Louisiana, 53% of whom were living with AIDS (DHH, 2014). In New Orleans, 4,901 people were living with HIV/AIDS in 2014. Of those living with HIV/AIDS, 2,596 had AIDS (53%). Across the

62%
of the People
in New Orleans
Metro Living with
HIV/AIDS are African
American

7%

31%

Other
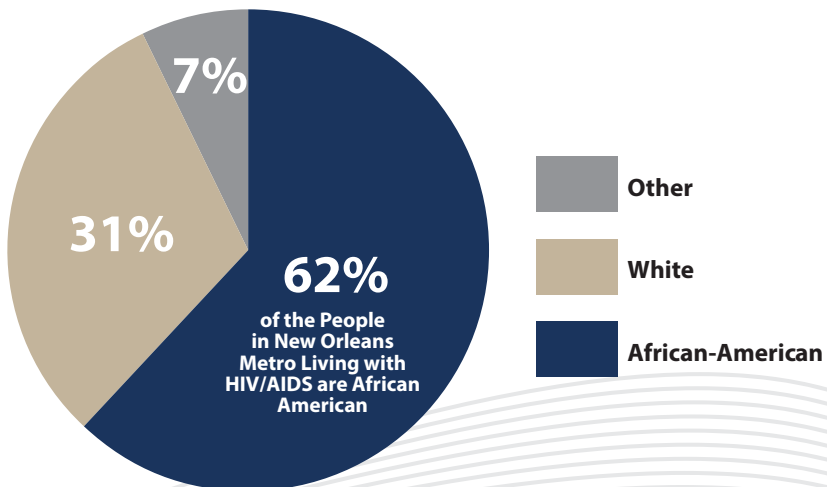
White

African-American

Figure 2

state, disparities in HIV/AIDS rates were extreme in 2014. In Louisiana, 68% of people living with HIV/AIDS were African American as compared to Whites who made up 23% of people living with AIDS (DHH, 2014). In 2014, African Americans represented 32% of the population in Louisiana. Those disparities held up in the New Orleans Metropolitan Statistical Area, where 62% of people living with HIV/AIDS were African American and 31% of those living with HIV/AIDS were White (See Figure 2) (DHH, 2014). The New Orleans metropolitan area includes Jefferson, Orleans, St. Tammany, St. John the Baptist, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. James and St. Charles parishes.

Cancer

Louisiana's rates of cancer are close to the national average or higher. From 2008-2012, per 100,000 people, the incidence of breast cancer rates averaged 121.9 compared to the national average of 123; lung cancer rates averaged 73 compared to the national average of 63.7; and rates of kidney cancer averaged 20.9 compared to national average of 16.0 (National Cancer Institute, 2012). Overall, cancer disproportionately affects people of color in Louisiana, with age-adjusted incidence rates for Whites at 486.7/100,000 compared to 508.8/100,000 for people of color including Latinos living in the state (National Cancer Institute, 2012). With less access and utilization of health care, African Americans are at an increased risk of morbidity caused by cancer. Black women, for example, are less likely to survive cancer following a diagnosis, compared to White women (Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, 2013). In New Orleans, African Americans are also disproportionately affected by cancer, with rates of death caused by cancer averaging 245/100,000 among African American communities compared

CANCER MORTALITY RATES

AFRICAN AMERICAN **245**

WHITES **150**

DEATHS PER 100,000

Figure 3

to the death rate average of 150/100,000 seen among White New Orleanians. African Americans are 1.55 times more likely to die from cancer than their White counterparts (See Figure 3) (New Orleans Department of Health, 2013).

Social Determinants of Health and Smoking

One of the most egregious examples of structural and social forces that promote poor health outcomes for African Americans is the tobacco industries' targeting of young people and low-income communities of color. An unpublished report by the Louisiana Public Health Institute (LPHI) found that the tobacco industry spends $215 million annually to market their products to these populations, resulting in tobacco-related disparities. LPHI conducted a study of the product, placement, pricing and promotion (4Ps) of tobacco, alcohol and food in New Orleans, surveying 465 stores throughout the city. They found a significant relationship between socioeconomic status and access.

Specific findings of the unpublished LPHI study suggest that the 4Ps are major social determinants that impact health choices and influence health outcomes. Findings of the study indicate that tobacco and alcohol products were cheaper and health foods were more expensive in African American neighborhoods. The reverse was true in more affluent, White neighborhoods. Study findings also indicate that African American neighborhoods had 2.5 times more tobacco advertising than more affluent, White neighborhoods where they had almost no tobacco ads in stores. These findings highlight the disparate strategies implemented by the tobacco industry in African American neighborhoods and illuminate some of the structural forces that promote poor health outcomes and health disparities for African Americans.

For added clarity, smoking is linked to 20% to 30% of low birth rates in the United States and public smoking and lack of access to fresh foods are risk factors for obesity and chronic disease (New Orleans Health Department, 2013b). It is safe to say that product, placement, pricing and promotion of tobacco, alcohol and healthy foods in African American neighborhoods in New Orleans is contributing to higher rates of low birth rates, obesity and chronic diseases among African American New Orleanians. While the aforementioned structural and social forces continue to facilitate poor health outcomes for African Americans, the New Orleans City Council passed a smoke-free ordinance banning smoking in bars, restaurants and casinos in the city that appears to be yielding positive health results (Berenson, 2015; City of New Orleans, 2015). A new study found a 96% decrease in fine particle air pollution in the 100 days since the ordinance passed (Travers &Vogl, 2015).

Disaster Preparedness

How much mayhem and loss of life could the city have avoided during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina had officials at all three levels of government executed an effective communication or disaster preparedness plan is unknown. Hindsight is 20/20. However, there are lessons learned regarding where the city stands today in its disaster preparedness and readiness plan should another storm or disaster strike. The government has infused billions of dollars into the city to shore up its levees, and has since made several repairs to address constant sinkage problems. However, some still worry the levees may not hold up if another storm makes a direct hit. Local providers and hospitals are still tasked with the challenge of caring for its sickest ventilator dependent patients during power outages. Lessons learned from Katrina include moving critical equipment like generators to higher floors and revamping hospital communication lists. No plan is ever exhaustive, which is why the greatest lesson learned from Hurricane Katrina is eradicating complacency such that residents heed evacuation warnings and alerts in a timely and orderly fashion and that disaster plans are regularly checked and updated for maximum preparedness. This is particularly critical for the city's most ill and vulnerable populations who will more likely rely on public transportation and other mass transit for evacuation purposes.

Conclusion

Like other major cities in America, where you live in New Orleans strongly correlates with the condition of your health and life expectancy. Thus, despite having a greater number of providers, residents in some of the most income and

resource poor areas of the city experience more persistent, frequent & severe health problems than those living in zip codes that are predominantly White and have higher income rates. Large disparities in diseases in only certain areas of the city are too disproportionate to ascribe it only to poor decision-making, particularly when considering how high the deck is stacked against residents living in some of the most violent areas of the city, like Treme and Central City.

Neighborhoods with low crime rates, quality schools, libraries, nutritious food outlets, safe workout facilities, parks and community centers, as well as, trusted relationships, and equal access to resources, strongly influence healthier lives just as much as access to quality healthcare. In applying this to New Orleans as a solution for addressing health disparities, we should take a different approach by looking more closely at the city's neighborhood infrastructure, land use and housing policies and not just the African Americans who live in them. The density of liquor stores and commercial to residential space, as well as the number of banks versus check-cashing places are as much drivers of health outcomes as is access to healthcare and neighborhood clinics.

Although riddled and beleaguered by epidemic, systemic failures, the city has nonetheless undergone a major transformation since Hurricane Katrina. But too many struggling areas of the city still sit bruised and battered not just from the waters of Katrina, but also from an almost daily spray of bullets and gun violence that remind us of the plight of New Orleans. If ever there was an opportunity to rectify substandard neighborhood conditions known to perpetuate the cycle of violence, desperation and health

disparity in New Orleans, the recovery period in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina was it. Yet, 10 years after one of the worst disasters ever unleashed onto the banks of the Mississippi, the health of many African American residents is no better off than it was before Hurricane Katrina, as compared to White residents. These disparities are sometimes seen as aggravating problems that are near impossible to fix. When the city honestly addresses its issues with neighborhood diversity and inclusion, and couples that with healthcare access interventions, it will have a more realistic and comprehensive picture on which to base decisions and an equitable strategy. Until New Orleans applies lessons learned from Katrina by addressing the relationship between zip code and morbidity, no amount of beds or providers alone will eliminate the health disparities between its African American and White residents. Closing the disparity gap between predominantly White communities like 70124 and predominately Black communities like 70112 requires an equitable practice of prioritizing Black health and healing in the city, which includes neighborhood diversity. The strategies employed throughout Columbia Parc represent one such approach the city can adopt in truly desegregating its communities as a step towards closing the health outcomes disparity gap.

Recommendations

Adopt strategies that diversify resources and funding streams and make them available to historically marginalized New Orleans communities to improve health equity.

Review the city's neighborhood infrastructure, and not just the African Americans who live in them, for land use and housing policies that promote a cycle of poverty, i.e., density of

liquor stores, commercial to residential space, number of banks versus check-cashing places, food deserts and limited service restaurants.

Advocate for increased funding and access to primary care and mental health services, exploring alternatives such as the national trend of increasing the provision of home-based psychiatric care to stabilized patients.

Regularly check disaster plans and update for maximum protection.

In hurricane preparedness plans, ensure critical equipment like generators are moved to higher floors.

Ensure hospital communication lists are periodically updated and alerts, educational outreach programs and warnings are regularly tested.

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EDUCATION CRIMINAL JUSTICE ENVIRONMENT HOUSING HEALTH WORKFORCE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

THE CHALLENGES OF GETTING HOME QUICKLY AND FAIRLY: SUCCESSES AND FAILURES OF POST-KATRINA HOUSING RECOVERY EFFORTS

KELLY D. OWENS, PHD.

THE QUESTION OFTEN ASKED BY THOSE OUTSIDE OF NEW ORLEANS IS, **"IS NEW ORLEANS BACK?"** ALTHOUGH THIS INQUIRY IS SEEMINGLY STRAIGHTFORWARD, A NUMBER OF COMPLEXITIES PRECLUDE THE ABILITY TO PROVIDE A SIMPLE ANSWER. IN GENERAL, **78% OF THE PRE-KATRINA NEW ORLEANS POPULATION COUNT IS BACK WITH 88%** OF HOUSING INVENTORY RESTORED.

HOUSING

The question often asked by those outside of New Orleans is, "Is New Orleans back?" Although this inquiry is seemingly straightforward, a number of complexities preclude the ability to provide a simple answer. In general, 78% of the pre-Katrina New Orleans population count is back with 88% of housing inventory restored (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). On the surface, the numbers suggest that the immediate post-Katrina concern around housing New Orleanians has been resolved. However, digging deeper unveils that while the quantity of housing units is not an issue, the affordability and quality of housing in New Orleans is a major concern, particularly to individuals and organizations vying for fairness, equality, and the provision of decent places to live for all citizens. Further, if "being back" is defined as the return of New Orleanians to their pre-Katrina neighborhoods, a thorough response has to be qualified with reference to race because of the disparate recovery of predominantly white versus predominantly Black neighborhoods. The fact that the answer to "Is New Orleans back?" elicits responses that have to be qualified based on affordability, housing quality, and race suggests that an analysis about equity and the fair distribution of disaster recovery resources for the rebuilding of New Orleans neighborhoods is warranted.

Bringing families back to New Orleans necessitated swift action to restore housing to pre-Katrina levels in order to stabilize neighborhoods. However, housing recovery

became an arduous task, complicated by the limitations of insurance companies, pre-Katrina poverty rates at 28%, and challenges such as neighborhood blight associated with a steadily declining population. Moreover, the city/state had to equally prioritize several needs: housing its labor force; safeguarding tax-based revenue from higher income households; preserving its tourist economy; and forestalling increased homelessness. These considerations meant that a comprehensive housing recovery plan would have to be developed and executed quickly. Under a national spotlight, the city of New Orleans and the state of Louisiana with support from the federal government had the opportunity to demonstrate how disaster recovery should be conducted. However, many lessons can still be gleaned from the mistakes made during the housing recovery. However, once the dust settled, housing recovery in New Orleans would become a case-study complete with lessons on what could and should have been done differently.

Housing and Race

Hurricane Katrina did not discriminate. Homes belonging to families of all racial backgrounds were affected by the devastating effects of the storm. Thousands of families were displaced and given that New Orleans had a majority African American population, when looking at raw numbers, more African American households were affected than any other racial group. Yet, when analyzing devastation and housing recovery percentage-wise, while disaster did not discriminate, disaster did expose major inequities. Of New Orleans' 14 planning districts, five areas experienced less than 13% severe housing damage as a result of Katrina while eight districts

encountered severe damage to at least 40% of their homes. In the Uptown/Carrollton area, one of the larger districts, 27% of homes were severely damaged (see Table 1). Of those eight, New Orleans East, the Lower Ninth Ward, Mid-City, Gentilly, and Village De l'est were the hardest hit, with 64% to 69% of homes severely damaged. All of these areas were predominantly occupied by African American families (see Table 1). Related to this observation is the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) finding that Blacks were less likely to return than were individuals in other racial groups. According to BLS, only 54% of Black evacuees returned to their pre-Katrina communities, compared with 82% of White evacuees. BLS concluded that Black net out-migration was tied to geographical patterns of storm damage, income, and educational attainment rather than race (Groen & Polivka, 2008). While it is apparent that geography determined which communities were more damaged and socioeconomic status dictated the capacity for residents to return, BLS's suggestion that race did not factor into which residents were able to return ignores the vestiges of racially discriminatory practices (e,g., redlining, steering, blockbusting, and exclusionary zoning) that established racially segregated communities. The suggestion also ignores that life chances are tied to geography.

It is because of residential segregation that predominantly Black communities in New Orleans were more susceptible to destruction caused by Katrina, which can be correlated to the rate of return of African Americans to New Orleans. New Orleans' population count dropped by 197,792 people from the 2000 census count to 2006, the period immediately

following Katrina, and estimates are that 64% of this population loss was African American (Shrinath, Mack, & Plyer, 2014; U.S. Census, 2000). As anticipated, the hardest hit neighborhoods suffered the most population loss. In 2010, five years after Katrina, the Lower Ninth Ward and the Little Woods neighborhood in New Orleans East were still experiencing population declines of more than 10,000 people (see Table 2).

These findings make it hard to circumvent race as a unit of analysis with respect to housing recovery. Since the onset of recovery efforts, policy analysts and academicians have been grappling with the finding that African American neighborhoods have been recovering at slower rates than white neighborhoods despite the influx of state and federal funding earmarked for recovery (Gotham, 2014; Ehrenfeucht & Nelson, 2011; Rose, Clark, & Duval-Diop, 2008; Rivera & Miller, 2007; Quigley, 2007a).

While these results may not have been intentional, it is important to bring such critiques and analyses forward if we are to inform and shape future practices that are equitable and fair for all groups.

Damage by Neighborhoods

New Orleans' City Planning Commission divides New Orleans into 14 planning districts comprised of neighborhoods.

	HOUSING UNITS	% UNITS SEVERELY DAMAGED	PERCENT OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN SPECIFIED NEIGHBORHOOD POPULATION COUNT PRE- AND POST-KATRINA		
			Neighborhood	2000	2010
French Quarter/CBD (1a)	2,896	0%	French Quarter	4.3%	4.4%
Warehouse/CBD (1b)	1,552	2%	Warehouse	DNA	DNA
Central City/Garden District (2)	19,737	12%	Central City	87.1%	72.4%
Uptown/Carrollton (3)	28,213	27%	Audubon	5.1%	4.8%
Mid-City (4)	24,247	64%	Mid City	64.3%	55%
Lakeview (5)	12,666	57%	Lakeview	.7%	3.4%
Gentilly (6)	16,902	67%	Gentilly Terrace	69.7%	77.8%
Bywater (7)	15,416	42%	St. Roch	91.5%	86.8%
Lower Ninth Ward (8)	6,802	69%	Lower Ninth Ward	98.3%	95.5%
Eastern New Orleans (9)	28,865	68%	Little Woods	86.1%	92.6%
Village d L'est (10)	3,820	67%	Village De l'est	55.4%	43.4%
Lake Catherine/Venetian Isles(11)	829	62%	Venetian Isles	76.5%	61.4%
Algiers (12)	18,973	1%	Old Aurora	30.9%	54.9%
English Turn (13)	1,712	12%	New Aurora/English Turn	68.1%	63.4%

Table 1: Damage by Neighborhoods
Source: The Data Center, Neighborhood Statistical Area Data Profiles

Sample Neighborhoods	POPULATION		Change Number	Change Percent
	2000	2010		
French Quarter	4,176	3,813	(363)	-8.69%
Central City	19,072	11,257	(7,815)	-40.98%
Audubon	14,898	15,865	967	6.49%
Mid City	19,909	14,633	(5,276)	-26.50%
Lakeview	9,875	6,394	(3,481)	-35.25%
Gentilly Terrace	10,542	8,210	(2,332)	-22.12%
St. Roch	11,975	6,632	(5,343)	-44.62%
Lower Ninth Ward	14,008	2,842	(11,166)	-79.71%
Little Woods (New Orleans East)	44,311	31,698	(12,613)	-28.46%
Village De l'est	12,912	8,008	(4,904)	-37.98%
Venetian Isles	1,883	840	(1,043)	-55.39%
Old Aurora	15,807	16,781	974	6.16%
New Aurora/English Turn	5,672	5,769	97	1.71%

Table 2: Population Count in Select Neighborhoods in 2000 and 2010
Source: The Data Center, Neighborhood Statistical Area Data Profiles

Table 1 indicates the amount of severe damage in each planning district and indicates the percentage of African Americans represented in the most populated neighborhoods of the planning districts.

Pre and Post-Katrina Housing Landscape

At the time of the last census (2000) before Katrina, housing inventory accommodated New Orleans' population of 484,674 residents with a total of 215,091 units. Of these units, 188,251 were occupied and renters inhabited 53.5% of them. The median home value was $87,300 and median gross rent was $488. The U.S. Census found that 26.7% of Orleans Parish homeowners and 42.7% of renters were paying 30% or more of their income toward housing costs (housing cost burden). Racial demographics before Katrina showed a majority Black/African American population of 66.6%. White residents represented 26.6% and the Asian population 2.3%. Hispanics of any race numbered 3.1% while American Indian and others were at 1.4% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

By 2013, the population of New Orleans was estimated at 378,715-- indicating that New Orleans had lost 105,959 residents since 2000. The 2013 American Community Survey counted 190,127 housing units in the city of New Orleans, 24,964 fewer units than in 2000.[1] Additionally, by 2013, the median gross rent had increased by 89% and home

	2000	2010	2013
POPULATION	484,674	343,829	378,715
Black/African American	66.6%	60%	59.8%
White	26.6%	30%	33.6%
Asian American	2.3%	3%	3%
Hispanics (any race)	3.1%	5%	5.3%
HOUSING			
Housing Units	215,091	189,896	190,127
Occupied Units	87.5%	74.9%	78.1%
Renter-occupied Units	53.5%	52.2%	52.7%
Vacant Units	26,840	47,738	41,729
Median Home Value	$87,300	$184,100	$183,700
Median gross rent	$488	$899	$926
Homeowners paying ≥ 30% of income toward housing costs	26.7%	46.2%	43.9%
Renters paying ≥ 30% of income toward gross rent	42.7%	61.6%	61.3%

Table 3: Demographic and Housing Characteristics of New Orleans in 2000, 2010, and 2013
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census & American Community Survey 2013, 2006-2010 American
Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

median values increased by more than $95,000 compared to 2000 values. Median gross rent at $926 explains the significant increase—from 42.7% to 61.3%--in number of renters experiencing housing cost burden of 30% or more. Another notable difference is the African American population, which in 2000 measured at 323,392, and was estimated at 213,632 in 2013 – a significant boost after having experienced a low of 125,600 in 2005. 2013 numbers show a decrease of 6.8% in Black residents since 2000 while White and Hispanic representation has increased by 7% and 2.2%, respectively (see Table 3).

Housing Recovery: Slow but Steady

Ten years post-Katrina, 99.9% of the 46,922 households that applied for financial assistance through Road Home, the state's housing disaster recovery program, have been granted funding (State of Louisiana, 2015a). While this is an encouraging finding, the pace by which the program operated substantially slowed down the rate by which neighborhoods recovered. It was not until August 2006, one year after Hurricane Katrina, that the Road Home program was officially launched.

Road Home, the state's response to damage caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita[2], has been a major component of the disaster housing programs that garnered $11.5 billion of the $13.3 billion in Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding from HUD[3] (State of Louisiana, 2015b). According to Governor Blanco, Road Home was established to "help Louisiana residents get back into their homes or apartments as quickly and fairly as possible" (Louisiana Recovery Authority, 2006). With grants of up to $150,000 to homeowners, New Orleanians would finally receive the assistance needed to rebuild their damaged homes. In partnership with the newly created Louisiana Recovery Authority, HUD signed off on the Road Home program as the mechanism to deliver much needed funding to distressed homeowners. The reliance on federal assistance was necessitated by the tremendous gaps created by the refusal of insurance companies to cover damage that was deemed to have been caused by flooding rather than wind. In other cases, homeowners were under- or uninsured (King, 2007; Buckley, Doroshow, Hamdan, & Hunter, 2006).

Unfortunately, Road Home was riddled with a number of challenges. Administrative execution of the program was slow and haphazard, eventually leading to the firing and replacement of the lead subcontractor of the program. Disbursement of funds was hindered by bureaucratic inefficiencies creating financial hardship for families waiting to rebuild (Finger, 2008). One troubling finding was that most Road Home grants were insufficient. Even after receiving financial assistance, many homeowners were still faced with major funding gaps making it impossible to complete work on their homes. By 2008, the average Road Home grant of $60,000 meant a shortfall of nearly $50,000 for

Neighborhood Impact of the Road Home Program

New Orleans East, a predominantly African American, middle-class neighborhood is about eight miles east of Lakeview, a neighborhood with a majority of White households. In New Orleans East and Lakeview, pre-storm home values averaged $146,216 and $336,064, respectively. Average home damage estimates were $224,303 in New Orleans East and $281,537 in Lakeview. In 2008, the average Road Home grant for the 13,908 applicants in New Orleans East was $69,196 while 4,735 Lakeview applicants received an average of $109,777. This created an average funding gap of $69,196 for New Orleans East applicants compared to a $44,405 gap for Lakeview applicants. (Rose, Clark, & Duval-Diop, 2008).

46.7% of applicants rebuilding in place (Rose, Clark, & Duval-Diop, 2008).

The shortfall of funding was a direct result of Road Home's policy in determining how much funding homeowners could receive. The formula was based on the pre-Katrina assessed value of the home or the actual cost to repair the home – whichever amount was less. For example, a home valued at $70,000 with $90,000 of home rebuilding costs would only receive $70,000 thus creating a $20,000 shortage. This policy created an even more deleterious effect for African American communities dealing with the nationwide trend of depressed market value attributed

to homes located in predominantly Black neighborhoods. PolicyLink (2007) found that African American households had an almost 35% higher shortfall than White households. A neighborhood-by-neighborhood analysis showed that in predominantly Black areas such as New Orleans East and the Lower 9th ward, 60% of homeowners ended up with average gaps of $65,000 and $68,000 respectively (Duval-Diop, 2009).

It could be argued that housing inequities were being further exacerbated by Road Home's policies and racial preferences. In 2008, HUD and LRA were sued for the disparate outcomes of Road Home in a class action lawsuit filed by several African American homeowners, the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and the National Fair Housing Alliance. The suit was settled six years after the storm in 2011 with remedies that included amending grant formulas to provide full relief to over 13,000 homeowners. Over 45,000 low and moderate-income homeowners across the state received supplemental grants based on damage costs rather than home values and one year extensions to occupy the homes were granted to homeowners whose original grants were based on pre-storm market value (NAACP Legal Defense Fund, 2011). To date, over $2 billion has been provided through Additional Compensation Grants (State of Louisiana, Office of Community Development, 2015).

LRA's failure to apply principles of equity and utilize actual renovation costs as a basis for funding from the start resulted in a delayed recovery process. In the meantime, lower- and middle-income families were indefinitely displaced or were forced to sell rather than rebuild due to delayed and insufficient funding. Slowly getting the program on par came at the expense of tax dollars being spent on building and maintaining temporary housing units ("FEMA trailers") or completely losing families—mostly Black families—to other cities and states. In addition to African American neighborhoods being disparately impacted by the government's policies and processes, government inefficiencies led to millions of wasted federal tax dollars and lost tax revenue for the city. As recent as 2014, LRA was continuing to implement new measures to deal with issues related to applicant compliance and recovery of grant dollars from homeowners due to non-compliance (Road Home, 2014).

Affordable Housing

High poverty rates, low wages, a preponderance of single-parent households, and high unemployment in New Orleans created the need for substantial affordable housing units in the city prior to Katrina where 42% of tenant households and over 25% of homeowners were excessively burdened (according to HUD standards) by paying 30% or more of their income towards gross rent and/or housing costs (U.S Census, 2000). This amount of burden demonstrated that affordable housing was extremely insufficient before Katrina.

Hurricane Katrina worsened the affordable housing situation for the city of New Orleans with severe damage to over 51,000 units (PolicyLink, 2007). The shortage of rental housing—market-rate or affordable—placed a premium on livable units resulting in median gross rents soaring from $488 right before Katrina to the current median gross rent of $926. Of the housing units damaged or lost due to the hurricane, 37,790 of these units fell in a price range officially considered affordable for low-income residents (less than 30% of household income).

Expediency and strategy were required in order to bring residents, including lower-income New Orleanians, back to the city. The primary affordable housing providers—the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO), the Louisiana Housing Corporation (which had been preceded by the Louisiana Housing Finance Authority), state and city-sponsored affordable homeownership programs, state and city-based tax incentives for private developers, and non-profit community development corporations—would have to thoughtfully address affordable housing gaps that were now deeper than before Katrina.

Rehabilitation Aid for Small Rental Properties

One of the state's responses to the affordable rental housing crisis was the Small Rental program launched in January 2007 and administered through the Louisiana Recovery Authority's Road Home program. To date, LRA has allocated $649 million of the $11.5 billion Community Development Block Grant (for housing programs) towards rental housing for extremely low- and very-low-income people (State of Louisiana, 2015b). The intent of the program was to provide forgivable loans to landlords of one to four-unit properties in the hardest hit neighborhoods. Landlords had to agree that rents would be capped for the next 10 years. In doing so, affordable rental units would be made available to residents. However, policy became a barrier for substantial progress being made during the initial phases. The program operated on a reimbursement basis with the expectation that landlords would front the money for repairs and then get compensated for expenditures up to $72,000 per unit. This policy initially delayed the replenishment of affordable units because many landlords did not have the resources to obtain upfront capital. Revisiting the policy, LRA decided to provide gap financing to eligible landlords. As of 2015, incentives for 6,169 small rental loans have been committed including 5,407 affordable rental units available in New Orleans. Just over $295 million of Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Funds have been committed specifically in New Orleans (Louisiana Recovery Authority, 2015).

Public Housing

Prior to August 2005, HANO reported 5,146 households living in public housing apartments. Currently, the city has a total count of 1,976 public housing units (HANO Fact sheet, 2015). The reduction in available units may have been more related to the timing of the storm rather than the storm itself. Katrina hit New Orleans during an era of nationwide redevelopment via the HUD-sponsored HOPE VI program launched in 1992. By 2005, HOPE VI had already transformed over 200 major housing developments in cities across the nation, including Chicago and Washington, DC as well as the Desire, St. Thomas, and Fischer housing developments in New Orleans.[4] HOPE VI was the federal government's solution to deconcentrate poverty whereby public-private partnerships leveraged funding to physically and socially alter public housing sites into mixed-income developments. Housing middle-class residents along with a substantially smaller subsidized tenant population in newly redeveloped sites was intended for new, higher-income individuals to model behavior that would encourage government-subsidized residents to adopt mainstream values such as self-sufficiency (Owens, 2012). However, HOPE VI bore with it some controversy, namely the failure to replace units on a one-on-one basis and allow all former residents to return upon completion of the new developments. This created the permanent displacement of

poor, Black residents with what appeared to be government-sanctioned gentrification (Lees, 2008; Hackworth & Smith, 2001).

The four housing developments—C.J. Peete, St. Bernard, Lafitte and B.W. Cooper—that were slated for redevelopment (using the HOPE VI mixed-income model)[5] survived the storm. This fueled protest against HUD and HANO's plan to demolish the buildings.[6] Redevelopment opponents pointed to the increased demand for affordable housing sparked by Katrina as rationale to merely renovate the developments, which could have housed more low-income households more quickly and more affordably than if they were razed and redeveloped. Protesters also made accusations of racism as the buildings had been occupied by Black families who faced permanent displacement.[7] The city cited unlivable conditions and an estimated $1 billion renovation cost as major impediments to renovate rather than redevelop (HANO, 2015). The New Orleans City Council unanimously voted in favor of demolition, resulting in 3,170 fewer public housing units in New Orleans. Mitigation for residents displaced by redevelopment included HANO's issuance of 2,987 tenant-protection vouchers.

Under President Obama's Administration, HOPE VI was modified into the HUD Choice Neighborhood Initiative, which requires one-to-one replacement of public housing units along with comprehensive services for subsidized residents. HANO was awarded a HUD Choice grant and is currently transforming the Iberville public housing site into a mixed-income community, which upon completion will bring the city's total to 2,748 public housing units. However, completion is not expected until 2017 and HANO's leadership has raised questions about the agency's capacity to deliver as originally planned. [8]

Since Katrina, the displacement of poorer households by redevelopment efforts and Hurricane Katrina more than doubled the demand for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, which provides housing assistance to enable low-income families to rent from private landlords. HANO has responded to demand via scattered site public housing and the inclusion of affordable units (in addition to public housing units) in a number of housing developments.[9] As an indication of the compelling need for affordable housing, consider that 17,800 families receive Section 8 vouchers and 20,000 families are currently on the waiting list (HANO, 2015).

Affordable Rentals Via Tax Credits

In addition to mixed-income developments resulting from the redevelopment of public housing, mixed-income housing is also made possible by private developers incentivized by public support in the form of tax credits. Investors have been building and rehabilitating multi-unit developments in areas such as the Tulane Avenue corridor, where affordable units funded by Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) funds comprise at least 30% of these newer developments. LIHTC is an indirect federal subsidy administered through the state-run Louisiana Housing Corporation (LHC). Affordable units are delivered through partnerships with private developers, non-profit organizations and public agencies. As enforced by the IRS, LIHTC units in these developments must remain affordable for 15 years. This timeframe can extend to a total of 30 years dependent upon continued enforcement by the city and state.

Despite a slow start, the production of affordable units made possible through LIHTC's did increase in response to Katrina, resulting in a total of 10,187 affordable tax credit units.[10] LIHTC units could have been made available sooner,

but several issues delayed or disrupted development. A number of neighborhood coalitions, driven by NIMBY-ism,[11] made it difficult for developers to come into their communities. Another barrier was the rising cost of insurance for apartment buildings, particularly right after Katrina. With higher insurance costs, opportunities to build equity and ensure profitability were diminished. Furthermore, the Great Recession[12] further hampered progress as stricter underwriting laws came into effect. LIHTC production was eventually aided by an allocation of $595 million in CDBG/Piggyback funds, which saved a number of developments under construction facing additional loan restrictions and scrutiny. As of May 2015, all but $272,000 of the CDBG/Piggyback fund had been obligated to the LIHTC program (State of Louisiana, 2015; Rose, Clark, & Duval-Diop, 2008; Schrayer, 2007).

The Impact of Mixed-Income Housing

To date, the combined efforts of public-private partnerships have created a modest dent when considering the overall housing affordability needs of low-income residents. Even with efforts such as the Greater New Orleans Foundation's Community Revitalization Fund that supported the development of 9,500 affordable housing units, affordable housing continues to be in great need.

While the affordable housing situation continues to be addressed, there is concern about where poorer families are being housed and for how long. Under certain conditions, developers are able to opt out of the LIHTC program in 15 years. This means that affordable housing units put in service beginning in 2010 could be drastically reduced by 2025 with subsequent conversions from affordable to market-rate units in the years thereafter, thus creating waves of affordable housing unit shortages. Moreover, the effects of NIMBYism and housing discrimination by Section 8 landlords are pushing lower-income residents into certain pockets of neighborhoods, reinforcing racial segregation and creating new areas of concentrated poverty.[13]

Affordable Homeownership

As an indication of housing cost burden, 26% of homeowners were paying 30% or more of their income towards home ownership costs in 2000. In 2013, 43.9% were paying more than 30% towards owner costs (e.g., mortgage, insurance, taxes, utilities, etc.), however, in 2013, there were 17,414 fewer owner occupied units than in 2000. In raw numbers, the number of "burdened" households has increased by over 600 families when compared to 2000 rates despite lower population numbers. One explanation for the increase in burdened households is the rising cost to buy homes. The average purchase price in May 2015 was $347,212 compared to $253,502 in May 2005 based on information from the Gulf South Real Estate Information Network. Other explanations are tied to institutionalized trends and market forces (discussed in next section).

While the rate of owner-occupied units has remained steady when comparing 2000 to 2013 (46.5% vs 47.3%), there were over 17,000 fewer owner occupied units by 2013. Still, the fact that owner occupancy is on par with previous rates despite the substantial displacement of previous homeowners is commendable and largely attributed to the collective efforts of government agencies, funders, volunteers, and organizations that have supported affordable housing programs and clean-up campaigns. Their efforts have helped neighborhoods recover and have made homeownership possible

for lower- and middle-income families. Efforts include the Crescent City Community Land Trust, which committed to providing 1,000 affordable housing units by 2024; Make it Right has built 150 homes averaging $150,000; NORA's administration of the HUD Neighborhood Stabilization program has delivered 236 affordable homes; the New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity helped over 3,200 families since 2006 by building 500 homes and gutting 2,400 buildings; HANO has placed 340 first-time buyers into homes; and the City of New Orleans and the Louisiana Housing Corporation have administered funds for homeownership programs including first time buyer and soft second programs, which received $120.9 million of CDBG-DR funds (Greater New Orleans Foundation, 2015; HANO, 2015; Make it Right, 2015; New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity, 2015; State of Louisiana, 2015; NORA, 2013). Although these efforts are laudable, there is still much work to be done if New Orleans' homeownership rates are to compete with those of Louisiana and the U.S.—which are 19.7 and 17.6 percentage points higher, respectively— and with a majority African American population, increasing homeownership may prove to be a challenge.

Challenges to Homeownership

Current homeownership rates in New Orleans are consistent with Pre-Katrina rates at about 46%, which is 17% lower than national homeownership rates. African American homeownership in New Orleans is more consistent with the national African American homeownership rate of 43.2%, however, New Orleans falls short in comparison to other predominantly Black cities such as Mobile, AL; Memphis, TN; and Virginia Beach, VA where Black homeownership is at least 48%. When examining predominantly Black neighborhoods in New Orleans prior

to Katrina, higher than average African American homeownership rates were found in The Lower Ninth Ward (54%), New Orleans East (55%) and Gentilly (72% homeownership rate). Post-Katrina homeownership for African Americans have fallen in these neighborhoods mostly due to lack of flood and hazard insurance, compounded by delays, inefficiencies, and inequitable distribution of Road Home funding (Washington, Smedley, Alvarez, & Reese, 2006).

The African American homeownership rate is largely attributable to discriminatory practices that have always existed in the real estate and mortgage industries, and recent market forces have added complications. The Great Recession brought with it foreclosures and tighter loan restrictions that have thwarted homeownership rates for families of all racial backgrounds. Upon factoring in predatory lending and other discriminatory loan practices in minority communities, the disparate impact on families of color is significant. Still today, the threat of foreclosure looms over many African American households in New Orleans and FHA foreclosed properties in Black neighborhoods are more likely to be neglected than those in white neighborhoods, consequently bringing down home values in African American neighborhoods. According to the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Center, between 2008 and 2010, African Americans held more high-yearly-percentage-rate home loans than whites, meaning that because they were paying off interest rather than principal, building equity was occurring at a much slower pace (Buchanan, 2015).

Additional findings that explain challenges to homeownership for African American households include the National Community Reinvestment Coalition's 2008 reporting that African Americans were 2.59 times

more likely to receive high cost home loans when compared to whites immediately following Katrina in 2006. Forty-one percent of all home loans received by African Americans were high cost, compared to just 16% of loans received by whites. Also, African Americans were nearly twice more likely to be denied loans than whites. In 2010, the Louisiana Office of Community Development conveyed that the home loan denial rate for Whites was 20.7%, for African Americans 37.9%, and for Hispanics 26.8% (Buchanan, 2015; Louisiana Office of Community Development, 2010).

Herein lies one of the major equity issues further compromised by the hurricane, levee failures, and government recovery efforts. Threats to homeownership, particularly for racial minorities, means delaying the building of equity and generational wealth. The associated implications are far-reaching when considering how home equity can be leveraged to handle financial emergencies or finance education, small business development, and other investments with potentially positive returns. In 2011, the median white household had $111,146 in wealth holdings, compared to just $7,113 for the median Black household. Homeownership is key to addressing the racial wealth gap (Sullivan et al., 2015).

Progress toward Eliminating Residual Effects of Katrina

Blight reduction. Another major issue confronting New Orleans recovery has been urban decay— also known as blight. Already a problem that precipitated Katrina due to population decline, blight became a barrier to neighborhood recovery in that many homeowners were reluctant to rebuild in neighborhoods experiencing higher percentages of blighted properties such as in the Lower 9th ward. While pre-storm blight figures are not available, it

has been estimated that in 2010, the rate of blighted homes in New Orleans was 25%, with approximately 43,755 blighted homes and empty lots coupled with 9,356 vacant but habitable housing units (one of the highest rates of abandonment in the country) (Plyer et al., 2011). In many instances, blight resulted from Road Home funding shortages, denied insurance claims, and contractor fraud. In essence, blight disparately impacted African American neighborhoods where there was the most damage and the widest funding gaps (Southern United Neighborhoods, 2013).

Peter Yaukey, geography professor at UNO, estimates blight reduction at a range of 10,328 to 14,591 units between 2010 and 2013 –an indication that Mayor Landrieu's blight reduction goal of 10,000 units was met. The city credits blight reduction to code enforcement, aggressive demolition policies, and a soft second finance program that tacked both blight and the affordable housing issue. Another blight reduction strategy has been the Lot Next Door program (LND) administered by the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA). Through this program, homeowners were able to purchase adjacent vacant properties that were part of the 5,000 properties acquired by the state through the Road Home program [14]. At least 1,300 homeowners have participated in LND and NORA is continuing to offer properties through this program (City of New Orleans, 2014a; NORA, 2014; Yaukey, Knaggs, & Wise, 2013).

Housing for homeless individuals and families. Homelessness in New Orleans was certainly worsened by Hurricane Katrina. Before Katrina, only 2,051 people lived in literal homelessness on any given night. In 2007, the homeless population surged to 11,619 homeless people. UNITY of Greater New Orleans—a nonprofit organization that leads a collaborative effort of 60 agencies

helping individuals who are homeless or at risk of being homeless—determined the 2014 homeless population to be at 1,981 people, 3% less than pre-Katrina.[15] This count is 15% less than the previous year and 83% less than 2007 (City of New Orleans, 2014b). Steady declines in the homeless population from 2007 to 2014 have been attributed to the combined efforts of the city's Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program funded with federal dollars and the UNITY homeless collaborative. UNITY doubled the amount of clients initially served in 2004, leased private rentals, and reunited homeless individuals with their families. UNITY also surpassed HUD's national requirement to permanently house at least 65% of transitional clients by finding permanent homes for 90% of clients in transitional housing programs. Even more recent developments include the abolishment of homelessness for veterans (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2015; Unity of Greater New Orleans, 2012; City of New Orleans, 2015).

Did Katrina Spur Gentrification?

Anxiety around the idea of New Orleans becoming more and more gentrified has been expressed by long-time residents since the beginning of initial planning talks. Apprehension may have been well founded given commentary from city officials and scholars. For example, Jimmy Reiss, the chair of the Regional Transit Authority for New Orleans, asserted that Katrina had changed New Orleans for the better if low income African Americans were not able to return; conclusions by over 200 social scientists indicated that the displacement of low-income residents presented the opportunity to deconcentrate poverty (Ehrenfeucht & Nelson, 2011).

While housing practitioners debate whether gentrification is an issue, an observation of redevelopment activity and soaring housing costs suggest that conditions for gentrification exist. Using the definition provided by Neil Smith, a preeminent geographer and scholar on the topic of gentrification, conditions for gentrification include the influx of private capital, homeowners, and renters as a means to refurbish poor neighborhoods (Smith, 1996). In the instance of post-Katrina recovery, it can be argued that both private and public capital has been poured into the redevelopment of lower-income neighborhoods, particularly in areas where public housing developments have been replaced with mixed-income developments, bringing in higher-income individuals as new renters and homeowners (Owens, 2012). Private and public redevelopment dollars have also contributed to improvements in several corridors bringing about more restaurants, retail hubs, and mixed-use developments. CDBG-DR dollars have contributed to redevelopment efforts with funding coming from an economic development allocation of over $317 million and/or from the nearly $1.4 billion dedicated to infrastructure programs (State of Louisiana, 2015b).

What is obvious to long-time residents is the influx of White transplants (Campanella, 2013), particularly into neighborhoods that are becoming less black, such as Central City, Mid City, and St. Roch. Neighborhood change is also prevalent along the Mississippi River where Bywater, Marigny, the Lower Garden District, St. Thomas, the Irish Channel, and East Riverside have all statistically become Whiter (see Table 2). Displacement in favor of mixed income development, neighborhood composition changing from one race to another, and huge capital investment clearly point to neighborhoods in the process of being gentrified.

Conclusion: Equity in the Rebuilding Process

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, African Americans comprised 67% of the population with one-third of those individuals living under the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Blacks were overrepresented as residents of public housing and affordable housing units. The economic status and housing patterns of New Orleanian Blacks is what made them more vulnerable to Hurricane Katrina, thus making their post-disaster experience quite different from more affluent populations (Fothergill & Peek, 2004; Bolin, 1998). Similar to policy-backed housing patterns in other urban areas across the U.S., African American New Orleanians resided in multi-family dwellings, in homes with weak infrastructures, in racially segregated sections of town, and in poor land-use areas (Kamel & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2004). These conditions made it possible for Katrina to uproot a disproportionate number of Black people, causing the involuntary displacement of mostlyBlack communities (Rivera & Miller, 2007). In essence, Katrina intensified the racial inequities that had predicated her arrival.

A number of scholars (Biles, 2000; Hirsch, 2000; Radford, 2000; Wilson, 1987) make it clear that residential segregation patterns are deliberate outcomes of housing policies and programs, including government subsidies for White flight to suburbs, redlining, and restrictive covenants. African Americans were further disadvantaged by sections of the Federal Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954 that "cleared slums" to embark upon urban renewal projects that, more often than not, were private development projects that resulted in the displacement of Blacks and rehousing of Blacks into public housing developments and neighborhoods

plagued with concentrated poverty (Biles, 2000; Hirsch, 2000). In total, these policies helped to crystallize racially segregated ghettos (Hirsch, 1998), subjecting African Americans to substandard land such as the case in New Orleans.

With respect to post-Katrina recovery, the state employed a number of tactics that placed African American neighborhoods at a disadvantage to recover as quickly as other neighborhoods. The demolition of four public housing developments and displacement of poor residents, the establishment of uninformed policies to govern distribution of government recovery dollars, and slow decision-making were crucial deterrents to recovery for all New Orleanians and particularly for African Americans. While unintended, the policy implications of initial recovery efforts have been reminiscent of slum clearance, urban renewal, and institutionalized racism. Essentially, when new policies are created without regard to preexisting disparate conditions, they are ineffective for intended minority groups, create more advantages for Whites, or create further harm to non-Whites. In the case of post-Katrina New Orleans, leveling the playing field for African American households may have been an unrealistic goal, however, the dire housing situation in New Orleans presented the city with the opportunity to design and build stronger communities, ensuring less exposure to future natural disaster. Ideally, housing recovery would also present an opportunity to ensure equity while restoring both Black and White neighborhoods.

Future housing recovery plans are encouraging. A group of concerned citizens and housing advocates are currently positioning New Orleanians for long-term development including plans for recovery should the city face another catastrophic disaster. HousingNola was launched in 2014

as a result of the Foundation for Louisiana's convening of a working group of community residents, housing advocates, for-profit and non-profit developers, and representatives of elected officials and city agencies. The Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance (GNOHA) serves as the lead agency of the coalition, which also includes the Urban League of Greater New Orleans and the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center. Collaborative efforts will produce a 10-year comprehensive housing plan, funded by the Foundation for Louisiana and a number of partners including the City of New Orleans and the Greater New Orleans Foundation. Of most importance is HousingNola's commitment towards equitable results undergirded by goals that include preventing displacement, promoting fair housing, encouraging sustainable design, improving quality of life in neighborhoods, and increasing accessibility for all residents, including special needs residents (HousingNola, 2015). The HousingNola plan intends to address *permanent* affordable housing, which is not fully addressed in the city's current master plan. The impact of HousingNola is dependent upon city leadership and is sure to be an important resource as housing recovery continues to be evaluated.

Data-based evaluation will continue to play a critical role in Katrina recovery efforts. Policy analysts, academicians, think tanks such as PolicyLink and the Brookings Institution, in addition to The Data Center (formerly the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center) have been instrumental in providing statistics, highlighting progress, exposing inequity, demonstrating the impact of policies and programs, and reporting important findings through data analyses. The level of transparency that these individuals and organizations have created ensures that agencies remain accountable and provide a clear picture of what still needs to be done.

Consistent with the saying that "hindsight is 20-20," it is recognized that Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath presented numerous unforeseen challenges, and many responses resulted from creating a recovery playbook in the process of trying to recover. The incapacity to administer recovery programs using fair and equitable practices may speak to a larger issue, not just in New Orleans but across the nation. Allowing policies and programs to be developed without considering historical and institutional biases has and will continue to place traditionally marginalized groups in vulnerable positions. Post-Katrina recovery efforts provide many lessons for cities and states that will have to respond to disaster-related neighborhood damage. In the same manner that environmental impact assessments are utilized to predict program and policy outcomes, cities and states will need to consider the social and racial implications of policy decisions and recovery processes. Taking the time to gauge overall equity and effectiveness prior to implementation not only ensures fairness but also saves long-term costs associated with lost wages, lost tax revenue, mismanagement, litigation, duplication of efforts, etc.

Having had this experience means that the city of New Orleans now has the playbook to ensure that in the event of future catastrophes, every effort will be made to make sure that the city fully and equitably recovers, and we will all be able to provide a resounding "Yes!" if ever asked the question, "Is New Orleans back?"

Endnotes

[1]Count does not take into consideration the number of housing units that were still uninhabitable. Because the Census Bureau defines housing units as long as they are not open means that many boarded up houses are in the census count. Examining the number of vacant units is therefore important in determining available housing stock.

[2]Hurricane Rita hit coastal Louisiana three weeks after Hurricane Katrina.

[3]CDBG-DR funding also supported infrastructure programs, economic development initiatives, planning and technical assistance, and administrative costs.

[4]HOPE VI awards to the Housing Authority of New Orleans occurred in 1994, 1996, and 2003

[5]HANO received a $20 million HOPE VI grant for redevelopment of C.J. Peete.

[6]HANO was under HUD receivership at the time due to operational challenges, mismanagement, and poor housing conditions.

[7]See http://www.nola.com/news/index.ssf/2007/12/city_hall_girds_for_public_hou.html

[8]See http://neworleanscitybusiness.com/blog/2015/02/16/top-construction-projects-8-iberville-redevelopment-2/ and http://nextcity.org/features/view/10-years-after-katrina-new-orleans-public-housing-still-in-limbo-iberville

[9]These are affordable units in addition to public housing units. The LIHTC program, which provides tax-based incentives to developers, is one of the mechanisms used to create affordable rental housing.

[10]Number includes units in service and units in development. Verified by LHC administrator via email, July 2015.

[11]NIMBY is the acronym for Not In My Backyard and describes the rationale for protest of proposed development that existing residents believe will create undesired effects

[12]The economic downturn between the years 2007-2009 precipitated by disproportionately high foreclosure rates

[13]See http://www.gnofairhousing.org/2009/09/16/housing-choice-in-crisis/

[14]5,221 homeowners opted not to rebuild and sold their properties to the state via the Road Home program.

[15]According to UNITY's point-in-time count conducted March 31, 2014 for Orleans and Jefferson parishes.

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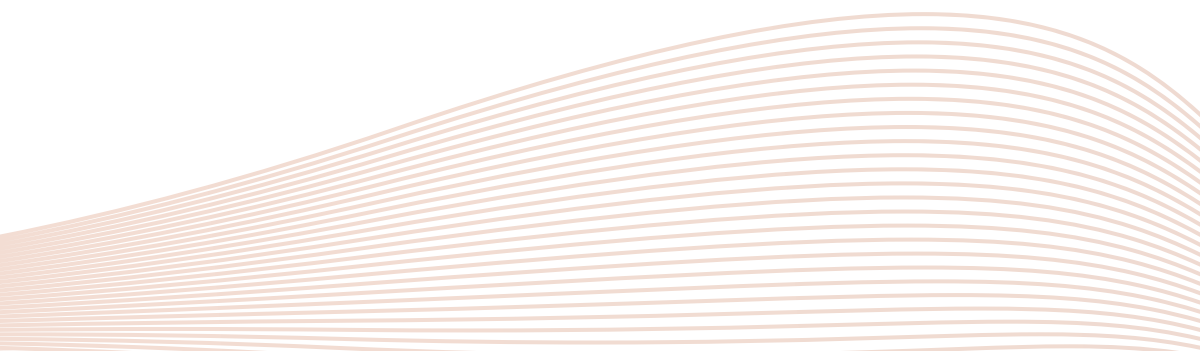
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KATRINA REFLECTIONS

SYBIL MORIAL

We all thought New Orleans would never be the same after Hurricane Katrina ravaged it beyond one's imagination. Nor would the lives of thousands ever be the same. Homes were destroyed by wind and floodwaters. Jobs disappeared, medical services and schools were crippled and in some areas non-existent. Family and neighborhood networks and churches, the bedrock in many areas, were gone as people fled to safe ground, some to cities all over the United States. The homes of three of my children and I were uninhabitable.   Ten years later, we have recovered.

My family's losses were devastating to us, but they cannot be compared with the financial loss and emotional trauma that thousands of New Orleanians had to live through. Everyone who was affected by Katrina has their own story.   However at this 10 anniversary of the disaster, I have chosen to recall the thousands of people who came to our aid, unsolicited, to help in so many ways that seemed miniscule in the whole scheme of the tragedy but meant a lot to the victims they helped.   Aid came from good people from around the globe, from individuals and diverse organizations, from church groups, and   college students in the months and years after Katrina to lend their time, their hands and talents and their treasure.

I cite just two examples of the help that came.   A group of college students from the northeast came during their Christmas vacation, secured free paint, and painted every room from ceiling to floor in a public school.

Katrina victims who had no place to go nor the means to get away from their flooded homes and neighborhoods went to inadequate public shelters. They suffered pain and humiliation beyond description, and from which they were transported to cities all over the country. Families in some of the cities opened their homes to the victims who were virtual strangers to them and allowed them to live there until they could figure out a plan of recovery.

Many opened their wallets over and over. Some made the journey over and over to help in ways that not only assisted in victim recovery, but lifted their spirits when their faith was at its lowest. I am sure there are more stories that should be recorded about the generosity of others during this horrific disaster.   It is this generosity of care and giving that has sustained my faith in the goodness of human beings.

Sybil H. Morial
Educator and wife of the late
New Orleans mayor, Dutch Morial

KATRINA REFLECTIONS

PASTOR TOM WATSON

I continue to see our beloved city like many other natives as we deem it the "Tale of Two or maybe Three Cities." A recent local news article (Times Picayune) on August 2, 2015 describes New Orleans economic expansion and job growth as strong, but wages and education funding lagging. New Orleans is a very different place 10 years post the storms. Because I was born, raised and educated here, I can really feel and see the difference. I believe we are even more segregated than before as a community in spite of all the great efforts to bring about a so-called "one voice." There are many Black churches still trying their best to be restored. Many Black pastors and leaders along with many Black citizens never returned and there is very little discussion or strategic efforts to aid in their return that I am aware of since August 2005. In my humble opinion, I believe the biggest crisis in the Black community (and maybe the White community) is one of effective, credible leadership at many tiers (religiously, politically, civically, socially etc). It's one of the reasons I offered myself to run for the mayor's seat in 2006. I thought and still believe that the profile of an effective city leader should be (but not limited to) a very spiritually grounded, governmentally experienced and militarily and culturally conscious individual considering the "times" in which we live.

In the midst of all of the basic challenges to return to New Orleans after hurricane Katrina, our church doors reopened with worship services on the first Sunday in November 2005 with full participation from so many worshippers who had no place to have church services. This reopening was under the leadership of Rev. Pat Watson, who now serves as the Executive Pastor of Watson Memorial Teaching Ministries and CEO of the Family Center of Hope Social and Educational agency. I returned to our city on the first Sunday in January 2006 and we have been non stop since that time with rebuilding, restoring and making ongoing contributions to our beloved community. I hope and pray that our city will move forward over the next ten years with some since of "equity" so that we don't leave so many others behind. Our goal for the next 10 years is to hold hands with partners throughout this region and beyond as we train and pave the way for the "next generation." We want to ensure to the best of our ability that the next generation is a lot better off than this one. Last but certainly not least, I hope that the people of God in this city and nation would continue to seek His divine direction as we march on 'til victory is won!

Pastor Tom Watson
Senior Pastor
Watson Memorial Teaching Ministries

KATRINA REFLECTIONS

JAY H. BANKS

2015 New Orleans is much more affluent, much more white, much more brown and far less black. Traditional black neighborhoods such as Central City, the Lower Ninth Ward and many other parts of uptown are being gentrified at a rocket pace. While the population numbers have risen to those similar to pre-Katrina, those numbers reflect new residents and the number of displaced natives who are unable to return home is alarming. Housing prices and escalating rent are forcing native residents out of neighborhoods that their families have populated for generations.

The one glaring fact about New Orleans that has not changed is the economic disparity between Blacks and Whites. Billions of dollars have been spent in rebuilding and reconstruction but very few Black New Orleanians have participated in capacities other than laborers. Atlanta created a black middle class with the construction of its airport and we had a much bigger opportunity to create black wealth here. Unfortunately, to-date, we have failed miserably.

The population will most certainly benefit from the construction of the new schools, drainage, infrastructure systems, hospitals and transportation systems, but those benefits would have still been realized if there had been significant minority participation in making some of the billions spent.

Our people, food, culture and way of life make New Orleans a wonderful place to live, but erasing the economic disparity would only make it better. I would never want another Katrina, but I sure would like another chance to fix this and truly build back stronger and more equitably for all New Orleanians

Jay H. Banks
King-elect 2016 and Recording Secretary,
Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club; and
Director of the School of Commerce,
Dryades YMCA

KATRINA REFLECTIONS

REBUILDING: BLACK LIVES DIDN'T MATTER AS MUCH

LLOYD DENNIS

Whenever I think about post Katrina New Orleans, I reflect on how racism was woven into the very fabric of Road Home - Homeowner Assistance Program distributions and how that negatively impacted the ability of too many black homeowners to restore their lives and property.

The inclusion of *pre-Katrina property values* into the calculations for claims rather than the more equitable *cost to rebuild* meant that the more Black and poor the neighborhood was, the less money Road Home provided for a home's repair, whereas similar size homes in more White and affluent neighborhoods received the maximum... because real estate values in New Orleans are heavily weighed by race. Even middle class, recently turned Black neighborhoods like New Orleans East felt the discrimination as their pre-Katrina property values were a fraction of the value before the collapse of the oil business and White flight from what was a primarily White homeowner community before 1986.

Now, 10 years later, in the name of blight removal, land is being taken from people as a result of their inability to recover, as many are disgustingly self-righteous about people who didn't renovate their property... since many have to remain away with no resources to keep up land that has lost almost all its value.

So once again, those that have are those that got and can now grab land that is a bargain because those who didn't get couldn't afford to keep it.

What bothers me is there are no media stories, no acknowledgment, no reparation for this inclusion of an easily identifiable racial and demographic factor into a disaster relief program. Why property values? There were no loans, no need for collateral, no federal requirement, just an assumption that some homes deserved to be rebuilt more than others and the inclusion of property values insured that race and demographics would determine which. But actually we are talking about rebuilding lives and in the Road Home program it seems rebuilding Black lives just didn't matter as much.

Lloyd Dennis
Executive Director
The Silverback Society

KATRINA REFLECTIONS

ANN DUPLESSIS

During this decade of rebirth following Hurricane Katrina, one of the more remarkable transformations has been New Orleans' K-12 education landscape. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, public education in New Orleans was experiencing its own mini-disaster. We had a school board that was completely dysfunctional, the system's finances were a mess and worst of all children were not learning.

While significant education reforms were enacted just prior to Hurricane Katrina, it took this tragedy that claimed the lives of more than 1,000 Louisianans to force us to make changes that we all knew needed to be made. The things that held us back for so many years – politics, turf wars, and the desire by many to maintain the status quo – were washed away by Katrina. The disaster thrust upon stakeholders – parents, school boards, lawmakers, unions, and reform advocates – the urgency to come together to create an educational environment that would put children and families at the forefront.

What's ahead in the next 10 years for education in New Orleans? We must look to parents, who are now more informed, empowered and engaged in the education of their children. They are saying loudly and unequivocally, "Don't go back!" This is a window of opportunity, opened by Hurricane Katrina, that cannot be closed.

During the recent *NOLA PARENTS PERSPECTIVE: A Conversation About New Orleans Public Education 10 Years Post-Katrina*, I listened as parents demanded that our schools continue to improve. They all agreed that the we won't reach the finish line until all choices are good choices; where every school is an excellent school, in every New Orleans neighborhood.

Ann Duplessis is president of the Louisiana Federation for Children and former state senator.

KATRINA REFLECTIONS

BEVERLY STANTON MCKENNA

My look back at Hurricane Katrina is one of death and dying, grieving and goodbyes as exemplified by the funeral of my mentor and the former Urban League of Greater New Orleans CEO, Clarence Lyle Barney. It was Saturday, August 27, 2005-- just two days before Katrina made landfall and the levees broke--when the Black community gathered at Dillard University Chapel to lay Barney to rest.

Ten years after "the" cataclysmic storm ripped our community asunder, forever changing the city, the defining event which, to me, symbolizes the mournful leave-taking of a people and their way of life is the funeral of our good friend and leader.

For 30 years, he had been the stalwart president of the local affiliate of the Urban League. He was determined and committed, a daring trailblazer. With his feet planted firmly on the ground, Barney understood the challenges of the everyday New Orleanian. He was at ease in every sector of our community. Whether conferring with the well-heeled uptown establishment or with the regular men and women whose culture, hard work and spirit are woven together to create the very fabric of the city, he was comfortable; he was unapologetic and authentic.

At this time— the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina and 10 years after Barney's death, I find myself asking over and again, "What would Clarence Barney think; what would he say about the state of our city now?" Interestingly enough, I need only to turn pages in *The New Orleans Tribune* to find the answers. You see, Barney had been a frequent *Tribune* contributor— writing one of his last commentaries in the August 2002 edition of the paper, an issue emblazoned with the headline "Yell Fire"—a headline that he had animatedly suggested for that issue.

Facing the daunting reality that there was an effort afoot to take New Orleans back, to wrestle influence and political muscle from the Black leadership that had steered its course during the previous 24 years, in that article he contemplated what he saw, an African American community in dire trouble.

And as usual, Barney was right. In fact, anxiety and angst envelope me as I reread his column. With uncanny prescience, he laid out the steps the establishment would employ to take New Orleans back.

He warned of the consequences Black New Orleans would face if it waited or did nothing or even worse—aided the establishment in their mission that he forewarned would:

"Proclaim that a certain group of citizens is morally, socially, culturally and intellectually superior and deserves to control New Orleans."

Is this not exactly what happened when the "shadow government" met in the days and weeks after Katrina with their plans for green space in New Orleans East and the Ninth Ward and their plans for redeveloping public housing into mixed income dwellings that provide fewer options for the city's poorest residents?

"Organize a network of private, quasi-public and volunteer institutions and supply them with a core ideology and message."

How long after Katrina were our public education system and neighborhood schools seized and subsequently turned over to outside management organizations? How long after Katrina before talk of privatizing our public recreation system began?

"Identify Blacks to carry that message and put them in positions of power."

To be sure, sadness washes over me when I consider the number of our leaders who have either co-signed these disastrous ideologies and messages or those who have sat silently saying and doing nothing as our communities, our schools, and our neighborhoods are placed on a modern-day auction block and sold to the highest bidders.

I know Clarence Barney would be troubled by this New Orleans. It may be new and different…revitalized. But it isn't right. With too many poor, mostly Black people still left out, left behind, locked out and stranded—just as they were in those haunting days after Katrina—it could never be right.

In the 30 years that *The New Orleans Tribune* has been in existence and particularly since Katrina, we at McKenna Publishing have taken seriously our mission to be an unfettered voice for the community. We remain undeterred in that mission. In so doing, we will strive to honor the legacy of our friend Clarence Barney. And personally, I, who served a term as vice chairman of the local Urban League board during his tenure, will challenge those who celebrate now to genuinely reimagine New Orleans as a city that refuses to leave anyone behind. Ours should be a richer city—not because we priced out and locked out the poor, but because we did everything in our power to eliminate the conditions that create poverty. Our city cannot be made stronger—truly stronger—by turning its back on the weak.

Yes, certain areas of the city have made progress since those precarious weeks and months immediately following the storm. And as we commemorate the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, those strides should be observed. But let's not confuse progress for certain areas with success.

As I look back to the 10 years since Katrina and then look to the future, I want a better New Orleans for all of our citizens—not just a different one.

Beverly Stanton McKenna
Publisher, The New Orleans Tribune