

GROUNDING COMMUNITY CHANGE WITHIN THE COMPLEXITY OF COMMUNITY VISIONS OF SAFETY

By

**Philip W. Rhoades, Ph.D.
Kristina M. Zambrano, MPA
Kristen M. Machac, BA**



Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
The Island University

Revision

of a paper presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice
Sciences 39th Annual Meeting in Anaheim, CA
on March 6, 2002

* Funding for the surveys came from the Corpus Christi Crime Control Prevention District, The Weed and Seed Program of the City of Corpus Christi, and Nueces County/United Way of the Coastal Bend through grants provided by the Criminal Justice Division, Office of the Governor, State of Texas, and the Texas Department of Transportation.

GROUNDING COMMUNITY CHANGE WITHIN THE COMPLEXITY OF COMMUNITY VISIONS OF SAFETY

INTRODUCTION

Planned Change

Nueces County, Texas and its largest city, Corpus Christi, have seen the development of several community efforts to prevent crime and improve safety over the past decade. These efforts grew out of evidence that the community had experienced higher rates of crime and related problem behaviors than other parts of the State for most of that decade. The evidence like that cited below has been compelling.

- Corpus Christi has placed first in property crime rates and fifth in violent crime rates in an analysis of the 15 largest cities in Texas (IACP, 1999).
- The confirmed child abuse rate has been higher in Nueces County than Texas as a whole for more than a decade (Rhoades and Zambrano, 2001a: 2).
- Adult family violence rates have been higher in both the City and the County than in Texas as a whole since 1993 (Rhoades and Zambrano, 2001a: 5-6).

The evidence has also indicated that the community has experienced higher levels of the risk factors that contribute to the presence of the problem behaviors noted above. Several examples may be cited.

- School districts in Nueces County report higher dropout rates than Texas as a whole (Rhoades and Zambrano, 2001a: 16).
- Unemployment rates and poverty rates for families are higher in Nueces County than in Texas as a whole (Rhoades and Zambrano, 2001a: 8-10).
- More Nueces County youth report use of alcohol and drugs than youth Statewide (Rhoades and Zambrano, 2001b).

Several community initiatives started to address the risk factors and problem behaviors. These initiatives sought processes whereby the community could attempt “to control its destiny rather than allowing future events to do so” as Gordon (1993:1) describes the intent of strategic planning. Indeed, each of the initiatives may be considered as an effort to engage in strategic planning or at least planned community change. They are programs or projects “intended to produce a change in some specific problem” (Welsh and Harris, 1999: 3), the problem of crime. Each has attempted to use a multi-stage process beginning with problem identification, risk and resource assessment,

selection of program and policy alternatives, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and revision. Such a multi-stage process may be described as a comprehensive strategy (Coolbaugh and Hansel, 2000), planned change (Welsh and Harris, 1999), or strategic planning (Gordon, 1993) among other labels.

Four Community Initiatives

These initiatives include the creation of a Corpus Christi Crime Control and Prevention District (CCPD), the development of a Weed & Seed Program, a strategic planning effort by the Nueces County Safe Communities Coalition, and a strategic planning effort by a coalition of agencies and organizations known as Youth Opportunities United (YOU).

The CCPD was established in an election by the voters of the City of Corpus Christi. The CCPD's boundaries are that of the City. It is funded by a 1/8th cent sales tax. The CCPD adopted a plan in 1997 with the goals to increase the number of police officers and add new equipment to the City Police Department, decrease crime by young offenders, prevent gang recruitment and violence, and reduce citizen's fear of crime. The CCPD plan states broad goals, relates specific objectives to those goals, and establishes measures by which the achievement of objectives may be examined. It originally scheduled evaluation to begin as implementation of the plan began. However, the first evaluation effort did not begin until 2000.

The Weed & Seed Program of the City of Corpus Christi began programmatic activities in 1998. It now operates in two Sites comprising much of the central-west area of the City known for high levels of poverty and crime. The Weed & Seed Program's goals include the reduction of crime, delinquency, and child abuse and the support of improvements in academic performance by children and economic development within the Sites. The Weed & Seed Program has not published a plan that clearly states goals and linked objectives. However, planning efforts have been completed in order to complete applications for funding. It has integrated into its own funding process for community projects the requirements that linkages be made to risk factors and provisions made for evaluation. The Weed & Seed Program began its first evaluation of itself in 2001.

YOU is a countywide coalition of government agencies, non-profit organizations, and businesses that formed in 1998. It has engaged in a comprehensive strategic planning process to reduce serious, chronic, and violent juvenile delinquency. It has selected family conflict, academic failure, economic depression, and early initiation of problem behaviors as its priority risk factors. The planning process calls for the improvement of current systems and the design, funding, and implementation of programs to foster protective factors that directly combat the priority risk factors. The planning process has been grounded in extensive data collection and analysis on risk and protective factors and analysis of community resources, systems, and policies. It has engaged in annual evaluation of its implementation efforts and revision of goals. It has completed evaluations of its funded activities annually.

The Safe Communities Coalition is also a group of government agencies, non-profit organizations, and businesses. Its mission is to assist Nueces County in becoming a Safe Community. To this end, it began a planning process in 1999 to reduce traumatic injury and death in the County. Its goals call for the creation of informational resources for use in strategic planning for the development of safety enhancing programs. An extensive data analysis effort resulted in the formulation of priority safety issues and linked initiatives to be implemented in 2001. Evaluation of initiatives began in 2001 and are planned for 2002.

While the four initiatives vary in the extent and sophistication of their data collection efforts, each has engaged in the collection and analysis of problem data as is necessary in planned change or strategic planning.

Grounding Community Change in Community Visions of Safety

Welsh and Harris (1999: 34-47) describe the first stage in planned change, analyzing the problem, that includes documenting the need for change, describing the problem's history, and examining its potential causes. In strategic planning terms, a community that seeks to be effective in shaping its plan to its community problems needs to engage in environmental scanning (Gordon, 1993: 26). This collection and assessment of "data about the nature and extent of" a community's problem and "the levels of their risk and protective factors...help determine the types of ...strategies needed in the community" (Coolbaugh and Hansel, 2000:3). For effective planning, as clear a problem description as possible is needed.

Yet, the image of the community's problem can be incomplete and the planning effort ineffective if only official sources of data are used in the analysis. Official sources do not contain all of the information necessary for a comprehensive planning process. Issues surrounding problems identified with official data can be clarified through the use of community surveys (Ross, 1999). As suggested in the literature on community and problem oriented policing, the processes of problem identification, clarification, and prioritization can be assisted through such surveys (Trojanowicz et al, 1998 and Goldstein, 1990: 86-87).

Surveys may assist in targeting specific problems among specific populations that maximize the use of limited resources (President's, 1997). This increased specificity can help to adapt strategies developed in other communities to local needs (Shaw and Oginsky, 2001). Thus, available resources can be targeted effectively in programs and policies that apply more directly to the community's uniqueness through adding community surveys into the data collected.

Through the use of community surveys, strategic planning or planned change processes become grounded in the problem images held by the target populations of the planned change. It is very likely that perceptions or visions of community problems differ across a variety of population dimensions. The capacity of a planning team to

accurately target and adapt programs is enhanced by obtaining an understanding of the complexities of these visions of crime and risk or their opposite, safety.

As projects are implemented, a significant need for measuring effectiveness develops (Goldstein, 1990: 145-147). Monitoring implementation and evaluating implemented programs and policies are necessary parts of planned change or strategic planning (Gordon, Welsh and Harris, and Howell, 1998). Evaluation assists in the determination of whether or not goals have been met and if strategies are effective (Helping, 1997: 6-7). Also, evaluations can provide proof of success to funding sources and thereby improve grant-writing success (Helping, 1997: 6-7). Community surveys can be an excellent source of evaluative data. This is especially true of surveys administered to those who may become or may have been the targets of programs.

The use of surveys among community groups that have been targeted for programmatic interventions strengthens the grounding of planned change in the community's visions of crime, risk, and safety. Pre- and post-intervention surveys of the target populations assist in determining if changes in victimization, fear of crime, sense of safety, or perceptions of problems have occurred as planned.

As a result of understanding the usefulness of community surveys, each of the four initiatives integrated a community survey into its data collection for the purpose of problem analysis or as a significant part of its evaluation plan. The surveys conducted for the initiatives have been directly used in their strategic planning processes for one or both of those purposes. Thus, each initiative has been grounded to a degree in community visions of crime, risk, and safety.

This grounding must be seen as an ongoing process within the continuous planned change cycle. As the community receives results from the initiatives' surveys, a need for comparative analysis exists. The comparative analysis provided here demonstrates both similarities and differences across the four community surveys. This analysis indicates that community visions may be complex. Thus, for community planning to be as effective as it can be, it needs to be grounded in this complexity of community visions of safety.

METHODOLOGY

Each initiative approached the collection of its community survey in a different manner as was appropriate for its different purpose. However, each collected responses from some portion of Nueces County. Most collected some information concerning the respondents' senses of safety, fear of crime, perceptions of crime problems, and victimization. The number of variables derived from the surveys varied from 103 to 150. Each survey was developed in cooperation with the initiative's planning team. Questions were included or deleted upon the team's choice. Thus, some generally standard demographic items were not collected by all of the surveys. The method of administration varied from telephone and in-person interviews to paper and pencil "test"

formats. The surveys covered a period of 14 months beginning in May 2000 and ending in July 2001. Brief descriptions of each of the methodologies for the surveys follow.

Crime Control and Prevention District

As part of an evaluation of the CCPD, a telephone survey of public opinion was conducted. A total of 408 valid responses were obtained during November and December of 2000. The survey was designed to measure the respondent's knowledge of the District, evaluation of the CCPD, perceptions of crime and fear of crime, and participation in crime prevention behaviors.

A questionnaire was designed partially from the Plan. Other questions were selected after discussions with CCPD staff about the topics to be included in the survey. These questions were generally found from prior surveys as reported in the *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics* (Maguire and Pastore, 1999). The final draft of the questionnaire was approved by CCPD staff before the survey began.

A sample was selected from the Corpus Christi area telephone book. To acquire a sample of at least 400, two entries were randomly selected from each phonebook page.

Safe Communities

The Safe Communities survey was conducted in May to July of 2000 as a needs assessment or problem identification exercise in support of the Safe Communities planning effort. The survey instrument sought to gather data about issues absent in official data, including safety concerns, perceptions of risk, safety knowledge and driving behaviors. Various distribution methods were utilized in order gain responses from law enforcement, emergency and health care professionals, young adults, senior citizens, and poor residents.

A random mail sample of county residents through use of the local phone book generated 171 responses, at a response rate of 15.5%. Of the surveys distributed to the total population of Police Department and Sheriff's Department employees, 39.6% of the surveys (99) were returned from Police Department employees and 53.0% (122 surveys) were returned from the Sheriff's Department employees. Nonrandom sampling methods resulted in 45 surveys from EMS/Fire Department employees and 201 surveys from seven local hospitals, where emergency room personnel were targeted. Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi students were also targeted and returned 144 surveys, while 119 seniors at local senior citizen centers participated, 179 public health clinic clients and 28 teachers from a local private school system returned surveys. A total of 1,108 surveys were collected.

You Opportunities United

The 1999-2000, Youth Opportunities United grant designed to provide after-school programs at five middle/junior high schools contained an evaluation plan. The

plan called for the creation, administration, and analysis of a student survey. The survey was to be used in a pre- and post-test evaluation design to search for changes as a result of the after-school program, but start-up delays prevented this.

However, the survey instrument was designed to support the collection of data for the analysis of juvenile delinquency risk factors in Nueces County.

The YOU Middle/Junior High Student Survey--2000 was administered to three middle schools and two school based juvenile delinquency intervention programs. The survey instrument was designed, printed and delivered to the administration of each school along with parental consent forms. The school staff distributed the surveys and collected those completed. Administration of the survey occurred in May of 2000. Of 1,128 survey forms delivered to the campuses, 789 were completed and returned for a response rate of 70.0%.

Weed & Seed

The Weed & Seed survey was designed to inquire into residents' participation and level of satisfaction in the Weed & Seed programs, perception of safety, child daycare usage, and proximity and access to area business as part of an evaluation. The survey was administered to residents in Weed & Seed sites I and II through telephone and in-person interviews in May through July of 2001. The survey instrument used in this process was modified from the 1997 Community Survey Basic Interview Data Questionnaire used in other evaluations of Weed and Seed sites in the country (Dunworth et al, 1999). Through use of a criss-cross phone directory and random number generation, a random sample of residents of the two sites was selected for participation in this survey. Approximately half of the surveys were administered in person, while the other half were performed by telephone. These processes resulted in 403 completed interviews.

The surveys resulted in data for samples of all Nueces County residents, all Corpus Christi residents, residents of the Weed & Seed Sites inside Corpus Christi, and students at 5 educational institutions within the County.

RESULTS

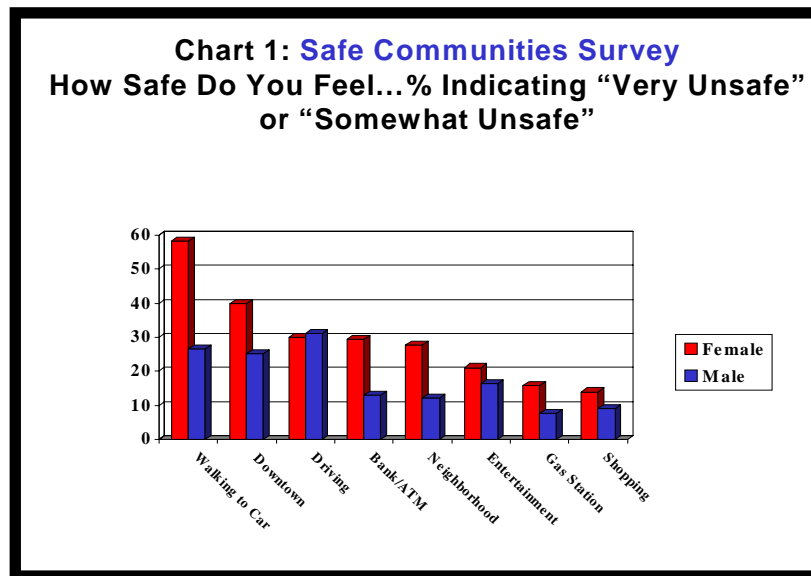
To provide examples of what we have termed complexities in community visions, data have been selected for comparative analysis on the respondents' perception of safety, fear of crime, perception of crime problems, and experience with victimization. These are variously examined in regard to the respondents' gender, ethnicity, age, and income. When possible, the exact questions are compared. Alternatively, a similar question related to the same dimension is compared.

Visions of Safety

Perception of Safety in Various Locations

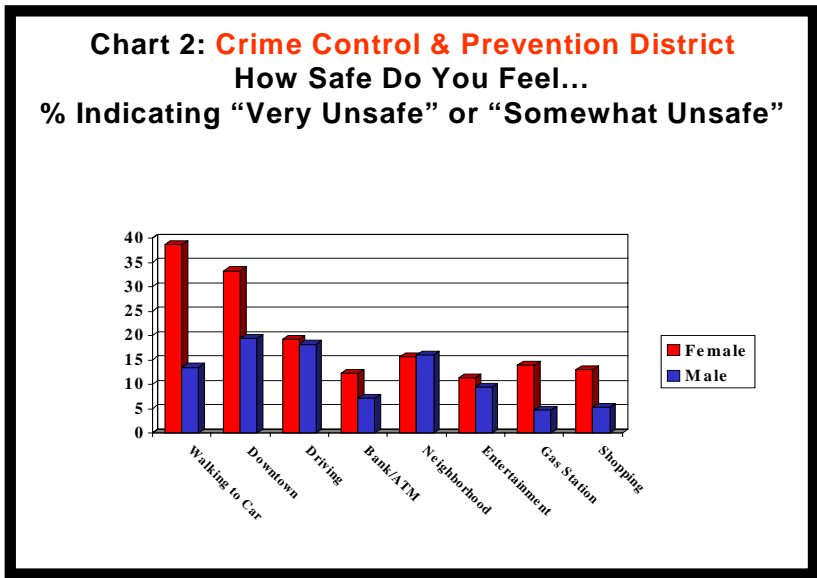
Respondents of both the Safe Communities and CCPD surveys were asked how safe they felt in eight different situations. These situations included: in their neighborhood at night, driving in the city, being in downtown Corpus Christi, walking to their car at night, at a bank, gas station or center of entertainment, and while shopping.

Chart 1 and Chart 2 provides the percentages of male and female respondents who reported that they felt either very unsafe or somewhat unsafe in these situations.



As can be seen in the charts, a clear difference between the responses of females and males occurred for this set of questions. In almost every situation, females reported feeling more unsafe than male respondents. Many of the differences between male and female respondents were statistically significant.

Looking at both surveys, the only two instances where male respondents reported feeling more unsafe were driving in Corpus Christi (Safe Communities respondents), and in their neighborhood at night (CCPD respondents). Neither of these differences was large.



In the YOU and Weed & Seed surveys respondents were also asked how safe they felt in their neighborhood. The gender pattern in the Weed & Seed survey (See Chart 3) was similar to that of the Safe Communities survey in that females felt more unsafe in their neighborhood than the males. The YOU and CCPD (see Chart 2) sample were similar in that a slightly higher percentage of the males felt "somewhat unsafe" or very unsafe" in their neighborhood. In the YOU sample, 10.3% of the males felt more unsafe as compared to 9.3% of females.

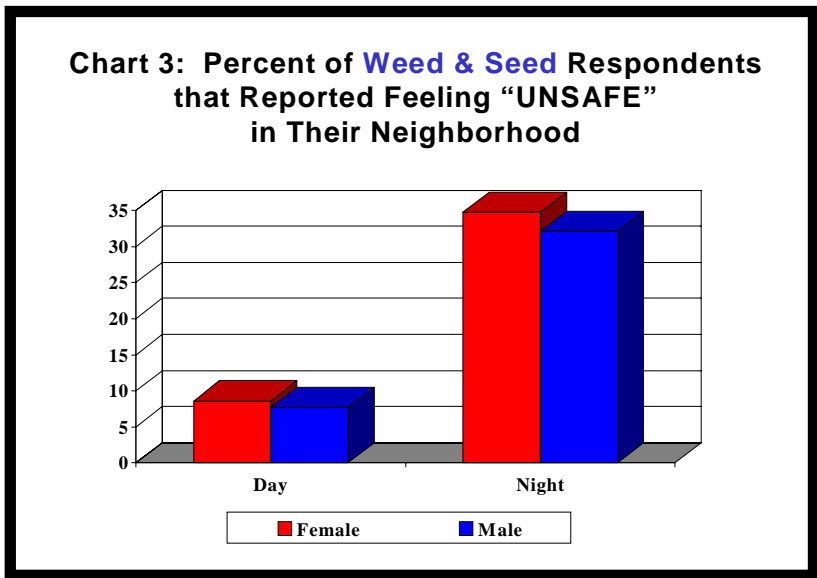
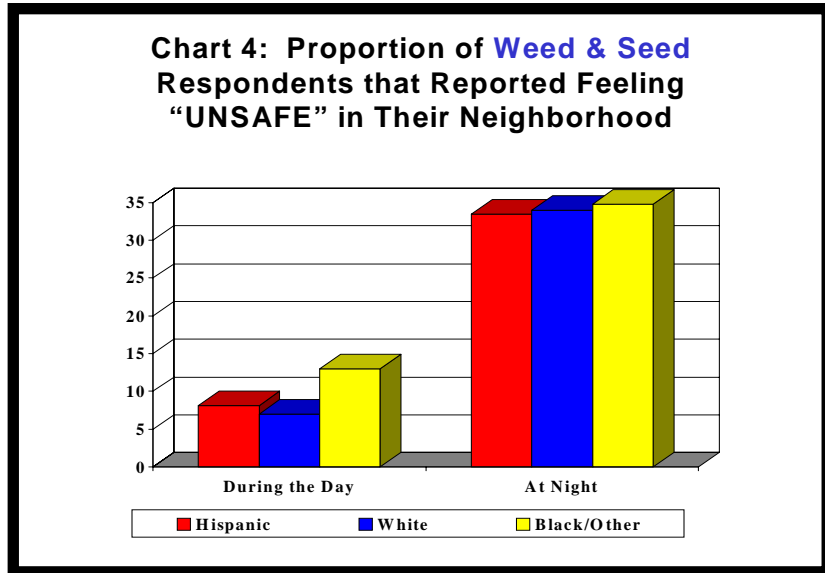


Table 1 provides the percentages of unsafe responses for this set of questions for Hispanic, Anglo, and Black/other respondents. The Black/Other category includes respondents who indicated that they were Black or an ethnicity other than Anglo or Hispanic. The situations are listed in descending order for Hispanic respondents in the Safe Communities survey. For most locations, Hispanic or Black/Other respondents felt more unsafe than Anglo respondents.

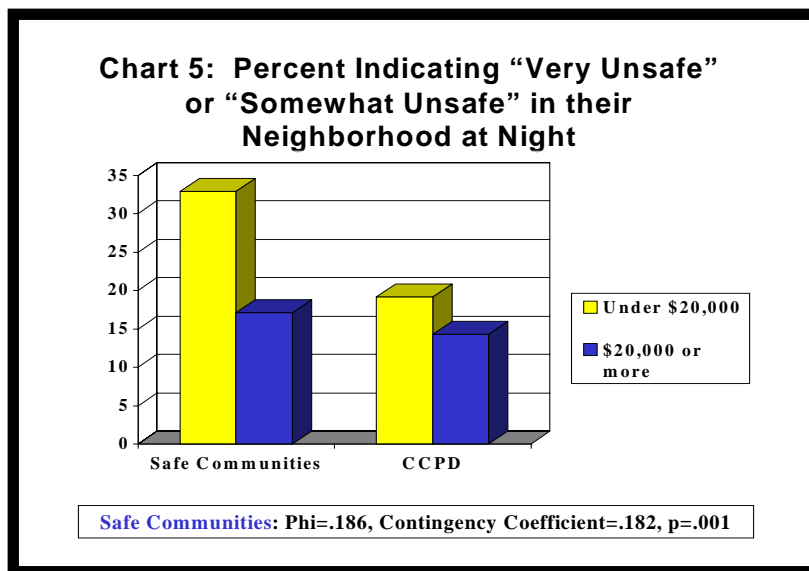
Table 1: How Safe Do You Feel... Percent Of Respondents Reporting “Somewhat Unsafe” Or “Very Unsafe”						
	Safe Communities			CCPD		
	Hispanic	Black/ Other	Anglo	Hispanic	Black/ Other	Anglo
Walking to car at night	45.6	41.0	45.8	36.8	27.3	24.5
In downtown Corpus Christi	32.0	33.6	36.3	34.5	29.5	24.1
At bank or ATM	°27.9	20.6	17.9	13.3	18.2	7.2
In neighborhood at night	°27.0	19.4	18.3	°24.8	18.2	11.3
Driving in Corpus Christi	°24.1	29.8	36.0	23.7	20.5	16.5
At centers of entertainment	*17.6	26.9	19.2	12.3	18.2	8.5
At local gas station	°14.9	10.1	9.7	°19.3	13.6	5.2
Shopping in community	*13.5	17.4	10.2	14.0	11.4	7.6

- * difference significant at $\geq .05$
- ° difference significant at $\geq .01$
- °° difference significant at $\geq .005$

The YOU sample follows the pattern of the Safe Communities and CCPD sample in that Hispanic youth were more likely to report feeling “somewhat unsafe” or “very unsafe” in their neighborhood than Anglos. This pattern is not followed when examining the Weed & Seed survey. In this survey (see Chart 4), the Black/Others were more likely to report feeling “somewhat unsafe” or “very unsafe.”

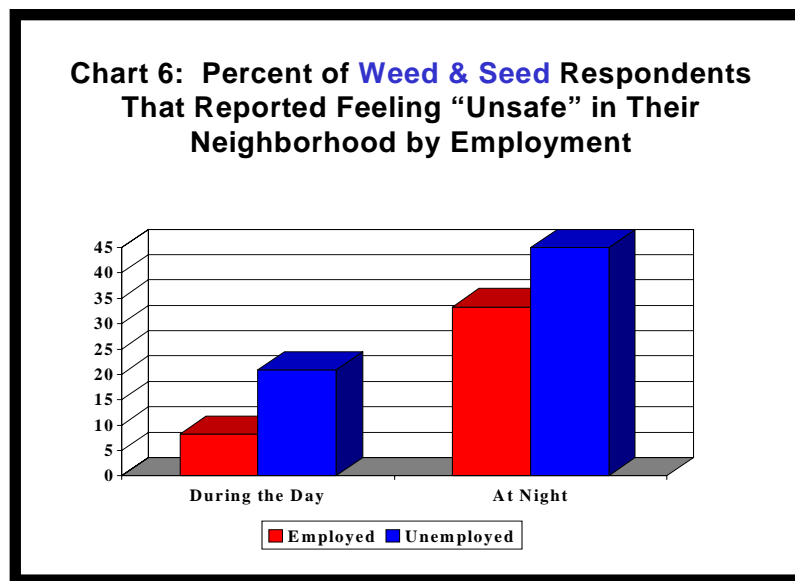


Regarding income and perception of safety in one’s neighborhood at night, similar differences were seen in the Safe Communities and CCPD surveys (see Chart 5). Those respondents with incomes under \$20,000, reported feeling very unsafe or unsafe at greater proportions than respondents in higher income brackets. The difference in the Safe Communities survey was statistically significant (Phi=.186, Contingency Coefficient=.182, p=.001).



The YOU and Weed & Seed surveys did not look at income the same way as the Safe Communities and CCPD surveys. Respondents in the Weed & Seed survey were asked if they were employed. Unemployed respondents reported feeling unsafe in a greater proportion than respondents who were employed. This difference was statistically significant ($\Phi = .166$, with $p = .005$) for the Weed & Seed respondents during the day (see Chart 6).

In the YOU survey, the respondents were asked if they were on the free or reduced lunch program. A slightly higher percent of those that were participating in the program reported feeling “somewhat unsafe” or “very unsafe” in their neighborhood as compared to those who were not in the program.



Looking at age and perception of safety while shopping in Corpus Christi (see Table 2), respondents who were 46 and older reported feeling more unsafe than those under 46 in the Safe Communities survey ($\Phi = .155$, Contingency Coefficient = .153, $p = .001$), while the difference was not significant for the CCPD survey.

Age	Safe Communities	CCPD
18-45	9.1	11.3
46+	19.9	8.2

When asked how safe they feel while in downtown Corpus Christi (see Table 3), a greater portion of respondents in the 46 and older age categories indicated very unsafe or unsafe in the Safe Communities survey, while the reverse was true in the CCPD survey (Safe Communities Phi=.125, Contingency Coefficient=.124, p=.001 and CCPD Phi=.231, Contingency Coefficient=.225, p=.001).

Table 3: Percent Of Respondents Indicating “Unsafe” While In Downtown Corpus Christi		
Age	Safe Communities	CCPD
18-45	30.5	31.8
46+	41.5	23.1

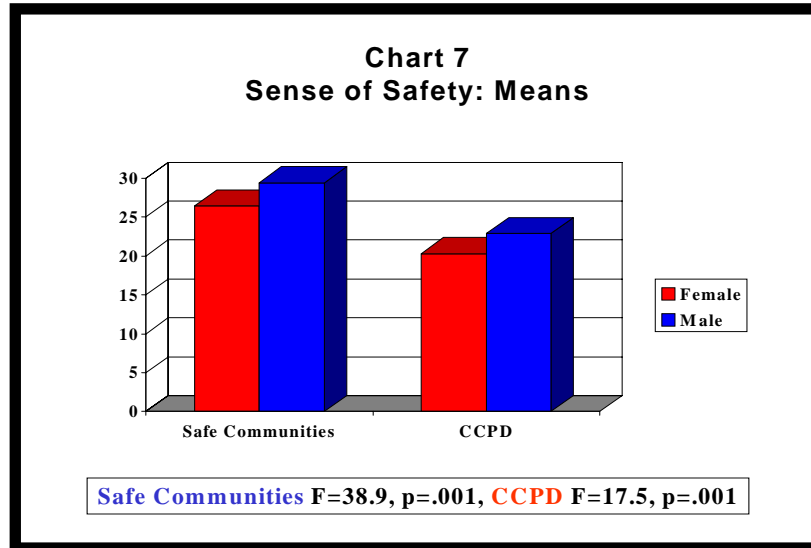
The same was true when respondents in each survey were asked how safe they felt walking to their car at night. A greater percentage of 46 and above respondents in the Safe Communities survey reported feeling unsafe, while a greater percentage of respondents under 46 reported feeling unsafe in the CCPD survey (see Table 4). Only the Safe Communities survey was statistically significant for this question (Phi= .113, Contingency Coefficient=.113, p=.001).

Table 4: Percent Of Respondents Indicating “Unsafe” Walking To Car At Night		
Age	Safe Communities	CCPD
18-45	41.3	30.7
46+	53.3	25.1

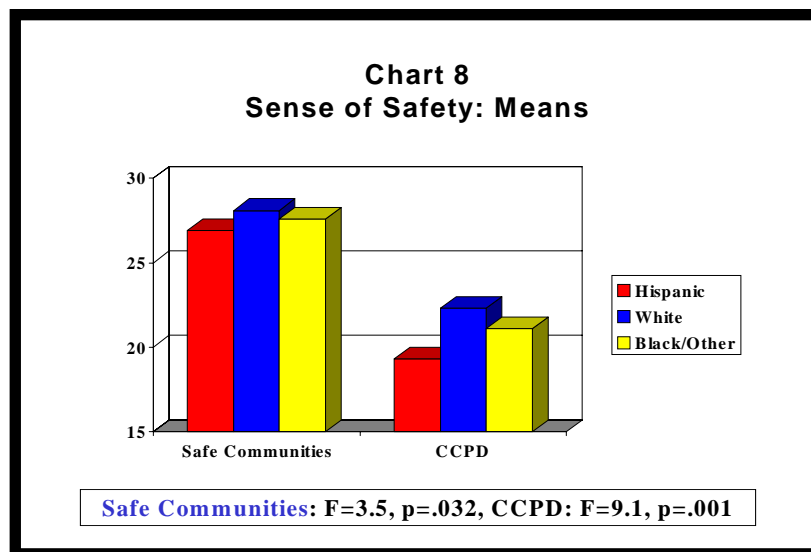
Perceptions of Safety

The eight questions regarding perception of safety in various locations were combined to form an index that measured a general sense of safety for the respondents in the Safe Communities and CCPD surveys. Possible scores ranged from 8 (indicating the respondent chose “very unsafe” on every question) to 40 (indicating the respondent chose “very safe” on every question). The following charts and table address the Safety Sense index scores in relation to the demographics of gender, ethnicity, age and income.

In both surveys, female (see Chart 7) respondents reported a significantly lower perception of overall safety (Safe Communities $F=38.9, p=.001$ and CCPD $F=17.5, p=.001$).



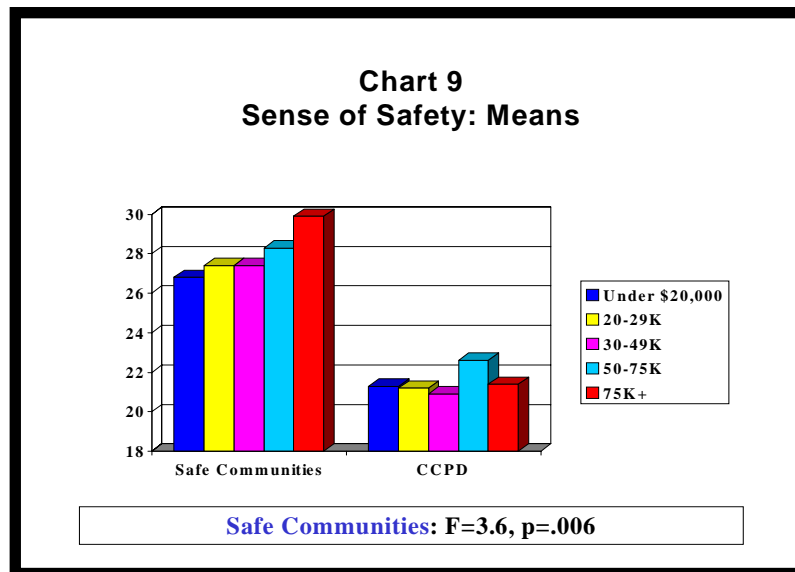
Regarding ethnicity and overall sense of safety (see Chart 8), both surveys had similar findings. Hispanic respondents reported the lowest perception of safety, while Anglo respondents reported the highest perception of safety and respondents in the Black/other category fell in between these two groups (Safe Communities $F=3.5, p=.032$, CCPD $F=9.1, p=.001$).



The mean safety sense scores for the various age categories were similar in each survey, indicating little variation by age (see Table 5). The difference among the means in the Safe Communities survey was statistically significant, likely because of the drop in mean in the 66+ age category ($F=3.1$ $p=.009$).

	Safe Communities	CCPD
18-24	28.7	21.3
25-35	27.5	21.8
36-45	27.6	20.6
46-55	26.5	22.4
56-65	28.1	21.4
66+	25.7	20.9

Regarding income (see Chart 9), findings from the Safe Communities survey show a gradual increase in perception of safety as income increases. Thus, those in the lower income brackets felt less safe, than those with higher incomes ($F=3.6$, $p=.006$).

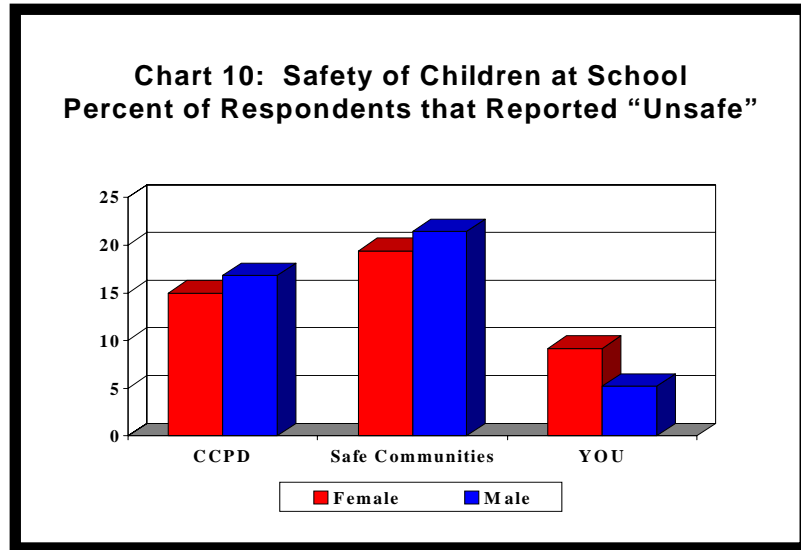


Safety of Children

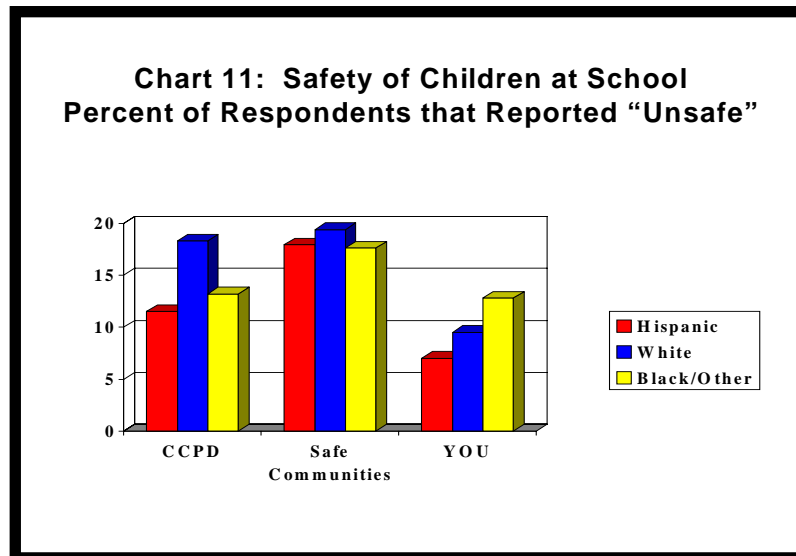
When examining the safety of children a somewhat different pattern is seen when compared to respondents' own safety. The males in the CCPD and Safe Communities

sample were more likely to report their children as unsafe at school than the females (Chart 10).

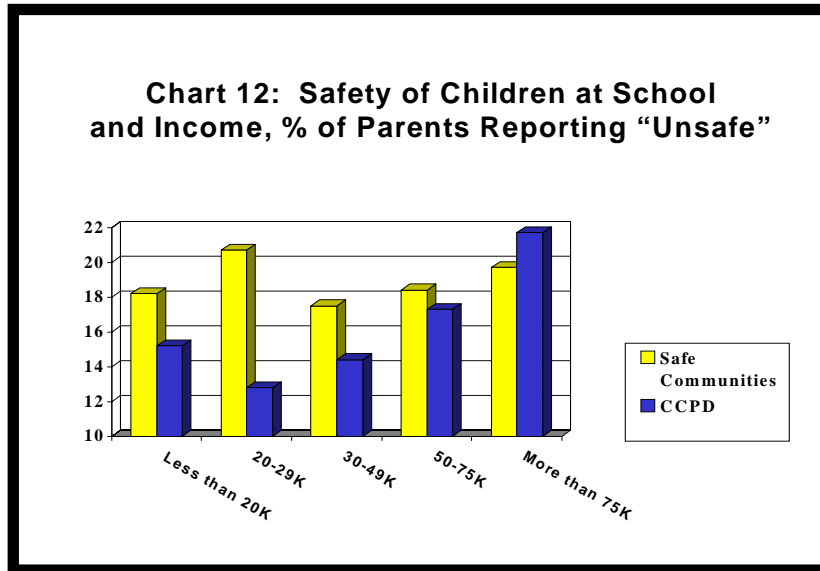
However, the children in the YOU sample were similar to the adult females perception of safety. More female youth reported feeling unsafe than male youth.



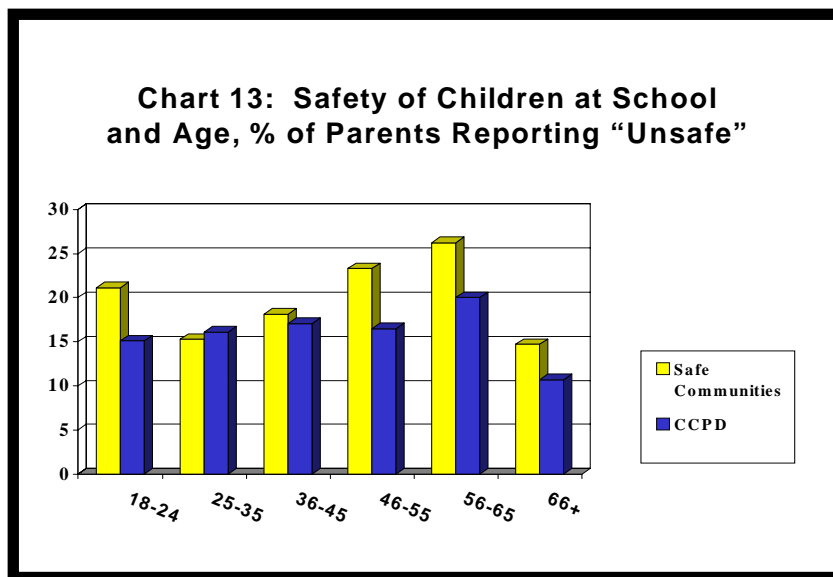
In the Safe Communities and CCPD sample a higher percentage of White respondents reported "not very safe" or "not safe at all" than the Hispanics and Black/Other. The results were different when looking at the YOU survey. A higher percentage of Black/Other reported "not very safe" or "not safe at all" followed by Whites and then Hispanics (see Chart 11).



Respondents with higher the income were more likely to report the safety of children at school as “not very safe” or “not safe at all” when compared to those with lower incomes (see Chart 12).



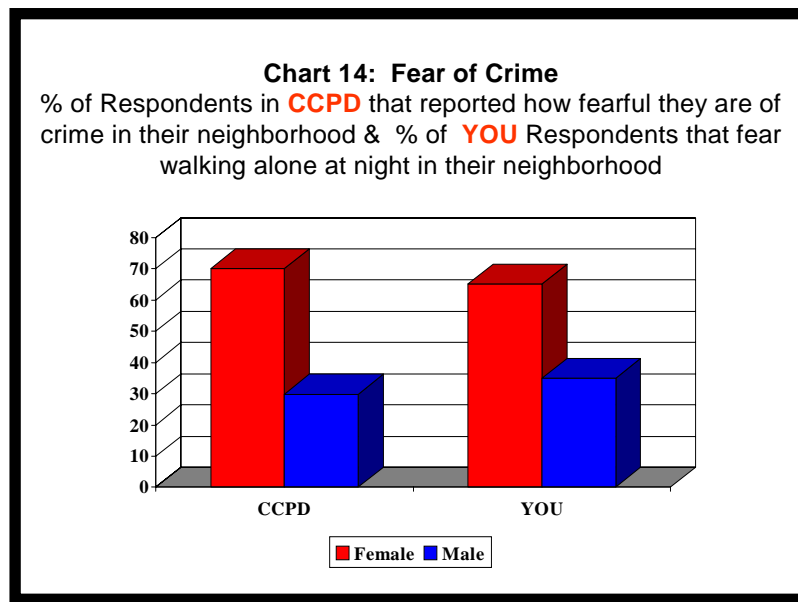
In regard to age, the older respondents in the Safe Communities sample were more likely to report their children unsafe at school than younger respondents (see Chart 13).



Fear of Crime

The CCPD and YOU surveys were the only two that allowed the examination of the fear of crime. The other surveys did not have questions on fear of crime.

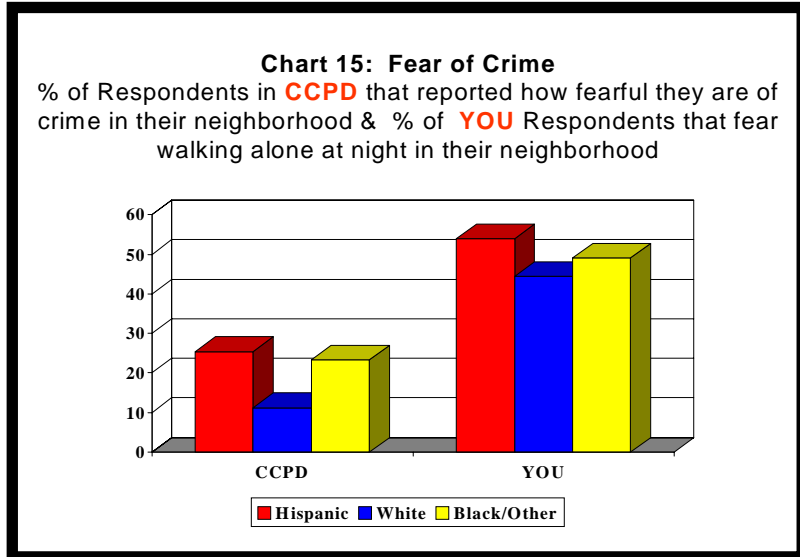
In the CCPD sample, the respondents were asked how fearful they were of crime in their neighborhood. A statistically significant difference is found between females and males in regards to the fear of crime (Phi = .107, Contingency Coefficient = .107, $p = .030$). A greater percentage of the females reported “a great deal” or “quite a lot” in regards to fearing crime in their neighborhood (see Chart 14).



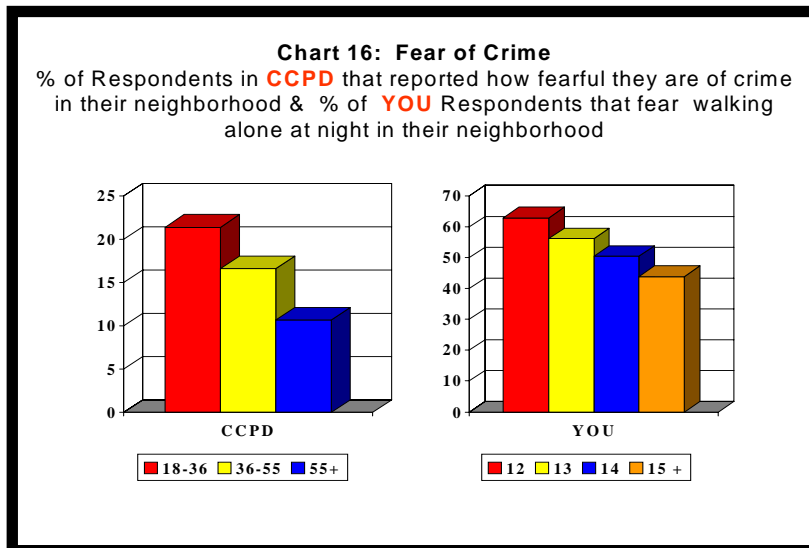
The results are similar to the CCPD survey when examining gender differences in the YOU survey. In the YOU survey, the respondents were asked if there was any area near where they lived that they would be afraid to walk alone at night (see Chart 14).

As in the Crime Control survey, a statistically significant difference is found between females and males (Phi = -.244, Contingency Coefficient = .244, $p = .001$). A greater percentage of the females reported being afraid than the males.

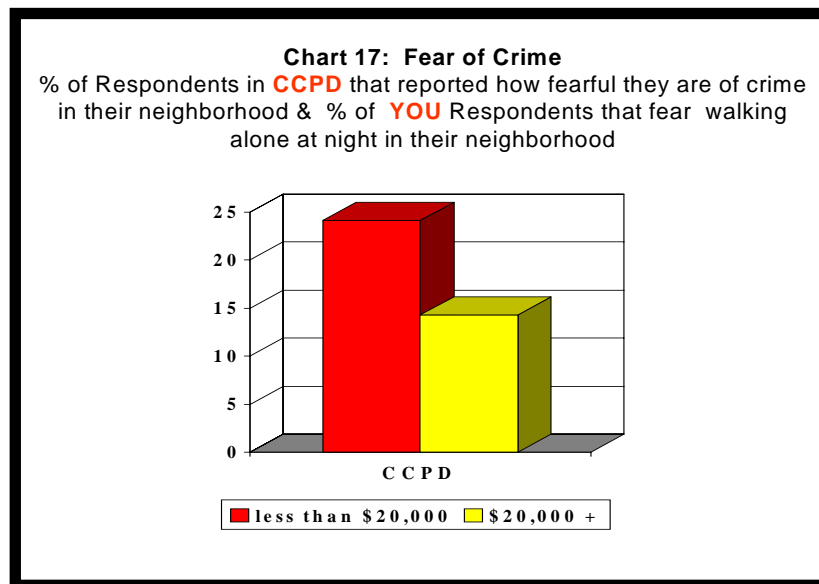
When examining ethnicity and the fear of crime in the CCPD and YOU samples, Hispanics reported being more fearful followed by Black/Other and Whites (see Chart 15). However, only in the CCPD survey was a statistically significant relationship found (Phi = .179, Contingency Coefficient = .179, $p = .001$).



When examining age in these surveys (see Chart 16), it was found that the younger respondents were more fearful of crime than the older respondents. A statistically significant difference was not found.



The respondents in the CCPD survey that reported their income at \$20,000 or less were more fearful of crime in their neighborhood than those that reported higher incomes (see Chart 17). A statistically significant relationship was found between income and fear (Phi = -.105, Contingency Coefficient = .105, p = .036).



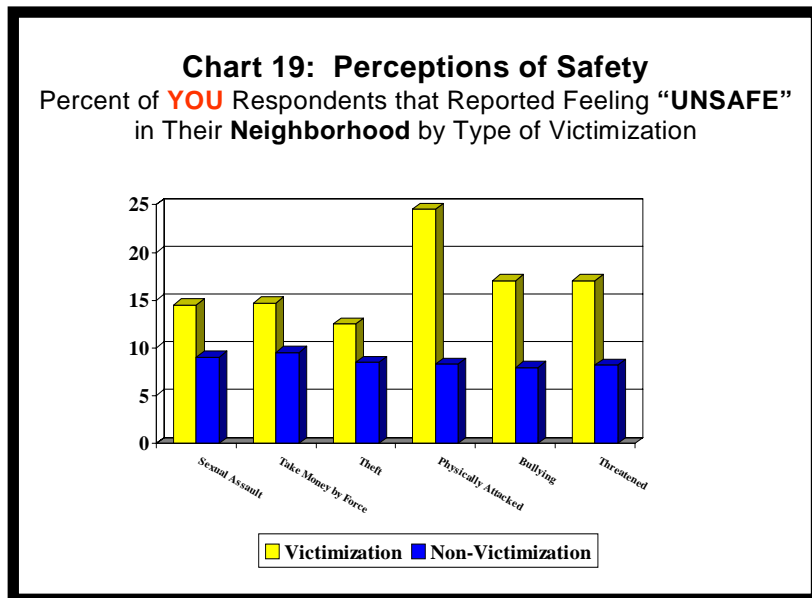
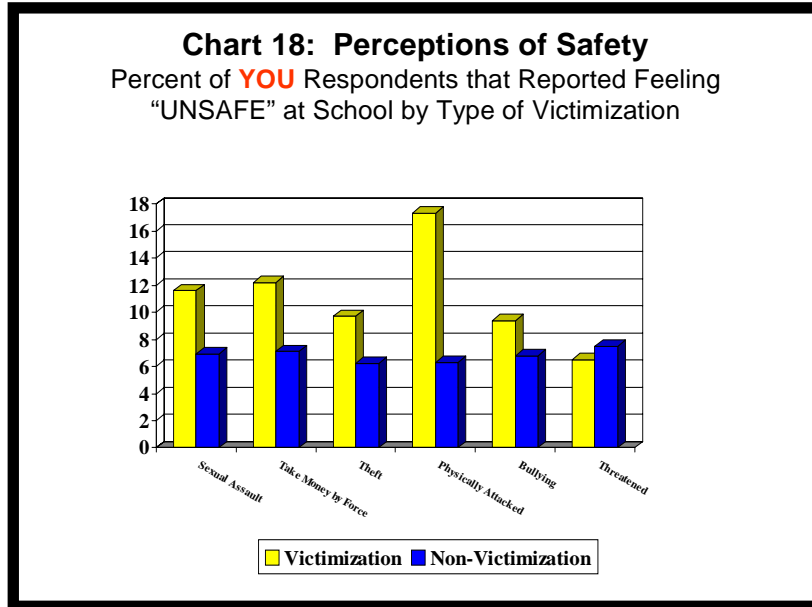
Victimization

Another area that was examined was victimization as related to visions of safety, fear of crime, and crime problems. Areas of victimization that were examined included victimization at school, sexual abuse by someone the respondent knew well, burglary of the home or property, and the respondent or respondent's family member experiencing threats and/or acts of violence.

Perceptions of Safety

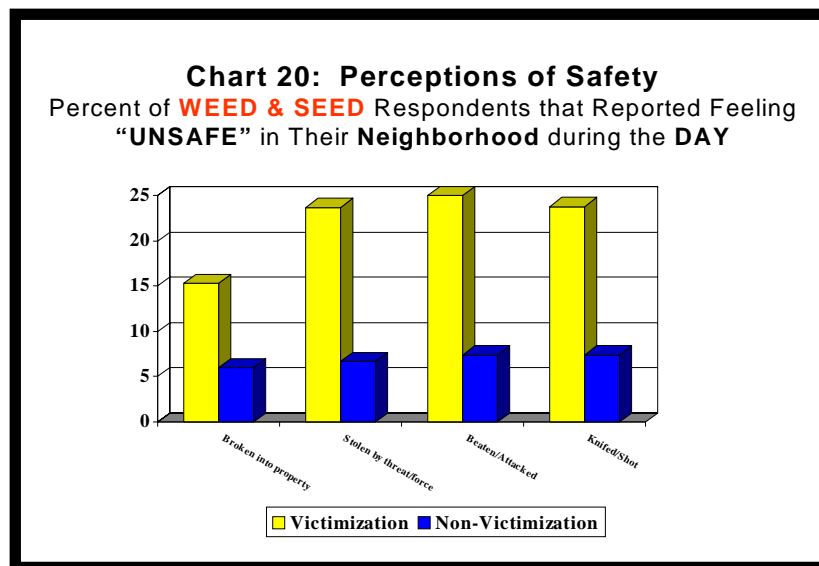
A higher percentage of the respondents in the YOU sample that reported victimization were more likely to report feeling "not very safe" or "not safe at all" at school than those students who did not experience any type of victimization (see Chart 18).

The same pattern can be seen when looking at the YOU respondents' sense of safety in their neighborhood (see Chart 19).

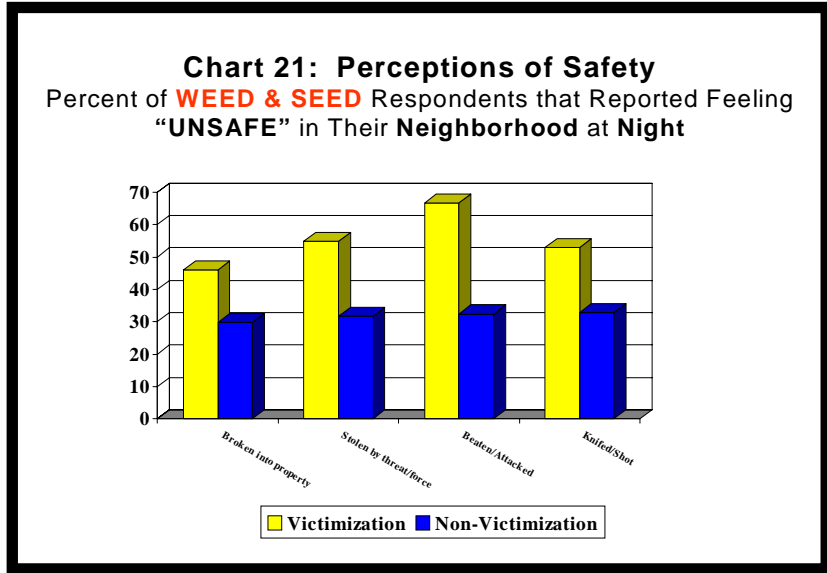


The CCPD results demonstrate a similar pattern in terms of victimization to that of the YOU sample. A greater proportion, 22.9%, of those respondents that reported their home was burglarized reported that they felt their children were “unsafe” at school as compared to those whose home had been not burglarized (14.6%). The same pattern can be seen when looking at the respondents’ sense of safety in their neighborhood and victimization. The CCPD sample conveys a significant relationship between the respondents’ home being burglarized and feeling “unsafe” in their neighborhood (Phi = .132, Contingency Coefficient = .131, p = .029).

In the Weed & Seed survey respondents were asked if they or any of their family members had experienced any type of victimization such as burglary, theft, having been threatened, or physically attacked. A significant relationship was found between victimization and the respondents’ sense of safety in their neighborhood during the day (see Chart 20).



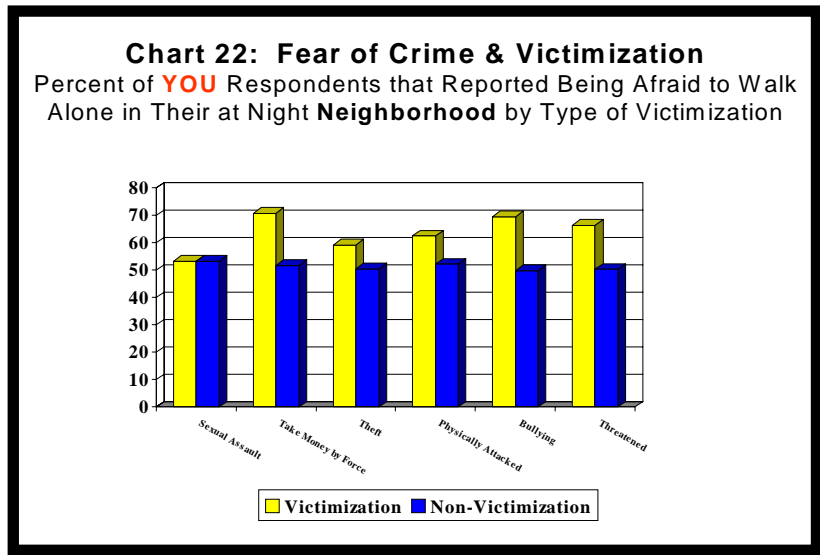
The percentage of those feeling “unsafe” in their neighborhood by type of victimization was even higher when asked about their sense of safety at night as compared to during the day (see Chart 21).



Overall, the surveys demonstrated that both youth and adults have a greater concern for safety in their neighborhoods and schools if they have experienced some type of victimization.

Fear of Crime

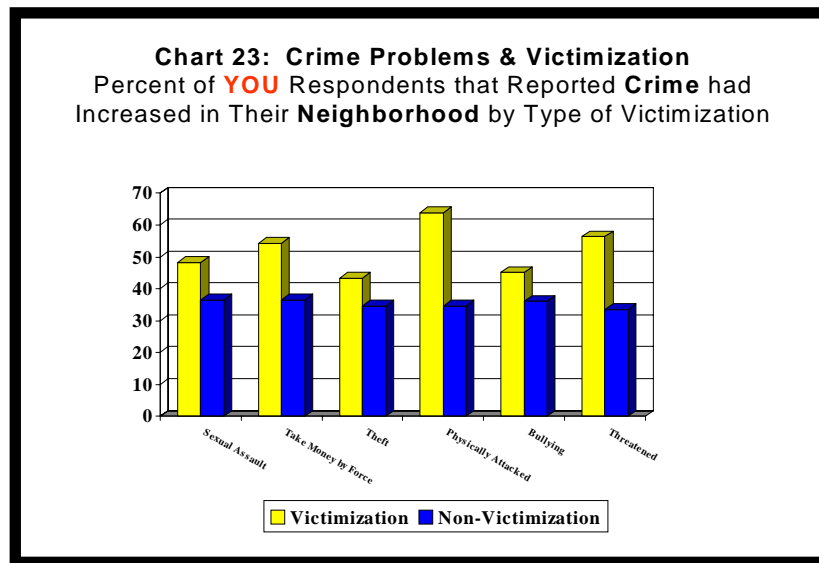
In most instances when examining the YOU sample, a statistically significant relationship existed between victimization and the fear of walking alone at night in one’s neighborhood (see Chart 22).



The results are similar to the YOU sample when examining the CCPD sample, but they were not statistically significant when examining the fear of crime in their neighborhood and victimization. Of those respondents whose home had been burglarized, 25.0% were very fearful of crime in their neighborhood as compared to only 15.3% of those whose home had not been burglarized.

Crime Problems

A higher percentage of the YOU and CCPD sample reported that crime had increased in their neighborhood if they were victimized as compared to those that had not been victimized. In most instances in the YOU survey a statistically significant relationship existed between victimization and the belief that crime had increased in their neighborhood (see Chart 23).



Of those respondents in the CCPD survey whose home had been burglarized, 61.2% reported that crime had increased. Of those who had not been victimized, only 48.0% reported that crime had increased.

A related question in the Weed & Seed survey asked if the neighborhood had gotten better or worse as a place to live in the past 2 years. Victimized respondents were more likely to report that the neighborhood had gotten worse than non-victimized respondents. Almost a third or 32.5% of victimized respondents reported their neighborhood had gotten worse compared to only 13.2% of those not victimized (Phi = .228 with p = .001)

When looking at issues of crime problems and victimization in the Crime Control, YOU, and Weed & Seed samples, a pattern can be seen. Several questions were asked about crime problems in the public schools and in the neighborhoods. In the CCPD and YOU surveys, the seriousness of public school problems such as violence, gangs, and drugs were examined as related to victimization. In the Weed & Seed sample, the seriousness of violent crime, gangs, and drug use in the neighborhoods was examined.

The students in the YOU sample that reported victimization were more likely to report violence, gangs, and drugs as serious problems at their schools than those who were not victimized (see Table 6). In most instances, a statistically significant relationship was found between victimization and the perception of the seriousness of the problems in school.

Type of Victimization	Victimized			Not Victimized		
	Violence	Gangs	Drugs	Violence	Gangs	Drugs
Sexual Assault	*17.4	*27.4	**27.4	10.2	15.5	15.8
Take Money by Force	**33.3	**34.7	**36.0	9.7	15.7	15.9
Theft	°15.0	°22.8	19.6	9.4	14.0	15.8
Physically attacked	**24.2	**37.1	**32.3	9.7	14.8	15.8
Bullying	**22.2	**26.5	*25.2	9.0	14.8	15.7
Threatened	**17.7	**27.4	**27.6	9.6	14.5	15.1

* difference significant at $\geq .05$

° difference significant at $\geq .01$

** difference significant at $\geq .005$

The pattern is similar in the CCPD sample (see Table 7). The adults in this sample were also more likely to report drugs, gangs, and fighting as a serious problem in public schools if their home had been burglarized. A statistically significant relationship was found when examining fighting and victimization ($\Phi = .172$, with $p = .007$).

Type of Victimization	Victimized			Not Victimized		
	Fighting	Gangs	Drugs	Fighting	Gangs	Drugs
Home Burglarized	72.7	68.9	69.6	48.4	60.3	61.4

Where the CCPD and YOU surveys had questions dealing with problems in schools, the Weed & Seed survey had questions dealing with neighborhood problems (see Table 8). Respondents were asked whether or not the problems were “a big problem, a small problem, or not a problem” in their neighborhood. In most instances, a

statistically significant relationship was found between victimization and the perception of problems facing the respondents' neighborhoods. Victimized respondents were significantly more likely to label the problems as "big" compared to those not victimized.

Type of Victimization	Victimized			Not Victimized		
	Violence	Gangs	Drugs	Violence	Gangs	Drugs
Broken into home, etc.	*16.3%	**25.2%	**29.3%	8.3%	10.0%	14.7%
Stolen something by force	21.1%	23.1%	30.8%	9.4%	13.1%	7.3%
Beaten or attacked	*35.0%	**45.0%	**55.0%	9.2%	12.4%	16.6%
Knifed or Shot	**33.3%	**47.6%	*42.9%	9.2%	12.1%	17.2%

* difference significant at $\geq .05$ ** difference significant at $\geq .005$

° difference significant at $\geq .01$

It may be concluded that both youth and adult victims of crime were more likely to perceive neighborhood problems with violence, gangs, and drugs as serious or big problems when compared to those not victimized.

DISCUSSION

The four surveys have provided a wealth of information for the planning teams of the initiatives to contemplate. For some dimensions, patterns of consistency occur across the surveys for which similar questions were used. However, inconsistent findings or variations occur that add complexity to the community images described in the results.

For example, a consistent pattern found across the three surveys of adults was that females were more likely to report feeling unsafe than males. However, this pattern did not extend to youth. Among the middle school students, males were slightly more likely to report being unsafe in their neighborhood than females.

Also, for countywide and citywide surveys, a consistent pattern was observed in that Hispanics and Black/Others reported lower senses of safety and higher fear of crime than Anglos. Complexity was added to this relationship when the Weed & Seed survey was considered. Residents of the Weed & Seed Sites had an essentially similar low sense of safety in their neighborhood at night regardless of ethnicity. Not only do these findings indicate that planners should consider day and night differences, but they must consider location in the community as a significant variable.

Part of the reason that the Weed & Seed respondents appeared to be uniformly concerned with their safety at night relates to economic conditions. All four surveys found that respondents with lower incomes more likely felt unsafe than those with higher incomes. While this appears to hold across the community, the effect of income may be greater in the Weed & Seed Sites because unemployment and poverty are more concentrated there than in other parts of the community.

A specific location, downtown Corpus Christi, appeared to be a place where individuals felt unsafe. This finding should be of particular interest to community leaders. The downtown area has established an economic development zone and has recently been included in a Renewal Community. Both of these efforts are designed to bring citizens back to the downtown area for economic revitalization purposes. This may be hard to accomplish if County residents perceive the downtown area as an unsafe location.

Related to this is that walking to one's car at night is a behavior that was considered unsafe. While this question was not limited to the downtown area, nighttime visitors to the entertainment areas of downtown area need to walk to their vehicles. Businesses in the downtown area and other shopping and entertainment centers in the community need to consider these findings as they evaluate their parking, lighting, and security for nighttime customers.

The need for planners to be aware of the limitations of surveys and to clearly examine findings across surveys is demonstrated by the questions related to safety downtown, walking to one's car at night, and shopping. For all three of these questions, the older respondents from the Safe Communities survey reported feeling unsafe to a greater degree than younger respondents. However, in the CCPD survey, the reverse was true. Younger respondents in the CCPD survey reported feeling unsafe to a greater degree than older respondents for these questions. The apparent contradiction in these findings may be explained by the nature of the two different samples. The Safe Community sample more closely matches the community in ethnicity. The CCPD sample contains an over representation of Anglos. As noted above, Anglos are the ethnic group that most often felt safe. Thus, the age data for the CCPD survey appears to be affected by the greater presence of Anglos in that sample.

An important consideration for planners is the difference between the respondents' perceptions of their own safety and the safety of their children at school. Lower income respondents, minority group members, and females are more likely to perceive themselves as unsafe compared to higher income respondents, Anglos, and males. However, lower income respondents, minority group members, and females are more likely to believe that their children are safe at school compared to higher income respondents, Anglos, and males. This complexity means that planners are likely to need to target quite different groups when focusing on adult versus child safety issues.

Perhaps, the most important set of findings for the community planning initiatives was that victimized respondents from the CCPD, YOU, and Weed & Seed surveys were more likely to report that they felt unsafe compared to non-victimized respondents. Victims were also more likely to report higher fear of crime than non-victimized respondents. Victimization significantly affected the respondents' views of neighborhood crime problems. Victims were more likely to report that crime had increased in their neighborhoods or that their neighborhoods had become worse places to live.

Victimized youth were more likely to see violence, drugs, and gangs as serious problems in their schools or neighborhoods when compared to non-victimized youth. The same finding occurred with adults. Victimized adults were more likely to see fighting, drugs, and gangs as problems in the schools than non-victimized adults. Interestingly, the largest differences were found among the respondents to the Weed & Seed survey.

CONCLUSIONS

As the final part of the discussion of survey results demonstrates, community surveys can assist in the grounding of planned change in the experience of the community not just in its visions of problems. Whether or not a specific community change process is envisioned as planned change, strategic planning, comprehensive strategy, or even action research using a rational decision making model (see Gottfredson, 2000), a process of data collection and analysis is necessary to clarify the problem image that is the basis for targeting planned interventions.

This problem identification or environmental scan is likely to be incomplete and potentially inaccurate if it depends solely on official data. Therefore, we argue here that community surveys need to be an integral part of the data collection and analysis effort. As demonstrated above from surveys conducted for four initiatives in one community, surveys can reveal complex relationships between experiences with the problem, visions of the problem, and demographic variation in the change effort's target population.

As programs and policies are implemented through the course of a planned change effort, monitoring of progress and measuring of effectiveness through planned evaluations need to occur. Monitoring and evaluation help to reduce wasting of effort and resources. They assist in effective targeting of limited resources and the adjustment of effort as change occurs. Community surveys can also assist in the monitoring and evaluation stages of planned change or strategic planning. The four initiatives described here all perceive that the completed surveys are only a first step. While two were conducted as parts of program evaluations, all four may be seen as pre-tests. Both the CCPD and the Weed & Seed Program have voiced interest in follow-up surveys to measure if change occurs. The Safe Communities project is scheduled to resurvey the County this spring and YOU is seeking funds to perform its survey across a larger number of schools.

The data collected for either problem identification or evaluation purposes may also be used to support the development of resources within the implementation phases of planning. “One of the primary benefits of strategic planning is that it permits and encourages the emergence of innovative approaches and programs” (Gordon, 1993: 79). Yet, to permit innovation and program development resources may need to be reallocated and new resources may need to be found. The four initiatives described here have used the community survey data to seek additional funds through targeted grant writing. Safe Communities recently applied for three years of program funding based on prioritization of issues it was led to from its analysis of both official and survey data. Both the CCPD and the Weed & Seed Program use the data to make program funding choices. Also, the CCPD faces an election to renew itself and its tax base. Its survey data may be used to demonstrate continued need for its programs to voters.

This report provides a brief look at four community change efforts’ uses of community surveys for initial planning, the ongoing evaluation and plan modification stages of planned change, and expansion of funding resources. We conclude that an ideal community change effort will be grounded in the complexity of community experience and vision found through community surveys.

Some final comments concern the availability of community survey results and the function that such community research may help communities play. Vito (1999: 13) observed that “knowledge does little good without dissemination.” Efforts to disseminate the survey based knowledge gained by the four initiatives have occurred. These dissemination efforts need to extend beyond the limited staff, boards of directors, and advisors to the individual initiatives. For Safe Communities, reports from its survey have been distributed to all of the participating agencies, all of the coalition members, and have been made available to the public. The results from the YOU survey have been distributed broadly in paper form and on a compact disc. All participating government agencies, school districts, non-profit organizations, and businesses have received the report. Also, YOU reports have been distributed to several hundred organizations that in some way connect to risk and protective factors related to juvenile delinquency. Also, several thousand brochures with some of the survey data have been distributed. Both the Safe Communities and YOU initiatives provide speakers for local community groups.

The CCPD data has seen less distribution. However, some of it has been integrated into the YOU information distribution. CCPD survey data has been supplied to the other three initiatives. This will also be done with the newest data from the Weed & Seed survey. It will be shared across the other initiatives.

This current paper will be part of the cross initiative sharing of data analysis. The comparative effort offered here is not the first such effort with the surveys, but it has been the most extensive. This document will be distributed to each of the staff and steering committees or advisory boards for each of the initiatives. By sharing the evidence about crime, risk, and safety across community initiatives these survey efforts may help to move criminal justice toward evidence-based planning and decision-making. Sherman (1998) describes evidenced-based policing as a new paradigm in which research is used

“to guide practice and evaluate practitioners. It uses the best evidence to shape the best practices.” Basing practice and evaluation on the best evidence appears to be a valuable function for all of criminal and juvenile justice.

Vito (1999: 14) also points out that the purpose of academic researchers “ is to provide information that can serve as the basis for policy—policy that is effective, policy that produces a just result...Our aim is to help people live safely in society.” This has been the aim of the four surveys completed for the community change initiatives over the past two years in Nueces County, Texas.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Coolbaugh, K. and C.J. Hansel. (2000). The Comprehensive Strategy: Lessons Learned From the Pilot Sites. Washington, D.C.: US Department of Justice.

Corpus Christi Crime Control and Prevention District. (1997). Crime Control and Prevention District Plan. Corpus Christi: City of Corpus Christi.

Dunworth, T., G. Mills, G. Cordner, and J. Greene. (1999). National Evaluation of Weed and Seed Cross-Site Analysis. Washington, D.C.: USGPO.

Goldstein, H. (1990). Problem-Oriented Policing. New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company.

Gorgon, G.L. (1993). Strategic Planning for Local Government. Washington, D.C.: International City/County Management Association.

Gottfredson, D.M. (2000). Juvenile Justice with Eyes Open. Pittsburgh, PA: National Center Juvenile Justice.

Hess, K.M. and H.M. Wroblewski. (1997). Police Operations. St. Paul: West Publishing Company.

Howell, J.C. ed. (1998). Guide to Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offender. Washington D.C.: US Department of Justice.

International Association of Chiefs of Police. (1999). Achieving the Commitment An Action Plan for community-CCPD Collaboration. Gaithersburg: IACP.

Machac, K.M., P.W. Rhoades, M.J. Hamilton, and E. Sefcik (2001). Safe Communities Survey Results, Total Sample-2000. Corpus Christi, TX: Social Science Research Center of the College of Arts and Humanities at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

Maguire, K. and A. L. Pastore, eds. (1999). Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics—1998. Washington, D.C.: USGPO.

The President's Crime Prevention Council. (1997). Helping Communities Fight Crime. Washington: USGPO.

Rhoades, P.W., and M. Sanchez (2001). Corpus Christi Crime Control and Prevention District Evaluation and Citizen Survey-2000. Corpus Christi, TX: Social Science Research Center of the College of Arts and Humanities at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

Rhoades, P.W., and M. Sanchez (2002). Weed and Seed Evaluation. Corpus Christi, TX: Social Science Research Center of the College of Arts and Humanities at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

Rhoades, P.W., and K.M. Zambrano (2001a). Nueces County Juvenile Delinquency Risk Factor Data and Trend Analysis. (Vol. 4). Corpus Christi, TX: Social Science Research Center of the College of Arts and Humanities at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

Rhoades, P.W., and K.M. Zambrano (2001b). YOU Middle School/Junior High Student Survey-2000. (Vol. 1). Corpus Christi, TX: Social Science Research Center of the College of Arts and Humanities at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

Rhoades, P.W., and K.M. Zambrano (2001c). YOU Middle School/Junior High Student Survey-2000. (Vol. 2). Corpus Christi, TX: Social Science Research Center of the College of Arts and Humanities at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

Ross, R. (1999). Surveys-Practical Tools for Gathering Information. A Dialogue About Safe Communities. Newton: MA. Education Development Center.

Shaw, M., and K. Oginsky. (2001). The Role of Local Government in Community Safety. Washington D.C.: US Department of Justice.

Sherman, L.W. (1998). Ideas in American Policing. Evidence-Based Policing. Washington, D.C.: Police Foundation

Trojanowicz, R., V.E. Kappeler, L.K. Gaines, and B. Bucqueroux. (1998). Community Policing, A Contemporary Perspective 2nd Edition. Cincinnati: Anderson Publishing Co.

Vito, G. F. (1999). Presidential Address. Justice Quarterly 16(1): 1-17.

Welsh, W.N., and P.W. Harris. (1999). Criminal Justice Policy & Planning. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing Co.

Wilson, J.J. and J.C. Howell. (1993). Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders. Washington D.C.: US Department of Justice.