



*A Research Initiative of The Texas A&M University System at Tarleton State University*

# **Mass Shootings and Workplace Violence in the United States**

# Methodology

**IPAC conducted analysis of The Violence Project database in four areas**

- Shooters
- Victims
- Weapons
- Locations

Peterson, J., & Densley, J. (2021). *The Violence Project database of mass shootings in the United States, 1966–2020*.  
<https://www.theviolenceproject.org>

# Mass Shooting Definition

A multiple homicide incident in which **four or more victims** are murdered with **firearms**—not including the offender(s)—within one event, and at least some of the murders occurred in a **public location**, and the murders are not attributable to any other underlying criminal activity (armed robbery, argument, romantic triangle).

# Why Begin in 1966?

- Peterson and Densley date the beginning of mass shootings to 1966 when Charles Whitman climbed the tower at the University of Texas and began indiscriminately killing people.
- They classify this as the first indiscriminate mass shooting during the age of a national media coverage. Thus, subsequent shootings had enough media coverage to provide researchers the opportunity develop the variables necessary to conduct analysis.

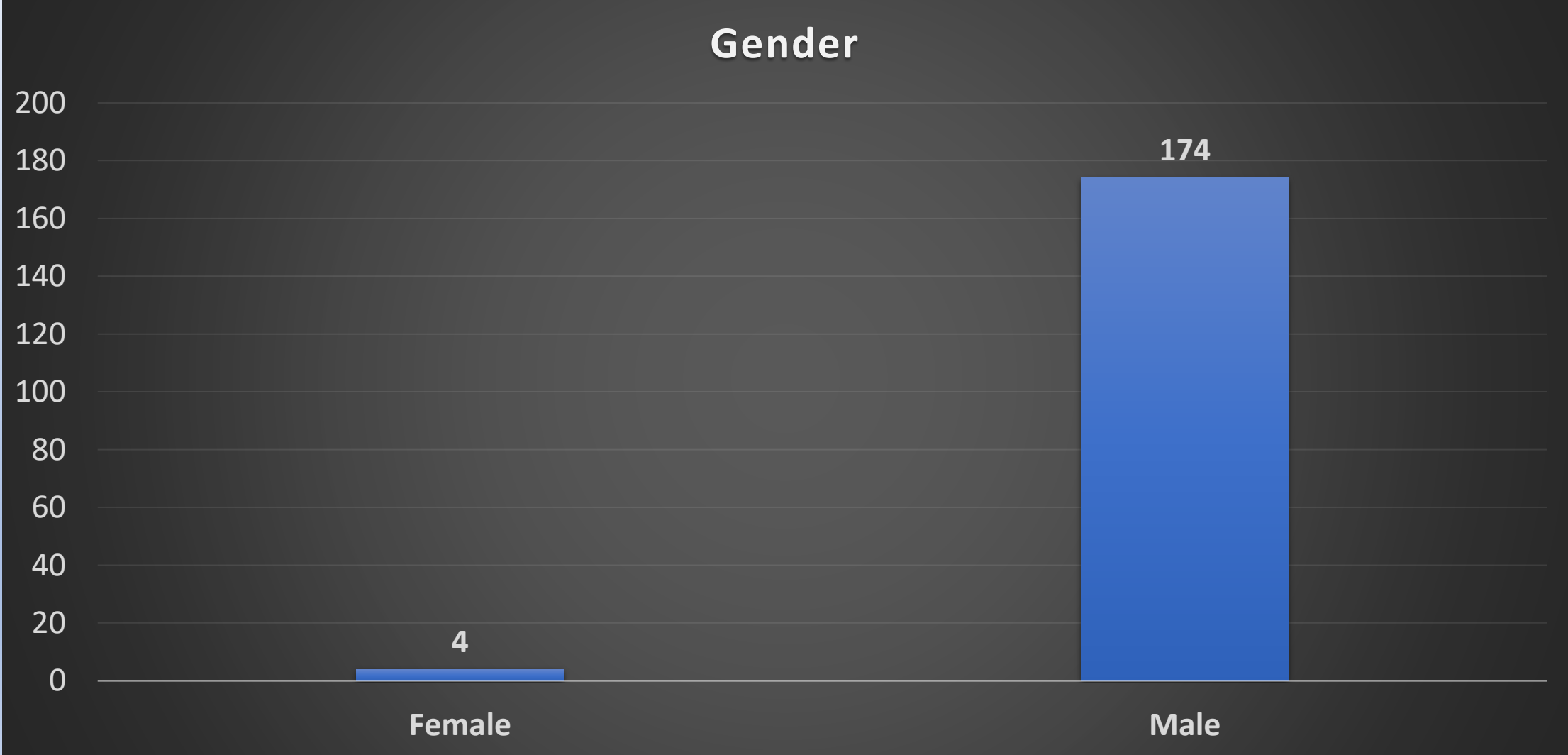
# Mass Shootings in Texas

- 1966—University of Texas
- 1980—Restaurant in El Paso
- 1980—Church in Daingerfield
- 1982—Workplace in Grand Prairie
- 1984—Restaurant in Dallas
- 1991—Restaurant in Killeen
- 1995—Workplace in Corpus Christi
- 1999—Church in Fort Worth
- 2000—Workplace in Irving
- 2001—Business in Houston
- 2005—Church in Honey Grove
- 2009—Military base in Killeen
- 2015—Outdoors in Anderson
- 2016—Outdoors in Dallas (DPD officers killed)
- 2017—Church in Sutherland Springs
- 2018—School in Santa Fe
- 2019—Business in El Paso
- 2019—Outdoors in Odessa
- 2022—School in Uvalde

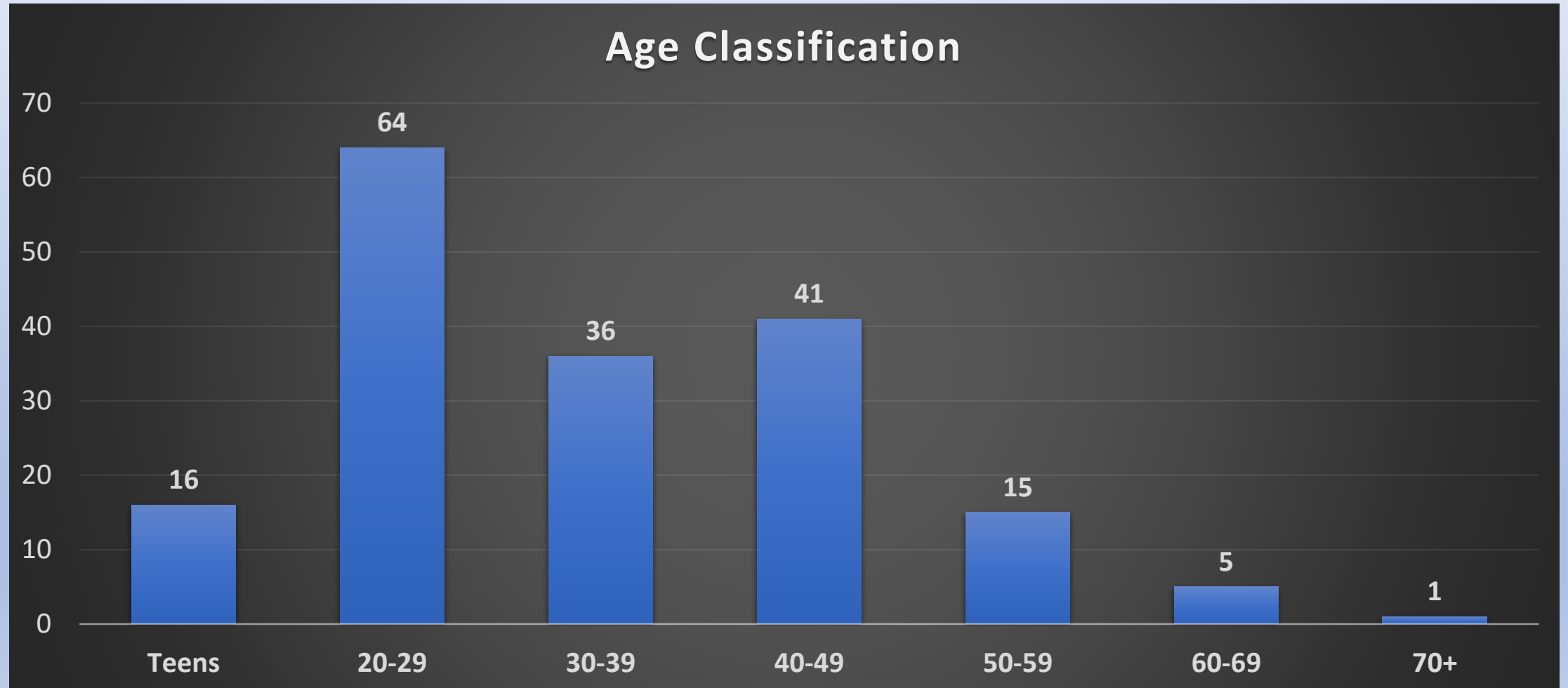
# About the Database

- **The Violence Project** database captures details on 178 mass shootings, beginning with 1966 University of Texas shooting. The database has carefully coded numerous variables on each mass shooting, allowing for a rich research environment.

# About the Shooters

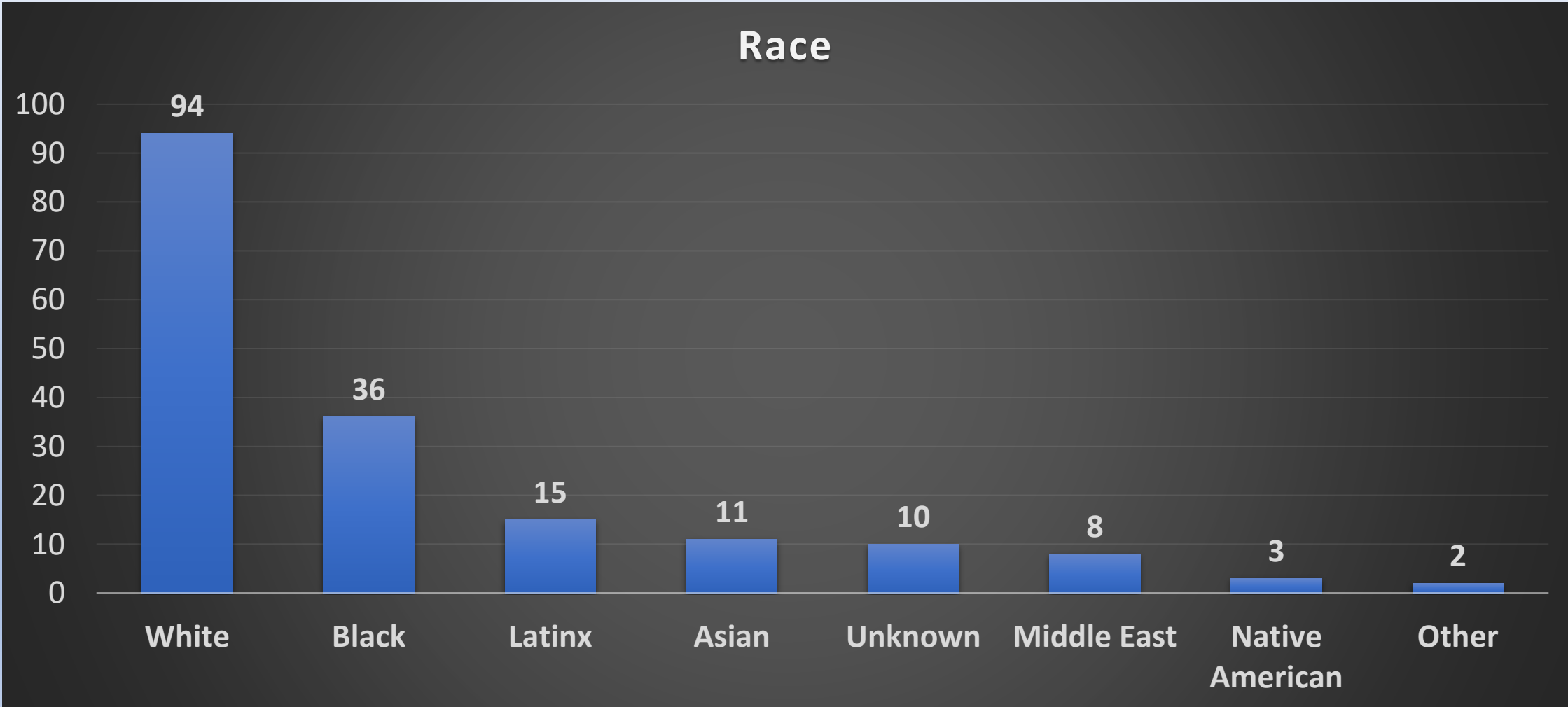


# About the Shooters





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- **Race.** While Whites make up the majority of the mass shooters, the trend over the last twenty years is becoming increasingly diverse.
- **Relationships.** The shooters also have a higher likelihood of not being in a relationship (single, divorced, separated, etc.).
- **Mental Illness.** Approximately 69% of mass shooters exhibited signs of mental illness.

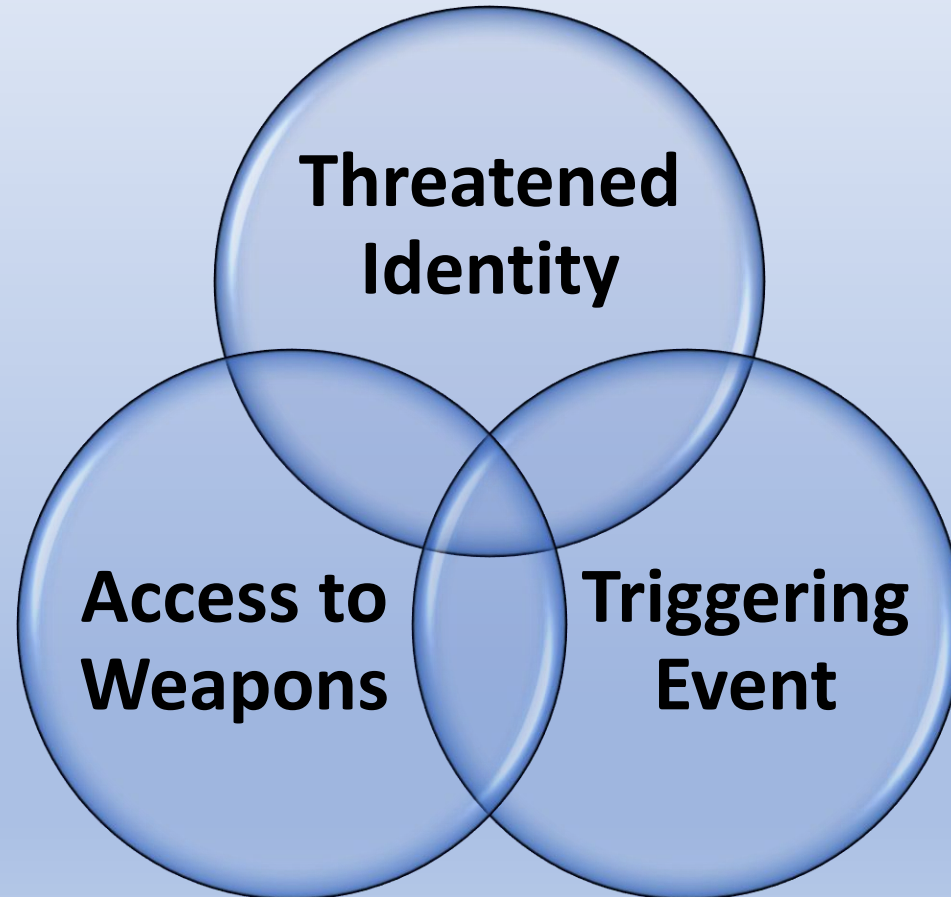
# About the Shooters

- **Criminal History.** Approximately 65% of mass shooters had a prior history of criminal activity.
- **Recent Employment Change.** Prior to engaging in a mass shooting, fifty-five percent (55%) of shooters had experienced a recent employment change. Employment change is understood as either termination, demotion, or passed over for promotion. ***When controlling for only workplace shootings, the percentage rose significantly to 78%.***
- **Insider Relationships.** Most mass shooters did not have a relationship to the location of the shooting. The exceptions to this are school shootings and workplace shootings.

# About the Shooters

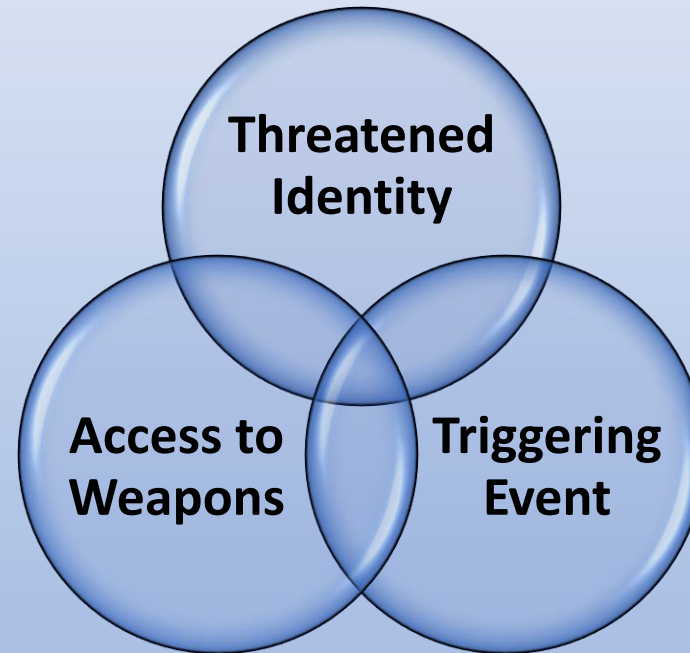
- **Aggrieved Entitlement.** Researchers believe evidence supports a finding of aggrieved entitlement as a contributing factor to mass shootings. When a person has an identity of privilege (White, male, etc.) and they do not perceive that they are reaping the benefits of that privilege, they may experience what sociologists refer to as aggrieved entitlement. That is, they may believe they are entitled to something their identity privilege did not secure for them, and feel empowered by that privilege to use revenge to exact that which they believe themselves entitled. In this study, this is most noticeable among males (gender privilege), which account for 98% of the shooters.

# Elements of Mass Shootings

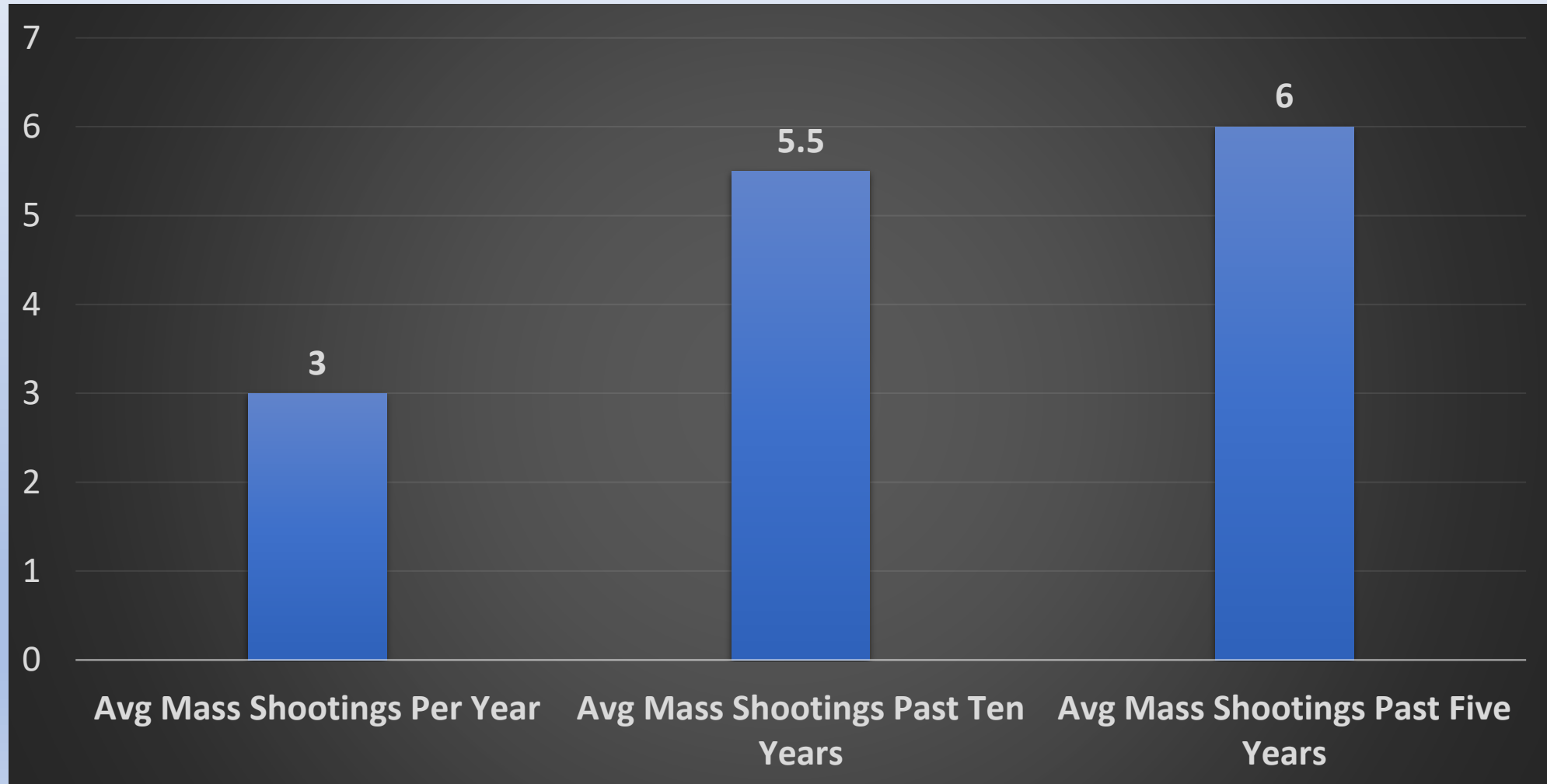


# Elements of Mass Shootings

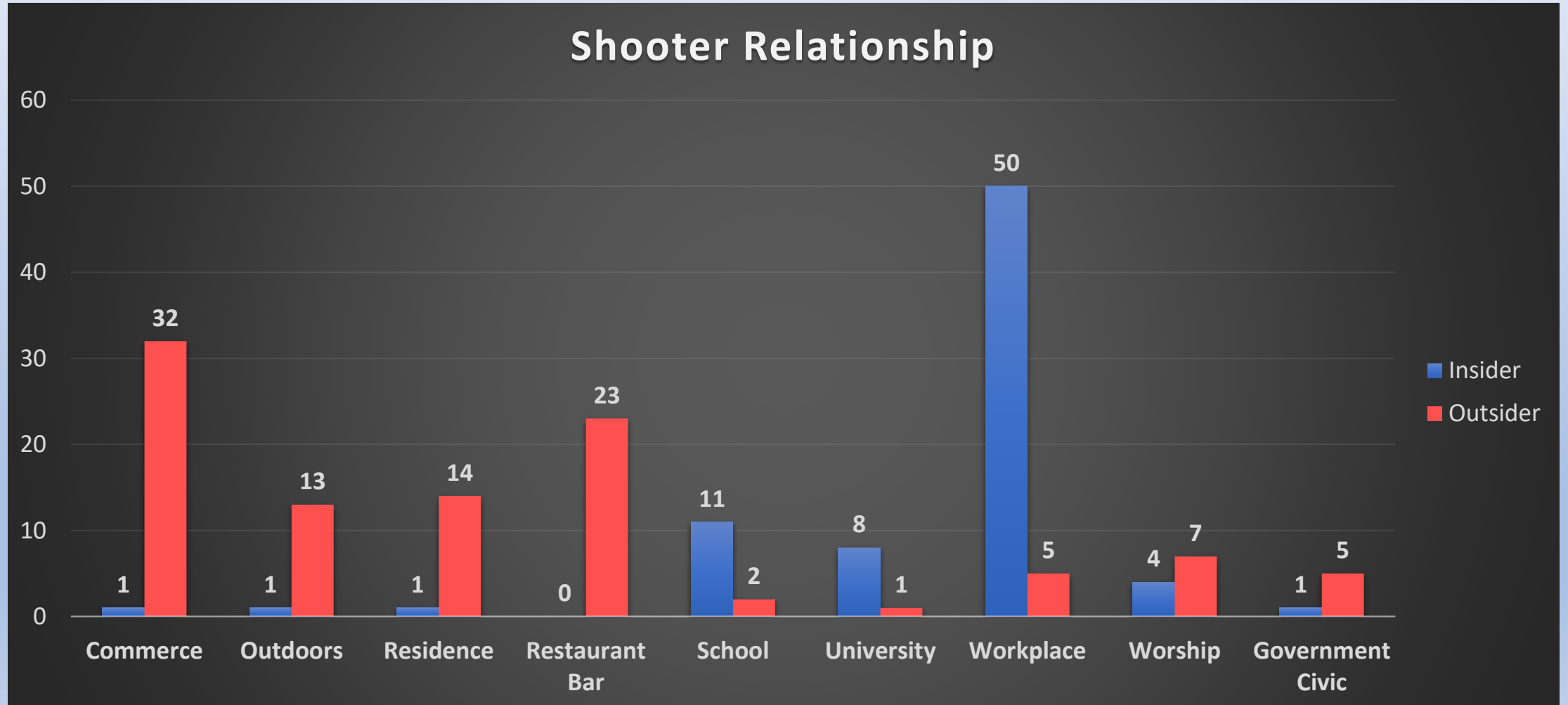
- If any element is removed, the requisite conditions to generate a mass shooting are eliminated.
  - No triggering event = No shooting
  - No access to weapons = No shooting
  - No threat to identity = No shooting



# Increasing Frequency of Mass Shootings

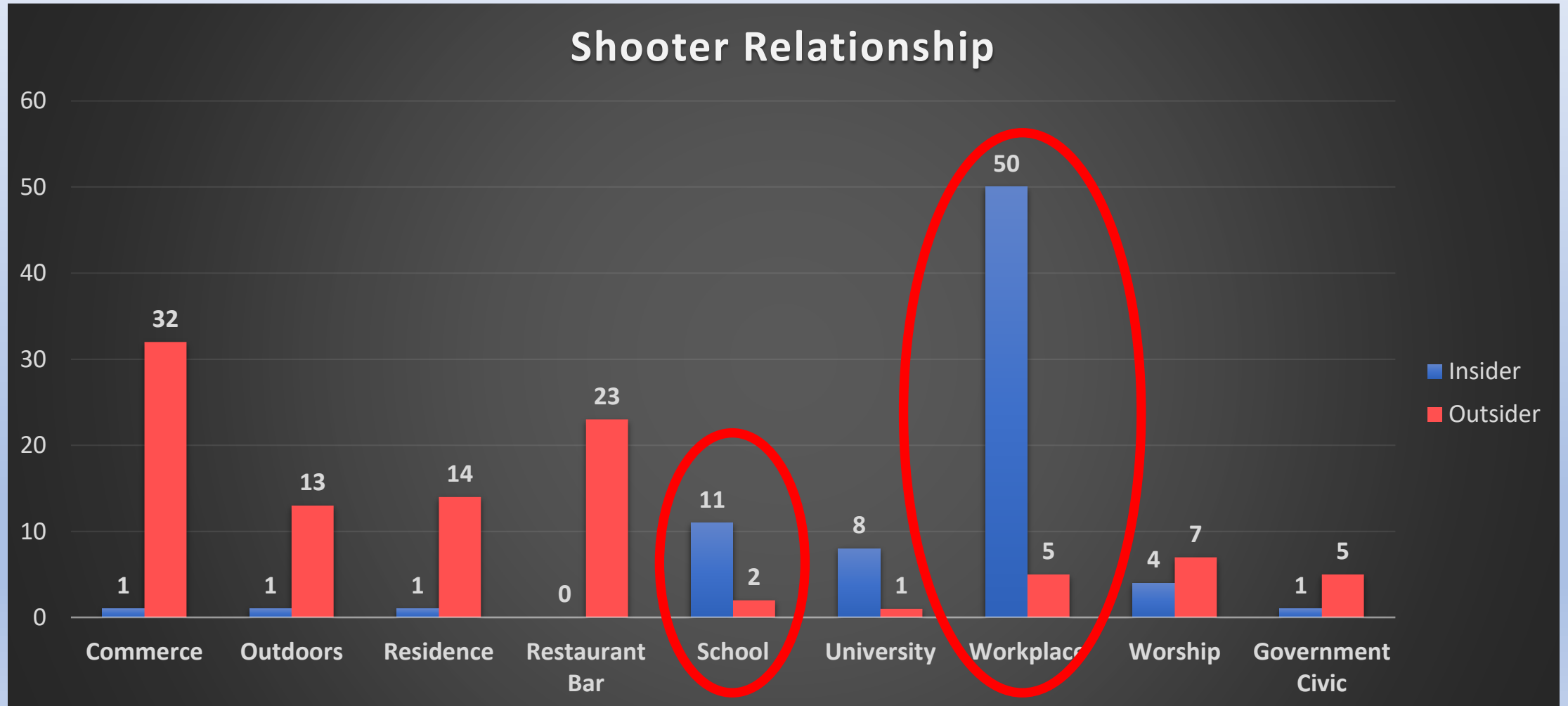


# Increasing Frequency of Mass Shootings

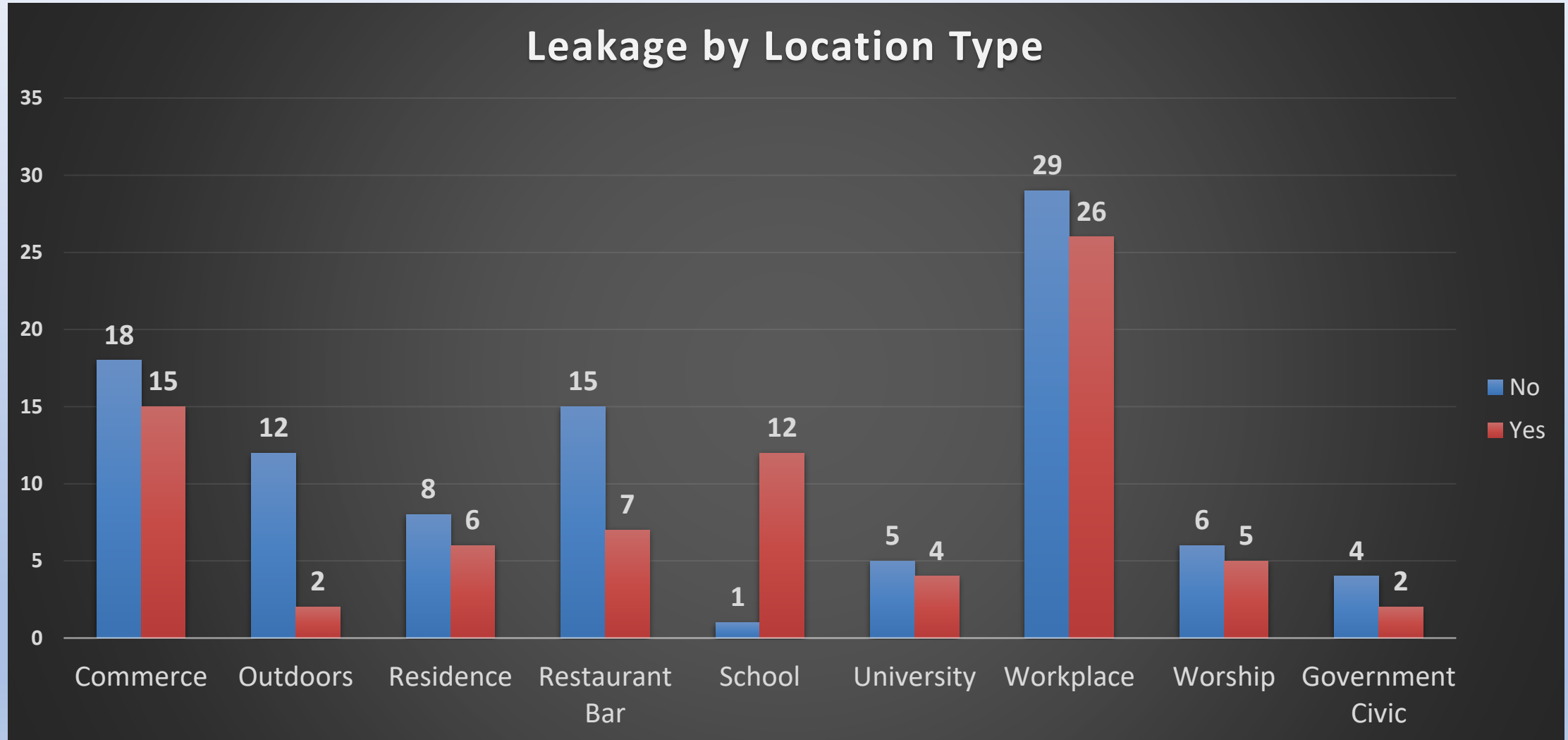




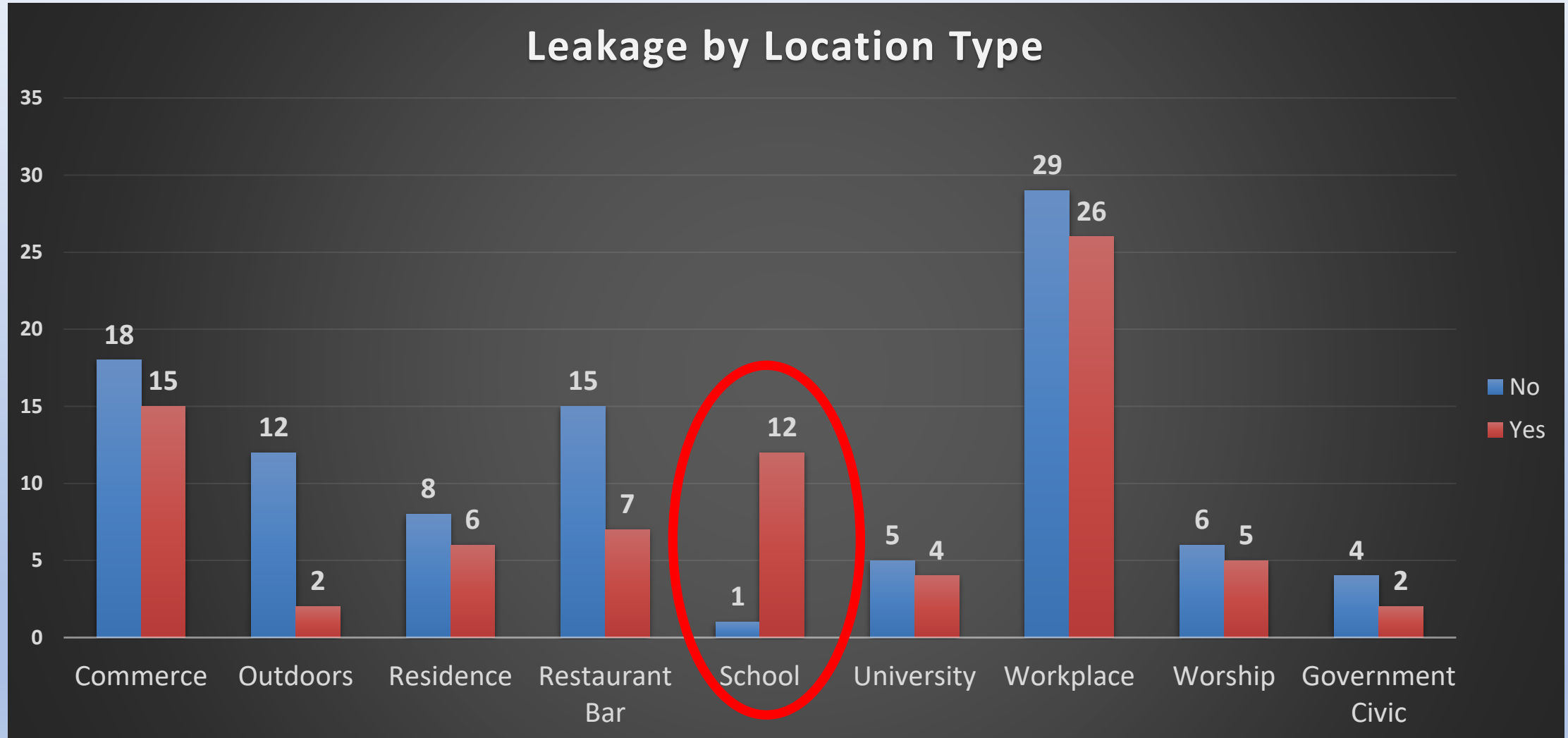
# Increasing Frequency of Mass Shootings



# Leakage—Whether shooters forecast their intentions



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# Recommendations

- **Workplace Shootings**—Employment leaders should be fluent with their personnel and emerging employment issues. They should also remain vigilant following employee discipline (termination, demotion, reassignment, reprimands, etc.).
- **Schools Shootings**—Educational leaders should take proactive steps with students who indicate potentially threatening language, or even those who indicate suicidal ideation. Since most school shooters have a penchant for forecasting mass shootings (leakage), all such communication should be taken seriously. Families are often the first to recognize potential crises, and are encouraged to report concerns to appropriate authorities.

# Recommendations

- **Early Interventions Systems**—Employers and schools are encouraged to develop and implement some kind of early intervention system which recognizes an emerging trend before the advent of a crisis.
- **Weapon Acquisition**—A recent purchase or acquisition of a weapon normally does not mean an imminent threat of mass shooting. However, among mass shooters, recent acquisition may be an indicator of potential crisis. Also, many young shooters gain access to weapons in their own home, thus families should be vigilant to keep weapons safe.

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