

# After Paradise

Inequalities in Resource Access and Resilience  
After the 2018 Camp Fire



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## 2018 Wildfire Season



# 2018 Camp Fire

Butte County, California

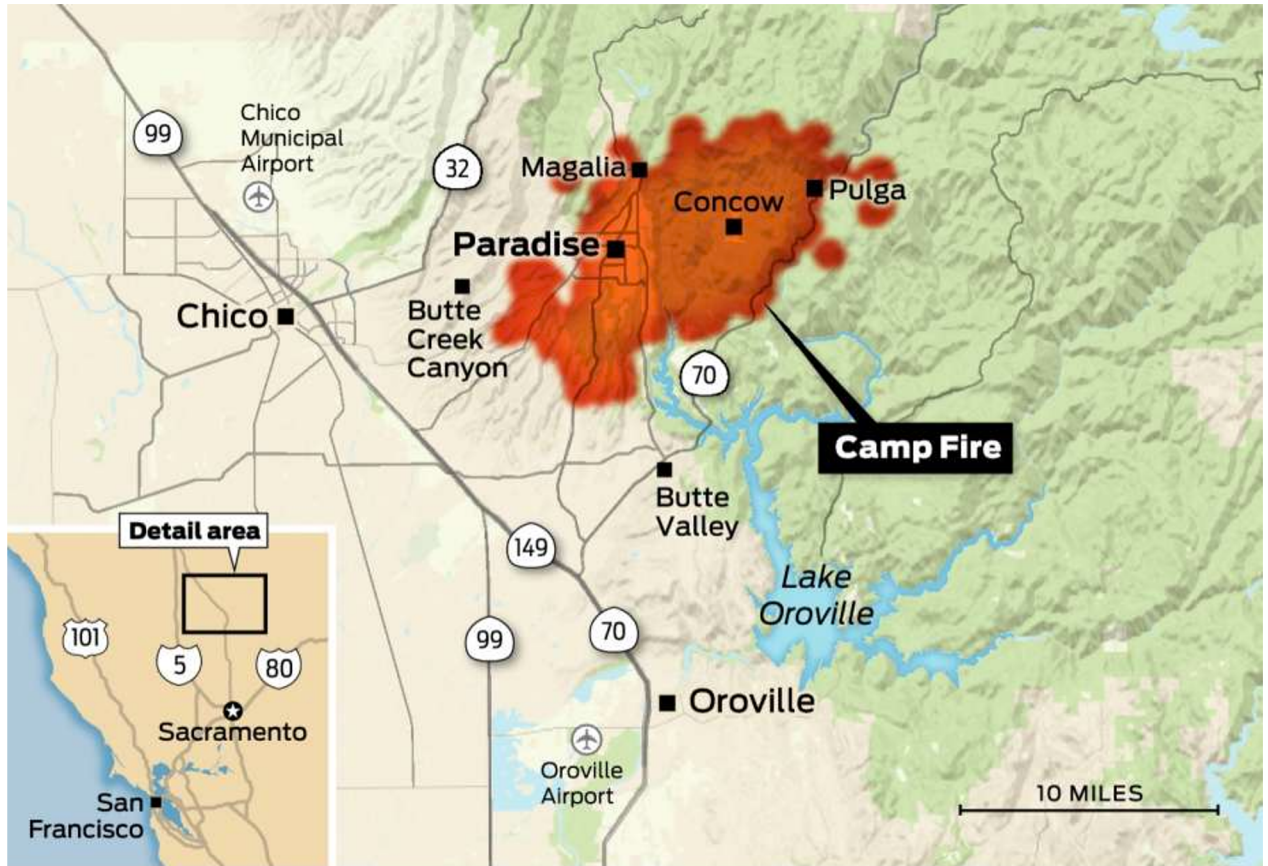
Most destructive fire in  
California History

18,793 structures destroyed,  
including 90% of residential  
buildings

52,000+ people evacuated

85 lives lost

153,000 acres burned



Sources: NASA MODIS, Nextzen, OpenStreetMap

Todd Trumbull / The Chronicle



# About the Research

## GOAL:

Understand long-term impacts of evacuation and recovery on resilience after a major wildfire

## METHODS:

In-depth qualitative interviews with 36 survivors 6-12 months post-fire

Interviews lasted between 90 minutes and 3 hours

Participants were compensated \$25 for participation

**Table 1.** Participant Demographics, *N* = 36

	<i>N</i>	%		<i>N</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Location</b>		
Female	30	83%	Paradise	27	75%
Male	6	17%	Magalia	5	13%
			Rural Butte County	4	11%
<b>Education</b>			<b>Home Burned</b>		
Less than High School	2	5%	Burned	32	89%
High School	6	17%	Did Not Burn	4	11%
Some College	12	33%			
College	10	28%	<b>Employment Status</b>		
Graduate School	6	17%	Unemployed	12	33%
<b>Yearly Income</b>			Student	2	5%
0-15K	5	13%	Part-Time Work	3	8%
15-30K	10	28%	Full-Time Work	8	22%
30-50K	13	36%	Retired	11	31%
50-75K	3	8%	<b>Disability</b>	9	25%
75-100K	3	3%	<b>Mean Age</b>	56	
>100K	2	5%			
<b>Home Ownership</b>					
Owned Home	22	61%			
Renting	12	33%			
Owned Mobile Home	2	5%			



# Building Resilience

**IMPLEMENTATION**  
Preparing for Disaster

**RECOVERY**  
After a Disaster

**MITIGATION**  
Rebuilding & Preparing  
for the Next Disaster



***RESISTANCE***  
*ability to withstand or absorb  
impacts and continue to function*

***RESILIENCE***  
*ability to achieve stability &  
recover the full range of pre-  
disaster resources and momentum*

# Recovery Resources in the United States

## Recovery Resources:

Financial Compensation | Housing | Food | Clothing & Toiletries  
Transportation | Necessary Items

### INSURANCE

Significant Financial  
Compensation

Long-term Housing

Significant Funds to  
Rebuild

### GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Limited Financial  
Compensation

Short-term Housing  
(up to 18 months)

Limited Funds to  
Rebuild

### NON-PROFITS

Gift cards & Small  
Sums of Cash

Housing in Shelters  
(first ~3 months)

Giveaways: Clothing,  
Toiletries, etc.

### CROWD FUNDING

Small Sums of Cash

Giveaways: Clothing,  
Toiletries, etc.

Other Necessary  
Items

# Barriers to Resource Access

## *Bourdieu's Forms of Capital*

### ***ECONOMIC CAPITAL***

Financial Assets

### ***CULTURAL CAPITAL***

Knowledge

Experience

Skillsets

### ***SOCIAL CAPITAL***

Friendships and Relationships



# Barriers to Resource Access

## *Insurance*

### Economic Capital

*"After the 2008 [fire], anybody who was a new renter could not get rental insurance... They said no, you live in a fire zone, you're only a renter, buy a home and we'll give you insurance."*

### Cultural Capital

*"He [the adjuster] schmoozed me very nicely...I learned later that there were a lot of things he should have done. He never compensated for a lot of things. Ducts should have been cleaned, insulation should have been pulled out..."*

*"First of all I asked, I want my full policy. I want you to email it to me and not just the cover page, the declaration page, I want everything. I went through that with a fine tooth comb, I researched. We had four adjusters."*

### Social Capital

*"These little old people, I helped a couple of them through it because, like my mom, they were insured with AAA forever and they're old, they don't have the stamina, they're all in shock. They don't know what to do with their insurance."*

# Barriers to Resource Access

## *Government Agencies*

### Cultural Capital

*"They ask you to file immediately, but they're not really ready for you to file. So everybody gets denied the first time, because they don't have all the paperwork they need... I had to appeal six times. Most of the older generation, you tell them no, it's no. They don't come back and appeal."*

### Social Capital

*"People that pushed for it got it, and they were telling other people... Go back. And the people who did know how to work it were trying to advise other people who didn't."*

### Economic Capital

*"I don't even know if I can afford [a government loan]! When you're poor, you know... how much money you have and do not have. I knew how much money I had when I lived in the other place and I made a lifestyle according to fit that. Now I have no idea what my expenses are going to be."*

# Barriers to Resource Access

## *Non-Profit Organizations*



Social Capital

*"If you talk to 20 people, you will not hear the same story from each one of them of the help they received. They all receive different little outlets of help because it was like some people heard about this help and some people heard about that help... it wasn't streamlined."*

Economic Capital

*"We couldn't get to 90% of the resources. We couldn't always get to FEMA Center [DRC]. In fact, we went to the FEMA Center a total of five times because... we had to ask and beg and plead for rides for weeks in advance. It wasn't an easy thing to do. It was like pulling teeth just to get help."*

Cultural Capital

*"No matter where you went you were sitting in a line. You were in a line of hundreds if not thousands of people... I know for a fact I was there a minimum of 37 times. After the first probably month and a half, two months, my brother just couldn't do it anymore..."*



# Barriers to Resource Access

## Crowd Funding Organizations



*"I had a relative that started a Go Fund Me in the very early days, and I was very fortunate. I was given \$5,000 bucks roughly from the friends and community, and it gave me a pad that so many people I don't know didn't have. I think it's why I've been able to manage as well as I had, that there really was money... to get winter clothes and to eat"*

### Cultural Capital



Paradise Fire Adopt a Family ▾

Public Group • 7.3K Members

*"It was just such a large amount of people that were affected and not all of the people were good people, unfortunately... it's like help the ones that need the help, versus the ones that want the help but don't necessarily need it. I think there's a difference and it's hard to find and identify who and what that is."*

*"The first Facebook group that came in to help was being segregated. They were helping this family, but not this family. Well, we don't want to help you because you're too drama. Or, we don't want to help you because... you're not grateful enough, and it's like wait a minute. Where does that come in?"*

# Barriers to Resource Access

## *Implications in Cascading Disasters*

Unequal distribution of resources **exacerbated inequality** in the long term and had **serious implications for families' resilience** to future challenges and disasters

### ***RESISTANCE***

*ability to withstand or absorb impacts and continue to function*

### ***RESILIENCE***

*ability to achieve stability & recover the full range of pre-disaster resources and momentum*

# Barriers to Resource Access

## ***ECONOMIC CAPITAL***

Qualifying for Insurance  
Coverage

Qualifying for Governmental  
Funding

Access to Transportation

Access to Internet

## ***CULTURAL CAPITAL***

Cultural Knowledge –  
what to expect after a disaster

Bureaucratic Competence –  
knowing how to apply for  
assistance from insurance /  
government / non-profits

Performing a “Legitimate  
Survivorhood”

## ***SOCIAL CAPITAL***

Local Connections –  
knowledge transmission about  
giveaways & bureaucratic  
processes

Non-local Connections –  
crowd-funding contributions  
from friends and family



# Improving Disaster Recovery

## ***ECONOMIC CAPITAL***

Qualifying for Insurance  
Coverage

Qualifying for Governmental  
Funding

Access to Transportation

Access to Internet



*How can we expand services to economically  
vulnerable groups?*

*How can we expand the ways that survivors can  
access services?*

# Improving Disaster Recovery

## ***CULTURAL CAPITAL***

Cultural Knowledge –  
what to expect after a disaster

Bureaucratic Competence –  
knowing how to apply for  
assistance from insurance /  
government / non-profits

Performing a “Legitimate  
Survivorhood”



*Is our language clear and accessible?*

*How can we improve transparency in our  
processes and procedures?*

# Improving Disaster Recovery

## ***SOCIAL CAPITAL***

Local Connections –  
knowledge transmission about  
giveaways & bureaucratic  
processes

Non-local Connections –  
crowd-funding contributions  
from friends and family



***Cal* OES**  
**GOVERNOR'S OFFICE  
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES**

*How can we increase or improve the ways that  
survivors can find out about our services?*

*How can we provide accurate information as  
fast as possible after a disaster?*

# Questions?

## *CONTACT INFORMATION*

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