

<sup>1</sup> **Stochastic Modeling of Solar Irradiance during  
2 Hurricanes**

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<sup>6</sup> **Abstract** The unprecedented growth of solar generation adoption indicates  
7 that solar can become a significant source of modern and clean energy for  
8 our power grids in just a few decades. Despite solar's growing criticality for  
9 generation, few studies have proposed models to assess solar generation during  
10 natural disasters. In particular, hurricanes bring environmental conditions  
11 that may drastically reduce solar generation even if solar infrastructure re-  
12 mains fully functional. Here, we present a stochastic model to quantify irra-  
13 diance decay during hurricanes. The model is developed through mixed-effect  
14 regression on a dataset that merges historical Global Horizontal Irradiance  
15 and Atlantic hurricane activity, exhibiting higher irradiance decays for higher  
16 hurricane categories and closer to the hurricane center. Accordingly, our model  
17 describes the irradiance decay as a function of hurricane category and the dis-  
18 tance the hurricane center normalized by the hurricane size. We show that  
19 category-dependent shapes and scales increase the statistical performance of  
20 the irradiance decay function based on the Akaike Information Criterion. Sim-  
21 ilarly, the hurricane's radius of outermost closed isobar performs best as nor-  
22 malizing distance. Our study suggests that hurricanes reduce irradiance due to  
23 optically thick clouds that absorb and reflect light. These clouds are close to the  
24 hurricane center and often become thicker during intensification. To showcase  
25 the methodology's applicability, we use it to generate stochastic simulations

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26 of irradiance in the Southern United States during a synthetic storm from  
27 its genesis to its dissipation. Our results also show that generation in Miami-  
28 Dade, Florida, can decrease beyond 70% in large regions during a category-4  
29 synthetic hurricane even if the solar infrastructure is undamaged. Further-  
30 more, generation losses can also last beyond three days, and this timeframe  
31 will be exacerbated if solar panels become non-functional. Our follow-up study  
32 integrates our proposed model with panel fragility functions to offer analysis  
33 capabilities for forecasting time-varying solar generation during hurricanes.

34 **Keywords** Disaster resilience · Solar panels · Solar irradiance · Hurricanes ·  
35 Optically thick clouds

## 36 1 Introduction

37 Solar generation is becoming a pillar in modern power systems. Solar energy  
38 accounted for nearly 40% of all the new electric generating capacity installed  
39 on the U.S. grid in 2019, the highest share in its history (Perea et al., 2019).  
40 The rapid adoption of panels to harvest solar energy is transforming key power  
41 system features such as its economics, environmental contributions to global  
42 warming, and resilience (Moriarty and Honnery, 2016). These new power sys-  
43 tem features may be a crucial part of our future grids, and government pro-  
44 jections state that solar generation will be 20–30% of the global electricity by  
45 2050 (International Energy Agency, 2014; Shah and Boorem-Phelps, 2015;  
46 The International Renewable Energy Agency, 2018; Solaun and Cerdá, 2019).  
47 Research has already highlighted and projected solar energy’s long-term envi-  
48 ronmental (Solangi et al., 2011; Creutzig et al., 2017) and economic (Devab-  
49 haktuni et al., 2013; Kannan and Vakeesan, 2016) benefits. However, there is  
50 significantly less understanding of the benefits of solar generation for increas-  
51 ing the resilience of our vulnerable existing grids.

52 Hurricanes have exposed significant vulnerabilities in our power grids. For  
53 example, Hurricane Maria caused the total loss of power in multiple major  
54 cities in Puerto Rico in 2017, leaving regions without power for up to eight  
55 months (Wang et al., 2018; Campbell et al., 2018). Similarly, in mainland  
56 United States, Hurricane Sandy in 2012 left more than eight million cus-  
57 tomers without power across 21 states (Henry and Ramirez-Marquez, 2016).  
58 Solar generation can increase resilience through decentralization, a fundamen-  
59 tal paradigm switch where users can generate energy locally, e.g., through  
60 rooftop solar panels (Colson et al., 2011; Panteli and Mancarella, 2015; Wang  
61 et al., 2016). Only a recent investigation has proposed a framework based on  
62 risk analysis to quantify the resilience of modern power systems with rooftop  
63 solar panels, but exclusively for earthquake hazards (Patel et al., 2021; Ce-  
64 ferino et al., 2020). As hurricanes pose an enormous threat to urban centers  
65 worldwide, this paper focuses on building a cornerstone solar irradiance model  
66 that enables the risk analysis of modern power systems with solar generation  
67 during hurricanes (generally called tropical cyclones).

Unlike earthquakes, hurricanes bring environmental conditions that may drastically reduce solar generation even if solar infrastructure remains fully functional. Figure 1 exemplifies the effect of hurricanes on the spatial distribution of solar irradiance and thus generation. The plot shows Global Horizontal Irradiance (GHI) at 3pm UTC (9 am local time) when Hurricane Katrina made landfall in Louisiana as a category three event in 2005 compared to the GHI distribution the year after. The comparison shows that the hurricane reduced GHI even for sites that were hundreds of kilometers away from the hurricane center. This observation is consistent with recent findings on GHI decay during past hurricanes (Cole et al., 2020). Yet, to integrate this observation into a risk analysis framework that assesses solar generation resilience, we lack a predictive model that generalizes GHI reduction under hurricanes, i.e., parametrizing GHI decay with key hurricane features.

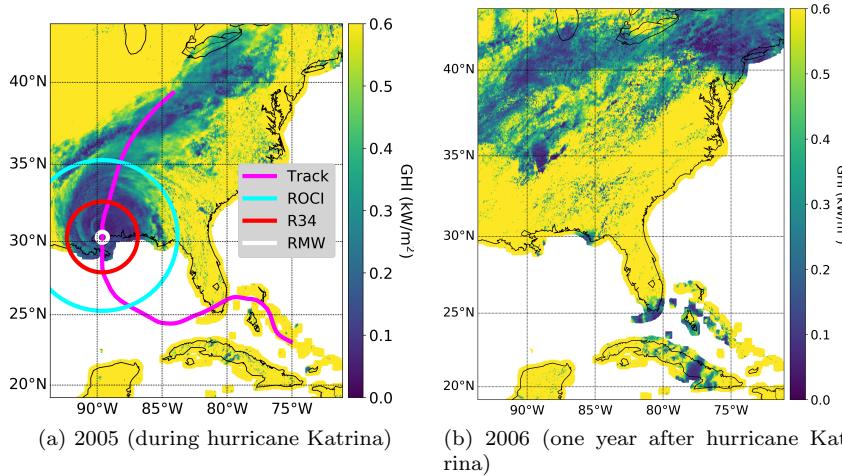


Fig. 1: Global horizontal irradiance decay during hurricanes with two snapshots at the same time but in different years. Both plots show the spatial distribution of GHI on August 29th, at 3 pm UTC (or 10 am local time in Louisiana). (a) The plot shows GHI in 2005 during Hurricane Katrina, indicating the hurricane's track, radius of maximum wind, radius at a wind speed of 34 knots, and radius of the outermost closed isobar. (b) The plot shows GHI in 2006 in the same region at the same time. Data retrieved from NREL (Sengupta et al., 2018).

To fill this research gap, we conduct an extensive data analysis on historical GHI during the hurricane seasons from 2001 to 2017 by combining the hurricane Best Track Database (Landsea and Franklin, 2013) with a GHI database from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) (Sengupta et al., 2018). The analysis identifies hurricane features that best predict the

86 intensity and extent of GHI decay. Next, we develop a probabilistic mixed-  
 87 effects model to capture irradiance decay through different functional forms.  
 88 These functions describe time and space-varying GHI reduction factors from  
 89 the hurricane center to unaffected regions using critical hurricane features with  
 90 different model complexities. We fit the different functional forms and highlight  
 91 the best predictive model based on the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC).

92 In application, we propose to first estimate solar irradiance when and where  
 93 a hurricane occurs but for normal conditions (Sengupta et al., 2018). Then,  
 94 we adjust the GHI estimates to the hurricane condition using our proposed  
 95 probabilistic model for hurricane-induced GHI decay. Because the proposed  
 96 GHI decay model is built for different times of the day and throughout the  
 97 entire hurricane season, our integrative framework quantifies the time-series of  
 98 solar irradiance for any real or synthetically simulated tropical cyclone since  
 99 its landfall to dissipation.

100 To showcase our proposed methodology's broad and regional applicability  
 101 for irradiance modeling, we use the framework to simulate solar generation  
 102 for a synthetic storm in the United States's southern region. We compare  
 103 our modeling results to existing studies on GHI decay to analyze its perfor-  
 104 mance. This application demonstrates that this methodology can successfully  
 105 simulate spatiotemporal distributions of irradiance under varying hurricane  
 106 conditions from genesis to dissipation. Ceferino et al. (2021) integrates the  
 107 proposed model with fragility functions for panel failure due to high winds to  
 108 assess time-varying solar generation during hurricanes in residential or utility-  
 109 scale panel arrays. These integrative approaches demonstrate the importance  
 110 of GHI decay models for assessing the resilience of power systems with solar  
 111 infrastructure to hurricanes.

112 The rest of the article begins with a statistical analysis of GHI during his-  
 113 torical storms. Then, it proposes a probabilistic model for capturing GHI de-  
 114 cays during hurricanes. Next, it shows the application to the Southern United  
 115 States. Finally, the article provides a summary and conclusions of our analysis.

## 116 2 Analysis of GHI during historical storms

117 Hurricane conditions reduce solar irradiance intensity at the ground level over  
 118 large geographical extents, limiting the ability of PV panels to harvest energy  
 119 in communities. Figure 1 shows intense GHI decays during Hurricane Katrina  
 120 in most regions within the radius (R34) at a wind speed of  $17 \text{ ms}^{-1}$  (34 knots),  
 121 which reached 262 km. In some regions, intense decays extended to distances  
 122 similar to the radii of the outermost closed isobar (ROCI), which reached 556  
 123 km. While Figure 1 shows only a snapshot for one hurricane demonstrating  
 124 irradiance decays, we consistently observe the same trend in other hurricanes.  
 125 In contrast to cloudless conditions of clear skies, which are associated with  
 126 maximum solar generation, hurricanes cover extensive regions with different  
 127 cloud structures from the eyewall to the rainbands (Houze, 2010). These clouds  
 128 absorb and scatter light, reducing direct incident radiation and generally lead-

129 ing to lower GHI and reduced solar panel generation (Xie et al., 2016, 2019).  
130 Clouds that have high moisture density and vertical depth, i.e. optically thick  
131 clouds, can drastically reduce direct incident radiation (Nouri et al., 2019). Ac-  
132 cordingly, hurricanes can significantly and rapidly lessen generation through  
133 optically thick cloud structures such as large cumulonimbus. However, hurri-  
134 canes can also reduce generation significantly even with less optically thick  
135 cloud structures like stratiform clouds because they can cover large geograph-  
136 ical extents.

137 To systematically investigate the effect of hurricanes on irradiance, we cou-  
138 pled a large dataset of GHI with historical hurricane data. We used the Physi-  
139 cal Solar Model (PSM) version 3 from the National Solar Radiation Database  
140 (NSRDB) published by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) to  
141 extract GHI with high spatial and temporal resolution (Sengupta et al., 2018).  
142 The PSM combines satellite-derived atmospheric and land surface properties  
143 with radiative transfer models to solve solar radiation through the Earth’s  
144 atmosphere. The PSM provides solar irradiance at a 4-km horizontal resolu-  
145 tion for 30-minute intervals from 1998 to 2017. The PSM enable us to observe  
146 the GHI behavior at different timesnaps for different hurricanes since 1998 for  
147 multiple sites and under various hurricane conditions.

## 148 2.1 Historical hurricane dataset

149 We compiled hurricane data from the revised Atlantic hurricane database  
150 (HURDAT2) (Landsea and Franklin, 2013). The data contain multiple hur-  
151 rricane features and span several decades; however, key spatial information  
152 including hurricanes’ radii is only available since 1998. The hurricane data  
153 include ROCI, the radius of maximum wind (RMW), radius at wind speeds  
154 of  $17 \text{ ms}^{-1}$  (R34, 34 knots) and  $33 \text{ ms}^{-1}$  (R64, 64 knots), hurricane category,  
155 and maximum wind speeds. The hurricane data have a 3-hour temporal reso-  
156 lution, which is coarser than the PSM temporal resolution; thus, we reduced  
157 the granularity of the GHI dataset from 30 minutes to 3 hours and matched  
158 the hurricane recording times. After performing a preliminary assessment to  
159 estimate the geographical extent impacted by the hurricane, we collected GHI  
160 records from the  $4 \times 4$ -km spatial grid within two times ROCI from the hur-  
161 cane center, which reached several hundreds of kilometers for massive storms.

162 We analyzed 22 hurricanes whose geneses were in the North American  
163 basin, made landfall on the Atlantic coasts of Central and North America  
164 and the Caribbean, and whose lifetime maximum intensity reached a category  
165 of at least three. The intensity threshold filtered out the disproportionately  
166 large number of storms that did not reach high intensities. While these events’  
167 maximum intensities were high, we tracked them from landfall to dissipation,  
168 covering the full range of intensities from high categories until they weakened  
169 into tropical depressions. 22 events had tropical storm winds in their lifespan,  
170 and nine reached a category of 5 (Figure S1).

171 The 22 hurricanes cover an extensive geographical region of our assessment  
 172 (Figure 2). These hurricanes have a wide variety of conditions, with maximum  
 173 wind speeds up to  $80 \text{ ms}^{-1}$  (category 5), ROCI from 200 km to above 800  
 174 km, RMW up to 250 km, and radii at circulating wind speeds of 0 (R0) from  
 175 200 km to above 2000 km (Figure S1). HURDAT2 omitted R0, the shortest  
 176 distance where hurricane circulating wind effects dissipate entirely.<sup>1</sup> Thus, we  
 177 estimated R0 with a wind profile model that captures the radial structure of  
 178 tropical cyclones (Chavas et al., 2015).

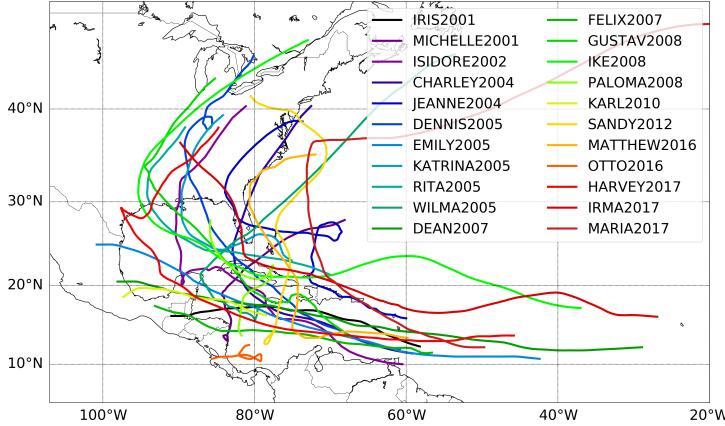


Fig. 2: List of hurricanes and their tracks included in GHI decay assessment in the North American basin

## 179 2.2 Key features for predicting GHI during hurricanes

180 To characterize GHI decay under different hurricane conditions, we define  
 181  $I^h$  as GHI during a hurricane. Previous research shows that GHI has strong  
 182 temporal and spatial variability during normal conditions, i.e., no hurricane  
 183 (Lehr et al., 2017; Patel et al., 2018). We account for such variability and  
 184 characterize GHI deviations from normal conditions in the logarithm space as

$$185 \delta^h = \ln \left( \frac{I^h}{\bar{I}} \right) \quad (1)$$

186 where  $\bar{I}$  represents the median of the GHI under normal conditions at the same  
 187 location and at the same time of the year as  $I^h$ . Since multiplicative factors  
 188 capture clouds' effects on solar irradiance, i.e., Beer-Bouguer-Lambert law of  
 extinction (Liou, 2002; Xie et al., 2019), we assume  $\delta^h$ , in the logarithmic

<sup>1</sup> Notice that there is environmental wind at R0.

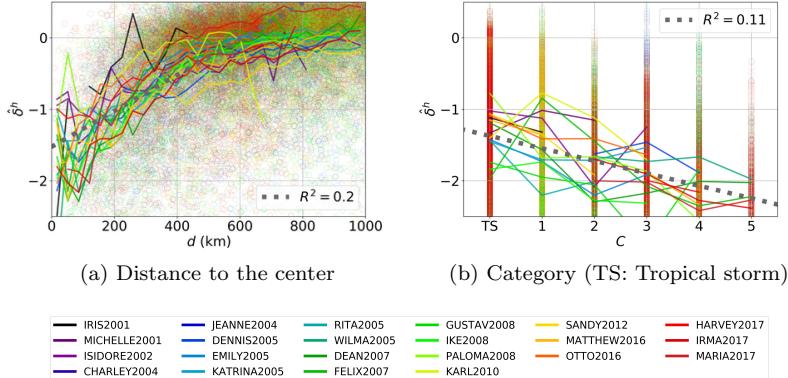


Fig. 3: Scatter plots showing relationship between GHI decay and key hurricane features.  $\widehat{\delta^h}$  during different hurricanes have different color. For each hurricane, the plots show a running average for  $\widehat{\delta^h}$  using solid lines. The plots also show linear regressions in dotted lines and their corresponding  $R^2$  values when the multi-hurricane data is lumped together. For visual clarity, there are only 50k randomly sampled data points in each plot.

189 space, can capture hurricane effects on GHI. We used 20 years of GHI data to  
 190 estimate  $\overline{I_{t,j}}$  for all the geographical extent covered by the hurricanes using a  
 191 3-hour temporal resolution. We used 20 years of GHI data to estimate  $\bar{I}$  for  
 192 all the geographical extent covered by the hurricanes using a 3-hour temporal  
 193 resolution. We assume that at each time of the day, GHI has approximately  
 194 the same distribution for a given month. As a result, we used approximately  
 195 600 instead of 20 data points to estimate the GHI medians. For example, to  
 196 estimate GHI at 10 a.m. in June, we lumped the data of its days from 1998 to  
 197 2017. We observe that for sites farther from the center of the hurricane, the  
 198 median of  $\delta^h$  approaches zero, implying that the site is outside the area where  
 199 hurricanes reduce GHI, i.e.,  $\bar{I} = \bar{I}^h$ .

200 We analyzed GHI during the 22 hurricanes to estimate the samples  $\widehat{\delta^h}$  and  
 201 understand GHI behavior during different hurricane conditions. Because our  
 202 focus was only on times of the day when communities can generate energy, we  
 203 only included in our analysis daytime data where and when  $\bar{I} > 10 \text{ W-h/m}^2$ ,  
 204 which finally resulted in  $\sim 28\text{M}$  data points. Figure 3 shows  $\widehat{\delta^h}$  as a function  
 205 of distance from the site to the hurricane's center and category.

206 Figure 3a shows the relationship between distances to the hurricane center  
 207  $d$  and  $\widehat{\delta^h}$ . On average,  $\widehat{\delta^h}$  has reduced values for small  $d$  and grows steadily up  
 208 to a plateau close to 0 for  $d$  values larger than 600 km. We fitted a line with  
 209  $d$  below 600 km to account mainly for the sites with significant irradiance  
 210 decays and found an  $R^2$  of 0.2 (correlation  $\rho = 0.45$ ). We observe that the  
 211 fitted line is not able to represent the transition between small distances to

the plateau for large  $d$  where hurricanes have little effect. The observed transition is consistent with the spatial distribution of cloud optical thicknesses in hurricanes. Hurricane eyewalls, which surround the hurricane eye typically at 10-50 km from the center (Weatherford and Gray, 1988), are composed of optically thick clouds as a result of high moisture densities and large vertical depths (Kokhanovsky and von Hoyningen-Huene, 2004; John et al., 2020), thus significantly reducing direct incident radiation through high absorption and reflection. Outside the eyewall, clouds' optical thicknesses are high only in rainbands and significantly lower in between them. Outside the regions with rainbands, a regular combination of clear-sky and partially cloudy conditions arise, bringing GHI back to normal levels (Kokhanovsky and von Hoyningen-Huene, 2004; Luo et al., 2008; John et al., 2020). Figure 3a shows that this occurs beyond 600 km from the hurricane center.

Additionally, we find that high hurricane intensity exacerbates GHI decay. To focus on sites with the largest hurricane decay and cover areas within hurricane eyewalls, we analyzed sites located at 100km or less from the hurricane center. Figure 3b shows a decaying trend between hurricane category  $C$  and  $\widehat{\delta^h}$  values, indicating that more intense hurricanes induce larger reductions in solar irradiance. A similar trend is observed between  $\widehat{\delta^h}$  and maximum winds  $V$  (Figure S2a) because  $V$  has high colinearity with  $C$  as the latter variable is an increasing step function of  $V$ . Thus, we see that the linear fit performs very similarly with  $R^2$  of nearly 0.11 ( $\rho = -0.34$ ) in both cases. Lower irradiance levels for higher hurricane categories are also consistent with recent evidence on satellite-derived cloud microphysical features during hurricanes (John et al., 2020). There are larger regions with higher cloud optical thicknesses associated with large and thick cloud structures such as cumulonimbus during hurricane maturity and intensification rather than during hurricane development or dissipation.

To investigate hurricane size effect, we evaluated the relationship between different hurricane size metrics and both the intensity and geographical extent of GHI decay. To study whether GHI decays are larger for bigger hurricanes, we analyzed the relationship between  $\widehat{\delta^h}$  and ROCI, RMW, and R0, respectively. We observe that hurricane size does not intensify GHI decay as linear fits between the size metrics and  $\widehat{\delta^h}$  have low  $R^2$  values of 0, 0.05, and 0.02, respectively (Figure S2).

To study how hurricane size correlates with the geographical extent of GHI decay, we analyzed the relationship between GHI and distance to the storm's center normalized by the hurricane size. We normalized  $d$  by four hurricane size metrics, ROCI, RMW, R0, and R34, where R34 is the radius at which the maximum wind speed is 34 knots, the minimum speed for the event to be categorized as a tropical storm. We split the data by hurricane category because  $C$  showed predictive power for hurricane decay intensification (Figure 3).

When the distance is normalized by ROCI and R34, we generally observe better fitting performance than for the absolute distance, with improved per-

257 performance for higher hurricane categories (Figure 4 and S5). We estimated that  
 258 a linear fit between  $R = d/\text{ROCI}$  and  $\delta^h$  has an  $R^2$  of 0.38 for category 5,  
 259 almost twice the value found for absolute distance for all storms (Figure 3a).  
 260 For  $R = d/\text{R34}$ ,  $R^2$  values show comparably good fitting performance to using  
 261 ROCI as normalizing distance (Table S1). The slopes of linear fits are steeper  
 262 for higher categories, further demonstrating that the intensity of the hurricane  
 263 intensifies GHI decay. As discussed earlier, this feature of GHI decay is driven  
 264 by optically thicker cloud structures occurring during hurricane maturity and  
 265 intensification. Distances normalized by RMW and R0 give lower performance,  
 266 which, however, still illustrate how the effect of the hurricane on irradiance  
 267 dissipates for large enough values of  $d$  (Figure S3 and S4).

268 The analysis also shows that the regions with GHI decay easily extend  
 269 beyond RMW and R34 as they only define hurricanes' inner-core circulation  
 270 (Table S1). In contrast, the regions with significant GHI decay do not reach  
 271 R0 but are close to being bounded by ROCI. Thus, these observations suggest  
 272 that the outer structure and radial extent of circulation bounded by ROCI is  
 273 coupled with the cloud structures absorbing and reflecting light during hurri-  
 274 canes.

### 275 3 Developing GHI decay model through mixed-effects re- 276 gression

277 To leverage well-established mixed-effects regression models (Pinheiro and  
 278 Bates, 2006), we assume that  $\ln(I^h)$  is Gaussian, i.e.,  $I^h$  is lognormally dis-  
 279 tributed, during daytime, when generation is not negligible, i.e.,  $I^h > 0$ . Thus

$$\ln(I^h) = \ln(\bar{I}^h) + \epsilon^h \quad (2)$$

280 where  $\bar{I}^h$  is the GHI median, and  $\epsilon^h$  is a Gaussian random variable with  
 281 zero mean that accounts for the variability of GHI during hurricanes in the  
 282 logarithmic space. We also assume that hurricanes reduce median GHI from  
 283 normal conditions to  $\bar{I}^h$  such that in the logarithmic space

$$\ln(I^h) = \ln(\bar{I}) + f(R, C) + \epsilon^h \quad (3)$$

284 where  $\bar{I}$  is the median GHI during normal conditions, and  $f(R, C)$  is a re-  
 285 duction factor that is a function of the normalized distance to the hurricane's  
 286 center  $R$  and the hurricane category  $C$ .  $f$  uses both  $R$  and  $C$  because they  
 287 demonstrated to have good predictive power for GHI decay in the previous  
 288 section. Using the expression in Equation 1, then

$$\delta^h = f(R, C) + \epsilon^h \quad (4)$$

289 Using Equation 4 and the samples of  $\delta^h$  from our dataset, we conducted a  
 290 mixed-effect regression analysis to test multiple functional forms  $f(R, C)$  and  
 291 formulate a predictive model for irradiance decay during hurricanes.

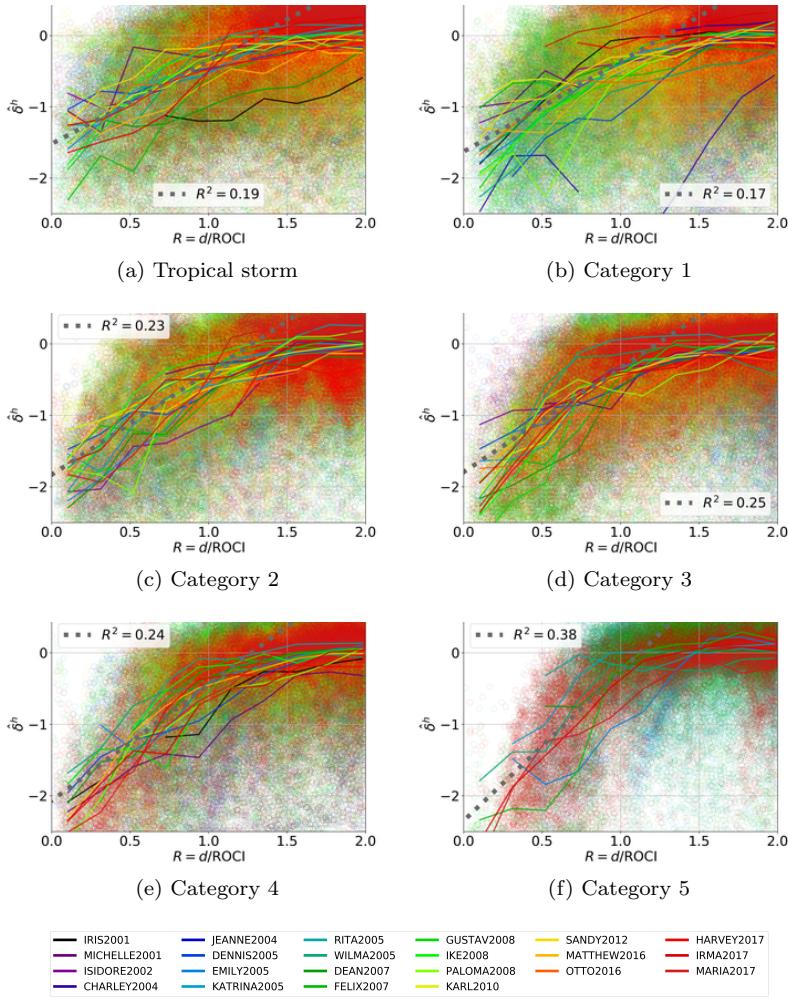


Fig. 4: Scatter plot showing relationship between GHI decay and distance normalized by ROCI for multiple categories. For each hurricane, the plots show a running mean for  $\hat{\delta}^h$  using solid lines. Linear trends are fitted for  $R$  between 0 and 1.2 when the multi-hurricane data is lumped together. There are 10k randomly sampled data points in each plot.

### 292 3.1 Functional forms for GHI reduction factors

293 We tested four different functional forms for  $f(R, C)$ . These functions are  
 294 shown in Equation 5. All of them include a logarithmic growth as a function of  
 295  $R$  followed by a plateau when  $f(R, C)$  reaches 0. The functional forms include  
 296 a short-distance correction factor  $b$  and a scale factor  $c$  that further calibrate

297 the influence of  $R$  on the irradiance decay. The short-distance correction factor  
 298 is added to the value of  $R$  so that the logarithmic function approaches the  
 299 observed values rather than  $-\infty$  when the site is close to the center of the  
 300 hurricane, i.e.,  $R \rightarrow 0$ . The scale factor further normalizes  $R$  to define where  
 301 the plateau is reached.

302 While all of the functional forms include a slope that varies with the hur-  
 303 rricane category ( $a_1C + a_2$ ), they vary in their complexity, differing in the  
 304 representation of the short-distance correction factor  $b$  and the scale factor  
 305  $c$ . In the functional form  $f_1$  in Equation 5a,  $b$  and  $c$  remain constant for all  
 306 hurricane categories. In the functional form  $f_2$  in Equation 5b,  $b$  varies with  
 307 category but  $c$  remains constant, and in the functional form  $f_3$  in Equation  
 308 5c,  $b$  is constant and  $c$  varies with hurricane category. In the functional form  
 309  $f_4$  in Equation 5d, both  $b$  and  $c$  vary with hurricane category.

$$f_1(R, C) = \begin{cases} (a_2C + a_1) \times \ln\left(\frac{R+b}{c}\right) & \text{if } R + b < c \\ 0 & \text{if } R + b \geq c \end{cases} \quad (5a)$$

$$f_2(R, C) = \begin{cases} (a_2C + a_1) \times \ln\left(\frac{R+(b_2C+b_1)}{c}\right) & \text{if } R + (b_2C + b_1) < c \\ 0 & \text{if } R + (b_2C + b_1) \geq c \end{cases} \quad (5b)$$

$$f_3(R, C) = \begin{cases} (a_2C + a_1) \times \ln\left(\frac{R+b}{c_2C+c_1}\right) & \text{if } R + b < c_2C + c_1 \\ 0 & \text{if } R + b \geq c_2C + c_1 \end{cases} \quad (5c)$$

$$f_4(R, C) = \begin{cases} (a_2C + a_1) \times \ln\left(\frac{R+(b_2C+b_1)}{c_2C+c_1}\right) & \text{if } R + (b_2C + b_1) < c_2C + c_1 \\ 0 & \text{if } R + (b_2C + b_1) \geq c_2C + c_1 \end{cases} \quad (5d)$$

### 310 3.2 Mixed-effects model formulation for GHI decay

311 We used a mixed-effects model to capture the main observed features of ir-  
 312 radiance decay during hurricanes. Unlike other methods such as fixed-effects  
 313 model, this model allows us to explicitly decompose the random variable  $\epsilon^h$   
 314 in Equation 4 into two independent factors (Pinheiro and Bates, 2006), one  
 315 factor accounting for the variability between different time steps represented  
 316 by the random variable  $\eta^h$  and another accounting for the spatial variability  
 317 at a fixed time represented by the random variable  $\varepsilon^h$ .

$$\delta^h = f(R, C) + \eta^h + \varepsilon^h \quad (6)$$

318 Through this explicit decomposition, we properly represent the high GHI  
 319 temporal and spatial variability structure as extensively discussed in previ-  
 320 ous research (Lehr et al., 2017; Patel et al., 2018; Mihailović et al., 2021). The  
 321 mixed-effects regression has both fixed and random components (Pinheiro and  
 322 Bates, 2006). With the fixed effect component, we capture how hurricanes de-  
 323 crease the (logarithm of the) median GHI with the factor  $f(R, C)$  (Equation  
 324 5). With the random component of the model, we capture spatial uncertainty  
 325 at a time step with a within-time random effect  $\varepsilon^h$  and uncertainty across time

326 steps with a between-time step random effect  $\eta^h$ . The model assumes that  $\eta^h$   
 327 and  $\varepsilon^h$  are independent. Similar techniques and independence assumptions  
 328 have been used to model natural disaster intensities with radiating decay. For  
 329 example, mixed-effects models and similar independence assumptions are ex-  
 330 tensively used to assess ground shaking that propagates from an earthquake  
 331 epicenter to a large geographical extent (Campbell and Bozorgnia, 2014; Abra-  
 332 hamson et al., 2016).

333 **3.3 Fitting the GHI decay model**

334 We lumped all hurricane data to fit the parameters of  $f(R, C)$ . Notice that  
 335 for a fixed time  $t$ , an observation of  $\delta^h$  at site  $j$  ( $\delta_{t,j}^h$ ) is the sum of  $\eta_t^h$ ,  $\varepsilon_{t,j}^h$   
 336 and  $f(R_{t,j}, C_t)$ . As  $\eta_t^h$  only captures temporal uncertainty, at a fixed time  $t$ ,  
 337 it takes the same value for all sites.  $\varepsilon_{t,j}^h$  captures spatial uncertainty, thus at  
 338 fixed time  $t$ , it varies for each specific site  $j$ . Similarly, while  $C_t$  varies at each  
 339 time step  $t$ ,  $R_{t,j}$  also varies for each site  $j$ . Thus, for each observation,

$$\delta_{t,j}^h = f(R_{t,j}, C_t) + \eta_t^h + \varepsilon_{t,j}^h \quad (7)$$

340 As described previously, we estimated  $\delta_{t,j}^h$  for around  $\sim 28$  M observations  
 341 corresponding to multiple time steps and sites of GHI recordings during the  
 342 22 hurricanes in the NREL dataset. We preprocessed the data by removing  
 343 sites at long distances where hurricanes did not have significant effect on GHI,  
 344 i.e.,  $d/ROCI > 2$ ,  $d/RMW > 20$ ,  $d/R0 > 1$ , and  $d/R34 > 4$  (Table S1). We then  
 345 balanced the observations across the hurricane categories and distances from  
 346 the center to the sites. There are more data samples for smaller hurricane cat-  
 347 egories and at larger distances from the center. To avoid that these samples  
 348 heavily control the regression, we randomly selected the same number of sam-  
 349 ples for different categories and four equally spaced intervals of  $R$ , resulting in  
 350  $\sim 0.75$  M data points for the analysis.

351 We conducted mixed-effect regressions for all 16 combinations of functional  
 352 forms  $f(R, C)$  and normalizing radii. We estimated the model parameters using  
 353 maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) for the non-linear mixed-effects regres-  
 354 sion with a Matlab package. The package uses an expectation-maximization  
 355 algorithm to solve for the parameters of the fixed component in Equation 5  
 356 while accounting for the unobserved component of the regression in Equation 7  
 357 (Lindstrom and Bates, 1990). We fitted the parameters for the four functions  
 358 considering the four previously analyzed normalization radii, ROCI, RMW,  
 359 R0, R34.

360 We report all fitted parameters in Table 1 and show the fitted functional  
 361 forms for  $f_4$  in Figure 5. Regardless of the normalizing radii, the fitted func-  
 362 tions show that GHI decays are the strongest closer to the hurricane center  
 363 and higher hurricane categories. These observations are consistent with the  
 364 presence of optically thick cloud structures close to the hurricane center and  
 365 during hurricane maturity and intensification, as noted previously.

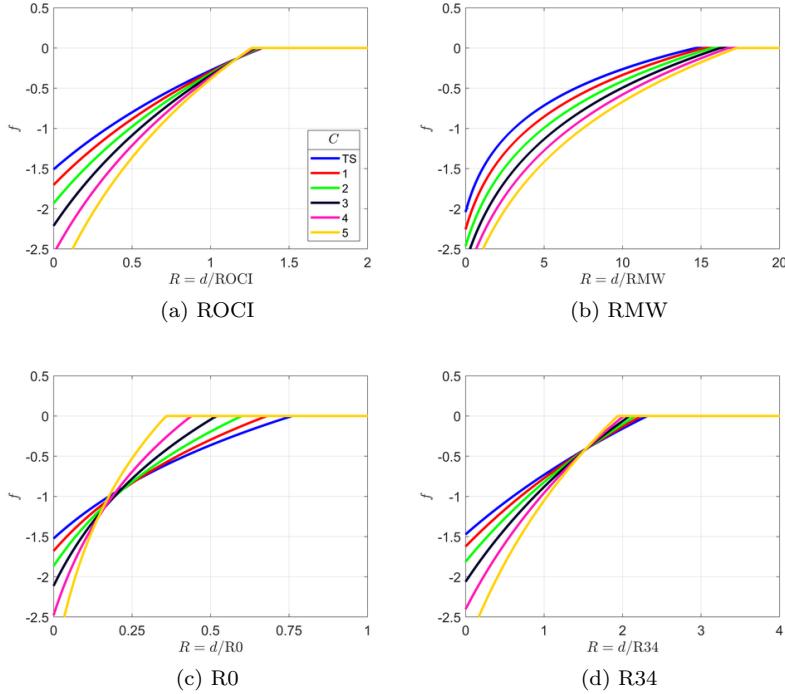


Fig. 5: Fitted functional form  $f_4$  in Equation 5d for distances normalized by the four different normalizing radii.

366 The regressions also show that the decay extends up to sites well beyond  
 367 RMW and R34, reaching sites  $\sim 15\text{RMW}$  and  $\sim 2\text{ROCI}$  away from the hur-  
 368 rricane center. The decay is also well within R0, reaching sites only up to  
 369  $\sim 0.35 - 0.75\text{R0}$ . The decay extents are most consistent with ROCI as they  
 370 are bounded by  $\sim 1.3$  times its size from the hurricane center (Figure 5a),  
 371 confirming the observation that the cloud structures and radial extent of hur-  
 372 rricane circulation defined by ROCI are strongly coupled with the hurricane  
 373 mechanism for high light absorption and reflection. Because this threshold ( $\sim$   
 374 1.3) does not change significantly for different categories, hurricanes with low  
 375 categories can cover more extensive regions with clouds that reduce GHI than  
 376 hurricanes with high categories as long as they have larger ROCI. However,  
 377 the level of decay will be smaller for lower categories.

### 378 3.4 Statistical Performance

379 We compared the statistical performance of the 16 regressions in Figure 5  
 380 using the AIC (Akaike, 1974). The AIC assesses the trade-off between the  
 381 model goodness of fit and its simplicity. The AIC is estimated as  $-2\hat{l} - 2K$ ,

Table 1: Fitted parameters for the four functional forms of  $f$  in Equation 5 using different normalizing radii.

Model	Norm. Radius	Parameters					
		$a_1$	$a_2$	$b_1$	$b_2$	$c_1$	$c_2$
$f_1$	ROCI	1.38	$2.37 \times 10^{-1}$	$6.43 \times 10^{-1}$		1.95	
	RMW	$7.78 \times 10^{-1}$	$8.85 \times 10^{-2}$	1.27		$1.34 \times 10^2$	
	R0	$6.42 \times 10^{-1}$	$1.47 \times 10^{-1}$	$5.45 \times 10^{-2}$		1.04	
	R34	1.55	$2.45 \times 10^{-1}$	1.30		3.43	
$f_2$	ROCI	1.37	$2.46 \times 10^{-1}$	$6.43 \times 10^{-1}$	$3.01 \times 10^{-3}$	1.95	
	RMW	$7.27 \times 10^{-1}$	$1.08 \times 10^{-1}$	$9.43 \times 10^{-1}$	$1.29 \times 10^{-1}$	$9.74 \times 10^1$	
	R0	1.63	$7.50 \times 10^{-1}$	$4.66 \times 10^{-1}$	$4.62 \times 10^{-2}$	1.05	
	R34	1.47	$3.47 \times 10^{-1}$	1.33	$5.28 \times 10^{-2}$	3.60	
$f_3$	ROCI	1.34	$2.53 \times 10^{-1}$	$6.47 \times 10^{-1}$		2.01	$-1.90 \times 10^{-2}$
	RMW	$8.52 \times 10^{-1}$	$9.73 \times 10^{-2}$	1.69		$1.62 \times 10^1$	$5.89 \times 10^{-1}$
	R0	$7.61 \times 10^{-1}$	$2.11 \times 10^{-1}$	$1.06 \times 10^{-1}$		$9.01 \times 10^{-1}$	$-8.59 \times 10^{-2}$
	R34	1.40	$2.90 \times 10^{-1}$	1.27		3.64	$-7.70 \times 10^{-2}$
$f_4$	ROCI	1.97	$9.65 \times 10^{-2}$	1.15	$-1.26 \times 10^{-1}$	2.48	$-1.39 \times 10^{-1}$
	RMW	$7.74 \times 10^{-1}$	$1.41 \times 10^{-1}$	1.02	$2.77 \times 10^{-1}$	$1.57 \times 10^1$	$7.98 \times 10^{-1}$
	R0	1.43	$8.66 \times 10^{-2}$	$3.99 \times 10^{-1}$	$-6.36 \times 10^{-2}$	1.16	$-1.44 \times 10^{-1}$
	R34	2.57	$4.96 \times 10^{-2}$	2.99	$-3.84 \times 10^{-1}$	5.31	$-4.59 \times 10^{-1}$

382 where  $\hat{l}$  is the logarithm of the marginal likelihood and  $K$  is the “degrees of  
 383 freedom correction” equal to the number of fixed parameters plus the number  
 384 of mean and variance parameters of the random component.  $K$  represents a  
 385 penalty for an increased risk of overfitting with higher model complexity, i.e.,  
 386 with more parameters.

387 The results show that the model that performs the best (with the lowest  
 388 AIC score) is  $f_4$  with  $R = d/\text{ROCI}$  (Table S2). In fact, for all normalizing radii,  
 389  $f_4$ , which takes six parameters, performs better than  $f_3$  and  $f_2$ , which take  
 390 5 parameters, and than  $f_1$ , which takes 4 parameters. Moreover,  $f_3$  performs  
 391 better than  $f_2$  in all cases, suggesting that having a category-dependent scale  
 392 factor  $c_2$  is more effective than having a category-dependent short-distance  
 393 correction factor  $b_2$ .  $f_1$  performs worse than  $f_3$ , but in a few cases, it performs  
 394 better than  $f_2$ .

395 ROCI and R34, which are the radii with the first and second-best AIC  
 396 performance (Figure S6), exhibit a similar shape where hurricanes with lower  
 397 categories take slightly longer distances to reach normal levels of GHI, i.e.,  $f_4 =$   
 398 0. R0, the radius with third-best performance, shows much longer distances to  
 399 reach the plateau for hurricanes with smaller categories. In contrast, RMW,  
 400 which has the lowest performance, exhibits smaller extents with GHI decay  
 401 for hurricanes with lower categories. Based on these AIC scores, we suggest  
 402 using  $f_4$  with  $R = d/\text{ROCI}$  to track GHI decay during hurricanes.

403 **4 Probabilistic modeling of solar irradiance during hurricanes**  
 404

405 **4.1 Stochastic model formulation**

406 We use stochastic modeling for spatiotemporal simulation of solar irradiance  
 407 during hurricanes and solve the problem with Monte Carlo simulation. The  
 408 analysis estimates irradiance during a hurricane  $h$  for each site  $j$  (out of  $N$   
 409 sites of interest) and multiple time steps  $t$ . Following Equation 3, samples of  
 410 GHI realizations can be as

$$I^h = \bar{I} \times e^{f(R,C) + \epsilon^h} \quad (8)$$

411 In the logarithmic space,  $\epsilon^h$  accounts for spatiotemporal variability in GHI  
 412 during hurricanes. Under our initial assumption that hurricanes only modify  
 413 the GHI logarithmic mean,  $\epsilon^h$  remains the same as normal-conditions  $\epsilon$ . Thus

$$I^h = \bar{I} \times e^{f(R,C) + \epsilon} \quad (9)$$

414 Following the lognormality assumption for GHI during normal conditions,  
 415  $I^h$  can be estimated by transforming GHI during normal conditions to GHI  
 416 during hurricane conditions

$$I^h = I \times e^{f(R,C)} \quad (10)$$

417 This equation enables us to leverage well-defined GHI normal-conditions  
 418 data throughout the entire U.S. to find decayed GHI during hurricanes with  
 419 a clean and simple formula. We fit probability distributions for  $I$  using data  
 420 from the NREL Physical Solar Model (PSM) version 3 (Sengupta et al., 2018).  
 421 This 20-year dataset is sufficient to characterize two-hour variations of normal-  
 422 conditions GHI within a day for each month and up to 4-km spatial resolution.  
 423 Then, for each site  $j$  and time  $t$ , a realization of GHI during normal conditions  
 424 ( $\tilde{I}_{t,j}$ ) is sampled and adjusted to hurricane conditions using  $f(R_{t,j}, C_t)$  as

$$\tilde{I}_{t,j}^h = \tilde{I}_{t,j} \times e^{f(R_{t,j}, C_t)} \quad (11)$$

425 **4.2 Assessing GHI in the Southern United States for a synthetic  
 426 storm**

427 We estimated irradiance for 839 counties ( $N = 839$ ) in the United States's  
 428 southern region for a large hurricane from its genesis to its dissipation, fo-  
 429 cusing on the counties' centroids. We selected the hurricane from a synthetic  
 430 dataset with 5018 physically possible landfalling storms in the U.S. generated  
 431 from a statistical-deterministic tropical cyclone (TC) model (Marsooli et al.,  
 432 2019). The selected synthetic storm reaches a category of 5 before making  
 433 landfall in Florida affecting a large region, e.g., ROCI of  $\sim 500$  km (Figure 6a).

434 The model output the hurricane's track, maximum sustained winds, and radii  
 435 of maximum winds in 2-hour intervals, which were coupled with irradiance  
 436 estimates using the exact synthetic hurricane's temporal resolution. Addition-  
 437 ally, at each time step, we estimated R0 based on both the radius of maximum  
 438 wind and maximum wind using the same TC wind field profile model applied  
 439 to the historical storms (Chavas et al., 2015). We estimated ROCI using the  
 440 expression  $ROCI = 0.18 \times R0 + 226$  (km), which was obtained conducting  
 441 a regression on the 22 historic TC described previously. This application il-  
 442 lustrates how our proposed framework combines synthetic storm simulations,  
 443 irradiance quantification, and our proposed GHI decay model.

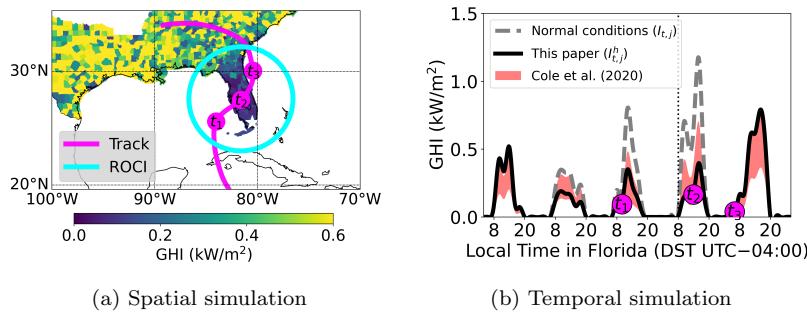


Fig. 6: Stochastic simulation of GHI during a synthetic storm making landfall in Florida. The spatial simulation shows a GHI map at 2 pm local time (DST UTC -4), i.e.,  $t_2$ , when the hurricane has a category of 4 and a ROCI of  $\sim 500$  km. The temporal simulation shows GHI during the storm in black for the Miami-Dade county (white star in the map). The circle marks in magenta show the GHI in Miami-Dade for the times when the hurricane center was at corresponding circle marks for times  $t_1$ ,  $t_2$ , and  $t_3$  in the map. The hurricane takes 44 hours to go from  $t_1$  to  $t_2$ . A vertical dotted line depicts landfall time.

444 A snapshot map shows the resulting GHI,  $\tilde{I}_{t,j}^h$ , for 2 pm local time, i.e.,  
 445 fixed  $t$ , when the storm crossing Florida from West to East (Figure 6a). Under  
 446 normal conditions, GHI would be high at 2 pm, similar to the levels of Texas  
 447 or Louisiana on the map, with several regions above  $0.6 \text{ kW/m}^2$ . However,  
 448 our simulations show that the hurricane significantly reduces generation to  
 449 values even below  $0.1 \text{ kW/m}^2$  close to the hurricane center. Note that cloud  
 450 conditions of category-4 hurricanes drastically reduce the median GHI by 70%,  
 451 i.e.,  $f_4 = -1.21$ , even at distant sites  $0.5 \text{ ROCI}$  away from the hurricane center  
 452 (Figure 5a). The resulting spatial distribution shows a good resemblance with  
 453 the radial decay during the 2005 Hurricane Katrina with significantly lower  
 454 GHI in the areas surrounding the hurricane center (Figure 1a).

455 The simulation of multiple snapshots allows for the analysis of the temporal  
456 variations of GHI during hurricanes at a specific site, i.e., fixed  $j$ . In Miami-  
457 Dade county (in the white star in Figure 6b), Florida, the hurricane decreased  
458 GHI before making landfall. The simulation shows that the hurricane reduces  
459 GHI,  $\tilde{I}_{t,j}^h$ , during three days. Through an analysis of 18 previous hurricanes,  
460 Cole et al. (2020) noted that GHI decayed to 18-60%, from clear-sky GHI during  
461 storms, and 39%-90% and 46%-100% for 72 hours before and after storms.  
462 The event duration in that study was determined through a subjective assess-  
463 ment of extreme wind conditions, resulting in an estimated average duration  
464 of 44 hours for the 18 events.

465 For comparison, we estimated the range of GHI decay using Cole et al.  
466 (2020)'s ratios, assuming that the synthetic storm's critical effects on Miami-  
467 Dade also last 44 hours. Our results give GHI estimates within Cole et al.  
468 (2020)'s ranges, indicating consistency with these observations, for the three  
469 days when our model predicts hurricane affects irradiance in Miami-Dade.  
470 Nevertheless, Cole et al. (2020)'s study suggests that the hurricane will af-  
471 fect GHI for five days, two more days than our model. These differences are  
472 not significant in the final estimates of GHI, though, as Cole et al. (2020)  
473 observed that GHI reductions before and after storms can also be modest,  
474 10% and below. These slight differences arise from the subjective definition of  
475 the hurricane duration in Cole et al. (2020)'s study. Defining a high thresh-  
476 old for extreme hurricane winds would reduce the hurricane duration, further  
477 reducing the timespan of decayed GHI.

478 Finally, our model demonstrates how irradiance can be simulated under  
479 hurricane conditions using state-of-the-art hurricane hazard characterizations.  
480 Our study systematically assesses instantaneous hurricane conditions through  
481 intensity and radii. Thus, it allows us to model higher temporal resolution than  
482 Cole et al. (2020)'s three intervals by coupling synthetic storms and irradiance  
483 quantification methods to assess solar irradiance during these extreme events.  
484 While the application focuses on a single synthetic storm, our framework allows  
485 for the assessment of the entire hurricane dataset to analyze comprehensive  
486 risk metrics (Ceferino et al., 2021).

## 487 5 Conclusions

488 This paper presents a stochastic model to capture irradiance decay during  
489 hurricanes, which has not been developed before to the authors' knowledge.  
490 The irradiance decay model is based on an extensive assessment of GHI under  
491 22 landfalling storms in the North American basin, which reached a category  
492 of at least three during their lifetime. The dataset conclusively shows that  
493 hurricanes reduce GHI throughout their tracks. We confirmed that the dis-  
494 tance from a site to the hurricane and its category are critical predictors of  
495 irradiance decay. We argue that the mechanism driving the decay is the forma-  
496 tion of optically thick clouds in the eyewall, which often become thicker during  
497 hurricane intensification. With high moisture density and vertical depth, these

498 optically thick clouds reduce direct incident radiation by light absorption and  
499 reflection.

500 We fitted four functional forms that vary in complexity to represent ir-  
501 radiance decay using a mixed-effects regression. Multiple category-dependent  
502 features controlling the intensity and shape of decay were tested, and the best  
503 functional form was selected using AIC to demonstrate its suitable statisti-  
504 cal performance. ROCI is shown to be a good size metric for normalizing the  
505 distance in the functional forms of irradiance decay. Thus, we suggest using  
506 ROCI if hazard modeling allows for its estimation in synthetic future storms.

507 Next, we described the application of the GHI decay model for stochastic  
508 simulations of solar irradiance during hurricanes. We conducted a spatiotempo-  
509 ral simulation of GHI during a synthetic storm for the United States's southern  
510 region in 839 counties. Our analysis shows to be consistent with empirical ob-  
511 servations of GHI spatial and temporal distributions from previous datasets  
512 and studies. Our results show that solar irradiance can decrease by more than  
513 70% in vast regions during a category-4 hurricane. Furthermore, reductions in  
514 irradiance lasted three days for Miami-Dade in our analysis, suggesting that  
515 power loss can last several days. These results indicate that hurricanes can  
516 significantly affect generation even if the solar infrastructure is undamaged.  
517 Damage to the solar infrastructure will further exacerbate the losses reducing  
518 generation to zero even if irradiance bounces back to normal after the hurri-  
519 cane. Thus, comprehensive generation loss assessments require the integration  
520 with and development of panel fragility functions as in Ceferino et al. (2021)'s  
521 study.

522 Our results show that generation losses driven by GHI decay can be critical,  
523 e.g., 70%. Functional power systems are crucial to support other urban systems  
524 during emergency response and expedite recovery. Recently, Hurricane Ida  
525 caused nearly 1M outages in Louisiana, reducing electricity access by more  
526 than 60% in more than ten parishes (counties), affecting the functionality of  
527 the water system and delaying recovery Goodman et al. (2021); Prevatt et al.  
528 (2021). While our proposed model focuses on spatiotemporal forecasting of  
529 irradiance rather than solar generation, it is essential to assess the effect of  
530 power disruptions during hurricanes due to the importance of irradiance decay.  
531 Solar generation is expected to become an essential source for our future power  
532 systems. At the same time, hurricanes are projected to be stronger in the  
533 future climate (Knutson et al., 2020). Coupling the presented model with risk  
534 frameworks offers opportunities to assess the effectiveness of climate mitigation  
535 and adaptation measures to make our grid more resilient to natural hazards  
536 while it becomes cleaner with solar energy.

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**544    Conflict of interest**

545    The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

**546    Availability of data and material**

547    The GHI data are publicly available and were obtained from the NREL web-  
548    site (<https://www.nrel.gov/gis/solar.html>) using the corresponding API.  
549    The historical hurricane data are publicly available and were obtained from  
550    the National Hurricane Center website (<https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/data/>)  
551    The parameters for the fitted GHI decay model, Figures S1-S6 and Tables S1  
552    and S2 are provided in the Supplementary Information in <https://tinyurl.com/4nsbz8dc>.  
553

**554    Code availability**

555    The code with the model implementation from this paper is available upon  
556    request to the corresponding author.

**557    Author contributions**

558    L.C. and N.L. conceptualized the model for GHI decay and the application  
559    for assessing solar irradiance during hurricanes. L.C., N.L., and D.X. curated  
560    the data for irradiance during storms, processed wind fields, and fitted the  
561    statistical models for the GHI decay model. L.C. drafted the manuscript with  
562    contributions and edits from all the authors.

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