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Articles for the special issue on:
Globalization of Juvenile Justice

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THE JOURNAL OF THE INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
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regarding a wide variety of social issues, both national and international, and a wide variety of
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journals will be considered. Submissions should follow the style from either the Publication
Manual of the American Psychological Association or the Uniform System of Citation.
PREFACE

The Journal of the Institute of Justice & International Studies (JIJIS) invited manuscripts for Issue 14 that would engage the theme of topics in Juvenile Justice spanning various dimensions across nations, cultures, or programs. The overall focus for a special issue of JIJIS was seen to address the host of aspects of this theme of the Globalization of Juvenile Justice.

Authors were informed that accepted manuscripts would be combined with an invited article by Beth Caldwell, who delivered a plenary address at the 2014 spring symposium on the Globalization of Juvenile Justice. This program, held at the University of Central Missouri, was organized by the Institute of Justice & International Studies.

Beth Caldwell’s article immediately directs attention to the contemporary perspectives on the universality of juvenile justice in its examination of the struggles of the judiciary in the U.S. to address the unfolding dimensions of recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions, which invoke a constitutional norm concerning life sentences for juvenile offenders that is compatible with that found in the Convention on the Rights of Children.

A concept of the globalization of juvenile justice takes broad approaches that extend beyond the formal juvenile justice process. This is seen in the article by Shannon Barton-Bellessa, Brian Johnson, Phillip Shon, and Corey Austin, which explores the impact of social climate on student success and development by examining the perceptions of the environment from the rural teachers’ perspective. Examined here are the perceptions of safety and support from students, teachers, and other staff and their victimization experiences.

Perspectives from the juveniles as offenders or as victims are the focus of examination in other articles. The article by Gordon Crews gives an overview of comments made by 28 currently incarcerated school violence perpetrators as to their views on the causes of school violence in America. This research provides candid information that was gathered through direct interviews and a questionnaire. Zina McGee in her article measures specific gender differences with regard to problem behavior (adjustment outcomes) and coping strategy among several hundred African-American youth exposed to violence and victimization. The results showed a strong relationship between victimization experience and adjustment outcomes including both internalizing and externalizing problem behavior.
The articles for this special issue of JIJIS feature an examination of programs from countries outside the U.S. The purpose of the study by April Bernard is to compare two divergent responses to youth crime and delinquency in Barbados, the traditional juvenile justice system in Barbados and a program that is based on the principles of restorative justice. The findings indicate the potential of restorative justice as an alternative approach to crime prevention and control for delinquent youth. Ruth Mann in her article assesses the amended Canada’s Amended Youth Criminal Justice Act introduction of deterrence as an additional sentencing aim through analyses of a subset of interviews with persistent male youth offenders recruited in a youth correctional facility in southern Ontario. The analysis in this paper indicates whether and how the youths' accounts of violence, crime, and rehabilitative intervention efforts fit with government insistence that a stronger deterrence message is needed to reverse the damage of a justice system that scholars concur largely missed the global punitive turn.

This list of articles indicates the breadth of perspectives and programs that embrace the care of our troubled youth across many spectrums. They each address a variety of questions. Hopefully the reader will agree on that this special issue of JIJIS contributes to the understanding of some of the challenges that countries face in the effort to find the most successful and effective ways to deal with at-risk and offending youth.

Don Wallace, Issue Editor
AUTHOR INFORMATION

Corey W. Austin is the current Superintendent at Target Range School District #23 in Missoula, Montana. He also serves as the President of the Western Montana Association of School Superintendents. He received his Ph.D. (2012) in educational leadership from Indiana State University. His research interests include school violence, student learning outcomes, and educational leadership.

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Dr. April Bernard is an Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice at Chicago State University. Her research and teaching interest include critical theory, restorative justice praxis, gender, and peacemaking criminology in the United States and internationally. She is the author of academic journal articles that have been published in Feminist Criminology, Critical Criminology, the Journal of Pan African Studies, and the Journal of Eastern Caribbean Studies and was a contributor to the United Nations Development Programme Caribbean Human Development Report on Crime and Citizen Security. Dr. Bernard is currently completing a research project on desistance and restorative justice.

Beth Caldwell is an Associate Professor of Legal Analysis, Writing and Skills at Southwestern Law School. She has earned a M.S.W., and a J.D. from the University of California, Los Angeles; and is a member of the California State Bar. Professor Caldwell's scholarly research areas include criminal law with an emphasis on its intersection with race, class and gender. Her current research focuses on juvenile justice, incorporating legal theory with research regarding adolescent brain development. Her publications have appeared in several leading law reviews. Professor Caldwell has a strong interest in the development of criminal and juvenile justice systems in Latin America. As a Fulbright Scholar, she conducted research in Mexico on the country's shift from written to oral trials in 2009 to 2010. She has also served as a consultant with the American Bar Association's Rule of Law Initiative in Ecuador, training law students in criminal trial advocacy skills.
**Gordon A. Crews** is a Professor of Criminal Justice & Criminology in the Department of Integrated Science and Technology at Marshall University (WV). He earned a Ph.D. in Education/Criminal Justice from the University of South Carolina (SC). Dr. Crews has myriad current research interests/efforts in the areas of violence and resulting societal reactions. Since 2000, he has conducted extensive field research in these areas across the United States, United Kingdom, Middle East, and Europe. Dr. Crews is also President and owner of The Veritas Group, a consulting firm based out of Huntington, WV. His publications include refereed journal articles and books dealing with juvenile and school violence, Occult/Satanic involvement and youth, and various law enforcement and correctional issues.

**Brian R. Johnson** is professor of criminal justice at Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He received his Ph.D. in criminal justice from Michigan State University. Professor Johnson has published extensively in the areas of policing, criminology, security, and criminal justice policy.

**Ruth Mann** is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminology at the University of Windsor in Canada. Dr. Mann earned her PhD in 1996 from the University of Toronto. She is author of Who Owns Domestic Abuse (University of Toronto Press) and numerous articles on the politics and practice of domestic violence and youth justice policy making and intervention. Her work on domestic violence, supported by the Health Research Centre for the Study of Violence Against Women at the University of Windsor, addresses tensions between feminism and men's rights and their impacts on family law and domestic violence policy in Canada and globally. Her work on youth justice builds on her SSHRC-funded research on youth violence and youth violence intervention under Canada's 2002 enacted (and 2012 amended) Youth Criminal Justice Act.

**Zina T. McGee**, Endowed University Professor of Sociology, received the B.A. and M. A. in Sociology from the University of New Orleans and the PhD in Sociology from Tulane University. She teaches methods, statistics, and criminology in the Department of Sociology at Hampton University. Her areas of specialization include juvenile delinquency, victimization among youth, and patterns of coping among women in prison. She recently received the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) Outstanding Faculty Award, and she is the recipient of a faculty research grant examining female delinquency and maternal incarceration. She has also been selected as one of the Top 26 Female Professors of Virginia and is a recipient of the President’s Ambassador of Excellence Award. She is Co-Investigator of two NIH funded grants to implement violence prevention initiatives and evaluate mentoring strategies among junior faculty, undergraduate students, and graduate students in biomedical and behavioral fields.

**Phillip C. Shon** is associate professor of criminology at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. He earned his Ph.D. in Criminal Justice from the University of Illinois (Chicago) in 2003. His research interests include parricide and other forms of murder.
GLOBALIZATION AND JUVENILE LIFE SENTENCES: CREATING MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES FOR RELEASE FOR JUVENILE OFFENDERS

Beth Caldwell,* Southwestern Law School

Although the United States is the only country in the world that currently incarcerates juvenile offenders for life without the possibility of parole, this country appears to be moving towards practices more consistent with the rest of the world. This article discusses these trends and focuses on California’s groundbreaking legislative reforms, which have created a schema that provides most juvenile offenders with the opportunity to earn their release from prison after serving between fifteen and twenty-five years in prison. Though the punitive American approach to juvenile justice is out of step with the rest of the world, the national trends are moving this country’s treatment of juveniles who break the law closer to the aspirations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The widespread adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has made a tremendous impact on global responses to juveniles—young people under the age of eighteen—who break the law. Although the United States has not ratified this nearly universally accepted Convention, its principles are nonetheless influencing the evolution of American juvenile justice. The U.S. Supreme Court has been influenced by global practices shaped by the CRC in a string of recent Eighth Amendment cases that prohibit the juvenile death penalty and limit juvenile LWOP sentences.

Although the United States is the only country in the world that currently incarcerates juvenile offenders for life without the possibility of parole, we appear to moving towards practices more consistent with the rest of the world. The recent trend to limit and, in many states, eliminate life sentences for juvenile offenders is notable in this regard. Legislation that expands the opportunities for juveniles sentenced to life in prison to obtain release is rapidly unfolding across the country. This article discusses these trends and focuses on California’s groundbreaking legislative reforms, which have created a schema that provides most juvenile offenders with the opportunity to earn their release from prison after serving between fifteen and twenty-five years in prison. While some states continue to allow the practice of sentencing juveniles to life without parole (LWOP), the national trend is moving in the opposite direction, bringing American juvenile justice back towards its rehabilitative roots and rendering it more consistent with internationally accepted practices.

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Global Trends in Juvenile Justice

When viewed in a global context, the United States’ approach to juvenile justice has become quite punitive (Goldson & Muncie, 2006). Although the country’s juvenile court system was founded in 1899 based on the idea that juveniles are fundamentally different than adults and should therefore be treated differently when they break the law, punitive reforms throughout the 1990s created numerous exceptions to juvenile court jurisdiction. These ever-widening exceptions opened the doors to allow increasing numbers of teenagers under the age of eighteen to be processed in adult courts each year. By the end of the 1990s, every state in the nation allowed juveniles to be transferred to adult court under some circumstances (Fagan & Zimring, 2000). What began as an exception, carved out for the “worst of the worst,” expanded to have a broad reach. An estimated 250,000 juveniles are tried, sentenced, and/or incarcerated in the adult criminal justice system each year within the United States (Arya, 2011). Once these teenagers enter the adult system, they no longer receive access to the rehabilitative services the juvenile delinquency system was designed to provide. In many respects, these laws have dismantled the juvenile justice system by systematically excluding large groups of young people.

Transferring juveniles to adult courts and, ultimately, to adult prisons, raises serious ethical and public policy concerns given what is known about the experiences of juvenile offenders who are housed in adult facilities. Studies show juvenile offenders are more likely to commit suicide and to be attacked with a weapon when housed in adult facilities (Redding, 2010). Furthermore, removing teenagers from the juvenile court system on such a widespread level reveals a collective belief that they are beyond redemption. The punitive trajectory of American juvenile justice since the 1990s indicates a lack of faith that young people are capable of being rehabilitated as the juvenile court system set out to do.

This punitive approach to juvenile justice stands in stark contrast to global trends. At the international level, countries are moving towards juvenile justice systems that incorporates the principles set forth in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary this year, the CRC has been accepted across the world. According to UNICEF, it “is the most rapidly and widely ratified convention in history” (UNICEF). 192 countries were State Parties to the Convention as of November 2005. The United States and Somalia are the only countries that have not ratified the Convention. The CRC requires due process protections for young people and requires states to use alternatives to incarceration whenever possible for juveniles who break the law. It emphasizes the rehabilitative potential of young people and embraces a philosophy that prioritizes rehabilitation over retribution. The CRC expressly prohibits sentencing juveniles to life without the possibility of parole.

Many countries have dramatically reformed their juvenile justice systems in order to comply with the CRC. I investigated this reform process in Mexico in 2010. Prior to 2005, juveniles who committed crimes in Mexico were either handled in an administrative system that lacked due process protections or through the regular criminal justice system geared for adults. Due to the constitutional reforms, each of Mexico’s thirty-one states was required to establish a juvenile delinquency system. In the state of Oaxaca, where I did most of my research, the government hired university professors to research best practices. Informed by this work, and by the CRC, they
developed a juvenile justice code that truly embodies the principles of the Convention (Caldwell, 2011).

For example, the CRC prohibits life without parole for juvenile offenders. Oaxaca’s code allows for a maximum period of incarceration of ten years for people under the age of eighteen who commit crimes. The CRC states that juveniles should not be incarcerated with adults unless it would be “in the child’s best interest.” Accordingly, Oaxaca does not allow juveniles to be transferred into adult court or to be housed in adult jails or prisons. Further, the CRC mandates that incarceration be used “as a measure of last resort” and for “the shortest appropriate period of time.” Oaxaca’s code therefore prohibits the incarceration of children under the age of fourteen and uses detention sparingly for older juvenile offenders, incarcerating a total of twenty-six youth in the entire state in 2009.

Other countries also incarcerate young offenders at much lower rates than the United States. According to the Justice Policy Institute (2011), “[t]he U.S. has almost 6 times as many youth in secure confinement as all comparison nations combined, despite having only a third greater general population.” Finland, for example, had a total of six juveniles detained in 2008 (Justice Policy Institute, 2011). New Zealand uses restorative justice circles to respond to most youth crime. There are alternative ways to approaching juvenile crime, and many countries use them. The American approach of sentencing young people to longer and longer prison sentences is not the only way to respond when young people break the law.

Because the United States has not ratified the CRC, we are not bound to follow it. An estimated 2,500 people are incarcerated in the U.S. for LWOP sentences on the basis of crimes they committed when they were under the age of eighteen. Thousands more are serving de facto LWOP sentences—sentences that amount to LWOP sentences because release is extremely unlikely or will not occur within the life expectancy of the juvenile offender. In contrast, no juvenile offenders are serving life without the possibility of parole sentences in the rest of the world. Some countries allow the practice but do not apply it towards juveniles (de la Vega & Leighton, 2009). The United States stands alone in its use of LWOP sentences for youth; many posit that the country’s desire to continue to impose this sentence stands in the way of ratifying the CRC.

Global Trends and the Supreme Court

Although the United States has refused to ratify the CRC, the Convention’s core principles are influencing American law. The Supreme Court has considered it in its recent Eighth Amendment jurisprudence on extreme sentences for juvenile offenders. When the Court held in 2005 that the death penalty constitutes cruel and unusual punishment in violation of the Eighth Amendment, it was impressed by the CRS’s “express prohibition on capital punishment for crimes committed by juveniles under 18” (Roper v. Simmons, 2005, p. 576). The opinion discusses international practices, concluding, “it is fair to say that the United States now stands alone in a world that has turned its face against the juvenile death penalty” (p. 577).

Five years after it outlawed the juvenile death penalty, the Supreme Court banned juvenile LWOP sentences for juveniles who have not committed homicide in Graham v. Florida (2010). The Court compared life without parole to a death sentence in that it is the second most severe punishment that can be imposed. International practices informed by the CRC also influenced the Supreme Court in
Graham, where the Court explained, “‘the overwhelming weight of international opinion against’ life without parole for non-homicide offenses committed by juveniles ‘provide[s] respected and significant confirmation for our own conclusions’” that life without parole is cruel and unusual punishment (Graham v. Florida, 2010, p. 81). As the Court acknowledged in Roper (2005), “It does not lessen our fidelity to the Constitution or our pride in its origins to acknowledge that the express affirmation of certain fundamental rights by other nations and peoples simply underscores the centrality of those same rights within our own heritage of freedom.” (p. 578).

In Miller v. Alabama (2012), the Supreme Court found that “appropriate actions” for imposing the sentence of life without parole “will be uncommon” for juveniles, but it left the possibility open for juveniles who have committed homicide. Under Miller, life without parole for juveniles may not be imposed under mandatory sentencing guidelines. Rather, the sentencing court must consider mitigating evidence relating to the defendant’s youth prior to imposing a life without the possibility of parole sentence.

There is a great deal of litigation surrounding the question of whether Miller v. Alabama’s prohibition on mandatory LWOP sentences for juvenile offenders applies to those 2,500 juvenile offenders who were sentenced to LWOP prior to the Miller decision. States are trying to determine whether Miller applies retroactively. Though state courts have reached conflicting conclusions on this issue, the majority of the states whose high courts have ruled on the issue have found that Miller does apply retroactively. Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, and Texas have found that the case does apply retroactively, and that those sentenced prior to the decision are entitled to resentencing that considers mitigating factors or to the possibility of release. On the other hand, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Louisiana, and Michigan have determined that Miller does not apply retroactively. These states house large numbers of juvenile offenders serving LWOP sentences; there are 355 in Louisiana, 444 in Pennsylvania, and over 300 in Michigan, comprising approximately 44% of total juveniles serving LWOP in the entire country. Nationally, the trend appears to favor limiting life without parole for juveniles, consistent with the CRC and international norms.

Advocates have appealed international human rights bodies to bring state interpretations of the law more in line with international human rights principles. For example, in Hill v. United States (2014), the ACLU and the Human Rights Institute of Colombia Law School filed a case with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights alleging that the United States is in violation of the American Declaration of Human Rights because the state of Michigan continues to incarcerate juveniles with LWOP sentences. This case was pending in front of the Inter-American Commission at the same time that the Michigan Supreme Court was considering whether Miller applies retroactively. A hearing was convened in front of the Inter-American Commission the same week that Michigan Supreme Court heard oral arguments. Ultimately, Michigan determined that Miller is not retroactive, and the Inter-American Commission case is still pending. It seems likely that the Inter-American Commission will find the United States in violation of human rights principles because it continues to allow juvenile life without parole.

Some states have taken a broader approach than Miller requires and are eliminating LWOP as a sentencing option for juvenile offenders, consistent with the CRC’s statement that “[n]either capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below
eighteen years of age.” The Massachusetts Supreme Court recently held that juvenile LWOP (even for homicide offenders) violates the state’s Declaration of Human Rights. Colorado and Texas transformed juvenile LWOP sentences to life with the possibility of parole after 40 years. Wyoming and Delaware did the same, but offer the possibility of release after 25 and 20 years respectively. Delaware’s law requires that youthful characteristics be considered in resentencing decisions.

Legislative Reforms in Juvenile Justice

The Supreme Court’s acknowledgement of the CRC’s core principles is trickling down to the states, spawning legislation that expands the protections available to juvenile offenders beyond the minimal boundaries the Supreme Court has established. Within the past year, states such as California, Hawaii, and West Virginia have passed legislation that requires all juvenile offenders to have “meaningful opportunities to obtain release” from prison. These changes to the law are moving our treatment of juvenile offenders back towards the original goals the juvenile court was founded upon, towards a focus on rehabilitation and redemption rather than permanent incarceration. Oddly enough, American juvenile justice is returning to its roots in part due to the influence of international human rights norms, epitomized in the CRC, as well as international practices.

State legislation that builds on the Supreme Court cases and provides more opportunities for juvenile offenders appears to be gaining momentum. California passed Senate Bill 9 in 2012 followed by Senate Bill 260 in 2013. Together, these bills created opportunities for almost all California juvenile offenders, including those previously sentenced to life without parole, with the opportunity to be released from prison after they have served between fifteen and twenty-five years of their sentences. This legislation effectively transforms California’s approach to juvenile justice, which for years had become increasingly punitive. The state currently incarcerates over 6,000 individuals who were sentenced to spend life in prison and will now qualify for release. Senate Bill 9 created a process whereby juvenile offenders serving life without the possibility of parole sentences can petition the court to be resentenced to life with the possibility of parole. Under the new law, the court must consider how the crime was influenced by the individual’s youth, as well as any evidence of rehabilitation. Senate Bill 260 applies to almost all juvenile offenders with long adult prison sentences, including those with life sentences and those with long term-of-years sentences. It creates a special parole process that for youth offenders; the Board of Parole must consider how “hallmark features of youth” influenced the crime, and evidence of rehabilitation and maturation since the time of the crime. The Parole Board “shall give great weight to the diminished culpability of juveniles as compared to adults, the hallmark features of youth, and any subsequent growth and increased maturity of the prisoner in accordance with the relevant case law.” Under SB 260 thousands of young offenders with determinative term-of-years sentences who would have never qualified for parole within their lifetimes will now have Youth Offender Parole Hearings after serving fifteen years in custody.

California’s new Youth Offender Parole Hearings are one approach to operationalizing the Supreme Court’s directive in Graham (2010) that states provide juvenile offenders with a “meaningful opportunity to obtain release based on demonstrated maturity and rehabilitation.” The Supreme Court purposefully left the implementation of this meaningful opportunity for release vague, stating, “[i]t is for
the State, in the first instance, to explore the means and mechanisms for compliance” (p. 75). Since *Graham* specifically addressed a life without parole sentence, courts are divided as to whether this “meaningful opportunity to obtain release” requirement applies only to those sentenced to life without the possibility of parole. California’s Supreme Court has taken a broader view. In *People v. Caballero* (2012), it held that *Graham*’s prohibition on life without parole for juveniles who have not committed homicide applies to those sentenced to *de facto* life sentences. Juvenile offenders sentenced to prison terms that exceed their life expectancies, such as Caballero’s 110-year sentence, are now entitled to meaningful opportunities to obtain release in California.

California’s approach to offering more juvenile offenders the opportunity to obtain release at younger ages is moving in the direction of international practices. In England, for example, juveniles are not incarcerated for the rest of their lives; the longest sentence imposed on a juvenile offender was 30 years (de la Vega & Leighton, 2008). Similarly, the maximum sentence given to a juvenile in Europe typically would not exceed 25 years (de la Vega & Leighton, 2008). Other countries seem to offer juveniles more meaningful opportunities for release than found in most states in the United States. Although California’s legislation goes farther than many other states, others are following suit. West Virginia and Hawaii both passed very similar legislation in 2014.

California’s Youth Offender Parole Hearings appear to be accomplishing what they set out to do in that more juvenile offenders are being released at younger ages through the process. Debates about the Supreme Court’s loose “meaningful opportunity” standard focus on (1) the age of release; (2) the likelihood of release. Although the Florida Court of Appeals says that offering the possibility of parole after an individual has served seventy years in prison qualifies as a meaningful opportunity for release, it seems that an individual should be released at a younger age in order for the opportunity for release to be truly meaningful. In California, the average age of prisoners granted parole in the first six months of the Youth Offender Parole Hearings is approximately ten years younger than the average age of the general population of parolees.

So far, those who have been granted parole have been incarcerated for at least twenty-five years. While this is less time than other lifers spend in prison in California, it is still longer than a system modeled after the CRC would permit. The CRC requires not only that incarceration be used as a last resort, but also that it be imposed for the shortest time necessary. As previously discussed, twenty-five years is the longest sentence that would typically be imposed on a juvenile offender in Europe. More progressive recommendations for reconsidering the release of juvenile offenders set the timeframe for parole at ten years. Based on the fundamental premise that young people have unique capacities to change as they mature, a Michigan appellate judge drew the line at ten years (although his decision was subsequently reversed) as does the Model Penal Code. In Oaxaca, Mexico, ten years is the longest sentenced a juvenile may receive. Ten years is a logical point for parole or resentencing considerations to take place because a juvenile’s brain continues to develop until the age of twenty-five. After spending ten years in custody, a young offender would have matured into adulthood, and many will have grown out of certain hallmark features of youth the Supreme Court has recognized may contribute to crime, including impulsivity, poor decision-making, and susceptibility to influence. The ten-year-mark would provide young offenders with more meaningful opportunities to integrate into
society and to build meaningful lives upon their release. This would give them enough time to have children, raise families, and establish meaningful professional careers.

In order to be meaningful, an opportunity for release on parole must be realistic. In *Graham*, Supreme Court clarified that juvenile offenders are not required to be released, but they must have a *realistic* opportunity to be released. Typically, parole grants are unlikely. Nationally, grant rates range between under ten percent to thirty percent. My preliminary research on California’s Youth Offender Parole Hearings suggests that those who go through YOPHs are at least twelve percent more likely to be released than their counterparts in the general population. This is a sign that the specialized youth parole hearings are creating more realistic opportunities for juvenile offenders to be released.

In order to earn their release at Youth Offender Parole Hearings, young offenders must demonstrate they have been rehabilitated. Like many other states, California’s prison classification ranks prisoners as higher security risks if they are younger, and if they committed an offense while they are under the age of eighteen. This systematically deprives young offenders of many educational, vocational, and rehabilitative opportunities, and exposes them to higher levels of violence. Juvenile offenders tend to be sent to Level IV prisons, the highest security level, when they first arrive in prison. This renders them even more vulnerable to violence than they would be in other adult prison facilities.

In August 2014, California passed legislation to respond to this problem. AB 1276 is currently awaiting the governor’s signature to become law. This new law would change the prison classification system to allow young people who are twenty-two years old or younger at the time of their entry to prison to be classified under a specialized system that would channel them into lower security facilities that offer more rehabilitative programming. This approach is more consistent with the CRC’s recognition of “the right of every child … to be treated in a manner … which takes into account the child's age and the desirability of promoting the child's reintegration and the child's assuming a constructive role in society” (Article 40). Missouri’s blended sentencing model, discussed at this symposium, takes this effort to expand rehabilitative opportunities to youth offenders in the adult system even further by housing them in their own facility that is designed to offer rehabilitative opportunities to juvenile offenders. This is a model California and other states should consider in order to allow all young offenders access to the kinds of rehabilitative services our juvenile court system was designed to offer. The Supreme Court has recognized that young people are capable of change, and we have an obligation (and opportunity) to provide them with rehabilitative opportunities even if they are transferred to adult court.

**Conclusion**

I think—I hope—the American approach to juvenile justice is heading towards a philosophy more rooted in human rights principles, that considers the fundamental differences between youth and adults, and that offers meaningful opportunities to change and become reintegrated into society. California’s approach, which offers resentencing opportunities to juveniles serving life without the possibility of parole sentences and provides Youth Offender Parole Hearings after juvenile offenders have served fifteen to twenty-five years of their sentences, is a promising model. The state’s recent move to change the prison classification process
for young offenders so they can be housed in facilities with greater access to rehabilitative programming is another important step in the direction of offering real opportunities for redemption to people who have made tragic mistakes in their youth. Missouri’s blended sentencing model is an even more promising model for offering juvenile offenders with adult prison sentences access to rehabilitative programming.

The punitive American approach to juvenile justice is still out of step with the rest of the world, but I am encouraged by national trends that are moving our treatment of juveniles who break the law closer to the aspirations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. I hope that our country’s responses to juvenile crime will increasingly acknowledge the importance of youth as a mitigating factor and facilitate the social reintegration of young offenders as the CRC would have us do.

References


AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF SCHOOL CRIME AND RURAL TEACHER AND STAFF VICTIMIZATION: A RESEARCH NOTE

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Research exploring the impact of social climate on student success and development has failed to gather perceptions of the environment from the rural teachers’ perspective. This study expands the current literature by surveying school personnel in a rural Midwestern United States community regarding their on- and off-campus experiences, indicators of social climate characteristics, and perceptions of safety and support from students, teachers, and other staff and their victimization experiences. Findings from this pilot study indicate that school personnel report feeling safe both on- and off-campus and have not experienced any violent or property victimizations. While this study is limited in its analytical power by the sample size, the data from this study establishes a framework for more extensive exploration of the victimization of school personnel both on- and off-campus in both rural and urban school environments.

Previous efforts to understand and respond to violence and disorder in schools have focused on the characteristics of offenders, the sources of crime, school settings, and efforts to reduce illicit activity through either proactive or reactive approaches (Price & Everett, 1997; Wells & Weisheit, 2004; Smith & Smith, 2006; Berry, Petrin, Gravelle & Farmer, 2012). Similarly, attempts to respond to illicit behavior in schools have disproportionately framed youths as victims, and school personnel as potential witnesses and interveners. Research, however, indicates that teachers and staff experience victimization, harassment, and intimidation—both on- and off-campus—at higher rates than students (see Robers, Zhang, & Truman, 2012). Yet, the majority of schools experience low crime and/or delinquency rates, thus, they are considered safe havens. These schools are oftentimes safer from crime than the communities in which the teachers reside (Robers, et al., 2012). However, the occurrence of one violent school-related event can have both a short and long-term impact on perceptions of safety and security, potentially compromising the integrity of the learning environment, prompting students, teachers, and staff to resort to extreme

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measures to protect themselves (Hernandez, Floden, & Bosworth, 2010; Welsh, 2001; Roberts, Wilcox, May & Clayton, 2007). Even more compelling is the lack of attention given to teachers in rural environments. The majority of studies examining the rates of teacher victimization have focused their efforts on urban settings (see Lawrence, 1998; Devine, 1996; Elliott, Hamburg, & Williams, 1998; Jimerson, Swearer, & Espelage, 2010).

This research note seeks to fill a void in the literature by exploring the extent of teacher and staff victimization on- and off-campus in a rural setting. Additionally, school climate characteristics (e.g., classroom management) are considered as explanatory factors for the existence or relative absence of student misbehavior, including both nuisance and delinquent behavior. To address these topics, a pilot study was conducted in a rural Midwestern U.S. K-12 school system (population 1279 students and 141 school personnel). For the purposes of this study, crime and disorder are defined using the legal codes put forth by the state, and the teachers’ own subjective interpretation of harassment and/or intimidation—both on- and off-campus. In addition, teachers were asked a series of specific questions regarding their victimization experiences with assault, vandalism, sexual harassment, general harassment, and intimidation. Given the limited size of the population, descriptive statistics are used to examine teacher and staff victimization and recommendations for future research are provided.

School Violence and Disorder in Context

The short- and long-term impact of witnessing and experiencing student-on-teacher violence and disorder may be twofold. School personnel may disengage from their duties as a result of victimization, harassment, and/or intimidation (Galand, Lecocq, & Philippot, 2007); they may also experience burnout, detachment, decreased social support of students, and increased use of coercive forms of discipline. Conversely, students may be indirectly affected by negative teacher experiences through decreased levels of achievement and increased levels of student-on-student bullying, misbehavior, and violence on campus (LeBlanc, Swisher, Vitaro & Tremblay, 2007; Morgan, Ludlow, Kitching, O’Leary & Clarke, 2010).

Previous studies assessing secure school environments in a variety of different settings including public, private and Catholic, urban, suburban, and rural, as well as all grade levels (K-12) have only measured safety as an absence of violence. Such measures have been primarily quantitative, using official and aggregate indicators, rather than delving into the subjective perceptions of safety (Bosworth, Ford, & Hernandez, 2011; Gottfredson, Gottfredson, Payne, & Gottfredson, 2005; Johnson, 2009). Thus, it is important to bring school personnel into the analytical prism by accurately capturing the extent of their victimization, contextualizing the school climate characteristics that may promote victimization and the environment (urban versus rural) in which victimization occurs—from the perspective of teachers (see Williams & Corvo, 2005).

Extant literature indicates teacher victimization reports are typically derived from the perspective of students and/or administrators rather than the faculty themselves (Ricketts, 2007). In 2007-08, according to the Schools and Staffing Supplement, 7% of teachers reported they had been verbally threatened with violence during the previous school year while 4% reported they had been physically attacked by a student in their school (Robers et al., 2012). In general, male junior high school
teachers, who teach low ability students in classes of 30 or more or teach in schools with a large minority population, were more likely to be victims of violence or crime (Lawrence, 1998). In a study of high profile homicide cases occurring on campuses between the years 1966 to 2008, Fox and Burstein (2010) found that 41% (n=18) involved the death of a teacher or administrator. While homicide cases on campuses are rare, this research does indicate that teachers and administrators are nearly as likely as students to be victims of extreme violence. Notwithstanding these findings, victimization of school personnel comes in many forms. Although physical violence against teachers may be rare, verbal victimization occurs more frequently (Galand et al., 2007) in multiple environments (rural and urban). Despite this knowledge, the majority of studies assessing the extent of teacher victimization have focused on occurrences in urban areas.

A review of the criminological literature supports the contention that violence and crime are not unique to urban environments (Berg & DeLisi, 2005; Deller & Deller, 2011). School violence studies have paralleled criminological research by typically focusing on student misbehavior as occurring primarily in urban communities rather than as a pervasive facet of American culture. Seldom have these explorations been extended to communities outside of major metropolitan areas. Two exceptions, however, were the studies comparing self-reported violent activities by both students and staff in rural Kentucky and urban Milwaukee school systems (Renfro, Huebener, Callahan, & Ritchey, 2012) and the Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1999: Violence in America’s Public Schools—Five Years Later that explored teachers’ reported levels of victimization and responses to crime (Binnas & Markow, 1999). In the study conducted by Renfro, Huebener, Callahan, and Ritchey (2003), researchers compared self-reported violent activities by both students and staff in urban (Milwaukee) and rural school systems (southeastern Kentucky). Results from this comparative study revealed that students from Kentucky (the rural community) were more likely to be victims and perpetrators of violence and they were more likely to carry a weapon to school (knife). These findings appear to contradict other reports that indicate school violence is much more likely to be an urban phenomenon.

Binns and Markow (1999) conducted telephone interviews with 1000 public school educators, teaching grades 3-12, asking about their victimization experiences in and around schools. Of those responding, approximately 17% reported having been a victim of violence. Most compelling were the perceptions of safety. Rural teachers reported feeling safer in their environments. However, results from this study suggest that rural teachers experience victimization and report carrying weapons or other items for protection to school at the same rate as their urban counterparts. Further, 19% of all responding teachers indicated that their fellow colleagues left their positions because of violence within the school setting. Thus, the reality of school personnel victimization is not unique to urban environments alone. These findings, however, do not account for the influence of community level factors on crime within the school setting.

While the issue of in-school violence in urban environments has been well documented, studies assessing the connection between community crime rates and daily school operations (e.g., discipline, academic rigor) have been limited. Clark and Lab (2000), however, sought to examine the influence of the surrounding community characteristics, such as poverty and crime rates, on in-school student victimization regardless of whether the school resided in either an urban or a rural setting. Results
from approximately 11,000 student surveys revealed inconsistencies with previous research that suggested community crime rates resembled the frequency of disorder in schools. Instead, the researchers found that on-campus misconduct varied by institution and was a reflection of an unhealthy school environment independent of community measures of crime and poverty. While this study offered some explanation for the causes of student violence or property crimes, it failed to explore the impact of the environment on teacher and staff victimization experiences particularly comparing the influence of urban versus rural locations.

While some explanations have been offered regarding teacher experiences with crime (see Binns & Markow, 1999), the question comparing the rate of victimization towards faculty in all types of settings (e.g., rural, suburban, and urban) but particularly in rural environments still remains relatively unanswered. The current study addresses the gap in that literature by exploring to what extent school personnel (teachers and staff) are the victims of crime, harassment, and/or intimidation on- and off-campus in a rural environment.

School Climate and Victimization

School climate has been measured in a variety of ways (see Zullig, Koopman, Patton, & Ubbes, 2010; Gottfredson et al., 2005; Wilson, 2004; Libbey, 2004). For example, school climate refers to the feelings of safety and security experienced by the individual (Sprott, 2004). Furthermore, research indicates that the individual classroom setting directly impacts the overall learning environment of students, including behavior, academic success, and social relationships (Hoy & Hannum, 1997; Finley, 2008; Dworkin, Saha, & Hill, 2003). Teachers’ perceptions of security and safety, therefore, affect student outcomes in significant ways.

Other studies addressing school climate have focused on the overall impact of student-on- student violence and disorder. Evidence suggests that school disorder results in not only lower success rates of students, but also in an increase in absence for both students and personnel (Payne, Gottfredson, & Gottfredson, 2003). Simply put, there is consensus that students’ disorder in the classroom affects both students’ and teachers’ performance.

The lack of attention to the problem of student misbehavior may promote further disorder in the following ways. Student misbehavior, which is not effectively redressed, may serve to legitimize it; prior student misbehavior that is not corrected may serve as a structure for future incidents (see Black, 1991). In addition, violence and disruption that occur both in and outside the classroom can lead to teacher disengagement, emotional exhaustion, and ultimately burnout (Galand et al., 2007). Finally, student misbehavior may impact the school climate in such a way that teacher fear of victimization negatively affects the overall learning environment for students. Thus, the role of the school climate as an explanatory factor for the relative existence or absence of student misbehavior either against one another or teachers should be considered. The present study seeks to examine to what extent school climate factors contribute to teachers’ victimization in a rural environment.
Methods

Site Selection

The school system selected for study is located on an 80-acre campus setting in a rural Midwestern state. The school system is comprised of approximately 88 faculty, 53 staff, and 1,279 students in grades K-12 (K-6, N = 652; 7-12, N=627). The average class size was 17 with an equal distribution of junior high faculty in classes of less than 30 (Southeast Fountain School Corporation, 2009). The resident population of the county in which the school system resides is one of the smallest ranking 78th out of the total 92 counties in the state. According to state census data, in 2011 the median age of residents was 42; 97.9% of residents were white; 19.9% of households were married with children, 33.9% were married without children, 7.8% were single parent homes, 26.9% lived alone, and 11.5% fell into some other unreported category. The median household income was $43,947, just below the state average of $44,616 (Fountain County, 2012).

Survey Development and Administration

The 254-item climate survey included measures of victimization, crime coping mechanisms, personal protection factors, and job satisfaction. Questions were created and modified from a number of previously validated instruments including the National Household Education Survey, School Climate Survey of Parents and Teachers, and the District and Teacher Survey on Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools. Using a modified version of the Dillman Tailored Design Method (see Dillman, Smythe, & Christian, 2009), which is considered to be the standard for effective mail surveys, questionnaires were administered to all school personnel (N=141) including 88 certified and non-certified teachers and 53 other staff, which was comprised of school administrators, clerical/technical, maintenance, and other support-related positions. The surveys were placed in each school personnel member’s inner office mailboxes two weeks prior to the end of the academic year (May, 2011), which included one copy of the survey, along with a letter explaining the purpose of the study, a self-addressed stamped envelope, and a raffle ticket ($25 gift card), were included as part of the survey. Two follow-up e-mails were sent from the superintendent encouraging faculty participation approximately every two weeks for one month following the original distribution of the instrument. These efforts resulted in 54 (38.3%) usable surveys being returned.

Findings

The majority of respondents were women (N = 42; 77.8%) certified teachers (N = 37; 68.5%) who taught elementary school (N = 30; 55.6%). The average class size was 22.39 students with the median and mode equaling 20. Just over one-fourth (N=15; 27.8%) of respondents reported they had been a victim of a property crime away from school, while only one reported being a victim of a violent crime away from school. When asked to report whether they had been harassed, the majority indicated that they had not (N = 41; 75.9%); none of the subjects had ever thought of quitting because of being harassed (N = 45; 83.3%).
For those personnel who were harassed, half indicated they reported the incident every time (N = 5), while a third (N = 3) stated they never reported the incident to school administrators. When asked why they may not report the incident, responses varied from lack of support from administration (22.2%) to fear of reprisal from administration (33.4%), students (11.1%), or parents/guardians (22.2%). While the vast majority of respondents did not indicate that they were victims of harassment/intimidation, almost 40% reported witnessing other faculty members being victimized on at least one occasion (N = 21; 38.9%).

Participants were asked a series of questions regarding where they thought harassment/intimidation was most likely to occur for current and/or former students, parents, or guardians including before school, during classes, between classes, during break periods, after school, on weekends, at home, out in public, in the cafeteria, locker rooms, parking lots, playgrounds, library, in classrooms, school entrances/exits, hallways, computer rooms, gymnasium, and electronic media. While the majority reported that no harassment/intimidation-related event had ever occurred, it also appeared there were no specific locations that increased the likelihood of being harassed. Respondents were asked to indicate how often they believed they were at risk of being harassed or intimidated by locations where N=Never (1); S=Sometimes (2); O=Often (3); and DK=Don’t Know (4). The respondents reported feeling safest from being victimized by current students in the library, computer rooms, locker rooms, and playgrounds (M=1.9) while playgrounds and locker rooms appear to provide the safest locations on campus for encounters with former students (M=1.22) (table not shown).

When asked about why current and former students and parents/guardians intimidated school personnel (see Table 1), respondents were asked to check yes or no to the reasons why they believed faculty were intimidated. Results indicate that the most commonly perceived reasons included the following: (1) to get attention (N = 30; 55.6%); (2) to show off (N = 27; 50.0%); (3) suffers from mental health issues (N = 26; 48.1%); (4) to feel powerful (N = 24; 44.4%); or (5) to be popular (N = 20; 37.0%). Meanwhile, reporting personnel did not indicate several factors were reasons why they believed current and former students intimidated faculty. These factors included faculty members race; faculty member was a smaller size; faculty member was of a different gender; faculty members sexual orientation; and the student was diagnosed on the autism spectrum scale (i.e., children diagnosed with an autistic disorder as defined by the National Institute of Health). When reporting on current parents/guardians, respondents indicated that the need to feel powerful (N = 29; 53.7%) was the most commonly perceived reason. Few participants offered an explanation for former student or parent/guardians’ intimidation practices. For those who did respond, mental health issues (N =12; 22.2%) and the need for attention (N = 10; 18.5%) for former students and the need to feel powerful (N = 24.1%) for former parents/guardians were the most frequently cited reasons for such actions.
Table 1  Descriptive statistics indicating why faculty believe current and former students, parents/guardians intimidate faculty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current Student</th>
<th>Current Parent/Guardian</th>
<th>Former Student</th>
<th>Former Parent/Guardian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To show off</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be popular</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To feel powerful</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>53.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get attention</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning disability</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health issue</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism Spectrum</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty member</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>different race</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty member</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>different gender</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Victimization Experiences

To explore the extent of educators’ victimization, a series of questions and statements regarding their experiences both on- and off-campus by current student(s), parent(s) or guardian(s) and former student(s), parent(s) or guardian(s) were included in the survey. Respondents were asked to indicate yes or no to whether they had experienced any of the following forms of victimization: verbal insults; spreading of rumors; threats of physical harm; physical assaults; pressure to do things related to the job, i.e., change grade; vandalize personal property; harassment by calling the home; or following to the home. A review of the descriptive statistics provides insight into the concerns and experiences of faculty members. An assessment of the completed surveys shows that the number of cases is small, as such, advanced statistical procedures cannot be performed (e.g., OLS or logistic regression) without violating the underlying assumptions of these analyses (see Jaccard & Becker, 2002).

The majority of school personnel reported that they had never been a victim of a property (N=39; 72.2%) or violent crime away from the school setting (N=53; 100.0%). Those reporting some form of victimization were asked to further specify by a simple yes or no whether they had been a victim of a certain offense. Table 2 summarizes these instances of victimization on and away from school property by current or former students, parents, or guardians. Approximately one-fifth (N = 10; 19.2%) of respondents reported being verbally insulted by current students. No school personnel have been physically assaulted and only 3 (5.8%) have been threatened by current students; one (1.9%) reported being threatened by a current parent or guardian. Besides being verbally insulted, the most common form of victimization was through spreading of rumors by current students (approximately 12%) and parents or guardians (approximately 16%).
Table 2 Descriptive Statistics Reporting Instances of Victimization in the Last 5 Years either On-Campus or Away from School Property by Current and Former Students, Parents or Guardians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>On School Property (n=52)</th>
<th>Away from School (n=51)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CS*</td>
<td>CPG*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N = 52)</td>
<td>(N = 52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbally insulted you</td>
<td>1 (9)</td>
<td>2 (3.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spread rumors about you</td>
<td>6 (18)</td>
<td>3 (5.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened you with physical harm</td>
<td>3 (5)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically assaulted you</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tried to make you do things related to your job, i.e., change grade</td>
<td>3 (5.6)</td>
<td>1 (1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalized your personal property</td>
<td>3 (5)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassed you by calling your home</td>
<td>1 (1.9)</td>
<td>3 (5.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow you or tried to follow you home</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *CS=Current Student(s); CPG=Current Parent/Guardian(s); **FS=Former Student(s); FPG=Former Parent/Guardian(s)

Factors Impacting Teaching

To assess the role of climate in teaching, a series of Likert-based statements related to school violence was asked. These items included questions regarding factors that impacted teaching on a scale from 1 (great extent) to 4 (not at all). Teachers were asked to respond to several factors, which included student tardiness, student absenteeism/class cutting, racial tensions, verbal abuse and/or physical abuse of school personnel, physical conflicts among students, student possession of weapons, trespassing, robbery or theft of items over $10, vandalism of school property, student alcohol use, student drug use, sale of drugs on school grounds, and student tobacco use. In general most teachers indicated that behaviors by students impacting teaching were reported as minor or no problem at all. The two areas that appeared to pose a somewhat moderate concern included student tardiness (M = 2.74) and student absenteeism/class cutting (M = 2.72).

Using the same Likert-type scale (1=great extent and 4=not at all), respondents were asked to report on variables related to order and discipline in the school setting such as, lack of or inadequate number of security personnel, lack of or inadequate teacher training in discipline procedures and school law, lack of or inadequate alternative placements/programs for disruptive students, likelihood of complaints from parents, lack of support from administration, faculty’s fear of student reprisal, student alcohol use, student drug use, student disruptive behavior, and student misconduct. The review of mean scores shows that the majority of environmental
variables did not cause a great concern. Those variables showing or causing the greatest concern were lack of or inadequate alternative placements/programs for disruptive students ($M = 2.68$), student disruptive behavior ($M = 2.70$), and student misconduct ($M = 2.72$). A chi-square analysis shows statistically significant differences by grade level taught related to these variables: lack of alternative placements, student disruptive behaviors, and student misconduct.

### Safety and Support

Table 3 presents the results for a series of questions that focused on experiences of safety and support in the classroom and on campus and the level of support received from students, parents, and other faculty. Respondents were asked on a scale from one to five where 1=strongly agree and 5=strongly disagree to report whether they agreed with a series of statements reflecting their perceived level of support and caring. In general, the mean scores show that faculty agree with the statement that students care about teachers ($M = 2.41$) and treat them with respect ($M = 2.65$). Similarly, they report that parents treat them with respect ($M = 2.48$) and care about their well-being ($M = 2.59$). Likewise, the respondents also disagree with statements regarding students and parents saying things to make them feel bad about themselves ($M = 3.57$ and $3.27$ respectively), nor do they feel humiliated by students ($M = 4.43$) or other colleagues ($M = 4.43$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support and Caring Variable (N = 54)</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Safety Variable (N = 54)</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students treat teachers with respect</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>I feel safe at school from intimidation</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/Guardian(s) treat teachers with respect</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>I feel safe at school from physical attack</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students care about teachers</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>I feel safe in the school building during school hours</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/Guardian(s) care about teachers</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>I feel safe in the school building after school hours</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students do or say things that make teachers feel bad about themselves</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>I feel safe on school grounds/campus</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/Guardian(s) do or say things that make teachers feel bad about themselves (n=52)</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>The neighborhood surrounding the school is safe</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often feel humiliated at school by students</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>I feel safe traveling to and from school</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often feel humiliated at school by other teachers</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>The level of security at school meets my needs</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree

When asked about their feelings of safety, the mean scores show that respondents report feeling safe from intimidation ($M = 1.56$), physical attack ($M = 1.52$), and feeling safe in the building during ($M = 1.48$) and after school hours ($M = 1.61$). Overall, they feel safe on school grounds ($M = 1.52$), in the neighborhood surrounding the school ($M=1.48$), and traveling to and from school ($M = 1.30$). The one area of even remote concern was related to the level of security in the school ($M =$
While this question registered between agree and neutral, half still reported that they strongly agreed that it met their needs, suggesting that teachers felt safe in their working environment and felt supported by students and parents/guardians.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

The current study contributed to the literature on school violence by studying the perceptions of safety and security of school personnel outside the school setting in a rural area. In prior research, perceptions of safety often originated from the viewpoint of administrators and not the educators themselves (see Ricketts, 2007). Such filtering raises questions about the extent of teacher harm and the validity of current measures of victimization. To remedy such gaps in the literature, we sought to examine the following two research questions in an exploratory way: (1) the extent of teachers as victims of crime, harassment, and/or intimidation both on and off-campus school grounds; and (2) how school climate factors contribute to teacher victimization.

As previously noted, national data indicate that between 2007-08, 7% of teachers were verbally threatened and 4% were physically attacked (Robers et al., 2012). Results from the current study indicate that 19.2% of school personnel had been verbally insulted which is higher than the 7% reported nationally. Those results, however, may not have included physically threatening attacks. When asked about verbal threats of physical attack by students or parents only 5.8% reported having been threatened with physical harm, although none were actually attacked. This finding is lower than the national average. As no respondents indicated that they were physically attacked, one must assume the likelihood for victimization for those responding was equivalent. This information suggests that criminal incidents worthy of further action by law enforcement officers are not a problem for personnel in this school district. Similarly, while the vast majority of respondents (75.9%) reported that they had not been harassed or intimidated, a large number did report they had witnessed other faculty being harassed (38.9%) on at least one occasion. The study did not ask respondents to report the exact number of instances they witnessed harassment. This finding brings into question whether those responding to the survey were the ones most likely to be victimized or if they defined individual experiences differently (e.g., teased but not harassed).

Previous research further suggested that class size plays a central role in increasing the opportunities for teacher victimization. As Lawrence (1998) and Robers et al. (2012) suggested, class sizes over 30 and those personnel teaching junior high school students were more likely to experience crime and victimization. As noted in our data, the average class size for the school system was 17 with an equal distribution of junior high faculty in classes of less than 30 (see Southeast Fountain, 2009). The average class size for respondents was 22.39. While the average number of students was larger for those responding, the number was not significant and still fell below the recommended 30. This finding alone lends support to the contention that the smaller class sizes allow teachers to have more personal interactions with students, which may reduce opportunities for crime and victimization.

The second research question asked to what extent school climate factors contribute to teacher victimization. Previous studies have differed greatly regarding the definition of what constitutes school climate (See Finley, 2008; Gottfredson, et al., 2005; Stewart, 2003; Welsh, 2001. Most compelling is the argument that victimization...
that occurs both on-and off-campus can lead to detrimental effects such as disengagement, emotional exhaustion, and burnout (Galand et al., 2007). Results from this study suggest the factors that would influence the overall social climate and victimization are not a problem. As noted, school personnel in this study reported no violent victimization experiences. Furthermore, on average, teachers indicated feeling supported by students, parents/guardians, and other faculty. This perception of support suggests that teachers may be more bonded to their environment and thus less likely to feel disengaged from the educational setting.

We also explored the relationship between the characteristics of teachers in a rural environment that may exacerbate or mitigate disorder in- and out-side of the classroom. Previous researchers have examined the connection between rural crime and the differences in school disorder between environments (Berg & DeLisi, 2005). As noted in Table 3 tardiness (arriving at school late) does appear to be a problem for high school teachers, while absenteeism (missing school altogether) is a problem for grade school faculty. When considering these issues in relation to climate factors, issues of absenteeism may be a reflection of civic disengagement or the lack of bonding to their community. Although not specifically measured, future research should explore the reasons behind why students miss class or show up late. Such occurrences could be due to individual level variables (e.g. health), or they could be related to a myriad of socio-economic issues including access to transportation, familial support and supervision. Or, repeated tardiness and habitual absenteeism may be indicators of a much more fundamental disengagement from social life.

We have identified three key limitations to our study. First, the smaller size of the study population lends itself only to descriptive analysis. Because this was a pilot study, the authors purposely chose to include only one study site. Future studies should seek to include a larger population. In addition, to the small sample size is the low response rate of 38.3%. It is possible that only those school personnel who have not been victimized chose to respond to the questionnaire. Further, it is possible the reverse is true. Thus, the findings should be interpreted with this limitation in mind. Finally, the timing of the questionnaire distribution serves as the third limitation of the study. The survey instrument was administered two weeks prior to the end of the school year. It is possible that some school personnel were busy finishing their yearly tasks and preparing for summer break in such a way that would discourage them from returning the completed instrument.

Because of the nature of the data, multiple explanations may be offered that make this data set unique from others in similar environments. First, results from this study may be a reflection of those who have not been victimized. Thus, it may very well be that those who might have been the victims of schools crimes chose not to participate. Additionally, those who responded may not be disengaged or experiencing job burnout, and therefore want to contribute to a broader understanding of the extent of, and how to respond to, teacher victimization. Based on these findings future research should make efforts to include a larger study site or population. In addition, other qualitative methods (e.g., snowball sampling) may enhance future research by delving into the experience of victimization of teachers who have lived through intimidation and bullying in the schools. Using such mixed methods to explore the experiences of teachers may provide researchers and administrators with more opportunity to enhance the learning environment and experiences of all involved.
References


The purpose of this study is to compare two divergent responses to youth crime and delinquency in Barbados, the traditional juvenile justice system in Barbados and a program that is based on the principles of restorative justice. In this study details aspects of the two approaches to youth crime and delinquency in Barbados and compares the outcomes of program participant. The analysis begins with a discussion of the factors that contribute to youth crime and delinquency in Barbados as an orientation to juvenile delinquency in the Barbadian context and includes the results of interviews, field observations, archival data, and administrative data describing the processes and outcomes of participants in the traditional juvenile justice system in Barbados and a restorative justice program. The findings indicate the potential of restorative justice as an alternative approach to crime prevention and control for delinquent youth.

The Barbados is the only country in the Caribbean with a top ranking in the United Nations’ Human Development Index (HDI), yet crimes involving youth and drugs are increasing in the country. Despite the 11% reduction in reported crimes between 2007 and 2010, half of the 2962 persons charged with crimes in 2010 were between the ages of 16 and 30. Growth and development in Barbados have coincided with increased fear of crime and the criminalization of young people as indicated by the Report of the National Commission on Law and Order (2004):

Over the last twenty-five years Barbados has been experiencing an unusually high number of serious and violent crimes, with murder, armed robberies and reckless violence among the youth becoming quite alarming. This has been accompanied by excessive involvement in the drug culture, both in supporting transshipment operation and in the increasing use of illicit drugs across all sections of the society. Perhaps the most troublesome feature is the frequency of drive-by shootings and the uncontrolled violence among drug dealers. This environment has resulted in a considerable fear of crime in residential communities and the business sector. (p. 84)

In addition to revealing concerns about juvenile delinquency, crime, and violence in various sectors of Barbadian society, the report goes on to state that the fear of crime in Barbadian society necessitates an effective social response:

[Although official statistics suggest that in recent years there has been some reduction in the reports of overall crime, general public perception is

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that there has been an increase in violent and odious crimes. Thus it is the heinous nature of the crimes now being committed which is seen as problematic and in need of urgent remedial action. (p. 84)

This statement calls into question the meaning of the phrase “remedial action” in the Barbadian context. The traditional response to crime has been retributive or punitive in nature, yet movement toward a restorative approach to juvenile justice has emerged as an alternative. Whereas retributive justice mechanisms in the adult and juvenile justice systems are marked by punishment, social isolation, incarceration, marginalization, and stigmatization of offenders, restorative justice departs from conventional models by viewing crime as a violation of individuals and social relationships that must be repaired ideally by engaging the offender, victim, and community in reparatory processes (Van Ness & Strong, 2002; Eglash 1977; Zehr, 1995). International studies offer varying perspectives on the potential of restorative justice to benefit young persons who have caused harm, the persons harmed, the community, and society at large (Moore, 1995; Kilchling & Loschnig-Gspandel, 2000; Griffiths, 1999; Roach, 2000; McElrea, 1998; Umbreit & Bradshaw, 1997; Walther, 2000; Morris & Young, 2000; Nelson, 2000; Bazemore, 1999; Umbreit & Coates, 1992; Umbreit & Greenwood, 1998). Collectively, these international studies suggest that to effectively explore the topic of restorative justice and juvenile delinquency, assessments of the unique contextual circumstances that contribute to (or impede) successful program outcomes are needed.

This study explores the possibilities and limits of restorative justice as an alternative response to youth crime and delinquency in Barbados, and specifically examines what aspects of an existing restorative justice program are perceived to be effective at mitigating risk factors in the Barbadian. To orient the reader to juvenile delinquency in Barbados, this article begins with a discussion of the factors that contribute to youth crime and delinquency in the country.

Factors That Contribute To Youth Crime And Delinquency In Barbados

Barbados is a country that places a high standard on educational achievement, as is evident in the high literacy rate (99.7) among the population and the widely promoted goal of having “one university graduate per household,” (Gilkes, 2012, n.p.). Despite high expectations, the pursuit of academic excellence by some young people in the country is constrained by the harsh reality of early exposure to drugs, sex, crime, inequality, and unemployment that can be linked to macro-social and -economic changes. In recent decades, Barbados like other countries in the Caribbean has had to grapple with post-independence development challenges of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) which include persistent or increasing levels of poverty, migration, and unemployment, and a range of related negative social conditions in response to economic and social transformations including crime (UNDP, 2012).

The subculture of crime affecting young people in Barbados has emerged from this post-independence reality and has been attributed to an extensive list of social and economic conditions that include poverty and poor housing, poor parenting (manifested as neglect, abuse, harsh and inconsistent discipline, lack of supervision, family violence, and criminality among parents or guardians), association with delinquent peers and siblings, poor school performance and persistent truancy, and hyperactivity and attention deficit disorder (National Task Force on Crime Prevention, 1999). Compounding the subculture of crime is the general sentiment among Barbadian youth that opportunities for success and
economic mobility exist outside of rather than within their own country: “If we want to become really good at something we have to leave Barbados to do it” (CARICOM Commission on Youth Development, 2010, 53). This notion may encourage social disinvestment or a lack of commitment to one’s own country or worse, a sense of hopelessness and anomie, particularly among some young persons who are unable to immigrate to other countries (CARICOM Commission on Youth Development, 2010).

Youth delinquency in Barbados may also be related to child abuse. The rising incidence of child abuse in Barbados indicates that children remain increasingly vulnerable to sexual, physical, and emotional abuse and neglect with only 234 reports occurring in 1982-1983 compared to 1370 reports in 2002 – 2003 (National Commission on Law and Order, 2004). Although Barbados has ratified the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which obligates the country to protect children against all forms of physical and mental violence, injury, and abuse, corporal punishment is still widely accepted and practiced in Barbadian schools and homes. The blurred line between necessary disciplinary action and patent abuse is easily crossed in the Barbados and throughout the African diaspora, perhaps as a legacy of slavery, to the detriment of new generations of children and youth. Renowned Caribbean scholar Barrington Chevannes (2000) in his research on the socialization of males in the Caribbean suggests that violence by adults in the home, school, and media contributes to an acceptance by youth of violence as the first response to conflict and leads to the perpetuation of a cycle of violence in Caribbean society.

Drug trafficking is a known factor contributing to violent crimes in the Caribbean. According to the Royal Barbados Police Force Crime Intelligence Database, drug crimes increased from a mere 16 cases in 1986 to 1561 cases in 2001, the highest number since 1978, when the recording of drug crimes in Barbados began. Although recent years have shown a marked reduction by almost half in the number of drug crimes since 2001 with 830 cases recorded in both 2009 and 2010, drug related crimes remain the primary reason for incarceration in Barbados. Barbados also recorded a murder rate of 11 deaths per 100,000 persons in 2010, which was low when compared to some other Caribbean countries such as Jamaica, Belize, Trinidad, and Guyana, yet this rate was almost twice the global average homicide rate of 6.9 per 100,000 in 2010 (UNODC, 2011).

The influence of the subculture of crime is somewhat evident in Barbadian schools. In 2006, a survey of 2,220 secondary school students representing 23 schools in Barbados assessed access and use of drugs among youth, (National Council on Substance Abuse, 2006). Although approximately 3 out of 4 students indicated they had never been offered drugs, the results highlighted problems associated with early access to and use of drugs, particularly marijuana among some students; of the students who had tried marijuana, 75% reported doing so by age 14 (National Council on Substance Abuse, 2006). Other studies also linked drug use among youth to violent and criminal behavior, and suggested that persons who used marijuana, even casually, were more likely to carry weapons, fight frequently, and require weapons to protect themselves from crime or violence (National Council on Substance Abuse, 2004; 2000). A study of 521 students of public secondary schools in Barbados assessed the issues of violence and drugs in school and found that one-fifth of the respondents (21.5%) reported having carried a weapon to school, and 47.7% indicated having seen alcohol at school, 31.5% had seen inhalants, 30.2% had seen marijuana at school, 21.9% cigarettes, 7.1% cocaine and 7.7% reported they had seen other drugs at school (Carter, 2005).
This combination of violence at school and in the community may contribute to perceptions of increasing youth crime and delinquency in Barbados. A July 28, 2010 report on “Gangs in Schools” featured the observations of Magistrate Faith Marshall-Harris, who presided over the Juvenile Court, (Carter, 2010). The Magistrate defined gangs as “groups which are formed with the specific purpose and intent of serious criminal activity,” (Carter, 2010, n.p.), and described the gang culture in Barbados as a “fairly new phenomenon with the potential to corrupt Barbados’ school population,” (Carter, 2010, n.p.). The Magistrate confirmed reports that the factions of two of the most feared gangs in the United States, the Crypts and Bloods, are present on the island. Evidence of the influence of U.S. gang culture in Barbados included a media report featuring a teen who identified himself as a former member of a Barbadian gang that was affiliated with both the Bloods and Crypts; this teen reported that he decided to leave the gang and “give his life to God” after being stabbed four times, encountering opposing gangs with guns, and receiving threats against his family, (King, 2011).

The context in which youth crime and delinquency in Barbados manifests is unique, yet the issues of violence in homes, schools, and communities, the influence of gang culture, and access to drugs are not unlike those experienced in urban areas in other countries, developed and developing alike. Like any of these other countries, Barbados presents itself as possessing the qualities of a compelling case study for studying the ways in which multiple factors combine to create a distinct context for exploring the efficacy of restorative justice as a response to youth crime and delinquency.

**Restorative Justice vs. Retributive Justice For Young Persons**

The restorative justice approach differs significantly from the traditional retributive criminal justice system in its view of the offender. The traditional criminal justice system views the offender as a person to be punished for committing a social harm. The response of a retributive criminal justice system to crime is punishment, typically involving various forms of social isolation, including incarceration, stigmatization, discrimination, and marginalization. In contrast, restorative justice is based upon the notion that ways of life, knowing, decision-making, and demonstrating agency are most efficacious when they are grounded in the values of compassion, cooperation, collective responsibility, and intolerance for injustice (Zehr, 2002). This intentionally humanitarian approach may be viewed as a process of restoration that addresses the needs of victims and offenders, the obligation of offenders to repair harm, and the engagement of community members in an effort to put things right (Zehr, 2002: 21). By defining crime as a social harm requiring a process of restoration that involves the victim, offender, and community (Bazemore, 1992), restorative justice fosters the creation of a context for justice that holds the potential for linking individual needs to community resources, as well as addressing the social-structural factors that contribute to crime (Zehr, 2002; Sullivan & Tifft, 2010; Bazemore & Umbreit, 1995; Braithwaite, 1989; Pranis, 1998).

Restorative justice has evolved in many parts of the world as a subject area within criminal justice and criminology. Restorative justice initiatives seek to divert cases from the criminal justice system; heal or repair the harm that was done and transition ex-offenders back into the community upon release from incarceration (Zehr, 2002, pp. 47-54). As the field evolves, the options used to achieve these aims have become increasingly diverse. Fundamental to restorative justice strategies are reconciliation and mediation processes that engage offenders,
family and community members, and ideally the victim in group discussions (conferences and circles) to address the harm committed (Bazemore & Griffiths, 1997; Umbreit, Coates, & Vos, 2001; Bazemore & Umbreit, 2001; Umbreit, 2000; Rodríguez, 2007).

The results of studies that favor restorative justice suggest that this alternative response to crime reduces the likelihood of reoffending (Gelsthorpe & Morris, 2000, Johnstone, 2002, Marshall, 1999; Hayes & Daly, 2003; Latimer et al, 2005; McGarrell, 2001; Nugent, Umbreit, Wiinamaki, & Paddock, 2001; Sherman, Strang, & Woods, 2000). To prevent reoffending, restorative justice strategies may also seek to engage offenders and others in processes to transform themselves, their communities, and the social structures of society as a means to reduce the perpetuation of individual, interpersonal, and structural crime, violence, and suffering (Sullivan & Tifft, 2010).

**The Juvenile Liaison Scheme**

Restorative justice initiatives have also been used to divert young persons from being remanded to juvenile detention centers, particularly in cases involving non-violent youth. This paper focuses on the work of the Juvenile Liaison Scheme (JLS) as an example of a restorative justice initiative in Barbados. Diversionary programs like JLS provide young offenders with opportunities to receive support services designed to divert them from the criminal justice system and a life of crime.

The JLS was established in July of 1983, under the auspices of the Royal Barbados Police Force (RBPF) with the general goal of diverting juveniles (ages 7 – 16) from the criminal justice system by avoiding criminal prosecution. The JLS provides voluntary supervision and remedial measures to address the causes of criminality and effect positive behavioral changes in juveniles who have committed crimes. The program also identifies children at risk of being involved in criminal activity and mobilizes resources within the community to facilitate their diversion from a criminal subculture in Barbados.

The Juvenile Liaison Scheme incorporates various elements of pre-established British and Australian programs that are facilitated by police officers with training in youth services (Asquith, 1995; Polk, 2003). In addition, youth services officers in the Barbadian program have received training in diverse areas, such as family violence, substance abuse, parenting skills, conflict resolution and mediation, and mental health issues to prevent young persons from becoming further involved in the subculture of crime (Organization of American States, 2008).

The JLS is designed to be supportive rather than punitive in nature. The program recognizes that labeling a child as a delinquent or offender often contributes to social stigmatization and the development of sustained patterns of deviant behavior that can lead to a trajectory of crime into adulthood. The aims of the JLS are to address the causes of criminality and intercept young people that have committed an offense or exhibit behavioral problems before they are remanded to the criminal justice system. Like other restorative justice programs, JLS aims to effect positive behavioral changes in juveniles, reduce the incidence of juvenile delinquency, facilitate the diversion of juveniles from the criminal subculture, and ultimately reduce crime by intervening with youth before they exhibit criminal behavior as adults.

The program targets juveniles between the ages of 7 and 16 who are known to be engaged in criminal activity, who have admitted to the commission of minor offenses, and who may have been issued a police caution (warning), but due to the
peculiar circumstances surrounding the offense they are not prosecuted. Juveniles that are suspected to be at risk or predisposed to involvement in criminal activity are also eligible for participation in JLS. Referrals to the program are received by:

- parents/guardians who are not capable of coping with a child’s behavior or suspects that the child is involved in criminal activity,
- police officers who initially investigate the reports involving the juvenile,
- personnel of social service agencies that suspect that a child is involved in criminal activity, as well as
- teachers, businesspersons, and others who are victims of, witness to, or have received reports of deviant acts or offenses committed by the juvenile.

The JLS core team consists of five staff members who are trained police officers. The officers are responsible for assessing all cases referred to the program, providing counseling, supervision and referral services, conducting special programs, and coordinating the activities of the volunteers. Within the six-month intervention period, the JLS Officer presents the juvenile’s case to a JLS Management Committee. The JLS Management Committee consists of representatives from the Juvenile Liaison Scheme Core Team, the National Task Force on Crime Prevention, the Welfare Department, the Child Care Board (which investigates issues regarding child abuse and neglect), the Probation Department, the Ministry of Education, the Attorney General’s Office, and church organizations. The aim of the monthly JLS Management Committee meetings is to review the case, provide recommendations for supportive services, or decide whether the option to prosecute should be utilized by referring the case to the Probation Department.

To raise awareness of the program and capitalize on opportunities to mobilize supportive resources, JLS Officers also engage in special programs in various communities throughout Barbados in collaboration with educational institutions and other social service agencies. The volunteer program is another JLS special initiative that engages a cadre of interested individuals in activities to provide moral support and assistance to juveniles admitted to the scheme and their parents.

This Study

International literature on restorative justice consists primarily of quantitative measures of the indicators and outcomes of juvenile offenders (Maxwell & Morris, 1998; Rodriguez, 2007), yet quantitative studies are limited by methodological issues such as nonresponse and/or selection bias and a lack of standardized practices to compare across programs (Kurki, 2000; Presser & Van Voorhis, 2002; Rodriguez, 2007). Research that includes a qualitative design could augment existing literature on the effectiveness of restorative justice programs by grounding their findings in the perspectives of program participants (Carter & Morrow, 2007; Sander et al, 2010). This study incorporates a qualitative and quantitative approach to the social inquiry of the phenomenon of restorative justice in the Barbadian context. While acknowledging the contributions of quantitative methods to the broader body of knowledge (literature) on the topic, the approach of this study is also intentionally open to new discoveries stemming from the subjective experience of the individuals most affected (and possibly marginalized) by the cultural and institutional context from which the phenomenon emerges (Carter & Morrow, 2007; Nastasi & Schensul, 2005; Sander et al, 2010).
This study relies on qualitative and quantitative data from the Juvenile Liaison Scheme and the Juvenile Court System in Barbados to answer the following questions:

- How is the Juvenile Liaison Scheme similar or different from the traditional approach to juvenile justice for youth in Barbados?
- What aspects of the Juvenile Liaison Scheme were perceived to be effective by parents whose children were participants in the program?
- What were the outcomes of participants in the program, particularly in regard to a reduction of risk factors?
- What aspects of the Juvenile Liaison Scheme were perceived to be effective by children who were participants in the program?

**Methods**

Data collection consisted of both qualitative (interviews, focus groups, and observation) and quantitative (surveys and administrative data) components. The surveys and interviews of participants were used to obtain indicators of behavioral change, sustainability of change, background/demographic information, level of client satisfaction, and opinions about the relevance of JLS services. Participants were defined as JLS clients who received services between 1988 and 2010. Current participants were excluded from the evaluation. A total of 88 surveys of participants were completed. Some surveys were conducted face-to-face at the JLS Office in the RBPF Central Station, and others were conducted by phone with participants. To ensure complete and accurate survey responses were obtained and recorded, evaluators read each question to the respondents, provided clarification if needed, and checked the appropriate response.

The qualitative data collection involved multiple sources. Of the 88 former participants surveyed, a total of ten participated in face-to-face interviews and were provided with a nominal stipend. All interviews with JLS participants were conducted at the RBPF Central Station JLS office. An additional interview was also conducted with a representative of the Juvenile Court in Barbados to discuss the processes and services provided to young persons in the traditional juvenile justice system. Focus groups were conducted with parents to gather comments about the strengths of the program, unmet needs and gaps in services, and the outcomes experienced by parents and participants. The parent focus group consisted of biological parents (primarily mothers), and guardians (typically extended family members). The focus groups were conducted at the RBPF Headquarters. All interviews and focus groups were transcribed verbatim using pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. The coding of the data identified patterns and themes regarding participants’ perspectives on the process and effectiveness of services provision.

The limitations of the participant survey component of the study mirror those of others and include selection bias and nonresponse. The Juvenile Liaison Scheme has served over 3000 clients since its foundation in 1983. Persons targeted for the survey included recent participants who could be conveniently located at the same addresses listed in the client database and were willing to participate. To counter this limitation, additional statistical analysis was conducted on administrative data collected from 150 former JLS participants who went on to commit crimes after leaving the program. This sample of 150 cases was drawn from the population of JLS participants listed in the Royal Barbados Police Force (RBPF) Crime Intelligence Database. This administrative data
includes information on the type of offense(s), date of offense(s), and date of birth for each case.

Administrative data about youth that were sentenced by the court to the juvenile detention center in Barbados were also collected and included information about the background and types of crimes committed. In summary, the results of this evaluation are based upon data that were obtained through the following means:

- surveys (n = 88);
- semi-structured interviews with former JLS participants (n = 10);
- semi-structured interviews with Juvenile Court staff (n = 1); focus group with parents of former JLS participants (n = 8);
- administrative data on former JLS clients listed in the Crime Intelligence Database (n = 150);
- administrative data describing persons that resided at the juvenile detention center between 2000 – 2010 (n = 1695).

**Findings**

**Evidence of Restorative vs. Retributive Practice in the Juvenile Justice System**

The analysis of data collected from the juvenile court system in Barbados focused on distinguishing evidence of restorative justice practices from those that were retributive in nature to assess the similarities and differences between the traditional and alternative approaches to juvenile justice in Barbados.

The criminal justice system in Barbados includes a special court to hear juvenile matters. The juvenile court has a separate location than other adult Magistrates’ Courts and the format is less formal. With an understanding that environmental as well as individual factors influence a child’s behavior the emphasis in the court proceedings is on examining the underlying causes of the behavior and whether institutionalization is necessary. Each case heard in the juvenile court includes the presence of multiple representatives that can support the case such as those from the Probation Department, Government Industrial School (a residential school for juvenile delinquents), National Council on Substance Abuse, and Ministry of Education. The Community Legal Services Order 1990 includes the provision of legal aid to minors, yet the extent to which minors are provided with legal assistance is not recorded (UNICEF, 1997). Other than the juvenile and his/her parents/guardians, attendance is otherwise restricted to preserve the anonymity of the juvenile and confidentiality of the case.

The availability of an array of governmental representatives to address the needs of each case is a departure from the traditional court proceedings where offenders have limited representation and support. The engagement of multiple stakeholders appears to be restorative in nature and could be compared to community sentencing circles if the intended outcome is to divert the juveniles from the criminal justice system. However, the types of representatives engaged in the proceedings would need to be broadened beyond those whose mandate is to provide services that may further stigmatize, isolate, and marginalize young persons who have caused harm.

The issue of criminal liability for juveniles is addressed in the Juvenile Offenders Act, Chapter 138 (UNICEF, 1998), which states that criminal responsibility is fixed at age seven years, meaning children below the age of seven are by law considered incapable of committing a crime. If the court determines
criminal responsibility then juveniles over the age of 10 years may be sent to the Government Industrial Schools (GIS), a juvenile detention center.

Based upon the details of the case, the Magistrate is to exercise the following options outlined in Section 16 of the Juvenile Offenders Act (UNICEF, 1998):

- Reprimand and discharge the juvenile, or place the juvenile under the supervision of a probation officer, relative or another fit person;
- Send the juvenile to GIS or a children’s home,
- Order the juvenile or parent/guardian to pay a fine, damages or costs for securing the juvenile’s good behavior, or
- Deal with the case in any other legal manner.

From 2000 – 2007, an average of 75.8 juveniles seen by the court were sentenced to probation annually (20.5 females and 55.3 males on average). The probation orders or court supervision sentencing processes require the probation officer and child to return to court every three months at which time the magistrate functions as a mentor and assesses the juvenile’s progress and either commends their good performance or threatens to withdraw support if progress is not indicated. As a part of the probation order for juveniles with drug-related issues, they may also be required to attend non-residential drug counseling services.

The frequent use of probation as the sentencing option for juveniles by the court indicates a lenient tendency of the court. This display of compassion by the court is aligned with the aims of restorative justice by diverting children from incarceration, yet this tendency toward leniency is discretionary, particularly in regard to gender and children charged with wandering.

In 2011, Magistrate Barbara Cooke-Alleyne, defined wandering as the act of a child being in a location without the consent of a parent or an adult, and issued a public warning to children stating that parents/guardians had the right to press charges against their wards if they were found to be wandering (Henry, 2011). Children who are found to have been away from home for a number of days rather than a few hours are considered to be wandering—a concept similar to absconding in the British legal system and running away in the United States.

According to a juvenile court representative, wandering is the most frequent charge facing children seen by the court, and although boys and girls tend to be found wandering at relatively equal rates, females are more likely to be remanded (charged but not sentenced) because of the perception of their higher vulnerability and risk of exposure to sexual exploitation or prostitution. The juvenile court representative described the incarceration of girls due to wandering as a necessary means to secure their physical safety:

When the court is confronted with these situations they [the girls] are remanded for their own safety. Boys that are wandering tend to be found in drug dealing situations, and can be sent home with bail, because the risk to them is not quite as immediate. Sometimes the girls cannot be sent home, and I wish we had somewhere where we could send them especially when they are being exploited sexually—I would prefer to have a halfway house, somewhere they could go to where they could get some guidance. They only need a year. At GIS the minimum sentence is 3 years. They maybe need only a year to sort things out with their parents—usually girls found wandering is an indication of a need to help them sort out relations at home. I wish they had somewhere to go, but GIS is all we have at the moment.
The Barbados Reformatory and Industrial Schools Act Chap. 169 Sect. 11 (1) states that children committed to the GIS must be detained for no less than three and no more than five years, and not beyond their nineteenth birthday (Joseph, 2000). The minimal legal age that a juvenile may be sentenced to imprisonment is 16 years. The rehabilitation of juveniles at the GIS includes the provision of education and training. In addition to vocational and educational skills, children are instructed in moral and religious values and are provided with recreational activities and psychological counseling. Children at GIS, who breach the rules and cause serious problems at the school, may be transferred to the adult prison.

In 2010, of the 122 juveniles who resided at GIS, 100 were remanded (74 males and 26 females) and 22 were committed (15 male and 7 female). On average, over the past decade, 40.6 boys were remanded to GIS for every one female, and 3.1 boys were committed for every one female, meaning boys were more likely to be remanded than girls, yet once remanded a higher proportion of girls were committed to GIS than boys. Males and females also differed in the types of offences for which they were sentenced to GIS. Over the past decade, for every one boy approximately 12 girls (an average of 11.6) were charged with wandering, and boys were 8 times more likely than girls to be charged with assault.

While there may be general agreement that GIS is not the appropriate place for children in need of protection from abuse and sexual exploitation or treatment for substance abuse, mental health and educational challenges, children whose cases could be adjourned but have no home to which they can return must remain at GIS due to a lack of available alternatives. Juveniles at GIS also include offenders who are in need of substance abuse treatment services. As an alternative to GIS, Teen Challenge was the only residential treatment facility available for youth in Barbados, although eligibility to this program was limited to male juveniles who are age 16 or over, which leaves younger children and girls over the age of 16 who are in need of substance abuse treatment without access to rehabilitation services. The concern about institutionalizing non-violent juveniles in GIS or other residential facilities is that this practice may lead to the criminalization, marginalization, and stigmatization of youth simply because these institutions have become spaces for children who have no other safe place of refuge. Rather than forced isolation, restorative justice practices would instead advocate for the development of community-based support and services for children and their families to address risk factors that may contribute to their crime and delinquency.

In addition to probation orders and the Government Industrial School, the juvenile court utilizes alternative sentencing options by mandating their participation in interventions which include: placement in a six-month residential program that is inclusive of remedial education, skills training and substance abuse and behavioral counseling services; community service for male and female offenders over the age of 16 who have failed to adhere to their probation orders; and restitution, which requires juveniles to offer an apology, return stolen items, or compensate victims in the presence of the court.

Systematic data regarding the frequency of use for each of these alternative interventions over a period of time within the Juvenile Court were not accessible at the time that this study was conducted. Despite the array of alternatives offered by the juvenile court system in Barbados, the processes, the underlying current supporting the juvenile court is its retributive nature. While retributive responses to crime tend to focus on punishing and isolating the offender, restorative justice practices like the Juvenile Liaison Scheme aim to
divert persons, who have caused harm from the criminal justice system, by maintaining children within their homes and communities while providing parents with support.

**Parents’ Perceptions of the Juvenile Liaison Scheme**

Programs like JLS give parents an opportunity to get services for their children while obtaining support for themselves as well. As a result of their participation in the program, parents with JLS-involved children seemed most impressed with the changes that occurred within themselves. Some parents wished their children’s progress would improve, yet they were pleased with what they had learned about their own parenting styles from the program. Parents were particularly pleased with their interaction with the JLS Officers, and described the JLS Officers as capacity builders with knowledge about how to increase their ability to be more effective parents.

The JLS officers offered parents useful advice about how to discipline their children. One respondent, Ann, shared how she learned to respond to her daughter’s behavior:

Her attitude and behavior has changed, but she still strays sometimes. We are back and forth every two months, but I learned to put my foot down. This program taught me a lot. The officer told me to trust her and taught me how to cope with her behavior. She would answer me sharp and go out and stay out, and I had to learn to become more stern with her and put my foot down.

Another parent, Warren, also stated that he learned to be less violent in response to his son’s behavior:

He beat his brother last week. I had to call the police. [The JLS Officer] helped calm me. I used to hit him a lot, now I tell him I love him and that I don’t want him to go to prison.

In her own comment, Denise described how she learned to set rules as a result of her son’s involvement in JLS program:

It is unusual for him to see that he has new rules. [The JLS Officer] set rules. He cannot be outside after 6 p.m. He now knows that he has boundaries. He cannot come and go as he pleases and it is very easy for him to go to jail.

Florence described the support she gained due to his interaction with a JLS Officer assigned to his son’s case:

She (the JLS Officer) reinforced what I was saying and doing and confirmed that what I was doing. It was good to have someone come and support my role and authority.

The practical advice the officers provided also improved the quality of life for some parents despite ongoing challenges they may experience with their children. Francis states:

Before JLS, I had to be at the school 15 times in one year, and I was tired to go to the school. [The JLS Officer] talked with him privately and then with me and she told me I had to learn to listen to him. [The JLS Officer] gave him assignments. He was in a gang and had marks on his skin, and that’s when his behavior change started. She gave him an assignment to describe why he was in a gang. At first he would not do it, and she would
send him back until it was done right. She helped me to relate to him and to structure my home. She suggested we have a family night, no TV. We would play games and talk. It worked out well for a while.

The JLS officers also taught lessons on love and acceptance. Regina reported:

[The JLS Officer] told him the love the gangs show him is not real. He is very loving and I would tell him not to kiss me and leave me alone, but [the JLS Officer] said don’t do that, he needs love. He is out of the gang now. She taught me how to love him.

Like Regina, Lee also observed that the JLS Officers often functioned as extensions of their families:

I got into an accident and from that time she started to act out and ran away. I went to the police and [the JLS Officer] was there. She sees [the JLS Officer] as a friend and tells her secrets, she is more like her mother. She talks to [another JLS Officer] a lot too, they help her. I am more like an aunt. [The JLS Officer] helped me to cope with her. They helped me to cope even with my accident and court case.

**Juvenile Liaison Scheme Participant Outcomes**

Descriptive statistics show that 74% of the survey respondents were very satisfied with the services provided by JLS staff members. Over 90% of the participants surveyed felt that as a result of their participation in JLS they could make better decisions, had more family and social support, felt hopeful about the future, and were better able to solve problems.

After participating in JLS, less than 25% of the respondents had experienced risk factors associated with being on probation, being suspended from school, and occasional use of marijuana, alcohol or other drugs. Reports of marijuana use (a total of frequent and occasional use) dropped from 29.5% (26 respondents) before the program to 20.5% (18 respondents) whereas alcohol use (both frequent and occasional) only changed by a fraction (17 respondents before to 16 respondents after). The number of persons who reported they had been truant from school dropped by more than half from 17 to 6 before and after the program respectively as did the number of persons who were suspended from school (from 61 to 20 before and after the program). Less than 10 of the 88 respondents indicated that they had committed a crime, been arrested, convicted, remanded, sentenced, imprisoned, or on probation since participating in JLS.

To better assess the extent to which JLS participants were involved in crimes after leaving the program, administrative data representing JLS clients with a record of involvement in the Criminal Justice system were obtained. An analysis of participants in the JLS database since 1983 was conducted against the Royal Barbados Police Force Crime Intelligence Database to identify those JLS participants who have been convicted of criminal offenses. Based upon this analysis, since 1983 of the 150 JLS participants were randomly selected from the JLS database and matched with the National Crime Intelligence Database, only 19% of JLS participants were subsequently charged with committing crimes.

**Participant Perspectives of the Juvenile Liaison Scheme**

The effectiveness of the program’s services was also indicated by the participants who were interviewed. In addition to the behavioral changes
identified, such as a decrease or elimination in fighting, more focus on school work, changing the company they keep, and being able to make better decisions, the participants noted a drastic improvement in their relationships. According to Tommy:

I have learnt how to better communicate with people …. Counseling helped me a lot in this area. I am closer to my family and can develop better relationships with people.

An improved relationship with their mothers was also a common theme among those participants that were interviewed. In addition to helping them control their anger, the participants reported that the counseling helped them to feel more confident, boost their self-esteem, change their attitude, and become more compliant. Angela states that she is more willing to conform to her mother’s authority as a result of her participation in JLS:

I adhere to my mother’s rules such as coming home early, and I follow the curfew and restrictions by the officer. I obey now and so my relationship with my family especially my mother is better.

Theo stated that he no longer feels unloved and is more accepting of challenges:

I believe that my relationship with my mother is much better because of the program. Before JLS, I felt unloved and unattended to because I had a little sister. However, I have learnt to accept certain things and understand other things and try to make myself better for me.

The participants felt that the counseling provided by JLS Officers was a key contributor to their improvements. Cecilia stated that she is better able to solve problems that involve her parents:

Before JLS, I did not have someone that I could talk with and confide in. My officer always gave me an objective position especially when I got into problems with either of my parents. She let me see the other side and showed me whenever I was right or wrong.

**Discussion**

The Juvenile Liaison Scheme is a program that is facilitated through the Royal Barbados Police Force and is viewed as a component of the prevention arm of law enforcement. The provision of the program within a traditional retributive law enforcement paradigm in Barbados is aligned with early British and Australian restorative justice models. Rather than entering the criminal justice system, clients are afforded preventative care and community sentencing interventions that aim to divert them from a criminal conviction. The alignment of JLS within the Police Department is a critical indicator of the general acceptance of restorative justice practices within the parameters of a traditional criminal justice system as a complementary response to youth crime and delinquency.

Whereas juveniles and their parents who were involved in JLS reported having improved relationships, coping skills, and a reduction in risk factors, juvenile offenders who are remanded to the traditional criminal justice system may be “disempowered, disenfranchised, and stigmatized” (Sander et al. 2010, p. 306). A majority of the young persons that are remanded to the Government Industrial Schools committed non-violent offenses and may experience prolonged stays as a result of limited placement options. Research indicates that incarceration during adolescence begins a pathway toward adult criminality that is
marked by a lack of high school completion, recidivism, and the accumulation of "criminal capital" (Sampson & Laub, 1993, 1997; Lochner & Moretti, 2004; Bayer, Hjalmarsson, & Pozen, 2009).

Like the British and Australian models for diversionary programs, the JLS is facilitated by police officers, and provides an opportunity to see restorative justice initiatives not only as a complementary component of the criminal justice system, but as a viable alternative to incarceration for juveniles, particularly those who are non-violent. In a system with limited capacity to house and treat juveniles for the multiple risks and subculture of crime that influence their behavior, further exploration and expansion of programs like JLS and other restorative justice modalities is recommended.

Conclusions

This study examines restorative justice as an alternative to the traditional criminal justice response to youth crime and delinquency in Barbados. The Juvenile Liaison Scheme in Barbados illuminates the potential for restorative justice practices to produce favorable outcomes for young persons who exhibit delinquent behavior. The participants and their parents provided numerous examples of how the restorative justice approach to crime prevention and control served to mitigate risk factors that had contributed to delinquent behavior among youth. Given the evidence of the effectiveness of programs like the Juvenile Liaison Scheme in keeping young persons in their families and communities (as opposed to institutions) while addressing the behavioral issues, emphasis on restorative justice as a viable alternative to traditional and retributive crime prevention and control policies and initiatives is warranted.

The Green Paper on the Proposal for Crime Reduction (National Task Force for Crime Prevention, 1999) was one of the first attempts by the Government of Barbados to institutionalize a multi-sectoral anti-crime policy. The document outlines Ten Core Strategies to combat crime and the fear of crime, which was acknowledged to reduce the quality of life for many Barbadians. Of the 10 core strategies proposed to reduce crime and strengthen the criminal justice system, not one referred to restorative justice practices such as the Juvenile Liaison Scheme. Eight out of the ten strategies focused on augmenting traditional law enforcement, sentencing, and penal systems, and the remaining two strategies referred to education and initiatives.

A review of other national plans regarding justice, security, law, and youth policy all commit to enhancing the effectiveness of the law enforcement and education systems to support a just and moral society, yet each of these proposals underemphasized restorative justice initiatives like the Juvenile Liaison Scheme as a complementary alternative, particularly for non-violent youth (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2006; National Commission on Law and Order, 2004). Given the positive outcomes experienced by JLS participants and their parents, criminal justice policy and program development would benefit from intentional discussions about the efficacy of restorative justice models as viable alternatives to retributive responses to crime in Barbados as well as internationally.
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SCHOOL VIOLENCE PERPETRATORS SPEAK: 
AN EXAMINATION OF PERPETRATORS VIEWS 
ON SCHOOL VIOLENCE OFFENSES 

Gordon A. Crews,* Marshall University

In the last few decades researchers have attempted to determine correlates for school violence. While the number of extreme incidents of school violence remains relatively small, extreme incidents cause the most concern for parents, teachers, law enforcement, and educational administrators. In addition to the fear these types of events cause, they also bring about a great deal of debate regarding proper responses. Some feel that stringent zero tolerance policies are the answer, while others argue for more gun control in society. Some feel that increased counseling and service to young people is the answer, while others argue for the increased use of school expulsion and the building of more juvenile correctional facilities. This article gives an overview of comments made by 28 currently incarcerated school violence perpetrators as to their views on the causes of school violence in America. This research provides extremely candid and unique information that is gathered through direct interviews and participation in a questionnaire. In addition, many of those interviews freely offered insights as to their own involvement in incidents of school violence.

Since 16-year old Brenda Spencer used “I don’t like Mondays” as her justification for killing two and injuring nine people through rifle fire at Cleveland Elementary School across from her home in San Diego, California, in 1979 (Associated Press, 1979), researchers have attempted to determine correlates for this extreme type of juvenile delinquency and violence. While such incidents of school violence (Center for Disease Control, 2014; Prevention Institute, 2014) remain relatively small in the percentage and type of violence in general, they cause the most concern. This concern impacts parents, teachers, law enforcement, and educational administrators almost every day of any given school year. In addition to the fear and panic these types of events cause, they also bring about a great deal of debate on proper responses (Crews & Montgomery, 2001; Crews & Counts, 1997; Crews, Montgomery, & Garris, 1996). A common view in the American public (Advancement Project and Civil Rights Project, 2000; Black, 2004; Ferrandino & Tirozzi, 2000; Kafka, 2001; Public Agenda, 2004; Skiba, 2004) is that stringent zero

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tolerance policies are the answer to this problem. A minority view in the general public is that more gun control in society is required. A common view in those who work with juveniles and in American schools is that increased counseling and service to young people is the answer. Still some Americans argue for increased use of school expulsion and the building of more juvenile correctional facilities.

Given the increase in major school shootings since the late 1990s, fear and panic associated with school violence have greatly escalated. Unfortunately, most efforts are reactive rather than proactive in nature and focus on punitive or zero-tolerance rather than prevention and intervention. Also, the vast majority of prior studies of school violence are individual case studies and/or interviews with fewer than eight perpetrators (FBI, 1999; Harding, Fox, & Mehta, 2002; Levin & Madfis, 2009; Muschert, 2007). This most often results in few mechanisms for intervention/prevention considered by school districts except for the implementation of “Zero Tolerance Polices” and “Gun-Free School Zones.”

The Overall Study

The current study is part of a more comprehensive research project investigating the causes of school violence and disturbance in America. This project focuses on the results of a 200-question scenario-based survey, entitled, “School Violence Prevention Questionnaire,” distributed in 2013 to identified incarcerated school violence perpetrators who committed acts of violence across the United States between 1979 and 2011 (N=78). This survey questionnaire was developed in late 2012 with assistance from the Themis Center for Justice Policy, Practice, and Research (Huntington, WV).

Sample, Survey Instrument, Data Collection, and Analysis

Sample: Between 2008 and 2012, the researcher scoured all publicly available lists and news reports to obtain a population of names of perpetrators who committed violence on school property or at a school function. Then the deceased, released, un-adjudicated, and otherwise un-locatable individuals were eliminated from the sample. Next, descriptive data from publicly available secondary sources (e.g., court transcripts, news reports, journal articles, etc.) related to the resulting 78 identified incarcerated perpetrators of school violence (mostly school shooters) were gathered. This was conducted to analyze their acts of school violence and to the aftermaths of their acts to develop a comprehensive portrait of K-12 school violence in the United States. In addition, the researcher analyzed the scenario-based questionnaire responses from more than 37 of these perpetrators.

Survey Instrument—“Prevention of School Violence Questionnaire”: With the “Prevention of School Violence Questionnaire,” respondents were asked to put themselves in the shoes of John/Jane, a person similar to themselves at the time they committed their acts of violence and to answer questions about John's/Jane's thoughts, feelings, and experiences at four different time periods: 1) prior to deciding to commit violence; 2) after the decision to commit violence and during the planning phase; 3)
during the act of violence; and 4) immediately after the act of violence. The development and utilization of this survey was an attempt to contribute to the understanding of school violence in several unique ways. First, nearly every prior examination of school violence has used case studies to evaluate just a few events (i.e., fewer than eight). This research provides descriptive information on the entire population of 78 incarcerated and available perpetrators of school violence, who committed their acts of violence between 1979 and 2011, to develop a comprehensive picture of perpetrators and events. Second, the descriptive data from the 37 questionnaire respondents is to be used in future quantitative analyses to test existing theory and to develop new theory.

Data Collection: Descriptive data (165 variables) from publicly available secondary sources (e.g., news reports, journal articles, court transcripts, and case studies) were collected for all 78 identified perpetrators and events. In addition, demographics, state-level variables, characteristics of event, victims, prosecution, weapons, family, school, peers, etc. were also collected. A database was established consisting of 365 (i.e., 165 demographic and 200 questionnaire items) variables for analysis.

Analysis: Descriptive data were entered on 78 perpetrators and questionnaire responses were entered on 37 who had agreed to participate returned their questionnaire responses. Indices were developed and preliminary inferential analysis was completed. This research is currently using quantitative data (200 ordinal variables) and qualitative data from the questionnaire and additional unsolicited written stories and comments. This qualitative data from the questionnaire and additional unsolicited written stories and comments is the basis for the current study.

The Current Study: School Violence Perpetrators Speak

The current study involves the content analysis of comments made by 28 (N=78) currently incarcerated school violence perpetrators from the sample as to their views on the causes of school violence in America. Their identity has been withheld (including any identifiers), stating only their demographics (Race/Sex/Age/Year of Incident) (e.g., B/M/21/2005). A very brief description of their school violence act is listed as well. The findings provided extremely candid and unique information given the number of participants involved and type of information gained.

In this part of the study, perpetrators were asked to offer their opinions about the causes of school violence. On an anecdotal level, many commonly viewed triggers of school violence incidents were confirmed by the shooters’ written comments on the survey instrument and other freely offered correspondence. A strong feeling of general hopelessness and ultimately finding themselves in the darkest spot (even thoughts of suicide) of their lives was reported as the number one cause of their violent act. Twenty-five perpetrators commented on the traditional problematic issues of being bullied, sexual and physical abuse, being products of broken homes, and lack of parental guidance. They stated that these issues combined with the
realities of poverty, the influence of gangs, and even mandated medication, were very strong factors in how one viewed themselves and their personal worth.

Three perpetrators suggested that those having contact with school children need to understand the commonalities between those that have issues and those that do not. These individuals offered that children are simply products of their environments. Parents and law enforcement officials trying to put students in neat boxes and teachers targeting wrong students with inappropriate labels cause students to try to be someone they are not and/or to prove themselves in an unhealthy manner. They also offered that that many are too scared to seek help and instead attempt to deal with the issues themselves, but begin to respond to real and/or perceived threats through acts of revenge or by alternatively turning their own personal fantasies into reality.

A secondary part of the research dealt with asking school violence perpetrators about their views on the horrific school shooting in December of 2012 at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. Almost all 28 perpetrators appeared to have a sincere concern over the victims and their families, but, not surprisingly, the main point of concern was as to whether the media attention would impact their own appeals and parole hearings. Ten discussed how they felt that young children can very often not understand their own emotions and definitely cannot see the future for themselves in a rational manner. Due to lack of proper guidance from family and teachers, these ten felt that children lacked a proper understanding about consequences of their actions.

While not asked initially, ten attempted to place themselves in the shoes of Adam Lanza (i.e., Sandy Hook Elementary School shooter) as they offered possible reasons for why he did what he did. Four stated that he may have had his sexuality questioned by past classmates, or did not belong to any group, or his Asperger's Syndrome was the cause. Two discussed how they felt society needs to understand that sometimes the victim may actually be to blame, albeit a very controversial idea. Six felt they have been victims of racial prejudice and/or were wronged by school officials or parents and may see that committing a shooting at a school is their only form of revenge. Two discussed how they themselves at the time of their violent acts had no thoughts of realistic consequences and were fascinated with death/school shootings/true crime stories. Two stated they expected to be killed/did not care about the future and hoped that people would understand why they did what they did. One respondent concluded with a potentially foreboding warning as he stated that knowledge of guns and medication for a real or perceived mental illness and depression is a dangerous mix for anyone, much less a child.

Perpetrator Comments

The following is a brief content analysis of the comments made by the 28 school violence perpetrators surveyed. While the lengths of the comments have been edited, the content has been offered verbatim with limited alterations to the substantive content, grammar, or spelling. Perpetrators commented on their views of the causes of school violence, the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, and their own incidents of school violence.
Perpetrator Comments on the Causes of School Violence: Three perpetrators made general comments about their views on the causes of school violence in America:

“One thing I notice it never be the ones that have bad behavior in school that pull thangs like what John did, it always be a smart, quiet student that you think would not do that, so the teacher be looking at the wrong student for behavior problems.”

B/M/21/2005 (Ambushed a rival 17-year old gang member with a three other males in a school parking lot)

“I agree that it has been understudied in serious circles, and “over studied” in the forum of talk shows and media sound bites. In addition to my own experience I have followed the phenomenon in the latter instance and, preferably, in the former. (Serious avenues such as Frontlines “The Killer at XXXXXXX High” and the book Columbine). It has given me a fair amount of insight. I believe there are commonalities in most of the school shootings (at least the student vs. student and/or teacher variety) which are confoundingly overlooked. And which, if understood better and more widely, would be a great tool in prevention.”

W/M/14/1986 (Failing a class, tried to kill the teacher, but shot and killed her substitute and injured a vice principal and two other students)

“A lot of people seem to want to alway’s put people in neat boxes & categories so they can easily demarcate acts in to various levels of stratification, such thinking is counter productive, & useless.”

B/M/15/1988 (Opened fire at several teachers with a semi-automatic pistol)

From these comments several themes reveal themselves clearly about what these individuals feel are involved in facilitating some to commit school violence acts.

Themes of Comments about School Violence in General: Interestingly, only three perpetrators of 28 chose to comment on the issue of school violence in general. The vast majority, 26, commented on their own situation only. Of those who did comment directly, one distinct theme was prevalent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Relationship between Teachers and Students</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Teachers targeting wrong students (Labeling)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teachers trying to put students in “neat boxes”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teachers need to understand commonalities in their problem students</td>
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The comments on the impact (positive and negative) that teachers have on their students echo what researchers (Crews & Montgomery, 2001; Crews & Counts, 1997; Crews, Montgomery, & Garris, 1996: Demuth, 2004; Kehler & Greig, 2005;
Kimmel & Mahler, 2003; Martino, 2000; McGee & DeBernardo, 1999) involved in the study of juvenile violence have reported.

Those working with youth need to ensure they are not inappropriately labeling those they encounter. This also includes ensuring that none of their students/charges even perceive that this is occurring. Real or perceived labeling will inevitably impact how individuals interact with each other. They must also remember that juvenile behavior is very complex and most children cannot be placed in neat boxes. While all children face similar issues in their adolescent lives, their reactions to those issues may be very different. Each child must be approached as an individual with unique strengths and weaknesses, which need to be promoted and addressed.

**Offender Comments on Sandy Hook Elementary School Shooting:**

Perpetrators were also asked to offer their opinions and comments on the tragedy at *Sandy Hook Elementary School* in Newtown, CT on December 12, 2012. Ten perpetrators made comments about their views on this school violence incident:

“In the aftermath of the SENSELESS acts of VIOLENCE that occurred at the Newtown, CT Elementary School, my earnest PRAYER is that these few words will find you both more DETERMINED & RESOLUTE than EVER! There has been much talk about the incident here behind the prison walls, (as I am sure it must be out there in society). I WISH there was more that I could do to express sincere concern for the lives of those innocent young children, & the suffering of their FAMILIES, FRIENDS, & COMMUNITIES.”

**B/M/14/1996** (shot another student 6 times with a .22 caliber pistol on a school bus after a verbal feud)

“I saw what just happen in Connecticut the tragedy of all those sweet innocent children. their lifes cut short. broke my heart when I saw it in the news I hope this study can bring this madness to a stop once and for all. or at least that we can recogize the people that might be thinking of doing something so disturbe like what just happen. my prayers go to the familys and vicitims”

**H/M/18/1999** (Shot two rival gang members in parking lot after school)

“My heart go out to those children and their families. I know that’s the worse feeling a Parent Could ever have. In-a-way I wish I Could’ve been there to help save the kids.”

“Now the politicians are involved, talking about more gun control laws. Im not Anti-Government, but the Government In my belief is full of it. Guns don’t Kill People, People Kill People! Every body know that with stricter gun control laws will only put more minorities in state & federal prisons. Instead of Gun Control laws the Government needs to spend money on mental health programs for the youth. They Promote Violence but then grieve for it. I feel sorry for those kids, all I could say is this is a very Cold & Dark World. The person that did that, I Don’t think Nobody pay attention to the signs. Because its always sign. That’s why I say we have to start with the youth in America.
But with “Newtown” happening my hope is a little bit scattered. I feel as if when a school-shooting happen rather, “Isolated” or “Mass” it hurts my Case.”

**B/M/16/1996** (shot another student during a fight with a group of students)

“Even with me living the life that I live and me being in the circumstances that Im in, I still disbelieve in using violence as a form of communication. When tragedies hit most people male or female we respond in a haste manner without thinking for others as well as the consequences of our actions which will only lead to years or decades of decadence. No quick fix can help our nation heal from it’s losses or the pain that we suffered over the last couple years, months, weeks etc...It’s time for rational thinking in unionism so different minds can give different opinions on the issues at hand. Making guns illegal in my opinion will only increase crime rate in my opinion solely for the fact that people already have existing problems and they need some type of artillery to protect there self and others.”

**B/M/16/2004** (shot and killed another student in a group fight a few minutes after their high school graduation)

“Him victimizing his mother, who for all outward appearances was a good mother, coupled with the facts that he was socially withdrawn and he victimized children specifically, leads me to suspect that he had issues identifying and understanding true emotions. For some reason I believe that even before the suicide he had given up hope. Hope of being a Father, friend, son, and being in a romantic relationship. I imagine him as being a person who could witness joy, love and pleasure, but couldn’t connect to, or experience them himself so he thought these things were fabricated, and ultimately offensive to him.”

**B/M/16/2005** (Shot and killed another student outside their school as classes recessed for the afternoon)

“Now, school-violence, that’s a problem of teachers. That’s a problem of teacher’s that only-them as a whole could change. People may not know it, but, teachers is the imperfection that need to be corrected. Psychology skills and counseling skills is what this is all about. Teachers need to be implemented with the skills to get a student to divulge whatever it is that he, or she wont divulge to their parents, or other outside family member or friends. Crack is taking over our teachers, & people don’t even much see it. These teachers may look up to standard from a outsider view of viewing them, but, with their good hearts; their minds and vision is impaired.”

**B/M/18/2003** (one of two men who entered school property via gaps in the fence armed with an AK-47 and a semi-automatic pistol, then entered the school gym and shot a 15 year old gang rival to death)
“I did hear about what happened in Connecticut the day it happened; I just
could not believe it. I want to help even more now to provide some insight
and help to prevent these things from happening. I think that, and these are
just opinions, but he might have been planning this before. He may have
chosen and elementary school because the majority of the people were little
children and they could do very little to stop him. Easier targets. If Adam
Lanza had any anger toward anyone there, then that might be a reason why
he went. If he was taking medication, that might have been a factor too. It has
been proven and researched that when you have someone taking psychiatric
medication, homicidal and suicidal thoughts can occur or increase. He knew
how to use guns, they were available to him, and when you mix that with
depression, frustration, or delusional thinking the results can be disastrous.”

H/M/18/2006 (Crashed through security shack at the entrance to the
student parking lots, stepped out of van, set off 3 smoke bombs and then
proceeded with gunfire towards the school, after killing father at family
home)

“I have no idea what the Newtown shooting was about. I’m about as far
removed from the facts on the ground as anyone can get. And even those that
have access to some of those facts (i.e. the media) can’t get it right. Aren’t
they the ones who reported Lanza’s mother was a teacher at the school?
People in this world, and the media particularly, have not learned that if you
don’t know what’s going on, say nothing. Otherwise you create an air of
confusion which later is hard to undo. This act may not have been so much
one of anger towards his mother or those teachers and children. It is more
likely his act was left as a burden for others to carry. That is, for perhaps his
father, his brother, the “town”, or whatever person/entity (and it could be
more than one…a confluence of motivations) that in his mind had wronged
him, or neglected him, or failed him, or spurred him, or whatever. I, quite
rationally, want to do something drastic and sacrificial which will bring
even one of them back. I can feel hopeless about my future because when I think
about this recent tragedy I don’t ever want to me a parole. So how could
anyone else? And if I don’t have a chance to live in a community and have a
family, then what hope do I have?”

W/M/14/1986 (Failing a class, tried to kill the teacher, but shot and
killed her substitute and injured a vice principal and two other students)

"I think he chose the school because it was familiier to him, he went to school
there so mabe something happened then. His mom was working at the school
so it was a place that was always on his mind cause she would come home
and talk about it. Maybe because of his Asbergers syndrome he felt that his
mother payed more attention to the kids at the school and that made him very
angery with her and the kids and adults at the school and he thought he had
to do something about it. It is very hard to put myself in his shoes, Iv been
raised that the children are the future and that they should be protected from
evil like that. I also think he may have thought that it may have been an easy
target because of its location and the fact that he was a little familiar with the school, people most of the time will pick a place their most comfortable at so that went they start to do such a think like that they don’t get spooked and change their mind and have to pick a new target with out having to plan anything out ahead of time. When I would do a robbery or when I was going to kill myself it was always at a place that I would go all the time.”

W/M/17/2007  (Brought a gun to school and held a class hostage for four hours)

“Extremely horrific thing that took place at that school in Connecticut last month, and those 20 little children losing their lives in that shooting. But the shooter, Adam Lanza, committed suicide? If Adam was a Christian like me, he wouldn’t have done so atrocious of an entity as to do that shooting at that school in Connecticut. This is the result of (at least in my opinion and even though it was a long time ago) of; in the 1960’s, taking BIBLES out of our public schools in this country. Its crucial for the people of this country not to take BIBLES out of our public schools.”

W/M/21/1993  (Former student who shot and killed assistant principle with a .44 caliber pistol)

The comments from these ten perpetrators offer additional insight into why some commit such acts. They also offer insight into the thinking patterns of some who commit such acts of violence. The comments do support the beliefs that many (Crews & Montgomery, 2001; Crews & Counts, 1997; Crews, Montgomery, & Garris, 1996; Demuth, 2004; Kehler & Greig, 2005; Kimmel & Mahler, 2003; Martino, 2000; McGee & DeBernardo, 1999) involved in the research of juvenile violence have argued for decades. Some individuals will see violence and aggression as their only way to communicate with others. Some will feel this is the only way to protect them and deal with the real or perceived aggression they experience from others (including school officials).

**Themes of Comments About Sandy Hook Elementary School Shooting:** The comments from ten of the perpetrators about the Newtown, CT, shooting are interesting in that these individuals are seldom asked their opinions on such events. These comments offer further insight into the thoughts of school violence perpetrators as to the causes of school violence. Four types of comments presented themselves in examining these comments:

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<th>Views on Incident</th>
<th>Concern for Self</th>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sincere concern</td>
<td>A lot of talk in prison</td>
<td>Fault of teachers</td>
<td>Need to identify potential perpetrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senseless act of violence</td>
<td>Fear of impact on their situation</td>
<td>Kids not being able to understand their emotions</td>
<td>Gun control will NOT work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School was a comfortable and easy target</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of understanding about consequences of their actions</td>
<td>Knowledge of guns and medication and depression is a dangerous mix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act left as a burden for others</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kids cannot see the future</td>
<td>Asperger's Syndrome is the cause</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The four types of comments involved views on the incident, concern for self, cause of school violence, and possible solutions to this type of juvenile violence. Ten of the perpetrators did appear to offer sincere concern for the victims of this tragedy. Although, eight of these individuals offered comments which appeared to be more worried about the potential negative impact that such an event would have on their own cases. Three discussed in detail how such events hurt their own chances for parole or early release due to renewed public outrage against this type of violence. Three comments offered great insight into the issues that the period of adolescence in general has upon a juvenile’s behavior and understanding of the consequences of their actions. Two discussed the possible impact that issues such as Asperger’s Syndrome and ADHD medication can have on a child’s behavior. Two discussed how sometimes perpetrators commit their violent acts at their school in that it is a known and comfortable place. Also, that it is possible that the perpetrators commit their acts of violence in order to leave a burden on others for a perceived mistreatment they have experienced in their lives.

**Offender Comments on Their Own Incidents of School Violence:** While no one surveyed or interviewed was asked to comment directly upon their own case or past, many freely offered comments and insights upon their own behavior. Seventeen perpetrators commented on their own incidents:

“Although I didn’t kill anyone or seriously injure anyone physically, the trauma was done. I terrorized my classmates, teachers and community. I’ve become apart of the worst trend in our society, and I hope you can help me speak out against it and encourage others to get the help they need instead of following in my footsteps, and the footsteps of too many others.”

**W/M/16/2004** (Fired three rounds with a 12 Gauge shotgun in a classroom)

“I grew up playing sport’s which is how I got my nickname “XXXX” from the legendary XXXXY XXXX. Sport’s became secondary once the street’s got a strong hold of my heart, mind, body and my soul would be latter confiscated by the commonwealth of XXXXXXXXXXX.”

**B/M/16/2004** (shot and killed another student in a group fight a few minutes after their high school graduation)

“I point this out for accuracy’s sake, not to minimize. I endangered the life of every person in the school by firing a weapon in the first place. I still struggle with many issues of depression and guilt. But if you get to know my story better you’ll realize I’ve been to the darkest spot possible (I hope) and survived it. As long as I can find meaning and hope I will endure and achieve.”

**W/M/14/1986** (Failing a class, tried to kill the teacher, but shot and killed her substitute and injured a vice principal and two other students)
“I wanted to HUMILIATE them & make them APOLOGIZE for threatening to harm my FAMILY, KILL ME & for all the RACIAL SLURS that they’d made towards me. They were waiting on me at my “Bus stop,” after following BEHIND the bus & driving BESIDE it, yelling out THREATS of bodily HARM, calling me nigger, porch monkey, etc. (ALL of which the Bus Driver Ms. Mar WITNESSED, but never said ANYTHING ABOUT!). I always KNEW I was going to JAIL AFTERWARDS. I just never thought it would be for MURDER...(ASSAULT or even BATTERY perhaps, but it never OCCURRED to me that something would go WRONG and I’d end up taking a LIFE! This 20 year old young MAN, had threatened to KILL me, RAPE my MOTHER & SEXUALLY ASSAULT – in HIS words, “stick his PENIS” in the MOUTHS of my kid brother and sister. (who were 8 & 9 year of age at the time.) I was DEVASTATED, ANGRY, & AFRAID for my LIFE BEFORE. But, NOW, although I was blessed to be ALIVE, I felt truly ALONE & left to WONDER “where & how it all (my life) went WRONG!”

B/M/14/1996 (shot another student 6 times with a .22 caliber pistol on a school bus after a verbal feud)

“When I got the letter and read it I couldn’t believe what I just read. I was like a zombie it was me but I wasn’t in my body. It took me about an hour to realize that the love of my life just broke my heart into a million parts, that’s when I started to cry. I took the gun to school with me the next day. The night before I couldn’t sleep the only thing I could think about was XXXX and how my life didn’t matter anymore. When I got off the bus that morning I seen XXXX walking towards me, but I couldn’t bring myself to do what I wanted to do which was shoot myself in front of her. I was headed to kill myself when I seen the security guard comeing my way. So I took out the gun and lighted a smoke and headed for the band room which I thought was empty at that time. I would have never brought the gun to school. I would have talked to an adult about my problems.”

W/M/17/2007 (Brought a gun to school and held a class hostage for four hours)

“I do take full responsibility of my actions, though. Being incarcerated this long I have educated myself. And I more in-tone with what I consider the reasons & why’ incidents occurred, but to be honest I could only speak for myself. My upbringin and surroundings of growing up in a Inner City like XXXXXXXX I was basically born into gang life. Not only that but drugs, guns, violence, unstable households was sort of a way of life. I did make bad choices however, in-a-way I never had a chance to grow due to my surroundings. I don’t Know if Im a victim of circumstances, or product of my environment. But it’s a fact that I’ve victimized so many by what happened with the case Im in here for. Yes I was crucified by the local media, and the victim was looked at as an angel when we both were known gang-members. However, we both were trying to just go to school, hoping to strive for our dreams. I know I was!”
**B/M/16/1996** (shot another student during a fight with a group of students)

“I had been relentlessly picked on & bullied, both physically & mentally and I felt totally powerless. But when you discover that it’s nothing you can do to remove the spotlight from off you in their (the bullies) eyes then you get more perplexed, then later angry & confused, then frustrated. After a while of being frustrated, then anger returns like a brutal cold rain, which matetes to various levels of rage which can’t be contained in a cage for long before it’s transformed into some sort of action. If I had know or even contemplated my actions fully and the full remifications of my actions (the stress and embarrassment and shame and pain & humiliation) caused to my mom and other families, I know I would not have done this crime nor would I have killed myself or anyone. I most likely would have found or discovered another route, or solution to solve my problems.”

**B/M/15/1988** (Opened fire at several teachers with a semi-automatic pistol)

“My parents divorced when I was only four years old. I’ve always felt ignored because I was the youngest and couldn’t understand. This lead to a lot of frustration, especially thinking I was left out of things because of my age. Around the age of five or six I was sexually molested several times. I didn’t tell anyone because I didn’t know it was wrong, and it was someone I’m related to so I trusted him. My life went on as normal until I was thirteen and realized what had really happened to me. I stopped playing sports, my grades began to drop, and I started drinking and smoking marijuana. I just wanted the memories to go away and to numb the pain. I attempted suicide and also cut my wrists. I was on meds for depression, then anxiety (Xanax), then sleeping pills. The following school year started so-so for me, and quickly went under. In February ’04, there was a moment when something happened and I felt people didn’t trust me. I was worried I would always be seen as a nut case and my life would never amount to anything anyway. I thought if I couldn’t be like everyone else, I’ll make them miserable like me. I had no solid plans, and once I showed up, the fantasy turned to reality. I tried to stop myself, wanted to leave before it started, but was scared of getting caught and I told myself nothing would change anyway. My life would go on miserably because I wouldn’t do anything to get the help I knew I needed.”

**W/M/16/2004** (Fired three rounds with a 12 Gauge shotgun in a classroom)

“I thank and have come to realize that all that has happen is to be blamed on me. I was trying very hard to prove to myself that I was someone that I knew deep down inside that wasn’t”

**B/M/15/1993** (Shot another student in the back during a gang fight on school grounds)
“On my Behalf – I don’t think I had time to think – it was more like a Blackout and I think I just snapped out. However I think it was About 11 of us that snapped out me, the victim, his friends and two of my friend. It was Originally an Brawl! Its a lot of “0” in this Section for me Because it wasn’t Plan B/C I was Used to Carrying Guns to school and in my hood.”

B/M/16/1996 (shot another student during a fight with a group of students)

“Feeling that my sexuality was being questioned: I marked “probably” because there was an internal question. Not an external one. And it wasn’t that I questioned my orientation. I felt confused because I had been sexually abused by a male. And I felt VERY, VERY, angry. The state of mind, once the decision is made, is quite calm. And since part of the reason for my act was reacting against overbearing and unfair authority, I had thrown out all such controls. It was a very “free” state, albeit at the same time out of control. And no thought at all for realistic consequences.”

W/M/14/1986 (Failing a class, tried to kill the teacher, but shot and killed her substitute and injured a vice principal and two other students)

“Not sure if it consist of bullying But due to my life style I grew upon I fell victim to getting jumped and shot at. I was defending myself. I was hoping people seen the other people pull our there gone. That why they would understand why I did/reacted in that manner. I victim was not the blame(XXXXX) But the victim who was caught with the gun who started all this I blame.”

B/M/16/2009 (opened fire on a crowd after a high school football game)

“With regards to bullying. I was not bullied in high school but in grade school. They were afraid of me. I had no outside group to associate with. It might of helped if I did. At the time I was not emotionally abused but was in the past and was scared of my father. I felt I was wronged by school officials for making me go to school. I did not have the option to quit school. I was often under the influence of over-the-counter pills (Max Alerts). With regards to consequences, I expected to be killed that day. I didn’t care about any consequences. Just to clarify, after I was arrested and on the way to jail, I knew my life was over and would spend the rest of my life in prison. It wasn’t until about an hour later after 2 was put into a cell and hearing about my crime on tv in the background that it really hit me what I had done. It was then I felt remorse and anguish over it “

W/M/17/1995 (used .22 caliber rifle to shoot two students and fatally shoot a freshman student)

“Mixing family & friends in questions is problematic. May be worried after/during/before about friends, but not family. Suffering some mental health problem but unaware of it himself. A bully, but doesn’t view himself
that way. Geek, nerd, weirdo aren’t really “Negative labels”. Everyone in a
clique, but don’t consider it a gang. Every kids fighting with another
student/group & they all feel punished unfairly by parents, usually just teen
angst/drama. “Often” is used a lot on pages 16-17 which, I think, implies a lot
and that’s not necessarily the case.”

W/M/14/1998  (Fatally shot a teacher and wounded another and two
students at a school dance)

“I often kept my mind on all the guys any of my girlfriends had sexual
relationships with before they were with me and how much it made me 100%
hate each guy for no other reason other than that. Feeling to deep in you’ve
said you was doing it, now you have to do it. Hyping myself up, listening to
violent music to drawn at any thoughts of talking myself out of do it. Feeling
stupid. Wishing I didn’t have my stupid pride”

W/M/16/2006  (Stabbed fellow classmate in the neck with the intent
to kill him, permanently scarred and physically disabled the student)

“John might be a former student. John may have a fascination with death.
John talks a lot about death. John may have an interest in tragedies such as
school shooting or true crime stories. John spends a lot of time in his room, in
isolation. John may feel remorse and talk a lot about a past event(s). John
believes he is a follower. John may feel that others will hopefully understand.
Majority of the time John thinks about this, like it’s the only thing to live for,
the violent plans he has. John may desire help in his plan. John may feel like
he has to tell someone. Hopes to kill as many as he can. Hopes to kill before
he is stopped or killed. Wants to be quick in his plan. Worried he might be
stopped. John may think of how many he hurt or killed. He may feel relief
that it is over. John may feel confused that he is still alive, or
disappointed/frustrated.”

H/M/18/2006  (Crashed through security shack at the entrance to the
student parking lot, stepped out of this van, set off 3 smoke bombs and then
proceeded with gunfire towards the school, after killing father at family
home)

“Mostly EVERYONE had their own CLICKS who were SOMEHOW
“outside” the REST of the students. –Well, I’ll say atleast HALF of the school
was made up of different CLICKS, NEIGHBORHOODS, GANNS of SOME
sort. So, it really wasn’t something considered “OUT” of the NORM. (That is
in the minds of many young kids such as myself). YES, I believe my parents
dependend on “corporal punishment” WAY too much & took things WAY too
FAR. –Before the “BUS DRIVER” started giving me problems & siding with
the victim who was CLEARLY the AGGRESSOR in the BEGINNING, I cant
say that I was seeking any REVENGE against any school officials or teachers.
I mean, I was ANGRY with her but it hadn’t crossed my mind to go as far as
THREATENING her in anyway. Being judged UNFAIRLY had simply become
“a part of LIFE”- a part of the new WORLD I lived in (being BLACK in an
all WHITE NEIGHBORHOOD.)...You could say the community looked AFTER its OWN. HOW?... Good enough to accomplish WHAT? I SAY this because I never PLANNED to KILL anyone. I just wanted the victim & his co-horts a LESSON. I wanted to HUMILIATE them & make them APOLOGIZE for threatening to harm my FAMILY, KILL ME & for all the RACIAL SLURTS that they’d made towards me. There were 2 OTHER guys with him a few days EARLIER, (ages 19 & 24) waiting on me at my “Bus stop,” after following BEHIND the bus & driving BESIDE it, yelling out THREATS of bodily HARM, calling me niggars, porch monkeys, etc. (ALL of which the Bus Driver Ms. Mar WITNESSED, but never said ANYTHING ABOUT!) I don’t recall the guys’ NAMES as of now, but I can STILL see their FACES! – ANYWAYZ, in SHORT. I always KNEW I was going to JAIL AFTERWARDS. I just never thought it would be for MURDER...(ASSAULT or even BATTERY perhaps, but it never OCCURRED to me that something would go WRONG and I’d end up taking a LIFE! EVENTUALLY, I DID think these things, but not immediately AFTER. When I think back to that TIME, I felt “BURDENED DOWN,” kind of like having the weight of the WORLD on my SHOULDERS. I never even received ANY kind of “PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION.” I was just walking around like an empty SHELL; Day after Day, FEARFUL & WONDERING if I’d ever WAKE up from the most TERRIFYING, long-drawn OUT NIGHTMARE of my young 14 year old LIFE!...”

B/M/14/1996 (shot another student 6 times with a .22 caliber pistol on a school bus after a verbal feud)

These comments offer a wide range of the issues involved in why some individuals decide to commit violent acts and why they choose a school or school grounds to be the location for the violence to occur.

Themes of Comments about Their own School Violence Incident Involvement: This part of the research study examined the unsolicited comments made by the twenty-eight school violence perpetrators in regards to their own involvement. Of the twenty-eight, seventeen offered reasons for their own personal motivation and experiences in a school violence incident. In an examination of the comments above, five distinct themes are revealed:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REVENGE</th>
<th>MISTREATMENT</th>
<th>HOPELESSNESS</th>
<th>ENVIRONMENT</th>
<th>CONSEQUENCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Victim is to blame sometimes</td>
<td>• Bullied and abused</td>
<td>• Thoughts of suicide</td>
<td>• Not planned, but always armed</td>
<td>• Hoping people will understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Revenge is sometimes the only option</td>
<td>• Having been sexuality questioned</td>
<td>• Feeling sorry for self</td>
<td>• Trying to be someone they are not/prove self</td>
<td>• No thoughts of realistic consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wrong by school officials/parents</td>
<td>• Sexual and physical abuse</td>
<td>• Expected to be killed/did not care about future</td>
<td>• Product of one’s environment/Upbrining and surroundings</td>
<td>• Worried about friends not family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Responding to real and/or perceived threats</td>
<td>• Response to racial prejudice</td>
<td>• Feelings of helplessness</td>
<td>• Influence of gangs</td>
<td>• No time to think/blacked out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The five themes above offer support to the most commonly suspected causes of juvenile violence and especially school related violence (Crews & Montgomery, 2001; Crews & Counts, 1997; Crews, Montgomery, & Garris, 1996; Demuth, 2004; Kehler & Greig, 2005; Kimmel & Mahler, 2003; Martino, 2000; McGee & DeBernardo, 1999). The traditional ideas of poverty, impact of one’s environment, sexual and physical abuse, etc. are clearly represented in these comments. Eight respondents discussed how the violence was simply a byproduct of their lives in that they were always armed or having daily conflicts with others. They offered that their usual delinquent behavior was escalated by others into violence and death. They argued that sometimes victims are to blame in causing their own victimization.

The comments made by ten perpetrators stated that sometimes revenge and violence become the only answer in a person’s mind. They offered that it is a response to bullying, racial prejudice, and mistreatment by others in their lives (e.g., family members, teachers, and peers). Five perpetrators stated that their violence was a last resort in their lives in that they had given up all hope and motivation to live any longer. Interestingly, three perpetrators stated that one area which needs further investigation was the possible impact that the fantasy lives and private mental lives that some youth develop can have upon their behavior.

**Limitations**

Conducting any type of research on school violence or disturbance in the United States is difficult and sometimes misleading (Crews & Counts, 1997). First, there was no system of recording and enumerating individual acts of this type of behavior until 1933 when the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Uniform Crime Report was developed. Moreover, many forms of individual aggression, such as juvenile misbehavior, were not a matter of public concern and attention until the 1960s (Cavan & Ferdinand, 1981; Crews & Counts, 1997; Rutter & Giller, 1984).
Throughout history, definitions of what constituted school disturbance and violence have varied. There have been varying reporting procedures among school districts. School administrators have historically minimized their problems to preserve the impression that they control their schools completely and ensure they are safe.

A potential limitation of this study is that various conclusions are drawn from a small sample of respondents (n=28). This limitation is mitigated potentially in that as of 2014, no other study has surveyed nor interviewed as many perpetrators. The Federal Bureau of Investigations’ Threat Assessment Team (1999) interviewed fewer than eight perpetrators in the year following the Columbine High School shooting (CO) as the foundation for their extensively utilized report entitled, The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective. This limitation is also minimized given the extensiveness of the survey instrument (involving 365 variables) and other face-to-face and mailing contacts.

Conclusion and Direction for Further Research

There will always be many questions that need to be addressed in future school violence research. The focus of many of these questions will mostly involve attempting to identify primary characteristics of perpetrators of school violence. They will also involve the identification of triggers or contributors to violent incidents at or around schools. The results of this research should not be to develop profiles or checklists, but instead provide a comprehensive understanding of these phenomena.

It is obvious that more research is needed into the true underlying causes of juvenile violence in general in schools, but especially these horrific types of events. It is common knowledge that bullying, assaults, and thefts are commonplace in most American schools. School shootings and homicides on the other hand represent an extreme failure in the life of a student or individual at some level. Unfortunately, a failure such that the individual felt it could not be answered in any other way than through the use of violence.

Special attention is needed to examine detailed characteristics of each violent event and its aftermath. Academic researchers need to continue to evaluate how well existing theories explain school violence and school shootings in particular. They will also need to continue to investigate whether perpetrator and event characteristics and perpetrator questionnaire responses can be used to develop more useful theories as to causation.

Finally, research needs to occur that will identify the factors that will aid school officials, parents, and peers in the early identification of young people at risk for becoming perpetrators. Moreover, assistance from research is needed for determining what policy responses are most effective to make schools safer. Maybe it is also time for researchers (Burnard, 1991; Quinn, 2005; Wengraf, 2001) to ask for assistance from those who may know the true answers, the perpetrators themselves.


References


This paper assesses the amended Canada’s Amended Youth Criminal Justice Act introduction of deterrence as an additional sentencing aim through analyses of a subset of interviews with persistent male youth offenders recruited in a youth correctional facility in southern Ontario. The analysis attends to how the youths’ accounts of violence, crime, and rehabilitative intervention efforts fit with government insistence that a stronger deterrence message is needed to reverse the damage of a justice system that scholars concur largely missed the global punitive turn. The paper concludes with a discussion of the relevance of the Canadian case to the globalization of juvenile justice, a development marked by the contradictory embrace of punitivism, on the one hand, and crime-prevention jurisprudence, on the other.

In 2012, Stephen Harper’s Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) amended the prevention oriented Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA) as part of this government’s larger and ongoing tough-on-crime overhaul of the Canadian justice system. As enacted in 2002, the YCJA aimed to divert as many minor youth offenders as possible away from the courts, provide a range of community-based non-custodial interventions for midrange offenders, and reserve custody for violent and repeat offenders. At the same time, it presumed that a youth age 14 or older found guilty of murder, attempted murder, aggravated sexual assault or a third serious violent offence would be subject to an adult sentence, though this presumption was overturned by the Supreme Court in 2008 (R. v. D.B., 2008). Consistent with the

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1 The YCJA’s presumptive adult sentence provisions placed the onus on the youth to demonstrate that they should not be sentenced as an adult or be publically identified. These provisions were overturned in R. v. D.B. (2008), which held that by precedent, from the time of Canada’s original Juvenile Delinquents Act (1908), and under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, youth are entitled to a presumption of diminished moral blameworthiness. Therefore, an adult sentence cannot be
overall intent to reduce reliance on custody. Deterrence was neither an explicit nor implied sentencing aim. Rather, as outlined in previous reviews (e.g., Bala, Carrington, & Roberts, 2009), the goal of extrajudicial diversions and sentencing alike was to provide meaningful consequences that fostered rehabilitation and reintegration ‘in order to promote the long-term protection of the public’ (pre-amended § 3(1)).

Among other changes, the 2012 amendments foreground public protection and accountability over rehabilitation and prevention (§ 3(1), broaden criteria for holding youth in pre-trial detention (§ 29(2) and sentenced custody (§ 39(1) and add deterrence and denunciation as sentencing objectives a youth court 'may' consider (§ 38(2)(f)). The amendments do not, however, eliminate the presumption that 'extrajudicial measures are often the most appropriate and effective way to address youth crime' (§ 4). Moreover, while the amended Declaration of Principle (§ 3(1) deletes reference to the long-term protection of the public, 'contributing' to this outcome remains the purpose of sentencing:

The purpose of sentencing under section 42 (youth sentences) is to hold a young person accountable for an offence through the imposition of just sanctions that have meaningful consequences for the young person and that promote his or her rehabilitation and reintegration into society, thereby contributing to the long-term protection of the public. (§ 38(1).

Recognizing the importance of differentiating symbolic from practical aims and impacts (Doob & Webster, 2006), this paper assesses the amended YCJA's introduction of deterrence as an additional sentencing aim through analyses of a subset of interviews with persistent male youth offenders recruited in a youth correctional facility in southern Ontario in 2005-2006 (n = 20). The analysis attends to how the youths' accounts of violence, crime, and rehabilitative intervention efforts fit with government insistence that a stronger deterrence message is needed to reverse the damage’ (Mann, 2014, p. 413) of a justice system that scholars concur largely missed the global 'punitive turn' (Meyer & O'Malley, 2005) that David Garland (2000) first identified (see also Donohue & Moore, 2009; Lynch, 2012; Moore & Hannah-Moffat, 2005; O'Malley, 1999, 2002; Webster & Doob 2007, 2014). The paper concludes with a discussion of the relevance of the Canadian case to the globalization of juvenile justice, a development marked by the contradictory embrace of punitivism, on the one hand, and crime-prevention jurisprudence, on the other (see also Andrews & Dowden, 2007; Bateman, 2012; Darke, 2011; Farrall, Bottoms & Shapland, 2010; Hutchinson, 2006; Muncie, 2006, 2008; Robinson, 2008; Welsh & Farrington, 2012).

**Desistance and Deterrence**

Desistance research is situated within a larger body of recent research on pathways into and out of crime that increasingly incorporates the voices of youth on presumed. Rather, the onus remains with the Crown to demonstrate, on a case by case basis, that an adult sentence is warranted.
risks and protectors, especially the voices of youth positioned at the margins of society where coming into conflict with the law is both commonplace and a marker of identity or status, particularly for males (Bottrell, 2007; Bracken, Deane & Morrissette, 2009; Bryne & Trew, 2008; Haigh, 2009; Hasley, 2006; Hartman, Little & Ungar, 2008). This research suggests that transitions from persisting in crime to desisting are contingent on the coming together of meaningful attachments with prosocial others that foster changes in identity. This outcome is mediated, among other contingencies, by an ‘imperative of doubt’ that renders ‘doing crime’ questionable (Haigh, 2009, pp. 309 & 317). This research views youth as ‘active assemblers of meaning’ (Ezeonu, 2008, p. 195), whose narratives convey identities that youth embrace or endorse, both possible and feared (Paternoster & Bushway, 2009) and also 'unchosen' or imposed identities 'ascribed by others and defined by social position' (Bottrell, 2007, p. 608).

Cognizant of these nuances, professionals who work with criminalized and at-risk youth have begun incorporating youths’ identity stories into institutional discourses, stories that capture youths' views and suggestions on what they need for desistance to become possible (Ashkar & Kenny, 2008; Bracken et al., 2009; Hartman et al., 2008). As reports on these efforts note, youth narratives often include claims and assertions about wanting to change, what is needed to change and so forth that run counter to accounts of actual plans and actions (Halsey, 2006), especially among youth whose pathways into crime are marked by experiences of sexual and physical abuse, poverty, racism, and mental illness. It is therefore imperative to attend carefully not only to indicators of desires and capacities for desistance, but also for indicators of the types of 'symbolic healing' (Bracken et al., 2009, p. 71) needed for criminalized youths to move beyond anti-social attitudes, behaviours and associations.

In contrast to research on desistance, research on deterrence has a heritage that reaches back for decades, if not centuries (Farrall et al., 2010). The field was once marked by a divide between those who contend that sanction threats ‘always deter’ and those who contend that they never do (Durlauf & Nagin, 2011, p.15). Recently, however, there has been a recurrence of scholarship and meta-reviews aimed at assembling the ‘500 piece … it depends puzzle’ on why deterrence appears to work for some offenders, at least some of the time, at least to a moderate extent, while for others ‘it will never work’ (Loughran, Pogarsky, Piquero & Paternoster, 2012, p. 733). Key among the ‘dirty little secrets’ of deterrence theory is the consistent finding that support for deterrence is ‘meagre and 'disappointing’ (Paternoster, 2010, p. 804). Not only are some offenders apparently not deterrable (Loughran, Piquero, Fagan & Mulvey, 2012; Maxson, Matsuda & Hennigan, 2011), some appear to be made worse by deterrence efforts (Andrews & Dowden, 2007; Bouffard & Piquero, 2010). Even among deterrable offenders, other factors, related to identity transformation, appear more salient (Paternoster, 2010).

Importantly, in contrast to research and meta-reviews on adult offenders, research on juvenile offenders finds virtually no evidence that sanction severity has a deterrent effect and only limited evidence that sanction certainty can serve as a deterrent (Matthews & Angew, 2008; Maxson et al., 2011). This conclusion is consistent with Canadian stakeholders’ ‘overwhelming consensus’ against adding deterrence to the YCJA's sentencing objectives, both in the academic literature (Corrado, Gronsdahl, MacAlister & Cohen, 2006, p. 542) and in cross-country consultations and parliamentary hearings on YCJA reform (Mann, 2014, p. 413).
The Research

This paper aims to assess the salience of deterrence messaging to desistance among representatives of ‘the relatively small group of out-of-control, violent, many-times-repeat young offenders’ that are the identified target of YCJA reform (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada Rob Nicolson, as cited in Canada, 2010; see also Department of Justice Canada, 2011). The paper addresses the following two research questions:

1. What role, if any, does deterrence, defined as the experience and threat of incarceration, play in persistent youth offenders' movements towards desistance?
2. Would a more explicit messaging of deterrence, or alternately a stronger messaging of support, better foster this outcome?

I address these research questions through analysis of 20 interviews with violent and persistent male youth offenders, age 16 to 18 – a subset of 83 interviews with youth that were conducted as part of a larger qualitative research project on youth violence and youth violence intervention in a single southern Ontario urban municipality during the first few years after the YCJA came into force (2004 through 2007). The research was funded through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and cleared by the University Research Ethics Board, the Ontario ministry responsible for youth corrections (now the Ministry of Child and Youth Services), the municipal Public Board of Education, senior administrators at two youth correctional facilities, the principal of an alternative high school for youth "at risk" of not graduating, including youth on probation, and principals of two mainstream high schools that referred students to this alternative. In addition to the 83 youths (53 males, 30 females; 49 interviewed in schools, 34 in youth corrections), we interviewed professionals and front-line workers on efforts to prevent and reduce youth violence in the community (22 in education, 17 in social agencies, 13 in youth justice). Our primary focus, however, was on how youth experienced and viewed both the phenomenon of youth violence and intervention efforts.

We recruited the youth orally at the schools and correctional facilities and through information letters and consent forms that school and correctional staff distributed on our behalf. The information letter described the research as a university-based study that aimed to build knowledge on youth violence by "hearing about how you, as a youth, see the problem of youth violence and what you think of intervention services". The consent form, which we reviewed orally with each youth and that each youth signed, outlined the terms of the research. The consent form emphasized our commitment to assign pseudonyms to all participating individuals, agencies, and the research community itself, participants' rights to withdraw from the study at any time and refuse to answer any questions they did not feel comfortable answering, legal
limitations on our ability to maintain confidentiality, and for youth interviewed in youth corrections, our court authorized access to agency housed young offender files.2

The interviews were conducted on site at participating schools and correctional facilities and took the form of an open-ended "active" dialogue (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995) on the issue of youth violence and formal efforts to address this issue. The interviews were conducted either by me, the principle investigator, or by one of two graduate research assistants (one female, one male). On average, the interviews lasted an hour to an hour and a half, during which the youths offered rich narrative accounts of violence they had participated in, witnessed and knew about, and equally rich accounts of their own and others' experiences with interventions. The youths offered these narratives in response to three broad open-ended questions. The first question was the sole question that we routinely posed using the wording suggested on our interview guide, which stipulated that the wording of our questions would vary since the aim was to generate a conversation rather than survey attitudes or experiences.

1) What do you think about the issue of youth violence? Some people say it's a problem and some people say it's not a problem. What do you think?

2) What do you think about efforts to address youth violence in the community (by the schools, by social agencies)?

3) What do you think about efforts to address youth violence by the justice system?

Using non-verbal and verbal prompts, we encouraged youths to elaborate upon and explore their perceptions and understandings. These ranged from head nods to utterances such as "umm", "okay", "yeah", "why do you think", "really", "I can see that", and so forth. In addition, in no set order and with no prescribed phrasing we posed a number of follow-up questions on potential aspects, triggers or sources of youth violence (for example, bullying, gangs, racism, drugs, family issues, sexism, gay bashing), on specific intervention practices (for example, school suspensions and expulsions, anger management programs, substance abuse programs), and on extrajudicial and sentencing options authorized under the YCJA. In addition, we invited youth, interviewed in correctional sites, to tell us about their run-ins with the law, to comment on their experiences in incarceration, and to tell us about correctional programs they had participated in (for example, moral reasoning, life skills, high school completion programs). At the end of each interview we posed a set of demographic questions that we used to confirm age, last grade of school completed, and whether the youth or their family had, or had not, been involved with child protection services. Following this "checklist" we posed a question on whether there was anything special that the youth identified with, such as where their family was originally from, their religion, or something they did as a person, for example, play music or play sports (the school board would not allow a direct question on race or ethnicity but agreed to this broader identity question, which elicited far richer data).

2 The school board additionally required written consent of a parent or guardian for all youth participants younger than age 18, unless staff confirmed that the youth was living independent of parental authority (a legal option for youth age 16 or older).
We concluded each interview by asking the youth to tell us about any hopes or plans they had for the future.

Using the qualitative software program NVIVO™ we coded the interview transcripts for experiential and attitudinal patterns and then imported the coded data into SPSS™ (so as to map and track identified patterns). Our coding strategy was consistent with Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, a flexible strategy for analyzing qualitative data that involves a series of recursive steps. These include reading through interview transcripts multiple times to develop deep familiarity with the data, generating codes based on explicit statements and inferences, including those made by the researcher, and organizing the coded data into overlapping categories or themes that are refined, redefined, reorganized, and expanded upon to address specific research questions. Our initial aim was to identify analytically distinct youth subgroups and explore whether and how voiced perspectives varied across these subgroups (e.g., sub-groups that had and had not been bullied, expelled from school, participated in gangs, involved with the police, made subject to child protection services, participated in children's mental health, youth counselling, or substance abuse interventions, and so forth). Recognizing that neither our sample size nor our recruitment procedure was adequate for deriving statistical conclusions or for theory testing, we viewed this as a first step towards future, more theory-driven, qualitative analyses.

**Twenty Violent Persistent Male Youth Offenders**

The 20 interviews analyzed for this paper are a subset of 27 interviews conducted with male correctional youth, age 16 to 18. The analysis draws on these 20 interviews because the youth self-identify and are file-identified as violent and persistent youth offenders, the young offender population targeted by the 2012 YCJA amendments. All 20 had five or more recorded charges and/or convictions, a rate of repeat offending that Carrington's (2007) review of official court data identifies is the case with 10 per cent of the Canadian young offender population. Eleven (55%) had served or were serving a six-month or longer custodial sentence, and three were cascading down from a three-year sentence served primarily in a larger secure custody facility, the maximum allowed under the YCJA unless a youth is found guilty of murder, which carries a ten-year maximum youth sentence. The remaining nine (45%) were "revolving door" youth, whose narratives and file records were marked by accounts of multiple non-custodial and brief custodial sentences, punctuated by typically brief stays in remand (pre-trial detention).

At the time of the interview seven of the youth were age 16 (35%), six were age 17 (30%) and seven were age 18 (35%). Fifteen were Caucasian (75%), four identified as Aboriginal (20%), and one identified as a new Canadian from Latin America (5%). Except for reticence to disclose violence perpetrated against an intimate partner or female family member (n = 6), the 20 youths openly talked about their involvements in violence, crime, and intervention services in ways that were broadly congruent with information gleaned from their correctional file. Eighteen (90%) had charges or convictions for very serious crimes including aggravated assault, attempted murder, uttering death threats, kidnapping, armed robbery, and car theft, typically in addition to minor assaults, break and enter, drug trafficking, and mischief offences. All additionally had multiple breaches or administrative offences,
14 of whom (70%) had run from the police or escaped custody at least once. Sixteen (80%) disclosed involvement in gang or drug trade activities.

Twelve of the 20 youth (60%) qualify as early onset offenders, having come to the attention of police at age 12 or younger, as do an estimated two per cent of Canadian youth offenders (Carrington, 2007). Fourteen (70%) had come to the attention of child protection services, four of whom were, or had been, crown wards, which is to say the state was their official guardian until they turned 16 unless child protection authorities and the youth agreed to extend said guardianship to age 18. Ten (50%) had a parent or sibling who also had a criminal history. Seventeen (85%) had participated in one or more group anger management program, and seven (35%) had undergone residential treatment and/or one-on-one mental health counselling to deal with anger or other mental health issues. All 20 reported using or abusing illegal drugs or alcohol (16 reported both), though only seven (35%) had participated in a specialized substance abuse program.

**Identities and Desistance**

To assess the salience of deterrence to desistance, I carried out additional coding, using NVIVO™ and SPSS™ to identify and map patterns. Employing a deductive thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), I identified and organized themes that speak to deterrence and desistance and the salience of identity and identity transformation to the latter. I used the construct identity to explore the different, diverse and multiple ways youth present themselves and others; that is, to capture the multiplicity of imagined or portrayed personages advanced in the narratives.

As anticipated, the youth drew upon and constructed a range of overlapping identity positions that speak both to what they valued about themselves and to what they hated and feared (see Table I). Focusing on each youth's three most emphasized framings of self, and using words and phrases the youths themselves provided, 17 of the 20 (85%) positioned themselves as "angry violent"; 16 (80%) as "drinking and drugging", and 14 (70%) as "a fighter". Thus, the angry violent drinking and drugging fighter emerged as a predominant identity position. Other emphasized identities were the "hard core" self (n = 4), the "misfit" (n = 4), the "cool-kid trouble maker" (n = 1) and the "good person" (n = 1).

**Table I: Identities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Age 16</th>
<th>Age 17</th>
<th>Age 18</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angry violent, Drinking-Drugging, Fighter</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry violent, Misfit, Drinking-Drugging</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry violent, Hard core, Fighter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misfit, Angry violent, Drinking-Drugging</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard core, Fighter, Drinking-drugging</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighter, Misfit, Cool kid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misfit, Drinking-drugging, Good person</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The narratives that gave rise to these positions resonate with the dangerous masculinized, traumatized, humiliated, pride needing, provoked, belittled, connection
seeking, proof displaying dynamics behind the "head stomping" (language that was invoked 35 times across the 20 narratives) and other near lethal violence that runs through the youths accounts of interactions with peers. As youth after youth made clear, to refrain from violence when called out as a "bitch", "pussy", "goof", "bird", "faggot", "punk", "piece of shit", "coward" or "scum" was to accept that "you're a smaller man" (Phillip, age 16), a possibility that the younger youths especially tended to construe as worse than facing another criminal charge, worse even than spending days in solitary confinement.

The narratives also resonate with youth's sense of what they are becoming or what they long to become. Here, the "good person", the "nice person", the "not a bad person", the person who cares about family and friends and the world at large came to the fore. This becoming or possible self is captured in Nelson's (age 18), "I want do something for this world", and in Vince's (age 18), "I think I'm gonna be a better person". It is perhaps most poignantly expressed by Ken's (age 17) sense of himself as "becoming aware":

I just see myself as a person that's just becoming aware and realizing things that I have to do to straighten myself out and change. So, I'm just becoming aware of my situations, and steps I need to take. So I'm not, I'm not behind and I'm definitely not ahead, I'm just figuring it out right now. That's what I see myself as.

**Does Deterrence Foster Desistance?**

Consistent with other research on youth attitudes towards the justice system (Ashkar & Kenny, 2008; Sprott, 2003), a majority of the youth endorsed punishment. Indeed, the youth routinely inflicted punishment on each other, both to command respect in the face of personal affronts and to ensure "getting paid" (Todd, age 17; Karl, age 17) when dealing drugs or fencing stolen merchandise. It is therefore unsurprising that some believed they would have ceased engaging in crime at a younger age had they received more than "a slap on the wrist" (a construct deployed repeatedly across the transcripts) when they first got in trouble with the law. Roger (age 18), who was nearing the end of a 33 month custodial sentence for armed robbery, in recounting his first encounter with the law stated:

If they would have hammered me right there [the first time] I probably wouldn't have, I never would have got in trouble again.

Notably, the idea that punishment keeps people out of trouble was most prominent in accounts of youth for whom desistance remained at best a vague hope. Roger, who wished he'd been "hammered" the first time, for example, struggled with unresolved mental health issues associated with severe physical child abuse experienced as a young child. While he hoped to avoid future conflict with the law and planned to pursue an apprenticeship in a skilled trade, his narrative seethed with anger, resentment, and cynicism. Consistent with the research literature on the potential for criminal sanctioning to foster defiance rather than desistance (Bouffard & Piquero, 2010; Matthews & Agnew, 2008); other interviewed youth who had spent significant time in secure custody projected a defiant disdain of authority. Ken (age 17), summarized the impact of secure custody as "likely to make them [young
offenders] colder and harder and they'll just want to get out and do it again, but they'll be a lot smarter about it".

The research literature identifies remorse as an indicator of readiness to reach towards desistance (Corrado & Peters, 2013; Flight & Forth, 2007). Four of the 20 youths (20%) spontaneously expressed unambivalent regret or remorse at harms they had inflicted (the interview guide did not include a prompt on remorse); five others (25%) expressed a mix of regret and lack of regret; and eleven (55%) conveyed no sense of remorse at all. This "not that sorry" stance is exemplified by Neil (age 17), a youth on remand and facing the likelihood, as his lawyer advised him, of a two year sentence for putting a peer in a hospital:

I'm not that sorry, and honestly, you know what, I'd do it again … the guy jumped by best friend. … Even if it wasn't my best friend, even if it was like one of my close friends, they jump my close friend I'm gonna go after them, I don't care who they are.

While a number youths appeared too invested in violence and too angry to consider regret, others, younger youths in particular, indicated that they simply enjoyed trouble-making too much to consider even trying to give up fighting or more generally crime. Sam (age 16), for example, baldly stated that he intended "to try to cause as much trouble as I can until I turn eighteen". This persisting in crime stance characterized nine of the twenty cases (six age 16 and three age 17), expressed not only in statements of intent, but as importantly, in attitudes. A majority of the youths, however, indicated that they had become, or were becoming, fed up with repeated criminal justice involvements and also with fighting and crime. Five (four age 18 and one age 17) expressed unambiguous determination to do what it took to turn their life around. Another five (one age 16, two age 17 and two age 18) stated they hoped do so but were uncertain about being able to avoid the activities and associations that kept getting them into trouble. One older youth expressed deep despair at ever achieving this, and dread at what this implied for his future.

The youths who appeared most convincingly on a pathway towards desistance emphasized the positive impacts of supports afforded in counselling and correctional contexts, in particular the support of someone to talk to who helped strategize on working towards a high school diploma, finding housing, finding a job, and overcoming substance abuse or other mental health challenges. With one exception, the five youths who were convincingly endeavouring to do what it takes to achieve desistance spoke first and foremost to a need for support, or alternately, to a need for
support mixed with punishment, as did a majority of the youth across four analytically identified intent categories.

**Table III: Youth Perspectives on How to Foster Desistance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Support needed</th>
<th>Support and punishment needed</th>
<th>Punishment needed</th>
<th>Defiant effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desisting intent</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contradictory-ambivalent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desisting despairing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persisting stance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data on intent and perceived needs for support, accompanied or not by punishment, speak directly to my research questions on the role, if any, that deterrence plays in youth offenders' movement towards desistance, and on whether a more explicit messaging of criminal justice deterrence, or alternately a stronger messaging of support, is needed to maximize desistance possibilities. While experiences of repeated criminal justice sanctioning and especially the experience of a six-month to three-year stay in sentenced custody coincided with a desire to avoid further criminal justice sanctioning, the implicit threat of future punishment was clearly not sufficient. What youths, reaching towards or despairing of desistance, appeared to most need were experiences that open possibilities to move beyond "this world is crap" (Nelson, age 18), "looking for a fight" (Earl, age 16), "rage in a bottle" (Elliott, age 18), "it's not gonna stop" (Sam, age 16) anger and despair. As the file data revealed, this anger and despair had led one of the youths, while still a child (age 8), to set fire to his parent's home with his family in it and had led several to overdose and/or to contemplate or attempt suicide at least once. These "I never had anyone to talk to" (Colin, age 18) youths seemed most to need support and assistance to accomplish the symbolic and real healing necessary for them to give their "good person" self a chance.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

The findings of this research are consistent with the broad body of evidence-based research that informs policy making in the field of youth justice globally. The political context in which this research is situated is relevant to whether and how this research influences policy outcomes.

As outlined by David Garland (2000), two rhetorically dichotomous but practically intermeshing criminal justice strategies vie for global prominence. One is adaptive in the sense that policies and practices attempt to accommodate what is now an international body of evidence-based research into the sources of offending and the efficacy of community-based prevention and intervention efforts to ameliorate risks and promote rehabilitation. The aim is to assist at-risk and offending persons, both youths and adults, so that they can turn themselves into ‘choice making, empowered, active, responsible and self-governing’ citizens capable of exercising responsible freedom, ultimately, as workers and consumers (Donohue & Moore, 2009, p. 323; see also Darke, 2011, Farrall et al., 2010).
Notwithstanding unavoidable incorporation of punitive features (Hutchinson, 2006; Moore & Hannah-Moffat, 2005; Robinson, 2008), this risk-responsive strategy is predicated upon a belief in and commitment to ‘proactive prevention’ (Garland, 2000, p. 349), and thus to identifying and responding to social and emotional needs (Andrews & Dowden, 2007). All agencies and sectors are accorded responsibility for advancing this goal, including political actors who are tasked with ‘ensuring that the highest quality scientific research is at center stage in the policy-making process’ (Welsh & Farrington, 2012, p. 128).

The second strategy, which Garland terms “sovereign state” (2000), is marked by the coming together of neo-liberal and neo-conservative mentalities in a 1970s emergent ‘new right’ political discourse and agency aimed at dismantling the Keynesian welfare state (Darke, 2011; Drolet, 2007; Gray & Salole, 2006; Kim, 2010; O'Malley, 1999, 2002; Sawyer & Laycock, 2009). Informed by the writing of Friedrich von Hayek, who notoriously rejected the idea that sociological knowledge can or should guide policy making, sovereign state strategies are marked by rhetorical disdain for and repudiation of both notions of social justice and sociological research (Bholat, 2010; Dean, 2010; Drolet, 2007; Gamble, 2013; Larner, 2008; Sawyer & Laycock, 2009; Taylor, 2009). Adopting an authoritative or indeed authoritarian leadership style and employing rhetoric that is simultaneously populist and politicized, politicians strategically work to marginalize experts and research evidence from the policy making process (Goldson, 2010; Lynch, 2012; Mann, 2014; Snow & Moffitt, 2012; Webster & Doob, 2007). In the face of evidence to the contrary, they unashamedly proclaim rehabilitation a ‘failure’ (Muncie, 2006, p. 775), and accord the symbolic figure of the victim to the place scientific evidence has been forced to vacate.

In the case of Canada’s reform of the YCJA, political rhetoric and stakeholder resistance focused on the efficacy of deterrence (Corrado et al., 2006; Mann, 2014). In taking opposing sides on this issue, the government and its critics replicated antiquated debates in the literature that take the form of ‘one side, mostly, but not always, economists arguing that sanction threats always deter and the other side, mostly, but not always, criminologists arguing that sanction threats never deter’ (Durlauf & Nagin, 2011, p.15). As the review of desistance and deterrence literatures at the beginning of this paper demonstrates, some criminologists find some support for deterrence, but most conclude that other theories, for example identity theory, better explain how youth offenders especially come to desist. The research analyzed for this paper is consistent with this broad conclusion.

With respect to the efficacy of adaptive and sovereign state strategies, the evidence is clear. Adaptive strategies work to help reduce reoffending; thereby contributing to the long-term protection of the public, while sovereign state strategies work to secure the reigns of governance when parties on the left lose favor. As demonstrated in the cases of New Zealand (Lynch, 2012) and Canada (Mann, 2014), both of which recently amended rehabilitation-focused youth justice legislation to make up for missing the punitive turn, no jurisdiction is immune no matter how strong its institutional and cultural legacies, and no matter how low its crime and homicide rates (Canada’s crime and homicide rates, for example, are at a 45-year low, see Boyce, Cotter & Perreault, 2014).

Across the globe, juvenile justice is shaped by the range of criminological and political discourses that authorize preventative rehabilitative intervention, on the one hand, and punishment and its threat, on the other. In practice, of course, punitive and
rehabilitative mechanisms are 'braided together' (Hutchinson, 2006, p. 447) in configurations that are shaped as much by local policy priorities and intervention practices as by legislation (Ashkar & Kenny, 2008; Doob & Webster, 2006; Meyer & O'Malley, 2005; Webster & Doob, 2007, 2014). Recognizing this, the amended YCJA provides what could be construed as a symbolically more punitive but substantively inconsequential rebalancing of these theoretically contradictory aims. This remains to be seen. Research is needed on whether and how an explicit messaging of deterrence, and the realities of incarceration that accompany this messaging, impact efforts by criminal justice personnel to operationalize their efforts to foster desistance among the violent and persistent youth offenders that are the identified target of the 2012 reforms.

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**Legislation Cited:**
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Youth Criminal Justice Act (S.C. 2002, c. 1).
EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE AND PROBLEM BEHAVIOR
AMONG URBAN ADOLESCENTS:
ASSESSING RISK FACTORS AND COPING STRATEGIES

Zina McGee, * Hampton University

This paper measured specific gender differences with regard to problem behavior (adjustment outcomes) and coping strategy among 500 African-American youth exposed to violence. For adolescent males, exposure to violence and victimization was strongly associated with externalizing problem behaviors such as delinquency, while adolescent females exposed to violence and victimization were more likely to exhibit internalizing symptoms indicative of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Among those exposed to violence and victimization, females were more likely to use problem-focused coping (e.g., social support) as an adaptive strategy in comparison to males. Further, the study used structural equation modeling to observe internalizing and externalizing behavioral characteristics (e.g., delinquency, depression, negative self-esteem, and avoidance) among those youth exposed to violence through direct victimization, witnessing violence and association with delinquent peers. Here results showed a strong relationship between victimization experience and adjustment outcomes including both internalizing (e.g., self-rejection, depression) and externalizing (e.g., offenses) problem behavior. Implications for intervention and future research are discussed.

Research indicates that many of the negative experiences of African-American youth originate in the social and economic structures of society, causing a direct impairment of their abilities to adapt to or modify their environment (Thomas et al., 2012; McMahon, Felix, Halpert, & Petropoulos, 2009; Brookins, Peterson, & Brooks, 1997; Tobin and Gorman-Smith, 1997; Scarpa, 2001; Williams and Stiffman, 1998; Cooley-Quille, Boyd, Frantz, & Walsh, 2001; Berman, Silverman, & Kurtineset, 2001; Wills, McNamara, & Vaccaro, 1995). Environmental factors such as chronic exposure to community violence negatively impact development and adaptive functioning among these youth (Foster and Brooks-Gunn, 2009; Cooley-Quille et al., 2001; Berman et al., 2000; Weist et al., 2001), and, regarding gender differences, studies have indicated that minority females are more likely to witness violent events while minority males are more likely to be victimized by violence, both of which can impact mental health outcomes. Further, exposure to crime and violence, as either a victim or a witness, is significantly related to substance abuse, carrying guns, trouble in school and post traumatic stress disorder.

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symptomatology (PTSD) among both males and females (Boyd et al, 2008; Cooley-Quille et al., 2001; Mazza, 1999; Schwab-Stone et al., 1999).

Studies of the impact of violence on urban youth have shown that the adverse effects can be evident in both internalizing and externalizing behavior, and often differ according to the gender of the child or adolescent. Regarding internalizing behavior, those raised in communities where violence occurs have direct encounters with violence (either as a victim or witness), which increases the likelihood of experiencing anxieties, depression, social withdrawal, and difficulties in concentrating (Foster & Brooks-Gunn, 2009; Salloum et al., 2011; Garbarino, 1996; Singer et al., 1995; Osofsky, Wewers, Hann, & Fick, 1993). Traumatic events experienced prior to age 11 are three times more likely to result in PTSD than those experienced after the age of 12. In a study of exposure to violence and PTSD symptomatology, it was found that direct victimization in the community and the home was associated with PTSD symptoms for a total sample of adolescents (Springer & Padgett, 2000). Although males were more likely to report direct victimization experiences, the findings also showed that females experienced more PTSD symptoms. For males, witnessing violence at school predicted PTSD symptomatology, while for females it was the witnessing violence in the community that was predictive of PTSD symptoms (Springer & Padgett, 2000). These findings suggest the importance of examining gender differences with regard to violence exposure and emotional adjustment. Other studies reported more post-traumatic stress symptoms after witnessing or victimization among females (Cooley-Quille et al., 2001), and found that female adolescents’ psychological distress was significantly related to all types of exposure to chronic community violence (e.g., witnessed, victimized), while male adolescents’ psychological distress was significantly related only to their own victimization. This research highlights the significance of examining gender differences with regard to violence exposure and emotional adjustment, particularly since males are more likely to report an association with violence as victims, witnesses, or offenders and are at a greater risk of desensitization and addiction to danger resulting from continual exposure to violence (see Thomas et al., 2012; Milam et al., 2012; Garbarino, 1996; Cooley-Quille et al., 2001).

Findings have also addressed a relationship between exposure to violence and the development of externalizing problem behavior such as delinquency. Myers (1989, 1992), for example, suggests that African-American youth are particularly vulnerable to the effects of violence because of stress inducing factors, as well as factors relating indirectly to issues of oppression and racism (e.g., class oppression, proliferation of drugs, the use of violence to resolve interpersonal conflicts). Further, the most socially distressing indicators of mental health problems among Black youth are the statistics reflecting the extent to which juvenile delinquency and violence have become a way of life (Myers, 1989, 1992). Research has also suggested that during childhood, low socioeconomic status serves as one of many environmental factors that can contribute to delinquency and school dropout (Boyd et al., 2008; Covington, 1997; Mahiri, 1997; Vitaro et al., 2000; McLoyd, 1998; Sampson, 1998; Tolan & Guerra, 1998). Therefore, the presence of “structural violence” in many communities can perpetuate systems of inequality including poverty and unemployment, both of which can severely impact child development and influence behavioral problems among youth. With regard to individual adaptation or adjustment to violence, Sampson (1998) argues that while issues of childhood development are rarely addressed in the social science literature, structural factors such as poverty, violence,
and residential instability can explain variations in crime and delinquency among youth. In this regard, delinquency emerges early in the life-course, remains relatively stable over time, and is an important component to the empirical connection between child health and development (Sampson, 1998). Although many are able to avoid problem behavior despite increased exposure to violence, research also suggests that a substantial number of “at-risk” youth are unable to adapt to such situations and are more likely to experience school failure and to participate in crime (for example, see Thomas et al., 2012; Salloum et al., 2011; Simons et. al., 1996, Elliott et al., 1998). Consequently, the behavior of children in and around schools is strongly influenced by social and psychological influences out of school, prompting many researchers to argue that the propensity for violence and involvement in delinquency is influenced by the desire of many youth to protect themselves from victimization by carrying guns (Scarpi & Halen, 2012; Davis, 1999; Mercy & Rothenberg, 1998; Lawrence, 1998; Vaughan et. al., 1996).

While there is no single source of resilience or vulnerability, the impact of environmental influences plays an integral role in the process by which youth respond to violent events (for example, see McMahon et al., 2009; Steele et. al., 1999; Schwab-Stone, 1999; Stiffman et. al., 1999; Reynolds, 1998). Research on coping strategies and behavior problems among inner-city youth has indicated that reliance on avoidant or emotion-focused coping is associated with distress and behavior problems while problem focused or active coping is associated with positive behavioral outcomes, suggesting the importance of familial and social patterns that may influence the coping strategies used by inner-city youth to protect themselves from daily stressors, chronic violence (Foster & Brooke-Gunn, 2009). Regarding variations in coping strategy, problem-focused coping involves seeking outside sources (e.g., parents, siblings, friends) as support agents as adolescents attempt to act on the source of stress to change it, while emotion-focused coping involves efforts to regulate emotional states that are associated with the stressful event. Although conceptual definitions of coping seldom distinguish between effective coping and maladaptive coping among adolescents, researchers have noted that emotion-focused coping strategies can include problematic behaviors associated with substance abuse and antisocial activities (Compas, Malcarne, & Fondacaro, 1988). The problem-focused/emotion-focused coping framework is particularly useful for describing alternative solutions for youth adaptation to stressful life events, including exposure to crime and violence. Regarding gender differences, studies have generally shown that female adolescents are more likely to engage in problem-focused coping while male adolescents are more likely to engage in emotion-focused coping (for example, see Compas et al, 1988). Other researchers have noted that while some symptoms such as fear and anxiety may be considered “normal” among youth exposed to increased levels of violence, these reactions have long term consequences for social, emotional, and cognitive development (for example, see Foster & Brooks-Gunn, 2009; Berman et al., 2000). Studies such as these are particularly important in investigations of minority youth since they emphasize familial and social patterns that may influence coping strategies used by inner-city children and adolescents to protect themselves from daily stressors such as chronic violence.

The current study estimates the extent of violent victimization among inner-city youth in Virginia, and posits a model in which exposure to violence through direct victimization, indirect victimization, or association with delinquent peers has an
effect on adjustment outcome or problem behavior such as delinquency, depression, self-rejection and avoidance. It is hypothesized that 1) exposure to violence, including victimization and delinquent peer associations, will predict adjustment outcome (problem behavior) among urban youth and 2) a significant difference exists between males and females on adjustment outcome (problem behavior). The study also examines gender differences in the relationship between exposure to violence, coping strategies, and behavioral outcomes such as academic achievement, anxiety, depression, negative self-esteem, and delinquency among the sample of minority youth. Emphasis is placed on the extent to which coping processes help to buffer behavioral and emotional responses to stressful life events such as exposure to crime and violence.

**Research Design And Method**

**Methods**

*Subjects and Procedure:* The analyses reported are based on responses to self-administered questionnaires completed by 500 youth between the ages of 12 and 18 in the state of Virginia. Census tract data were utilized to obtain a stratified sample selected from various school, church, and community organizations that service youth in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. Each participating organization serviced inner-city youth in after-school programs. In each instance, students who participated in the youth organizations attended inner-city schools and had encountered gun-related violence (as victims, perpetrators, or bystanders) out of school. Parental income, educational, and occupational status served as measures of the adolescents’ socioeconomic background. Surveys were distributed to 20-30 youth at a time during group sessions. The survey was introduced to students as a study of youth violence in the state of Virginia. Written permission to participate was obtained from parents and student respondents. Representative of inner-city students nationally, the sample was 87 percent Black; fewer respondents were White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American and Other. Most students were 15 and the modal grade level was 9th. Fifty-two percent of the students were male. The common living arrangement included mother only (48 percent), followed by both parents (33 percent). Seventeen percent of the students were employed.

*Measures*

*Exposure to Violence and Victimization:* Participants completed the Survey of Children's Exposure to Community developed by Richters and Saltzman (1990). This instrument assesses the frequency with which children and adolescents have been victimized by, have witnessed, or have heard about 20 forms of violence and violence-related activities in the school and community excluding media exposure (see also Richters and Martinez, 1993a, 1993b). The survey has been used in studies examining the effects of violence on low-income school children. Students are asked to rate how frequently they have been exposed to violence at home (e.g., "I have seen a gun in my home"), as a victim (e.g., “somebody threatened to shoot me"), and as a witness (e.g., "I have seen a dead body"). Other items pertaining to a general knowledge of violence occurring in schools and neighborhoods are also included.
Internalizing and Externalizing Problem Behaviors: The assessment of problem behaviors included analyzing responses to instruments measuring emotional and behavioral outcomes (e.g., avoidance, depression, negative self-esteem, and delinquency) including the Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents, the Children's Depression Inventory (CDI), Wills’ (1986) Coping Inventory, and additional instruments delinquent behavior.

The Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents developed by Susan Harter (1988) reflects the concerns of adolescents relating to self-worth and competence. The adolescent is first asked to decide which kind of teenager is most like him or her, and then asked whether this is only sort of true or really true of him or her. According to Harter (1988), this type of format ensures that adolescents are giving accurate self-perceptions rather than socially desirable responses. Perceptions of scholastic competence, physical appearance, social acceptance, and global self-worth are used to address issues of self-esteem.

With regard to depression as an internalizing problem behavior, Kovacs' (1980) Children's Depression Inventory (CDI) is the most widely cited self-report childhood depression scale. The CDI is a 27-item instrument whereby youth are asked to endorse descriptions that best apply, and results are used to assess cognitive, affective, and behavioral symptoms of childhood depression. Evidence suggests that this scale reliably discriminates between clinically depressed and non-depressed psychiatric patients (Kovacs, 1980). The measure of student performance was the response by the student to a question that asks for the selection of a category that represents the usual grade the student receives (e.g., mostly A's, about half A's and B's, etc). Research has suggested that grades, unlike scores on intelligence tests and measures based on standardized achievement tests, provide the most appropriate measure of school performance (see Dornbusch et. al., 1987). Finally, delinquency was measured by self-report responses to three offense-type indicators developed by Jang and Thornberry (1998), which includes a 14-item property crime index, a 6 item violent crime index, and a 3-item status offense index.

Coping Strategies: Participants also completed a 54-item coping inventory developed by Wills (1986). Each item is rated on a 5-point scale indicating the frequency with which a particular coping strategy is used for handling specific problems. An orthogonal factor analysis was conducted by Wills (1986) to produce eleven factors including problem-solving coping, cognitive coping, adult social support, peer social, parental support, substance use, physical exercise, aggression, social entertainment, individual relaxation, and prayer. Of particular importance is Wills' (1986) use of predominately African American adolescents in the sample, addressing the fact that the coping strategies used by these youth may differ from those used by others given different life experiences. The 54-item coping measure has been shown to have high test-retest reliability, while correlations have provided support for the validity of the adolescents' self-reports (see also Wills et al., 1995). Factor analyses for the current project created two primary factors from the 54-item coping inventory: problem focused/social support (positive ways of coping) and emotion focused/avoidance (negative ways of coping). The first factor, problem-focused/social support coping, explained 30% of the variance while the second factor, emotion-focused/avoidance coping, explained 12% of the variance. Therefore 42% of the total variance was explained by these two factors.
Analyses And Results

Univariate and Bivariate Analyses

Direct Victimization: Regarding exposure to violence and victimization, results indicate that 26 percent have been asked to get involved with illegal drug dealing, 22 percent have been chased by gangs or older kids, 13 percent have been beaten up or mugged, 12 percent have been attacked with a knife, and 5 percent have been shot at with a gun. Statistically significant gender differences exist for all direct victimization experiences including those involving gang activity, drug dealing, and violent attacks. In most instances, males were more likely to report higher levels of victimization. Females, however, were more likely to report muggings and attacks with guns.

Indirect Victimization: Data also indicate that higher rates of indirect victimization (witnessing) exist for the sample when compared to direct victimization in that 49 percent have seen someone being chased by gangs, 72 percent have seen people using or selling illegal drugs, 80 percent have seen someone being beaten or mugged, while 23 percent have heard the sound of gunfire when they were near or in school. As with direct victimization experiences, statistically significant gender differences exist. Males were more likely to report seeing people using or selling drugs and hearing gunfire in or near school, while females were more likely to report seeing people being chased by gangs and seeing someone being beaten or mugged.

Peer Delinquency: With regard to peer delinquency as a measure of exposure to violence, findings indicate that many of the respondents’ friends were involved in property- and violence-related activities with 44 percent reporting that their friends have damaged or destroyed someone else’s property on purpose, 55 percent reporting that their friends have hit someone with the idea of hurting them, and 32 percent reporting that their friends attacked someone with a weapon with the idea of seriously hurting them. No statistically significant gender differences existed for association with delinquent peers.

Delinquent Behavior: Regarding personal violence- and property-related activities, findings indicate a slightly higher rate of involvement in violent activities such as throwing objects at people (50 percent) when compared to property related activities such as selling worthless items (38 percent), selling stolen items (25 percent) and theft (20 percent). Regarding weapons usage, fewer students have reported committing crimes to force people to give them money or other items (9 percent). Statistically significant differences in gender suggest that males were slightly more likely to report involvement in both property and violent crimes, although females were more likely to report throwing objects such as rocks or bottles at people.

Results in Tables 1 and 2 suggest statistically significant gender differences in the relationship between coping strategies and problem behavior (adjustment outcome) among youth exposed to violence. A sub-sample of youth (N=484) who had seen a violent event, been threatened or attacked, or associated with peer delinquents was selected from the larger sample of 500 subjects. Thus, ninety-seven percent (97%) of the full sample had been exposed to some form of violence. Tests of
Mean differences and bivariate correlation analyses were conducted on the youth who had been exposed to violence to examine the relationship between coping and behavioral outcome among these youth. Items addressing academic achievement, delinquency, self-esteem, anxiety, and depression were examined as measures of adjustment outcome or behavioral factors as well as the two factors addressing positive and negative ways of coping.

**Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of Behavioral Factors and Coping Strategies among African-American Youth Exposed to Violence as Victims or Witnesses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Reported Grades</td>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>4.07 (1.45)</td>
<td>3.57 (1.67)</td>
<td>3.85 (1.61)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symptoms of Anxiety</td>
<td>0-27</td>
<td>6.04 (4.69)</td>
<td>8.76 (6.41)</td>
<td>7.12 (5.56)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symptoms of Depression</td>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>2.15 (2.56)</td>
<td>3.26 (3.96)</td>
<td>2.61 (3.26)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property-Related Offenses</td>
<td>0-23</td>
<td>4.08 (5.05)</td>
<td>2.74 (4.25)</td>
<td>3.57 (4.78)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence-Related Offenses</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>2.62 (3.26)</td>
<td>2.26 (2.72)</td>
<td>2.44 (2.99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Focused/Social Support Coping</td>
<td>-1.81-2.06</td>
<td>-.147 (.98)</td>
<td>.211 (.98)</td>
<td>-.003 (.98)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance/Wishful Thinking Coping</td>
<td>-1.98-2.50</td>
<td>.064 (1.00)</td>
<td>-.087 (.99)</td>
<td>-.008 (1.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Self-Esteem</td>
<td>3-15</td>
<td>6.43 (3.45)</td>
<td>5.95 (2.47)</td>
<td>6.18 (3.01)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.001

Table 1 data show that males exposed to violence were more likely to report higher rates of property-related delinquency and lower rates of academic achievement (mostly Cs and Ds), while females exposed to violence were more likely to report higher rates of anxiety, depression, and academic achievement (mostly Bs and Cs). Regarding coping strategies among youth exposed to violence, females scored higher on the factor measuring positive ways of coping (e.g., social support, problem focus). Overall, the findings suggest that gender differences were more likely to exist when considering internalizing behaviors among students exposed to violence (e.g., depression, anxiety) as opposed to externalizing behaviors (e.g., delinquency). Females exposed to violence were more likely to exhibit internalizing problem behaviors (e.g., anxiety and depression) than were males exposed to violence. Female adolescents were also more likely to use problem-focused coping in adverse situations when compared to male adolescents. It should be noted, however, that involvement in violent delinquency, negative ways of coping and self-rejection did not differ significantly among African American male and female youth exposed to violence.
Table 2. Zero-Order Correlations Examining Behavioral Factors and Coping Strategies Among African American Youth Exposed to Violence as Victims or Witnesses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.16**</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.18*</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.14*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Self-Reported Grades</td>
<td></td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>-.27**</td>
<td>.18*</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Symptoms of Anxiety</td>
<td></td>
<td>.56**</td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Symptoms of Depression</td>
<td></td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Violence-Related Offenses</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.25**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.83**</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Problem Focused/Social Support Coping</td>
<td></td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.31**</td>
<td>-.21**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Avoidance/Wishful Thinking Coping</td>
<td></td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Property-Related Offenses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Negative Self-Esteem (Self-Rejection)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.001

Table 2 data indicate that youths exposed to violence who scored higher on problem-focus/social support coping appeared more resilient in that they were less likely to be involved in violent-related delinquency (r= -.25) and property-related delinquency (r= -.31), and were also less likely to report low self-esteem (r= -.21) and poor academic achievement (r= -.27). Additionally, high scores for avoidance/wishful thinking coping appeared to suggest maladaptivity in that youth exposed to violence who scored highly on this measure were more likely to be involved in violent-related delinquency (r=.41) and property-related delinquency (r=.36), and were also more likely to report low self-esteem (r=.29) and poor academic achievement (r=.18). As indicated earlier, the findings of the study suggest a linkage between coping and behavior among African American youth exposed to danger.

Structural Equation Models

Based on the literature, constructs including Direct Victimization, Indirect Victimization, Delinquent Peer Associations, Offenses, Depression, Self Rejection, and Avoidance were composed from several questions on the survey. To determine the internal consistency of these constructs, coefficient alphas were computed for each construct, meeting acceptable standards ranging from a .77 to .90 with a mean of .8111 (see Table 3). The constructs of Direct Victimization, Indirect Victimization, and Delinquent Peer Associations were hypothesized to be indicators of a latent construct named Victimization. The constructs of Avoidance, Self Rejection, Depression, and Offenses were hypothesized to be indicators of a latent construct named Adjustment Outcome. The latent construct of Victimization was hypothesized to have a direct effect on the latent construct Adjustment Outcome.
The first analysis conducted determined if victimization as characterized by direct and indirect victimization incidents along with delinquent peer associations had a direct effect on adjustment outcomes as characterized by avoidant, self-rejection, and depressive behaviors along with the incidence of violent and property offenses. The overall model is depicted in Figure 1.

![Diagram](https://example.com/diagram.png)

**Figure 1**: Overall, Chi-Square=44.995, df=13, p=.000, CFI=.998, TLI=.986, RMSEA=.089, SRMR=.0463

Figure 2 reflects the results of the analysis. For the overall model, the chi square was significant as expected. All other fit indexes indicated that the model was a good fit
for the data as suggested by the CFI (.998) and the TLI (.986). The RMSEA (.089) and the SRMR (.0463) were also within acceptable ranges. The standardized residual covariances were examined and they ranged from 1.799 to –1.652 indicating a symmetrical shape with no absolute values exceeding 2.0. When viewing the overall model, all parameter estimates were statistically significant. The standardized factor loadings for the indicators of the latent construct Victimization were strong and ranged from .68 to .84. The standardized factor loadings for the indicators of the latent construct Adjustment Outcome were somewhat weaker with the total number of Offenses as its best indicator. The latent construct Victimization had a standardized factor loading with the latent construct Adjustment Outcome of .85 and accounted for 72 percent of the variance.

In order to determine if gender differences existed, a multiple group analysis was conducted. The overall fit of the models was acceptable (see Comparisons). In the first analysis, the factor loadings were compared across the groups. When comparing the factor loadings for the latent construct Victimization, all factor loadings were statistically significant. Direct Victimization was the strongest indicator for the female group at .911 as compared with .863 for the male group. Indirect Victimization demonstrated an opposite relationship with a factor loading for the female group at .611 as compared to .863 for the male group. Delinquent Peer Association for both groups appeared comparable. For the latent construct

Figure 2: Males, Chi Square=88.200, df=26, p=.000, CFI=.977, TLI=.950, RMSEA=.090, SRMR=.0716
Adjustment Outcome, all factor loadings were statistically significant with the exception of factor loading for Avoidance in the female group. In the female group, the latent construct of Victimization demonstrated a strong relationship with Adjustment Outcome at .91 and accounted for 84% of the variance. The male group did not perform similarly. Victimization demonstrated a consistent strong influence but at a lower amount of .82 and only accounted for 68% of the variance.

To determine if there were significant differences between the two groups, the factor loadings for the latent construct Victimization and Adjustment Outcome were held invariant across the groups. The original model of the two groups was named Comparison Model and the model where the factor loadings were held equivalent across groups was named Congeneric. Using Amos 4.01, the two groups were compared using chi square difference test. Assuming that the Comparison Model was correct, the Congeneric Model was statistically significant indicating significant differences between the groups.

Discussion And Conclusion

Findings of this research study suggest a linkage between victimization and development of internalizing (e.g., self-rejection, depression) and externalizing (e.g., offenses) problem behavior among African American youth exposed to danger. Results indicated that 72% of the variance in adjustment outcome or problem behavior is accounted for by victimization experience. Results also showed that, overall, direct victimization was the best indicator of victimization experience, while offenses were the best indicators of adjustment outcome. Regarding gender differences, the study’s results indicated the importance of continued examination of community and school based preventions focusing on the specific needs of students exposed to danger. The findings showed a greater influence of victimization on offenses, self-rejection, and avoidance among males and a stronger influence of victimization on depression among females. In addition, direct victimization was the strongest indicator of problem behavior for females, while indirect victimization was the strongest indicator of problem behavior for males. Delinquent peer association as a measure of victimization for both groups was comparable. For males, the effects of victimization had a stronger influence on the development of externalizing problem behaviors such as delinquency, while females were more likely to exhibit internalizing symptoms indicative of PTSD resulting from violence exposure. The findings also suggested that males were more likely to use avoidance as a coping strategy than are females, further indicating the need to explore violence prevention programs across multiple domains including those examining variations in victimization experiences as well responses to violent events (Springer & Padgett, 2000).

The research investigated the relationship between exposure to violence and problem behavior in a representative sample of African-American youth. From the findings, there is evidence to suggest that prevention programs aimed at strengthening protective factors would be more effective in reducing risk factors by considering variations not only in types of victimization, but in adjustment outcomes as well. In some instances, indirect victimization can be as powerful a determinant of problem behavior as direct victimization as suggested by variations in exposure to violence among both groups of adolescents. In addition, Compas et al. (1988) argue that all adaptive strategies used by adolescents exposed to stressful events should be considered, including those suggesting effective coping as well as those suggesting
maladaptivity and antisocial behavior. These analyses are based on a race-homogenous design consisting of data collected from African-American youth residing in areas plagued with violence and crime. With regard to social class, research indicates that low socioeconomic status serves as one of the many environmental factors that can contribute to the use of violence to resolve conflicts (Myers, 1989; Myers et al., 1992). McLoyd (1998) argues that the validity of research involving American minorities is often impaired by the rejection of the cultural context of minority experiences and viewpoints. The author points toward the importance of situationally relevant factors (e.g., unequal education, structured inequality) as opposed to person-centered characteristics (e.g., aggression, intelligence) in an effort to better understand problematic situations that American minorities face. Within this context, she argues that greater opportunities should be given to allow minorities to interpret their own experiences, lending additional support to interpretative validity in social science research.

Intense exposure to violence is often considered to be “normal,” and is not recognized by many youth as a problem in need of mental health services (Cooley-Quille, 2001; Weist et al., 2001). The linkage between exposure to violence, coping strategy, and behavior problems among minority youth suggests the need for continued cognitive-, behavioral-, and school-based intervention, as well as exposure-based intervention (e.g., including assessments of negative experiences as well as adaptive coping strategies). The instruments utilized in this study were comprised of a series of questions relating personal experiences regarding violent events, adjustment outcomes, and coping strategies. Future research should continue to explore the linkage between these factors as contributing to studies addressing violence within the African-American youth population.

References


