Placeless: Interaction of Disaster and Human Security

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Placeless: Interaction of Disaster and Human Security

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RESEARCH QUESTION
What are the human security issues experienced by New Orleanians displaced after Katrina?

BACKGROUND: HUMAN SECURITY AND DISPLACEMENT
Human security issues are universal, interdependent, and people-centered
- Economic security (freedom from poverty)
- Food security (access to basic nutrition)
- Health security (minimum protection from diseases)
- Environmental security (safety from natural disasters)
- Personal security (protection from violence)
- Community security (protection of traditional cultures)
- Political security (civil and political rights)

Displacement after Hurricane Katrina
The result of combined human security issues that have been suddenly worsened or revealed by extreme events.
Katrina was one of the worst crises the US experienced and resulted in millions of people struggling with a myriad of the above seven human security issues. These human security concerns were wide spread of displaced New Orleanians.

DATA AND METHODS: QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE
Thematic qualitative analysis provides deeper information alluding to specific human security challenges while social vulnerability index mapping provides a geographic context to quantitative factors related to issues associated with human security.

Thematic Analysis of Secondary Qualitative Data Using Atlas.ti:
- Seven Oral histories from New Orleanians displaced after Katrina who were not going back to NOLA in the foreseeable future.
- Interviews reported in media articles and blogs
- Themes: losses due to displacement, barriers to transition, barriers to return, resources for transition and opportunities

Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) Mapping: Center for disease control measures and ArcGIS
Four themes and fifteen indicators identified from Census 2000 at tract level

Social Vulnerability Themes | Indicators
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Socioeconomic status: per capita income, poverty, employment, education |  
Household composition and disability: elderly, young, single parent, disability status |  
Minority status and language: race, ethnicity, English language proficiency |  
Housing and transportation: multi-unit, mobile home, crowding, vehicle access |  

FINDINGS
Significant vulnerability to hazards in the central and eastern parts of New Orleans, where also most of the inundation occurred

Displaced residents from the most vulnerable parts of New Orleans had the most trouble transitioning, while those in stable neighborhoods were able to transition into new opportunities quickly.

CONCLUSION
Displaced New Orleanians experienced challenges to their human security during the transition periods, especially those were in vulnerable conditions before Katrina.

Human Security Indicators
- Economic Security
  - Periods of poverty between FEMA and NGO assistance
- Food Security
  - Food stamps of no value, lack of access to grocery stores
- Health Security
  - Health issues due to Katrina; Gaps in access to Medicare and Medicaid services in the new states
- Environmental Security
  - Disruption of daily lives due to destruction and loss of coastal environment
- Personal Security
  - Mental health problems from PTSD, transitional trauma
- Community Security
  - Loss of sense of place, New Orleans unique community, and culture
- Political Security
  - Lack of representation for return, lack of connection with political on goings in the new communities

WORKS CITED