ABSTRACT. New Orleans has suffered from a significant population decline during 2000–2010, mainly due to Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Regression models are used here to explain the spatial variability of population change in New Orleans by variables such as proximity (distance or travel time) to the central business district (CBD), a natural environment variable “elevation”, and two composite socio-demographic indices derived from variables in the census. The research reveals a U-shaped population-change profile with distance or travel time from the CBD, population loss bottomed at 4–5 kilometers (10–15 minutes) from the CBD and recovered towards both the CBD and suburbs. This suggests possible converging forces of suburbanization (that is, a nationwide trend that began long before the hurricane) and the CBD’s anchoring role in the post-Katrina recovery. Greater population loss was also observed in the socioeconomically disadvantaged and lower-elevated areas, but neighborhoods of Hispanic concentration experienced less population loss.

Reference for the full paper: