

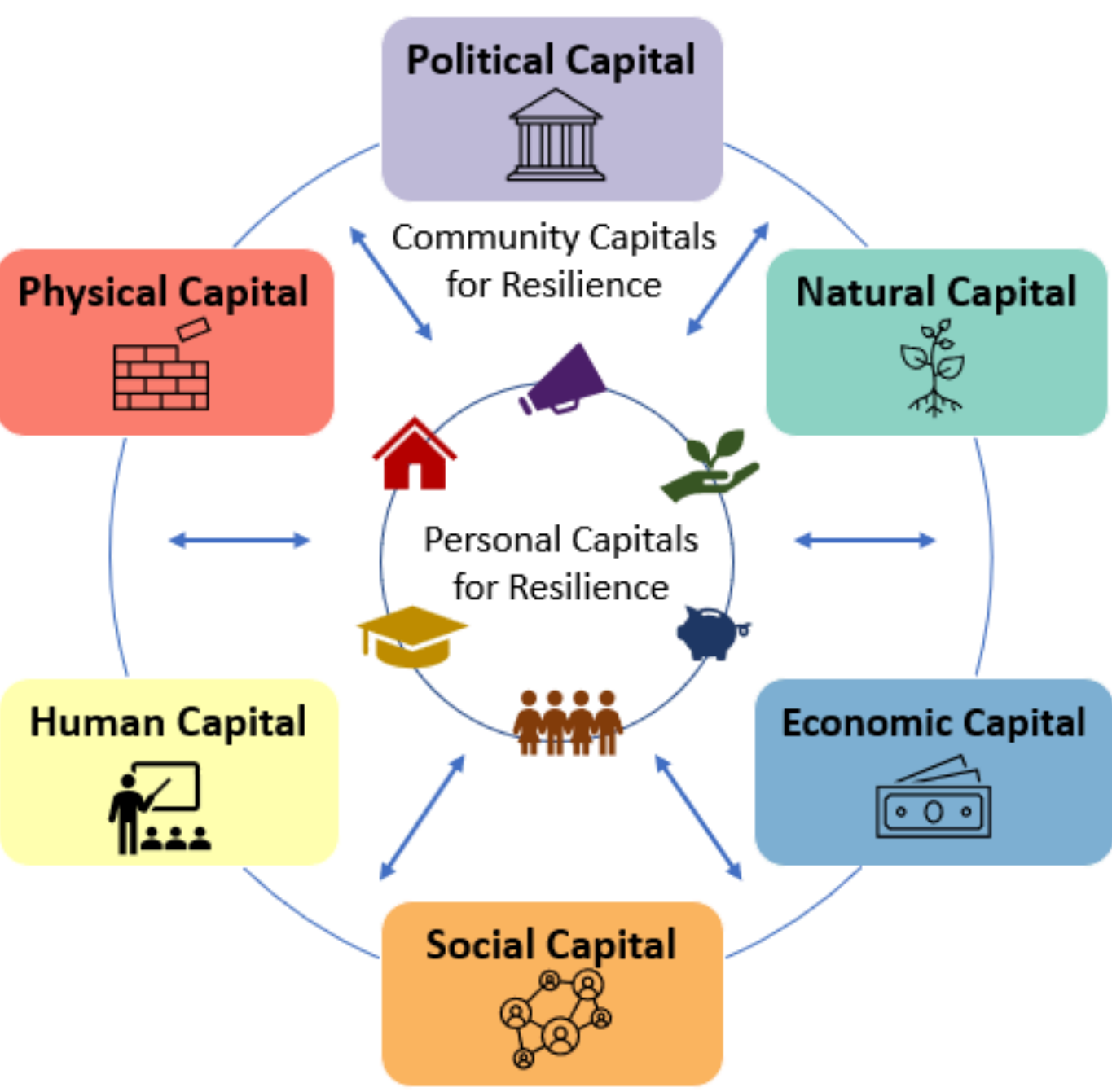
Community through the Lens of Capital: How household resources shape relocation perceptions and pathways

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Abstract

Previous studies have demonstrated the power of community characteristics in disaster recovery and relocation decisions, but it has been difficult to capture the effects of the web of capital resources at scale or in a generalizable form. Even more challenging is the dynamic relationship between household capitals and community capitals for resilience. Because different households will have different needs and resources, they will perceive and draw upon collective community resources differently. This study examines the interaction between household and community capitals in shaping relocation decisions. Specifically, we ask: **How do household capitals affect the relative importance of community factors in willingness to relocate?**



Conceptualization of Community Capitals

- **Financial** - Job Opportunities
- **Human** - Quality of Public Schools and Healthcare
- **Physical** - Quality of Roadways
- **Social** - Family & Friends and Faith-based Groups in the Area
- **Natural** - Recreational Activities in the Area

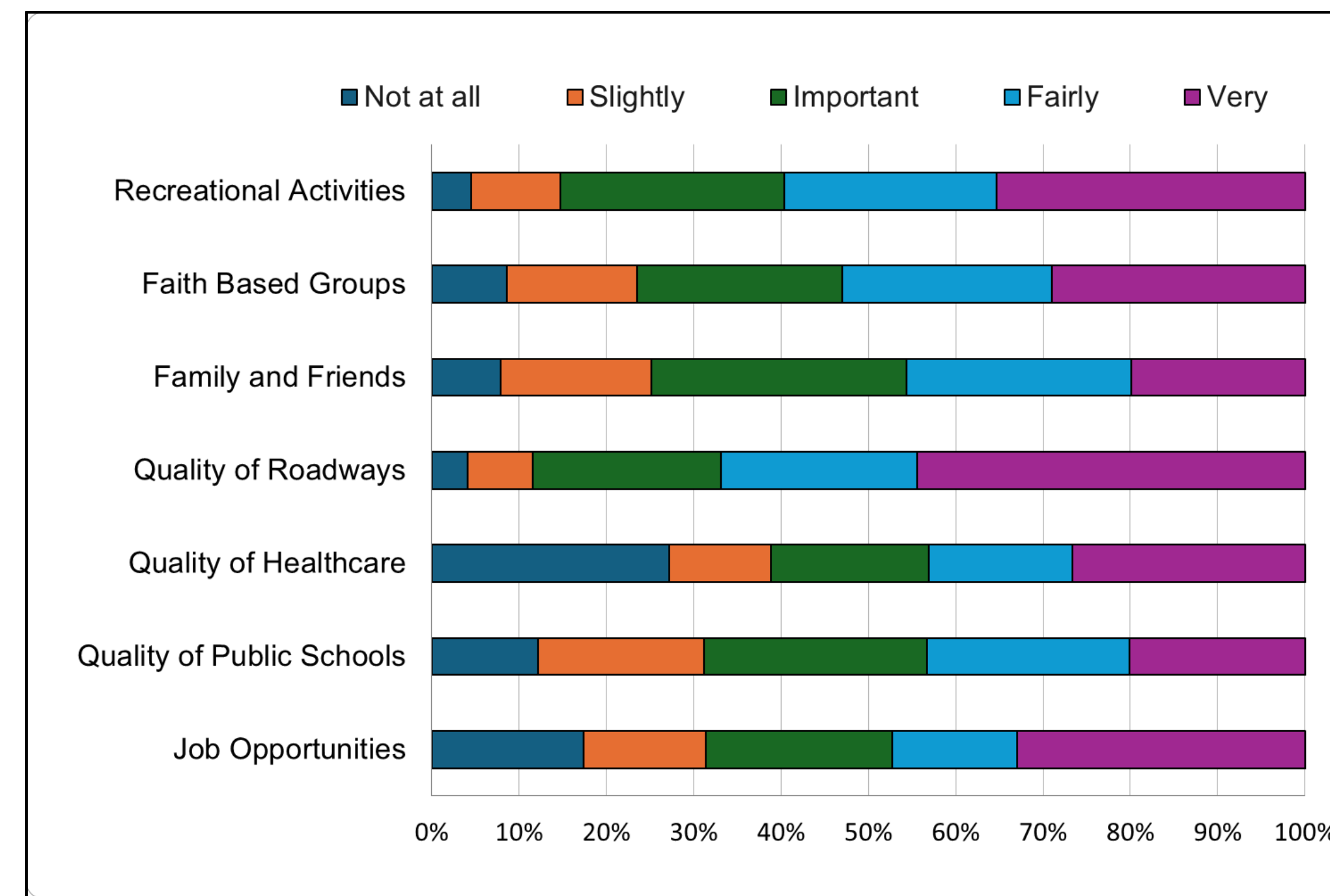
Methods

Data Collection: We employ mixed methods utilizing data collected from interviews of Louisiana residents following Hurricane Ida in 2021 and an original survey of residents in **New Orleans**, Louisiana and **Houston**, Texas. The survey included sections on disaster experience, hazard mitigation, relocation preferences, and socioeconomic characteristics.

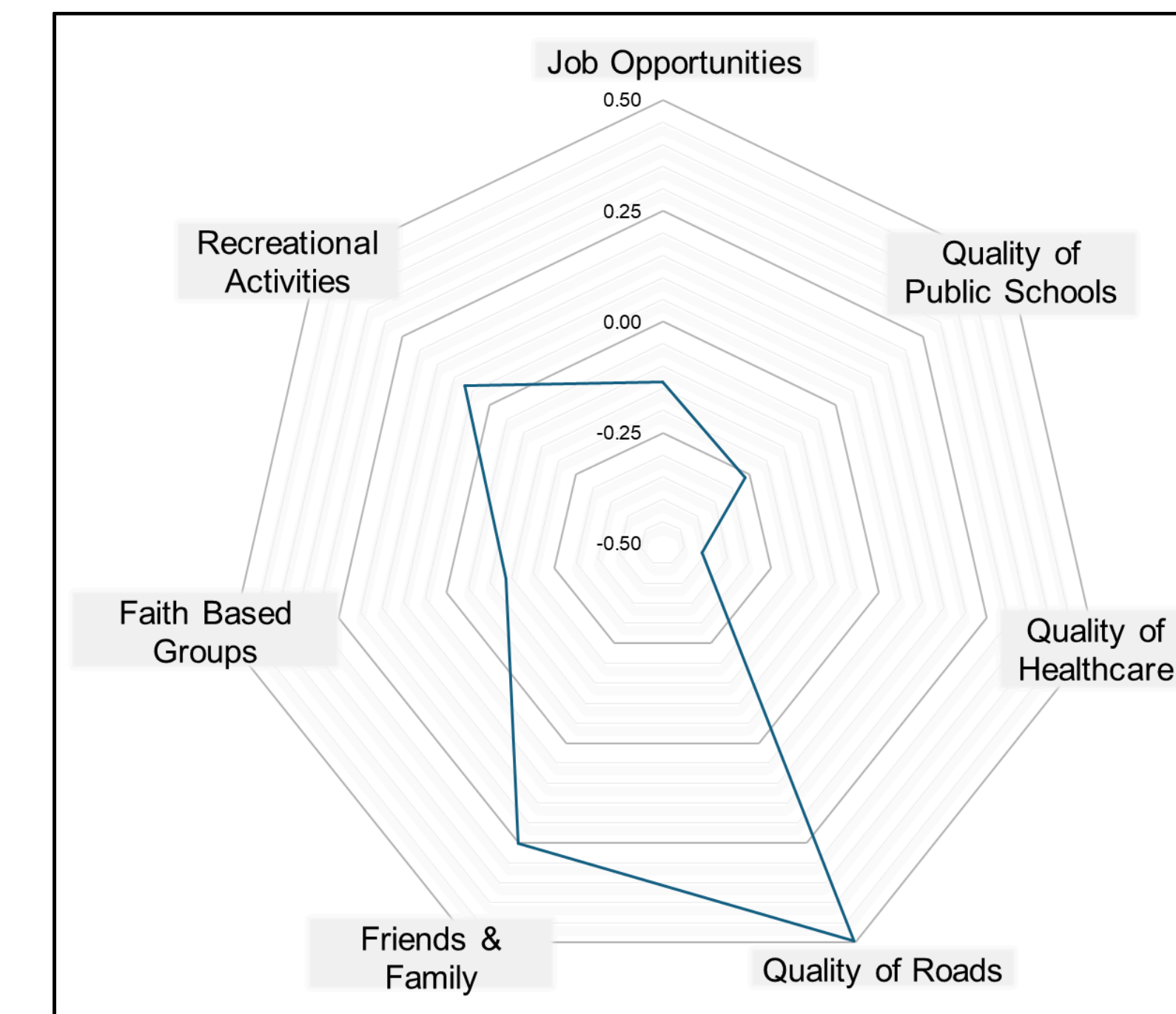
Measurement of Capitals: Respondents were asked to think about characteristics within their communities: *Thinking about where you live now versus a new community where you might move, rate how important each of the following is to you for staying in your current community.* Responses were on five-point scale from “not important at all” to “very important.” Personal capital resources are measured as reported income, employment, social networks (bonding capital), education, race, homeownership and home age.

Person-Centered Mean: Survey rankings are subject to individual biases, including acquiescence or leniency and scale compression where some use only a narrow slice of the 1–5 range. To address this issue, we transformed the rankings to Person-mean centered scores for each of the community factors. **We then employ regression analysis to assess the relationship between personal capital resources and the relative importance of community factors.**

Reported Importance of Community Factors



Person-Centered Mean



Family Ties
My Mom lives with my 97 year old grandmother. So, I always tell my husband, I can't leave my mom, and she can't leave her mom. I have a really close relationship with my mom, and she helps out a lot. That's kind of the thing that's tethering me here the most. Don't tell my bosses that though. (Interview 2T)

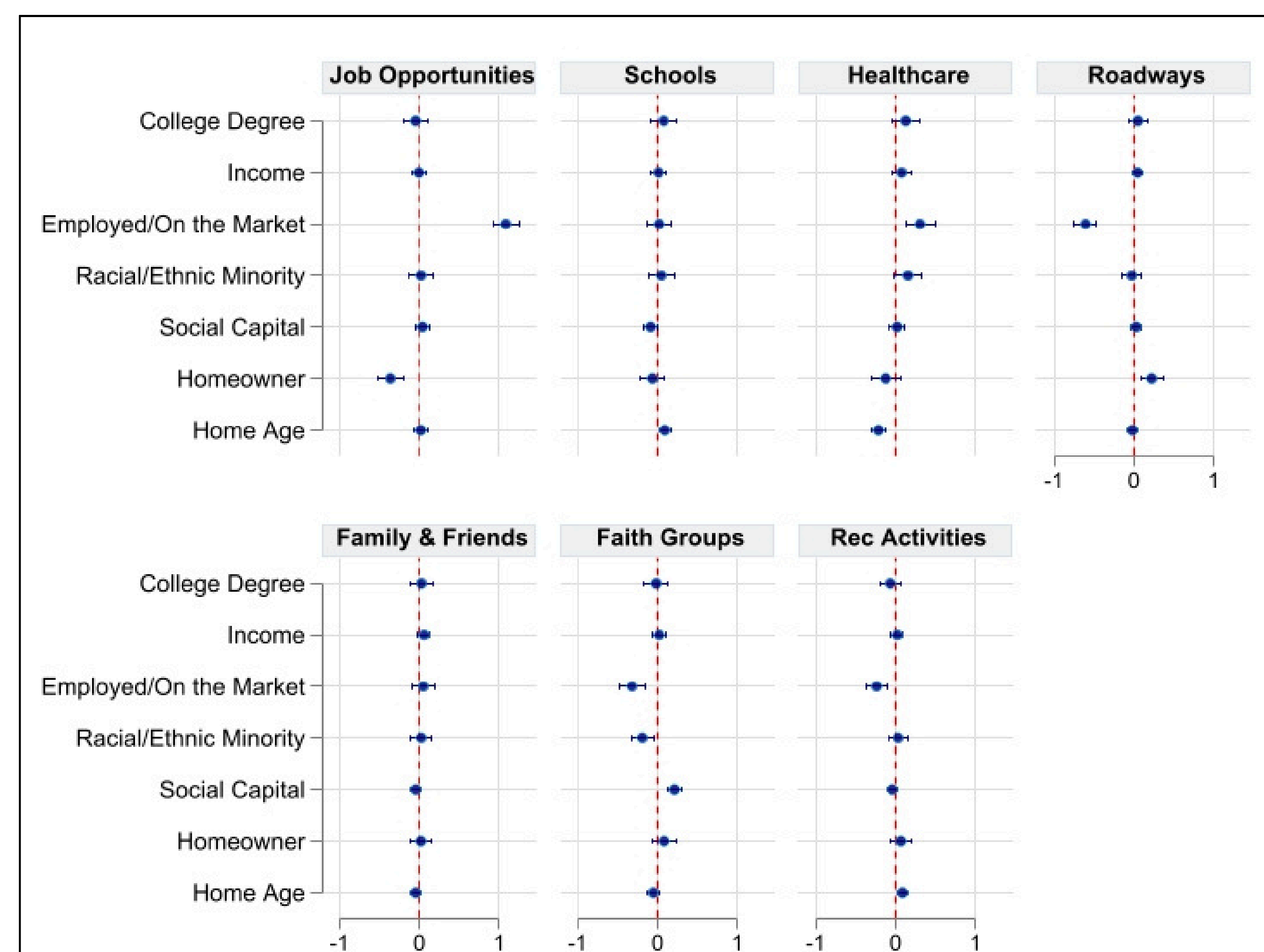
Key Findings

- 1 This study explored the relationship between personal resources and perceived importance of community resources for relocation.
- 2 Quantitative analysis highlights differentiated priorities across socioeconomic strata of home ownership, employment and social capital.
- 3 The voices of hurricane impacted residents provide clarity in the interpretation of the regression results.

Job Constraints

I think that if our jobs weren't where we are, we would look probably to moving out of the state. I've got family here, but my parents, they're retired. They travel all the time. My sister's family lives 45 minutes away from us anyway. So yeah, we would probably, honestly, move to like Florida or something. I don't know if that's better with the hurricanes... but we like vacationing in Florida. We like the beach. We don't like being cold. (Interview 5S)

Linear Regression Results



Next Steps

1. Model refinement including additional personal resources and characteristics (e.g., respondent age, dependents, employment industry)
2. Additional qualitative analysis of interviews to further interpret quantitative results (see examples above)

Implications

- This analysis underscores the interplay between household and community resources in shaping relocation decisions.
- The results should shape targeted relocation assistance and community investment strategies to account for differentiated priorities across socioeconomic strata.
- Recognizing how household assets influence reliance on community capitals allows decision-makers to design interventions that strengthen resilience both for households considering relocation and for communities at risk of losing critical social and economic resources.