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Coming Home to New Orleans: Neighborhood Rebuilding After Katrina

Karl F. Seidman

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Karl F. Seidman : Coming Home to New Orleans: Neighborhood Rebuilding After Katrina before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Coming Home to New Orleans: Neighborhood Rebuilding After Katrina:

Coming Home to New Orleans documents grassroots rebuilding efforts in New Orleans neighborhoods after hurricane

Katrina, and draws lessons on their contribution to the post-disaster recovery of cities. The book begins with two chapters that address Katrina's impact and the planning and public sector recovery policies that set the context for neighborhood recovery. Rebuilding narratives for six New Orleans neighborhoods are then presented and analyzed. In the heavily flooded Broadmoor and Village de L'Est neighborhoods, residents coalesced around communitywide initiatives, one through a neighborhood association and the second under church leadership, to help homeowners return and restore housing, get key public facilities and businesses rebuilt and create new community-based organizations and civic capacity. A comparison of four adjacent neighborhoods in the center of the city show how differing socioeconomic conditions, geography, government policies and neighborhood capacity created varied recovery trajectories. The concluding chapter argues that grassroots and neighborhood scale initiatives can make important contributions to city recovery in four areas: repopulation, restoring "complete neighborhoods" with key services and amenities, rebuilding parts of the small business economy and enhancing recovery capacity. It also calls for more balanced investments and policies to rebuild rental and owner-occupied housing and more deliberate collaboration with community-based organizations to undertake and implement recovery plans, and proposes changes to federal disaster recovery policies and programs to leverage the contribution of grassroots rebuilding and more support for city recovery.

"Seidman's meticulous documentation, laborious research, and his view across multiple neighborhoods provides a rare opportunity to assess how city, state, and federal programs actually worked on the ground after Hurricane Katrina. His book both documents and reflects upon the implementation of recovery policies in a way that no other study could. In a world of hastily-published books on post-Katrina New Orleans, Seidman's clear-headed and honest account stands out for its careful scholarship, thoughtful observations, balance, and—above all—its credibility. His sound, level-headed recommendations deserve the attention of federal policy makers."--Robert B. Olshansky, Professor, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Karl Seidman has produced a path breaking book that focuses on perhaps the most overlooked element of disaster recovery: grassroots action. Seidman keenly recognizes the agency of people who are struck, but not defeated, by catastrophe. He traces the growth and decline, and the battles and opportunities faced by New Orleans' recovering neighborhoods. Few scholars cover this theme in such depth and with such conceptual clarity. This is a fascinating and provocative work of social theory."--Earthea Nance, Assistant Professor, Department of Planning and Urban Studies, University of New Orleans

Post-disaster recovery research and policy have primarily focused on restoring individual households and businesses or on public buildings, institutions, and infrastructure. Karl Seidman examines the often-overlooked intermediate layer of neighborhoods and the role they serve in the recovery of a place after a disaster. Recovery is as much about the rebuilding of community as it is about the rebuilding of physical assets. This book makes an important contribution to the body of knowledge of disaster recovery and crisis leadership. It is valuable for anyone seeking to understand the dynamics of how recoveries actually work."--Douglas Ahlers, Senior Fellow, The Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School of Government

Seidman has written a resource that should be widely available. Using post-Katrina New Orleans as his test case, the author examines how neighborhoods work to reemerge as 'residential and social centers.' Indispensable for collections that support urban planning, public administration, and modern southern history curricula. Essential. All levels/libraries."--CHOICE

About the Author Senior Lecturer, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, MIT