

WALKING ATM'S: A CRIMINOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF HISPANIC ROBBERY
VICTIMIZATION PRE AND POST HURRICANE KATRINA IN
METROPOLITAN NEW ORLEANS

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ABSTRACT

The Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina sparked the largest influx of Hispanic laborers in the metropolitan New Orleans area ever recorded in Louisiana's history. Inhabiting impoverished neighborhoods with minimal resources, unable to speak the language and illegal in status, may prime this migrant class as vulnerable targets of robbery. Hence, robberies against Hispanics have increased in Jefferson Parish, which is the basis for the present study. The intention of this research is to ascertain whether such robbery victims sustain greater secondary violence during the commission of the crime than that of Non-Hispanics and also if geographic confinement is contributory factor to Hispanics being robbed.

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INTRODUCTION

People from countless regions throughout the globe will likely never forget Hurricane Katrina and its catastrophic aftermath upon the gulf coast region of the United States. Apart from the tangible destruction to the metropolitan area of New Orleans, the storm's indelible blemish on its landscape has enticed numerous people from Central America to migrate, typically for economic reasons, and participate in the recovery effort. A significant number of these individuals toil in hazardous reconstruction environments that most of the native citizenry would reject. Furthermore, scores of these migrant workers end up as victims of violent crimes.

In the midst of rebuilding a part of America destroyed by such a cataclysmic event, a secondary social catastrophe is taking place, impacting this new segment of Jefferson Parish who is here to bring about positive transformation. This calamity manifests in the form of selective aggression aimed at Hispanics by assailants during either attempted or completed robberies. Illegal by status and fearful of detection and/or deportation, most of the Hispanic workforce strive to maintain a low profile within the majority of the present population, as they are instrumental in reshaping the place known to many as *the city that care forgot*.

Just west of New Orleans stands Jefferson Parish, a metropolis in its own right with a pre-Katrina population of approximately 450,000, which sustained far less infrastructural damage than its neighbors. Since the storm, the populace of Jefferson Parish has suffered a depletion of different races with the exception of Hispanics. According to the U.S Census Bureau, the proportion of Hispanics rose or remained the same between mid-2007 and mid-2008,

with Jefferson Parish measuring the highest proportion of Hispanic residences of any race with 9.4 percent last year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009).

This new augment of skilled and unskilled arrivals initiated revitalization and progress while striving for a better life. In this era of recovery, crime indicators have revealed that robberies have increased in Jefferson Parish. Hispanics recipients of this particular swell in law-breaking have been targeted as victims.

Unlike Non-Hispanic victims of the similar misfortunes, the distinctive aspects of this manner of criminality displays a level of vulnerability of people of Latino heritage as they reside and work in high crime areas. Specifically, such migrants have minimal resources, limited English speaking skills and reside in lower socioeconomic areas. The consequences of this impact repeatedly expose the defenselessness of Hispanics, making them susceptible to victimization.

The principle of this research is to focus on the degree in which this social quandary has impacted the Hispanic way of life and affected the social cohesion of particular communities. Moreover, it is designed to explain the possible causes for the certain forms of criminality targeted at this demographic by individuals who regard them as nothing more than transporters of accessible valuables and currency or *Walking ATM's*. Potentially, these victims will have a voice that will stimulate change through justice, as they too strive for the American dream.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Post-Katrina recovery efforts in Jefferson Parish Louisiana channeled the largest surge of Hispanic migrants ever recorded in US history. In the days after the hurricane, President George W. Bush temporarily suspended the Davis-Bacon Act, which guarantees construction workers the prevailing local wage when paid with federal money (Edsall, 2005). The Hispanic population of New Orleans is believed to have increased by 4,000 people as a result of the influx of disaster restoration workers; that of neighboring Jefferson Parish had increased by 6,000, so that by early 2007 one out of ten people in both New Orleans and Jefferson Parish were Hispanic (Bankston, 2007, pg. 40).

Although, no literature has been pinpointed regarding further victimization of Hispanics during robberies, and few highlight aspects of Hispanic victimization germane to this principle this social issue will require further study. A 2007 study by Callie Rennison, PhD of the University of Missouri was most relevant to this analysis. Using over a decade of data from the National Crime Victimization Survey, and the review of data from other researchers this article investigates Hispanic reporting of victimization relative to Non-Hispanic Whites, Blacks, American Indians, and Asians (Rennison, 2007, pg.754). One notable finding indicates that Hispanics are least likely to report in relation to more serious crimes than Non-Hispanic Whites. Rennison proffered three cultural explanations to suggest this finding. First, in general, Hispanics view addressing personal problems with the police as a threat to the integrity and the authority of the head of household (Carter, 1983). Second, many Hispanics fear that police

contact invites questions about immigration status for themselves, family members, and others in the community (Walker, Spohn, & Delone, 2004; Rennison 2007). The third rationale is communicative difficulties expected due to a language barrier.

Rennison and collaborator, Hart compared the percentage of crime reporting between Hispanics and Non-Hispanics for total violence and was crime specific. The crimes included rape, robbery, and assault (aggravated and simple). The assessment revealed no difference in the percentage of crime reported except for robbery. The drawback to this is the study failed to include almost any relevant correlate of reporting violence (e.g. severity of violence, weapon presence, gender of victim) (Rennison, 2007 pg. 755). The analysis was derived from descriptive reports of the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) which are commonly reviewed for comparative analysis.

While the subject matter referenced is significant to determine why a particular minority group is not likely to report violence against them to the police, it is equally imperative to ascertain the level of victimization. Rennison, in collaboration with other researchers, conducted a study derived strictly from the National Crime Victimization Survey, which can be criticized for reliability and accuracy because Hispanics are more likely to become non-interviewers overtime (Hart, Rennison, and Gibson 2005). Conversely, the contribution to the literature and Hispanic populous rises above any criticism, specifically for taking her study beyond univariate and bivariate analyses in examining some of the difficulties Hispanics have with report crimes to the police.

Baumer (2002) published an investigation of the influence of neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage on reporting violence in which Hispanic origin was included as a

control. Coefficients from his model suggest that Hispanic origin was a predictor of reporting robbery to the police. Specifically, Baumer found that robbery (completed and attempted aggregated) against a Hispanic was less likely to be reported than similar violence against Non-Hispanic (Rennison, (2007) pg.756). Race and ethnic disparities in violent offending and victimization are pronounced and long-standing. Blacks, and to a lesser extent Hispanics, suffer much higher rates of robbery and homicide victimization than do whites. These differences result in part from social forces that ecologically concentrate race with poverty and other social dislocations (Sampson; Lauritsen, 1997).

Conceivably, there are many obvious predictors to support why Hispanics are unwilling to report an act of violence to the police, especially migrant laborers. Even more, there are palpable grounds to support the view that Hispanics are susceptible to being victims of robbery. Thus, local conditions, social class in the home country, and manner of reception might be important determinants of immigrant well-being (Lee, M.T., Martinez, R, & Rosefeld, R. B., 2002, 2000 Pg. 810). Still others maintain that large labor pools of young immigrant males willing to work for lower wages than native-born Americans, in particular inner city residents exacerbate ethnic conflict and contribute to urban disorders (Brimelow, 1995). The primary reason for the South's increase in Hispanic workers is economic opportunity, a fundamental motivation for migration (Bankston, 2007 pg 24); in this case, Hurricane Katrina.

Martinez and Lee conducted a study that examined the immigration and crime bond by focusing on where migrants live and how immigration might impact violent crime in Miami relating to Mariel refugees who were portrayed as killers by the media. Their finding suggested that the Mariels were in greater danger of victimization than others (Martinez; Lee, Pg. 798). One can only speculate as to whether the Meriels experienced similar difficulties with

victimization in south Florida as the Hispanic people did in the gulf coast region after Hurricane Katrina. An answer to this question would require further research.

One of the most important theoretical perspectives in criminology is the social disorganization theory. The lack of social cohesion, confidence in the police and socioeconomic disadvantage are components of this theory. A classic hypothesis regarding the nature of the relationship between social cohesion and homicide assumes that neighborhoods with limited social cohesion have less collective efficacy (Sampson et al., 1997). This also results in difficulties in securing an adequate share of various public services, such as formal police protection (Nieuwbeerta et al., 2008 Pg. 93). The link between levels of socioeconomic disadvantage and social cohesion is based on the residents' limited material and political resources in disadvantaged neighborhoods that are argued to lead to a lower capacity for social organization (2008, Pg. 94). This is derived from the classic works of Shaw & McKay, 1942/1969 on which the social disorganization theory was developed. Residents of socioeconomic disadvantaged neighborhoods, especially youth and immigrants, are felt to be alienated from the general norms of society (Anderson, 1999; Baumer, 2002). Outsiders who are in the process of violating a community's space can threaten a broad range of values and conjure up many stereotypes about their behavior (Skogan, 1986 Pg. 215). If Hispanics are to be truly integrated into American society, much work must be done to overcome that kind of anger and resentment (Rivera, 2008, Pg. 64).

A considerable amount of research exist which examines the nexus between victimization and poverty. This research provides evidence of a higher rates of victimization occur among the poor. In reviewing recent data on impoverished Hispanics and victimization, perplexing statistics were uncovered which conflicts with past studies. The recent data shows that although

many Hispanics reside in impoverished neighborhoods, they are not victimized at disproportionately higher rates. According to one researcher, the findings that Hispanics were not victimized at disproportionately high rates are enigmatic (Brown 2009).

Cohen and Felson's cite three variables in the routine activities theory which can be examined within this context. These variables are: motivated offenders, suitable targets of criminal victimization and capable guardians. Cohn and Felson hypothesize that changes in daily activities related to work, school, and leisure since World War II have placed more people in particular places at particular times which both increase their accessibility as targets of crime and keep them away from home as guardians of their own possessions and property (Akers 1999).

Advanced studies on Hispanic victimization are minimal in scope. Despite the fact that the literature maintains abundance of studies regarding why a particular class is likely or not to report violence to law enforcement, there remains a missing piece to the puzzle. Nevertheless, research on victimization as it relates to secondary violence still remains hollow, as it pertains to crucial data. Factors, such as, language barrier, resource deprivation, geographic confinement, accessible economic targets, and situational awareness may be considered contributors to victimization and worthy of consideration for future research.

HYPOTHOSIS

H1) Pre-Katrina UCR statistics will reflect a lower robbery rate against Hispanics compared to Post-Katrina data.

The rationale regarding H1 is to determine if an increase of Hispanic victimization has occurred in robbery crimes since Hurricane Katrina. Despite the fact that the recovery effort has yielded great progress and led to an increase in Hispanic population in Jefferson Parish, It is hypothesized that they will be more susceptible victims of robbery.

Dependant Variable: Rate of robbery crimes against Hispanics: (three years Pre-Katrina and three years Post-Katrina).

Independent Variable: Hurricane Katrina.

H2) Unlike Non-Hispanic victims, Hispanic victims are typically exposed to secondary violence (i.e. murder, attempted murder, beatings etc.) during Robberies, Post Katrina.

It is hypothesized that of Hispanic victim reporting results in an elevated rate of consequential aggression during robbery crimes. For the purposes of this study, secondary violence will be defined as any additional criminal act perpetrated against the victim during the robbery.

Dependant Variable: Hispanic victims

Independent Variable: Secondary violence

H3) Geographic confinement is a contributory factor to Hispanic victimization relating to robbery.

It is hypothesized that the UCR will illustrate whether the Hispanic victimization occurred within the confinement of their neighborhood.

Dependant Variable: Hispanic victimization

Independent Variables: Geographic confinement

METHODOLOGY

Secondary data analysis of robberies committed against Hispanics in unincorporated Jefferson Parish, three years pre and post Hurricane Katrina, is the subject of this study. Note this assignment defines Hispanics as migrants predominantly from Central America. For the purpose of this research, robbery is defined as the attempted or completed act of taking anything of value belonging to another from the person of another or that is in the immediate control of another, including: simple robbery, first degree robbery, second degree robbery, armed robbery, purse snatching, and carjacking.

Statistics originated from the UCR and the Robbery Section data base of the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office are the direct sources.

The first undertaking involved reviewing annual reports from the Robbery Section data base for the years 2002 – 2008, which listed all robberies, solved and unsolved, committed in Jefferson Parish. These queries provided all item numbers necessary to access police reports.

The next task entailed accessing all police reports documented in the statistics, which totaled 2,863. All reports were sorted by year, and then divided into Hispanic and Non-Hispanic victim groups (see table 1). Worksheets were utilized subsequently, due to the volume of reports manually assessed.

This method consisted marking the following categories in order to calculate the totals:

Ethnicity (Hispanic/Non-Hispanic), number of victims, secondary violence, no secondary violence, crime specific, geographic confinement, reporting areas.

The manner of counting is a unary system calculating the frequencies of the occurrence of each of the identified categories examined. Two worksheets per year were completed to compare the categories listed between Hispanic and Non-Hispanic victims. Reports that contained secondary violence were flagged for quick reference to determine the crime specific aspect of H2. Those marked were systematically reviewed again to identify the type of secondary violence while keeping track of the numbers.

The number of reports from the data base is not equal to the number of victims. The UCR and data base assign each incident an item number, however there may be more than one victim per report. The only approach to accurately calculate and analyze this data was to manually examine every robbery complaint and document the pertinent information on the worksheets. This meticulous task required an additional mechanism to display if geographic confinement was or was not present along with the number of victims per complaint. The reports were individually reviewed again to determine the reporting area (rep area) or *beat* of the incidents for mapping purposes. A series of maps were utilized to display the geographic areas impacted by Hispanic victimization. To maintain an accurate calculation, the data was thoroughly analyzed three times.

RESULTS

With respect to the first assumption (H1), Pre Katrina UCR statistics will reflect a lower robbery rate against Hispanic victims compared to Post Katrina, all analyses present a positive relationship between the independent and dependent variable. An increase in reported robberies against Hispanics is clearly in consort with the influx of laborers Post Katrina. The robbery rate against Hispanics subsequent to the storm increased 18.4 %. This is shown in Table 1. A decrease in Non-Hispanic robbery reporting is evident the first three years subsequent to the hurricane. This decrease in reporting likely reflects the population decrease in Non-Hispanics due to evacuation from the area under investigation. See Table 1.

The assertion of H2, that unlike Non-Hispanic victims, Hispanic victims are typically exposed to secondary violence during robberies Post Katrina merits further research; refer to Table 2.

Because of the nominal duration this study covered, additional research will be required in order to secure a more accurate understanding of the correlation between the independent variable (secondary violence) and dependent variable (Hispanic victims). Nevertheless, an increase in secondary violence is observed among Hispanic victims two years after the hurricane, then leveling off the final year of the study. In comparison, the Non-Hispanic victim population also displayed an increase in secondary violence.

Though the decrease in Non-Hispanic population must be taken into account for the years 2006 and 2007, an increase in secondary violence among Hispanic victims was higher compared to Non-Hispanics. In 2006 36.8% of Hispanics in contrast to 22.6 % Non-Hispanics sustained secondary violence. The following year (2007) the rate for Hispanics was still high at 31.1 %, however Non-Hispanic secondary violence increased to 29.4%. In final year of the study, a decrease of 25.1% of secondary violence was recorded which fell below Non-Hispanic secondary violence which was noted at 28.8%. Of the total number of robberies against Hispanics, (Table 1. *post Katrina*) analysis reveals the percentage of who were victims of secondary violence is slightly higher than that of Non-Hispanics with the exception of 2005. In 2005, three out four or 75% of the robberies committed contained some form of secondary violence.

Tables 3 and 4 reflect the crime specific element of H2. The secondary violence listed in the robbery reports were noted as additional crimes committed against the victims as the robbery event was occurring. Analysis of Tables 3 and 4 indicates that of the host of additional crimes committed during robberies, simple battery among Hispanics and Non-Hispanics is the more prevalent type of secondary offense. An increase in homicide is documented in both Hispanic and Non-Hispanic robbery crimes. Incidents of aggravated battery increased during robbery crimes among Hispanic victims each year.

In summation, the pre and post Katrina data regarding robbery (H1) rates yielded no extreme revelation. Though robbery rates increased among the Hispanic population residing in Jefferson Parish after the storm, predicting such an increase appeared self-evident given the Hispanic population increase. One aspect of the 18.4 % increase in robbery crimes of Hispanics

suggests that their arrival in significant numbers contrast by the decrease in population of Non-Hispanics evacuees created environment for their victimization.

The hypothesis that Hispanics sustained secondary violence post Katrina (H2) was supported to some degree. The 36.8 % increase in Hispanic victimization in contrast to the 22.6% in Non-Hispanic victimization in 2006, followed by a high percentage of Hispanic victimization in 2007 displays data that Hispanics did receive a higher rate of secondary violence during that time frame. .

With respect to geographic confinement, the data uncovered from the research is supportive of the fact that Hispanic victimization as it pertains to this study has a correlation to the locality of where Hispanic victims reside. Identifying the confined areas of two neighborhoods in Jefferson Parish reporting areas 2705 and 4602 provided a representation of how confined geographically the robbery rate among Hispanics victims became during that period. Nevertheless, the investigator acknowledges that these findings provide only a brief insight into this social dilemma and further research could assist in abating Hispanic victimization.

Table 1. *Robberies Pre Katrina*

Ethnicity	2002	2003	2004	2005	*P
Hispanic	7	15	24	17	3.8
Non-Hispanic	427	417	460	308	96.2

**Hurricane Katrina August 29, 2005*

Robberies Post Katrina

Ethnicity	2005	2006	2007	2008	P
Hispanic	4	95	109	135	20.7
Non-Hispanic	75	379	452	406	79.3

Table 2. *Robberies with Secondary Violence*

Ethnicity	2005	2006	2007	2008	P
Hispanic	3	35	34	34	22.6
Non-Hispanic	26	86	133	117	77.4

Table 3. *Secondary Violence/Crime Specific Hispanic*

Hispanic	2005	2006	2007	2008
Murder	0	1	3	3
Attempted Murder	0	5	2	3
Aggravated Battery	2	9	14	13
Simple Battery	1	19	13	10
Sexual Assault	0	0	0	0
Aggravated Assault	0	1	2	5

Table 4. *Secondary Violence/Crime Specific Non-Hispanic*

Non-Hispanic	2005	2006	2007	2008
Murder	3	5	6	12
Attempted Murder	4	9	7	4
Aggravated Battery	41	22	44	35
Simple Battery	42	49	65	64
Sexual Assault	0	1	0	0
Aggravated Assault	3	0	11	2

The last theory proposed in the study (H3), geographic confinement is a contributory factor to Hispanic victimization, is supported by the analysis of the rep areas listed on the police reports. The UCR data confirms that within concentrated rep areas, Hispanics reside in proximity to where the robberies occurred. Also existing within these rep areas is a higher concentration of reporting among Hispanics regarding robbery crimes. Analysis shows the majority of robberies against Hispanics occurred within rep areas 2705 and 4602, which are low-income housing neighborhoods. Such districts are positioned several miles apart from one another within Jefferson Parish. (See Figures 1-5).

Figure 1. Jefferson Parish

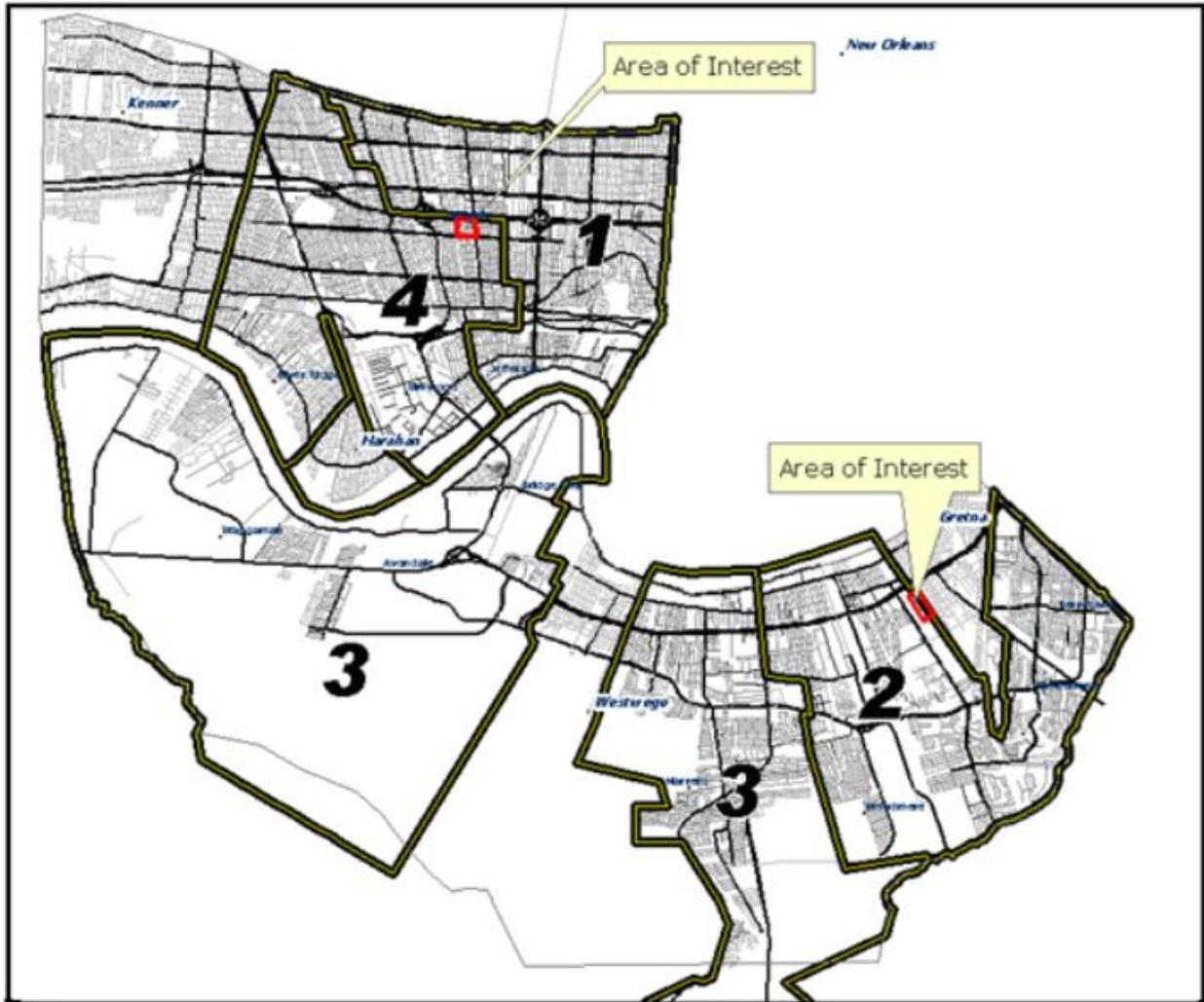


Figure 2. Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office 2nd District and 3rd District

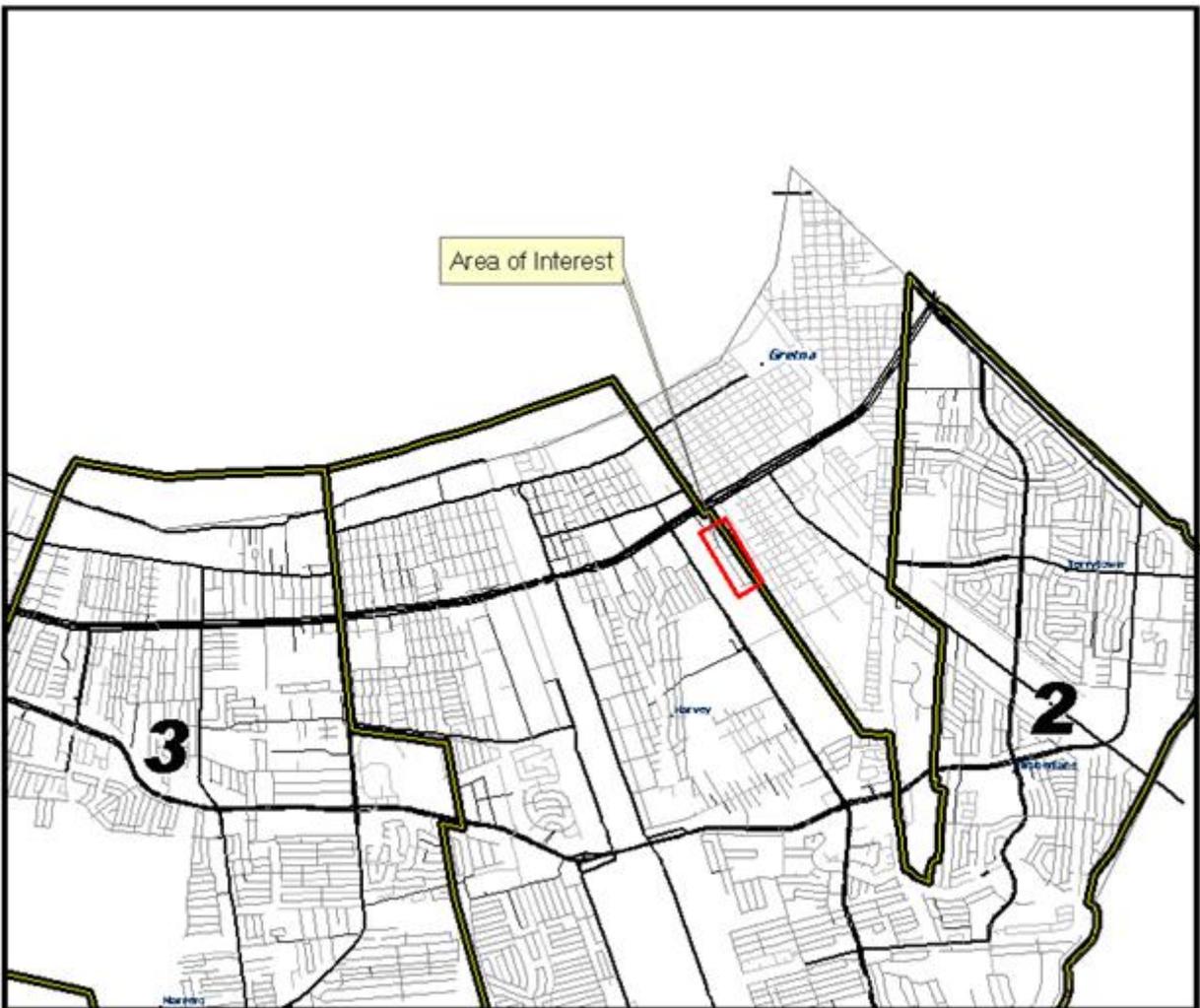


Figure 4. Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office 1st and 4th Districts

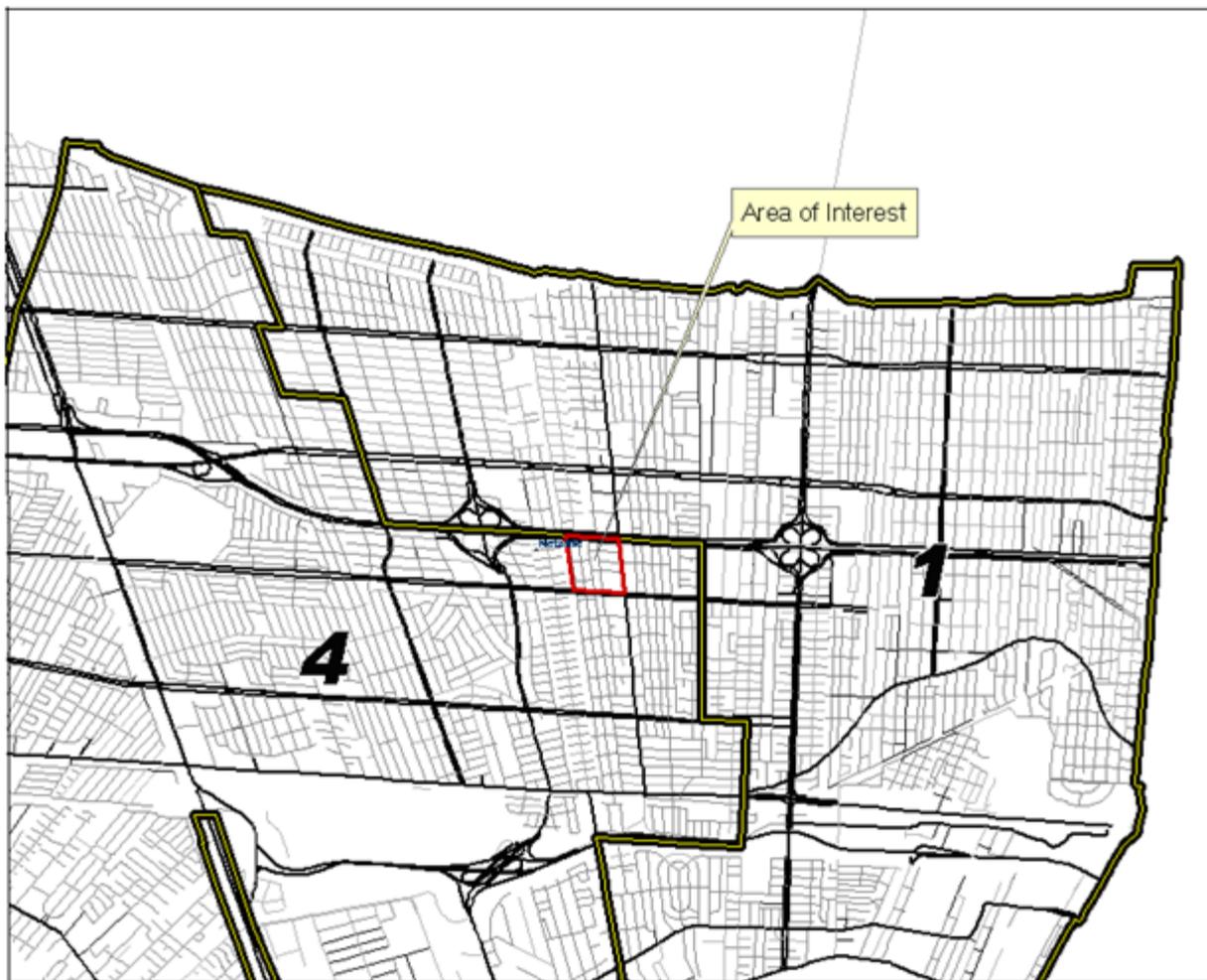
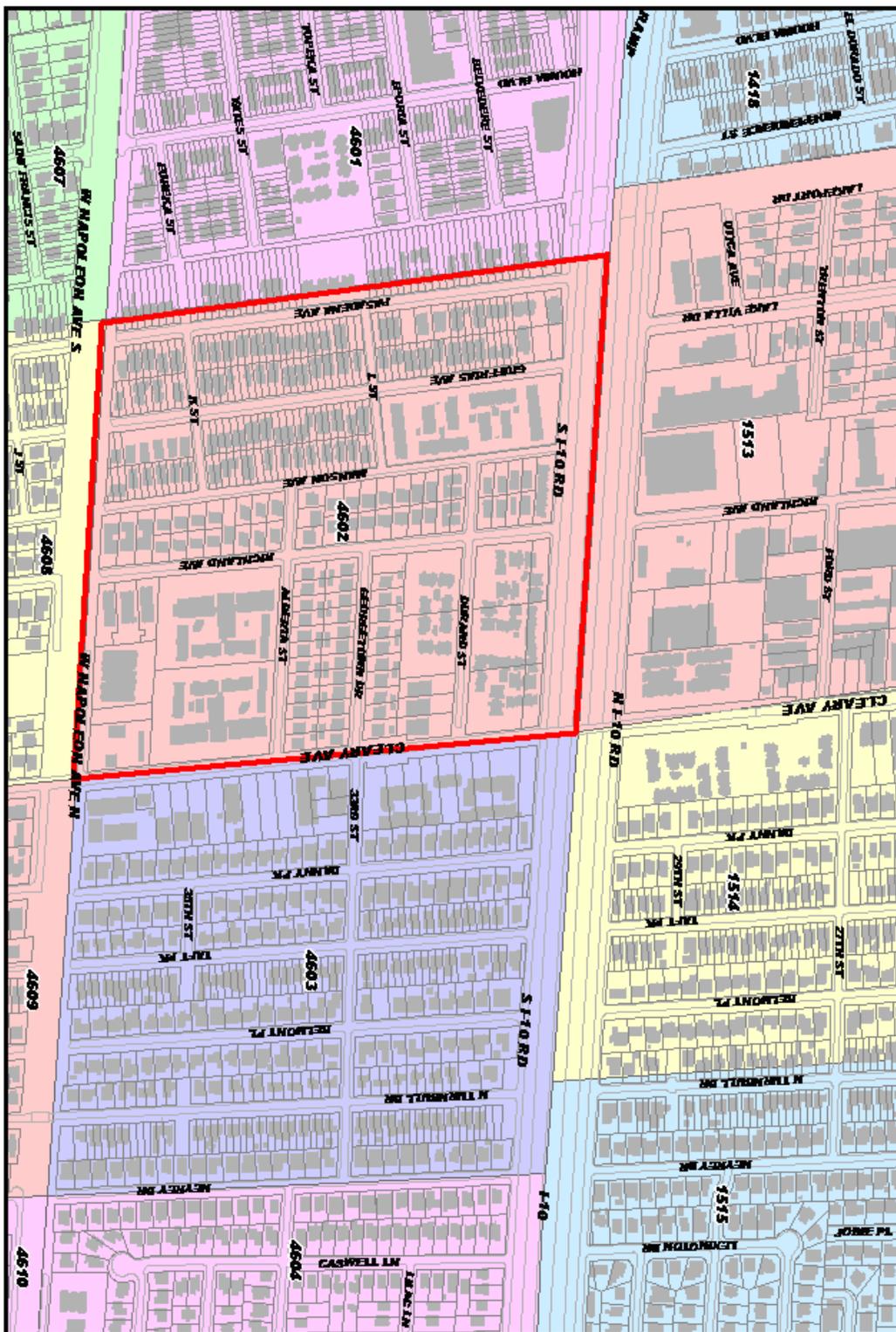


Figure 5. Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office Rep Area 4602



DISCUSSION

Robbery rates among Hispanics were considerably lower than post Hurricane Katrina data. The post Katrina Hispanic population increase in Jefferson Parish correlates with the elevated level of Hispanic victimization contributed by the recovery effort.

Pre Katrina Hispanic victimization numbers depicts an increase in reported robberies from 2002 until an abrupt halt when Hurricane Katrina struck the Louisiana/Mississippi coast August 2005. Post Katrina data reflects an 18.4 % increase in Hispanic robberies with a steady climb in crime reporting at the end of 2005 through 2008 (See Table 1).

Analysis of these findings generates further questions concerning the victimology of Hispanic robbery victims. It remains debatable as to why a sudden increase in one facet of the population in certain geographical areas produces a higher rate of crime reporting. Future deliberation over the causation of aggression against Hispanics in this type of spatial environment will be essential. Nevertheless, an extensive search for literatures of similar circumstances germane to this study yielded unconstructive results. Another factor taken into account is the movement of population pre and post Hurricane Katrina as it pertains to people, many Non-Hispanics, evacuating from the area and several Hispanic migrates entering the area to participate in the recovery effort. Although there is no clear method to determine how many departed the area, what is clear is that for an extended duration post Katrina a shift in the

population of Non-Hispanics deserted their homes for safety, while droves of Hispanics arrived and took up residence in the midst of this disaster.

With respect to Hypothesis two (H2), efforts were made to determine if Hispanics were exposed to secondary violence more so than non-Hispanics during victimization in a Post Katrina environment. The relatively brief Post Katrina 3.2 year examination of data may not completely support a factual basis for this theory. Yet, noticeable existing figures appear to lean towards a trend that Hispanics have endured an elevated rate of secondary victimization in the short duration examined. Robbery of Hispanics with secondary violence increased from three in 2005 to thirty five in 2006, which leveled off to thirty four cases in 2007 and 2008

Geography was a significant aspect of this study for a number of reasons. In addition to it providing a locality to where crime patterns occur, it also highlighted neighborhoods of where several Hispanic people migrated to upon reaching the metropolitan area as the recovery effort progressed. The research reflected the fact that Hispanics settled in lower socioeconomic neighborhoods. The concept of confinement as a contributory factor illustrates that numerous Hispanics reside in specific vicinities absent of economic, social, and educational resources and endure discriminatory victimization. Furthermore, many Hispanics during the Post Katrina period were confined in a sense that their mobility was limited. Hence, Hispanics became target rich as robbery victims by perpetrators capitalizing on this opportunity.

Based on the data retrieved from the robbery reports, clear evidence is present to support the premises that 61% of Hispanics were victimized by robberies in, near or within a one block area of where they reside compared to Non-Hispanic victims. As 2008 ended and Hispanic robbery victimization increased, the geographical areas within the jurisdiction shifted. As of

December 2008 rep area 4602 in the Fourth District sustained the highest rate in one geographical area with 16 robberies. The second highest area to sustain Hispanic victimization was the reporting 2705 area in the Second District with 9 robberies for that year.

Another aspect of the Geographical confinement hypothesis, which was not utilized, is data on suspects who perpetrate robberies against Hispanics. After careful review of UCR data, it was determined that securing accurate information regarding biographical aspects of suspects proved to be limited in scope since several of the robbery crimes examined at the time the reports were written were unsolved with little or no suspect information. However, the robberies that were investigated and led to apprehensions could be the basis for future reviews.

Other factors which could arguably be present when robbery crimes are occurring with Hispanic victims is the theory that the language barrier is also a contributory ingredient. Likewise, Many may suffer from a form of situational awareness such as the inability to completely comprehend the level of danger they might be exposed to by not practicing certain forms of crime prevention and not mindful of their own personal protection.

Crime reporting is another concern with respect to this social dilemma. Recent analysis regarding the accuracy of crime reporting has now become a source of contention. There is now a debate is over which source of data collection paints the most comprehensive picture of our nation's true crime problem. At the core issue to this struggle is a polarization between the U.S. Department of Justice's UCR systems which collection statistics from law enforcement crime reports throughout the country, and the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which collects data from both, reported and unreported crimes. To indicate how far the measuring standards are apart, both systems recently arrived at statistical results which fell at opposite ends

of the spectrum. In May 2001 the FBI released UCR data to show that violent crime in the United States had stabilized in 2000 after several years of decline. Contrary to this, weeks later the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) released findings to indicate that in 2000 the violent crime had fallen by 15 percent from its 1999 level, the greatest percentage decline in the survey's 20 year history (Rand and Rennison 2002). Criminologists, along with various social scientists, believe that both sources of data are useful in collectively displaying criminal trends, victimization levels and crime rates as the year's progress.

Unfortunately the (NCVS) could not provide sound data of unreported Hispanic victimization in the Metropolitan New Orleans area since Hurricane Katrina. On a local level, the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office has embraced a radical approach to Hispanic victimization by relaxing immigration enforcement. The department initiates in providing assistance to Hispanic victims for them to secure temporary visas to remain in the area locally. This process has benefits on multiple levels. For the victims, it allows them latitude and encourages them not to be fearful of deportation to their homeland if they report a crime. In addition, it allows them to remain on U.S. soil and work, while experiencing freedom as U.S citizens.

Recently the Superintendent of the New Orleans Police Department issued statement, announcing that his police force will no longer ask crime victims or witnesses about their documentation status (McCarthy, 2009). In essence, Hispanics will not be challenged to produce or discuss their legal status during criminal investigations. This stance, according to some proponents, is a move in the right direction by abating Hispanics' fears of law enforcement. Yet, others contest that such radical anti-immigration enforcement on the part of local law enforcement may drive a wedge in the working relationships between the NOPD and Federal law enforcement agencies.

Contrary to this issue are the suspects who perpetrate against Hispanic victims. From this examination, local and state authorities need to develop new strategies in providing social alternatives along with sound law enforcement practices. Efforts in addressing the quality of life issues of target neighborhoods could aid in decreasing victimization not only among Hispanics, but all citizens.

Limitations

The depth and breadth of available research specific to this particular aspect of Hispanic victimization was limited during this investigation. Analysis of Hispanic studies in general as it relates to victimization, crime and demographics are abundant. However, Hispanic victimization in the context of a catastrophic event such as Hurricane Katrina appears lean in scope. One may only speculate as to why this is so. An unprecedented increase in the numbers of undocumented Hispanics arriving from outside the United States and settling within restricted areas in a relatively short period of time which impacted several social factors, including crime, is one possibility. It is important to note that due to the uniqueness of this event, historical research for comparison data was largely unavailable.

CONCLUSION

Nevertheless, it is the investigator desire that additional research into Hispanic victimization continues. It is now nearly five years since Hurricane Katrina and progress in the rebuilding of New Orleans is evident. A rapid growth in construction would not have been possible without a dedicated Hispanic work force. Irrelevant of what side of the argument one takes on immigration law, Hurricane Katrina not only brought destruction and death to the area, it also brought a group of energetic people prepared to labor for low wages and subject themselves to physical injustices as they too, become a fabric of America.

Contradictory to other studies, the cataclysmic event which brought the Hispanic work force to Jefferson Parish and New Orleans proper provided a rapid fusion of people from great distances into existing neighborhoods in a relatively short period of time. The dynamics of this consequence, coupled with a lack of preceding research, provides a compelling argument that the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina engineered a prompt social collision with Hispanic migrates in confined geographical areas, possibly creating an experience never witnessed before in modern U.S. times.

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