

When/How Black Lives Don't Matter: HURRICANE KATRINA @10
 Citizenship, Statelessness & Losing the Right to have Rights:
 A Political Economy of Moral Worth



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Why are we being called—and treated as—refugees?
 We're American citizens; where are our rights?



"We learned that if don't have money or status in America you don't have a government", Hurricane Katrina survivor, *Trouble the Water* 2

HK: "Referendum on black citizenship"

- 77% blacks (vs. 37% whites) rejected media term of "refugees"
- "A decade later, it's worth wondering whether they were bothered by a fear that "refugee" not "citizen" had been the most apt description all along."

» Jelani Cobb, New Yorker, Aug. 24, 2015

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This is what Black Lives **Don't** Matter looks like...



Hurricane Katrina=3 Elements

- “Failed” FEMA
- 134,000 “Left Behind”
- Paramilitary Occupation: “War zone” not a rescue zone

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Marketization of Black Citizenship

“Color-blind” and “merit-based” market-based criteria for moral worth grafted onto legacy of race-based legal and social exclusions

Perniciousness of color-blind market exclusion:

It cannot be outlawed

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FAILED FEMA



• **“Heckuva a job Brownie!”**

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THE *SOCIAL* STATE

- Social state= protection *by* government from full exposure to market forces.
- Provides food, shelter, medical care, education, rescue from natural disaster

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Market-driven governance's anti-government crusade

"My goal is to cut government in half in twenty-five years, to get it down to the size where we can drown it in the bathtub."
 — Grover Norquist; 'Field Marshal' of the Bush Plan

New Orleans
under water



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"Starve the beast"

- <http://theragblog.blogspot.com/2010/03/whys-there-no-money-for-education-hint.html>
- **"Why is there No Money for Education?"**
- Rather than proposing unpopular spending cuts, Republicans would push through popular tax cuts, with the deliberate intention of worsening the government's fiscal position. Spending cuts could then be sold as a necessity rather than a choice, the only way to eliminate an unsustainable budget deficit.
- Paul Krugman



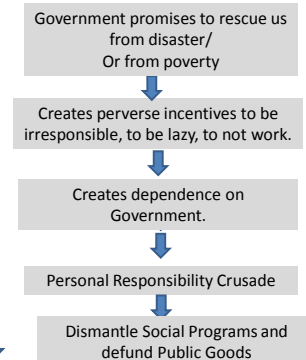
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Failed FEMA/Welfare

• Starving the Beast



FEMA as Moral Hazard



Public Goods Are Rights

- A Right is the name we use for universal access to public goods that are protected from the market by the state
- Whereas Commodities = privileges
- Public goods=RIGHTS!

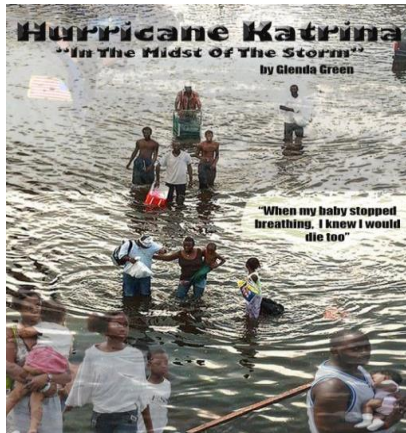
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Starving the beast→Demise of Social State>Internal statelessness

- Many inner-city Americans live without enforceable rights because, having been virtually abandoned their government, they are *virtually stateless*.
-
- “We learned that if don’t have money or status in America you don’t have a government”, Hurricane Katrina survivor, *Trouble the Water*

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The Left Behind



134,000 not evacuated

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Unused abandoned busses



***De facto* Citizenship=** **RIGHT TO HAVE RIGHTS**

- Full membership is PRIMARY right,
- Membership=Social Inclusion
- Membership requires being *morally recognizable* by dominant others.

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Marketization/Contractualization of citizenship

From

from an ethos of citizenship
rights based in of mutual
reciprocities and shared fate

from the individual as citizen
with moral worth based on
human recognition and
membership

from the dominance of
sociology and social knowledge

To

to rights and inclusion made
conditional upon having adequate
market value in a contract-like
exchange

to the individual as a measure of
human capital whose worth is
conditional on her market value;

to the rule of economics

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**Hurricane
Katrina**



Rightlessness

Rightlessness:

1. Social Exclusion
2. Statelessness
3. Losing "Right to have Rights/Public goods "

Rights are public goods;
Public Goods are social rights
and foundation of social
citizenship;
Necessary for social inclusion
and moral recognition

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Internal statelessness does not mean "small government"

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From social provisioning to policing the social

- Statelessness means losing two kinds of rights:
 1. Lose right to protection *by* the police/government
 2. Lose right to protection *from* the police
- A disabled state cannot protect personal liberties, such as the right not to be tortured by police officers and prison guards.
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- "They were all about detention, as if it were Iraq, like we were foreigners and they were fighting a war. They implemented war-like conditions. They treated us worse than prisoners of war. Even prisoners of war have rights under the Geneva Convention."

- WRITTEN TESTIMONY FOR THE RECORD
 - By Leah Hodges Evacuee, New Orleans Louisiana
 - Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina
 - December 6, 2005

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POLICING POVERTY: THE EXAGGERATION OF LAWLESSNESS AND CRIMINALITY

"These troops are fresh back from Iraq, well trained, experienced, battle tested, and under my orders to restore order in the streets.

They have M-16s and they are locked and loaded. These troops know how to shoot and kill and they are more than willing to do so if necessary and I expect they will."

— Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco, quoted in ABC News, Sept. 2, 2005

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Danziger Bridge shooting

Sept 4th 2005



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A Tale of Two Violent Bridges: Police vs African-Americans

1965 Selma, AL
"Bloody Sunday." March 7,
1965. Crossing Pettus Bridge



"Confrontation at the Bridge," 1975 Jacob Lawrence (1917-2000)

2005 New Orleans, LA

Danziger Bridge 2005

"Former police officer pleads guilty to
Danziger Bridge shooting cover-up of
stunning breadth"



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Police in Suburbs Blocked Evacuees, Witnesses Report

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Gretna Bridge

- ***Police in Suburbs Blocked Evacuees, Witnesses Report,***

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Loss of social rights/Enhanced Police Occupation and Surveillance



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Triumph of Dominant Narrative

The legacy of 'starving the state':

- Downsize public institutions so they can no longer be effective
- So: Privatize public institutions

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Dominant Narrative (cont.)

- The Left Behind=Welfare Dependents
- Michael Brown, The American public needs to learn not to rely on the government to save them when a crisis hits. 8/27/15
<http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/08/katrina-ten-years-later-michael-brown-121782#ixzz3l6WCDXoT>

•
So: Further eliminate public goods

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Dominant Narrative (cont.)

- Roaming gangs of lawless “thugs”
- So: Increase police surveillance and incarceration
- Privatize security forces

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“An economy of exclusion,” Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation

- “no longer...about exploitation and oppression...those excluded are no longer society’s underside or its fringes or its disenfranchised [although they are also that]— they are no longer even a part of it.
- The excluded are ...the outcast, the ‘leftovers’.”
- “Such an economy [of exclusion] kills...not news when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points”
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