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Review of *Race, Place, and Environmental Justice after Hurricane Katrina: Struggles to Reclaim, Rebuild, and Revitalize New Orleans and the Gulf Coast*. Robert Bullard and Beverly Wright, Eds.

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neoclassical model, which postulates that markets are efficient and self-regulating, that there is therefore no unemployment and that there is a minimal or no role for government in the economy. The Depression severely weakened the stronghold of that model. Keynesianism, with its emphasis on government's positive role in the economy, played an important part in maintaining the relative prosperity of post-World War II decades. But since the 1980s, these neoclassical views—albeit with many variants and in modern dress—again predominate and underlie much economic policy.

Stiglitz provides a compelling case that we can't—and shouldn't—go back to where we were before the crisis. Instead, he advocates a new capitalist order, one that resembles the Swedish welfare state. He asks fundamental questions—among them: What kind of society do we want? And is our economy helping us to achieve it? Has the market misshaped our values? Shouldn't we be concerned about our moral deficit? The book ends with a call to create a new economic system that is sustainable, has greater income equality, gives people security, rights, and leisure, and that will, among other things, "create meaningful jobs, decent work for all those who want it." The question is how to get there—and there are few clues from Stiglitz on that score. Perhaps in his next book!

*Helen Lachs Ginsburg, Emeritus, Brooklyn College &
National Jobs for All Coalition*

Robert Bullard & Beverly Wright, Eds., *Race, Place, and Environmental Justice after Hurricane Katrina: Struggles to Reclaim, Rebuild, and Revitalize New Orleans and the Gulf Coast*. Westview Press, 2009. \$32.00 paperback.

There is no doubt that in August 2005 Hurricane Katrina changed the history of New Orleans and its residents forever. The events that unfolded before the eyes of the world called into sharp relief how the U.S. responds to a massive crisis of dislocation, one that in this case particularly impacted poor and African American communities. Is there any doubt that had Katrina swept over one of the country's vacation playgrounds for the wealthy there would have been no delays in rebuilding

and that President George Bush would not have done a callous 'fly over' to assess the damage?

Readers interested in the question of why place matters in peoples' lives and those interested in questions of environmental justice will find this book rewarding. In this edited volume Clark Atlanta University Prof. Robert Bullard and Dillard University Prof. Beverly Wright have assembled a richly researched and well written series of essays exploring why it is that some communities get left behind economically, spatially, and physically both before *and* after disasters strike. Reading the book as the summer 2010 BP oil spill disaster unfolds, much of what the authors consider in *Race, Place and Environmental Justice* unfortunately still applies.

Written by experts in environmental justice, land-use policy, and political science, the book makes it clear that while Katrina was, to be sure, a natural disaster, it was made exponentially worse by the government's inept urban policies before Katrina and its brutally horrible response once the levees broke. The book is divided into four parts: Challenges of Racialized Place, Health and Environment Post-Katrina, Equitable Rebuilding and Recovery, and Policy Choices for Social Changes. The editors frame the essays with an introductory chapter and an afterward in which they present their observations on what transpired over the three years to late August 2008 with respect to rebuilding the city. There they state:

Some policy analysts and elected officials have presented the plight of the city's displaced 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. However, the best way to break up concentrated poverty is not displacement but concentrated employment at a living wage.

Even the clean up heaped insult upon injury. Bullard and Wright in their introductory essay point out that Black-owned firms were "frozen out of the clean-up and rebuilding of the Gulf Coast." They note: "Only 1.5 percent of the \$1.6 billion

awarded by FEMA went to minority businesses, less than a third of the 5 percent normally required by law.”

The parts of the book discussing the environmental damage left in the wake of the levees' breaking offers cold comfort to communities being damaged by the BP spill. After Katrina, rather than work to clean up New Orleans neighborhoods, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) spent years making the case to leave the contamination as is!

State and federal governments remain ill prepared to deal with massive environmental disasters. The BP debacle and Katrina disproportionately affect the lives of poor and working class people. Just as there were no contingencies in place in August 2005 to handle the assault on peoples' lives, little is being done to make right the uprooted lives of people awash this time in filthy oil. The sorry state of the government's response post-Katrina offers little cause for optimism today as the very same region of the U.S. struggles with what is another preventable environmental disaster, which has the gravest of consequences on low-income communities and people of color.

Robert Farrant, University of Massachusetts Lowell

Marisa Chappell, *The War on Welfare: Family, Poverty, and Politics in Modern America*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010. \$45.00 hardcover.

The history of public welfare in the second half of the twentieth century, Chappell argues, reveals a complex and unsettling story of policy making based on ideologically driven agendas that used the poor as proxies in struggles to capture the American imagination and the structures of the American state. President Clinton promised “to end welfare as we know it,” and in 1996 when he signed the Personal Responsibility Work and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWOA), he ended Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), overturning sixty years of federal responsibility for poor children and their caregivers. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), AFDC's successor, provided block grants to states for public assistance, effectively devolving responsibility for