

Victimization: Homeless in the Heartland

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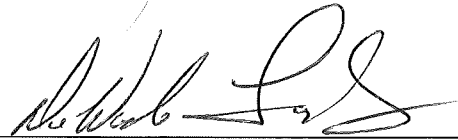
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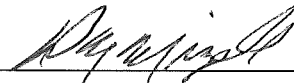
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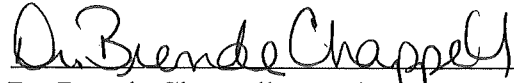
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Abstract

This study examines victimization of 21 homeless individuals and noted viewpoints on crimes relating to the homeless from caretakers in Oklahoma City proper. The crimes reported to the police are listed and examined to assess or understand how the environment is related to their victimization. Through the use of qualitative methods and grounded theory, the homeless and their caretakers provided a wealth of information into an often hidden world of the homeless.

This sample of 21 homeless individuals had an average of five victimizations during their period of homelessness. Although they experienced numerous crimes, few were reported to the police. Various theoretical concepts, crime maps, and interview data were used to determine a grounded explanation of crimes against this sample of the homeless. This study found the proximity of three homeless shelters may contribute to robberies, and petty thefts among this sample of 21 homeless.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all of the people who sat down with me and spoke about very personal matters. I appreciated the assistance from Sister Barbara Joseph, Brother Scott Allen, Keith Starkey, James Grace, Barbara Lewis, Jan Mercer, and all of my brothers and sisters at the Sister Barbara Joseph's Pantry for their assistance and guidance in understanding the homeless. I became aware that most volunteers and donators ignored the homeless after Christmas, leaving them to seek help elsewhere. While the rest of society sleeps, the Oklahoma City Police Department utilizes some of its top officers to protect the needy at the Jesus House.

The School of Criminal Justice at the University of Central Oklahoma should be thankful for the dedicated teachers whose humility knows no bounds. Many universities do not have a Dr. Shukla who would be willing to listen to an idea of crime research at 6:30 a.m. from an eccentric student. If they are not there, then education crumbles. I thank you Drs. Elaine Bartgis, Rashi Shukla, Brenda Chappell, and Donald Mizell for all of the assistance. Importantly, the thesis editors helped me to no end. Joan Conley and Dr. De Bolt's assistance in my paper is graciously appreciated. In addition, I thank my wife, Erin for being my rock. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. DeWade A. Langley who spent numerous hours providing guidance, wisdom, patience, and hope which motivated me to finish this thesis.

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Introduction

This is an exploratory of crime and homelessness in a major southwest metropolitan city. Research has shown that the homeless are victimized at higher rates than the general population (Abrams, Davis, Hawkins, & Padgett, 2006; Dutton, Goodman, & Harris, 1995; Bangsberg, Clark, Kushel, Moss, & Perry, 2002) and the majority of those crimes go unreported to the police (Kohm, 2006). Each segment of the homeless varies in its cultures, addictions, social values, and ages (Anderson & Snow, 1993), making it difficult to apply other victimization studies to the homeless of Oklahoma City.

The area of study contained a homeless population of 1,463 homeless persons in Oklahoma City proper (Homeless Alliance, 2009). According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Oklahoma City has a population of 579,999. Therefore, approximately three in every 1000 people are considered homeless in Oklahoma City. However, the actual number of homeless persons is unknown (Devine, Rubin, & Wright, 1998; Personal Communication with Director Nancy, March 12, 2010).

Attempts have been made to collect data on homeless victimization. One source is through the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), which compiles crime information reported to law enforcement agencies in the United States (Karmen, 1984). Police departments record incidents and report this information to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. While this system maybe a good measure of reported crimes, it fails to reflect crimes that go underreported (Karmen, 1984). Recognizing this issue as problematic, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice agencies ordered the creation of the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) to capture the victim's perspective. The NCVS measures America's level of victimization by surveying households through the mail (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011). The

NCVS provides information on hidden crimes (Babbie, 2005) and acts as a supplement to the Uniform Crime Report (Karmen, 1984).

Another option is to use the more recently developed National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Similar to the UCR, NIBRS provides information on reported crimes (Karmen, 1984; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000). Unlike the UCR which only counts felonies, NIBRS data includes certain misdemeanors as well (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000). NIBRS provides descriptions of the victim, such as race, age, sex, and residential status (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000). A victim's residence can be classified in to three categories: resident, nonresident, and unknown (Department of Justice, 2000)¹. The *NIBRS Manual* defines "resident" as "a person who maintains his/her home for legal purposes in the locality (town, city, or community) where the crime took place" (Department of Justice, 2000, p.93). There is no definition for "nonresident" and "unknown" in the *NIBRS Manual*.

Crime data regarding the homeless were not readily available at the local level. Municipal police departments typically do not record a homeless victim's residential status. In addition, the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation's (OSBI) statistics do not indicate the residential status of the victim. In fact, few agencies document whether or not victims are homeless at the time of their victimization. A comparison between the U.S. Census (2010) and data from the Homeless Alliance (2009) reflected that .003 of the Oklahoma City population was homeless. Therefore, any reliable data on victimization of the homeless may not be available at this time.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between homelessness and victimization. The scant data on homeless victimization suggests that current crime reporting

¹ There is no readily available edition more recent than the 2000 version of the *NIBRS Manual*.

methods like NIBRS may have been underreporting this group. The term, “unknown” in the *NIBRS Manual* could include groups who failed to provide an address, but the manual does not provide this designation. Gaps in reporting crime among the homeless reinforce the need for more accurate information on crime and homelessness.

Interviews were conducted with both homeless victims and caretakers who provide their own unique perspective to this study. The interviews of homeless subjects provided first-hand accounts of victimization experiences, explanations, and descriptions of the events. The caretakers provided a third-party viewpoint on victimization. This dual viewpoint perspective provides victim accounts and caretakers who work with the homeless.

The information gathered from the interviews were systematically placed into categories and compared to each other. Locations of robberies, aggravated assaults, and assaults with a deadly weapon were plotted on maps to determine any relationship between victimization experiences and homeless gathering spaces. Okccrime.com provided maps that displayed crimes reported in the areas around Oklahoma City’s homeless shelters. These two forms of data helped to visually explain victimization among this sample of homeless.

Significance

The study originally focused on the relationship between homelessness and victimization in a specific geographic area. As the study evolved the focus expanded to include the relationship between specific locations and victimization. In the end the relationship between the proximity of The Jesus House, The Grace Rescue Mission and Sister Mary Joseph’s Pantry were compared with the hotspots identified by the homeless themselves. Each of these relationships will be discussed in greater detail, however, it is the nature of this study that makes it unique and provides for the application of Grounded Theory. Since few studies have suggested the spatial

placement of the homeless and how the relationship contributes to an increased level of crime, the findings that emerge from this study may have significant policy implications for the municipality.

Overview

This study is divided into six sections. The literature review section outlines and explains the current information on the homeless and their experiences putting the need for this research into context. The next section presents the methodology portion of this study, followed by the homeless subjects' backgrounds before and during the time of homelessness. The third section describes their victimization experiences and examines their reasons for not reporting crimes against them to the police, followed by a grounded explanation for robberies, aggravated assaults, assaults with a dangerous weapon and places of avoidance according to this sample of homeless. The conclusion describes the findings of this study and makes recommendations for future research on homeless victimization.

Review of Literature

Introduction

There have been numerous studies concerning the plight of the homeless in general, and a respectable body of academic work exists on victimization of the homeless. The majority of the work on victimization focuses on segments of the homeless population such as women, the mentally ill, or the elderly. Few studies, if any, focus on the environmental aspects of crime as it relates to the homeless. This study was designed to help fill that void.

Therefore, the review of the literature for this study has two segments. The first deals with homeless victimization in general. The second segment deals with environmental theories

that are usually applied to the general population, but may help frame the homeless victimization issue.

Homelessness Victimization

In his novel *Down and Out in Paris and London*, George Orwell (1961) briefly mentioned the plight of homeless women and extensively noted the societal ignorance of male homelessness because there are more homeless men than women (U.S. Department of Urban Development, 2008). In fact, in *The 2008 Homeless Assessment Report to Congress*, the U.S. Department of Urban Development (2008) found approximately 1.6 million experienced some form of homelessness. Out of the 1.6 million, 64% were male.

In the general population, males experienced more violent and property crimes than females (U.S. Department of Justice, 2007). The same pattern held true for the homeless male population. In one of the few studies that examined the victimization of homeless men (Bradford, Ford, Howard, & Kim, 2010) found those men experienced more victimization than the general male population, and more sexual assaults than the general, female population (Evans et al., 2003).

With regard to reporting crime, men are less likely to report their victimizations than females (U.S. Department of Justice, 2003). Bradford et al. (2010) noted that homeless men underreport sexual victimizations, but found that respondents disclosed these crimes more often than the general male population. In a study of homeless teenagers Finkelstein (2005) utilized personal interviews to extract information concerning victimization experiences. She gained admissions of sexual victimizations from her male respondents, including prostitution, sexual assault, and rape in the New York City area. However, the study was unable to determine a reason for the lack of reporting these crimes by the male population.

Since the 1980s, the number of homeless women has been on the rise (Devine et al., 1998). Dear and Wolch (1993) explained the increase stemmed from the failure to adjust welfare compensation for rising inflation, lack of marital partners, poor career choices, and the absence of equal wages. Compounding the issue, many of these women also bore children. With less pay, no support from a partner, and additional parental responsibilities, more and more women have found homelessness an unpleasant reality.

Women in the general population report a wider range of victimizations than men, in particular sexual crimes (U.S. Department of Justice, 2003). Similarly, homeless women reported multiple sexual assaults (Galaif et al., 1999) and rapes (Finkelstein, 2005). Galaif et al. (1999) examined a sample of homeless women and their intimate partners (this study did not specify the residential status of their intimate partners). They found women experienced a significant number of sexual crimes in their adulthood. Nevertheless, they did not specify whether the victimizations happened during their course of homelessness. This distinction is significant because homelessness may not be a factor in their victimization experience.

Most of the research on homeless women took a psychological approach. Unlike homeless men, women transients appeared to lose their social identity before homelessness (D'Ercole & Struening, 1990). Many of these women are single mothers, (D'Ercole & Struening, 1990) with psychological problems who were reportedly abused as children. All of these details factor into their victimization (Apel & Dugan, 2003).

Mental Illness

In the 1960's, laws forced mentally ill patients to leave institutions contributing to a larger number of mentally ill in the homeless population (Devine et al., 1998). The 1980's brought another wave of public abhorrence for the mentally ill and closed hospitals that

specialized in this area of treatment. Those facilities provided care and perhaps as importantly shelter. Without these institutions, the mentally ill were left to fend for themselves. As the number of mentally ill on the streets increased so did their susceptibility to crime.

Mentally ill homeless suffer higher rates of victimization than any other homeless group. (Markowitz, 2006; Anthony et al. 1986; Dietz & Wright, 2005; Padgett & Struening, 1992; Davidson, Fisk, Rowe, & Sells, 2003). Dutton et al. (1995) sampled 99 females with mental illnesses and found only three percent did not suffer criminal victimization. Davidson et al. (2003) wanted to know if people who suffer from both mental illness and substance abuse disorders were more likely to be victimized than a person with just a mental illness or a substance abuse problem. They found those with both mental illness and substance abuse problems suffered more criminal victimizations than those with a single issue of drug abuse or mental illness.

While many of these studies never explain why the mentally ill are vulnerable, one possible explanation could center on finances. Many of the mentally ill receive monetary assistance from the government for their disability. With extra money and the inability to safely manage those funds in an area where most do not have money, the mentally ill are highly vulnerable to crime. In the past, institutions provided assistance in managing their money, but since deinstitutionization, the mentally ill were left to manage for themselves on the streets.

Substance Abuse

According to Homeless Alliance (2009), 33% of Oklahoma City's homeless suffer from substance abuse addiction. In a Burchfield and R. Felson (2004) study on alcohol and victimization, researchers found that people who drink heavily are more at risk for physical assaults. The increased risk is due to the amount of alcohol consumed and the environment in

which the drinking takes place. People who drink heavily are often in areas with motivated offenders making them highly vulnerable to crime (Padgett & Struening, 1992). In fact, Crawford, Hayt, and Whitbeck (2009) noted that most of their violent situations arose out of high-risk survival strategies, such as prostitution or stealing, association with antisocial peers, and substance abuse. Baggerly and Zalaquett (2006) found that homeless shelters reduced drug use among the homeless by providing the opportunity for drug rehabilitation. Importantly, they also noted high levels of victimization among those drinking in public areas suggesting environmental factors were involved.

Age

In the past, older men were the predominately homeless category (Rosenthal, 1994). Today, women and youth compose the newest segment of homelessness in American society (Apel & Dugan, 2003). Finkelstein (2005) interviewed several youth in the New York City area. Many of her subjects were brutally robbed, assaulted, and raped. Both young men and women were sexually assaulted by male acquaintances or strangers. Those interviewed had an average age of approximately 30 (Dietz & Wright, 2005; Wacholz, 2005; D'Ercole & Struening, 1990). The reasons for their victimizations included; revenge, turf wars, expression of emotion, and alcoholism. Since youth were only a fraction of the homeless population sample, Finkelstein's findings were unable to be generalized to the larger homeless population.

Looking at the other end of the spectrum, Dietz and Wright (2005) attempted to find victimization information on the elderly. They hypothesized that older homeless people would be easier targets because they are less able to defend themselves. However, they found the opposite: younger people were more likely to be victimized. Dietz and Wright (2005) theorized that older

individuals understood the streets better and knew how to avoid potential problems. However, the study provided no scientific evidence to support that assumption.

The findings on age and homeless victimization are still inconsistent and do not reflect a universally accepted explanation for the cause of victimization. In Oklahoma City, most of the homeless population is over 30 making it extremely difficult to apply youth studies to this homeless population (Homeless Alliance.org, 2009), but those studies do shed light on an understudied group and may point out the need for additional study.

Under Reporting

Another aspect of victimization deals with the underreporting of crime by the homeless. Willingness to report crimes could help to provide necessary assistance for this group. Kohm (2006) interviewed 25 respondents relating to topics, such as; fear of crime, check disbursement, and reporting crime to the police as it related to homeless victimization and welfare check disbursements in Winnipeg, Canada. Many subjects characterized their victimizations in Kohm's study as a simple result of daily living on the streets. According to Kohm (2006), the enormous amount of violence in the area contributed to the apathy. The study concluded that when a person experiences violence on a routine basis there is a tendency to become desensitized; at some point fighting, robbing and raping simply become a part of homeless life unworthy of reporting.

Another reason for not reporting was the relationship of the victim to the offender. Dutton et al. (1995) found homeless females were more likely to be victimized by a significant other (80%). Dutton et al. (1995) showed 57% of women sampled were "sexually assaulted by a stranger, 40% by a relative or acquaintance, and 40% by an intimate partner" (p. 473). However, Dutton et al. (1995) never drew a connection between the closeness of the relationship and the likelihood of reporting.

Despite the amount of crime, Kohm (2006) noted that his sample participants were hesitant to report their victimization to the police but provided no explanation. However, numerous studies including Rosenthal (1994), Dear & Wolch (1993), and Wacholz (2005) found negative attitudes between the homeless and the police. Many of the homeless live outside, putting them into more direct contact with both the public and the police. Since homeless persons have few places to rest, they frequently come in contact with officers enforcing anti-loitering and similar ordinances (Wacholz, 2005). The homeless are in the public eye which also subjects them to random stops by the police to check identification (Wacholz, 2005). Municipalities passed ordinances, prohibiting loitering or sleeping on benches which required police enforcement (Kohm, 2006; Wacholz, 2005). Therefore, many encounters were negative which led to a reluctance on the part of the homeless to report crimes.

Environmental Theories

Agnew's Strain Theory

Domestic violence, high levels of substance abuse, the eviction of mentally ill from highly controlled mental institutions, all seem to contribute to Agnew's (1992) general strain theory (GST). Agnew (1992) theorized people react to stressors in different ways with one of those ways being crime. Agnew categorized strain into three areas: 1) failure to attain goals, 2) suffering of a loss or removal of a person, object, thing which gave the person pleasure or, 3) exposure to negative stimuli.

In 2001, Agnew attempted to specify certain strains that were more conducive for crime coping and noted four situations or strains most likely to cause the person to commit a crime. First, inequity or unjust strains are stressors causing people to feel unjustly wronged in some way. Second, there are stressors that are increasingly ongoing. Agnew (2001) believed that this

strain was high in magnitude for homeless people “because it represents a considerable challenge to a broad range of goals, needs, values, activities, and identities” (p.345). Third, there are stressors related to low forms of social control such as; parental rejection, secondary labor markets, and unemployment. The final situation deals with people who feel pressure or are enticed to commit criminal acts (Agnew, 2001).

In 2006, Agnew explained why certain strains increase the likelihood of crime and examined people who are more likely to cope through crime. Agnew (2006) noted that those exposed to negative emotions, low constraint abilities, low levels of social control, and the increased likelihood of learning crime from peers were more likely to cope through crime. Those individuals who fail to develop an understanding of how to use legal means of coping with problems, and are unconscious of the consequences of crime, are more likely use crime as a coping mechanism.

The GST literature on homelessness reveals a focus on delinquency rather than crime committed by adults; however, it does contribute to the explanation of why high levels of crime coping is found in the homeless world. Baron (2006) examined street youths in a Canadian City and found direct relationships between deviant attitudes and crime. In addition, a question related to a person’s position in life at the present moment found to be a predictor of crime (Baron, 2006). However, the sample was limited to youth, and results may differ in the adult population.

The literature suggests that the homeless live in areas that promote crime and are, in a sense, disaffiliated from society (Anderson & Snow, 1993; Rosenthal, 1994; Dear & Wolch, 1993). According to Agnew’s theory, there is also a high level of strain that exists in homeless environments. This strain leads to negative emotions and the preference to resolve problems

through crime. For instance, one problem that the homeless face is the lack of necessities. Studies on theft during homelessness suggest the action as a survival mechanism (Anderson & Snow, 1993; Rosenthal, 1994; Finkelstein, 2005). For example, Anderson and Snow report a homeless group discussing how they took a person's belongings while the victim slept on the street. They also noted that any unattended or valuable item would be taken and sold to pawnshops (Anderson & Snow, 1993). In fact, 60% of Finkelstein's (2005) respondents admitted to theft during their periods of homelessness. Crawford, Hayt, and Whitbeck (2009) also found that most violent situations facing the homeless arise out of high-risk survival or coping strategies, such as prostitution, stealing, antisocial peers, and substance abuse. Under Agnew's (2006) strain theory, these survival strategies fall under vicarious strain.

One common strain is family abuse. Studies have shown that homeless people experience a high level of family abuse before becoming homeless (Finkelstein, 2005; Anderson & Snow, 1993; Rosenthal, 1994; Dear & Wolch, 1993), especially homeless women (Dutton et al., 1995) and children (Finkelstein, 2005). According to Finkelstein (2005), prior family violence was linked to high occurrences of violence in adulthood among a sample of homeless youth (Finkelstein, 2005).

An example of anticipated strain is the expectation of future violence (Agnew, 2006). The most typical reaction to this form of strain is weapon possession. The person carries such items because he or she foresees future violence according to Finkelstein (2005). It would be obvious that in dangerous situations, one would use such weapons and thereby increase the likelihood of having to seek emergency medical services. D'Ercole and Struening (1990) found that emergency room treatments are reliable indicators of homeless victimization; they also inadvertently found connections between the higher weapon possession among the homeless and

a high frequency of injuries by weapons. Finkelstein's (2005) findings also reinforce the high use of weapons, such as chain wallets, which are image statements of tough teens and a manifestation of anticipated strain.

In addition to weapons, the creation of street families indicates the fear of future violence among the population. Although this familial bond protects the homeless from crime, it also allows them to victimize others by committing crimes to further their own survival (Finkelstein, 2005; Anderson & Snow, 1993).

Another premise behind Agnew's strain theory is that a high level of direct control lowers crime. Direct control can be legal sanctions, emotional bonds, the individual's investments in conventional institutions, and/or the individual's personal beliefs about crime. These forms of control support and sustain normalcy in life. However, this normality is rare in the homeless population. Shelters are used to help people get back on their feet and proceed with life, but do not provide the emotional bonds normally formed within a family. Without these societal bonds, one does not have the tools to succeed in everyday life.

Battle for Space

The environment can influence how homeless people become crime victims. Studies that examined the homeless environment found that society forces the homeless into certain areas. The locations of the homeless in most municipalities are not a matter of choice (Wacholz, 2005) and are often contested by society (Mulcahy & Snow, 2001; Anderson & Snow, 1993; Rosenthal, 1994).

A few notable studies discovered links in which removal techniques forced homeless people to seek shelter in different areas. "Not in My Back Yard" groups (NIMBY), ordinance codes, removal of park benches, and public toilets discouraged outside living arrangements

(Mulcahy & Snow, 2001; Rosenthal, 1994; Dear & Wolch, 1993). Anderson and Snow (1993) interviewed the homeless who disclosed information relating to these movements.

By analyzing local newspapers, Mulcahy and Snow (2001) discovered strong connections between politicians and the removal of Tucson, Arizona's homeless population. These not so subtle techniques can be found in other areas of the U.S. such as Austin (Anderson & Snow, 1993), Santa Barbara (Rosenthal, 1994), and New England (Wacholz, 2005). These techniques relocate people into marginal spaces of the city that have minimal intrinsic value (Anderson & Snow, 1993; Dear & Wolch, 1993; Kohm, 2006; Mulcahy & Snow, 2001). The homeless remain there until the value of the land increases which may lead to a new cycle of displacement.

Anderson and Snow (1993) observed ways in which local politicians and store owners found new worth in economically depressed areas of the city and proceeded to break up marginal concentrations in Austin, Texas. The political actions increased walking distances by pushing the homeless area further away from welfare operations, free clinics, hospitals, and day labor agencies (Anderson & Snow, 1993). This movement away from essential services affects homeless people's movement or their routines in and out of spaces (Wolch & Dear, 1993), which reduces time to establish bonds in a given area (Anderson & Snow, 1993). Thus, it contributes to a highly unstable living environment.

Social Disorganization Theory

The marginal areas described by Anderson and Snow (1993) mirror the *social disorganization theory* in which spaces have a direct effect on crime (Shaw & McKay, 1942). According to Shaw and McKay (1942), three things contribute to crime: 1. low socioeconomic status of the population 2. unstable residency and 3. different cultures and values. The first two are tied directly to this study of homeless victimization.

Low socioeconomic status might have explained high levels of crime, but some studies suggest otherwise (Mares, Martinez, & Rosenfield, 2008; Silver, 2000). For example, Mares et al. (2008) found a negative correlation between low socioeconomic status, drug activity, and violent crime. Since the homeless survive by participating in day labor (Anderson & Snow, 1993), illegal activities, and by receiving minimal government assistance (Wolch & Dear, 1993), lower socioeconomic status may be a better measure by which to study homelessness. The lack of governmental assistance means less treatment for addictions or mental illnesses, and since there is no money for housing, the homeless are forced to live in marginal spaces. Finally, public transportation may be too far from their living areas, reducing the chances of obtaining and maintaining gainful employment. Essentially, the homeless are trapped in an unwanted space (Anderson & Snow, 1993; Mulchaly & Snow, 2001; Rosenthal, 1994; Wolch & Dear, 1993), without the mobility to improve their situation in life.

Residential mobility is a fundamental element of homeless life and increases the chance for crime. Convington, Mustaine, & Tewkybury (2010) found that the high frequency of residential mobility contributed more to the high level of crime among juveniles than low socioeconomic status. A good indicator of residential mobility is the high level of housing vacancies and rental houses (Mares et al., 2008). The study used housing vacancies and rent houses as a measure of residential instability. Mares et al. (2008) used two defining criteria, residential mobility and socioeconomic status to establish a relationship with crime. Residential mobility could include places, such as camps, homeless shelters, or infrequent tenancy at a friend's house or motels, all of which are commonplace among homeless people (Anderson & Snow, 1993). To support residential mobility as a variable for crime, Mares et al. (2008) found

positive correlations between residential instability and the high numbers of aggravated assaults and robberies. This finding may have illuminated a key factor of homeless victimization.

Studies of the homeless and *social disorganization theory* are scarce, but they can be well-suited to explain victimization from a spatial viewpoint. Lin (as cited in Silver, 2000) suggested the lack of social networks, mobility of residents, and high unemployment (Andresen, 2006) play a role within the homeless population and are contributors to crime. Silver's (2000) study investigates the *social disorganization theory* and the homeless, but only in relation to the mentally ill.

When the marginal and prime concepts from Mulcahy and Snow's (2001) study and Shaw and McKay's (1942) *Social Disorganization Theory* are combined, the logical conclusion is that society pushes the homeless into areas that have scarce social support mechanisms. This herding into marginal areas worsens the homeless plight making them highly vulnerable to crime.

Routine Activities Theory

According to Cohen and Felson (1979), three elements must be present before a criminal act can occur: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian. These three things can converge depending on an individual's daily routines.

Many studies support *routine activities theory* to explain homeless victimization because of its focus on the victims' activities, and how their routines contribute to crime (Dietz & Wright, 2005; Gaetz, 2004; Burchfield & R. Felson, 2004). Gaetz (2004) believed it was the routines that contributed to the high amount of victimization among homeless youth and found:

Their very public lives are in general played out in spaces that bring them into contact with hostile strangers, potential offenders, other homeless, and people with serious substance abuse issues or mental health problems. (p.427)

Although Gaetz's study focused only on homeless youth, the quote may be applicable to many homeless populations in the United States.

Motivated Offender. Cohen and Felson (1972) focused on the criminal acts instead of offender motivation. However, they noted the importance of looking at group activities and how they may be suitable avenues in studying offenders. Importantly, there are two areas in the homeless world that more motivate an offender: survival and opportunity.

Crime opportunities are abundant within the homeless community. Anderson and Snow (1992) noted the idea of scavenging in which the homeless would search areas for anything of value. Items that were small and easy to carry were quickly taken and sold to local pawnshops (Anderson & Snow, 1992). Homeless areas tend to be geographically small and predominately populated by the homeless. Thus motivated offenders can know routines, be aware of governmental welfare disbursements, and know where people like to drink and use drugs.

Suitable Target. Cohen and Felson (1972) also noted the element of a suitable target. This element can be delineated into two areas; items and people. With no place to secure clothing, food, and other bare necessities, the homeless are easy targets for offenders. With regard to people, Dietz and Wright (2006) examined homeless victimization and Routine Activities Theory as it related to age. They found that younger homeless people suffered more victimizations than older homeless. According to routine activities theory, older individuals have a limited routine, thereby decreasing their chances of crime. In a similar vein, older homeless may stay in the shelter longer than others, which has shown to offset victimization (Baggerly &

Zalaquett, 2006; Dutton et al., 1995; Gelberg, Leake, & Nyamathi, 2001). With two elements in place, the only remaining segment needed for crime to occur is the lack of a suitable guardian.

Guardianship. The guardianship element is related to stakeholders in the community; police, friends, and neighbors (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Felson, 2006) are alert to the possibility of crime. Studies suggest community stakeholders consider homeless people as the opposition to an ideal living environment (Rosenthal, 1994; Anderson & Snow, 1993; Mulcahly & Snow, 2001; Dear & Wolch, 1993). For example, issue-based groups like, Not In My Backyard (NIMB), protest unwanted entities, one of which is homeless people (Rosenthal, 1994). In addition, the homeless are in a constant state of mobility which reduces any chances of establishing friendships. In fact, a year after conducting their study of street people, Anderson and Snow revisited research sites and found different inhabitants.

Friendships are purely situational in the homeless world (Anderson & Snow, 1993). Unlike familial friendships, homeless friendships rarely evolve to a high level of mutual trust (Anderson & Snow, 1993; Finkelstien, 2005). However, several studies have found that street families protect women and youths (Finkelstien, 2005; Anderson & Snow, 1993; Rosenthal, 1994). These street family memberships are reactive as opposed to proactive measures. Since these friendships are situational, the relationships are not suitable as proactive deterrents against crime. In fact, they were found to be detrimental to women (Dutton et al., 1995).

Studies relating to relationships between the homeless and police present the latter in an unfavorable light. Police officers enforcing curfews, statutes against sleeping on park benches, public urination, and public intoxication, become the “face” of those who desire the removal of the homeless. (Wacholz, 2005; Anderson & Snow, 1993; Rosenthal, 1994). Officers enforcing these laws are often accused of showing little regard for the rights of the homeless. In contrast,

police officers believe that they are simply doing their duties and are treating people as equals (Rosenthal, 1994). Since the homeless are living on the streets, police officers have more contact with them than with average citizens (Wacholz, 2005; Anderson & Snow, 1993; Rosenthal, 1994; Dear & Wolch, 1993).

Wacholz (2005) and Rosenthal (1994) studies discussed how police officers play a role in the homeless world, but other studies such as those cited above imply that officers are supervising the prime or valuable lands. Further, since the homeless consider police officers as enemies, and they may not contact them during times of need. However, despite these negative relationships, it is the presence of the police that provide protection for the homeless.

Shelters offset victimization of homeless people (Baggerly & Zalaquett, 2006; Dutton et al., 1995; Gelberg, Leake, & Nyamathi, 2001). In a comparison study between sheltered and unsheltered women, Gelberg et al., (2001) found unsheltered women experienced more physical and sexual victimizations than those sheltered (Dutton et al.,1995). Dutton et al. (1995) found that women on “the street” were physically attacked at a rate of 62% and sexually assaulted at a rate of 57%; in contrast to sheltered women, who were physically attacked at a rate of 31% and sexually assaulted at a rate of 13%. However, Dutton et al. (1995) did not note victimization locations which may contribute to a determination of shelter safety. Furthermore, these findings reinforce the support for homeless shelters, but do not explain how they protect the homeless.

Summary

In summary, the literature is plentiful on the plight of the homeless, but there are significant gaps related to how the environment contributes to their victimization. The general information on homelessness contained in the first portion of this review helps to frame the problem of victimization by providing background information on the general plight of the

homeless. The second portion of this review summarizes some of the key environmental theories that provide the researcher with a lens through which to view the data obtained during the research. Both segments are needed to provide a balanced understanding of the issue under study.

Methods

A two-sided qualitative study was used to explore homeless victimization. Each sample group was asked a unique set of questions. Homeless subjects and caretakers provided a dual perspective on the issue of victimization. The homeless interview instrument (see appendix A) was exploratory, providing unique details into homeless victimization. The shelter workers' interview instrument (see appendix B) was semi-structured, designed to supplement the homeless respondents' data. All of the subjects were assigned pseudonyms to hide their identity. The homeless were given only a first name and the caretakers were assigned a distinct title, such as a director, counselor, or brother to distinguish from the two samples. The data received from their responses provided an overall picture of homeless victimization.

Qualitative Methods

Qualitative research entails the painstaking process of gathering and analyzing data in an attempt to explain a phenomenon. An example of qualitative research would be a newscaster interviewing a guest on a topic for the morning news broadcast. Unlike a news interview, everything that was said would be recorded. Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggested that every single word, pause, and mannerism be noted because they are forms of data too.

Qualitative methodology is best suited for studying homeless victimization because the method calls for interaction that is often needed to get at personal information. Through interaction, qualitative discourse adapts to the ebb and flow of a natural conversation. In

addition, it allows exploration and understanding of the idiosyncrasies about homeless victimization through the words and actions of each subject (Berg, 2001; Corbin & Strauss, 1998, 2008).

Another value of qualitative research is the ability to delve deeper into an issue that arises in interview sessions. For example, when asked whether there were attempts or acts of sexual assault, one male respondent disclosed several solicitations. Since the respondents continuously mentioned this crime, follow up questions related to sex crimes were posed.

Qualitative research limitations. There were a few limitations recognized while doing qualitative research with this these samples, including anonymity and confidentiality concerns. It was apparent that the subjects were being interviewed by the interviewer. The study was conducted in a highly controlled environment. Interviews occurred in an office, or in an area where workers were visible, but not within an audible range. In addition, since there are 21 homeless subjects and seven caretakers, it would be difficult to apply this approach to other cities because of the small sample size. Despite these impediments, qualitative methods provide a grounded basis for a topic that is rarely researched.

Initial Research Questions

The following set of research questions were first used to obtain information on homeless victimization.

Were there any differences or similarities in the types of victimization between age groups?

Which types of thefts did the respondents experience?

Which types of physical attacks did the respondents experience?

Which types of sexual attacks did the respondents experience?

What kind of experiences did the sample have with the police while being homeless?

With each victimization occurrence, what was the relationship between the offender and the victim?

Did the respondents mention any similar locations where they were victimized? If so, were there any specific forms of victimization?

Did the subjects report any of their victimizations to the police? If so, what types of victimization were generally reported?

The initial questions for the caretakers were used to provide further information on the homeless and were only used to supplement the homeless perspective.

Do the employees at the research sites see signs of victimization in their clients? If so, could they see any certain type of victimization?

How did the caretakers handle victimization occurrences in their facility?

Did any recent business or residential districts have an adverse effect on the homeless population? If so, then to what extent?

If any victimization occurred in the facility, what was the typical issue behind it?

Did the caretakers have a different attitude towards the police than the homeless?

Why are the homeless victimized according to the caretakers?

Expanded Research Questions

1. To what extent did this sample of homeless people experience crime during homelessness?
2. What were the perceived victimization experiences with the police among this sample of homeless?
3. Out of all crimes that were mentioned during the interview, which, if any were reported to the police, and what were the themes for not reporting?

4. Were there connections between the severity of the injury and crime reporting?
5. Did the proximity of shelters in the Oklahoma City Proper contribute to this sample's victimization? If so, were there any significant connections between the proximity of the shelters and specific crimes?

These questions will be answered in later sections.

Research Sites

The interview sites had to serve or provide for the homeless in some manner. The respondents were recruited from three locations that were regularly frequented by the homeless in Oklahoma City: Grace Rescue Mission (figure 1), Jesus House (figure 2), and Sister Barbara Joseph's Pantry (figure 3). There are four heavily populated homeless shelters, Grace Rescue Mission, Jesus House, Salvation Army, and City Rescue Mission. Four homeless shelters were found on the Oklahoma Homeless Alliance Website and Sister Barbara Joseph's Pantry was found through personal contacts. The shelters provide care to many homeless in the city, and representatives from each site consented to the interview.

Figure 1 is a picture of Grace Rescue Mission which opened in 1950 and currently houses about 80 men (Starkey, K. personal communication, November 21, 2009).



Figure 1. Grace Rescue Mission.

Located in a violent, poverty stricken residential area, the Grace Rescue Mission is amid dilapidated and abandoned houses and is further away from Oklahoma City's downtown area than other shelters. Behind the shelter, "do not enter" is spray painted on the sides of houses. The shelter closes its doors at 10:00 p.m. and no one is allowed to leave. It is the only shelter in the Oklahoma City area that accepts only male residents and provides a place to sleep, shower, shave, and sober up. In addition to feeding its residents, The Grace Rescue Mission provides food and medical care to the local community (Interview with Brother Ron), making it a very important asset.

Established in 1973, the Jesus House provides assistance to only those with addictions or mental illnesses² (figure 2). Set in a predominately industrial area, the Jesus House is directly west of downtown Oklahoma City. The facility houses roughly 75 adults. At the time of the study, the Jesus House had 67 men and 18 women.

² During the day, the Jesus House feeds the local homeless and its residents. So, there are other groups of people who frequent the area.



Figure 2. Picture of the Jesus House.

The Jesus House often provides extra beds in very cold weather. Unlike the Grace Rescue Mission or Sister Barbara Joseph's Pantry, Jesus House has a police officer present 24 hours a day, each day of the week, to ensure the security of both the caretakers and its residents.

Located at Northwest Fourth and Classen which is in close proximity to the Oklahoma City business district, Sister Barbara Joseph's Pantry (figure 3) is open to all of the local homeless in the area.



Figure 3. Sister Barbara Joseph's Pantry is a place where the homeless gather and receive sack lunches.

A newer facility, the Pantry opened up in 2006. On Friday and Saturday mornings, Sister Barbara Joseph's Pantry feeds and clothes Oklahoma City's homeless. Unlike the other sites, the pantry does not have any housing facilities available for homeless people, but provides the opportunity for those who choose to live outside.

The interviews began in November, 2009 and concluded in early February, 2010. During this period, Oklahoma suffered one of the worst winters in its history. The time and weather increased the number of homeless in these shelters, which effectively increased the number of homeless in this sample.

Criteria for Inclusion and Exclusion

The criteria for inclusion and exclusion were used to protect the subjects, the researcher, and eliminate any subjects who may not be suitable for this study. The three criteria for inclusion are that the respondents had to be over the age of 18, he or she acknowledged their homelessness, and the subject acknowledged that he or she had been a victim of a crime while homeless. At times, the second criterion has to be elaborated during the interview. The definition of "homeless" is relative to one's perspective. For instance, individuals may say that they resided in a car or a friend's house. This type of information was elicited through casual conversations before the interview. For the purposes of this study, residence in a vehicle is still defined as homeless. The caretakers were the sampled group who provided a third-person account of the homeless. The criteria for inclusion for the caretakers were: over the age of 18, not a resident at the facility, and that they must have worked or volunteered more than 10 hours a week at the site.

The criteria for exclusion were the following: apparent signs of intoxication, incoherent, or any outward appearance that questioned a subject's ability to respond during an interview.

The respondents understood the consent form, the interview questions, and all fit the criteria for inclusion.

Sampling Strategies

Purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is based on a researcher's subjective judgment that there will be certain people who fit the criteria (Babbie, 2005). At the beginning of this sample, there was little evidence of a stereotypical victim of a crime during homelessness. In fact, the primary assumption was that most suffered some type of victimization during homelessness. Purposive strategy was selected for this study, because each research site varied in its operation and required different strategies. It was necessary to use this non-probability sampling strategy because the sample is relatively small. Furthermore, homeless crime victims were an even smaller group within the homeless population.

Snowball sampling. Snowball sampling occurs when one uses informants to obtain subjects (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). In time, the number of participants will increase through "word of mouth." Several informants and caretakers were used to assist in finding participants at each research site. In time, many homeless individuals knew about the research and were willing to participate in initial interviews.

A period of emersion in the environment as volunteers allowed clients at Sister Barbara Joseph's Pantry time to adjust to new faces and people asking questions. Several informants were told about the research and they in turn found a few people who were later interviewed. One informant brought an older man named Sam who had a broken arm from a mistaken identity situation involving an Oklahoma City police officer. Sam was told of the study and agreed to an interview. In addition, one caretaker at Sr. Barbara Joseph's Pantry, Mr. Pete had a friend who suffered a tremendous amount of criminal victimization and consented to an interview.

The caretakers at the Grace Rescue Mission and the Jesus House saw the importance of the research and provided the majority of respondents for this study. At the Grace Rescue Mission, the research was explained to the assistant director who in turn, identified residents who desired to participate in the study.

Convenience sampling. Under convenience sampling strategy, one obtains samples by being at the right place based on convenience (Babbie, 2005). At each research site, convenient sampling was ideal for obtaining research data from this population. At certain times of the month, Sister Barbara Joseph's clients fluctuated from 20 to 80. According to Mr. Pete, the chances of obtaining samples were easier toward the end of the month because most have spent any money received through governmental assistance before the end of the month.

Another example of convenience sampling came from several encounters with Jimmy. Jimmy was one of the first people the researcher met at Sister Barbara Joseph's Pantry. At first, Jimmy appeared to have a carefree outlook on life. But one day he came into the pantry limping; Jimmy later disclosed that someone smashed a metal bar across his leg but did not want to discuss it further. A few weeks later, with a disparaging look on his face, Jimmy mentioned a brand new jacket given to him by someone had been slashed and wanted to talk about the experience and other victimizations on the street. At the same location, Paul came to the pantry one early, cold morning and spoke about a recent theft of his personal belongings. Initially, he disclosed that he had never been a victim of a crime. During the interview, however, he mentioned numerous victimizations, such as a thief who stole items from right next to him while he slept outside.

Snowball and convenience sampling strategies successfully provided participants for this study. These strategies would be difficult to apply in many other settings because the subjects

were preselected before the interview. They had to meet the requirements for the criteria for inclusion and exclusion of the study. There was an assumption that there would be many homeless subjects who had suffered a crime during their homelessness.

Data Collection

Permission was obtained from the directors of the research sites, and visits were scheduled after a full-board approval of the University of Central Oklahoma Institutional Review Board (IRB). At each research site, the homeless respondents were briefed about the research. Occasionally, an informant or caretaker assisted in obtaining subjects for the study. The informed consent sheet (see appendix C) was read to the respondents. After their consent was obtained, the interviews were conducted in private.

The homeless unstandardized interview instrument is similar to a conversation between two individuals (appendix A), in which one can develop a conversation with the subject and bring more information to light. All data were recorded by a digital voice recorder, with the respondents having the option to refuse. The subjects could decline a question or terminate the interview at any time. Each interview lasted approximately 15 to 40 minutes.

Interviews of caretakers were scheduled according to their availability. The interviews took place in a private area at each research site. Before the interview, the researcher read the "Caretaker Inform Consent Form" (see appendix D) to the respondents. The interviews began when the respondents agreed to the terms and conditions

As with previous interviews with the homeless, the caretakers were informed that the interview would be recorded on a digital voice recorder. Caretakers were advised they could end the interview at any time. Upon completion of the interview, the information obtained was stored

and later transcribed onto the computer. After transcription, the interview was deleted. It should be noted that no monetary compensation was given to the caretakers for their time.

Potential concerns regarding the homeless and the caretakers participating in this study are as follows. With retrospective interviews the ability to recall information on the suspect or facts about the incident may be misconstrued or forgotten (Karmen, 1984). Many subjects lived on the streets for a long period of time and may have blocked the memories of any attack. Furthermore, the subjects may have felt uncomfortable discussing their victimization experiences with others. With regards to the caretakers, many questions involved their places of employment. The caretaker's response could damage the research site's reputation, resulting in job loss. In addition, the respondent could be biased, and some caretakers could feel liable because they failed to report a crime. Knowing the risk, caretakers agreed to be interviewed.

Instrumentation for the Homeless

The first set of questions were demographic in nature designed to provide a description of the sample (appendix A). The respondents were asked how long they had been homeless and the cause. If the respondents had been homeless multiple times, they were asked for the major reason contributing to their homelessness.

Primary questions relating to victimization were asked, followed by sub-questions or probes (appendix F). The first set of questions was about thefts. Each set of questions asked about thefts and attacks were used in an attempt remind respondents of any experiences. If respondents answered positively, the researcher would ask for more elaboration or details. During or after the respondents' elaborations, those interviewed were asked if they knew the offender and if the crime was reported to the police.

The third set of questions asked the respondents about places that they avoided. Specific areas likely to be avoided were noted and physical locations established. After the respondents specified a location, questions relating to the description, type, and number of people in the area, and why they avoided the location were asked.

As the interview moved into violent crimes questions, the subjects were asked to disclose deeper forms of victimization. Respondents were advised that the next question would be about sex crimes and were reminded of the confidentiality and anonymity agreement. The sex crime question was general in nature and elicited an array of responses. If respondents had been a victim of a sex crime, they were asked if the crime had been reported to authorities.

The next set of questions related to the relationship between the local police and homeless people in the Oklahoma City area. The first question asked the respondent's general opinion about the police. The second question related to specific encounters with the police while being homeless. At the end of the police questions, an open-ended question was posed providing an opportunity for the respondents to add any relevant information concerning their relationship with authorities.

A final open-ended question provided an opportunity to disclose any additional information concerning victimization. Responses received provided insight into noncriminal forms of victimization. Examples include unfair wages, the lack of victim's rights, and the perception of failure to provide adequate police presence in homeless areas.

Instrumentation for the Caretakers

The interviews with caretakers provided information relating to homeless victimization. The first set of questions related to the caretaker's background. The second set of questions consisted of shelter quality aspects with follow up probing questions. The next set of questions

was designed to discover any common traits among those victimized at the facility. If the respondent had dealt with a situation where the client had been victimized, a follow-up question was asked to gain additional details.

In order to determine whether urban development affected the sample, questions regarding the surrounding area were asked. If the respondent could provide an example, the researcher would ask if there were any differences in victimization during and after the new developments.

Inquiries as to the relationship between the homeless and the police were made. The first question related to the role that the police play in their facility. The second question related to the homeless interactions with the police. The third question dealt with the caretaker's perception of their client's relationship with the police. The fourth question related to the caretaker's personal opinion about the police. Finally, an open-ended question was asked in order for the caretakers to provide additional information relating to homeless victimization.

Data Management and Analysis

The homeless and caretakers' contributions came in the form of lengthy interviews on this topic. There were two distinct groups with two types of interview forms; therefore, data management was necessary throughout the study. In addition, a unique filing system of the data was created, which allowed quick retrieval of data for analysis.

Data management. Careful data management was necessary because each respondent provided an immense amount of raw data. In order to combat against "data meshing," respondents were assigned characters and numbers. A number was assigned to the homeless subjects and a letter to the caretakers. The subjects had their own file which included the transcriptions and any miscellaneous field notes, such as the type of weather or the subject's

demeanor during the interview. After the interview, the conversation was transcribed onto the computer. The transcriptions had the researcher's name and the subject's assigned character or number. Given the large amounts of transcription data, it was necessary to break down a subject's response into additional categories.

One of the greatest problems noted with qualitative studies is the need to analyze several pages of transcriptions. Corbin and Strauss (1998) suggest looking for recurring themes, actions, and interactions of a respondent's story. Their recommendations were followed in the present study which proved to be highly valuable because of the nature of victimization and homelessness, both very sensitive and rich with meaning.

Categories were created from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1998). Each interview instrument had a set of main questions regarding the subject matter. Responses to a main question were compiled into a file. For example, theft and sex crime responses had separate files. At times, the homeless respondents mentioned victimizations that may have been unrelated to the question asked and created a problem regarding categorization. For example, before asking a question relating to sex crimes, Roxanna inadvertently disclosed that she had been raped. Fortunately, these instances were noted and adapted by inserting the answer into the respective category or file.

Qualitative analysis. The process of qualitative analysis devises ways to understand the phenomenon (Corbin & Strauss, 1998, 2008; Berg, 2001). Importantly, this study followed Corbin and Strauss's (1998, 2008) analysis of grounded theory. Three levels of coding analysis were implemented for both groups. At each level, the data broke down into meaningful and operational concepts. First, each response to the question was isolated into a category onto a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. For instance, if the respondent experienced a physical attack, the

response would be placed in the physical attacks category. Second, following Corbin and Strauss' (1998) recommendation on the use of micro-analysis, which is an analysis of each line of the respondent's transcript, each response was closely viewed for subtle forms of victimizations, such as jargon that may indicate additional victimizations. Third, axial-coding is a process that compares data and other categories, and develops further subcategories. For instance, after a subject disclosed a victimization experience, the location thereof was asked and placed into a subcategory and compared to other accounts. In order to visualize the situation, crime maps provided by Google Earth, gave a first-person point of view of the streets. The location of the victimizations and any areas which the subjects avoided were plotted on these maps. Throughout the following sections, different portions of interviews may overlap or be used in multiple categories.

The first level of coding (appendix E) consisted of categorizing the data by locating reoccurring themes, such as drug use, petty thefts, rapes, or robberies. After transcribing the data, each answer to the main question was compared to the other respondents. For instance, there were 21 responses to the sex crime question. Transcripts often run together, giving the possibility of the reader overlooking an important theme. This methodology reduces that possibility because one question had to be answered before proceeding to the next.

After isolating the responses into categories, the microanalysis process was used to further understand the data. Microanalysis requires a critical interpretation of each line, word, pause, and word usage (Corbin & Strauss, 1998). Microanalysis is one of the best methods when analyzing transcripts relating to victimization. Disclosing victimization is personal for most individuals, and through the use of microanalysis, one can easily deduct some hidden victimizations within the text. In addition, it can illuminate victims' underlying feelings, such as

retribution, sadness, anger, and other insecurities as they explain each victimization scenario. In practice, memos were used in this coding process, asking questions about the data, respondents, and the topics.

Axial coding analysis is the coding process that allows the respondents to be heard in the most meaningful way possible (Corbin & Strauss, 1998) by systematically capturing the relationship between the caretaker and the homeless therefore reducing bias from both groups. For instance, a causal connection can be drawn between a homeless persons' addiction and their level of victimization, or some other factor. Simply reporting the responses fails to encompass the actual context of the event (Corbin & Strauss, 1998). During this process, the subjects provided descriptions of each victimization occurrence. However, questioning the victim's responses, allowed the interpretation of slang terminology that might be misconstrued. For example, the term, "rolled," could mean a physical attack by multiple offenders. In essence, axial coding was necessary to compare other information from other subjects that may not have been elaborated from their experiences.

Grounded Theory

The history and development of Dr. Glaser and Strauss's grounded theory (1967) will be discussed at length. Grounded theory has many applications; some of those will be presented in this section. This study will only examined grounded theory studies that deal with the homeless. In addition, there is a discussion on theories that are highly suitable for explaining homeless victimization. These theories put the current study into perspective and strengthen the findings in later sections. Importantly, these theories reinforce the need to use grounded theoretical methodology in this study of homeless victimization.

In order to understand grounded theory, it is necessary to explain its origins. In the 1960s, sociologists were attempting to replicate the work of sociological studies. At that time, it was considered that theory happened only by chance (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Researchers favored statistical or quantitative methods, which were believed to remove partiality from the analysis. Glaser and Strauss (1967) conducted their research at a time when statistical or quantitative analysis was considered the gold standard, and qualitative research was considered too biased. They asserted that researchers, who used qualitative measures to crudely quantify their results, were losing valuable data. In addition, Glaser and Strauss disagreed with the proposition that theory originates by chance. They argued that theory could be created systematically. Glaser and Strauss wanted to create a methodological way of generating theory. Their hospital research in the 1960s afforded them that opportunity to examine their data in a new light.

Over the years, researchers have attempted to further define this systematic way of generating theory. Today, there are three schools of thought that focus on grounded theory. The proponents of these schools are the Glaser, Corbin and Strauss, and Charmaz (Bonner, et al., 2006). The oldest of these schools of thought originated with Glaser in the 1970s.

Glaser used a technique called the coding analytic tool, which has three levels of analysis. First, the open coding technique collects data until it forms a category. Next, those categories are synthesized into higher or theoretical mindsets and compared. Once the data has reached this theoretical level, categorical relationships can be established. Finally, constant comparative is the process by which researchers compare the theoretical data to its open data counterparts (Bonner et al., 2006). During this process, Glaser stresses that one should be theoretically sensitive to the data, meaning that researchers should use their knowledge and

expertise in making connections and subtracting those from the equation. Theoretical sensitivity assumes researchers have a vast understanding of theory in their field.

According to Kelle (2005), the Glaser method is not for novice researchers and is time consuming. In order to reduce or eliminate data corruption, Glaser recommended any literature review be conducted after data collection and analysis (Bonner, et al., 2006). This reinforces the need to know a plethora of theories. Essentially, he contends that researchers have no preconceived ideas during the process of data emergence.

In contrast, Corbin and Strauss (1998, 2008) believed that it is necessary to obtain ideas from the literature in order to understand the topic, followed by data collection and analysis. A final review of the literature would then be conducted to add substance to the study and aid in fully understanding the data. Corbin and Strauss (1998, 2008) offer an easier technique than Glaser's theoretical coding method. Their coding paradigm focused on the data's actions, interactions, observations, causality conditions, and how all relate to human life.

This method utilizes a three level approach to analysis of the data. First, responses are reduced to categories until data saturation is achieved. Second, microanalysis is employed to analyze the raw data, line-by-line, noting any possible hidden data. Third, axial coding allows researchers to compare and note surrounding circumstances during the interview such as the environment, a subject's mannerisms, or other aspects of the paradigm.

With this technique, researchers do not need any knowledge of theories. In addition, it provides researchers a skeletal framework to guide them. However, Glaser objected to this method because it forces the data into categories, thereby eroding the main premise of grounded theory (Bonner et al., 2006). In Dr. Glaser's view, the theory should emerge from the data without a predetermined paradigm.

A final model is present by Charmaz. She argued that it is not the data that is important, but how the data is used (Bonner, et al., 2006). It is the interaction with the data that elicits or allows theory to emerge. Charmaz has a view of grounded theory that puts the researcher at the forefront of the analysis. She notes the importance of the analytical process. It is the interaction between the researcher and data that is most important. Each researcher has a different set of values and beliefs which affect the data analysis. So, it is therefore necessary to have the researcher analyze his or her work alone. Collectively, these three contributors to grounded theory provide an understanding of how grounded theory techniques have and can be used.

To understand grounded theory, it is important to know its applications. One useful application of grounded theory is the examination of small groups (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). These small groups provide unique challenges to both quantitative and qualitative researchers. Quantitative researchers are generally unable to obtain significant findings on small groups; additionally, qualitative investigators may provide thematic meanings but are unable to draw any substantive theoretical concepts. However, grounded theorists are able to draw connections, meanings, and explanations from very small data sets.

For instance, an example of how grounded theory might apply to the study of small groups is found in a Native American tribe in western Oklahoma. Due to the limited numbers of tribal members, conventional qualitative and quantitative approaches may be ineffective. Grounded theory methodology provides an effective means of capturing the tribe's values and beliefs from a small group. Grounded theorists can obtain a deep understanding of the tribe by focusing on data saturation, which can be achieved even from a relatively small number of tribal members.

As an analytical process that does not require a preselected number of participants, Grounded Theory sheds light on those understudied groups which might be overlooked by conventional research methods. For example, Glaser and Strauss (1967) provided examples where data saturation could be reached with only one person. As long as the process reaches data saturation, the sample size is immaterial. In addition, Glaser's strategy calls for a knowledge of theory but does not require a review of the literature prior to data collection. This approach allows the data to explain what is actually happening within the studied group, which in turn results in the generation of theoretical concepts based solely on data without being influenced by prior works.

Grounded theory does not only fill gaps in the literature, but also develops a new landscape of thought, which prompts more research. By using this systematic means of creating theory, researchers can at least generate substantive theories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which provide the foundational works upon which formal theories can be constructed. The ultimate goal of grounded theory is to turn substantive theories into formal ones that encompass the whole spectrum of the studied phenomenon

While research is replete with information on homelessness, grounded theory has rarely been used to research the issue of homeless victimization. The current studies and other theoretical frameworks on spatial concepts and criminality provide helpful information in understanding homeless victimization. Together these data can provide an ability to forecast potential crimes against the homeless.

Grounded theory develops from the collected data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Corbin & Strauss, 1998, 2008; Berg, 2001). Unlike a hypothesis that has an answer before the undertaking of the research, grounded theory forms after the collection of data. For instance, two data sets

may develop into two separate theories. When using grounded theory, an idea or topic is developed and data gathered on the topic is then used for theory development. This allows the researcher to seek any type of information to explain this idea or phenomenon. The information collected could be in the form of interviews, maps, statistics, climate changes, or even television shows. All collected information or data contribute to the body of evidence on the topic.

The analytical process of grounded theory for this study encompassed a vast variety of data gathering and observational techniques that assisted in studying this sample of homeless. At first, it was assumed that the homeless experienced high crimes rates. In addition, a large segment of homeless people live in the area of Oklahoma City proper. After reading materials that examine homeless life, it appears that society subtly pushes this group away into uninhabitable places of the city.

The aforementioned factors were turned into questions and inserted into the interview instruments. The interviews provided a significant amount of victimization accounts and were compared to the experiences of other participants. There was a noteworthy connection among two areas of Oklahoma City proper and robbery, petty thefts, aggravated assaults, and assaults with a dangerous weapon.³ The identical two areas were the same places that 14 different subjects avoided because of the areas' violent⁴ reputation. In addition, Okccrime.com⁴ displayed reported crimes that were plotted on maps and were compared to their accounts. In addition to the opportunity for crime comparison, Okccrime.com reinforced the dangerousness of the Oklahoma City proper's homeless areas. Their personal accounts were compared with the caretakers third-party perspective. For instance, the homeless frequently brought up the perilous

³ The six robberies that were disclosed included aggravated assaults and assaults with a dangerous weapon, but were only classified as a robbery.

⁴ Okccrime.com granted permission to use the website's crime maps for educational purposes.

area around Reno and Shartel Avenue, and the caretakers confirmed their comments. In addition, caretaker also suggested the reasons for the discontent. Counselor William of the Jesus House and Brother Keith Starkey (Starkey, K. personal communication, November 21, 2009) noted the sudden policy adjustments at one of the larger shelters or other support services in the city, and how it forced many former occupants to seek their assistance.

Summary

Qualitative methods are a way to capture the essence of the phenomenon. The final research question was developed with collection of the data. With the collected data retrieved from three places in the downtown area of Oklahoma City, multiple strategies were needed to obtain information concerning a group that is often ignored and not surveyed. One may call the information “data”, but it is also a unique piece of the individual. These unique pieces were painstakingly put together to form a cohesive picture of homeless victimization.

Description of Participants

The purposes of this section are to describe the backgrounds of homeless and caretaker subjects, the homeless peoples’ reasons for vagrancy, and their length of time of homelessness. Although the responses to the questions were brief, they still possessed unique categorical themes. At the end of this section, one will begin to understand these subjects were individuals who shared homelessness and victimization experiences but little else.

Description of Samples

The study included a sample of homeless and caretaker respondents. The homeless respondents provided information on their victimization experiences while being homeless, and the caretakers provided supplemental information on homeless victimization.

The demographics of the sampled homeless were unique. In table 1, 29% of the homeless sample was female, and 71% of the sample was male. The average age for this sample was 46 years old. Nineteen percent of the sample was African American, while 81% were white. Education varied within this group. The majority of the sample never graduated from high school, and three respondents had an associate's degree. Finally, one had attended graduate school.

Table 1

Demographics of the Homeless Respondents (n=21)

Respondents	Sex	Age ($\bar{X}=46.48$)	Race	Education
1	Male	53	White	9 th grade
2	Male	52	White	10 th grade
3	Male	56	White	High school Diploma
4	Male	56	White	Some college
5	Male	52	White	Associates
6	Male	42	Black	Some College
7	Male	58	White	Associates
8	Male	44	White	12 th grade
9	Male	49	White	High school Diploma
10	Male	30	Black	9 th grade
11	Male	51	Black	Associates
12	Male	54	Black	10 th grade
13	Male	63	White	Graduate School
14	Female	52	White	GED
15	Male	36	White	GED
16	Male	40	White	12 th grade
17	Female	51	White	Some College
18	Female	34	White	GED
19	Female	34	White	9 th grade
20	Female	33	White	GED
21	Female	36	White	Some College

* For a complete breakdown with years of homelessness, see appendix G.

Four of the caretakers were homeless in the past which gave them greater insight into homelessness. Each one provided a unique view of homeless victimization. The caretakers worked with the homeless on average 11 years (See table 2). The average years worked at each research site was four years. Each subject had a different role at the shelter such as security, drug counselor, president, or volunteer. In addition, their education also varied from eleventh grade to graduate school.

Table 2

Demographics of the Caretaker Sample (n=7)

Subject	Sex	Years working with homeless	Years at Site	Role	Education
A	Female	7	3	President	BA
B	Male	2	2	Volunteer Intake	GED
C	Male	3	3	Supervisor Assistant	11th grade
D	Male	2	2	Supervisor	GED
E	Male	18	8	Security Director of client	Some College
F	Female	27	10	services Director of recovery	Graduate school
G	Male	15	2	services	BA/AA

The subjects' reasons for being homeless were classified into categories. Instead of using an "other" category, each unique reason for being homeless was classified as specifically as possible. In addition, if they had been grouped into a few categories, one would be unable to see if their backgrounds were related to their victimization. Using this approach, seven categories emerged from 21 respondents: substance abuse, disability, family dysfunction, inadequate pay, "tired of the rat race," natural disaster, and crime victim.

The first and most common category was substance abuse⁵. Seven subjects mentioned alcohol consumption or illegal drug usage as the main reason for their homelessness. Elizabeth, at the age of 51, provided a meaningful response to her homelessness:

I end up homeless through drug addiction. I'm addicted to drugs and even having been sober for a couple years, this disease is pretty powerful, and I can't quit it. Sometimes, I think... drugs... rent... drugs... rent well, I want to use these drugs... rent, ah you know rent... its, its overrated... having a place to live is not that important. I really want to get high...

Stephen, who was addicted to drugs, left his wife to pursue recovery at the Jesus House. Whether they were addicted to alcohol or illegal drugs, substance abuse among the respondents was significant. Seven of the twenty-one subjects were from the Jesus House, which only takes those who are mentally ill and/or suffer from a substance abuse problem. Consequently, this may explain the larger amount of respondents who listed substance abuse as their reason for homelessness.

When asked the question relating to why they are homeless, three subjects mentioned disability. According to the U.S. Conference of Mayors (2008), 13% of the homeless population is disabled. This present finding is very close to the national average. Their disabilities made them unable to provide adequate shelter for themselves. As illustrated by 56 year-old John:

I did not have a place to, uhh, live. I well, they wanted me do... Things that I wasn't able to do 'cause of my disability, and uh, so uhh, I they give me, uhh week's notice ... So I left and, uhh, that's when I became homeless...

⁵ Specific drugs were not asked during the interviews.

They did not specify the disability, and the question was not asked. However, it is noteworthy that the three subjects were males over the age of 50. Two of those had previously attended college.

Four subjects mentioned family dysfunction, such as domestic violence, infidelity, or divorce. The respondents in this category were predominately female with the exception of one male, but all exhibited family dysfunction. Two out of the four provided a descriptive account of family dysfunction. For instance, Roxanna disclosed her separation from her husband in Texas: “I came from Texas and my husband I was with, I left him. And I’ve been homeless ever since.”

Marion provided his account for homelessness:

(thinking) Well uhh I had a lot of problems dealing with uh my family and my immediate family umm there’s a bunch of victimizations, lies that made it too difficult to sustain a house.... A lot of infidelity that I walked in on. The main thing is that when I felt my life was threaten. I just tried to protect myself and that got me to you know some little trouble... My mother wanted my children. I refused to sign them over to her... A lot of other things went on... I just didn’t want feel like being around them you know for a while [lowers voice].

These respondents left abusive homes, but were unable to provide enough income for a place of residence. So, they had to live at one of the shelters in the city. After leaving an abusive husband, Beatrice had to prostitute herself in Oklahoma City to make ends meet. Eventually, she gave it up and sought refuge at the Jesus House. In addition, the only male respondent in the sample experienced both family violence and infidelity with his spouse. Marion held back tears as he spoke of family disputes concerning inheritance, infidelity, and the possibility of domestic violence. All of these instances forced Marion to seek shelter at the Grace Rescue Mission.

Anderson and Snow (1993) had several subjects who worked at day labor areas and noted their inability to provide adequate shelter. Three subjects mentioned similar situations in which they were in a constant pursuit of another job. Mike provided this account of his homelessness:

...2007 when I was staying down at the mission after I had my accident that disabled my ... cause they had to put a... piece of metal in my hip, and I started to get my disability checks and stuff like that... uhh, no, I was homeless before that uh. I was working out of temporary place only working maybe two to four days a week, couldn't afford rent and stuff. So, I ended up having to sleep out on the street.

The data suggests that temporary jobs were inadequate to sustain a home. Before the accident, Mike lived in a poorly constructed and unsafe home because that was all he could afford. Mike slipped and fell as he reached for a handle, breaking his hip. This injury prevented Mike from seeking a job, and forced him to live at the City Rescue Mission for a few months. In addition to day labor problems, Marshall experienced situations where he performed labor without pay. He worked for six months at a horse ranch in the city. The premise behind the organization was work therapy. As Marshall explained:

There's a whole lot of programs out here you can get into and stuff like that, but it's like your making them a fortune. Then when you're done with that, First Step Out There is a perfect example... I went out there and volunteered for it twice. I worked for them for over six months. You work six days a week. They take all your money. You don't even get money for cigarettes... When your six months is over you are out you're right back where you was.

Marshall discussed this issue at length because he felt that he was criminally victimized by this organization. Day laboring might provide enough money for food and various items, but not enough for shelter.

Two individuals simply were “tired of the rat race,” which is a phrase often used when people are fed up with their current state of being and quit their jobs. Out of the 21 subjects, Paul and Noah fell under this category. Noah’s alcohol addiction forced him into a life on the streets. After spending over 34 years on the street, homelessness became a way of life. In contrast, Paul who had been homeless for over nine years was simply tired of his job in Minnesota :

I resigned from my job working for three and half years, got tired of traveling... I was single, and I had a couple of cats at home and all those other bills of having a home... I could not get out of that job for for three or four years... The last, had some money in the bank and I was like, well I will be ok I would just [take?] two months off work. I resigned on July 1st and probably did try to find work until the middle of October... I ended [up?] unemployed for two years living in my home. I couldn’t afford that anymore. So, I sold the house, and I figured out I wouldn’t be homeless for more than two months. And well, it’s been nine and half years now. So, totally unexpected, nothing I’d never plan.

Paul attempted to find another job with no success. At one point, Paul and Noah had places to call home, but their actions and circumstances led to a significant amount of time on the streets. Those dreams faded and the streets became their homes.

It may be rare in the Oklahoma City area; however, climate changes can lead to homelessness. Jim was the only subject who became homeless after a hurricane destroyed his home in Florida. Everything that he owned was taken away from him in an instant. After the

hurricane, Jim lived in a tent with enough food to sustain life. Eventually, he made his way to Oklahoma.⁶ Many people have insurance and are compensated. Jim may have been one of the unfortunate ones who were not.

There was only one subject who became homeless because of a crime against him. Marshall became homeless after someone stole his car, causing him to miss work which led to his termination:

Well... I had, I had been working at the Goodwill and stuff, and my car got stolen, and I lost my car. So, that was my transportation I had most of everything in my (pauses). Anyway, I lost my job for the car being stolen and stuff, and just ended up on the streets.

Marshall's car not only took him to work, it also was his home for a while. He did report the incident, but Marshall noted that he was unable to be contacted in case of the vehicle's recovery. This situation was rare because the subject claimed that the loss of his car was the direct cause of his homelessness. Importantly, Marshall did not count the time where slept in the car as homeless; rather, he only counted the time at the shelter. Marshall also suffered from alcohol addiction, but he felt that his addiction was not the main reason for his homelessness.

Length of Homelessness

In addition to the differing reasons for homelessness, the respondents varied in their time on the streets. The average time of homelessness of the sample was five years (appendix G). Of the 21 subjects, three people were homeless for less than a year (see appendix G). Three mentioned living in something other than a house or apartment. Marshall and Isaiah did not consider themselves homeless until they lost their vehicle or their storage unit. Many respondents

⁶ Jim did not mention how or why he arrived in Oklahoma.

were periodically homeless over the course of many years, meaning they were in and out of stable residences. For instance, living at a friend's house still means one is homeless. It was expected that some of the subjects would experience periods of homelessness. It must be noted that those who mentioned this issue were homeless more often than not.

With regard to sex, the women (n=6) sample averaged three years on the street and while the men (n=13)⁷ sample lived on the streets for over six years. There were a few men who were homeless for over ten years, which explains the higher average of length of homelessness. Unlike the male sample whose reasons for homelessness varied, the majority of the female sample suffered from drug addiction and the rest left abusive homes. In addition, the women were younger ($\bar{X} = 40$) than the men ($\bar{X} = 49$). The reason for the high drug addiction among the homeless women was due to the oversampling of them at the Jesus House, which only houses those with a substance addition and/or mental illness. Interestingly, eight men over the age of 50 averaged 10 years of homelessness while three men who are 40 and younger averaged one year. In contrast, women ages 30 to 40 averaged four years of homelessness.

Summary

There are seven categories for only 21 subjects who had a victimization experience. Five were addicted to drugs while three individuals were disabled, and four had family problems. The least reported categories were inadequate pay, a hurricane, or simply being tired of working. Some were new to the homeless lifestyle; others had been homeless for over two decades. They shared victimizations experiences during homelessness. On average, these individuals were homeless for almost five years (see appendix G).

⁷ Two male subjects did not provide the length of time of their homelessness.

Victimization Experiences

“I just bought a pair of, brand new pair of tennis shoes, and I was walking back to the mission and a couple of guys ran up behind me and snatch up the bag out of my hand and took off running.”

51 year old, disabled African American male, homeless for a year and three months

“I’ve had food gone... something important like... a pocket knife or something...really nothing big.”

44 year-old hurricane victim, white male, homeless on or off for five years

“They want to harass you, and, and criticize you, and call you names and try to force themselves on you.”

34 year-old abused female, homeless on and off for five years

Introduction

The following questions will be answered in this section regarding victimization among this sample of homeless people. To what extent did this sample of homeless people experience crime during homelessness? The second article of inquiry asks the question, what were the perceived victimization experiences with the police among this sample of homeless? The third issue begs the question, which crimes were reported to the police, and what were the themes for not reporting? Finally, was there a connection between the severity of the injury from the crime and the level of reporting? These four questions guided the victimization experiences among this sample of homeless people.

Thefts

Twenty out of 21 subjects experienced a theft during homelessness. The sampled individuals experienced four different types of theft: burglary, petty larceny, motor vehicle theft, and robbery. For the purposes of this study, the first three types of thefts were classified as non-violent thefts (appendix H), and robbery was classified as a violent theft (appendix I) because of higher level of violence between the offender and victim.

A burglary in this study occurs when a person(s) unlawfully or without permission enters a dwelling and takes an item. Five subjects experienced a burglary of their campsites during their course of homelessness. Paul provided several accounts where he would leave his camp site for the day, come back, and find his belongings missing:

I've had something stolen from me probably a dozen times... My camp site; I'd leave for the day, and I come back and find somebody had been in there... I find stuff that was missing... it's been... This week I got hit twice, lost some stuff that I wish I hadn't lost. A year and a half ago I got hit twice and lost a lot of stuff...

It's been like that pretty much every time I got something stolen from me.

Paul resides in a camp site in an undisclosed location in the downtown area of Oklahoma City.

Like most burglaries, Paul was not at the crime scene. In addition, with no door locks or watchful neighbors, all of which contribute to the safety of a resident, Paul's campsite was utterly defenseless against a motivated offender.

A motor vehicle theft in this study occurs when someone unlawfully takes possession of a vehicle without permission from the owner. Two individuals disclosed a motor vehicle theft during homelessness. Offenders steal vehicles to move around the city. Sometimes, they sell parts at a "chop shop." However, to some of these individuals, a vehicle was their home. Marshall lived at the Grace Rescue Mission because someone stole his car. Although he disclosed that he was homeless for three months, his narratives implied that he lived in his vehicle for an extended amount of time. To Marshall's knowledge the police never found the vehicle. On the other hand, Mary had her vehicle returned each time it was stolen from a crack house where she purchased drugs. Unlike Marshall, Mary never mentioned living in her car.

These two subjects were the only motor vehicle thefts victims because the rest of the sample did not own vehicles.

However, most of the mentioned experiences fall under the classification of petty theft. If the subject did not suffer a violent theft, they had some items stolen from them.⁸ Sam provided a telling description of petty thefts in the Oklahoma City area:

It don't matter if you turn your back for [to?] change your clothes or hygiene.

They'll get it: Your backpack or sleeping bag or whatever. All you have to do is turn your back for five minutes, and whatever you sit down, going to be gone.

A week before interviewing Sam, someone stole his backpack with his medical prescriptions while he napped right next to Sister Barbara Joseph's Pantry around 8:00 a.m. Each Saturday and Friday morning, the homeless line up at the gate at the Sister Barbara Joseph's Pantry. Men and women have sack lunches while others have large backpacks draped across their backs. It is clear that many items have to be watched and secured at all times. As Sam mentioned, if one were to leave their belongings unattended, someone would be likely to steal them. Since many homeless essentially carry their lives on their shoulders, it would be difficult to secure all of their belongings.

A robbery arises when someone takes possession of items from another person with force or with threats of force. Six subjects experienced a robbery in the Oklahoma City area during their course of homelessness. Mike described his victimization in full detail:

It was probably about nine thirty, coming from the store bought pack of cigarettes, been drinking... Ol boy came up behind me when I was in the middle of the street. He was like "hey buddy... hey buddy." I felt his hand touching my

⁸ Seventeen subjects or 81% of the sample experienced a petty theft.

wallet... When I turn right around, the wallet come out the pocket and fell on the street... When I picked it up he uhh uhh bashed me in the head, left me in the middle of the street, and uh took my wallet. And uh that was 08’.

The offender used brute force to obtain Mike’s wallet. Another interesting fact about the robbery was the lack of firearms. Eighteen percent of those who were robbed reported a knife or some other type of object (U.S. Department of Justice, 2010).⁹ No firearms were displayed during the commission of these violent thefts among this sample. Sticks, bats, knives, blunt objects, or physical force, were used by the offenders. Each offender escaped retribution except for one criminal. While walking home from his stepdaughter’s house, James felt someone following him:

I was walking one eve[ning]... It was about probably eleven o’clock at night... I saw two guys coming up behind me... I just knew, so I reached in my pocket, got my pocket knife out... I opened the blades up... Whenever they got closer to me they said, ‘hey, we want all your money.’ I just turned around and sliced...I told the other guy, ‘your next.’

James defended himself against his offender. Most victims were caught by surprise, leaving them with bad memories and physical injuries.

Description of stolen items.

The stolen items differed depending on their utility and value to the offender. An offender in a residential area steals the jewelry, flat screen TV, and X-Box from the houses, but fails to steal trivial items such as, shoes, clothes, or sunglasses. In the homeless world, even these trivial items would be taken. From small to large items, “if it wasn’t nailed down, it would be

⁹ The percentages of those who reported a knife or some other type of instrument were combined to 18%.

gone,” said James. Offenders stole items that most would consider as insignificant: food, knives, clothing, and blankets, all of which were highly desirable to these individuals. These respondents treasured and needed these items to survive. John sighed when he mentioned his stolen sleeping bag:

That’s the only one thing that really was any... Cause everything else I had was worth, not worth stealing. Now that sleeping bag was a gift from somebody else who gave it to me when I was sleeping on the streets.

Sleeping bags, canned goods, or hygiene products are very difficult to secure when the person has no place to store them.

Most of the items mentioned were stolen from men who needed these items while they slept on the streets of Oklahoma City. The women in this sample mentioned a different group of items than the men.

Eve: I’ve had money stolen from me, um, but it was probably because you know me being drinking and um, um being careless you know... Somebody taking my money leaving my purse somewhere... Somebody taking it... little things you know like jewelry something like that I’ve had people stolen from me.

Elizabeth too had an encounter where the respondent took her money while she attempted to purchase drugs:

Someone must have known I had some money on me, and came up, and push me in the street. I had a part in it. If I weren’t there in the middle of the night, it wouldn’t have happen. And somebody came up behind me and stole my money.

With this extra money, the women were seen as a target for many offenders. Master Sergeant Serpico and Counselor William noted homeless women’s high susceptibility to crime in

Oklahoma City. Specifically, Master Sergeant Serpico stated that: “Some women have monies coming in and got something somebody else wants.” All of the women respondents resided in a shelter and very few mentioned camping out unless they had a companion and rarely mentioned losing an item that would be classified as a survival item. The reason for the difference is a matter of sleeping arrangements and the sample. A good portion of the male sample slept outside, while the entire female sample resided in a shelter. So, it would be expected that this sample of men lost more items that would be considered survival items.

Physical Attacks

Eleven subjects experienced victimizations ranging from a verbal assault, aggravated assault, assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, to even maiming (appendix J). Homeless respondents were asked whether they participated in any physical altercations which disclosed both victimizations and offenses. This is based on the assumption that many victims may not realize that they could be classified as either were a victim or offender or both. If the subject caused the fight, it was removed from the analysis.¹⁰

An assault in this study is defined as when an individual voices a threat that connotes an act of violence. A good illustration came from weekly discussions with Paul. One morning at Sister Barbara Joseph’s Pantry, there were a few individuals who attempted to take an extra sack lunch. At times, Paul, upset because some of the people were disrespectful, would quietly insult them. When asked, if anybody ever heard his fiery remarks, Paul replied, “Oh, I have my life threatened all the time.” The physical fight question never elicited this type of verbal assault because it was assumed that verbal assaults were too prevalent to measure. The altercations with the police were the only verbal assault incidents that were mentioned in the interview. In an

¹⁰ Very few subjects mentioned this type of scenario where they were the offender.

attempt to catch a shoplifter, Oklahoma City Police mistakenly arrested a fifty-three year old homeless man named Sam who matched the description of the thief: long, stringy hair, and no teeth. While handcuffed inside a police car, a young police officer told Sam: "I ought to bust you in the face." This quote falls under the assault category.

Five respondents suffered an aggravated assault,¹¹ which is a situation where the subject suffers a major injury to his or her body. Often times, there were multiple offenders said Noah: "Been jumped... got rolled a few times... sometimes they got away, sometimes they didn't. You know mostly by more than one person." While walking down the street in Oklahoma City, a younger man surprisingly punched Paul.

Paul: I had some of those two dollar sandwiches from 7-11; had four of them in a bag... This guy comes walking towards me. I went to move and this guy starts wailing on me. I'm not sure how many times... He hit me. I woke up, came to, he hadn't taken anything. Sandwiches were still there. I had five or six dollars still in my pocket... Just attacked me. I ended up losing the sight in my left eye out of that... I didn't know who the guy was.

Those perpetrating these aggravated assaults used no weapon other than their own fists. Before arresting and placing Sam in the police car, he claimed that one of the officers: "Slammed my head into the trunk, jacked my arm up, plummed up back of my neck." Sam sought medical attention for a torn shoulder and welt on his forehead from being slammed onto the trunk of a police car. Between these two men, several injuries were sustain including a torn shoulder, the loss of vision, major bruises to the forehead; all of these aggravated assault injuries were incurred in public view in downtown Oklahoma City.

¹¹ Robberies were excluded in this portion of the study.

Four respondents were beaten with sticks, bats, pipes, liquor bottles, and other blunt instruments.

Mike: Christmas Eve... 2002 a buddy of mine. I was sleeping on his floor, cause it was winter time, cold out... He was cussing me for some reason. I asked why he was cussing me. Next thing I know, he was hitting me with a pipe.

Marshall also had a similar situation:

I got hit in the head, down in Tulsa one time. The guy hit me with it there again. We're just sitting there drinking, guy smack me in the head with a whiskey bottle...

No guns were used in either of these instances. In addition, these occurrences were sporadic and unprovoked, leaving no time for the victim to defend himself.

A victim of maiming loses some part or function of the body, but the offender intended to commit the injury. This intent to injure or disable a person falls under the maiming category. For instance, the offender who punched Paul did not anticipate that Paul would lose the sight of his eye. However, the next illustration is an account where the offenders knew the gravity of their actions. High on drugs, Stephen claimed to be in a stranger's home without their permission.

Stephen provided his account with the Oklahoma County Sheriff's department:

Stephen: ...They put me in a lockdown room. Four of them came in because I was struggling, but they were bending my thumb back to my wrist to make me stop struggling... I don't know if that's ever happen[ed?] to you, but that hurts really bad. ...You can't help but react to that. Your body has instincts. They put their boot on my head to make me stop moving. When I left, they put me on the 13th

floor... Strapped down, I lost, I had nerve damage to my fingers because they had me chained down so hard... For 12 hours I was like that...

This account depicts a situation where the victim is tied down, unable to defend himself while skilled correctional officers caused permanent damage to his hands in order stop Stephen's movement who admitted to being under the influence of drugs at that time. Typically, the thumb can be pulled back about two inches away from the wrist before the pain occurs. Stephen also disclosed during the interview that he had mental disabilities. He also mentioned the thirteenth floor which houses the medical portion of Oklahoma County Jail (Richardson, Z, June 26, 2010. personal communication). Since these correctional officers were trained in various submission tactics and possessed the knowledge that those tactics could permanently damage people, this instance falls under the maiming category.

Assaults, aggravated assaults, assault and battery with dangerous weapons, and maimings were experienced among 11 respondents. It was assumed that assaults were too high to measure. However, an officer threatening physical violence to a hand-cuffed man would be considered an assault. Surprise attacks, numerous men attacking another, even torn shoulder muscles resulting from the actions of a police officer occurred within this sample. All of the apparent injuries sustained by these respondents were done with an object other than a firearm. Finally, by using submission tactics, Stephen suffered permanent nerve damage to his hand while in the custody of the Oklahoma County Jail.

Sex Crimes

Three types of sex crimes arose from the data: rape, solicitation of a prostitute, and sexual assault. Ten out of 21 individuals suffered a sex crime during homelessness. In appendix K, rapes and sexual assaults were classified as violent sex crimes. Finally, solicitation of a prostitute

was classified as a nonviolent sex crime. Each sex crime incident was classified into these three categories.

A rape in this study was defined as any type of unwanted penetration of the mouth, anus, or vagina. Four out of the six women surveyed were raped during their course of homelessness (appendix K). At the Jesus House, Minerva was asked if she would help obtain another female respondent for the study. She went out the door and found Roxanne. Eager to help people understand homeless victimization, she consented to an interview. After inquiring for more theft victimizations, she inadvertently disclosed that she had been raped in 2008.

Roxanne: I've been raped and all that stuff and you know. So I've been [lowers and slows voice] a, a lot of stuff and, and I guess it's kind of hard...He raped four other women. He put a knife to my throat. I was really scared for my life. I was scared to death... It's just like, I didn't want no man to touch me you know, not even my friends. I realized that being out here, what does it do for me, you know? I mean, I could have been dead, but by the grace of God I wasn't, you know. I'm a survivor of it you know.

Roxanna was never asked to disclose the location of her rape. However, she was homeless when it occurred. In a similar vein, Minerva came to the Jesus House seeking rehabilitation for addiction to methamphetamines. She was still homeless in the far south east corner of Oklahoma, in a town called Idabel where she had been raped.

We was smoking dope, but this dope was different, cause it made me tired. So tired, I couldn't hardly keep my eyes open... Next thing I knew it was two o'clock in the morning and, and that dude he was raping me. And more than that, its gross, gross I was on my period. And I was like. He was like, "you want me to

stop, you want me to stop,” and I was like, “man I’m on my period. I had a tampon in” and that’s the last thing I was saying. I was back out again, and then the next morning I couldn’t find it; took me three or four days. It was so packed inside of me that tampon it was disgusting and yea...

These two subjects provided the most detail about their rape experiences. The other two female victims acknowledged the rape but did not disclose any further information.

The rape victims in this sample were women, but the men were not entirely immune to sex crimes. Although they never disclosed rape experiences, five males were solicited for sex by male johns on multiple occasions (appendix L). Jim disclosed that men often attempted to offer him money for sex. When asked how many times he was solicited, Jim replied, “once a week.”

Similarly, Noah encountered the same situation:

I’ve had uh, people, mostly men when I was younger tried to pick me up... Just going about my business. Usually, they’d accept that and go on. They don’t force the issue... It always happens to someone I guess... sooner or later I know that it happens to me.

Noah also noted the distinction of length of time on the streets. He stated the longer one is homeless, the chances of being solicited for sex increases. The average time of homelessness for those who were solicited was three years.¹² Stephen also had instances of sexual solicitation:

I’ve been uh, verbally questioned about “Hey you want to make a couple of bucks?” or hey you know “Want to get high and all you have to do is this that or the other” umm.

¹² Noah was removed from this finding because he was homeless for 35 years, increasing the average.

When asked how many times Stephen experienced sexual solicitations, he replied, “it happens all the time... Oh yeah, kind of reminds me of deliverance “Hey boy you gotta pretty mouth” and what not (laughing) you know...” A very humorous remark from Stephen shows the normalcy of this crime. In contrast with the men, all but one woman experienced this type of sex crime.¹³ Urial experienced this situation multiple times: “I’ve had guys...do you want to make some money? Do you you want to get high?” Similarly, at 52, Jill too had multiple experiences with men soliciting her for sex:

Yeah, walking down the street last time I was here... Quite a few times, people would stop and ask you “would you like to make some money.” Yeah, I had a business guy; he had a business suit on and tie at the library and asked me “You wanna make some money?” I mean he wasn’t like somebody off the street, and I was like “no thank you.” I just got up and went back to the library... When you are walking to the store, I had people stop right in the street... “You wanna make some money” “You wanna clean my house” and that’s leading on to the prostitution.

Both female and male respondents noted the lack of pressure from the “Johns.” Given that most of the male victims were over the age of 40, it was surprising to see a large amount of male respondents who were solicited for sex. With the exception of one female respondent, the majority of the females experienced the crime of sexual solicitation.

Sexual assault in this study is any unwanted touching that has a sexual connotation. Only one female respondent disclosed a sexual assault during homelessness. Mary was very brief in explaining this crime.

¹³ Minerva just arrived from Idabel to the Oklahoma City area and was unfamiliar with the area.

Mary: They assume you have something from you that you don't have... Really all you have is what's on your person... So, they want to harass you and, and criticize you, and call you names, try to force themselves on you.

Sexual assault is a very broad crime. Pinches on the bottom, an unwanted kiss on the lips, or a woman rubbing a man's chest, are all forms of sexual assaults. This finding was not surprising; most sexual assaults go unnoticed, and few mention them to the proper authorities.

Encounters with the Police

One woman and 10 men noted encounters with the police where they felt that they were unnecessarily stopped and questioned. More importantly, the homeless respondents felt that this was a victimization. When asked about attitudes towards the police, Jim replied:

Jim: I didn't do anything wrong. I don't see the point in having ID, cause that's my right to walk where I want to walk... I don't like them (police) personally myself cause they do that, but I can see the reason they do it, but I mean I just feel like a victim because they're asking me why am I in this area. Why I'm here you know what I mean...

Noah has been homeless for over 30 years in Oklahoma. Out of this lengthy time of homelessness, he had two negative experiences with the police. In the first event, as Noah was pushing his shopping cart next to the off ramp onto Agnew Street, suddenly, he ran to avoid an oncoming police vehicle:

Noah: ...It was a cop. He just come up, go around, made a u-haul, come back, and stop me, jumped out, asked me what was I running from... I tried to explain it to him; I was getting out of the way. I didn't know it was a cop. All I saw was a pair

of head lights... Finally he ran my ID, all that kind of crap... Finally, he just shine me on and let me go.

In the second event, while riding his bicycle, Noah had an attachment that carried his extra cans to the local recycling area in the flats, a locally known drug area in Oklahoma City. In order to avoid the rain-filled potholes, Noah moved his bicycle away from the curb several times. An Oklahoma City police officer began to follow him:

He followed me, got on my tail, and just followed me, didn't say a word till I found the canning place, stopped me right across the street from it. In front of God and everybody, told me about riding away from the curb. I tried to explain to him about the rain in the potholes. I didn't want get a busted tire or wheel on my bicycle... They jacked me up, and they were going to take me to jail, leaving my bicycle, and everything I own right there in the street... Just take me in...

When asked an explanation as to why the police officer wanted to take him into custody, Noah repeatedly slammed his fist onto the table, saying:

Noah: (At this time the subject started to thump his fist onto the desk) I don't know some kind of stupid breaking the law or something. I don't know what it was. I don't even remember much of it. All I know he just stopped and harass me for doing nothing, minding my own damn business. That's twice, after that, uh I got no use for Oklahoma cops at all.

Noah did not understand the rule of law regarding riding away from the curb. It is these negative experiences that affect the reporting of crime in the next section.

Reporting

Most of victimizations were not reported to the police. One rape, two larcenies of a motor vehicle theft, one robbery, two assaults with a dangerous weapon, and one aggravated assault by an officer were known to police. In addition, five thematic categories emerged regarding why this sample did not report their crimes. First, similar to the normalcy of crime, the phrase, “you snooze, you lose,” was used frequently to classify how the subjects viewed victimization. Second, a feeling of vulnerability underlined the interviews. Third, the subjects felt the offender would seek retribution if they decided to report the crime to the police. Fourth, at the time of the crime, many subjects were using drugs, intoxicated, or had warrants for their arrest. Fifth, the already strained relationship between the homeless and the police fostered a disconnect regarding crime reporting.

You snooze, you lose. “You snooze, you lose,” Sam said when he had all of his medication and other items stolen from him. Many did not seem bothered by their victimization experiences. The constant exposure to crime was a part of life on the streets. There was a lot of talk about “getting rolled” from the respondents which would be considered a robbery:

Noah: Physical fights...been jumped usually when I’m pretty drunk; got rolled a few times. Most fights, sometimes they got away, sometimes they didn’t. You know? Mostly by more than one person.

When Noah was asked if he reported any of these crimes, he vehemently replied with a no and that it was pointless to do so.

Since most of these crimes were normal to the homeless, extracting accounts of less serious crimes was a problem, as shown by the following conversation.

Researcher: So did they ever try to like solicit you or...

Jill: No.

Researcher: You ever had someone like pull up and try something like that?

Jill: Oh yeah, yeah, walking down the street, last time I was here. Yeah quite a few times, people would stop and ask you, "Would you like to make some money?" Yeah, I had a business guy he had a business suit on and tie at the library...

Many quickly dismissed the sex crime question, but when asked about prostitution, many respondents had several encounters. The prostitution offense differed from other types of crime. The offenders all drove cars, offering money for sex which indicated that they were not homeless. Importantly, they were all male and totally unknown to the victims. Finally, no one ever reported a sexual solicitation offer to the police. In addition, since the offender did not push the issue, many simply dismissed the encounter. In addition to prostitution and sexual assault, casual threats of violence were hardly brought up during the interviews. Since the homeless had a difficult time recognizing lesser crimes, it follows that they would not report them.

Vulnerability. Another theme emerging from the data was a sense of vulnerability. After not reporting theft victimizations, Stephen said, "I was the guilty one I think for you know just being vulnerable like that." Uriel explained:

Would be my own fault, but somebody stole it, but I be drunk leaving it somewhere. So, um but I've been drunk, and just, uh being forgetful you know, and being at my house, trust my friends, and, um I had stuff stolen like that like, little things you know like jewelry, something like that. I've had people stolen from me.

Manipulation and exploitation by friends creates embarrassing situations for the victims who feel guilty for their actions leading up to the crime.

Fear of Retribution. The theme of retribution reoccurred throughout the interviews when the offender was a police officer. Since there are around 1,500 homeless people living in the Oklahoma City area (Homeless alliance, 2009), it may be unlikely that the victim would recognize the offender or vice-versa. In addition, these offenders were often a stranger to these individuals. However, there was a good chance that the police could come into contact with the victim while they patrol their beat. For instance, Sam voiced a complaint to the Oklahoma City Police department regarding the misidentification and subsequent attack by the police, but refused to file a formal complaint:

I mean, I didn't file a complaint, because I'm afraid of the repercussions because of public intox I already had... They see me all the time, but I let them know what I thought... A big black investigator said he [was?] going to let them know what he thought too.

Marshall refused to provide information to Oklahoma City internal affairs regarding an excessive force complaint involving his public intoxication arrest, because he was scared of retaliation.

I just told them it was no big deal you know otherwise he would stack charges on me from now till... I would still be in jail... He was way over the top you know. I mean he's a big giant, looks like a marine or something you know... He slammed my face down on the concrete, rolling me around...

The threat of violence, and more importantly, the idea that one can take away their freedom through imprisonment is a serious retribution tool.

Offender/Victim Relationship. The knowledge of the person's whereabouts is a powerful tool. The offender's relationship to the victim is a good way to understand why they did not report. Roxanna and Minerva discussed the relationship with their offenders. Roxanna

provided an account of her assailant: “He raped four other women; he put a knife to my throat.” The knowledge of the previous rapes indicates that she knew the offender to a certain degree. Minerva suffered a similar event at the hands of her stepdad’s friend, which changed Minerva’s mind to file charges against her offender. After a rape, Minerva waited too long to report it to the police because she was discouraged from coming forward by the rapist’s friends, “Robin who likes the guy (stepdad’s friend) who done this to me... And when I told her what happen she said oh Minerva, you don’t know who messed with you.”

Similarly, as Stephen made the statement, “they rolled me every time you know cause I had a wallet on me and they’d make sure I was okay they’d called an ambulance for me, but they would take my money.” He noted his friendships with his assailants. The offenders even made sure that he would have medical attention, which showed some level of care. Urial made numerous friends who would party at cheap motels around Oklahoma City. However, many of her supposed friends would use her motel room for a place to drink, which led to two aggravated assaults against her. Since Stephen considered his attackers his friends, it would be unlikely that he would report them to the police because of likelihood of retaliation. The offenders may have a better understanding of Stephen’s routines than strangers.

Outlaw. The term, outlaw, refers to those who were breaking the law during their victimizations or just felt that their prior convictions made them less likely to report a crime. At the time of their thefts, some of respondents were breaking the law or had outstanding warrants for failure to appear at their hearings. Perhaps, the homeless were buying drugs at times of victimization, putting them in situations that promoted crime. When asked the question relating to the police and the homeless, Mr. Pete, a caretaker at Sister Barbara Joseph’s Pantry noted, “Mr. Pete: They’re usually scared of the cops...because they have warrants.”

An outstanding warrant dramatically decreases the chances of a victim coming forward. Stephen put everything into perspective, "I personally think once you're a felon or once you're convicted of anything you are always the suspect and not the victim." However, this connection occurred infrequently in the interviews.

Many mentioned the use of intoxicating substances. When using or buying illegal substances, the individual exposes him or herself to potential victimization. As Mary explained when she went to a drug house:

They just think they are going to take all your stuff cause you sitting there going to get high... They think that you're, you're scum of the earth because you are here to get high and spend money... there ain't no one else in the whole house gots money they want to feed off you, and steal, and tear you down.

Negative Relationship with the Police. Breaking the law is one issue, 10 respondents had a negative experience with the local police and would not report crime. With regards to attitudes towards to the police (appendix M), ten, nine, and two respondents reported a negative, positive, or neutral response respectively. The gender also differed with five of the positive responses coming from females. Many respondents did not trust the police because of prior situations in which an officer acted unprofessionally in handling situations where these individuals reported crimes and where the respondent was a victim of a crime. To illustrate, two men attempted to attack Marion and failed at the attempt. The discouraged offenders ran away from Marion and brought back several men in trucks. Marion repeatedly called 911. At one point, the officer arrived at the scene where he called Marion a liar because the offenders had left the area and advised Marion that if he called again he would not come down to the location. Another instance occurred with Marshall when a thief stole his vehicle which was also his home:

They [the police] were being sarcastic about it...I said 'Hey man I thought it was your job,' cause I have been working. I worked at the goodwill for over a year, and 'I thought it was your job to protect and defend us taxpayers,' and he goes, 'Oh yeah I bet you pay a lot of taxes last year' you know. It was just, really cold about it... I don't know if anything was ever done about my car or not. I never heard of anything... It was kinda like a joke to them. It's like, 'Dude its everything I own.'

Each time Noah was asked if he reported his victimizations to the police, he replied, "I didn't report it to the cops, cause they don't care, you're homeless. You're on your own. They're not going to do anything anyway." Noah's attitude demonstrates the usual relationship between the police and the homeless, and explains the lack of crime reporting by this sample.

The injury connection. Out of the six reported crimes, four were reported because of the hospitalization. Many respondents suffered major injuries from their physical assaults. However, all respondents except for Elizabeth reported major injuries to the police. To illustrate, Mike had two instances involving physical fights. The first one was reported and the other was not.

Mike: Christmas Eve, what was it 99' uh no, 2002. A buddy of mine, I was sleeping on his floor cause it was winter time, cold out and uh, he was cussing me for some reason. I ask why he was cussing me. Next thing I know, he was hitting me with a pipe.

Mike reported this crime and provided his account relating to reporting:

He bashed me in the head, broke my skull open, and I had to go to the hospital and stuff, and uh, cops were there, and everything else. And I told them where it was at, the thing was and everything.

One cannot ignore the blatant physical violence that Christmas Eve. Mike received stitches at St. Anthony's Hospital. Mike also had a similar encounter with a stranger:

I was walking across Classen and uh, 2006, and uh a big ol black guy come up behind me with a tree limb, just started swinging on me...

Researcher: ...the one with the tree limb did you report that one?

Mike: no um, cause that was just kinda, like uh he swung at me, and I ducked and [he] that was about it for that one.

This instance shows an offender attacking Mike, but Mike ducked to avoid the tree limb and left the scene without an injury. There was no need to seek medical attention, which provides the opportunity to report the crime. In contrast, while at the hospital for stitches to his head, Marshall reported the man who threw a whiskey bottle at him. In the case of a rape, according to Oklahoma law, a healthcare provider does not have to call the police unless the victim requests it (Crimes and Punishments, Title 22. Ch.2§ 40.3A). However, many women seek medical assistance after a rape for damage to the vagina, venereal diseases, and other forms of trauma. In these cases, it may be more likely that hospitalization provides the opportunity to report crimes.

Summary

These subjects suffered multiple and various victimizations. Thefts were the largest category, with petty thefts being the most common. Clothes, blankets, food, or anything that was not secured would be taken by a thief. This extreme behavior is an act of survival as well as an act of opportunity. Physical altercations produced violence in extremes: from casual threats of violence to severe attacks with baseball bats. Alcohol and/or drugs were mentioned in half of the thefts and physical fight instances, indicating a strong relationship. Only women in the sample were victims of rape. However, being solicited for sex was not gender specific. The police

encounters were only mentioned by the men in this sample who actually lived on the streets of Oklahoma City as opposed to the women, who primarily resided in the shelters.

According to the respondents, there were few crimes reported to the police in comparison with the total amount of victimizations. Most of the respondents attributed crime to just another part of being homeless. Others reasons included vulnerability, relationship to the offender, and negative attitudes towards the police. These factors collectively form a synthesis in explaining why this sample does not report. Finally, larceny of a motor vehicle and violent attacks were the only crimes reported to the police. People have an incentive to get their car back. The reasons are obvious: a vehicle is worth money and to this sample, a potential shelter. Further, the violent attacks in which victims had to receive medical attention gave them the opportunity to report the crime to the police. This finding suggests a connection to severe trauma and crime reporting. These were incidents experienced by this sample of homeless. With the exception of rapes and sexual assaults, all of these victimizations took place in and around Oklahoma City. As one will shortly see, the victimizations were a by-product of the environment in which the individual resided.

A Grounded Framework for Oklahoma City's Homeless

Researcher: *Do you have any concerns over your client's safety as it pertains to victimization?*

Master Sergeant Serpico: *While they are here at the facility... no. No, I think we they are all well-versed, and know that they can tell us any time of night if there is an issue. We are going to take care of it.*

Researcher: *What about outside the facility?*

Master Sergeant Serpico: *Outside the facility, definitely, the streets are a very dangerous place.*

Introduction

A veteran Oklahoma City Police officer offered the above commentary regarding the vulnerability of the homeless in Oklahoma City. At this point, it has been established that this sample of homeless people suffered an average of five victimizations during their course of homelessness. In addition, throughout their time of vagrancy, all but one subject resided in and around Downtown Oklahoma City's homeless shelters. Robberies, petty thefts, and places known for violence were disclosed throughout the interviews with the homeless and in one instance from a caretaker. These locations, mentioned during the interviews, were plotted on a map (see figure 8) and compared to reported crimes in the area. Both forms of data were analyzed and compared, forming a grounded explanation as to why this sample experienced more crime in one area than in others. Thus, the question is raised: did the proximity of shelters in the Oklahoma City proper contribute to this sample's victimization? If so, were there any significant connections between the proximity of the shelters and specific crimes?

Grounded Theory Statement

This explanatory framework suggests that the close proximity of the Jesus House, City Rescue Mission, and the Salvation Army shelters in Oklahoma City proper contributes to the high level of crime among these homeless individuals as it relates to robberies and petty thefts. In addition, the same areas in which these specific crimes took place are also the areas of avoidance among this sample of homeless people.

Overview

In the following pages, this theory will be explained through the use of subject responses, observations, and crime maps. In addition, sociological or criminological theories will be used to assist in clarifying the gravity of the homeless living environment. Together, all of these

elements will explain why the placement of the shelters added to the subjects' high level of victimization.

A Synthesis of Theories

Combinations of criminological and sociological principles are needed to put the Grounded Theory into context. To restate, Cohen and Felson's (1979), discussion of routine activities theory states that three things must be present for a criminal event to occur: a suitable target, motivated offender, and the absence of a capable guardian. Crime occurs when these three factors converge. This theory sets up the characters and/or entities that are involved in a crime scenario. Agnew (2006) identifies the motivation of offenders in the homeless world. The "Battle for space" argument explains how these conditions coincide in particular areas that promote dangerous environments (Mulcahly & Snow, 2001). Essentially, battle for space is the idea that society pushes the homeless into less desirable or marginal areas (Mulcahly & Snow, 2001; Anderson & Snow, 1993; Walcholz, 2006). The transitional area is the border between the marginal and prime land and is the place where the homeless experience societal harassments because both society and the homeless share the area (Walcholz, 2006). The marginal area has been described as a rundown area and tends to be the dumping ground for the homeless (Mulcahly & Snow, 2001; Anderson & Snow, 1993; Walcholz, 2006). In addition, social disorganization theory explains that the high level of crime in an area is attributed to the lack of social structure (Shaw & McKay, 1942), which mirrors the marginal area to an extent. Thus, the premises from the routine activities theory, battle for space, and social disorganization theory creates a fertile ground of understanding of the high amount of victimization among these sampled individuals.

Areal Classifications

First-person observations of homes and types of businesses, and subject interviews determined the prime, transitional, and marginal areas in Oklahoma City proper. Since the shelters and the majority of the homeless live in a highly concentrated area, a map was created that encompasses their residences and routines.

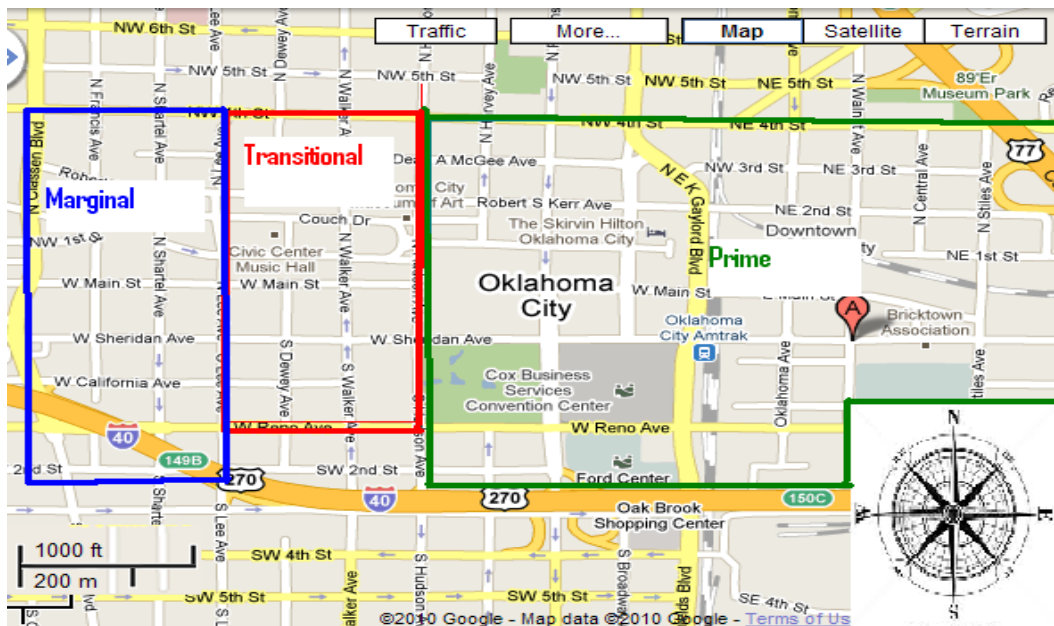


Figure 4. Application of Battle for Space principle of Oklahoma City Proper.

Prime area. Directly east of Hudson Avenue is the prime area: a large convention center and other large office buildings that offer vendors key revenue—earning potential. On the eastern side of the prime area, one finds Oklahoma’s newly rebuilt Bricktown area. This area consists of numerous restaurants, nightclubs, and expensive residential condos. The prime area was considered off limits to the homeless due to watchful vendors and/or high police presence. For example, the Bricktown area, which is in the heart of the prime area of downtown Oklahoma City, is rarely frequented by the homeless. As exhibited by Director Nancy:

Director Nancy: ... You just can't be homeless and crazy and sit on a bench in Bricktown, because somebody will come and tell you to move the hell on. No one wants to look at you at the Thunder game or whatever it is. It scares people. We have little children. They're not nice...

Prime spaces, such as Bricktown, were rarely mentioned by these individuals because they have “no reason to be there” according to Paul or “it is too far from their home” says Isaiah. Since most of the shelters are at least two to five miles away and the homeless have no sufficient form of transportation, it would be unlikely that the prime area would be a part of their routine.

Transitional area. Within the transitional space is a mixture of large office buildings and gated residential apartment complexes. People go to work in this area and immediately leave at night. The area is relatively aesthetic: decorative parks and a large botanical garden for a passerby to view from the highway. The homeless and society meet at the transitional area (Mulchaly & Snow, 2001; Anderson & Snow, 1993; Walcholz, 2006) which is a place where both groups have a shared interest in the use of the area. Various people from all socio-economic classes inhabit or socialize in the downtown Oklahoma City area. People drive through the area to work in one of the large buildings adjacent to the bus stop while homeless men and women carry decorated paper sack lunches from Sister Barbara Joseph's Pantry to supper at First Church, or to look for jobs on a library computer, or to receive medical attention at the St. Anthony's Hospital. It is also an area to solicit the homeless for sex. Jim brought this incident to light during his interview at the Grace Rescue Mission and noted that Johns¹⁴ could easily blend into this area and not the rougher parts of the city. Two out of the ten subjects experienced this type of victimization, and had multiple sexual solicitation victimizations in the transitional area.

¹⁴ A John is someone who purchases sexual actions from another.

The main bus stop where many homeless await transportation on 4th and Walker was saturated with “Johns.”

Jim: The city bus here, the nine bus stop here, and you got this little alley back through there. A lot of time[s?] you got guys will pull up there with their brand new cars, “Ohh you need a couple bucks? You want to go for a ride?” You know what they’re wanting...

Marginal area. The majority of the homeless population was located in the marginal area because of the available services in the area such as, shelters, food banks, employment agencies (Homeless Alliance, 2009). Eighteen subjects lived in a shelter at the time of the interviews, and 20 individuals resided in this marginal area during their course of homelessness. High skyscrapers decorate the east side of downtown Oklahoma City while only a block away, the west side is marked with old dilapidated buildings which are remnants of the old oil booms. From Lee Avenue to a couple blocks west of Classen Avenue with NW 4th street to the north (see figure 8), little development and dilapidated buildings dart the landscape. The I-40 highway runs through the middle of this region. Underneath it, space is provided to sleep, socialize, hide, and commit crimes. This is the place where many respondents call home and is also the area where the majority of crimes occurred.

Crime hot spots. By using crime maps from the interviews and reported crime information from Okccrime.com, crime hot spots started to take shape in the marginal areas of Oklahoma City proper. One must remember that the homeless in this study rarely reported their crimes, so Okccrime.com reflects only reported crimes and also shows specific areas of crime. In Figure 5, Okccrime.com reported six vehicle larcenies in the area of Lee and Reno Avenue. Figure 6 shows there are only four theft crimes around the Lee and Reno Avenue. However,

when public drunkenness reports are added (see Figure 7), there are several areas around the homeless area. Although public drunkenness is not the focus of this study, this finding reinforces the idea that this is an area that has a problem with drunkenness. Importantly, there are few bars in this area, mostly beer bars. This fact rules out the idea that bars or nightclubs contribute to the large area of public intoxications. In fact, the closest liquor store is several miles away from the area. In Figures 5, 6, 7, and 9, there is large manifestation of crime on the right side of the map or around the area of 10th and Lee Avenue. This is evident due to the St. Anthony hospital's police force, which allows the opportunity to report crime at the hospital.



Figure 5. Vehicle larceny reports. Adapted with permission from Okccrime.com. The pinked areas are supposed to indicate crime occurrences.

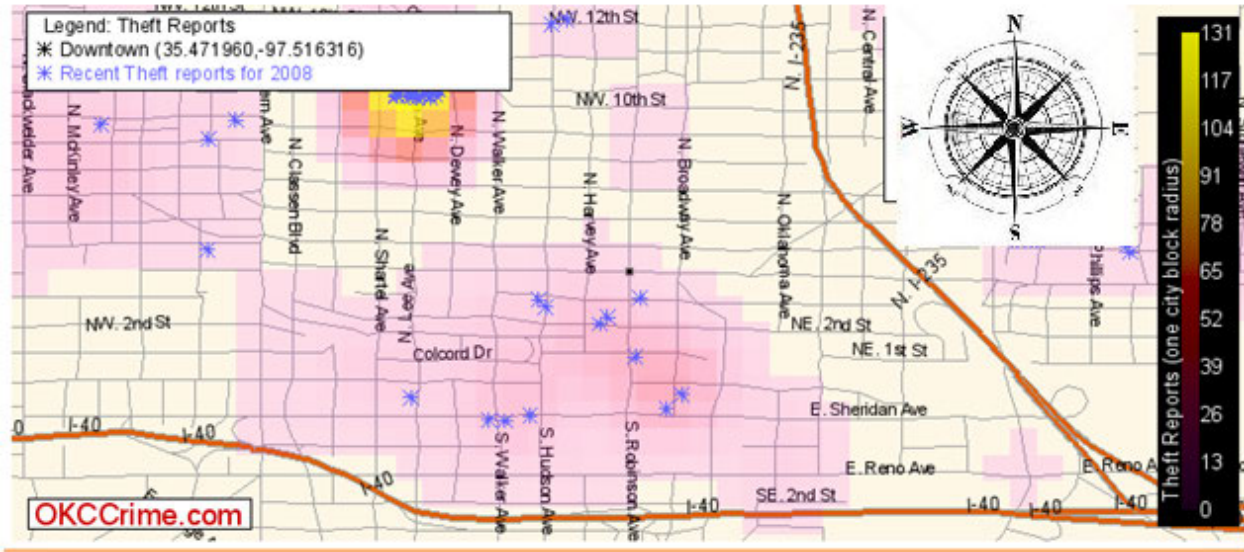


Figure 6. Theft reports. Adapted with permission from Okccrime.com. The pinked areas are supposed to indicate crime occurrences.

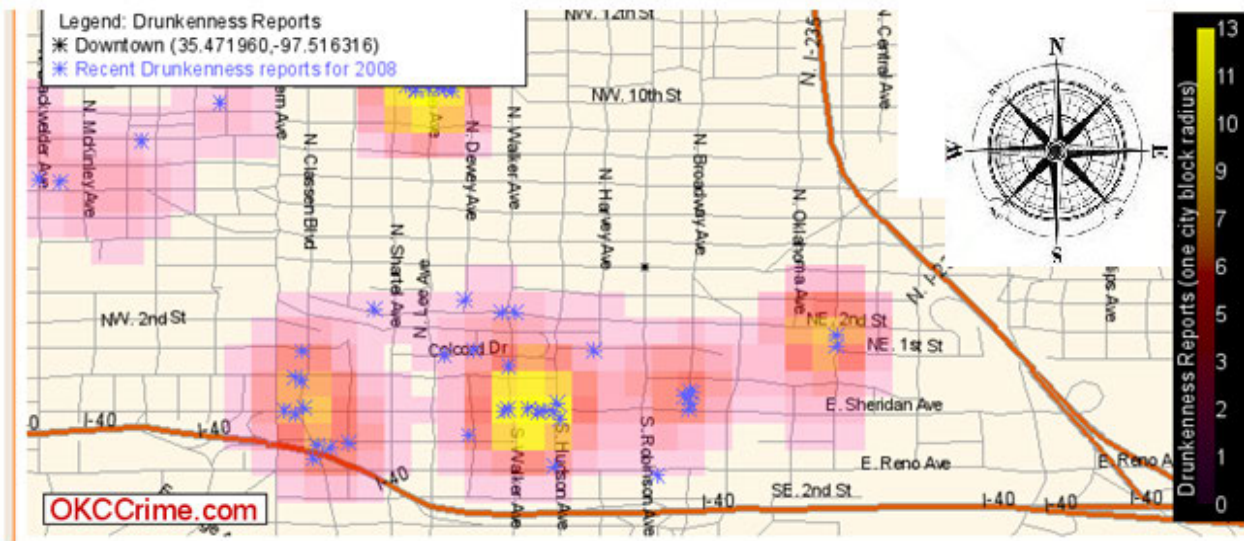


Figure 7. Public drunk reports. Adapted with permission from Okccrime.com. The pinked areas are supposed to indicate crime occurrences.

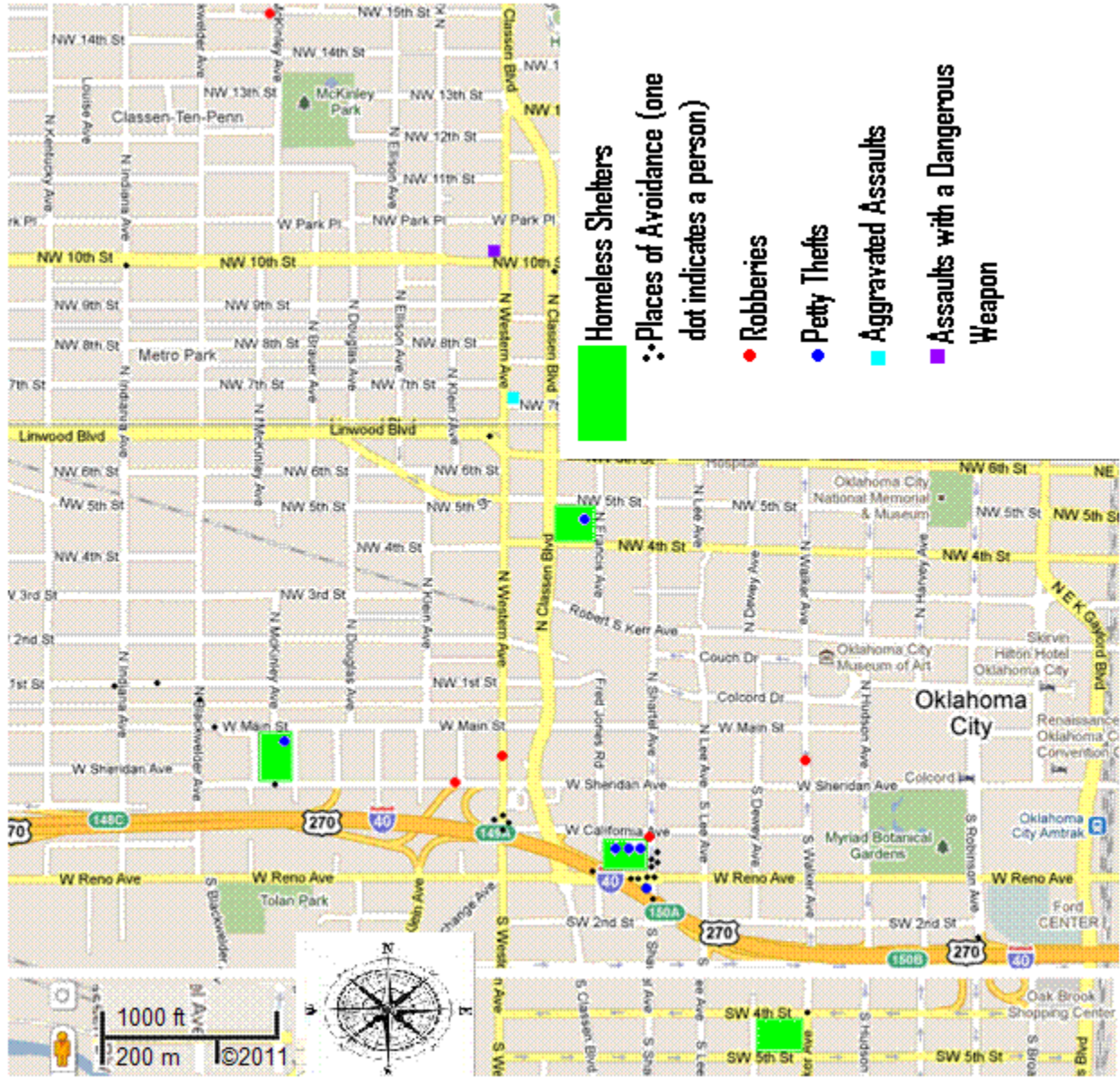


Figure 8. Locations of victimizations. Adapted from Googlemaps.com. The robbery victims also experienced aggravated assaults and/or assaults with a dangerous weapon, but the end result was a robbery.

In Figure 8, a pattern starts to develop in the area of California and Lee Avenue. Each red dot was a specific location of a robbery mentioned by a respondent. As one can see in Figure 8, three robberies occurred within blocks from each other. The blue dots are petty thefts. The subjects who brought up a petty theft during the interview only noted a few specific areas around the city. Finally, during the interview, each subject was asked a question about places they avoid; the black dot represents an individual who avoided this area because of the high probability of potential crime. Ten subjects mentioned the same area around Lee and Shartel Avenue. Similarly, in Figure 9, Okccrime.com (2008) reported a large number of violent crimes¹⁵ reported between the Dewey and Lee Avenue area.

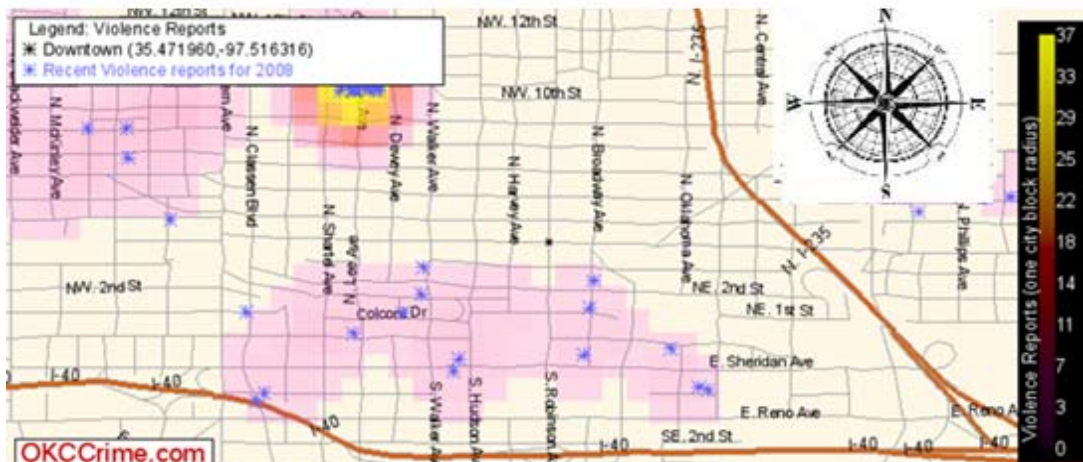


Figure 9. Violence Reporting. Adapted with permission from Okccrime.com The pinked areas are supposed to indicate crime occurrences.

Area A and B. According to the crime data in figure 8, it appears that two separate locations have crime hot spots. In figure 10, two circles were drawn to distinguish these places where the victimizations took place in which the subject provided a specific location. There are a few things one must consider when viewing this area. These two areas are still in the marginal

¹⁵ Okccrime.com did not define the term, violent crime.

region. Most of the places in the area are industrial, peppered with commercially owned restaurants and failed businesses. Both locations are places with numerous streets, alleyways and intersections, and include parts of highway I-40's overpasses, and are areas of crime convergence according to Figure 8.

Areas A and B differ in infrastructures. Area A, about one block west of the Area B, would be characterized as a commercial zone punctuated with failed businesses. People purchase a case of beer, a pack of cigarettes from a local gas station, or a meal from a fast food restaurant; while the homeless panhandle to drivers exiting onto Classen from the highway. Importantly, the Jesus House, City Rescue Mission, and the Salvation Army are within half a mile walking distance from this area.

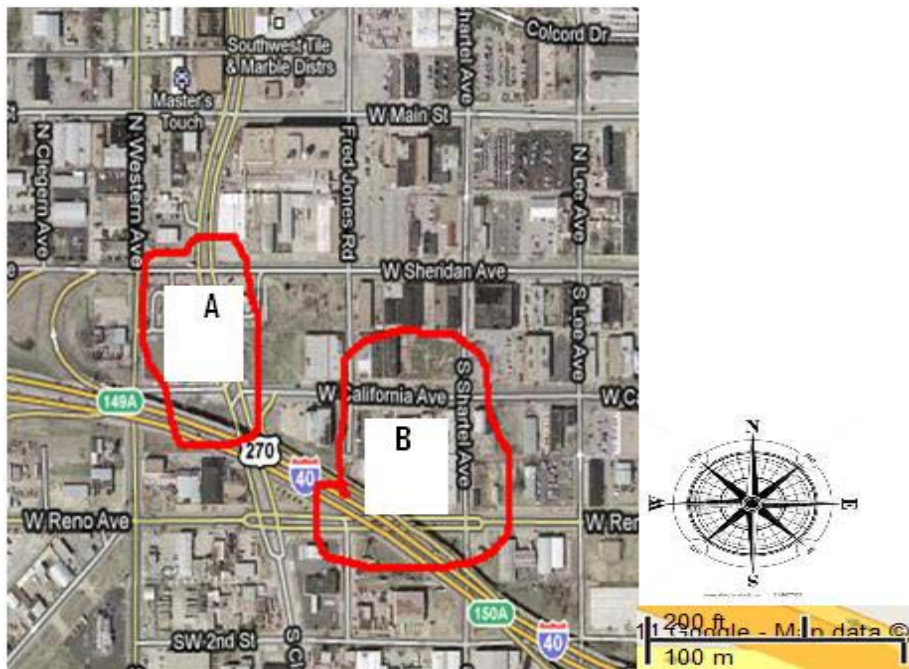


Figure 10. Crime hot spots in the Oklahoma City area. Adapted from Google.com.



Figure 11. A pathway of victimization. This is the pathway that her client took during her attack. The larger X represents the Jesus House and the smaller X is the convenience store.

Area A is also a place where offenders seek out potential victims. To illustrate, Director Nancy helped a mentally ill woman, who was punched in the face and robbed of her money by an unknown assailant while she walked to a gas station, located on Classen and Sheridan from the Jesus House to pick up a Coke (figure 11). Directly north of W. Sheridan Avenue, one will find high grass fields and the entrance to highway I-40. Dilapidated buildings mark the landscape with no residential areas. There are five intersections that the woman in question walked by before getting her Coke at the gas station. Driving through this area to the Jesus House, numerous homeless socialize and watch patrons coming out of a gas station. This is an opportune

place for a robbery because both areas have motivated offenders and suitable targets and no guardians.

Motivated Offenders. Jim illustrates the best example of the types of victimizations in Area B, which is around the City Rescue Mission.

Jim: I don't go around down town much because there's a lot of homeless there.

A lot of them don't have nothing... The more people you get in an area that's homeless, the more crimes there are because the more people don't have anything and they see you with something they want it, you know what I mean?

Located on Shartel, in between Sheridan and West California Avenue, area B, also known as the "Jungle" according to Roxanne, contains numerous targets for motivated offenders. Two missions are within two blocks of each other. The City Rescue Mission houses over 400 men, women, and children, Salvation Army houses around 80 male and female occupants, and the Jesus House takes care of 75 mentally and/or drug addicted males and females (Homeless Alliance, 2009). Driving eastbound on Reno Avenue under the I-40 overpass, homeless men and women wait for the bus on Shartel Avenue. Just north of this area, dozens of people socialize around the City Rescue Mission (Figure 13).

Figure 12 depicts the close proximity of the Jesus House, the City Rescue Mission, and the Salvation Army area to the hot spots. By measuring the walking distance from The Jesus House, Salvation Army, and City Rescue Mission and the distance to the crime hot spots, one will find that the Jesus House is .40 miles, City Rescue is already within Area B and is .15 miles away from Area A, and Salvation Army is .24 miles away from Area B. The City Rescue mission is adjacent to highway I-40 and is in the middle of Area B. Four respondents lived at one

point directly below this area of the high way. Before living at Grace Rescue Mission, James lived under the I-40 underpass by Western Avenue and provided a good illustration of the area:

.... I know City Rescue is right over there but, and that's a bad place... All the drugs and people just go nuts over there... They have no money. They try to just take whatever they can...

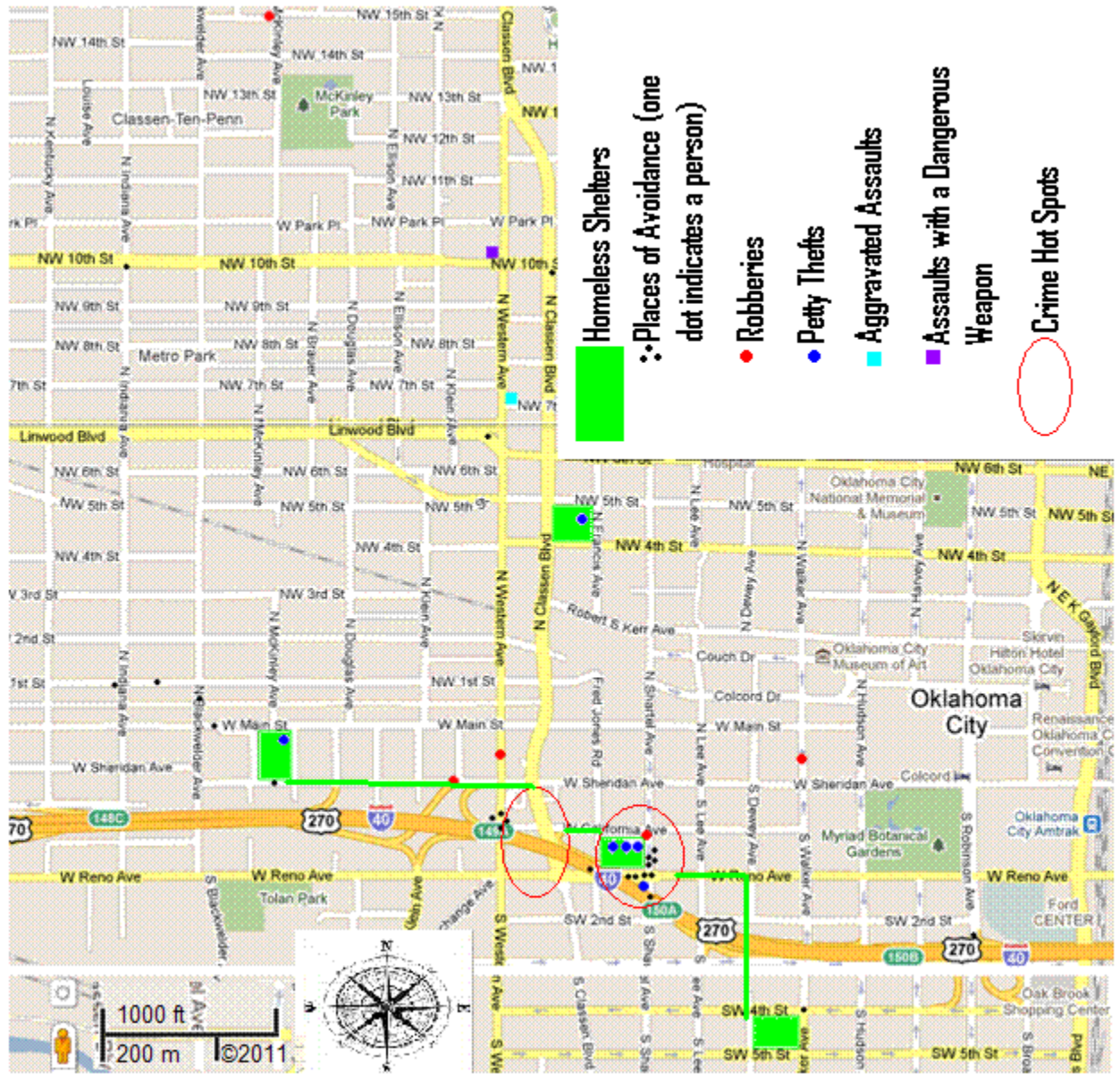


Figure 12. Shelter Proximity. The green paths are the distances from each shelter to each hot zone. Adapted from Google.com. One must note that the crime hot spot furthest west should include Western and Sheridan Avenue intersection.



Figure 13. City Rescue Mission during the daytime. This first-person view is a satellite picture taken from Google.com. It is also representational of one driving south between California and Shartel Avenue. Adapted from Google.com.

As one can see in Areas A and B, these areas provide the opportunity for people to commit crimes. The residents from the Salvation Army and City Rescue Mission meet around area B. Blocked by the overpowering size of I-40 Highway, this area allows motivated offenders to move around freely without guardians to stop them.

Guardians. There are motivated offenders and illegal activities, but no mention of a guardian such as a police officer, volunteer, or a caretaker in Area B. If there were a guardian(s), it would be impossible to watch over 400 transients frequenting this area.¹⁶ In figure 13, one can see the I-40 highway and underpass on the far left corner, and people are socializing around the City Rescue Mission that has little windows that a caretaker could watch through from the inside of the building. In Figure 13, there is only

¹⁶ There may have been some guardians in the area, but no one mentioned them.

one entrance into the men's side of City Rescue Mission. The entrance is inconspicuous. There is only a place to drop someone off at the shelter and no place to park. However, the woman's side of the shelter allows volunteers and employees to park, which provides fewer opportunities for crime, because of heavier guardian traffic.



Figure 14. The other side of the City Rescue Mission.

Potential guardians turn a blind eye at the site of crime in this area according to Noah: “Right down the streets of the City Rescue Mission they hanged out there, robbed you in broad daylight, and those people in that store don’t care. They’ll sit there and watch it...” Noah mentions a gas station that is on the southwest corner of I-40 about fifty yards away from the I-40 overpass. The surrounding buildings appear to be abandoned. In addition, there are various alleys and side roads around the mission, where the homeless ask for Stephen’s cigarettes and sex from Jill. The entrances to City Rescue Mission

are not in view of the overpasses, reducing staff members or guardians opportunity to secure the area. So, it would be difficult to watch the surrounding area.

The security in the area is minimal at best. According to interviews and observations, there are several homeless people in the area all day and night. There are police inside the City Rescue Mission during the daytime hours, but not at night, reducing the number of guardians at one period of the day. During the day, the residents venture off to their activities, so the police secure the inside of the mission and not the outside. In figure 14, a person can easily see any problems by looking north on Shartel from Reno Avenue and south from California Avenue, but the buildings around the area appear abandoned, reducing watchful eyes.

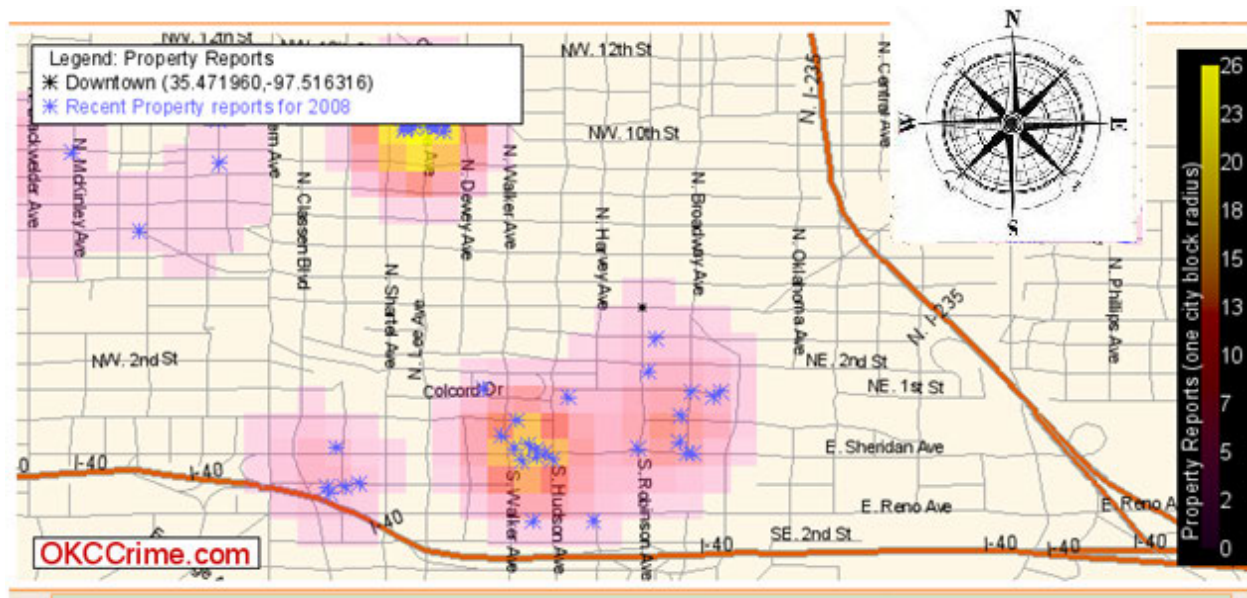


Figure 15. Property crime reports around Sister Barbara Joseph's Pantry which is on 4th Street and Classen Boulevard. Adapted with permission from Okccrime.com. The pinked areas are supposed to indicate crime occurrences.

In figure 15, Okccrime.com (2008) reported a high amount of crime about five blocks Northeast of the pantry, and around the area of Colcord Drive and Walker Avenue, but very few incidents occurred at the Pantry (see figure 15).

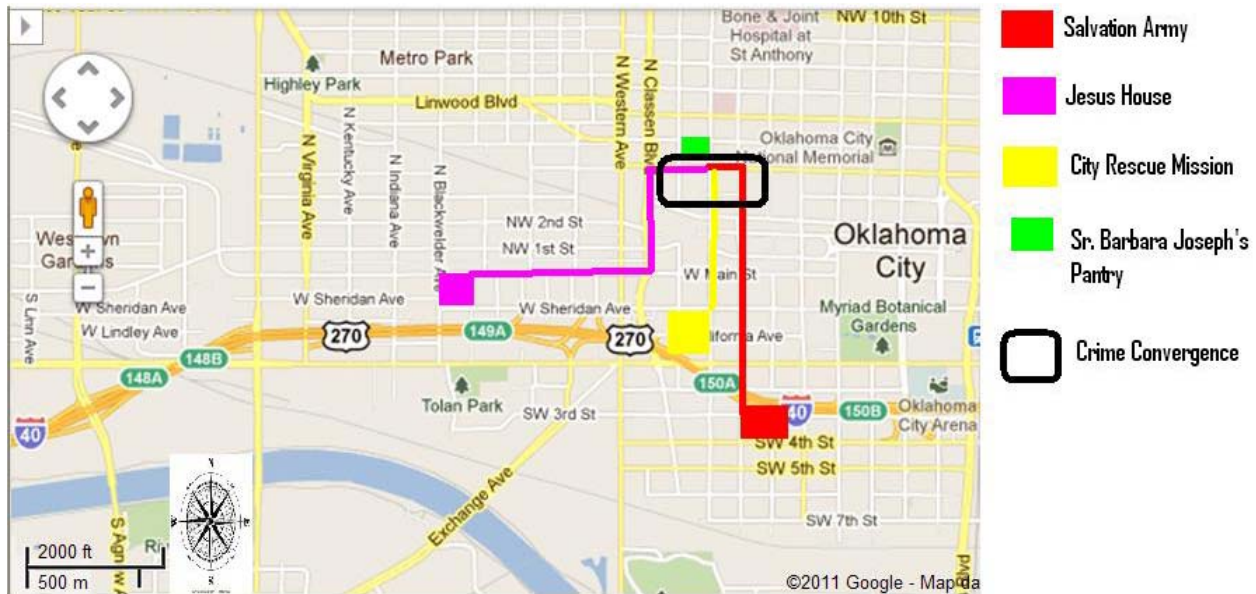


Figure 16. Convergence onto the Sister Barbara Joseph's Pantry.

A meeting area outside of Sister Barbara Joseph's Pantry is conducive for crime, because it allows the opportunity to meet and conduct illegal activities. However, the operating hours of the shelter and the number of volunteers offset such activities. In Figure 16, many residents walk to Sister Barbara Joseph's Pantry for clothes and food because of the close proximity to the Jesus House, City Rescue Mission, and the Salvation Army. The Jesus House residents may take the path in purple. The City Rescue residents follow the yellow. Finally, the Salvation Army residents may take the green path. Further, Figure 16 does not include those who reside in camps because the camps are scattered around the city, but the three subjects who did not live in a

shelter, mentioned living a few blocks away from this site. Sister Sarah mentioned a few instances where people had a past argument at another location and fought at the pantry:

Two people maybe, um, had disagreements, you know away from the pantry, but they both happened to be here at the same time. And so, they um have pick up rocks and try to throw rocks at each other.

The area has the potential for being a place for crime convergence, but something reduced the chances.

Two things contributed to offset crime at the pantry. The operating hours of the pantry and the number of volunteers contributed to the decrease in crime. Around 6:30a.m., every Friday and Saturday, the homeless gather around the pantry which opens at 7:00a.m. From 7:00a.m. to 9:00a.m., the facility opens the side gate to the picnic benches. Offenders and potential victims or targets converge onto this area for a brief time and leave. Sister Sarah's quote reflected an instance that occurred in the grand opening of the pantry. As the pantry became more established with regular volunteers; confrontations dropped. These two factors reduced victimization in an area that has a high chance of crime convergence, but this site is not an actual shelter.

Shelter Protection

The shelters, Jesus House and Grace Rescue Mission, protected the homeless from violent crime. The Jesus House is well-known as an Oklahoma City homeless shelter. Off-duty Oklahoma City Police officers provide 24 hour security. Each officer is certified in Crisis Intervention, a certification that allows police officers to assess the mentally ill. In addition, high-tech security cameras survey the gated property. The only apparent security issue was the high accessibility of the Jesus House. Despite the cameras, there are three to four entrances into

the facility, which could allow access to the unwanted residents or outsiders. These outsiders move in and out of the shelter, selling drugs to recovering addicts. However, the shelter goes into lockdown around 7:00p.m., eliminating any unwanted guests at night. The area directly outside provides additional security, because the street that abuts the shelter on the south side ends a block away from the shelter. This road blockage reduces the flow of outside traffic. West Sheridan Avenue ends at North McKinley, reducing any unnecessary and unwanted traffic. All of these deterrents contribute to the security of its residents.

Another way of protecting their residents was bond formation among the homeless at the Jesus House. Many of its residents shared the idea of family. Roxanna put it this way: “This is our home you know, this is our home. We have to treat it like it is our home.” Stephen manifested this idea in protecting others at the Jesus House.

Stephen: Here, I will report it. If I see it, umm, as far as they mess with the women. I’m very well-aware of how a man thinks... I can see the signs of somebody, that predator in them. I’m very sensitive to that, and, uh yeah I can see that. The way I can take my anger out sometimes it’s because I see that. It’s just makes my heart hurt; certain ways to take it out on a punching bag without gloves (laughing) [reveals several abrasions on his knuckles]...

If a female were harassed at the shelter, Stephen would be quick to tell an officer and have the person removed. The Jesus House only accepts people who are mentally ill and/or substance abusers seeking recovery. Families look after each other. Out of families, arise guardians who watch over the members of the family. The Jesus House family ensures that residents are not raped, robbed, or experience some other crimes.

The Grace Rescue Mission offers a different way of protecting the homeless. Unlike Jesus House, the stockyards provide low skill labor. Importantly, caretakers watch the property 24 hours a day to guard against nonresidents who can be easily viewed from a large front window. In order to live at the shelter, the residents perform chores which foster a sense of ownership. Outside of the mission, a few homeless men sit and wait for the bus in front of the mission. Since there is only one shelter in the area, outsiders do not visit the area. It is a place where men rest their heads and then leave for a job in the city. There are very few women in the area, reducing any need to impress or compete with other males according to Brother Ron. In essence, the Grace Rescue's monastic setting may provide an unorthodox way of protecting its residents.

One apparent problem in crime prevention is the living quarters. If one were to walk into this shelter and see the living quarters of the residents, it closely resembles a military barracks. This men-only shelter houses around 80 people. The idea behind this is an attempt to get men off the streets, but it also provides offenders the opportunity for petty thefts due to the high number of residents.

Suitable Targets

Oklahoma City's Homeless. Out of 1,081 homeless in Oklahoma City proper, 33% suffered from a substance addiction and 22% suffered from a mental illness (Homeless Alliance, 2010). Three out of seven caretakers claimed mental illness as a predictor of victimization. Although mental illness was not specifically examined, Counselor William provided information pertaining to Oklahoma City's mentally ill homeless:

Where places are closing down, um, treatment programs, chemical abuse programs, we are seeing an increase in people showing up who have come from

other facilities that no longer have a bed for them' cause of over crowdedness or because they're in a downsizing mode. So, we have people coming in here that a year ago weren't homeless. Because they're in another facility due to budget or whatever the politics involved these facilities. Or we have an increase in popularity due to facilities closing down rather than new facilities opening up.

These closures greatly affect the Jesus House because they are the only ones who house the mentally ill homeless. The mentally ill are a highly vulnerable group and an easy target for crime (Markowitz, 2006; Anthony et al., 1986; Dietz & Wright, 2005; Padgett & Struening, 1992; Davidson et al., 2003). Director Nancy, with over 25 years of experience with the mentally ill further explained why they are so vulnerable:

Mental health patients, many of times things happen to them, and because they're classified as mental patients, no one believes them when they say this is happening to me; "My landlord is sexually abusing me," whatever it is.

Unlike other homeless, mentally ill receive money from the local and federal government. With an increase in population, the shelters exceed capacity forcing them to seek shelter somewhere else within this marginal region according to Counselor William. Since the Jesus House only houses 75 for the mentally ill, there is a good chance that this type of people will have to sleep outside, which leaves them vulnerable to crime.

Shelter dwellers and Non-shelter dwellers. There was a significant difference between shelter dwellers and non-shelter dwellers. Sister Barbara Joseph's Pantry was unique from the rest of the research sites. Since it does not provide shelter, it also provides services for those who may not reside in a shelter. Out of the 21 respondents, three did not live in shelters at the time of the interview and were living on the street in camps. This group provided the opportunity to

compare shelter dwellers and those who live on the street. Shelter dwellers most often mentioned their victimization in the distant past. In contrast, non-shelter dwellers told stories that occurred in the days shortly surrounding the interview.

Grace Rescue Mission and the Jesus House were used to compare against victimizations on the street and provided a safer place than sleeping underneath a highway overpass.¹⁷ There were only three crime occurrences at the Jesus House and Grace Rescue Mission. In contrast, the ten respondents who camped out in the city in the past—suffered huge losses of clothing, tools, and other necessities. In the shelters, they had a lock and a locker to secure their items. When something did get stolen at the shelter, the main reason for losing the items was carelessness. Director Nancy explained that:

They have a locker and a lock ... We tell them, like you would at your home, if you were going to have people in your home. The things that you were concern about that may disappear would be put in their proper place so if they had wallets, IDS, CD players, whatever it is they got, it needs to be in their locker.

This finding is not surprising. Indeed, shelters allow the opportunity to protect goods from offenders. In addition, the shelters have guardians who watch the area for motivated offenders.

Grace Rescue Mission Distance Example

Brother Ron was asked the question relating to how the caretakers protect their residents at the Grace Rescue Mission. He confidently responded:

As long as they are here, no, not really. I mean this this like I said, this is the best place. This is the Hilton of homeless missions as far as I'm concerned... It's a

¹⁷ Sister Barbara Joseph's Pantry does not house the homeless; therefore it was not used in this section.

very good place. It's a very good place you can be. Here, you can get sober...

You can take time to get your life together, and not have to worry about getting ripped off, rolled, or anything.

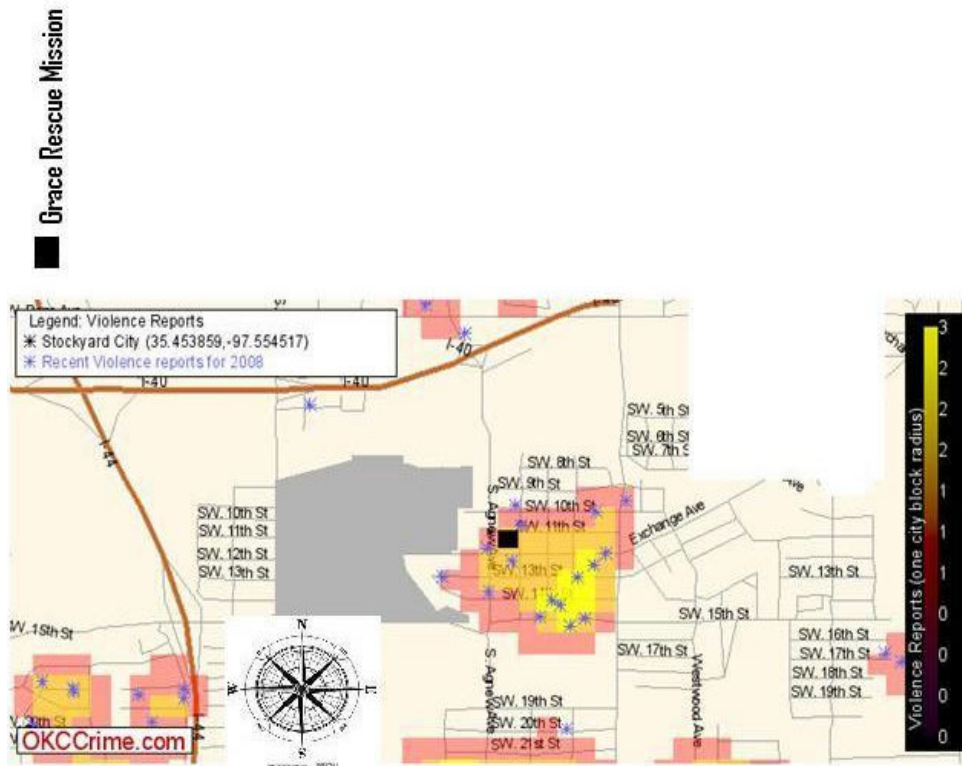


Figure 17. Violence reports by the Grace Rescue Mission. This picture was adapted with permission from Okccrime.com. The pinked areas indicate crime occurrences.

The landscape of Grace Rescue Mission is distinct from the other shelters. It is Located in the heart of the Flats District, a well-known place for drugs. In addition, Okccrime.com shows it is also violent (see figure 17), this mission is directly east of the Stockyards and a few miles away from the other shelters (see figure 18). Directly behind the shelter, abandoned houses and Hispanic immigrants pepper the area. The area is mostly residential with little commercial avenues. This area is so poor and dangerous that the interview room at the mission was punctured with bullet holes. According to Okccrime.com (see figure 17), the area around the

Grace Rescue is a hot bed for crime. Okccrime.com (2008) reported 16 violent acts within a three block radius.

- Grace Rescue Mission
- Salvation Army
- Jesus House
- City Rescue Mission

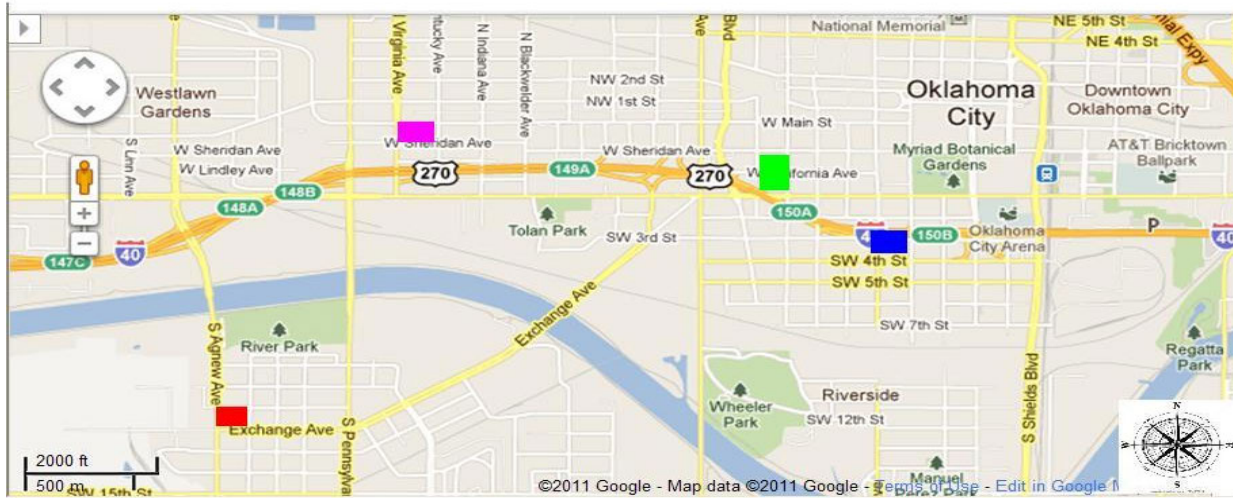


Figure 18. The Grace Rescue Mission’s location from another shelter.

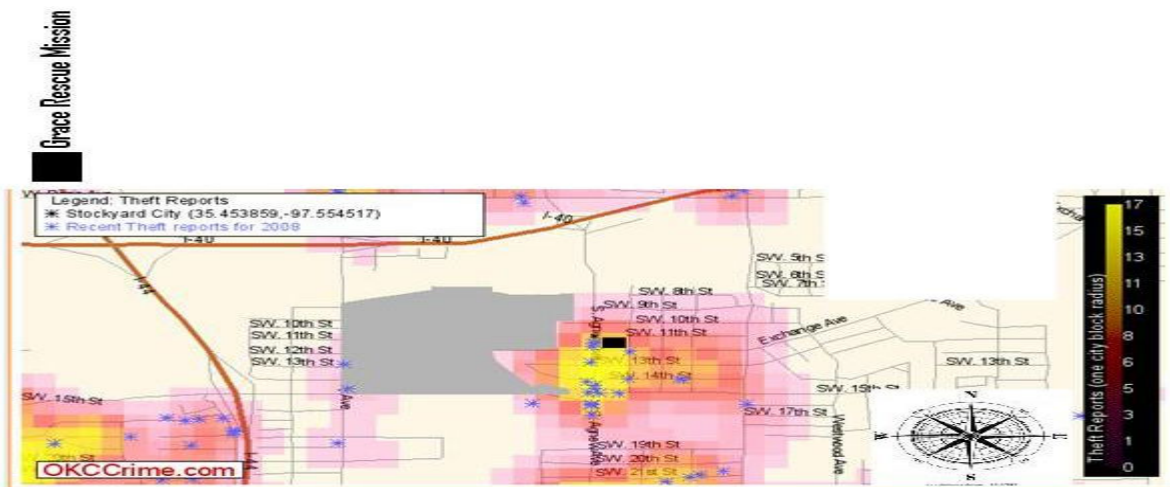


Figure 19. Theft reports around the Grace Rescue Mission. This picture was adapted with permission from Okccrime.com. The pinked areas indicate crime occurrences.

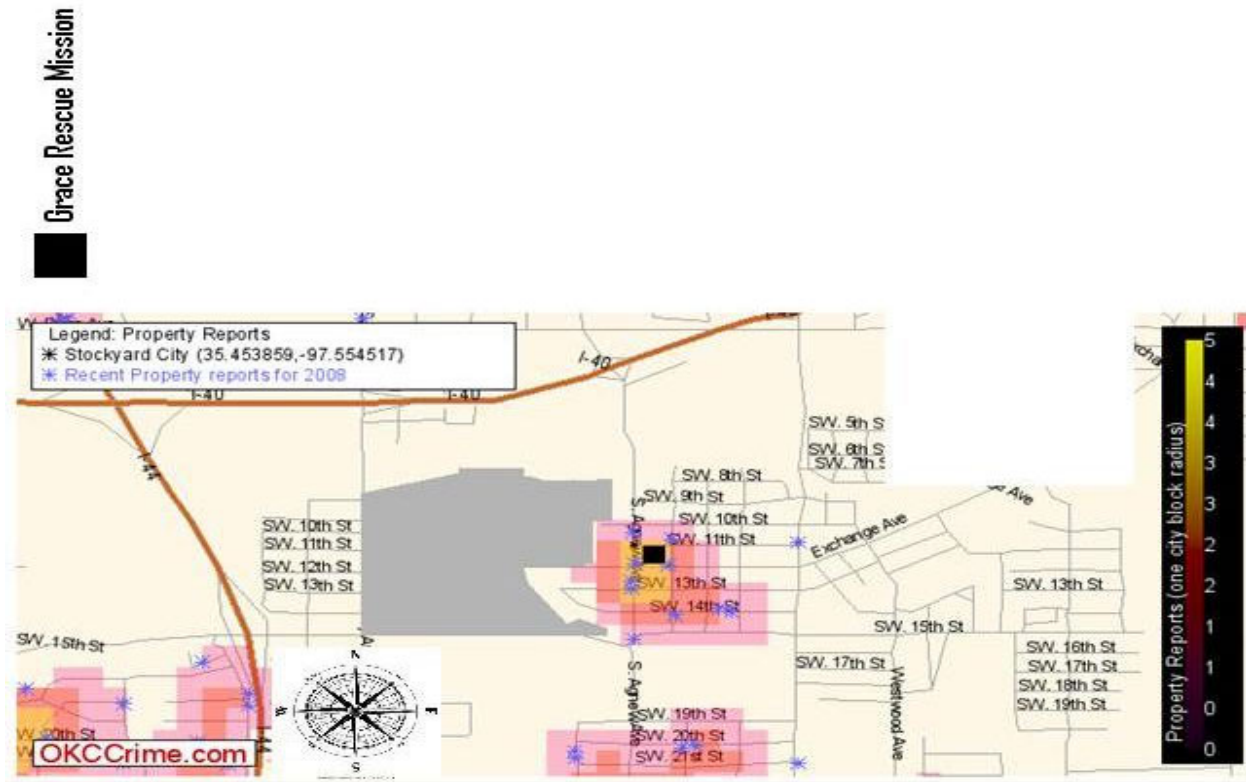


Figure 20. Property crime reports around the Grace Rescue Mission. The picture was adapted with permission from Okccrime.com. The pinked areas indicate crime occurrences.

With regard to thefts, Okccrime.com displayed 11 thefts in figure 19 and eight property crimes in figure 20. Despite the high level of crime, fourteen males claimed to have never experienced a crime in this area. This important finding demonstrates that the close proximity of shelters promoted a high level of crime.

Conclusion

The streets of Oklahoma City are a dangerous place for the homeless. Master Sergeant Serpico noted that factors, such as urban development will greatly reduce the area available to the homeless. However, the crime areas will not be completely eliminated because of the

proximity to the highway and locality of the shelters. In fact, it will force the homeless to remain in a shrinking geographic area with environmental factors conducive to increased crime.

In addition, Counselor William mentioned that there is an increase of mentally ill on the streets due in part to a lack of funding for mental health services. Coupled with their vulnerabilities, monthly paychecks, and the reduction of marginal areas, the mentally ill will face even more dangerous situations in the not so distant future.

The Jesus House houses around 75 people, the Grace Rescue Mission provides 80 beds, the City Rescue Mission has 400, and the rest of the shelters provide approximately 200 beds. There are over 1,500 homeless people in Oklahoma City proper (Homeless Alliance, 2009). Overburdened, the caretakers face the challenge of providing beds for the homeless, which may not stop homelessness, but provides a safer environment than the streets. Furthermore, these individuals experienced more crime on the streets than at the sampled shelters which reinforces the fact that shelters do prevent victimization among the homeless while housed in the shelter.

The close proximity of shelters, however, contributed to a high level of crime among this homeless sample. The Grace Rescue Mission's distance from the other shelters strengthens this argument. By the same token, City Rescue Mission's high population and close proximity to other shelters also strengthens this finding. All of the environmental factors needed for crime to occur are present in this area. The area is filled with vulnerable groups, motivated offenders, and very few guardians. The landscape hides offenders, reducing the ability to watch over the vulnerable. The homeless are forced to live in these areas because of their status, and the fact that these are the only places that serve their needs. Finally, two out of 14 men reported only petty thefts at the Grace Rescue Mission. Importantly, none of the subjects reported any other thefts or

violent crimes in this highly violent area.¹⁸ This reinforces the need to consider the placement of shelters.

Discussion

This spatially related finding on crime offers an alternative explanation of homeless victimization. This study indicates that the placement of homeless shelters in the Oklahoma City proper contributes to a significant amount of crime. This result has a high potential for follow-up tests in other municipalities with significantly large homeless populations. In light of this study homeless shelter placement should be an important issue for city council leaders concerned about the safety of the homeless population in their city.

In the study seven categories of causation emerged for homelessness with substance abuse being the highest category. These numerous categories reinforce the individuality of the homeless, a similar finding in Anderson and Snow's study (1993). However, substance abuse cannot be ignored as a factor of victimization. Many were severely intoxicated during the crime, waking up to find items missing with no offender in sight. In addition, Okccrime.com (2008) reported a high amount of public intoxication in the area. Nevertheless, it was not mentioned in all cases. Even though victimization while intoxicated is a common finding (Burchfield & Felson, R. 2004; Padgett & Struening, 1992; Crawford et al., 2009; Baggerly & Zalaquett, 2006), one cannot reasonably conclude that all of these victimizations stemmed from that factor.

The demographics of this sample are similar to the general homeless population in Oklahoma City proper. With regard to age, this study did not have any respondents under the age of thirty. Anderson and Snow (1993) conducted their study in Austin, Texas and had similar findings. These cities may be unappealing to the youth. Since there were no younger people in

¹⁸ The locations of rapes and sexual assaults were never disclosed during this study. This significant crime differences applies to thefts and physical attacks only.

this present sample, Dietz and Wright's (2005) finding on youth cannot be supported or disproven. It is important to note the present sample was older and still experienced multiple amounts of victimization regardless of age. If one were to remove the years of homelessness from the present sample, one would still find that most were still over the age of thirty. Thus, age may not be a determinant to homeless victimization.

This study revealed a significant amount of victimization. The sample of 21 homeless people experienced an average of five victimizations per person. Twenty respondents experienced at least one type of theft. Overall, the most important fact of the nonviolent thefts was the motive itself. Anderson and Snow's (1993) survival concept surfaced frequently within the present data. Whether it is a can of food or money, it is still valuable to both offenders and victims.

All of the females lived in a shelter the whole time of homelessness and mentioned losing money, whereas the majority of the males slept on the street at one point and lost survival items. The act of stealing survival items appears gender-specific, but this difference may stem from the present data; whereas if one were to interview women who in fact slept on the street, they might find that they lost several survival items as well. One must not entirely dismiss the idea of survival because it does provide the social status of the offender—homeless. The pressure of survival shows that the offenders are highly motivated.

The high amounts of sexual victimizations are noteworthy. No males disclosed a rape or sexual assault, but this finding is not surprising. Bradford et al. (2010) also found that homeless males underreport their sexual victimizations. Finkelstien's (2005) discovery of rapes among homeless youth is novel, but may be explained by the fact that her sampling pool was younger. In contrast, all but two females were a victim of a rape, one experienced a sexual assault,

however only one rape was reported to the police. This lack of reporting of sex crimes by homeless women is similar in other studies (Abrams et al., 2006; Dutton et al., 1995; Galaif, et al., 1999; D'Ercole & Struening, 1990; Apel & Dugan, 2003). Given the low numbers of reports and no mentioned locations, rapes and sexual assaults were never plotted on a crime map. The only location mentioned was Idabel, Oklahoma, which is three hours away from Oklahoma City.

Sexual solicitations did not differ between sexes—a similar finding in Walcholz (2006) and Finkelstein's (2005) studies. While the current study did not reach saturation on this point, it did indicate that the location may have an effect on whether or not sexual solicitations occur. Two subjects mentioned several encounters in the transitional area of this study. Every subject who experienced this crime indicated the offender was a male who did not appear to be homeless. Walcholz (2006) discussed the ways society harasses the homeless, and sexual solicitation is a form of this harassment. No one mentioned being solicited in the marginal or prime regions of the city; the homeless do not visit the prime area, which explains the lack of occurrences. Nice cars and well-dressed men look suspicious in a marginal area. The transitional area is a perfect spot for a "John" to accost a man or woman. The action of sexual solicitation of the homeless is a pure manifestation of society exploiting this group of people. The sexual solicitations of the homeless in the transitional areas are worth further study.

The secondary victimizations are noteworthy. The negative relationship between the police and the homeless appeared in other studies (Walcholz, 2006; Dear & Wolch, 1993; Rosenthal, 1994; Anderson & Snow 1993; Mulchaly & Snow, 2001), but those studies assume that the police are attempting to enforce specific laws against the homeless. In contrast, the police in this study acted in an investigative function, by attempting to find criminal activity and not focusing on harassing the homeless. The police questioned the homeless mostly in poor areas

and the issue of loitering was never raised. “I think sometimes they get their kicks out of slapping homeless people around,” says Marshall. This quote from Marshall is illustrative of the prevailing attitude among the homeless men in this sample. Further, this negative attitude towards the police is highly dangerous for both parties. This finding helps us understand what the homeless consider offensive. There was a significant difference between male and female attitudes towards the police.

Five out of six women had a positive attitude towards the police. This positive attitude is attributed to the oversampling of women at the Jesus House who come in contact with the officers who work at the facility in a secondary employment role. In fact, every sampled resident at the Jesus House has shown the same positive attitude towards the Oklahoma City Police Officers who worked there. Although their main purpose is security, these police officers interact with the residents at all hours of the day. This was the only shelter that had a high level of police presence. It should also be noted that there was a more positive attitude towards the police at this shelter than any other research site. This finding warrants further study on shelter dwellers and police presence.

Very few crimes were reported to the police. It was not surprising to find that automobile thefts were reported, as they are among most sections of society (U.S. Department of Justice, 2003). Vehicles are expensive and are especially important if they are a place of residence. They are easier to track than clothing or other small items.

In addition, the use of emergency rooms and reporting are significant. The emergency rooms of the downtown Oklahoma City area are a good indicator of violent crime against the homeless. Mike reported his robbery experience when he was at St. Anthony’s Hospital while receiving stitches to his head. The hospital provides the opportunity for the victim to report the

victimization. Those who received hospitalization were the only ones who reported the violent crimes to the police. This finding reinforces Bangsberg et al.'s (2002) study on the homeless and their emergency room use. In addition, Karmen (1984) also found that many were more likely to report when they suffered an injury. Nevertheless, there is no legislation requiring the hospital to provide this type of data.

Several important themes occurred regarding crime reporting. Crime is another part of being homeless. This typical attitude is similar to that found in Kohm's (2006) study. The Department of Justice (2003) found personal or private matters were generally the main reason for not reporting. The homeless are under constant exposure to crime, which becomes just another part of street living. These overly violent experiences relate to Agnew's (2006) theory on strain and indeed explain why crimes were rarely reported.

The last two reasons for not reporting were retribution and apathy. The relationship between the offender and victim tended to be one of stranger to stranger. However, when a police officer is the offender, the uniform is an excellent identifier. The incidents with the police produced fear and distrust of law enforcement among portions of this sample. As mentioned, these police officers patrol the homeless areas and may know the location where homeless congregate. Self-esteem in the homeless community is low to nonexistent, and the lack of sympathy does change a person's attitude and the chances of reporting again will significantly decrease.

The environment plays an important role in homeless victimization. When one combines the ideas from battle for space, social disorganization theory and routine activity theory, and strain theory, one is able to explain that most of the crime that was experienced by this group of people was purely environmental. The stakeholders of the downtown Oklahoma City area have

pushed this group into spaces with highly motivated offenders and few to no guardians. These offenders are not the typical burglar opting for only highly valuable goods, but people who will seize the opportunity if it presents itself. Since these people do not have a home, they are left to carry the equivalent of their homes upon their shoulders creating more opportunities for crime making them highly suitable targets. This situation is not novel. Gaetz (2004) found the same finding for the youth. In addition to an unsafe environment, the proximity of shelters played a notable role in the victimization among the current sample.

There were a few factors that offset the high amount of victimization. Sister Barbara Joseph's Pantry's setup, hours of operation, and the number of volunteers, prevented much victimization. However, the area of Classen and Sheridan Avenue provides a place where others can steal, and a place where offenders can survey the area for potential targets. The businesses in that area are commercially owned and the corporations have no incentive to survey the area. Felson (2006) recommends placing privately owned shops into the area as a means to reduce crime. Privately owned businesses have a vested interest in the promotion of profit and safety in their areas.

The location of the City Rescue Mission and its large number of residents contributes to the vast amount of victimization among this sample. A recommendation is to house people in the larger shelters who are less likely to offend, such as women, children, and/or married couples. There needs to be another shelter similar to Grace Rescue Mission far away from these areas of convergence to house the large population of male homeless who may be more likely to offend. A shelter located outside the Oklahoma City downtown area would be preferable to society and increase safety for the homeless by being in an environment less conducive to crime.

The shelters provide safe haven for the homeless in comparison to sleeping on the streets as Sister Sarah illustrates,

The victimization is because, not necessary, cause they're mean. I think it has to do with their way of life. Its tough, tough way of life, and they are out to survive ... The ones, the guys living out on the street. They will do what they need to do to survive. It's a hard survival, especially when the weather like today, [the temperature was below freezing] When the weather is in the teens you spent the whole night out there trying to stay warm. To keep an attitude, to keep a happy attitude, in a situation like that is hard.

Living in a shelter protects the homeless from most crimes, especially violent ones (Dutton et al., 1995). Four respondents suffered losses at the City Rescue Mission, but none mentioned a violent crime. Phillip's robbery occurred outside of the City Rescue Mission, so we cannot say that the mission was responsible.

The Grace Rescue Mission is located miles away from the other shelters and the majority of the homeless. There are fewer motivated offenders than is seen in the area around the City Rescue Mission, despite the widely known violence of the Flats district. In addition, there are no apparent areas of convergence. Importantly, the separation of sexes may have contributed to the low levels of victimization in the area, but the interview instruments were unable to provide that finding.

The Jesus House is in an area that promotes crimes. The researcher found three to four entrances into the Jesus House. Clark (1997) noted that reducing entrances and exits discourages crime. This is pertinent especially when the residents are in drug recovery. This suggestion may reduce the inflow of outsiders who may sell drugs to the residents. If it were not for the police officers at the Jesus House, crime might be rampant in this shelter. In addition to being in a high

crime environment, it is too close to the other shelters making its residents more susceptible to crime.

Caveats

There are several issues regarding self-reports. Hagan (2005) raises the issue of telescoping¹⁹ during victimization self-report studies. In this study, the subjects were specifically asked about victimizations that occurred during homelessness. The respondents could divulge information outside of the homeless timeframe. Hagan (2005) also raises the issue of lying. The subjects may have exaggerated or misconstrued the accounts. However, many studies found minimal error during self-reporting (Morris & Slocum, 2010; Bauerle, Keller, & Turner, 2010). The next issue Hagan (2005) notes is poor memory. Many subjects mentioned substance abuse during the victimizations and may have experienced further crimes and/or were homeless for over five years. Since some were apathetic towards their victimizations, it was possible that the subjects overlooked some crimes. These issues were addressed during the development of the instruments and during the analysis of the data. Further, the use of dual data reduces error in self-reports (Enzmann, Gruszczynska, Junger-Tas, Killias, Marshall, & Steketee, 2010). Unlike most studies, this study had a separate group of subjects. The caretakers' data confirmed the high level of victimization among the homeless of Oklahoma City. Morris and Slocum (2010) noted the use of landmarks as a way to reduce error in self-reporting. The homeless respondents were asked to provide the exact location for each victimization except rape. These locations also reoccurred throughout the data. As a result, the level of error regarding self-reports is minimal.

There were several specifics regarding the sample population and size. There was a sample of 21 homeless respondents and seven caretakers. Although small, the point of this

¹⁹ "Tendency of respondents to move forward and report has having occurred events that actually occurred before the reference period" (Hagan, 2005. p. 391).

research is to acquire a general understanding of homeless victimization. Second, this study cannot be generalized to other areas of the country because each city has its own unique homeless population. With regard to demographics, there were very few women in this sample. The research sites had mostly men; Grace Rescue Mission houses only men and the Jesus House provides around 75 beds to both men and women. At the time of the study, the Jesus House had eighteen women living in the shelter; six of those were sampled for this study. Since Sr. Barbara Joseph's Pantry is open to the outdoors and freezing temperatures, there were few women who would endure the cold weather. The City Rescue Mission's refusal to allow the conducting of research significantly reduced the sample of women. Finally, since this sample is small, it might be difficult to apply the finding to the whole homeless population of Oklahoma City.

Future research

Temporal order of crime. A temporal order of crime was noted throughout the interviews but there was not enough information to support that finding. There were a lot of discussions with caretakers about the first and third week of the month and its relation to crime. The first and third week of the month refers to those who receive governmental assistance. Many caretakers thought that those periods of the month were conducive for crime. However, one has to assume that all or most of the homeless receive governmental assistance. The ones who do are normally mentally ill, disabled, or women with children. According to the caretakers, these are the three groups that were most vulnerable. However, many subjects did not mention victimizations directly from this type of scenario. This requires further research.

Another temporal occurrence emerged during the interviewing phase of this study. During the winter season, many vagrants sought shelter at one of the missions. During this time,

non-resident visitors caused these people extra problems. Master Sergeant Serpico mentioned this group of people as the “outsiders” who come into the shelter and exploit residents:

Serpico: Oh, from time to time, a problem arises, but that’s because we got 70 people on the property. At any given time, more when we have outsiders coming in due to cold weather or bad weather. You are going to have people who just don’t have respect for other people’s property...this time of the year, we have a lot of larcenies...

During the interview process, Oklahoma experienced one of the coldest winters from December to February in recorded history. Many people who normally do not seek shelter did. Caretakers provided more information on this subject because of their years of experience. For example, the assistant director of Grace Rescue Mission also noticed an influx of residents during the winter months. Consequently, the weather may have some effect on in homeless research.

Conclusion

These findings on homeless victimization add to the scarce collection of homeless literature. This sample of the homeless consisted of older adults who reported an average of five years of homelessness. Although there were more males than females, this sample is representative of the Oklahoma City’s homeless population. Seven subjects became homeless because of substance abuse, making this group the largest of the other categories. This cause for homelessness cannot be ignored, but one must understand that seven out of 21 were sampled from the Jesus House which only houses the mentally ill and/or those suffering from substance abuse. Therefore, one cannot reasonably conclude that substance abuse causes homelessness.

This sample suffered a significant amount of theft victimization. Twenty out of 21 subjects suffered a petty theft during their course of homelessness. Out of those 21 individuals, six of them suffered a violent robbery. From cars to cans of food or sleeping bags, all of these

stolen items provide a clue that the offenders in the homeless world of Oklahoma City are not only motivated to crime at high levels but also are desperate to survive. During the drafting of this study, one subject experienced two burglary incidents in one week.

Eleven out of 21 subjects experienced a physical assault. Five aggravated assaults, four assaults with a deadly weapon, one assault by an officer, and one detailed maiming account at the hands of law enforcement personnel were reported in this study. It was not the initial intention of this research to discover assaults, but one incident was significant enough to be counted with the other crimes. If assaults were counted in this study, it would not be surprising to have the whole sample experience at least one incident.

Sexual crimes affected 10 out of 21 people in this study during their time on the streets. Four out six women were raped. Out of those six women, five were accosted by men who wanted to have sex for money. Although none of the men disclosed a rape incident, five out of 15 men were solicited for sex on multiple occasions. In addition, only one woman disclosed a sexual assault. The reason for the low number of reported sexual assaults stems from the initial design of this study, in which the sex crime question was very broad and could elicit anything from rapes to “catcalling.” Like assaults, it was preconceived that sexual assaults may be too prevalent to measure. In addition, since many of this sample thought crime was normal, some instances of sexual assaults may not have been considered a crime by this sample.

The secondary victimizations are noteworthy regarding the treatment of homeless by the police. One woman and 10 men felt that the police harassed them by questioning them on the street. Unlike other studies that supported the idea that police were trying to move the homeless away from the prime areas of the city, the incidents involving these subjects demonstrate the attitude that the homeless are committing a crime. Situations, where the police accost people who

are in rough areas, are not actions of harassment, but of common sense. However, some of the incidents do suggest police harassment. On the other hand, all of the sampled subjects from the Jesus House, that is five women and two men, had a positive attitude towards the police. The police at the Jesus House were highly respected and liked by the respondents. This finding shows the importance of police presence in the homeless world. Unfortunately, the Jesus House houses only 75 people who suffer from addiction or mental illness. The majority of the homeless will not get to meet these officers who specifically possess a better understanding of the homeless than most agencies, whether law enforcement or social.

Five themes emerged regarding reporting. Analogous to the normalcy of crime the term, “you snooze, you lose” reinforces the idea that crime is another part of being homeless in Oklahoma City. The concept of vulnerability reoccurred throughout the interviews. An interesting concept, fear of retribution from the police emerged from the data. In addition, many subjects had warrants or felt that since they had felonies they were unmotivated to report certain crimes. Finally, an overall negative attitude towards the police discouraged reporting victimizations.

With the exception of automobile thefts, the only time crimes were reported to the police was at the emergency room bedside of a victim. Only four violent crimes from this sample were known to the police because those persons suffered severe injuries. This finding reinforces the connection between emergency room use and victimization reporting.

The homeless of Oklahoma City proper were subtly displaced from other places into the marginal regions of the city because of the placement of facilities that suited their needs and were not, in a sense, bullied into these areas by the community shareholders. Anderson and Snow (1993) and Wacholz (2005) demonstrated how local shareholders push the homeless away from

prime areas. However, in Oklahoma City, this behavior has not manifested at this stage. Nevertheless, these subtle movements induced the homeless to congregate in certain areas. As the homeless population grew, criminal activity rose to high levels. With no other options, this sample had to endure the dangers of this area for drug treatment, psychological counseling, day labor opportunities, food, and a place to sleep.

The present theory demonstrates that the close proximity of the shelters significantly contributed to the crime of this sample of 21 men and women regarding robberies and petty thefts. The City Rescue Mission, the largest rescue mission in the city, the Jesus House, and Salvation Army are too close together. This sample of homeless lived in a highly socially disorganized environment that had little to no community support because the city planners established these three shelters away from mainstream society. This reflects a synthesis of all of the described theories in this study. Since there is a high population density in the area, without means of support, and little to no guardianship, the victims are susceptible to highly motivated offenders. However, although the community is dangerous and rough, Grace Rescue Mission is in a community that supports the presence of the homeless shelter. According to Brother Ron, in addition to serving 80 men daily, Grace Rescue Missions feeds hungry families in the area.

Throughout this study, there were impediments to criminal activity. The volunteers and operating hours of Sr. Barbara Joseph's Pantry discouraged crime. All of the shelters in the city significantly protected this sample from victimization. No one reported violent or sexual crimes occurring inside the shelters. The Jesus House and Grace Rescue Mission offered the opportunity to seek recovery from drugs and to find opportunities to leave the homeless world. Importantly, these shelters prevented a great deal of violent crime.

There are several policy implications. First, since the homeless are clustered into one area, it is necessary to relocate the missions away from each other. Grace Rescue Mission demonstrates that a mission can be in a poor area and yet be safe for its residents. Second, City Rescue Mission needs to reduce its residents to women and children only, and relocate the men to another men's only facility some distance from the area of California and Shartel Avenues. The landscape around the City Rescue Mission hides criminals, but this recommendation will move the men who are the offenders in most, if not all cases in this study, away from the area. Third, there are several caretakers who suggested a problem with the mentally ill and substance abuse; the Jesus House cannot be the only place that specializes in this type of treatment. A recommendation would be to create a similar facility away from the other homeless shelters. Finally, there needs to be more research on the homeless in general, and in Oklahoma City specifically.

The high rate of victimization will not decrease until environmental factors are addressed. As the prime area of Oklahoma City proper expands, the homeless will not disappear. In fact, they will be put in closer quarters with offenders. The crime hot spots will not disappear due in part to the fact that I-40 runs through the middle of the area and provides hiding places for offenders who prey on the homeless. Places where offenders congregate will remain while urban renewal will force the homeless to relocate closer to the offenders. In addition, Oklahoma City's population will continue to rise, creating more homeless.

The Jesus House provides 75 beds, the City Rescue Mission houses around 400, the Salvation Army houses around 80 people, and the Grace Rescue Missions provides 80 beds for men. There are still not enough beds for the climbing homeless population. Although this study did not attempt to find a connection between shelter use and homelessness, it did find that the

shelters reduced the chances of being a victim of a violent or sex crime. It is crucial that society and its leaders discuss the issue of homelessness and in the present case, homeless victimization.

The former may be an inevitable result of our society, however the latter is preventable.

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Appendix A

Shelter and Food Line Resident Interview

Oral Script

Qualifier Question: I'm Thad Merrill. I'm doing a paper at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond over crimes against the homeless. I would like to ask you a few questions to see if you qualify for my interview. (Victimization is where one is a victim of a criminal act).

Have you been a victim of a criminal act while being homeless?

Are you over the age of 18?

Are you homeless right now?

(If the person says no to anyone of the qualifier questions I will proceed to find another person and ask the qualifier questions again).

(I will wait for a response from the participant. If he or she says no, then I will say thank you and find someone else. If he or she agrees, then I will read them the inform consent form, followed by the questions below).

I will start out with a few questions about yourself.

Male _____

Female _____

How old are you? _____

What is your race or ethnicity? _____

How far did you go in school? _____

Are you currently employed? _____

How long have you been homeless?

How did you become homeless?

(if respondent says that he or she has been homeless on different occasions, ask the main issue for the majority of times).

I will ask you a few questions about thefts and attacks. I want to think of the times where you have been victim of any type of crime while you were homeless. Remember, if you don't want to answer the question, just say so.

While you are out here, on the streets have you ever had something stolen from you?

Could you give details about each time that this has happen to you while being homeless?

Did you know this person?

Did you report it?

I would also like to know about any physical fights you been into out here on the streets?

Could you give details about each time that this has happen to you while being homeless?

Did you know this person?

Did you report it?

The question I'm about to ask about the areas, spots, or hangouts around the area.

Is there any place that you avoid? (If respondent says no, skip the next question and its sub-questions.)

Why do you avoid those places? [If no, skip questions b)]

Can you provide details?

Could you describe the area?

Who hangs out in that the area?

Are there a lot of people there?

The following questions are more sensitive. The questions that I am about to ask you are sex crimes. Remember, that this conversation will remain between you and me.

While living out here on the streets, have you ever had anybody try to do something sexually to you that you considered offensive or hurtful?

a) Did you report it?

Now, I am going to ask you about the local police in this area.

What do you think of them?

Did you ever have any encounters with them?

Could you explain?

Have you had any other encounters with the police that you would like to talk about?

Finally, my last question is open-ended.

Is there anything else about being a victim of a crime that you would like to talk about?

Hey, thank you for your time, if you know someone who wants to tell me their story bring them to me.

Appendix B

Homeless Caretaker Interview Instrument

(At this point, I have read the inform consent form to the respondent).

I am going to start out with a few questions relating to your background and then I will ask questions relating to homeless victimization. Basically, victimization is where one is a victim of a criminal act.

Sex: _____ **MALE** _____ **FEMALE**

- a) How long have you worked with the homeless?
- b) How long have you worked at this facility?
- c) What is your educational level?
- d) What is your job or role at this facility?

Now, I am going to ask you a few questions about how you handle victimization at your facility. I do not know anything about you facility's policies about disclosing information that may be negative. Keep in mind that you can choose not to answer the following questions:

Have you ever dealt with a situation involving your clients getting into a dispute that ended in someone getting victimized? (If no, skip the next question)

Could you explain?

How did you handle the situation?

What do you think was the typical issue behind the dispute?

Have you ever seen visual signs of victimization of your clients? For instance, one may see a person with a black eye and assume he or she got into a fight.

Are there any warning signals that one of your clients had a specific crime done to them?

Could you explain?

Typically, how do your residents resolve arguments?

Was there ever a victimization problem at your facility? If so, can you explain the situation?

Have you ever noticed any attempts from your clients to unite and prevent a victimization problem going on in their population?

If so, can you provide an illustration?

Do you have any concerns over your client's safety as it pertains to victimization?

Could you explain?

In your opinion, why do the homeless get victimized?

There are several different types of people who visit your facility.

What homeless group gets victimized the most?

Has it always been that group?

Like most places in Oklahoma, new developments are springing up everywhere.

Are there any recent businesses or residential developments in the surrounding area affecting your facility or your clients?

Did you notice a difference in victimization after the new developments?

If so, please explain.

The next set of questions relate to the local police department.

What role do the police play on your residents?

How do your clients interact with the police?

Do your clients like the police?

a) Why?

What do you think about police in this area?

That is the end of my specific questions. Now, I have one more question and this interview will be over.

Is there anything that can help me understand homeless victimization?

Appendix C
Homeless Verbal Consent Form

I'm doing this interview to understand how the homeless are victimized. The study is being conducted by a graduate student at the University of Central Oklahoma. If it would make you comfortable, you can bring someone in here.

The following information will apply to you, the participant:

You must be eighteen (18) years of age or older to participate in the interview.

I need to hear your experiences about victimization while being homeless.

The questions are very short and take about 20 minutes.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can stop, and you can refuse to answer any question(s).

The interview will be recorded on a digital voice recorder. The interview will be deleted immediately after I type the responses onto my computer. You do have the option of not being recorded.

Your responses are confidential. Once I type the data onto the computer, the data will be anonymous because your name and related identifying information will not be linked to your answers. There will be no way to indentify you from your interview responses.

No names or identifying information should be mentioned during the interview.

Due to Oklahoma State laws requiring the mandatory reporting of child abuse, during the interview you should not mention any specific information about child abuse, which is the physical or sexual abuse of a child or anything that you may consider to be child abuse. A child is anyone younger than 18 years old.

Now, you may feel sad or angry about some of the questions because they may bring up something personal that few know about you. If you feel like reporting one of your victimizations or if you would like to simply talk to someone, here are some numbers you can call:

Oklahoma City Police Department: (405) 297-1100

Oklahoma County Sheriff Department: (405)713-1000

Tulsa Police Department: (918) 596-9177

Tulsa County: (918) 596-5601

Oklahoma County District Attorney's Office (victim division): (405) 713-1639

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Safeline 1800-522-7233

YWCA Crisis Service Domestic Violence Hotline: (405) 917-9922

All the data will be used for research purposes only.

To the best of my knowledge, there isn't any information coming from your perspective in Oklahoma. The information that you provide will help people understand the realities of homeless victimization in this state.

Should you have any questions about your rights in this study, please contact the University of Central Oklahoma College Institutional Review Board at (405) 974-2526 or 974-5479.

I am not going to ask you to sign anything. All I ask is that you answer these four things to consent to this interview:

You are at least eighteen (18) years of age. _____CHECK

You understand that you must voluntarily provide verbal consent to participate in this interview. _____CHECK

Do you understand that your participation is voluntary and that you can withdraw from the study at anytime and refuse to answer any questions. _____CHECK

Would you allow me to record this conversation_____CHECK

Finally, you have been provided with a copy of this consent form. _____CHECK

I, Thad Merrill will check off each box acknowledging that the respondent gave me verbal consent to conduct this interview.

Date: _____

Appendix D
Inform Consent Form for Caretakers

I'm conducting interviews of people who work with the homeless in order to get a well-rounded perspective of homeless victimization. The study is being conducted by a graduate student at the University of Central Oklahoma. **Also, the director of this location has given me permission to interview his or her employees or volunteers.**

The following information will apply to all who participate in this study:

You must be eighteen (18) years of age or older to participate in the interview.

The nature of your participation involves answering questions.

The time required for the interview is about 30 minutes.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can terminate your involvement at any time, and you can refuse to answer any question(s).

The interview will be recorded on a digital voice recorder. The interview will be deleted immediately after transcription. You do have the option of not being recorded.

Your responses are confidential. Once the data is transcribed, the data will be anonymous because your name and related identifying information will not be linked to your answers. There will be no way to identify you from your interview responses.

No names or identifying information should be mentioned during the interview.

Due to Oklahoma State laws requiring the mandatory reporting of child abuse, during the interview you should not mention any specific information about child abuse, which is the physical or sexual abuse of a child or anything that you may consider to be child abuse. A child is anyone younger than 18 years old.

There are some questions about your facility's level of security. I am unaware of your facility's policies, so you can choose to answer or skip it if you feel it may compromise your well-being.

I am not sure of your organization's policies in disclosing information regarding the facility itself. Keep in mind that you do not have to answer any questions that may make your facility look unfavorably. By looking back on some of the victimizations at your facility, you may feel that some of the victimization would be considered a crime. The following are a list of local law enforcement agencies that you can report a crime:

Oklahoma City Police Department: (405) 297-1100

Oklahoma County Sheriff Department: (405)713-1000

Tulsa Police Department: (918) 596-9177

Tulsa County: (918) 596-5601

Oklahoma County District Attorney's Office (victim division): (405) 713-1639

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Safeline 1800-522-7233

YWCA Crisis Service Domestic Violence Hotline: (405) 917-9922

All the data will be used for research purposes only.

The information that you provide will help people understand the realities of homeless victimization in this state. I cannot give you any compensation for this interview.

Should you have any questions about the research, or need to talk to the researcher after participation in the study, you can contact, me, Thad Merrill, by calling (405)326-7286.

Should you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact the University of Central Oklahoma College Institutional Review Board at (405) 974-2526 or 974-5479.

I am not going to ask you to sign anything. All I ask if that you answer these four things consent:

You are at least eighteen (18) years of age. _____CHECK

You understand that you must voluntarily provide verbal consent to participate in this interview.

_____CHECK

Do you understand that your participation is voluntary and that you can withdraw from the study at anytime and refuse to answer any questions. _____CHECK

Would you allow me to record this interview. _____CHECK

Finally, you have been provided with a copy of this consent form. _____CHECK

I, Thad Merrill will check off each box acknowledging that the respondent gave me verbal consent to conduct this interview.

Date: _____

Appendix E

Reoccurring themes within the data

Thematization of respondents' data on thefts.

Hardships
Avoidance of the other sex
Fear
Drug use
Simple stuff
Don't want any trouble
Careless
My fault
Trusting
Fake friends
Manipulation
Drug exploitation
Middle of the night
Alcoholism
Alcoholism venerability
Survival items
Anger issues
Little things
Intimidation
Upsetting
Camping
Seasonal
Trespassing
Started all over again
City rescue mission
Robbery
Burglary
Revenge
Mentally ill
Under the bridge
Assaults
Unknown offenders
Vigilantes
Lawless
Apathy to stolen stuff

What goes around comes around
No self worth
Perfect stranger
Railroad tracks
Thousands of eyes always watching ya
Insecurity
Disability
You snooze you lose
Happens to people everyday out here
Unintentional thefts
Put your bags at the door

Thematization of respondents' data on Fights.

Happens all the time
Disagreements
Pipes
Sticks
Friends
Primitive weapons
Total stranger
Hanging out
Drinking
Injuries forces them to report
Single victims
Robberies
Night time
High crime area
Easy target
Getting jumped
Police apathy
Rolled
Poor perception of the police
Visual injuries
Avoidance of this conflict
Detox
Fighting over a bed
Camping
Not reporting because they didn't know who done it
Mental illness

Topics

Family condone violence

Good friends

Who would the police lock up?

Hang out with nonviolent people

Prostitute

Turf fighting

Doing the right thing

Men beating women

Women beating women

Spontaneity of the assault

Black eyes

Sex

Retaliation

Chatline

Family fights

Friends stop the fight...noticed by A and B

Temper

Anger

Thematization of respondents' data on sex crimes.

Inappropriate

Everybody knows everybody

Solicitation

Demeanor

Happens everywhere

Manipulation

Exploitation

Older men looking out for women

More likely as a youth

Men soliciting men

Gays exploited the homeless

Respondents don't know solicitation is sex crime

Happens more in the downtown area

Can't stop it

Drugs area

No reporting

Shouting obscenities

Shelters protect and facilitate

No trust
Sexually offensive words
Very bold men
Societal judgments on women: all come from an abusive relationship
Women with children
Avoid it by just walking
Ways of socilitating for sex
Non homeless johns are not aggressive
Hard to report
Younger women seek guidance from older ones
Residents of a shelter will report but not on the streets
Anger
Multiple types of sexual victimization
Forcing themselves on you
Relative or friend
Drugs
Reporting it to the wrong people
Disbelief
What goes around comes around
Fear
Cautious
Solicitations are nothing

Thematization of respondents' data on reason for homelessness.

Disability
temp agencies
pay was not enough to sustain a residence
makeshift housing
loss of a car:home
loss of a job
living in a car doesn't make you homeless
drugs
family problems
infidelity
sacrifice
jail
alcoholism
way of life
habit

natural disasters
eviction
no backup plans
resignation of job
single
divorce
hostile residence made uncomfortable to live
kids
opposing institutions: school system
mentally ill
discriminations
left a job
walking away from the abuse
in and out
fighting society
addiction
mental illness

Thematization of respondents' data on area avoidance

City rescue mission
Jesus house
Avoids places where rules are present
Lot of people present
During the 1st and 3rd of the month
Pimps
Crack whores
Crackheads
Drugs users
Criminal element
Seasonal
Overpasses
Robinson
Night time
Flats
Gang activity
Restaurants
Bars
Clubs
Liquor stores

Salvation Army
Killers hang out at the rescue mission
I-40 and western
16th and Blackwelder
Indiana and 10th/1st
Survival
10th and Classen around 7th and Shartel
Homeless people hang out in those areas
Western and reno
No police presence
Downtown
Restaurants around classen Sheridan
Crack houses around the GRM area
Bicentennial park cause of police harassment
Law enforcement agencies
Harassment
Try to keep a low profile
Main to Pennsylvania at night
29th street
Prostitution areas
Avoid the bad areas by use of buses
Southside
Back alleys
Avoids the city rescue for fear of retaliation
Places where they use to drink or hustle
Penn and grand
Drug areas
Jungle:city rescue mission
Blackwelder and Indian
linwood

Thematization of respondents' data on police attitudes

Good and bad
Encounters
Security guards
Mistaken identity
Mistreatment
Innocent victim
John Wayne style/rookies

Police scrutiny
Pretty good
Unreasonable searches
Cops doing their job
False accusation
Reporting sarcasm
No sympathy
Old times are good
Shelter cops don't like the homeless
Excessive force
Police scarcity
Police retaliation for reporting
Dude give me a break man I'm a drunk I don't care anything about kids you know
Overzealous
Heroes trying to save people
Harassment
Task force
Police presence reduces crimes
Homeless appearance
Officer misconduct
Bad rumors
Officers using violence to get information
No use for them
Threats
I'm not going to call the cops it wouldn't do any good
Right to walk
They think they're god
Arrogance
Racial profiling
Negative attitudes towards Nichols hills police department
Different ordinances
Less willing to help
The lack of mental health knowledge
Police brutality
They were bending my thumb back to my wrist
Police presence increases the relationship with the homeless
CIT
Jesus house cops do a good job
Feel totally unprotected and abandoned
Removal of the outsiders

Thematization of caretaker's data on recent developments.

Poverty stricken areas
Displacement
Unfruitful
Eye sore
Reputation of each mission
Closing down or downsizing
Less services
Over crowdedness
Traditionally homeless

Thematization of caretaker's data on why do the homeless get victimized.

Jealously
Way of life
Drugs
Addiction
Mental illness
Venerable
Cycle of destruction
Lack of money management
Party
Ignorance
Involvement
Poor decision making
No protagonist to the antagonist...only a victim
Worthless
Pitiful
Us versus them

Thematization of caretaker's data on the police.

Medical involvement
Avoidance of authority figures
Past experience with the police
Police avoid the homeless
Gracious for the shelter work
Lack of police presence

Appearance
Controlled environment
Poor relationship
Rule of thumb
Ignorance of the law
Response time
Suicide
Neutral
Reactive
Handle your own
Doing their job
Cocky
Arrogance
Misunderstanding
Protection from outsiders
Frequent discourse with the police
Security
Crisis intervention team
Respect
Distrust
Removal of homeless from other localities

Thematization of client prevention of crimes.

Familiarity
Unresolved issues
Prevention
Coming together
Protect their own
Prior knowledge
Group settings
Speaking up
Police presence at Jesus house
Snitching
Lack of homeless involvement
Support groups
Close quarters with the offender and victim
Consoling the victim

Thematization of certain groups of people who get victimized.

Drunks or alcoholics
Venerable
No distinction
Conclusively statements
Undiagnosed mental problems
Ignorance of personal problems
Single women
Mentally ill
Closing mental institutions
Sex crimes
Easier to rob

Thematization of clients' safety.

Awareness
1st of the month
Disability checks
Cyclical victimization
Safety at shelter
24 hour security
Streets are a very dangerous place
Familial exploitation
Exploitation
Providing a safe environment to learn new skills
Hustling
Trap
Public transportation
Safety in numbers

Thematization of issue behind the dispute.

Frustration
Day-to-day living
Awareness
Equality
Harden life
Simple stuff
Past histories
Encounters

Disrespected
Cutting line
Drugs
Money

Thematization of dispute that ended up someone getting victimized.

Disputes
Apathy
Misunderstanding
Assaults
Larcenies
Bar
School yard pushing match
Prevention
Officer discretion
Refusal to use police
Counseling

Thematization of victimization problem at facility.

Open dorm
Outsiders
Seasonal victimizations
Facility protocol
Family
Past victimization at other places

Thematization of visual signs of victimization.

Black eyes
Domestic violence
Swolled and bruised faces
Getting out of the situation
Violence
Alcoholism
Quietness
Victims actions
Anger
Bloody noses

Scabs

Thematization of argument resolution.

Removal of one party

Protocol

Promotion of nonviolence

Discussion between the two parties

Own personal responsibility

Life skills

Thematization of understanding victimization.

Involvement

Lifestyle

Survival

Respect

Ignorance of the problems

Don't stereotype

Appendix F

Interview Probes

Both homeless and caretaker interviews provided information that needed further elaboration. So, it was necessary to list the following probes that will be used in both interview instruments:

- What is _____?
- Please tell me more about _____?
- How does _____ compare to _____?
- Will you describe _____ further?
- What was _____ like?
- How did your experiences with _____ differ from your experiences with _____?
- Will you be more specific about _____
- How did _____ affect you?
- What happened after _____?
- How did _____ affect your life?
- What types of problems did you have with _____
- Have you been _____ before?
- How many times have you _____ before?
- How do you see _____ as?
- Did you ever go to _____?
- Do we have _____ here?
- What would you classify the relationship?
- So they _____ you?
- Did it make you uncomfortable?
- Did it make you feel _____?
- Did you report _____?
- How did you handle _____?
- Do they ever _____ to you?

Appendix G**Years of Homelessness**

Subjects (n=19)	Sex	Age	Years of homelessness ($\bar{X} = 5$)
1	male	53	3
2	male	52	n/a
3	male	56	Less than a year
4	male	56	4
5	male	52	7
6	male	42	1
7	male	58	35
8	male	44	5
9	male	49	n/a
10	male	30	Less than a year
11	male	51	1
12	male	54	23
13	male	63	10
14	female	52	3
15	male	36	Less than a year
16	male	40	2
17	female	51	2
18	female	34	5
19	female	34	2
20	female	33	4
21	female	36	5

Appendix H**Nonviolent Thefts Occurrences**

Subjects	Number of nonviolent theft occurrences	Reported	Relationship with the offender
1	1	No	Stranger
2			
3	1	No	Stranger
3	1	Yes	Stranger
4	1	No	Stranger
5	1	No	Acquaintance
6	1	No	Acquaintance
7	1	No	Stranger
8	1	No	Stranger
9	1	No	Acquaintance
10			
11	1	No	Stranger
12	1	No	Acquaintance
13	12	No	Stranger
14	1	No	Stranger
15			Acquaintance
16	More than 1	No	Stranger
17			
18	1	Yes	Stranger
19	More than 1	No	Acquaintance
20	1	No	Friend
20	1	No	Acquaintance
21	1	Yes	Acquaintance
Total amount of Incidents	Over 30		

Appendix I**Violent Thefts**

Subjects	Violent Theft	Reported	Relationship
1	1	No	Acquaintance
2	1	Yes	Stranger
3			
4			
5	1	No	Stranger
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11	1	No	Stranger
12			
13			
14			
15	More than 1	No	Friend
16			
17	1	No	Stranger
18			
19			
20			
21			

Appendix J

Physical Attacks

Subjects	Physical Attacks	Reported	Relationship
1			
2		1Yes	Friend
3		1Yes	Acquaintance
4			
5			
6		1Yes	Acquaintance
7			
	More than 1	No	Stranger
8			
9		1No	N/A
10			
11			
12		1No	Stranger
13		1No	Acquaintance
13			
		1No	Stranger
13		1No	Stranger
13		1No	Stranger
14			
15		1No	Acquaintance
15			
		1No	Acquaintance
15		1No	Acquaintance
15			
		1No	Acquaintance
16			
17			
18	More than 1	No	Stranger
19		1No	Acquaintance
19		1No	Acquaintance
19		1No	Acquaintance
20		1No	Friend
21			

Appendix K**Violent Sex Crimes**

Subjects	Violent Sex Crimes	Reported
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17	1	No
18	More than 1	No
19		
20	1	No
21	1	Yes

Appendix L

Sexual Solicitations

Subjects	Solicitation	Reported	Relationship
1			
2	1	No	Stranger
3			
4			
5			
6			
7	1	No	Stranger
8	More than 1	No	Stranger
9			
10			
11	More than 5	No	Stranger
12			
13			
14	More than 1	No	Stranger
15	More than 1	No	Stranger
16			
17	1	No	Stranger
18	More than 1	No	Stranger
19	More than 1	No	Stranger
20			
21	1	No	Acquaintance

Appendix M**Attitudes Towards the Police**

Subjects	Sex	Attitude towards police
1	Male	Neutral
2	Male	Positive
3	Male	Negative
4	Male	Positive
5	Male	Positive
6	Male	Negative
7	Male	Negative
8	Male	Negative
9	Male	Negative
10	Male	Negative
11	Male	Positive
12	Male	Negative
13	Male	Negative
14	Female	Neutral
15	Male	Negative
16	Male	Positive
17	Female	Negative
18	Female	Positive
19	Female	Positive
20	Female	Positive
21	Female	Positive