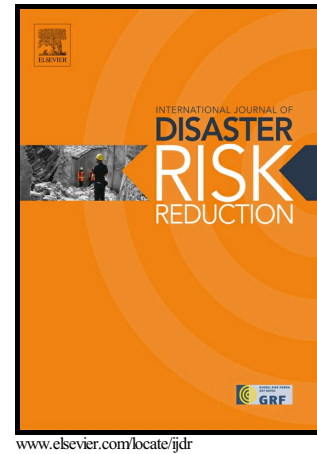


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PERCEIVED NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARIES: A MISSING LINK IN MODELING POST-DISASTER HOUSING RECOVERY

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ABSTRACT

Literature in the domain of disasters has highlighted the importance of reestablishment of housing to restore a community due to its ripple effect on the overall timing of recovery. In fact, previous research studies have revealed the significance of members of social support networks, such as neighbors, church members, and others who share local communal spaces, on the making of recovery decisions. The objective of this research is to explore the determinants that drive households' perceived neighborhood boundaries, which will in turn facilitate future research on exploring the importance of community assets which would lead to establishment of these social support networks within perceived neighborhoods. To accomplish this, an online survey was designed and conducted in the states of New York and Louisiana, which bore the brunt of the nation's two costliest hurricanes, Sandy and Katrina. The survey provided an online graphical user interface with which participants could manually draw a polygon around the area they perceived to be their neighborhood. These manually-selected neighborhoods were then compared to fixed units defined by the Census Bureau to check for similarities and differences. In summary, out of various internal attributes, prior disaster-related personal impact resulted in identifying larger areas as perceived neighborhood boundaries. Similarly, location density was shown to have an increasing effect on perceived neighborhood area. Moreover, married participants tended to have larger perceived neighborhoods when compared to their unmarried

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