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The University of Southern Mississippi

RECOVERY, LEADERSHIP EFFORTS, AND THE CASINO INDUSTRY IN THE
MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST REGION AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA

by

Ethan Jon Joella

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2010

ABSTRACT

RECOVERY, LEADERSHIP EFFORTS, AND THE CASINO INDUSTRY IN THE MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST REGION AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA

by Ethan Jon Joella

August 2010

The purpose of this study is to examine the following three interlocking areas of theory: a) casinos as economic engines; b) tourism recovery following a disaster or negative event; and, c) economic/social characteristics that facilitate recovery after disasters generally. This study examines the necessary ingredients for a speedy disaster recovery (typified in the casino industry on the Mississippi Gulf Coast).

This study employs a qualitative interview design with elite interviewing to test the theory and provide evidence and context to it. With interview questions informed by Rubin's three elements that influence the recovery process within a community (Rubin as cited in Johnson, 2007), this study utilizes a descriptive qualitative interview design to ascertain the various industry professionals', consultants', tourism officials' and state regulators' perspectives of the casino industry's role in revitalizing the Mississippi Gulf Coast region.

The findings show that an even distribution of strong leadership and a strong institutional support setting explains the recovery in Mississippi. This empirically supported principle may be applied to other disaster relief incidences, natural and otherwise. These findings are helpful to other casino locales that

may wish to take steps in advance to mitigate against disasters, and to non-casino locales that are considering adding casino gaming as well.

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The University of Southern Mississippi

RECOVERY, LEADERSHIP EFFORTS, AND THE CASINO INDUSTRY IN THE
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by

Ethan Jon Joella

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Dean of the Graduate School

August 2010

DEDICATION

*For Rebecca, Gia, and Frankie.
My three loves.*

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first meager chapters and project goals, and now here we are finishing up. I can take on the biggest challenges because I always know you will be on my side.

Now it's time to celebrate!

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

According to Schwartz (2006) after Hurricane Katrina, casinos were “lauded as a major tool for the rebirth of the region’s economy” (442). The purpose of this study is to examine the following three interlocking areas of theory: a) casinos as economic engines; b) tourism recovery following a disaster or negative event; and, c) economic/social characteristics that facilitate recovery after disasters generally. This study examines the necessary ingredients for a speedy disaster recovery (typified in the casino industry on the Mississippi Gulf Coast).

Research Questions

The key research questions addressed in this study are as follows:

1. What are the characteristics of successful disaster recovery efforts of businesses?
2. How and why do casinos assist in the recovery of the Mississippi Gulf Coast region after Hurricane Katrina?

Background of the Problem

By the year 2005, Mississippi’s nearly fifteen-year-old casino industry had reached a stable maturity. As a three billion dollar industry, it had grown to be the third largest in the United States, behind Nevada and New Jersey, respectively (Richard, 2006). In Biloxi, Mississippi, for example, one of the city’s

major sources of revenue was the four percent tax on gaming revenues. This gaming tax brought in about 20 million dollars annually to Biloxi, which was about one-third of local revenue (Edwards & Afawubo, 2008/2009). The desperate condition the state of Mississippi had found itself in during the late 1980's and early 1990's with high rates of unemployment, rampant poverty, and a lack of capital investments seemed to be only a memory for the coastal counties. Things were looking up, it seemed, and the state's decision to permit gaming in the early 1990's had proved to be a sound one.

However, all that changed on August 29, 2005.

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina ravaged states such as Mississippi and Louisiana in the United States. The extreme damage to areas of Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama made Katrina into, as Miller (2008) states

the most destructive and costly hurricane in the western hemisphere since the beginning of recorded history. The disaster area covered over 90,000 square miles along the Gulf of Mexico within the USA, drowning the physical landscape and leaving a monumental infrastructural and cultural rebuilding effort in its wake. (Miller, 2008)

As the costliest natural disaster in the history of the United States, Hurricane Katrina caused at least \$100 billion in damages, and just in Mississippi, left 231 people dead. Furthermore, all three of the coastal counties of Mississippi were affected, and some coastal communities "were utterly wiped off the map" (French, Goodman, & Stanley, 2008). According to Edwards and Afawubo (2008/2009), this natural disaster was responsible for the loss of four hundred thousand jobs along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Further, "Biloxi suffered the loss

of six thousand buildings, or about 20% of its homes and business structures” (Edwards & Afawubo, 2008/2009, p. 87).

In Mississippi, the nearly-three billion dollar (gross gaming revenues) casino industry was damaged, an industry that brought thousands of jobs and about 330 million dollars in direct annual gaming taxes to the state (von Herrmann, 2006). According to the Mississippi State Tax Commission (2007), in August 2005, the casino gross gaming revenues were approximately \$106 million (US). After the storm, there were no revenues reported for September, October, and November 2005 due to the debilitated condition of this industry. Then, in December 2005, the casino gross gaming revenues started to grow to approximately \$11.5 million (US) in the Gulf Coast counties. By January 2006, they were up to \$64 million. However, these revenues did not reach their pre-storm amounts until September 2006.

Statement of the Problem

Immediately after Hurricane Katrina, the state of Mississippi was losing an estimated \$500 thousand per day when Hurricane Katrina destroyed the various floating casinos. This also put an estimated fourteen thousand people out of work (Edwards & Afawubo, 2008/2009). So, how did the gambling industry and the Mississippi Gulf Coast region begin to rebound, and, are these two incidences related?

The Mississippi legislature authorized gambling in the early 1990s with the first casinos opening in 1992, but the casinos were only permitted to be built on vessels or barges off the coast “on defined Coastal and Mississippi River (and tributary) waterways” (Rychlak as cited in von Herrmann, 2006, p. 12). However,

being on the coast made these casinos vulnerable to hurricane damage; furthermore, being on barges put these expensive casinos in an even more perilous position. This was evident in the major damage suffered by these casinos, which caused 12 casinos to remain closed (see Table 1). According to Moss, Ryan, & Moss (2008),

As shown in Table 1, 12 casinos remained closed after Katrina. The lost tax revenue was estimated to be \$400,000 to \$500,000 a day, a drop of 50% from pre-hurricane levels (Cope 2005, Kovaleski, 2005). Mississippi Gaming Commission statistics show that the Mississippi casino industry employed 32,603 people in August of 2005. Post Katrina, in September of 2005, the number of employees declined to 16,217, a loss of 16,386 jobs (Mississippi Gaming Commission, 2007). The number of operating casinos fell from 29 to 17 in September of 2005. All of the closures were in Biloxi, Gulfport and Bay St. Louis, the Gulf Coast region. The closures represented 684,386 of the 1,470,047 square feet (46.5%) of gaming area in Mississippi. (19)

As of November 2006, there were 1,202,128 square feet of gaming area open. (Mississippi Gaming Commission, 2007).

In order to protect their investment, casino corporations pushed for the right for casinos to be built and to operate on land. According to Moss, Ryan, & Moss (2008), "after Katrina, many of the casinos adopted an initial strategy of waiting for changes in the gaming laws before they committed to rebuilding (Brush as cited in Moss et al, 2008). On October 3, 2005 Mississippi changed the law that required casinos to build on the water and allowed them to rebuild 800

feet in-shore (Mississippi Gaming Commission 2007; Robertson as cited in Moss et al., 2008).

Table 1

Mississippi Casinos Operating by Month

Month	Casino
7/05	29
8/05	29
9/05	17
10/05	17
11/05	17
12/05	20
1/06	20
2/06	20
3/06	20
4/06	20
5/06	20
6/06	22
7/06	22
8/06	25
9/06	26
10/06	26
11/06	27

Since the state did not want to lose a major source of state and local revenue, this change in state law enacted just weeks after Hurricane Katrina permitted casinos to be rebuilt on land near the shoreline instead of on the unsafe barges off the coast in Mississippi. The casinos rebuilt rapidly in Mississippi with three reopening in December 2005 (see Table 1) and already generating casino gross gaming revenues in the Gulf Coast counties around 11.5 million dollars in December 2005 (Mississippi State Tax Commission, 2007).

By examining the literature on disaster recovery and the role of the casino industry as it relates to the recovery of the Mississippi Gulf Coast region, the presence of the casino industry appears to be vital to the successful disaster recovery efforts of this area.

Disaster Recovery

White and Haas (1975) state that research on disaster recovery needs to concentrate on what can be accomplished “usefully from a technological and regulatory sense, as well as how to help local governments and the public-at-risk to implement new approaches” (4). Rubin, Saperstein and Barbee (Rubin, 1991) study disaster recovery as it applies to communities (cities, towns, and so on). From these studies, they have developed three key elements of the recovery process. Rubin’s three elements that influence the recovery process within a community are personal leadership, the ability to act, and knowing what to do (Figure 1).

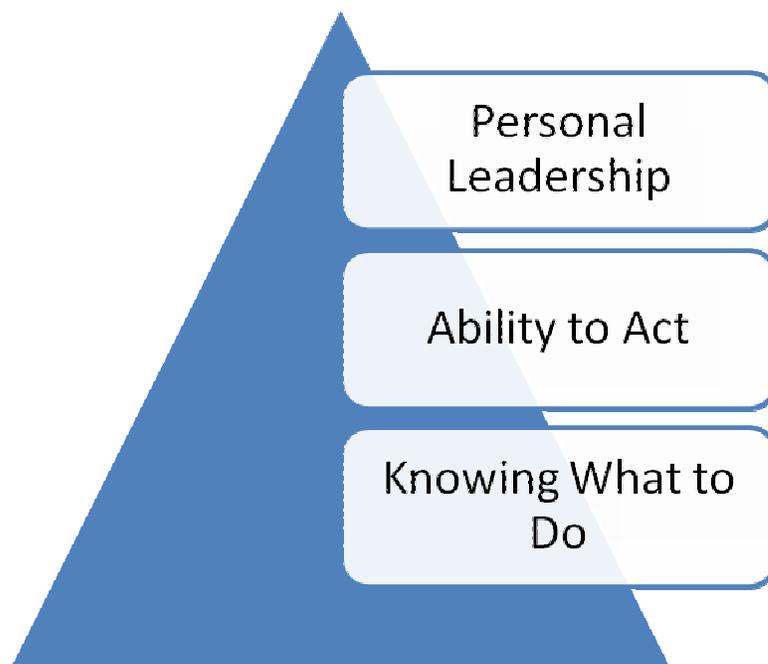


Figure 1. Rubin's Three Elements That Influence the Recovery Process (Rubin, 1991)

Three Elements That Influence the Recovery Process

While there is no extant literature on casinos and recovery, one area where there is substantial research on disaster recovery is higher education. Johnson (2007) uses the findings of Rubin, Saperstein and Barbee (Rubin, 1991) as a framework for research in disaster recovery actions in higher education. Rubin's three elements that influence the recovery process within a community are as follows: personal leadership, the ability to act, and knowing what to do. Johnson (2007) believes that while these elements are applied to the setting of a community, they can just as appropriately be applied within a higher education setting because colleges and universities are still a community.

These elements are extremely important when looking at leadership and the role of casinos in the Mississippi Gulf Coast, so Rubin, Saperstein, and Barbee's (Rubin, 1991) three elements will be used in this dissertation as a framework for identifying themes and guiding the open-ended, qualitative interview questions. These elements will be analyzed from the following perspective:

1. Personal Leadership. Personal leadership, as defined by Rubin, Saperstein, and Barbee (Rubin, 1991), includes the local decision making, the priority of intergovernmental relations, the redevelopment of damaged areas, the long-range view of the rebuilt community, and the ability to marshal internal and external resources.
2. The Ability to Act. This, according to Rubin, Saperstein, and Barbee (Rubin, 1991) refers to the availability of state and federal resources, the reliance on local rather than external resources, the local administrative and technical capability, and the horizontal and vertical intergovernmental relationships.
3. Knowing What to Do. The knowledge and awareness needed to bring about progress is essential to disaster recovery. That is, who possessed (or quickly formed) feasible, workable recovery plans? Also, who had knowledge of what assistance to seek and what steps to take first?

Hurricane Katrina destroyed parts of the Gulf Coast, making it known as the most expensive and one of the deadliest hurricanes in United States history.

Natural disasters and the economic recovery from them have an extensive literature. Besides the devastating natural disaster of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, there have been significant disasters with subsequent challenging recoveries from them such as Hurricane Andrew in 1992 in the United States; the Kobe Earthquake in 1995 in Japan; and the 2004 tsunami in Asia, to name a few.

Gaps in Literature

There is much literature regarding disaster recovery that can provide relevant comparison for the Mississippi Gulf Coast region; however, the casino industry's role in rebuilding regions after a disaster has yet to be studied (Figure 2). When it comes to the subjects of disaster recovery, the casino industry, and tourism in general, there is an extensive body of literature on each of these subjects. However, when we combine these three areas in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and seek to understand the role of casinos in this recovery, we find gaps in the literature.

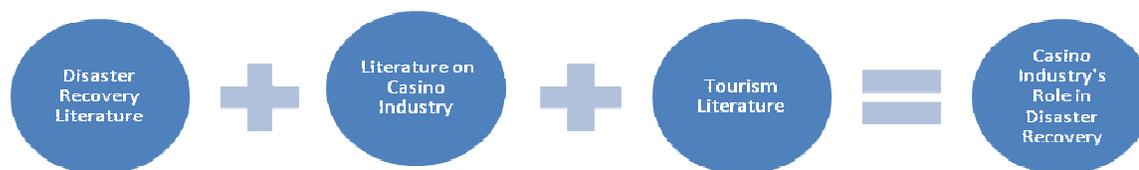


Figure 2. The Role of Casinos in Disaster Recovery.

Researchers have suggested that successful patterns of post-disaster recovery “depend on expanded economic resources for victims to reduce vulnerability and enhance resiliency; the re-establishment of social, political and cultural institutions; and the restoration of basic services including education facilities, hospitals and financial and transportation infrastructure” (Blaikie, Cannon, Davis & Wisner; Cutter; Hartman & Squires; Klinenberg; Pelling, as cited in Gotham & Greenberg, 2008, p. 1040). Furthermore, since Hurricane Katrina, researchers (Peck as cited in Gotham & Greenberg, 2008) have fought for “the privatization of public services and greater government reliance on private corporations (i.e., Wal-Mart) to deliver resources and speed post-disaster recovery” (Gotham & Greenberg, 2008, p. 1040). Researchers have not yet had an opportunity to determine what role casinos might be expected to play in recovery following disasters.

Mississippi Casinos

Casinos have thrived¹ in Mississippi much more than other states such as Louisiana. If Louisiana is used as an example for comparison (because of its proximity to Mississippi and its similar damage sustained from Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita), the following points can be emphasized: according to the American Gaming Association (2007), approximately eight thousand more people are employed by casinos in Mississippi than are employed in Louisiana. Also, Louisiana has 16 operating casinos (only one of them land-based) while Mississippi has 27.

¹ For the sake of this dissertation, we will define the term *thrive* to mean the following: to flourish economically; to grow and expand; and to provide ample employment, business opportunity, and revenue to the state.

The difference in how casinos perform in Mississippi versus a state like Louisiana is attributed to differences in state regulation. The notion is that the growth of the casino industry in Mississippi is not artificially limited in the way that it has been by the imposing rules in Louisiana and many other U.S. states. The casino industry in Mississippi, with its market-oriented regulatory structure (von Herrmann, 2002b) prefers to allow market conditions to dictate the amount and direction of growth, rather than submitting to artificial limitations imposed by the state. In order to try to ensure the one private casino they granted a license to would be successful, Louisiana only gave out one casino license in New Orleans and did not allow competitors (Hsu, 1999). Furthermore, according to Richard (2006), in addition to Louisiana's restricting the number of casino licenses available, Louisiana imposes a higher tax rate than Mississippi (von Herrmann, 2006). In any case, this open, competitive market free from unnecessary restrictions that Mississippi boasts appears to be vital to its success in this disaster recovery.

Hypothesis

Earlier work has shown that the Mississippi Gulf Coast is an attractive casino location due to low taxes, low land costs, stable employee base, and a conducive governmental and regulatory environment (von Herrmann, 2002b, 2006; Richard, 2006). The working hypothesis in this study is that casinos assisted in the recovery of the Mississippi Gulf Coast region by taking advantage of the above-referenced qualities; by being a substantial employer of people in this area; by utilizing effective leadership methods as described in Rubin's

elements; by contributing to tourism efforts; and by being involved in planning of the area post-Hurricane Katrina.

Exceptionality of Industry

The research will also show the exceptionality of casinos as compared with other industries (such as manufacturing or government agencies) in that they attract revenue from visitors and produce a net inflow of revenue while being limited to very specific geographic areas. That is, if casinos had not been on the Coast, but instead specialized manufacturing facilities had dominated the economy, there might have been even longer delays in producing a rebound effect.

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative interview design with elite interviewing to test the theory and provide evidence and context to it. With interview questions informed by Rubin's three elements that influence the recovery process within a community (Rubin as cited in Johnson, 2007), this study utilizes a descriptive qualitative interview design to ascertain the various industry professionals', consultants', tourism officials' and state regulators' perspectives of the casino industry's role in revitalizing the Mississippi Gulf Coast region.

The data is gathered through phone interviews, and the information acquired from the phone interviews is audio recorded and transcribed. The results of the study are presented in a descriptive, narrative format, organized by themes, in Chapter IV to preserve the original information obtained from the interviews with the interviewees. Content analysis of the transcribed results is used to organize the data that is gathered.

Significance of Study

By demonstrating the necessary ingredients for a speedy disaster recovery (typified in the casino industry on the Mississippi Gulf Coast), this study will show that an even distribution of strong leadership and a strong institutional support setting explains the relatively successful post-disaster recovery in Mississippi. This empirically supported principle may then be applied to other disaster relief incidences, natural and otherwise.

Delimitations of the Study

1. This study was delimited to participants familiar with the casino industry in the Mississippi Gulf Coast region who experienced effects of Hurricane Katrina.
2. This study was delimited to an in-depth initial phone interview with follow-up interviews when necessary.

Limitations of the Study

1. This study was limited to participants who agreed to participate in the study.
2. This study was conducted less than five years after Hurricane Katrina, so the perceptions relating to recovery are still evolving since many aspects of recovery take a greater number of years to achieve.
3. The researcher assumed that the participants in the study would give honest responses to the interview questions.

Summary

Chapter I identified the problem and provided background about the problem. Important aspects of disaster recovery and casino history were

summarized, and the gaps in the literature were identified. The significance of the study was attended to, and limitations and delimitations were discussed. Lastly, a brief overview of the methodology was given. Chapter II provides a review of the relevant literature regarding disaster recovery, tourism, and casinos. Chapter III gives an in-depth presentation of the method of study. Chapter IV presents the data analysis and the findings of the study. Lastly, Chapter V puts forward conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the literature indicates that there is substantial research in disaster recovery, tourism recovery, and the casino industry in general. Four important categories were identified that were applicable to this study because of the specific research questions: The Casino Industry in Mississippi, Casinos' Roles in Economic Development, Hazard Mitigation and Disaster Recovery, and Tourism Recovery. The end of this chapter ties these theoretical threads together to explain how they relate specifically to the goals of the study, and how examining this case will support the hypothesis.

It is first important to look at the casino industry in Mississippi to chronicle how it evolved from a state mired with political, economic and social problems in the late 1980s to a state currently used as a successful gaming model.

Casino Industry in Mississippi

Dombrink and Thompson (as cited in Nelson & Mason, 2003) concluded that there are a number of variables that affect the probability that a state will permit casinos to legally operate within its borders. They are as follows:

'political environment' factors, such as the economy and the state's prior experience with gambling; 'political elite and active interests' factors, including the stance of public officials and business interests on casinos; 'campaign sponsorship' factors, such as the credibility and financial commitment of casino advocates; and 'campaign issue dominance' factors, notably the ability of casino supporters to frame the issue as one of economic development rather than of crime, morality, or quality of life.

Dombrink and Thompson found that, in contrast to lotteries and some other forms of legalized gambling, a 'veto model' describes the politics of casinos; that is, if even one of the four factors they enumerated is adverse to a casino measure, the measure will fail. (648)

Nelson and Mason (2003) state that advocates of legalized gambling identify the state of Mississippi as a model "of how to 'do it right'" (650).

According to Hsu (1999), Mississippi, in the late 1980s, "ranked near the bottom of most lists of economic and social indicators and had state budget deficits of hundreds of thousands of dollars" (75). Having seen the launch of riverboats in Iowa and combined with the harsh budget deficits and staggering levels of unemployment and economic depression, this hastened the gaming legislation process in the Magnolia State. Nelson and Mason (2003) state that many expected the adoption of a state lottery in 1990. That is, "early in the 1990 legislative session, much to the surprise of ... most political observers, the lottery lost a test vote in the Senate" (650). Astonishingly, however, in March,

the Legislature gave final passage to the Gaming Control Act, a bill which, in the absence of local opposition, would legalize casino gambling in fourteen of the state's eighty-two counties: the three counties along the Gulf Coast and the eleven along the Mississippi River, which constitutes the state's western border. In passing the Act, legislators made Mississippi only the fifth casino state in the nation and the first in the South. Within a few years, Mississippi would have more casinos than any other state except Nevada. (Nelson & Mason, 2003, p. 650)

In 1990, Mississippi's choice to rebuff a lottery and legalize casinos was “anomalous by any standard” (Nelson & Mason, 2003, p. 650). Furthermore, as McGowan (as cited in Nelson & Mason, 2003) has observed, “‘Mississippi is the great exception’ to the rule that ‘casino gambling is usually the last form of gambling that state officials will recognize’” (Nelson and Mason, 2003, p. 651). According to Nelson and Mason, the reasons for Mississippi's decisions in 1990 are numerous. “Some, as predicted by diffusion theory, involve the influence of other states' actions on Mississippi. Others are grounded in the internal characteristics of the state itself: its constitution, its political norms, and its prevailing economic situation” (651). In any case, so began a new page in this state's history.

Though casinos were legal in fourteen of the state's 82 counties (Nelson and Mason, 2003), only two areas became clusters of casinos: The Gulf Coast (which includes Gulfport, Biloxi, and Bay St. Louis) in the south and Tunica, which is close to Memphis, in the north of Mississippi. Tunica County previously was sated with open sewers, shacks and outhouses. The addition of the casino industry made it then known as a “boom town,” and this county showed employment growth above the state average from 1985-1999 (von Herrmann, 2006). On the Gulf Coast, casinos revitalized the then-stagnant tourist industry (Schwartz, 2006).

According to von Herrmann (2006), Mississippi has seen the most rapid growth of any of the casino markets that have opened since 1990. Much of this success is credited to Mississippi's adopting what is known as a market-oriented regulatory structure where the state does not impose regulations on how many

licenses can be issued to casinos or certain restrictions (“credit, loss, or wager”) on betting. To sum up, Mississippi allows “full and open competition among casinos” (67).

In contrast, von Herrmann (2006) says, the casinos in Louisiana, such as Harrah’s in New Orleans, have to pay very high taxes to the state in comparison with what the Mississippi casinos pay. Richard (2006) states that the restrictive regulatory setting of Louisiana gives Mississippi the edge when it comes to patrons who might otherwise support Louisiana casinos because the Mississippi casinos are able to then make more customer-pleasing services and promotional campaigns because they are dealing with competition among their in-state and out-of-state competitors so they are not becoming complacent in the services or promotions they are offering (von Herrmann, 2006).

Most of the customers of Mississippi Gulf Coast casinos come as a result of planned trips, and most were found to live within a day’s drive of the casinos. The casinos as a tourist destination have increasingly been identified as the primary purpose of customers’ trips (von Herrmann, Ingram, & Smith, 2000; von Herrmann, 2002a). There is customer loyalty for the Gulf Coast casinos in that respondents in von Herrmann’s 2001 study revealed that 39.5% had visited Gulf Coast casinos from one to five times during the last twelve months, and 29.9% had visited the region’s casinos more than 25 times during the last twelve months of this study. The average number of visits annually for the casinos in the Mississippi Gulf Coast region was 13.4 visits in the 2001 study (von Herrmann, 2002a). This strong customer base and the tourism aspect of Mississippi casinos bring the revenue of this tourism into focus.

All the evidence of the casino industry's growth in Mississippi leads to questions of how much casinos impact economic development generally.

Casinos' Role in Economic Development

Hsu (1999) points to debates about the economic impacts of casinos. That is, the gaming industry is viewed "as a source of new and improved job opportunities, increased tax revenues for public projects, or broad-based economic development" (157). However, there is often a significant lag period that exists before the economic benefits are witnessed (Stokowski as cited in Hsu, 1999). Nelson and Mason (2003) state that in spite of the resistance to casinos,

casinos seem strongly entrenched in Mississippi. Most of the initial promises for economic development, tourism, and tax revenues have been more than fulfilled, with little clear evidence of serious increases in crime or immoral behavior. In state politics, the dominant stance among candidates on the casino issue has been to express personal opposition to gambling but to praise the casino industry for its contributions to the state's economy. (658)

Hsu (1999) says that (in regard to the rebuilding of Atlantic City) in the national debate over gaming,

it is too easy for people to focus on the \$45 billion that gamblers lost in Atlantic City over a twenty-year period at the slot machines and gaming tables and to point to it as the negative economic impact of gambling...But an overwhelming percentage of that \$45 billion has gone back into the

pockets of employees and vendors and has helped to build a vibrant economy for the region. (132)

Collins (2003) states that casinos offer economic advantages to governments other than those that amass from gambling taxes. Specifically, casinos are able to offer all sorts of jobs, during and after construction. Government may also obtain from casino companies a promise to build additional structures, “sometimes called ‘add-ons,’ which are not related to gambling but thought to be of general benefit to the community. These additional structures may include conference centers, hotels, theme parks and rides, and even upgrades of transport infrastructure or the construction of canals or monorails” (99).

Collins (2003) states that government has to be clear with casino policy (compared with any other form of gambling) about what it wants its policy to accomplish and whom it wants to encourage and help. There is not one best policy for any particular area. Communities need to decide what they desire from casinos in their region and must convey those wishes. Finally, “only after governments have worked out what they want to achieve on behalf of their electorates will they be able to address the question of what policies and regulations will be the most effective in securing their chosen objectives” (99).

Morse and Goss (2007) state that more state and local government policymakers are resorting to casino gambling to fill gaps in budget. These leaders advocate the “development creation abilities” of casinos. However, their results indicate that “casinos tend to dampen income growth but increase job opportunities in the counties where they are located” (66).

Fahrenkopf (as cited in Haugen & Musser, 2007) asserts that casinos are major providers to the economic comfort of communities that host them. That is, elected officials and civic leaders are strikingly positive about the impact casinos have had on their communities. They welcome the additional tax revenue, jobs, secondary economic development, and the contributions casino gaming makes to the community and charitable organizations. Fully 58 percent of those surveyed say that they had a positive initial reaction when casinos were first proposed in the community. After the casinos opened, more than 90 percent of those leaders believe the casinos have either met or exceeded their expectations. (34)

Eadington (1999) states that the potential gains from states that allow casino gambling can be divided into three areas: first, there are the customers' gains in utility and the "economic rents that arise when the state legalizes a previously prohibited but popular activity" (186); second, there are secondary gains from a casino in a state such as "job creation, investment stimulation, tourism development, economic development or redevelopment, urban or waterfront revitalization, or the improvement of the economic status of deserving or underprivileged groups" (Economic Development Review as cited in Eadington, 1999, p. 186); and third, is the additional source of revenue to the public sector.

von Herrmann (2002b) points out that Mississippi's Department of Economic Development has described the arrival of gaming as "The Mississippi Miracle" in regard to Mississippi's economy (87). Furthermore, Broomhall (as cited in von Herrmann, 2002b) published a report on the impact of casinos in

general in the state of Indiana and their potential to achieve economic development. Essential to this study, Broomhall's findings discuss the need for casinos to be a good community "neighbor" and a valuable tourist attraction:

For legalized gambling to create economic development it must do two things: provide a positive economic contribution to the economy and draw clientele from outside the local economy. The measure of a positive economic contribution to the economy is somewhat subjective, but it means the expansion and diversification of the economic base, the generation of jobs that pay reasonable wages, and improvements in public and private services such as cultural amenities, restaurants, and shopping. Generally speaking, the jobs created, both directly by the gambling operation and indirectly, should be of at least similar quality and average wage as the existing employment base (as cited in von Herrmann, 2002b, p. 96)

This review of the literature on economic impacts from casinos demonstrates that casinos can be an effective tool for development of local economies if they are appropriately structured and regulated and if governments are clear about their objectives and goals.

Once established, casino tourism locales appear to become a vital part of the overall economy. Damage to, or loss of casino tourism from disasters obviously raises important questions about the impact of such events and what may be done to mitigate their effects and/or to facilitate recovery.

Hazard Mitigation and Disaster Recovery

On the subject of natural hazards research in the United States, White and Haas (1975) state that even though there has been a wealth of research directed toward disaster prediction and control, “relatively little is done in relation to the economic, social, and political aspects of adjustment to natural hazards” (5). Furthermore, the authors state that future efforts with regard to research on hurricanes and hurricane modification needs to be directed on “understanding the social ramifications of the hurricane hazard and encouraging more adaptive human responses” (249).

Lynch (2004) describes three stages of disaster recovery: emergency, reassurance, and recovery. Lynch also states that recovery from natural disasters may normally be handled more efficiently than other crises because there is usually a protocol in place for handling the disaster as well as various funding for the disaster. After a natural disaster, there is often a focus on hazard mitigation.² However, there is also an emphasis on the economic development of the disaster-affected region. Godschalk et al. (1999) state that economic recovery is an important part of post-disaster recovery. In the case of Hurricane Andrew, Godschalk et al. (1999) discuss examples of economic recovery projects that ended up being factors in hazard mitigation, even though that was not their original intention. Horwich (2000), in reference to the speedy recovery from the 1995 Kobe earthquake in Japan, states that different resources can be combined in order to hasten output and recovery.

² Hazard mitigation can be defined as the reduction or alleviation “of the losses of life, injuries and property resulting from natural and human-made hazards through long-term strategies” (New Hampshire Department of Safety government website, 2007).

Light (as cited in O'Connor, 2006) states that there are four “pillars” that must be followed in disaster recovery:

1. Awareness about what is up ahead—institutions must anticipate disasters and explore a wide range of scenarios and possibilities.
2. Agility in generating a work force by means of “training, retaining, and redeploying”—in order to execute a disaster recovery plan, it must be executed by an able work force.
3. Adaptability—institutions must be able to adjust to what the disaster dictates that it adjust to.
4. Alignment of organizations—organizations must work together and cooperate toward a common good. (111-112)

Light continues that “in planning for catastrophe, preparedness starts at the top, not the bottom, with clear signals about where to invest, whom to engage and how to coordinate” (113).

Rubin (as cited in Johnson, 2007) proposed the Rocky Mountain Model of Disaster Recovery. This was named in honor of the location where this model was first presented. In this model, Rubin “views the process of disaster recovery as a time of conflict and confusion, with the politics of recovery adding to the pressure of the situation” (Johnson, 2007, p. 15). This model states that the recovery process is analogous to three mountain peaks—“each separate, but connected, according to three stages: 1) Minimalist/Restoration, 2) Foresight/Mitigation, and 3) Vision/Community Betterment” (p. 15). Each of the

stages builds upon the previous stage; furthermore, each stage is more difficult to realize. The first stage (Minimalist/Restoration) is the expected mode of recovery, focusing on the clean-up and repair of facilities and physical infrastructures. The second stage (Foresight/Mitigation) focuses more on human necessities and managing social factors. This stage requires more planning and greater thought. The final stage (Vision/Community Betterment), however, is very difficult to achieve and “requires a level of sophistication and forward thinking that often eludes communities in their quest for recovery. Rubin believes it is this level that must be attained in order to effectively prepare one’s community for future disaster situations” (Johnson, 2007, p. 15).

Tourism Recovery

The subject of tourism recovery is germane to this study because the Mississippi Gulf Coast has long been a tourism destination. Wallace and Webber (2004) state that action steps must be recognized to keep the customer in mind in the face of disaster. A disaster plan must consider the customer. Furthermore, the authors state that the risk of businesses will be reduced if customers are geographically spread out. That is, customers who are affected by the same disaster as the tourism destination are likely to be engaged in their own recovery efforts, affecting their status as consumers. Lastly, customers will work with businesses to make it through the disaster if they are kept up to date of the recovery efforts of businesses.

Citing other cases that relied on tourism recovery, Hong Kong had to rebound its tourism industry after the 2003 severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak, and Thailand faced a great loss in tourism after the 2004 Asian

tsunami. De Jong (as cited in Plog, 2006) states the following: “we learned painful lessons from SARS and the tsunami. We learned that government transparency is extremely important [and a] verifiable and frequently updated communications network is vital” (409).

Concerning tourism recovery in Thailand, Rittichainuwat (2006) found the following by conducting a survey of travelers to Thailand’s Andaman Coast:

the top-eleven motivators were good climate, relaxing atmosphere, beauty of nature, friendliness of the local people, service-minded people, interesting culture, good value for money, variety of foods, images of the Thais helping foreigners during the tsunami, high quality of hotels and resorts, and helping local people to recover from the disaster. The least-cited reason was curiosity to see damaged areas and debris. Although they sought value for money, most of these tourists were neutral toward the fun packages. That is, neither Westerners nor Asians stated that the low-cost tour packages affected their decision to visit the Andaman Coast. (396)

Hardman (2006) examines the recovery of Cancun after Hurricane Wilma in 2005. Hardman’s findings are that the city used this disaster as an opportunity to “upgrade its infrastructure and add new attractions, condominiums, and restaurants” (3). Furthermore, the city “launched a massive public relations campaign-which included a \$77,000 two-page advertisement in the official 2006 World Cup guide-to persuade people to come back to Cancún” (3). Studying these other instances gives insight into tourism recovery and the Mississippi Gulf

Coast region and what strategies can be considered best practices. The cases of Hong Kong, Thailand, and Cancun are relevant to the Mississippi Gulf Coast because they each demonstrate that flexibility and innovation are needed when it comes to the recovery of a tourism destination after a disaster.

Generally speaking, Durocher (1994) says that tourism recovery that follows after a natural disaster hinges on a) the level of damages involved, b) the usefulness of marketing to publicize the status of the affected destination area, and c) the manner in which the general facilities of the destination are brought back online. Durocher (1994) says that when a destination is not available to tourists, they will find other places to go (known as the “substitution effect”). Therefore, tourism recovery needs a strong “reintroduction” of the place that was damaged so that visitors will again recognize this as a place to which they can now return. This reintroduction presents a marketing challenge, where the destination must rise above the negative associations that resulted from the natural disaster. It might even take years to build business back to pre-disaster levels. Glascoff (2008) emphasizes Mississippi’s hard work on that front, citing a two-year follow up report which stated that the gaming and tourism industry had “risen to exceed the pre-Katrina level; that eleven casinos had opened/reopened since Katrina providing customers, three-quarters of whom were from outside Mississippi” (116).

When it comes to average time for a tourism location to recover, Lynch (2004) finds that it takes about three years for a tourism destination to recover³

³ By *recovery*, Lynch (2004) provides the following definition: “where business returns to the level enjoyed in the year before the crisis and this is sustained for at least two years” (100).

from a crisis. The reason for keeping an eye on the level that was enjoyed in the year before the crisis over a set period of time is to make certain that there is not just a temporary, short-term surge in business that would detract from the overall accurate picture. Lynch, however, does keep this term simple even though it is made clear that this definition is not fully explanatory. For example, Lynch states, if the destination was seeing a growth curve at the time of the crisis, then this particular definition of recovery may, in fact, underestimate the effect of the crisis; on the other hand, if the destination was seeing a drop in business before the crisis, then the crisis could be mistakenly cited as the entire reason for the loss of business. This is similar, D. Butler (personal communication, 2008) says, to the situation where the US airline industry was in decline prior to September 11, 2001. The events of September 11, however, accelerated this decline. All of these items are important to keep in mind.

Lynch (2004) finds that tourism business returns more quickly to destinations that are faced with a natural disaster as opposed to destinations that faced other crises such as New York City following the terrorist attacks or any sort of publicized scandal such as the Natalee Holloway disappearance in Aruba. The competence of authorities in restoring the physical infrastructure and verifying that the area is safe affects this return of business.

Ichinosawa (2006) argues that, with any reputational disaster, marketing solutions can assist in bringing about tourism recovery in the long term, but not over shorter periods (e.g. a few months to a year). Further, micro business owners and unskilled workers can be jeopardized by the loss of several months of earnings; however, bigger enterprises are able to endure this type of setback

more easily. Therefore, Ichinosawa asserts that emergency measures and policies that are focused on reducing the damage of reputational disasters are needed rather than a single marketing approach aimed at tourism recovery.

There are also two other factors to keep in mind relating to the return of tourism: a) the media coverage associations that the public has with the destination; and b) the catchment area of customers. First, if the media focuses ample attention (so that everyone in the country is aware of this disaster and even many people from other countries) on the natural disaster as was certainly the case with Hurricane Katrina, then the destination must work extra hard to counter these negative images in the post-disaster stage. However, there can also be a benefit to this coverage: some people who were previously unaware of the destination may be inclined to visit after the crisis has passed. Second, there is a relationship between catchment of customers and the return of tourism. The closer the customer base lives to the area affected by the natural disaster, the more likely these customers are to return (Lynch, 2004).

Durocher (1994), in citing the recovery of Hawaii after Hurricane Iniki in 1992, states that this rapid recovery can be attributed to the prompt action of residents, government officials, and businesses that pulled together for the “good of the whole” (1). Prabhu (1996) asserts that “tourism development is an important vehicle in improving a country's economy and social status” (1).

Nielsen (as cited in Avraham & Ketter, 2008) emphasizes the difficulty of promoting a tourism place, especially one with an image-related crisis: “Promoting a destination in normal circumstances is a difficult task, but promoting a destination that faces tourism challenges-whether from negative press, or from

infrastructure damage caused by natural disasters or man-made disasters-is an altogether more arduous task” (207-208). On the other hand, Lynch (2004), relating to the recovery from a natural disaster, finds that there is no public blame linked to this event because a natural disaster is seen as “an act of God.” Therefore, something such as Hurricane Katrina generates a lot of sympathy and understanding from the public. Public perceptions will not have been damaged by this event.

This research regarding the economic impact and role of casinos as both tourist attractions and local businesses will be vital to consider when discussing and evaluating the findings of this study.

Review of Theory: Weaving the Theories Together

From the review of the literature, we see that disasters do not always lead to successful recovery. We know that recovery is aided when, as Rubin (as cited in Johnson, 2007) says, we have the right people, abilities, and plans in place. We also know from Rubin (as cited in Johnson, 2007) that many communities never reach the third stage of recovery. We know for tourism areas in particular that recovery requires that the customer be kept in mind—reassured and informed—and that quick action is critical. Then we look at the casino industry—what do we know about that? We know it has strong leadership, political support, and a strong focus on its customers. We know the Coast’s customers come from about a day’s drive away and had already developed strong location loyalty (von Herrmann, 2002a; von Herrmann et al., 2000). So what do we expect? What does all of this theory tell us? It tells us the conditions are right for a quick recovery of the destination after the disaster. We would expect political support in

the form of changed legislation, quick work by zoning boards, building inspectors and others to get casinos rebuilt and back in operation. We would expect these casinos—with their strong customer bases and relatively little nearby competition—to decide quickly that it is worth reinvesting in the location.

Conclusion

When researching these four categories that are applicable to this study as a combined focus, there is a dearth of research regarding how and why casinos can help in the recovery after a natural disaster. Within these four categories, this chapter first examined the historical development of gaming in Mississippi to understand the casino's role in this region and Mississippi's market-oriented regulatory structure, which has contributed to the state's apparent success with casinos. Next, with the casinos' role in economic development, this chapter looked at the economic contributions of a casino industry toward a state and what qualities this industry must have as a local business and tourism attraction in order to perform most efficiently. Next, this chapter viewed different models of disaster recovery for an area affected by a natural disaster and looked at the stages of the recovery process. Lastly, within tourism recovery, cases such as Hong Kong, Thailand and Cancun were discussed because each of these areas had to focus on bringing tourism back after a disaster or catastrophe. Also, the best practices associated with tourism recovery were presented along with a general timeline for tourism recovery. The last part of this chapter serves to tie these theoretical threads together. This study aims to contribute to the literature and test theory as a qualitative study as

to how and why casinos are able to help in the economic recovery of an area after a natural disaster.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study employed a qualitative methodology and utilized a qualitative interview design with elite interviewing to test the theory and provide evidence and context to it. This research design was chosen to be the most appropriate design because there is no body of theory that exists that deals with how casinos can assist in recovery after a disaster. Therefore, this study examined three interlocking areas of theory (casinos as economic engines, tourism recovery following disaster or negative event, and economic/social characteristics that facilitate recovery after disasters generally) to articulate a simple, unified conclusion of why casino resorts allow tourism locales to recover faster or better than they otherwise would.

Qualitative Interviews

Rubin and Rubin (2005) state that in qualitative interviews, those being interviewed contribute to and share in the interesting discoveries made and take part in the actual work, “often guiding the questioning in channels of their own choosing” (14). In contrast, with survey interviews, those who are supplying the information are “relatively passive” and are not often given the chance to go into extended details (14). Patton (2002) states that open-ended responses allow the qualitative researcher to appreciate the world as it is viewed by the interviewees. Further, Patton states that the objective of gathering replies to questions that are open-ended is to make it possible for the researcher to “understand and capture the points of view of other people without predetermining those points of view

through prior selection of questionnaire categories” (21). For all these reasons, open-ended qualitative interviews fit this particular study best.

Design/Data Collection Procedures

This study employed a descriptive, open-ended interview design with elite interviewing. With interview questions informed by Rubin’s three elements that influence the recovery process within a community (Rubin as cited in Johnson, 2007), this study utilized a descriptive, open-ended interview design to ascertain the various industry professionals’, consultants’, tourism officials’ and state regulators’ perspectives of the casino industry’s role in revitalizing the Mississippi Gulf Coast region. Personal telephone interviews with the various parties were conducted for this study. The interviews took place from January 2009 (first interview) until May 2009 (final interview).

For this study, a wide range of individuals who are involved with aspects of the casino industry and the economic recovery of the region in Mississippi were selected and interviewed. The interviews were recorded, and the focus of the interviews was based on the questions found in the appendix.

Semi-Structured Interview

Berg (2004) states that the semi-structured interview (or *semistandardized* interview) involves the “implementation of a number of predetermined questions and special topics” (81). The questions are normally asked of each of the interviewees in a normal and consistent order; however, the interviewer is given the freedom to deviate from the normal order and take time asking for clarification or “to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared standardized

questions” (81). Finally, the interviewer may adjust the language or add and delete probes as necessary.

This type of interview was most appropriate for this research project because as Yin (2003) states, “you can ask key respondents about the facts of a matter as well as their opinions and events” (90). Also, the researcher might even ask the interviewee to propose his or her insights into specific incidents and “may use such propositions as the basis for future inquiry” (90). Lastly, Yin mentions that the interviewees are also able to suggest other persons to be interviewed as well as other sources of research relevant to the study.

Participants were able to share freely, and more than one participant suggested other sources to study or other people to interview.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

This project was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, at The University of Southern Mississippi (see Appendix D). Participants were given the consent form prior to the interview (see Appendix B), and signed consent forms were mailed to the researcher. Consent was also obtained orally and audio recorded if the researcher had not received the signed form prior to the interview. All signed forms were received and kept on file during the time of the study. This leads to the research instrument utilized in this study.

Research Instrument

The interview questions used as the research instrument are found in Appendix A. Fourteen questions were asked of the participants, and a few (as

noted in the appendix) were influenced by the interview questions of Johnson (2007) whose study addresses disaster recovery actions in higher education.

Selection of Sample

Creswell (1998) and Weiss (as cited in Mertus, 2010) run through different techniques for choosing a sample of informants, and this sample depends “on the scope of the study, the amount of time the researcher is willing and able to spend in data collection, and the tradition of inquiry used for the project” (Mertus, 2010, p. 2).

The type of sampling most appropriate for this study is *Convenience Sampling*. This is due to the fact that this study requires informed perceptions and specific experience relevant to the goals of this study. According to Mertus (2010), Convenience Sampling is best characterized as follows:

This strategy stems from the idea that it is often difficult to take a completely random survey, or to find examples of the entire range of experiences within a population. Researchers who use convenience sampling basically try to talk to whoever is available that may be able to offer insight to the project (Weiss 1994)... Although convenience sampling is not as scientifically precise as the [other] methods, it is a valuable technique which can provide valuable data for a qualitative research project. (2)

When considering the goals of this study, the characteristics of convenience sampling are a good match. O’Sullivan, Rassel, and Berner (2003) state that convenience samples can “provide illustrative case material or serve as the basis for exploratory studies” (p. 147).

Elite Interviewing

Rather than generalizing this specific study to a larger population who may not be informed on the subject matter to participate in the study, elite interviewing was chosen in order to learn from a select sample of individuals specifically because of their role during the recovery period. Elite interviews are a valuable source of data. As Tansey (n.d.) states, "One of the strongest advantages of elite interviews is that they enable researchers to interview first-hand participants of the processes under investigation, allowing for researchers to obtain accounts from direct witnesses to the events in question" (p. 6). Tansey also says that documents and materials are valuable to a researcher, but there is very often no substitute for first-hand accounts and insights obtained from "key participants" (p. 6).

According to Dexter (as cited in Berger et al., 2007), elite interviews with "key informants" are designed to determine "the decision makers' understanding of the phenomenon, its meaning to them, and what they consider relevant" (Berger et al., 2007, p. 136). Also, according to John and Torger (as cited in Berger et al., 2007), "the validity of using key informants to describe organizational phenomena has a long history" (p. 136).

To sum up why elite interviewing was a good fit for this study, Tansey (n.d.) says the following:

When interviewees have been significant players, when their memories are strong, and when they are willing to disclose their knowledge of events in an impartial manner, elite interviews will arguably be the most important instrument in the process tracer's data collection toolkit. (p. 7)

Participants

Participants included three females and seven males who are involved with aspects of the casino industry and the economic recovery of the Gulf Coast region in Mississippi. Types of people interviewed were casino executives, tourism officials, housing officials, industry professionals, consultants, and state and local regulators. The goal was to include upper-level casino employees in this study, but numerous attempts to reach several identified individuals went without response. This researcher tried letters, emails, and phone calls to invite participation, but this goal was not successful. The researcher, committee chair, and committee members determined the sufficiency of the number of interviews, and this number was agreed to be in the range of 10-12 participants. The researcher also verified that saturation of the data was achieved.

By interviewing all of the individuals mentioned, this research seeks to demonstrate what all the different voices are saying about recovery and tourism specifically, not just casino professionals. What follows is a brief description of each individual according to pseudonym (a chart is included in the appendix to be used as a quick reference).

Participant #1, who will be identified as “Beth,” is a tourism official with media relations experience who has extensive knowledge of the Mississippi Gulf Coast tourism specifically. Participant #2, who will be identified as “Robert,” is an elected official who was in an elected office in the Mississippi Gulf Coast region during Hurricane Katrina. Participant #3, who will be identified as “Ben,” is a local business owner who demonstrated excellence in disaster recovery to get his business back online quickly after the storm. Ben was also appointed to the

Governor's Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding, and Renewal. Participant #4, who will be identified as "Joyce," works largely with Gulf Coast planning matters. Participant #5, who will be identified as "Paul," is a gaming official. Participant #6, who will be identified as "Jack" is a local executive who was cited as being active in the recovery and overseeing the rapid recovery of his utility company. Participant #7, who will be identified as "David," works for the Mississippi Development Authority. Participant #8, who will be identified as "Steven," is a casino expert involved in higher education. Participant #9, who will be identified as "Fred," is a gaming official. Lastly, Participant #10, who will be identified as "Anne," is a casino official.

This researcher went through great strides to include more than just casino executives in this study to keep the research pure and comprehensive. By interviewing all of the individuals mentioned, this research sought to demonstrate what all the different voices were saying about recovery and tourism specifically, not just casino professionals.

Time Spent in Area

To gain a strong perspective of the issues at stake and of the area, this researcher spent time in the Mississippi Gulf Coast region and in several of the region's casinos before and after Hurricane Katrina. This exposure provided a strong flavor of the climate, the people, the lifestyle, and the issues relevant to this area. It would be nearly impossible to imagine the recovery of the area if this researcher had not witnessed the destruction and despondency that came from Hurricane Katrina. This perspective was crucial to the understanding and the conducting of this research.

Telephone Interviews

There is a good deal of research that addresses the role of telephone interviews in qualitative research. Berg (2004) says that telephone interviews “lack face-to-face non-verbal cues that researchers use to pace their interviews and to determine the direction to move in” (93). However, research, Berg (2004) states, has determined that “under certain circumstances, telephone interviews may provide not only an effective means for gathering data but also in some instances—owing to geographic locations—the only viable method” (93). Since this researcher is located in Pennsylvania and is fully employed as an assistant professor at a Pennsylvania college with a full teaching load and department chair responsibilities, the prospect of traveling to Mississippi to conduct these interviews in a face-to-face manner was not feasible. Since surveys and questionnaires were eliminated as possibilities because they would not allow respondents to go into enough detail or dictate their own directions on the questions, telephone interviews became the best possible choice when all factors were considered. Also, Rubin and Rubin (2005) state that telephone interviews “can be useful for follow-up questions...” (p. 125).

Berg (2004) states that qualitative telephone interviews are most likely to be most effective when the researcher has quite specific questions (that is, a formal or semi-structured interview agenda). Since this study involved a specific set of questions (with mild modifications made in the case that the question is not applicable), this specificity worked in the study’s favor.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) state that qualitative telephone interviewing necessitates that modifications be made to the traditional stage model. That is,

“it is more difficult to engage in casual small talk on a telephone during the business day and interviewees may want you to get to the point quickly. The result may be less time to build trust before asking questions” (125). To offset this, this researcher sought to build in multiple contacts by means of phone, mailed letters, and email with the subjects before the actual scheduled telephone interview. The subjects also had multiple opportunities to ask questions about the study beforehand; they were also given the interview questions before the scheduled interview.

Something else important to keep in mind when doing telephone interviews is that one has to establish legitimacy and work extra hard at gaining a sense of trust with people the researcher has probably not met on a face-to-face basis. Rubin and Rubin (2005) state that it is “important to be sure to include material in your letter requesting an interview that indicates you are safe to talk to, that you know some of the same people...anything that makes you seem more familiar and reliable” (125).

Berg (2004) lists these steps a researcher must do to accomplish a successful qualitative telephone interview:

First, the investigator must establish legitimacy; next, the researcher must convince the potential subject that it is important for the subject to take part in the research; and finally, the researcher must carefully ensure that the information he or she obtains is sufficiently detailed to contribute meaningfully to the study. (p. 93)

This researcher established legitimacy by including his USM contact information and advisor in the initial letter to prospective subjects; also, the

researcher's place of employment and job title were included to let the potential subjects know that this person is trustworthy. Furthermore, the initial letter and the subsequent contacts made it clear to the prospective subjects how few of them there are and how important their perspectives were to this study. The carefully-constructed interview questions provide a strong framework for getting meaningful feedback from the respondents.

Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI)

Berg (2004) states that Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) can be very useful when conducting qualitative telephone interviews. In a qualitative version of CATI, Berg says, the interviewer asks the open-ended questions and types in the complete explanations offered by the subject. The advantage of using this method is that there is no need for transcription later on. However, the typist has to be extremely skilled. To exercise caution, this researcher used a mere version of CATI. This study had the phone interviews audio recorded and then transcribed for data analysis, but this researcher still incorporated CATI to jot down first impressions and brainstorm possible emerging themes in the responses. Furthermore, the researcher composed a detailed, first-impression summary of the interview immediately following the interview so that these impressions could be juxtaposed against the transcriptions of the entire interview. This method of incorporating CATI allowed the researcher to have the actual data along with the advantage of being able to recall the reactions to the exact interview that was taking place.

Transcriptions

Rubin and Rubin (2005) state that most interviewers prepare a fully written version of interviews. Gibbs (2002) states that there are two good reasons for using transcriptions: “It forces you to read carefully what is recorded on tape or in your notes and it provides you with an easily readable transcript that can be copied as many times as necessary” (1). Also, Gibbs lists three methods of transcribing data: an audio typist, speech recognition software, and optical character recognition (OCR) software. For this study, an audio typist was used to capture the recordings. No matter which method, however, the transcription needs to be checked against the original recording (Gibbs, 2002).

With regard to the level of the transcription, Gibbs (2002) states the following:

There are varying degrees to which you can capture what is in the sound recording and you need to decide what is appropriate for the purposes of your study. Sometimes just a draft version of what is said is sufficient. This is often the case in policy and evaluation research, where the salient factual content of what people have said is good enough for analysis. (6)

Also, Gibbs states that it is up to the researcher whether the transcript should be “tidied up.” It depends on the purpose of the study. Tidy, grammatical transcriptions are more agreeable to read and therefore analyze. That is, “if your study is not much concerned with the details of expression and language use and is more interested in the factual content of what is said, then such tidying up is acceptable” (6). Gibbs lists different levels of transcription such as *Just the*

Gist, Verbatim, Verbatim with Dialect, and Discourse Level. This study uses *Verbatim Transcriptions* with some grammatical tidying up in spots for clarity. In Chapter IV, the selections from the participants are verbatim transcriptions that have been lightly edited for clarity.

Content Analysis

Analysis of the data was completed after the interviews were conducted. The data obtained from the interviews was interpreted. The collected information from all participants was sorted and compiled into categories based on the research question and the interview questions, and information presented from the participants was coded within these categories and common themes were identified. The data was then formatted into a qualitative narrative.

This researcher followed the model of Rubin & Rubin (2005) for content analysis. That is, after the review of the transcriptions and the written summaries of each interview, the researcher gains a preliminary idea of the themes and concepts that are present in the interviews. The first stage of analysis is then recognition where the researcher identifies these concepts, events, and themes in the interviews. Next, the researcher clarifies what is being said and then synthesizes the different versions of events to get an overall sense of the narrative of the study. The researcher then “find[s], refine[s], elaborate[s] and integrate[s]” these concepts and themes (p. 207). Lastly, the researcher will code and sort the data before a final synthesis.

The results of the study are presented in a descriptive, narrative format, organized by themes, in Chapter IV to preserve the original information obtained from the interviews with the interviewees. Names, however, are withheld in this

study. The narrative format will allow the readers of this study to fully understand the perspectives of the industry professionals without the results becoming distorted from their original meaning.

Qualitative Analysis: “Not about Counting”

Rubin and Rubin (2005) state the following about qualitative data analysis: Qualitative analysis is not about mere counting or providing numeric summaries. Instead, the objective is to discover variation, portray shades of meaning, and examine complexity. The goals of the analysis are to reflect the complexity of human interaction by portraying it in the words of the interviewees and through actual events and to make that complexity understandable to others. (p. 202)

Data Verification Procedure

Patton (2002) states that because qualitative analysts do not have statistical tests to indicate when a pattern or observation is important, they need to rely on their own knowledge, judgment, and intellect; second, they need to take seriously the responses they received from those who were interviewed. Therefore, the method that was used for data verification was member-checking. Member-checking is the process of taking the final report or portions back to the participants and verifying that the content is accurate (Creswell, 2003). Hatch (2002) suggests that participants should be allowed to review and react to the interpretations of the interview data by the researchers. Upon completion of the transcription of the interviews, the researcher asked the participants to review the interview transcription to confirm the accuracy.

The information received during these interviews was further authenticated by the researcher's conscious desire to steer clear of "elite interviewing." That is, by interviewing such a diverse range of professionals in the Mississippi Gulf Coast region, this kept the data as pure and balanced as possible. Further, the researcher sought to verify information gained from the interviews by cross-checking it against official documents, reports, websites, and articles.

Researcher reflexivity is the procedure where the researchers self-disclose their personal beliefs, biases, and assumptions (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In the current study, the researcher freely shared his intentions and focus with the participants after the interview was completed. That is, that the researcher has no bias regarding casinos.

Additional Data

The researcher also collected additional data concerning casino gross revenues, payroll expenses, and other expenses in the years before and after Katrina. This helped to establish the study in the proper setting and provide the additional data necessary to substantiating the study. Furthermore, the researcher also included a timeline of casinos reopening (or opening for the first time) after Hurricane Katrina. This additional data can be found in Chapter IV.

Ethical Considerations

This study seeks to be fair and ethical, respecting the rights of the participants and the institutions they represent. In order to ensure that individual and institutional rights were protected during this study, the researcher took the following steps:

1. The researcher received consent for this study in writing (Appendix B).
2. The researcher gave the participants the interview questions ahead of time.
3. The researcher obtained approval from the institutional review board (IRB) of The University of Southern Mississippi prior to data collection (Appendix D).
4. This study does not disclose names.

Conclusion

Since the qualitative open-ended interview design with elite interviewing format was selected to be most appropriate due to the nature of this dissertation, the data collection and analysis procedures were selected in accordance with the goal of this study which is to articulate a simple, unified conclusion of why casino resorts allow tourism locales to recover faster or better than they otherwise would. The relevant documents to this methodology can be found in the appendixes of this dissertation.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter begins with tables of data on the casino industry in the Gulf Coast Region of Mississippi pre- and post-Hurricane Katrina (e.g. a timeline of casinos in the area reopening and revenue and employment tables) in order to indicate the recovery of this industry after Hurricane Katrina. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the recovery efforts in the Gulf Coast region in Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina and explore what part the casino industry played in this renewal in order to articulate a conclusion of why casino resorts allow tourism locales to recover faster or better than they otherwise would.

This study employed open-ended transcribed personal telephone interviews. The participants of this study frame the findings of the study. The results are organized into two sections. The first section describes the study's sample, including the background information of the participants. The second section presents the themes uncovered by the analysis of the data as well as verbatim transcriptions relevant to the theme along with commentary and analysis. The five themes that developed from the data analysis with regard to the role of casinos are as follows: employment efforts, capital investment, community assistance, active decision-making, and tourism efforts. In order to protect the confidentiality of the participants, pseudonyms have been used in place of participants' names. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Facts and Figures

Table 2 shows the timeline of casinos (only those currently operating) reopening in the Mississippi Gulf Coast region after Hurricane Katrina. This serves to archive these events as part of this study and show the pattern of rebuilding and reopening.

Table 2

Timeline of Casino Rebuildings and Reopenings

Reopen Date	Name of Casino
December 22, 2005	Imperial Palace Biloxi
December 26, 2005	Isle of Capri Casino Biloxi
December 30, 2005	Palace Casino Biloxi
June 21, 2006	Treasure Bay Casino Biloxi
June 29, 2006	Boomtown Casino Biloxi
August 17, 2006	Grand Casino Biloxi
August 29, 2006	Beau Rivage Biloxi
August 31, 2006	Hollywood Casino Bay St. Louis
September 18, 2006	Island View Casino Resort Gulfport
November 8, 2006	Silver Slipper Casino Waveland
July 4, 2007	Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Biloxi

(Source: The Mississippi Gaming Commission, 2010).

As Table 2 demonstrates, by July 2007, there were a total of 11 casinos operating in the Mississippi Gulf Coast Region. The figures below will show the

figures over a four-year period and demonstrate the recovery of revenue and employment.

In order to see a broad historical context to casino gross revenues, payroll figures, and other related expenses prior to and after Hurricane Katrina, Tables 3 to 7 (Mississippi Gaming Commission, 2010) illustrate these figures from the 4th quarter⁴ of each year from 2003-2007.

Table 3

Revenue and Expenditures 4th Quarter 2003

Revenue and Expenditures	Coastal Region
Gross Revenue	\$376,264,740
Capital Investments	\$2,094,284,954
In-State	\$28,258,490
Out-of-State	\$405,450
Land	\$37,822
Facility	\$5,799,574
Gaming Equipment	\$7,773,768
Payroll	\$113,133,504
Operating Expenditures	\$242,841,776
Advertising	\$12,289,586
Donations / Public Service	\$281,295

⁴ Fourth quarter revenues are generally the smallest and therefore the most conservative way to demonstrate rebuilding.

Table 4

Revenue and Expenditures 4th Quarter 2004

Revenue and Expenditures	Coastal Region
Gross Revenue	\$383,962,692
Capital Investments	\$2,131,507,844
In-State	\$17,336,063
Out-of-State	\$676,619
Land	\$3,628
Facility	\$17,727,970
Gaming Equipment	\$7,956,632
Payroll	\$112,356,152
Operating Expenditures	\$249,206,212
Advertising	\$17,909,593
Donations / Public Service	\$306,354

Table 5

Revenue and Expenditures 4th Quarter 2005

Revenue and Expenditures	Coastal Region
Gross Revenue	\$24,811,403
Capital Investments	\$1,208,796,909
In-State	-\$610,852,497

Table 5 (continued).

Revenues and Expenditures	Coastal Region
Out-of-State	-\$3,954,347
Land	\$14,965,053
Facility	-\$431,517,503
Gaming Equipment	-\$68,210,016
Payroll	\$55,371,025
Operating Expenditures	\$18,609,533
Advertising	\$1,386,749
Donations / Public Service	\$24,819

Table 6

Revenue and Expenditures 4th Quarter 2006

Revenue and Expenditures	Coastal Region
Gross Revenue	\$421,474,667
Capital Investments	\$2,298,782,073
In-State	\$164,764,149
Out-of-State	\$0
Land	\$2,273,158
Facility	\$129,625,862

Table 6 (continued).

Revenues and Expenditures	Coastal Region
Gaming Equipment	\$28,437,405
Payroll	\$97,946,521
Operating Expenditures	\$295,057,891
Advertising	\$9,369,328
Donations / Public Service	\$181,441

Table 7

Revenue and Expenditures 4th Quarter 2007

Revenue and Expenditures	Coastal Region
Gross Revenue	\$403,487,746
Capital Investments	\$2,729,414,047
In-State	\$122,461,530
Out-of-State	\$0
Land	\$81,366
Facility	\$72,478,452
Gaming Equipment	\$4,213,281
Payroll	\$109,233,867
Operating Expenditures	\$197,577,665

Table 7 (continued).

Revenues and Expenditures	Coastal Region
Advertising	\$9,453,475
Donations / Public Service	\$418,086

In 2003 the Coast casinos employed over 16,000 people (The Mississippi Gaming Commission, 2010) for a payroll figure of \$113,133,504 in the 4th quarter of 2003 (Table 3) and a gross revenue of \$376,264,740 for this quarter, and these figures grew slowly and steadily until Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005. In the 4th quarter of 2005 (Table 5), payroll was down to \$55,371,025, and the gross revenue was down to \$24,811,403. The number of people employed by Coast casinos in December 2005 was below 4,000 (The Mississippi Gaming Commission, 2010).

Within six months (June 2006), the casinos regained employees—up to approximately 5,600 (The Mississippi Gaming Commission, 2010, Directory of Operators) and by December 2007 had rebounded to nearly 14,000 employees (The Mississippi Gaming Commission, 2010) with a payroll in the 4th quarter of 2007 of \$109,233,867 and a gross revenue of \$403,487,746 (Table 7).

This data helps to indicate the progress made with the casinos and the recovery achieved between Hurricane Katrina 2005 and the 4th quarter of 2007. Now this chapter will discuss the participants, the research questions, and the results with commentary.

Participants

Each participant was contacted by email, personal letter, or phone to be invited to participate in this study. Once the participant responded, he or she was contacted to set up a telephone interview time. Before the participants were interviewed, they were given the appropriate consent forms relevant to the study. The interview guide that was used helped to make certain that each interview addressed the same information. However, follow-up questions were added when necessary, and questions that were not relevant to the participant were deleted.

Participants included three females and seven males who were involved with aspects of the casino industry and the economic recovery of the Gulf Coast region in Mississippi. Types of people interviewed were casino executives, tourism officials, housing officials, industry professionals, consultants, and state and local regulators. The researcher, committee chair, and committee members determined the sufficiency of the number of interviews, and this number was agreed to be in the range of 10-12 participants. The researcher also verified that saturation of the data was achieved.

By interviewing all of the individuals mentioned, this research seeks to demonstrate what all the different voices are saying about recovery and tourism specifically, not just casino professionals. What follows is a brief description of each individual according to pseudonym (a chart is included in Appendix C to be used as a quick reference).

Participant #1, who will be identified as “Beth,” is a tourism official with media relations experience who has extensive knowledge of the Mississippi Gulf

Coast tourism specifically. Participant #2, who will be identified as “Robert,” is an elected official who was in an elected office in the Mississippi Gulf Coast region during Hurricane Katrina. Participant #3, who will be identified as “Ben,” is a local business owner who demonstrated excellence in disaster recovery to get his business back online quickly after the storm. Ben was also appointed to the Governor’s Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding, and Renewal. Participant #4, who will be identified as “Joyce,” works largely with Gulf Coast planning matters. Participant #5, who will be identified as “Paul,” is a gaming official. Participant #6, who will be identified as “Jack” is a local executive who was cited as being active in the recovery and overseeing the rapid recovery of his utility company. Participant #7, who will be identified as “David,” works for the Mississippi Development Authority. Participant #8, who will be identified as “Steven,” is a casino expert involved in higher education. Participant #9, who will be identified as “Fred,” is a gaming official. Lastly, Participant #10, who will be identified as “Anne,” is a casino official.

All of these telephone interviews were audio taped to allow for transcription. This transcription, though sometimes raw, facilitated the coding and analysis of the data. The collected information from all participants was sorted and compiled into categories based on the research question and the interview questions, and information presented from the participants was coded within these categories and common themes were identified. Emergent themes selected from the interviews were identified and presented by using descriptive and helpful quotes from the participants of the study.

Research Questions

The open-ended interview questions (in Appendix A) asked of the participants were informed by Rubin, Saperstein, and Barbee's (as cited in Johnson, 2007) three elements that influence the recovery process within a community. These interview questions were constructed to correspond with the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of successful disaster recovery efforts of businesses?
2. How and why did casinos assist in the recovery of the Mississippi Gulf Coast region after Hurricane Katrina?

Themes

There are five themes which emerged from the interviews with the casino executives, tourism officials, housing officials, industry professionals, consultants, and state and local regulators. The themes that developed from the data analysis are as follows: job creation, access to capital, community assistance, active decision-making, and tourism efforts. This text is separated into paragraphs categorized by pseudonym in order to designate different speakers. Commentary is provided after each theme along with a categorization into one of Rubin, Saperstein, and Barbee's three elements that influence the recovery process within a community (Rubin, 1991).

Employment Efforts

Paul

On a private sector side there is no doubt that the casinos down there were critical in the rapid recovery because of wanting to rebuild that

industry and the casinos wanted to come back. They wanted to rebuild and, of course, the number of employees. They hired people back. That was a critical thing--we had close to fifteen thousand casino employees just out of work that very next day, and the majority of casinos...paid for the employees, kept them on salary and kept their insurance even though they didn't come back to work. They did that from August, I think, up to about December for about six months...They were a critical page in the quick recovery because they are the ones that are the major businesses down on the Mississippi Gulf Coast... So not only with the employees coming back online [but] look at the jobs they had for the recovery: people of rebuilding-- the contractors, the ironworkers, the plumbers and all of that.

Fred

[The casinos] were a huge part of the economic development picture, and I think that you would be hard pressed to point to any other industry that has gone from zero to thirteen thousand jobs as quickly as the gaming industry has done in Mississippi... I think that not only have the casino resorts done a lot in terms of employing construction folks,...food and beverage people and hotel staff and what have you, but those folks then are able to buy a new car or upgrade from renting an apartment to buying a house.

David

Job creation...It was very important that we got them back up and running... without them, I think recovery would have been - we would have

had a lot more problems. They were some of the first to get back up and running and employing people. It was a source of income where other businesses were not up and running yet.

Beth

Without the casinos' commitment to rebuild and reopen, over 15,000 people would not have had the hope of returned employment. Individual casino companies really stepped up to the plate and helped employees find temporary employment... The casinos did lead the way for the rebuilding of the area because they are major employers.

Steven

I think in terms of providing employment, they were one of the first being one of the major employers especially the central part of the Gulf Coast – just there in rebuilding and reopening provided an important employment base. I think they did a lot of things for their employees in terms of the housing situation of their employees – I am not sure how much they did outside of those two things; those are two very important things.

Ben

For every casino job you got 1 to 1.5 additional jobs that are created to serve the casinos. It gave the casinos opening some nearly fifteen thousand people back employed as rapidly as we did was fundamentally important to where we are today.

Anne

There are thirteen thousand current employees; we have gotten thirteen thousand back to work now... we have two properties that did not re-open.

Lack of enough insurance and lack of available funding for them to rebuild, so thirteen out of fifteen is probably not bad. Thirteen thousand out of fifteen thousand employees, but there is probably another fifty thousand people whose work depended on the industry. In other words your food salesmen, your beer salesmen, your custodial people that were contracted...So that is just a few right there but there were so many, and I think in the fifty thousand auxiliary jobs is probably a low estimate.

Jack

Well they are, taken collectively, a larger employer and they have been a good employer... and they have really helped to stabilize the economy because they have come back quickly and their business has come back. We are down slightly over last year to date but our gaming revenues are comparable to what they were before Katrina and so that is very impressive.

Robert

The casinos, like I said, that was the job that put people back to work and housed construction workers and people that came into help us recover.

Commentary

The theme of the casinos' employment efforts was a strong one that emerged. Most of the participants cited employment efforts in their opening reactions. The fact that casinos kept thousands of employees on the payroll even when they were not open and the fact that the casinos were employees of thirteen thousand people (Davidson, 2006) resonated with these participants.

Another point made by more than one participant was that the reopening of the casinos created more jobs than just the ones in the casinos. For example, construction workers and, as Anne put it, “your food salesmen, your beer salesmen, your custodial people that were contracted.” So this ripple employment effect of the casinos’ reopening is also a component to this theme.

The employment efforts of the casinos appears to fit into the “Knowing What to Do” category of Rubin, Saperstein, and Barbee’s three elements that influence the recovery process within a community (Rubin, 1991).

Capital Investment

Paul

And so all up and down, the casinos were quick. They were so quick because they had the capital... these major companies had the capital to inject into that economy down there... like I said, you had an area that was completely devastated, and the casinos really tried to do all that they could to help their employees. I think they did a great job...If the casinos had not come back the Gulf Coast would not be back and as vibrant as it is right now.

Ben

[The governor] has a saying that I like which goes something to this effect: “It’s the federal government that is going to get you back on your knees, but it’s the private investors that are going to get you back on your feet.” You know the federal government is going to help you rebuild your infrastructure, your roads, your highway, your sewage infrastructure, your water, and so on, but it is the private investments that are ultimately going

to create jobs and ultimately help us recover... I mentioned before the role the casinos played in the recovery was massive and the multiplier factor that their economic impact was massive and so they have been able to help us mask a lot of our scars while we simultaneously rebuilt, and I honestly cannot imagine where we would be if it had not been for the casinos... That was significant because we have fifteen to seventeen thousand employees before the storm and providing immediate ability for the casinos to rebuild but rebuild safely the fact was the capital dollars in many cases weren't going to come back and allow them to rebuild on water. Some chose to do this, but many didn't. They had to build back safely. They had to be able to get insurance, and they needed to be open as quickly as possible.

Beth

From the beginning, the announcement that the casinos would rebuild and invest many millions of dollars in the Mississippi Gulf Coast economy invited other businesses to look more closely at investing in our area. Their decisions to reopen quickly and then continue to rebuild put tax dollars into local and state budgets as well as the personal paychecks.

Fred

I think the industry has given the capital investment that the industry has made in this area over the last, well, nearly twenty years now that we were and remain an important part of the economic framework down there... I think that casinos have done a great deal to spur economic growth and economic development in the Gulf Coast region.

Jack

We passed legislation to allow the casinos to be land-based so that they can be more secure and therefore insure those investments. Had those investments not been made to rebuild, our economies would have been dramatically affected for years to come... what the casinos do for us really allows us to help the economy.

Commentary

Where would the Mississippi Gulf Coast region be without the casinos? That is a recurring question among the participants for this area. The large amount of capital the casinos had at their hands was viewed as another critical factor in the recovery efforts. It is also mentioned that casinos set an example for other big businesses to inject capital into this area. According to Beth, this “invited other businesses to look more closely at investing in our area.”

Furthermore, Beth states that “their decisions to reopen quickly and then continue to rebuild put tax dollars into local and state budgets as well as the personal paychecks.” The capital investment the casinos were able to provide appears to fit well into the “Ability to Act” category of Rubin, Saperstein, and Barbee’s three elements that influence the recovery process within a community (Rubin, 1991).

Community Assistance

Robert

Well, they played a major role in recovery by getting back open and getting people back to work. Of course, the casino--that is where all the FEMA people were staying along with the military and a lot of people in

charge, you know, who were in charge getting us back on our feet, so the casinos played a major role but also because we lost money. It was about fifty-five thousand dollars of income a day paid into the city, but they got back open as quickly as they could back in December and into January so they were a major, major recovery... They helped people. They gave food to people. You know right after the storm we opened up a kitchen... right behind a public safety building. We were operating out of City Hall to see what was damaged. We opened up a cafeteria in the school, the campus school right next door to us. The casinos would ship food over every day, you know they had food and it was from their freezers and so forth. They were there--I am talking about steaks, I am talking about seafood, you know just all kinds of food that they gave to us to cook for all these volunteers we had. People like the search and rescue teams that came in from Florida from all over and that search and recovery, they supplied all that food and drinks. You know they [the casinos] were really important, did everything that they could in the city.

Joyce

They were good civic citizens. They really were in terms of just immediate aftermath. They housed people, they allowed people to come in. FEMA resided at casinos, they certainly paid their employees as they could and rehired as they could. They were good to the community as best they could with the understanding that they were all severely damaged. Everyone was truly in this together which leveled the playing

field, and so I think you did see that everybody had the same challenge and I'm very impressed that everybody really met that challenge.

Jack

Secondly, the casinos have been very generous. There have been millions of dollars given to things that have nothing to do with the gaming industry. Whether it is rebuilding our boys and girls' clubs facilities that were all destroyed during the storm or giving to our non-profit center..We have developed the Business Council to develop a non-profit center building that we got from the casino at a huge discount. We have renovated it, we have raised the money to put it in shape to put all of our non-profits in there at subsidized prices with no debt on the books. We are operational now and we cleaned out all the space for non-profits at below market rates. That was because of the generosity of a lot of companies, but particularly one of the casinos stepped up in a big way. So they have been corporate citizens as you would expect them to be, and that has helped us a lot.

Beth

[Casinos] assisted in volunteer efforts... it takes the entire community working together to start the rebuilding process but you also need outside help... Individual casino companies really stepped up to the plate and helped employees find temporary employment and assisted in volunteer efforts. The recovery of the Mississippi Gulf Coast has come as far as it has as quickly because the whole community worked together.

Anne

They were great, when they finally got up and running of course not all of them got up at the same time. But as they came online, putting more people back to work they actually helped distribute some of the needed necessary supplies and the hotels – our casino hotels are the newest ones well they are all new now – they were the newest ones prior to Katrina and they are high-rises, so the higher up you went in the hotel the less damage was there. Most of our damage was from the Gulf of Mexico coming offshore, so they housed a lot of the first responders. .. They helped feed them. Some of them had barbecue grills outside, cooked whatever they had – make sandwiches – you know they had the staff people that wanted to work.

Fred

Also, I suppose there is mentioning they have made a huge important role in terms of generating taxes that go to things like new police cars or allowing the City of Gulfport or Biloxi to hire additional public safety people or put money towards roads and bridges and that sort of thing, so obviously the tax revenues that go to the state are massively important state-wide but the local taxes that casinos generate are also hugely important.

Commentary

A theme that came up that was unexpected with the goals of this project was the consistent mentioning of the casinos being “good civic citizens,” as Joyce states. In addition to their being major employers after the hurricane and

major sources of capital investment, many participants also were impressed with the community efforts. These community efforts are another fundamental aspect to recovery. As Robert states, “They helped people. They gave food to people.”

The notion that the casinos were also looking out for their community and investing in programs and organizations that did not relate to casinos is an unexpected piece to the puzzle which really makes an active difference. Casinos had some things at their disposal that even the government did not—such as large supplies of food and contacts with suppliers who could quickly restock them. The community assistance the casinos provided appears to fit well into the “Personal Leadership” category of Rubin, Saperstein, and Barbee’s three elements that influence the recovery process within a community (Rubin, 1991). Also, this ties back to “the re-establishment of social, political and cultural institutions; and the restoration of basic services...” discussed in the review of the literature (Cutter; Blaikie, Cannon, Davis & Wisner; Hartman & Squires; Klinenberg; Pelling, as cited in Gotham and Greenberg, 2008).

Active Decision-Making

David

They have had a huge impact, there is no doubt about it. I mean, they were the first businesses that got back up and running.

Beth

I think they gave people hope in the market on the Mississippi Gulf Coast by investing their money back in here instead of pulling out. They showed the rest of the business community and the investment community that the Mississippi Gulf Coast was something that was worth staying for.

Joyce

In terms of our economy, they certainly helped out very much in the beginning because they opened quickly, they rehired as many locals as they could. They participated strongly in the recovery for the economy as well as the stability of the recovery and keeping it moving forward.

Jack

Well, first of all, they got going fast. Keep in mind that they did not have to reinvest and they saw this market weak then they would not have put their shareholders' money at risk here again, but they did. All of them have come back pretty much, and they have come back bigger and better than they were and partially because we took the step to help them if they chose to land-base their units to get over land. That was a show of good faith that they responded by answering the call to make the investments.

Paul

I was down there the first day, but...the second day I visited about all the casinos and they actually had people in there cleaning up debris on the second day. They were a critical piece in the quick recovery because they are the ones that are the major businesses down on the Mississippi Gulf Coast... I did get the commitment and everyone we met all day. We met for about an hour with eight and all the ones committed that they would come back, but all of them had a caveat too. They felt like the risk was too great for them to come back and rebuild if they had to rebuild on water... you could build on land and then, of course, the rest is history. Once that took place, people started taking advantage of that, and the

casino came back and within a year's time, we pretty much had the industry back online, all the employees were back to work , so I think that was a critical decision in the recovery.

Commentary

The fourth piece of the puzzle is active decision making. The casinos acted quickly, even on day two as Paul mentions. "They were a critical page in the quick recovery" (Paul) really sums up the casinos' fast decision making, and this fits into the "Knowing What to Do" category of Rubin, Saperstein, and Barbee's three elements that influence the recovery process within a community (Rubin, 1991).

Tourism Efforts

Beth

The tourism market, in general, is working much better together just because they have had to.

Paul

It is not only good for the employees but for tourism. We want people to come for the full package deal. You know, we want them not to just sit in front of a slot machine but we want them to visit and look at our history down there, and the wine and the Anderson Museum and the fishing...All of that is beautiful that we are proud of down there; but, if the casinos had not come back, the Gulf Coast would not be back and as vibrant as it is right now.

David

Putting money in the economy, tourism industry coming back people going to the casinos.

Fred

I think that the non-gaming amenities are going to become an even bigger part of the overall picture. Whether it be golf courses or spas or what have you, fine dining, or signature chef restaurants. I think all of those things become easier to do or more important when you have got a traditional kind of land-based resort versus, I suppose, any kind of a riverboat or barge kind of model.

Jack

We have tried to create a vision for the coast to be a tier-one resort destination. That means these people would come in there and spend a week vacationing here from anywhere in the country. That is not our business. We are kind of a mid-tier regional kind of really--more of a two- or three-night stay, most of it driven around the casino... but we have a vision to create this as more of a tourist destination, and it is going to take a lot of work; but we are taking the steps now to build that capability, and it will take time. So we have a vision, I would say that a much stronger vision than we had before Katrina. To rebuild better than we were before; to create a better, stronger economy, more diversified in its nature.

Ben

With tourism destination one of the best-kept secrets in America for so long but when casinos came here regionally marketing it created an area

where we weren't such a secret anymore and so after Katrina as we are still trying to get our beaches cleaned and still trying to have our condo stations built and preparing how we build our bridges we think about the work that had to be done. With the casinos opening and getting people back to work and bringing people here... without that, we would not have been the draw to bring dollars into South Mississippi... There is no one, I don't care where they stand morally around the role of casinos in society, just from a pure economic view just in terms of the work we did to get them back open, their work to reinvest to get employees back working and get their marketing plans back in place, attracting visitors here, that is an amazing story.

Commentary

Casinos are seen by these participants as contributing greatly to the Mississippi Gulf Coast region's tourism efforts. It is not just about attracting people to come and play in the casinos; rather, it is about creating and planning a valuable destination where visitors will be greeted with variety and culture. The tourism efforts the casinos are contributing to appear to fit into the category of "Personal Leadership" of Rubin, Saperstein, and Barbee's three elements that influence the recovery process within a community (Rubin, 1991).

Relation to Theory

The themes identified in this study expand and elaborate on the theory and hypothesis used in this study. These themes and the quotes associated with them illustrate the nuances and subtleties of the theory and provide greater specificity to the research questions.

Conclusion

Ten individuals participated in this study. Chapter IV presented findings from the interviews with the casino executives, tourism officials, housing officials, industry professionals, consultants, and state and local regulators. All participants were forthcoming and shared candidly during these interviews. There are five themes that surfaced from the data gathered from the interviews. The themes are as follows: employment efforts, capital investment, community assistance, active decision-making, and tourism efforts. These themes are a reflection of the common thoughts, perceptions, and emotions of the participants. The findings are portrayed in a style that allows the voice of the participants to be clearly elucidated in the context of each person's professional position. Chapter V will present the conclusions, implications, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Review

The purpose of this study was to examine the following three interlocking areas of theory: a) casinos as economic engines; b) tourism recovery following a disaster or negative event; and c) economic/social characteristics that facilitate recovery after disasters generally. This was done to articulate a simple, unified conclusion of why casino resorts allow tourism locales to recover faster or better than they otherwise would.

This study employed a qualitative interview design with elite interviewing to test the theory and provide evidence and context to it. With interview questions informed by Rubin's three elements that influence the recovery process within a community (Rubin as cited in Johnson, 2007), this study utilized a descriptive qualitative interview with elite interviewing to ascertain the various industry professionals', consultants', tourism officials' and state regulators' perspectives of the casino industry's role in revitalizing the Mississippi Gulf Coast region. Mainly, this dissertation sought to uncover the necessary ingredients for a speedy disaster recovery (typified in the casino industry on the Mississippi Gulf Coast).

Gaps in the Literature

The work of Walker and Jackson (2008) finds that the casino industry has had a significant impact on the Gulf Coast rebuilding effort in Mississippi and Louisiana and that "the commercial casino industry has had a significantly

positive impact on state-level personal income” (p. 522). However, they state that their research does not state exactly *how* the casino industry rebuilding has led to economic development. They can only speculate that “it is likely an amalgamation of capital and labor effects, and the attraction of tourism” (522). Their research ends just where this study begins, and this study serves to qualify their assumptions.

Themes

The sample consists of ten participants whose varied voices and perspectives were each important to this project. The data evolved into five themes. The themes are as follows: employment efforts, capital investment, community assistance, active decision-making, and tourism efforts. These themes are closely related, and can easily be filed into one or more of Rubin, Saperstein, and Barbee’s (Johnson, 2007; Rubin, 1991) framework for the recovery process.

Exceptionality of Casinos

This research asserts, and the data corroborates, that it is the unique presence of these five themes in partnership which make casinos effective as recovery tools after a natural disaster. Furthermore, the themes that evolved help to illustrate the exceptionality of the casino industry as compared with other industries (such as manufacturing industries) in that casinos focus on tourism aspects, attracting revenue from visitors and producing a net inflow of revenue. That is, if casinos had not been on the Coast, but instead something such as specialized manufacturing facilities had dominated the economy, there might have been even longer delays in producing a rebound effect. There are also

three other important distinctions between a manufacturer or another type of business and casinos:

1. A manufacturer has more options when it comes to relocating. A manufacturer could relocate anywhere—even out of the country—and still run its business. Casinos are not able to do this except in a small number of defined casino areas. This relative lack of choices was beneficial to the Mississippi Gulf Coast region post-disaster.
2. Though their market is geographically defined, casinos pull in customers from a wider area than a business such as a restaurant can. Therefore, their market area is much larger than a typical business.
3. Casinos are highly labor intensive (as is stated frequently in the interviews) compared with a restaurant, hotel, or business. Further, casinos not only employ such a large number of employees, but they also utilize other services (e.g. food services, contractors).

Job Creation

Employment efforts of casinos was an often-mentioned subject.

Participants cited the casinos as the major employer of thousands of Mississippi Gulf Coast residents. The casinos' overall commitment to their employees (e.g. keeping them on payroll and benefits even while the businesses were not operating) was seen as dedicated and praiseworthy. Further, the fact that casinos had a ripple effect and employed so many builders, food suppliers, and people to clean up the debris was not overlooked. Overall, the participants were impressed with the casinos' apparent value placed on their employees. Casinos are able to offer all sorts of jobs, during and after construction. (Collins, 2003).

Morse and Goss (2007) state that casinos “increase job opportunities in the counties where they are located” (p. 66).

Access to Capital

Capital investment is an area that sets the casinos apart from many other potential investors and businesses. The casinos have access to millions of dollars and create local and state revenues. Fahrenkopf (as cited in Haugen & Musser, 2007) asserts that casinos are major providers to the economic comfort of communities that host them.

Community Assistance

With regard to community assistance, one participant said it best by calling the casinos “corporate citizens.” Through their housing efforts and generous food and space donations, casinos showed the area that they cared about its wellbeing. Many of the participants had a unique example of the casinos doing something to contribute to the Gulf Coast community, and indicated that it was more than just a place to make profits. Collins (2003) states that government may also obtain “from the casino companies a commitment to building additional structures, sometimes called ‘add-ons,’ which are not related to gambling but thought to be of general benefit to the community. These additional structures may include conference centers, hotels, theme parks and rides, and even upgrades of transport infrastructure or the construction of canals or monorails” (p. 99). Fahrenkopf (as cited in Haugen & Musser, 2007) discusses “the contributions casino gaming makes to the community and charitable organizations” (p. 34).

Active Decision-Making

An area that does not come up in the literature is the aspect of active decision-making. An essential ingredient to the success of the casinos in the disaster recovery of the Mississippi Gulf Coast region was, as Rubin (1991) refers to it, their “ability to act.” As was discussed in the interviews, the casinos made a fast decision and worked with the state to move quickly and immediately begin the cleanup and rebuilding. As Paul says, “And so all up and down, the casinos were quick. They were so quick...” Also, “They were a critical page in the quick recovery.”

Tourism Efforts

Glascoff (2008) emphasizes Mississippi’s hard work on that front, citing a two-year follow up report which stated that the gaming and tourism industry had “risen to exceed the pre-Katrina level; that eleven casinos had opened/reopened since Katrina providing customers, three-quarters of whom were from outside Mississippi” (116). The tourism efforts of the casinos have also been a significant factor in this recovery.

Classification of Interview Data

Table 8 shows the interview data classified into three areas according to Rubin, Saperstein, and Barbee’s (Rubin, 1991) three elements that influence the recovery process within a community. These elements are personal leadership, the ability to act, and knowing what to do. The interview data is classified as evidence to support the hypothesis in this study—that the casinos were relatively prepared to recover fast given their structural and institutional environment. The

table shows the balance of responses equally (ranging from 9 to 11 responses) between these three areas influencing the recovery process.

Table 8

Descriptive Table Which Classifies the Interview Data According to the Three Elements from Rubin, Saperstein, and Barbee

Personal Leadership	Ability to Act	Knowing What to Do
<i>[The casinos] were a huge part of the economic development picture (Fred)</i>	<i>They were a critical page in the quick recovery because they are the ones that are the major businesses down on the Mississippi Gulf Coast...(Paul)</i>	<i>On a private sector side there is no doubt that the casinos down there were critical in the rapid recovery because of wanting to rebuild that industry and the casinos wanted to come back. (Paul)</i>
<i>They were some of the first to get back up and running and employing people (David)</i>	<i>It was a source of income where other businesses were not up and running yet. (David)</i>	<i>Without the casinos' commitment to rebuild and reopen, over 15,000 people would not have had the hope of returned employment. (Beth)</i>
<i>Individual casino companies really stepped up to the plate and helped employees find temporary employment... The casinos did lead the way for the rebuilding of the area because they are major employers. (Beth)</i>	<i>They were so quick because they had the capital... these major companies had the capital to inject into that economy down there (Paul)</i>	<i>I think they did a lot of things for their employees in terms of the housing situation of their employees (Steven)</i>
<i>The casinos, like I said, that was the job that put people back to work and housed construction workers and people that came in to help us recover. (Robert)</i>	<i>The announcement that the casinos would rebuild and invest many millions of dollars in the Mississippi Gulf Coast (Beth)</i>	<i>They have really helped to stabilize the economy because they have come back quickly and their business has come back. (Jack)</i>
<i>The casinos really tried to do all that they could to help their employees. I think they did a great job (Paul)</i>	<i>I think that casinos have done a great deal to spur economic growth and economic development in the Gulf Coast region. (Fred)</i>	<i>Their decisions to reopen quickly and then continue to rebuild put tax dollars into local and state budgets as well as the personal paychecks. (Beth)</i>
<i>[The governor] has a saying that I like which goes something to this effect: "It's the federal government that is going to get you back on your knees, but it's the private investors that are</i>	<i>Had those investments not been made to rebuild, our economies would have been dramatically affected</i>	

<i>going to get you back on your feet.” (Ben)</i>	<i>for years to come... what the casinos do for us really allows us to help the economy. (Jack)</i>	<i>They have had a huge impact, there is no doubt about it. I mean, they were the first businesses that got back up and running. (David)</i>
<i>... they were a major, major recovery... They helped people. They gave food to people. (Robert)</i>	<i>In terms of our economy, they certainly helped out very much in the beginning because they opened quickly, they rehired as many locals as they could. They participated strongly in the recovery for the economy as well as the stability of the recovery and keeping it moving forward. (Joyce)</i>	<i>I think they gave people hope in the market on the Mississippi Gulf Coast by investing their money back in here instead of pulling out. (Beth)</i>
<i>They were good civic citizens. They really were in terms of just immediate aftermath. They housed people, they allowed people to come in. FEMA resided at casinos, they certainly paid their employees as they could and rehired as they could. They were good to the community as best they could with the understanding that they were all severely damaged. (Joyce)</i>	<i>They felt like the risk was too great for them to come back and rebuild if they had to rebuild on water... you could build on land and then, of course, the rest is history. Once that took place, people started taking advantage of that, and the casino came back and within a year’s time, we pretty much had the industry back online, all the employees were back to work , so I think that was a critical decision in the recovery. (Paul)</i>	<i>Well, first of all, they got going fast. Keep in mind that they did not have to reinvest and they saw this market weak then they would not have put their shareholders’ money at risk here again, but they did. (Jack)</i>
<i>So they have been corporate citizens as you would expect them to be, and that has helped us a lot. (Jack)</i>	<i>...putting money in the economy, tourism industry coming back people going to the casinos. (David)</i>	<i>I visited about all the casinos and they actually had people in there cleaning up debris on the second day. They were a critical page in the quick recovery because they are the ones that are the major businesses down on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. (Paul)</i>
<i>Individual casino companies really stepped up to the plate and helped employees find temporary employment and assisted in volunteer efforts. The recovery of the Mississippi Gulf Coast has come as far as it has as quickly because the whole community worked together. (Beth)</i>	<i>With the casinos opening and getting people back to work and bringing people here... without that, we would not have been the draw to bring dollars into South Mississippi (Ben)</i>	
<i>Most of our damage was from the Gulf of Mexico coming offshore, so [the casinos] housed a lot of the first responders. .. They helped feed them. (Anne)</i>		

If we also look at Light's (as cited in O'Connor, 2006) four "pillars" that must be followed in disaster recovery, we can conclude that these pillars have been adhered to in the case of the Mississippi Gulf Coast region after Hurricane Katrina.

1. Awareness about what is up ahead—institutions must anticipate disasters and explore a wide range of scenarios and possibilities. *The casino industry was well prepared and went into recovery mode shortly after the storm.*
2. Agility in generating a work force by means of "training, retaining, and redeploying"—in order to execute a disaster recovery plan, it must be executed by an able work force. *The figures show that the casino was able to sustain a large percentage of the employee base.*
3. Adaptability—institutions must be able to adjust to what the disaster dictates that it adjust to. *The partnership with the state to rebuild exemplifies this principle.*
4. Alignment of organizations—organizations must work together and cooperate toward a common good. *The community assistance aspect mentioned in the analysis of data testifies to this. (111-112)*

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine the following three interlocking areas of theory: a) casinos as economic engines; b) tourism recovery following a disaster or negative event; and c) economic/social characteristics that facilitate recovery after disasters generally. This was done to articulate a simple, unified conclusion of why casino resorts allow tourism locales to recover faster or better than they otherwise would.

From the theories and literature studied, with regard to disaster recovery, we know disasters do not always lead to successful recovery. We know that recovery is aided when, as Rubin (as cited in Johnson, 2007) says, we have the right people, abilities, and plans in place. We also know from Rubin (as cited in Johnson, 2007) that many communities never reach the third stage of recovery. With regard to tourism recovery, we know, for tourism areas in particular, that recovery requires that the customer be kept in mind—reassured and informed—and that quick action is critical. Then with regard to the casino industry, we know it has strong leadership, political support, and a strong focus on its customers. Furthermore, the Mississippi Gulf Coast's customers come from about a day's drive away and had already developed strong location loyalty (von Herrmann, 2002a; von Herrmann et al., 2000).

If all of this is woven together and the interview data is considered, what does all of this theory tell us? The combination of the theory tells us the conditions were right for a quick recovery of the destination after the disaster. Consequently, we saw, based on the data from the interviews, political support in

the form of changed legislation, quick work by zoning boards, building inspectors and others to get casinos rebuilt and back in operation.

We see from the interviews and themes that emerged that these casinos—with their strong customer bases and relatively little nearby competition—decided quickly that it was worth reinvesting in the location. The interview data and the five themes that arrived from these interviews tell us that all of these factors were in place. Using this data, the theories work together to support the expectations of this study. The findings show that an even distribution of strong leadership and a strong institutional support setting explains the recovery in Mississippi. This empirically supported principle may be applied to other disaster relief incidences, natural and otherwise.

After a review of the data and the selection of the five themes uncovered by the qualitative interviews, the goals of this study were successful. This study affirms what has been informally said in the press and in informal academic studies as this study is the first one to weave all these areas of theory together (a) casinos as economic engines; b) tourism recovery following a disaster or negative event; and, c) economic/social characteristics that facilitate recovery after disasters generally).

Table 9

Findings Summary Table

Research Questions	Findings
1. What are the characteristics of successful disaster recovery efforts of businesses?	We see from the interviews and themes that emerged that these casinos – with their strong customer bases and relatively little nearby competition – decided quickly that it was worth reinvesting in the location.
2. How and why did casinos assist in the recovery of the Mississippi Gulf Coast region after Hurricane Katrina?	The interview data and the five themes that arrive from these interviews tell us that all of these factors are in place. Using this data, the theories work together to support the expectations of this study.

Recommendations

There were several other themes that emerged from this research that would make for other related research projects in disaster recovery and the rebuilding of an area after a natural disaster. While they did not fit the specific aims of this study, another researcher could examine these issues more closely.

1. The contribution of faith-based groups to the recovery of the Mississippi Gulf Coast region. At least half of the people interviewed for this project mentioned the vast contributions of faith-based groups to the recovery effort.
2. The importance of a diversified economy. Several participants mentioned that a more diversified economy should be a goal of a disaster recovery

project. This economic diversification is something worth studying to see the value of this strategy.

3. Case studies of specific businesses. Two businesses were mentioned during the interviews that were viewed as successful models of disaster recovery and getting a business (especially one whose customers really depend on its fast recovery) quickly back online. Those businesses are Mississippi Power and *The Sun Herald*. It would be worthwhile for a researcher to detail these two recovery efforts as case studies for successful models of disaster recovery.

Summary

Chapter V discussed the five themes identified from the interviews and why the combination of these five elements is important to the success in the disaster recovery of this region. Furthermore, casinos were distinguished as an exceptional industry and the theories worked together to support the study's hypothesis. Lastly, recommendations for further research were discussed. The working hypothesis in this study was that casinos assisted in the recovery of the Mississippi Gulf Coast region by taking advantage of the state's low taxes, low land costs, stable employee base, and a conducive governmental and regulatory environment; by being a substantial employer of people in this area; by utilizing effective leadership methods as described in Rubin's elements; by contributing to tourism efforts; and by being involved in planning of the area post-Hurricane Katrina. Using the study's data, the theories work together to support the expectations of this study. The findings show that an even distribution of strong leadership and a strong institutional support setting explains the recovery in

Mississippi. This empirically supported principle may be applied to other disaster relief incidences, natural and otherwise.

These findings are helpful to other casino locales that may wish to take steps in advance to mitigate against disasters, and to non-casino locales that are considering adding casino gaming as well.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Ethan Joella
Doctoral Candidate
The University of Southern Mississippi

Dissertation Project: Disaster Recovery and the Mississippi Gulf Coast Region

1. After Hurricane Katrina, could you describe what your institution's needs were with regard to disaster recovery and how your institution prioritized those needs? (Johnson, 2007, Question #2)
2. Did your institution have a disaster recovery plan in place prior to Hurricane Katrina? If so, did you use it?
3. If you did use this disaster recovery plan, how well did it work? (Johnson, 2007, Question #1)
4. If your institution has a disaster recovery plan, has it been revised since Katrina? If so, what changes have been incorporated into the new document?
5. How did political, economic and social leadership roles in the Mississippi Gulf Coast area change after Hurricane Katrina? (Johnson, 2007, Question #6)
6. What institutions on the coast do you see as being effective in the recovery effort? Who has taken active action to ensure rapid recovery?
7. How helpful were outside institutions who had a role in the recovery of this area? (Johnson, 2007, Question #3)
8. Has there been success in the recovery of the Mississippi Gulf Coast region? If so, how did decisions made and actions taken during the recovery period contribute to the success of the recovery of this area? (Johnson, 2007, Question #7)
9. What has Hurricane Katrina taught you as a person about disaster recovery?
10. What has Hurricane Katrina taught your institution about disaster recovery?
11. In five years time, will the strategies and actions used after Hurricane Katrina make this area stronger, more prepared, and more sustainable than what the area would be like if Katrina never occurred?
12. How do you think casino companies have helped in the recovery (i.e. job creation and restoring of operations) after Hurricane Katrina?
13. What do you think casino companies have done for employment and rebuilding (i.e. physical rebuilding)?
14. Have casinos been a savior to this area, or have they in any way impeded other institutions from stepping forward and achieving other aspects of recovery?

Review Board, Human Subjects Protection Review Committee 118 College Drive #5147 Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001 Phone: (601) 266-6820

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
AUTHORIZATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH PROJECT

Subject's Name _____

Consent is hereby given to participate in the research project entitled Disaster Recovery and the Mississippi Gulf Coast Region. All procedures and/or investigations to be followed and their purpose, including any experimental procedures, were explained by Ethan Joella. The disclosure and consent was reviewed, and information was given about all benefits, risks, inconveniences, or discomforts that might be expected.

The opportunity to ask questions regarding the research and procedures was given. Participation in the project is completely voluntary, and subjects may withdraw at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits. All personal information is strictly confidential, and no names will be disclosed unless participants indicate their wish to have their name revealed in this study. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided if that information may affect the willingness to continue participation in the project.

Questions concerning the research, at any time during or after the project, should be directed to Ethan Joella at 610-863-1140 or ethanjoella@yahoo.com. This project and this consent form have been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820.

A copy of this form will be given to the participant.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date

APPENDIX C
PARTICIPANTS

POSITION	DATE INTERVIEWED	ASSIGNED PSEUDONYM
Media Relations; Mississippi Gulf Coast Tourism	January 2009	Beth
Elected Official in Office during Katrina in Miss. Gulf Coast Region	January 2009	Robert
Local business administrator; also on Governor's Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding, Renewal	January 2009	Ben
Gulf Coast Planning	January 2009	Joyce
Involved with Mississippi Gaming Commission	January 2009	Paul
CEO of Mississippi business; Identified as being active in the recovery	May 2009	Jack
Involved with Mississippi development authority	February 2009	David
Casino researcher in higher education	February 2009	Steven
Director of Research, gaming official	April 2009	Fred
Casino official	January 2009	Anne

APPENDIX D

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL FORM



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: **28071504**

PROJECT TITLE: **Disaster Recovery and the Mississippi Gulf Coast Region**

PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: **06/01/08 to 08/30/08**

PROJECT TYPE: **Dissertation or Thesis**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: **Ethan Joella**

COLLEGE/DIVISION: **College of Arts & Letters**

DEPARTMENT: **International Development**

FUNDING AGENCY: **N/A**

HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: **Exempt Approval**

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: **07/21/08 to 07/20/09**



 Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
 HSPRC Chair

7-28-08

 Date

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