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Youth Violence in Harrison County, Mississippi

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Youth Violence in Harrison County, Mississippi

By

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CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM

Youth violence plagues school communities and has traumatic effects on students,
families, and communities (Affonso, Mayberry, Shibuya, Archambeau, Correa,
Deliramich, & Frueh, 2010). Even though the rate of crime has declined, children have
continued to increase the rates of violent acts (Funk, Elliot, Bechtoldt, Pasold, &
Tsavoussis, 2003). Today, violent behaviors are being exhibited at an earlier age than
ever before. Tragedies stemmed from youth violence occur almost daily in the United
States. Between 1986 and 1991, slayings committed by teenagers, who had shown
bullying tendencies as children, rose 124 percent. In 1992, 3,400 people were killed
nationwide by teen violence. In Richmond, California, a six-year-old boy brutally beat
and killed a one-month-old infant in 1996. In 1998, young children opened fire on their
classmates causing many to be killed or injured. The National Education Association
reported that one in six youth under the age of eighteen are arrested for murder, rape,
robbery, or assault (Smith, Twemlow, & Hoover, 1999). A national survey conducted in
the U.S. in 2003 showed that more than 1.56 million incidents of violent victimization
were committed by young persons between the ages of 12 and 20. In other words, there is
a rate of approximately 4.2 incidents of violent crime committed per every 100 juveniles
aged 12 to 20. The highest rates of violent acts in 2003 were committed by juveniles.
Juveniles, aged 10 to 17, comprised less than 12% of the total USA population, yet these
youths were involved as offenders in close to 25% of serious violent victimizations
throughout the past twenty-five years (Services, 2007).

Youth violence is no longer an isolated inner-city problem in schools. Now, the problem spreads through all types of communities across America (Boyce, 2000). Unfortunately, the southeastern United States is not exempt from youth violence. In March of 1998 in Jonesboro, Arkansas, two boys, one thirteen-years-old and the other eleven-years-old, killed five people at school. In May of 1998 in Fayetteville, Tennessee, an eighteen-year-old killed a classmate. Also in 1998, a sixteen-year-old in Pearl, Mississippi killed two classmates and wounded seven more classmates. Then, he proceeded to stab his mother to death on the same day (Chandras, 1999). Between 1999 and 2001, there were 413 Mississippi youth aged 15 to 24 who were killed due to violence-related injuries. This accounted for approximately 22% of all violence-related deaths (Zhang & Johnson, 2005) among all 15-24 year olds. With youth violence like this hitting so close to home, parents and youth have become concerned with the physical, social, and psychological extent of violence in adolescents (Chandras, 1999).

As time progressed, it seemed that the brutality of youth violence increased. When school shootings occurred in communities such as Pearl, Mississippi, West Paducah, Kentucky, Jonesboro, Arkansas, and Jefferson County, Colorado, the general public became concerned for the safety of students nationwide (Berglund, Vossekuil, Fein, Modzeleski, Borum, & Reddy, 2001). The media also plays a major role in focusing on high-level school violence in order to grab the public's attention (Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002). Although the impact of school shooting is tremendous, these incidents are sporadic (Berglund, Vossekuil, Fein, Modzeleski, Borum, & Reddy, 2001).

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The media tends to drift away from what is considered low-level school violence; however, that does not mean that it is not as important. Low-level violence in schools such as bullying and harassment can have a profound impact on students' mental health and performance in school (Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002).

An interesting thing to note about youth violence is that children may resort to violent behaviors as a means to cope with stress from natural disasters. During natural disasters, children are the most vulnerable because their neuro-physiological systems are not developed enough to manage catastrophic events (Baggerly, Jennifer, & Exum, 2008). Between 1986 and 1995, there were 319 natural disasters in the U. S. Between 1996 and 2005, there were 545 natural disasters in the U.S. This does not include Hurricane Katrina, which occurred in August of 2005 and devastated the coast. For children between 6 and 11, increased fighting and aggression and school refusal are typical symptoms exhibited after natural disasters. For adolescents 12 to 17 years old, substance abuse, risk-taking behaviors, and rebellion at home or school are typical symptoms displayed after natural disasters (Baggerly, Jennifer, & Exum, 2008). This is interesting to note because natural disasters such as hurricanes are frequent to the ocastal region of the country. Recently, the coast has been struggling with an oil leak for the past few months. Has this stressful event had an effect on youth violence in Harrison County?

With violent behaviors starting at a younger age, youth violence has begun to affect elementary students. In 1998, 45.3% of elementary students in Harrison County,

Mississippi reported that youth violence was a significant problem in Harrison County (Foundation & Payne, 1998). 76.9% of elementary students reported that youth violence had affected their school (Foundation & Payne, 1998). Out of 1,912 4th and 5th grade students that were randomly selected from a Midwestern Urban school district in 2000, 25% of the students did not feel safe going to and from school (Price, Telljohann, Dake, & Zyla, 2002). 23% of the students were worried that they would be physically attacked while in the gymnasium; whereas, 43% of the students feared that they would be physically attacked while on the playground (Price, Telljohann, Dake, & Zyla, 2002).

During the 1990s, the fear of youth violence increased amongst adolescents even though the actual rate of youth violence had decreased (Melde & Esbensen, 2009). In 1998, adolescents felt that youth violence was a significant problem and had affected their school. However, they did not change their daily routines out of fear of being a victim of youth violence (Foundation &Payne, 1998). Then, in 2005, the percentage of students who were afraid of being a victim of youth violence declined from 11.8 to 6.2. Relatively, the reports of actual victimizations involving adolescents dropped 56%, as well (Melde & Esbensen, 2009).

In conclusion, parents, school administrators, and community administrators are responsible for reducing violent-related behaviors on school grounds (Zhang & Johnson, 2005). Therefore, it is important for parents and administrators to understand the extent of youth violence within their community and school district. Parents and administrators often underestimate the youth violence problem in their community because they believe

that certain safety committees within their communities make their schools immune to youth violence (Del Prete, 2000). Teachers frequently underestimate the number of students who fall victim to youth violence and expect students to resolve these problems themselves. Commonly, teachers will overlook nonphysical aggression and see it as less serious and easier for students to handle (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2007). Parents often underestimate youth violence by justifying violent behaviors as part of growing up (Neufeld, 2002). In contrast, overreacting and exaggerating the nature of youth violence within their community does not help either. Overreacting to violence causes a general negative perception that runs contrary to the facts. Also, it can cause at-risk individuals to seek out their notoriety and 15 minutes of fame through a violent act that is worthy of front-page coverage (Del Prete, 2000). Because it is important for parents, school administrators, and community administrators, as well as youth, to understand the nature of youth violence within their school district, the specific question I am proposing to answer with this project is "How have the perceptions of youth violence in Harrison County, Mississippi changed since 1998?"

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the years, the degree of youth violence has changed dramatically. In 1949, a survey of high school principals documented that lying, disrespect, and running in the hallways were their most serious problems (Henning, 1949). A study conducted in 1956 by the National Education Association showed that violence was, in fact, becoming a concern in school. However, the violence taking place during this time was not

interpersonal. In other words, this violence was not student against student. Violence directed toward teachers was the main concern at this time. Then, four years later, another concern arose about violence within schools. Students were starting to exhibit interpersonal violence driven by race as a result of attempts to integrate schools. During the 1970s, the rates of violence began to drastically increase. The Bayh Report concentrated on violence and vandalism in 759 school districts in the United States. Within these schools, the report noted more serious crimes such as weapon carrying, homicide, and attempted rapes. In the early 1990s, the availability of weapons resulted in a 62% increase of juveniles who bought weapons to school. Statistics showed that 30 children were shot each day in the United States at this time (Warner, Weist, & Krulak, 1999).

In 2007, the University of South Florida interview team visited eight youth organizations to gain an understanding of perceived barriers and benefits of violent behaviors in a southeast urban school district (Quinn, Bell-Ellison, Loomis, & Tucci, 2007). The interview team used a social marketing approach to conduct a series of in-depth interviews with middle-school aged youths. As a result of the interviews, most of the youths agreed that a majority of youth violence occurs on school grounds. Also, a majority of the youths believed that using violence was necessary to defend themselves from other peers or to protect family members. It was interesting to note that although the majority of participants reported that they had engaged in violent acts, they did not think of themselves as violent (Quinn, Bell-Ellison, Loomis, & Tucci, 2007).

To find out how students are affected by youth violence, JoLynn Carney did experiments with 91 sixth grade students from a selected rural school district in the Midwest. In 2008, the school district had approximately 2,000 students with one middle school that had 200 sixth-grade students. About 50% of the sixth-grade students volunteered as participants for Carney's study. Only those students who returned a parental informed consent form were able to participate. The participants' ages ranged from 11 to 14, with a majority of the students being European Americans. Carney distributed a School Bullying Survey and the Impact of Event Scale along with a bullying scenario to each of the participants; this was administered in the school cafeteria. Before the students completed the Impact of Event Scale, they were told to read a hypothetical bullying scenario and answer the Impact of Event Scale as if they were the victim in the scenario. The School Bullying Survey had items that assessed demographic information (age, sex, grade, and race), as well as, specific items related to being (1) a bully and/or (2) a victim and/or (3) a witness of bullying during the current academic year. After analyzing the results of the School Bullying Survey and the Impact of Event Scale, Carney found that frequent exposure to bullying was the greatest factor in predicting trauma levels. It was interesting to note that female students received higher scores on the Impact of Event Scale than male students. This could mean that female students respond more to the physical types of bullying. As a result from the School Bullying Survey, both male and female students reported that they did not have dreams that contained bullying content. However, a majority of the female students said that they would use avoidance

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as a coping mechanism for themselves. It is important to note that this study did have some limitations. For example, a majority of the students were European Americans so there was not a significant racial or ethnical diversity. Also, the students were reporting on a hypothetical situation and not their own experiences (Carney, 2008).

Youth violence not only affects students, but also affects parents and the general public. To see how the parents and public are affected, some studies were conducted by Dr. Hope Hill and Dr. Lauren Jones. Dr. Hill and Dr. Jones used a fifty-item structured interview as their instrument to measure the perceptions of adults. They also measured the children's perceptions in order to compare the two. To do this, they used a twenty-item structured interview that focused on what the children have experienced themselves. As a result, they felt that adults were not reporting violence as they should have; whereas, children were not reporting the violent acts each time these acts were witnessed (Hill & Lauren).

There was another project conducted in Harrison County, Mississippi by Dr. Thomas Payne and the Knight Foundation in 1998. The first survey they administered was designed as a needs assessment and served the purpose of exploring the local perceptions of the nature and extent of youth violence in Harrison County, Mississippi. The survey was administered to students, parents, and teachers at elementary, junior high and high school levels in both private and public schools. There were 462 respondents for this survey. As a result, the survey led them to three significant findings. First, all respondents agreed that youth violence was a problem in Harrison County and that it has affected their school. Second, all respondents agreed on the definition of youth violence

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as being some physical and/or emotional violence. Interestingly, it was the elementary school students who identified youth violence as being emotional and physical. Third, students agreed that youth violence can be prevented through organizations that promote moral behavior (Foundation & Payne, 1998).

After the completion of the first survey, the Knight Foundation and Dr. Payne worked with the Viewpoint Youth Survey Team through WLOX-TV, who modified the survey. The WLOX youth group administered the survey to a large number of their peers under the guidance of news staff. Respondents were selected at random from 20 different schools in Harrison County. 357 surveys were completed and submitted. Through this, they found that youths think youth violence is a problem; however, the majority has not been personally affected by violence or changed their lives out of fear. The respondents reported that their school has been affected by youth violence and that their school's policy changed to cope with violence. The respondents also reported that what they expect from adults is responsible parenting in order to help cut back on youth violence. They also reported that they thought drugs were the main cause of youth violence. One question on the survey asked them to list things that they believed would prevent youth violence. Christian activities were cited by 20.4% of all respondents as the primary preventative measure. 9.5% suggested school programs like choir and band, and 8.4% suggested after-school athletic programs (Foundation & Payne, 1998).

In order to reach the general public, the Knight Foundation and Dr. Payne distributed a Likert-style survey as an insert in the Sun-Herald newspaper. Because the

first wave of the survey had a low response rate, it had to be administered twice. The problem was where the survey was placed within the newspaper. Placing the survey next to the Sunday comics resulted in a response with more than three hundred respondents. After scoring the surveys, they discovered that the residents of Harrison County express a concern and fear of youth violence; however, they do not display actions that show they are truly concerned with becoming a victim. Also, a majority (approximately 90%) of the public had not experienced youth violence firsthand. The greatest concern of youth violence came from elementary school teachers, who stated that physical acts of violence were their biggest concern (Foundation & Payne, 1998).

   As the media displays youth violence in schools, the public begins to worry about the safety of the students. In general, as individuals get older, they become more conservative and less tolerant of youth violence, and they are more willing to see it as a problem. In fact, older individuals might consider an issue that is not directly violent in nature – such as loud noises caused by youth – part of the violence problem (Foundation & Payne, 1998). Women tend to view youth violence as more of a problem than men (Foundation & Payne, 1998). African-Americans have a less tolerant attitude toward youth violence than Caucasians (Foundation & Payne, 1998). Overall, women and African-Americans seem to have more conservative views and see youth violence as more of a significant problem than any other group (Foundation & Payne, 1998).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The research question for this study is, "How have the perceptions of youth violence in Harrison County, Mississippi changed since 1998?" With the help of Dr. Thomas Payne, I replicated part of a study that he conducted in 1998. I surveyed the general public in Harrison County, Mississippi, which has a population of approximately 181,191 (Harrison County, Mississippi, 2010), via the Sun-Herald newspaper. The Likert-style survey that I used served as a purpose to quantify the attitudes of the Harrison County residents regarding youth violence.

Variables

For the purpose of this project, youth were defined as any person between the ages of 5 and 17.Violence was defined as any act of physical force used to cause fear or harm to another.

Participants

For this project, any residents of Harrison County, Mississippi were asked to participate. This included any youth (5-17 years old), men, and woman who live in Harrison County. A response rate of at least 300 was expected.

Procedure

Before starting my project, I was responsible for getting my survey approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) because my project included human samples. Since

I used a mail-in survey, I did not have to include a consent form. The participant showed his consent by mailing in the survey. After the survey was approved, I was able to begin collecting my data. To obtain my data, I used a survey that used Likert-style statements to measure the general public's perception of youth violence in Harrison County schools. The participants were also asked some demographic questions (age, gender, current employment, city and county residence, etc.). On April 5, 2011, my survey was distributed to the general public as an insert in the Sun-Herald newspaper. The survey was also available on-line. If the participant chose to complete the on-line survey, he had to print the survey, complete it, and mail it to my post office box at the University of Southern Mississippi. The participants were asked to mail in the survey no later than April 15th. However, there were some issues receiving the surveys because the respondents were not writing my name in the address. Therefore, some of the surveys were returned. However, after talking to the manager at the university's post office, the problem was resolved. The deadline was extended due to the issue and a low response rate. Any respondents living outside the county or any incomplete surveys were removed from the analysis pool. To determine the perceptions of the residents of Harrison County, several questions were asked. The respondents were asked to score a series of events that they considered to be youth violence if committed by persons under the age of 17. This helped us to understand how the respondents defined youth violence, and if they are able to differentiate between violent acts and things that are simply annoying. Respondents were also asked questions that report on personal experiences with youth violence. This

helped us determine if the respondent expresses a true concern or not by looking at their personal behavior modification in response to an issue. After the surveys were scored, the Sun Herald published a follow-up to inform the residents of Harrison County, Mississippi the results of the project.

We received a total of 313 mail-in survey forms. Out of the 313 surveys, 13 of them were from residents living outside of Harrison County. The 13 surveys were removed from the analysis pool. The final pool consisted of 300 persons: 199 female (66.3%) and 101 males (33.7%). 180 were Caucasians (60%); 63 were African American (21%) ; and 57 were other ethnic groups (19%). Areas of residence were: 33.3% Gulfport, 30% Biloxi, 11% Long Beach, 8% other in-county residents, 7.7% Pass Christian, 5.3% Saucier, and 4.7% D'Iberville. It was interesting to note that out of the 300 participants, there were only 5 respondents who mailed in the actual insert from the newspaper. Participants who mailed in the survey from the actual newspaper were all over the age of 50. The rest were a print out of the survey that was available on-line. Participants ranged in age from 13-86 years old. Participants answered using a scale of 0-9 with 0 being disagree, 5 being neutral, and 9 being agree. The numbers 0-4 were combined to find the percentages for those who disagree. The numbers 6-9 were combined to find the percentages for those who agreed.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The following is a question-by-question breakdown. The percentages for answers 6-9 are combined.

Question 1: I believe the actions below should be classified as "Youth Violence" when committed by persons under the age of 17.

This question was designed to establish a "tolerance level." It determines what the respondent considers to be youth violence, and if he can differentiate between acts that are truly violent or acts that are just bothersome. The question presents a range of bothersome behaviors and the use of force and asks the respondents to determine what should be classified as "Youth Violence."

Physical Contact

1. Strike (causing blood to flow)   98.3%   Results from 1998   91.7%

2. Strike (causing a bruise)   67.0%   Results from 1998   90.4%

3. Strike (no injury)   63.0%   Results from 1998   84.8%

4. Pushing and shoving   51.3%   Results from 1998   77.7%

Threatening Behavior

5. Physical threat (display weapon)   90.0%   Results from 1998   91.7%

6. Physical threat (display fist)   69.0%   Results from 1998   87.9%

7. Spoken threat   55.7%   Results from 1998   79.9%

Property Damage

8. Vandalism	73.7%	Results from 1998	86.4%
9. Graffiti	48.0%	Results from 1998	57.7%

Disrespect

10. Talking back to adults	45.7%	Results from 1998	56.2%
11. Name calling	36.7%	Results from 1998	47.7%

Generic

12. Loud behavior	36.7%	Results from 1998	41.7%

The results show that the definition of youth violence has changed since 1998. In 1998, the respondents were concerned with any physical contact, as well as, threatening behavior. Today, the respondents were mainly concerned with physical contact that caused blood to flow and threatening behavior that involved a weapon. It was also interesting to see that today, respondents were more concerned with vandalism than they were with a strike that caused a bruise or no injury at all.

Question 2: Most youth violence occurs in these locations.

This question was designed to determine where participants believe youth violence occurs. The locations listed are typical places where youth tend to congregate. The responses show that 74.7% of the respondents feel that youth violence occurs in other neighborhoods; whereas, 66% disagree or strongly disagree that it happens in their neighborhood. 6% of the respondents report that youth violence occurs in their own

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home. However, the broad definitions of Youth Violence in question 1 should be considered.

The locations where respondents perceive that youth violence occur are:

1. Other neighborhoods   74.7%   Results from 1998   78.1%

2. Public beaches   54.0%   Results from 1998   60.0%

3. School grounds after school   53.3%   Results from 1998   50.3%

4. On and around business parking lots   49.7%   Results from 1998   66.6%

5. In and around shopping malls 48.3%   Results from 1998   63.8%

6. City parks   46.0%   Results from 1998   70.7%

7. State parks   38.0%   Results from 1998   47.4%

8. School grounds during school hours   34.0%   Results from 1998   61.7%

9. My neighborhood   21.7%   Results from 1998   26.3%

10. In my home   6.0%   Results from 1998   7.9%

Question 3: Most youth violence occurs at this time.

This question was designed to determine what time of day respondents perceive youth violence to occur.

1. Evening (after 6 PM)   91.0%   Results from 1998   93.3%

2. Afternoon (1 PM – 5 PM)   49.0%   Results from 1998   59.3%

3. During school hours   39.3%   Results form 1998   58.5%

4. Mid-day (10 AM – 1 PM)   23.0%   Results from 1998   23.6%

5. Morning 6 AM – 10 AM)   9.0%   Results from 1998   12.7%

The results remain basically the same today being only slightly lower than what they were in 1998. However, respondents perceive that today, there is roughly a 20% decrease in youth violence during school hours.

Question 4: I learn that there is going to be a fight between two youths. My reaction is to:

This question examines an individual's personal aggression level. For example, would the individual go watch the fight or go to support a relative or friend? It also examines whether or not an individual believes that an authority figure is capable of handling the situation. Just like in 1998, 16.1% of the respondents agreed that they would be reluctant to go watch a fight even if a relative was directly involved. Similarly, in 1998, 31% of the respondents reported that they would not go out of their way to avoid an area where they knew a fight was going to occur, but most would actively avoid the area.

In 1998, 19% reported that they would go to stop the fight themselves. Today, only 12.3% of the respondents reported that they would go to try to stop the fight themselves. It was interesting to see that in 1998, over 80% of the respondents would tell an authority figure or call the police. Today, only 46.1% of the respondents reported that they would tell an authority figure or call the police to prevent the fight. Also, in 1998, respondents stated that they would tell a student leader before consulting the police. Today's results showed that the respondents would tell the police before consulting a student leader.

Question 5: In the past twelve months, I have changed these behaviors because of concern for youth violence.

In questions 1-4, we have only asked questions that dealt with the respondents' perceptions. Now, we are asking the respondents to report their personal involvement with youth violence. This question helps determine if there is a real concern for youth violence by seeing which behaviors the respondents have actually changed in the past year in response to youth violence. After reviewing the results from this question, we find that few of the respondents feel that youth violence is enough of a concern to change their behaviors.

1. Places you go after school/work   13.7%   Results from 1998   25.3%

2. Changed places they go during school/work   8.3%   Results from 1998   18.6%

3. Changed the persons they associate with   7.3%   Results from 1998   22.5%

4. Changed the places they shopped   12.0%   Results from 1998   27.5%

5. Changed schools   6.3%   Results from 1998   10.3%

6. Changed the time of day they shopped   14.0%   Results from 1998   35.7%

7. Changed the way they dressed   3.3%   Results from 1998   11.9%

8. Changed their mode of transportation   3.0%   Results from 1998   8.7%

When comparing today's results with those of 1998, the percentages have dropped. There are fewer respondents who feel that youth violence is enough of a concern to change their daily behaviors.

Question 6: In the past twelve months, I have personally…

This question was designed to determine how many respondents have experienced youth violence.

1.	Have not been injured by a person under 17 years old	95.3%		Results from 1998	92.3%
2.	Have not been involved in a physical fight	90.0%		Results from 1998	90.6%
3.	Have not been threatened by a juvenile	78.3%		Results from 1998	79.4%
4.	Have not been insulted by a person under 17 years old	68.3%		Results from 1998	60.2%
5.	Have not seen a fight	66.0%		Results from 1998	62.9%
6.	Have not carried a weapon for self-protection	65.7%		Results from 1998	83.5%

Results show that 26.0% have seen juveniles carrying a gun, knife, or club at least once in the past year. In 1998, 26.6% of respondents reported that they had seen the same. 20% of the respondents in 1998 reported that they had called the police in the last year to report youth violence. Similarly, there were 15.3% today who have called the police in the last year to report youth violence. Also, the respondents who reported that they carried a weapon for self-protection were adults, not juveniles. Furthermore, there are nearly 20% more today than in 1998 who reported that they have carried a gun for self-protection.

Question 7: This is usually what I do after school [for Youth only]

This question was designed to determine where juveniles go after they get out of school. In 1998, 77.2% of juveniles reported that they went home after school. Today, only 56.1% of the juveniles reported that they went home after school. Today, 6.9% reported that they went to a job after school, which is close to the 8.6% that was reported in 1998. You must keep in mind that not all of our respondents were of working ages. 44.8% of the juveniles reported that they went to a friend's house, and 35.1% reported that they went to an activity after school. In 1998, 64.2% of the juveniles reported that there was an adult present at the place they went after school "always" or "usually." However, today, there were only 40.4% of the juveniles that reported that there was an adult present at the place they went after school.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Researcher Observations

Question 1 showed that the respondents feared the possession of a weapon more that physical contact. They also reported that a threat was just as significant as an assault that caused a bruise or no injury. However, the results did not show a widespread fear of youth violence in Harrison County, Mississippi. The results were significantly lower than what they were in 1998. The next questions explored the locations and time of day that respondents felt youth violence occurred. The respondents reported that they felt that public beaches were the most violent public areas and that late evening was the most

critical time. However, juveniles reported that public beaches were places that they were least likely to go after school.

Overall Evaluation

The most important results of our research are that there is not a statistically significant youth violence problem in Harrison County, Mississippi. Secondly, the impression that there is a youth violence problem has dropped since 1998.

When looking at the results, we also grouped the surveys according to age, sex, and ethnicity. The results showed that as individuals age, they see actions that are not violent in nature but acts that are simply annoying like loud behavior as youth violence. Also, it was mostly older individuals who have actually called the police to report youth violence. Another thing we found is that women tend to have more conservative views than those of men. Women's views are conservative in a sense that they consider acts that are not violent in nature to be youth violence. For example, women were more sensitive to name calling and pushing and shoving, where men did not consider it to be violent. Overall, the respondents in this study have become more tolerant towards behaviors that are considered to be youth violence than the respondents who participated in 1998. For example, today, most people overlook behaviors such as pushing and shoving, graffiti, and name calling and focus more on serious acts that have a strong potential to be violent such as a strike causing blood to flow or displaying a weapon.

The results from this research can be used to decide how schools can tackle youth violence. The results showed that 91.0% of the people who participated in the survey felt

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that most youth violence occurred in the evening after 6 P.M. Policy-makers can use this to come up with evening organizations for youth to attend in order to stay out of trouble. They can also consider setting earlier curfews for youth. In order to further this research, surveys could be given to students in Harrison County public and private schools. The researcher could chose a lower level grade, a middle level grade, and higher level grade. This way, the researcher could get a wider range of what youth think about youth violence. The researcher could also interview students from different grades. This would allow the researcher to ask questions based on what the student said.

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24.

APPENDIX A

2011 Youth Violence Survey

Instructions:

Please circle the number on the scale that corresponds to how much you
agree or disagree with the statement listed.

1. The actions listed below should be classified as "Youth Violence"
   when committed by persons under the age of 18?

	Agree	Disagree
Graffiti		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Talking back to adults		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Strike (causing a bruise)		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Vandalism		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Spoken threat		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Physical threat (display fist)		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Loud behavior		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Physical threat (display weapon)		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Name calling		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Pushing and shoving		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Strike (no injury)		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Strike (causing blood to flow)		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

2. Most youth violence occurs in these locations.

	Agree	Disagree
School grounds (during school hours)		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
School grounds (non-school hours)		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Your neighborhood		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Other neighborhoods		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
In your home		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
In and around shopping malls		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
On and around business parking lots		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

25.

Recreational areas:	
City parks	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
State parks	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Public beaches	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

3. Most youth violence occurs at this time.

	Agree	Disagree
Morning: 6 AM to 10 AM		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Mid-day: 10 AM to 1 PM		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Afternoon: 1 PM to 5 PM		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Evening: After 6 PM		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
During School hours		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

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4. You learn that there is going to be a fight between two youths. Your reaction is to:

	Agree	Disagree
Go watch		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Go to support a friend		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Go to support a relative involved in the fight		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Avoid the area where the fight will be		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Go to stop the fight		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Tell a teacher		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Tell an authority figure		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Tell the police		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

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5. In the past twelve months, I have changed these behaviors because of concern for youth violence.

	Agree	Disagree

Changed places you go after school/work	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Changed places to go in school/at work	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Changed people you associate with	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Changed places you shopped	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Changed schools	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Change times of day you shop	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Changed the way you dress	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Changed your mode of transportation	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

26.

6. **In the past twelve months**, I have **personally:**

	Agree	Disagree
Seen a fist fight		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Been involved in a physical fight		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Been physically injured by a person under 18 years old		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Been insulted by a person under 18 years old		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Been threatened by a person under 18 years old		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Seen a person under 18 years old carrying		
A weapon (gun, knife, or club)		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Carried a weapon for self protection		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Called the police to report youth violence		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

FOR YOUTH ONLY [17 YEARS OLD AND YOUNGER]

7. This is what I usually do after school:

	Agree	Disagree
Go home		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Go to a job		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Go to an activity (club, team, group)		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Go to afternoon care (supervised)		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Go to a friend's house		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Go to a shopping area		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Go to a business to meet your friends		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Engage in unsupervised activities		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Stay around the schoolyard with friends		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Go to a city park		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
Go to a state park		9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

Go to a public beach	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
There is an adult physically present at the place	
I go to after school	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

27.

Please fill in or check the blocks which most accurately describe the person taking the survey.

Demographic information for all respondents:

Age_____ Gender __ Male ___ Female

Ethnic Group: __White ___ African-American __ Asian-American

__ Hispanic ___Native American ___ Other: please specify_____

City of residence_____ County of residence_____

Current Employment: ___Full time (salary) __ Full time (hourly) __Part Time

___ Not working ___ Student __ Homemaker

FOR ADULTS ONLY: 18 years old and older:

Educational Level: __ Not a High School graduate __High School graduate

__ Some college __ Advanced Technical schooling __ Bachelor's degree

__ Graduate work __Graduate degree

ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME CATEGORY: __ Under $10,000

__ $10-20,000 __$20-30,000 __ $30-40,000 __ $40-50,000

__ More than $50,000

FOR YOUTH ONLY [17 years old and younger]

Grade in school____
Type of school attending: __ Public   __ Private __ Home Schooling __ None
Not in school, graduated ___
Not in school by my choice___
Not in school by school's choice___
Not in school for other reasons___

28.

Appendix B

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Institutional Review Board

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HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE
NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

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

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 10101801
PROJECT TITLE: Youth Violence in Harrison County, Mississippi
PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: 11/01/2010 to 05/06/2011
PROJECT TYPE: Dissertation or Thesis
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: Ashley Rushing
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Science & Technology
DEPARTMENT: School of Criminal Justice
FUNDING AGENCY: N/A
HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 10/25/2010 to 10/24/2011

Lawrence A. Hosman   _10-27-2010_
Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.   Date
HSPRC Chair

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