

# The Social Dimensions of Resilience

## Community Resilience: A Social Justice Perspective



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# Topics:

- Physical and Social Resiliency
- Sources of Social Vulnerability
- Characteristics of a Resilient Society
- Social Justice and Sustainability

# Physical Resiliency

The ability to absorb  
and then recover



Photo courtesy of Lori Peek

# Social Resiliency

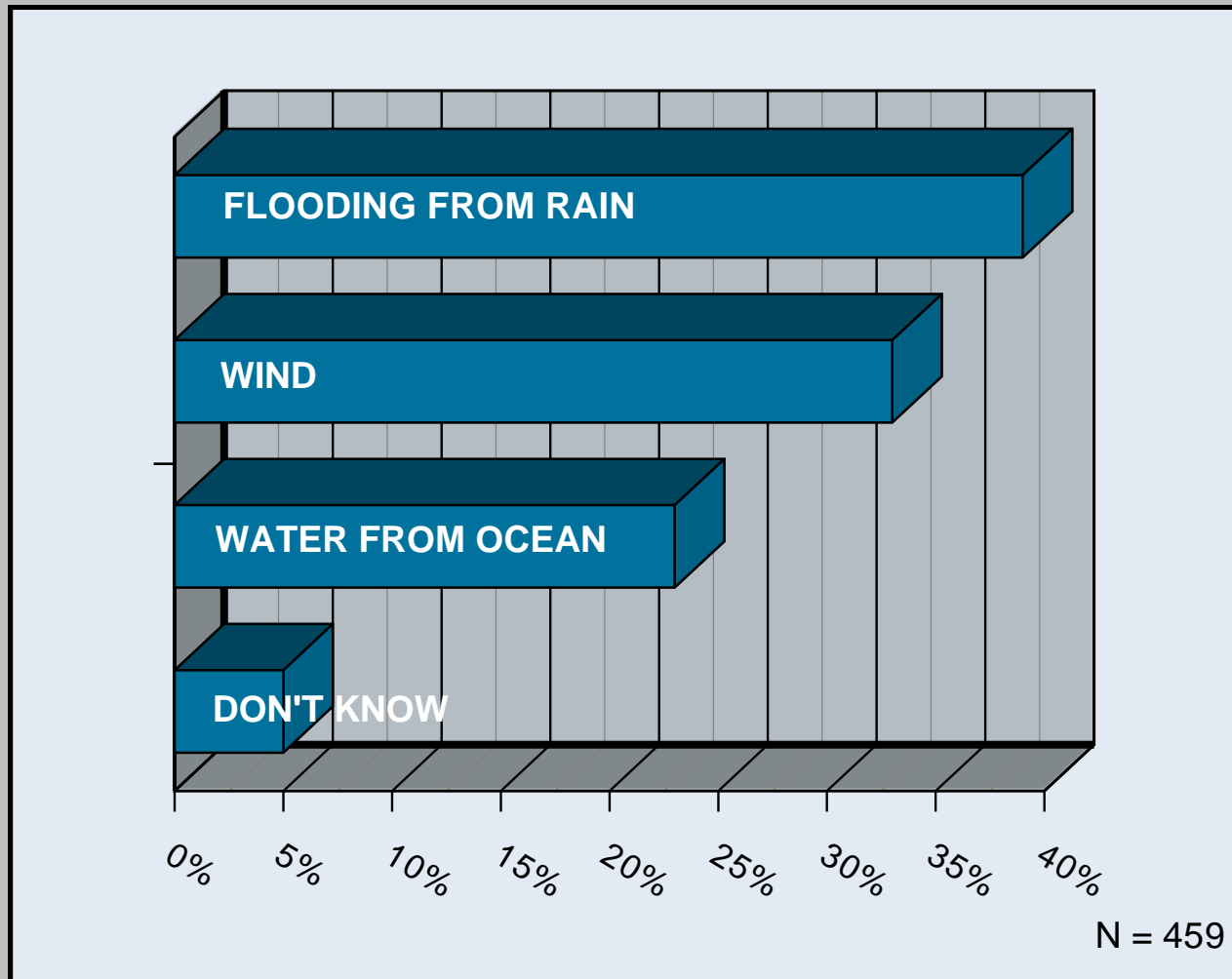
- Ability to absorb and then recover
- Readiness for facing threats/abnormal events
- Adaptability to changing environment
- Tenacity and commitment to survive
- Willingness of communities to rally around a common cause and shared set of values

# Hazard Resiliency Requires:

- Knowledge of the hazard
- Accurate perception of the risk

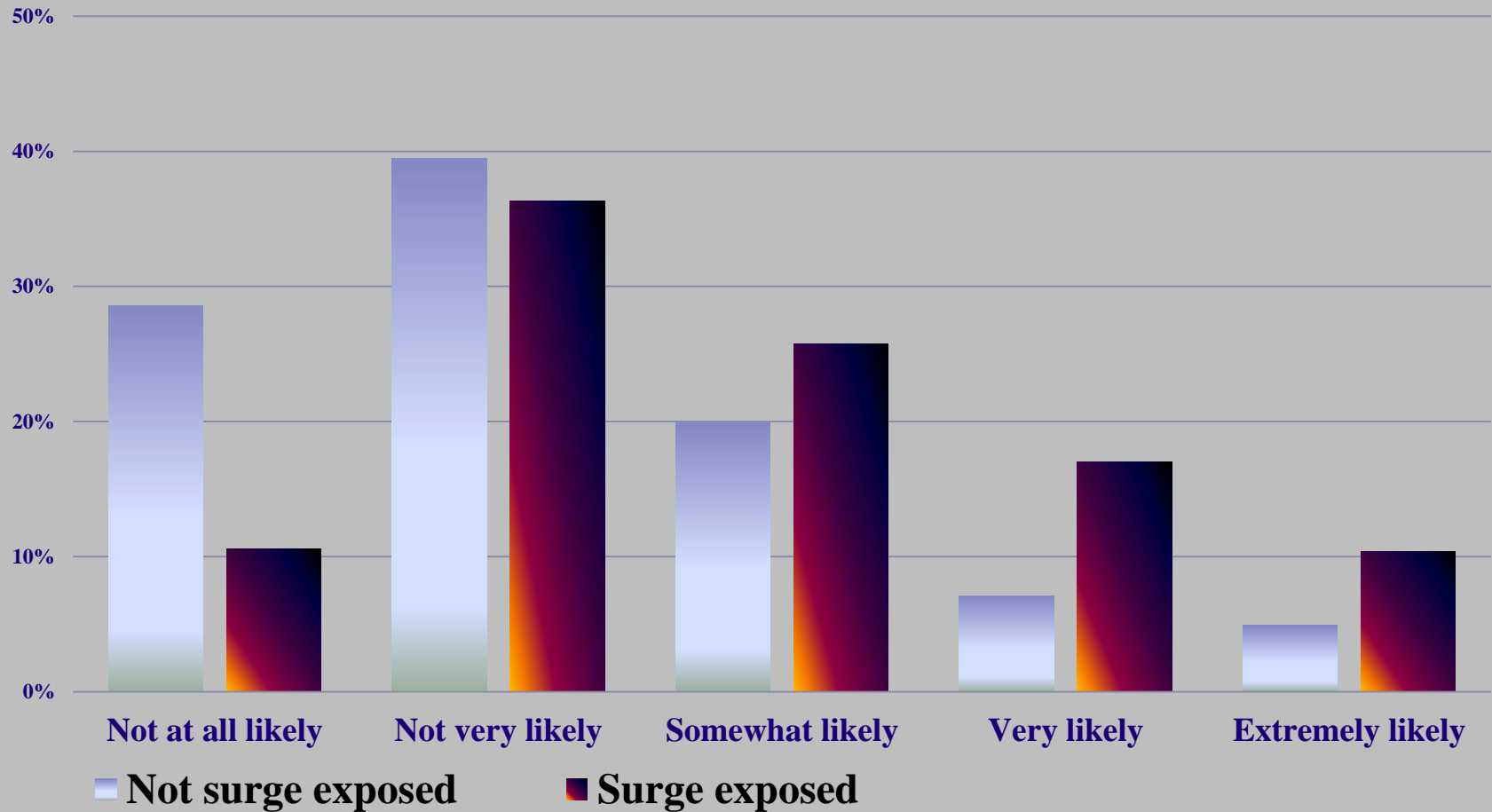
# A STORM SURGE EXAMPLE:

Public Opinion on What Hurricane Hazard Causes the Most Deaths



*Coastal Public On-Line Survey on Tropical and Extratropical Cyclone Forecast 6  
Communication Products – Report to NOAA. 2012. Eastern Research Group, Inc.*

# Risk Perception vs. Surge Exposure



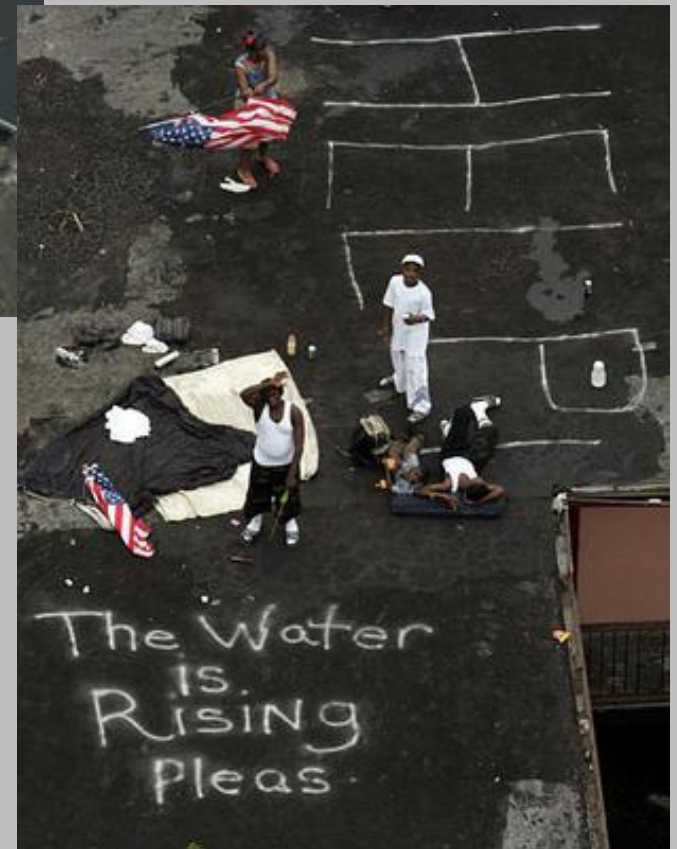
Q7. *How likely is it that your home would be seriously damaged or destroyed by storm surge in a major hurricane?*

Lazo, Jeff. 2010. *Survey of Hurricane Vulnerable Public – North Carolina to Texas*. NCAR.

# Hazard Resiliency Requires:

- Knowledge of the hazard
- Accurate perception of the risk
- Understanding of available alternatives
  - Where?
- Resources and flexibility to respond
  - How to get there?

RISK = MORE THAN  
HAZARD EXPOSURE



# Sources of Social Vulnerability

- Unequal exposure to risk



Plate 1.1 A dazed man returned to his destroyed mobile home in Florida City to find everything he owned was gone except for this pair of pants  
Source: C.M. Guerrero/Miami Herald



Families in  
manufactured  
housing,  
minorities, renters,  
the elderly, etc.



Plate 1.2 A resident of an apartment building lowers his belongings to the street below  
Source: Chuck Fadely/Miami Herald



# Sources of Social Vulnerability

- Unequal exposure to risk
- Inadequate
  - Economic resources
    - Money to mitigate, evacuate, recover
    - Insurance
  - Human resources
    - Health and physical ability
    - Education

# South Miami Heights & Hurricane Andrew

- Homeowners
- Working Class
- Multiethnic
- Interviewed in 1993
- Many difficulties
  - Insurance
  - Contractors
  - Lack of resources
- Revisited in 2002
- Of those interviewed:
  - Majority still not back to normal
  - 90% reported moderate or major long-term effects on family
  - More renters in neighborhood
  - Uneven recovery

## SOUTH MIAMI HEIGHTS 10 YEARS AFTER ANDREW



2007. Dash, Nicole, Betty Hearn Morrow, Juanita Mainster and Lilia Cunningham. "Lasting Effects of Hurricane Andrew on a Working Class Community." *Natural Hazards Review* 8(1):13-21.

# Sources of Social Vulnerability

- Unequal exposure to risk
- Unequal exposure to
  - Economic resources
    - Money to mitigate, evacuate, recover
    - Insurance
  - Human resources
    - Health and physical ability
    - Education
  - **Social resources**
    - **Social networks and connections**

# A Positive Example of Social Networks and Connections

## Strong Social Network Sped Recovery Of Vietnamese Katrina Survivors

Begin rebuilding within  
one month  
90% back by one year

- Strong leadership
- Strong community network
- Shared values
- Homeowners with strong ties to area



Father Vien Nguyen, Priest,  
MQVC Church, Versailles

# A Resilient Society:

- Plans for growth and development
- Addresses chronic poverty
- Addresses chronic health issues
- Promotes social equality
- Connects families with community
- Protects the environment



Manufactured home  
in Port Charlotte

## After Hurricane Charley



New Home in Punta Gorda built  
to new Florida building codes



# After Superstorm Sandy

Dune and setback in Avalon, NJ

Photos courtesy of Martin  
Pagliughi, Emergency  
Manager, Cape May County



Surge erosion in Ocean City, NJ

# A Resilient Society:

- Plans for growth and development
- **Addresses chronic poverty**
- **Promotes social equality**
- Addresses chronic health issues
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# WEALTH INEQUALITY IN AMERICA

## ACTUAL

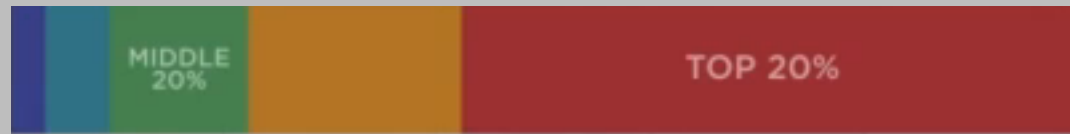
Distribution of Wealth  
in the U.S.



What Americans

## THINK

The Distribution is



Distribution  
92% Choose as

## IDEAL

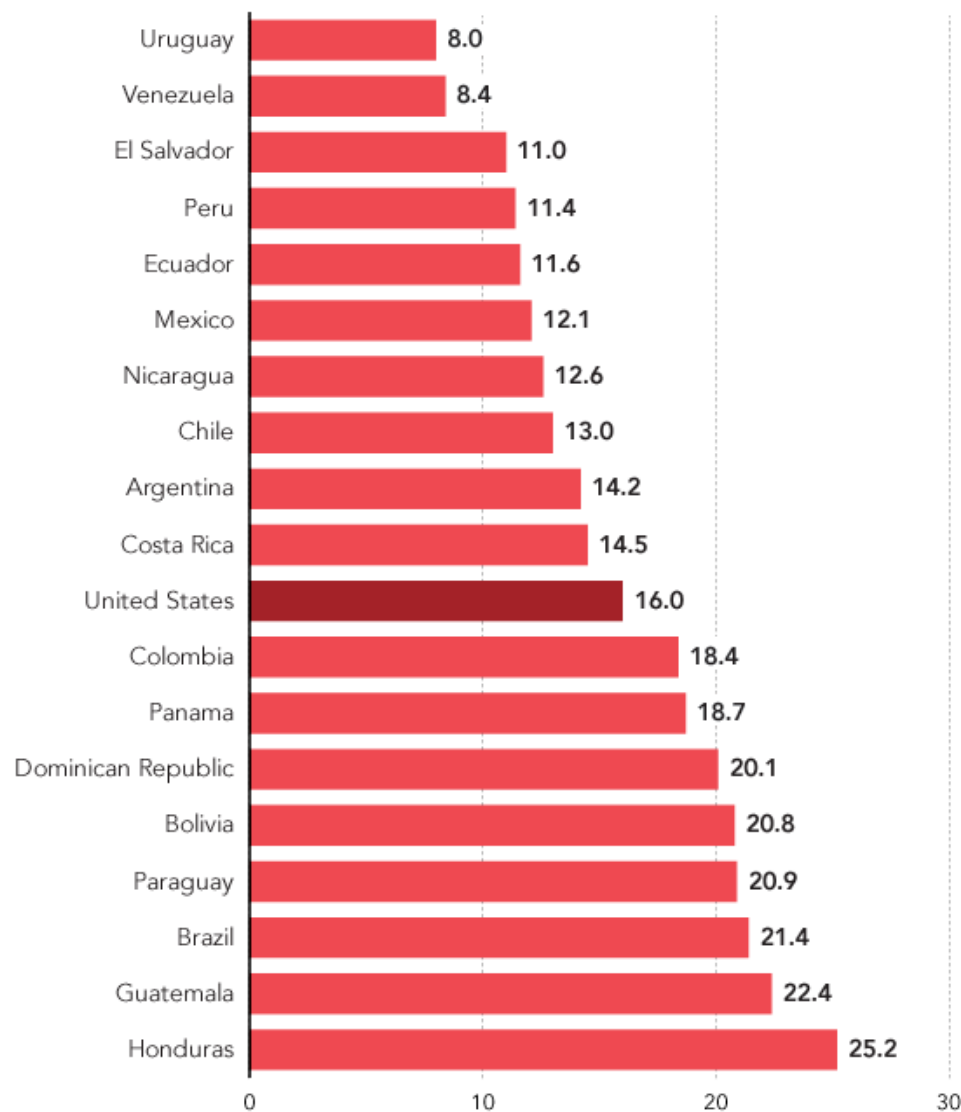


Politzane. *Wealth Inequality in America*. 2012.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPKKQnijnsM>

## Inequality In The Americas

The figures below represent the annual income of the richest 20 percent of a given country, divided by the income of the poorest 20 percent. The larger the figure, the greater the economic inequality. The data was culled by Latin America analyst Adam Isacson from the U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean's annual Statistical Yearbook.



Source: U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

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# A Resilient Society:

- Plans for growth and development
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- Promotes social equality
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- Connects families with community
- Protects the environment

# A Resilient Community:

... is a good place to live.

*"It's a quality of life issue."*

Don Geis

# Sustainability Paradigm



Agyeman, J. and T. Evans. 2003. "Toward Just Sustainability in Urban Communities: Building Equity Rights with Sustainable Solutions." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 590  
*Annals Rethinking Sustainable Development* 35-53.

# Conclusions

- Community resilience and sustainability are tied to distribution of resources
- Inequality has increased in U.S.
- Thus, safety has decreased for large segments of the population
- A social justice perception questions this from a MORAL standpoint as well as a practical one

# A Just Society:

...is that society which any rational agent situated behind a veil of ignorance would choose, knowing that he or she could actually be located at any position within that society.

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*

# Thank you !

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