

grievances are constructed. Instead he locates the “why” in the realm of the “building blocks” of individual emotions. Missing from Jasper’s theoretical purview is a vision of power that goes beyond the micro level. Rather it seems to reside in the ability of individuals to mobilize around shared and/or constructed emotional responses, with little attention given to individuals’ unequal access to resources or their differential placement in systems of power that a structuralist analysis would emphasize.

Scholars puzzling over the rise of Trumpism and the responses to it will find much to ponder in Jasper’s insistent but nuanced focus on emotional dynamics. At a time when anger, moral shocks, and collective moods of condescension and discontent—often grounded in feelings of economic, racial, and gender displacement—loom large, his analysis illuminates the affective and moral commitments that infused both the Trump rallies and the Women’s March. In particular, it challenges us to reject any assumed distinction between those who think and those who feel.

But Trumpism must also be read as part of a global phenomenon that profoundly challenges the logic of Jasper’s bottom-up micro analysis. Right-wing identitarian populist movements are not particular to American society; they have emerged across a wide expanse, from Greece’s Golden Dawn to France’s National Front and Britain’s Brexit campaign, from the dominance of India’s Hindu Nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party to Brazil’s election of the bluntly racist, homophobic, misogynistic Jair Bolsonaro as its president. Surely these must be understood in terms of the dynamics of global political economy—ethno-racial formations, structures of gendered power, and decades of neoliberal policies. While Jasper’s theory is certainly helpful to explain why particular individuals choose to protest, it’s less helpful for understanding why mass movements emerge when they do, especially when versions of them spring up in such various and seemingly unconnected locales. Can the grievances prompted by rising economic inequality and the dislocations caused by the massive movement of people and capital across borders be explained by a bottom-up

theory of action that posits individuals as the first movers?

## Reference

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*Recovering Inequality: Hurricane Katrina, the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906, and the Aftermath of Disaster*, by **Steve Kroll-Smith**. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2018. 198 pp. \$27.95 paper. ISBN: 9781477316115.

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We live on an active planet. Since 1960, government records show that tens of thousands of natural hazards have struck the United States, causing hundreds of billions of dollars in direct property damage across every county in the country. That’s simply how it is. Wherever we settle, nature pushes back, whether it is in the form of storms, floods, fires, droughts, tornadoes, earthquakes, mudslides, or other natural calamities. When these events hit close to home, they awaken us to this reality; and if they’re big enough, they may even capture national attention, but rarely for long. Two disasters, however, defy that amnesia: the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco and Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, each of which devastated nearly 80 percent of their respective cities. Steve Kroll-Smith places these events side by side in his new book, *Recovering Inequality: Hurricane Katrina, the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906, and the Aftermath of Disaster*, to offer rich insight into the inner workings of American society and how it handles disaster.

In a nutshell, Kroll-Smith argues that the nation’s long-standing approach to disaster recovery is best viewed in three stages that loop back on each other to form an unvirtuous circle. During the early, undifferentiated stage before disaster, there is the making of local place, space, and social inequalities.

San Francisco and New Orleans offer stark illustrations because as cities they not only concentrate vast sums of people and wealth but also divide them. Through capitalism and racism, Kroll-Smith explains, "The sharp scissors of money and color cut each urban space into warrens of social kinds whose disparate relations to capital accumulation and the privileges of skin shade [bring] a modicum of both cognitive and social order to the cacophony of urban life" (p. 36).

When catastrophe strikes, this unequal social order is disrupted, and denizens lurch into a second stage in which the city suddenly transforms from a divided space into a collective place. Amid the immediate destruction and uncertainty, categorical divides recede. Strangers help strangers. People of stature call for rebirth. Media celebrate heroism and the spirit of cooperation. Through these acts, the city not only asserts its relevance to outsiders but also becomes therapeutic to those within it, as a more just and caring society courageously emerges to help those in need through no fault of their own.

Soon after, though, comes stage three, which sternly and steadily reconstructs not just the damaged built environment but also the lost social order. Kroll-Smith shows how this recovery of inequality unfolds in a variety of unintentional and uncoordinated ways to restore categorical divides threatened by stage two. Early on, media coverage and law enforcement begin distinguishing "looters" from survivors based more on the color and character of their bodies than what they are actually doing, such as securing food, water, or other provisions. As Kroll-Smith explains, "If disaster acts to disorder the market hierarchy that organizes urban life, 'the looter' is the scapegoat, the victim sacrificed to launch the rescue of order" (p. 83). Thereafter, recovering inequality is propelled by opportunistic developers looking to accumulate land and wealth through the dispossession of marginalized victims. And it is further fueled by how relief is imagined and administered as fraud and entitlement are constructed to be the true threats to recovery.

In the shadow of these twin specters, government agencies and private insurers categorically divide deserving from undeserving

victims. Kroll-Smith argues that this division is based less on need than on how far down the social ladder the fickle fate of catastrophe threatens to knock respective parties, which of course depends on how far up they already were. This division minimizes the plight of marginalized residents—Asians in Chinatown for example, or low-income African Americans in public housing. It also extends upward to differentiate working- and middle-class homeowners, as well as the neighborhoods they anchor. A case in point is the Road Home Program in New Orleans. By tying the amount given in housing restoration grants to pre-disaster property values, this relief effort underfunded the reconstruction of black communities, where a long history of segregation, oppression, and reduced public investment has suppressed market values below those of similar properties in predominantly white neighborhoods.

Kroll-Smith contends that because these dynamics are rooted in market logics, they readily scale up to differentiate deserving from undeserving cities, too. For early-twentieth-century San Francisco, this scalability was good news because the nation—and, more importantly, the federal government—deemed the city deserving, based largely on its growing market ties to China. For early-twenty-first-century New Orleans, this wasn't the case. Yes, the area received billions of dollars to build new flood infrastructure; but because the city no longer served as a strategic port or regional economy, it received far less to reconstruct its social infrastructure. Thus, the recovery of inequality becomes a nested act, stacking up rebuilt categorical divides between cities atop those between neighborhoods and peoples in ways that don't require conspiracy or purposeful behavior. As Kroll-Smith explains, "When society [bows] to the market, the fact is that most everything [becomes] a business deal, including disaster recovery" (p. 155). This is the real catastrophe, made all the more so by the fact that it now seems so natural.

In advancing this thesis, Kroll-Smith is not the first to arrive, but he is revelatory. Other scholars have compared disasters, but they haven't done so as directly across such a wide spatial and temporal expanse. This impressive effort leverages the strength of

universalizing comparison to offer insights into not just enduring features of disaster recovery but also American society over the *longue durée*. These features include a capacity for uncategorical compassion in times of collective need alongside an abiding sense that the great injustice of inequality is not that it exists but that those higher up might undeservingly fall from its higher perches.

Kroll-Smith draws on a trove of materials to marshal this thesis, including diaries, letters, and newspapers, as well as prior research and, in the case of New Orleans, the Oral History Project. In doing so he doesn't test his claims so much as illustrate and contextualize them. To some, this approach might seem like cherry-picking: a conclusion in search of evidence. But in Kroll-Smith's hands, the reward is a clearer view of how inequality is covertly restored during recovery along with a careful cataloging of the mechanisms involved. Along the way, broad-ranging scholarship is brought to bear from Du Bois to Durkheim, Marx, Polanyi, and Weber, together with lyrical nods to Baudelaire, Dickens, and Twain.

Written with engaging and often eloquent turns of phrase, it is the work of a sociological mind atop its craft and respectful of readers' time and intellect. You can recommend it to your neighbors while also assigning it to your undergraduate and graduate students. It will sit comfortably on my sociological bookshelf next to Kai Erikson's work on Buffalo Creek and Eric Klinenberg's *Heat Wave*.

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*Twenty-First Century Inequality and Capitalism: Piketty, Marx and Beyond*, edited by **Lauren Langman** and **David A. Smith**. Leiden: Brill, 2018. 392 pp. \$149.00 cloth. ISBN: 9789004331440.

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Asked to talk about the effect of Marx on his thinking in an interview with *The New Republic*, Thomas Piketty responded, "Marx? . . . I never managed to read it." When interviewer Isaac Chotiner then noted, "obviously with the title, it seemed like you were

tipping your hat to him in some ways," Piketty responded emphatically, "no, not at all!" Even so, several times in the text of Piketty's bestseller *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* he references Marx as an "apocalyptic" theorist of "infinite accumulation" and "perpetual divergence" who failed to use systematic data (2014:27). *Twenty-First Century Inequality and Capitalism: Piketty, Marx and Beyond*, edited by Lauren Langman and David A. Smith, responds to Piketty from an explicitly Marxist and critical theory perspective. Most of the authors in this volume's twenty-two chapters praise both its role in pushing questions of inequality to the forefront and its rigorous aggregation of national-level statistics from a diverse array of sources. Yet they also raise concerns about its interpretive claims and theoretical orientation.

Having read Piketty's book in advance will certainly help the reader navigate these chapters, but several contribute toward a summary that can be pieced together. Most readers will be familiar with the U-shaped graph depicting the increasing share of national income going to the top layers of society beginning around 1975. Many will also be familiar with the fact that much of this recent rise in inequality is being driven by the incomes of earners at the very top, the 1 percent. For Piketty, the key distinction is income from wealth and income from labor. He uses wealth and capital interchangeably as "non-human assets that can be owned and exchanged on some market" (2014:46). Drawing from meticulously collected and prepared longitudinal data, he shows how the composition of income from labor and wealth has changed since the eighteenth century, comparing several rich capitalist countries.

The core finding can be summarized by the formula  $r > g$ , where  $r$  is the rate of return on capital and  $g$  is the rate of growth of national income. Capital accumulates, whereas labor income does not. Why does the rate of return on capital exceed the rate of growth? According to Piketty, because "it is always possible—up to a certain point—to find new and useful things to do with capital" (2014:221). Taking on mainstream economics, Piketty argues that the notion that