Online Theses and Dissertations   Student Scholarship

January 2011

A Call To Arms: The Militarization of Natural Disasters in the United States

Ashley Katherine Farmer
Eastern Kentucky University

Follow this and additional works at: https://encompass.eku.edu/etd

 Part of the Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons

Recommended Citation

Farmer, Ashley Katherine, "A Call To Arms: The Militarization of Natural Disasters in the United States" (2011). *Online Theses and Dissertations*. 34.
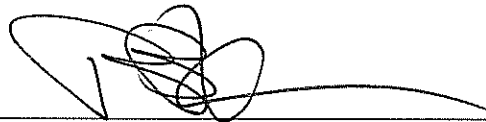https://encompass.eku.edu/etd/34

A Call to Arms: The Militarization of Natural Disasters in the United States

By

Ashley K. Farmer
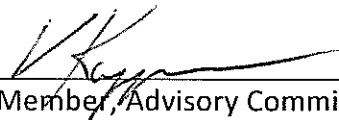

Thesis Approved:

_____

Chair, Advisory Committee

_____

Member, Advisory Committee

_____

Member, Advisory Committee

_____

Dean, Graduate School

STATEMENT OF PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a __MS__ degree

at Eastern Kentucky University, I agree that the Library shall make it available to

borrowers under rules of the Library. Brief quotations from this thesis are allowable

without special permission, provided that accurate acknowledgment of the source is

made. Permission for extensive quotation from or reproduction of this thesis may be

granted by my major professor, or in [his/her] absence, by the Head of Interlibrary

Services when, in the opinion of either, the proposed use of the material is for scholarly

purposes. Any copying or use of the material in this thesis for financial gain shall not be

allowed without my written permission.

Signature ___Ashley Farmer___

Date ___8/3/11___

A CALL TO ARMS: THE MILITARIZATION OF NATURAL DISASTERS

IN THE UNITED STATES

By

Ashley K. Farmer

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science

Eastern Kentucky University

Richmond, Kentucky

May 2007

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

Eastern Kentucky University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Science in Criminal Justice

August 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE NEW RESPONSE TO DISASTERS

Natural disasters are an expected, albeit uncontrolled part of history, and will

continue and possibly worsen in the future. Communities have been able to rebuild

after devastating damages and fatal disasters through recovery and relief efforts

that have focused on what's essential- survival and basic necessities. The

humanitarian focus that has characterized disaster response is changing, along with

the way the government responds to large-scale disasters.

Since there have been natural disasters, there has also been some sort of

disaster response, although initial responses to earthquakes, tornadoes and the like

resemble few aspects of disaster response today. Since the inception of the Federal

Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 1979, the role of the military has grown

more remarkable and substantial, almost to the point that we increasingly see the

military as first responders (Burby 2006, Hofmann and Hudson 2009, Mannion 2006,

Marek 2005).

A much newer phenomenon than military involvement is the focus on

security and crime, and one objective of this study is to show through literature that

this is true. In recent years, disaster response has been plagued with the perception that looting and violent crimes commonly take place in the aftermath of a natural disaster (Tierney et al, 2006), and that these security problems need to be addressed first to keep society and neighborhoods that are affected safe. In fact, much of the reason military personnel and troops are called upon now is to deal with threats to security after a natural disaster, and this seems especially true for private military companies that are contracted by the government. Securing neighborhoods and attempting to quell criminal activity have taken precedent over getting victims of natural disasters out of the area and to proper shelter with amenities they need. This is a problematic trend in society today, where the failed responses on the part of the government have meant private sector companies and individuals in communities are expected to compensate for this lack of regard.

Current literature on the militarization of disaster relief focuses on the expansion of powers of federal government, with a broader role for the military because they have the manpower and resources to be of great assistance (Johnson 2004, Alvarez 2005, Fischer et al 2006). The supplies the military has at its disposal are not overlooked when it comes to helping in times of disaster. The military has always been involved to some extent, but only as support to local and state authorities, as this is all the law will allow. The Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 has been at odds with the reality of situations, as the military has not only been increasingly

used as responders, but used more as security detail. White House Reports on

Hurricane Katrina, sociological journals, and books ranging from *Militarizing the*

American Criminal Justice System (Kraska, 2001) to *Acts of God* (Steinberg, 2006) are

examples of sources used to accumulate information.

As has been the case in recent history, citizens often must bear the brunt of

losses from these natural disasters (Burby, 2006), which means disaster response in

the new millennium has a neoliberal slant that was previously nonexistent to

disaster recovery operations. Victims in communities that have been stricken by

hurricanes, tornadoes and other common natural disasters are expected to, for the

most part, not only fend for themselves but also cleaning up after and rebuilding

after the disaster.

This new liberalism is based on corporate autonomy, keeping businesses from

feeling negative impacts while a "free market" mentality is applied for individual

citizens (Steinberg, 2006). A prime example of neo-liberalism at work would be the

poor and underprivileged New Orleans citizens who had no way out of the city

before Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005. There were no plans in place to help with

evacuations, which is why many stayed behind.

All of the literature considered from different areas of interest builds a

foundation upon which theories and examples can be discussed. The aim was to

coordinate the information in a way that not only exemplifies that militarization of

disaster response is a real phenomenon, but also one that should be studied in criminal justice because of the implications to our field of study. It has become clear since the turn of the century that disaster response is no longer about helping victims and recovery efforts, but about keeping people "safe" and minimizing the risk of crime in what is considered an area in a disarray with no rule of law being enforced.

Research will showcase a turn of events that has been taking place, and how the concentration of disaster response is changing in our modern society as we become ever more concerned with crime and keeping ourselves safe and out of harm's way. This mentality has paved the way for private military companies and the military itself to get more involved in responding to natural disasters and gaining more power in controlling the neighborhoods and people affected by unforeseen catastrophes.

This research is exploring a phenomenon previously unexamined within the field of criminal justice studies. Many have written extensively on the subjects of disaster relief and militarization concepts within many disciplinary fields. Secondary document analysis was undertaken using a wide variety of sources, including government reports, peer reviewed journal articles, and newspapers and editorials. The task undertaken in this research will be to synthesize as much relevant information as could be attained in order to build a theoretical framework that can

help shed light on the militarization of disaster response and how it specifically

relates to crime, using Hurricane Katrina as a case study and example of the

phenomenon.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

The primary methods used in this research are a secondary analysis of written

sources, as well as theoretical synthesis of information. The goal of this is to cite

instances and circumstances that prove the fact that disaster response has changed

to increasingly work from the military approach, and then theorize on why this has

happened and what it means for criminal justice.

Analytical techniques used were perusing the relevant literature by using

search engines and the database JSTOR. Various terms and words were used to

maximize the documents that could be found, including terms on "militarization",

"disaster response", "crime and Hurricane Katrina", "disasters and crime", and other

combinations. The articles that were found to be relevant were examined for

common themes or for precise examples to be used. It was also important to check

government websites, for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to gain basic

knowledge and understanding to be used so that a general overview of disaster

response could be provided.

As was mentioned, the theoretical section is included to answer the question of why disaster response has become so much more focused on criminal behavior in the aftermath of a catastrophe, and why the military has been used more as an unofficial police force. It is important to understand not just that this is a new phenomenon taking place and that it has significant meaning for the field of crime and justice studies, but to consider why it is taking place now.

CHAPTER 3

THE HISTORY OF MILITARIZATION AND DISASTER RESPONSE

Defining the concepts of militarization and militarism is essential to seeing

how this has been taking place in the realm of disaster response. Militarization refers

to a means of implementing the ideology of militarism, but applying those elements

of the military to a different agency or situation (Kraska, 2001). Merriam-Webster

dictionary defines militarism as "predominance of the military class or its ideals".

The focus on problems is shifted so that they are seen as easily amenable through

military efforts. The American public views the military as a problem solver that

succeed in any mission. They are perceived as efficient, orderly, and disciplined, and

the military itself is willing to keep up this image, as it makes them socially useful.

There are four indicators to look for with militarization- material, cultural,

organizational, and operational (Kraska, 2001). Material refers to weapons and

technology that might be used in responses. Cultural aspects are indicated by

language used to describe what has happened in militaristic terms. After Hurricane

Katrina, New Orleans was referenced in terms of restoring law and order.

Organizational would be how military arrangements are deployed., whether it be as

first responders, for support to civil authority, or for security purposes. Operational is how the militant agencies and groups carry out their orders, as oftentimes the use of force or threat of force is a method used. The ideology of the military is strong, and the social environment must be open to accepting this.

As will be evidenced throughout this research, officials have long since been calling for greater military intervention in disasters. The public view of the military as saviors who help restore order and prevent disaster victims from causing crime is common. This is what Chalmers Johnson (2004) refers to when he writes, "certainly one of the clearest signs of militarism in America is the willingness of some senior officers and civilian militarists to meddle in domestic policing".

The authority of the federal government and the military in disaster response used to follow traditional protocol (Anderson, 1970). There were role expectations and norms to adhere to, and even when the military was called upon it was strictly in support to civil authorities. They waited until they were invited to help, unless the need was known and apparent, putting them under pressure to respond, which is what the framers intended (Anderson 1970, Dunlap Jr.2001).

The Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 was passed with the direct intention of limiting the ability of the federal government to use the military for law enforcement purposes. It does not apply to the National Guard or Coast Guard (Trebilcock, 2000).,

and the formality and strict separation has deteriorated over the years. When it comes to natural disasters, Trebilcock (2000) writes:

> Federal military personnel may also be used pursuant to the Stafford Act, 42 U.S.C., section 5121, in times of natural disaster upon request from a state governor. In such an instance, the Stafford Act permits the president to declare a major disaster and send in military forces on an emergency basis for up to ten days to preserve life and property. While the Stafford Act authority is still subject to the criteria of active versus passive, it represents a significant exception to the Posse Comitatus Act's underlying principle that the military is not a domestic police force auxiliary.

Given the supposed lack of public order after Hurricane Katrina, President Bush recommended revising this law so that the military could restore law and order. These changes were implemented in the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007. This gave the commander in chief the authority to call on the armed forces to "restore public order and enforce laws of the United States when, as a result of a natural disaster, epidemic, or other serious public health emergency, terrorist attack or incident, or other condition... the President determines that... domestic violence has occurred to such an extent that the constituted authorities of the State or possession are incapable of maintaining public order" (H.R. 5122, 2006). Although it has since been repealed (in 2008), this alarming trend of using the military as police for security purposes after a natural disaster, and passing laws to make this acceptable, has led to the expectation that

"disaster relief has become a core, but rarely acknowledged, mission of the United

States military" (Juul, 2010).

Previously in United States history, disaster relief has been primarily a local

and state issue, but has become increasingly more federalized over the years

(Buchalter, 2007). The Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950 and the Stafford Act

(amended from the 1988 Disaster Relief Act), both authorize federal authorities to

take action after a natural disaster strikes should the President feel he or she is

acting in the interests of saving human lives. Despite all of this, the military is still

only supposed to act in support to civil authorities, and traditionally have been called

in as such.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was an organization

created in 1979 specifically to coordinate disaster response when it was formally

requested by state governments. A regularized system of disaster relief had already

been implemented by the 1960s, due to massive natural disasters such as Hurricane

Betsy in 1965, Hurricane Carla in 1962, and the Alaskan Earthquake of 1964. The

Disaster Relief Act of 1974 established the process for presidential disaster

declarations (FEMA, 2011). When President Carter made the executive order in 1979

to merge and coordinate the fragmented disaster relief operations, and "civil

defense responsibilities were also transferred to the new agency from the Defense

Department's Defense Civil Preparedness Agency" (FEMA, 2011). The influence of

militarism, then, has always been an inherent part of disaster response and disaster response agencies.

The creation of FEMA was prompted by criticism of how the federal government handled emergency management (Steinberg, 2006). Many early leaders of the agency had military experience, including Director Louis Giuffrida, who attended U.S. Army War College and served in the National Guard. During the next decade, FEMA developed a plan under the guidance of Colonel Oliver North to prevent nuclear attack on the United States. As Steinberg notes, "between 1982 and 1991, FEMA spent almost $3 billion developing equipment and plans for either protecting government officials during nuclear war or dealing with other aspects of national security. During the same time, it spent just $243 million on planning for natural disaster." This led to disconcerting and mediocre responses to natural disasters such as Hurricane Hugo in South Carolina.

After Hurricane Andrew hit Florida in 1992, FEMA was strongly criticized for its slow response to the disaster. This led to an effort by the federal government to improve the agency, and give it a more definitive mission. President Clinton nominated James L. Witt as the new director, the first one in FEMA's 14-year history who had experience as a state emergency manager. Resources were allocated differently, from civil defense to preparedness and disaster relief and recovery

operations (FEMA, 2011). All of this was sidelined, however, after the terrorist

attacks on September 11, 2001.

FEMA became refocused on issues of national security and preparedness

after 9/11. (FEMA, 2011). FEMA's Office of National Preparedness trained first

responders to deal with weapons of mass destruction, billions of dollars were spent

on homeland security, and finally in March of 2003, FEMA became a part of the

Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The main focus of the DHS since its creation has been national security and

terrorism, so natural disaster response preparedness efforts and mitigation plans

were superseded by counter terrorism as the new homeland security focused

organization developed plans based on terrorist disasters. Because all of the

agencies within the DHS were interconnected, monies could be easily transferred

from one to another, and FEMA began to lose funds. This made the agency less

capable of carrying out planning and preparation for natural disasters. The focus was

forced to change and concentrated only on relief efforts, which made FEMA seem to

some the equivalent of a "federal firehouse" (Cooper and Block, 2006).

FEMA being integrated with the Department of Homeland Security has been

viewed as problematic by disaster response analysts. Fischer, et al (2006),

commented, for example, that "while terrorism may occur again, we know

hurricanes and other types of disasters will." It is also questionable, and reasonable

to wonder, on what has been accomplished by the serious focus on terrorism and security. The planning and preparation for natural disasters has become inadequate, and almost moot (Cooper and Block 2006, Gill 2007).

Even in the days after Hurricane Katrina, terrorism was still on the minds of federal officials. A document from the DHS entitled "How Terrorists Might Exploit a Hurricane" (2004) was circulated throughout federal agencies. This plan even noted that it was unlikely that terrorism could be an issue during a natural disaster, but went on to outline recommendations such as nationwide security and high security levels at shelters that would include identification checks. Those who took part in the Red Cell that organized this document included the U.S. Marine Corps -- another indicator of militarization.

In 2002, United States Military Northern Command was established, which serves as an on-call federal response for disasters, its mission to protect the homeland. It officially serves as a support to civil authorities (limited by the Posse Comitatus Act), but also states that in case of a national emergency, the Air Forces Northern National Security Emergency Preparedness Directorate will gain control of the situation. They will coordinate defense support and provide command and control (Lendman, 2008).

The National Response Plan, adopted in 2004, was a document outlining emergency response guidelines in the event of a catastrophic event. Although it was

14

not just focused on natural disasters, FEMA was not consulted in drawing up of this plan. The Rand Corporation, a counterterrorism thinktank, was contracted for the job. The government, in regards to disasters, was focused only on terrorism, not the more likely to occur natural disasters.

The White House Report on the federal response to Hurricane Katrina, released in February 2006, also mentioned national security and 9/11 numerous times in the discussion on lessons learned from the natural disaster that leveled New Orleans. Since terrorism was at the forefront of topics discussed in disaster response, most funds were used for this purpose, making designing plans for preparing and mitigating damage from natural disasters nearly impossible.

CHAPTER 4

HURRICANE KATRINA: A CASE STUDY

On August 29, 2005, the role of the federal government in response to

natural disasters would face true scrutiny, and become one of the most inefficient

disaster responses in recent history. New Orleans was in the direct path of a

Category 5 hurricane, and completely unprepared for the havoc the storm would

unleash. Hurricane Katrina, and the subsequent governmental response in New

Orleans, will be used to exemplify the militarization of disaster response. There was

a marked difference in how relief operations were handled as compared to any

disaster before.

Three days before the hurricane made landfall, Louisiana governor Kathleen

Blanco declared a state of emergency. A federal emergency was declared a day

later, as Blanco asked President Bush to do so, stating:

I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that

effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and affected local

governments, and that supplementary Federal assistance is necessary to save

lives, protect property, public health, and safety, or to lessen or avert the

threat of a disaster.

 This gave the federal government, including FEMA and the Department of

Homeland Security, full authority in the disaster response to Hurricane Katrina. A

day before landfall, Mayor Ray Nagin declared a mandatory evacuation of New

Orleans. Unable to leave the city because they lacked transportation, roughly 30,000

citizens gathered at the Superdome. The Louisiana National Guard requested 700

buses from FEMA to help with evacuations, but only 100 were sent (O'Brian and

Bender, 2005). The next morning, Hurricane Katrina made landfall as a category 4

storm.

Reports of water overflowing the levees, and the possibility they had been

breached, arose almost immediately. The devastation would remain to be seen at

this time, but officials were aware of the unavoidable possibilities. In 2004, FEMA

had funded and participated in a disaster simulation referred to as "Hurricane Pam",

which warned of the desolation that could become New Orleans, a city that has a

vulnerable geographic landscape and lies below sea level. Poor communication on

whether or not the levees had actually broke hinted to poor preparedness for this

predicted catastrophe. The levees had in fact been breeched by late morning, as the

Times-Picayune reported, "A large section of the vital 17th Street Canal levee, where it connects to the brand new 'hurricane proof' Old Hammond Highway bridge, gave way late Monday morning in Bucktown after Katrina's fiercest winds were well north."

Reports of crime and lawlessness surfaced almost immediately. The media nationwide began reporting on riots and looting happening in the affected areas, and alleging that citizens were being shot and raped, with gangs running around the Superdome menacing people. Afterwards, it was revealed there were only eight gunshot victims total in New Orleans during the Hurricane Katrina rescue effort, and two of those were apparent suicides (Cooper and Block, 2006). As will be further discussed, disaster literature notes that crime and looting after natural disasters are rarely significant problems in the United States. Still, American citizens were on the outside looking in, wondering why the federal government had not responded to the crime issue earlier. The Associated Press reported that fights and fired had broken out, corpses were laying out on the streets, and rescue helicopters and law enforcement officers were shot at, turning the situation even more desperate. Tierney and Bevc (2007) give an overview of how militarization began with the relief efforts in Louisiana:

In the response that followed the landfall of Hurricane Katrina, more than

63,000 National Guard and active military personnel were deployed to assist

in the response and recovery efforts of the Gulf region. Beyond routine tasks,

such as search and rescue and the delivery of relief supplies, military

personnel also operated outside their traditional areas of responsibility and

were armed with loaded weapons to deal with socially constructed threats of

urban insurgents and charged with restoring order. The Katrina catastrophe

provided the justification for U.S. leaders to push for the militarization of

disasters, even though the idea has many opponents and the rationales for

expanding the role of the military are questionable.

Thousands of fully armed troops, from the Coast Guard, National Guard, and

Marines, were present to guard the streets of New Orleans, with assault rifles and

hummers (Whitney 2005, Kouddous 2005). A 6 p.m. curfew was put into effect for all

citizens, and no re-entry was allowed for residents who might be trying to return to

the city, either to get belongings or search for loved ones. The Convention Center

and Superdome were heavily guarded and locked down, complete with military

checkpoints throughout the city (Scahill, 2005).

Hurricane Katrina became a launch for military operations against United

States citizens. It has since been illustrated through eyewitness reports that New

Orleans police officers were told they were allowed to shoot looters (Shankman and

Jennings, 2010). Ultimately, a total of eleven New Orleans residents were involved in

shootings by officers.

Aside from this, there was much confusion among law enforcement officials

as to how much force should be used to stop looting, some citing martial law, and

other refusing to adhere to the order. "Take back the city" and "regain control" were

phrases used repeatedly and without consequence. Sally Forman, communications

chief for Mayor Nagin, was quoted saying "The mayor said, 'Let's stop the looting,

let's stop the lawlessness and let's put our police officers on the streets so that our

citizens are protected," (Shankman and Jennings, 2010). Many journalists and

citizens were shocked to hear the order to shoot looters, especially since they posed

no immediate or dangerous threat to the safety of others (Joyner 2005, Shankman

and Jennings 2010).

Related to looting are disaster myths (Tierney, Bevc, and Kuligowski, 2006)

which frame social control and reactions from citizens. Classic disaster research

shows that there are lower instances of deviant behaviors than during nondisaster

time periods. The panic myth is a popularly held misconception about reactions

during times of disaster, which assumes the public will react with great alarm. The

authors mention Hurricane Katrina specifically, and how media coverage shifted

from exhibiting the devastation to characterizing the disaster victims "as

opportunistic looters and violent criminals." New Orleans was referred to as a "war zone, drawing parallels between the conditions in that city and urban insurgency in Iraq." What ensued was a military response based on the assumption that residents in New Orleans were out of control, dangerous, and deviant.

Fischer noted a "looting frame" in disaster myths also (1998). It is a "most expected behavioral response" in times of disaster, with the media reporting on looting consistently. Troops are brought in to prevent these incidents and act as a social control. Oftentimes, if looting is rampant, it is merely a means for survival, with residents taking food and water, which is not being provided to them. The social disorder that was commonly throught to plague New Orleans during this time was a social construction, and many citizens "with homes, property, and livelihoods gone, with no evidence of a functioning governmental system…without any idea of when help would arrive…might have understandably concluded they had to fend for themselves" (Tierney et al, 2006).

Beyond the scope of property damage and theft were the reports of violent crimes. These stories of people robbing businesses and assaulting other disaster victims was a "clear influence" on disaster management decision making. Accounts of gunshot victims, rape of children, and gangs were proven groundless, but even during hurricane relief efforts, Governor Blanco and Mayor Nagin made safety from

crime a priority, ordering officials to go after lawbreakers, disregarding the fact that many victims were still stranded.

Some news headlines were more representative and accurate (Fischer et al, 2006): "No evidence shots fired at helicopters- post-Katrina rumor delayed rescue actions in New Orleans" (Hill and Spangler 2005); "Now the real looting begins: Purging the poor" (Klein 2005); and Exposed: Katrina urban legends- rumors of murder, mayhem debunked" (Gillin 2005) are a few examples. Some have argued that if shots ever were fired at aircrafts, it was only to draw attention to themselves so they could be rescued. These exaggerated reports of crime delayed rescue missions that were fearful to enter the city.

One cannot mention Hurricane Katrina without also noting the race factor. Minorities are often portrayed in stereotypical ways, and this was true for New Orleans. Black residents were labeled in captions as "looters" while white citizens were looking for supplies. Similarities begin to surface also between New Orleans post-Katrina and the American criminal justice system. Young black men are disproportionately labeled as criminals and serve time in prison, creating a racial stereotype that is carried out even through gatekeepers just as law enforcement. The reaction to looters and resident of New Orleans (and the Ninth Ward specifically) shows this same racial myth, justifying law enforcement tactics because

of the threat to social order by "thugs" in the city (Niman 2005, Hartman and Squires 2006, Elliott and Pais 2006).

Given the concentration on criminal behavior and lawlessness and disorder, the reaction that came afterwards under the guidance of the federal government does not seem so surprising. Soon after this natural disaster, one of the worst in the history of the United States, troops and private military personnel were called upon to restore law and order. Private military companies (PMC's), such as Blackwater, were hired by the federal government, as well as business owners in New Orleans, to protect property enforce rule of law. The focus was on providing surveillance and ensuring that crime did not become an issue (Tierney 2007; Williams, 2008).

Private military companies, also sometimes referred to as mercenaries, are hired contractors who provide security services. Many private business owners hired PMC's such as Israeli Defense Forces and Blackwater to guard property (Scahill, 2005). These companies "employ some of the most feared professional killers in the world accustomed to operating without worry of legal consequences and largely off the congressional radar" (Scahill, 2007). In an effort to avoid threatening the Posse Comitatus Act, the federal government was able to hire these mercenaries to police the streets of New Orleans as the military might do if they were able, their job being to secure the neighborhoods and confront criminals. 164 Blackwater troops were

hired directly by the Department of Homeland Security (Cooper and Block, 2006), and others were hired privately as well.

This militarization of post-Katrina Louisiana was magnified by the fact that just five days after the hurricane, the number of Guardsmen and active military deployed tripled that of Hurricane Andrew (Tierney et al, 2006). Search and rescue mission "began to resemble military search and destroy missions" and the region was described as being similar to that of a war zone. After the military and police gained control, evacuees were searched and patted down like criminals for weapons and drugs. An army major general was quoted as saying, "once you put soldiers on the streets with M16s, things tend to settle down" (Tierney et al 2006, Alvarez 2005). Special Forces were sent to New Orleans for the distinct purposes of security, including a 300 person military police unit (Alvarez, 2005).

According to American Forces Information Service, the deployment of the military in response to Hurricane Katrina was the largest for any natural disaster in history (2005). DHS press secretary Russ Knocke was quoted as saying, "we could have had the military, for instance, fly over New Orleans early on to help us gain visibility on things- water levels and developing pockets of criminal activity" (Marek, 2005). Shortly after recovery operations began in New Orleans the president made it clear that the challenges faced in confronting the response to this natural disaster

"requires greater federal authority and a broader role for the armed forces" (Marek, 2005).

A Disaster Assistance report from the United States General Accountability Office in 1993 foreshadowed what would happen over ten years later. The report suggested that "the roles, training, and doctrine military forces employ during disasters are similar to what they employ in performing their national security missions" during wartime. In Florida during Hurricane Andrew, it is noted, the Guard was primarily used to law enforcement, and reserves should be made more readily available for response to disasters.

The Army Times reported in 2008 that the 3rd Infantry's Brigade Combat Team in Iraq would be "redeployed at home as an on-call federal response force for natural or manmade emergencies and disasters" (Lendman, 2009). This goes along with the militaristic thinking in society and the perception that the military "proved to be the only federal entities capable of turning the president's orders into prompt action on the ground" (Mannion, 2006) after Hurricane Katrina. This not only continues to improve the image of the military, but also provide training opportunities (Hoffman and Hudson, 2009), as they can use disaster response operations as practice for real deployment operations.

The White House Report on the federal response to Hurricane Katrina was released in 2006, citing lessons learned from the ordeal. The natural disaster is

related to 9/11 numerous times, in reference to citizens expecting a more timely

response. Terrorism and national security are also mentioned ostensibly in the

report. Acts of terrorists and the wrath of nature are equated. A larger federal role in

contingency planning for catastrophes is suggested, even though the federal

government failed by all accounts.

Public safety and security is covered in the report, where is it written that

"most of the New Orleans police force was redirected from search and rescue

missions to respond to the looting, detracting from the priority mission of saving

lives". This admission by the government that police forces blatantly stopped search

missions to deal with crime is momentous. Worthy of mentioning is how Hurricane

Katrina was said to "cripple" the nation's criminal justice system, with offenders not

accounted for and on the lose. Criminal prosecutions were delayed and there was

poor recordkeeping. Contrary to what is now known about the societal reaction of

New Orleans, the White House report declares that "almost immediately following

Hurricane Katrina's landfall, law and order began to deteriorate". This is one of

many assumptions on the part of the federal government. Furthermore, the first

person federally arrested after Hurricane Katrina (as a suspect for shooting at

helicopters) is presumed guilty although the outcome is never divulged, and his

given statement not shared, so we are expected to assume this was another case of

deviant behavior in the disorderly neighborhoods.

Perhaps the most resounding recommendation is the most revealing- re-

establish FEMA as an agency separate from the Department of Homeland Security

(Fischer, 2006). This would ensure money would be allocated for the agency, and

instead of focusing only on an immediate disaster security-based response, plans

could be organized for mitigation of damages from disasters and preparedness,

much like what happened after Hurricane Andrew (although that never fully came to

fruition).

CHAPTER 5

THEORIZING ON WHY DISASTERS HAVE BECOME MILITARIZED

IN MODERN TIMES

It became evident after Hurricane Katrina that disaster response had taken

on a life of its own, and the military was a primary leader in relief efforts. All of this

was exemplified through the media and the response of the federal government,

through focusing on crime and security to hiring mercenaries. What happened after

Hurricane Katrina was at odds with disaster response protocol on not involving the

military in policing efforts, and coming to the aid of American citizens. Naturally the

most significant question to be asked is: why?

Society today has become much more concerned with security and avoiding

risk, assuming complete control is possible in our rapidly changing culture. This is

what is known as late modernity, and refers to the current era we are in. This

theoretical orientation will be used to explain, in part, why disaster response has

changed so drastically.

One perspective in understanding late modernity are the neo-liberal policies the government is practicing today, which are embedded within disaster response as well. FEMA has made it clear that victims of natural disasters in communities must be prepared to be on their own for the first 72 hours (Fischer, 2006). The White House report on Hurricane Katrina also mentions that the government alone cannot deliver all disaster relief, and has a section entitled "Citizen Preparedness", which suggests that "civilians need to take responsibility for maximizing the probability that they will survive, should disaster strike". Many citizens in New Orleans, however, lacked these means of survival. They did not have access to transportation and the state did not have a contingency plan in place that would have mitigated damages. After the worst was over and residents had been evacuated to nearby states, they were left to fend for themselves still, relying instead on the graciousness of the Red Cross, United Way, and other charitable organizations. Problems are still rampant with FEMA claims and funding, with many not able to acquire enough to sustain themselves for any proper length of time. Individualism was given high priority during Hurricane Katrina, since the state had obviously failed, bringing neo-liberalism to the limelight. Citizens are made to "bear the brunt of losses in disasters, local public officials often fail to take actions necessary to protect them" (Burby, 2006). These burdens are not just physical and emotional, but financial.

Two paradoxes that entail the burden of the individual are the safe development paradox and the local government paradox (Burby, 2006). Safe development means the federal government makes a certain locality safe to build on and develop, which in turn makes them susceptible to disasters. Local government comes into play as they give inadequate attention to threats of disaster, such as the unwillingness in New Orleans to rebuild the levees. What results is catastrophe, and even though the government did nothing to prevent or alleviate damages, they also do nothing to amend any situation, leaving citizens like those of the lower ninth ward in New Orleans without homes and no property or belongings left to claim.

In situations of high uncertainty, "organizations deploy science and technology in combination with a misplaced faith in their capabilities so as to redefine risks as more manageable and acceptable" (Williams, 2008). What we are left with are manufactured risks, making natural disasters seem controllable. The focus is shifted from the fury of nature to the fury of man. Concentrations were on "providing surveillance and protective equipment" (Tierney 2006). Accusations were rampant about looting when family members were simply searching for loved ones, and people were refused permission to leave the shelters, for fear letting them out on their own would result in more crime and chaos.

Environmental matters are relegated secondary to social issues, even though natural disasters are not preventable, as "complex systems involve much uncertainty

and the unknown while the stakes are very high" (Williams 2008). This is what instills fear in late modern society. Many practices are based on pre-modern notions of society, but modern society reacts differently, and an actuarial society rises. An emphasis is placed on "efficiency, minimizing risk, targeting hot-spots of potential danger, and prevention" (Kraska, 2004). In late modern society, we want the world to be as safe, secure, and predictable as possible, all within a "socially exclusive society". Populations are so consumed with avoiding danger and minimizing risk, that "those members of society that pose a potential danger are the excluded 'other'" (Kraska, 2004).

This all explains why the reaction to Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans happened. When a natural disaster such as a hurricane strikes, it causes a panic because no one knows what to expect- the outcome is unknown and above all no one can tell when help will arrive, and in what form. Since we are already a risk aversive society, fearful of the unknown, sometimes we allow liberties to become eroded in exchange for a feeling of safety. After a natural disaster, the feeling of uncertainty is magnified. Because society will go to extremes in terms of safety and security, allowing military personnel to get involved in disaster response seems acceptable, especially when it comes to dealing with crime. There are already so many unforeseen problems with housing, transportation, food and water supplies, that there will be zero tolerance for criminal activity.

The residents of New Orleans who were left behind to fend for themselves in the hurricane were the "other", and because the risk was so great, the response was great. The military not only became involved, but became a primary actor. Law enforcement officers acted militarily as well, obeying shoot to kill order against looters. The stories of horrific violence and a community in a disarray were misrepresented because fear was heightened, and in order to minimize the risk on everyone else in surrounding communities, extreme security measure were taken against those left behind, while basic relief efforts were neglected.

Jonathan Simon (2007) writes of a notion he calls governing through crime, which essentially means that problems in society are defined through how crime is dealt with. Consistently since the 1960's (when the period of late modernity began) crime control is the most important matter. This has always been an efficient strategy for lawmakers and leaders, to tell the public they are going to get tough on crime. When it comes to natural disasters it does not seem as appropriate, given the other more pertinent problems such as amenities for survival, but that is what has been happening. The response to Hurricane Katrina exemplifies how crime was used as a first response by the government. Almost immediately, residents were on lockdown in the Superdome, troops were called in, and within a day reports of looting and heinous crimes were spreading through the news circuit. The federal government is breeding a society of "eager consumers of public and private

governmental tools against crime risk" (Simon, 2007). Communities will welcome military troops, law enforcement officers, National Guard, and private military companies into their neighborhoods after a natural disaster because it means they are protected.

Naturally, what happened after Hurricane Katrina did not come about unexpectedly or suddenly. The military has always been a part of disaster response, simply taking it a few steps further to become the predominant force in attempts to quell criminal activity. The time is also right for the public to be accepting of this. Our heightened fears about uncertainty and risk have led us to take drastic measures in the name of security and safety. We will allow the military into our backyards with assault rifles if it means we no longer feel we have to worry about hazards or unforeseen dangers. The irony of this when it comes to natural disasters is that they are almost always unforeseen dangers. A hurricane can change its path at any moment; a tornado drops out of the sky with little warning; and wildfires spread with the wind. Entrusting armed troops and mercenaries with our safety seems more haphazard than risk aversive.

CHAPTER 6

LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH AND CONCLUSION

This research began as an exploratory study of militarizing all disasters. However, natural and man-made disasters combined make up a large body of literature, one that could never have been examined with care given the time frame, which is why natural disasters became the focal point. One limitation is not being able to include other man-made disasters such as oil spills, as these kinds of disasters also illustrate the points made in this research.

Also limiting to this research is the fact that one example was used- Hurricane Katrina. This decision was made because this natural disaster embodied all of the marked changes that had taken place within disaster response, and showed how drastic militarization of disasters could take place. It is certainly not the lone natural disaster to involve the military, but it is one of the most memorable of recent history. Further research could certainly focus on other types of natural disasters, such as wildfires or tornado outbreaks.

Militarization of natural disaster response in the United State is a very real phenomenon, and one those involved in the study of criminal justice should pay attention to, as the primary reason the military has been involved is for policing and security. The perception of crime by the public and media, and the reliance on the federal government and military to safeguard society in these areas struck by natural disasters is of consequence. Hurricane Katrina was a catastrophic disaster not only because of the Category 5 storm that broke levees and killed thousands, but because the response was uncoordinated and unfocused on what should have mattered-saving human lives. The federal government and state and local officials have long ago admitted recovery operations were halted to deal with responses to crime. The focus on security and criminal behavior in a time of emergency is unnatural, happening only because late modern society has expectations and will not tolerate even the supposed threat to safety. Disaster response in the United States will remain forever changed by what happened in New Orleans, and the role of the military shows no signs of stopping expansion into the realm of disaster relief.

REFERENCES

Alvarez, S. (2005). Alabama Guard Provides Critical Disaster Response. Retrieved

from http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=17410

Anderson, W. A. (1970). Military Organizations in Natural Disasters: Established and

Emergent Norms. *American Behavioral Scientist, 13*: 415-422.

Brinkley, D. (2006). *The Great Deluge: Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans, and the*

Mississippi Gulf Coast. New York: HarperCollins.

Burby, R. J. (2006). Hurricane Katrina and the Paradoxes of Government Disaster

Policy: Bringing about wise governmental decisions for hazardous areas. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 604*, 171-191.

Cooper, C. and Block, R. (2006). *Disaster: Hurricane Katrina and the Failure of*

Homeland Security. New York: Times Books.

Elliott, J.R. and Pais, J. (2006). Race, Class, and Hurricane Katrina: Social Differences

in Human Responses to Disaster. *Social Science Research 35 (2)*: 295-321.

Federal Research Divison, Library of Congress. (2007). *Military Support to Civil*

Authorities: The Roles of the Department of Defense in Support of Homeland Defense. Washington, DC: Alice R. Buchalter.

Fischer, H.W., Gregoire, K., Scala, J., Letukas, L., Mellon, J., Romine, S., and Turner, D.

 (2006). The Emergency Management Response to Hurricane Katrina: As told by the First
 Responders- A Case Study of What Went Wrong & Recommendations for the Future.
 Quick Response Research Report 189. Center for Disaster Research and Education.
 Retrieved from http://www.colorado.edu/hazards/research/qr/qr189/qr189.htm.

Gill, D. A. (2007). Disaster Research and Hurricane Katrina. *Sociological Spectrum 27*

 (6)), 609-612.

Goodman, A. (Interviewer) and Scahill, J. (Interviewee). (2005). The Militarization of

 New Orleans: Jeremy Scahill reports from Louisiana (Interview Transcript). Retrieved
 from
 http://www.democracynow.com/2005/9/16/the_militarization_of_new_orleans_jerem
 y.

Hartman, C. and Squires, G.D. (eds.) (2006). *There is No Such Thing As a Natural*

 Disaster: Race, Class, and Hurricane Katrina. New York: Routledge.

Hoffman, C. and Hudson, L. (2009). Military responses to natural disasters: Last

 resort or inevitable trend? Humanitarian Exchange Magazine. Retrieved from
 http://www.odihpn.org/report.asp?id=3030.

Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection, Department of Homeland

 Security (2004). *How Terrorists Might Exploit a Hurricane.* IAIP Analytic Red Cell
 Program.

Johnson, C. (2004) *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, secrecy, and the end of the*

 republic. New York: Metropolitan Books.

Joyner, J. (2005). Katrina: Governor Orders Troops to Shoot and Kill Looters.

Retrieved from http://www.outsidethebeltway.com/la_governor_warns_troops_will_/

Juul, P. (2010). Institutionalizing U.S. Military Disaster Relief. Retrieved from

http://wonkroom.thinkprogress.org/2010/01/15/disaster_relief/.

Kraska, P.B. (2001). *Militarizing the American Criminal Justice System: The changing*

roles of the armed forces and the police. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Kraska, P.B. (2004) *Theorizing Criminal Justice: Eight essential orientations*. Long

Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc.

Lendman, S. (2008). A picture of things to come: Katrina Redux- The Militarization

of New Orleans. Retrieved from http://www.sott.net/articles/show/165505-A-picture-of-things-to-come-Katrina-Redux-The-Militarization-of-New-Orleans.

Lendman, S. (2009). Updating the Militarization and Annexation of North America.

Global Research. Retrieved from http://www.globalresearch.ca//articleid=12696.

Mannion, J. (2006). Military To Plan For Larger Role in Disaster Relief. Retrieved

from
http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Military_To_Plan_For_Larger_Role_in_Disaster_Relief.

Marek, A. C. (2005). National Security Watch: The militarization of disaster

response. Retrieved from
http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/050921/21natsec_print.htm

Niman, M.I. (2005). Katrina's America: Failure, Racism, and Profiteering. Retrieved

from www.thehumanist.org/humanist/articles/Niman.Katrina.pdf

Shankman, S., Jennings, T., McCarthy, B., and Maggi, L. (2010). After Katrina, New

Orleans Cops Were Told They Could Shoot Looters. Retrieved from
http://www.propublica.org/nola/story/nopd-order-to-shoot-looters-hurricane-katrina.

Simon, J. (2007) *Governing Through Crime*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Steinberg, T. (2006) *Acts of God: The unnatural history of natural disaster in America*.

New York: Oxford University Press.

Thomas, S. A. (2007). Lies, Damn Lies, and Rumors: An Analysis of Collective

Efficacy, Rumors, and Fear in the Wake of Katrina. *Sociological Spectrum, 27*: 679-703.

Tierney, K., Bevc, C. and Kuligowski, E. (2006). Metaphors Matter: Disaster Myths,

Media Frames, and Their Consequences in Hurricane Katrina. *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science, 604*, 57-81.

Townsend, F.F. (2006). The Federal Response To Hurricane Katrina: Lessons

Learned, White House Report. Washington, DC.

Trebilcock, C. T. (2000). The Myth of Posse Comitatus. Retrieved from

http://www.homelandsecurity.org/journal/articles/trebilcock.htm

Whitney, M. (2005). The Siege of New Orleans. Retrieved from

http://informationclearinghouse.info/article10182.htm

Williams, S. (2008). Rethinking the Nature of Disaster: From Failed Instruments of

Learning to a Post-Social Understanding. *Social Forces, 87(2*), 1115-1138.