INTEGRATING SOCIAL VULNERABILITY AND FLOOD SAFETY MODELING

HURRICANE IKE AND GALVESTON, TEXAS: A CASE STUDY

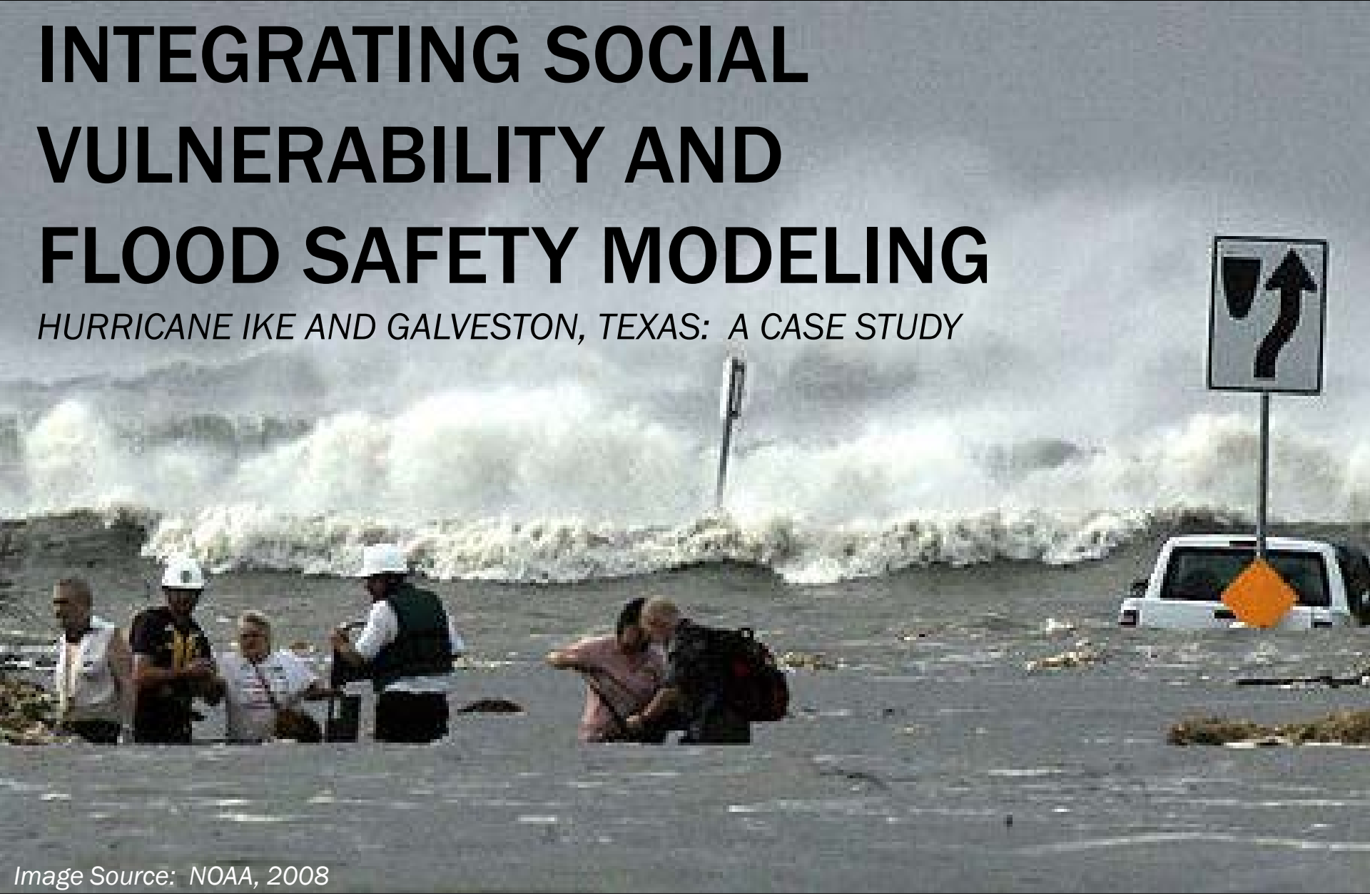


Image Source: NOAA, 2008

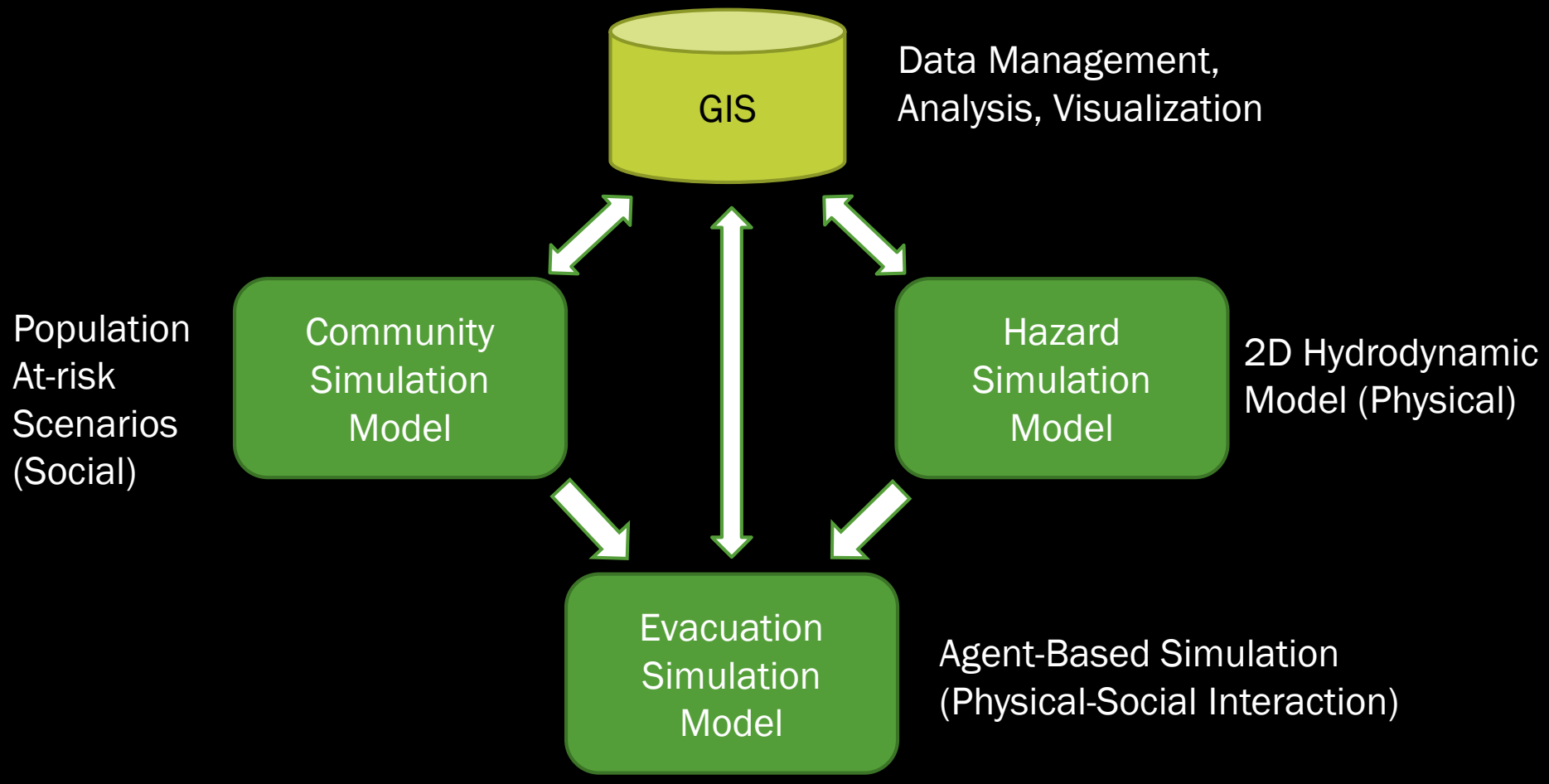
John Pritchard, P.E., CFM

Esri User Conference 2017

Overview

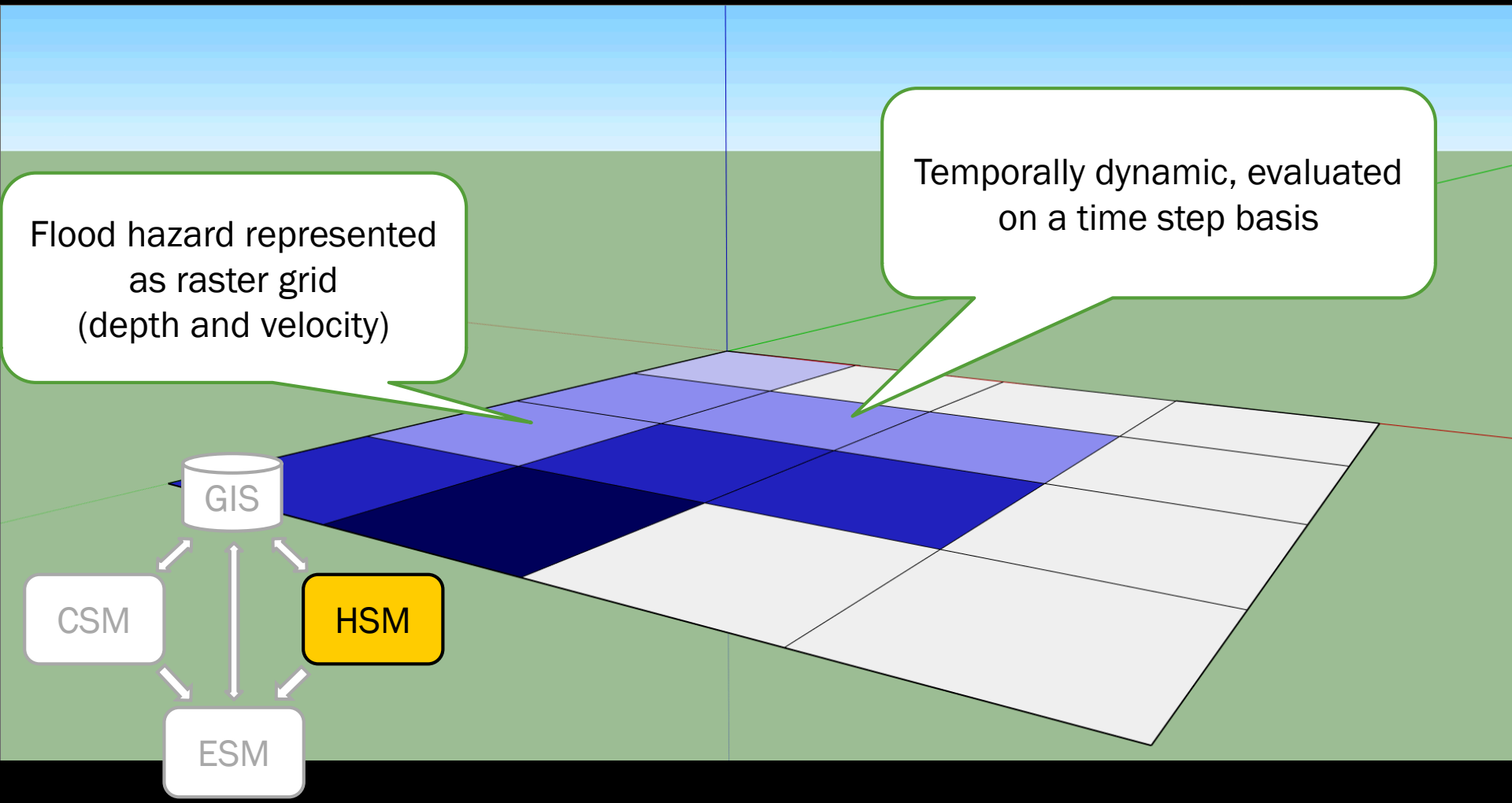
- Disaster Modeling Framework
- Hurricane Ike and the Galveston experience
- Integrating Social Vulnerability
- Findings and Next Steps

Disaster Modeling Framework[1]



[1]*Adapted from Assaf, 2011.*

Objects within the model framework



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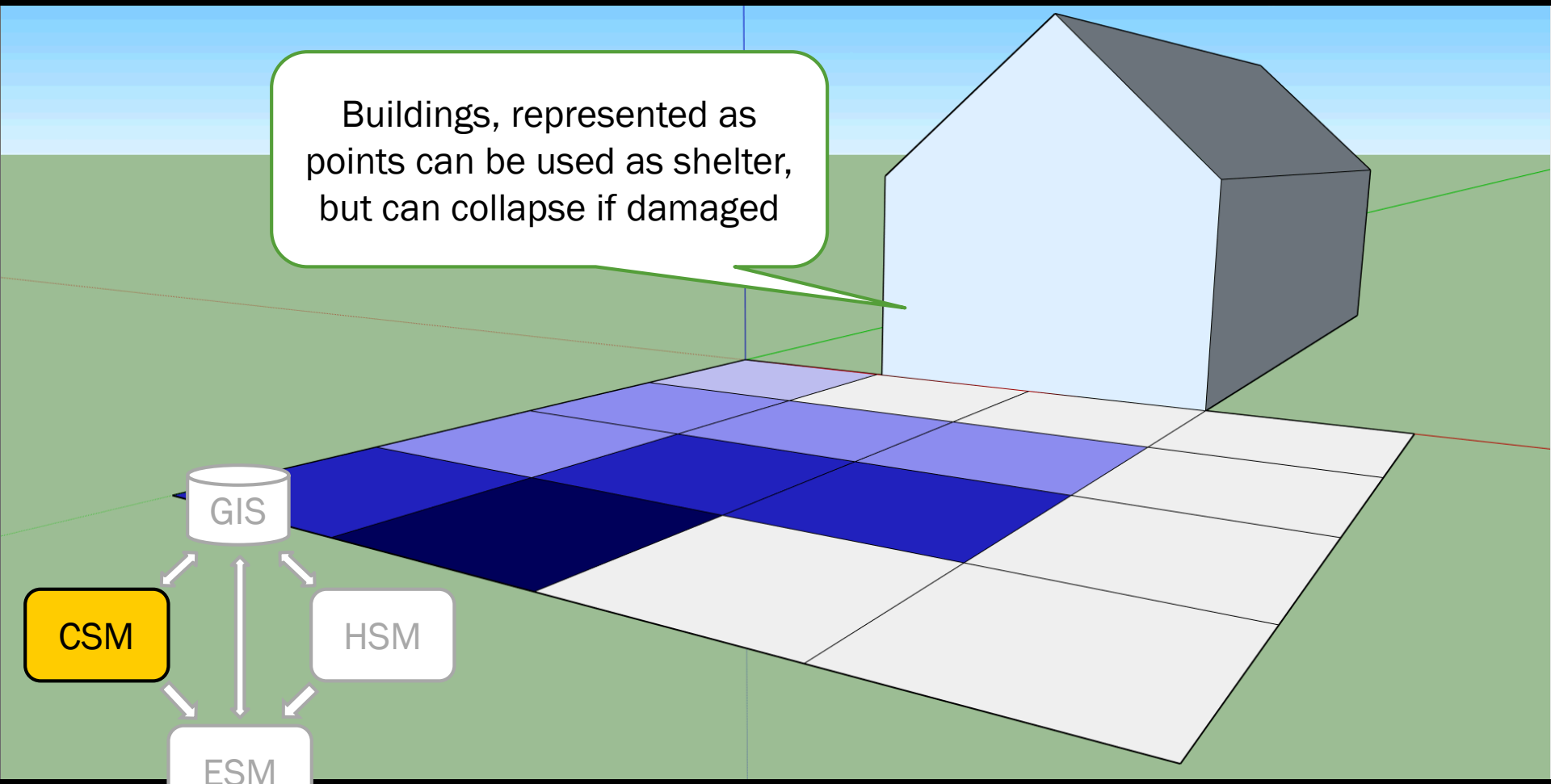

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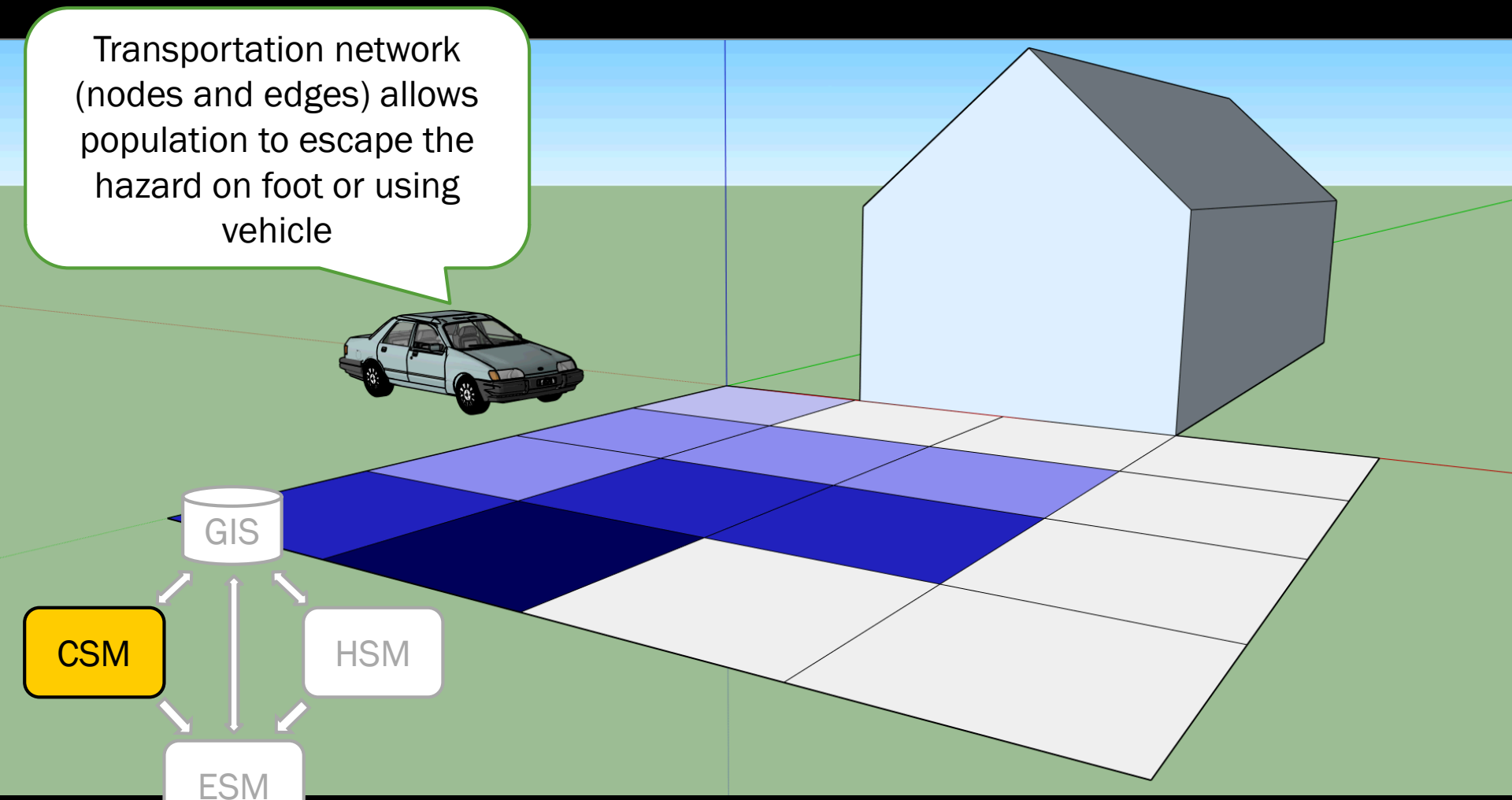

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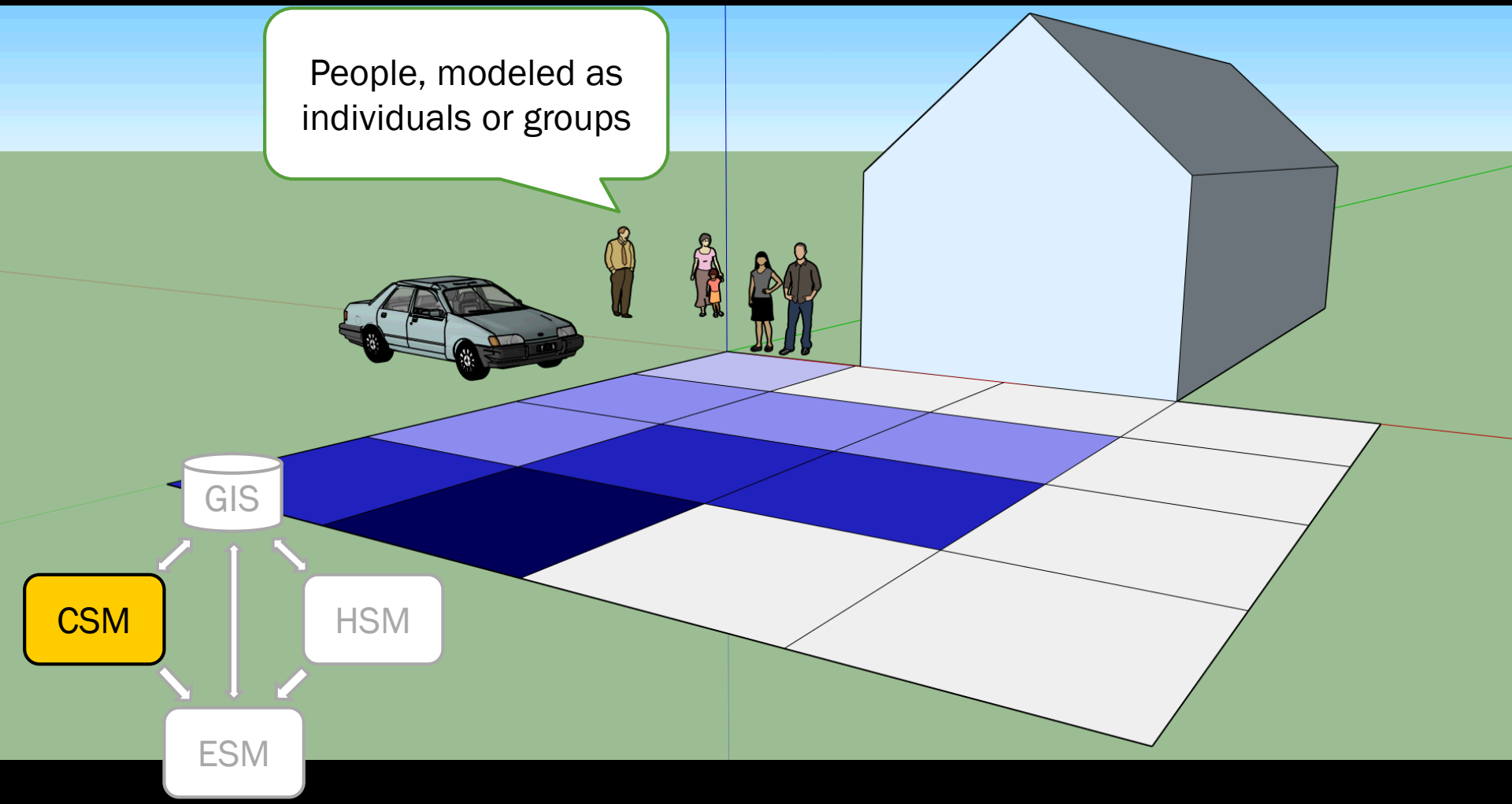

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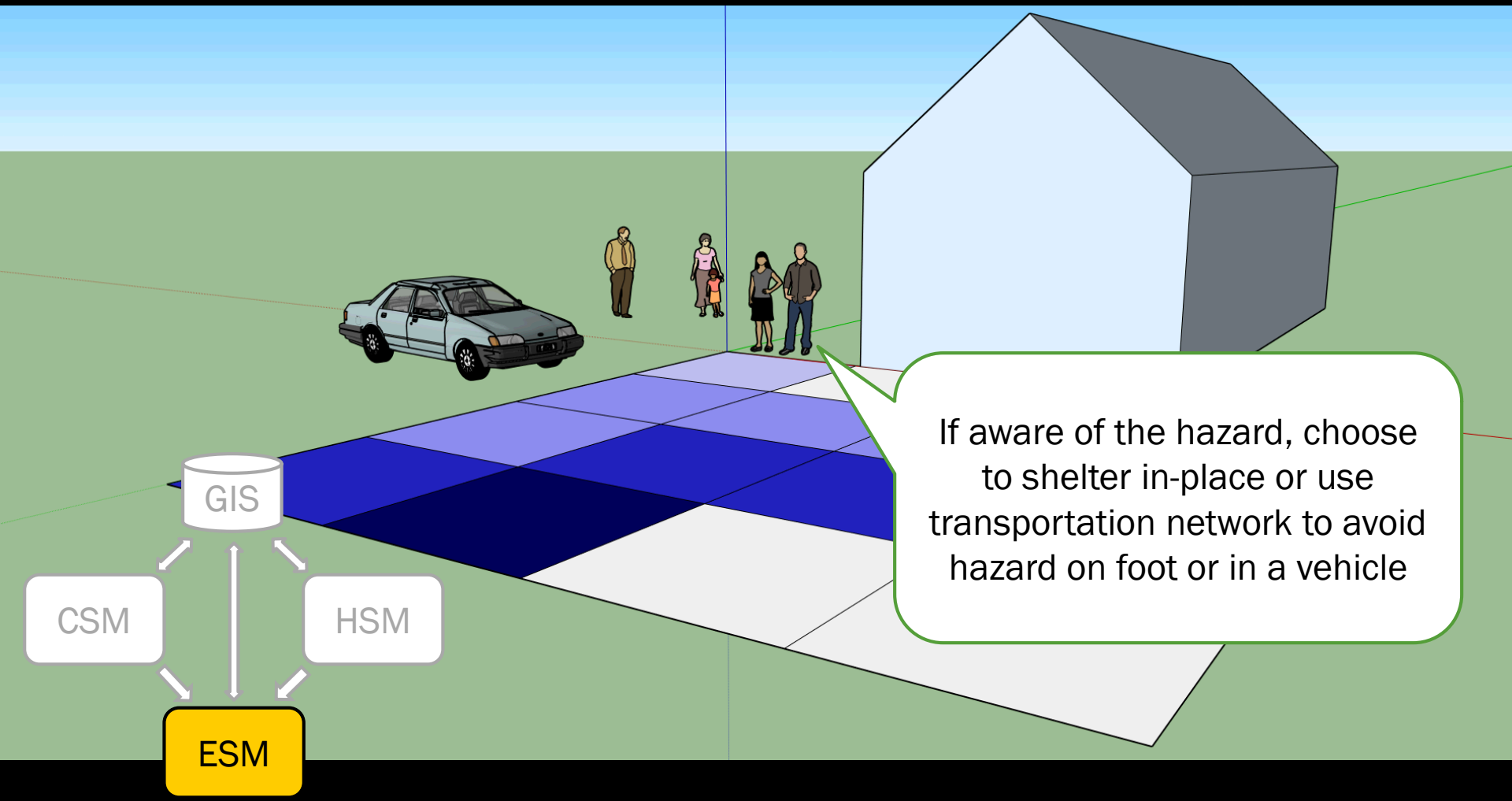
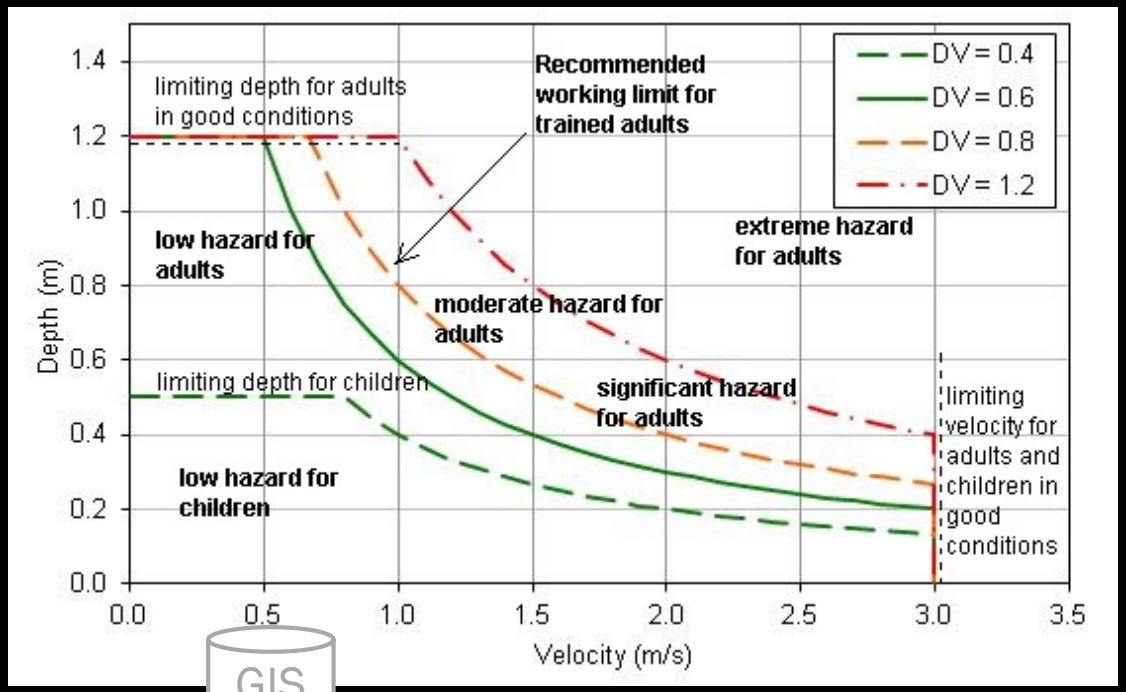
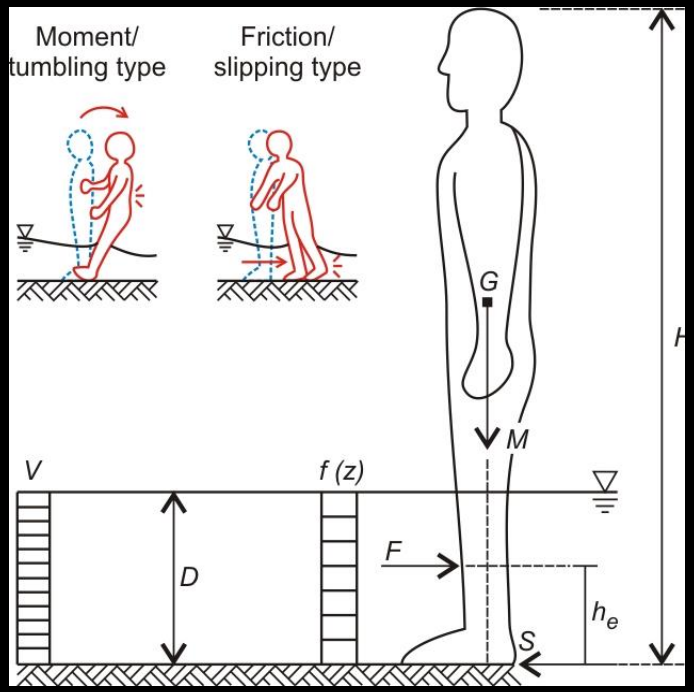
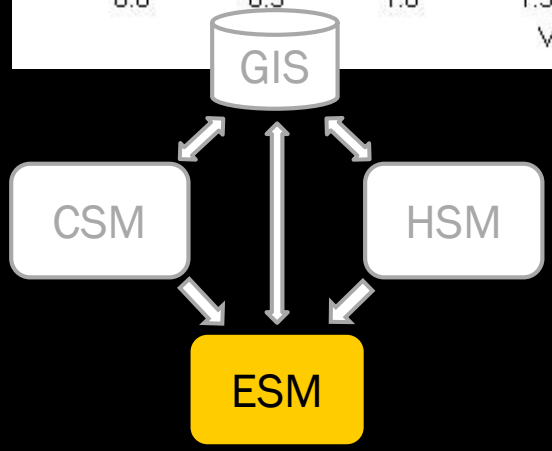


Fate of objects in the evacuation simulation are determined at each time step

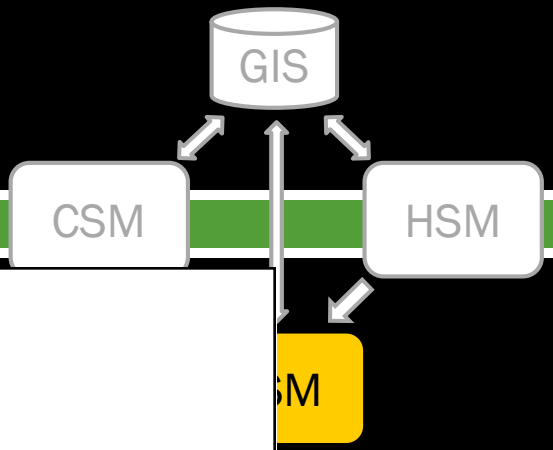




Safety Criteria for People in Variable Flow Conditions and Typical Modes of Instability in Floods (Source: Cox et al, 2010)



Visualizing the model results



(Source: Map tiles by Stamen Design, 2017)

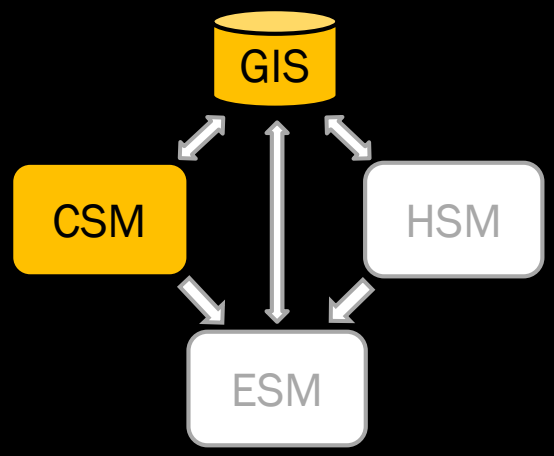
Modeling the system as a whole allows us to ask new questions about a place

- Evacuation Planning
  - Is the evacuation plan effective?
  - How significant is traffic congestion?
  - Is risk affected by time of day or year?
  - Are some groups at greater risk of harm?

- Scenario-based
  - Test efficacy of mitigation actions
  - Training (“what if…?”)
  - Communication with managers and public

Research Question: Can the Disaster Simulation Model be refined using Social Vulnerability Data?

- In the U.S., history tells us that roughly a third of the population will not evacuate prior to a hurricane (Weller et al., 2016)
  - Who stays behind?
  - Why do they stay behind?
  - More importantly, where are they located?

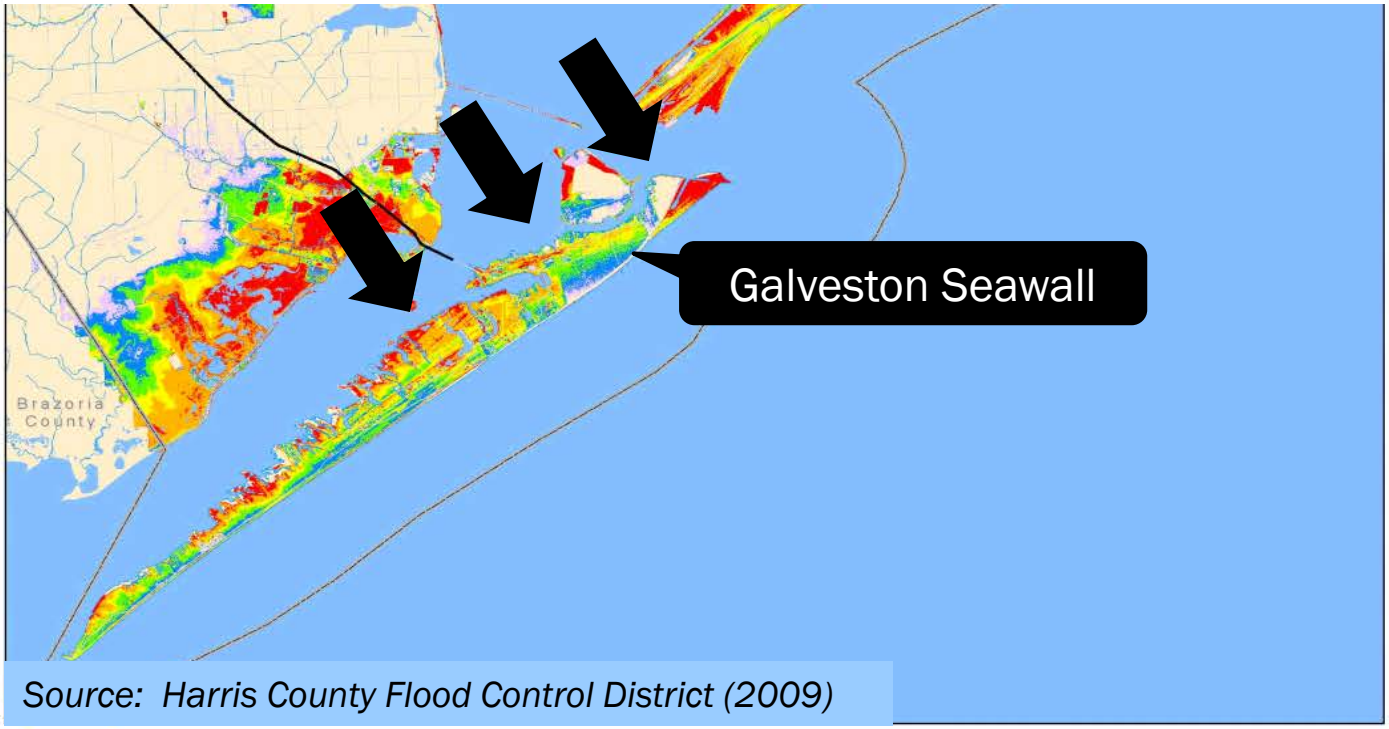


Why Galveston?

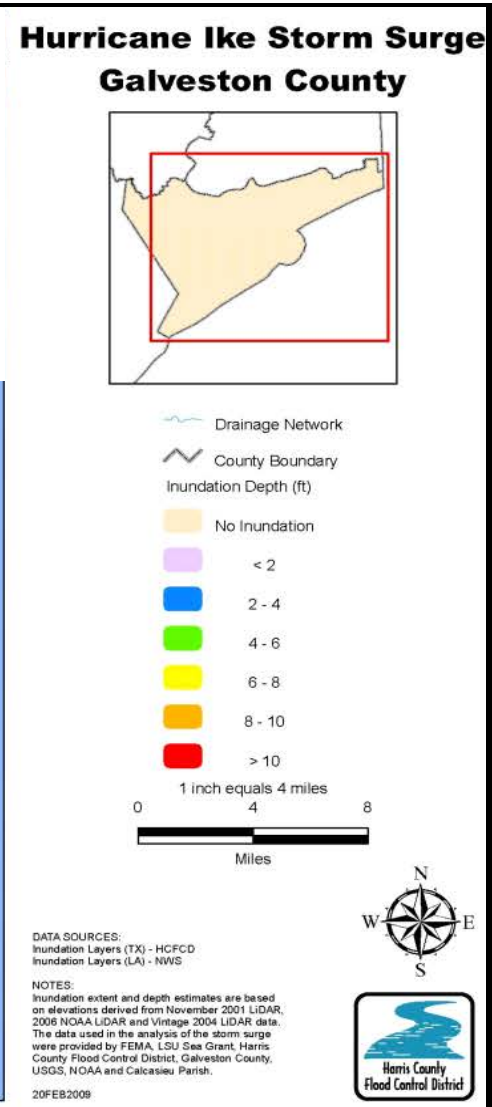
- History of flooding
- Physically constrained
- Primary data required is publicly availability

What happened in Galveston during Hurricane Ike in 2008?

- Category 2 wind speeds
- Category 4 storm surge
- Large wind field – storm surge arrived early
- Storm surge came from the backside of the Island, outflanking the Galveston Seawall.

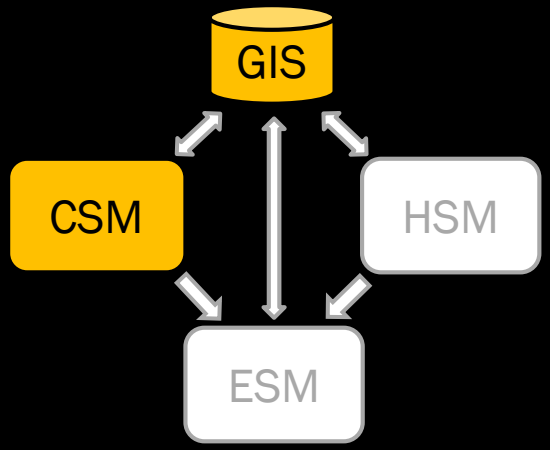


Source: Harris County Flood Control District (2009)



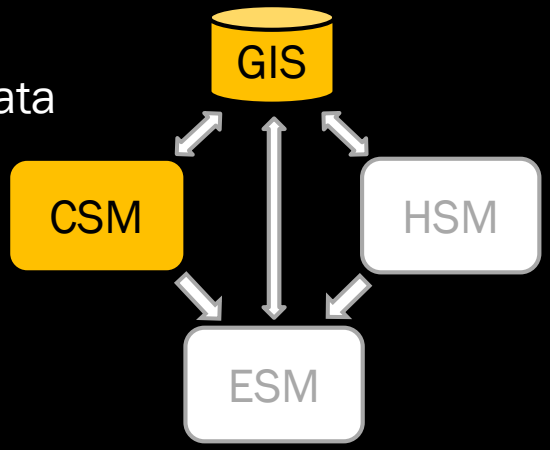
Preparing the Community Simulation Model: who stayed behind, and where were they?

- Data Uncertainties:
  - Census data is aggregated at block group level, for privacy reasons a one-to-one match with actual population isn't possible
  - Data from post-disaster surveys is largely qualitative, difficult to integrate into a GIS framework
  - Estimates of evacuation compliance vary

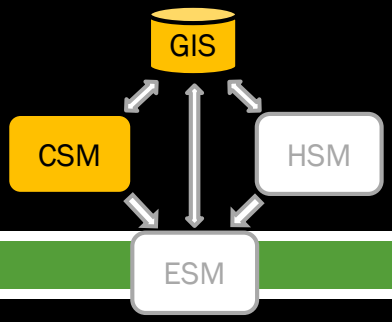


Defining the Population at Risk

- 2010 U.S. Synthesized Population dataset (RTI, 2014)
  - Disaggregated the 2010 Census into individual synthetic households and household members with attributes (sex, age, etc.)
  - Not a one-to-one match, but represents the demographic composition within Census Blocks
  - Useful for agent-based micro-simulation
  - Dasymetric model based on U.S. EPA ICLUS land use data



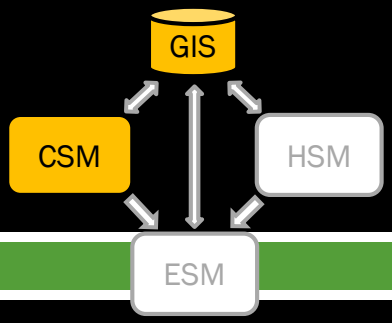
Data Uncertainty:
Spatial Distribution of Synthetic Population



- ICLUS 90-meter grid resolution is too course to map population to individual parcels

(Sources: RTI, 2014 and Esri World Imagery service layer, 2017)

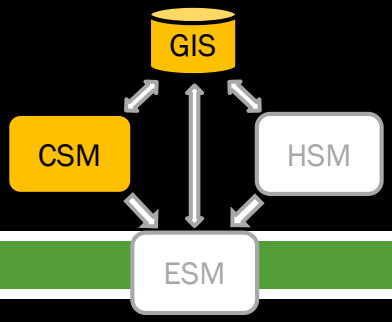
Data Uncertainty:
Spatial Distribution of Synthetic Population



- Assumptions:
  - Natural breaks can be used to group households by income with similar parcels inside each census block
  - Single family homes given priority, followed by multi-family units
  - Multi-family unit capacity estimated based on square footage estimates
- Uncertainty:
  - Parcel data incomplete for multi-family units
  - Large number of vacation rental properties
- Solution:
  - Custom Python script
  - Use random function to “shuffle” lists of households and parcels

python

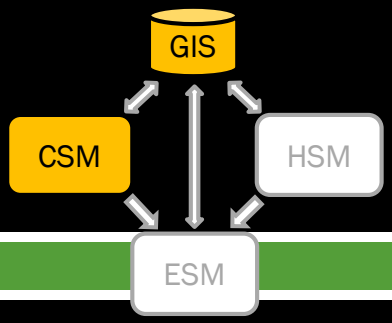
Data Uncertainty:
Spatial Distribution of Synthetic Population



- Result: households moved to residential parcel centroids

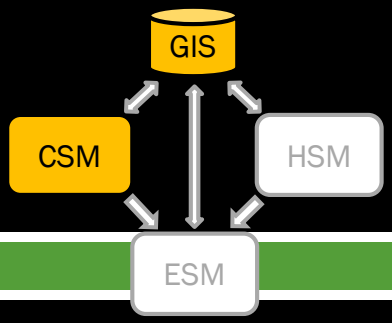
(Sources: Galveston County Central Appraisal District, 2016 and Esri World Imagery service layer, 2017)

Data Uncertainty: Who Stayed Behind?



- Actual spatial distribution of unevacuated PAR cannot truly be known, but Monte Carlo simulation can be used to create an envelope of outcomes
  - Null hypothesis: select unevacuated population at random
  - Alternative hypothesis: stratified sampling based on presence of children in the household will reduce sampling error and improve model predictions
  - Based on sensitivity analysis, assume that 40% of households remain behind (approx. 23,000 people).

Data Uncertainty: Who Stayed Behind?

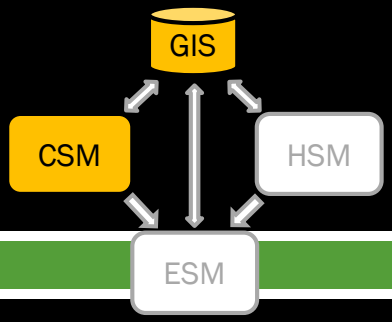


Sample Description (Weller et al, 2016)

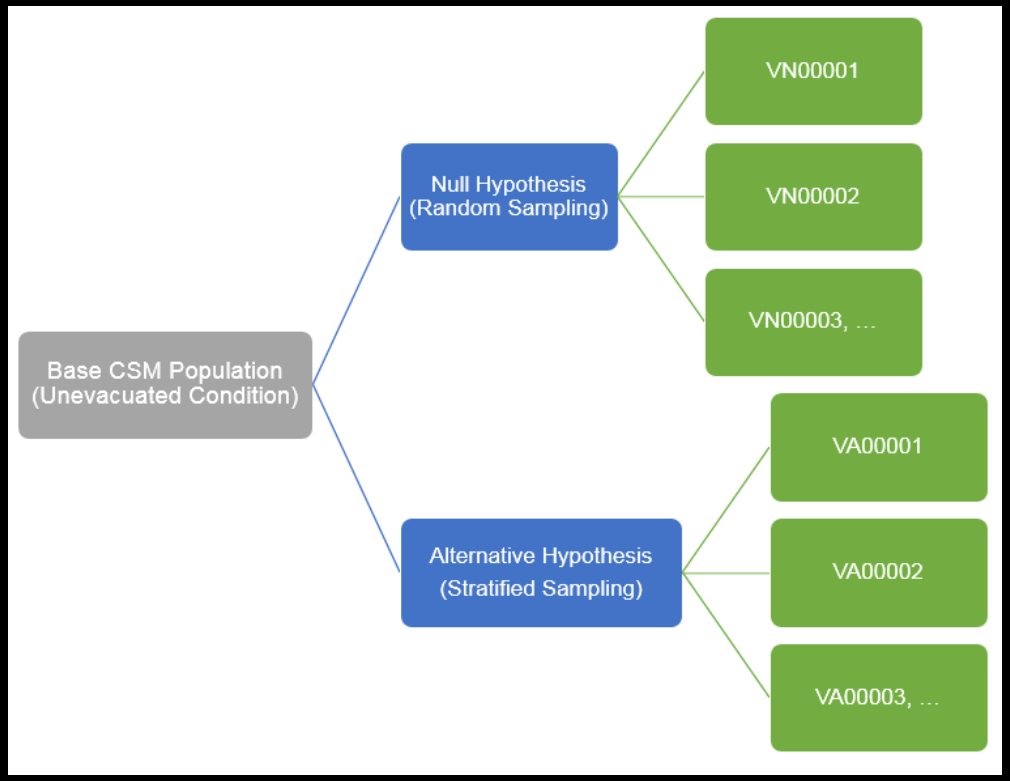
Variable	Evacuated (n = 16)	Stayed (n = 16)
Educational Level (years)	15.3	14.5
Age	44.7 (33-63)	48.3 (21 -64)
Length Residency (years)	28.6 (5.5 -61)	26.1 (4-64)
Own home (%)	80	75
Windstorm insurance (%)	77	71
Flood insurance (%)	57	60
Ethnicity (%)		
White	31.3	62.5
Hispanic	43.8	18.8
African-American	18.8	12.5
Nat. American/Pac Islander	6.3	6.3
Gender (female) (%)	38.8	43.8
Have Children	56.3	18.8
Storm damage	8% no damage	33% no damage
	38% minimal damage	8% minimal damage
	54% major damage	58% major damage

"...importance of family safety and the evacuation of vulnerable family members (children, elderly, handicapped, and infirm) to a safer place." (Weller et al., 2016)

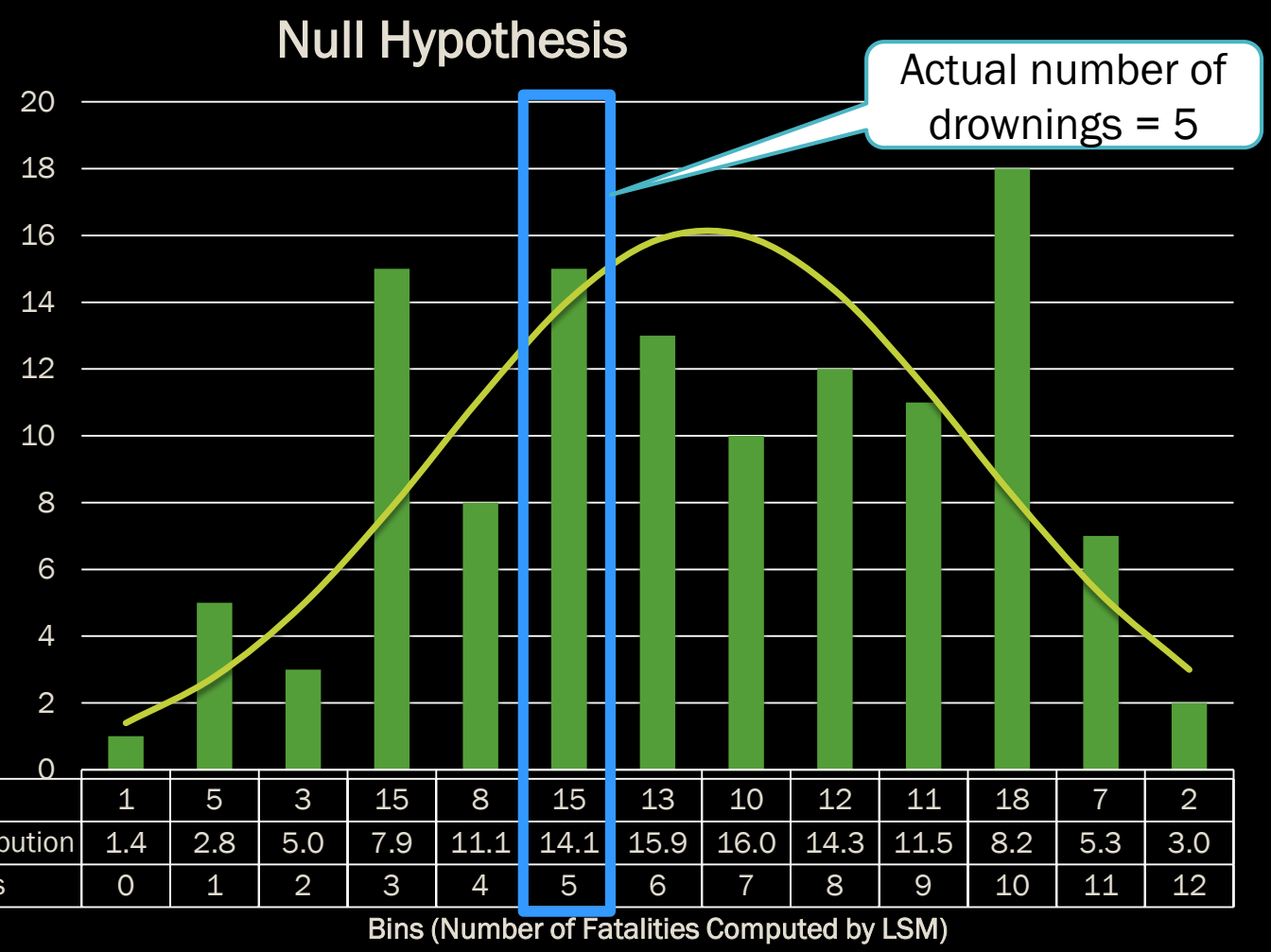
Data Uncertainty: Who Stayed Behind?



- Solution:
  - Python scripting
  - CSM scenarios
  - Batch run ESM model

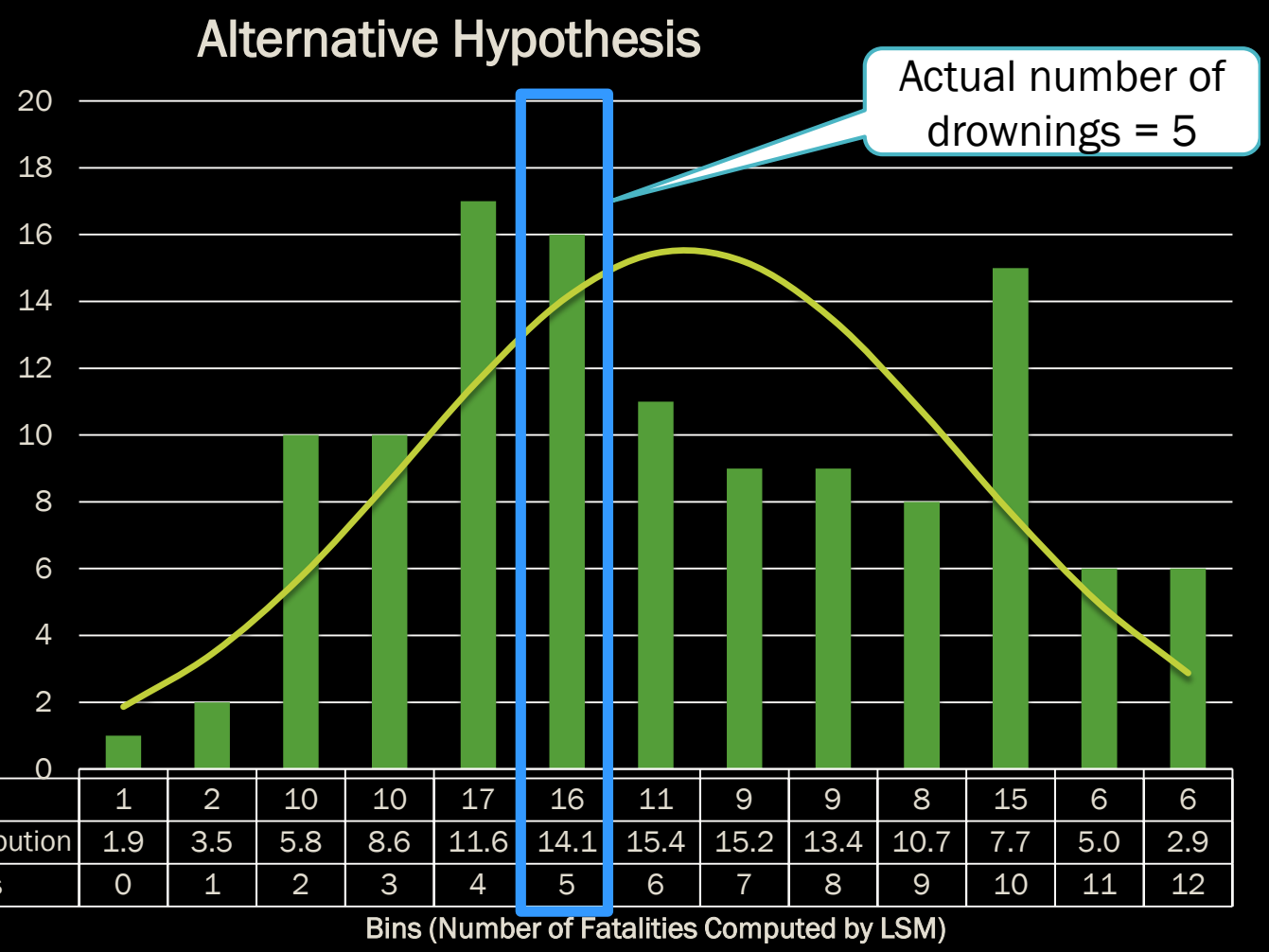


Simulation Results



Frequency	1	5	3	15	8	15	13	10	12	11	18	7	2
Fitted Normal Distribution	1.4	2.8	5.0	7.9	11.1	14.1	15.9	16.0	14.3	11.5	8.2	5.3	3.0
Number of Fatalities	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

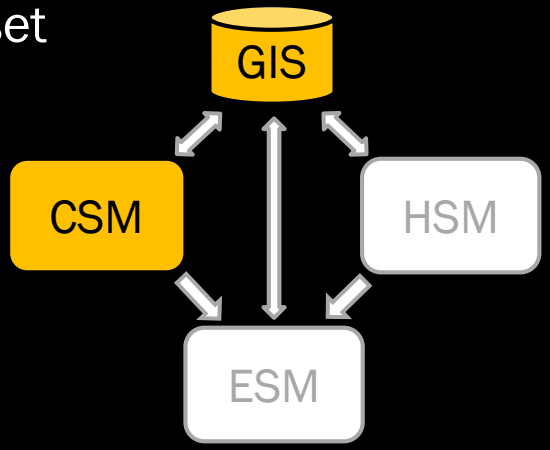
Results



Frequency	1	2	10	10	17	16	11	9	9	8	15	6	6
Fitted Normal Distribution	1.9	3.5	5.8	8.6	11.6	14.1	15.4	15.2	13.4	10.7	7.7	5.0	2.9
Number of Fatalities	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

Conclusion and Next Steps

- Social vulnerability indicators can be integrated within the CSM framework
- Additional simulations required before drawing conclusions
- Improving the CSM in the future
  - Harmonize census data with disaster
  - Add SV attributes to Synthetic Population dataset
  - Integrate institutional populations
  - Purpose-specific post-disaster surveys
  - Refine cadastral / building inventories



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- BMT WBM, Pty., Ltd.
- Wood Rodgers, Inc.

Questions and Discussion

Contact:

John Pritchard, P.E., CFM

jpritchard@woodrodgers.com

https://www.linkedin.com/pub/john-pritchard/99/716/93b

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