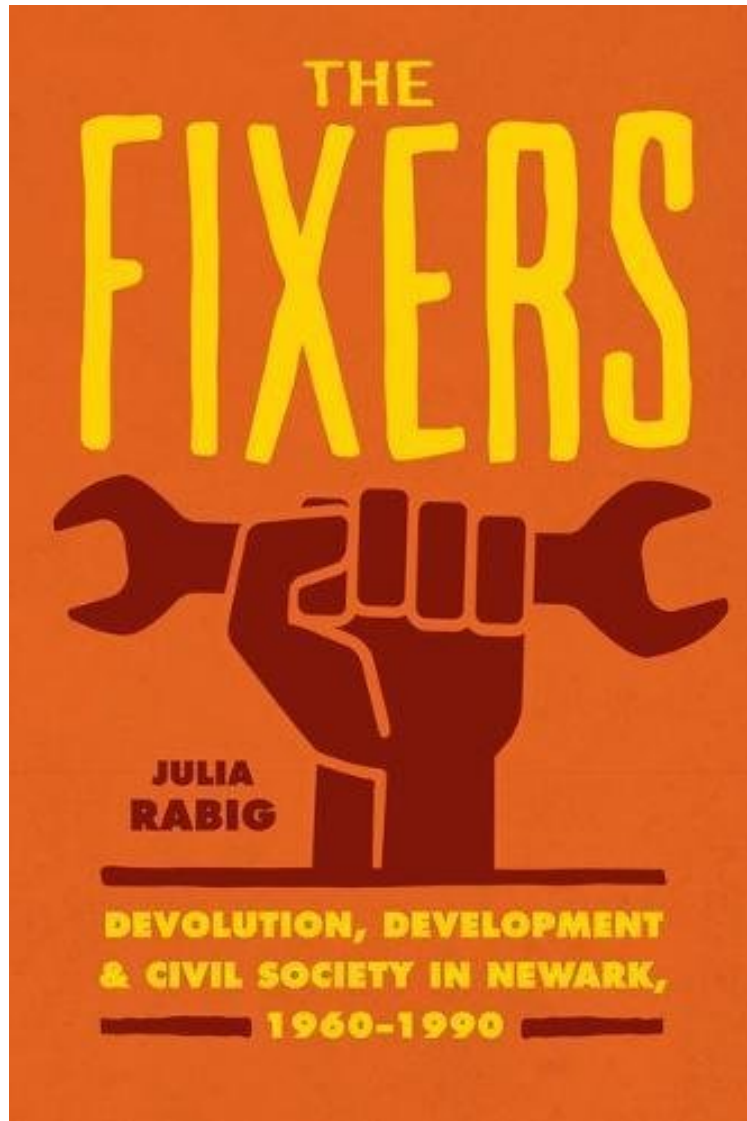


[Free read ebook] The Fixers: Devolution, Development, and Civil Society in Newark, 1960-1990
(Historical Studies of Urban America)

The Fixers: Devolution, Development, and Civil Society in Newark, 1960-1990 (Historical Studies of Urban America)

Julia Rabig

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Julia Rabig : The Fixers: Devolution, Development, and Civil Society in Newark, 1960-1990 (Historical Studies of Urban America) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Fixers: Devolution, Development, and Civil Society in Newark, 1960-1990 (Historical Studies of Urban America):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Impact of Change on Newark By Donald Rabig Having grown up in Newark's neighboring city of Elizabeth in a public housing project built just prior to WWII, a city that shared many of the same issues of suburban flight, loss of manufacturing jobs, and areas of stubborn poverty. It was significantly smaller with a population just over 100,000. There were distinctive ethnic and racial neighborhoods as in Newark. As a child growing up in the 1950's I recall it being a treat to take the bus to Newark for occasional shopping trips to Bamberger's or S. Klein's. My first job out of high school was in the mail department in the headquarters building of Prudential Insurance Co. By the time of the period covered in the book I no longer lived in Elizabeth but still had relatives who did. I think the author presented a very well-documented account of the impact of the civil rights movement, migration to the city, the flight of long time residents to the suburbs and the effect of the politics on the outcomes of the war on poverty, as well as, the election of black leaders to the position of mayor.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Magisterial Study of Urban History By R. Stuart Julia Rabig's 'The Fixers -- Devolution, Development Civil Society in Newark, 1960-1990' -- compellingly written and conceptually sophisticated -- is a magisterial study of the confluence of the Black civil rights struggle and urban history. Though the book is the well-told story of a single city -- with sidebars on Chicago, Cleveland, and other cities with similar problems, Dartmouth Professor Rabig has as well brought forth a superb comparative history of American urban politics in the last half of the 20th century. Newark provides the ideal case study of the Civil Rights Movement as it moved North, encountering more subtle forms of crypto-racism and de facto segregation embedded in the urban fabric. The city experienced Black migration, urban ghettoization, suburbanization, white flight, and crippling de-industrialization. In the ensuing Black struggle with white power structures -- for decent housing and jobs -- the ultimate prize was power itself, the political power to deliver the goods. Federal funding for low income public housing, nominally labeled 'urban renewal' became -- in fact -- urban removal, while good jobs on the construction sites still eluded Blacks due to the collusion of a white troika -- building trades unions, contractors, and the developers. LBJ's attention was divided; he had chosen to fight a costly two-front war -- in Vietnam and on the domestic poverty front. Added to the problem, the federal War on Poverty as well as state legislation enacted to alleviate the disparities, often fell victim to implementation sabotage -- with even the courts unable to assure timely compliance. Over time, the cumulative erosive effects of discrimination, displacement, and high Black unemployment, combined with familiar police repression, led in '67 to the Newark uprising, a collective act of deep socio-political grievance. Enter the fixers, the activists at the heart of Julia Rabig's study. She has employed the term 'fixer' positively as a constructive factor in Newark's story. Fixers represented human agency in the political and legal labyrinths of urban politics. They served as reform advocates, navigators of racial and class divides, forgers of alliances, and, when necessary, agitators. A fixer needed the social skills to tack between street and conference room and moderates and radicals as well as utopian ideals and pragmatic outcomes. In the aftermath of the Newark uprising, concessions made to the Black community created new space for political maneuver into which the fixers moved. The author profiles a number of fixers in depth, including Gustav Heningburg and Pat Foley. Heningburg skillfully shuttled between Black moderates and radicals, as well as white progressives and government bureaucrats. Foley, a white Catholic activist and mother of 8, worked tirelessly to narrow the gap between Newark's suburban whites and urban Blacks, epitomizing the art of the fixer as immersion activism. Concluding her monumental study, Professor Rabig argues persuasively that Newark's fixers "altered the calculus of urban policy" (19), engendering a "fixer ethos that shaped urban development on a national scale even as they remained locally focused." (232)

Stories of Newark's postwar decline are easy to find. But in *The Fixers*, Julia Rabig supplements these tales of misery with the story of the many imaginative challenges to the city's decline mounted by Newark's residents and suburban neighbors. In these pages, we meet the black nationalists whose dynamic organizing elected African American candidates in unprecedented numbers. There are tenants who mounted a historic rent strike to transform public housing and renegade white Catholic priests who joined black laywomen to pioneer the construction of low-income housing and influence housing policy. These are just a few of the "fixers" we meet—people who devised ways to work with limited resources and pull together the threads of a patchwork welfare state. Rabig argues that fixers play dual roles. They support resistance, but also mediation; they fight for reform, but also more radical and far-reaching alternatives; they rally others to a collective cause, but sometimes they broker factions. Fixers reflect longer traditions of organizing while responding to the demands of their times. In so doing, they end up fixing (like a fixative) a new and enduring pattern of activist strategies, reforms, and institutional expectations—a pattern we continue to see today.

“Rescuing ‘the fixer’ from the bowels of urban political history, Rabig reframes the black freedom struggle in Newark, NJ, during the 1960s and 1970s. . . . By carefully measuring their potent mixture of radical protest with backroom dealing, Rabig allows readers to see how fixers sought self-determination and to meet immediate needs for housing and jobs. The book builds its final section, three compelling chapters on three very distinctive community development corporations, all of which embodied ‘a fixer ethos that shaped urban development on a national scale even as they remained locally focused.’ Rabig convincingly argues that these organizations, more than harbingers of

privatized welfare provision, represented the holistic responses of Newark residents to the urban crisis. Recommended.”