

REFRAMING REALITY: A DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF BLACK WOMEN IN LAKE CHARLES, LA.

Yajaira I. Ayala

Ph. D. Candidate

Disaster Research Center Alumni

UD Doctoral Fellow for Excellence



UD
Climate
Hub



THE
William Averette
Anderson **FUND**

Expanding inclusive hazard disaster planning for communities of color

Objectives



Showcase trends within demographic profile from dissertation data

Highlight implications for disaster recovery of the sample

Research questions

How do poor Black women recover from disasters in the context of structural and cultural violence?

What are the strategies these women are employing to survive after a disaster?

How do these women understand and define their resilience and vulnerability?

Questions for today

What can demographic data tell us about the recovery process?

How can structural and cultural violence be identified within everyday experiences?

Theoretical orientation

Disaster Science

- *Recovery*

Critical Race Theory

- *Intersectional Black Feminist Theory*

Peace and Conflict Studies

- *Structural Violence theory*
- *Cultural violence theory*



Qualitative study

Radical
ethnographic
elements



Mixed methods approach

Semi-structured
interviews
Field observations
Archival analysis



Building rapport

Volunteered with
local organization

Research Design

Hurricane Laura

- Hurricane Laura entered the coast of Louisiana on August 26th, 2020
 - *Hurricane category 4*
 - *Sustained wind speed of 150 mph*
- Hurricane Delta hit the coast of Louisiana on October 9th, 2020
 - *Hurricane category 1*
 - *Sustained wind speed of 100 mph*
- COVID-19 pandemic



Photo credit: NOAA; 2020



Living situation

"Every ceiling every room in my house got cracks. The ceiling, I mean the roof, I had to get a new roof because one of the trees in my backyard was on the back of the house so we had three big trees, and then I had an orange tree in my back, and a shed in my back so all that was down. So they came in and they removed all the trees, and they even ground the stumps up and got all out so there's no trees in my yard now. And so, we had to replace the shed. And I mean we, we in middle of the lawsuit right now with the insurance company, which is ridiculous because I'm just like you spent all this money outside for the house and you know our house got structural damage with the foundation and everything. So, you got to fix that foundation before we can do any work in the house. So, we went in a lawsuit with that which is crazy to me. You spent \$22,000 taking some trees down in the yard."

- Zaila; age 60

Health conditions

“ For hurricane Laura I **ended up at hives all over me**, and it's because well, my son- **his wife had a miscarriage...** and then you know it was just like I said a lot. My husband wasn't helping me with anything with these insurance companies. They were, it was, they were giving me a run around and he was so busy; and I understood because **his mother had just died...** but it was horrible for me because I was, **I felt like I was alone**. And I had hives all over me because just the nerves from **just trying to deal with it all**. I mean it was just like all over, I woke up and I was just itching. It was from just nerves, just from because it was a lot. I mean my house, I had a big hole in a roof, you know, in my kitchen; and the adjuster that came, he was such a little, he was all butthole. God forgive me. He really was.”

-Alayah; age 63

Employment

“A lot of people are depending off of me; and they don't know what I go through. They just think it's easy because you know, you can run here and there. But you know, it's not easy dealing with people. And you know, it's just a lot behind it because they want their way; and then you're there to do a service. As to where at the workplace, it wasn't that demanding like I did my job and the next shift come in whatever wasn't done wasn't done; the next shift picked up on it, yeah. But that **cleaning houses is tedious** yeah, yeah. **It's just me doing all the hard work** and running to the grocery stores. And you know, a lot of people are depending off of me, and it's just life isn't fair you know. And I just feel like I'm doing God's work and everything because the people that I'm doing it for need my help, but then you know it's just **it's not a paycheck.**”

-Destiny; age 53

Lessons learned

01

Poor Black women's recovery is exacerbated by structural conditions they face as result of the storm

02

The fundamental conditions within their lives- that continue to be affected 3 years after the storm- hint at the presence of both structural and cultural violence

03

Understanding that the recovery process for Black women is tied to violence begs for a reframing of our understanding of this process as a whole

A large green L-shaped graphic is positioned on the left side of the slide, consisting of a vertical bar and a horizontal bar that meet at a right angle. A second, smaller green L-shaped graphic is positioned on the right side of the slide, also consisting of a vertical bar and a horizontal bar meeting at a right angle.

THANK YOU!