ABSTRACT

RESEARCH PAPER: A People’s Recovery: The Joplin Tornado of May 22, 2011

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This study documents the post-disaster recovery of survivors of the Joplin Tornado that occurred on May 22, 2011. Survivors acting in their own power to recreate their lives and manifest a new normal worked through various agencies, associations, and actors to rebuild and recover. Through surveys and interviews with a limited number of survivors, a recovery narrative was documented and categorized within the larger context of social capital studies to provide a greater understanding to the underlying social networks that survivors in disasters rely upon in times of great emergency and hazards. This research adds to the even larger discourse of post-disaster recovery and pre-disaster hazard planning that is going on in the world as man-made and natural disasters continue to happen with ever increasing frequency. Survivors in Joplin relied upon their social capital that was manifested in relationships with family, friends, and/or neighbors. To rebuild their lives, survivors relied upon local associations and connections to place them in larger social networks that could provide even greater assistance and aid after the disaster through job relationships, churches and other religious organizations, and/or local nonprofits in the Joplin area.