Coastal areas (e.g., Puerto Rico, South Florida) vulnerable to;
• the extreme weather events (e.g., Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Irma and,
• Sea level rise (Day et al. 1995; Karim and Mimura, 2008)
• 53% of U.S. population live on the coast (UN 2018)
• 300-900% increase in nuisance flooding compared to 50 years ago (NOAA 2018)
Projected impact by 2030: over $500 billion/year (DARA, 2012)

Research Questions:
R.Q.-1: What are the factors that the Florida Keys residents take into account as they decide whether or not to rebuild in Post-Hurricane Irma recovery process?
R.Q.-2: To what extent do the long-term environmental risks associated with sea level rise affect reconstruction decisions of the residents displaced by Hurricane Irma?

Findings
1. The Factors That Affect Reconstruction Decisions
   • Challenges that the residents face in general (exacerbated after the Hurricane)
     - Low-wage, service sector-based, tourism dominant industry
     - Lack of affordable housing & shelters
     - High cost of living (e.g., housing, goods, services and maintenance costs), the most expensive survival threshold budget in the state (KILCE, 2018)
     - Flood prone geography
     - Logistics (long chain of islands linked by a single highway, US-1)
   
   • Back to “the New Normal” in Snowbirds’ Paradise
     - Secondary house-dominate (either not used or rented short term for majority of the year)
     - Hurricane impact on housing, businesses (loss of damage on housing, effect on businesses and jobs)
     - Most impacted area, Big Pine Key is where most of the affordable housing located
   - Affordable housing: Trailers, RV, boats, and ground level houses the most impacted by the hurricane and flooding
   - Insurance-related problems (e.g., inadequate coverage of damages, policyholders)

2. Rebuilding Back in the Face of Rising Seas
   • The focus on short-term priorities (e.g., housing recovery, debris removal from canals), concern about the next storm rather than SLR
   • SLR as a long-term priority in disaster recovery process: the concern about potential burden on rebuilding costs (e.g., additional taxes) and bureaucratic challenges (e.g., building codes)
   • Population groups that take SLR more seriously in reconstruction decisions, homeowners (with and without damage), business owners, younger populations, college degree holders

Data Collection Methods
- Semi-structured interviews (n=28)
- Review of Secondary Sources (e.g., newspaper articles)
- Focus groups (n=28)

Recommendations for the planners and policymakers:
• Finding the optimum period to act on sea level rise adaptation in the aftermath of a disaster, considering long-term risks soon after addressing the immediate needs, while the collective memory of the disaster is still present.
• Local officials need support from:
  1. The upper levels of the government (state and federal)
  2. Public (e.g., public awareness campaigns)