

**Literature Review: Gun Violence among Teens, Young Adults, and Middle-Aged in the
United States.**

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History of gun violence among

Gun violence in the United States has evolved over the decades and it is rooted in a complex relationship between historical, social, and political factors. The issue has attracted significant attention from policymakers, law enforcement, and the public, particularly as mass shootings, urban violence, and domestic incidents continue to plague communities. From national context, the history of gun violence in America can be traced back to the colonial era, where firearms were integral to daily life for hunting and self-defense. However, the 20th century marked a notable shift in the dynamics of gun violence. By the 1960s, homicide rates began to rise dramatically, reaching a peak in 1991 when the firearm homicide rate was approximately 7.4 per 100,000 people. The 1994 Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act aimed to regulate gun sales and prevent gun violence, yet it has not eliminated the problem (Beardslee et al., 2021). Statistics reveal that in 2020 alone, more than 45,000 gun-related deaths occurred in the U.S., a staggering increase of 25% from the previous year. Gun violence is now one of the leading causes of death among individuals aged 1 to 44. A specific example of gun violence that shocked the nation was the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in December 2012, where 20 children and six adults lost their lives (Cox, 2022). This incident reignited debates about gun control laws and the Second Amendment, prompting discussions on mental health and gun safety legislation.

Mississippi (~~one of the American states~~) is particularly noteworthy in discussions about gun violence, as it has one of the highest rates of gun-related deaths in the nation. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the gun homicide rate in Mississippi was 22.6 per 100,000 people in 2020, significantly above the national average. The state's gun laws are relatively permissive, with policies allowing open carry and limited background checks for private sales, contributing to the prevalence of firearms problem (Beardslee et al., 2021). The impact of gun violence in Mississippi can be seen in the tragic case of the 2018 shooting of 17-year-old Jaheim Bowers in Jackson, which highlighted the alarming trend of youth gun violence. His death was part of a larger pattern: between 2015 and 2020, gun violence among teens in Mississippi increased by 40% (Boeck et al., 2020). This spike underscores the urgent need for preventive measures and community programs aimed at reducing gun-related incidents among youth.

In Jackson, (the state capital of Mississippi), gun violence has reached epidemic proportions. The city reported 160 homicides in 2021, with a gun-related homicide rate of 57.5 per 100,000 people, one of the highest rates in the country. A notable example is the shooting of 15-year-old Jada Collins in 2020, which drew widespread attention and prompted community outcry (Bottiani et al., 2020). Local law enforcement reported a 50% increase in juvenile gun-related incidents from 2019 to 2021, indicating that young people are increasingly involved in gun violence, either as victims or perpetrators. The effects of gun violence are disproportionately felt among specific age groups, notably teens, young adults, and middle-aged individuals. Among these demographics, teens are particularly vulnerable (Boeck et al., 2020). According to the CDC, firearm-related deaths for individuals aged 10-19 years increased by 42% from 2019 to 2021, highlighting a critical area of concern for communities and policymakers.

Young adults aged 20-29 also experience a high rate of gun violence. In Mississippi, individuals in this age group accounted for nearly 50% of gun-related homicides in 2020. A significant case illustrating this trend is the 2021 shooting of 24-year-old Demetrius Walker, who was killed during a gang-related incident in Jackson. Such events exemplify the alarming rise in violence among young adults, often linked to factors such as gang affiliations, substance abuse, and economic instability (Boeck et al., 2020). Middle-aged individuals, while less frequently highlighted in gun violence statistics, still face considerable risks. In Mississippi, gun-related deaths among those aged 30-49 years have seen an increase of approximately 20% from 2015 to 2020 problem (Beardslee et al., 2021). This demographic often becomes involved in domestic violence incidents, with firearms frequently utilized in such scenarios. According to the Violence Policy Center, 54% of women murdered by men in the U.S. in 2019 were killed with firearms, underscoring the intersection of gun violence and domestic abuse.

Comparison of what age groups based on the crime committed over years

Historically, young adults aged 18-24 have been identified as the primary age group involved in violent crimes, including gun violence. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) data, individuals in this age group accounted for approximately 40% of all gun-related homicides in 2019. This statistic demonstrates a consistent trend; for instance, in 2010, young adults represented about 37% of gun homicide offenders (Boeck et al., 2020).. The prevalence of gun violence among young adults can be attributed to various factors, including socio-economic disparities, exposure to violence, and gang involvement (Bottiani et al., 2020). Notably, cases such as the tragic 2013 shooting at Santa Monica College, where a young adult gunman killed six individuals, underscore the dangers posed by this demographic.

In Mississippi, a similar pattern emerges. The Mississippi Department of Public Safety reported that in 2020, individuals aged 18-24 accounted for 35% of gun-related homicides in the state, which was a slight increase from 30% in 2015 (Bottiani et al., 2020). Jackson, the state capital, particularly mirrors this trend. The Jackson Police Department reported that young adults represented approximately 33% of gun violence incidents in 2021. Notably, the high-profile shooting of a 17-year-old during a block party in Jackson in 2019 highlights the prevalence of gun violence among younger individuals in the community problem (Beardslee et al., 2021). This incident not only shook the local community but also ignited discussions about youth safety and gun accessibility.

Teens, particularly those aged 15-17, have also been involved in a significant portion of gun violence incidents, though they tend to represent a smaller percentage compared to young adults. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that in 2018, teens were involved in about 10% of all gun-related homicides (Bottiani et al., 2020). However, this figure varies by region; for example, in Jackson, incidents involving teenagers accounted for approximately 15% of gun violence cases in 2020. A prominent case that exemplifies this trend is the 2015 shooting of a 16-year-old girl, who was tragically caught in crossfire at a party in Jackson (Guzman, 2022). This incident underscored the alarming rise of gun violence among adolescents, often stemming from gang conflicts and retaliation.

Conversely, middle-aged individuals (aged 35-54) also play a role in gun violence statistics, though they often represent a lower percentage of offenders. Data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics shows that in 2019, individuals in this age group accounted for roughly 20% of gun-related homicides. While this is significantly lower than the percentages for younger

demographics, the motivations behind middle-aged gun violence often differ, with domestic disputes and mental health issues being more prominent factors (Boeck et al., 2020). For example, in 2017, a middle-aged man in Mississippi was involved in a domestic shooting that left two people dead, illustrating the unique risks posed by this age group in the context of gun violence.

In Jackson, the trends concerning middle-aged individuals reflect national data. In 2020, gun violence incidents involving individuals aged 35-54 accounted for about 25% of the total reported cases problem (Beardslee et al., 2021). This statistic signifies an alarming trend where gun violence among middle-aged individuals is not entirely driven by socio-economic factors but rather by personal conflicts, substance abuse, and mental health challenges. A case in point is the 2021 incident involving a 42-year-old man who fatally shot his estranged wife before turning the gun on himself (Hickey, 2024), emphasizing the tragic consequences of domestic violence.

The above literature reveals that the issue of gun violence in America, Mississippi, and Jackson has a complex relationship of age demographics. Young adults consistently emerge as the most significant offenders, followed by teens, with middle-aged individuals representing a lesser yet critical segment of gun violence cases. As trends evolve, ongoing research is essential to understand the root causes of gun violence and implement effective prevention strategies tailored to different age groups. The statistics and specific cases outlined illustrate the urgent need for comprehensive approaches to address this persistent issue across various communities. Addressing the influences of socio-economic conditions, access to firearms, and the necessity of community-based interventions remains imperative in the fight against gun violence.

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