

**Disaster Resilience into Which Direction(s)?
Competing Discursive and Material Practices in
Post-Katrina New Orleans**

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ABSTRACT

Making use of theories of discourse and social innovation, this paper analyses the resilience of post-Katrina housing reconstruction trajectories in New Orleans. It defines and connects the concepts of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic social resilience cells (SRC), institutional structures and housing reconstruction trajectories as the pillars of the housing systems. SRC are the key agents in these systems and have been the main architects of the multidirectional housing recovery trajectory in New Orleans. Their discursive and material practices, and the way they interact with institutional structures are studied for two periods in the post-Katrina recovery process. Based on the main features of their practices and institutional affinities SRC can be divided into three types: hegemonic pro-growth and counter-hegemonic pro-equity and pro-comaterializing SRC. The evidence on the multidirectionality of housing reconstruction trajectories has challenged at least three hegemonic discursive myths about the post-Katrina recovery process: that reconstruction should be planned top-down; without state involvement; and without city-wide political leadership. The paper concludes that socially optimal recovery outcomes can be achieved when institutional structures build alliances with diverse types of SRC and orchestrate resilience trajectories on the basis of equity of treatment.

KEY WORDS: Social resilience cells, Discursive and material practices, Housing (systems), Institutional structures, Multidirectional recovery trajectory

Introduction

In this paper, we use and connect the concepts of social resilience cells (SRC), institutional structures and multidirectionality of resilience trajectories to gain a deeper insight into the impact which contentious, dynamic and heterogeneous recovery and housing reconstruction processes have on the socio-spatial formulations of post- Katrina New Orleans. SRC are situated within the housing system and are defined as affordable housing providers or housing policy implementers who organize themselves discursively and actively in their aim to influence the recovery profile of a post-disaster city (Paidakaki and Moulaert 2017). Shying away from earlier ecological and socio-ecological understandings of resilience as a single capacity of a system to resist shock and bounce back or bounce forward in a linear, monodirectional way (Holling 1973; Vale and Campanella 2005; Cutter et al. 2008; Editorial of Local Environment 2011), we reconceptualize resilience as a highly political, continuously changing, socially transformative process, with various “bounce-forward” imaginations – or resilience trajectories – promoted and materialized by a heterogeneity of social groups.

To achieve this reconceptualization, we focus on the socio-institutional and political dimensions of housing systems that have so far has been limitedly studied in the resilience literature. From a resilience perspective, a crisis period provides the potential for sociopolitical transformations leading to the disruption of well-seated socio-institutional arrangements and the genesis of new forms of housing systems. These housing systems provide the stages on which SRC constantly set forward various transformations leading to a dynamic, multidirectional recovery trajectory. This trajectory moves towards the satisfaction of unmet housing needs and the discussion on housing alternatives, but also in the direction of retriggering wealth accumulation. The symmetries or asymmetries in power relations among SRC occupying different positions in the housing system(s), respectively, guide the nature, objective and material outcomes of post-disaster recovery processes. The introduction of the concept of SRC, their typology (hegemonic pro-growth and counter-hegemonic pro-equity and pro-comaterializing) and the idea of an SRC-led multidirectionality of resilience during post-disaster recovery periods are the two core theoretical advancements of this paper in the resilience-housing conceptual investigation. These theoretical advancements are empirically strengthened by our investigation of the heterogeneous and dynamic discursive and material resilience manifestations of SRC in post-Katrina New Orleans.

The concept of SRC is central in our conceptual framework because it encompasses the theoretical strands of cultural theory and social innovation that allows us to uncover, expose and explain the nature of and influence of social practices (Holtz 2014), namely discursive and material practices ordinarily performed in society that have been largely neglected in the post-recovery resilience literature to date. More specifically, cultural theory (Jessop and Sum 2001; Sum 2006) enriches our understanding on how discursive practices, namely practices of framing, narration and articulation, express relations of power linked to conflicts between SRC over material and cultural resources (i.e. housing) and hence serve to reproduce ideology (i.e. hegemonic visions by the pro-growth SRC of the “ideal” post-disaster city). Cultural theory then comes into dialogue with the literature of social innovation (Moulaert et al. 2007; Moulaert 2013) in order to deepen our understanding of post-disaster material practices initiated by a heterogeneous landscape of pro-equity and pro-comaterializing SRC. These alternative practices of resilience are material implementations of various understandings of “recovery”, and hold potential in exposing hegemonic discursive myths about “ideal recovery processes” as well as altering (pre-)determined visions and practices of post-crisis “resilient” urbanism.

To gain a better empirical understanding of the heterogeneity of transformations played out on post-disaster housing systems and the dynamically evolving, multilevel, conflictual recovery process leading to many resilience trajectories, we focus our analysis on the long-term post-Katrina recovery of New Orleans. More specifically, we empirically examine the power of discursive and material practices mobilized by various SRC since Katrina hit New Orleans in 2005. Our investigation focuses on two recovery periods – the early recovery years (2005–2007) and the late recovery years (2008–2015) – during which a multiplicity of actors, SRC and institutional structures,ⁱ were (re)activated to influence the recovery trajectories of the city. Our empirical investigation in New Orleans and Washington DC between March 2014 and May 2015 was largely informed by interviews with institutional structures (state agencies, think tanks, foundations), SRC (housing developers, activists) and experts (urban specialists, architectural firms, academics) with a dual aim: first, to identify and harvest the plethora of different discursive and material practices mobilized by various SRC and institutional structures; and second, to critically examine the influence of those practices on governmental housing actions and inactions on the unfolded recovery trajectories. The interview questions were structured to also reveal the recovery discourse of the interviewees and capture the various interpretations of the mechanisms and practices affecting the current rebuilding profile of the city.ⁱⁱ

The paper is henceforth structured as follows. In Section 1, the discursive and material practices in post-disaster recovery are conceptualized. This conceptualization relies on housing systems seen through the lens of resilience and the dialogue between cultural and social innovation theories. In Section 2, we dig into the various housing narratives and actions by SRC and institutional structures that have been played out historically in the US regarding the reconstruction of New Orleans post-Katrina and integrate our interviewees' recent reflections on the ways redevelopment has been variously imagined and re-imagined over the recovery years. This discussion leads us to Section 3 in which we dig out significant hegemonic discursive myths and real-life material realities around "successful" recovery strategies in the USA. In the last section, by way of conclusion, we revisit and clarify resilience based on our preceding analysis, and initiate a discussion on the norms for the role of the state in collaborating with SRC and orchestrating resilience trajectories that lead to socially optimal recovery outcomes.

Conceptualizing Discursive and Material Practices in Post-Disaster Recovery

To enhance our understanding of post-disaster recovery processes, we apply the concept of resilience to concretize the heterogeneous transformative potential of housing systems. We dig into this heterogeneity by shedding light on the various discursive and material practices of SRC and institutional structures emerging or reinventing themselves in post-disaster recovery frameworks. To that purpose, theories of culture and social innovation are mobilized to formulate the concept of SRC and their practices and to allow for a better interpretation of the sociopolitical nature of the discursive and physical reconstruction battle in times of crisis.

Resilience, a Post-Disaster Housing Perspective

The concept of resilience was first introduced in ecological studies in the 1970s and was understood as the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and return to its original functions in a timely manner (Holling 1973). This "bounce-back" understanding, while relevant when applied to robust engineering structures, fails to consider social complexity and evolution of urban human systems in disaster contexts. To deal with this limitation, the disaster scholarship embraced a "bounceforward" ability conceptualization of resilience. Resilience in this perspective is understood as a continually changing socially transformative process (Davoudi et al. 2012) and a capacity to adapt future

changes (Gunderson and Holling 2002). While this approach represents a radical change in perspective, two important questions remain unanswered: Bouncing forward by which social groups and into which direction? Whose transformative ability is enhanced and whose is undermined during recovery processes? To partly answer these questions, several disaster and urban theorists have recently put emphasis on the unbalanced power relations embedded in human systems, and the possibilities of powerful stakeholders sanctioning or containing alternative opinions and actions by consolidating their own hegemonic social construction of “ideal recovery” or “resilience” (see Davoudi et al. 2012; Cannon and Müller-Mahn 2010, 633 cited in Davoudi et al. 2012; Kuhlicke 2013 in Paidakaki and Moulaert 2017). Yet, the potentials for alternative social groups to team up and develop influential counter-hegemonic and inclusive discursive and material practices over the long-term years of recovery are insufficiently studied. Therefore, the constant interactions between power relations, discursive (counter-) hegemony and social innovation initiatives and processes that trigger and steer various transformations and resilience trajectories need further investigation (Paidakaki and Moulaert 2017).

In this paper, we aim to address this challenge by shedding light on how these interactions play out in the concrete terrain of housing systems in a post-disaster urban environment. We argue that the housing system is a stage on which people set forward various transformations; a potential collective action paradigm for social change (Turner 1978). From one perspective, housing systems present an opportunity for progress in the functioning of the community, starting from satisfying unmet housing needs and discussing housing alternatives to bringing up the questions of human rights and changes in sociopolitical relationships (Johnson 2011; Satterthwaite 2011; Boano and Hunter 2012), whereas from another perspective, they provide an opportunity for re-triggering processes of wealth accumulation and socioeconomic (re)development (Paidakaki and Moulaert 2017). Based on these two perspectives, three broadly defined types of SRC can be identified: the hegemonic pro-growth, and the counter-hegemonic/alternative pro-equity and pro-comaterializing. Both analytical constructs are useful because they showcase that the resilient city cannot exist per se, but unfolds through the discursive and material practices of SRC within the city struggling for their own right to experimentation (ibid). As a result of this multifarious quality of resilience, recovery and rebuilding does not take a single direction – as the bulk of the resilience literature suggests – but numerous resilience trajectories, the pro-growth, pro-equity and pro-comaterializing.

By viewing resilience through these lenses, in the next section we aim to analyse the extent to which discursive practices of hegemonic SRC are powerful enough to affect and empower specific resilience trajectories at the expense of others. This conceptual framework allows us to illuminate how the cultural hegemony of the dominant SRC is secured by like-minded influential institutional structures and path dependencies in the housing systems but also challenged by counter-hegemonic discursive and material practices of alternative SRC; understand how under conditions of crisis alternative SRC are formed and transformed; and shed light on the material outcomes of antagonistic discursive and material practices as well as on the prospects for change in social relations and governance structures (Jessop and Sum 2001; Fraser 1991, 98 cited in Sum 2006).

Discourses, Power and Urban Redevelopment; Theoretical Insights

In our quest to understand the nature of discursive and material practices, we look to the theories of discourse and social innovation. More specifically, in order to understand discursive practices, we rely on the core concept of hegemony in the theory of discourse. According to Sum (2006), hegemony is understood as a political process in which dominant social forces – pro-growth SRC in our context – articulate and try to impose a hegemonic framing (vision, plan, core strategies) that incorporates common elements drawn from the perspectives and interests of their associated groups.

This process ultimately demonstrates relations of power linked to conflicts over material and cultural resources (Gotham and Greenberg 2014). In this process, some interests and values prevail over others. Thus, hegemonic SRC utilize their cultural influences and economic capital in order to establish and impose their views of “what should be done” as a universal truth (Sum 2006), in these SRC’s opinion the only “common sense” (Arena 2012). This objectification of social practices serves to reproduce the dominant ideology (Sum 2006; Gotham and Greenberg 2014). This reproduction of a hegemonic ideology has serious repercussions in planning for the public domain (Friedmann 1987). Ideology defines planning and forms people’s values as well as directs the ways by which people frame issues, and set and achieve goals individually and collectively (Cullingworth and Caves 2014).

The current grand hegemonic order is neoliberalism; the symbols (freedom of choice) and practices (privatization, deregulation, flexibility) of which have become meaningful and partly legitimized in and through the urban process (Sum 2006). The mainstream contemporary portrait of urban development depicts a “new” urban economy which mainly engages itself with large-scale physical infrastructure, enters in competition with other cities in the well-favoured sectors of the global markets (new technologies, advanced business, communication services) and holds hands with a neoliberal New Urban Policy agenda, promoting and justifying market-led development (Moulaert et al. 2007; Moulaert 2000). In a context of deregulation and increasing privatization of public and collective assets, this portrait of the new city tends to be recycled to the post-disaster city. The hegemonic discourse preserves its power by promising a universally beneficial urban growth that reconstitutes citizens’ pride and the collective psyche (Pais and Elliot 2008 in Paidakaki and Moulaert 2017). In this way, the post-disaster landscape provides an action space for capitalistic social relations to renew themselves by mobilizing land and labour to produce commodities (housing) with an eye towards the realization of the embodied exchange value through which cycles of wealth accumulation are hence renewed (Biel 2011; Cook and Swyngedouw 2012). The financialization of real estate development intensifies these cycles of accumulation (Aalbers 2008; Fernandez and Aalbers 2016), further favouritizing pro-growth SRC.

This dominant view and pro-growth material practices of the new urban development imaginary have been increasingly criticized by alternative SRC. The content of criticism rests on the socio-economic inconsistencies, class-character and disrupting social, political, cultural and biophysical consequences of this form of urban development (Moulaert et al. 2007). What do alternative SRC do? These alternative SRC often articulate a wide range of different discursive and material pathways for urban redevelopment. These pathways are commonly grounded on themes such as grassroots mobilization, neighbourhood-based small-scale projects, citizen participation, quality of life and the right to the city. They fall under the overall umbrella of social innovation that relies on collective human agency to address non-satisfied human needs – in our case housing needs – to build empowering social relations from the bottom-up with the ambition of transforming sociopolitical institutions (Moulaert et al. 2007; Moulaert and Van Dyck 2013). Through the social innovation lenses, the capacity of material practices to influence urban processes conceptually becomes of equal importance to those of hegemony and discourse.

Especially during times of crisis, a wide array of counter-hegemonic SRC emerge and do battle over meanings and interpretations of crisis conditions to contest proposed forms of urban redevelopment. This battle between hegemonic and alternative meanings of “rebuilding” lays bare the contradictory nature of hegemony and offers new opportunities for political intervention and social transformation (Sum 2006; Gotham and Greenberg 2014). However, counter-hegemonic SRC often encounter difficulty to discursively challenge the hegemonic practices – and instead turn to small-scale material practices to express their desires and views. This difficulty is partially explained by the

shortage of resources that could make alternative strategies tangible, as well as the lack of access of counter-hegemonic initiatives to mass media. This resorting to material practices by the alternative SRC reveals that hegemonic discourse can also be challenged by material practices and proves that discursive practices are neither omnipotent nor self-fulfilling in practice (see also Moulaert et al. 2007). This alternative resorting further reveals a gap between discourse and practice when the former is examined in spatial terms; meaning that hegemonic discursive practices while appealing at the grand level, prove to be less pertinent if they bypass or ignore context specificity, path dependencies and human development needs and capacities experienced in concrete living circumstances at the local level (ibid).

Facing this persistent possibility of opposition, dominant SRC tend to constantly renew their rhetoric in order to maintain their hegemonic influence in urban affairs (Giroux 1980, 23 in Sum 2006). They achieve this by incorporating criticisms within their frame, at least at the level of discourse. Illustrative examples of this discursive co-optation are “ethical/social entrepreneurship”, “green growth” and “sustainable production systems” (Hulgård 2010; Parra 2013). This implies that while hegemony is not a static, closed system of top-down domination (Sum 2006), it is dynamic enough to incorporate new ideas and practices produced by challengers (Arena 2012). This results in the constant opening of new circles of cultural–dialectical processes with the formulation of counter-hegemony or discursive or material counteraction as living options. The content of this continuous battle between SRC through discursive and material practices and their impact on recovery trajectories becomes more crystal when examined through the concrete lenses of housing systems.

SRC and Housing Systems

Housing systems are contentious and institutionally diverse terrains. On the one hand, they consist of hegemonic pro-growth SRC working together with powerful institutional structures (elected officials, financial institutions, state agencies, think tanks, lobbying firms) to generate and extract exchange values through ongoing land use intensification as well as mobilize financial capital directly and indirectly, i.e. through lobbying in favour of deregulation of mortgage markets. These SRC define housing problems mainly by material standards, determine housing values by the material quantity of related products (such as profit or equity) and treat houses as objects of profitable market transactions (Bull-Kamanga et al. 2003; Turner 1980; Pais and Elliot 2008 in Paidakaki and Moulaert 2017). On the other hand, housing systems consist of counter-hegemonic pro-equity and pro-comaterializing SRC. The pro-equity SRC work intimately with progressive foundations and elected officials, civic and charity groups, state agencies and other social movements to advocate primarily for the use values of houses as well as for a qualitatively richer housing market or a more generous and just distribution of financial resources across affordable housing providers (see also Davoudi et al. 2012). The pro-comaterializing SRC are housing providers engaged in co-materializing initiatives, like housing cooperatives, community land trusts and grass-roots rebuilding initiatives collectively erecting houses in “solidarity” style (see also Satterthwaite 2011; Biel 2011 in Paidakaki and Moulaert 2017). Typical organizations representing the three types of SRC are displayed in Figure 1.

What we claim is that all SRC have their own transformative capacities. Their differentiation mainly lies in the answers they discursively and/or materially give to questions like: Who should (re)build and for whom? How do SRC provide for the housing needs of all the displaced? Who should frame, decide upon and push forward housing reconstruction processes? What civic principles and moral values post-disaster decision-making should be based on? (Gutmann 2006 in Paidakaki and Moulaert 2017).

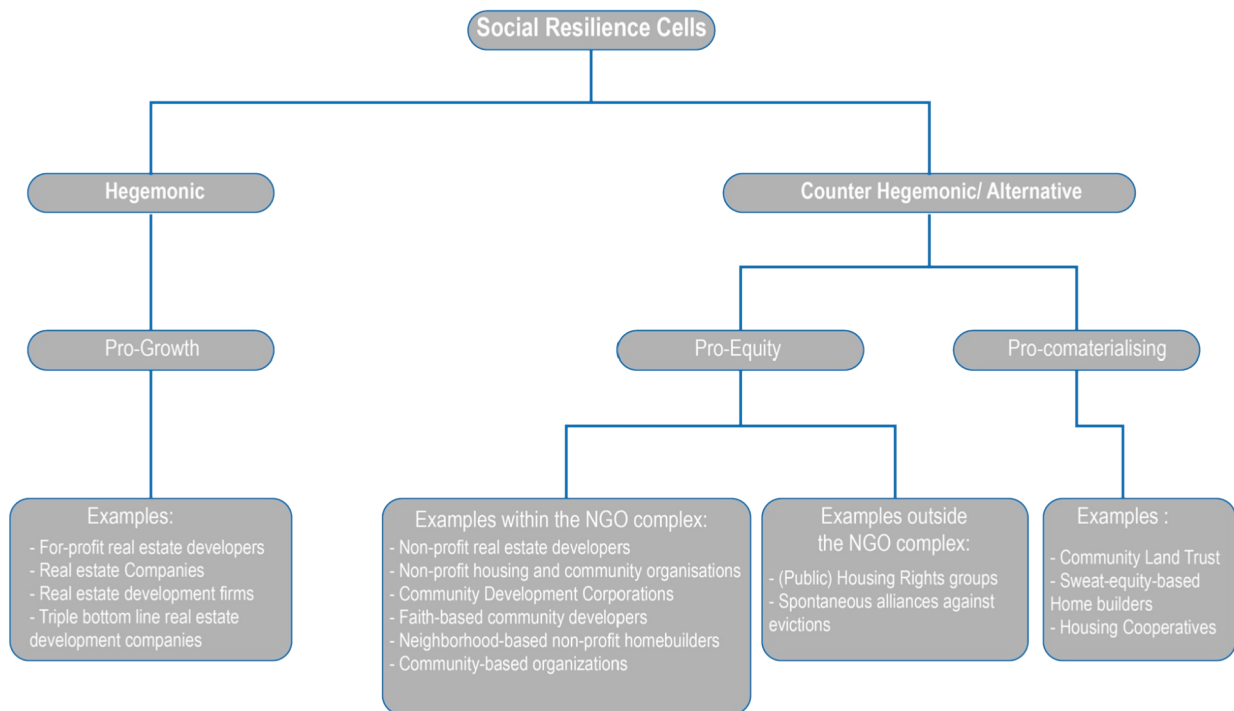


Figure 1. Social resilience cells.

We contend that the answer to these questions puts a spotlight on the multidirectional trajectory of the post-disaster recovery process towards pro-growth, pro-equity and pro-comaterializing possibilities. We further assert that the final socio-physical rebuilding profile of a post-disaster city highly depends on the symmetries or asymmetries in power relations among the SRC occupying different positions in the housing system(s) and promoting different developmental values attached to housing. In this power (a)symmetry, the positions of SRC in the governmental and other socio-institutional arenas play an important role.

Competing Discursive and Material Practices of SRC in Post-Katrina New Orleans

Our examination of the post-Katrina recovery of New Orleans focuses on two historical phases: the early years of recovery (2005–2007) and the late years of recovery (2007–2015). By examining both phases we will be in a better position to comprehend the diversity and the dynamism of various discursive and material practices of the different SRC over the recovery years, and the ways these practices have affected the “resilience” trajectories of the city of New Orleans.

Early Recovery Years

In the very immediate aftermath of the Katrina disaster, some influential US conservative think tanks (the Manhattan Institute, the American Enterprise Institute, the Heritage Foundation) known for their capacity to frame issues in ways that facilitate their ideological objectives, were quick to direct state actions by proposing a series of “principled” – pro-growth – formulas for recovery (Peck 2006). The Heritage Foundation, for example encouraged, inter alia, accountability, flexibility and creativity by supporting the utilization of tax credits and voucher programmes; the reduction of red tape with the aim to speed up private sector investment; and private entrepreneurial

activity and vision as the main engine to rebuild vis-a-vis the bureaucratic government (Meese et al. 2005, 1 in Peck 2006).

According to Peck (2006), the conservative think tanks have prominently influenced the package of neoliberal ideas that dominated the post-Katrina policy debate and favoured the work of the pro-growth SRC. In December 2005, the US Congress passed the Gulf Opportunity Zone Act 2005 (GO Zone Act) in order to spur the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast through the provision of tax incentives and other financial incentives, deductions and exemptions for business. Under the GO Zone Act, the state of Louisiana was responsible for allocating \$14.0 billion in tax-exempt private activity bonds between 2006 and 2011 (Olshansky and Johnson 2010; BondGraham 2011). Inter alia, the Go Zone Act provided special allocation of Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to raise private capital to rebuild rental housing (Seidman 2013). However, the value of LIHTC provisions (323\$ million) paled compared to the large amount of tax-exempt bonds to finance other recovery efforts (Olshansky and Johnson 2010).

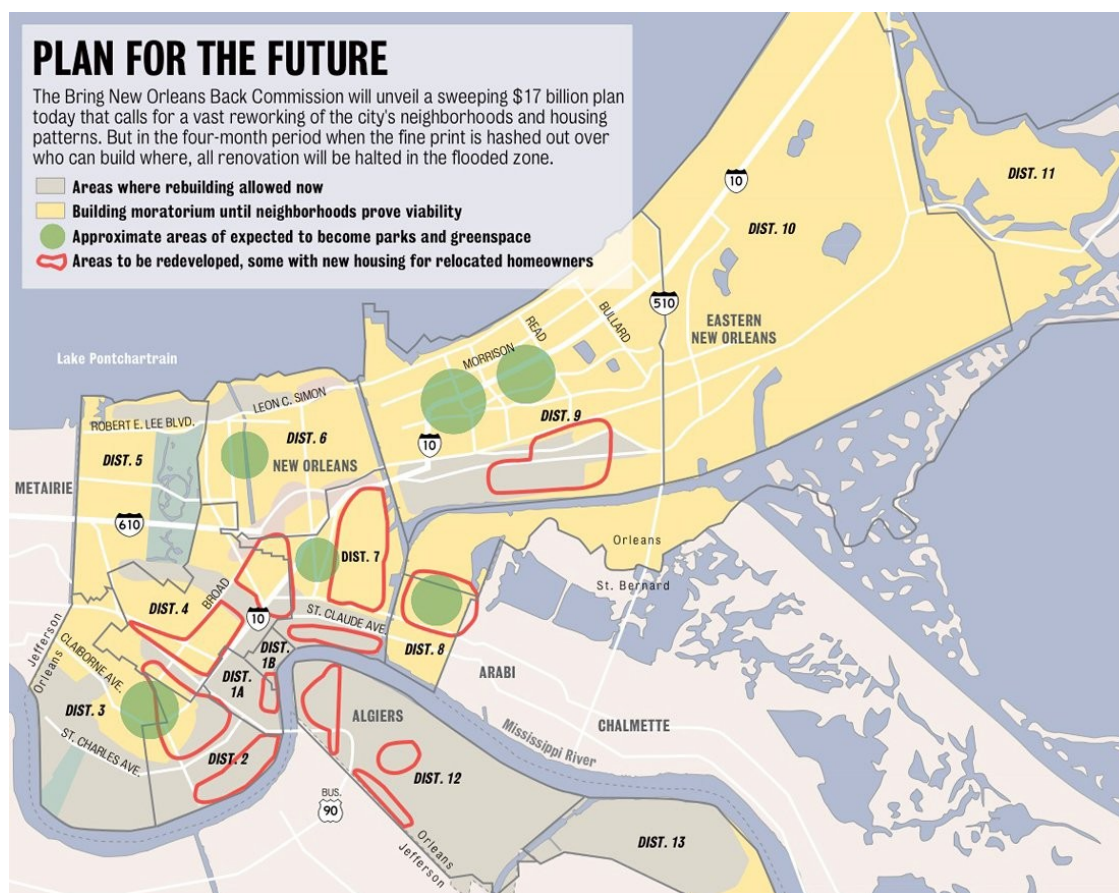
Federal actions largely provided the framework for initiatives at the state level, favouratizing pro-growth SRC for their part. On October 2005, the Louisiana State Government created the Louisiana Recovery Administration (LRA) as a business-oriented agency to oversee the reconstruction effort, thus bypassing the authority of local elected officials. The LRA with the aid of federal-level waivers removed income targets, public benefit requirements and public oversight from the recovery policies' guidelines. According to Gotham and Greenberg (2014), the introduction of waivers created profitable opportunities for the pro-growth SRC to expand their profiteering interests with little public oversight.

At the local level, the city council and many alternative SRC battled over the frame of the mayor's "recovery" and control of federal resources allocation, thus slowing down the development of a widely acceptable reconstruction plan (Seidman 2013). More specifically, what was observed during the first post-Katrina months was the ambition of powerful local actors and politicians, with the help of outsiders, to radically restructure the city's urban form and demographics (Olshansky and Johnson 2010). Two weeks after the storm, the Mayor of New Orleans set up the so-called Bring New Orleans Back (BNOB) commission, the work of which was broken down into several committees, inducing the establishment of the planning committee. This planning committee was chaired by a powerful representative of the pro-growth SRC, a local for-profit developer with connections to the White House (Joseph Canizaro), who together with the Urban Land Institute made recommendations for strategic reconstruction. These recommendations included the prioritization for immediate rebuilding of those areas that went through minimal damage and an evaluation of the feasibility for reinvestment of those areas that suffered more extensive damage, sending out an ambiguous and controversial message: that New Orleans may become a blank slate ready for new forms of investment by the progrowth SRC (ibid). This message was conveyed through a newspaper article that put emphasis on expected delays in recovery of the most flooded areas, unless people would return and prove the viability of their neighbourhoods. The message was illustrated with the infamous "green dots" on the city map (Map 1.) and raised public concern about the city's "footprint", and possible "shrinkage" (ibid).

The city council opposed the mayoral top-down outside-expert plan and called upon a neighbourhood-led, counter-plan (Neighbourhood Planning Initiative also known as the Lambert Plans) that focused only on the flooded areas, in this way yielding the space for many alternative SRC to emerge and act (Seidman 2013). However, according to the Deputy Director of the City Planning Commission, L. Alley, this made the people living in the driest neighbourhoods feel neglected (personal communication July 25, 2014). In turn, both plans were abandoned and

replaced by the Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP), an externally funded, expertsupported unifying process. The UNOP plan encouraged people coming from the worst affected areas to relocate to planned “cluster developments”. Clustering in areas that suffered the least flood damage was the rationale on which the city would ground the allocation of investment in terms of built and social infrastructure. However, this rationale was resisted by residents who interpreted it as a denial of resources to their own severely damaged neighbourhoods. As a result, the plan was not actualized (Colten, Kates, and Laska 2008), and the city has been rebuilt to a large extent in an ad hoc, spontaneous and fragmented manner.

Another bone of contention played out locally was the decision to demolish four public housing developments. The Katrina-triggered flooding provided a momentous opportunity with an abundance of funds for the pro-growth SRC to accelerate and expand their long-standing plans to transform real estate use values into exchange values for private developers through the revamping of public housing (BondGraham 2011). The rhetorical lubricants mobilized to justify the need for demolition and transformation, were, according to Arena (2012), references to the social pathologies of public housing using terms like concentrated poverty and isolation effects. Arena further asserts that “common sense” pronouncements coming from a business leader one week after the storm such as: “Those who want to see this city rebuilt ... want to see it done in a completely different way: demographically, geographically and politically”; and from a powerful local developer: “I think we have a clean sheet to start again, and with that clean sheet we have some very big opportunities” made it clear that public housing communities were not part of the “completely different” city they were imagining.



Map 1. The green Dot map. Source: Donze, Frank and Gordon Russell (2006), Times-Picayune.

The demolition of public housing was debated and fought against predominantly by alternative SRC standing outside the NGO complex (“C3/Hands off Iberville”, “New Orleans Housing Emergency Action Team, N.O.H.E.A.T.”). These SRC built their argumentation on two axes: (1) the buildings suffered little damage from the storm; and (2) every citizen has the right to return and be housed where he belongs. Despite opposition, the four estates were finally demolished. This can be partly explained by the fact that since 2002 the local public authority responsible for the oversight of the projects (Housing Authority New Orleans – HANO) was in receivership by the federal department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Hence, decisions around local public housing were made by state agencies and political authorities at the federal level who have been advocating for public housing demolition since 1996. Indeed, long before the Katrina disaster, HUD had been experimenting with the New Urbanism (NU) design elements through financing the transformation of public housing projects into mixed-income developments (HOPE VI program). Hence, it came as little surprise that any local forces against public housing demolition were weakened and the four former public housing projects were finally replaced by mixed-income housing units under the HOPE VI program (Gotham and Campanella 2011), with a fifth project following some years later under the Choice Neighborhoods program, which equally embraces NU elements.

The struggle over the demolition of the four public housing developments as well as the “green dot” controversy spurred an unprecedented activism led by alternative SRC (Gotham and Greenberg 2014). This activism took various forms: protests, advocacy, formation of neighbourhood associations and community development corporations, development of neighbourhood plans, development of alliances and strategic partnerships, alternative modes of housing production (collective rebuilding in solidarity style). The idea that all neighbourhoods might need to prove their “viability” activated concerned citizens and community organizations in the most flooded neighbourhoods to hold meetings and launch their own independent planning processes (Broadmoor, Village de l’Est). In addition, alternative SRC began to form in areas which lacked established organizations prior to Katrina because they anticipated the threat of forced redevelopment and permanent displacement (Lower Mid-city). Some neighbourhoods made strategic alliances to build SRC together with academic institutions to develop plans and conduct studies for their neighbourhoods (Ninth Ward, Broadmoor), whereas others (the Vietnamese community in New Orleans East) started to use their own savings to buy building materials and neighbours offered labour for one another (Olshansky and Johnson 2010; Seidman 2013). Finally, ACORN, an alternative SRC mostly active in the Lower Ninth Ward initiated the “no bulldozing” campaign with the aim to stop the demolition of houses in the area by the American Corps of Engineers. B. Butler and M. Hurt, community organizers of this SRC (personal communication, 27 May 2014), explained that through this action ACORN also aimed at conveying a message to an “invisible power structure”, that people want to keep control over their own neighbourhoods (Map 2).

Alternative SRC varied considerably with respect to the theories and terminology they employed to justify their material practices. According to Gotham (2012), for the part of the pro-equity SRC belonging in the NGO complex, the ones coming from a Left background turned into Marxian class theory, while others employed a mixture of human rights, identity politics, pragmatism and “there is no alternative” discourse and ideology. In contrast, pro-equity SRC which operated outside the nonprofit complex and who were mainly involved in the opposition against the public housing demolitions came from various ideological and organizational tendencies (Christian pacifist, Maoist, Luxemburgist, Anarchist, human rights; *ibid*). Similarly, as reported by Pyles and Harding (2012), various community development practices were more spontaneous rather than guided by a conscious framework with specific values, frames and ideology.

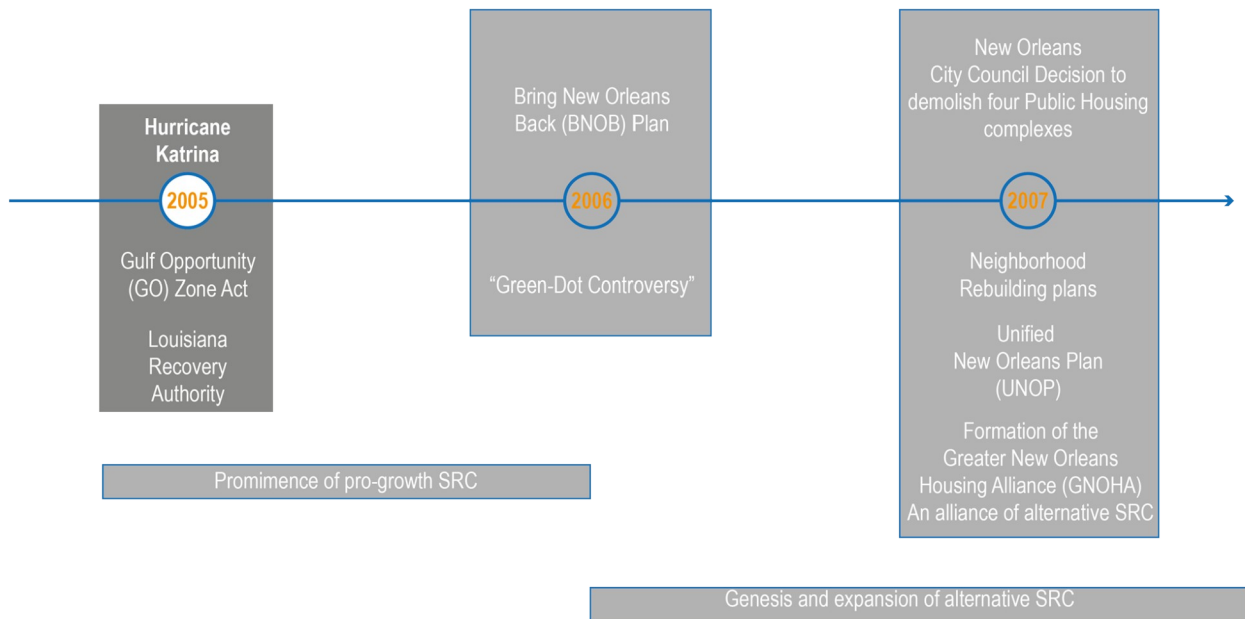


Figure 2. Early recovery years (2005–2007).

The following section discusses the ways “recovery” was discursively re-approached by the pro-growth SRC and the new city administration in 2010 and how the development of new visions, imaginaries and agencies for New Orleans has affected the material practices in the redevelopment trajectories. The section also deliberates on the restructurizing efforts of the alternative SRC to address the ongoing post-Katrina housing deficit and the newly emerging challenges of gentrification and internal displacement.

Late Recovery Years

The long-term recovery challenges opened the way for political and economic elites to reinforce public–private relationships and promote a more “entrepreneurial”, pro-growth, vision for New Orleans. In 2007, the city government together with a regional economic development alliance (the Greater New Orleans Inc.) hired the International Economic Development Council – a membership organization serving economic developers – to consult on the development and implementation of the public–private partnership (PPP) model (Gotham 2012). In 2010, the newly elected mayor announced the creation of the New Orleans Business Alliance, the first formal PPP in the city of New Orleans responsible for urban rebranding. The most prominent institutional structures remarketed the city as a centre for biosciences, software technology and sustainable industries with the aim to attract and channel resources into the promoted industries (ibid). The Greater New Orleans Inc. went as far as to speak of a “New Orleans miracle”, a paradigmatic city for the rest of the US, praised as an ideal, utopian city that promoted cultural diversity and sustainability (Gotham and Greenberg 2014).ⁱⁱⁱ

Under the new city administration, post-Katrina redevelopment was re-strategized on the basis of a “place-based” approach. As a highly ranked public employee in the city’s housing and community development office (personal communication, 4 September 2014) clarified, “The place-based approach is making sure that all government resources and private resources work together. For example, if the school system aims at building new schools in one neighborhood, and a medical operating conglomerate also targets the same neighborhood, then the city government will direct resources to make sure that all the necessary infrastructure (i.e. streets, sewage, drainage) will support the private investment that focuses on that area. This includes housing opportunities through the adjudication of vacant properties by the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA)”. He added: “Investing resources to fix houses in areas that are not close to schools and hospitals is a not part of the strategy”.

A reference to the importance of a place-based approach was also traced in an article written in 2010 by the influential president of a local pro-growth SRC (HRI properties) and proponent of NU principles, P. Kabacoff. In his article online, Kabacoff celebrates the place-based approach as the pathway to build “healthier neighborhoods” through targeting the right neighbourhoods and strategically focusing public resources. Kabacoff’s imagination of the city of New Orleans relates to aesthetic urbanism: “(New Orleans can become the) Afro-Caribbean Paris”: a safe, walkable city with an interesting architecture, with less renters and people using expensive social services, and more middle-income users ... a small degree of gentrification would be useful for the city to become stronger (personal communication, 6 January 2015).

The implementation of this new urban imaginary of New Orleans mainly staged by the City government, (“place-based revitalization” strategy in the City’s Blight Reduction Report^{iv}) the business lobbies (New Orleans Business Alliance) and the pro-growth SRC (HRI properties) has changed the city’s demographics over the late recovery years. B. White, founding member of the Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability Initiative (personal communication, 6 August 2014) observes: “There was a strange phenomenon after Katrina where New Orleans is a thousand times hipper now than it was pre-Katrina”. The city’s rebirth caused the influx of young educated people seeking working opportunities in the city’s promoted industries which has inevitably led to the generation of new urban ills, such as exclusive gentrification and internal displacement. Indeed, according to N. Barnes, Executive Director of Jericho Road Episcopal Housing Initiative and M. Ripple, Partner at the Architecture firm Eskew + Dumez + Ripple (personal communications, 4 June 2014; 25 August 2016), fast rising rents, property values and housing costs (tax and insurance) due to the inflow of relatively prosperous new inhabitants have priced out a significant portion of the community in several neighbourhoods. In response, novel pro-comaterializing SRC have emerged promoting alternative housing tenure models; and the local housing movement – a multiplex of alternative SRC – has drawn fresh breath.

In 2008, the first community land trust in New Orleans was founded with the aim to experiment with the ideas of equity and effective participation as well as new types of tenure in a neighbourhood. According to B. White, “The goals were to encourage participation and investment from the whole community, direct control by the people who live in the housing as well as promote perpetual ownership of the land. The concept of the (community) land trust is applied not only to figure out an affordable housing model but also to detect ways to improve the neighbourhood without displacing its residents”. B. White further explains: “The property value of a CLT housing unit will not be worth as much as it could be in the same neighborhood, however the quality will be exponentially higher”. According to B. White and C. Pealer, Director of Tulane’s Social Innovation & Social Entrepreneurship program, (personal communication 2 June 2014), this also triggers a new

plea to reconsider the dominant view of housing solely as a source of wealth accumulation for families.

A large portion of the alternative SRC emerging post-Katrina in response to an inequitable recovery and housing provision has transformed into a movement of skilled NGOs, mainly affordable housing developers, who have discovered the power to work in coalition through dissemination of information, shared visioning and collective problem-solving. In 2007, this resulted in the formulation of the Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance (GNOHA), in its terms a “collaborative of non-profit housing builders and community development corporations with a common vision: the preservation and production of affordable housing in the city of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina devastated the city’s infrastructure”.^v The alliance has been invigorated over the long-term recovery years, the influential capacity of which has been proved by a series of policy victories.^{vi} The most recent and ambitious initiative of GNOHA is the HousingNOLA plan; a broad-based initiative aiming to produce and implement a community-led plan to identify and meet the housing needs of all New Orleans for the next 10 years (2015–2025). Seen more as a process and less as a plan, HousingNOLA aims to serve as a continuously updated data framework that informs more thoughtful future housing policy and aims to achieve scalable housing developments that are affordable for all income levels.^{vii} The “Leadership Board”, the core decision-making body of the HousingNOLA plan, consists of a wide range of stakeholders/actors including public officials, community leaders, neighbourhood associations, financial institutions, policy-makers, special needs advocacy groups, non-profit and for-profit developers as well as the City’s Office of Housing and Community Development.^{viii}

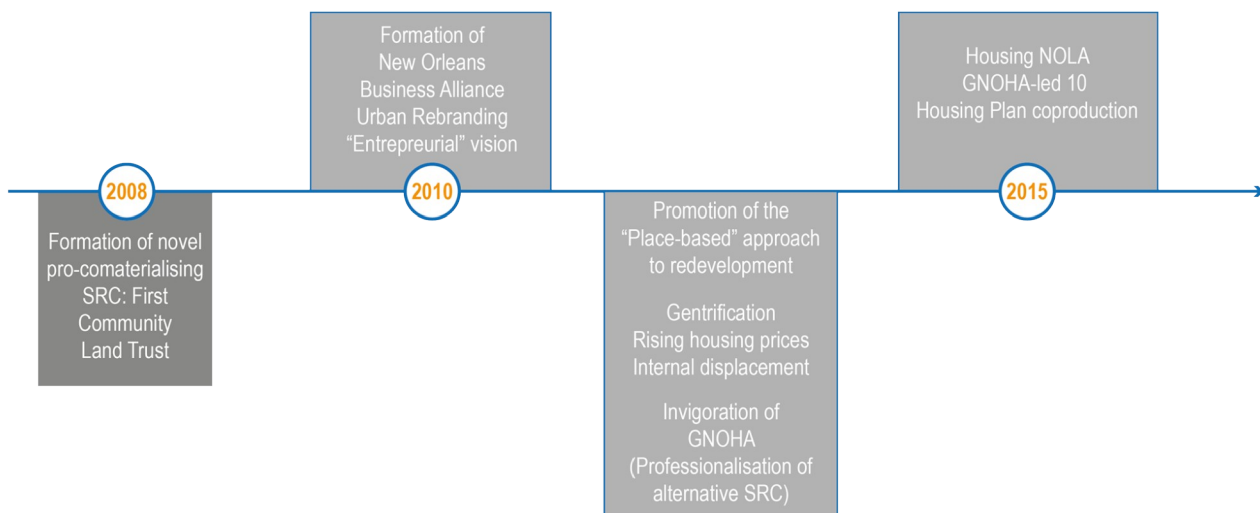


Figure 3. Late recovery years (2008–2015).

The professionalization of the housing movement and the discovery of “strength in unity” hold a dual powerful potential: first, the (re)formulation of more democratic and accountable urban governance structures; and second, the stronger capability of the affordable housing sector in discursively and materially altering – at least on the neighbourhood and city level – predestined redevelopment plans that would radically change the local sociocultural fabric. While largely effective in material practices around affordable housing production at the micro level, the movement has become more deliberate on and discursively active around the city’s urgent and precise housing needs. The president of GNOHA, A. Morris, (personal communication, 10 March 2015) explains that by becoming more astute in negotiating with the governmental authorities this coalition of alternative SRC has become more decisive in co-constructing a plan that qualitatively defines and accurately quantifies the housing problem, promotes an equitable distribution of resources across neighbourhoods and introduces radical initiatives around halting gentrification.

To summarize, the genesis, persistence and transformation of various SRC during the long-term recovery years (figure 3) and their restructured approaches to build alliances among themselves and with state and governmental authorities, distinguishes “resilience” as a capacity and a process that is rediscovered and reapplied to constantly affect recovery trajectories and redevelopment priorities. Concurrently, the (co-)existence, symbiosis and antibiosis of various SRC – and hence discursive and material practices – reveals that resilience is a multidirectional process during which many hegemonic discursive myths of the “ideal recovery” are uncovered.

Reflections on the Post-Katrina Hegemonic Discursive Myths and Real-Life Material Realities

Current reflections on the various discursive and material practices manifested by SRC and their affiliated institutional structures during the early and late post-Katrina reconstruction years that led to the fragmented rebuilding profile of New Orleans, reveal lessons on the contradictions of hastily celebrated hegemonic, pro-growth discourses on post-Katrina (re)development and recovery. When these discourses were tested on the ground, the contradictions became tangible, also through the early spontaneous and as of late more profound pro-equity and pro-comaterializing discursive and material practices of various alternative SRC. In this last section, we specifically focus on the contradictions of the hegemonic narratives developed early in the recovery process and their objective to steer pro-growth resilience trajectories. These contradictions revolve around the role of planning, governmental (in)action, and political leadership in the post-disaster urban process and recovery trajectory. We put together the different views of how recovery finally materialized itself – discursively and materially – by a variety of SRC and their affiliated institutional structures and how things can improve in the future in terms of equity, context-relatedness and resilience incubation in its multifarious form. We specifically focus on how social innovation and political activism by alternative SRC have – directly or indirectly – exposed the contradictions of the hegemonic discourse and sketched new pro-equity and pro-comaterializing resilience trajectories. Although we recognize the high interconnectedness between these contradictions, we hereby analyse them in a sequential way which allows us to be more explicit on their particular character.

Discursive Myth no.1: The Role of Top-Down Planning

A first evidence of a disconnection between top-down hegemonic discursive practices (i.e. pre-manufactured “universal” planning ideals like NU) and the diversity of needs and material practices on the ground is the context-unrelated planning proposals in the immediate aftermath of the storm. According to J. Pate, executive director at the New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity (personal communication 9 July 2014) and B. White, what the pro-growth SRC and their affiliated planners in the BNOB plan failed to incorporate was the fact that New Orleanians – wealthy and poor – identify

strongly with their neighbourhoods. This devotion is manifested in people's return to under-invested, largely vacant and blighted neighbourhoods (i.e. Lower Ninth Ward). Moreover, as N. Barnes points out, the less well-to-do among the displaced people did not have the financial means to survive in limbo conditions for an indefinite time period. In the lack of fast and equity-oriented governmental actions, a lot of the displaced New Orleanians inevitably returned and took their lives and neighbourhoods in their hands. According to B. Butler and M. Hurt, the return of the displaced sent a strong message that neighbourhoods are not worthless and that the determining factor for investment should instead be people's desire to return. This message was sent through a heterogeneity of material practices taking place on the ground (neighbourhood planning, alternative SRC formulation, protests), considerably altering BNOB's pro-growth recovery imaginations and starting to sketch new resilience trajectories. N. Barnes argued that the BNOB planning committee also failed to consider that the city is racially divided, and any claims for land would raise fundamental institutional distrust. The initial emphasis put by the progrowth SRC on physical vulnerability as the critical factor determining investment priority was attacked as considerably short-sighted when taking into account the fact that the whole city of New Orleans is below sea level, with the exception of very few slivers of land.

Think tanks in Washington DC are especially divided around the time dimension of people's return. According to one think tank who decided to stay anonymous, post-Katrina urban development plans provided considerable amounts of uncertainty, and proved to be time-consuming as well as incapable to capture local needs when imposed top-down.^{ix} However, the Brookings Institute, holds opposite views, stressing the need to first build a place of opportunity before people return.^x

The reality revealed in post-Katrina New Orleans was that a place of opportunity is co-produced and hetero-produced by various social actors, including displaced people and their associations. Most people return and join up with or subscribe to agendas of alternative SRC supporting community-based reconstruction. They oppose top-down pro-growth impositions of "transformation" and socioculturally disembedded planning processes that have hampered revitalization in poorer areas. From our analysis, we learn that the early planning proposals were too elitist, relied too much on top-down expert views, and narrowly over-stressed land market price mechanisms and how these can be influenced through tax instruments. While the planning coalitions' considerations of morphological differences and hydrological fragilities were justified, the differential housing needs in the various neighbourhoods, and the socio-professional differences in the housing systems were misperceived. Resilience, hence, emerges as an urban quality and as a process that cannot be premanufactured based on "universal" planning ideas.

Discursive Myth no. 2: The Reduced Role of State Agencies

Overstressing market mechanisms in planning the city's redevelopment leads us to another striking myth in the hegemonic discourse of recovery, namely that of the reduced role of the state in the urban process. This myth is especially evident when the state roles are examined by looking at the promotion of specific financial mechanisms to steer housing production, as well as the development of state alliances with different stakeholders belonging to different segments of society. In contrast to pro-growth, pro-business discourse supporting small government federalism (Peck 2006), the reality is that without state intervention the housing system cannot sustain the supply of affordable housing. The state agencies and governmental authorities play a critical role in the types of financial mechanisms they support to incentive the financialization of affordable housing rebuilding, especially in post-disaster contexts. The over-reliance on tax credits – also a form of state intervention – in the case of New Orleans as the predominant pro-market mechanism to finance affordable housing proved to be less efficient. The reason for this inefficiency is twofold: first, tax

credits are not sufficient to cover development costs and most alternative SRC need deep subsidies to deliver their pro-equity and procomaterializing mission^{xi}; and second, post-disaster housing rebuilding is excessively conditional on the conditions of the local real estate market and in private capital markets; therefore an obsessive focus of pro-growth SRC and their coalitions on tax credits can delay the recovery progress^{xii} (Seidman 2013).

What the aforementioned points teach us, and as echoed by J. Pate and N. Barnes, is the indispensable need for a strong presence of the state in the recovery process in an active role – opposite to the claims of the pro-growth coalitions. In order for (post-disaster) cities to overcome or at least reduce the risk of facing serious socio-economic repercussions of unprecedented affordable housing deficits, the state is needed to provide a better balanced mixture of financial incentives and regulations (block grants, housing trust funds, inclusionary zoning) that will sustain the delivery of the mission of all SRC active in the affordable housing sector. This decision over a balanced and context-relevant mixture of financial instruments is – or should be – partly made by a collective local leadership, which is often missing.

Discursive Myth no. 3: No Need for (Political) Leadership

The need for (local) political leadership steering recovery, as opposed to purely market- led suggestions of the hegemonic discourse, is highlighted by almost all the research participants . A. Liu explains: “In the absence of leadership around planning you end up with ad hoc investments by homeowners that were not serviced at all (no streets, pavement, schools, groceries, garbage pickup) ... You need leadership to coordinate and scale which one makes sense and redeploy in different parts of the neighborhood because certain solutions may not make sense in certain markets”. J. Pate, C. Pealer, L. Alley and B. White similarly argue that the recovery trajectory would have taken a radically different direction if there was a compelling vision in place and the city authorities did not put neighbourhoods against each other by making them justify their own existence. In the lack of political leadership and comfort that the state agencies would lead the way, people felt uninvested. According to C. Pealer, the fact that there are neighbourhoods lagging behind in redevelopment is justified to a large extent by the lack of governmental determination in making strategic infrastructure investments in every community. A. Morris follows a similar line of argumentation “in the immediate aftermath of Katrina, the disparity in recovery was the result of a lack of focused investment and thoughtful or customized plans of recovery based on the needs of areas. Instead, due to the hysteria generated around the “Green Dot” controversy, resources were scattered everywhere without acknowledgment of the different needs of people residing in different neighborhoods”.

In the absence of (elected) political leadership, and in reaction to a foreseen market- led and uneven urban redevelopment of New Orleans, a growing number of alternative SRC have played a significant role in challenging plans and restoring housing (Lowe 2012). Filling the leadership void, the success of these SRC has been increasingly acknowledged by the local and state governments, and celebrated by prominent think tanks in Washington DC.^{xiii}

To sum up, an important overarching lesson drawn from this analysis is that resilience (re)emerges as a quality and as a process that is hetero-acquired, heterodetermined and hetero-applied constantly disclosing discursive myths and redirecting the rebuilding trajectory of the post-disaster city through newly formed discursive and material practices. When resilience is treated in this way, pro-market discourses catering for the interest of hegemonic pro-growth SRC and their better-off clientele are only partly relevant. In the face of a diverse landscape of SRC aiming to build alliances with public authorities and elected political officials with an eye towards a more socially diverse housing system, the question that remains underexplored is: What role state agencies and elected

political leaders should play in the housing systems in order to provide a good co-productive and hetero-productive symbiosis between the different SRC (agendas) and hence orchestrate all resilience trajectories equally? Part of the final concluding section aims to further this discussion.

Concluding Remarks

When the concepts of resilience and SRC are analytically tested from a long-term post-disaster recovery perspective with a specific focus on the socio-institutional and political dimensions of housing systems, a series of important revelations about postdisaster rebuilding processes come forth. These revelations mainly bring to surface a highly heterogeneous – and often contentious – landscape of housing actors involved in a (re)development experiment, who fight – discursively and materially – for their right to affect recovery trajectories. Resilience, hence, is not anymore approached as one quality, a linear process and/or a single objective. On the opposite, what the various discursive and material practices of the pro-growth, pro-equity and pro-comaterializing SRC denote is that housing systems are radically multifarious and that various transformations and resilience trajectories may take place simultaneously. This multiplicity of trajectories steered by different SRC, and their constant reformulation lies at the heart of our argumentation.

Housing systems reveal that resilience, unlike the predominant apolitical understandings of the concept, is not a linear process of a city bouncing back or forward following a single trajectory. On the opposite, resilience is understood as the co-existence and rejuvenation of multiple bouncing forward trajectories over the long-term years of recovery. The institutional accommodation, containment or refusal of the various discursive and material practices of SRC further denotes that path dependencies in housing policy and the levels of interactions between SRC and institutional structures play a critical role in the (re)direction and the promotion of some resilience trajectories against the others both in the early and the long-term recovery years.

In the New Orleans context, housing reconstruction was highly contingent upon the path dependencies existing in the national and state housing policy prior to the Katrina disaster. The governmental priorities in tools and actions preferred for recovery after Katrina were indeed responsive to the new urban policy agenda already prevalent in the US and favouring pro-growth SRC discourse and strategies rather than to the need of the inhabitants of the deprived neighbourhoods such as Lower Ninth Ward. While this agenda tended to reproduce itself over the years under different names (“clustering”, “place-based”), path dependencies were partly broken – or at least redirected – by alternative SRC aiming to initiate new recovery paths. Operating increasingly in a socially innovative way, namely by connecting the satisfaction of housing needs to cooperatively building networks of co-decision and sociopolitical mobilization (see the case of GNOHA and HousingNOLA), the new alternative SRC hold the potential in uncovering hegemonic discourses, altering housing governance configurations and setting in motion novel redevelopment trajectories.

In the genesis of alternative SRC, the criticism of the dominant discourse plays a role. As the counter-discourse builds up stepwise, the recovery period in New Orleans proved to be not a monumental clash in a big arena between two discourses. Rather, it is a much more iterative, sometimes decentralized, sometimes city-wide confrontation that dynamically alters the social relations of power among the various SRC active in the housing sector who fight over the rights to experiment with their own ideas about how the city should be rebuilt. These dynamics hold the potential in transforming the ways in which institutional structures – predominantly state agencies and political authorities – engage themselves in the urban process. State agencies and political authorities are forced to cease facilitating predominantly the private enterprise – namely the

hegemonic pro-growth SRC – and are increasingly compelled to build alliances with diverse types of new SRC, pro-equity and pro-comaterializing.

Hence, state agencies and political authorities are expected to adopt the role of the equity planner and gain a deep understanding of the various conflictual forces in the city and exercise social justice in the allocation of rights to experimentation for all. Especially political authorities, due to their legislative and executive powers, hold the potential for reaching a socially optimal housing reconstruction praxis by normalizing the establishment of respectful and productive frameworks for all SRC (see also Kunnen, MacCallum, and Young 2013). Future research that points to the challenge of governing heterogeneous SRC and the ways institutional structures respond to this challenge will better inform the scholarly investigation of the housing–resilience nexus.

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- i Institutional structures include public or state entities (state agencies, governmental authorities, elected officials) and private bodies (lobbying firms, foundations, faith-based organizations, intermediaries, financial institutions, industry associations).
- ii Straightforward connections between recovery and resilience were only made by some interviewees to justify their narrations. This was explained by the fact that the term “resilience” was largely absent in the rhetoric or practice during the early years of recovery.
- iii Cultural diversity was understood in “post-race” and “post-class” terms, transcending socio-spatial inequalities, and sustainability was interpreted as a symbol that would connect real estate markets to secure ecomodernist futures (Gotham and Greenberg 2014).
- iv http://www.nola.gov/getattachment/Performance-and-Accountability/Initiatives-and-Reports/BlightSTAT/Blight-Report_web.pdf/.
- v http://www.gnoha.org/main/about_us.
- vi More on the policy victories of the alliance here: http://gnoha.org/main/policy_victories.
- vii <http://www.housingnola.org/main/home>.
- viii The openness of public officials to a better acknowledged non-profit affordable housing sector can also be illustrated by the formation of a New Orleans consortium comprising twelve nonprofit organizations and three for-profit developers, who together with NORA received Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP2) funding to create affordable housing units for local residents.
- ix “Follow these guidelines or plan when a disaster happens’ isn’t really going to capture everything... communities start doing stuff because they don’t want to wait” (personal communication, June 18, 2014).
- x A. Liu, Vice President and Director of the Metropolitan Policy Program (personal communication, June 23, 2014) explains: “You want people to come back to a place of opportunity ... why re-build a house on a plot of land that will have no market value, why rebuild a house in a neighborhood that has no grocery stores and no access to jobs, why come back to a community if you could go to Atlanta and Houston and have a better life? ... It’s all about rebuilding New Orleans so it is truly a place of opportunity to come back to”.
- xi Regarding the first element of inefficiency of tax credits, Schwartz (2015, 140) explains: Tax credits are seldom sufficient to cover development costs. Most developers require some amount of mortgage financing as well as additional sources of debt and equity to make a project viable ... these additional resources of financing are most often provided by state and local governments, often through block grants, housing trust funds ... as well as low-interest loans on which interest payments are deferred (also known as ‘soft second mortgages’). K. Labord, President and CEO at the Gulf Coast Housing Partnership (personal communication, 29 August 2014) further elaborates: “Due to the fact that the real estate in the US is capitalized in a transaction-focused way, many nonprofit developers (alternative SRC) end up being under-capitalized ... they cannot access the capital markets because they do not have the financial capacity. On the service side, the affordable housing tenants are subsidized by the federal government. Without governmental intervention, affordable housing provision is hard to sustain. To be in the real estate business you need capital ... and a non profit in the US cannot sell stocks (to raise capital)” According to N. Barnes and B. White, especially in the affordable housing sector, alternative SRC are the principal interest groups delivering the mission of affordable housing needs satisfaction; followed by the pro-growth who are nevertheless primarily motivated by the provision of public subsidies and secondarily – if at all – by the social mission involved.
- xii With respects to the second element of inefficiency of tax credits, the resulting delays in the recovery progress can be variously explained. According to A. Stroud, real estate development consultant and Principal at the Urban Focus LLC Louisiana (personal communication, 12 August 2014), from the start on, investors were not necessarily interested in investing in New Orleans recovery, when the American media was still arguing against the rebuilding of the city and better opportunities for investment were found elsewhere as the national economy was booming. Moreover, substantial reliance on tax credits in New Orleans at the critical post-disaster moments was inappropriate because there were very few LIHTC developers in the city prior to Katrina. Later, in 2008, when the mortgage bubble burst, the rebuilding of rental housing was further affected since investor demand for LIHTC declined steeply (Seidman 2013).
- xiii An anonymous think tank stated: “Some neighborhoods recovered faster because they often had a leader, a social leader or a social entrepreneur in the neighborhood, maybe a pastor or church leader ... so they were able to rally folks to come back and recover ... Reliance on those sort of local entrepreneurs seems to be very key, a mover of change”. A. Liu echoes: “Neighborhood and grassroots organizations have demonstrated increasing organizational capacity and autonomy, such as the rise in nonprofit housing advocates and developers. Individuals and groups have become more strategic and sophisticated ... And I think that’s the big story that came out of New Orleans – that the absence of political leadership because the mayor was not strong at all, forced citizens and community organizations and others to come into this vacuum and really push for changes”.