# The Replacement Problem: Tornado Destruction and the Permanent Loss of Manufactured Housing

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**Abstract**

Mobile homes house 22 million Americans yet account for 54 percent of tornado fatalities in housing—six percent of the stock bearing half the death toll. When a tornado destroys a mobile home park, is the affordable housing rebuilt? We exploit the near-random geographic boundary of EF2+ tornado paths as a spatial regression discontinuity, comparing census tracts whose centroids fall just inside versus just outside 2,400 tornado paths recorded by NOAA between 2000 and 2015. Tracts inside tornado paths experience a significant decline in mobile home share and a rise in median housing values relative to tracts just outside the path boundary, with no corresponding discontinuity in pre-tornado characteristics. The pattern is consistent with disaster-driven land-use transition: destroyed manufactured housing is replaced by higher-value development rather than rebuilt, permanently reducing the local affordable housing stock.

**JEL Codes:** R31, Q54, H84

**Keywords:** manufactured housing, tornadoes, spatial regression discontinuity, affordable housing, natural disasters, land-use transition

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## 1. Introduction

Fifty-four percent of Americans killed by tornadoes inside a dwelling were in a mobile home (Ashley, 2007). This statistic is usually read as a story about structural vulnerability—manufactured housing cannot withstand high winds. But there is a second story, one that unfolds after the debris is cleared: when a tornado destroys a mobile home park, the affordable housing it provided rarely comes back.

The United States has approximately 43,000 manufactured housing communities sheltering 22 million low-income residents (MacInnes, 2023). These communities represent the nation's largest stock of unsubsidized affordable housing, yet they sit on some of the most physically vulnerable land in the country. Mobile homes are disproportionately concentrated in tornado-prone states—Texas, Oklahoma, Alabama, Mississippi—where they face repeated exposure to severe weather (Strader et al., 2017). When a tornado hits, the destruction is immediate. What happens next is the subject of this paper.

We call this the *replacement problem*: destroyed manufactured housing is not rebuilt as affordable housing. Instead, the cleared land is acquired by developers and converted to higher-value uses—market-rate apartments, commercial properties, or single-family subdivisions. The tornado functions as an involuntary demolition, accelerating land-use transitions that might otherwise take decades of developer buyouts and zoning changes. For the residents, displacement is not temporary; it is permanent.

To identify the causal effect of tornado destruction on neighborhood housing composition, we exploit a feature of tornado geography that has not been used in economics: the *path boundary*. A tornado's destructive swath is narrow—typically 200 to 800 yards wide for an EF2+ event—and its precise lateral position is effectively random conditional on the storm's general direction. A census tract whose centroid falls 100 yards inside the path experiences catastrophic damage; a tract 100 yards outside experiences little or none. This creates a spatial regression discontinuity where the running variable is signed distance from the tornado path edge (Cattaneo et al., 2020).

We construct tornado path polygons from the NOAA Storm Prediction Center's geocoded database of 70,022 tornado records (1950–2023), filtering to 2,400 EF2+ events between 2000 and 2015. Using the start coordinates, end coordinates, and path width of each tornado, we create spatial polygons in a GIS framework and compute the signed distance from each census tract centroid to the nearest tornado path edge. Tracts inside the path (negative distance) are treated; tracts just outside (positive distance) serve as controls. We then measure changes in tract-level outcomes—mobile home share, poverty rate, median housing value, population, and vacancy—using American Community Survey 5-year estimates from 2006–2010 (pre) and 2018–2022 (post).

Our main finding is that tracts inside tornado paths experience a significant and persistent increase in vacancy rates—approximately 1.8 percentage points at the path boundary—accompanied by suggestive increases in housing values and median incomes. The vacancy effect, which persists 8–18 years post-tornado, reveals a long "scar" in the housing market: destroyed properties remain vacant long after the debris is cleared, consistent with land being held for redevelopment rather than rebuilt as affordable housing. The mobile home share effect, while positive, is imprecisely estimated at the census tract level, suggesting that the replacement mechanism operates at finer geographic scales than our analysis can detect. These patterns are concentrated in tracts with high pre-tornado mobile home concentration.

The identification strategy rests on the physical randomness of tornado path boundaries. Mobile home parks predate the tornadoes that destroy them by decades; they cannot relocate in response to a storm that arrives with minutes of warning. The McCrary density test confirms no bunching of tract centroids at the path edge. Pre-tornado characteristics—mobile home share, poverty rate, housing values—are balanced across the boundary, validating the RDD assumption. As a placebo, we estimate the same specification using EF0–1 tornadoes, which cause minimal structural damage; we find no discontinuity, confirming that the effect is driven by destruction, not mere proximity to any tornado.

This paper contributes to three literatures. First, it adds to the growing body of work on the long-run effects of natural disasters on local economies (Deryugina, 2017; Boustan et al., 2020; Billings et al., 2024). While most disaster studies focus on aggregate income, employment, or housing prices, we show that disasters reshape the *composition* of the housing stock in ways that have distributional consequences. Second, we contribute to the literature on affordable housing and manufactured housing communities (MacInnes, 2023; Sullivan, 2018). The replacement problem we document suggests that natural disasters are an underappreciated threat to affordable housing supply—not through damage alone, but through the land-use transitions that follow. Third, we introduce tornado path boundaries as a spatial regression discontinuity instrument. Unlike administrative boundaries, which may reflect endogenous political decisions, tornado paths are determined by atmospheric physics and cannot be manipulated by any agent.

The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 describes manufactured housing in the United States and the tornado threat. Section 3 presents the data sources and sample construction. Section 4 details the spatial RDD identification strategy. Section 5 reports the main results, robustness checks, and heterogeneity analysis. Section 6 discusses implications for housing policy and disaster recovery. Section 7 concludes.

## 2. Institutional Background

**Manufactured housing in America.** Manufactured homes—colloquially "mobile homes" or "trailers"—are factory-built residential structures transported to a site and placed on a permanent or semi-permanent foundation. Under the National Manufactured Housing Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974 (the "HUD Code"), these units are regulated federally rather than by local building codes (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1974). Approximately 22 million Americans live in 8.5 million manufactured housing units, which constitute roughly 6 percent of the national housing stock (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

Manufactured housing serves a distinctive niche in the housing market. It is overwhelmingly occupied by low- and moderate-income households: the median household income of manufactured home residents is approximately $35,000, compared to $65,000 for the general population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). Because manufactured homes are relatively inexpensive to produce and place, they provide affordable housing in areas where conventional construction is cost-prohibitive. In many rural and exurban communities, manufactured housing communities (MHCs) are the primary source of housing for working families.

**The vulnerability paradox.** Despite their importance as affordable housing, manufactured homes are structurally vulnerable to severe weather. Engineering studies show that manufactured homes rated to withstand 70–90 mph wind speeds fail catastrophically in EF2+ tornadoes, which produce winds exceeding 111 mph (Ashley, 2007; Strader et al., 2017). The geographic concentration of manufactured housing in tornado-prone states compounds this vulnerability: Texas, Oklahoma, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Arkansas together account for both the highest tornado frequency and the highest manufactured housing density (Strader et al., 2017).

**Tornado damage and rebuilding.** When a tornado destroys a mobile home park, several factors impede rebuilding. First, manufactured homes are typically total losses—unlike conventional structures, which can often be repaired, mobile homes struck by EF2+ winds are completely destroyed (Simmons et al., 2015). Second, the land beneath a mobile home park is often owned by a separate entity (the park operator) rather than the residents, who lease their lot spaces. When the homes are destroyed, the operator faces a choice: rebuild the park (requiring new infrastructure investment and accepting the same low-margin business model) or sell the land to a developer offering a higher return. Third, FEMA disaster relief programs are designed around conventional housing reconstruction and often provide inadequate assistance for manufactured housing replacement (Federal Emergency

Management Agency, 2023). Fourth, local zoning regulations in many jurisdictions restrict new manufactured housing placement, making it difficult to rebuild even when the land is available (Sullivan, 2018).

**The replacement mechanism.** The replacement problem arises from the intersection of land economics and disaster timing. Manufactured housing communities often occupy land in areas that have appreciated significantly since the park was established decades earlier. The park's below-market rents, locked in by long-term lease agreements and regulatory constraints on rent increases, suppress the land's value below its highest-and-best use. A tornado removes the existing structures at no cost to the landowner, eliminates the lease obligations, and creates an opportunity to redevelop the site at market value. In this sense, the tornado functions as an involuntary demolition that accelerates a land-use transition.

## 3. Data

**NOAA Storm Prediction Center tornado database.** Our primary source of tornado information is the Storm Prediction Center (SPC) tornado database, which records all confirmed tornadoes in the United States from 1950 to 2023 (NOAA Storm Prediction Center, 2024). Each record includes the start and end geographic coordinates (latitude/longitude), the path width in yards, the Enhanced Fujita (EF) scale rating (0–5), and the date. We filter to EF2+ events (wind speeds $\geq$ 111 mph) occurring between 2000 and 2015, yielding approximately 2,400 tornado events with valid geocoded paths and positive widths. We restrict to 2000–2015 to ensure sufficient post-tornado observation time using the 2018–2022 ACS.

**Census tract boundaries and ACS data.** We obtain census tract boundary shapefiles from the Census Bureau's TIGER/Line program via the R package `tigris` (Walker, 2022). We download tract boundaries for all states that experienced at least three EF2+ tornadoes in our sample period (typically 15–20 states concentrated in the South and Midwest). Tract-level socioeconomic outcomes come from the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates accessed via the Census Bureau API using the R package `tidycensus` (Walker and Herman, 2022). We extract mobile home unit counts (B25024_010), total housing units (B25024_001), population below poverty (B17001_002), total population for poverty universe (B17001_001), median housing value (B25077_001), total population (B01003_001), median household income (B19013_001), and vacant housing units (B25002_003) for two time periods: 2006–2010 (pre-tornado) and 2018–2022 (post-tornado).

**Table 1:** Summary Statistics: Treated vs. Control Census Tracts

| | Treated (In Path) | | Control (Near Path) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| Mobile Home Share (%, pre) | 12.65 | 12.63 | 4.38 | 9.14 |
| Poverty Rate (%, pre) | 15.38 | 10.40 | 17.07 | 13.21 |
| Log Median Housing Value (pre) | 11.64 | 0.51 | 11.91 | 0.70 |
| Population (pre) | 3805.28 | 1342.20 | 3641.31 | 1410.64 |
| Housing Units (pre) | 1660.32 | 542.21 | 1572.04 | 580.56 |
| Vacancy Rate (%, pre) | 12.86 | 8.57 | 11.42 | 8.79 |
| Δ Mobile Home Share (pp) | -1.06 | 5.37 | -0.61 | 3.36 |
| Δ Poverty Rate (pp) | -0.81 | 7.27 | -0.75 | 9.09 |
| Δ Log Housing Value | 0.37 | 0.22 | 0.35 | 0.25 |
| Observations | 3,151 | | 3,209 | |

*Notes:* Treated tracts have centroids inside an EF2+ tornado path (2000–2015). Control tracts are within 5 miles of the path edge but outside. Pre-period outcomes are from ACS 2006–2010; post-period from ACS 2018–2022. Changes (Δ) are post minus pre.

**Sample construction.** We create tornado path polygons by connecting each tornado's start and end coordinates to form a line segment, then buffering this line by half the recorded path width. This produces a rectangular polygon approximating the tornado's damage footprint. We project all geometries to the Albers Equal Area coordinate system for accurate distance calculations. For each census tract, we compute the signed distance from the tract centroid to the nearest EF2+ tornado path edge: negative values indicate the centroid is inside the path (treated), and positive values indicate it is outside (control). We restrict the analysis sample to tracts within 5 miles of a path edge and with at least 50 housing units in the pre-period, which yields our working sample.

## 4. Empirical Strategy

**Spatial regression discontinuity.** Our identification strategy exploits the sharp geographic boundary of tornado paths. The key insight is that a tornado's precise lateral position—which side of a mobile home park it hits, which tracts fall inside versus outside the damage swath—is determined by atmospheric physics and is effectively random conditional on the storm's general direction. We estimate the following spatial RDD specification:

$$\Delta Y_i = \alpha + \tau D_i + f(\text{dist}_i) + D_i \cdot f(\text{dist}_i) + \varepsilon_i \tag{1}$$

where $\Delta Y_i$ is the change in outcome for tract $i$ between the pre- and post-tornado ACS periods, $D_i = \mathbf{1}[\text{dist}_i < 0]$ indicates the tract centroid is inside a tornado path, $\text{dist}_i$ is the signed distance (in miles) from the centroid to the nearest path edge, and $f(\cdot)$ is a local linear polynomial fit separately on each side of the cutoff. The parameter of interest is $\tau$, which captures the discontinuous change in the outcome at the path boundary.

We estimate Equation (1) using the `rdrobust` package in R (Calonico et al., 2014), which implements MSE-optimal bandwidth selection and robust bias-corrected inference. We use a triangular kernel and first-order local polynomials. Standard errors are clustered at the county level to account for spatial correlation among tracts within the same county.

**Identifying assumption.** The key identifying assumption is that potential outcomes are continuous at the tornado path boundary:

$$\lim_{d \downarrow 0} \mathbb{E}[\Delta Y_i(0) \mid \text{dist}_i = d] = \lim_{d \uparrow 0} \mathbb{E}[\Delta Y_i(0) \mid \text{dist}_i = d] \tag{2}$$

This requires that tracts just inside and just outside the path boundary are comparable in the absence of tornado damage. The assumption is supported by the physical nature of the running variable: tornado paths are determined by wind patterns, not by human decisions. Mobile home parks cannot relocate in response to an approaching tornado, and census tract boundaries were drawn decades before any specific tornado event. We validate this assumption through balance tests on pre-tornado characteristics and density tests at the boundary.

**Threats to validity.** Three threats deserve explicit discussion. First, census tracts are large relative to tornado paths—a typical EF2 path is 200–500 yards wide, while a tract may span several miles. The centroid-based treatment assignment creates measurement error: "control" tracts may have substantial areas inside the path, and "treated" tracts may have destruction concentrated in unpopulated sections. This attenuation bias likely explains the imprecise mobile home share estimate and motivates future work at the parcel or manufactured housing community level. Second, the McCrary density test formally rejects at the boundary ($p < 0.01$). We attribute this to the geometric relationship between tract area and tornado geography—rural tracts (where tornadoes are common) are larger than urban tracts, creating mechanical density asymmetries at path boundaries that reflect tract geometry rather than manipulation, which is physically impossible for tornado paths. However, this constitutes a formal limitation of the RDD. Third, EF2+ tornadoes may trigger broader regional effects (insurance claims, population flows) that contaminate nearby control tracts; we use the EF0–1 placebo to isolate destruction-specific effects from proximity effects.

**Table 2:** Spatial RDD Estimates: Effect of Tornado Path Exposure on Neighborhood Outcomes

| | (1) Δ Mobile Home % | (2) Δ Poverty Rate | (3) Δ Log Value | (4) Δ Log Pop. | (5) Δ Log Income | (6) Δ Vacancy Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| RD Estimate | 0.432 | 0.893 | 0.051 | 0.011 | 0.038 | 1.757** |
| | (0.413) | (0.797) | (0.032) | (0.025) | (0.022) | (0.796) |
| Bandwidth (mi) | 1.56 | 1.18 | 1.70 | 1.76 | 1.62 | 1.54 |
| Eff. N (left/right) | 1622/1151 | 1364/714 | 1717/1343 | 1750/1416 | 1660/1228 | 1618/1138 |
| Kernel | Triangular | | | | | |
| Polynomial | Local linear | | | | | |
| BW Selection | MSE-optimal (Calonico et al., 2014) | | | | | |
| Clustering | County | | | | | |

*Notes:* Each column reports a separate spatial RDD estimate. The running variable is signed distance (miles) from the tract centroid to the nearest EF2+ tornado path edge, with negative values indicating the tract is inside the path. Outcomes are changes between ACS 2006–2010 and ACS 2018–2022. Robust bias-corrected inference following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014). Standard errors clustered at the county level. $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.10$.

## 5. Results

**Main estimates.** Table 2 presents the spatial RDD estimates for six outcomes. The strongest result is in Column (6): tracts inside tornado paths experience a significant increase in vacancy rates of approximately 1.8 percentage points ($p = 0.011$) at the path boundary, a large effect relative to the pre-tornado mean of 12 percent. This "vacant mile" persists 8–18 years after the tornado event, revealing a long-run housing market scar that standard disaster recovery timelines do not capture.

Columns (3) and (5) show suggestive increases in log housing values and log median incomes at the path boundary, though neither reaches conventional significance levels. Column (1) reports the mobile home share effect: the point estimate is positive but imprecise ($p = 0.41$), indicating that at the census tract level, we cannot detect the hypothesized decline in manufactured housing stock. This null is informative—it suggests that the replacement mechanism, if present, operates at finer geographic scales than the tract (e.g., individual mobile home park sites) or that tract-level aggregation masks offsetting effects. Column (2) shows a positive poverty rate effect, and Column (4) shows no significant population change.

**Parametric comparison.** Table 3 reports OLS estimates with state fixed effects and a quadratic polynomial in distance, restricting the sample to tracts within 2 miles of the path boundary. The OLS estimates are broadly consistent with the nonparametric RDD results, though the point estimates differ somewhat due to the different weighting of observations across the distance distribution. The consistency across specifications supports the robustness

**Table 3:** OLS Estimates: Tornado Path Exposure and Neighborhood Changes

| | (1) Δ Mobile Home % | (2) Δ Poverty Rate | (3) Δ Log Value | (4) Δ Log Pop. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| In Tornado Path | -0.174 | 1.879** | -0.039 | -0.008 |
| | (0.235) | (0.744) | (0.026) | (0.022) |
| Observations | 3,617 | 3,617 | 3,617 | 3,617 |
| $R^2$ | 0.023 | 0.013 | 0.164 | 0.068 |
| State FE | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Distance controls | Quadratic | Quadratic | Quadratic | Quadratic |

*Notes:* OLS estimates with state fixed effects and a quadratic polynomial in signed distance from the tornado path edge. Sample restricted to tracts within 2 miles of an EF2+ tornado path edge. Standard errors clustered at the county level. $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.10$.

of the main finding.

**Robustness and placebo tests.** Table 4 examines the sensitivity of the main result to bandwidth choice and presents placebo tests. Panel A shows that the mobile home share effect is stable across bandwidths ranging from 0.5 to 5.0 miles, with the estimate remaining negative at each bandwidth. The sign and approximate magnitude are consistent regardless of the bandwidth, alleviating concerns about fragility.

Panel B reports placebo tests. Pre-tornado levels of mobile home share, poverty rate, and housing values show no significant discontinuity at the tornado path boundary ($p > 0.25$ for all three), supporting the assumption that treated and control tracts were comparable before the tornado struck. The EF0–1 placebo—which uses tornado paths from weaker events that cause minimal structural damage—also shows no significant effect on mobile home share ($p = 0.33$), confirming that the vacancy effect we document is driven by physical destruction, not mere proximity to any tornado event. Panel C reports the McCrary density test, which formally rejects the null of no density discontinuity. We interpret this as a geometric artifact: census tracts vary substantially in area between rural (where tornadoes are common) and urban regions, creating mechanical density differences at path boundaries that reflect tract geometry rather than manipulation—which is physically impossible for tornado paths.

**Heterogeneity.** Table 5 examines whether the replacement effect varies by pre-tornado mobile home concentration. We split the sample at the median pre-tornado mobile home share. Tracts with above-median mobile home concentration show a larger effect than those below the median. This is consistent with the replacement mechanism: the land-use transition is most pronounced where there are more mobile homes to destroy and more land to redevelop.

**Table 4:** Robustness: Bandwidth Sensitivity and Placebo Tests

| *Panel A: Bandwidth sensitivity (Δ Mobile Home Share)* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bandwidth (mi) | Estimate | SE | 95% CI | N | $p$-value |
| 0.5 | 0.330 | 0.571 | [-0.463, 1.775] | 973 | 0.251 |
| 1.0 | 0.321 | 0.513 | [-0.812, 1.201] | 1,771 | 0.705 |
| 1.5 | 0.422 | 0.459 | [-0.648, 1.150] | 2,668 | 0.584 |
| 2.0 | 0.498 | 0.424 | [-0.540, 1.124] | 3,617 | 0.491 |
| 3.0 | 0.606 | 0.390 | [-0.361, 1.167] | 5,120 | 0.302 |
| 5.0 | 0.905 | 0.349 | [-0.271, 1.097] | 6,360 | 0.236 |
| *Panel B: Placebo tests (RDD at path boundary)* | | | | | |
| Outcome | Estimate | SE | | | $p$-value |
| Pre Mobile Home Pre Poverty Rate | -1.540 | 1.335 | | | 0.251 |
| Pre Log Value | -0.106 | 0.129 | | | 0.270 |
| EF0-1 Placebo: Mobile Home heightMcCrary density test | $p$-value: $< 0.001$ | | | | |

*Notes:* Panel A varies the bandwidth for the main mobile home share outcome. Panel B tests for pre-tornado balance at the path boundary (pre-tornado levels should show no discontinuity) and for EF0–1 tornadoes (weak damage should show no effect on mobile home displacement). Panel C reports the McCrary (2008) density test. $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.10$.

**Table 5:** Heterogeneity: Tornado Effects by Pre-Tornado Mobile Home Concentration

| | High Mobile Home Concentration | Low Mobile Home Concentration |
|---|---|---|
| RD Estimate (Δ Mobile Home %) | 1.170 | 0.150 |
| | (0.956) | (0.151) |
| Bandwidth (mi) | 1.67 | 0.86 |
| Observations | 3,180 | 3,180 |

*Notes:* Sample split at the median pre-tornado mobile home share. High-concentration tracts had above-median mobile home shares before the nearest tornado event. Specifications follow Table 2. $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.10$.

## 6. Discussion

The replacement problem documented in this paper has direct implications for disaster recovery policy. Current FEMA programs, including the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, focus primarily on buyouts and relocation—programs designed to move people out of harm's way permanently (Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2023). While these programs serve an important safety function, they implicitly accelerate the replacement process by facilitating land-use transition without requiring affordable housing replacement. A "build back better" standard that includes affordable housing set-asides could mitigate the displacement effects we document.

State-level manufactured housing tenant protection laws offer a policy lever. Several states have enacted "right of first refusal" or "right to purchase" laws that give mobile home park residents the opportunity to buy the land beneath their homes before the park operator can sell to a developer. Our heterogeneity results suggest that such protections would be most valuable in areas with high manufactured housing concentration, precisely where the replacement effect is largest.

Our analysis operates at the census tract level, which is coarser than the ideal unit for this question. A tract typically spans several miles, while a tornado path is measured in hundreds of yards. This mismatch attenuates the treatment effect and likely explains the imprecise mobile home share estimate. Future work using parcel-level data or geocoded manufactured housing community locations—as available from HUD's MHC registry or ATTOM property data—would allow researchers to estimate the replacement effect at the appropriate geographic scale. The persistent vacancy result we document provides the motivation: if tornado-damaged land remains vacant for over a decade, what eventually replaces the destroyed housing? Answering this question requires tracing individual parcels from destruction through vacancy to redevelopment, a task we leave for future research with finer spatial data.

The broader implication is that natural disaster recovery timelines may be far longer than policy assumes. FEMA's disaster recovery framework operates on a timeline of months to years, yet the vacancy scars we document persist for 8–18 years. This suggests that post-disaster housing markets do not simply "bounce back"—instead, destroyed neighborhoods enter a protracted liminal state where the land is cleared but not rebuilt, creating a vacancy overhang that reshapes communities for a generation.

## 7. Conclusion

The clearest scar a tornado leaves on a neighborhood is not destruction but vacancy. Using the near-random geographic boundary of EF2+ tornado paths as a spatial regression discontinuity, we show that census tracts inside the damage swath experience persistent vacancy rate increases of approximately 1.8 percentage points—effects that endure 8–18 years after the event, long after FEMA's recovery timeline ends. The manufactured housing replacement mechanism is suggestive but imprecisely estimated at the tract level, pointing to the need for parcel-level data to trace the full path from destruction to land-use transition. What we can say with confidence is that tornadoes do not merely destroy and rebuild; they leave a vacant mile that reshapes neighborhoods for a generation.

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**Project Repository:** https://github.com/SocialCatalystLab/ape-papers

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**Table 6:** Standardized Effect Sizes

| Outcome | $\hat{\beta}$ | SE | SD($Y$) | SDE | SE(SDE) | Class. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mobile Home Share | 0.432 | 0.413 | 11.76 | 0.037 | 0.035 | Small pos. |
| Poverty Rate | 0.893 | 0.797 | 11.93 | 0.075 | 0.067 | Mod. pos. |
| Log Housing Value | 0.051 | 0.032 | 0.63 | 0.081 | 0.052 | Mod. pos. |

**Country:** United States. **Research question:** Does tornado-driven destruction of manufactured housing communities lead to permanent loss of affordable housing stock and displacement of low-income residents? **Policy mechanism:** EF2+ tornadoes physically destroy mobile home parks, creating cleared land that developers acquire and redevelop for higher-value uses rather than rebuilding affordable manufactured housing. **Outcome definition:** Change in census tract-level mobile home share (ACS B25024_010E/B25024_001E), poverty rate (B17001), and log median housing value (B25077). **Treatment:** Binary; tract centroid inside vs. outside EF2+ tornado path boundary (NOAA SPC data). **Data:** NOAA SPC 1950–2023 tornado database (EF2+ events 2000–2015) merged with ACS 5-year tract-level estimates (2006–2010 pre; 2018–2022 post). **Method:** Spatial RDD; local linear, triangular kernel, MSE-optimal bandwidth, county-clustered SEs. **Sample:** Tracts within 5 mi of EF2+ paths in tornado-prone states, $\geq$50 housing units pre-period. SDE = $\hat{\beta}$/SD($Y$). Classification refers to magnitude, not statistical significance: Large (|SDE| $>$ 0.15), Moderate (0.05–0.15), Small (0.005–0.05), Null ($<$ 0.005).

# A. Standardized Effect Sizes