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THE NEW ORLEANS POLICE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO HURRICANE KATRINA: A CASE STUDY

Michael Peter Wigginton Jr.
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THE NEW ORLEANS POLICE EMERGENCY RESPONSE
TO HURRICANE KATRINA: A CASE STUDY

by

Michael Peter Wigginton, Jr.

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Studies Office
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved:

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The University of Southern Mississippi

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Abstract of a Dissertation
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On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina, a category 3 storm, with sustained winds of one hundred and twenty miles per hour and a twenty-eight foot tidal surge, roared into the city of New Orleans. The tidal surge caused several breeches in the levee system, which resulted in the flooding of eighty percent of the city. This disastrous storm debilitated the entire criminal justice system.

This research project is a case study that will explore the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) emergency response to Hurricane Katrina. While this exploratory study has no formal hypothesis, it seeks to examine the relationship between the independent variables, identified as: training, communications, leadership, higher education, and hiring standards, and the dependent variable which has been identified as the NOPD emergency response to Hurricane Katrina.

In this study, structured interviews served as the primary source of data and the participants were asked 15 significant questions. The personal interviews revealed that there is a significant relationship between training, communications, leadership and hiring standards and police performance during critical situations such as a natural disaster. However, the participants indicated that police experience was more important to police performance than a higher education. In addition, this study revealed that training and proper emergency planning are vital to any police emergency response to a critical situation.
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I am extremely grateful to NOPD Captain Juan Quinton (Chief of Staff) and Warren Riley (NOPD Superintendent) for their assistance in conducting this study. In addition, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the NOPD officers who participated in this study. Their cooperation and candor during the interview process were vital to the integrity of the study. In addition, I commend those NOPD officers who remained on the job and served admirably during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina under extremely adverse conditions.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

On August 25, 2005, Emergency Management Offices from across the Gulf Coast closely observed Hurricane Katrina as the storm entered the Gulf of Mexico, and they began to mobilize their resources in the event that Katrina would make landfall in their respective states. The National Hurricane Center (NHC) had posted several advisories warning people of the Gulf South that Hurricane Katrina was expected to intensify as she traveled across the Gulf of Mexico’s warm waters.

Traditionally, the states of Louisiana and Mississippi have based their level of hurricane preparedness on Hurricane Camille, which severely damaged the Mississippi Gulf Coast region during the summer of 1969. Hurricane Camille was a category 5 storm with winds estimated at 200 mph and a 28 foot tidal surge that wiped away thousands of residences and businesses along the Louisiana-Mississippi Gulf Coast (Zebrowski, Judith & Howard, 2005). In addition, Hurricane Camille sank or beached twenty-four ocean going vessels, precipitated the collapse of six off-shore drilling platforms, and caused the drowning of one hundred and ninety-eight people (Zebrowski et al., 2005).

New Orleans residents imagined nothing worse than Hurricane Camille. In addition, the New Orleans populace had become complacent to hurricanes: For several years the city had been spared of direct hits by major storms. Consequently, the city of New Orleans had developed a false sense of security. It was the general belief that Hurricane Katrina would only cause severe wind damage and possible street flooding. New Orleans city officials assumed a “wait and see” posture as the storm approached the Louisiana-Mississippi coastline.
On August 27, 2005, NOPD Superintendent Eddie Compass conducted a NOPD staff meeting. At this meeting, the Commanders were advised that Hurricane Katrina was expected to make a direct hit on the city of New Orleans as a Category 3 or 4 hurricane. Superintendent Compass instructed his Commanders to direct their personnel to secure their families and then report to their respective duty assignments in preparation for hurricane duty. In addition, the police commanders were instructed to fuel their police vehicles in advance and have a limited number prepared for storm duty. Commanders who felt that they did not have a secured parking area for the police vehicles were instructed to park their police cruisers in a designated area in the Louisiana Superdome. This decision proved disastrous during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

On May 21, 2002, P. Edwin Compass III (Eddie Compass) was appointed Superintendent of the NOPD by Mayor Ray Nagin. Prior to being appointed as Superintendent, Compass served district commander with twenty-three years of experience. Mayor Nagin stated that he was most impressed with Compass’ record for implementing community policing programs that helped reduce the city’s murder rate (Asher, 2005). Compass was a self described “street cop” who had risen through the ranks. He was a boyhood friend of Mayor Nagin, and they grew up together in one of the poorer neighborhoods of New Orleans. Compass can be regarded as a “transformational leader.” According to transformational leadership theory, a transformational leader possesses “good vision, rhetorical and impression skills that they use to bond with their followers” (Reese, 2005, p. 24). Charisma has been described as an important component of transactional leadership. According to Reese (2005), charisma enhances the chemistry with subordinates that inspire their loyalty and respect. The end result is that subordinates intensely identify with their mission. Compass earned the respect of his subordinates.
because, according to police vernacular, he “walked the beat.” Compass developed a
close relationship with his fellow police officers and he often characterized the NOPD as
a close knit family. In addition, Compass had a special connection with the community
because he was a lifelong resident and a product of the public education system of New
Orleans. Compass was genuinely concerned about the social issues that plagued his city.

Daryl Gates, former LAPD Chief of Police, has also been described as a
transformational leader. He had the extraordinary ability to motivate his employees to
reach their full potential (Reese, 2005). Gates believed that the LAPD was the most
professional police department in the world and that his aggressive and proactive style of
policing was enthusiastically embraced by his subordinates. Unlike Eddie Compass,
Chief Gates lacked a connection with the citizens of Los Angeles which became a
contributing factor in his forced retirement from the LAPD.

On the morning of August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina blasted into the city of
New Orleans with sustained winds in an excess of 120 miles per hour, and a 28 foot tidal
surge. According to Deputy Chief Warren Riley (2006), the NOPD Communications
Division received over six hundred 911 emergency calls for help during a twenty minute
period. Riley (2006) added that people were “pleading and begging” for help. The NOPD
Communications Division received reports of widespread flooding and that several
NOPD District stations were disabled. The NOPD has eight police districts located
throughout the city, and a Vieux Carre District that services the French Quarter. During
the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, only the First, Second, Fourth, Sixth and Vieux Carre
Districts were operational. NOPD officers assigned to the Third and Seventh police
districts had to be rescued. Fifth district officers had to walk through chest high water to
evacuate their police station. It was reported that numerous off-duty police officers were stranded on the roof tops of their homes throughout the city and had to be rescued.

As the flood waters rose, NOPD communications were inoperable. Rescue and law enforcement operations were hindered as a result of the lack of communications. Cell and commercial telephones were inoperable, as well as computer networks. There was conflicting information as to the availability and usage of satellite telephones throughout the metropolitan area. The city depended on the Louisiana National Guard (LNG) for emergency communications but the LNG was based at Jackson Barracks and incapacitated due to flood waters, estimated in an excess of 14 feet. This flooding resulted in the destruction of all communications equipment and the LNG vehicles (Brinkley, 2006). Additionally, rising flood waters required that approximately 700 LNG troops had to be evacuated from Jackson Barracks.

To further aggravate the situation, the NOPD Command Staff received reports that approximately 228 police officers had abandoned their posts and approximately 91 had resigned or retired from the police force during the days following Hurricane Katrina. According to Horne (2006), two NOPD officers committed suicide as a direct result of the emotional and physical stress that was placed upon them while the remaining police officers attempted to maintain order and continue to conduct rescue operations throughout the city. Horne (2006) claimed that police officer Celestine committed suicide because he felt betrayed by the number of officers who allegedly deserted their posts and were accused of looting. Approximately 900 NOPD officers had reportedly lost their homes due to flooding, and many officers were unaware of the plight of their loved ones (Brinkley, 2006).
As the city began to flood, there were reports of widespread looting. Deputy Chief Riley (2006) informed the United States Senate Subcommittee on Homeland Security that the NOPD had abandoned their traditional role of policing (crime prevention and maintenance of order) for rescue operations. The NOPD only had three boats available for rescue operations. Prior to the arrival of the storm, the NOPD had positioned 40 boats and 24 high-water vehicles. This decision was based on the NOPD's Hurricane Emergency Operations Plan (Horne, 2006). It was reported that NOPD officers were using their personally owned boats to assist in the massive rescue operations. In addition, the NOPD rescue operations were augmented by local boat owners who were instrumental in rescuing hundreds of stranded residents. As the NOPD focused on rescue operations, civil disorder began to spread throughout the city.

Gangs roamed the streets. robbed, looted and committed acts of arson on businesses and residences alike. Random acts of violence were perpetrated upon citizens who were stranded in their flooded homes. Snipers were allegedly firing upon firefighters who attempted to extinguish fires throughout the city. The news media reported that snipers were firing at rescue helicopters while they conducted life saving rescue missions. However, it was later learned that much of the gunfire emanated from citizens stranded on their rooftops who attempted to gain the attention of rescuers operating in their neighborhood (Cooper & Block, 2006). In addition, NOPD district stations were often victimized by random sniper fire. It appeared that anarchy had taken over the streets of New Orleans.

Following the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the entire criminal justice system of New Orleans collapsed. NOPD headquarters had flooded and was incapacitated. Communications had been destroyed and the Central Lock Up facility was inoperable.
Consequently, there was no correctional facility available to house arrestees by the NOPD. In addition, the Orleans Parish Courthouse had been flooded and incapacitated. The Orleans Parish Clerk of Court, who also acts as the custodian of evidence in all criminal court cases, reported that critical evidence had been destroyed during the flood.

Several days following the arrival of Hurricane Katrina, NOPD Superintendent Eddie Compass was forced to retire. Many government pundits theorized that this was a political move employed by Mayor Nagin because he was displeased with how Compass handled the police operations during the aftermath of the storm. As a result of this action, Deputy Police Chief Warren Riley was appointed as the new NOPD Superintendent.

Hurricane Katrina has been described as the most catastrophic natural disaster in the history of the United States. Hurricane Katrina resulted in a reported 1,277 deaths and approximately $200 billion in property damage along the Gulf Coast area (CNN Reports, 2005).

**Statement of the Problem**

Policing literature reveals that the traditional role of law enforcement has always been crime prevention and the maintenance of order and to a certain extent the protection of property. Since the tragic terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the mission of law enforcement has included the security and protection of our nation’s critical infrastructure. The 1992 Los Angeles riots have shown the necessity of law enforcement to maintain order for the purpose of minimizing the loss of life and property during incidents of civil unrest. The LAPD was severely criticized for its delayed response to the 1992 riots which resulted in the deaths of sixty people, twenty-three citizens injured, and approximately ten thousand businesses looted and burned (Cole, 1999). The riots have been described as the largest act of civil disorder in the history of the United States.
For several days following the storm, the NOPD had to abandon their traditional role of policing for rescue operations. The police department concentrated on rescuing people from the rooftops of their residences. This study revealed that the NOPD did not have the equipment, training, or expertise necessary to conduct rescue operations of this magnitude. Cooper and Block (2006) claimed that the rescue operations were plagued with an inadequate command and control system. The rescue operations lacked a systematic process whereby the rescuers acted in concert. The NOPD complained that the various responding agencies did not coordinate their rescue efforts through the NOPD makeshift headquarters.

There has been a considerable lack of published reports regarding the NOPD response to Hurricane Katrina. This is because many published Katrina studies have focused primarily on the social problems of New Orleans, including poverty and class distinction.

This case study explores the NOPD emergency response to Hurricane Katrina.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the NOPD emergency response to Hurricane Katrina. The NOPD was faced with numerous challenges while responding to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. For the purpose of this study, the term “aftermath of Hurricane Katrina” refers to the NOPD emergency response to Hurricane Katrina which included rescue operations, efforts to maintain order, response to calls for service, and proactive strategies utilized to identify and apprehend the returning criminal element.

Many police districts flooded, and police communications were inoperable due to the storm. NOPD officers were unable to report to duty because they were stranded in their flooded homes and needed rescue. In addition, approximately 228 NOPD officers went Absent Without Leave (AWOL) or abandoned their posts; furthermore, several NOPD officers were charged with illegally commandeering high-priced vehicles from a local Cadillac dealership for the alleged purpose of using them as police cruisers. In spite of these setbacks, the majority of the NOPD police officers performed admirably under extremely adverse and harsh conditions. The purpose of the study is to answer the following question: What was the NOPD emergency response to Hurricane Katrina? This will be accomplished by interviewing thirty-five police and supervisory officers who participated in the NOPD emergency response to the largest natural disaster in the history of the United States. In addition, the results of this study should have policy implications for the police response to future natural disasters.

Hypothesis

While this is an exploratory study having no formal hypothesis, it is prudent to examine the relationship between the variables. The independent variables are as follows:
• Training: “provides officers with unambiguous instructions on how to perform many of the tasks that they are expected to complete” (Haberfeld, 2002, p. 34).
• Communications: the practice of communicating information.
• Leadership: the process of getting people to work toward a common objective.
• Higher Education: refers to education completed above the high school level, i.e. college education.
• Hiring Standards: refers to recruiting and selection standards such as physical, health, social, psychological, educational, and intellectual.

The dependent variable is the “police emergency response” to Hurricane Katrina. This study will explore the relationship between training and the ability of a police officer to respond to an emergency situation. August Vollmer, former Chief of Police, Berkeley, California, and renowned police reformer, strongly believed that training was the foundation of police professionalism. In 1909, Vollmer was the first police administrator to introduce a formal police training academy (Swanson, Territo, and Taylor, 2004). Police training should not end at the police academy. In-service or career enhancement training has been noted to promote personal and professional development of the individual officer (Swanson et al., 2004).

Communications is a vital component of any police organization. The facts and circumstances surrounding the tragic events of September 11, 2001, proved the crucial importance of communication between emergency responders. The 9-11 Commission...
recognized that inadequate communications hampered the rescue efforts of emergency response personnel to the World Trade Center. The 9-11 Commission noted that the responding emergency units lacked the ability to communicate across department lines. In other words, the New York Police Department (NYPD) was unable to communicate with the New York Fire Department (NYFD). As a result of this failed communications system, several hundred fire fighters met their death because they could not be warned in time of the World Trade Center's impending collapse.

During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, it was quite evident that the lack of communications adversely affected the NOPD rescue and enforcement operations. The NOPD was unable to communicate with its personnel once police headquarters were incapacitated. In addition, the NOPD had extreme difficulty in communicating with other state and local agencies.

Police organizations require adequate leadership to be effective and efficient. During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the NOPD command and control system was disrupted due to the lack of communication and the displacement of NOPD officers from their supervisors. This study will explore several principles of leadership such as transformational leadership and how they apply to the NOPD operations during Hurricane Katrina.

The literature indicated that a higher education (college degree) tends to improve the overall performance of a police officer. This study will explore the benefits of a college degree as it pertains to overall police performance especially in emergency situations. In 1922, August Vollmer claimed that the university was an indispensable tool to prepare young adults for police service (O'Keefe, 2004). According to O'Keefe (2004), the "Wickersham Commission" recognized that the most effective means of
improving the quality of the individual police officer was through the imposition of higher educational standards” (p. 18).

Hiring and selection standards are usually determined by the respective law enforcement agencies. Hiring standards refers to the quality of a potential police or law enforcement candidate during the police selection process. These standards include character, education, physical agility and a psychological profile conducive to ethical policing. During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, it was reported that approximately 228 officers abandoned or deserted their posts. This study explores the reasons why these officers went AWOL and if there is any correlation to the NOPD hiring standards. In addition, this study also explores why the majority of the NOPD officers remained on the job and performed admirably under extremely adverse conditions.

Limitations

This researcher limited this study to those NOPD officers who participated in the NOPD emergency response to Hurricane Katrina, which struck New Orleans on August 29, 2005.

Assumptions

Certain basic assumptions were made in order to assess accurately the results of the present study.

1). The researcher expected respondents to answer all questions honestly and accurately.

2). The researcher expected that the respondents had a thorough knowledge of the research topic.

3). The researcher expected the respondent to have participated in the actual emergency rescue and/or enforcement operations during the aftermath of
Hurricane Katrina.

Justification for Study

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina, a category 4 storm, roared into New Orleans with 120 mile per hour winds and a 28 foot tidal surge which caused several levee breaches and resulted in the flooding of 88 percent of the city. NOPD Headquarters, police communications, and lock-up facilities were incapacitated due to the flooding. Furthermore, many police officers were stranded in several police districts and had to be rescued. Hurricane Katrina has been described as the most catastrophic natural disaster in the history of the United States. The challenges facing the NOPD were unprecedented in the annals of American policing. As a result of the storm, the entire New Orleans criminal justice system was disabled. At the time of this study, the New Orleans criminal justice system is still recovering from the storm. The criminal courts are experiencing an extreme backlog of cases and are conducting trials in makeshift court rooms that have been temporarily housed in trailers. The Orleans Parish Criminal Clerk’s Office reports that evidence stored in the evidence facility of the criminal courts building was severely damaged due to flooding. It should be noted that in conjunction with its administrative duties, the Orleans Parish Clerk of Court’s Office is the criminal evidence custodian for the criminal district courts of Orleans Parish. The destruction of evidence could result in the dismissal of charges against career criminals who have been contributing to the spiraling violent crime rate of New Orleans.

The NOPD sustained a tremendously high attrition rate subsequent to the storm. Many NOPD officers lost their homes during the storm and consequently had to reside in makeshift housing or FEMA trailers. Consequently, their families had to be relocated. This situation has placed a considerable amount of stress and hardship on the NOPD
officers. It was almost impossible for the officers to remove themselves from the
destruction and suffering created by the storm. As a result, many officers have resigned
from the police force so that they could be reunited with their families, and many others
left the force because they have been exasperated with having to live and work in a
deplorable environment. Adequate and affordable housing continues to be problematic
for displaced NOPD officers.

There is a significant void in the literature regarding the NOPD emergency
response to Hurricane Katrina. This research project is a case study that will explore the
NOPD response to the storm. It is expected that the results of this study will have policy
implications for law enforcement’s response to future natural disasters.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

History of Policing

Traditionally, the mission of the police is to protect life, prevent crime and maintain order. Order maintenance has been a focal point in the history of policing in England and the United States. During the early years of the nineteenth century, the main purpose of American policing was to maintain order (Palmiotto, 2005). Hale (2004) claims that social order can be defined as the “absence of disorder” (p. 49). In the American nineteenth century, acts of civil disorder included violent clashes with immigrants and disturbances that involved labor disputes. The problem of maintaining order created a definite need for a police system.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, England experienced an increase in civil disorder due to the burgeoning population. Western civilization experienced the “industrial revolution,” which caused a population migration from rural communities to large cities. As a result crime and civil unrest increased in cities like London. Local magistrates often called upon the British army to quell these acts of civil disorder (Rawlings, 2002). Oftentimes, however, the military would agitate and escalate civil disorder. As a result, Sir Robert Peel, a British statesman, sponsored the Metropolitan Police Act that established the London Metropolitan Police Department (Fyfe, Greene, Walsh, Wilson, & McLaren, 1997). Peel created the London Metropolitan Police Department partially because he was disenchanted with the spiraling crime rate and the inability of government to quell acts of civil disorder. The London Metropolitan Police Department was to prevent crime and maintain order, and this was to be achieved through preventive patrol (Fyfe et al., 1997).
Alpert and Dunham (1997) noted that police organizations originate from the military. This explains why police agencies are often referred to as “quasi military organizations.” In addition, police organizations follow the bureaucratic management model. Max Weber, the renowned German sociologist, has been credited with development of the bureaucratic model based on the Prussian army (Palmiotto, 2005). Palmiotto (2005) noted “the purpose of the bureaucratic organization is simply to develop lines of legitimate authority to delineate effective divisions of labor; and to create productive workers and job efficiency” (p. 119). The principle of hierarchy is a major factor within the bureaucratic model of management. It has often been referred to as the “pyramid” or the “top to bottom” management style; that is to say, the police hierarchy lies at the top of the pyramid and the subordinates (police officers) are at the base. The principle of hierarchy ensures that each lower office is under the control of a higher one (Palmiotto, 2005).

Further reason why police organizations are very similar to the military is that most law enforcement agencies follow a strict chain of command. Alpert and Dunham (1997) define chain of command as “ss the route or channel along which authority and responsibility flow” (p. 90).

The American policing system is based upon the London Metropolitan Police model established by Sir Robert Peel in 1829. Peel developed several principles of policing that have become the “fabric and framework” of modern policing (Hale, 2004). According to Hale (2004), Peel’s police principles are listed as follows:

1). The police should be organized along military lines.

2). Emphasis should be placed on screening and training police personnel.
3). Police officers should be hired on a probationary basis.

4). The police should be under government control.

5). Police should be deployed by time and area.

6). Police headquarters should be centrally located.

7). Police record keeping is essential (p. 4).

Wadman and Allison (2004) noted that the English colonists who helped settle the United States brought with them an English style of policing. As a result of the human rights abuses perpetrated by the English monarchy upon the American colonists, they were reluctant to establish a police force. The colonists were mindful of the pre-Revolutionary days when the colonies were occupied by English troops.

The English policing style became the framework for the American policing system. During the developmental years of the United States, primary law enforcement duties were conducted by sheriffs and constables along with watch systems.

The constable was the primary town law enforcement officer and usually worked during daylight hours. A citizen was required by law to participate in the constabulary program or be fined. Most citizens who could afford it would opt to pay the fine rather than participate in the program. As a result, the court would appoint citizens from the lower socioeconomic status of society to the constabulary program. Wadman and Allison (2004) claim that the constables were permitted to keep a portion of the “fees and fines” but were not paid a salary (p. 9). These practices often lead constables to engage in unlawful behavior by “shaking down” citizens in order to collect fees.

Throughout the colonies, a night watch system was implemented to maintain a “lookout for crime” during the hours of darkness. Additional duties of the night watch included making sure the cities were quiet, handling drunks and vagrants, and even...
enforcing curfews if they were applicable (Wadman & Allison, 2004). The night watch was not a highly sought after position, similar to the constable position since it usually manned by low income citizens who could not afford to pay the fine for refusing to participate. As a result of their social status, both positions were disrespected by the citizens and were often physically abused by the general public. The constable and night watch lacked any real authority to prevent crime or provide security for the community they served.

During the beginning of the nineteenth century, America began to experience a population shift from a rural (agrarian) society to the city (industrialized areas). Along with an increase in population, crime and civil disorder increased. In 1838, the city of Boston sponsored a police force. The decision to sponsor a police force was in response to several riots that occurred during the 1830s (Alpert et al., 1997). The first full fledged police department was established in New York City in 1845 as the result of growing civil unrest, a burgeoning population of immigrants and a strengthening crime rate. The New York City Police Department was the first American police department to use the London Metropolitan Police Department as a policing model. Pertinent literature has shown that urbanization, civil unrest and an increasing crime rate were the primary factors for municipalities establishing police departments.

NOPD Background Information

Following the War of 1812, Louisiana was admitted into the Union as the eighteenth state of the United States. Shortly afterward, New Orleans created a municipal police force whose organization closely resembled that of a small army (Rousey, 1996). According to Rousey (1996), “this martial style of policing stood in stark contrast to the civil style of law enforcement in northern cities, where constables and night watchmen,
ununiformed and unarmed, presented a thoroughly unmilitary and scarcely intimidating appearance” (p. 13). This martial style of policing, reminiscent of the French military style, was adopted in Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, and Richmond.

The primary mission of this martial style of policing was to control the significant slave population in large southern cities, especially port cities. In many instances the slave population outnumbered the white population. The population disparity concerned slave masters fearful of outright slave rebellion.

In 1805, New Orleans employed the first black police officers in the United States (Fuller, 2006). These black police officers were freed slaves, primarily responsible for maintaining order within the slave population and apprehending runaway slaves (Fuller, 2006).

The NOPD was established in 1852 as the result of a consolidation of three independent police jurisdictions. The creation of the NOPD was part of a massive political reform that included all levels of city government.

Following the Civil War, New Orleans, like many other municipalities across the nation, was plagued with political and police corruption. Many reform-minded police chiefs were appointed and failed to successfully implement their strategies for police reform and crime reduction.

In 1890, NOPD Chief David Hennessey was assassinated while walking to his residence after attending a board meeting (Gambino, 2000). Hennessey believed that Sicilian immigrants were responsible for the increase in New Orleans crime. At the time of his assassination, Hennessey was in the midst of cracking down on Sicilian offenders. It is reputed that Sicilian criminals were responsible for Chief Hennessey’s murder. As a result, nineteen Italians were indicted and later acquitted of all charges. The acquittal
infuriated local officials and residents to the extent that eleven alleged killers were executed by hanging in the French Quarter of New Orleans (Gambino, 2000). This incident was considered the largest outdoor lynching in the history of the United States.

In the early 1960s, Joseph Giarrusso was appointed Superintendent of the NOPD and under his administration the police department made tremendous advancements. Giarrusso stressed professionalism, implemented a police cadet program, strongly supported in-service training, and encouraged his police officers to further their education by pursuing a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Criminology from Loyola University of New Orleans (Asher, 2005).

Giarrusso was responsible for connecting the NOPD with the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and forty-six other state agencies throughout the United States (Asher, 2005).

According to Asher (2005), “one of the greatest tragedies ever to befall the NOPD was when, on December 31, 1972, the first of a series of snipings and gun battles began between a lone gunman identified as Mark Essex and members of the NOPD” (p. 4).

Between December 31, 1972 and January 7, 1973, Essex was responsible for indiscriminately shooting several NOPD officers and Joe Perniciaro, a mid-city grocery store owner (Hemon, 2001). Shortly after the murder of Perniciaro on January 7, 1973, NOPD investigators were able to trace Essex to the Downtown Howard Johnson’s Hotel located in the New Orleans Central Business District (CBD).

Upon entering the hotel, Essex advised several startled black employees not to worry because he was only there to kill white people (Hemon, 2001). While in the hotel, Essex began to randomly shoot hotel guests and started several fires inside the hotel.
New Orleans firefighters attempted to extinguish the fires, Essex began to shoot them as they approached.

According to The Crime Library (2005), Essex maintained a position on the eighth floor of the hotel, where he randomly shot into a crowd of policemen, firefighters, and spectators who were located across the street in the front of the Howard Johnson’s hotel. After a prolonged standoff, NOPD Superintendent Charles Giarrusso made the decision to permit several officers to board a U.S. Marine helicopter and attempted to locate Essex who was reportedly located on the hotel’s rooftop (Asher, 2005). As the helicopter approached the roof of the hotel, Essex began to fire at the helicopter; the NOPD officers returned fire, killing Essex. At the standoff's conclusion, it was reported that Essex had shot nineteen people including ten police officers (The Crime Library, 2005). During the Howard Johnson incident, Deputy Chief Louis Sirgo was shot and killed by Essex as he entered a hotel stairway in an attempt to rescue several officers trapped in a hotel elevator. Sirgo was considered to be a rising star of the NOPD and was believed to be a strong candidate for the next superintendent. His untimely death proved a dramatic setback for NOPD's leadership.

A follow-up investigation revealed that Essex had espoused to the radical ideology of the Black Panther Party partially and helped explain why he arbitrarily fired on only Caucasians. In addition, he targeted police officers in an attempt to avenge two black males who were killed by the NOPD at an earlier date.

During the early 1970s, the rank and file of the NOPD attempted to negotiate a much needed pay raise. In January 1978, Peralta (1994) stated that the NOPD received a pay increase from $6,360.00 per year to $10,344.00, an increase of 63 percent. In the beginning of 1979, the New Orleans City Council approved a proposed pay increase of
the NOPD starting salary to $14,028.00 (Wigginton, 2000). This proposed pay increase would have ranked the NOPD 14th among 27 cities in starting salaries. In 1978, the Seattle Police Department was ranked 1st with a starting salary $18,324.00. Ranked last was the Atlanta Police Department with a beginning salary of $11,362.00 (Wigginton, 2000).

Historically, in order to compensate for low police salaries, the city of New Orleans offered an attractive benefit package as an incentive to recruit police candidates. Part of the annual benefit package included 21 days of sick leave, 24 days of annual leave per year, and an additional 10 paid holidays (Peralta, 1994).

The Police Association of New Orleans (PANO) attempted on several occasions to negotiate a pay raise but was unsuccessful. As a result of the city’s refusal to grant a pay increase and in conjunction with their decision to reduce police benefits, PANO members began to discuss the possibilities of a strike. Once again PANO attempted to bargain with the city in good faith but the city refused to negotiate. On February 8, 1978 at approximately 8:30 pm, 98 percent of the PANO members voted to walk off the job (Wigginton, 2000). The proposed police strike was scheduled to begin at 12:01 am, on February 11, 1979.

The city filed a temporary restraining order demanding that the striking police officers return to work. Because approximately 1,320 out of 1,400 NOPD officers had walked off the job, these work orders were avoided (Wigginton, 2000). It was reported that, at one stage of the strike, there were only eighteen police officers patrolling the streets of New Orleans.

The first police strike lasted approximately 40 hours and Mayor Dutch Morial capitulated to the demands of PANO. In a show of good faith, the PANO leadership
instructed their members to return to work without receiving a signed agreement from Mayor Morial (Wigginton, 2000). During further negotiations, Mayor Morial stated that he did not have the authority to restore benefits or grant a pay raise. Morial insisted that this authority solely lay with the Civil Service Commission. Morial reneged on his verbal agreement with PANO; consequently, PANO members grew disgruntled, and rumors of another walk began to circulate with assistance from the International Teamsters Union. PANO made numerous attempts to negotiate with city hall but to no avail. On February 17, 1979, PANO members voted for another walk out. The second walk out transpired just days prior to Mardi Gras, and the PANO leadership strongly believed that the city negotiate instead of cancelling Mardi Gras. The PANO leadership was proved wrong. Morial refused to negotiate, and he terminated Mardi Gras. This was the first time since WWII that Mardi Gras had been canceled. PANO was blamed for the cessation of Mardi Gras, and, as a result, the NOPD officers lost public support for their cause. Approximately two weeks later, NOPD officers began to filter back to work, thus ending the police strike. Their benefits were reinstated, but the NOPD did not receive a pay raise. The city lost millions in revenue. No party benefited in the NOPD strike.

In the years following the police strike, the NOPD had to deal with urban decay and associated social problems. Like many other municipal police agencies, the NOPD had to deal with manpower shortages, blighted housing, low wages, and a high crime rate.

During the 1990s, the NOPD faced a workforce shortage in conjunction with a spiraling crime rate. To meet these challenges, the NOPD lowered their hiring standards and conducted a mass hiring that included questionable or marginal candidates. As a result of this policy, the NOPD has been plagued with numerous incidents of police
misconduct and corruption. In the months following Hurricane Katrina, the NOPD is once again faced with a reduced workforce and a highly violent crime rate. It is hopeful that the city administration will be mindful of past hiring indiscretions and employ the best candidates possible.

New Orleans Violent Crime Rate

During the past twenty-five years New Orleans has experienced an epidemic of violent crime. Ripley (2006) stated prior to Hurricane Katrina, “New Orleans was on track to finish the year as the deadliest city in America” (p. 1). In August 2005, the Metropolitan Crime Commission (MCC) of New Orleans released a study that revealed that only 7 percent of all convicted violent offenders were incarcerated in Orleans Parish. The incarceration rate for violent offenders was considerably lower than the national average of 23 percent. According to the MCC (2005), the Orleans Parish Criminal Court system has failed miserably in removing violent offenders from the streets of New Orleans. This is the primary reason for the continuous high rate of violent crime, particularly murder in New Orleans.

During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, approximately 150,000 people were evacuated from New Orleans to Houston, Texas. Research has revealed that the majority of the evacuees were the poorest people of New Orleans. However, Gelinas (2006) notes that many of the evacuees were responsible for the majority of looting that transpired during the aftermath of the apocalyptic storm. In addition, Houston city officials were cognizant of the violent crime rate of New Orleans prior to the arrival of Hurricane Katrina. The City of Houston was not going to allow their city to be exploited by the displaced criminal element from New Orleans. According to Gelinas (2006), Houston slowly acknowledged that Katrina evacuees had provoked an increase in their violent
crime rate (particularly homicide). It was suggested that the post-Katrina crime surge was an extension of the pre-Katrina violence of the New Orleans criminal underclass (Gelinas, 2006). It was widely reported that the evacuated New Orleans criminal element had contributed greatly to the violent crime rate of Houston. New Orleans evacuees not only perpetrated violent crimes but were victims as well. As a matter of fact, municipalities that provided shelter and subsistence to New Orleans evacuees experienced an increase in violent crime. During the absence of the evacuees, the New Orleans crime rate plummeted. However, when the evacuees returned, New Orleans experienced a spike in the violent crime rate. In the eighteen months following Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans is once again earning the reputation as one of America's most violent cities.

Many social scientists believe that poverty is a major factor for New Orleans violent crime. Dyson (2006) contends that New Orleans has been ranked as the seventh poorest city in the nation, with one of the largest "concentrated poverty" communities in the country. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, African-Americans comprised 67.9 percent of the population of New Orleans, of which 103,000 people were considered to be poor (Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals, 2006). Dyson (2006) stated that the city of "New Orleans had a poverty rate of 23 percent, which is 76 percent higher than the national average of 13.1 percent" (p. 5). The high poverty ranking is due in part to the failure of the New Orleans Parish School Board to educate effectively. The New Orleans Public School Board has been plagued with corruption and mismanagement for a number of years, which has resulted in the school system being ranked as the lowest performing school district in Louisiana. According to Brinkley (2006), Louisiana spends
approximately $4,724 to educate each student, and Louisiana teaching salaries rank as the third lowest in the nation (Brinkley, 2006).

The New Orleans economy is based upon tourism, which normally yields low paying jobs, another factor contributing to the city’s poverty and substantial crime rate. However, New Orleans has adopted a violent culture nurtured by drug trafficking elements that operate within the confines of public housing projects and the poorest neighborhoods. Over the past decade, many law enforcement unsuccessful initiatives were implemented by the NOPD to curtail the increase in violent crime. One of the many techniques utilized included a strong enforcement of quality of life issues, a proposal successfully implemented by New York Police Chief William Bratton during the 1990s. The NYPD adopted a zero tolerance policy for violations of quality of life ordinances in an attempt to lower the burgeoning crime rate of New York City. This concept was based upon the “broken windows” theory, which states that if an abandoned building has one broken window, all remaining windows will be broken (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). This theory further contends that untended behavior leads to the breakdown of community controls. These borrowed tactics from the NYPD helped reduce the overall crime rate, but it had little impact the murder rate.

NOPD Corruption/Misconduct

Police corruption and misconduct is not a recent phenomenon. Palmiotto (2005) stated “to study the history of policing, is to study police deviance, corruption and misconduct” (p. 30). In England, during the pre-industrial revolution era, the “constable” was the primary law enforcement officer for England’s large cities. The constabulary was notoriously corrupt by “shaking down” citizens and accepting kickbacks and bribes to keep criminal matters out of court (McCormick, 1996).
Since 1844, The NYPD has had a storied history of police corruption and misconduct. The NYPD has been the subject of fifteen corruption investigations since its inception. During the 1990s, NYPD officers have been convicted of rape, armed robbery, drug distribution, and a host of other crimes. The 1990s saw a proliferation of drug-related police corruption in police agencies across our nation. Lersch (1999) claims that during the 1990s, police departments came under federal scrutiny, “including Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Savannah, and Washington D.C.” (p. 142). Furthermore, Lersch (1999) added that from 1993-1997, “a total of 640 police officers were convicted as a result of corruption investigations led by the FBI” (p. 142).

Over the years, the NOPD has received a reputation as brutal and corrupt. In 1998, the United States General Accounting Office (USGAO) conducted a study regarding police corruption and concluded that there are two key elements of the various definitions of police corruption. According to the USGAO (1998), the elements are:

1). the “misuse” of the officer’s professional role, “authority” or official position.

2). the receipt or expected receipt of material rewards or personal gain.

In addition, the 1998 USGAO study further concluded that police corruption is greatly associated with all forms of vice crimes such as gambling, narcotics and prostitution. Amnesty International is a non-profit organization that maintains a dossier on police brutality throughout the world. Amnesty International (1998) reported that NOPD officer Len Davis ordered the murder of Kim Grover after learning that she filed a brutality complaint against him. At the time of Grover’s murder, Davis was under surveillance by federal agents for allegations of drug trafficking (Amnesty International,
Davis' conversation regarding the ordered murder of Grover was recorded by federal agents who conducted a wiretap intercept subsequent to a search warrant that was issued by the Eastern District of Louisiana. Unfortunately, federal agents were unable to react in sufficient time to save Grover.

Amnesty International (1998) reported that on November 6, 1996, Davis was sentenced to death in federal district court for civil rights violations (murdering Grover); and on December 18, 1996, Davis was sentenced to life plus five years for his involvement in a cocaine distribution ring. Narcotics related police corruption has developed into a recent phenomenon that has evolved from the major financial rewards associated with the drug trafficking trade. The GAO (1998) reported that police officers that are implicated in drug-related corruption are more likely to be actively involved in the commission of a variety of crimes including stealing drugs and/or money from drug dealers, trafficking drugs, committing perjury while testifying in court, and conducting illegal searches. The New York City Mollen Commission, a bi-partisan commission formed to investigate drug related corruption in the NYPD, concluded that “profit” was the motivating factor in police drug-related corruption (GAO, 1998).

Another incident of NOPD criminal conduct involved Officer Antoinette Frank. On March 4, 1995, Officer Frank entered a Vietnamese restaurant to commit murder and robbery (Hustmyre, 2004a). Upon entering the restaurant, Frank shot and killed Officer Ronnie Williams who had been working an off-duty security detail at the restaurant. Ironically, Frank and Williams had been on and off partners for a brief period of time. After shooting Williams, Frank proceeded to execute the son and daughter of the Vietnamese restaurant owners (Hustmyre, 2004a). Frank fled the scene and returned moments later as a responding police officer. Unbeknownst to Frank, the owner's
daughter had been hiding in a walk-in refrigerator and was an eye witness to the triple murders. Frank was tried and convicted and is currently residing on death row at the Louisiana State Penitentiary.

The NOPD has sustained numerous incidents of police misconduct and criminal activity. There were incidents of armed robbery, vice shakedowns, drug trafficking and rape. In 1995, Chief Richard Pennington was hired as a reform-minded police chief by Mayor Marc Morial. Upon being appointed, Pennington immediately established a partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice, and, in particular, with the FBI in an effort to confront internal corruption. As a result of this partnership between the NOPD and the FBI, the NOPD is the only police department in the United States that has FBI agents assigned to their Public Integrity Unit (Internal Affairs). As a result, major criminal offenses committed by NOPD officers can be deferred to Federal District Court for prosecution.

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, the NOPD had a contingency of 1,688 police officers. During the events surrounding Hurricane Katrina, approximately 228 police officers deserted their posts (an unprecedented event in the annals of American policing). Not only did these former police officers turn their backs on their communities but they deserted their brother officers in the midst of major rescue and enforcement operations. At the time of this research project, the NOPD workforce has been reduced to approximately 1200 police officers. In the months following Hurricane Katrina, undocumented sources have estimated the current police workforce at approximately 800 police officers. Riley comments that, since the storm, the NOPD has been losing approximately 17 officers a month to other law enforcement agencies and other officers have decided to resign from the police force.
As a result of the manpower shortage, NOPD Superintendent Riley requested assistance from the Louisiana National Guard and the Louisiana State Police. At the time of this research project, Governor Blanco has deployed 360 members of the LNG and the Louisiana State Police (LSP) to support the operations of the NOPD.

To further exacerbate the situation, numerous NOPD officers illegally commandeered many vehicles from a New Orleans Cadillac dealership. Officers who participated in this incident claimed that the vehicles were commandeered for the purpose of replacing their flooded or unusable police cruisers. However, it was reported that many of the vehicles allegedly commandeered were high-priced vehicles the Cadillac Escalade. In addition, Horne (2006) claims that many of commandeered vehicles were used by NOPD officers to evacuate the city and to facilitate the desertion of their posts. These incidents are still under investigation.

Countering Police Misconduct and Corruption

The policing profession has always been known to be rife with opportunities for misconduct (Klockers, Ivkovich, Harver, and Haberfeld, 2000). In addition, Klockers et al. (2000) claim that "policing is a highly discretionary, coercive activity that routinely takes place in private settings, and out of the sight of supervisors, and in the presence of witnesses who are often regarded as unreliable" (p. 1).

Due to the substantial discretion police officers are granted in the performance of their duties it is incumbent that the police recruitment process help select only highly qualified individuals who can perform the job in a professional and ethical manner. Fyfe et al. (1997) claims the recruitment of marginal or questionable candidates is unacceptable because they may "hurt citizens, other officers, and themselves; discredit their department, and cause civil liability" (p. 290). For example, the NOPD hired
Antoinette Frank who had twice failed the psychological testing portion of the recruit
testing but managed to slip through the recruitment process anyway. In addition, she had
lied on her employment application and had forged several letters of recommendation to
support her claim that she was qualified to become a NOPD officer (Hustmyre, 2004).

Approximately twenty-eight months following her graduation from the police
academy, Frank shot and killed two children of the owners of a local Vietnamese
restaurant, including her on-off partner who had been working an off-duty security detail
at the restaurant.

Hiring or selection standards are usually determined by law enforcement
agencies. In some jurisdictions, the civil service commission may make recommendations
or have some input into setting hiring or selection standards. The hiring standards refer to
the quality of a potential law enforcement recruit during the police hiring process. Some
of these qualities include character, education, physical agility, sound judgment, physical
courage, and a psychological profile that is conducive to ethical policing (Palmiotto,
2005). During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina it was reported that approximately 228
police officers abandoned or deserted their posts. It is widely believed that those officers
who had gone AWOL during the chaotic days following Hurricane Katrina should not
have been hired in the first place. Palmiotto (2006) claims that the hiring of unqualified
candidates, who cannot adapt to the pressures of police work and end up in difficulties
that would embarrass the police agency that hired them, should not be surprising to the
community. Palmiotto’s theory supports the notion that those officers who deserted their
posts during the storm should have not been hired in the first place. The desertion of
those officers had a negative impact on the emergency operations of the NOPD because
the department was already suffering from a depleted workforce. Off-duty police officers
were either stranded on their roof tops or they could not report for duty because of the rising flood waters. The literature has indicated that the hiring of quality individuals drastically reduces the chances of those candidates engaging in misconduct or corruption.

August Vollmer, a renowned police reformer and former Berkeley, California Chief of Police, strongly believed that training was the foundation of police professionalism. In 1909, Vollmer was the first police administrator to introduce a formal police training academy (Swanson, Territo, and Taylor, 2004). Police training should not end at the police academy. In-service or career enhancement training has been noted to promote personal and professional development of the individual officer (Swanson et al., 2004). Police officers must be trained to handle any situation they encounter. Palmiotto (2006) suggests that police officers be continuously trained to "keep abreast of the changes in policing" (p.259). In the days following Hurricane Katrina, Deputy Chief Riley commented that the NOPD had been trained for hostage situations, terrorist attacks, and a sundry of other foreseeable events but had never been prepared for such a catastrophic event as Hurricane Katrina (Brinkley, 2006). According to Brinkley (2006) Riley added "This storm was absolutely beyond possibility. How do you prepare for this?" (p. 208).

The literature suggests that ethics training is the most important course in the police training curriculum. According to Trautman (2003), scandals involving police misconduct can be prevented. Trautman (2003) added that incidents of police misconduct result from "an evolution of predictable and preventable circumstances" (p. 31). In many incidents of police misconduct, supervisors ignore early warning signs ignored (Trautman, 2003). Consequently it is vital that law enforcement agencies implement an
ethics training program for supervisors and subordinates in an effort to identify potential problems and to educate the workforce about consequences of inappropriate conduct.

NOPD Superintendent Pennington was well aware of the importance of ethics training, and, as a result, in 1995 he implemented a training course in ethics conducted by the National Institute of Ethics in an attempt to counteract a growing concern for police corruption (Asher, 2005). As of this date, ethics training remains an integral component of the NOPD training curriculum.

The literature indicates that a higher education (college degree) tends to improve the overall performance of a police officer and reduces incidents of police misconduct. This study will explore the benefits of a college degree as it pertains to overall police performance especially in emergency situations. In 1922, August Vollmer claimed that the university was an indispensable tool to prepare young adults for police service (O’Keefe, 2004). According to O’Keefe (2004), the “Wickersham Commission” recognized that the most effective means of improving the quality of the individual police officer was through the imposition of higher educational standards” (p. 18).

In 2002, the Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission (CJSTC) contracted the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) to conduct a study to determine if a correlation existed between discipline and educational levels. The Commission reported that, as of August 2002, the state of Florida had approximately 42,910 sworn officers (Swanson et al., 2004). Swanson et al. (2004) stated that the educational backgrounds of Florida’s sworn officers were as follows:

1). 24,800 have High School Diplomas
2). 6,777 have Associates Degree
3). 10,364 have Bachelor’s Degrees

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According to the IACP, “officers with no degree above high school accounted for a startling 74.8 percent of the 727 disciplinary actions issued by the CJSTC during the period of 1997 to 2002 (Swanson et al., 2002). Many other studies have indicated that a college educated police officer was less likely to engage in misconduct and corruption.

Over the years there has been a continual debate whether or not police agencies should require an undergraduate degree at the entry level. Swanson et al. (2004) claim that only 14 percent of our nation’s police agencies require a college degree. Palmiotto (2005) argues that the college educated police officer is better equipped to handle community and problem oriented policing strategies that require problem solving skills and minimum supervision. However, this should not suggest that a college educated police officer is necessarily a better police officer in every possible circumstance (Palmiotto, 2005).

Leadership is another variable that helps counteract police misconduct and corruption. It is vital that a police administrator act swiftly and certainly in administering punishment to those officers who are found guilty of those charges. This action sends a clear message to the rank and file that misconduct and corruption will not be tolerated. The literature has strongly indicated that hiring standards, training and a college education are important elements in reducing police misconduct and enhancing police performance. In addition, police leadership should be committed to developing a totally ethical organization and that it should be known to the rank and file that anything less would be unacceptable.

NOPD Emergency Response
Prior to the arrival of Hurricane Katrina, the NOPD command staff had deployed their police officers and vehicles to various hospitals located throughout the city. The rationale for this deployment was to have NOPD officers standing by in a location that was thought to be a non-flood prone should Hurricane Katrina cause serious street flooding.

Police commanders were instructed by Superintendent Compass to order their subordinates to bring provisions and additional clothing with them to their respective assignments. These provisions would sustain them for approximately three days. It was reported that some police officers brought only several bottles of soda and bags of chips and an extra t-shirt with them to their respective assignments. It was apparent that these officers failed to take the threat from an approaching catastrophic storm seriously. This rationale could best be explained by the fact that many of the young NOPD officers had never experienced a hurricane and were thus unaware of the consequences associated with improper planning and a complacent attitude.

As Hurricane Katrina approached the Louisiana coastline, the storm had weakened from a category 5 to a category 3. In addition, as the storm approached New Orleans it had turned several degrees to the east sparing the city from a direct hit.

On the morning of August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina roared into the city of New Orleans with sustained winds in excess of 120 miles per hour along with a 28 foot tidal surge. According to MC Quaid and Schleifstein (2006), then 28 foot tidal surge that demolished everything in its path. This powerful tidal surge created several breaches in the city's levee system which resulted in the flooding of 80 percent of New Orleans.

As the storm passed over the city, NOPD Communications Division (9-11 system) received approximately 600 calls for emergency assistance within twenty-three
minutes (McQuaid and Schleifstein, 2006). Police dispatchers stated that citizens were "pleading and begging" for help (Riley, 2006). In addition, the NOPD Communications Division was receiving reports that several police districts had been disabled due to the widespread flooding and that approximately 300 police cruisers had been flooded (Horne, 2006). Prior to the storm, NOPD had nine operational police districts. After Hurricane Katrina, only the First, Second, Fourth and Sixth police districts were operational. NOPD officers assigned to the Third and Seventh police districts had to be rescued. Fifth district police officers had to walk through chest high water to evacuate their police station (Riley, 2006). It was reported that numerous off-duty police officers were stranded on the rooftops of their homes throughout the city and had to be rescued.

The NOPD was not the only law enforcement agency paralyzed by Hurricane Katrina. Local police departments along the Mississippi Gulf Coast such as Waveland, Gulfport and Biloxi were completely destroyed by the effects of this massive and devastating storm. Brinkley (2006) reported that several Waveland police officers were stranded in trees to prevent being washed away by the storm’s tidal surge, which completely demolished their police station. Brinkley (2006) added that they became known as the “Tree Cops of Waveland” (p. 153). Other police officers and staff members were able to escape the flood waters by making their way to the roof of the police station.

As the flood waters continued to rise, NOPD communications were incapacitated and no alternate communication method was available. McQuaid and Schleifstein (2006) contend that the city, state or federal government did not have a communications emergency plan. The city depended on the LNG to provide communication once the storm had passed. Prior to the storm, the LNG was stationed at Jackson Barracks. According to McQuaid and Schleifstein (2006) “Jackson Barracks was the local
headquarters of the Louisiana National Guard and had been designated as a staging area for rescue operations, with 40 boats and 24 amphibious vehicles” (p. 195). Jackson Barracks was the staging ground for approximately 1000 national guardsmen. As the storm approached, the tidal surge caused a levee breach nearby that resulted in the flooding of Jackson Barracks. The flooding rendered the LNG rescue vehicles and communications equipment inoperable. In addition, the LNG guardsmen had to scramble to high ground to avoid drowning in the rising water.

To further complicate the situation, NOPD commanders received reports that approximately 228 police officers abandoned their posts and that 91 officers resigned or retired from the police force. These actions were unprecedented in the history of American policing. New Orleans was the only police department in the entire Gulf Coast region that experienced a massive desertion by their police officers. Many reasons were given as to why these officers abandoned their posts. Deputy Chief Riley stated that many officers were isolated and unable to report for duty (Treaster, 2005). Riley added that other officers had evacuated their families and were unable to return to New Orleans (Treaster, 2005). On the other hand, many officers had just given up. In an interview with the New York Times (Treaster, 2005), Riley stated “that some of the officers who left the force couldn’t handle the pressure and were certainly not the people we need in this department” (p.1). Many police officers who had remained on the job believed that those officers who had fled were young inexperienced officers who could not cope with the atrocities associated with the storm.

During the days following Hurricane Katrina, NOPD officers had to contend with desertion, looting, an overwhelming amount of refugees and occasional snipers. Furthermore, 80 percent of the NOPD officers lost their homes to the storm (Capochino,
As a result, many officers lived in their police cruisers for several days until emergency make-shift housing became available. After several weeks following the storm, approximately 700 NOPD officers and their families were quartered on a Carnival Cruise ship that was docked on the Mississippi River.

While members of the NOPD were conducting rescue and humanitarian operations, they would often wade and swim through toxic floodwaters. These officers placed their health at great risk while they conducted these rescue operations. Police officers complained of skin rashes and other ailments as a result of traversing the noxious bowl that had become New Orleans. It was reported that a twenty-three year old police officer died as a direct result of an infection while conducting a rescue mission.

Two NOPD officers committed suicide as a direct result of the emotional and physical stress that was placed upon them during the ensuing days of Hurricane Katrina. According to Alpert and Dunham (1997), police suicide rates continue to exceed the national suicide rate. In addition, recent studies have shown that police have almost three times the rate of suicide compared to those of the general population (Alpert and Dunham, 1997).

Swanson et al. (2004) cited frustration as one of the important occupational factors causing police suicide. Swanson et al. (2004) defined a critical incident “as any crisis situation that causes emergency personnel to respond with immediate or delayed stress-altered physical, mental, emotional, psychological, or social coping mechanisms and that may result in witnessing human suffering beyond the normal range (p. 466).” Swanson et al. (2004) added that critical incident equated to an act of terrorism, a natural disaster or an airplane crash.

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Constant exposure to death and serious injury also accounts for the high rate of police suicide (Alpert & Dunham, 1997). In 1992, the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, left many first responders traumatized by the carnage they witnessed while conducting rescue missions through the federal building's rubble. Consequently, many police officers along with other first responders to the Oklahoma City bombing were diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, which resulted in the suicide of several emergency workers.

Many NOPD officers who suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder during the wake of Hurricane Katrina could not seek medical assistance because no psychological services were available. Because of the storm, metropolitan area hospitals lacked electrical power and suffered from a displaced staff. In addition, many flooded hospitals were evacuated. At the time of this study, New Orleans still suffers from a shortage of mental health and medical facilities.

When the city began to flood, the NOPD attempted to launch emergency rescue operations throughout the city. Prior to the storm, the NOPD had stored their emergency vehicles at Jackson Barracks because the NOPD believed that the emergency vehicles would be secure at that location. Unfortunately, the NOPD had lost their emergency high-water vehicles and boats as a result of the extensive flooding of Jackson Barracks. Consequently, members of the NOPD placed their personally owned boats into service and began assisting in the emergency rescue operations of stranded citizens. In addition, many boats were commandeered and placed into service.

Numerous volunteers arrived in New Orleans with their personally owned boats and conducted systematic rescue operations with the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries (LWF). Nicknamed the “Cajun Navy” (Brinkley, 2006), the group of volunteers operated...
in concert with the NOPD and the LWF and were instructed to ignore any/all floating bodies encountered while traveling through the flood waters, and concentrate only on rescuing the living. NOPD officers advised members of the rescue team to be vigilant because reports were circulating that rescue workers were being fired upon (Brinkley, 2006). It is estimated that this group of volunteers rescued approximately 4,000 victims from the flooded streets of New Orleans (Brinkley, 2006).

When the city began to flood, the NOPD focused primarily on rescue operations, and, as a result, incidents of widespread looting and civil disorder began to spread throughout the city. Mayor Nagin ordered the NOPD to cease all rescue operations and focus on restoring order. Citizens looted stores for food and water, while others stole plasma television sets and an assortment of other merchandise not considered to be life sustaining items.

Looting in incidents of natural disaster, acts of civil disorder, and acts of terrorism is not uncommon. On September 21, 2001, members of a New York National Guard Unit, who were conducting lifesaving rescue operations in the subterranean passageways of 5 World Trade Center, discovered that many shops and ATM machines had been looted (Chivers, 2001) following the terrorist attacks of 9-11. Many of the National Guardsmen viewed this action as “aberrant behavior” because ground zero was considered to be hallowed ground. The perpetrators of this crime did not steal to sustain life. They engaged in a crime of opportunity. According to Chivers (2001), several guardsmen expressed disgust at the thought that someone would choose to engage in looting as opposed to assist in rescuing trapped WTC employees or give their support in the recovery of human remains from the rubble of the World Trade Center.
Pearsall & Trumble (1996) defines looting "as the robbing or stealing of goods left behind in a premises unprotected after riots or other violent events." According to Louisiana Revised Statue RS: 14: 62.5, any individual who commits a crime of looting during a declared state of emergency such as a hurricane, flood, fire or other act of God, can be fined not less than $5,000 or no more than $10,000. A person convicted of this crime shall be imprisoned at hard labor not less than 3 years and no more than 15 years without the benefit of probation or parole (Thomson-West, 2006).

The meaning or moral connotations of the term "looting" varies with different people. Green (2007) claims that some people may find looting as being "predatory or an exploitive act," which deserves a harsher punishment. On the other hand, Green (2007) contends that incidents of looting may be necessary by law abiding citizens in order for survival, especially during incidents of natural disaster or war.

During the days following Hurricane Katrina, photographs of looters were published via the electronic and print media throughout the world. Melendez and Sefton (2005) described these images as troubling, that it was human behavior at its most desperate. Melendez and Sefton (2005) reported that, according to disaster-response researchers, "incidents of wide-spread looting following a natural disaster are rare" (p. 1). The only reported episode of wide-spread looting occurred in St. Croix following Hurricane Hugo.

It was widely noted that African Americans represented the majority of the photographs taken of looters following Hurricane Katrina. Robert Smith, a political scientist from San Francisco State University, stated that he was not surprised, because the majority of stranded residents were black and without resources (Melendez and Sefton, 2005). They did not have the means to evacuate or the capital to self-sustain for a
prolonged period of time. For understandable reasons, they were considered to be the poorest of New Orleans.

Law enforcement officials assigned to metropolitan New Orleans area have a different perspective on the wide-spread occurrence of looting following a natural disaster, particularly Hurricane Katrina. While the NOPD was preoccupied with conducting rescue operations, reports of wide-spread looting began to circulate throughout the city. According to Cooper and Block (2006) “the looting was open and brazen and went on during the day in plain view of reporters” (p. 168). On August 30, 2005, LSP reported that a NOPD officer was shot by a surprised looter and that a New Orleans gun store had been looted and stripped of all their guns and ammunition. Shortly after, there were rampant rumors circulating that street gangs were arming themselves throughout the city.

Various news agencies reported that New Orleans area Wal-Mart stores had been looted and all the weapons and ammunition had been reported stolen. To further aggravate the situation, national news organizations reported that NOPD officers participated in the looting.

On Wednesday August 30, 2005, The Times Picayune newspaper released a photograph of two NOPD officers on the front page of their newspaper, exiting a looted Wal-Mart store carrying an assortment of DVDs. The Wal-Mart store in question was located in the lower Garden District. The parking lot of this Wal-Mart store was pandemonium. According to Peristein and Thevenot (2005), looters, police officers, and firefighters pushed shopping carts and loaded pick-up trucks with Wal-Mart merchandise. A disgruntled looter commented that the police officers “got all of the good stuff. They’re more crookeder than us” (p. A5).
In accordance with the New Orleans Hurricane Emergency Plan, NOPD officers are authorized to procure supplies such as food, water, and batteries to resupply the police department during critical incidents. This was a common occurrence by emergency responders throughout the storm ravaged region who were attempting to subsist until state and federal aid arrived. It is quite conceivable that an outsider could misconstrue this activity as being illegal; however, according to various state and local emergency disaster plans, it is authorized. The procurement of food and supplies by those law enforcement agencies adversely affected by the storm was a direct result of not being adequately prepared. Smith and Rojek (2006) claim that many of the key equipment shortages included chainsaws, radios, batteries, generators and tires. After the storm’s passing, the emergency response of many police departments, including the NOPD, was hampered because of downed trees and lack of chainsaws.

Cooper and Block (2006) stated that LSP Superintendent Colonel Whitehorn was extremely concerned about the situation in New Orleans and requested emergency assistance from FBI Director Robert Mueller. Colonel Whitehorn added that New Orleans had sustained enormous damage (Cooper & Block, 2006) and that the LSP attempted to stabilize the situation but “the looting continue[d] to be a significant problem” (p. 168). Many NOPD officers felt powerless; the NOPD lacked the manpower and resources to control the looting. If NOPD officers attempted to affect an arrest, there were no detention facilities available to house the arrestees.

It is a widely accepted position that law enforcement officers should not engage in deadly force to prevent looting. The crime of looting is a property crime; therefore, deadly force is not warranted. This is a very controversial subject. During the 1960s, the United States was rife with incidents of civil disorder. Cities such as Newark, Los
Angeles, Detroit, Tampa and Cincinnati were sites of civil disturbances and full-scale riots. In response to this wave of violence and civil disobedience, President Lyndon Johnson issued Executive Order 11365, which authorized the creation of the U.S. National Advisory Committee on Civil Disorders (NACCD) to investigate the root causes of the civil disorder. The Commission was also known as the "Kerner Commission" after the chairman Otto Kerner. During their investigation of looting and violence associated with the incidents of civil disorder, the NACCD heard testimony from Major General George Gelston (Commander of Maryland National Guard) who stated that "I am not going to order a man killed for stealing a six-pack of beer or a television set" (p. 176). Gelston believed that non-lethal tear gas could stop any looting. As a result of his testimony, the Commission adopted the policy recommendation of using chemical agents as an alternative to the use of deadly force for civil disorder and looting incidents.

During the Los Angeles riots of 1992, many Korean store owners in South Central Los Angeles were accused of using deadly force in attempts to stop looters and arsonists destroy their businesses. It was widely reported that wealthy home and business owners of New Orleans had contracted national security agencies such as Blackwater to protect their homes and businesses from looters and street gangs who were engaging in acts of random violence.

Days following the storm, news of random violence perpetrated on citizens and police was being reported throughout the city. A NOPD officer described the situation of the city during the initial days following the storm as a "war zone." Best (1999) claims that "the notion of random violence refers to the risk that anyone might be attacked for no good reason" (p. 9). Oftentimes crimes associated with acts of random violence are pointless and the victims are chosen arbitrarily (Best, 1999).
Charmaine Neville, a local musical icon, evacuated her home due to the flooding and relocated to Drew Elementary School, where she attended to the needs of the less fortunate. While staying at the makeshift evacuation center, Neville was raped by a knife wielding assailant on the rooftop of the elementary school (Horne, 2006). Neville commented that if residents had not abandoned their homes, these random acts of violence would never have occurred. Female evacuees at Drew Elementary claimed that many other displaced females raped and that the NOPD had been downplayed the number of these crimes (Horne, 2006).

The French Quarter (Vieux Carre Police District) police station was subjected to sniper fire on a daily basis. Consequently, officers were positioned on the district rooftop to act as counter snipers (CNN Reports, 2005). The situation at the Vieux Carre district station was so dire that it was nicknamed “Fort Apache.”

The community of Algiers is located on the westbank of New Orleans and home to the NOPD Fourth district station. Algiers was fortunate to escape the flood waters that paralyzed the majority of the east bank of New Orleans, but did not remain immune from the violence associated with Katrina. While on routine patrol, Fourth district officers encountered four looters that were heavily armed at a local convenience store/gas station. Officer Kevin Thomas and his partner startled one of the looters, and Thomas was subsequently shot in the head by one of the looters (Hustmyre, 2006). Thomas’ partner returned fire and wounded one perpetrator. Officer Thomas survived the shooting incident but has not returned to duty because of the injury he sustained.

According to Hustmyre, (2006), members of the Fourth district claimed that they received weapons fire every night during the first week following the storm. Fourth district officers stated that they would return fire and then send a patrol to ascertain if
they had hit anyone (Hustmyre, 2006), tactics reminiscent of those used during the Vietnam War.

During the first week after the storm, random acts of violence escalated. There were numerous reports of shootings, rapes and stabbings at the New Orleans Convention Center which served as a makeshift evacuation staging area. There were reports of thugs hijacking rescue vehicles and firing on rescue workers. The NOPD SWAT team received information that a group of armed thugs on an Interstate overpass were robbing people as they approached a hijacked water truck (Hustmyre, 2006). One desperate person made the fateful decision not to cooperate with the criminals and was summarily thrown from the top of the Interstate. Shortly after, NOPD SWAT members located the man’s body underneath the Interstate overpass.

The NOPD SWAT commander instructed his personnel to be on the lookout for any/all suspicious water trucks in the area. A short time later, the SWAT Team encountered a water truck being driven in a suspicious manner and upon being stopped, the driver exited the vehicle brandishing a firearm towards the officers. The officers fired in self-defense, killing the truck driver.

**Leadership and Command and Control**

During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the NOPD, the mayor and his administration were severely criticized for deficient leadership and a dysfunctional command and control system. Haddow and Bullock (2006) argue that a “slow or ineffective initial disaster response disproportionately increases human loses” (p. 121). In addition, Haddow and Bullock (2006) claim that a “poorly coordinated and perceived response efforts can damage political careers and the reputation of the responding agencies” (p. 121). In the days following the storm, Mayor Nagin was severely criticized
for the way he handled the city’s emergency response. Many news outlets reported that the mayor fled the city for several days and left Colonel Ebert the city’s Director of Homeland Security, in command. In spite of the criticism, Nagin was surprisingly reelected to a second term as mayor.

The command and control system of the NOPD were completely shattered due to the widespread flooding and the loss of the primary and secondary communications systems. It was quite apparent that the city administration along with the NOPD command staff were overwhelmed by the magnitude and destruction of the storm.

As a result of the breakdown of the NOPD command and control system, unit commanders operated independently by supervising and initiating enforcement, rescue and humanitarian operations. Smith and Rojek (2006) stated that individual police officers were displaced and “forced to improvise ad hoc responses to public safety issues brought about by the storm” (p. 2). Smith and Rojek (2006) added that these officers could have been put to better use through a coordinated emergency plan. The research indicates that the city had a hurricane emergency plan; however, it was apparent that the city did not follow this plan.

The New Orleans Emergency Operations Center was originally headquartered at city hall, but it became non-operational after the storm struck the city. The mayor relocated his operations to the Hyatt Regency Hotel. In critical incidents such as a natural disaster, it is crucial that emergency operations and communications are coordinated through one command center. Unfortunately, this was not the case in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina. It was not until several days following the storm when state and federal assistance began to arrive that the city’s command and control system was reestablished.
NOPD Superintendent Eddie Compass appeared to be overwhelmed during the days following Hurricane Katrina. Superintendent Compass served as District commander prior to being appointed superintendent. Throughout his career he earned a reputation for being a “street cop” and was successful in reducing crime in his district through the implementation of a successful community policing program. He can best be described as a “transformational” leader because of his ability to motivate his subordinates and his charisma ingratiated him with the community.

Because one is a “good cop” does not necessarily mean that the same person will become a good administrator. Many superintendents and chiefs of police are promoted through the ranks and consequently are not prepared for all of the complexities of serving as police executive. O’Keefe (2004) contends that successful police administrators tend to grow into the job of chief or superintendent. Furthermore, O’Keefe (2004) adds that as police executives grow, they tend to develop their “strengths and preferences, thereby accentuating their competences and allowing themselves time to develop in their areas of weakness” (p. 242). As a result of this concept, O’Keefe (2004) contends that transformational leadership should be the core focus of development for professional law enforcement administrators. Compass had served as the Superintendent of the NOPD for approximately three years before the arrival of Hurricane Katrina. During this time frame it appeared that he was experiencing difficulty in becoming an effective administrator. In the beginning of his administration, he had concentrated on improving NOPD’s hiring standards but took a soft stand on police misconduct and corruption. He proposed a “service first” campaign to change the mind-set of corrupt and discourteous officers as opposed to taking a tough stand on such conduct (Brinkley, 2006).
During the days following the storm, Compass was working a twenty-hour day, overseeing the emergency operations of the NOPD. It was evident during several news conferences that his schedule- and job-related stress began to take its toll. Brinkley (2006) noted that on several occasions he appeared to be incoherent and talking to himself. As a result of his behavior, rumors were beginning to circulate that Compass was experiencing a nervous breakdown or that he was drinking and taking drugs on the job. Compass dispelled these rumors by asserting that he was working around the clock without any sleep (Brinkley, 2006).

While conducting periodic news conferences, Compass would often release information that had not been confirmed or substantiated. On one occasion, Compass reported that in the New Orleans Convention Center an armed gang had taken over, occupied the third floor of the building, and began shooting tourists who ventured too close to the Convention Center (Cooper & Block, 2006). In addition, Compass claimed that he had deployed eighty-eight police officers to the Convention Center to restore order but were deflected by a better armed and organized army of criminals (Cooper & Block, 2006). Many of these reports were accepted by many news reporters and government officials, even though they lacked accuracy. These unsubstantiated reports continued the suffering of those trapped in the Convention Center because government officials believed that the situation was too dangerous to conduct relief operations in the middle of the night (Cooper and Bullock, 2006).

Prior to the arrival of the storm, rumors surfaced that Mayor Nagin was displeased with the performance of Superintendent Compass because of the spike in the murder and violent crime rates. However, political pundits claim that Compass' undoing was the
result of the massive desertion by NOPD officers and the scandal involving the
commandeering of vehicles from a local Cadillac dealership.

On September 27, 2005, in a hastily assembled news conference, NOPD
Superintendent Eddie Compass III retired from the police department following 26 years
of service (Levin, 2005). Several weeks following his announced retirement, Compass
claimed that he was forced to retire or he would be fired by Mayor Nagin. Compass was
replaced by Deputy Chief Warren Riley.

During the initial days following the arrival of Hurricane Katrina, the entire
Criminal Justice system of New Orleans collapsed. The NOPD operated without
communications, police cruisers, ammunition, food, water, and the necessary equipment
to conduct routine police operations. The Central Lock-Up facility (city jail) was flooded
and inoperable. Consequently, NOPD officers had no means to book and lodge prisoners.
This became problematic, and attempts to control looting proved difficult. Approximately
seven days following the storm, the Louisiana Department of Corrections established a
makeshift correctional facility at the local Greyhound Bus station.

U. S. Government officials claim that their relief effort was delayed because they
did not anticipate the total collapse of civil law enforcement in New Orleans and that
state and local government did not formally make the necessary requests for assistance.

Approximately four days following the storm, federal troops began arriving in
New Orleans. In addition, through the cooperation of the Louisiana State Police and the
FBI police, communications was slowly being restored. In accordance with the
provisions of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), participating
states dispatched National Guard and state law enforcement agencies to assist in the
emergency operations in New Orleans (www.emacweb.org).
The U.S. Attorney General, in accordance with the National Response Plan, authorized the deployment of federal agents to assist state and local law enforcement in restoring order.

Hurricane Katrina has been described as the most catastrophic natural disaster in the history of the United States. The effects of the storm on the New Orleans criminal justice system and the NOPD in particular are still being felt today.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Hurricane Katrina, a Category 4 storm, roared into the city of New Orleans on the morning of August 29, 2005, with sustained winds of approximately 120 miles per hour. The winds were accompanied by an estimated 28 foot tidal surge that resulted in several levee breaches which caused 80 percent of the city to flood. Hurricane Katrina has been described as the largest natural disaster in the history of the United States. The NOPD was faced with an unprecedented problem of commencing rescue operations in addition to maintaining order in the midst of civil unrest, which largely resulted in street gangs committing crimes of opportunity and a panicked populace. In addition, the NOPD was confronted with 228 police officers who abandoned their posts of duty. Police communications were completely incapacitated and the majority of the NOPD vehicle fleet had been flooded. During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the NOPD attempted to operate without food, water, and ammunition. NOPD officers lost their homes and were unaware of the status of their families. Many NOPD officers had to be rescued from the roof tops of their homes, which delayed their reporting to work. Numerous NOPD officers were accused of looting department stores, jewelry stores and illegally commandeering high-priced vehicles from a Cadillac dealership. In spite of these adversities, the majority of the NOPD officers performed admirably during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina under harsh and arduous conditions.

Research Design

This research will utilize a case study that is designed to explore the NOPD emergency response to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. This research design will
include interviews with 35 NOPD officers, (30 police officers and 5 supervisory officers), who participated in the NOPD post-Katrina rescue and enforcement operations. For the purpose of this study, a police officer should be considered as a line officer. Supervisors include ranking police officers such as sergeant, lieutenant, captain, major and deputy chief.

The researcher briefed interviewees about the purpose of the study and the participants were guaranteed anonymity to protect them from reprisal. The interview was recorded by utilizing a Sony V-O-R micro-cassette digital tape recorder. All interview recordings were made only with the consent of the interviewee. In the event an interviewee declined to give consent to be recorded the researcher will take copious notes on a standard legal pad. During the interview process, each interviewee was identified as Officer John Doe #1 through officer John Doe #35, respectively. The recorded interviews were transcribed and upon completion any/all research notes were secured in the researcher’s home office. It should be noted that at all times during this study the true identity of the interviewee was known only to the researcher.

During the interview process, structured and open ended follow-up questions will be utilized in this exploratory case study. A list of the structured questions can be found in Appendix E.

The location of the interview was mutually determined by the interviewee and the researcher. The interviews were conducted at the police districts.

Archival Research

The academic literature describing the NOPD emergency response to Hurricane Katrina was consulted. The scholarly research will assist the researcher acquire historical
background information of the NOPD. Furthermore, extensive research was conducted in
government publications that analyzed police emergency response to natural disasters and
civil unrest. Research will be conducted in federal legislation that prohibits or restricts the
federal government’s response to incidents of civil disorder and natural disasters.
Furthermore, an examination of the city of New Orleans and the NOPD Emergency
Response Plans will be conducted to evaluate the level of preparedness by the NOPD and
the city.

This research design also includes secondary sources such as The Wall Street
Journal, New York Times, The Times Picayune, Morning Advocate and Time and
Newsweek magazines, to obtain a chronological perspective of the events surrounding
this historical event.

Variables

The independent variables in this study have been identified as contributors to the
NOPD emergency response to Hurricane Katrina. The independent variables were
identified as a result of a review of the pertinent literature regarding police emergency
response. In addition, the writer is a thirty-two year law enforcement veteran, and his
experience contributed to the identification/selection of the independent variables. The
dependent variable has been identified as “the police emergency response.” The
independent variables are listed as follows:

1). Training
2). Communications
3). Leadership
4). Education
5). Hiring Standards

Time Frame

The time frame for this study is from August 29, 2005, to January 15, 2007. This time frame includes the NOPD rescue and enforcement operations during the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. It should be noted that at the time of this study the NOPD is still dealing with problems associated with Hurricane Katrina.

Hypothesis

While this is an exploratory study having no formal hypothesis, it would be prudent to examine the relationship between the variables. This study will explore the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, the police emergency response. Furthermore, this study will answer the research question “what was the NOPD emergency response to Hurricane Katrina?

August Vollmer, a renowned police reformer and former Berkeley California chief of police, strongly believed that training was the foundation of police professionalism. In 1909, Vollmer was the first police administrator to introduce a formal police training academy (Swanson et al., 2004). Police training should not end at the police academy. In-service or career enhancement training has been noted to promote personal and professional development of the individual officer.

Communications is a vital component of any police organization. The facts and circumstances surrounding the tragic events of September 11, 2001, proved the vital importance of communications. The 9-11 Commission recognized the fact that the lack of communications hampered the rescue efforts of emergency response personnel to the New York City World Trade Center. During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, it was
quite evident that the lack of communications adversely affected the NOPD rescue and enforcement operations.

Police organizations require leadership to be an effective and efficient organization. During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina the command and control system was broken because of lack of communications and the number of displaced NOPD officers that were stranded throughout the city. This study will explore several principles of leadership such as trait leadership and Friedman’s Contingency Theory and how it applied to the NOPD operations during Hurricane Katrina.

The literature has shown that a higher education (college degree) tends to improve the overall performance of a police officer. This study will explore the benefits of a college degree as it pertains to overall police performance especially in emergency situations. In 1922, August Vollmer claimed that the university was an indispensable tool to prepare young adults for police service (O’Keefe, 2004). According to O’Keefe (2004), the “Wickersham Commission recognized that the most effective means of improving the quality of the individual police officer was through the imposition of higher educational standards” (p. 18).

Hiring standards refers to the quality of a potential police or law enforcement recruit during the hiring process. Some of these standards include character, education, physical agility and a psychological profile that is conducive to ethical policing. During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina it was reported that approximately 228 police officers abandoned or deserted their posts. This study will explore the reasons why these officers went AWOL and if there is any correlation to the NOPD hiring standards. In addition,
this study will also explore the reasons why the majority of the NOPD officers remained on the job and performed admirably under extremely adverse conditions.

Instrument

Structured and semi-structured interviews of 35 NOPD line and supervisory officers who participated in the NOPD rescue and enforcement operations during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina will provide much of the data for this study. The balance of the interviewees will consist of supervisory police officers such as; sergeant, lieutenant, captain, major and deputy chief. These persons will be regarded as the interviewees.

All interviews will be recorded with the permission of the interviewee. If the interviewee declines to give permission the researcher (interviewer) will take copious notes on a standard legal note pad. The instrument will be the fifteen significant questions that will be asked of the interviewees. These questions were formulated following an extensive review of the pertinent literature concerning the NOPD emergency response to the largest natural disaster in the history of the United States. In addition, the writer is a former New Orleans Police Officer and has a thirty-two law enforcement career. This experience has assisted the writer in formulating the significant questions that will be used in this study.

Setting

In 1682, the city of New Orleans was founded by the French explorer Robert sieur de la Salle, and in 1718, Bienville named the French settlement New Orleans, in honor of the Duc d’ Orleans (Stall, 1995). In 1803, the Louisiana Purchase was completed, making Louisiana and New Orleans part of the United States. Due to the
city’s proximity to the Mississippi River, New Orleans has become one of the largest sea ports in the United States. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, the NOPD consisted of approximately 1,600 commissioned police officers. According to the 2000 United States Census, the population prior to Hurricane Katrina was listed as 484,674 residents. The U.S. Census 2000 listed the ethnic and racial demographics of the city of New Orleans as follows:

1). Caucasian 135,956
2). African American 325,947
3). Other 23,674

Following Hurricane Katrina, the 2006 Louisiana Health and Population Survey reported that in October 2006 the population of New Orleans was listed as having 191,139 residents. The 2006 Louisiana Health and Population Survey listed the ethnic and demographics of the city as follows:

1). Caucasian 81,557
2). African American 89,891
3). Other 19,691

The focus of this study is the NOPD emergency response to Hurricane Katrina. The flood waters of Hurricane Katrina encompassed eighty percent of the city of New Orleans, and this massive storm has been described as the most catastrophic natural disaster in American history. Prior to Hurricane Katrina the NOPD was comprised of approximately 1,600 police officers. In the post-Katrina era, the NOPD consisted of approximately 1,300 commissioned police officers.

*Population and Sample*
The subjects of this study represent those NOPD officers who participated in the rescue and enforcement operations during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, the NOPD workforce consisted of approximately 1,688 commissioned police officers. This number does not equate to the actual number of police officers actually on duty at the time of the storm. The reader must be mindful of the fact that many officers were not available for duty because of sickness, injured on duty, vacation or suspension. For the purpose of this study, the population will consist of only those line and supervisory officers who participated in the emergency rescue and enforcement operations during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Furthermore, during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, 228 police officers abandoned their posts or went AWOL. In addition, 91 officers retired or resigned from the police force during the same time frame. This combination of AWOL, retired or officers who resigned further reduced the number of officers who were available for duty during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

In this study the researcher will utilize a random stratified sampling technique. The sample will be divided into two strata (categories) line officers and supervisory officers. At the time of this proposal, the “span of control” (ratio of supervisors to line officers) is unknown. The literature suggests that ideally the span of control should be one supervisor for every six line officers (Fyfe et al., 1997). The researcher proposes to personally interview 30 line officers and 5 supervisors. A list of police officers (line & supervisory) will be obtained from the NOPD who participated in the rescue and enforcement operations that were conducted during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The exact number of these police officers is unknown at this particular time. Upon receiving the list of police officers, the researcher will affix a random number to each
name. For example, if the total number of participating officers is 500, then the range of random numbers will be listed as 1 through 500.

The next step in the sampling process would include randomly selecting thirty names of police officers to be interviewed. A second random selection of 5 supervisors will take place. In the event that a perspective interviewee declines or is unable to participate in the study, 3 alternate names from the line officer and supervisory officer categories (strata) will be randomly selected and will be labeled accordingly.

Analysis of Data

A content analysis will be conducted of the data received from the interviews of the key informants. The content analysis will be conducted on a computer based program to identify any/all common themes with regards to the NOPD emergency response to Hurricane Katrina.
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

The purpose of this case study is to conduct an exploratory analysis of the NOPD response to Hurricane Katrina. The collection of data was based upon structured and semi-structured interviews of 30 NOPD line officers and 5 supervisory officers. The population consisted of those NOPD officers who served during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The researcher utilized a stratified random sampling technique. The sample was divided into two strata (categories): line officers and supervisors.

Demographics

The demographics of the participants are listed as follows:

- Female Police Officers 6
- Male Police Officers 29
- Average Job Tenure 10 years

For further information regarding the demographics of the NOPD refer to Table 1.

Table 1

NOPD Race/Sex Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Sex</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Male Police Officers</td>
<td>1010</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Female Police Officers</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Black Police Officers</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total White Police Officers</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Police Officers</td>
<td>1410</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NOPD June 30, 2007

On March 21, 2007, the researcher met with Captain Juan Quinton, NOPD Chief of Staff, and submitted a written request for the authorization and cooperation of the NOPD to conduct this study. A copy of the request letter to Superintendent Warren Riley
is attachment #1. On March 29, 2007, Captain Quinton advised the researcher that the study had been approved. A copy of the approval letter is attachment #2.

Shortly after, Deputy Chief of Operations Anthony Cannatella issued a directive instructing the various unit commanders to cooperate with the researcher who was conducting a study of the NOPD response to Hurricane Katrina. A copy of the NOPD memorandum is attachment #3. In addition, Deputy Chief Cannatella advised personnel that this study had been sanctioned by the Superintendent of the NOPD, and he encouraged the participants to be candid when responding to the researcher’s questions.

Collection Procedure

Upon receiving the NOPD directive from Deputy Chief Cannatella, the researcher was contacted by the various police district Internal Control Officers (ICO). These positions were formerly known as the District Executive Officer (XO). The researcher informed the ICOs that he required a copy of the district manpower list in order to conduct a stratified random sampling. Upon receiving the manpower lists, the researcher placed a set of numbers alongside the names of the line-officers on the manpower roster and a separate list of numbers along side the supervisors. The researcher utilized two separate decks of pre-numbered cards, from which officers and supervisors were randomly selected. In addition, 5 alternate line-officers and supervisors were selected in the event some of the original selectees were unavailable or refused to be interviewed. In order to protect the identity of the participants, the researcher labeled them John Doe #1 through John Doe #35. The participants were selected from the following police districts; 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th, 7th and the 8th. The 5th district failed to participate in the study for unknown reasons, and, as a result, the Special Operations Unit replaced the 5th district and participated in the study. The Special Operations Unit consists of the Special
Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT), Dive Team, and the Explosives Ordinance Disposal Team (EOD).

Data Instrumentation

The structured interviews consisted of 15 significant questions (attachment # 4) that were created as the result of the literature review and the personal experiences of the researcher's 32 year law enforcement career, which ironically began with the NOPD. The participants were advised of the goals and objectives of the study in accordance with the guidelines set by the University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board (IRB). A copy of the USM-IRB paperwork is attachment # 5. The researcher received permission from the participants to record all of the interviews. The interviews were recorded on a Sony VOR micro-cassette tape recorder, and the recorded interviews were subsequently transcribed into a Microsoft Word format. All of the interviews were conducted at the respective district stations and the special operations office respectively.

Data Analysis

In the data analysis section of this study, 35 NOPD line and supervisory officers responded to the 15 significant questions by vividly portraying their personal accounts of their experiences while serving during the precarious aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

The answers provided by the participants have been categorized according to their response to the question. As part of the data analysis, extracts from their personal interviews have been included in their response to provide the reader with a first hand account of their unique experiences while serving during the waning days of the most catastrophic natural disaster in the history of the United States.

Question 1: Why do you think the NOPD was ill-prepared to handle the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina?
Eighty-nine percent of the respondents claimed that the NOPD and the city of New Orleans were ill-prepared to handle the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Many of the participants believed that the city and police administration had a complacent attitude towards Hurricane Katrina. This attitude is largely predicated upon the fact that, during the past decade, New Orleans had been spared of a direct hit by several intense storms. As a result, many city administrators, as well as residents of New Orleans, had developed a "dodge the bullet syndrome."

In addition, officers of this group strongly believed that the city ignored repeated warnings from the National Hurricane Center (NHC) that Katrina was a catastrophic hurricane and that the NHC had predicted New Orleans was in the danger zone (projected landfall). These advanced warnings from the NHC gave the city administration several days to prepare for any/all emergencies.

Furthermore, many respondents claim that the mayor's delayed decision to issue a mandatory evacuation order contributed to the disaster. The officers indicated that the mayor had many resources available to assist in the evacuation of the city's indigent population such as; Amtrak train service, and Regional Transit Authority (RTA) buses, but Mayor Nagin declined to take Amtrak's offer of assistance to evacuate citizens and the RTA buses were inoperable due to the flooding.

This group of respondents also indicated that the city failed to prepare for a failure of the levee system. There were three levee breeches that resulted in the flooding of 88% of the city. The majority of the officers interviewed claimed that the city had survived the storm, but it was the flooding that caused the catastrophe.

One respondent claims that, "In my opinion, I think the higher brass in the department weren't prepared, from the top, and from them not being prepared it filtered..."
The city administration along with the NOPD command staff underestimated the destructiveness of Hurricane Katrina. Even though New Orleans and the entire Gulf Coast region received numerous advanced warnings from the National Hurricane Center (NHC) about the potential for an extremely disastrous situation with this storm, the administration, along with the populace,
maintained a complacent attitude. One officer commented about this problem: "I think like other storms, they underestimated the level of destruction that it was going to actually bring. I think there have been other times that we have weathered storms, they blew over, after 2 or 3 days we've back to normal. I just don't think that they really believed that this was going to be as destructive as it actually was."

Another supervisor commented on the lack of planning and preparation by the NOPD and the city administration: "I feel that there was no plan or anticipation of a worse case scenario. I think a lot of people spoke about the worse case scenario but as an organization, as a whole, I don't think we planned ahead. We didn't have a lot of things in place. First and foremost, I didn't feel like we had things in place that would project that the long term isolation from families and, you know, people's loved ones but individually I think a lot of officers performed well in spite of the lack of planning on the part of the, obviously not just the police department, the part of the city because actually, you know, the departments of city government and a lot of resources that we get are directly from the city government. So it wasn't just the police department in itself. I think the city planning for the worse case scenario was not prepared."

One participant expressed his viewpoint on this question by stating, "The most obvious thing that comes to my mind was equipment. We were absolutely not prepared in the incidents where we needed boats or something of that nature. We basically had to appropriate those. We needed additional high-powered firearms to protect ourselves and the citizens. We had to either appropriate those from citizens who were nice enough to loan them to us or in most cases, officers brought their own."
Eleven percent of the respondents stated that the NOPD and the city administration were prepared to handle the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. This group of officers believed that "no one could have been prepared to handle an act of God."

One officer stated, "I don't think no agency has been through something so traumatic like that and, you know, New Orleans has never seen anything like that so, you know, I mean, it was just... no one ever expected it to be that bad. I think that's the bottom line of it. You know, how can you prepare for something like that?"

Another officer supported the NOPD command staff and the city administration's performance during the storm by stating, "I really don't believe they were ill-prepared. I think the situation was very unique and I think they did the best they could under that situation and I believe a lot of Monday morning quarterbacking could be put into this. But I think they did a fine job under the situation."

In response to this question 100% of the supervisors responded that the NOPD was ill-prepared for Hurricane Katrina. 64% of the female officers stated that the NOPD was ill-prepared to handle Hurricane Katrina and 33% of the female officers claimed that the NOPD did not expect the storm to be so destructive.

**Question 2: What type of emergency response training did the NOPD provide you prior to the arrival of Hurricane Katrina?**

Ninety-four percent of the respondents claimed that they received no emergency response training from the NOPD. Emergency response training would include training police officers to respond to critical incidents such as natural disasters, acts of terrorism, aircraft crashes, etc.
The reader must be mindful of the fact that the mission of the police is to prevent crime, maintain order, and, to some extent, protect property. One disgruntled respondent stated with regards to emergency response training, “I do not know what they (NOPD) had, but I do not have one manual or pamphlet or any type of information that would give me directions to direct a person or who would be over an event such as this on this date. I have to use my own discretion. I haven’t had any practice. I don’t know any locations to go. I don’t have any locations to send people. I don’t know any evacuation routes. I don’t know backup evacuation routes. I don’t know CPR. I don’t know rescue. I don’t know where the boats are. I don’t know what my unit assignment would be. I don’t know where my second contingent would be. I don’t know what to do if I get separated from my unit. Need I go on?”

Six percent of the respondents claimed that they received some type of emergency training. Several officers stated that they received National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) training. According to the NIMS Incident Command System Field Guide (2006), “the goal of NIMS is to provide a consistent nationwide template for all levels of government and private sector organizations to effectively work together in preparation, response and recovery from domestic incidents” (p. 2).

Eighty-six percent of the respondents stated that they had not received any emergency response training since Hurricane Katrina. One of the respondents stated, “I think anytime you’re in a city surrounded by water like we are that, it’s absolutely essential that they provide training on things like boating and water rescue...things of that nature.”
In response to this question, 100% of the supervisors and the female officers responded that they did not receive any emergency response training prior to the arrival of Hurricane Katrina.

**Question 3: What type(s) of emergency equipment were available to you during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina?**

Ninety-one percent of the respondents claimed that they were not provided with any type of emergency equipment. The overwhelming majority of the officers who were interviewed stated that they only had their personal police equipment which included items such as; gun belt, firearm, flashlight and a change of clothes etc. With regards to having emergency equipment one officer stated "The only equipment that was available to me was what I brought myself. I brought a large flashlight. I had food. I had a change of clothes. I had medical supplies that I supplied for myself. I basically had somewhat of a plan."

Many of the officers who were interviewed contend that they commandeered many types of equipment during the aftermath of the storm. Respondents stated that they had to appropriate chainsaws to clear the streets of downed trees so that they could respond to calls for assistance. One officer commented, "So basically, you didn't have any NOPD equipment, emergency equipment. You just commandeered everything you needed. We commandeered boats. We had to get water. We had to get food because we had none of that. We were told to report to work with an extra change of clothes and a meal for the night. That was our preparedness." Many officers complained that the only provisions the NOPD gave them prior to the storm were 72 ten ounce bottles of water for 92 police officers.
During the days following the storm, numerous officers commented that local citizens and corporations donated a variety of equipment to the district officers to assist them in their rescue operations. According to one officer, "We had a lot of outside resources (non-government). We had a railroad where we got vehicles, large equipment. We also had a wealthy guy that had backhoes, tractors, whatnot. We hit everybody up. We also had Audubon Zoo. We used some of their big equipment."

The reader should be mindful of the fact that not all police district stations were flooded. The 4th, 2nd, 6th, and 8th district stations were spared from the flooding. However, many of the surrounding areas of those districts were flooded which, in turn, severely restricted the response of those officers.

One officer commented that he did not receive any type of emergency equipment from the NOPD. He added that during the days following the storm, he received some equipment from members of the Louisiana National Guard (LNG). In a follow-up question, the officer was asked if he was instructed to bring any provisions to work his tour of hurricane duty. The officer responded to the question as follows: "Like any other storms, yes, I brought 2 or 3 days of clothing, food, water, and they stated that we're going to have a water supply and it was going to be stored at the LSU Dental School, which is what we have done in the past. So it was basically the routine procedure for us like any other storm that I've dealt with since I've been on the job." It should be noted that not all police officers brought provisions such as food, water, and additional clothing with them when they reported to hurricane duty. As a result of these interviews, it appears that this procedure was not mandated. Prior to the arrival of Hurricane Katrina, the LSU Dental School was a designated staging area for members of the NOPD.
Subsequent to the levee breeches the LSU Dental School was flooded and the police officers had to be rescued by Agents of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries (LWF).

Another participant answered the question by stating, "Not too terribly much. I believe this time I was in the Second District. I believe that we had a generator at the station. Most of the equipment that was made available to us was equipment that was made available by entities other than the police department. I know Touro and Baptist Hospitals provided us with accommodations. They fed us at their cafeterias and that kind of thing. Other than that, just the normal equipment that we have been issued."

Nine percent of the respondents claimed that a generator was the only NOPD emergency equipment that was available to them. One officer stated, "We had the generator downstairs and, uh, you know, at least the station ran. The problem was when they put the generator in; they put it underneath the building so all the heat came in here. The generator was not big enough to power the air conditioner units. We got that big tower outside. If they could have put smaller units in here, smaller units it probably would have powered it. Its just dumb planning on the city's part. They don't look at ... Plus people always said, oh, one day we're going to be hit bad. Oh no, that would never here."

One officer summed up the situation involving the police districts: "Initially, there was nothing available to us. Approximately 3 days later we started to get more and more manpower. We started to get provisions such as water and MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat). But during the first 3 days we fended for ourselves."

In response to this question 100% of the supervisors responded that they did not receive any type of emergency equipment during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.
83% of the female officers responded that they did not receive any emergency equipment. 17% of the female officers claimed that they only received a generator.

**Question 4: Were you made aware of the NOPD Hurricane Emergency Operations Plan prior to the arrival of Hurricane Katrina?**

Seventy-seven percent of the respondents stated that they were not aware of the NOPD Hurricane Operations Plan. Many officers added that they heard that there was such a plan but they never saw it. According to one officer, “*To my knowledge, there was one, it was not available to me or to any of my co-workers or my rank. No information was disseminated down from up high to us.*” Another officer declared, “*You have to realize I’m kind of at the bottom of the totem pole so the higher ups probably knew, but we didn’t know.*”

Another officer commented about having advanced knowledge of the NOPD Hurricane Emergency Plan by stating, “*Let me give you an idea of what we got at roll call. I believe it was the day before the hurricane. The captain called everyone into the roll call room. We were sitting in the roll call room. They were saying…okay come in tonight around three in the morning, four in the morning. And we are looking at each other…That is the time the hurricane is supposed to hit. We can’t come in at that time. That is the exact hour they predicted it’s gonna hit…okay, everybody come in at six o’clock. Right there, I immediately knew, ok, we don’t know what we are doing here. Because messages are coming in at the last moment to tell us what time to come in.*”

Twenty-three percent of the officers stated that they were aware of the NOPD Hurricane Operations Plan. One respondent commented, “*I was made aware of the operations plan through a 105 memo; it’s short. The memo said…in the event of a*”
hurricane what steps and what procedures the department will follow. I can’t be specific about exactly what was on that piece of paper.” It should be noted that a form 105 is a NOPD interoffice memorandum.

One supervisor commented about this subject matter by commenting, “Yes, I was. I had that two-inch book sitting on my desk and it was the 2005 version. To be very honest with you, I never opened the book. I still have it. I kept it in the trunk of my vehicle when the hurricane hit. But that book really...I mean I had looked at it in the past. That book really referred to operations of the city, not the operations of the police department. The simple mandate from the Office of Emergency Preparedness, though that documentation is very simple. Do what you need to do to keep citizens safe, period. There was no clear delineation on how to do it, when to do it, with whom, with what personnel.”

The NOPD historically withdraws all patrol units from the streets when the storm winds exceed 50 miles per hour. This has traditionally been the standard operating procedure with regards to hurricanes and tropical storms to prevent police officers from being seriously injured by flying debris.

It was learned during the course of the interviews that many district and unit commanders took the initiative to relocate their police vehicles to areas such as the Louisiana Superdome and private facilities to avoid loosing the police cruisers to potential flooding. The officers further stated that the relocation of the police cruisers to higher ground was part of the NOPD Hurricane Emergency Operations Plan. It was reported that approximately 500 NOPD cruisers were lost due to flooding from the storm.

Several officers commented that subsequent to Hurricane Katrina, the NOPD has revised their hurricane operations plan and allegedly made it readily available to
members of the police department. However, numerous participants advised that they were not aware of an updated hurricane operations plan.

In response to this question, 60% of the supervisors responded that they were not aware of the NOPD Hurricane Emergency Plan. 40% of the supervisors responded that they were aware of the NOPD Hurricane Emergency Plan. 83% of the female officers responded that they were not aware of the hurricane emergency plan while 17% responded that they were.

Question 5: In your opinion, was there a breakdown in leadership or supervision within the NOPD during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina?

Eighty-three percent of the respondents stated that there was a breakdown in leadership or supervision during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. During any critical situation, leadership is extremely important. The literature has shown that during an emergency situation someone must step up and take charge of the situation. One officer stated, "I think, uh, in any crisis situation, in order for things to work effectively like they should, you have to have good leadership at the top. If the leaders of the department would have, maybe implemented some plans a little sooner, perhaps, previous to the actual event, I think we would have had much less of a problem with officers needing to leave to handle the last minute things getting their families in place."

The same officer continued by stating, "I think there was too much indecisiveness. You know, somebody needed to stand up and say, hey, this is what we're going to do. The storm is coming. This is what we're going to do. This is where we're going to put people in place, and maybe have (like we had in years past) a central
location where all the police department could meet and could disperse and go out around the city from one central location."

Within this group of respondents, many officers believed that there was a breakdown in leadership from the top to the bottom. Many police officers strongly believed that the NOPD Command Staff was not prepared to handle a storm of this magnitude. One respondent commented about the breakdown in leadership: "Just the struggle that took place afterwards. The fear, the stress factor, both of those combined took place. I don't think the upper management was prepared for the dealings of what happened between the flooding, the looting, just carelessness that took place, for lack of a better term." Another officer commented "that there was a complete breakdown at all levels. Mainly at the upper levels-captains and above, sergeants. I think at all levels there was a breakdown."

One officer responded to the this way: "Yeah, a complete breakdown. It happened at pretty much every level. From what I saw, everything broke down into the district commands and there were certain commanders that took it upon themselves to basically circle up what people and equipment they had and do the best they could, and the higher-ups in my opinion just basically fell apart. It was one of the hardest situations for anybody in that position to deal with, but at the same time, I think it was a lack of communications and I think, obviously having no radios, cell phones for an extended period of time added to the chaos. It struck me that the higher-ups completely fell apart and there was no direction from anyone above the rank of captain.

Even though the majority of the interviewed officers believed that there was a breakdown in leadership, they also claimed that during the first three to four days following the storm the officers operated at the unit level that was usually commanded by
a sergeant. Several officers complained that several of the shift lieutenants had abandoned them during the storm, leaving them to fend for themselves. Many officers were without assignments and did not know where to go.

One supervisor responded to this question by stating, "Yes, there was no command structure from headquarters whatsoever. And this is not because they weren't capable. It's because they were disoriented as everybody else was. Within the first three days after the hurricane, the only command structure that we had and actually saved our lives, and probably physical and mental well-being, was the structure that we developed within our own divisions. The superintendent was worried about getting his face on television. The assistant superintendent was working as a dispatcher. There was no command post structure set up. There were no auxiliary units. There was no public information. There were no medical facilities. Nothing was established unless you did it on your own."

Another supervisor expressed his thoughts about the question by commenting, "I think the only breakdown we had was the communications process. Radio communications were bad. But I think one thing that could have been...We had a deputy chief and about four captains and several units were assigned there, but we never met to see who was...like at roll call everyday. You know, there should have been a big board with the chain of command and people reporting to say everybody's there because you know, I saw people at the end I never saw for seven days when we were getting ready to leave the superdome. So sure there was a breakdown but within our ranks."

With regards to this subject matter, one officer stated, "Well, nobody knew who to communicate with. Nobody knew who to take directions from. The radio system went out. At that point we lost all communications. There was no backup plan as to if, you know,
we lost radio communications, how would we be able to communicate. Every district basically was on their own. Every officer was on their own and, basically, did whatever they thought they had to do. There was a breakdown in leadership from the mayor's office down.”

It has been duly noted that, during the waning days following the storm, there was complete chaos. New Orleans was on the verge of anarchy and the police department was literally paralyzed by the storm. The emergency response capability had been negligible because of flooding, and as a consequence, there was a complete breakdown in the NOPD command and control system. One officer commented about the breakdown in leadership by stating, “Absolutely there was a complete breakdown in leadership. There was total chaos. Well, it was due to the fact that the communications system was down altogether. Even though this is hearsay, it was my understanding when they were able...I mean the upper rank of the Third District, were able to make contact to advise them about the conditions that the wording was you're on your own! And at that point there was a severe breakdown in communications because, if you have officers, fellow officers that are in dire straights and no one at any time should tell them (officers) you're on your own.” At this point the officer added that as a result of the situation at hand, he and his fellow officers developed a “defense mechanism.” The officer was questioned as to what he meant by that term. The officer responded by stating, “That you just take care of your own. You can’t worry with anybody else; we gotta make sure that we’re safe first, and then we can do whatever we need to do. So the district for me, as far as I was concerned, was an independent community at that point.”

In addition, many of the officers concurred that the lack of communications contributed to the breakdown of the NOPD command and control system. Builder,
Bankers and Nordin (1999) defines command and control system as the “facilities, equipment, communications, procedures, and personnel essential to the commander for planning, directing, and controlling operations of assigned forces pursuant to the missions assigned” (p. xiii). Communications is the life blood of any police organization. During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the interviewed officers claimed that the entire NOPD communications system was paralyzed by the storm. While operating in the field, the officers stated they communicated by cell phones (if they were operable), text messaging, pay telephone and by word of mouth. Some police units employed “runners” to communicate with other units who were located in different geographical locations.

Seventeen percent of the respondents stated that they believed that the leadership and supervision of the NOPD were adequate during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. This was based upon the fact that the impact of the storm and the flooding totally incapacitated the NOPD command staff. Officers from this group claimed no other agency or police department in the United States could have coped with a natural disaster of this magnitude. One officer commented “That leadership was pretty good, to see all the chaos that was going on. I think the supervision was on point."

Another officer expressed his feelings regarding this issue by saying, “I think there was a breakdown in the leadership but I don’t think that we were prepared. But as far as reaction, I think the leadership reacted very well with what we had. The manpower, everyone reacted...everyone did as much as they could. They did the best they could with what they had.”

The majority of the officers spoke highly of their district commander’s performance during the waning days of the storm. One officer stated, “I think the main thing was the breakdown in communications. They had no communications. But if you
had a strong captain you worked for, such as Bayard, Jeff Winn and Mendoza, they kept their people together and focused on what had to be done. I can’t speak for the district captains because I was not there. I was out doing my own thing, but I heard a few of those guys stood up and shined too.”

In response to this question, 100% of the supervisors responded that they believed that there was a breakdown in leadership and supervision during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. 83% of the female officers responded that there was a breakdown in the NOPD leadership and supervision during Hurricane Katrina while 17% believed that the leadership was adequate.

Question 6: How do you feel about the officers who went AWOL during the aftermath of the storm?

Fifty-four percent of the respondents stated that they felt “anger” when they heard that several hundred NOPD officers had gone Absent Without Leave (AWOL) during the storm. It should be noted that this event was unprecedented in the annals of American policing. No other law enforcement agency that was affected by Hurricane Katrina reported any officers going AWOL. One respondent stated, “I felt that they should all be terminated on the spot. There is no excuse for them not being here. It affected morale; you took an oath, if you weren’t here you’re a coward and you should be fired.”

Another officer commented about the officers who went AWOL by stating, “There were some police officers who left before, during and after Katrina. I was pissed off when I first heard about it.” In addition, one veteran police commented, “Those son-of-a-bitches should have kept on running.”
A veteran supervisor expressed his feelings about the question by stating, "You know, I think that they should have been disciplined, number one. That's why I'll never wear the NOPD Hurricane Katrina pin commemorating what we did during the storm, because I see people on the job that I know left the Louisiana Superdome and got their jobs back and were never ever reported as being AWOL. Again, each captain or each unit, when asked who had left, they would lie and say... Oh no, they were all here. There was no consistency and no accountability. Everyday we had roll call at let's say six o'clock in the morning or seven in the morning. I mean we're doing three hour shifts twenty-four hours a day for three days sitting in the back of our police cars so...as far as the ones that left, they have to live with themselves. I think most of them got the discipline that they deserve."

The supervisor was further questioned if he was angry about the officers who went AWOL. The supervisor responded by saying "Absolutely, and that is why it's important. You know, I wanted to leave too, but I stayed because of the guys I work with. If I had left and came back to work with these guys I couldn't face them. We did talk about leaving."

In an additional follow-up question, the supervisor was asked if he had felt abandoned while working in the superdome during the storm. The supervisor answered the question by stating, "Oh, absolutely." The same supervisor discussed the reasons why his unit was contemplating leaving their assignment in the superdome by stating "Well, by Wednesday, we had no water, Sunday to Wednesday, and there was no help on the way. The New Orleans Health Director came to the dome from the New Orleans Arena and said he's not getting any support. He picked up and left all those sick people in the arena and we were almost like...Okay, we gotta get out because nobody is coming
to help us, and then the Louisiana National Guard (LNG) showed up.” The supervisor added that the LNG had set up a facility adjacent to the superdome that was equipped with showers and food services. According to the supervisor, the NOPD officers were prohibited from using the NG facilities for some unknown reason. It should be noted that even though this supervisor along with his unit had discussed leaving the superdome they remained on the job until they were properly relieved.

Many officers stated that they were shocked when they learned about the large number of officers who had reportedly gone AWOL. Officers from this group considered these actions to be a slap in the face because they stayed and worked even though they lost their homes and did know the whereabouts of their families.

One participant responded to the question by stating, “For the most part, I would have to say that they pretty much deserted us, but after the storm and after having gone through everything, that was my opinion straight across the board. But since time has passed away and obviously had time to have a cooler head or whatever, I’ve heard some stories from people that had genuine excuses for leaving and I would probably say 80% of everybody that left deserves to lose their jobs. But I did hear some stories of people leaving just to secure their family and immediately coming back to work and then having some problems.”

In addition, numerous officers claimed that they felt betrayed and abandoned by those officers who went AWOL. One officer commented, “Not only did they desert their brother officers, they deserted the citizens who desperately needed their help.” Another participant expressed his views: “I felt betrayed and I’ll be honest with you, I was stunned by it, that it had never even crossed my mind to where I didn’t even realize it was an option. And I think part of the problem was since our unit was one of the first units out
there, the needs of so many people out there were just so immediate that I couldn’t even fathom. I wasn’t worried about them leaving us per se, right at that moment. It was just so many thousands of people upon rooftops; I couldn’t imagine leaving that many people. The amount of guilt that I would have anyway, at having just, you know, walked out on thousands of... I mean, it was men, women and children, you know. It wasn’t a matter of criminals or black and white. So I mean, it was just vast... It was like a sea of people on rooftops and everybody needed help. So to walk out of here, it wouldn’t even be an issue of choosing to be a police officer or not to be a police officer at that point. It was more of an issue of being a human being you know.”

Furthermore, several officers supported the notion that 80% of those officers who went AWOL should have been terminated.

One officer had a different spin on the officers who had gone AWOL: “Initially, I harbored a lot of resentment. In the aftermath of seeing how we were treated with the department, at this point I don’t blame them for doing what they did, because ultimately, they were the ones who were able to leave, secure their families, secure their properties, funding, assistance that was needed, food, clothing and shelter while we were left to basically handle our condition like we were in a third world country. And on top of that, they were able to come back and resume their jobs without any problems. Yeah, you may have gotten a few suspension days, but in the end you were able to take care of all of your needs, and it was well worth it.”

Forty-six percent of the respondents felt “mixed emotions” with regards to those officers who had gone AWOL. This group of officers felt that every officer should be judged on a case-by-case basis. In their viewpoint, many officers had a legitimate reason for going AWOL. In addition, scores of officers were labeled “AWOL,” when, in reality,
they were working. According to the interviewed officers, many police officers were
displaced due to the storm and were working in other NOPD assignments. According to
one supervisor, "And I know in our particular unit we started out with 60 people. We
ended up with 68 on the morning of the hurricane. They didn’t know where to go...so we
said come with us.”

In addition, hundreds of police officers were stranded on the rooftops of their
flooded homes and were unable to report to work for several days until they were
rescued. One officer commented, "That this issue was a two-parter for me. The ones that
had a reason to leave; I totally understand if they left for a couple of days to check their
family, check their house and came back. The ones that left, they shouldn’t be here in any
capacity. They should not be an officer."

The researcher realized that the AWOL question was a very controversial and
emotional topic for those officers who participated in this study. Many officers stated that
they still have a sense of animosity towards those officers who left their posts. One
officer informed the researcher that prior to the storm, he had worked with his partner for
a number of years and he was considered to be his best friend. However, during the
aftermath of the storm, his friend and former partner fled or deserted his post, and as a
result, the interviewed officer claimed that they no longer speak. Many friendships within
the ranks of the NOPD have been terminated as a result of officers going AWOL during
the storm.

One participant expounded on the issue of broken friendships and working
relations as the direct result of those officers who had gone AWOL: "I will say it has
been strained for the most part. If they were true friends in the beginning, I think you’ve
got to the point of recovery and healing. If it was people that you really weren’t
associated with in the beginning, it is easy to harbor the resentment because you never really come in contact with you know. You can talk in passing or talk about you being able to place blame on those that you really don't have direct contact with... that's easy. Friends that were here that abandoned, um, either the conversation gets avoided or you just find a place of acceptance that you can deal with, you know, and just move on."

The majority of the respondents stated that it will take a long time for this sense of resentment against those officers who abandoned their posts to heal. In addition, the officers added that they can no longer trust those officers who had fled. They are no longer considered to be reliable or dependable.

Even though the word "coward" was referred to frequently during the interviews, it should be noted that the majority of the respondents were reluctant to label those officers who fled as such. In addition, many officers stated that those police officers who had gone AWOL had to deal with the problem personally. In other words, they have to live with their conscience. The respondents indicated that even though the wounds are beginning to heal, many of these officers firmly believe that the topic will come up time and time again with each new hurricane season.

There was a wide disparity in the supervisor's response to this question. The supervisor's responded to this question as follows:

- Anger 40%
- Mixed emotions 20%
- Case by case basis 20%
- Fear 20%

In similar fashion, the female participants had a wide variety of responses to the question. The responses of the female officers are listed as experiencing the following:
Question 7: In your opinion, why did the police officers desert or abandon their posts?

Twenty-eight percent of the respondents indicated that “family issues” were the primary reason for NOPD officers leaving or deserting their posts. One officer stated, “Family...the only thing that you’re trying to do, you want your family safe and if your family is not safe, you’re not going to be able to help anybody else because you’re worried about your family.”

Prior to the arrival of Hurricane Katrina, many police officers evacuated their families while some chose not to. This scenario became problematic when the levees had breeched and 88% of the city was flooded. Those officers who were assigned to storm duty experienced severe difficulty in attempting to contact their loved ones who had remained in their homes or who had evacuated. As a result, scores of officers left their posts to check on their families and their homes. According to participants of this study, this was an accepted practice as long as the officer received permission from his/her first line supervisor and immediately returned to duty. The problem arose when many officers failed to return to duty.

Twenty-three percent of the interviewed officers claimed that “fear” was the primary reason for why NOPD officers abandoned their posts. There were many young
police officers in the NOPD ranks who had never experienced a hurricane. However, when the city began to flood, the respondents indicated that a combination of young and veteran police officers had abandoned their posts. One officer stated, "They were scared...they did not know where to go. They felt abandoned; there was no leadership."

Another officer commented, "I think...personally, I believe the reason why people left is that they were scared. The fright, the stress level, they just never did experience anything like that. It was overwhelming. And naturally at a time of disaster like that cream always rises to the top and unfortunately, we didn't get too much cream. I know that sounds funny but it is true."

One seasoned supervisor expressed his thoughts regarding this question: "Fear, the number two reason is that they didn't know where to go. Abandonment is a funny term. Some people were charged with abandonment to my knowledge when in fact, during the investigation it showed that they didn't abandon their posts. They didn't have a post to go to. They were totally isolated. If you are referring to officers that abandoned their posts by coming to work for the first day and then leaving after that, there again, it's subjective. Some of them may have left because they didn't know where their families were." In a follow-up question, the supervisor was asked if any of these actions were excusable. The supervisor responded by stating "I will make a blanket statement. Every abandonment case that I am looking at now, and we're talking 20 months after the hurricane--they were totally excusable because the leadership that should have led by example did not do their job."

Another supervisor offered this response: "I think they were afraid. I think this was new territory. But again, I thought if there was a better command structure to keep everybody together on a daily basis discussing...or...okay, guys here's what the plan is.
We’re getting information...blah...blah...blah. And again, each commander would be accountable for his people. In essence, the supervisor was suggesting that the command staff is partially responsible for the large amount of police officers going AWOL due to the lack of leadership and accountability.

In a follow-up question, the supervisor was asked if he believed if “dedication to duty” is pervasive within the ranks of the NOPD. The supervisor answered the question by declaring, “Absolutely not! I just think it’s a different mentality now. I think people come on this job now as a job to get a paycheck, you know, with 23 years on the job I used to always say when I first came on, those guys with 20 years are so miserable they ought to just leave. And now I’ve become one because I see what’s coming on the job, and I think you can’t look at this when a disaster happens and think you’re a regular civilian. You swore to protect and serve and these guys are coming on, girls coming on now, that look at this as a paycheck and a retirement.”

Eighteen percent of the respondents stated that the primary reason(s) why NOPD officers abandoned their posts was a combination of a “lack of leadership and a lack of dedication to duty.” This group of officers indicated that many police officers abandoned their posts because there was no direction from their supervisors. In some instances even supervisors abandoned their assignments. According to one participant, “They felt like the city abandoned them...that the leadership abandoned them, you know, they didn’t have any leadership. So they felt like, uh...I got word that everybody thought the whole department was deserting, you know. That’s the word we were getting, that it was just pockets of police here and there and that everybody just left. It was like uh, that’s the word that was getting back to me that we had no police department, that it fell apart.”
Several of the participants claimed that many of the officers who had fled or abandoned their posts did so because of a lack of dedication to duty or a lack of commitment. One respondent stated, "There was a lack of a true commitment. Some people are cops and some are citizens with guns." There was a considerable amount of belief among the participants of this study that there is a large amount of officers on the job that are on the department just to earn a paycheck and take advantage of the job benefits such as hospitalization, paid vacation, and a lucrative retirement plan. One participant referred to this philosophy as "police welfare." The officer continued by adding, "Simply speaking, they are here just for the paycheck and there is no commitment to the job or to the community."

Seventeen percent of the participants stated that communications or miscommunications were the primary reason(s) why NOPD officers abandoned their assignments. As the city began to flood the entire NOPD command and control system had collapsed. There were no police communications, and as a result rumors and uncertainty was rampant among the rank and file of the department who remained on the job. One participant stated, "Lack of communications, the large number of rumors that were spreading around the city about things like there is a twenty foot high wall of water that is going to come through the city and you have got to get to higher ground, or we're all going to drown. I mean me myself, I never feared that because at the time of the storm I happened to be working downtown and I knew that along Canal Street we have so many high-rise hotels that I carry a badge and a gun, I figure there would be no problem with me getting to higher ground if I wanted to."

During the waning days following Hurricane Katrina, members of the NOPD had no communications with the outside world, as though isolated from the rest of the
country. Numerous officers who had abandoned their posts believed that the entire city was flooded. The lack of communications prevented many officers from authenticating many of the rumors that were circulating through the ranks of the NOPD about what was actually happening within the city.

With regards to communications, one respondent stated that during the days following Hurricane Katrina, he attempted to travel to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in a marked NOPD cruiser to purchase several cell phones (Baton Rouge area code) in an attempt to re-establish some sort of communications. The officer advised that he believed that cell phones without a southeastern Louisiana area code would be operational.

While he was traveling on Interstate Ten (I-10) towards Baton Rouge, he was stopped by a Louisiana State Police (LSP) Trooper. The trooper advised the NOPD officer that he had instructions to stop all NOPD police cars that were traveling away from New Orleans because it was believed that scores of NOPD officers were deserting the city and LSP was attempting to block their escape. At this time, the NOPD officer explained to the trooper the reason why he was traveling and the trooper permitted him to continue to Baton Rouge.

Fourteen percent of the respondents included a myriad of other reasons why officers abandoned or deserted their posts. However, one officer indicated that there was no reason to abandon a post. The officer stated that “you took an oath and if you weren’t here, you are a coward and you should be fired, and that is how I feel about that.”

Another officer suggested, “If you are trapped in your house from the water here, yeah that is an excuse. You couldn’t get out; that is an excuse. That is the only excuse. Now if you were actually trapped in your house or your apartment that would be the only excuse.”
One officer who was stranded in his flooded home during the first few days of the storm stated, "My first thought about those officers who had gone AWOL was complete anger. I felt that they should draw and quarter each one. But then I guess maybe a week or so later I was thinking about it. You know, I don't have a family here. You know I don’t know how I would have reacted if my mother, my father were stuck, stranded. I don't know. The job is most important, but you also have to consider your family. You have to do what you have to do. You can’t just let them perish." In a follow-up question, this participant was asked if there was any viable excuse for going AWOL. The officer responded by stating, "It depends upon the circumstances why they left, how they left. Did they make contact, try to make contact. Like I said it took me 3 days to make contact. But fortunately, I had spoken to my sergeant the day before, right after the storm and I was trying to make it to work but I had like about 2 feet of water, 3 feet of water a couple of blocks away when my car flooded. I told him that I couldn’t make it in. I mean, it appears it’s going down. I’ll come in tomorrow. He said...okay, come whenever you can. I woke up the next morning with 7 feet of water around me.” It should be noted that this officer was stranded on the fourth floor of his apartment complex for 3 days when inexplicably he was able to make contact with his sergeant via his cell phone and was subsequently rescued and returned to duty.

In this response group, a myriad of reasons were given why those police officers had gone AWOL. One police officer provided a different reason for such action: "There was no sense of security. There was no sense of promise that everything was going to be okay. And there is no set plan that they could actually follow, nothing tangible for them to be able to believe in. You needed to fend for yourself and nobody had a sense of direction so you did what you felt was best for you in the position that you are in.”
In response to this question 100% of the supervisors responded that “fear” was the overwhelming reason why NOPD officers had gone AWOL. Conversely, the female officers responded with a myriad of reasons why the NOPD officers had gone AWOL. A list of the female responses is as follows:

- Lack of Leadership 33%
- No Sense of Security 17%
- Fear 17%
- Family 17%
- Lack of Preparation 16%

Question 8: Do you believe that character and loyalty are important attributes of the police recruitment process?

Eighty-six percent of the respondents stated character and loyalty are very important attributes to the recruitment process. One officer responded with the following: “Absolutely, being an ex-military man myself, I think those attributes that you really need to have if you want to go through the fire with somebody. You want somebody that you know has the fortitude to, you know, go through the fire with you, who’s not going to run out on you, that will be there, you know, stick with you when the stuff hits the fan.”

Another respondent argued that “yes, character and loyalty are important. There is a lot of temptation on the job. Character helps make the right decisions and loyalty... means you can depend on each other.”

This group of respondents strongly believed that character and loyalty were extremely important not only to the recruitment process but to the entire rank and file of the NOPD. This attitude is due in part because of the high number of incidents of police misconduct that have been reported during the last 20 years. One officer commented by
saying, "A person of good character is going to stand up and move forward where a person of ill-character is either going to loot, steal and commit other things that’s going to bring out the bad in the police."

Another officer responded with the following: "Yeah, I believe those are some of the important, you know, I think if you start with a good foundation, somebody that has these qualities, you know, your chances of success are going to be greatly increased. I think some of the problems in the past has been bickering over the residency rule has made it to where you’ve only got a small pond to fish from, you know, and if you only got a small pond to fish from you’re gonna have to take whatever you have, whereas if you opened it up, you could be a lot choosier." The officer discussed with regards to character and loyalty, during the waning days following the storm, police supervisors took roll call to ascertain how many police officers had remained on the job. The officer commented, "I mean, I do not know how true it was but at one point I heard that they took roll call to try and figure out what kind of resources they had and I don’t know if there would be any way of confirming this but they counted 230 rolls and this was like on day four or five or something. So the stories of about 300 or 400 officers leaving, I think that was some kind of red herring fed to the media to try and get them off the trail of the fact that there was almost nobody here."

One supervisor commented about this topic by stating, "Yes, and it’s two parts. Character and loyalty are important both as a recruiter and a recruit. Unfortunately, I think our recruiters have been taught that loyalty doesn’t exist. It’s a two way street and in my mind that’s what loyalty is. It’s a two-way street. So they go out and they’re doing their job but we’re expected, or they’re expected, to hire people that are going to be at an undying loyalty to this department. And you do initially. I think every young officer does."
But as they become seasoned they learn that. You know what? I'm not as loyal as I used to be because I'm getting no loyalty in return. You're not getting it from the PD. You're not getting it from the city, and you're not getting it from your co-workers." In a follow-up question, the supervisor was asked if there is such a thing as dedication to duty and is it pervasive within the NOPD. The supervisor responded by stating "In the early 1980s, the city was going through a recruitment retention problem just as they are right now and the city dropped their guard and there was a quote by Lambert Boissiere, who was a city councilperson at the time, when the Superintendent came to him and said 'We are having trouble getting Class A recruits.' Mr. Boissiere's response was, 'if you can't get Class A, get Class B.' And that was the downfall because they started hiring Class B individuals who really came on the job, and this is not everybody entirely, but they started to get individuals who were only concerned about themselves. They liked the power of the gun and badge. They like the money they were making on a consistent basis thanks to details and things like that. And when they could no longer do that, the hell with the department and they were gone. The dedication to duty isn't there. It still exists, but it is not as prevalent as it used to be."

Fourteen percent of the respondents stated that character and loyalty are important attributes of the recruitment process but they do not see it in the field. One officer commented "I think it is important but, uh, I've seen that probably in the past couple of years it seems like more and more that's not really applicable to the recruitment process."

Another officer commented about character and loyalty by stating "They are important because you're not getting the quality that you have with older officers now. I think a lot of these people think this is just a job like we're going to Quickie Mart, but it's
It was apparent that the majority of the participants of this study consider police work to be a “calling or a vocation.” They consider character, loyalty, and dedication to duty to be important attributes of being a police officer. However, several officers stated that even though these are important attributes to have in a police recruit they are extremely difficult to measure. One respondent commented about this topic by stating, “You can’t screen character. You can try, but you can’t screen it. It’s got to be learned. There has to be a system in place where if they have any major character flaws, they shouldn’t be on the job. That’s what this job is about. You’re supposed to be held to a higher standard than the general populace.”

Another officer placed a different spin on this question. He admits that character and loyalty are important attributes to the recruitment process but adds “Not only must the recruits have character and loyalty, but the recruiters must have it as well.”

According to the data collected, character and loyalty are important attributes in policing. One respondent agreed that character and loyalty are important; however, he believes these attributes can be taught by the Field Training Officer (FTO). According to this officer, “I think the most important thing is, and I don’t know if they really can answer this question, in this way... once an officer comes through the academy, he’s only going to be as good as his field training officer. If he is trained well, discipline, character and integrity is going to carry him through his career. But if he is trained by a FTO who really doesn’t care, maybe he’s in it for, you know, incentive or a pay raise; this is going to affect this officer through his career. So it starts with training.”
In response to this question, 80% of the supervisors responded that character and loyalty are important attributes of the recruitment process. 20% of the supervisors responded that they should be important but in reality they are not. Conversely, 100% of the female officers responded that character and loyalty were important attributes of the recruitment process.

**Question 9: Do you believe that the NOPD should improve their recruitment standards? Please explain your response. Or do you think it’s adequate?**

Eighty percent of the respondents stated that the NOPD should improve the recruitment standards. One participant stated, "The recruitment standards should include a more in-depth screening. I mean...I don't know how they are doing things now but I know I had to go through hell and back to get on. I don't know if it's like that now because we're so short but it just seems like anybody could be a cop these days."

Another officer commented about the recruitment process: "I think so...yes, because we have so many officers that slip through the cracks that should never become police officers, and once they get on the job you hear about them in the news and a lot of them haven't been on the job very long at all. I feel that they (hiring standards) are not stiff enough."

An additional participant commented about this question by stating, "I believe that the standards are inadequate. I've got to say that I was in recruitment under Chief Pennington. When he was here I was assigned to recruitment and they (Pennington) lowered the standards quite a bit in order to get the numbers. When I first came on, you were required to take a PT (physical fitness test) in order to get to the hiring process. They did away with that. They said that once the officer was onboard in the academy for
all those weeks they could get them in shape. That didn't happen. So they lowered their standards."

Numerous officers complained about the educational level of many of the new recruits who have joined the ranks of the police department. Historically, the New Orleans Public School system's achievement scores have traditionally placed at the bottom of the Louisiana public school systems. In addition, New Orleans has one of the highest high school drop out ratios in the United States. With these statistics in mind, one respondent stated, "Even though they (NOPD) need the manpower, they should not make a critical error in hiring somebody who is not of good character or does not have a good education. They shouldn't even hire someone from the New Orleans Public School System. I believe that the hiring standards are ridiculously bad."

Another police officer further commented on the topic by stating, "Yes, the recruiting standards are inadequate. You also must improve the background investigation process. The police academy should be more difficult because the recruits cannot read and write."

One supervisor commented on whether the NOPD should improve its hiring standards by stating, "Well, I think they're faced like any private entity, they're faced with filling spots to perform a service. They (NOPD) have lulled themselves into the belief that they can change almost anybody into a productive police officer. And that is not true. That's just totally untrue. I think that they need to change their standards and, changing them, they need to make those standards legislatively mandated because the standards change from one administration to another, depending on the problems that the administration is facing. When I first came on the job years ago during a lie detector test or a polygraph test, the question of drug usage came up. I was asked have you used
drugs in the last six...no, Have you used drugs in the last year? If you answered yes, that would not necessarily eliminate you, but it showed a stronger regimen then. The question now is, have you used drugs in the last 30 days? Yes, the standards have been lowered.

The pervasive opinion with regards to this question is that the recruitment process is primarily concerned with putting officers on the street with little consideration to the quality of the police candidate. One officer expressed his opinion by stating, “I believe they’re just trying to stuff shirts. The manpower is down. They want visibility and they really don’t care about the type of discipline and the type of officers that they are putting on the streets. I think the training period in the academy should be longer. I think the instructors should be much better. And I think the instructors should be brought in from the outside and not within the police department.”

Eight percent of the participants stated that the hiring standards were adequate. One respondent commented, “No, the hiring standards are adequate. However, there is room for improvement. The police academy should weed out problem recruits.” Several officers indicated that the police academy should be more challenging physically and academically. Quite a few respondents complained about a lack of a physical fitness program within the NOPD. These officers claimed that a lack of physical fitness stifles an officer’s performance, and a sloppy appearance shows a lack of professionalism.

Six percent of the respondents claimed that the department must increase the wages before they can improve the department’s hiring standards. Historically, the NOPD has been one of the lowest paid police departments in the country. Many of the officers strongly believe that in order to attract quality recruits the pay scale must be commensurate with the hiring standards. One respondent stated, “I think that they should improve their recruitment standards but if you’re going to improve your recruitment
standards, then they have to be reward based. You can't recruit Harvard students and offer them Delgado (Community College) standards. You know you get what you pay for, right?

A second supervisor answered the question by commenting, "Absolutely, but with that comes pay. And you know, a guy can go on a federal agency that has anything on the ball with a college degree and can start at the same salary as a captain makes on this job and with guaranteed raises every year in steps and grades and makes $120,000 a year, you know, it's a smart move and you can do that relatively quick, incredibly compared to here." In a follow-up question, the second supervisor was asked if the NOPD is more interested in recruiting quantity as opposed to quality recruits. The second supervisor responded by stating, "I think that they want to get anybody they can get. Anybody that's willing to come on this job, they'll find a way to...If they're halfway decent, get them on."

Another officer commented about the subject matter by stating, "To be honest with you, we were shorthanded before the storm. That magic seventeen hundred—that was an illusion. That was to receive federal money. We were shorthanded before and right now we are ridiculously low. But I've always felt like they should raise the standards. I jokingly say you can make it through the academy if you can walk and talk and spell your name correctly three times straight, you're in. But only way you're going to draw enough people for the numbers that we need is if they raise the pay. That's the only way they're going to attract people. And then you raise the standards. Right now I don't know if you can raise the standards and attract enough people."

Six percent of the respondents claimed that the city administration should eliminate the residency requirement in order to attract quality police candidates. The
overall majority of the respondents concur that inadequate hiring standards leads to police misconduct.

In response to this question, 80% of the supervisors responded that the NOPD should improve their hiring or recruitment standards. 20% of the supervisors believed that the hiring standards were adequate. On the other hand, 83% of the female officers responded that the NOPD should improve their hiring standards while 17% of the female officers believed that the selection process should be improved.

**Question 10: Do you believe that higher education or a college degree improves the quality of a police officer?**

Thirty-four percent of the respondents stated that higher education or a college degree improves the quality of a police officer. One participant stated, "Yes, I do. I believe it improves an officer’s performance for two reasons: it exposes an individual to different issues and it shows discipline and commitment." Several of the officers from this group indicated that higher education or a college degree indicates that an individual has discipline and a commitment to a worthy cause.

One supervisor suggested the following: "Yes, I think he or she has an advantage in this fashion. With a higher education they’re able to communicate more intelligently with all walks of life. A lower education initially, with a lack of experience attached to it, a lower education, you’re sort of limited in the basic things. You’re limited in your vocabulary, you’re limited in your experiences, you’re limited in your communication skills. The broader your education, the more people you are able to communicate with. Now on the positive side of lower education, I personally have worked with officers that can’t spell the word college but they would make some of the best supervisors in the
world. The reason is very simple, they've got the experience. So in summation to that question, I believe that education is important but the credit should be given for experience also.

Sixty-three percent of the participants declared that higher education or a college degree does not improve the quality of a police officer. One officer stated, "No, not necessarily, because I only went through the twelfth grade, and I feel that I am very professional and I think it all comes from the way I was raised. So I really don't think that plays a part."

Another participant commented about higher education and police performance by stating, "No, I do not believe it improves the quality of an officer, but I do believe it plays a part in your diversity. As far as paperwork is concerned, it's probably beneficial. But as to day-to-day basic police work on the street, it doesn't matter. No, I don't think you have to have a college degree just to know the basics of street survival and all of that type of stuff."

Many of the officers of this group indicated that job experience was more vital to police performance than a higher education. They would prefer to have an officer who had paid his "dues" on the street than having a college educated partner. An officer expressed his views by stating, "Yes and no about a college degree. If you're talking about a person that becomes a seasoned officer and they're given an opportunity to further their education, then, yeah, it's beneficial. But no matter who you are, you really have to go through the process of learning to be a police officer before you can say that person is going to be a good cop."

Three percent of the participants stated that they were unsure whether a college degree or a higher education improved the quality of a police officer.
It should be noted that NOPD officers have numerous opportunities to obtain a college degree in the metropolitan New Orleans area. The New Orleans Police Foundation provides tuition assistance for officers who wish to attend Tulane University. In addition, the University of New Orleans offers a tuition discount to all state and local law enforcements officers.

Even though the majority of respondents felt that a college education does not enhance the overall performance of a police officer, they did agree that upper management (captain and above) should have a college degree.

The educational level of those officers who were interviewed is listed as follows:

- Master’s Degree 1
- Bachelor’s Degree 3
- Associate’s Degree 4
- Some College 16
- High School Diploma 10
- GED 1

A breakdown of the responses to this question: “Do you believe that higher education or a college degree improves the quality of a police officer” according to the participant’s educational level, is listed as Table 2.
Table 2

*Participant's Response to Question 10*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant's Educational Level</th>
<th>Improves Officer's Performance</th>
<th>Does Not Improve Officer's Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate's Degree</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to this question 80% of the supervisors responded that the NOPD should improve their hiring or recruitment standards. 20% of the supervisors believed that the hiring standards were adequate. On the other hand, 83% of the female officers responded that the NOPD should improve their hiring standards while 17% of the female officers believed that the selection process should be improved.

The literature has shown that there have been many studies conducted about the effect of a college education and police performance. The conclusion of these studies has revealed that it was equally divided among the respondents who believed that a college education improved police performance and those respondents who disagreed. This study has indicated that higher education does not improve police performance.

In response to this question 60% of the supervisors responded that a higher education or a college degree improves the quality of a police officer, and 40% of the supervisors believed that a college education does improve the quality of a police officer.

Conversely, 100% of the female participants responded that a college education does not improve the quality of a police officer.
Question 11: Do you believe that the NOPD Training Academy prepared you to handle any/all emergency situations especially the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina? Why or why not?

Seventy-one percent of the respondents stated that they did not believe the NOPD Academy prepared them for any/all emergencies, especially the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. One participant stated, "No, I do not think that anyone would have been prepared for something like that. How do you escape water?" Another officer stated about his academy training that "No, I was trained to fight crime, not emergencies." One supervisor responded to this question by stating, "Not even close. Not even close."

One respondent commented about the academy training by saying, "I think it’s a combination of life experience as well as the academy and experience on the street and that’s what prepares each individual to handle what happened. If you don’t have the character or belief in yourself or your word, if it doesn’t mean anything, then you are not going to handle it."

With regards to this topic, another participant stated, "I think our training is probably...from what I understand it’s one of the best in the country. I think our training is very good and I tell my recruits now...You may think you’ve forgotten everything you learned at the academy but if an emergency situation comes up, you’re going to remember your training. It will come back to you. So I think our training is very good. As far as for a disaster, we had no training for disaster preparedness."

Another officer spoke about the need for changes in the training academy by stating, "Well, I received my training back in 1989 and 1990. They prepared us to fight crime. Emergencies, we didn’t get into it. A lot of things have changed. September 11, 2001, pushed this country into another gear of response. So to be prepared for an
emergency such as Katrina...my training was sufficient for the time I was trained. But anything after that should have been implemented but it was not.”

One officer asked whether training was necessary if there were no resources to support the training. The officer added, “No, I didn’t receive any emergency type of training, because there are things like I said before, as far as water rescue, dealing with a lack of necessary resources. I mean we learned crowd control and stuff like that, and we’re among the best in the world at crowd control but when you’ve got a crowd of people who are you know, asking for your help and you can’t provide them with something as simple as a bottle of water.”

In response to this question, 80% of the supervisors responded that the NOPD Academy did not prepare them to handle any and all emergency situations especially the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. 20% of the supervisors believed that the NOPD Academy did prepare them to handle any and all emergencies including Hurricane Katrina.

On the other hand, 66% of the female participants responded that the NOPD Academy did not prepare them for any/all emergencies, while 17% of the female officers believed that the Academy did adequately prepare them for any/all emergencies. 17% did not respond to this question.

Question 12: Do you believe that the NOPD has a reputation of being a professional police department? Why or why not?

Thirty-four percent of the respondents stated that they believed that the NOPD has a reputation of being a professional police department. One participant stated, “Yes, however, the news media does not respect the NOPD. It seems like every time the police
department takes one step forward, someone makes a mistake (engages in misconduct) that sets us back.”

Another participant stated, “I believe it is professional. I do. As much as we get bashed by the national media and local media for some of our ill-failings and some of our officers who have less moral standards I think all in all, cops that work here, if they can survive here and work here, they can function anywhere in the country. It’s because of the experience that we have the job knowledge in what you see and what you handle daily. Most departments nationwide never will go through what we went through in Katrina. If you look at 9-11, it was confined to a few blocks. Washington D.C., was confined to one central area, being the Pentagon. If you look at Katrina, Katrina was spread across Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi where it was probably the biggest natural disaster and for the most part we had to respond. We were on our own for the first couple of days before we had reinforcements and I told my guys I had working for me. If we can make it for the first three or four days, we’ll have more backup coming, and it happened that way. So far as being professional, I told my guys, if you can work here, you can work anywhere.”

One supervisor responded, “I think internally it does and some of it’s real. I think some of it is aspirations that the hierarchy would like to believe and like everybody else to believe. I think the biggest problem with professionalism and this police department is that our hierarchy does not know the definition of professionalism, and what they’re trying to implement right now, they’re equating discipline with professionalism. Discipline is only part of the professionalism process and it shouldn’t be a very large part.”
In a follow-up question, the supervisor was asked if he believed the NOPD was trying to make up for the lower hiring standards: “Well, if you take responsibility as a superintendent, and that’s the person that has to take responsibility, if you take responsibility as a superintendent, and you allow the hiring standards to be lowered, then you know you’ve got to cover your ass on the back end when that officer you hired screws up and the way you cover it up when you say... We won’t let any deed, any misdeed, go unaddressed. We immediately address it, and we will make sure this doesn’t happen again. Well, I have news for you, Mr. Chief, if you wouldn’t have hired the idiot to begin with, it wouldn’t have happened.”

Forty-nine percent of the respondents stated that they do not believe that the NOPD has reputation of being a professional police department. The prevailing attitude of this group was that the numerous incidents of police misconduct have tarnished the image of the NOPD. One officer stated, “I don’t know, I think that’s a reputation... there are a lot of professionals here. They don’t get credit. But the reputation of the department has to be earned. We have a good reputation for crowd control. I don’t think that there is another department in the country that can handle crowd control. I’m sure many departments have come here to study our methods of crowd control. No one has better crowd control than New Orleans. But our reputation is not for crowd control. Our reputation is for corruption. I think that is the national impression.”

Another participant commented about the NOPD being a professional police department: “It’s just that all the time we always look like the kind of cops that are not professional and in some instances that are corrupt.” One respondent stated, “No, I do not believe that the NOPD is a professional police department because of a few bad
apples. A lot of people are afraid of the police because they have had some bad experiences with the police.”

With regards to this subject matter, one officer stated, “Sometimes, for the most part, you don’t want anybody to know you’re a police officer because it’s embarrassing. I know a long time ago police got respect out here. Now it’s a joke. Police get no respect, and I think another problem is that department succumbs to what citizens want. And that is not the best thing. You know, we now have walking beats and there’s just some stuff that...to me really doesn’t...it doesn’t do it. I mean, you can’t...you...we know what’s best for the department, not Joe Blow citizen. And I think that things have gotten so bad to where we’ve succumbed to what citizens want, knowing that that’s not in the best interest for the department.”

Seventeen percent of the respondents commented that the NOPD was not a professional police department because of myriad reasons. Several officers claimed that the NOPD’s tarnished image was the direct result of low hiring standards. This group of officers believed that there is a correlation of police misconduct/corruption and low hiring standards. In addition, other officers believed that the lack of professionalism was the end result of a lack of discipline. Another reason why the NOPD lacks professionalism is because officers do not take pride in themselves or their uniform. Many officers complained that their colleagues maintain a sloppy personal appearance, which, in their opinion, leads to a lack of professionalism on their part.

One officer expressed her viewpoint through the following response: “I think the mayor and maybe the chief are trying to achieve with this department professionalism that comes from the military. Which means dressed appropriately, neatly groomed, well-spoken, soft-mannered. That is the front of it because, generally, with the military it’s
ma'am, and sir. Very rarely do they raise their voice, but it is part of their training. If you don’t get the training, you can’t expect to be able to get that end result because that’s what you want or that’s what you desire. It comes as part of a process."

In response to this question, 60% of the supervisors responded that the NOPD has a reputation of being a professional police department. 40% of the supervisors believed that the NOPD is not a professional police department.

Conversely, 100% of the female police officers responded that the NOPD is not a professional police department.

**Question 13: In your opinion, what can have been done differently to improve the overall professionalism of the NOPD?**

Thirty-four percent of the respondents stated that by improving the hiring standards, the overall professionalism of the NOPD will improve. This group of officers contends that the hiring of quality people will reduce the number of incidents of police corruption and misconduct. One officer stated, "Again, it goes back to hiring standards. I wouldn’t hire a kid that only had a job at McDonald’s and for his next job he wants to be a policeman. I wouldn’t hire a kid with a bunch of tattoos all over his forearms, a bunch of piercing, different...five, six, seven, eight gold teeth—that’s not someone I would hire. I wouldn’t hire a kid who was two or three hundred pounds, or eighty pounds overweight. I wouldn’t do it. I wouldn’t hire a person who did not fit the standard of what a law enforcement officer should be."

A female officer commented about this subject matter by stating, "Uh, for one, I think it would have to start with recruitment. That should be first. And secondly, I think the department, overall, has to change as far as the way they treat the officers, because..."
there is a lot of professional officers out there but they feel like they're not respected by the police department. So they just don't care anymore. You know, there is no incentive to stay on the job, once you have reached your time, it's time to go. I mean, you're leaving because they do nothing...there is nothing, no incentive to stay...none.”

Another officer responded to the question by declaring “Well, they could start with the hiring process. Be more selective and along with that should be better pay. If you're going to come on this job and you know what the salary is...a lot of people say that but that doesn't necessarily make it true because if you pay more and you still hire garbage, you're just going to get garbage making more money.”

Twenty-three percent of the participants claimed that training should improve the overall professionalism of the NOPD. The officers added that the term “training” includes in-service (professional development) as well at the police academy (basic training). One officer responded, “Training, training and more training. Being an ex-military man, once again, the one thing I have to say that I learned in the military—when you trained to do the job that you're expected to do, and it is drilled into you, you do it, basically, out of second nature.” In a follow-up question, the researcher asked the participant, “What type of training are you specifically mentioning?” The participant stated, “It would be a combination of community relations and professionalism training in terms of the storm. Just being able to reassure people that they...we're here to help you. We're going to do everything we can in our power to get you to a safer place so that you don't have to panic or worry about dying.”

One supervisor commented, “Well, you know, training. That is the buzzword...Let's get more training. But you know I always said if you were an idiot—or I could use the word 'asshole'—before you came on the job, this just heightens it even
more. And I think that’s what we have a lot of. I think guys that come on this job who were idiots before, and this just gives them more power.”

With regards to the same topic, another participant stated, “There is so much going on with the department right now. You have stress in the department and then you go out on the street and you got to deal with the public. So I think...I think probably being a little more considerate of other people’s feelings, the way we handle things, not blowing off on people and stuff like that. But that’s all I can think of. Being a little more courteous, a little friendlier. But even then I don’t think that helps because once you get a reputation, it sticks.” Subsequent to the storm, scores of NOPD officers have dealt with living without their families and residing and working in FEMA trailers. These factors, along with a spiraling crime rate and a high attrition rate have placed an incredible amount of stress upon the rank and file of the NOPD. Unfortunately, this stress has been responsible for incidents of discourtesy, even police brutality.

Fourteen percent of the respondents claim that an increase in wages would improve the overall professionalism of the NOPD. This mindset suggests that a lucrative salary would attract quality police candidates to the NOPD. At the time of this study, members of the NOPD are about to receive a 10% pay raise. One respondent commented, “A lot of officers, they’re so fatigued and tired because they work here and then they kind of get details (paid security jobs) to make ends meet. If you give us the income to where we don’t have to do all those details, you’d get better quality officers on the street who would have more...I guess you could say more tolerance to deal with people before it jumps to another level.”

Eleven percent of the participants stated that a well-trained upper management would be beneficial in improving the overall professionalism of the NOPD. Several
officers complained that the NOPD upper management is extremely disrespectful to the line-officers. These officers felt that they are more knowledgeable about what's going on in the city than upper management. It appears after a decision was made to change the color of the uniform shirt of captains and above from to blue to white it created a gap between the line officers and management.

Eighteen percent of the respondents gave a myriad of other examples that would improve the overall professionalism of the NOPD. One of the examples was improved relations with the news media. The participants of this study expressed a strong dislike for the media. The majority of the officers felt that the national and local news media only reports negative stories about the NOPD. According to the majority of the respondents, the media never reports anything positive about the police department. In their viewpoint, this negativity has created an unfavorable opinion of the NOPD by the general public.

These officers felt that members of the police department performed some commendable actions during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina; however, they were never reported by the media.

In response to this question the supervisors provided an assortment of suggestions to improve the overall professionalism of the NOPD. A list of the suggestions is as follows:

- Improved Wages  20%
- Improved Recruitment  20%
- Training  40%
- Respect of line-officers  20%
Similar to the responses of the supervisors, the female officers provided a variety of responses to the questions. A list of their responses is as follows:

- Improved Wages 33%
- Improved Recruitment 17%
- Improved Training 33%
- Improved Media Relations 17%

**Question 14: In your opinion, what could have been done differently to improve the NOPD response to Hurricane Katrina?**

Twenty-six percent of the respondents stated that “proper planning” for the worst case scenario would have helped improve the NOPD response to Hurricane Katrina. One participant suggested “we should have a plan C and D instead of just plan A and B.” During these interviews, many officers commented that the city administration, along with the NOPD command staff, maintained a “complacent” mindset with regards to hurricanes. Another respondent commented about this subject matter, stating, “The actual belief that it could happen! There is no need for the city and the department to be complacent.”

Another officer stated, “We should have had a plan that calls for staging officers and emergency equipment on higher ground.” Subsequent to Hurricane Katrina, the NOPD has made arrangements with the city of Hammond, Louisiana, to relocate officers and equipment to a location north of the I-12 corridor. The I-12 corridor has been noted by government emergency officials as a “safe zone” from major flooding due to any/all tidal surges that would result from a catastrophic storm. Regarding planning, one participant commented, “We should have better policy planning. We should have a plan for the worst case scenario because the NOPD has a reputation for poor planning.”
addition, another officer stated, "There should be a plan in place for a secondary headquarters during an emergency situation."

Concerning planning and improving the NOPD performance during Katrina one officer added, "Well, for one, I think every...knowing...I think they knew, because I knew how destructive this hurricane could have been. And if I knew what I know even with having everybody to report to their assigned districts, I think, was a mistake; I think everybody should have been centralized, the entire police department should have been centralized, one central location. Because once winds reached 35 mph, you have to pull the cars off the streets anyway so there is nobody on the streets. There is nothing we can do. Centralize the police, everybody, and then at that point, once the hurricane is past, then you have that communications. You can communicate to everybody what their assignments are and you don't have to worry about the breakdown of communications, you know. I think that's a big mistake that they do."

Another officer expressed his opinion about improving the NOPD emergency response to Hurricane Katrina: "I think developing a command post earlier that was accessible to everybody ...I mean, Harrah's (Casino) ended up working out great but it was one of those things that was haphazard. We just happened to pick that, you know, it wasn't like anybody said, you know, if everything goes to hell, we're going to meet at Harrah's. It just happened. Harrah's was a wide open space where a lot of vehicles and equipment could get to, so establishing a command post there was just a coincidence. Harrah's Casino is located at the end of Canal Street near the Mississippi River in area that borders the French Quarter and the Central Business District. It was an area that did not flood."
The officer continued his comments: "I think it was easy for everyone to lose track of the fact that there were thousands of people in the superdome and the convention center that languished for a long period of time because of a fear of violence. And the bottom line is I think probably is that ninety to ninety-five percent of those people were civilians that were in a bad way, and I think we could have come up with some kind of routes to get those people out, to get trucks in and get food in. We needed to have done a better job having some lifeline with the outside world because it became an island here and it really did not have to be one."

Twenty percent of the participants suggested that by making emergency resources available to the officers in the field prior to the arrival of the storm would have improved the emergency response to Hurricane Katrina. Many officers of this group contend that the NOPD should have made provisions such as food, water and batteries available to them in the field to last approximately 3 days. The participants declared that it took anywhere from 4-5 days for emergency assistance to arrive. During that time frame, the officers in the field had to fend for themselves.

The officers indicated that during the aftermath of Katrina, they had to procure chainsaws, gasoline, generators and other equipment from the private sector in order to maintain their operations.

One respondent commented about this subject matter by stating, "I do realize the storm came up and hit us overnight. On Friday night it was upgraded to a major storm. But prior to that to begin the hurricane season there were no provisions, whether it was MRE's, water, food, or some other kind of pre-planned or prepackaged meal that could be stored somewhere. There was no plan for officers of where they were going to be located or to other commands. They didn't anticipate flooding or anything like that. We
lost so many police cars in the storm because the area was not elevated. So far as pre-
planning, the pre-planning was poor."

Eleven percent of the respondents claimed that the NOPD should have a back-up or an improved communications system plan to improve the emergency response to Katrina. Another 11% of the participants stated that they believe the police department should receive extensive emergency response training. In this group officers added that the NOPD should incorporate “mock hurricane training” to help prepare police officers respond to major storms or other natural disasters.

Eleven percent of the respondents declared that better coordination between federal, state and city government would have improved the emergency response to Hurricane Katrina. One officer stated, "I think that we could have networked with the military authorities that were in the nearby area along with other agencies in the local area. Maybe pooled resources together so that we had available equipment as well as a cohesive plan in place."

Twenty-one percent of the participants gave a variety of examples that would have improved the emergency response to Hurricane Katrina. Some of the examples included improved leadership, improved construction of police stations and a more expeditious evacuation policy. Several officers had no recommendations.

One supervisor stated, "You know how many times we thought the big one was coming and it shifted over? And just like this one, we thought it wasn’t coming and it shifted towards us. So you can’t be prepared for that. Especially monetarily... They’d have (city administration) to bring police officers to work sooner, which I think was one of the mistakes the city made. They made this decision because they did not want to pay police overtime.” It should be noted that the entire police department was not instructed
to report for hurricane duty as the storm approached. The supervisor contends that this policy was imposed because the city did not want to pay for police overtime. Therefore, the city was left with limited police resources and this explains in part why so many police officers were stranded at their residences when the storm made landfall.

Several days prior to Hurricane Katrina making landfall on the Louisiana-Mississippi coastline, the NHC issued numerous hurricane advisories warning Gulf-Coast emergency managers along with other government officials that Hurricane Katrina was a catastrophic storm and should be taken seriously. As Hurricane Katrina approached the Louisiana coast, Mayor Ray Nagin was still deliberating whether his office had the legal authority to issue a mandatory evacuation of New Orleans. With regards to this subject matter, one respondent commented, “I think if people would have been evacuated beforehand...because the city, you have to realize we have a lot of people here that don't have a lot of money, that don’t own cars. So they weren’t going evacuate because they didn’t have the money. It was rent time. It was the end of the month. So a lot of people said, I can’t go anywhere and then come back and my rent is due and then I am going to get evicted. So they were stuck here.” Many officers believed that the city should have evacuated its citizens earlier and this action would have circumvented many of the tragic problems that followed.

The prevailing theme with regards to the responses of this question was planning, and improving emergency resources such as provisions and equipment.

In response to this question, supervisors made several suggestions to improve the emergency response to Hurricane Katrina. A list of the responses is as follows:

- Improved Planning 40%
- Emergency Equipment 40%
• Improved Training 20%

The female participants gave an assortment of responses to the question. A list of the responses is as follows:

• Improved Planning 32%
• Early Evacuation 17%
• Improved Communications 17%
• Government Assistance 17%
• Emergency Equipment 17%

Question 15: Do you believe that policing is a noble profession? Please explain your response.

One hundred percent of the respondents stated that they believed policing is a noble profession. One respondent stated, "Yes! it is a career. I look at it like the military, with dignity and respect." Another participant commented about policing being a noble profession by stating, "Yes, it takes a special person to be able to deal with the public on a daily basis. It takes someone who can maintain their cool under stressful situations."

One veteran officer added his comments by stating, "Yes, it is one of the best things you can do to help people...to help your fellow man. Pride in the police department, pride in the city, pride in yourself."

One supervisor responded, "I do believe that policing is a noble profession. I've had police in my family since 1920. I think the difference is it's not the same anymore. I will break the chain with my kids. The public is too preoccupied with videotapes and attempting to catch guys (police officers) engaging in misconduct. But I am not defending it. But because of the age of video and media coverage, you're so much more under the
microscope than you were ever before... You know I've always said— I think Eddie Murphy or Chris Rock said if you just listen to what the police tell you to do, you won't have to fight them. It's just a shame that we've come to that. I think we've become a target of frustration for people since Katrina, and it's become more pervasive. There are no mental hospitals to care for mental patients." It should be noted that since Hurricane Katrina there has been a severe shortage of mental patient facilities along with traditional medical providers in the city of New Orleans. Stress has been a major factor among those police officers and citizens alike who had lost their homes and loved ones during the storm. As a result of the amount of stress caused by rebuilding their homes and lives, many individuals have resorted to suicide as a means to cope with the disastrous aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Another participant responded to the question by stating, "Same thing I tell a lot of recruits. I believe it is if you make it one. I think that there are people that come on the job and they disgrace this uniform. They disgrace this badge. They disgrace this profession. But I think that if you come and do your job correctly, it is a very noble profession. And I think that there are a lot of people on the police department and I think a lot of citizens that do believe that. There are some others that probably don't."

In a follow-up question, the researcher asked the participants if they were proud to be a NOPD officer. 89% of the respondents stated that they were proud to be a NOPD officer. One officer stated, "Yes, we have a few bad officers, but we got a lot of quality officers. The media should focus more on the positives of the NOPD. They are always negative. That is the reason why the public has a negative view of the NOPD. Another officer responded, "Yes, well I am 50 years old, and I am still here. I mean the only way I'll leave is if I die."
Eleven percent of the respondents stated that they were not proud or they were ashamed to be a NOPD officer. One respondent commented about the subject matter by offering the following: “Not anymore, I do not like telling anybody anymore because of the negative publicity and because of poor leadership during the storm. Everybody felt like they just deserted us.”

The prevailing theme of the responses for this question indicated that the majority of the officers concur that the numerous incidents of police misconduct has adversely affected the image of the NOPD.

In response to this question 100% of the supervisors stated that policing is a noble profession. Conversely, 100% of the female participants also believed that policing is a noble profession. In a follow-up question, 100% of the supervisors stated that they were proud to be a NOPD officer. On the other hand, only 83% of the female officers stated that they were proud to be a NOPD officer, while 17% of the female participants stated that they were proud to be a NOPD officer only “sometimes.”

Summary

The structured personal interviews of the 35 NOPD officers served as the instrument for this exploratory study. In this section the researcher will summarize the responses to the questions.

In response to question 1, the overwhelming majority of the participants stated that the NOPD, along with the city administration, were ill-prepared to handle a storm of such magnitude, despite numerous advanced warnings from the National Hurricane Center. The minority opinion claimed that no other police department or other agency could have performed under such circumstances. As one participant noted, “How can you prepare for an act of God?”
With regards to question 2, the mass majority of the respondents claimed that the NOPD failed to provide any/all emergency training to the police officers prior to the arrival of Hurricane Katrina. In addition, numerous officers claimed that they have not received any emergency training since the storm. One officer commented on the situation by stating, "I think anytime you're in a city surrounded by water like we are that it's essential that they provide training on things like boating and water rescue...things of that nature."

In response to question 3, the majority of the respondents stated that they never received any type of emergency equipment prior to the arrival of Hurricane Katrina. According to one respondent, "The NOPD only provided 2 army cots and 72 ten ounce bottles of water to a cadre of 92 police officers." As a result of a lack of emergency equipment, the respondents claimed that they appropriated gasoline, chainsaws and generators from the public sector to maintain their operations until emergency assistance arrived 4 to 5 days later.

In question 4, many of the respondents claimed that they were not aware of the NOPD Emergency Operations Plan prior to the arrival of Hurricane Katrina. One officer stated, "You have to realize I'm kind of at the bottom of the totem pole so the higher-ups probably knew, but we didn't know about it." The minority of the officers stated that they were aware of the plan; however, there was some disparity as how the plan was disseminated to the line-officers.

Overwhelmingly, the majority of the participants responded in question 5 that there was a breakdown in the NOPD leadership and supervision across the board. One officer responded by stating, "I don't think the upper management was prepared for the dealings of what happened between the flooding, the looting, and just carelessness that
took place. " The balance of the participants claimed that the leadership was good; it was simply the lack of communication that caused the perceived problems with leadership.

In question 6, the majority of the officers stated that they felt “anger” when they first learned that a large amount of officers had abandoned their posts. One officer commented about the situation by stating, “There were some officers who left before, during and after Hurricane Katrina. I was pissed off when I first heard about it.” Other officers stated that they felt betrayed and abandoned when those officers deserted their posts. Furthermore, many officers felt mixed emotions with regards to the situation. Even though they were upset, they understood if an officer left their post to take care of the family. However, these officers added the problem arose if the officer failed to return to duty.

With regards to question 7, the majority of the respondents claimed that “family issues” was the primary reason why those officers had gone AWOL. Another group of respondents stated that “fear” was the primary reason why those officers abandoned their posts. In addition, several other officers claimed that a combination of “lack of leadership” and a “lack of dedication to duty” were the primary reasons why those officers had gone AWOL. According to one officer, “I think personally... I believe the reason why people left are because they were scared. The fright, the stress level, they just never experienced anything like that. It was overwhelming and naturally at a time of disaster the cream always rises to the top and unfortunately, we didn’t get too much cream.”

In question 8, the mass majority of the respondents agreed that character and loyalty are important attributes of the recruitment process. One officer stated, “Yes,
character and loyalty are important. There is a lot of temptation on the job. Character helps make the right decisions and loyalty...means you can depend on each other." The other group of respondents stated that even though they believed that character and loyalty were very important to the recruitment process that they did not see it in the new recruits.

Question 9 asked if the NOPD should improve their recruitment standards. The larger number of the participants declared that the NOPD should improve their hiring standards. This group of participants complained that the current hiring standards are inadequate and that the selection process has failed to choose quality candidates. One participant commented on the recruitment process by stating, "I think so... yes, because we have so many officers that slip through the cracks that should never become police officers, and once they get on the job you hear about them in the news and a lot of them haven't been on the job very long at all. I feel that they (hiring standards) are not stiff enough." In addition, several participants indicated that the police department should conduct a more thorough background investigation on all applicants.

In response to question 10, the majority of the officers declared that a higher education or a college degree does not improve the quality of a police officer. They also added that job experience was the most important factor in police performance. In the minority opinion, officers declared that an officer who pursues a college degree shows discipline. One officer commented about this matter by stating, "Yes, I do. I believe it improves an officer's performance for two reasons: it exposes an individual to different issues and it shows discipline and commitment." It should be noted that prevailing educational level of the participants was "some college" followed by high school graduates.
Question 11 asked if the respondents believed that the NOPD Academy prepared them to handle any/all emergency situations, especially the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. A large number of the respondents stated that they did not believe that the NOPD Academy prepared for any/all emergencies such as Hurricane Katrina. One officer stated, "I was trained to fight crime, not emergencies." Several officers indicated that a combination of life experience on the street as well as academy training was the best case scenario for preparing for an event such as Hurricane Katrina.

With regards to question 12, a slight majority of the respondents believed that the NOPD does not enjoy a reputation of being a professional law enforcement organization. The prevailing attitude of this group was based upon the numerous incidents of police misconduct that has tarnished the image of the NOPD. One officer commented about this issue by stating, "It's just that all the time we look like the kind of cops that are not professional and in some instances we look corrupt." The minority opinion claimed that the news media was responsible for the non-professional image of the NOPD.

In response to question 13, the mass majority of the respondents claimed that by improving the hiring standards the overall professionalism of the NOPD would be enhanced. Furthermore, numerous officers claimed that if you improve the hiring standards then you have to increase the wages. One officer stated, "Well, they could start with the hiring process. Be more selective and along with that should be better pay." The minority opinion indicated that training would help improve the overall professionalism of the NOPD.

Question 14 asked what could have been done differently to improve the NOPD response to Hurricane Katrina. A slight majority of respondents claimed that "proper planning" would have improved the police response to the natural disaster. Another
group of respondents stated that making emergency resources available to the line-officers in the field prior to the arrival of the storm would have greatly enhanced the police emergency response. The emergency resources would include provisions that would last approximately 3 days along with generators, chainsaws, etc. With regards to this topic, one supervisor stated, "We received 6 army cots and 2 cases of bottled water for 60 police officers."

In response to question 15, 100% of the respondents stated that policing is a noble profession. One officer declared, "Yes, it takes a special person to be able to deal with the public on a daily basis. It takes someone who can maintain their cool under stressful situations."

In a follow-up question, the participants were asked if they were proud to be a NOPD officer. The mass majority of the participants stated that they were proud to be a NOPD officer. One officer commented about this topic by stating, "Yes, we have a few bad officers, but we got a lot of quality officers on the job."

The minority opinion stated that they were not proud and even ashamed to be a NOPD officer because of the numerous incidents of police misconduct and the poor leadership that was exhibited during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

While this is an exploratory study having no formal hypothesis, it is prudent for the researcher to analyze the relationship between significant variables in this study. This section will discuss the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

Relationship of the Variables

As a result of a review of the pertinent literature regarding police emergency response and a history of the NOPD, the independent variables of this study have been identified as contributors to the NOPD emergency response to Hurricane Katrina. In addition, the author of this project is a thirty-two year law enforcement veteran, whose experience contributed to the identification/selection of the independent variables. The dependent variable was “police emergency response.”

Training

During the course of this study, participants were questioned as to whether they received emergency response training prior to the arrival of Hurricane Katrina. Emergency response training is defined as the training of a first responder for any/all emergency situations to include natural disasters, plane crashes and acts of terrorism. This training will also involve the training of police officers in the techniques of conducting water rescues due to the close proximity of the city of New Orleans to adjacent waterways such as Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi River.

Ninety-four percent of respondents claimed they did not receive any emergency training prior to Hurricane Katrina. In addition, 71% stated that the NOPD Training Academy did not prepare them for any/all emergency training. Furthermore, 23% of the respondents declared that training would improve the overall professionalism of the
NOPD. It is quite clear from this study that training improves the overall quality or performance of a police officer. This conclusion is in line with the pertinent literature. The literature has shown that training is the foundation of police professionalism. In addition, training should not be limited to the police training academy. It should include in-service training which has been noted to promote personal and professional development of the individual police officer.

Many participants of this study claimed that any type of emergency response training would have greatly enhanced their response during Hurricane Katrina. It was quite obvious after conducting interviews that the majority of the participants have a strong desire to improve their image. They believe this can best be accomplished through training.

During the course of this study, the mass majority of respondents strongly believed that the NOPD Training Academy was not challenging academically or physically. They overwhelmingly believed that the training standards should be more stringent. According to the respondents, they believe that the academy has been mandated to pass all police recruits in order to increase police manpower on the streets. They have been critical of the academy claiming the academy has graduated a low caliber police officer because of the number of police recruits unable to communicate in writing and verbally.

The NOPD Education and Training Division is responsible for operating the Training Academy which oversees the police basic training. In addition, the Education and Training Division conducts in-service (professional development) training. The NOPD Basic Police Training Curriculum is listed in Table 3.
Table 3

NOPD Basic Police Training Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Hours of Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to Criminal Justice</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Aspects</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Aid</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearms</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigations</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report Writing</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Services</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrol Services</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized Activities</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer Survival</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Community Relations</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Dimensions</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Training Hours</td>
<td>476</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.nopd.com

Phase I of the NOPD basic training consists of an 18 week program (476 hours) that is designed to prepare the newly hired member for a career as a professional law enforcement officer (www.nopd.com). Phase II of the basic training program consists of 16 weeks of training in the Field Training Officer (FTO) Program. Haberfeld (2002) defined the FTO program “as a mentoring type of model that has been designed to provide a practical information bridge from the training academy to the job” (p. 78).

Once a police recruit has successfully completed Phase II of the training program, the police recruit is promoted to the position of Police Officer I.

While conducting interviews for this study, participants indicated that the NOPD training academy was deficient in training police recruits and lacking in in-service training for veteran police officers. In an attempt to determine if the total amount of NOPD training hours were comparable with other law enforcement agencies, the researcher surveyed the training curriculum and amount of training hours implemented in...
various law enforcement agencies across the United States. Table 4 illustrates a comparison of the amount of basic police training hours.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law Enforcement Agency</th>
<th>Training Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOPD</td>
<td>476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia Police Department</td>
<td>1042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Antonio Police Department</td>
<td>1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nashville Police Department</td>
<td>950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York State Police</td>
<td>1095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramento Police Department</td>
<td>952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honolulu Police Department</td>
<td>1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas Police Department</td>
<td>1298</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This comparison indicates that the amount of training hours in the NOPD basic police training academy is significantly less than that of the law enforcement agencies mentioned in Table 4. Furthermore, according to the U.S. Department of Labor (2000), the national average for police basic training hours for a police department that serves a population of 250,000 to 499,000 citizens. The NOPD academy is 515 hours below the national average.

This study revealed that training does improve the overall performance of a police officer. It should be noted that the term “police performance” is the ability of an individual to make sound decisions, work with a minimum of supervision, the ability to communicate with the public and does not engage in misconduct or abuse sick or medical leave.

Communications

This study showed that communications is a vital component of the NOPD command and control system. The literature has indicated that a police organization
cannot be effective without communications. The entire NOPD communications network was completely paralyzed by Hurricane Katrina. As a result, the NOPD command staff was unable to issue orders or account for missing police officers.

The interviewees of this study claimed that during the waning days of the storm the only means of communications were cell phones (if they were operational), text messaging, pay telephones (if they could be located), and word of mouth. Many police units employed “runners” to communicate with officers in a different geographical area of the city.

In addition, numerous participants indicated that the lack of communications contributed greatly to “misinformation.” During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the press sensationalized accounts of violent crime and atrocities committed against citizens who evacuated to the Louisiana Superdome and the New Orleans Convention Center. The NOPD command staff was unable to confirm or deny reports of crime and looting and other issues because of the lack of communications. As a result, there was a tremendous amount of misinformation reported by the news media. In addition, participants claimed that information from daily staff meetings were not disseminated to line-officers in the field. Line-officers felt a sense of consternation because they were unaware of what was transpiring within their own department, much less the entire city. Many respondents complained they were unable to communicate with their families to gather whether they were safe. Displaced families were incapable of contacting loved ones who were police officers working during the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Officer’s families were concerned for their loved ones (police officers) because of the news accounts of the escalating violence and disorder occurring in New Orleans in the days following the storm.
In addition, citizens were unable to contact the police department to request assistance because of their inability to communicate. Once various police districts became operational, police units were dispatched into the city streets to respond to citizens in need and open a line of communications with the community.

The results of this study revealed that communications is crucial to the performance of a police officer, especially during an emergency situation. This study has also illustrated the importance of communications to the police command and control system.

Leadership

Eighty-three percent of participants confirmed a breakdown in NOPD leadership during the days following the storm. The literature has shown that autocratic leaders tend to be authoritarian by nature and prefer to give orders rather than invite group participation (Peak, 2001). According to Peak (2001), “the autocratic leadership style works best in emergency situations in which strict control and rapid decision making are needed” (p. 37). According to participants of this study, no autocratic leader took control of the police operations during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Many respondents believed the breakdown in leadership was caused by the lack of communications. Due to the lack of leadership and accountability, line-officers were unaccounted for during the storm which directly resulted in those officers operating on an individual basis without any supervision. To further complicate the situation, respondents claimed that numerous supervisors abandoned their posts and left the line-officers to fend for themselves. During the storm scores of police officers became displaced and isolated and eventually absorbed by other commands or police units. As a result of being supplanted, these officers were mistakenly reported AWOL by their original assignment.
This could partially explain the exceedingly large number of police officers originally reported going AWOL. As the city began to flood, the press erroneously reported that approximately 500 police officers had gone AWOL. The literature indicated that approximately 228 police officers had officially gone AWOL.

The majority of respondents stated that they believed that the District Commanders performed admirably during the storm. However, the participants agreed that first-line supervisors (sergeants) were responsible for maintaining a sense of cohesiveness during the storm among officers who stayed. Leadership affected the performance of police officers during the storm. These results support a study conducted by the University of South Carolina Department of Criminal Justice, which concluded that scores of police officers had to operate as individual units due to the breakdown of the NOPD command and control system.

During the aftermath of the storm, the chain of command of the NOPD became problematic. Readers should be mindful that the police department is an agency within the executive branch of city government, administered by the mayor. The mayor is considered the city’s executive officer and has the power to appoint the superintendent of the police department with the approval of the city council. The police superintendent serves at the pleasure of the mayor and can be dismissed at any time. The average tenure of the superintendent of a mid to large size metropolitan police department is 3 to 6 years (Swanson, Territo and Taylor, 2004). The Superintendent of the NOPD is charged with the responsibility of administering the daily operations of the police department in addition to ensuring the safety of community citizens.

Following the tragic events surrounding the terrorist attacks of 9/11, most state and local governments established Offices of Homeland Security to assist in the training
of first responders, obtain funding for equipment and the coordination of emergency responses to acts of terrorism and natural disasters. As a result of the need for coordinating with the federal government, the city of New Orleans created the Department of Homeland Security and Public Safety. This office has operational and planning authority for the NOPD, the NOFD, the New Orleans Office of Emergency Preparedness and the Office of Criminal Justice Coordination (www.cityinfono.com).

With the advent of the New Orleans Office of Homeland Security, the chain of command becomes uncertain when the city is faced with an emergency situation such as Hurricane Katrina. The question involves whether the police department comes under the authority of the Department of Homeland Security or whether the superintendent maintains total and complete autonomy of the police department during an emergency. According to the participants of this study, Colonel Terry Ebbert, the director of New Orleans Department of Homeland Security, is the reporting authority for the Superintendents of the NOPD and NOFD respectively during an emergency. The study further revealed that the superintendent of the NOPD maintains control of the police department on a daily basis and that Colonel Ebbert does not interfere with police operations with regards to crime, crime prevention and enforcement operations.

Many participants of this study indicated there was a failure in leadership and planning from the mayor’s office and across supervisory levels of the NOPD. Mayor Nagin was severely criticized for not being visible during the days following the storm; unlike former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani who demonstrated leadership ability and skills in the days following the tragedy of September 11, 2001 by being ubiquitous. Mayor Giuliani’s mere presence during the rescue operations of the World Trade Center served as a major source of inspiration and encouragement, not only for the emergency
first responders but for frightened and bewildered citizens of New York City. It has been duly noted that Mayor Giuliani exhibited tremendous leadership during those difficult times, which earned him the nickname “Rudy the Rock.” According to Swanson, Territo and Taylor (2004), “it was Giuliani’s perseverance and charisma that brought the citizens of New York together and his hands-on style that helped calm the chaos and rebuild the city he loved” (p. 139).

During the events surrounding the terrorist attacks of the World Trade Center, Bernard Kerik was the NYPD Police Commissioner. Like former NOPD Superintendant Eddie Compass, Kerik and Compass rose through the ranks of their respective police agencies to become the top police executive. According to Haberfeld (2006), while under the command of Bernard Kerik, the NYPD was well prepared to handle an event such as the magnitude of 9/11; as well, the NYPD was better prepared for this type of emergency than any other police agency in the United States. This was based upon the fact that the NYPD under Kerik’s direction conducted numerous mock terrorist attacks, along with offering frequent antiterrorism training courses. Many government pundits strongly believe that Commissioner Kerik was the driving force that held the emergency response together, and without his leadership, the police response to 9/11 would have fallen apart.

Unlike Mayor Nagin, NOPD Superintendent Compass maintained a highly visible presence during the days following the storm. Compass was overwhelmed by the magnitude of the press coverage that he received during the days following the storm. During many briefings and press interviews, Compass was viewed as behaving erratically and extremely emotional on national television. Mayor Nagin instructed city employees not to speak to press unless it was approved by him or the mayor’s spokeswoman. Shortly after Nagin’s edict, Compass appeared on the Dr. Phil television show and was flown by
the National Football League (NFL) to New York City where he participated in the coin toss prior to the kickoff of the New Orleans Saints and New York Giants football game (Lee, 2006). The mayor accused Compass of going behind his back and speaking to the news media without his consent, and as a result, Nagin instructed Compass to come up with a 30-60 day exit plan (Lee, 2006). On September 27, Compass announced his unexpected retirement from the NOPD. Shortly after, Deputy Chief Warren Riley was appointed as the new superintendent of police.

Eddie Compass served the NOPD for 27 years. The sudden retirement of Compass was controversial because he claimed he was forced out of office while Nagin stated that Compass made the decision to retire. Eleven months following his announced retirement Compass admitted in an interview with the Times Picayune that he made many mistakes during Hurricane Katrina (Lee, 2006). In the tumultuous days following the storm, Compass admitted he provided the press and government officials misinformation regarding the criminal atrocities allegedly being committed in New Orleans during the aftermath of Katrina. This misinformation resulted in the delay of rescue operations and the shipment of much needed humanitarian supplies.

In another controversial event that contributed to the forced resignation of Superintendent Compass, he instructed members of the police department, along with the LNG, to confiscate any/all firearms, even those owned by law abiding citizens not engaged in criminal activity. The reader must be aware that during the waning days following the storm, the police department was dysfunctional as a result of the flooding, and that violent crime was reportedly out of control, causing the city to be on the verge of anarchy. Citizens argued that their personally owned firearms were the only means of defending themselves since the police were incapable of protecting the populace and they
strongly believed that the NOPD was violating their Second Amendment right to possess firearms.

As a result of this police action, the National Rifle Association, along with the Second Amendment Foundation, filed a lawsuit in federal court against the city of New Orleans to place an emergency injunction forbidding such seizures. A temporary restraining order was granted on September 23, 2005. The Disaster Recovery Personal Protection Act of 2006 was introduced March 28, 2006 by Congressman Bobby Jindal (La.) in the House of Representatives and on April 7, 2006 by Senator David Vitter (La.) in the U.S. Senate (Library of Congress, 2006). This act prohibits the seizure of legally possessed firearms during a disaster.

Interviewed officers indicated that NOPD Superintendent Eddie Compass assumed too much responsibility during the waning days of the storm. The literature indicated that, as a result of long hours and the stress of coping with the emergency situation, Compass allegedly sustained a nervous breakdown. However, many government pundits strongly believed that Compass was forced to retire because of the number of police misconduct incidents which included looting, unauthorized use of numerous vehicles from a local Cadillac dealership, and the large volume of police officers who went AWOL during the storm. Numerous vehicles from the local Cadillac dealership were commandeered for official police use. However, it was reported that several police officers appropriated numerous vehicles for their personal use to enable them to flee the city.

When comparing the leadership characteristics of the major actors of the events of September 11, 2001 and Hurricane Katrina, the reader must be mindful that 9/11 was restricted to a small geographical area limited to lower Manhattan. In the wake of
Hurricane Katrina, 88% of the city of New Orleans was flooded, which resulted in the total collapse of the New Orleans criminal justice system. In addition, NOPD officers lost their homes and families during the storm. They had no place to go home to. Conversely, emergency responders in New York City were able to return home and be with families when their tour of duty had been completed.

During the tragic events of September 11, 2001, Mayor Giuliani and Commissioner Kerik were regarded as heroes because of their dynamic leadership ability in the days following the terrorist attacks. Conversely, New Orleans Mayor Nagin and Superintendent Compass were severely criticized for their lack of leadership and their lack of preparedness for the meteorologically worse case scenario. The researcher elected to compare the leadership styles of Giuliani-Kerik to Nagin-Compass during a time of trepidation to provide a contrast of how municipal leaders dealt with two different tragic events in our nation’s history.

**Education**

Sixty-three percent of respondents stated they do not believe a higher education or college degree improves the quality of a police officer. This group of officers believed job experience was more valuable than a college degree in the context of being a quality police officer. The literature revealed numerous studies on the relationship between higher education and police performance. The results of these studies have been equally divided between those who feel that higher education improves the quality of a police officer and those who feel that it does not.

However, with the advent of community policing, police officers are required to make sound decisions and to operate independently without supervision. Many studies
involving higher education and police officer performance reveal that a college education assists officers in making quality decisions. According to Bowman (2001), “officers with bachelor's degrees tend to accept change more readily. The college experience prepares officers to understand that success breeds failure, and thus that continuous learning and improvement is essential for long-term success. It teaches employees respect for differences and engenders the ability to handle difficult situations with greater creativity and innovation. It forces communication with people from all walks of life, thus sharpening those skills and lessening reliability on physical confrontation to resolve differences” (p. 4). In addition, Bowman (2001) claimed that a college degree “brings with it an air of self-respect and professional demeanor that builds organizational morale. A college education tends to enhance a police officer’s research and analytical skills; preparing them for solving complex problems without the need for strict supervision” (p. 4).

**Hiring Standards**

Eighty percent of respondents stated that the NOPD should improve recruitment standards. It should be noted that hiring and recruitment standards are synonymous. The majority of the participants strongly believe that inadequate hiring standards often led to incidents of police misconduct. Some officers complain that 10% of officers in the police department should not have been hired. Included in this group, many respondents felt that the NOPD should conduct a more intense background investigation to help reduce the number of potentially problematic police officers.

The mass majority of participants claimed the NOPD has lowered hiring standards which has severely impacted the overall performance of the NOPD. The
participants declared that many of the new officers have difficulty reading and writing and possess poor people and communications skills. Included in this group of respondents, the officers stated that numerous new hires are “heavy handed” when they deal with the public, implying that many police officers physically abuse arrested subjects. In addition, respondents stated that many new police officers are extremely discourteous when dealing with the general public, and as a result the public has lost confidence in the police. The respondents claim that being discourteous is a major contributor to why the public refuses to cooperate with the police during major criminal investigations. In summation, the lowering of hiring or recruitment standards becomes problematic for any law enforcement agency.

Another group of respondents claimed that a police department cannot raise or improve hiring standards without having a pay scale commensurate with recruitment standards. Wages have historically been challenging for the NOPD. Traditionally, the NOPD has been below the national and southern average for decades. In an attempt to circumvent low wages, the city has offered a lucrative benefit package. According to the U.S. Department of Labor (2007), the national average salary for a police and sheriff’s patrol officer is $48,410 per year. As part of this study, a survey of the starting pay scales for various law enforcement agencies was conducted to see how they compare to the starting salary of the NOPD. The comparison of starting pay scales is illustrated in Table 5.
Table 5

Comparable Starting Police Salaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law Enforcement Agency</th>
<th>Starting Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Orleans Police Department</td>
<td>$30,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson, Ms. Police Department</td>
<td>$23,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampa Police Department</td>
<td>$44,387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orlando Police Department</td>
<td>$38,032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis Police Department</td>
<td>$35,361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las Vegas Metro Police Department</td>
<td>$47,035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia Police Department</td>
<td>$37,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arlington, TX. Police Department</td>
<td>$45,131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents considered the residency requirement to be another problem with the hiring standards of the NOPD. The mass majority complained that the residency requirement has “handcuffed” the NOPD recruitment process. This group of officers claimed that the Public School system has failed to educate the children of New Orleans. The literature has revealed that the New Orleans Public School system has traditionally scored last in statewide achievement examinations. Residents of New Orleans and Louisiana are more likely to lack a high school education than residents elsewhere in the United States. However, New Orleans residents are more likely to have a college education than residents of either the state of Louisiana or the entire country (www.dollarsandsense.org/archives/2006).

Participants argued that by restricting recruiting efforts to only Orleans Parish (New Orleans) the department will not attract the most qualified candidates for the police department. The majority of the respondents believed that the police department should permanently eliminate the residency requirement in order to attract the most qualified police candidates. Subsequent to Hurricane Katrina, the New Orleans City Council
temporarily suspended the residency requirement for hiring police officers until the ranks of the police department reached their desired goal.

In addition to experiencing difficulties in recruiting qualified police candidates in post-Katrina New Orleans, the NOPD has had problems in retaining veteran police officers. During the months following the storm, the police department was allegedly losing approximately 17 veteran police officers a month. This startling statistic was partially because many police families had been separated or displaced as a result of the storm. Consequently, many veteran officers resigned from the department to be reunited with their families. In addition, numerous police officers grew extremely distraught working and living in a FEMA trailer, deciding to continue their law enforcement career elsewhere.

On June 22, 2007, the New Orleans City Council, in conjunction with the Civil Service Commission, developed a pay incentive for police officers assigned to specialized units like the bomb squad, dive team, and K-9 unit. In the proposed pay incentive, officers assigned to these units will receive an extra $1,500 a year (Eggler, 2007). According to city officials, those police officers possessing college degrees will receive educational benefits under this pay proposal. According to Eggler (2007), the proposed pay incentives for higher education are listed as follows: a bachelor’s degree receives $1,000 per year and an officer with a master’s degree receives $3,000 a year in addition to base salary. According to the educational pay incentive, police officers who possess a bachelor’s degree in addition to a master’s degree will only receive $3,000 per year.
Table 6 provides a breakdown of the number of college degrees of the police officers of the NOPD. The overall manpower total is uncertain but police officials estimate the department currently employs approximately 1200 police officers.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Type</th>
<th>Number of Degrees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degrees</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degrees</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degrees</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In addition to the specialized and educational pay incentives, the City Council along with the Civil Service Commission, has approved a 10% pay raise across the board. These pay incentives are designed to attract potential police candidates and to retain veteran police officers.

The results of this study revealed that the NOPD recruitment standards should be improved. Improved hiring standards would improve the quality of the police candidate thereby improving the overall performance of the police department.

Other Significant Findings

When the participants were questioned if they believed policing was a noble profession, the mass majority of the respondents responded affirmatively. In a follow-up question, participants were asked if they were proud to be a NOPD officer, and the mass majority claimed that they were proud. However, many of the participants claim the image of the police department has been tarnished because of numerous incidents of police misconduct occurring during the past decade. In addition, the participants recognized that episodes of inappropriate behavior occurring during the storm, along with
228 officers who went AWOL, have significantly blemished the image of the NOPD. Numerous officers indicated they have lost the respect and trust of the community because of these events. One participant stated he believed the acts of police misconduct surrounding Hurricane Katrina had set back the NOPD 200 years.

The Metropolitan Crime Commission (MCC) of New Orleans conducted a recent study titled *Crime and Safety in Central City: A Community’s Perspective Summer/Fall 2006*; this study targets New Orleans mid-city residents to ascertain their feelings about crime and the performance of the NOPD. According to the MCC (2006), “the respondents of the study indicated that the NOPD’s ability to respond to crime emergencies and to provide assistance in emergency situations was seen as its strong points” (p. 20). Even though central city residents have observed NOPD units patrolling their neighborhood, they felt that they were an ineffective deterrent to crime.

Furthermore, the MCC (2006) study revealed “that many residents have doubts about the NOPD’s general professionalism and truthfulness. The overabundant fear of crime combined with a community distrust of the NOPD can only further exacerbate crime problems. The lack of faith in the NOPD articulated by large segments of the population may result in a community that does not cooperate with law enforcement and questions whether the police are capable of successfully addressing the crime problems in Central City” (p. 20).

The results of the MCC study paralleled the responses of the participants of this study with regards to the overall professionalism of the NOPD. The majority of the interviewed officers indicated the police department revealed that the NOPD was deficient in community relations and exhibited an overwhelming desire to improve the overall professionalism of the police department.
The University of South Carolina Department of Criminal Justice (USC-CJ) in 2006 conducted a study of the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina titled *Law Enforcement Lessons From Hurricane Katrina*. In this study the authors highlighted many problems associated with emergency planning and the Gulf-Coast law enforcement response to the most catastrophic natural disaster in the history of the United States.

One of the topics highlighted in the USC-CJ study was that most of the law enforcement agencies in the Gulf-Coast region failed to adopt a comprehensive hurricane disaster plan and that these departments did not adequately train for such disasters. These findings were comparable to the results of this study. The mass majority of the participants of this study claimed they were not aware of the NOPD Hurricane Emergency Plan, and that if there was such a plan they never read it nor was it disseminated to them.

The USC-CJ study criticized Gulf-Coast emergency managers and law enforcement officials for failing to adopt a disaster plan and to properly prepare for any/all severe hurricanes by stockpiling emergency equipment and supplies prior to the arrival of the storm. The USC-CJ study suggested that law enforcement agencies of the Gulf-Coast region should have been prepared to maintain operations for a period of 5 days. This includes maintaining a sufficient supply of food, water, gasoline, radios, chain saws, batteries and generators.

According to the USC-CJ study, the city of Slidell, Louisiana, just like New Orleans, was flooded and cut off from outside assistance. The study noted that the Slidell Police Department was one of the very few law enforcement agencies in the Gulf-Coast region that had a supply of food and water to last their police officers approximately 3 days. Once these supplies were exhausted, members of the Slidell Police Department had
to appropriate additional humanitarian supplies from stores and restaurants until emergency assistance arrived 5 days later. It should be noted that federal emergency assistance did not arrive to the World Trade Center until 48 hours following the terrorist attacks in New York City. This is the main reason why state and local law enforcement agencies should be properly prepared and equipped for any and all emergency situations, because in most acts of terrorism and natural disasters, state and local law enforcement agencies are the first responders.

The participants of this research project complained they were not provided with necessary emergency equipment and resources to handle an emergency of such magnitude as Hurricane Katrina. They indicated that if they had the necessary resources, their response would have been more efficient and probably could have saved more lives.

As part of any emergency disaster plan, the USC-CJ study indicated that state and local government should make available medical and psychological care for first responders. The USC-CJ study noted that this aspect of the disaster plan is often overlooked. During the wake of 9/11, NYPD Commissioner Kerik was heralded for mandating that all NYPD personnel attend counseling sessions to assist those officers in coping with the loss of brother officers and with the tragedy of this horrific event.

Several participants of this research project indicated that the police department or city government should have made counseling available to officers who responded to Katrina. These participants suggested that counseling was desperately needed, because not only were the police officers engaged in rescue operations and attempts to restore order, but also had to cope with the loss of their homes and the displacement of their families. In addition, these officers worked extended shifts almost to the point of complete exhaustion. For the most part, scores of police officers resided in police cruisers.
until emergency assistance arrived approximately 4 to 5 days later. To further worsen the situation, many officers had to scrounge for their own food and water and change of clothes because the city and police department were not prepared for an emergency of such magnitude.

Because of the extensive flooding of the city, hospitals and medical facilities were flooded and rendered inoperable as a result of several levee breeches. Consequently, physicians and medical staff personnel were displaced and unavailable not only to the general populace but to emergency first responders as well. Medical and psychological services were unavailable. As a result, remaining NOPD officers had to cope with the situation themselves. During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, two NOPD officers became extremely distraught and took their own lives as a result of the stress and carnage created by this horrific natural disaster. It should be noted that the medical services in the metropolitan New Orleans area have not reached the pre-Katrina capacity. According to Sternberg (2007), New Orleans lost 7 of 22 local hospitals, resulting in the loss of half of the city's hospital beds. In addition, since Hurricane Katrina New Orleans has lost 4,486 medical doctors, which has contributed to a 47% increase in the death rate of New Orleans (Sternberg, 2007). In addition, the loss of medical facilities has resulted in a major reduction in mental care and drug rehabilitation.

Limitations of the Study

Traditionally, one of the obstacles with conducting research of a police organization is that law enforcement administrators have been resistant in allowing “outsiders” to conduct research of their respective agencies. Consequently, research of criminal justice organizations was severely limited until the mid-1970s. Peak (2001)
claims the literature has shown there were two primary reasons for a lack of policing research until this timeframe. First, "many police executives perceived research studies as a threat to their personal careers and the organization's image" (p. 72). "Second, few police administrators saw any benefit to the research for them. They had no need to challenge traditional methods of operation. The 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' attitude prevailed, particularly among old-school administrators" (p. 72).

Another obstacle to overcome while conducting police research is the policeman's working personality. According to Fuller (2006) "The policeman's working personality is a term that explains how law enforcement officers are drawn into a police subculture that emphasizes a different set of values from those held by mainstream society" (p. 189). As part of the police subculture, many police officers are reluctant to speak with outsiders, especially about their profession. This is because, for the most part, law enforcement officers, especially police officers, tend to develop a sense of solidarity in the police subculture. During the course of this research project, the researcher was informed that NOPD officers are prohibited to be interviewed without the permission of the superintendent or the Office of Public Affairs.

Upon receiving approval to conduct this study from Superintendent Warren Riley, the NOPD was extremely cooperative and the police department made every effort to accommodate the researcher and the participants alike. When this study was sanctioned by the NOPD, participants were encouraged to be candid in their responses to the significant questions. Obtaining NOPD approval to conduct this study was crucial for the researcher and many participants alike. For example, one respondent stated that he would not have participated in this study if it was not authorized by the superintendent.
With that stated, the only limitation placed upon the researcher was the lack of a private location where interviews could be conducted. It should be noted that several police districts are still operating out of FEMA trailers. As a result, privacy became an issue. On occasion the interview would be interrupted by the police radio or by some other distraction. However, the researcher believes these distractions did not have any bearing on the truthfulness or candidness of the participants. The mass majority of the participants were enthusiastic to participate in this research project.

The researcher was able to overcome any and all obstacles in the interview process because the researcher is a retired federal agent who began his law enforcement career with the NOPD approximately 32 years ago. This sense of commonality or brotherhood with the participants greatly assisted the researcher while conducting interviews for this study. The researcher strongly believes that being a former police officer reduced any and all barriers between the researcher and the participants so that the researcher could establish a rapport with the interviewees.

The only difficulty encountered by the researcher in this project was convincing the NOPD management staff that the study required a random sampling technique. Once this technique was explained to the staff, the researcher was provided with all manpower lists to draft a stratified random sampling. No other problems or limitations were encountered while conducting the research.

One criticism of this study is that the researcher could have decided to conduct a quantitative study instead of opting for a qualitative research project. However, because several of the NOPD districts are still operating out of FEMA trailers, it would have been extremely difficult to distribute a questionnaire to the sampling population. The NOPD response to Hurricane Katrina was an extremely emotional and trying experience for the...
members of the police department. By utilizing a qualitative research design, the researcher was able to capture the participant’s thoughts and emotions while analyzing the NOPD response to the most catastrophic natural disaster in the history of the United States.

Validity and Reliability

With regards to reliability, the methodology set forth in this case study should be easy to replicate. However, there is no guarantee that the participants will respond in the same manner as the police officers who participated in this study. Individual experiences and interpretations of what transpired during Hurricane Katrina can differ according to the officer’s assignment during the wake of the storm.

During the collection of data (personal interviews), the researcher had no reason to believe that any of the respondents attempted to mislead or be untruthful. Furthermore, participants were encouraged by the NOPD upper management to be candid in their responses to the researcher’s questions.

In addition, construct validity was established because the researcher’s dissertation committee, along with the NOPD Chief of Staff, reviewed and approved the 15 significant questions utilized during this study. In addition, the participant’s responses to the 15 significant questions were comparable to the information obtained in the review of literature and the findings of several other studies conducted of the emergency response to Hurricane Katrina, which included the current state of affairs of the NOPD.

Recommendations for Further Research

Hiring standards is a topic that should be considered for further research. This study has shown there is a correlation between hiring standards and police misconduct. The literature revealed that law enforcement agencies should refrain from hiring
marginally qualified candidates. Historically, the NOPD has had a history of hiring marginally qualified candidates, and the consequences of such hiring practices has resulted in two former police officers being sentenced to the death penalty.

As part of the hiring standards, further research should be conducted as to the effects of an intensive background investigation of the hiring process. Background investigations have historically been conducted to screen problematic police candidates. However, the philosophy of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) has utilized background investigations not only to screen problematic police candidates but also to predict if a police candidate has the personality that might lead a recruit to engage in misconduct during his or her police career. LAPD has adopted this policy as a direct result of the Rodney King beatings, which led to the 1992 Los Angeles riots and the Rampart Division scandals.

Secondly, a topic of further research should include a comparative analysis of higher education and police performance. There have been numerous studies involving this topic; however, as state and local law enforcement agencies strive to become more professional, an increasing need has arisen for police officers to possess a college education. This study, along with the review of literature, has shown that more municipal police agencies have been utilizing the concept of community policing to reduce crime and to ingratiate the department with the community.

With the advent of community policing, those police officers assigned to interact with the community must possess good decision making skills and are required to act independently with limited supervision. The literature has shown that a college education can help a police officer develop or improve these skills. However, education and training should not be limited to officers who already possess a college education. These
skills should be taught as part of the training academy curriculum and included in an annual in-service training program.

The research should include follow-up studies of the relationship between police performance and higher education through surveys of the community to determine if higher education does enhance police performance. This research should include a study of internal performance between college educated officers and high school graduates with regards to misconduct, discipline and abuse of sick leave.

The traditional mission of policing has been crime prevention and the maintenance of order; however, as the result of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the police mission has included homeland security. Homeland security pundits have advised Americans that the terrorism threat is real and the war on terrorism is a continuous process. In addition, Gulf-Coast residents are always reminded of the hazards of nature with the advent of every approaching hurricane season.

As a result of the threats posed by natural disasters and acts of terrorism, law enforcement members must develop the leadership skills necessary to coordinate and respond to such disasters. It is recommended that further research be conducted of the benefits of incorporating a leadership skills training program at the training academy level. The rationale of such research is to develop leadership skills at the entry level of policing to assist individual officers to make sound decisions during emergency situations and during the course of their normal daily duties.

This study revealed that during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina scores of police officers were displaced and separated from their commands, and as a result operated independently without any supervision or direction. Subsequent to Hurricane Katrina and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, these events have illustrated a
definite need for leadership training of law enforcement officers at the entry level. In addition, the research should include the benefits of such training in developing future police supervisors and administrators.

Policy Recommendations

1). Abolish Residency Requirement: The NOPD and city administrators should abolish the residency requirement to attract quality candidates for the police department. In the post-Katrina era New Orleans the city has experienced a major shortage of available low-to-moderate cost housing that could be affordable for police officers. In addition, the failure of the New Orleans Public School system to educate its citizens has acted as a deterrent to potential police candidates and their families from relocating to the city of New Orleans. The metropolitan New Orleans area has experienced a shortage of law enforcement officers as a result of Hurricane Katrina. Consequently, fierce competition to hire the most qualified candidates has intensified, and it is strongly believed that the residency requirement would hinder the recruitment process.

2). Improve Hiring Standards: It is recommended that the NOPD improve their hiring standards. Included in the selection process should be an intense background investigation. Police officers assigned to the Applicant Investigation Unit should not only conduct the routine background investigation checks such as criminal history and Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) checks, but include a financial history check to determine if the potential candidate has any serious credit problems or has overextended themselves financially. In addition, interviews of neighbors, acquaintances, and educators should be conducted to determine if the candidate has any character flaws. The NOPD must eliminate the traditional hiring practice of
quantity versus quality with regards to the hiring process.

3). The New Orleans Fire Department should be designated as the primary rescue agency. The NOPD should be relieved of any and all rescue operations during an emergency situation such as Hurricane Katrina. During the aftermath of the storm, the NOPD was engaged in emergency rescue operations at the sake of maintaining order. While the NOPD was engaged in rescue operations, New Orleans was on the verge of anarchy. It is recommended that the NOPD be utilized to maintain order and provide armed security for all emergency responders during acts of terrorism and natural disasters. The NOFD should be provided with of the necessary training and equipment to conduct such operations.

4). Improve overall training at the academy level: The literature has shown that the police academy should serve as a part of the recruit screening process. The police administrators should expect to “weed out” a number of police recruits per academy class. This research project revealed that the NOPD Training Academy provides 476 hours of instruction as part of their Phase I of the recruit training program. This study has indicated that the national average of basic police training is 991 hours for a police department that serves a population of 250,000 to 499,999 citizens. At the time of this study, the population of New Orleans was estimated at 255,000 people. According to the national average of police basic training hours the NOPD academy is 515 hours lower than the national average.

Conclusion

Hurricane Katrina has been described as the most catastrophic natural disaster in the history of the United States, and the loss of property could exceed $150 billion. Hurricane Katrina has also been elucidated as the costliest storm in our nation’s history.
Furthermore, this massive storm has rearranged the demographics of the entire Gulf-Coast region. The metropolitan New Orleans area has experienced a major population shift as a result of the storm. The population of New Orleans prior to the storm was estimated at 450,000 residents. At the time of this study, the population of the crescent city has been projected at 255,000 residents.

As Hurricane Katrina roared through the city of New Orleans, the tidal surge precipitated several levee breeches which resulted in the flooding of 88% of the city of New Orleans. The subsequent flooding rendered the NOPD command and control system dysfunctional and totally devastated the New Orleans Criminal Justice system. It was reported that approximately 80% of the police officers had lost their homes during the wake of the storm.

During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the NOPD had to deviate from their traditional role of maintaining order and the prevention of crime to commence rescue operations of those citizens who could not financially afford to evacuate or refused to leave to protect their property. While the police department was preoccupied with rescue operations violent crime was out of control, and looting was becoming a major problem. Violent crime and looting was pushing the city towards anarchy, because the NOPD suffered a manpower shortage due to the fact that scores of police officers were stranded on their rooftops and 228 officers had gone AWOL.

Members of the police department who had remained on the job had to resort to scavenging food and water to remain alive. During the wake of the storm the NOPD had lost 500 police cruisers because of the flooding. Homeless police officers used the remaining police vehicles that were operational as their sleeping quarters. Police officers who participated in the rescue operations developed skin rashes and other maladies as a
result of wading through the toxic waters to rescue stranded citizens. When police officers attempted to control the volume of looting, they were often out gunned, out manned, and had to retreat.

The purpose of this case study was to explore the NOPD emergency response to Hurricane Katrina using the independent variables of training, communications, hiring standards, higher education and leadership. The dependent variable has been identified as the police response to the storm.

The mass majority of the participants of this study claimed that they were never properly trained to handle an emergency of such magnitude as Hurricane Katrina. Furthermore, the participants overwhelmingly agreed that training at the academy level and in-service training was the key to the overall professionalism of the NOPD. The participants expressed a strong desire to be a professional police department but indicated that the reoccurring incidents of police misconduct have tarnished the image of the NOPD. Numerous participants claimed that the many reported episodes of inappropriate behavior on the part of numerous officers during the days following the storm has set back the image of the NOPD 200 hundred years. Another police officer commented that the NOPD is famous for their expertise in crowd control but added that the public only remembers the department’s reputation for corruption.

The participants declared that improving the department’s hiring standards would alleviate many of the incidents of police misconduct. The mass majority of the participants claimed that due to a lack of manpower the NOPD has focused on quantity as opposed to hiring quality candidates. The NOPD can ill afford to revert to the hiring practices of the 1980s and 1990s when scores of marginal candidates were hired. These
ill-advised hiring practices resulted in two police officers being sentenced to death row and hundreds more being disciplined, arrested, or terminated.

This study has shown that, along with recruiting quality candidates, the pay scale must be commensurate with the hiring standards. During the post-Katrina era, competition for quality police candidates has become extremely competitive in the metropolitan New Orleans area and in the state of Louisiana. Subsequent to Hurricane Katrina, the metropolitan area has experienced a shortage of police officers. As a result of this shortage, the NOPD, the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office (JPSO) and the Louisiana State Police (LSP) have been actively recruiting post-certified and experienced police officers. As part of the recruiting package, these law enforcement agencies have been offering an abbreviated training academy in an attempt to place more officers on the street in a shorter period of time. In addition, those NOPD officers who remained on the job during the wake of the storm have demonstrated their courage and dedication to duty while performing admirably under extremely adverse conditions during the days following the storm. As a consequence of their heroic performance, several out-of-state law enforcement agencies such as the Atlanta Police Department have attempted to recruit those officers who remained on the job during Hurricane Katrina.

The NOPD and the city of New Orleans have begun the process of attempting to retain their veteran police officers by offering educational and job specialization pay incentives in addition to a much deserved across the board 10% pay raise.

During the course of this study, leadership has been shown to have been severely lacking during the wake of Hurricane Katrina. This was due in part to a lack of communications, which rendered the NOPD command and control system dysfunctional. However, the mass majority of the participants of this study claimed that no one from the
police department stood up and took control of the situation. Furthermore, numerous participants stated that they felt abandoned by the police department and the city administration. One participant claimed that no one from the NOPD command staff or the city administration ever reassured the police officers who remained on the job that the situation would be all right. Unlike Mayor Giuliani and NYPD Commissioner Kerik, who were ubiquitous at ground zero and were constantly reassuring the emergency first responders that the situation would improve and that they were not forgotten, the NOPD’s lack of response amplified the havoc and severely decreased public morale.

Character and loyalty have been described as extremely important attributes in the police recruitment process, and they are just as important for veteran police officers as well. However, many of the participants claimed that loyalty is a “two-way street.” Police officers must be loyal to the citizens of the city because they are public servants who provide a service to the community. Numerous participants stated that the city administration, along with upper management of the NOPD, have failed to reciprocate loyalty to members of the police department. Several of the police interviewed officers in this study indicated that the NOPD upper management has been disrespectful of the line-officers. The participants added that the upper management has forgotten that veteran patrol officers are the backbone of the police department.

As part of the character and loyalty discussion, the participants were asked if they believed in the term “dedication to duty.” The mass majority of the participants stated that they believed in dedication to duty and they strongly felt that policing was a "calling." This group of officers contends that an individual does not become a police officer for monetary gain. They become police officers, because they sincerely desire to help people and to help make the city become a better place to live.
In a follow-up question, the participants were questioned if they felt that dedication to duty was a prevalent attitude within the rank and file of the NOPD. The responses of the participants were equally divided. One group of participants claimed that majority of the police officers consider being a policeman to be just another job. This group of participants explained that a lack of dedication contributed to the reason police officers had gone AWOL during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

The second group of respondents claimed that dedication to duty is prevalent mostly in the veteran police officers and that the younger police officers were primarily concerned with making a steady paycheck. Many participants claimed that numerous single parents who are police officers were primarily concerned with the benefits that the NOPD offers its members.

During the study, the participants indicated that a higher education or a college degree does not improve the overall performance of a police officer. Many participants of the study contend that if a police officer had a degree they do not understand why he/she should remain on the department, as they could obtain a federal law enforcement position and double their salary. However, just recently the NOPD, New Orleans City Council, and the Civil Service Commission have developed an educational pay incentive plan in an attempt to prevent veteran police officers who possess a college degree from leaving the police department. This educational pay incentive plan is an attempt to curtail the high attrition rate of their experienced police officers which has been exacerbating the NOPD since Hurricane Katrina.

According to Smith and Rojek (2006), “the inability of Gulf Coast law enforcement agencies to communicate by radio, cell phone, or even landline telephone was frequently cited by law enforcement officials as their most critical problem following
the storm” (p. 4). This statement was applicable to New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina. Just like other law enforcement agencies located in the Gulf Coast region the NOPD was without a back-up communications plan. This was the main reason for the total collapse of the NOPD’s command and control system. The literature has pointed out that communications is the heart and soul of any organization’s command and control system. Without communications, no commander can issue orders or implement strategies which lead to the breakdown of any organization. The total and complete collapse of local law enforcement in New Orleans took state and federal authorities by complete surprise and caused a delay in the delivery of humanitarian emergency supplies.

Since Hurricane Katrina struck the city of New Orleans on August 29, 2005, the city, along with the police department, have been attempting to rebuild. This study has addressed some of the major issues in the opinion of the participants that would improve the overall performance of the NOPD.

The police department continues to confront a spiraling violent crime rate that has been affecting the New Orleans tourism industry, which is the economic engine that drives the city. The Governor of Louisiana has approved an extension of a detachment of Louisiana National Guard and Louisiana State Troopers to remain in New Orleans to augment the undermanned police department until the conclusion of the 2007 hurricane season.

Blame for mistakes and lack of emergency planning that occurred prior to and during Hurricane Katrina does not solely belong to the Command Staff of the NOPD. The police department is an agency within the executive branch of city government, and the mayor is the chief executive officer of city government charged with the responsibility of protecting the city. As a result, the mayor and his/her designees must
share the responsibility for being ill-prepared and ill-equipped to respond to a natural
disaster of such magnitude. The mayor, city administrators, the NOPD and the citizens of
New Orleans can no longer afford to maintain a complacent attitude toward hurricanes
and other natural disasters. It is hopeful that Hurricane Katrina has been a learning lesson
that no one would soon forget.

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, the city of New Orleans had the reputation of being
the most violent city in the United States. The New Orleans murder rate per capita was
the highest in the country, and the NOPD had a reputation of being inept, brutal, and
corrupt. Subsequent to Katrina, the NOPD has been confronted with a spiraling crime
rate, a large attrition rate of experienced police officers, and suffering from a severe
manpower shortage.

The NOPD has an excellent opportunity to improve the overall performance and
image of the department by recruiting highly qualified candidates and implementing a
training program that would improve the overall professionalism of the department. The
participants of this study expressed a strong desire to become a well-trained and a more
professional police department. It is hopeful that city administrators, city council persons
along with the citizens of New Orleans come together in unison and help create a well-
trained, highly motivated and professional police department. During the waning days of
Hurricane Katrina, the media highly publicized the misconduct of scores of NOPD
officers to an international audience. It is unfortunate that the stories of heroism and
unselfishness on the part of the police officers who remained on the job and performed
admirably under extremely adverse conditions were not told. It is hopeful that this case
study not only analyzed the police emergency response to Hurricane Katrina but also
illustrated the trials and tribulations that these heroic police officers experienced during the most catastrophic natural disaster in the history of the United States.
## APPENDIX A
### NOPD RACE/SEX BREAKDOWN

**NEW ORLEANS POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**RACE/SEX BREAKDOWN**

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**TOTAL BLACK** 792 56%  
**TOTAL WHITE** 618 44%

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APPENDIX B
NOPD COOPERATION REQUEST LETTER

March 21, 2007

Superintendent Warren Riley
New Orleans Police Department
New Orleans, La.

Superintendent Riley,

My name is Michael Wigginton Jr. and I am an Adjunct Professor of Criminal Justice at Southeastern Louisiana University and an Adjunct Professor of Homeland Security at Tulane University. In addition, I am a retired Senior Special Agent with the U.S. Customs Service. However, I began my 32 year law enforcement career with the NOPD as a Patrol Officer in the Second District.

Furthermore, I am a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Southern Mississippi with a major in the Administration of Justice. I am currently working on my dissertation. My research topic is the “NOPD Emergency Response to Hurricane Katrina: A Case Study.” I am submitting this request to solicit the cooperation of the NOPD in my study. The objective of this study is to analyze the police response to the most destructive natural disaster in the history of the United States. This study should have policy implications for any law enforcement response to any future natural disasters.

It is requested that as part of this study that you authorize me to interview 30 police officers and 5 supervisors with regards to the NOPD response to Hurricane Katrina. The only criterion is that the interviewees participated in the response to the storm. I would further request that the interviewees be randomly selected and that the participants remain anonymous to preserve the integrity of the study and protect the participants. A copy of the structured questions is attached to this request. I would schedule the interviews in such a manner that they would not interfere with the duties of the participants.

As a part of this study, I have identified several independent variables such as; communications, leadership, hiring standards, higher-education and training. The dependent variable has been identified as the police response to the storm. The study will explore the relationship between the independent variables and the police emergency response to the storm. The study will determine if the independent variables could influence police performance during an emergency situation such as Hurricane Katrina.

It should be noted that it is not the intent of this research project to discredit the NOPD. My main objective is to analyze the police emergency response to the storm and to determine what could be done differently to improve the police response to a natural disaster. However, it should be noted that the AWOL incident that occurred during the storm will be addressed.
I sincerely believe that the results of this study could be utilized to improve hiring standards, police training and illustrate the need for better salaries for the entire NOPD. I can assure you that the study will be conducted in an ethical manner and I will not attempt to deceive anyone. I would be willing to allow you to read the study prior to any submission, and I would greatly appreciate it if you would allow me to interview you at the conclusion of the study.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would authorize this request. If you have any questions I would be more than happy to meet with you and answer any questions that you might have with regards to the study. As a retired law enforcement officer and a professor of criminal justice I have the NOPD’s best interest at heart and I would appreciate the opportunity to tell the story of the positive aspects of the NOPD’s response to Hurricane Katrina.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration of my request.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Wigginton Jr.
Contact telephone (985) 640-6007
E-mail wiggintonjr0638@bellsouth.net
APPENDIX C
NOPD STUDY APPROVAL LETTER

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE
P.O. Box 51480
New Orleans, LA 70151

March 29, 2007

Mr. Wigginton,
C/O: University of Southern Mississippi

This is to inform you that your request to interview officers and supervisors of the New Orleans Police Department has been approved. It is my understanding the interview process will be used in furtherance of your dissertation. Any request for assistance should be directed to Captain Juan R. Quinton, Superintendent’s Staff.

Superintendent of Police
Warren J. Riley

By: Captain R. Quinton, Jr.
Chief of Staff

A Nationally Accredited Law Enforcement Agency

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APPENDIX D
NOPD MEMO TO DISTRICT COMMANDERS

DEPARTMENT OF POLICE
INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

DATE: March 30, 2007

TO: See Distribution

Anthony W. Cannatella, Sr.
FROM: Deputy Superintendent – Operations Bureau

SUBJECT: Interviews / Hurricane Katrina

Distribution: Operations Bureau District Commanders

The Superintendent has approved a request from former NOPD Officer Michael Wigginton Jr., now an Adjunct Professor of Criminal Justice at Southeastern Louisiana University, to interview members of this Department with regards to the "NOPD Emergency Response to Hurricane Katrina".

Each District Commander shall select four (4) Police Officers and one (1) Supervisor to participate in the interviews. The participants in the interviews will remain anonymous.

Each District Integrity Control Officer shall contact Mr. Wigginton (985) 640-6007 to coordinate and schedule the interviews.

ANTHONY W. CANNATELLA, SR.
Deputy Superintendent
Operations Bureau

Attachment: (1) Correspondence dated 03/21/07

cc: Warren J. Riley, Superintendent of Police

AWC/jjb
APPENDIX E
LIST OF 15 SIGNIFICANT QUESTIONS

Michael Wigginton Jr.
Institutional Review Board

Significant Questions

1). Why do you think the NOPD was ill prepared to handle the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina?

2). What type of emergency response training did the NOPD provide you prior to the arrival of Hurricane Katrina?

3). What type(s) of emergency equipment was available to you during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina?

4). Were you made aware of the NOPD Hurricane Emergency Operations Plan prior to the arrival of Hurricane Katrina?

5). In your opinion, was there a breakdown in leadership or supervision within the NOPD during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina? Please explain your response.

6). How did you feel about the police officers who went Absent Without Leave (AWOL) during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina?

7). In your opinion, why did the police officers desert or abandon their posts?

8). Do you believe that character and loyalty are important attributes of the police recruitment process? Please explain your response.

9). Do you believe that the NOPD should improve their recruitment standards? Please explain your response.

10). Do you believe that higher education or a college degree improves the quality of a police officer? Explain your response.

11). Do you believe that the NOPD Training Academy prepared you to handle any/all emergency situations especially the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina? Why or Why not?

12). Do you believe that the NOPD has a reputation of being a professional police department? Why or why not?

13). In your opinion, what could have been done differently to improve the overall professionalism of the NOPD?
14). In your opinion, what could have been done differently to improve the NOPD response to Hurricane Katrina?

15). Do you believe that policing is a noble profession? Please explain your response.
TO: Michael P. Wigginton, Jr.
125 Cypress Lakes Drive
Slidell, LA 70458

FROM: Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
HSPRC Chair

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 27030601
PROJECT TITLE: The New Orleans Police Emergency Response to Hurricane Katrina: A Case Study

Enclosed is The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee Notice of Committee Action taken on the above referenced project proposal. If I can be of further assistance, contact me at (601) 266-4279, FAX at (601) 266-4275, or you can e-mail me at Lawrence.Hosman@usm.edu. Good luck with your research.
The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.

Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 27030601
PROJECT TITLE: The New Orleans Police Emergency Response to Hurricane Katrina: A Case Study
PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: 03/10/07 to 08/31/07
PROJECT TYPE: Dissertation or Thesis
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: Michael P. Wigginton, Jr.
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Science & Technology
DEPARTMENT: Administration of Justice
FUNDING AGENCY: N/A
HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 04/03/07 to 04/02/08

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
HSPRC Chair
APPENDIX F (continued)

HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW FORM
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
(SUBMIT THIS FORM IN DUPLICATE)

Name: Michael P. Wigginton Jr. Phone: 985-640-6007

E-Mail Address: wiggintonjr0638@bellsouth.net

Mailing Address: 125 Cypress Lakes Drive, Slidell, La. 70458
(address to receive information regarding this application)

College/Division: Science & Technology Dept: Administration of Justice

Department Box #: Box 5127 Phone: 601-266-4509

Proposed Project Dates: From March 10, 2007 To August 31, 2007
(specific month, day and year of the beginning and ending dates of full project, not just data collection)

Title: The New Orleans Police Emergency Response To Hurricane Katrina: A Case Study

Funding Agencies or Research Sponsors: None

Grant Number (when applicable): None

Box 5127 New Project

XXX Dissertation or Thesis

Renewal or Continuation: Protocol #

Change in Previously Approved Project: Protocol #

Principal Investigator: Michael P. Wigginton Jr. Date: 02-28-07

Advisor: Dr. Thomas Payne Date: 2-28-07

Department Chair: Dr. Laura New Date: 3-1-07

RECOMMENDATION OF HSPRC MEMBER

1 Category I, Exempt under Subpart A, Section 46.101 (F) 45CFR46.

Category II, Expedited Review, Subpart A, Section 46.110 and Subparagraph ( ).

Category III, Full Committee Review.

HSPRC College/Division Member: Date: 3/15/07

HSPRC Chair: Date: 4-6-07

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REFERENCES


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