

Sorry We are Closed: The Impact Hurricane Sandy had on Local Businesses

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for

AP/GEOG 4520: Research Design and Field Studies in Human Geography, York University

Research Background

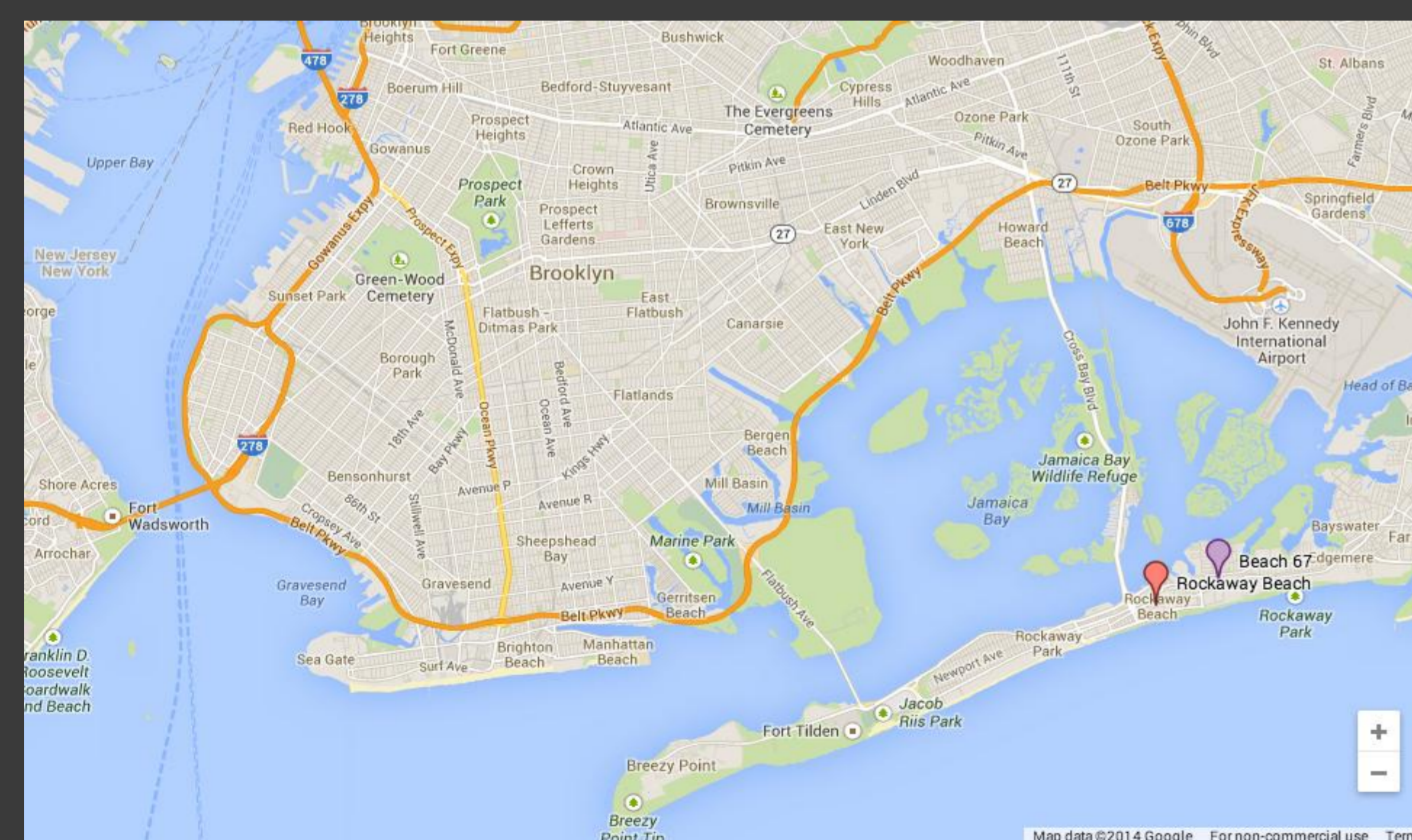
- Hurricane Sandy hit New York City on 29 October 2012
- Literature on vulnerability and resilience to natural hazards

Research Questions

- 1) How has Hurricane Sandy impacted businesses in the Rockaway Peninsula, New York City?
- 2) Accordingly, how did business owners respond to the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy?

Research Sites

- 1) Rockaway Beach
- 2) Beach 67



Source: <https://maps.google.ca/>

Research Method

- Face-to-face semi-structured interviews

Data Analysis

	Rockaway Beach	Beach 67
Analysis from Primary Data		
Date Visited	Oct. 26, 2013	Oct. 27, 2013
Number of Business Owners Interviewed	11	12
Length of Interviews (minutes)	10 to 20	5 to 10
Duration of Closure (months)	1.5 to 4	1 to 4
Type of Businesses		
Family/Independently Owned	82%	83%
Franchise	18%	17%
Preparation for Hurricane Sandy		
Seeking Financial Assistance after Storm	64%	67%
Received Assistance	18%	17%
Analysis from Secondary Data		
Total Population		
White Nonhispanic	78.30%	15.50%
Black/African American Nonhispanic	7.50%	54.70%
Asian Nonhispanic	2.10%	2.80%
Some other race Nonhispanic	0.40%	1.10%
Nonhispanic of two or more races	0.90%	2.30%
Hispanic origin	10.80%	23.60%
Workforce cohort in 2010	65.70%	66%
Workforce cohort in 2000	63%	62%
Spoke English < than very well" 2008-10		30%

Sources: interview data by authors; <http://maps.nyc.gov/census/>

Impact on Local Businesses

- Revenue loss due to loss of inventory during storm, structural repairs and population displacement after the storm
- Job layoff following storm
- Significantly slower business following storm and even after recovery
- Lack of or insufficient financial assistance from government
- Some businesses remain closed and may never reopen



Signs of Flood Damage on the Beam in a Business
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Thomas Hughes, Liquor Store Owner: "November and December are our two biggest months. We lost about \$300,000 U.S. in sales. We were down another \$50,000 U.S. during the spring because so few customers were around. We laid off everyone until December 12, 2012. We did not rehire everyone until mid 2013".



Business still closed 1 year after Hurricane Sandy
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'Now Opening' and 'For Rent' signs Still visible in October 2013
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Conclusions

- Hurricane Sandy left many local businesses destroyed and having to rebuild from the bottom up.
- However, there is a silver lining to this storm - the community has come together and is a stronger unit than before.
- "Rome wasn't built in a day"- thus, it will take time for these businesses to recover, that is, if they can.

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