

Rise of Community Organizations, Citizen Engagement, and New Institutions

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Following Hurricane Katrina, observers worried that New Orleans might continue on the path of citizen passivity, inter-communal conflict, and corruption that was a long-standing part of its reputation. Instead, observers have been struck by the outpouring of citizen engagement, the rise of new or reinvigorated community organizations, and the calls for government responsiveness.

By many accounts, New Orleans had never developed a robust civil society in its long history before Hurricane Katrina.¹ Its elites were a closed group, its government was unresponsive, and most of its citizens swung between passivity and angry protest. As is typical of communities with closed and rigid elites, New Orleans had lost rank to more open, dynamic cities, in this case since the 1840s, when it was the third-largest American city.² In the half-century before Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans actually shrank in size, while a “New South” arose all around it.

In short, New Orleans had lost sight of what democratic theory, going back to Alexis de Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill in the mid-nineteenth century, identified as three important characteristics of a free society.³ First, the initiative to address issues comes from free citizens working together in their communities. Second, government is responsive to citizens and partners with them, rather than commanding or excluding them. And third, civic engagement is open to all citizens, regardless of social standing

or background, and leadership is open to merit. They argue that in an unfree society, by contrast, government discourages people from working together to solve their own problems and elites restrict participation on the basis of class, race/ethnicity, gender, or colonial status. Therefore, participation in a free society takes the form of interaction, reconciliation of opposing interests, and the formation of an idea (however imperfect) of a common good. Participation in an unfree society takes the form of resistance to oppression and petitioning of elites for benefits that people are prevented from working together to attain. Although these are ideal types, civic engagement in a free society seems to have much in common with the social “capacity” needed for “resilience” described by Kathryn Foster in chapter 2 in this volume.

The effort to recover from Hurricane Katrina seems to have spurred a new burst of civic engagement in New Orleans, giving the city an opportunity to regain lost ground. Sociologists suggest that communities respond to natural disasters by pulling together and cooperating in their attempt to recover because they feel that they all face a common challenge.⁴ After Katrina, government assistance alone was never sufficient for recovery; therefore citizens and communities were motivated to work together to recover. Citizens had an incentive to cooperate and provide each other with assistance; communities had an incentive to partner with one another; elites had an incentive to accept leadership initiatives from outside their traditional ranks; and government had an incentive to accept offers of assistance and partnership from engaged citizens and communities. A virtuous circle of growing mutual trust and civic engagement began to displace the old vicious circle of distrust and disengagement.⁵

Summary of Post-Katrina Community Engagement

This chapter relies mostly on original data collected through the author’s research project on community recovery in Greater New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina, especially on a survey of about 7,000 residents initiated in spring 2006 and continuing through spring 2011 that covered respondents’ damage, recovery, social connections (social capital), and feelings; a survey of neighborhood association leaders conducted in partnership with the New Orleans Neighborhood Partnership Network (data collection is still under way, with about ninety leaders surveyed so far); and intensive ethnographic research, including videotaped interviews, conducted since shortly after the storm of neighborhood associations,

churches, synagogues, and other faith-based groups, nonprofits, and other community organizations (more than 200 groups in total).

Overall Civic Engagement and Social Capital

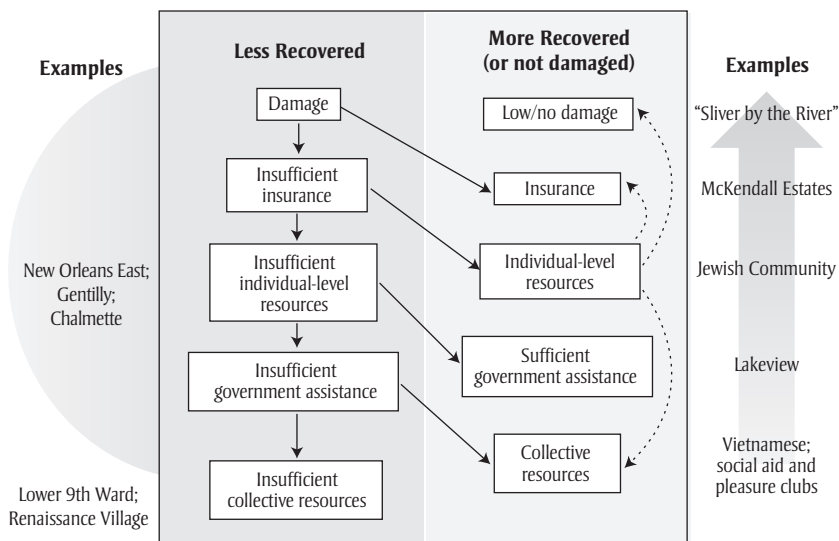
Surveys of some 7,000 residents conducted by the author's research team reveal that New Orleanians since Katrina score below the national average on most measures of civic engagement and social capital included in the 2006 Social Capital Community Survey.⁶ They express a good deal less social trust and are less likely to participate in various social activities. Yet at the same time, post-Katrina New Orleanians were substantially *more* likely to attend a public meeting at which town or school affairs were discussed, at least a few times a year. With the advent of frequent community and planning meetings focused on disaster recovery, perhaps we see “new” forms of civic engagement displacing an “old” style of civil distrust and disengagement in New Orleans.

Who Participates: Individual and Collective Resources

Research shows that participation requires resources, and resources are not distributed equally.⁷ Citizens with greater individual resources, such as money, education, and time, participate more actively than citizens with fewer resources. Citizens with greater collective resources or social capital—cohesive communities, strong organizations, enthusiasm and mobilization, mutual trust—participate more effectively than those without collective resources. And higher-status citizens (who have more individual resources) usually have more collective resources as well. But collective resources can help lower-status citizens compensate for their lack of individual resources and thus help them participate at higher rates than they otherwise could. Lower-status citizens without compensating social capital are least able to participate.

Figure 14-1 suggests how these patterns seem to have played out in post-Katrina New Orleans. People with individual resources like money and education were less likely to receive storm damage because they lived in places that were less likely to flood; they were more likely to have adequate insurance; and they were more likely to be civically engaged. People with insufficient individual resources were more dependent on collective resources or, failing that, on government assistance to compensate and enable them to recover. People who had neither individual nor collective resources were least likely to recover.

FIGURE 14-1. Storm Damage, Resources, and Recovery: Sequence and Effects of Different Types of Recovery^a



Source: Author's illustration.

a. The figure illustrates hypotheses about different paths to hurricane recovery. Solid-line arrows show an opportunity or decision tree, indicating different possible paths for moving out of the dark-shaded damage zone into the light-shaded recovery zone. (The arrows do not represent causation.) For instance, if a community suffers damage but has insurance, it has a path to recovery and moves into the light zone. Failing that ("insufficient insurance"), it might exit the damage area with individual-level resources, or some other means, further along the tree branches. Communities that have exhausted all potential resources or that have none are unable to move out of the dark zone into the light zone—that is, they are unable to recover. (Dotted-line arrows show a causal relationship, namely, that individual-level resources contribute to obtaining many other forms of resources as well.)

Well-to-do communities, therefore, were at an advantage: the "Sliver by the River" (Garden District, French Quarter, and others) received less damage; McKendall Estates residents were well insured; the Jewish community was well-off and had strong solidarity; Lakeview was upper-middle income and had a strong neighborhood organization. Less well-to-do communities like the Vietnamese and the Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs were able to compensate to some extent for inadequate individual resources by employing strong collective resources. Recovery in middle-income communities, like those in New Orleans East, Gentilly, and Chalmette, varied considerably according to whether the communities were able to organize themselves or receive sufficient government assistance. The low- to moderate-income communities that were most heavily

damaged and were unable to draw sufficiently on collective resources, like the Lower Ninth Ward, have had a weak recovery. And individuals with little individual or collective resources, especially isolated poor people, lower-income elderly, those with disabilities, and those without strong networks of family and friends, have struggled most, often remaining in FEMA trailer parks like Renaissance Village in Baker, Louisiana, near Baton Rouge.

Civic Engagement and Recovery

Figure 14-2 reinforces that picture. Higher-status people and solidaristic communities participate more strongly. On a civic engagement index in the author's resident survey, better-educated and higher-income people are more engaged, as are Jews, church members, and members of Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs (SAPCs).⁸ Residents of FEMA trailer parks are less engaged. The Vietnamese community, which has a reputation as a very tightly knit community that has only recently begun to abandon its traditional reluctance to engage in citywide affairs, remains less civically engaged than average. Perhaps that is due to its lesser integration into New Orleans society. The most striking finding in figure 14-2 is that Social Aid and Pleasure Club members score highest on civic engagement.⁹ While SACP members are mostly lower income and thus lack strong individual resources, they are nevertheless more civically active, service oriented, and trusting than even the rich or well educated. That finding is a powerful testament to the importance of social capital or collective resources in compensating for the lack of individual resources.

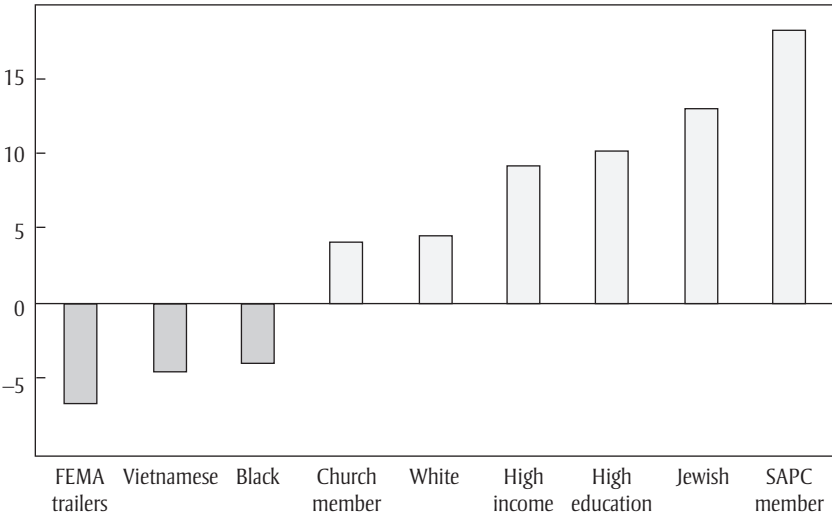
Figure 14-3 shows that higher levels of civic engagement and social capital in a census tract are associated with stronger community recovery. Specifically, greater associational involvement, civic leadership, service performance, attendance at club meetings, and social trust correlate significantly ($p < .01$) with stronger repopulation and less damage, blight, and violent crime in 180 census tracts.

Optimistic Developments: A New Form and Quality of Civic Engagement

A new style of activism has arisen in post-Katrina New Orleans. Civic engagement has evolved away from pressing for government assistance while government plays communities off against each other. New forms of engagement include

FIGURE 14-2. Civic Engagement in Selected Social Groups^a

Percentage points above or below New Orleans average



Source: LSU Disaster Recovery Survey. *N* = ca. 7,000. Data collection began in spring 2006 and continued through spring 2011. More details are available at www.lsu.edu/fweil/KatrinaResearch.

a. Civic engagement scores are an average of scores on the following questions. Items in brackets are the answers included in the scale.

1. "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?" [Most people can be trusted.]

2. "About how often have you done the following?" Attended any public meeting in which there was discussion of town or school affairs. [Once a month or more.]

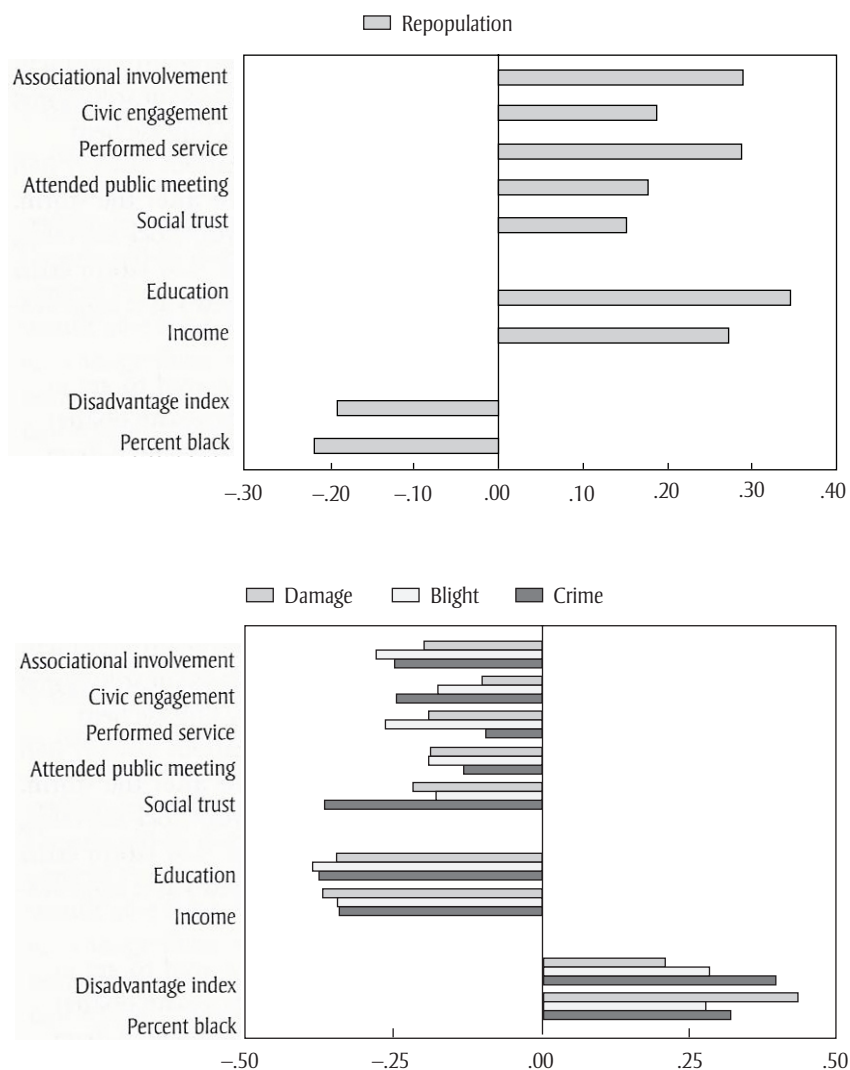
3. "Have you taken part in activities with the following groups and organizations in the past 12 months?" A neighborhood association like a block association; a homeowner or tenant association; or a crime watch group. [Yes.]

4. "Have you taken part in activities with the following groups and organizations in the past 12 months?" A charity or social welfare organization that provides services in such fields as health or service to the needy. [Yes.]

5. "In the past twelve months, have you served as an officer or served on a committee of any local club or organization?" [Yes.]

- increasing organizational capacity and autonomy
- greater strategic sophistication
- increasing citizen participation
- a new cooperative orientation and the emergence of new umbrella groups
- new recovery resources from “outside-inside” the community.

Moreover, government and established elites have perhaps become more open to citizen input than in the past. However, this is a recent development, and it remains to be seen how permanent it will be. Let's look at each of these factors in turn.

FIGURE 14-3. Correlation of Civic Engagement and Social Capital with Community Recovery^a

Sources: LSU Disaster Recovery Survey. Damage estimates are from the City of New Orleans; repopulation and blight estimates are based on postal delivery data from the U.S. Postal Service and HUD; data on violent crime are from the City of New Orleans Police Department.

a. Data are aggregated to the level of census tract (N = 180). Data are for Orleans and St. Bernard Parish census tracts; a few tracts are combined because of too few survey responses. Number of interviews per tract are: mean = 16; median = 12; maximum = 102; minimum = 3.

Increasing Organizational Capacity and Autonomy

Community leaders stress several important elements in increasing organizational capacity and autonomy: improved organization, including the use of committees and block captains; data collection and developing their own, independent sources of information; ongoing incorporation of new technologies like mapping and databases; extensive use of volunteers; and, above all, taking the initiative and not waiting for outside help.

Some of the older, preexisting community organizations already had committee structures, which were quickly reactivated after the storm. But one of the most innovative organizational initiatives, block captains, grew organically out of the need to act quickly in the post-storm crisis environment. Al Petrie, former president of the Lakeview Civic Improvement Association said,

One of the first things we did was say, "Okay, we need to get in touch with people as best we can," and the best way we can do that is to see if we have people that we know and then that one of them knows on every block in Lakeview. . . . And we created a block captain network, where through everybody knowing somebody in Lakeview, we got somebody to volunteer to be the information officer for a particular block. And by doing that, we started our whole surveying process.¹⁰

The block captain system quickly became an important tool for information gathering and dissemination, organizing, planning, and other activities that helped to build community capacity.

Organizations became adept at conducting their own surveys of property conditions and infrastructure. They then input the data into GIS mapping programs and computer databases and learned to analyze and use their own data for their own purposes. Organizations also organized and used their own workforce of volunteer labor, especially volunteer groups that came to help rebuild.

Such initiatives enabled citizen organizations to become more independent of the government, especially when the government was slow and overwhelmed in providing services during recovery. Indeed, when organizations found that the government was overwhelmed and unable to perform its duties, citizens sometimes tried to bring their assembled data to the government to help it organize its tasks more efficiently. Describing how citizens can fight blight, Denise Thornton, founder and president of the Beacon of Hope Resource Center, said,

[We've learned] the things to look for, how to fight blight, how to go to city hall and win in a constructive way. These blight teams have case files on every single blighted home, where they make phone calls, they do voluntary compliance. . . . You don't just sit around and wait for government to help you. You've got to do it yourself.¹¹

A New Strategic Sophistication

A sense of urgency contributed also to the development of a new strategic sophistication among community leaders, who quickly realized that if residents thought that no one else was going to come back and rebuild, they would be discouraged, resulting in a self-fulfilling prophecy. If, conversely, residents thought that others were returning and rebuilding, that would give them the confidence to do the same. The question was how to manage impressions and create a critical mass.¹² Broadmoor put up banners and yard signs throughout the neighborhood that said "Broadmoor Lives," and people in New Orleans East put signs in their window and yards that read "We're Coming Back," well before they were able to return. That kind of signaling helped create a critical mass, or tipping point, to forge solidarity in the service of recovery.

On that basis, formal planning became much more productive. Residents came to planning meetings in large numbers and actively participated. In the neighborhoods that began the process earliest, such as Lakeview and Broadmoor, neighborhood meetings were large and had a buzz of anticipation, with neighbors eager to see each other.

Several ethnic/religious communities also engaged in their own community planning. The Vietnamese community around the Mary Queen of Vietnam (MQVN) Catholic Church and the Mary Queen of Vietnam Community Development Corporation had begun planning before the storm. MQVN had planned a retirement home in a park-like setting, accompanied by an urban farm and farmers' market, which it planned to make self-financing by serving not only New Orleans customers but also Asian produce markets throughout the United States. Hurricane Katrina interrupted development, but after the storm the community was able to quickly pick up where it had left off.¹³ The Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans (JFGNO) also engaged in extensive recovery planning, building on a long-standing tradition of community self-governance.¹⁴ The JFGNO conducted a recovery survey in spring of 2006 and planning surveys in 2007 and 2010 and formed a set of planning committees that met and worked for a year.¹⁵ The JFGNO also hired a new executive

director, an Israeli urban planner from Jerusalem's city hall. Results of the surveys and conclusions from the planning committees were combined in a planning document at JFGNO's fall 2007 annual meeting. Among the most notable outcomes of these efforts was the creation of a successful "newcomers" program to attract young, dynamic new community members to relocate to New Orleans.

Increasing Citizen Participation

One of the most striking aspects of the post-Katrina period in New Orleans is how people who had never really taken part before have been drawn into civic affairs. People were galvanized by many things, including the "green dot" on a planning map that said that their community was slated for return to forest or park;¹⁶ by anger at authorities who were viewed as unresponsive; or by feelings of love for and solidarity with fellow community members. A new civic leadership emerged from among people who had never been engaged before. Katherine Prevost, president of Bunny Friend Neighborhood Association in the Upper Ninth Ward, said,

Before the storm, I was living my daily life. The storm changed me. . . . All I think about when I go to work is, "Let me hurry up and get these eight hours over with so I can do my community work" So when I leave my job, I put another eight hours in sometimes.¹⁷

A New Cooperative Orientation and the Emergence of New Umbrella Groups

Another centrally important feature of the new civic participation in post-Katrina New Orleans was its cooperative orientation. Community members pooled their efforts for the common cause of recovery and improvement. Communities partnered with each other to achieve common goals rather than competing with or confronting each other. Perhaps most surprisingly of all, many citizens reached out to government to act as a partner.

When Vietnamese community members began to return after the storm, those with building skills went house to house in teams, putting on new roofs, so that the owners could sleep in them, even while they worked on them. Others, without building skills, cooked communal meals for community members. Meanwhile, building supplies were warehoused in MQVN church buildings. Within about six months of the storm, most community members had returned and had usable housing, generally as a result of their own communal efforts.¹⁸

Communities also began to develop strongly cooperative relations with each other. Our survey of neighborhood association leaders asked about their relations with other neighborhood associations. As figure 14-4 shows, their assessment was that relations were good and overwhelmingly cooperative rather than competitive, and they identified specific areas and projects on which partnership was possible, including areas where one might predict competition.

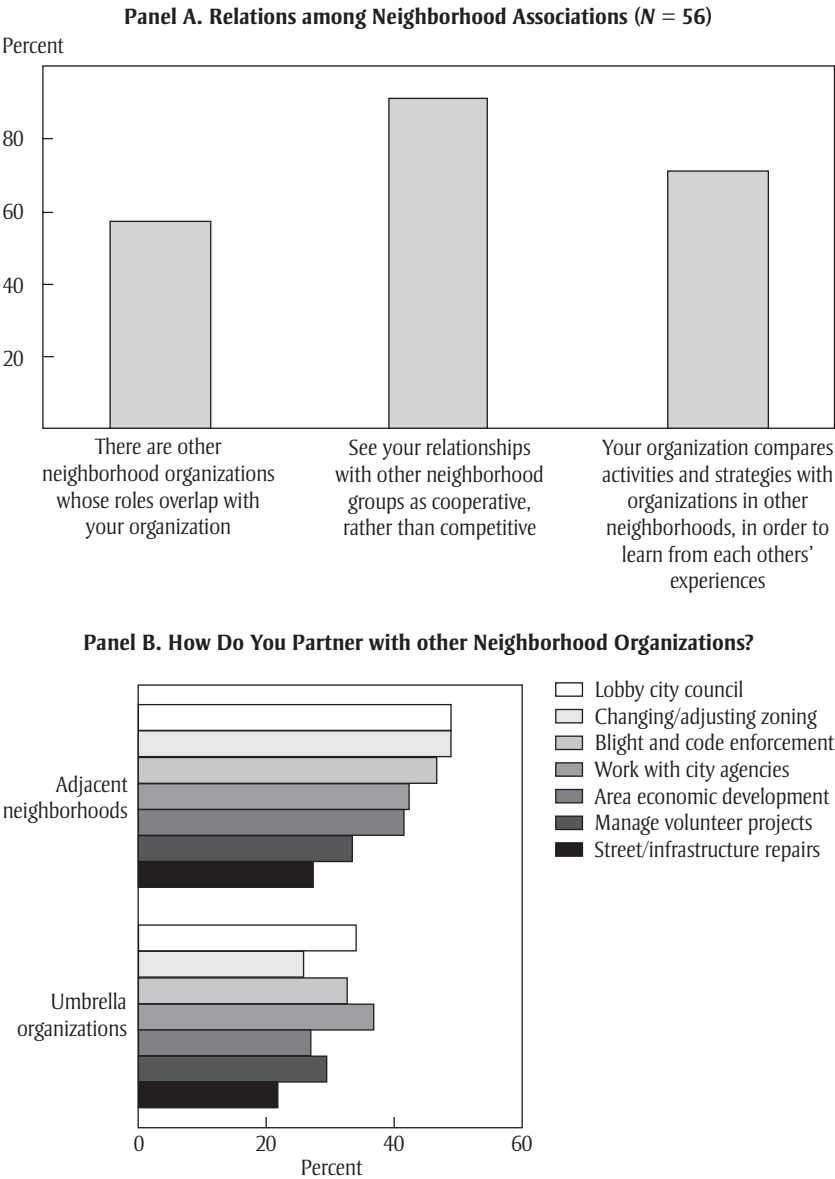
Coordinating organizations also emerged that sought to reduce tensions or conflict among organizations in their community. Thus, the Social Aid and Pleasure Club Task Force and the Mardi Gras Indian Council worked to reduce tensions among their constituent groups and to address external difficulties that all their groups faced, especially concerning city regulations and relations with the police.

A similar phenomenon was the emergence of new umbrella groups formed to coordinate community groups and bring them together in addressing the challenges of disaster recovery. Some of the umbrella groups were formed *outside* the system of organizations that they sought to work with, and it is notable how well they have been accepted and embraced. Three important umbrella groups are the Neighborhoods Partnership Network, the Beacon of Hope Resource Center, and Sweet Home New Orleans. Despite differences among them, the groups share the mission of helping their member groups gain capacity and autonomy, find areas of common concern on which they can work together, find synergies on issues that would otherwise produce competition or conflict, and, perhaps most important, learn from each other. In this regard, they also differ from more traditional service-providing nonprofit organizations because they do not approach their task as expert professionals who seek to solve problems for their clients but rather as conveners who try to help organizations function together more effectively within their own ecosystem.

New Recovery Resources from “Outside-Inside” the Community

Intracommunity resources from outside the affected region, a sort of “outside-inside” resource, were critical. They were most prevalent in the faith-based and ethnic communities but were also important in the cultural community. The national and neighboring Jewish communities immediately mobilized to help the New Orleans Jewish community. Representatives from national Jewish organizations were on the ground in Baton Rouge, Houston, and the Mississippi Gulf Coast within twenty-four hours of the storm and immediately began providing monetary,

FIGURE 14-4. Relations among New Orleans Neighborhood Associations



Sources: LSU/Neighborhoods Partnership Network survey of neighborhood association leaders; still in the field as of spring 2011.

logistical, and organizational assistance, aimed primarily at ensuring continuity of existing communal institutions so that the community could continue to function autonomously and provide for its members. At the same time, the neighboring Jewish community in Baton Rouge coordinated with New Orleans Jewish leaders to send boats into the flooded areas; within two or three days, they had picked up every single stranded community member as well as ferried anyone else that they could carry to dry land.

When the Vietnamese of New Orleans East decided to evacuate, they phoned ahead to their colleagues in Houston to tell them they were en route. As the convoy of cars arrived in Houston-area Vietnamese strip malls, local community members came running out, holding up fingers indicating the number of evacuees that they could take into their own homes. And when the MQVN community returned after the storm, its sister community on New Orleans' West Bank helped returning community members warehouse building materials and provided a local staging area for rebuilding. The cultural community also received massive assistance from musicians, artists, and others in cultural communities throughout the nation and around the world. Organizations like MusiCares (the Grammy's nonprofit wing), Music Rising, Renew Our Music, and the American Federation of Musicians contributed money, organized fundraisers, and replaced instruments and equipment.

Outlook: Cautious Optimism

These developments are very helpful for New Orleans' prospects not only of recovering but also of actually growing out of some of its pre-storm problems. Yet while the new civic engagement can help drive progress, citizen participation must itself overcome several challenges if it is to help the city move forward:

Lower- and middle-class citizens must be able to overcome elite resistance to their participation. Perhaps the most striking finding of our large survey is the high level of civic engagement of Social Aid and Pleasure Club members. By the standards of the civic engagement literature, SAPC members are model citizens: they are community leaders; they perform service; they support each other in times of need.¹⁹ When the hurricane hit, the Young Men Olympians mobilized its phone list and located all its members on their cell phones within days.²⁰ Asked to say a few words about what her club does, Sue Press, founder and president of the Ole

and Nu Style Fellas SAPC, reeled off an unbroken, five-minute stream of accomplishments, from mentoring youth, to donating school uniforms to needy families, to holding a voter registration drive at her house.²¹

New Orleans elites were not accustomed to viewing SAPC members, who are mostly working-class African Americans, as community leaders, and generally questioned the clubs' value and excluded them from a seat at the table.²² Yet the Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs perform the crucial leadership functions of drawing members of disadvantaged and excluded communities into the mainstream, providing opportunities and reducing the attraction of harmful activities. At his inauguration in 2010, Mayor Mitch Landrieu signaled that he would reverse the traditional elite view and reach out to SAPC leadership.²³

Citizens must overcome government resistance to their participation. As discussed, community groups have grown increasingly capable and sophisticated, gathering their own data, generating their own development plans, and asking government to act as a partner in their efforts. Historically, the New Orleans government tended to resist citizens' bids to form partnerships or tried to co-opt groups that made the bids.

Since Katrina, communities sometimes employed hardball tactics to remind government to be open and responsive. But those tactics shared only the form—not the content or intent—of the more familiar protests demanding benefits from government. For instance, when the city called for neighborhoods to develop recovery plans in late 2006, the Broadmoor neighborhood had already developed its own, outside the city's framework. When it appeared that city hall might not accept Broadmoor's plans, which were widely acknowledged to have been well constructed with widespread citizen participation, community leaders organized a demonstration. Their protest was not intended to demand benefits but rather to assert the community's autonomy, keep Broadmoor's citizens engaged, and insist that government partner with the community rather than command it. Likewise, the traditionally quiescent Vietnamese community in eastern New Orleans organized a protest against the creation of a landfill garbage dump nearby. Again, while the form was similar to protests aimed at gaining benefits or avoiding disadvantages, this protest was intended mainly to keep its citizens engaged and to demand inclusion in decisionmaking that affected the community. That is to say, the Vietnamese community also demanded that government partner with them rather than make decisions for them.

These new “hardball” practices helped community organizations to act as partners with rather than petitioning clients of government, and by incorporating participation within a framework of active community organizations, they also helped to maintain and ensure higher levels of citizen participation after the euphoric period of immediate recovery.

Here, too, in its first few months in office, the Landrieu administration indicated that it intended to be more welcoming of civic participation and more transparent than its predecessors. The incoming Landrieu team invited several of the “new” community leaders to chair or serve on transition task forces and to join the administration.²⁴ Landrieu began to welcome citizen participation, including data collection, in his administration’s fight against blight.²⁵ That openness may be starting to pay off. In our surveys, through the first five months of the Landrieu administration (until October 2010), satisfaction with New Orleans political leadership rose from 11 percent under Mayor Nagin to 16 percent under Landrieu, while dissatisfaction fell from 67 to 55 percent. Only time—and the administration’s actions—will tell if those are honeymoon numbers or the beginning of a positive trend.²⁶

Communities must find ways to extend participation beyond the euphoric early period of recovery into the period in which more mundane, less popular, and often technical tasks must be accomplished if progress is to continue. Most of the civic engagement described in this chapter seems oriented to the individual or neighborhood level. Yet many of the most central decisions New Orleans must make going forward take place at institutional, administrative, and technical levels. Some observers feel that, even under the best of circumstances, citizens cannot have much impact here because participation at this level requires such a high degree of expertise.²⁷ Therefore, there is a danger that if citizens are unable to compete at the expert level, their participation might ineluctably be pushed back to “old” forms like petitioning authorities rather than take “new” forms like partnering. Yet it is important to remind ourselves that experts do not actually govern. They implement decisions made by leaders, and the form that implementation takes reflects the character of leadership. If a city has a closed elite system, in which decisions are made behind closed doors, experts may appear to govern because elites prefer to obscure their own role. But when leadership is open and communities hammer out policies in public discourse, experts are required to implement decisions with a degree of transparency and accountability. If they

do not, leaders hold them accountable, but more important, leaders hold each other accountable with checks and balances.

Conclusion

This account shows how civic engagement and participation helped drive recovery in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Progress was fastest and most effective among communities that refused to wait for somebody else to help. The most successful communities did not take the law into their own hands or point the finger of blame. They mobilized their most valuable resource, their community members; they followed the most effective strategy, working with each other; and they took the view that government is not the problem: it belongs to citizens, and it can and must act as a partner to citizens. The Landrieu administration, in its first year in office, has shown signs of acting as such a partner. Therefore, the best policies going forward should encourage this civic orientation and include previously disadvantaged and excluded communities. Citizen and community organizations are asking to retain their autonomy and for government to partner with them. New Orleans has perhaps begun to seize the opportunity to change its narrative—even in the face of the 2010 oil spill—from that of pitiable victim to author of its own destiny and to serve as an advanced model of how civic engagement can drive a city's improvement.

Notes

1. Kent B. Germany, *New Orleans after the Promises: Poverty, Citizenship, and the Search for the Great Society* (University of Georgia Press, 2007); James Gill, *Lords of Misrule: Mardi Gras and the Politics of Race in New Orleans* (University Press of Mississippi, 1997); Ben Toledano, "New Orleans—An Autopsy," *Commentary*, September 2007, pp. 27–32.

2. Richard Campanella, *Bienville's Dilemma: A Historical Geography of New Orleans* (Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2008).

3. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (University of Chicago Press, 2000 [orig. 1835 and 1840]); Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the Revolution* (University of Chicago Press, 2001 [orig. 1856]); John Stuart Mill, "De Tocqueville on Democracy in America," vol. 1 and 2, in *Essays on Politics and Culture*, edited by Gertrude Himmelfarb (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1973 [orig. 1835 and 1840]); John Stuart Mill, *Three Essays: On Liberty* [orig. 1859], *Representative Government* [orig. 1861], and *The Subjection of Women* [orig. 1869] (Oxford University Press,

1975); Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1970).

4. By contrast, citizens recovering from a man-made disaster have an incentive to look for blame and fight each other for benefits to be gained from the responsible party that caused the disaster. See Allen H. Barton, *Communities in Disaster: A Sociological Analysis of Collective Stress Situations* (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1969); William R. Freudenburg, "Contamination, Corrosion, and the Social Order: An Overview," *Current Sociology* 45, no. 3 (1997): 19–40; H. Paul Friesema, *Aftermath: Communities after Natural Disasters* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1979); Duane A. Gill and others, "Technological Disaster and Chronic Community Stress," *Society and Natural Resources* 11, no.8 (1998): 795–816; J. Steven Picou, Brent K. Marshall, and Duane A. Gill, "Disaster, Litigation, and the Corrosive Community," *Social Forces* 82, no. 4 (2004): 1493–522; Russell R. Dynes and E. L. Quarantelli, "Community Conflict: Its Absence and Its Presence in Natural Disasters," *Mass Emergencies* 1 (1975): 139–52.

5. For further discussion and a literature review of vicious and virtuous circles of participation styles, see Frederick Weil, "Political Culture, Political Structure, and Democracy: The Case of Legitimation and Opposition Structure," in *Research on Democracy and Society*, vol. 2, *Political Culture and Political Structure: Theoretical and Empirical Studies* (Greenwich: JAI Press, 1994).

6. Robert D. Putnam, "The 2006 Social Capital Community Survey," Saguario Seminar: Civic Engagement in America (www.hks.harvard.edu/saguaro/measurement/2006scs.htm). Unfortunately, there seem to be no similar measurements for New Orleans before Katrina with which to compare measurements after the storm.

7. Sidney Verba and Norman Nie, *Participation in America* (New York: Harper and Rowman, 1972); Sidney Verba, Norman Nie, and Jae-On Kim, *Participation and Political Equality: A Seven-Nation Comparison* (Cambridge University Press, 1978); Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady, *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics* (Harvard University Press, 1995).

8. The index includes the average scores on questions relating to whether most people can be trusted and whether the respondent had attended a public meeting, was a member of a neighborhood association, was an officer of local organization, or had engaged in service activity.

9. Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs are associations of mostly lower- to middle-income African Americans. They trace their heritage to nineteenth-century benevolent and burial societies created in response to racial discrimination and segregation. They developed the tradition of "jazz funerals," wherein a brass band would play a dirge on the way to the cemetery followed by jazz on the way out of the cemetery. The latter became known as a "second line" and today most SAPCs hold an annual second-line parade in which members and neighbors dance to brass band music on a long, circuitous route through the city. The clubs rightly regard themselves as keepers and innovators of the culture and proudly maintain and develop these living traditions. SAPCs continue to be service and fellowship organizations today.

10. Al Petrie, filmed interview with Wesley Shrum (professor of sociology, Louisiana State University), September 19, 2008, New Orleans. This and several other filmed interviews quoted in this chapter can be viewed at www.lsu.edu/fweil/KatrinaResearch.

11 Denise Thornton, filmed interview with the author, March 11, 2010, New Orleans.

12. Gerald Marwell and Pamela Oliver, *The Critical Mass in Collective Action: Studies in Rationality and Social Change* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

13. Most information in this and later sections on the Vietnamese community is based on interviews by the author with Reverend Nguyen The Vien, pastor, Mary Queen of Vietnam Catholic Church, on April 22, May 14, June 6, September 9, and October 23, 2006; December 10, 2007; January 16 and April 22, 2008; and August 13, 2010 (videotaped); a videotaped interview with Mary Tran and Diem Nguyen, former and current executive directors, Mary Queen of Vietnam Community Development Corporation, August 12, 2010; and many informal discussions with community members since spring 2006. Also see Christine Hauser, "Sustained by Close Ties, Vietnamese Toil to Rebuild," *New York Times*, October 20, 2005; Sharon Cohen, "Vietnamese Priest Works to Rebuild His Flooded Parish," Associated Press, November 20, 2005; Patrick Strange, "Strength to Lead the Charge," *Times-Picayune*, August 29, 2006; John Pope, "East N.O. Priest Personifies Resilience; Vietnamese Leader Preaches Self-Reliance," *Times-Picayune*, September 03, 2006.

14. The Jewish community also provided extensive assistance to other communities. The Jewish Federations of North America (then called the United Jewish Communities) alone donated \$11.4 million to other communities, and other Jewish organizations donated additional funds and goods; roughly 30,000 to 50,000 Jewish volunteers came to the Gulf Coast to help other communities rebuild through Hillel alternative spring breaks, synagogues, schools, and other mitzvah groups (e-mail to the author from Michael Weil, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans, February 7, 2011). Assistance to others could be the subject of a separate chapter. It is not discussed in depth here not just for lack of space but also because this chapter focuses on communities' efforts to further their own recovery—that is, residents' own efforts within their own community.

15. The surveys mentioned in this paragraph were conducted by the author: April–December 2006 ($N = 707$); June–September 2007 ($N = 791$); 2010 ($N = 144$). See www.lsu.edu/fweil/KatrinaResearch and www.jewishnola.com/page.aspx?id=176820.

16. "4 Months to Decide," *Times-Picayune*, January 11, 2006.

17. Katherine Prevost, filmed interview with the author, March 3, 2010, New Orleans.

18. The U.S. Census reports that the Asian American population in Orleans Parish declined from 11,056 to 9,883 from 2000 to 2010 (<http://factfinder2.census.gov>). In other words, almost 90 percent returned (compared with 71 percent parish-wide), roughly what Father Vien told the author in multiple interviews. See footnote 13, which indicates that the return was rapid.

19. The Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs are highlighted here mainly because we have good survey data for them, yet they are just one of a number of organizations that provide support and assistance within lower-income African American communities. Others include churches, community cultural programs (for example, the Roots of Music after-school program for middle-school children; see www.therootsofmusic.com/), and extended families. The legacy of resistance to oppression is also strong, flowing not only from the civil rights movement (for example, Germany, *New Orleans after the Promises*) but also from older cultural roots (for example, Mardi Gras Indians, voodoo and spiritualism, Skeleton gangs). See, for example, Richard Brent Turner, *Jazz Religion, the Second Line, and Black New Orleans* (Indiana University Press, 2009); Michael E. Crutcher Jr., *Treme: Race and Place in a New Orleans Neighborhood* (University of Georgia Press, 2010); Al Kennedy, *Big Chief Harrison and the Mardi Gras Indians* (Pelican Publishing, 2010); Rachel Breunlin, Ronald W. Lewis,

and Helen Regis, *The House of Dance and Feathers: A Museum* by Ronald W. Lewis (UNO Press/Neighborhood Story Project, 2009); Ned Sublette, *The World That Made New Orleans: From Spanish Silver to Congo Square* (Lawrence Hill Books, 2009). Many of these organizations are more typical of lower- than middle-income black communities, whose forms of participation often resemble those of white middle-income communities more than those of black lower-income communities.

20. Waldorf J. Gipson III (vice president of the Young Men's Olympians SAPC), filmed interview with Wesley Shrum (professor of sociology, Louisiana State University), January 17, 2009, New Orleans.

21. Sue Press, filmed interview with the author, April 17, 2010, New Orleans.

22. "Witness: Second Line Shooting Victim Saved Kids," New Orleans Fox 8 Live, September 6, 2010 (www.fox8live.com/news/local/story/Witness-Second-line-shooting-victim-saved-kids/VciIa089Uk25oE75VMTTdA.csp)

23. Landrieu had already established fairly good relations with these communities as lieutenant governor, a position whose mandate includes "culture," so the communities had some predisposition to optimism. Norm Dixon, president of the Young Men's Olympians, expressed such a feeling to the author in a Mardi Gras day interview, February 16, 2010. Landrieu invited Mardi Gras Indians and SAPCs to his May 3, 2010, inauguration celebrations and danced with them (see Deborah Cotton, "BigRed-Cotton," *YouTube*, May 03, 2010, "Mayor Mitch Landrieu and Mardi Gras Indians at Inauguration Gala" [www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvQMX-imng]), and he made a point of publicly commiserating with the community following the tragic shooting death of a child at a second-line parade (see Ramon Antonio Vargas, "Mayor, Congressman among Those Mourning 2-year-old Jeremy Galmon," *Times-Picayune*, October 4, 2010.)

24. Transition chairs included LaToya Cantrell, president of the Broadmoor Improvement Association; Denise Thornton, founder and president of Beacon of Hope; and Timolynn Sams, executive director of the Neighborhood Partnership Network. Hires include Lucas Diaz, formerly the executive director of the Hispanic organization, Puentes, as director of the city's new Office of Neighborhood Engagement; Charles Allen, past president of the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association; and Denise Warren Ross, deputy director of the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center.

25. "The strategies outlined in the Mayor's plan came out of a collaboration between City officials and staff, non-profit organizations, community members and urban blight experts from across the country. Beacon of Hope is especially excited to see included in the comprehensive strategy the importance of resident-collected blight data to help inform city agencies of conditions in each community." Beacon of Hope Resource Center, "Mayor Landrieu's New Plan to Fight Blight Includes Resident Data Collection," *October News*, October 20, 2010. See also Frank Donze, "Mayor Mitch Landrieu Sets Goal of Clearing 10,000 Blighted Eyesores," *Times-Picayune*, October 1, 2010, and "Mayor Unveils Comprehensive Blight Eradication Strategy," City of New Orleans, September 30, 2010 (www.nola.gov/PRESS/City-Of-New-Orleans/All-Articles/MAYOR-UNVEILS-COMPREHENSIVE-BLIGHT-ERADICATION-STRATEGY).

26. For instance, this trend masks race differences: satisfaction rose among whites by 18 points, but changed very little among blacks. This very early trend, based on only a few respondents, will bear watching.

27. Jürgen Habermas, *Toward a Rational Society* (Boston: Beacon, 1970).