

Decentralized Governance in the Context of Urban Resilience: A Case Study of Post-Hurricane Recovery in New Orleans

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Abstract. This study examines the decentralized governance mechanisms deployed during the post-Hurricane Katrina recovery in New Orleans, highlighting their effectiveness in promoting urban resilience. Utilizing a mixed-method approach, we analyze qualitative interviews with key stakeholders and quantitative metrics of recovery outcomes. Our findings reveal that decentralized governance not only facilitated adaptive responses to crises but also fostered community engagement and resource mobilization. The implications of this study are significant, suggesting that decentralized frameworks can enhance resilience in urban policy-making amidst growing climate uncertainties. This work contributes to the discourse on public policy by providing empirical evidence of successful governance models in disaster recovery contexts.

Keywords: Decentralized governance, Urban resilience, Post-disaster recovery, Public policy, Community engagement, Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans, Crisis management, Adaptive capacity

Introduction

In the face of increasing climate-related disasters, the resilience of urban settings has emerged as a pivotal area of study within public policy. Urban resilience refers to the capacity of cities to absorb, recover from, and adapt to adverse events while maintaining essential functions. The global urgency of enhancing urban resilience is underscored by the

escalating frequency and intensity of natural disasters, particularly hurricanes, making the study of effective governance frameworks crucial. This paper focuses on the case of New Orleans, post-Hurricane Katrina, as a critical lens through which to explore decentralized governance structures that emerged during the recovery phase. The relevance of this study in the current context (2024-2026) cannot be overstated. As cities worldwide grapple with the multifaceted challenges posed by climate change, the exploration of governance models that embrace decentralization offers valuable insights. Presently, many urban areas are revisiting their governance strategies, acknowledging that traditional top-down approaches may not adequately address the dynamic nature of crises. The shifts towards decentralized governance are often rooted in local knowledge, community engagement, and adaptive capacities that traditional models may overlook. New Orleans serves as an emblematic case study, given its unique socio-economic and cultural landscape, which was profoundly affected by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and has since been a focal point for resilience research. In this paper, we will outline the methodologies employed to examine the effectiveness of decentralized governance in New Orleans. We will present a mixed-methods approach that includes qualitative interviews with local stakeholders and quantitative data analysis regarding the outcomes of recovery initiatives. The structure of the paper will be as follows: first, we will review the theoretical framework surrounding urban resilience and governance; second, we will detail the case study methodology and data sources; third, we will analyze the findings and discuss their implications for public policy; finally, we will conclude with recommendations for future research in decentralized governance.

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References

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