

# Understanding School Shootings in the U.S.A, 1990- 2016

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# Outline

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- Goals and Objectives of the Project
- Importance of Study
- Overview of Methodology
- Key Findings

# Goals and Objectives

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- Expand knowledge & address gaps about the causes of school shootings
- Create open source DB that includes all publically known shootings w/at least 1 injury (1990-2016)
- Apply criminology's Developmental Social Control theory to better understand offenders
- Apply criminology's Situational Crime Prevention (SCP) to better understand events
- Produce deliverables to aid law enforcement, school officials, policy-makers, and the social sciences

# Importance

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- Impact of School Shootings
- Limitations of Existing Research
  - *The lack of valid large-scale data*
  - *The lack of detailed understanding of the school environment*
  - *Changes over time*
  - *Victim attributes*
  - *Measurement & reliability*
- *Better data=Better understanding of the problem, opportunity to assess of impact of policy initiatives.*

# Methodology: Overview

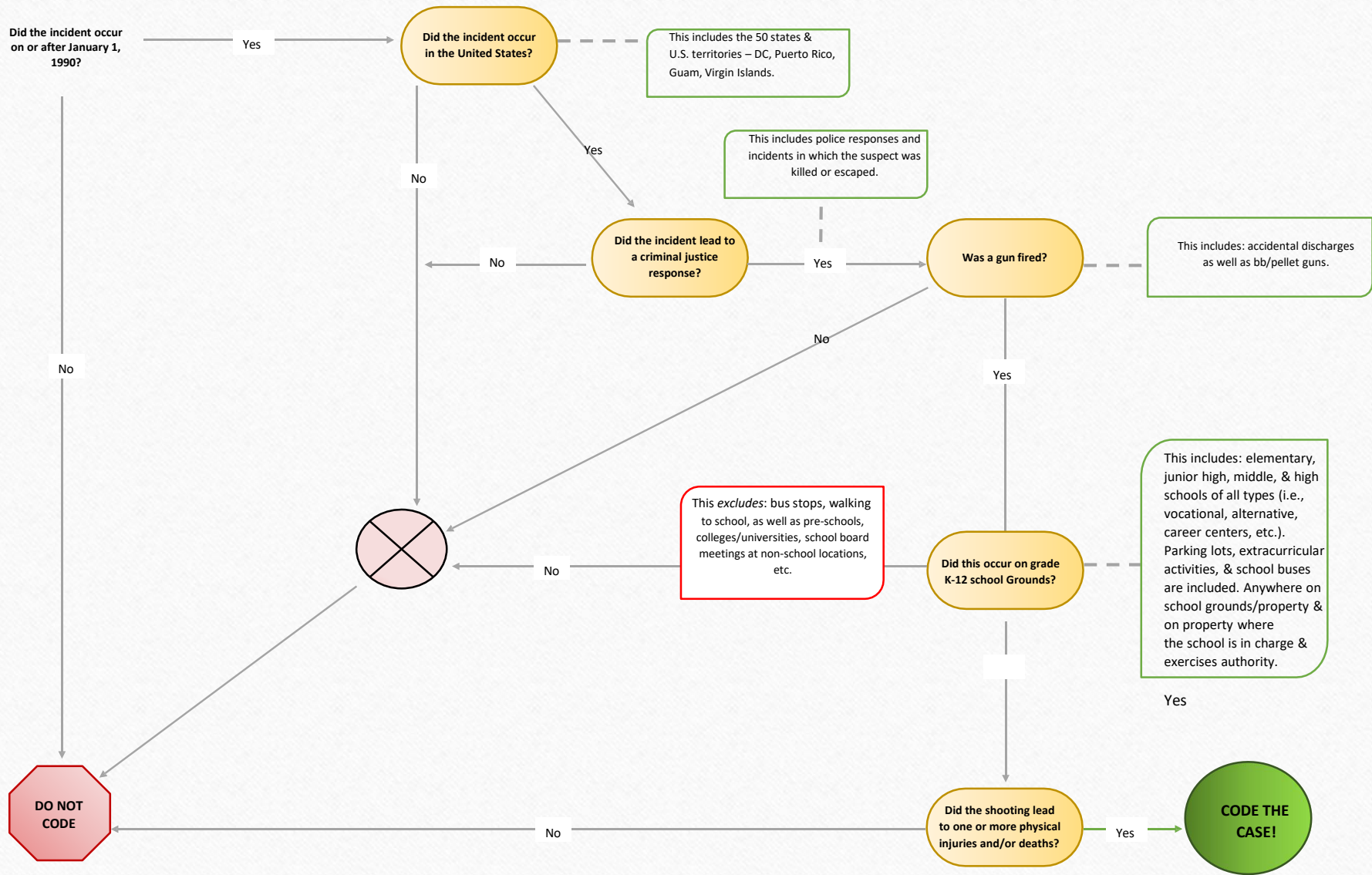
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- Quantitative Analysis
  - Open source database
    - Inclusion
    - Process
    - Assessment
- Qualitative Analysis
  - 30 Case Studies
    - Focused on in-depth capture of life course of offenders and situational crime prevention related to schools

# Inclusion Criteria

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- Open sources to ID events
- *1/1/90- 12/31/16*
- Shooting with injury/fatality on K-12 school grounds/includes outdoors; Excludes universities
- 50 states & U.S. territories
- At least 1 gun-shot/bullet injury or death
  - Includes rampage; work place; drugs; suicide; gangs, etc.
  - Excludes plots



# Identifying Cases

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- Review sources to ID relevant cases (Conducted by PIs; reviewed 35+ )
  - Scholarly; Official; Media; Watch-Group; Web-Engines, Databases
- Capture all known school shootings events reported in open sources



**Figure 2: Flow Chart of Case Identification and Inclusion for the TASSS**

Sampling Frame of Potentially Eligible Cases (n=1,378)

52.69% excluded for failing to  
meet selection criteria (n=726)

The American School Shooting Study (TASSS) v1.0, 1990-2016 (n=652)

72.55%  
voluntary/intentional  
(non-accidental) fatal  
and non-fatal  
shootings (n=473)

15.64%  
voluntary/intentional  
(non-accidental)  
self-harm shootings  
(n=102)

11.20% accidental  
shootings (n=73)

0.61% legally  
justified shootings  
(n=4)

# Searching Cases

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- Collect all publically available information on each case
  - (i) 60 web-engines searches
  - (ii) Event/offender/victim search protocol & (ii) school search protocol
- UG RAs- Extensive training:
  - Court cases (criminal & civil)
  - Department of Corrections
  - Obituaries
  - Scholarly books; other books (survivor, reporter, etc.)
  - Social media
  - Documentaries
  - Watch-groups, blogs, etc.
  - School, offender, victim photos

# Search Protocols (Sample)

MASTERFILE #:		MF 1 #	COMMENTS
Source:	Link:		
Lexis-Nexis	<a href="http://libguides.lib.msu.edu/az.php?q=nexis%20uni">http://libguides.lib.msu.edu/az.php?q=nexis%20uni</a>	Y	E.g. "used x and y search terms. # articles found"
Proquest	<a href="https://search-proquest-com.proxy2.cl.msu.edu/criminaljusticeperiodicals/index?accountid=12598">https://search-proquest-com.proxy2.cl.msu.edu/criminaljusticeperiodicals/index?accountid=12598</a>	Y	
Yahoo	<a href="https://www.yahoo.com/">https://www.yahoo.com/</a>	Y	
Bing	<a href="https://www.bing.com/">https://www.bing.com/</a>	Y	
Google	<a href="https://www.google.com/">https://www.google.com/</a>	Y	
Newsbank	<a href="http://infoweb.newsbank.com.proxy1.cl.msu.edu">http://infoweb.newsbank.com.proxy1.cl.msu.edu</a>	Y	
Google Scholar	<a href="https://scholar.google.com/">https://scholar.google.com/</a>	Y	
USA.gov	<a href="https://www.usa.gov/">https://www.usa.gov/</a>	Y	
Google Video	<a href="https://www.google.com/videohp">https://www.google.com/videohp</a>	Y	
Google News	<a href="https://news.google.com/?hl=en-US&amp;gl=US&amp;ceid=US:en">https://news.google.com/?hl=en-US&amp;gl=US&amp;ceid=US:en</a>	Y	
Google Images	<a href="https://www.google.com/imghp?hl=en">https://www.google.com/imghp?hl=en</a>	Y	
School Shooters Info	<a href="https://schoolshooters.info/browse-library">https://schoolshooters.info/browse-library</a>	Y	

Table 1. Estimated Open-Source Data Coverage for Intentional U.S. School Shootings Involving Publicly Known Shooters (n=352)

Document Type	Total	Mean	Median	St.Dev.	Min	Max
Court	210	<b>0.60</b>	0.00	2.62	0	37
Police	709	<b>2.01</b>	0.00	7.90	0	76
Other Government	443	<b>1.26</b>	1.00	1.90	0	19
Education/School	90	<b>0.26</b>	0.00	3.24	0	51
News Media	26983	<b>76.66</b>	25.00	158.49	0	2078
Scholarly	612	<b>1.74</b>	1.00	3.60	0	21
Websites	627	<b>1.78</b>	1.00	31.53	0	20
Other	545	<b>1.55</b>	0.00	4.47	0	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>30148</b>	<b>85.65</b>	<b>31.50</b>	<b>165.23</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2091</b>

# Data Capture: Codebooks

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- Offender level DB
  - Operationalize Developmental Social Control
- Event AND school databases
  - Operationalize Situational Crime Prevention
  - Extend ECDB
- Case study template (Developmental Social Control & SCP)

Figure 3. Yearly Prevalence of Fatal and Non-Fatal U.S. School Shootings, 1990-2016 (n=652)

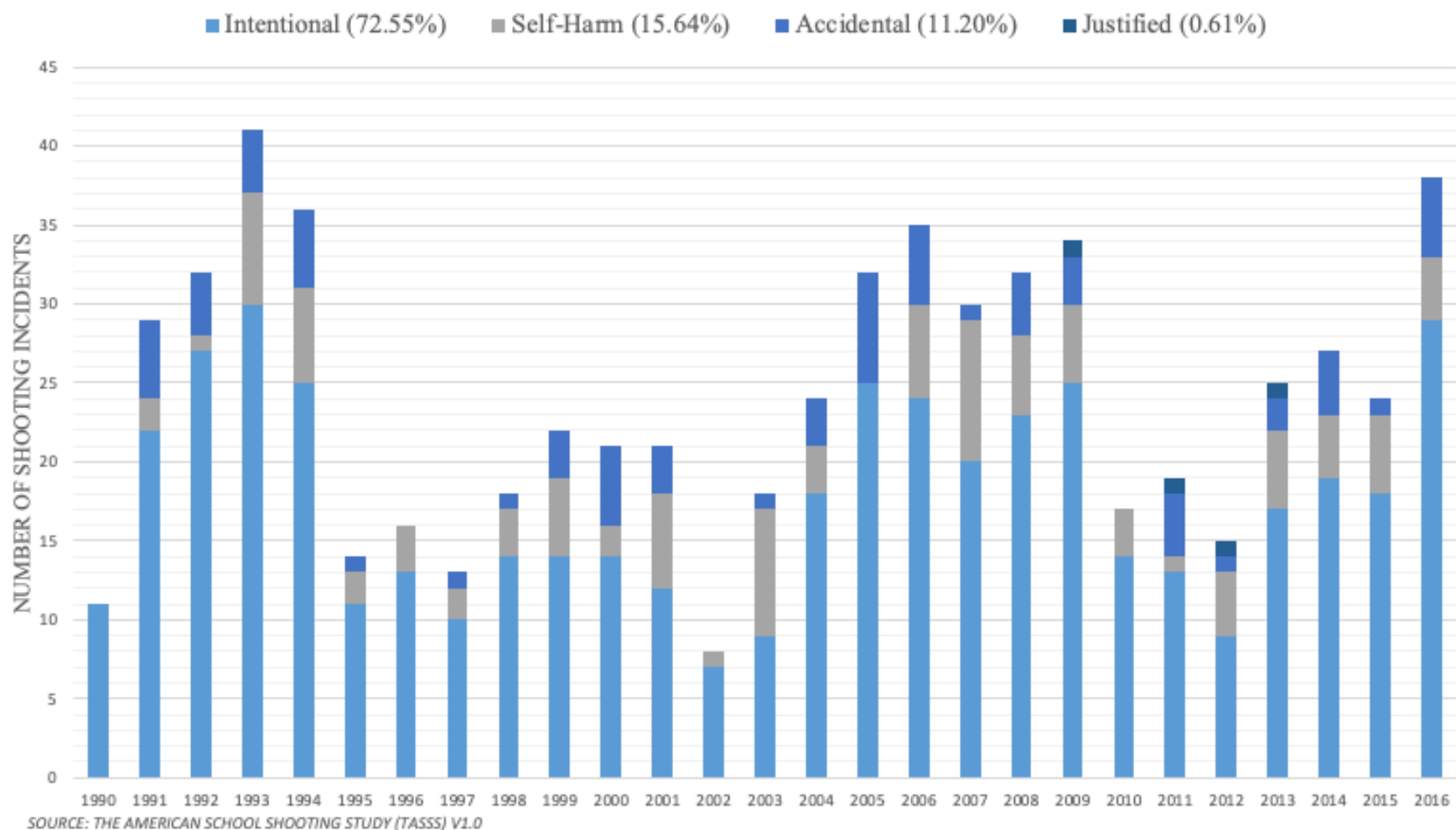
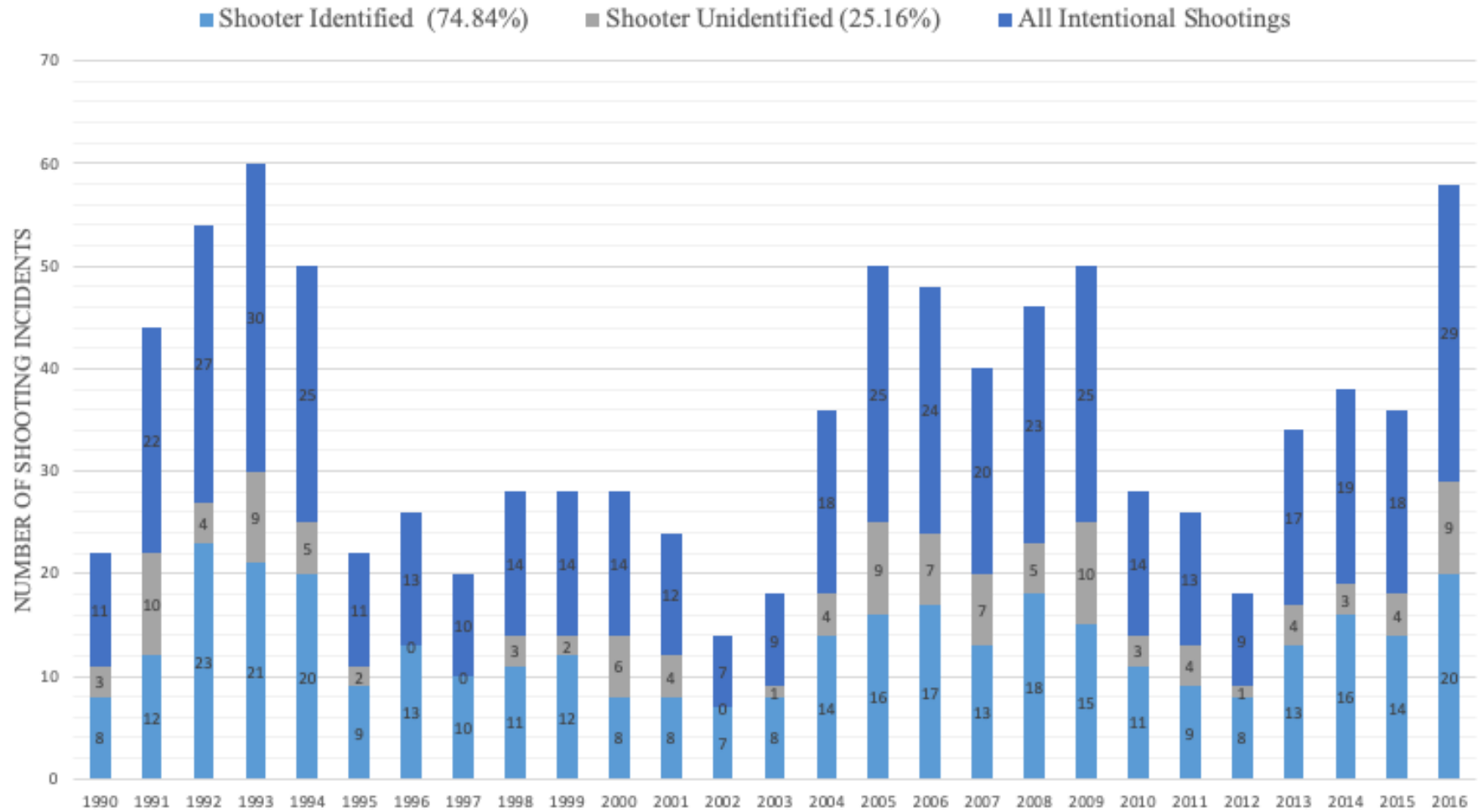
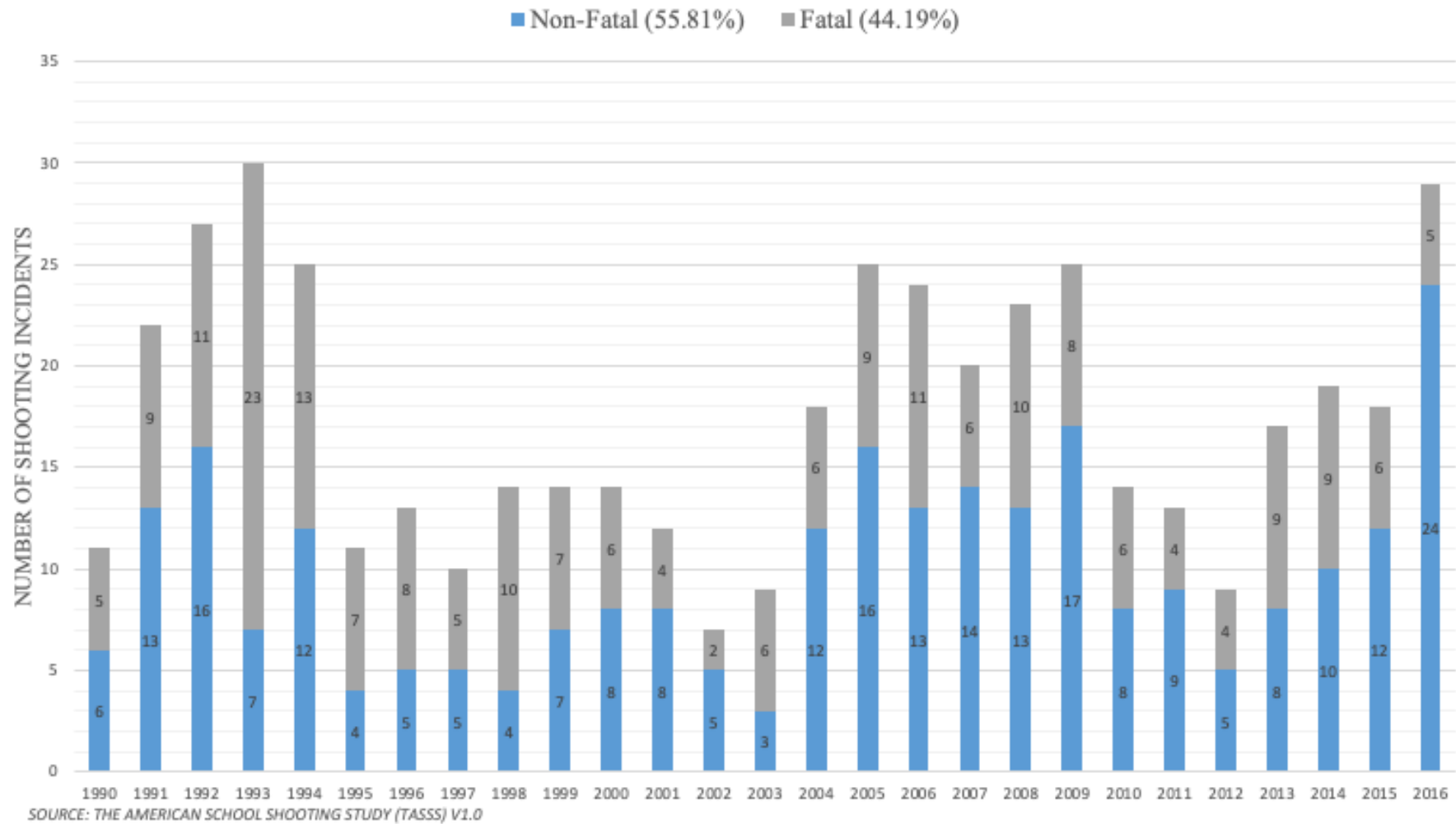


Figure 4. Yearly Prevalence of Intentional U.S. School Shootings, 1990-2016  
(n=473)

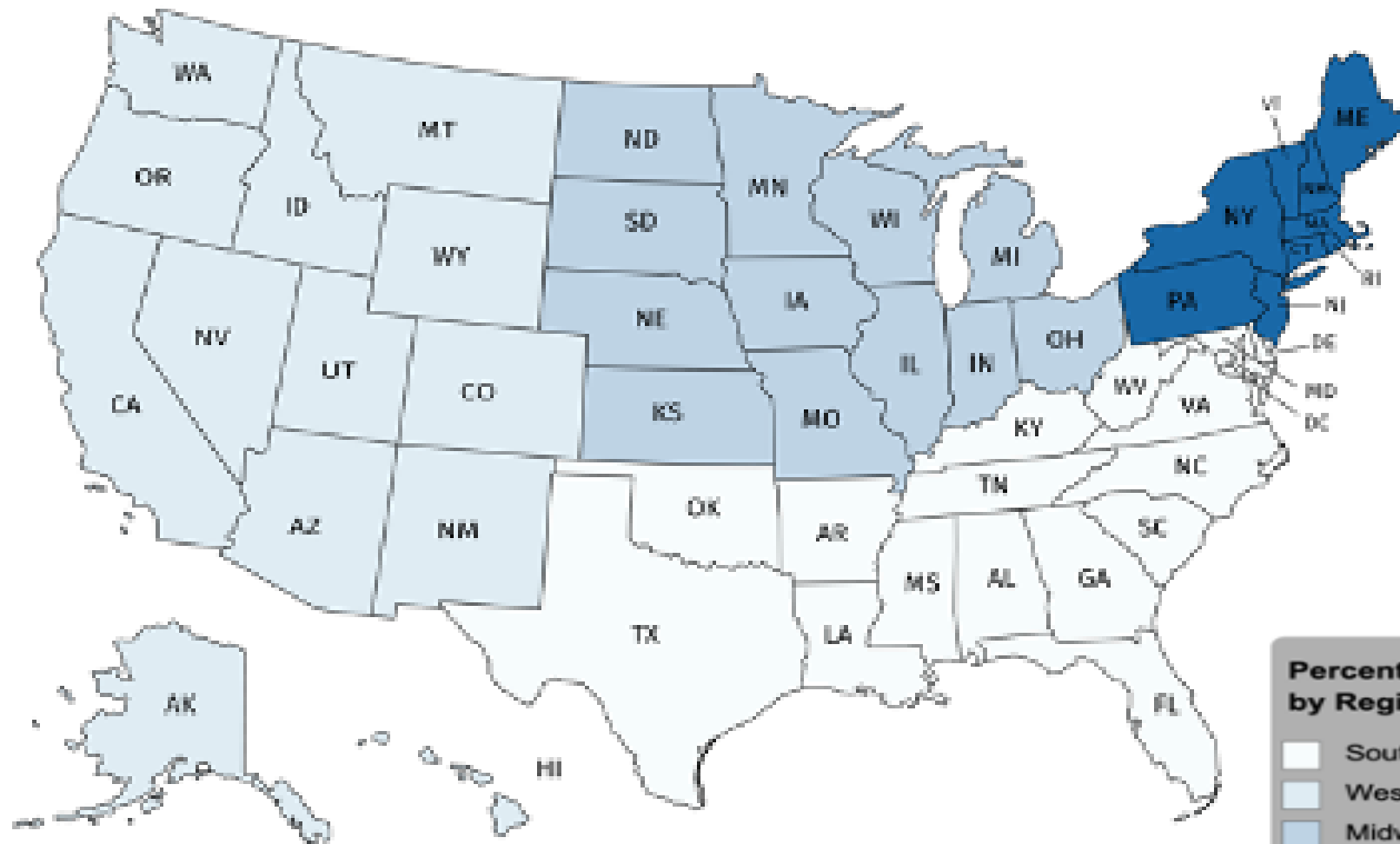


SOURCE: THE AMERICAN SCHOOL SHOOTING STUDY (TASSS) V1.0

Figure 5. Yearly Prevalence of Intentional U.S. School Shootings by Fatal & Non-Fatal Encounters, 1990-2016 (n=473)







**Percentage of School Shootings by Region**

- South (43.23%)
- West (23.44%)
- Midwest (21.00%)
- Northeast (12.33%)

**Table 2. Characteristics of Adolescent and Adult School Shooters**

Variables	Adolescent (N=250)	Adult (N=102)
<b>Severity</b>		
Fatal	116/46.4%	65/63.7%
Non-Fatal	134/53.6%	37/36.3%
<b>Number of Mass Shootings</b>		
+3 Fatal Victims	8/3.2%	3/2.9%
+4 Fatal Victims	4/1.6%	3/2.9%
<b>Location</b>		
Inside School	105/42.0%	29/28.4%
Outside School	145/58.0%	73/71.6%
<b>Timing</b>		
During School Hours	108/43.2%	28/27.5%
Before/After School Hours	142/56.8%	74/72.5%
<b>Student Status</b>		
Current Student	142/56.8%	N/A

# SCP/Case Study Results

- SCP Findings

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  - 5% Metal Detectors
  - 45% School Guards/Officers
  - 27% Barriers
  - 70% Limited Access
- Criminal Opportunities
  - Easy Access to School
  - Access to Gun
- Leakage
  - Number leaked
  - Time to Shooting
  - Response