

Declaration of Authenticity

I, the undersigned, SARRADJ Siham, declare that I am the legitimate author of the present dissertation, and that this thesis is my original work, gathered and utilized especially to fulfil the purposes and objectives of this study.

I also declare that this work has not been previously submitted to any other university for a higher degree.

Signature

Acknowledgments

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In the memory of Dr BENALI Rachid, the model teacher who inspired me, and left an immortal handprint on my heart. You were a special educator, an honorable tutor, and a friend that only comes along once in a lifetime.

Dedication

All praise is to God Almighty. Thank you Allah for all the things you granted me unconditionally. Thank you for having given me the health and the courage to pursue my studies. Thank you for having given me the patience and the capacity to work, study and raise my lovely three flowers. Thank you for having given me a patient and a comprehensive husband.

A special debt of gratitude to my husband. Thank you for your presence, your support and your encouragement. Your unconditional help is what made this dissertation an important step in my life. Thank you so much.

To my dearest mother, lovely children Israa, Adam and Ayoub, my darling sister, and all my relatives and friends.

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To my grandmother, who left us before the accomplishment of this work. Rest in peace dear grandmother.

Abstract

School violence is a serious social problem in the United States and even in many parts of the world. It concerns not only the individuals involved, but also the parents, the teachers, the classmates and the whole community. A violent learning environment poses a real obstacle against a successful and prosperous educational process. This thesis is going to explore the problem through the lens of different perspectives, discuss the different factors contributing to school violence and school shootings, and take the reader into an in-depth analysis of 71 school attacks that took place in the United States from 1970 to 2010. In the end, this research will attempt to assess the proposed solutions and suggest alternative outlets.

Key Words: youth violence, school violence, school shootings, case studies, risk factors, safety measures.

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List of Abbreviations

ABCD: The Affective-Behavioral-Cognitive-Dynamic

CDC: Center for Disease Control and Prevention

CHIPS: Challenging High Intellectual Potential Students

CSPV: The Center for the Study of the Prevention of Violence

DOE: Department of Education

FDA: Food and Drug Administration

GFSZA: The Gun Free School Zone Act

MST: The Multisystemic Therapy

NCES: The National Center for Education Statistics

NCVS: The National Crime Victimization Survey

NEA: The National Education Association

NICS: National Instant Criminal Background Check System

NRO: The National Rifle Organization

PATHS: Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies

UNODC: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

WHO: World Health Organization

NICS: The National Instant Criminal Background Check System

NFA: The National Firearms Act

FFA: The Federal Firearms Act

FOPA: The Firearms Owners' Protection Act

CCA: The Crime Control Act

OJJDP: The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

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Introduction

Violence is broadly defined as a deliberate use of power against oneself, someone else or a group of persons.¹ Violent acts may be divided into two large categories: lethal and non-lethal violence. By lethal violence we mean, acts of violence that result directly in the death of the assaulted person like gun violence, and by non-lethal violence we mean, non-deadly acts of violence like sexual and psychological violence, but which still leave the victim with long-lasting psychological and/or physical injuries. Vulnerable people, and by that we refer to; women, children and the elderly, are usually the ones who suffer more from non-lethal acts of violence.²

Violence, with all its various types combined, is perceived as a very serious “public health, human right, and human development problem.”³ It is one of the leading causes of death in many parts of the world. Acts of violence, account for more than 1.4 million deaths worldwide every year.⁴ That is to say, more than 3800 people lose their lives every day as a result of violence. Globally, these deadly acts of violence are caused by: acts of self-directed violence like suicide, which account for 56% of the total deaths, interpersonal violence like intimate violence, which account for 33%, and collective violence like wars, which account for 11%.⁵

This dissertation, however, is going to focus on three main sub-branches of interpersonal violence, which are: youth violence, school violence and school gun violence. That is, we are going

¹ Alexander Butchart and Christopher R Mikton, Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2014, *World Health Organization*, 2014, 2.

² "Global Plan of Action to Strengthen the Role of the Health System within a National Multisectoral Response to Address Interpersonal Violence, in Particular against Women and Girls, and against Children," *WHO, 2016*: 4. <https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/global-plan-of-action/en/>. (Accessed February 22, 2018).

³ WHO, "10 Facts About Violence Prevention," <https://www.who.int/features/factfiles/violence/en/>. (Accessed February 02, 2019).

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

first of all, to start with apprehending the problem of youth violence in general, then we will move to school violence, and then to lethal school violence. This gradual move, is in fact quite important in paving the way for the reader, in order to completely and clearly understand the problem of youth gun violence in general, and the problem of school shootings in particular.

Indeed, the problem of youth gun violence in the U.S is so serious that it was compared to “an epidemic” that quickly and severely affects a large number of people. The President of the American College of Emergency Physicians, Dr. Jack Allison, referred to gun violence in the United States as a “shameful epidemic.”⁶ Dr. Alison used the word “shameful” in referring to the fact that, though the epidemic of gun violence is somehow unique to the United States in comparison with other industrialized countries, the country has not taken definitive solutions to curb “the preventable epidemic” of gun violence.⁷ He declared: “gunshot wounds are the second leading cause of death for children ages 10-19 in the United States...a child in the United States is far more likely to catch a bullet than the measles.”⁸

Same opinion was shared by Philip J. Cook and Jens Ludwig authors of *Gun Violence: The Real Costs* (2000), who compared gun violence in the U.S to an infectious viral disease that necessitates an urgent intervention. They wrote:

All across America in the late 1940s and early 1950s, polio changed the face of childhood...between 1947 and 1959, 17,000 died and hundreds of thousands were disabled. With the introduction of the Salk vaccine in 1955... the savings to society from this miracle include the costs avoided from acute and long term medical care of victims, the suffering of victims and their families, and the lost productivity of those who died young or were permanently disabled...The analogy with gun violence is clear. While it is hard to imagine a “vaccine” ...the savings would include, as in the case of polio, both the elimination of costs stemming from victimization, plus the costs of all the efforts to deter shootings or protect from them.⁹

⁶ Ogle, Donna, Ronald M Klemp, and Bill McBride. *Building Literacy in Social Studies: Strategies for Improving Comprehension and Critical Thinking*. ASCD, 2007. 171.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Philip J Cook and Jens Ludwig, *Gun Violence: The Real Costs*, (Oxford University Press on Demand, 2000,) 48-49.

From both declarations, one can deduce that the problem of youth gun violence in the U.S is so serious that it was labelled “an epidemic,” and it is so dangerous that it was compared to a deadly disease like Polio. Thus, the solutions have to be that firm in order to address this issue effectively. Yet, due to the complexity of the entire problem of armed violence in the U.S, the solutions have never been totally achieved, and the problem is still continuing to exist despite all the efforts that have been displayed by the federal and the local governments.

In this dissertation, we will try to evaluate all the proposed solutions, in an attempt to look for some loopholes that might help us drawing an objective general deduction. We will scrutinize the problem of school gun violence in the U.S taking into consideration; the problem of violence, youth violence and youth gun violence. That is, we will overwhelm the problem of violence among youths from various sides, see it from different perspectives, illustrate with real examples, in order to try to puzzle out the seemingly mysterious phenomenon.

However, “this happy ending” will be very challenging because of the peculiarity of this issue in this atypical nation, which is the United States of America. As we know, this country was basically and historically founded on the concept of “individual liberties.” By individual liberties we mean, the freedom to worship or not, the freedom of the press, the freedom of speech, the freedom of assembly, and the freedom to dissolve the government. All these liberties have got a constitutional immunity against any infringement.¹⁰ This is not all, American citizens have also got the right to bear and possess arms guaranteed by the U.S Constitution.¹¹ Hence, among the important research questions of this work will be: how can the nation regulate armed violence, if the ownership of firearms is legally protected?

¹⁰ *Amendment I - the Bill of Rights*. 1789, America's Founding Documents - National Archives. <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights>. (Accessed February 02, 2019).

¹¹ *Amendment II - the Bill of Rights*. 1789, America's Founding Documents - National Archives. <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights>. (Accessed February 02, 2019).

Likewise, the problem of school shootings in the United States, which will be at the core of the present research, is also perceived as a very challenging issue, because of the unconstitutionality to totally ban private gun ownership. Indeed, the phenomenon of school shootings in the United States goes back to the 1920s, when Andrew Kehoe blew up a primary school in Michigan, killing 38 children and injuring more than 50 persons.¹² What is new, however, was the emergence of a new wave of young “criminals” who starting from the 1990s, began, on a regular basis, targeting their own classmates and their own educational institutions. Besides, this new type of school violence took another dimension, when it reached other parts of the world, leading people to speculate: what are the real causes of this “contagious American problem”? Who are these school shooters? And why do they commit similar murderous deeds?

As a matter of fact, given the regularity of violent incidents in U.S school, psychologists, sociologists, journalists and legislators, have given a special attention to this problem in order to apprehend this phenomenon, and try to propose some appropriate solutions each according to his/her own domain.

In *Why Kids Kill: Inside the Minds of School Shooters* (2009), Psychologist Peter Langman offered a psychological reading of ten school shooters, and argued that the psychological problems were the leading causes that drove those students to commit their deadly acts. Langman divided the shooters into three main categories: psychopaths, psychotics and traumatized, and explained, using convincing arguments, how each shooter showed a psychological instability long before the exhibition of his plan.¹³

¹² Tobin T Buhk, *True Crime: Michigan: The State's Most Notorious Criminal Cases*, (Stackpole Books, 2011), 50-51.

¹³ Peter F Langman, *Why Kids Kill: Inside the Minds of School Shooters*, (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2010.)

Sociologist Katherine S. Newman, in *Rampage: The Social Roots of School Shootings* (2004), on the other hand, argued that the roots of school shootings are purely social. Newman's conclusion, was based on a long investigation of two school shootings, the Heath High School Shooting in Kentucky, and the Westside Middle School Shooting in Arkansas. Newman argued how a collaborative work between the parents, the neighbors and the teachers would be quite beneficial in preventing future attacks.¹⁴

And last but not least, Journalist Dave Cullen, the author of *Columbine* (2010), gave us a different reading of the infamous Columbine High massacre that took place in 1999. In his book, Cullen denounced certain beliefs about this notorious school attack, and argued that Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, the perpetrators of the attack, were neither victims of school bullying, nor under the influence of violent media as many used to believe, but their plan was in fact a terrorist attack that failed, and everyone was supposed to die.¹⁵

In this work, however, we will try to see the problem of school shootings from different angles, in order to supply the reader with a panoramic reading of the problem as a whole. This method of addressing the topic from various points of view is quite useful in providing the reader with different perspectives, collecting as much information as possible, and avoiding being biased with a certain bias.

Furthermore, the present research is also going to take the reader into an in-depth analysis of 71 school massacres that were carried out in the United States from 1970 to 2010. This examination will compare all these cases in terms of: the sex, age, ethnicity and the motive of the shooters, as well as the location, the educational level and the source of guns. The main objective of this analytic

¹⁴ Katherine S Newman, *Rampage: The Social Roots of School Shootings*, (New York: Basic Books, 2004.)

¹⁵ Dave Cullen, *Columbine*, (New York: Twelve, 2009.)

study will be to look for some missing gaps that might help us in besieging the most prominent risk factors.

The present thesis will be divided into four main chapters, and we will proceed as follows. In the first chapter, the main goal will be to provide the reader with some basic notions that will help him draw a preliminary understanding of the problem of youth violence in general. He will be introduced to concepts like: violence, youth violence, and school violence, and he will be provided also with other important information regarding, the origins, the trends of violence and the risk factors of violence.

In the second chapter, we will tighten the research area, and focus on the problem of school attacks. We will try to locate the problem in its historical background, and attempt to answer questions like: when did the problem of school shootings start to emerge? And why is the problem of school shootings somehow unique to the United States? We will also highlight the findings of the analytic examination of the 71 cases, and try to discuss them in order to come up with a global conclusion.

In the third chapter, we will address the different risk factors that contributed directly or indirectly to the studied school shootings. That is, we will divide the risk factors into two main categories, direct and indirect risk factors. In the direct causes, we will focus on the reasons that were shared by the majority of the studied cases, and which seemed to have pushed the attackers to finalize their deadly acts. And in the indirect causes, we will debate other reasons, which were not found in all the cases, but which still have dangerous effects.

Finally, in the fourth chapter, we will attempt to evaluate the applied solutions, and answer questions like: what have been done to curb school gun violence? To what extent were the measures that were taken effective in deterring school gun violence and youth gun violence? And what other measures can be taken to prevent future attacks?

I. CHAPTER I: Introducing Violence, Youth Violence and School Violence

I.1. Introduction

According to Nelson Mandela, the use of violence became more visible and more intense starting from the twentieth century. This era knew not only the proliferation of political and economic types of violence, but also the propagation of interpersonal violence. By interpersonal violence, Mandela meant:

...the legacy of day-to-day, individual suffering ...It is the pain of children who are abused by people who should protect them, women injured or humiliated by violent partners, elderly persons maltreated by their caregivers, youths who are bullied by other youths, and people of all ages who inflict violence on themselves. This suffering – and there are many more examples that I could give – is a legacy that reproduces itself, as new generations learn from the violence of generations past, as victims learn from victimizers, and as the social conditions that nurture violence are allowed to continue...”¹(For the full quotation, consult appendix 1).

As we can see, interpersonal violence encompasses different types of violent acts, which can take place: at homes, in foster homes or at schools. Violence at schools will be at the core of the present research; however, this sub-branch of violence cannot be accurately studied in isolation with violence as a whole.

That is why, in this introductory chapter, the reader is going to be introduced first of all to the phenomenon of violence in general. That is, he will be provided by different basic concepts and definitions like: the typology of violence, the origins of violence, and the risk factors of violence. Then, he will be driven gradually to two main sub-branches of interpersonal violence, which are youth violence and school violence.

¹ Etienne G. Krug et al. eds, *World Report on Violence and Health*. (Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002.), ix.

I.2. Defining Violence

An all inclusive analysis of violence should begin by defining the term “violence” and by explaining its various forms. There exist different definitions of violence. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines violence as: “The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high like-hood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.”²

In 1996 WHO, developed a typology of violence that characterized the different types of violence (see figure 1). The typology proposed, provides us with a useful frame-work summarizing the different kinds of violence that are taking place around the world. The horizontal range shows who is affected, and the vertical range describes how they are affected.³

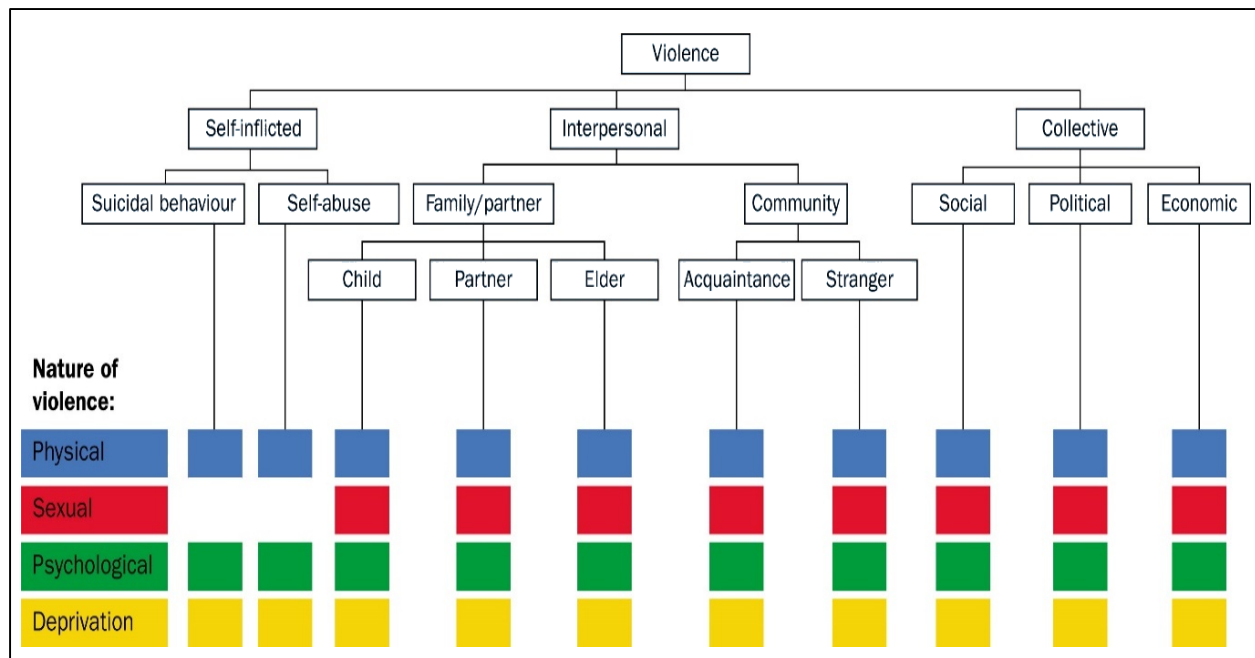
The WHO, divided violence into three major categories: self-directed violence, interpersonal violence and collective violence. Self-directed violence includes both suicidal behavior and self abuse. Interpersonal violence covers family and intimate partner violence, and community violence. The latter includes also other forms of violence like: child abuse, abuse of the elderly which encompasses youth violence, random acts of violence, rape or sexual assaults by strangers, and violence in institutional settings such as schools. Collective violence is usually committed by larger groups or by states. Examples: crimes of hate, terrorism, mob violence, and wars.⁴

² Ibid, 5.

³ Ibid, 7.

⁴ Ibid.

Figure 1: A Typology of Violence



Source: Etienne G. Krug et al. eds, *World Report on Violence and Health*. (Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002.), 7.

In psychology, violence is generally defined as “an intentional physically aggressive behavior against another person like; beating, kicking, pushing, grabbing, and using a weapon.”⁵ The definition includes also, “murder, robbery, assault and rape.”⁶

In this field, it is said that there is a close correlation between the term violence and the term aggression. In a recent article entitled “Aggression and Violence: Definitions and Distinctions” (2017), it has been argued that violence is considered by many psychologists as a “subset of aggression”, or more precisely as “an extreme form of aggression that has severe physical harm as its goal.”⁷

⁵ Jan Volvaka, “The Neuropsychology of Violence: An Update,” *The Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences* (1999): 308.

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Johnie J. Allen and Craig A. Anderson, “Aggression and Violence: Definitions and distinctions,” *The Wiley Handbook of Violence and Aggression*, (2017): 2_3.

The term aggression, on the other hand, is defined as: “a behavior that is intended to harm another person who is motivated to avoid that harm.” Consequently, all acts of violence are considered as instances of aggression, yet not all aggressive acts are considered as being violent. The difference is in the severity of the act; the more an act is severe the more it is perceived as being violent. Example: if a child pushes his brother to get back his favorite toy, this wouldn't be perceived as a violent act, but aggressive⁸.

For psychologists, especially neuropsychologists, violent acts can be divided into two main categories: impulsive and premeditated violent acts. Impulsive aggression, or reactive aggression, occurs in response to a provocation⁹, and premeditated aggression or proactive aggression, which is a more calculated type of violence, may be either predatory (committed for one's own gain; for example, a robbery) or pathological which is committed by mentally ill people acting on their delusions or hallucinations.¹⁰ The mentally ill, however, may also commit predatory or impulsive violent act.¹¹

In sociology, violence is seen as a social phenomenon. Sociologists, take into account the social situation. For them, what really matters is not why a violent act occurred, rather, why violent acts happen more in some circumstances than in others.¹² For them, a violent act generally means: “performances of power and domination offered up to various audiences as symbolic accomplishments.” Or more specifically: “any form of behavior by an individual that intentionally threatens to or does cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm to others or themselves.”¹³

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Marc T. Swogger. et al, “Impulsive versus Premeditated Aggression in the Predication of Violent Criminal Recidivism.” *Aggressive behavior* 41.4 (2015)
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4449320/> (Accessed July 24, 2018).

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Jan. Volvaka, op.cit, 308.

¹² Thomas W Blum, “Social Perspectives on Violence.” *Michigan Family Review*, (Spring 1996).

¹³ Larry Ray, *Violence and Society*, (London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE, 2011), 7.

Some sociologists divided violence into two branches, instrumental and expressive violent acts. Instrumental violence is a type of violence that is oriented to reach a specific goal, such as obtaining money, and expressive violent acts is a type of violence that is guided to meet or gratify an intrinsic emotion like hate.¹⁴ Yet, for some scientists in sociology, violence is always instrumental because it is a “rational choice” in that it is always chosen and perpetrated to achieve a specific gain.¹⁵

Indeed, unlike sociologists who do not agree on one unified definition of violence, criminologists need and tend to narrow definitions of violence, focusing on physical harm or perceived threats. For them, the broadly accepted definition of violence, defined it as “behaviors by individuals that intentionally threaten, attempt, or inflict physical harm on others.”¹⁶

As we can see, the definition of the term violence varied, to some extent, from one field to another. What is certain; however, is that violence, in all the fields, is regarded as an intentional use of force against someone else. But if the definition of violence was ‘somehow’ unified, what about the origins of violence? Do researchers offer a single analysis of violence evolution through time? Or is there a history of violence? In order to answer these questions, let us explore the origins of violence.

I.2.1 The Origins of Violence

In an attempt to locate the origins of violence, a number of philosophers, sociologists and theorists debated the topic for centuries. This debate goes back to the seventeenth century when

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Richard B. Felson, “Violence, Crime, and Violent Crime,” *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, (2009), 24.

¹⁶ Sophie Body-Gendrot and Pieter Spierenburg, eds, *Violence in Europe: historical and contemporary perspectives*, (Springer Science & Business Media, 2008), 30.

the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) argued that humans are naturally and inherently violent.¹⁷ Hobbes identified three principal causes of violence, “competition, diffidence and glory.”¹⁸ He explained that the pursuit of one of these causes lead to violence; in the sense that, man uses violence when he wants to gain control over someone, like his wife or his children. He uses violence when he wants to defend them, and when he wants to attack others for ‘reputation’ of himself, his friends, his nation, his profession, or his name.¹⁹ Hobbes added that, without a ‘common law’, people live in a continuous fear of danger and violent death.²⁰ However, with rationality and mutual self-interest, people are more persuaded to look for a peaceful social life.²¹

Hobbes’s view that the ‘natural state of man’ is one of violent, has been challenged by other philosophers like John Locke (1632-1734) and Jean Jack Rousseau (1712-1778). John Locke argued that, the state of nature is not naturally violent but sociable. He explained that people do respect one another’s individual rights, and it is the state that destroys those rights if it wants to. Rousseau added that the individuals are neither violent nor peaceful, but are the product of the environment they live in.²²

By the nineteenth century, many Victorian social thinkers, strongly believed in the existence of classless societies which were free from conflict and violence. Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) and Karl Marx (1818-1883), claimed that original pre-state societies were democratic and free from violence, and they added that class division, which is the product of capitalism, was the main cause of violence throughout history.²³ They explained that “ the appearance of the state, structured,

¹⁷ L, Ray, op. cit ., 26

¹⁸ Patricia Springborg, *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's Leviathan*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 119.

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ L. Ray, op. cit., 26

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

division of labour, patrilineal descent, enslavement of women were all part of the historical appearance of private property from which arose the violence of the dominant and subordinate strata .”²⁴

A differing point of view was expressed by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) who argued that aggressiveness is innate in the human nature.²⁵ For him, aggressive behavior is ‘deeply rooted in the psyche and independent of circumstances’. Not only that, Freud added that inflicting harm on others is sometimes a ‘need’ that has to be satisfied.²⁶

Nonetheless, Freud’s hypothesis has been criticized partly on the basis that; human’s aggressiveness can be instinctive in some cases; and this what probably explain why some persons are naturally predisposed to behave violently, yet it can be learnt; and this what was explained by the behaviorists as well as Albert Bandura (1977), who showed in the Bobo Doll Experiment (1961) how the aggressive behavior is learnt from the environment through the process of observational learning.²⁷

As we can see, there are opposite views regarding the roots of violence. While some considered it as a new behavior that has been invented by modern states; others perceived it as something natural that has coexisted with the history of humankind. But if acts of violence, for some thinkers, evolved through time, then what other factors facilitated that development?

1.2.2 Globalization and Violence

Generally speaking, globalization is defined as “the process by which the world is becoming

²⁴ Ibid., 27

²⁵ Roy F Baumeister and Brad J Bushman, "Human Nature and Aggressive Motivation: Why Do Cultural Animals Turn Violent?", *Revue internationale de psychologie sociale*. 17 (2004), 207.

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Saul McLeod, "Bandura-Social Learning Theory", Simply Psychology (2016).
<http://www.simplypsychology.org/bandura.html> (Accessed July 25, 2018)

increasingly interconnected as a result of massively increased trade and cultural exchange.”²⁸ As a matter of fact, globalization has led to a number of beneficial results like: improvements in transportation, improvements in communication, freedom of trade and availability of labor. However, in some parts of the world, globalization has led to increased inequalities in income, especially among low skilled workers, and helped destroy factors such as social cohesion that protected against interpersonal violence.²⁹ Indeed, researchers in South Africa found that “daily exposure to inequality combined with poverty, is a key driver of violence.³⁰” In addition, the removal of market constraints can lead to much freer access to alcohol, drugs and firearms,³¹ which are considered as important risk factors for violent behavior.

Not only that, according to the French expert in school violence, Eric Débarbieux, this globalized world is witnessing ‘a globalization of violence’, and the economic globalization led to serious social implications. He explained in the following terms: “the organization in Quebec, in May 2003, of the Second International Conference on School Violence in Schools, after the one organized in Paris in 2001..., is a sign of the mobilization of the scientific community around a phenomenon that is perceived as being increasingly worrying. It is an event that also raises questions about this “globalization” of school violence and about the links between this violence and economic globalization.”³² Débarbieux explained also that ‘social exclusion’ is a key factor of school violence; in the sense that, poor societies that suffer from social and income inequalities,

²⁸ BBC, “Globalisation: What is globalisation?”

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/geography/globalisation/globalisation_rev1.shtml (Accessed 25 July, 2018)

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ International Development Research Centre, "Social Cohesion: Solution or Driver of Urban Violence", Canada. <https://www.idrc.ca/sites/default/files/sp/Documents%20EN/safecities-social-cohesion-eng-web.pdf> (Accessed 25 July, 2018)

³¹ Mark Lindley, "Current Links between Globalization and Violence", *Journal of American Science* 3, n.1 (2007), 2.

³² Eric Debarbieux, "School Violence and Globalisation", *Journal of educational administration* 41, no. 6 (2003), 582.

are more at risk to experience violence; hence, there is an ‘urgent’ necessity to tackle the problem of violence in ‘deprived areas’.³³

This may imply that this new world order, is perceived as a double edged weapon, from one side it is full of promises, but from the other side it is a vicious circle, once inside, states got trapped and are incapable of regaining their previous sovereignty. As Débarbieux pointed out: “globalization leads to “the inability of states to protect their populations from the effects linked with the cynicism of markets...³⁴”.

In other words, through this rapid and widespread movement and exchange of information, ideas, services and products, globalization has destroyed the functional and political borders that separated people into sovereign states.³⁵ Companies, for instance, are no longer local, but they have become multinational corporations, and a number of social problems, like violence, are no longer regional too, but they have become universal problems. But if the prevalence of violence is ‘globalized’ and witnessed in different parts of the world, how can we justify or prove that global widespread?

I.2.3 Trends of Violence

A number of international, The World Health Organization, national (WHO), The National Crime Victimization, or individual surveys collect data regularly on violence. Yet, it is worth noticing that problems within data availability exist. For example, in a South African survey, it has been shown that between 50% and 80% of victims of violence who received medical treatment for a violence-related injury did not report the incident to the police. In another study, conducted in

³³ Ibid., 595.

³⁴ Ibid., 594 .

³⁵ M. Lindley, *op. cit.*, 2.

the United States of America, 46% of victims who sought emergency treatment did not also make a report to the police.³⁶

Statistically, the WHO revealed in its first report on violence in 2002, that about 1,6 million people lose their lives, annually, as a result of self-inflicted, interpersonal or collective violence.³⁷ Overall, it considered violence as the leading cause of death worldwide for people aged 15-44 years. The WHO, clarified that about half of these deaths were suicides, one third were homicides and one fifth were related to wars. The report added that rates of mortality varied considerably according to income levels, with more than 90% of violence-related deaths that took place in low to middle-income countries to less than 10% in high-income countries.³⁸

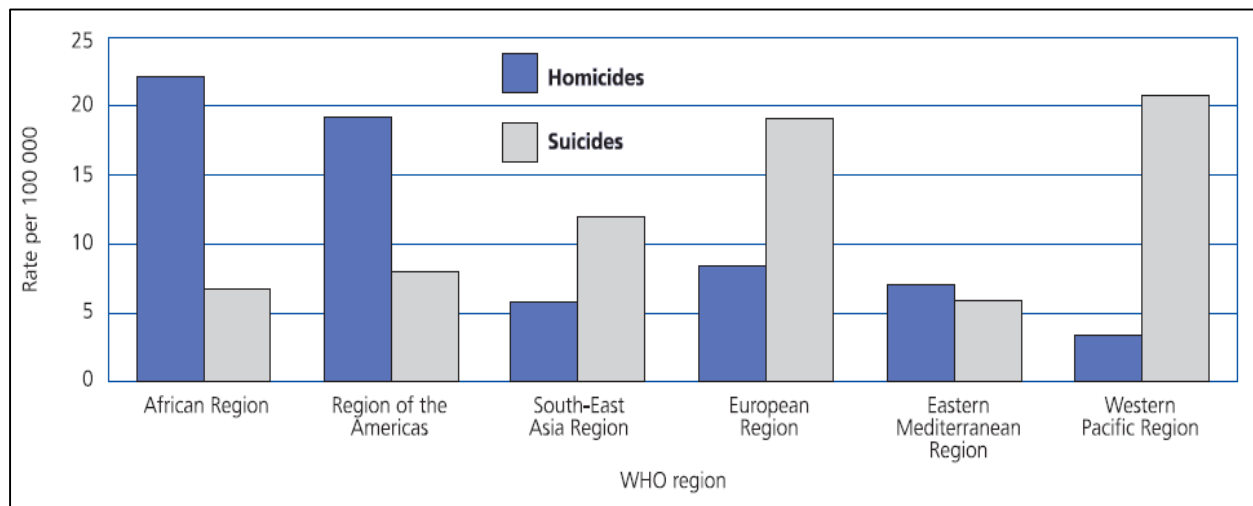
The distribution of violent acts varied also from one region to another. In the same report the WHO claimed that, in the Region of the Americas and the African Region, homicide rates were nearly three times greater than suicide rates; however, in the European and South East Asian Regions, suicide rates were more than double homicide rates.³⁹ In figure 2, we clearly notice that homicides and suicide rates fluctuate from one region to another. African region along with the Region of the Americas had the highest rate of homicide in comparison with South East Asia, European Region, Eastern Mediterranean Region and Western Pacific Region. However, Western Pacific Region, European Region and South East Asia, had higher suicide rates than the other regions combined. It is important also to highlight that suicide rates and homicide rates in Eastern Mediterranean Region are nearly the same, and suicide deaths are largely higher in Western Pacific Region in contrast with homicide.

³⁶ Krug, Etienne G, op. cit., 8.

³⁷ Ibid., 9.

³⁸ Ibid., 10.

³⁹ Krug, Etienne G, op. cit., 11.

Figure 2: Homicide and Suicide Rates by WHO Region, 2000.

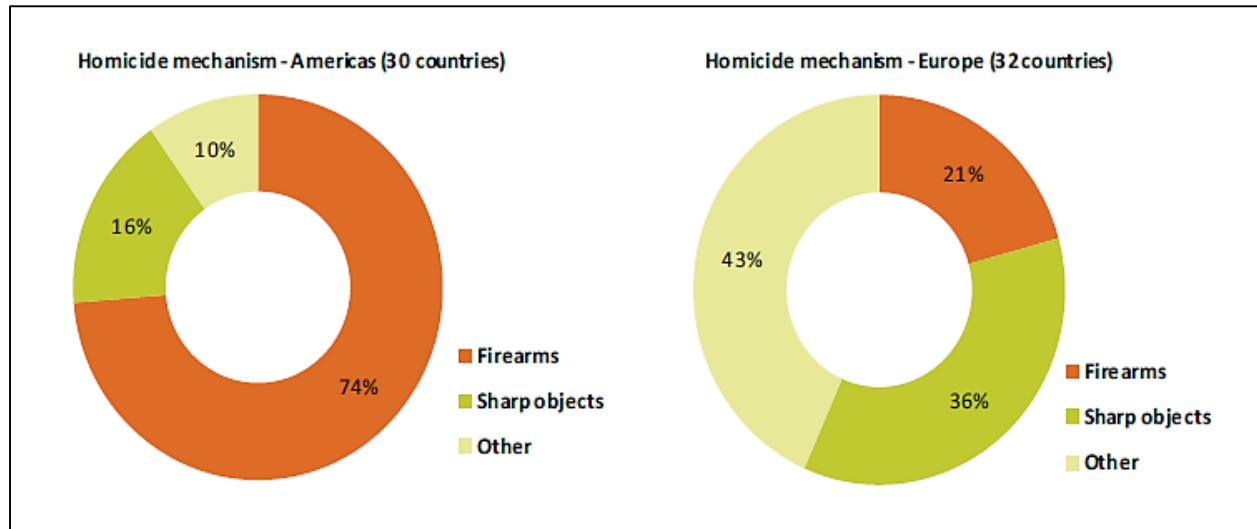
Source: Krug EG et al., eds, *World report on violence and health*, (Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002), 11.

In 2010, the total number of annual homicides estimated by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) was 468,000.⁴⁰ About 36% were estimated to have occurred in Africa, 31% in the Americas, 27% in Asia, 5% in Europe and 1% in Oceania. UNODC reported also that even though not all homicides were gun related, 42% of global homicides were actually committed by firearms. Homicides in the Americas, however, were more than three and a half times as likely to be perpetrated with a firearm than in Europe (74% vs 21%). Figure 3 below, compares homicide mechanism in 30 American countries, with 32 European countries. The figure shows that though not all homicides involve a weapon, a significant portion of homicides are perpetrated by a firearm. However, the use of guns as the method of homicides is not equally distributed. The study estimated that about 74 % of homicides in the Americas were committed by a firearm, unlike European countries, where the use of firearms was barely fixed at 21 %. In contrast, sharp objects accounted for 36 % in European countries compared to 16% in the Americas, and the use of other weapons

⁴⁰United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "2011 Global Study on Homicide: Trends, Contexts, Data", (Vienna, 2011), 40.

accounts only for 10% in the Americas but for 43% in Europe.

Figure 3: Homicide Mechanism, the Americas and Europe (2008 - 2010).



Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "2011 Global Study on Homicide: Trends, Contexts, Data", (Vienna, 2011), 40.

Indeed, the high rate of gun homicide in the Americas can be justified mainly by the high rate of firearm ownership. In 2007, the Small Arms Survey reported that the United States of America has got the highest rate of civilian firearms worldwide. The Small Arms Survey estimated the number of civilian firearm ownership in different countries worldwide. The survey found out that the USA was on the top of 40 countries with 89 firearms per every 100 people, to one firearm or less for every 100 residents in countries like South Korea and Ghana.⁴¹ (See appendix 1)

To sum up, statistically speaking, one can say that violence is considered as a universal problem. Yet, the distribution of violent acts differs considerably due to factors like: the

⁴¹ Small Arms Survey, "Estimating Civilian Owned Firearms", (September 2011), 1-2. http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/H-Research_Notes/SAS-Research-Note-9.pdf. (Accessed July 25, 2018).

geographical areas, the types of violence and the income levels. Additionally, it has also been observed that the role played by firearms in violent deaths was quite significant, and it appeared that a vicious circle connects firearm availability and higher homicide levels especially in countries like the USA.

But if the use of violence is globally present, how can we explain the presence of peaceful people who have never been involved in violent acts despite the fact that they live in sensitive geographical areas? In order to address this question, let us examine the risk factors for violence.

I.2.4 Examining the Roots of Violence

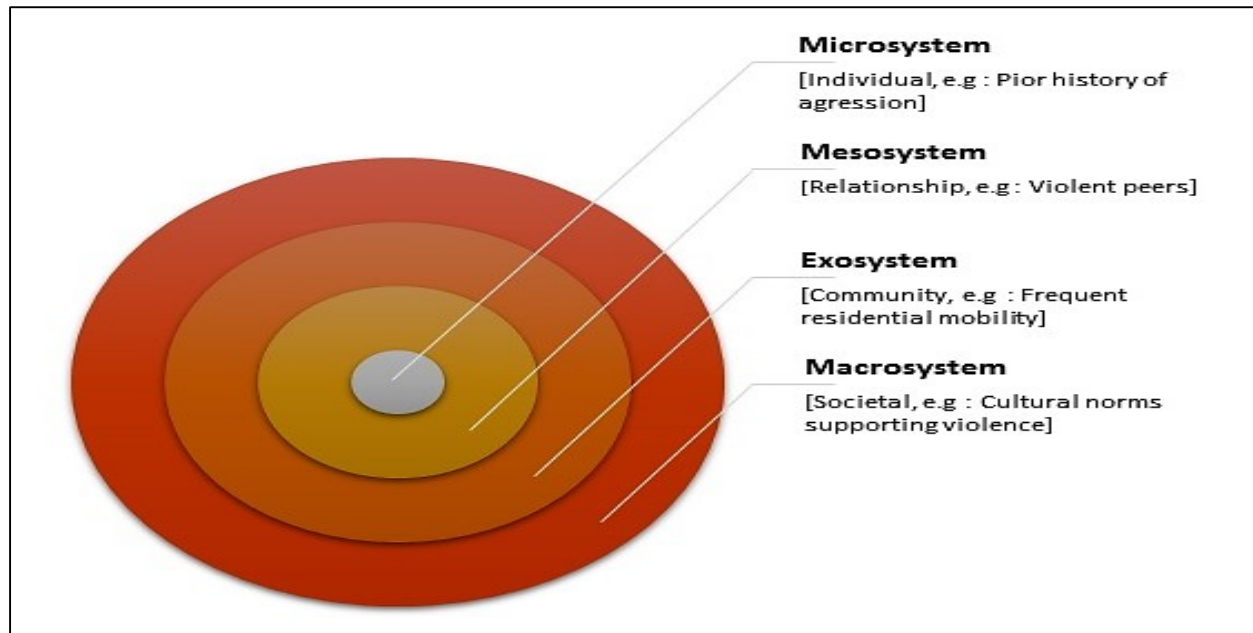
In 1970's, Urie Bronfenbrenner, an American developmental psychologist, developed an Ecological System Theory of child development in which he attempted to comprehend human development by taking into consideration the whole ecological system in which growth occurs.⁴² The model proposed, explored the relationship between individual and contextual factors and perceived violence as the product of different levels of influence on behavior.

As we can see in figure 4, Bronfenbrenner' ecological system divided the causes of violent behavior into four systems or levels: Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem and Macrosystem. He insisted, however, on the fact that these systems are closely related that' why he conceived them "as a set of nested structures, each inside the next, like a set of Russian dolls".⁴³

⁴² Urie Bronfenbrenner, "Ecological Models of Human Development," *International encyclopedia of education* 3, no. 2 (1994): 37.

⁴³ Urie Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1979), 3.

Figure 4: The Ecological Systems Theory of Human Development (modified).



Source: Andrea Ettekal, Vest and Joseph L, Mahoney. "Ecological Systems Theory," In *The Sage Encyclopedia of out-of-School Learning*, edited by Kylie Pepler. (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2017), 3.

At the first level of the ecological model, Bronfenbrenner sought to identify the biological and personal traits that an individual brings to his or her behavior such as: impulsivity and prior history of aggression and abuse. The second level of the ecological model, explored social relationships like relations with violent peers or family members that increase the risk for violent victimization or perpetration of violence. At the third level, he examined the community contexts such as schools, workplaces and neighborhoods, in order to identify the characteristics of these settings that are associated with violence, whether being victims or perpetrators. The fourth and final level of the ecological system, examined larger societal factors like: cultural norms that sustain violence as an acceptable way to solve conflicts, attitudes that regard suicide as a matter of individual choice, and norms that support male dominance over women⁴⁴.

⁴⁴ Krug, Etienne G, op. cit, 12-13.

As we can see, Bronfenbrenner's ecological model summarized and clarified the risk factors for violence, insisting on the fact that no single factor explains why some individuals behave violently toward others. According to him, violence is the result of a complex relationship between individual, relationship, social and environmental factors.

But if violent behavior, in general, is universal and variable, what about certain types of violence like youth violence and school violence? Are they considered as global problems too? Are they the outcome of interrelated factors as well? In order to answer these inquiries, let us start by examining the problem of youth violence.

I.3. Youth Violence

Violence by young people is one of the most visible forms of violence in society. It occurs particularly outdoors, and the perpetrators are themselves young adults, who are less than 29 years old. Some types of youth violence like bullying, are less lethal and lead more to psychological and/or physical injuries, but other forms of youth violence like assault, are more disastrous and may result in the death of the assaulted person.⁴⁵ Here is a brief analysis of youth violence, emphasizing on its prevalence as well as on its risk factors.

I.3.1 Trends of Youth Violence

In 2000, WHO reported that between 1985 and 1994, youth homicide rates increased in many parts of the world, especially among youth in the 10-24 years old age bracket.⁴⁶ The WHO estimated 199 000 youth homicides globally, explaining that, about 565 children, adolescents and

⁴⁵ A Butchart and Mikton, C, *Global status report on violence prevention 2014*, (WHO 2014), 72.
http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/status_report/2014/en/ (Accessed July 25, 2018)

⁴⁶ Krug, Etienne G, op. cit, 27.

young adults between the ages of 10 and 29 years lost their lives each day as a result of interpersonal violence⁴⁷. The report added that this increase was mainly associated with gun violence, and the proportion of juvenile homicides involving weapons varied considerably from one region to another.

The WHO reported also that youth gun violence, for the period 1985–1994, remained at around 30% in countries like: France, Germany, United Kingdom and Russia.⁴⁸ However, remarkable differences in youth homicide trends were observed across the American continent. In the United States, youth homicides involving guns increased by 70%, in Venezuela by 132, and in Colombia by 159%. The exception; however, was in countries like Canada, where the youth homicide rate fell by 9.5%, in Australia, where the rate declined from 2.0 per 100 000 in 1985 to 1.5 per 100 000 in 1994, or in Japan, where rates in the same period stayed low, at around 0.4 per 100 000⁴⁹.

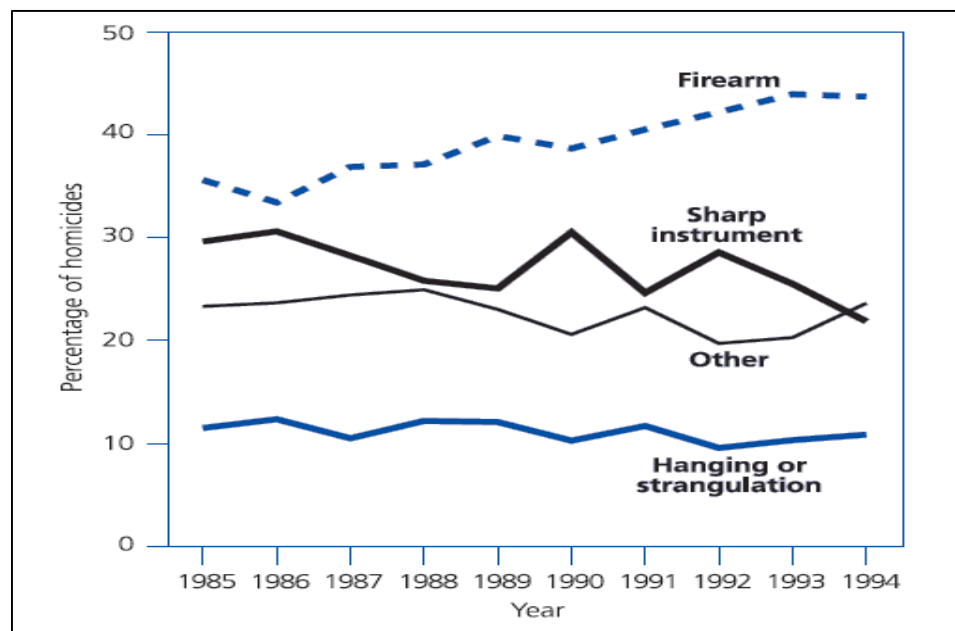
Indeed, a number of different reports confirm that youth violence peaked during the 1990s,⁵⁰ and based on data from 46 countries, the WHO revealed that this increase was associated with an increase in the use of firearms as the method of the attack (see figure 5). As it is shown in figure 5, guns were the ‘favorite’ instrument used in youth homicides from 1984 to 1994. Besides, we can also remark that the use of firearms increased by the beginning of the 1990’s unlike the use of sharp instruments which fluctuated, or the use of other methods like hanging, which remained globally stable.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 25.

⁴⁸ Krug, Etienne G, op. cit, 27.

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Philip J Cook and John H. Laub, “After the epidemic: recent trends in youth violence in the United States,” *Crime and Justice*, No. 29, (2002), 3.

Figure 5: Trends in Method of Attack in Homicides among Youths Aged 10-24 years, 1985-1994.

Source: Krug EG et al., eds, *World report on violence and health*, (Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002), 27.

Further more, the same reports confirmed that the increase was unequally distributed, and the USA, once again, was unique in this regard since it witnessed a sharp increase in the rate of youth gun violence compared to many developed and undeveloped countries⁵¹. As a matter of fact, the U.S Department of Justice revealed in 2004 that, homicide rates in the U.S declined between the 1980s and 1990s, but youth homicide, particularly gun homicide, increased dramatically.⁵² The report explained that between 1984 and 1994, juvenile (younger than 18) homicides committed with handguns increased by 418%, and juvenile homicides committed with other guns increased by 125%.⁵³

In fact, youth gun violence has remained a critical concern in the U.S in comparison with

⁵¹ Krug, Etienne G, op. cit, 13.

⁵²Anthony Braga Allan, *Gun Violence among Serious Young Offenders*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2004), 1-2.

⁵³Ibid

other industrialized countries. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. has the highest rates of childhood homicide, suicide, and firearm-related death among children than in many other developed countries. A child in America is 12 times more likely to die from guns than children in many other industrialized countries.⁵⁴

This conclusion was indeed the fruit of an intensive study conducted by the CDC, in order to compare patterns and the impact of violent deaths among children in the United States and other industrialized countries. The study analyzed data on childhood homicide, suicide, and firearm-related death in the United States and 25 other industrialized countries.⁵⁵ Each country reported data for 1 year between 1990 and 1995; U.S. data were reported for 1993. The results showed that the number of homicides per 100,000 children under age 15 in the U.S. was five times the number in the other countries combined (2.57 vs. 0.51).⁵⁶ The rate of child homicides involving a firearm, however, was 16 times greater in the U.S. than in the other countries combined (0.94 vs. 0.06). The U.S. suicide rate was twice the rate for the other countries combined (0,55 vs. 0,27). However suicides involving firearms in the U.S., were almost 11 times the rate for the other countries combined (0,32 vs. 0,03).⁵⁷

Not only that, another cross-national study in 2007, explored firearm-related deaths by comparing the incidence of firearm-related deaths among 25 industrialized countries. The report deduced that the United States had a higher firearm mortality rate among children and youth than

⁵⁴CDC, "Rates of Homicide, Suicide, and Firearm-Related Death Among Children – 26 Industrialized Countries," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 46, no. 5 (1997): 102, 103 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24247970>. (Accessed July 25, 2018).

25 countries were: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, England and Wales, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Norway, Scotland, Singapore, Sweden, Spain, Switzerland, and Taiwan.

⁵⁵Ibid

⁵⁶ "Kids and Guns," U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, (March 2000), 10. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/178994.pdf>. (Accessed July 25, 2018).

⁵⁷Ibid

the next highest 25 industrialized nations of the world combined.⁵⁸

In 2010, the CDC summarized the trends of lethal youth violence in the U.S. stating that, homicide in the United States is in the top three principal causes of death for persons aged 10-24, resulting in almost 4,800 deaths and an estimated \$9 billion in lost productivity and medical costs⁵⁹. The CDC revealed also that, homicide rates varied substantially during the period 1981-2010, with a sharp rise from 1985 to 1993 followed by a decline that has slowed since 1999. During the period 2000–2010, rates declined for all groups, although the decline was significantly slower for males compared with females and for blacks compared with Hispanics and persons of other racial/ethnic groups. By mechanism of injury however, the decline for firearm homicides from 2000 to 2010 was significantly slower than for non-firearm homicides.⁶⁰

Once again, we can conclude that the problem of youth violence is not unique to a specific region, but it is considered as a global public health problem. Nevertheless, the rate of youth mortality varied according to two main factors. Firstly, the increase did not include all types of youth violence, but it concerned more youth gun violence. And secondly, that sharp rise was observed in certain regions, especially in certain countries of the American continent.

But if the problem of youth violence is variable, then what are the factors that put some youths at risk for experiencing violence?

⁵⁸Robert Wm Blum and Farah Qureshi, "Morbidity and Mortality among Adolescents and Young Adults in the United States," *AstraZeneca* Fact Sheet. Baltimore: John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, 2011, 3-4.

⁵⁹Annest, J Lee, "Homicide Rates among Persons Aged 10–24 Years—United States, 1981–2010," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 62, no. 27 (2013): 545.

⁶⁰Ibid .

I.3.2 Risk Factors for Youth Violence

Some young adults are more likely to commit violent acts than others because of different interrelated factors.⁶¹ Firstly, among the major personality and behavioral factors that may predict youth violence are hyperactivity, impulsiveness, poor behavioral control and attention problem. In a follow-up study of over 1000 children in Dunedin, New Zealand, boys with violent convictions up to the age of 18 years were significantly more likely to have had problems within behavioral control (for example, impulsiveness and lack of persistence) at the age of 3–5 years⁶².

Secondly, factors associated with the interpersonal relations of young people can also strongly affect aggressive and violent behavior and shape personality traits that, in turn, can contribute to violent behavior. This was in fact proved by a followed up survey of almost 900 children in New York, which found that severe corporal punishment by parents at the age of 8 years predicted not only arrests for violence up to the age of 30 years, but also, for boys, the severity of punishment of their own children and their own histories of domestic abuse⁶³. Peer influences during adolescence were partly considered positive and important in shaping interpersonal relationships, but researchers warned that delinquent peers might be an immediate predictor for youth violence especially along with poor parental supervision⁶⁴.

Thirdly, the communities in which young people live have also an important influence on violent behavior. Generally speaking, boys in urban areas were more likely to be involved in

⁶¹ Robert Haggerty and Patricia J Mrazek, *Reducing Risks for Mental Disorders: Frontiers for Preventive Intervention Research*, (National Academies Press, 1994), 9.

Risk factors, are those characteristics, variables, or hazards that if present for a given individual make it more likely that this individual, rather than someone selected from the general population, will develop a disorder.

⁶² David P Farrington. "Predictors, Causes, and Correlates of Male Youth Violence," *Crime and Justice* 24 (1998): 443.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 446.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 454.

delinquent acts than those living in rural areas, and those living in neighborhoods with high levels of crime were more likely to be involved in violent behaviors than those living in peaceful neighborhoods⁶⁵. In the United States, the presence of guns, gangs and drugs in the neighborhoods were regarded as an important factor for juvenile homicide which knew an unprecedented rise during the late 1980's, after a 'relative stability' from 1970 to 1985⁶⁶. Alfred Blumstein, an influential American researcher in the field of criminology, explained that this dramatic rise was directly linked to increases occurring over the same period in the carrying of guns, for self-protection, as a result of 'a recruitment of young people into illicit drug markets', and in the number of gangs and battles fought over the selling of crack cocaine⁶⁷.

Finally, a number of societal factors may create conditions favorable to violence among young people. Rapid demographic growth in youth population, modernization, migration, urbanization and changing social policies have all been linked with an increase in youth violence.⁶⁸ Modernization is said to be destructive for the traditional moral order of society, which protected against individual deviance. Urbanization accelerates this breakdown because it is in the city where the old values collapse quickly and entirely; and migration of young persons to cities may worsen the crime problem by centralizing the people most disposed to crime in those geographical places in which the opportunities for theft and similar felonies are greatest.⁶⁹

Another societal factor that has been regarded as a critical element in youth violence was economic development and rapid demographic growth among young people. Indeed, in places that

⁶⁵ Ibid., 449.

⁶⁶ Alfred Blumstein, "Youth Violence, Guns, and the Illicit-Drug Industry," *The Journal of criminal law & criminology* / 86, no. 1 (1995): 18.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 10, 28.

⁶⁸ Suzanne T Ortega, Jay Corzine, Cathleen Burnett, and Tracey Poyer, "Modernization, Age Structure, and Regional Context: A Cross National Study of Crime," *Sociological Spectrum* 12, no. 3 (1992): 260.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 258.

went through economic crises such as in Africa and parts of Latin America, a series of socio-economic problems emerged: real remunerations have declined severely, laws intended to protect labor have been weakened or thrown away, and a considerable degeneration in basic infrastructure and social services has occurred.⁷⁰

In a demographic analysis of young people in Africa, researchers suggested that the tension between a rapid growth in young population and a deteriorating infrastructure has led to numerous manifestations notably school-based riots⁷¹. Same conclusion was observed in countries like Senegal, Algeria and New Guinea, where researchers concluded that the combination of both rapid demographic growth and a period of economic degeneration created conditions favorable to the proliferation of violence among the young population.⁷²

One may deduce that violence, in general, and youth violence, in particular, are regarded by many researchers as interrelated problems with biological, psychological and societal factors. As the American psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner (see the roots of violence), had already explained, human development occurs within the context of different levels that directly influence and shape human growth, positively or negatively, through a process of mutual reciprocity between the person and the surrounding environment.

The following part is going to tackle another sub-branch of youth violence which is school violence. We will proceed in the same way we did with violence and youth violence. We will start by defining school violence, tracing its historical background, and highlighting its prevalence.

⁷⁰Krug Etienne G, op. cit, 36.

⁷¹Thérèse Lauras-Locoh, et Lopez-Escartin, Nuria, «Les jeunes en Afrique : enjeux démographiques, enjeux sociaux, »*Cahiers québécois de démographie* 21, n° 1 (1992) : 42. doi:10.7202/010103ar

⁷² Krug Etienne G, op. cit, 35.

I.4. Defining School Violence

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defined school violence as: “youth violence that occurs on school property, on the way to or from school or during a school-sponsored event.⁷³” School violence encompasses different forms of violence, some of them such as bullying, pushing, and shoving, can result in more emotional harm than physical harm, but other types of violence, such as gang violence and assault (with or without weapons), can lead to serious injury and even to death.⁷⁴

Historically, the right to education has always been regarded as a human right which needs to be protected by the state legislation. Besides, many of those pupils and students believe profoundly in their right to be taught in a safe and secure environment. Unfortunately, in many school settings that belief is not always guaranteed. Many are regularly exposed to numerous forms of violence like: bullying, fighting, sexual and gender based violence, leading to a range of adverse effects on their academic performance, their physical and emotional well being.

As a matter of fact, school violence is present in all the countries around the world, with differences in the distribution of proportions. Globally, it is estimated that about 246 million of pupils and students experience school violence each year⁷⁵. That is to say, all children are vulnerable to school violence, but it is worth noticing that some of them are more vulnerable than others due to their gender, physical appearances, social status, especially poverty, and their ethnic, linguistic or cultural differences⁷⁶. Variations have also been observed in the types of violent acts.

⁷³ CDC, "Understanding School Violence: Fact Sheet,"(2016).

https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/school_violence_fact_sheet-a.pdf. (Accessed July 25, 2018).

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ UNESCO, "School Violence and Bullying: Global Status Report," 9. Paris: *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, 2017, 9.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 16.

Data from different parts of the world (North America, Europe and Australia) suggest that bullying was the most visible form of school violence.⁷⁷

Statistically, some countries witnessed an increase in some types of school violence at specific moments over time. In 1996, numerous studies revealed that there had been a ‘sharp rise’ in violence at schools in some developing countries; notably in countries like: Ethiopia, Jordan and Malaysia.⁷⁸ The same reports highlighted; however, that the increase did not include all the forms of violence. For instance: intimidation; verbal, physical and psychological violence, accounted for 60% of the reported incidents in Ethiopia.⁷⁹ Violent behaviors, especially rioting, bullying and swearing at classmates and teachers, accounted for 79% of the recorded incidents in Jordan, and behaviors like extortion, fighting with teachers, bullying and sexual harassment were the frequent forms of violence in Malaysia.⁸⁰

Other European studies confirmed that violence at schools has become universal and has increased everywhere, especially in certain sensitive areas.⁸¹ This was explained by a French study that was carried out by Eric Débarbieux, a famous French researcher in school violence, which concluded that “the more difficult the social indicators of a school area, the higher the level of extortion reported by the pupils.” The study specified that the percentage of pupils of secondary schools living in sensitive areas, where citizens suffer from underemployment and ethnic segregation, who reported extortion was higher (46,6%) than those living in middle class areas (30,7%), or privileged places (19,2%). The same deduction was confirmed by a Swedish study in

⁷⁷ Ibid, 12.

⁷⁸ Toshio Ohsako, *Violence at School: Global Issues and Interventions*, (Studies in Comparative Education. Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1997,) 11.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Eric Débarbieux, *op.cit.*, 592.

2001, where it has been shown that 47% of schools in deprived areas reported acts of violence, especially verbal, compared to 22% in privileged locations. An Irish survey put forward that conclusion, stating that the level of school bullying was higher among students suffering from socio-economic problems.⁸²

Actually, it is believed that school violence evolved through time, and the history of school violence followed the pattern of what most would consider the history of education. Hence, violence within schools is not a new phenomenon, but it has existed since the beginning of formal education, thereby; it is important to trace its historical development in an attempt to pinpoint some missing explanations.

I.4.1 Historical Background of School Violence in the United States

School violence in the United States went through different stages. At the beginning of education, it was suggested that school violence was nearly nonexistent, or at least was exhibited only by the teacher who wanted to take control of his class, then it developed until it reached its peak in the 1990's. Here is a summary of the development of school violence in the United States from the 15th century up to the present era.

I.4.1.1 Colonial Period (1600–1775)

In American history, there exist few information on educational methods and students accomplishment during the Colonial period. Globally, education during that time, was depicted as being unregulated and disordered.⁸³

⁸² Ibid. 593

⁸³ Kimberly A McCabe and Gregory M. Martin, *School Violence, the Media, and Criminal Justice Responses*. Studies in Crime & Punishment, (New York: P. Lang, 2005), 12.

Children were educated randomly throughout various times of the year, on carefully chosen topics that were of interest to their teachers or the communities at that time. Males were more likely to be educated than females, and if females wanted to learn, they did it in secret.⁸⁴

During this period, only three basic sources of education were available: the family, the church, and the public schools; however, not all of these sources of education were equally accessible to all children. The church was reserved to the upper class, public schools could not be afforded by everyone since they were financed by the parents; therefore, many preferred or were somehow obliged to teach their children the basics of reading and writing at home. Indeed, this source of education was regulated by the Massachusetts Compulsory Education Law (1642), the first law that made education compulsory, which required the parents to educate their children at home in order to understand the principals of the church. If the children could not comprehend the teachings of the church, the parents could be legally pursued. For illiterate parents, the alternative was an apprenticeship program, which was a kind of a deal between the child and the ‘master’ (the master taught the child in exchange of his servitude).⁸⁵

Concerning violence in the school setting during the Colonial period, little attention was given to the problem mainly for two reasons. First, the education of children was viewed by many as a prestige, and that privilege, historically, had been granted only to the wealthy. Second, the school systems of the Colonial period had supported solely physical punishment; consequently, incidents of school violence were infrequent. When they did occur, however, they were met with severe sanctions, regardless of the student’s age, and in most cases, the sanction was either prison or death.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Elaine Kendall, “Beyond Mother’s Knee: The Struggle to Educate Women,” *In Portrait of America, Vol 1: To 1877*, edited by Stephen B. Oates, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999, 166.

⁸⁵ Kimberly A McCabe, op. cit., 12.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 15.

I.4.1.2. National Period (1776–1830)

After the Colonial period, came the National period which is characterized as a new era since the United States, as an independent country, began changing and growing. Nonetheless, in addressing the education of children, a handful of changes had been brought. Efforts toward a free common schooling started to be felt, since children, even females in certain places like in New England, started to attend school on a regular basis. Yet, religious teaching was still the major core of learning, education was not free in all the states, and teachers continued to control their students with menaces and corporal punishment.⁸⁷

During this period it was believed, that turbulent pupils were the result of a breakdown within the ‘normal’ family structure. Children who had not been exposed to a balanced family life would be less likely to adhere to the classroom’s rules. Consequently, a child who could not be controlled could not be educated; thereby the state had the right to intervene for the “sake of the child”.⁸⁸

As new waves of immigrants arrived, conflicts among the students started to emerge. Schools became both the institutions of learning, and the institutions of cultural and social exchange. As a result, the state felt an urgent need to tighten control over immigrant students who somehow threatened the stability of the American society; therefore, school officials were given ‘free hands’ to protect their educational settings from any infringement.⁸⁹

I.4.1.3. Common School Era (1830–1860)

It is suggested that real reforms within the educational system started taking place during the common school era. During this period, industrialization became an important part in the American

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.,16.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

economy, and the concept of the “Little House on the Prairie” or one-room schoolhouse appeared for the first time. At this time, school officials supported the idea that one setting was needed for all of the students, especially if they were white, in order to strengthen social control and simplify support for governmental policy.⁹⁰ However, it was also during this time that the problem of discrimination first appeared in U.S. Court, specifically, in the case of *Roberts v. Boston* (1850), where the action of separating students by race was reinforced.⁹¹

The Common School era knew also the appearance of the first school reformer, Horace Mann, who became Massachusetts’ first schools’ supervisor. Mann’s objectives differed than other ordinary schools’ superintends; in the sense that, Mann not only wanted to ensure that each child was educated, but he also was one of the first people to gather information on conflicts within the school setting. Although Mann did not obviously refer to the term “school violence,” he did collect numerous acts of violence that proved the existence of violence within the schools. Precisely, Mann reported in the late 1830s that one school with 250 students had recorded about 300 floggings for disciplinary problems in a one week period.⁹² In addition, Mann pointed out that around 400 schools were locked annually due to discipline problems. Not only that, Mann’s declarations were in fact supported by another report in Boston in 1850, where it had been reported that 65 beatings per day were needed to sustain a school of 400 students.⁹³ Thus, juvenile delinquency is not uniquely the product of the actual modern life, since the very first acts of violence in schools trace their origins to the early 1800s.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Thomas C Hunt, *Encyclopedia of Educational Reform and Dissent*, (2 vols Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications, 2010,) 264.

⁹² Kimberly A McCabe, op. cit., 17.

⁹³ Ibid.

I.4.1.4. Progressive School Era (1860–1960)

During the Progressive School Era, the American society was going through a series of changes in many fields. Americanization and nationalism became the focal points of the American society, and the American educational system saw important reforms⁹⁴. During this period education had become a norm for many children, and by 1890 it was estimated that 90% of all elementary and secondary age children were provided with formal education.⁹⁵

Yet, it was during this period that changes in students' behaviors started to get the schools officials' attention. The presence of alcohol in schools started to surface and the immoral behaviors of teens began to manifest. Moreover, cities became more and more industrialized; thus, problems related to the growing number of children moving into cities became more apparent, and cultural conflicts started to be more and more documented. Teachers admitted that occasional help was needed in controlling students, and the cities were the focus of recorded acts of school violence notably problems like: “dishonesty of the students, the immorality of the females, the violation of attendance rules, the lack of orderliness by students, and students not completing their homework”.⁹⁶

In addressing problems of student behavior in schools, many institutions in the 1930s began applying new disciplinary methods. The well-known punitive method was the use of disciplinary classrooms that were like the “in school suspension” rooms of nowadays, or the use of Central Parental Schools which resembled to today's Alternative Schools. During the same period, it was

⁹⁴ Gordon A Crews and M. Reid Counts, *The Evolution of School Disturbance in America: Colonial Times to Modern Day*, (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1997,) 59.

⁹⁵ Frank J McVeigh and Loreen Therese Wolfer, *Brief History of Social Problems: A Critical Thinking Approach*, (Dallas: University Press of America, 2004,) 227.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

estimated that one out of every 350 school children was placed in a Central Parental School.⁹⁷ The Progressive School Era is also known for the *Brown vs Board* case in 1954, in which the U.S Supreme Court ruled that segregation in schools was unconstitutional.⁹⁸

I.4.1.5. Kaleidoscopic Era (1960-Present)

During the Kaleidoscopic era, the American educational system knew radical reforms and changes. New evaluations and standards of learning have been initiated, and it was during this period that the term “school violence” has been introduced.⁹⁹

In 1970, it had been recorded that around 1% of students were assaulted by their school mates on a monthly basis, with 42% of those attacks resulting in injury. According to the U.S. Department of Health (1977), school crime in the 1970s cost society about \$200 million each year. By the 1980s, approximately 3 million cases of rapes, robberies, assaults or thefts took place within the school environment on an annual basis, thereby; it was during this period that school violence became widely recognized one of the most critical problems of American society.¹⁰⁰

Based on the historical background given above, one may deduce that school violence is not a new phenomenon, but it goes back to the Common School Era when the very first acts of school violence started to be recorded. What is new; however, is the unreversed development of school violence which continuously grew and never slowed down ever since. Besides, even large scale school violence, which is the main point to be tackled in this dissertation, is not new. We can take for example, the worst incident of school violence in U.S. history, which occurred in 1927 in Bath

⁹⁷ Ellwood Patterson Cubberley, “Public Education in the United States, a Study and Interpretation of American Educational History,” (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), 92.

⁹⁸ Kimberly A McCabe, op. cit., 19.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 20.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 21.

Township, Michigan, when the Bath Consolidated School was devastated in a series of bombings that killed 38 children, 7 adults, and injured 58 more.¹⁰¹ This disaster shocked the Americans who ignored that this unprecedented new kind of school violence had just been inaugurated.

The following point will supply the reader with an analytic reading of school violence in the United States, emphasizing on different statistical reports.

I.4.2 Trends of School Violence in the United States

Statistically speaking, some reports show that school violence has increased by as much as 10 percent since 1999, including a number of plots that were stopped before they could be carried out.¹⁰² Other reports; however, show that incidents of school violence have decreased by half since 1992, and the American Bar Association has observed that a child is “three times more likely to be struck by lightning than to be killed violently at school.”¹⁰³

However, an important number of reports agree on the fact that the percentage of nonfatal school violence and fatal school violence were not stable from the 1980’s to 2010. Sometimes increases were in the types of victimization; whether the act of violence was serious (rape, murder, suicide and physical attack or fight with a weapon), or less serious (physical attack or fight without a weapon, theft and vandalism), or due to other reasons like: the geographical area of the educational institution, ethnicity, the instructional level and the sex.

In a sample conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) in 1998, it had been highlighted that in 1996, students ages 12 to 18 were

¹⁰¹ Valrie Plaza, *American Mass Murderers*, (Lulu.com, 2015,) 306.

¹⁰² CDC, “Youth Violence Facts at a Glance,” 2012, <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/yv-datasheet-a.pdf> (Accessed July 28, 2018).

¹⁰³ Daniels Peggy, *School Violence*, (Detroit: Greenhaven Press, 2009), 6.

victims of about 225,000 incidents of nonfatal serious violent crime (rape, robbery and sexual assault), at school and about 671,000 incidents away from school.¹⁰⁴ This indicates that being away from school rises the like hood of being victim of nonfatal violent crimes than being at the school property, but it does not annul the fact that being at school may be dangerous too since an important number of violent crimes did occur at the school yard.

The report explained; however, that from 1992 to 1996, students ages 12 to 18 were more likely to be victims of theft at school (64% of all crimes at school) than away from it (53% of all crimes away from school).¹⁰⁵ Demonstrating, once again, that students can be exposed to less serious violent acts away from school and in school as well.

Furthermore, the study showed that increases were observed in the use of marijuana and stimulants at school, which have increased since 1992 (especially between 1989 and 1995).¹⁰⁶ Besides, the percentage of students, Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics, ages 12 through 19 who avoided one or more places at school for fear of their own safety increased too from 5% to 9%. During the same period, the percentage of students who reported that street gangs were present at their schools raised from 15% in 1989, to 28% by 1995.¹⁰⁷

Not only that, the report revealed that from 1992 to 1994, a total of 105 violent deaths occurred at schools, including 29 who were nonstudents. Students in higher grades were more likely to be victims (86%) than those in lower grades (14%), and black students were more likely to be victims, representing 50% of violent deaths, than other racial ethnic groups (White, Hispanic, Asian, and Pacific Islander).¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Phillip Kaufman, et al, *Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 1998*, (edited by NCES 98-251/NCJ-172215 Washington D.C.: U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, 1998,) 2.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 32

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

Indeed, the sample pointed out that variations within the rates of school violence were due to different factors. The total rates for different types of crimes, including serious violent crime and simple violent crimes like theft, were higher for males (134 per 1000 students) than females (107 per 1000 students), and for students who were between 12 to 14 age bracket (151 per 1000 students) than for those who were between 15 to 18 age bracket (97 per 1000 students). Differences were observed also in the geographical areas, where it has been shown that 12 to 18 years old urban students were more vulnerable to serious violent crimes than were suburban or rural students. However, students' vulnerability to theft was higher in suburban areas compared to urban and rural areas.¹⁰⁹ (See figure 6)

Not only that, differences were noticed as well in the type and the level of the educational institution. In the sense that, public school students were more likely to report having been victims of a violent crime than were private school students, and elementary schools were much less likely than either middle or high schools to report any type of crime.¹¹⁰

In another study conducted by the U.S Department of Education and the U.S Department of Justice in 2000, the conclusions were somehow the opposite. The study came to the conclusion that, the rate of nonfatal victimization for young people decreased between 1993 and 1998, and the percentage of students who reported being victims of crime at school declined from 10 percent to 8 percent.¹¹¹ It added that between 1995 and 1999, the prevalence of reported victimization dropped from 11 percent to 8 percent for 7th graders, from 11 percent to 8 percent for 8th graders, and from 12 percent to 9 percent for 9th graders.¹¹²

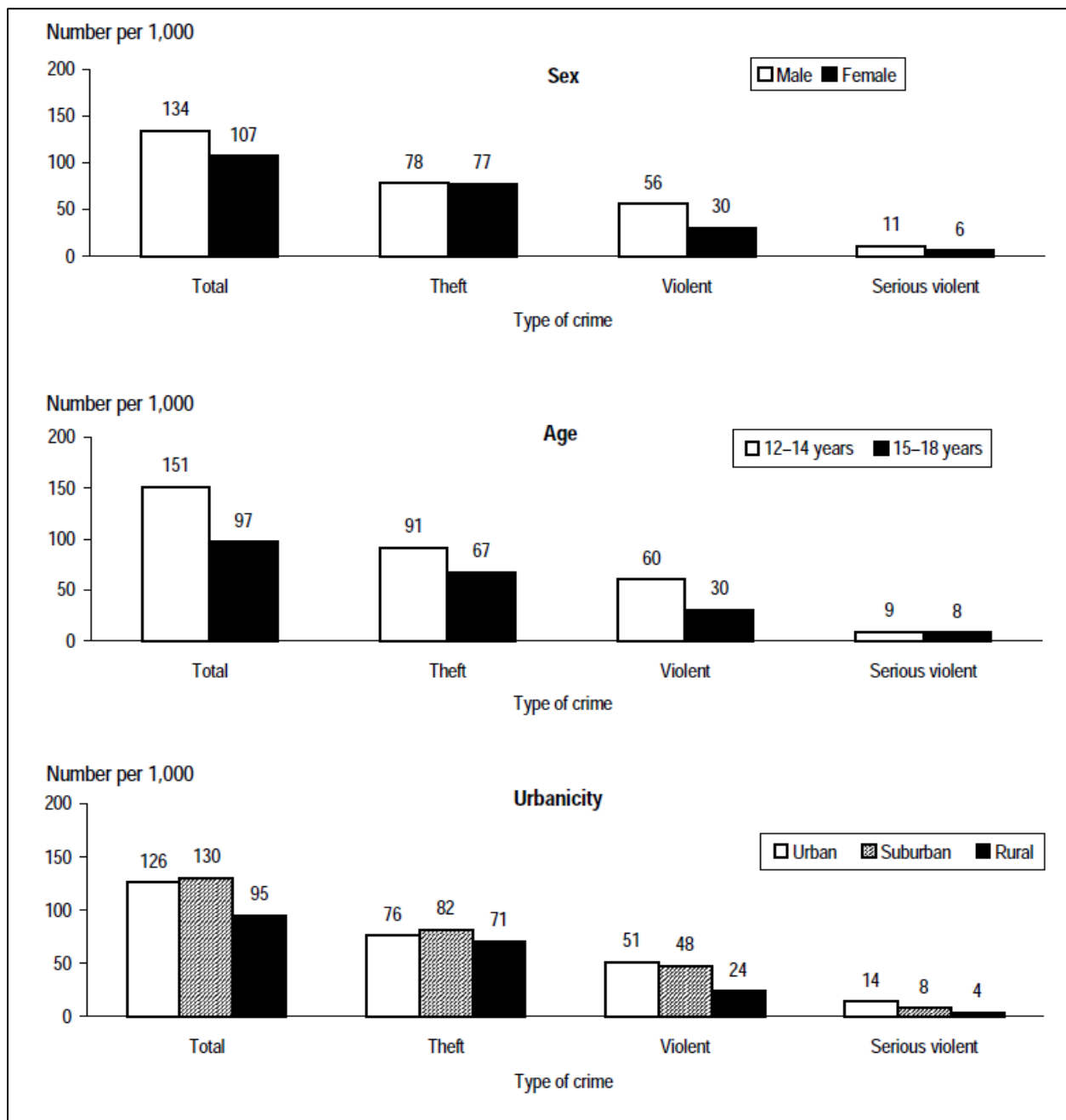
¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 2- 4.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 14.

¹¹¹ Phillip Kaufman, et al, *Indicators of School Crime Safety, 2000*, (edited by NCES 2001-01/ NCJ-18417 Washington D.C.: U.S. Departments of Education and Justice 2000,) vi

¹¹² Ibid.

Figure 6: Number of nonfatal crimes against students ages 12 through 18 occurring at school or going to or from school per 1,000 students, by type of crime and selected student characteristics: 1996



Source: Phillip Kaufman, et al, *Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 1998*, (edited by NCES 98-251/NCJ-172215 Washington D.C.: U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, 1998,) 4.

Note: Serious violent crimes include rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault. Violent crimes include serious violent crimes and simple assault.

However, for some types of crimes at school the report stated that, between 1993 and 1997, the percentage of students in grades 9 through 12 who were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property remained constant, at about 7 or 8%, and the percentage of the same category of students, during the same period, who reported being in a physical fight also remained unchanged at about 15%. Consequently, students who reported avoiding places at school for their own safety decreased as well between 1995 and 1999 from 9 to 5 %.¹¹³

Moreover, the report added that no difference was observed in relation with the location of the educational institution; that is to say, students living in urban, suburban and rural places were equally vulnerable to violent crime and theft at school. Yet, students in urban and suburban areas were more vulnerable to serious acts of violence away from school than were those living in rural locations.¹¹⁴ Surprisingly, in 2001 data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) showed that students ages 12 to 18 were more likely to be victims of crime at school than away from it.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, this relationship varied by type of crime; in the sense: students were more likely to be victims of theft at school and of serious violence away from school. Precisely, about 1,2 million thefts took place at the school property, compared to 913,000 thefts that occurred away from it. But students were victims of 161,000 serious violent crimes (rape, sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault) at school, and to 290,000 serious violent crimes away from it. Simple assaults at school (fighting, kicking, punching, hitting) accounted for 603,000 case, and bullying was one of the most common form of school victimization especially among lower grade students.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., viii

¹¹⁵ Richard Lawrence and Mario Hesse, *Juvenile Justice: The Essentials*, (California: Sage Publications, 2010,) 87.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

The report pointed out, once more, that distribution of proportions varied due to different factors. Males (9%) were more likely than females (7%) to report acts of school bullying, and White students were more likely to be victims of bullying (9%) than were Black (8%) or Hispanic students (6%) students.¹¹⁷

In 2010, the National Center for Education Statistics published a report where it concluded that in each year during the period 1992–93 to 2007–08, there were at least 50 times as many homicides of youth away from school than at school, and generally at least 150 times as many suicides of youth away from school than at school.¹¹⁸ It added that, from 1993 through 2009, the percentage of students who were threatened or injured with a weapon fluctuated continually, and that fluctuation had a direct correlation with the students' grades. That is to say, the lowest grade, 9th grade, regularly had the highest rate of fatal school crimes during a period of 16 years, compared to 10th, 11th and 12th grades, and was the only category that witnessed a sharp increase in 2001. (See figure 7)

As we can see, according to different reports the conclusions concerning the rate of school crimes varied constantly. However, there was a consensus on the fact that variations in the rates of school crime had a direct relation with different factors notably: the type of crime, age, ethnicity, geographical area, and the sex. Besides, even though some of the above statistics have shown that a student is safer at school than away from it, it is worth noticing that any instance of crime of violence at school not only affects the individuals involved, but also disrupts the educational process and affects the school itself, and the whole community.¹¹⁹ For all in the schools,

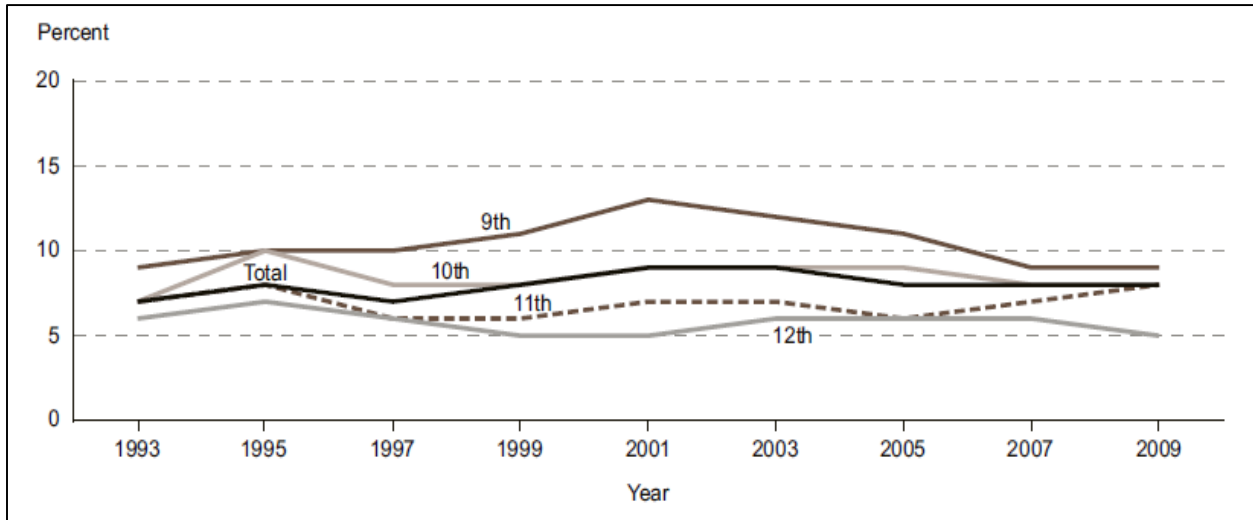
¹¹⁷ Ibid., 88.

¹¹⁸ Simone Robers, et al, "Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2010," *National Center for Education Statistics* Nces 2011-002/Nej 230812 (2010) 8.

¹¹⁹ Anlan Zhang, et al, "Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2015." 1-221. Washington, DC: *National Center for Education Statistics*, 2016.III.

victimization at school can have lasting effects and exposure to youth violence and school violence can lead to a wide array of negative health behaviors and outcomes including alcohol, drug use and even suicide.¹²⁰

Figure 7: Percentage of students in grades 9-12 who reported being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property at least one time during the previous 12 months, by grade. Various years 1993- 2009.



Source: Simone Robers, et al, "Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2010," National Center for Education Statistics Nces 2011-002/Ncj 230812 (2010), 17.

But how can we explain school violence? Is it the result of one, two or different causal factors? In order to address this question, let us look for some explanations.

I.4.3 Risk Factors for School Violence

For some researchers, the sociology of school violence is a sociology of social exclusion. As it has been explained in a meta-analysis of 34 longitudinal surveys: "Poverty and income inequality, educational attainment, mobility of the population, ethnic composition, population density, and high proportions of female-headed households are correlated with area crime rates".¹²¹

¹²⁰CDC, "Understanding School Violence: Fact Sheet," (2016).

https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/school_violence_fact_sheet-a.pdf. (Accessed July 29, 2018).

¹²¹ Denise C Gottfredson., *Schools and Delinquency*, (Cambridge Criminology Series. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 69.

However, this correlation is not always automatic because many poor children who live in a single parent family, with an unemployed mother, and who belong to an ethnic minority do not systematically become delinquent students. Consequently, as Débarbieux explained, a risk factor is in most cases ‘probabilistic not deterministic’, and the presence of a risk factor is not always fatal.¹²²

Indeed, different comparative studies came to the conclusion that there are different causes of school violence, thus poverty or unemployment alone do not lead to violent acts. In other words, the risk of being a perpetrator of violence increases when there is a combination of different factors including social exclusion. However, as the British professor of psychological criminology David Farrington pointed out, these factors are closely related; hence, it is difficult to dissociate them. Farrington clarified: “children who live in deprived inner cities areas tend to be from ethnic minorities, tend to have parents with low status, low paid jobs, or no job at all, and tend to have friends who commit deviant acts.”¹²³

In addition to these socio-economic related problems, other individual and societal traits play a major role in explaining delinquency within schools. As a matter of fact, it has been argued that psychological and behavioral problems are directly linked to delinquency. Among the behavioral characteristics that predict delinquent behavior we can name, aggression, hyperactivity, attention problems, impulsivity, low verbal IQ, delayed language development, low academic performance and low commitment to school.¹²⁴

Other social factors, including family and peer influences, are also important risk factors for

¹²² Eric Débarbieux., op. cit, 593.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Michael Shader, *Risk Factors for Delinquency: An Overview*, (US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Washington, DC, 2001), 6.

juvenile delinquency. In a study of 250 boys at the age of 10 in 1979, researchers found that among the strongest predictors of later convictions for violent offenses were poor parental supervision, parental conflict and parental aggression including harsh punitive discipline. Besides, the presence of delinquent friends, especially in the absence of parental supervision, has also been depicted as a 'key predictor' for juvenile delinquency.¹²⁵

However these explanations are not the only ones. As the problem of school violence encompasses the problem of school gun violence, then we will explain, in details, the different causal factors in the third chapter, after having analyzed a number of school attack cases.

1.5. Conclusion

To sum up, in this chapter the reader has been introduced to the phenomenon of violence in general, as well as the phenomenon of youth violence and school violence. He has been provided by basic notions concerning the roots of violence and school violence, their prevalence and their predominant risk factors.

Among the main conclusions that have been highlighted in this chapter we can recapitulate. Violence has always been a debatable research topic, and the conclusions concerning the origin of violence and the risk factors remain to a great extent variable. Nonetheless, some types of violence, notably youth gun violence and school violence, were found to be more concentrated in specific regions due to various reasons as well. Violence within the school setting for instance, has been documented to exist since the beginning of education, although historically, we saw that teachers were most often the perpetrators. Statistically, reports showed that the prevalence of violent acts at schools was not stable; it knew increases as well as decreases during different periods of time and

¹²⁵ Ibid.

due to a number of factors. Besides, the reasons lying behind school violence were found to be a combination of both intrinsic and extrinsic causes.

The following chapter will be solely devoted to the phenomenon of school shootings. It will analyze all the school rampages that were carried out by former or current students of a given educational institution in the U.S between 1970 and 2010. It will try to draw a profile of a school shooter if possible, attempt to determine the similarities as well as the differences between those school attacks, and highlight the various reasons that pushed those students to commit their deadly acts.

II. CHAPTER II: School Shootings in the U.S from 1970 to 2010

II.1. Introduction

School shootings are an extreme type of school violence. The shooter is a student or a stranger who, in most cases, deliberately arm himself and head to the school setting in order to kill a teacher, a school official, a school mate, or any other person who accidentally hampered his way. This type of school violence leads, in the majority of the cases, to numerous heavy human and material consequences, and the survivors, in all the cases, are left with longstanding emotional and psychological scars.

This chapter is going to overwhelm the problem of school shootings by explaining the term “school shooting”, clarifying its various types, and tracing its historical development. Then it will examine some international cases of school attacks, in order to see why this sort of school violence is generally regarded as being exclusively “American”. At the end, it will highlight and discuss all the findings that have been drawn from the analysis of the 71 cases of school attacks, which occurred on the American soil between 1970 and 2010.

II.2. Defining School Shootings

Generally speaking, school shootings are a kind of armed attacks that: “...take place on a school-related public stage before an audience; involve multiple victims, some of whom are shot simply for their symbolic significance or at random; and involve one or more shooters,”¹ who are not systematically current or former students of the attacked school.

According to Glenn W. Muschert, an associate professor of sociology at Miami University school shootings can be divided into five varieties: targeted shootings, government shootings, terroristic shootings, mass shootings, and rampage school shootings. Each type got its own kind of

¹ Katherine Newman, op.cit.,50.

perpetrators who were motivated by different kinds of purposes. Some of them shot randomly in order to get power, others targeted particular individuals due to actual or perceived physical or emotional abuse.²

The typology provided by Muschert clarified to us the distinction between the different categories of school shootings. Muschert pointed out, however, that all of the above stated categories share a common feature which is the place of the incident; that is, the shooting must take place at school or during a school sponsored event.³

Muschert explained that terroristic school shooting is characterized by being both random and highly symbolic like the Beslan terrorist attack which occurred in Beslan, Russia, in 2004, when a group of terrorists locked in hostages at a school in Beslan.⁴ The incident ended up after 3 days, when the Russian security broke into the building, resulting in 344 deaths, including 186 children. Muschert added that similar attacks are politically motivated and terrorists prefer the school setting because such important institutions may be quite effective in attracting people's attention.⁵

Government school shootings are also executed randomly and the shooter is a government agent whose ultimate aim is 'to restore peace' in response to students' violent protestations.⁶ Examples may include: 1968 shooting of anti-segregation protesters by South Carolina Highway Patrol officers that occurred at South Carolina State University, also known as the Orangeburg

² Philip Mongan, "Rampage School Shootings: A Content Analysis of Media and Scholarly Accounts of Perpetration Factors Associated with the Phenomenon," University of Kentucky *UKnowledge*, (2013.) 2. https://uknowledge.uky.edu/csw_etds/5 (Accessed July 30, 2018).

³ Ibid

⁴ Glenn W Muschert, "Research in School Shootings," *Sociology Compass* 1, no. 1 (2007): 64. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2007.00008.x> (Accessed July 25, 2018).

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Philip Mongan, op.cit., 5.

Massacre, and 1970 shooting by Ohio National Guard troops at Kent State University, when students protested against the US invasion of Cambodia during the Vietnam War.⁷

Targeted school shooting, on the other hand, is neither arbitrary nor emblematic at the societal level, and the attacker is /was a student of the attacked institution whose main goal was to take revenge on a specific person inside the school.⁸ We can take for example, the Reseda High shooting 1993, California, U.S, when 15 year old Robert Heard fatally opened fire at his classmate Michael Shean Ensley after a dispute about their crews.⁹

Finally, mass-murder school shootings resemble to rampage shootings especially in the attackers' motives. That is to say, both attackers target the school as a whole, and both of them carry out the shooting to gain some perceived power.¹⁰ Yet, the perpetrators are not the same, because, unlike rampage school shooters, mass murderers are neither former students nor school officials, but they are unknown adults who target the school for its 'symbolic importance'.¹¹ The 1966 University of Texas tower shootings and the 2007 shootings at Virginia Tech are appropriate examples of rampage incidents that occurred at American universities, and the 1927 school shooting in Bath Township, Michigan, suits mass shooting category, since an adult stranger attacked the Bath Consolidated School and killed 38 children, 7 adults, and injured 58 more.¹²

This dissertation is going to shed light on two types of school shootings: targeted school shootings and rampage school shootings. In other words, we are going to focus on targeted school shootings, that were carried out by current or former students of a given educational institution,

⁷ Glenn W Muschert, op.cit., 65.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Colker, David, and Sam Enriquez, "Student Shot, Dies at Reseda High," *Los Angeles Times*, (February 23, 1993.) http://articles.latimes.com/1993-02-23/news/mn-453_1_reseda-high-school. (Accessed July 31, 2018)

¹⁰ Muschert, op.cit., 64.

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Valrie Plaza, Op. cit., 306.

who wanted to extract revenge from specific persons, as well as rampage school shootings, where the attacker was also a student but whose target was neither a classmate nor a teacher but simply general or nonexistent. However, before we present the different school shooting cases, let us go back to the very first cases of school attacks in order to trace their historical background.

II.3. Historical Background

Historically, contrary to all industrialized countries, the United States is the only developed nation which has developed such a violent “boy culture”, as E. Anthony Rotundo, an American historian, names it in his book *American Manhood (1993)*. It was in the United States, as late as the 1940’s, that young boys used “to carry little chips of wood on their shoulders, daring others to knock it off so that they might have a fight”.¹³ And it was in the United States where psychologists used to recommend fighting for young boys, in order to enhance their masculinity. Overall, aggressiveness was conceived as a ‘necessary evil’, and was generally tolerated because it was beneficial for men’s health.¹⁴

Psychologist J. Adams Puffer, wrote in his parental advice book *the Boy and his Gang (1912)*, that it is quite normal for a boy to fight up to six times a week. He stated: “there are times when every boy must defend his own rights if he is not to become a coward, and lose the road to independence and true manhood...if he fights more than, let us say, a half-dozen times a week- except of course, during his first week at a new school- he is probably over-quarrelsome and needs to curb.”¹⁵ Indeed, America is now and has long been a relatively violent nation. It has had a particularly infamous history with respect to lethal violence. During the 1980’s and the 1990’s, the

¹³ Kimmel Michael and Matthew Mahler, "Adolescent Masculinity, Homophobia, and Violence: Random School Shootings, 1982-2001," *American behavioral scientist* 46, no. 10 (2003): 1450.

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Joseph Adams Puffer, *The Boy and His Gang*, (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1912), 16.

general violence of American society has immersed the nation's youths. During this period, it was suggested that the United States experienced a historically unprecedented epidemic of lethal youth violence that took the lives of an important number of young victims, and destroyed the future prospects of many young people across the country.¹⁶

However, serious school violence, is said to have remained rare even as society weathered the epidemic of youth violence. Nonetheless, it was reported that the prevalence of violent victimizations in schools has more than doubled since the late 1980's. And while it is said that the majority of American schools were relatively safe and free of deadly violence, some schools knew very high rates of violent crimes, especially those in high-crime areas of U.S. cities.¹⁷

Nevertheless, it was during the second half of the 1990's, that lethal shooting incidents in school settings increased and enlarged public concern about violence in schools. As a matter of fact, it was reported that between 1994 and 1999, 220 deadly events resulting in 253 victims occurred in school settings. Specifically, "202 events involved 1 death and 18 involved multiple deaths, 172 were homicides, 30 were suicides, 11 were homicide-suicides, 5 were legal intervention deaths, and 2 were unintentional firearm-related deaths."¹⁸ Thus, people started speculating: is this country raising a new generation of children who solve disputes and feelings of isolation by firing upon themselves and their classmates?

In fact, the deadliest school attack in contemporary U.S history goes back to 1927, when Andrew Kehoe, aged 55 year old, a farmer, killed his wife then used a dynamite to blow up a school

¹⁶ Mark H Moore, *Deadly Lessons: Understanding Lethal School Violence*, (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2003), 1.

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Mark Anderson et al, "School-Associated Violent Deaths in the United States, 1994-1999." *JAMA* 286, no. 21 (2001): 2695.

in Bath, Michigan, killing 45 and wounding 58.¹⁹ Some sources cited that the loss of election as the Bath Township Clerk and the foreclosure notice, as “lightening a fuse in Kehoe's mind”.²⁰ Most of the victims were children in the second to sixth grades (7-12 years of age) attending the Bath Consolidated School. Their deaths constitute the deadliest act of school mass murder in U.S. history.²¹

Forty years later, in 1966, Charles Whitman, aged 25 year old, a former student at the University of Texas at Austin and a former Marine, killed 16 and wounded 32 during a shooting rampage in and around the university's campus. This shooting is considered as the second deadliest school shooting in U.S history, and the first bloodiest incident carried out by a student of a given learning institution. Charles' motives varied from his history of abuse, to his failure in life, to the brain tumor which was found in the autopsy the day following the attack.²²

The 1970s and 1980s were not free from school attacks. In 1974, a 17 year old Anthony Barbaro, shot at people on the street from windows of Orlean High School in New York, killing 3 and injuring 11. Those who knew him, described him as being calm, and the school principal remembered him as a loner. In a note explaining his motives, Barbaro wrote: “I guess I just wanted to kill the person I hate most, myself, I just did not have the courage. I wanted to die, but I could not do it....”. Barbaro committed suicide in prison about 11 months after his crime.²³

In 1976, a 37 year old, Edward Charles Allaway, a custodian at the library of California State University, Fullerton, killed 7 and wounded 5 others. Different mental health professionals

¹⁹Tobin T Buhk. op.cit., 50-51.

²⁰Ibid, 58.

²¹Ibid, 51-52.

²² Committee, Texas Governor's, "Press Conference: Report to the Governor, Medical Aspects Charles J. Whitman Catastrophe," 11. <http://alt.cimedia.com/statesman/specialreports/whitman/findings.pdf>. (Accessed July 31, 2018).

²³Ford Fessenden, "They Threaten, Seethe and Unhinge, Then Kill in Quantity," *The New York Times*, April 9, 2000. <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/04/09/us/they-threaten-seethe-and-unhinge-then-kill-in-quantity.html>. (Accessed July 31, 2018).

diagnosed him with “paranoid schizophrenia”, a chronic mental illness in which a person loses touch with reality.²⁴ Edward was found guilty of first degree murder, but the trial determined that he was insane. Hence, he was committed to the California state mental hospital system, and remained at Patton State Hospital in San Bernardino.²⁵

In 1985, a 14 year old, James Allan Kearby, a student at the Goddard high Junior School in Kansas, killed the principal and injured 2 teachers and a student.²⁶ James was charged with first-degree murder. The police did not discuss potential motives, but a teacher said that “the youth was a loner with a quick temper who was fascinated by weapons.”²⁷

Last but not least, on January 17, 1989, a 26 year old named Patrick Purdy opened fire on an elementary school playground in Stockton, California. He killed 5 children wounded 29 others and a teacher then he committed suicide. Purdy had a long criminal history which began during his early teenage years. Police stated that Purdy was alcoholic and drug-addicted, and his friends described him as suicidal at times and upset about the fact he couldn’t “make it on his own”.²⁸

These multiple school homicides emphasize the fact that, deadly acts of school violence continuously existed during the 1970s and 1980s. Yet, the term “school shooting” is said to have become a common term during the 1990s²⁹ mainly for three reasons. First of all, the 1990’s saw a sharp increase in school gun-violence. Secondly, this era was characterized by the emergence of children who became murderers, and these kids were killing their own classmates, sometimes for

²⁴“Schizophrenia: An Overview.” <https://www.webmd.com/schizophrenia/mental-health-schizophrenia#1>. (Accessed August 13, 2018).

²⁵Robert Lindsey, “Seven Killed, Two Injured as Gunman Sprays Shots at College in California,” *The New York Times*, July 13, 1976. <https://www.nytimes.com/1976/07/13/archives/seven-killed-two-injured-as-gunman-sprays-shots-at-college-in.html>. (Accessed August 13, 2018).

²⁶Steven Gevinson et al, *Increase the Peace: A Program for Ending School Violence*, (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2006.).

²⁷“Headliners,” *The New York Times*, (January 27, 1985) <https://www.nytimes.com/1985/01/27/weekinreview/headliners-244766.html> (Accessed August 13, 2018).

²⁸“Five Children Killed as Gunman Attacks a California School,” *The New York Times*, January 18, 1989, <https://www.nytimes.com/1989/01/18/us/five-children-killed-as-gunman-attacks-a-california-school.html>. (Accessed August 13, 2018).

²⁹ Peter Langman, *Why Kids Kill: Inside the Minds of School Shooters*. op.cit., 3.

trivial, banal reasons. Thirdly, this period did not witness solely the emergence of young predators, but also a total increase in juvenile violence.³⁰ (See chapter 1)

In fact, Franklin E Zimring, the author of *American Youth Violence* (2000), explained that the 1990s new wave of youth violence went hand in hand with the emergence of what he termed “moral poverty”. Zimring clarified the concept in the following words:

By “moral poverty” we mean the poverty of being without loving, capable, responsible adults who teach the young right from wrong. [Living in] the poverty of being without parents, guardians, relatives, friends, teachers, coaches, clergy, who habituate...children. It is the poverty of growing up in the virtual absence of people who teach these lessons by their own everyday example, and who insist that you follow suit and behave accordingly.³¹

Zimring insisted also on the fact that, single-parent households is an important factor for juvenile crime and delinquency, as is family disorganization. Coincidentally, the problem of single parent status has been rising quickly in the U.S; as it has also in other Western nations since the 1960s.³²

Other analysts pinpointed the emergence of the Goth music, notably Marlyn Manson, along with the spread of violent video games as potential causes for this rapid blowout of adolescent murderers. President Bill Clinton, for instance, while discussing possible solutions with high school students after Columbine High massacre 1999, clearly confessed: “we have to acknowledge ... that we do have more violence among younger people in America than other cultures.”³³ Clinton then hinted at a possible relation between the high level of violence seen in television programs and the

³⁰Ibid, 4.

³¹ Franklin E Zimring, *American Youth Violence*, (Studies in Crime and Public Policy, New York : Oxford University Press, 1998), 185.

³²Ibid.

³³ "Clinton Discusses School Violence with High Schoolers," *CNN.com*, (April 22, 1999.) <http://edition.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/stories/1999/04/22/clinton.shooting/>. (Accessed August 19, 2018)

newly widespread problem of school shootings.

This hypothesis was in fact asserted by many researchers from all the fields. Michael Gurian, a social philosopher, confirmed that the prevalence of violent media might be a possible explanation. He wrote: “parents don’t realize that taking four year-olds to True Lies, a fun movie for adults but excessively violent, is poison to their brain.”³⁴

Alvin Poussaint, a psychiatrist at Harvard Medical School, added: “in America, violence is considered fun to kids. They play video games where they chop people’s heads off and blood gushes an it’s fun, it’s entertainment. It’s like a game. And I think this is the psychology of these kids-this’ let’s go out there and kill like on television.”³⁵

Sissela Bok, in her well-known warning book on violence *Mayhem* (1999), highlighted that the internet and violent video games weaken children’s flexibility and self-control, and both were never available to children and young people in the past.³⁶

As we can see, school shootings are regarded as a complex phenomenon with complex risk factors. While some claimed that the American ‘boy culture’ was an important risk factor for school shootings, others explained how family disorganization facilitated the overall spread of juvenile crime. Still others, declared that the prevalence of violent media in the American society encouraged the prevalence of similar violent attacks (for more details about the risk factors, please consult chapter 3).

What is certain, however, is that the problem of school shootings was rare before the 1970’s,

³⁴ Richard Arum et al, *The Structure of Schooling: Readings in the Sociology of Education*, (2nd Ed. Los Angeles: Pine Forge Press, an imprint of SAGE Publications, 2011), 583.

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Sissela Bok, *Mayhem: Violence as Public Entertainment*, (Reading, MA: Perseus Books, 1999), 78.

except a handful of cases, in comparison with the 1980's and the 1990's. As it has already been explained, the term school shootings became more popular during the 1990's, because it was during that era that the problem took totally a new dimension. Consequently, people wondered: why those attacks happen only in America?

In order to fully address this question, let us look for and analyze some international school attack cases.

II.4. School Shootings as a Global Phenomenon

First of all, it is important to clarify that the problem of school attacks is not exclusively American, because numerous school shootings stroke different countries across the globe. Russia, France, Scotland, Lebanon, Nigeria, Kenya, Yemen, Australia, Mexico, China, Japan, and many others, have all been touched, one day, by the same violent deeds, and their newspapers had to speculate one morning, why did it happen?

However, it is also important to note that an important number of the school attacks that happened outside the U.S, were either terrorist attacks, government school shootings or mass-murder school attacks. Examples may include: Dunblane School attack which took place in Scotland in 1996, when Thomas Hamilton, aged 43 years old, perpetrated the bloodiest mass-murder school attack in U.K history, taking the life of 16 children and one teacher.³⁷ The Beslan terrorist attack which happened in Russia in 2004, when a group of terrorists took hostages inside a school for three days, killing more than 300 persons, half of them were children.³⁸ The Beirut Arab University shooting, an infamous government school shooting which happened in Lebanon

³⁷"Mass Shootings and Gun Control," *BBC News*, (June 2, 2010), <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10216955>. (Accessed September 11, 2018).

³⁸ Tom Balmforth, "Ten Years after Beslan School Siege, Survivors Struggle to Make a New Life," *The Guardian*, (September 1, 2014), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/01/beslan-school-massacre-ten-years>. (Accessed September 11, 2018).

in 2007, and ended up with 4 deaths.³⁹ And Toulouse school shooting which happened in France in 2012, when Mohamed Merah, a terrorist, attacked a Jewish school and killed three children and one teacher.⁴⁰

Moreover, targeted and rampage school shootings, which are the focus of this dissertation, are not also solely American, since countries like Canada, Germany and Finland did experience these particular types of school attacks. Here is a brief history of the infamous school shootings that occurred in those countries.

On April 28, 1999, a fourteen year old, Todd Cameron Smith, walked into his high School in Taber, Alberta, Canada, and began shooting at students in the hall, killing one and seriously wounding another.⁴¹ The shooter is said to have suffered severe acts of bullying at school, and his mother declared that the boy was depressive during his childhood.⁴² Smith was sentenced to three years in prison, and seven on probation because he was protected by Canada's Young Offender's Act, which limited youths' detention to a maximum of 3 years.⁴³

The shooting was the third deadly school attack on the Canadian soil since the ST Pius X High School shooting in 1975, when an eighteen year old student, Robert Poulin killed a student before committing suicide,⁴⁴ and the second after the École Polytechnique mass-murder massacre in 1989, when the 25 year old Marc Lépine targeted and killed 14 female students before taking

³⁹ "Four Killed in Beirut University Clash," *The Guardian*. (January 25, 2007.) <https://www.theguardian.com/education-/2007/jan/25/internationaleducationnews.highereducation>. (Accessed September 11, 2018).

⁴⁰ "Shootings in Toulouse and Montauban: What We Know," *BBC News*, (March 22, 2012.) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17428860>. (Accessed September 11, 2018)

⁴¹ "Alberta Town Tries to Understand," *CBC News*, (April 29, 1999.) <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/alberta-town-tries-to-understand-1.185788>. (Accessed August 19, 2018)

⁴² "Tragedy in Taber," *CBC News*, (April 27, 2004.) <http://www.cbc.ca/news2/background/taber/>. (Accessed August 19, 2018)

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Peter Langman, "Expanding the Sample: Five School Shooters," (February 1, 2016), https://schoolshooters.info/sites/default/files/expanding_the_sample_1.5.pdf. (Accessed August 19, 2018)

his own life.⁴⁵

The W. R. Myers High School shooting shocked the nation, and the Prime Minister, Jean Chretien, described the incident as a “senselessness act of violence” that can neither be accepted nor comprehended.⁴⁶ The Canadian authority responded to those attacks by passing new gun laws, notably the Bill C-68 in 1995, in order to regulate and control guns’ ownership.⁴⁷

On April 26, 2002, a student at Gutenberg School in Erfurt, Germany, killed fourteen teachers, two students and a policeman during a shooting spree which ended with him taking his own life.⁴⁸ The 19 year old gunman, Robert Steinhäuser, was expelled two months ago due to a falsified medical certificate, and that expulsion is said to have pushed him to commit his murderous attack.⁴⁹ Robert’s parents ignored about his expulsion, and his mother declared that she even wished him luck that morning, because her son told her that he had an exam to take.⁵⁰ Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder depicted the massacre as “beyond the powers of imagination”,⁵¹ because it occurred in a country with gun control laws so strict that the number of deaths nationwide each year is said to be barely half that of New York's.⁵²

The Erfurt School shooting was not the only deadly school attack that stroke Germany. The

⁴⁵ “This is how one survivor described the Montreal Massacre the day after the shooting,” *CBC*, (December 7, 2017), <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/as-it-happens-wednesday-edition-1.4435607/this-is-how-one-survivor-described-the-montreal-massacre-the-day-after-the-shooting-1.4435613> (Accessed September 11, 2018).

⁴⁶ “One Dead, One Wounded in Alberta School Shooting,” *CBC New*, (Apr 29, 1999), <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/one-dead-one-wounded-in-alberta-school-shooting-1.188376>. (Accessed August 19, 2018).

⁴⁷ Marian Scott, “25 Years after Polytechnique, Gun Control Movement Has Lost Steam,” *Montreal Gazette*, (December 5, 2014), <https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/25-years-after-polytechnique-gun-control-movement-has-lost-steam>. (Accessed September 11, 2018).

⁴⁸ “Eighteen Killed in German School Shooting,” *The Guardian*, (April 26, 2002), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/apr/26/schools.education>. (Accessed August 24, 2018).

⁴⁹ “Gunman Hid Expulsion from Parents,” *CNN.com*, (April 28, 2002), <http://edition.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/europe/04/28/germany.shooting/index.html?related>. (Accessed August 30, 2018).

⁵⁰ John Hooper, “Killer’s Secret Behind Revenge Attack,” *The Guardian*, (April 29, 2002), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/apr/29/schools.education>. (Accessed September 11, 2018).

⁵¹ *Ibid*

⁵² “18 Dead in German School Shooting,” *BBC News*, (April 26, 2002), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1952869.stm>. (Accessed August 24, 2018)

country had already experienced one mass murder school shooting in 1983,⁵³, and endured its bloodiest school attack on March 11, 2009, when a 17 year-old Tim Kretschmer, a former student at The Winnenden secondary school, and a depressed boy, fatally shot 16 students including himself.⁵⁴

As a response, the German government decided to reinforce its legislation, through tightening its handgun security via an electronic nationwide weapons registry, increasing age limitations for certain weapons, and launching a random checks in gun-owner homes to make sure that the guns are adequately stored.⁵⁵

On September 23, 2008, Finland was too shaken by a similar disastrous incident which occurred in Kauhajoki, in Western Finland, where Matti Saari, a 22 year old student opened fire at his trade school, killing ten people and fatally shooting himself in the head.⁵⁶ The attacker, was a troubled person who showed an obsession with guns, and who had been dismissed from the Finnish Army in 2006 because he opened fire against orders.⁵⁷ The day before the attack, Saari was interviewed by police on the menacing comments he had posted online, but they did not seize his gun due to an absence of real particular threats.⁵⁸

⁵³ "Gunman Kills 5 in School," *The Spokesman-Review*, (June 4, 1983), <https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=YNURAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=1O4DAAAAIIBAJ&pg=7147.1879619&dq=eppstein>. (Accessed September 11, 2018).

⁵⁴ "German School Gunman Kills 15," *BBC News*, (March 11, 2009), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7936817.stm>. (Accessed August 30, 2018).

⁵⁵ Nach Winnenden, "Bundestag Billigt Verschärftes Waffenrecht," *Berliner Morgenpost*, (June 18, 2009), <https://www.morgenpost.de/politik/article103911191/Bundestag-billigt-verschaerftes-Waffenrecht.html>. (Accessed September 11, 2018).

⁵⁶ Rami Benbenishty and Ron Avi Astor, "School Violence in an International Context: A Call for Global Collaboration in Research and Prevention," *International Journal of Violence and School* 7 (2008) 59.

⁵⁷ Nick Allen, "Finland Shooting: Two School Killers Bought Guns in Same Shop," *The Telegraph*, (September 25, 2008), <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/finland/3077572/Finland-shooting-Two-school-killers-bought-guns-in-same-shop.html>. (Accessed September 11, 2018).

⁵⁸ Attila Cser, "Gunman Kills 10, Self in Finnish School Shooting," *Reuters*, (September 23, 2008), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-finland-shooting-news/student-kills-nine-in-finnish-school-shooting-idUSTRE48M92I20080923>. (Accessed August 30, 2018).

The incident was Finland's third school attack since the Raumanmeri targeted school shooting in 1989,⁵⁹ and the second rampage school massacre after the Jokela High School shooting, on November 7, 2007, when an eighteen year-old student Pekka Eric Auvinen, killed six students, a teacher and a school nurse, then he took his own life.⁶⁰ The gunman was depicted as being a threatening person who was fascinated with violence. In his diary, Pekka clearly declared that he wanted to kill people in order to leave a lasting effect.⁶¹

Indeed both the Kauhajoki school shooting and the Jokela High School shooting, triggered a serious debate about guns availability in this nation with deep rooted hunting traditions. Nonetheless, the Finnish government said it would raise the minimum age for buying guns from 15 to 18, but insisted there was no need for radical changes to Finland's gun laws.⁶²

However, even with these instances of international targeted and rampage school attacks, the U.S is believed to be the “host country” of these particular types of school shootings, and the incidents that occurred in Canada, Germany, and Finland are blamed on the shootings that happened in the U.S, notably on the Columbine massacre 1999. As a matter of fact, following the W. R. Myers High School shooting, Canadians widely believed that it was a copycat crime, because it took place only one week after the Columbine High School massacre in Colorado.⁶³ A Canadian student named, Matt Anderson, wondered how a similar attack, which is supposed to be

⁵⁹ Johanna Nurmi, "Making Sense of School Shootings: Comparing Local Narratives of Solidarity and Conflict in Finland," *Traumatology* 18, no. 3 (2012), 17.
doi: 10.1177/1534765611426787.

⁶⁰ "Jokela School Shooting on 7 November 2007 - Report of the Investigation Commission," *Ministry of Justice*, 13.
http://www.turvallisuustutkinta.fi/material/attachments/otkes/tutkintaselostukset/fi/poikkeuksellisetahtumat/SbmrFqAo3/Jokela_School_Shooting_on_7_November_2007.pdf. (Accessed September 11, 2018).

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 17.

⁶² Jussi Mustikkamaa, "Gunman Kills 10 at School in Finland, Then Self," *The New York Sun*, (September 23, 2008),
<http://www.nysun.com/foreign/nine-killed-in-finland-school-shooting/86409/>. (Accessed August 24, 2018)

⁶³ "Boy Charged in Taber Shooting Gets Three Years," *CBC News*, (Nov 18, 2000),
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/boy-charged-in-taber-shooting-gets-three-years-1.227459>. (Accessed August 19, 2018).

“American”, happened in Canada. He declared: “I never thought it could happen, I thought Colorado's far away.”⁶⁴

Same feeling was shared by the Germans and many other Europeans who described similar attacks as an “overwhelmingly American problem.”⁶⁵

Additionally, a number of the above stated shooters were deeply fascinated by Columbine’s attackers. Todd Cameron Smith for instance, the perpetrator of the W. R. Myers High School shooting in Canada, “alluded to the Littleton massacre” to his comrades, and wore a trench coat, as did Harris and Klebold, the day of his attack.⁶⁶ Robert Steinhäuser, the German committer of the Gutenberg School massacre, was also mesmerized by Columbine’s shooters and continuously talked over, and looked for them online.⁶⁷ Last but not least, the Finnish shooter Matti Sarri was, too, deeply fascinated by two infamous American shootings which are Columbine High massacre and Virginia Tech Massacre.⁶⁸

As a result, one can deduce that school shootings, all kinds combined, are global, but rampage and targeted school attacks remain highly American due to the incomparable number of these specific attacks that occurred on the American soil compared with the handful of attacks that stroke countries like Germany, Canada and Finland. Besides, those few instances of international school attacks were even blamed on the ones that happened in America, through the copycat effect, which can be compared to an “American epidemic”, which contagiously reached different parts of the world. Hence, an important question is raised: why the number of school attacks is so high in

⁶⁴“Alberta Town Reeling after School Shooting,” *CBC NEWS*, (April 29, 1999), <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/alberta-town-reeling-after-school-shooting-1.175117>. (Accessed September 9, 2018).

⁶⁵Ibid

⁶⁶ Peter Langman, *Role Models, Contagions, and Copycats: An Exploration of the Influence of Prior Killers on Subsequent Attacks*, (2016), 10. doi:10.13140/rg.2.2.18440.21763.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 11.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 9.

the U.S?

In the previous chapter, it has been explained that youth gun violence, in general, remains a critical concern in the U.S in comparison with other industrialized countries. According to the CDC, “the United States has the highest rates of childhood homicide, suicide, and firearm-related death among industrialized countries.”⁶⁹ Additionally, the entire increase in juvenile homicides during the 1990s was said to be gun related, and logically, mass murders tend not to happen in schools, or in any other place, if cold steel weapons were the only weapons available. Therefore, the most rational explanation that might be given to explain the high rate of school shootings in the U.S, is the high availability of guns that largely surpassed that of any other country across the globe. Yet, it is worth noticing that guns possession in the U.S has always been regarded as a delicate topic, since citizens’ guns ownership is protected by the Second Amendment, and this what makes the problem even more complicated than it appears to be. (For more details see chapter three)

In fact, in an attempt to fully understand the seemingly inexplicable phenomenon, 71 cases of school shootings were deeply analyzed in this chapter. These cases will be presented in the following table, which is going to give the reader a global idea about those shootings, by focusing on the shooter’s name and age, the shooting’s date and place, as well as the number of the victims. The remaining information will be found in appendix 4, 5, 6.

The studied cases had been chosen on the basis of the following criteria:

- 1) The shootings were exclusively American, and they all occurred between 1970 and 2010.

⁶⁹ CDC, "Rates of Homicide, Suicide, and Firearm-Related Death Among Children – 26 Industrialized Countries," op.cit., 101.

- 2) The cases included only two types of school shootings which are: rampage school shootings and targeted school shootings. Other types of school shootings, and shootings that were committed by outsiders, i.e., the attacker was neither a current nor a former student of the attacked school, were all excluded from the study.
- 3) All the shootings resulted in at least one dead victim (either the shooter shot and killed at least one person, or he missed his target and committed suicide). Shootings that resulted in no victims, shootings that were only a suicide of the shooter, and accident school shootings were not included too.
- 4) All the analyzed cases took place inside the school or during a school sponsored event. Shootings that took place outside the school, in the school bus, or that were related to gangs, were all excluded.

II.5. Case Studies: School Shootings from 1970 to 2010

Shooter (s)	Location	Year	Brief Description
1)Robert Cantor	Pennsylvania	1970	33 year old Robert a disgruntled graduate school student killed a teacher and injured another during a seminar. Before taking his own life. ⁷⁰
2)Steven Guy	Illinois	1974	14 year old Steven killed his former school principal because he had been transferred to a social adjustment center. ⁷¹

⁷⁰ "Upset over Doctoral Thesis - Penn Student Wounds Two Professors, Takes Own Life in Seminar Shooting." *Observer Reporter*, (February 12, 1970), <https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=WsddAAAAIABJ&sjid=-bV4NAAAAIABJ&hl=fr&pg=906%2C1950274>. (Accessed September 11, 2018).

⁷¹ "Expelled Boy Kills Chicago Principal," *The Pittsburgh Press*, Volume 90, Number 203, (January 18, 1974), <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1144&dat=19740118&id=5GcqAAAAIABJ&sjid=KVUEAAAAIABJ&pg=6547.710902&hl=fr>. (Accessed September 11, 2018).

4)James Briggs	Oklahoma	1975	15 year old James killed a fellow student Randy Truit and wounded five others. ⁷²
5)Ricardo Lopez	Texas	1977	17 year old Ricardo killed the school principal for unknown reasons. ⁷³
6)Roger Needham	Michigan	1978	15 year old Roger killed one student and wounded another after being taunted for his beliefs. ⁷⁴
7)John Daniel Christian	Texas	1978	13 year old John D Christian killed his teacher. ⁷⁵
8)Robin Robinson	Alabama	1978	13 year old Robin killed the principal Lewis Hoggs. ⁷⁶
9)Evan Hampton	Arkansas	1980	16 year old Evan waited in a classroom for 19 year old student Mike Sanders whom he immediately killed. ⁷⁷
10)Thomas Kakonis	Michigan	1980	20 year old Thomas killed his business teacher Robert Brauer because he had failed an exam in his class. ⁷⁸

⁷² "Charge Filed in Shooting," *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, (September 24, 1975),

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=pFVQAAAAIIBAJ&pg=3249.2241230> (Accessed September 11, 2018).

⁷³ "Police Don't Know Reason Student Killed His Principal," *The Bryan Times*, Volume 29, Number 83, (April 7, 1977),

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=REAhAAAAIIBAJ&pg=5618.677358>. (Accessed September 11, 2018).

⁷⁴ "Roger Needham Must Answer," *Evening Independent*, (June 5, 1978),

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=7lhQAAAAIIBAJ&pg=6396.810282>. (Accessed September 11, 2018).

⁷⁵ "LBJ press aide's son held in teacher killing," *Chicago Tribune*, (May 19, 1978),

<https://chicagotribune.newspapers.com/image/385562876/?terms=LBJ%2Bpress%2Baide%27s%2Bson%2Bheld%2Bin%2Bteacher%2Bkilling>. (Accessed September 15, 2018).

⁷⁶ "Student Angered By Paddling Shoots Junior High Principal," *Times Daily*, Volume 109, Number 291, (October 18, 1978),

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=wCUsAAAAIIBAJ&pg=6504.4253947>. (Accessed September 15, 2018).

⁷⁷ "Death of student makes no sense," *The Bryan Times*, Volume 32, Number 7, (January 9, 1980),

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=799&dat=19800109&id=0CccAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=41cEAAAAIIBAJ&pg=6542.692754&hl=fr>. (Accessed September 15, 2018).

⁷⁸ "Student Kills Professor in Class," *The Harvard Crimson*, (April 5, 1980), <http://www.thecrimson.com/article/1980/4/5/student-kills-professor-in-class-pbig/>. (Accessed August 24, 2018)

11)Rudy Farmer	Alabama	1980	17 year old Rudy wounded a fellow student then turned his gun on himself. ⁷⁹
12)Leo E. Kelly	Michigan	1981	22 year old Leo shot and killed two students, potentially for his falling grades. ⁸⁰
13)Jason Price Rocha	Colorado	1982	14 year old Rocha killed a 13 year old student Scott Darwin Michael. ⁸¹
14)James Hartzog	Mississippi	1982	18 year old school dropout James killed his girlfriend 17 year old Faye Williams. He then took his own life. ⁸²
15)Patrick Lizotte	Nevada	1982	Thinking that his teacher wanted to have him committed to an institution, Patrick, 17 years old, killed his teacher and shot two students. ⁸³
16)David F. Lawler	Missouri	1983	14 year old David killed a 15 year old Randall Koger and injured another, he then took his own life. ⁸⁴
17)Todd Dunahoo	Iowa	1984	17 year old Todd killed 16 year old Valerie Rockafellow then he turned the gun on himself. ⁸⁵

⁷⁹ "Student killed in school shooting," *Wilmington Morning Star*, Volume 114, Number 16, (November 1, 1980),

⁸⁰ "2 students die in dorm shooting," *Chicago Tribune*, (April 18, 1981), <https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=CcgsAAAAIABJ&pg=6542.12997>. (Accessed September 15, 2018).

⁸¹ "Boy Sentenced: Murder," *The Lewiston Daily Sun*, Volume 90, (February 24, 2010), <https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=XV0gAAAAIABJ&pg=2324.1488506>. (Accessed September 15, 2018).

⁸² "Shotgun Murder, Suicide In High School Classroom," *The Victoria Advocate*, Volume 137, Number 190 (November 13, 1982), <https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=aMFHAAAAIABJ&pg=3889.3102138> (Accessed September 15, 2018).

⁸³ "Student a suspect in teacher slaying," *The New York Times*, (March, 20th, 1982), <https://www.nytimes.com/1982/03/20/us/student-a-suspect-in-teacher-slaying.html>. (Accessed September 15, 2018).

⁸⁴ "Around the Nation, 8th Grader Kills Youth, then Himself at School," *The New York Times*, (January 21st, 1983), <http://www.nytimes.com/1983/01/21/us/around-the-nation-8th-grader-kills-youth-then-himself-at-school.html>. (Accessed September 15, 2018).

⁸⁵ Roger Munns, "Mother devastated in school shooting," *The Daily Reporter*, Volume 87, Number 237, (May 19, 1984), <https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=xGYrAAAAIABJ&pg=3087.3973454>. (Accessed September 15, 2018).

18)James Alan Kearbey	Kansas	1985	James Alan, 14 year old, killed the principal, and injured two teachers and a student. ⁸⁶
19)Heather Smith	Washington	1985	14 year old Heather killed Gordon Pickett her ex-boyfriend and 14 year old Christopher Ricco, she later took her own life. ⁸⁷
20)Floyd Warmsley	Connecticut	1985	13 year old Floyd, was suspended for refusing to take off his hat, wounded the principal, the school secretary and killed the school janitor. ⁸⁸
21)Ritchie Overman	Missouri	1986	16 year old Ritchie killed a studious student Leslie Lynn Wyatt. ⁸⁹
22)Kristopher Hans	Montana	1986	Hans, a 14 year old, wanted to kill a teacher because of his falling grades. He killed a substitute teacher, injured the vice principal and two female students. ⁹⁰
23)Fawaz Abdin	California	1987	25 year old graduate student Fawaz killed his former teacher because of a low grade he had given him a year earlier. He then took his own life. ⁹¹
24)Nathan Ferris	Missouri	1987	12 year old an honor student Nathan killed a 13

⁸⁶ William Robbins, "Quiet Wichita suburb is bewildered by killing of popular principal," *The New York Times*, (January 23, 1985), <http://www.nytimes.com/1985/01/23/us/quiet-wichita-suburb-is-bewildered-by-killing-of-popular-principal.html>. (Accessed September 18, 2018).

⁸⁷ "3 dead in junior high romance," *The Spokesman-Review*, Volume 103, Number 206, (November 28, 1985), <https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=Mg1XAAAIBAJ&pg=6853.7648228>. (Accessed September 18, 2018).

⁸⁸ Richard L Madden, "At Junior High, Attempt to Deal with Shootings," *The New York Times*, (December 12, 1985), <https://www.nytimes.com/1985/12/13/nyregion/at-junior-high-attempt-to-deal-with-shootings.html>. (Accessed September 18, 2018).

⁸⁹ "Student shot to death in Mo," *The Lewiston Daily Sun*, Volume 94, (April 30, 1986), <https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=xwggAAAIBAJ&pg=5487.6034638>. (Accessed September 18, 2018).

⁹⁰ "Montana boy gets 206 year prison term," *The Spokesman-Review*, Volume 3, Number 69, (June 4, 1988), <https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=qb5YAAAIBAJ&pg=5224.1725283>. (Accessed September 18, 2018).

⁹¹ "Killed Teacher, Self: More Light Shed on CSUN Gunman Who Took 2 Lives," *Los Angeles Times*, (February 10, 1987), http://articles.latimes.com/1987-02-10/local/me-2069_1_computer-science-teacher. (Accessed September 18, 2018).

			year old classmate after he bullied him. Then he turned the gun on himself. ⁹²
25) Jason Harless and Jason McCoy	Florida	1988	15 year old students Harless and McCoy shot and killed an assistant principal and wounded a teacher and a student. ⁹³
26) Nicholas Elliot	Virginia	1988	Elliot, 16 years old, wanted to kill a student who had been tormenting him. He killed one teacher, and injured another. ⁹⁴
27) Lakeeta Cadoree	Texas	1991	15 year old Lakeeta killed 17 year old Arthur Jermel in the cafeteria of the school. ⁹⁵
28) Gang Lu	Iowa	1991	28 year old Gang Lu, a distraught former graduate student, killed 4 members of the university and a student before taking his own life. Gang was infuriated because his PhD dissertation did not receive a monetary prize which could facilitate for him his postdoctoral research. ⁹⁶
29) Khalil Sumpter	New York	1992	15 year old Kahlil killed two fellow students 16 year old Tyrone Sinkler and 17 year old Ian Moore. ⁹⁷

⁹² Donna Bryson, "School shooting linked to classmates' teasing," *Lawrence Journal-World*, (March 3, 1987), <https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=rtIxAAAAIIBAJ&pg=7175,877107>. (Accessed September 18, 2018).

⁹³ "Two mothers say deputy's guns were too easy for sons to steal," *Boca Raton News*, Volume 33, Number 65 (February 24, 1988), <https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=ZUpUAAAAIIBAJ&pg=4514,8235348>. (Accessed September 18, 2018).

⁹⁴ "Student with Pistol Kills One Teacher and Injures Another," *The New York Times*, (December 17, 1988), <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/12/17/us/student-with-pistol-kills-one-teacher-and-injures-another.html>. (Accessed September 18, 2018).

⁹⁵ "High school football star shot in cafeteria," *The Gainesville Sun*, Volume 116, Number 76 (September 19, 1991), <https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=2XozAAAAIIBAJ&pg=6733,5988438>. (Accessed September 18, 2018).

⁹⁶ Michel Marriott, "Iowa Gunman Was Torn by Academic Challenge," *The New York Times*, (November 4, 1991), <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/11/04/us/iowa-gunman-was-torn-by-academic-challenge.html> (Accessed September 18, 2018).

⁹⁷ Stephen O'Connor, *Will My Name Be Shouted Out? Reaching Inner City Students through the Power of Writing*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 296.

30)Eric Houston	California	1992	Houston, a 20 year old, returned to his former high school and killed a teacher who had previously flunked him. He also killed three students and injured 10 others. ⁹⁸
31)Wayne Lo	Massachusetts	1992	Lo, 18 year old, walked up to his high school and killed a teacher, a student and wounded four others ⁹⁹ .
32)Scott Pennington	Kentucky	1993	17 year old Scott shot his teacher, killed a custodian and held a class hostage for 40 minutes before he gave himself up to the police. ¹⁰⁰
33)Robert Heard	California	1993	15 year old Robert fatally shot 17 year old Michael Shean Ensley after a dispute about their crews. ¹⁰¹
34)Leonard D.McDowell	Wisconsin	1993	21 year old former student, Leonard fatally shot the associate principal, Dale Breitlow. The shooter had several mental health issues. ¹⁰²
35)Jason Smith	Pennsylvania	1993	15 year old Jason killed a student who had bullied him. ¹⁰³

⁹⁸ Jessie Klein, *The Bully Society: School Shootings and the Crisis of Bullying in America's Schools*, (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 153.

⁹⁹ William Glaberson, "Man and His Son's Slayer Unite to Ask Why," *New York Times*, (April 12, 2000), , <http://partners.nytimes.com/library/national/041200rampage-killers.html>. (Accessed September 18, 2018).

¹⁰⁰ Marcel Lebrun, *Books, Blackboards, and Bullets: School Shootings and Violence in America*, (Lanham: R&L Education, 2011), 173.

¹⁰¹ David Colker and Sam Enriquez, "Student Shot, Dies at Reseda High: Violence: Boy Is the Second Killed in the L.A. District in a Month. A School Football Player is Arrested. Officials Will Step up Metal Detector Searches on Campuses." *Los Angeles Times* (February 23, 1993). http://articles.latimes.com/1993-02-23/news/mn-453_1_reseda-high-school. (Accessed August 9, 2018)

¹⁰² Gordon Crews, *Critical Examinations of School Violence and Disturbance in K-12 Education*, (Hershey PA: Information Science Reference, 2016), 7.

¹⁰³ Leslie Klein Funk, "Boy Who Killed Classmate Gets 12-1/2 Years' State Time," *The Morning Call*, (October 15, 1993), http://articles.mcall.com/1993-10-15/news/2953222_1_smith-s-mother-michael-swann-jason-michael-smith. (Accessed September 18, 2018).

36) Floyd Eugene Brown	South Carolina	1994	18 year old Floyd killed a fellow student, 17 year old Earnest Dunalp, following an argument the same week. ¹⁰⁴
37)Darrell Cloud	Washington	1994	24 year old Darell a former student killed his former middle school teacher after a decade of sexual abuse. ¹⁰⁵
38)Jason Osmanson	Montana	1994	10 year old Jason killed an 11 year old student who teased him because his parents had AIDS. ¹⁰⁶
39)Keith A. Ledeger	Ohio	1994	37 year old former student, Keith killed a custodian, and wounded an assistant principal, and a police officer. The gunman had been drinking but there was no clear motive. ¹⁰⁷
40)Keith E. Johnson	Florida	1995	14 year old Keith killed 13 year old student after verbal confrontations. Keith stated in court that the victim had bullied him. ¹⁰⁸
41)Toby Sincino	South Carolina	1995	16 year old suspended student, Toby shot his teacher, killed another teacher before killing himself. ¹⁰⁹
42)Jamie Rouse	Tennessee	1995	17 year old Jamie killed a teacher, a student and injured another teacher. ¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ "School shooting kills teen," *The Times-News*, Volume 117, Number 26 (January 26, 1994),

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=OB0aAAAIBAJ&pg=6899,6173973>. (Accessed September 18, 2018).

¹⁰⁵ Linda Shaw, "Abuse victim who killed teacher settles with district," *The Seattle Times*, (January 27, 2005), <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/abuse-victim-who-killed-teacher-settles-with-district/>. (Accessed September 18, 2018).

¹⁰⁶ Gordon Crews, op.cit., 7.

¹⁰⁷ "Student Shot Outside High School," *The New York Times*, (November 8, 1994), <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/11/08/us/man-fires-shotgun-in-school-killing-one-and-injuring-3.html>. (Accessed September 20, 2018).

¹⁰⁸ Sarah Lundy, "The Death of Joey," *Orlando Sentinel*, (September 25, 2005), http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2005-09-25/news/LTAVSHOOTING25_1_tavares-joev-johnson. (Accessed September 20, 2018).

¹⁰⁹ Gordon Crews, op. cit., 7.

¹¹⁰ Jessie Klein, op. cit., 154.

43)Barry Loukaitis	Washington	1996	14 year old Loukaitis killed two students and a teacher. ¹¹¹
44)Frederick Martin Davidson	California	1996	36 year old master student, Frederick killed three professors, on the day of his master's thesis defense, because he believed they were involved in a conspiracy against him. ¹¹²
45)Evan Ramsey	Alaska	1997	16 year old Evan sought out and shot a fellow student. Then he went on a 20 minutes shooting spree. He killed the principal and a student and injured two others. ¹¹³
46)Luke Woodham	Mississippi	1997	16 year old Luke shot and killed his former girlfriend, another student and injured seven others. Earlier, he stabbed his mother to death with a kitchen knife. ¹¹⁴
47)Michael Carneal	Kentucky	1997	14 year old Carneal killed three students and injured five others. ¹¹⁵
48)Andrew Golden and Mitchell Johnson	Arkansas	1998	11 year old Andrew and 13 year old Mitchell, killed four students, a teacher and injured ten others. ¹¹⁶
49)Andrew Jerome	Pennsylvania	1998	14 year old Andrew killed a teacher and

¹¹¹ Jessie Klein, op. cit., 152.

¹¹² "Man Gets 3 Life Terms for Killing 3 Professors," *The New York Times*, (July 19, 1997), <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/07/19/us/man-gets-3-life-terms-for-killing-3-professors.html>. (Accessed September 20, 2018).

¹¹³ Jessie Klein, op. cit., 151, 152.

¹¹⁴ "Teen guilty in Mississippi school-shooting rampage," CNN, (June 12, 1998), <http://edition.cnn.com/US/9806/12/school.shooting.verdict/>. (Accessed August 25, 2018)

¹¹⁵ "Media Companies are Sued in Kentucky Shooting," *The New York Times*, (April, 13, 1999), <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/04/13/us/media-companies-are-sued-in-kentucky-shooting.html>. (Accessed September 20, 2018).

¹¹⁶ Rick Bragg, "From wild talk and friendship, to five deaths in schoolyard," *The New York Times*, (March 29, 1998), <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/03/29/us/from-wild-talk-and-friendship-to-five-deaths-in-a-schoolyard.html?sec=&spon=&pagewanted=all> (Accessed September 20, 2018).

Wurst			wounded two students. ¹¹⁷
50)Jacob Lee Davis	Tennessee	1998	18 year old Jacob Lee, fatally shot an 18 year old student after a dispute over a girl. ¹¹⁸
51)Kip Kinkel	Oregon	1998	15 year old Kip killed two students, injured 22. Earlier, he shot and killed his parents. ¹¹⁹
52)Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold	Colorado	1999	18 year old Eric and 17 year old Dylan killed 13 students, a teacher and injured 24 others. The shooting spree ended with their own suicides. ¹²⁰
53)Dedrick Owens	Michigan	2000	6 year old Dedrick, the youngest documented school shooter, killed his classmate Kayla Rolland. Dedrick was never charged due to his inability, his uncle, the gun's owner, was charged instead. ¹²¹
54)Nathaniel Brazill	Florida	2000	13 year old honor student, Nathaniel fatally shot his favorite teacher after he had been suspended. ¹²²
55)James Easton Kelly	Arkansas	2000	36 year old, a dismissed PhD candidate, killed the faculty advisor before taking his own life. ¹²³

¹¹⁷ Kristen Hays, "Edinboro teen killer sentenced," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, (September 10, 1999), www.post-gazette.com/region/state/19990910teacher1.asp. (Accessed September 20, 2018).

¹¹⁸ Tom Sharp, "Teenage passion turns deadly at Tennessee school," *Park City Daily News*, (May 20, 1998), <https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=ivoaAAAIBAJ&pg=6820,3064789> (Accessed September 20, 2018).

¹¹⁹ Tony Clark, "Teen jailed after Oregon high school shooting spree," CNN, (May 21, 1998), <http://edition.cnn.com/US/9805/21/school.shooting.pm.2/>. (Accessed August 25, 2018)

¹²⁰ Jessie Klein, op.cit., 152-153.

¹²¹ Kim Russel, "Kayla Rolands Father Speaks out on 10th Anniversary of Shooting," *NBC News*, (March 1, 2010), <http://nbc25news.com/news/local/kayla-rollands-father-speaks-out-on-10th-anniversary-of-shooting>. (Accessed August 25, 2018)

¹²² Gordon Crews, op. cit., 6.

¹²³ "U. Arkansas Deaths Murder-Suicide," *CBS News*, (August 29, 2000), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/u-arkansas-deaths-murder-suicide/>. (Accessed August 25, 2018)

56) Charles Andrew Williams	California	2001	15 year old Charles killed two students and injured 13. Charles admitted that he had been suicidal several months before the shooting due to his parent's divorce. ¹²⁴
57) Peter Odighizuwa	Virginia	2002	42 year old a distressed student facing suspension killed the dean, a teacher and a student and wounded three others. ¹²⁵
58) Robert Stewart Flores	Arizona	2002	40 year old Robert a student flunking out of the university of Arizona nursing school killed three professors before taking his own life. ¹²⁶
59) James Sheets	Pennsylvania	2003	14 year old a depressed student James killed the school's principal before killing himself. ¹²⁷
60) John Jason Mc Laughlin	Minnesota	2003	15 year old Jason murdered two students. The shooter claimed that one of the victims bullied him over his acne. ¹²⁸
61) Jeffrey Weise	Minnesota	2005	16 year old Jeffrey murdered seven students and wounded five others before taking his own life. Earlier, Jeffrey killed his grand father and his grand father's companion. ¹²⁹
62) Kenneth Bartley	Tennessee	2005	15 year old Kenneth killed the assistant's

¹²⁴ "Often Ridiculed, the Suspect Said, 'I'll Show You One Day,'" *Los Angeles Times* (March 6, 2001), <http://articles.latimes.com/2001/mar/06/news/mn-33987>. (Accessed September 20, 2018).

¹²⁵ Francis X Clines, "3 Slain at Law School; Student Is Held," *The New York Times*, (January 17, 2002), , <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/01/17/us/3-slain-at-law-school-student-is-held.html> (Accessed September 20, 2018).

¹²⁶ Jaime Holguin, "4 Dead In Univ. Of Arizona Shooting," *CBS News*, (October 29, 2002), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/4-dead-in-univ-of-arizona-shooting/>. (Accessed August 26, 2018)

¹²⁷ "York County 14-year-old shoots principal, turns gun on himself," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (April 25, 2003), <http://old.post-gazette.com/localnews/20030425redlionrp2.asp>. (Accessed September 20, 2018).

¹²⁸ Marcel Lebrun, op.cit., 176.

¹²⁹ "School gunman stole police pistol, vest," *CNN International*, (March 23, 2005), http://edition.cnn.com/2005/US/03/22/school.shooting/index.html?_s=PM:US. (Accessed August 26, 2018)

			principal and wounded two others. No clear motive was determined. ¹³⁰
63)Eric Hainstock	Wisconsin	2006	15 year old Eric fatally shot the school's principal. Eric claimed that about 25 students bullied him and nothing was done to prevent them. He also reported that he was treated like a slave by his father. ¹³¹
64)Douglas S. Chanthabouly	Washington	2007	18 year old Douglas killed 17 year old Samnang Kok following a personal disagreement. ¹³²
65)Asa Coon	Ohio	2007	14 year old Asa, suspended student, shot two students and two teachers before committing suicide. ¹³³
66)Seung Hui Cho	Virginia	2007	23 year old Cho killed thirty two students and wounded seventeen others before taking his own life. ¹³⁴
67)Latina Williams	Louisiana	2008	23 year old Latina a nursing student killed two classmates and then herself ¹³⁵ .
68)Brandon McInerney	California	2008	14 year old Brandon shot and killed 15 year old Larry King. ¹³⁶

¹³⁰Gordon Crews, op.cit., 5.

¹³¹ Marcel Lebrun, op.cit., 181.

¹³²Adam Lynn, "Young man convicted in Foss High School shooting sentenced to prison," *The News Tribune*, (June 5, 2009), <https://web.archive.org/web/20140226021748/http://blog.thenewstribune.com/crime/2009/06/05/young-man-convicted-in-foss-high-school-shooting-sentenced-to-prison/>. (Accessed September 20, 2018).

¹³³ Jessie Klein, op.cit., 154.

¹³⁴ Christine Hauser, "Virginia Tech Shooting leaves 33 Dead," *The New York Times*, (April, 16, 2007), <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/16/us/16end-shooting.html>. (Accessed September 20, 2018).

¹³⁵ "Woman Kills 2 Students in Louisiana College Classroom Takes Own Life," *Fox News*, (February 8, 2008),

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/2008/02/08/woman-kills-2-students-in-louisiana-college-classroom-takes-own-life.html>.

(Accessed August 26, 2018)

¹³⁶ "Calif. teen Brandon McInerney sentenced to 21 years for point-blank murder of gay classmate," *CBS News*. (December 19, 2011), <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/calif-teen-brandon-mcinerney-sentenced-to-21-years-for-point-blank-murder-of-gay-classmate/>. (Accessed August 26, 2018)

69) Steven Kazmierczak	Illinois	2008	27 year old Steven, a former student of the university, killed five, injured 17 before taking his own life. ¹³⁷
70) Jamar Siler	Tennessee	2008	15 year old Jamar killed 15 year old Ryan McDonald. ¹³⁸
71) Teah Wimberly	Florida	2008	15 year old Teah killed a 15 year old Amanda Collette. ¹³⁹

II.6. The Findings: The Similarities and the Differences between the Studied School Shootings

After careful review of the available and checked data of the school shootings stated above, a number of findings were identified. Globally, the incidents did share some characteristics in common, meaning that, some future attacks might be prevented if those common traits would be taken into consideration. Yet, they got some differing features making the whole problem even more complex than it seemed to be. The findings will be presented in two parts. The first part is going to state the main findings concerning the attackers, and the second part is going to highlight the findings concerning the attacks as a whole. Both parts will be followed by a discussion in order to fully explain and comprehend some important criteria.

¹³⁷"18 shot, six dead including gunman, at Northern Illinois University," *CNN International*, (February 14, 2008), <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/US/02/14/university.shooting/index.html> (Accessed September 20, 2018).

¹³⁸ Gordon Crews, op., cit., 8.

¹³⁹ Jeanette Lopez, "Teen Shooter Sentenced to 25 Years in Prison," *NBC Miami*, (March 26, 2010), <http://www.nbcmiami.com/news/local/Girl-who-shot-friend-to-be-sentenced-89262222.html>. (Accessed August 26, 2018)

II.6.1 Findings Concerning the Attackers

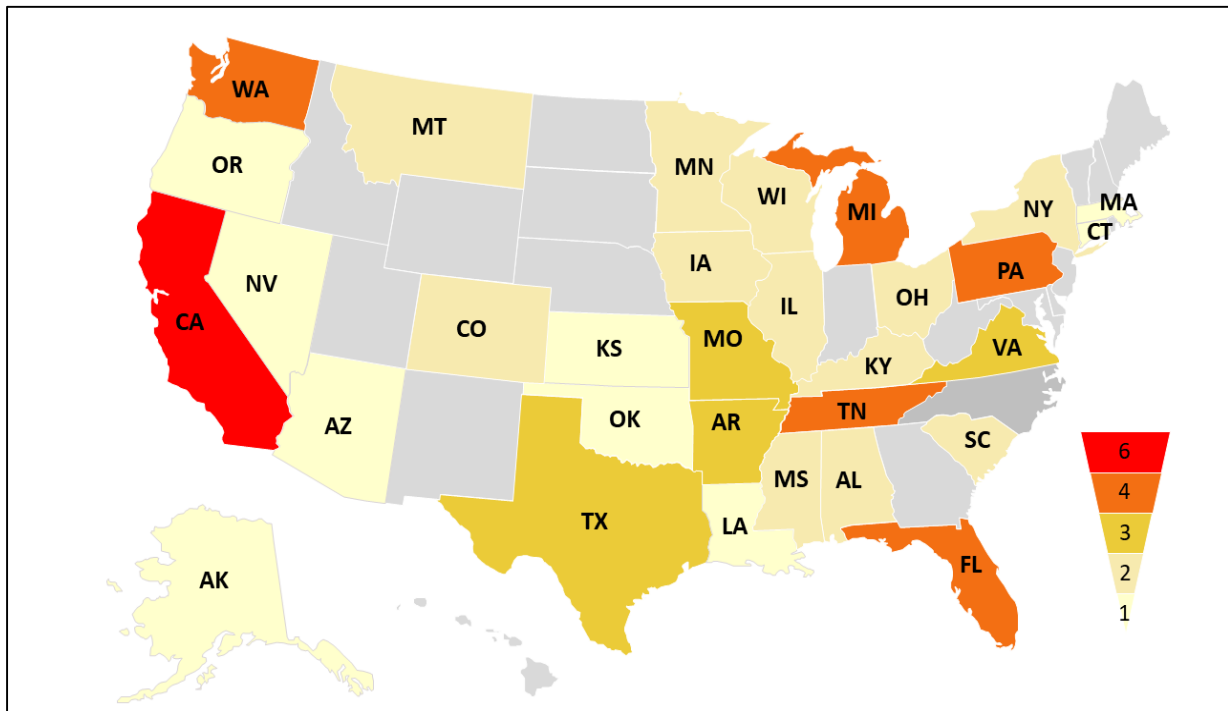
- 1) The first striking criterion the shooters shared in common, was the fact that nearly all of them were males. Only four shootings, out of 71, were carried out by females.
- 2) Another obvious common feature was that the majority of the shooters were minors, especially between 17 and 13 age range. (11 were 17 years, 9 were 16 years old, 11 were 15 years old, 17 shooters were 14 years old, and 8 shooters were 13 years old or less.)
- 3) The shooters' racial profile varied, but the White surpassed largely other ethnic groups (Blacks, Asians, Caucasians, Arabs).
- 4) Many attackers were suicidal, and 20 of them ended their shootings by taking their own lives.
- 5) The attackers' motives changed from one case to another, yet four main reasons have been highlighted throughout the whole analysis. The major motives were: falling grades or prior suspension, bullying, disputes and psychological problems.
- 6) Concerning the source of the gun, the majority of the used guns were brought directly from the family's attackers. The remaining shooters, purchased them legally, or obtained them illegally via a friend, or other illegal means.
- 7) The academic and behavioral profile of the shooters varied to some extent. While some were bright students, friendly and respectful, others were average, violent and impulsive or quiet and loners. Still for certain shooters, the fact that they felt as ostracized persons, was found to be an important common feature.
- 8) Available data showed also that several shooters who targeted their victims told at least one friend about their plan to kill that person. However, none of them warned the school officials either because they thought it was not serious enough, or they were directly or indirectly accomplices in the crime.

II.6.2 Findings Concerning the Attacks

- 1) The first remarkable similarity that was shared between the studied school attacks, was the fact that the majority of them, 41 out of 71, were targeted school attacks. The remaining attacks were cases of rampage school shootings, where the attackers shot randomly and indiscriminately.
- 2) High schools seemed to be the favorite place for school attacks, with 46 shootings out of 71, followed by universities with 13 shootings, secondary schools with 9 attacks, and elementary schools with 3 attacks.
- 3) The majority of the American states, 31, were stricken by at least one school shooting during a period of 30 years. However, while some of them witnessed four school attacks, (Florida, Tennessee, Washington, Pennsylvania), others experienced two school shootings (Illinois, Ohio, Colorado, South Carolina...). Still in 9 cities (Oklahoma, Nevada, Kansas, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Arizona, Louisiana, Oregon, and Alaska), there was only one school attack in a period of thirty years (see figure 8). The exception was with California which surpassed all the states with six school shootings during the same period, and this was explained by the fact that, California throughout the 1980's and 1990's was considered as the American state with the highest gun mortality rate.¹⁴⁰
- 4) It has also been observed that the two studied types of school attacks remained relatively stable during a period of 20 years, with 26 cases from 1970 to 1980, and also 26 attacks from 1980 to 1990. From 2000 to 2010; however, there was a clear decrease in the number of school shootings with only 19 cases.

¹⁴⁰ Kathleen Miles, "Gun Control California: Stockton School Shooting in 1989 was Catalyst for Stricter Gun Control," *The Huffington Post*, (December 18, 2012), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/12/18/gun-control-california-stockton-school-shooting_n_2316666.html (Accessed September 28, 2018).

Figure 8: The Geographical Distribution of School Shootings in the U.S from 1970 to 2010.



II.6.3 Discussion

The above stated findings might provide the reader with a global comparison of the studied cases of school shootings. The common features might be used as warning signs to prevent future attacks, yet the differing characteristics prove that there is no accurate profile of a school shooter. Consequently, the whole analysis is probabilistic, and any intervention necessitates, above all, a delicate scrutiny.

Indeed, as it has been shown in the above stated findings, the in-depth analysis indicated that school shootings are a genre of violence that fascinates boys exclusively, especially minors. This can be explained by the fact that, the shooters wanted to prove their masculinity which was

somehow threatened by someone or something, and in a society that glorifies violence, similar attacks were the appropriate means for them. According to Michael Kimmel, an American sociologist specialized in gender studies, homophobia is the ultimate cause for school shootings. That is to say, male students, especially those who are somehow different (wear glasses, are fat, wear special clothes, are shy and loner), do not accept, at all, that their fellow students call them “faggot” or similar names, simply because, doing so would threaten their masculinity. Kimmel explained: “homophobia-being constantly threatened and bullied as if you are gay as well as the homophobic desire to make sure that others know that you are a “real man”- plays a pivotal and understudied role in these school shootings.”¹⁴¹

Besides, those male students targeted the persons who, according to them, endangered their manliness. While some aimed at their bullies, others shot their beloved, or wanted to kill the principal or the teacher due to a falling grade or a previous suspension. Still for one case, Darrell Cloud a former student at Whitman Middle School in North Seattle, Washington, targeted and killed his former middle school teacher in 1994, who abused him sexually during a long period of time.

Another important finding that needs a special discussion, is the fact that a number of the shooters foreshadowed, directly or indirectly, to a coming killing. For example: Kristopher Hans, the student who killed a substitute teacher at the Fergus High School in Lewistow, Montana in 1986, told at least one classmate about his intention to kill, and even repeated it twice, however, his friend did not signal the threat.¹⁴² Keith E. Johnson, the student who killed a classmate in

¹⁴¹Michael Kimmel, op.cit., 1449.

¹⁴²“Falling Grade is Linked to Shooting of a Teacher,” *The New York Times*, (1986), <https://www.nytimes.com/1986/12/06/us/failing-grade-is-linked-to-shooting-of-teacher.html> (Accessed September 28, 2018).

1995,¹⁴³ and Charles Andrew Williams, the perpetrator of the Santana High School shooting, 2001, both told several of their classmates about their plan to commit a shooting, yet none of them took the menace seriously.¹⁴⁴ Eric Harris, Dylan Klebold, Jeffrey Weise and Seung Hui Cho, all of them warned indirectly via some violent stories that they wrote, and which were similar to the shootings they were preparing. Seung Hui Cho, for instance, wrote a short story about a student who planned a school shooting, but did not finalize it.¹⁴⁵ Dylan Klebold, just few weeks before the shooting, also wrote a story about a man who cruelly murdered a group of students, and his English teacher was so upset that she summoned his parents.¹⁴⁶

Indeed, this characteristic can be taken as a very useful warning sign, because it is perceived as a natural feature shared by adolescent murderers. Paul Mones, the author of the book *When a Child Kills* (1991), and a lawyer who served on a federal task force that examined school shootings, explained why teenagers, contrary to adults, tend to tell about their killings before, in the following words:

Basically, one thing that comes out over and over, not just in school shooting cases but in nearly all homicides by teenagers, is that kids talk about it before they do it. Kids want to vent their anger, their worries, their frustrations, their fantasies. They will talk about wanting to get a gun or wanting to kill somebody prior to it happening. It has an element in this discussion of gaining the acquiescence, or at least the confidence, of others when they are going to do this. Many adult murderers, by contrast, are highly reclusive and secretive about their intentions.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Christal Hayes, "Remembering Traveres Middle School Shooting 20 Years Later," *Orlando Sentimental*, (September 30, 2015), <https://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/os-lk-school-shooting-tavares-middle-1995-20150918-story.html#> (Accessed September 19, 2018)

¹⁴⁴ "Exclusive: Santana School Shooter," *ABC News*, (October 9, 2001), <http://abcnews.go.com/Primetime/story?id=132072&page=1>. (Accessed August 27, 2018)

¹⁴⁵ Sari Horwitz, "Paper by Cho Exhibits Disturbing Parallels to Shootings, Sources Say," *The Washington Post*, (August 29, 2007), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/08/28/AR2007082801948.html?nav=hcmodule> (Accessed September 28, 2018).

¹⁴⁶ Peter Langman, Peter, *Why Kids Kill: Inside the minds of Schools Shooters*. op.cit., 181.

¹⁴⁷ Todd S Purdum, "shooting at school leaves 2 dead and 13 hurt," *The New York Times*, (March 6, 2001), <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/06/us/shooting-at-school-leaves-2-dead-and-13-hurt.html>. (Accessed September 28, 2018).

However, the length of time the shooters' took to realize their deadly acts, varied considerably. While some decided in few days, others took all their time to prepare for their 'big day'. For instance, Lakeeta Cadoree, the 15 year old who shot a 17 year old student at Crosby High School Texas in 1991, took her decision just the day before, when the victim called her names.¹⁴⁸ Seung Hui Cho, the perpetrator of the Virginia Tech University massacre in 2007, started preparing for the attack few months before, when he started purchasing his weapons.¹⁴⁹ And the Columbine High shooters' plan for destruction, began taking shape one year before the attack, i.e., in April 1998.¹⁵⁰ This means that, as soon as the intention to commit a shooting is present, the plan can be realized at any time. Hence, any kind of threats, direct or indirect, physical or verbal, should be taken seriously and immediately.

Relating to the shooters psychological profile, it was found that at least 16 shooters suffered from psychological problems, and some of them were even under anti-depressant drugs the day of the attack. Eric Harris for instance, took Luvox, Jeffrey Weise was taking Prozac, Bary Loukaitis was prescribed Ritalin, and Cho Hui Seung was too on a psychotic drug. Not only that, an important number of the shooters developed suicidal and/or homicidal thinking long before their murderous rampages. Twenty attackers committed suicide after their attacks, others had the intention to kill themselves but did not go through with it, still for some, committing a killing spree was an indirect way to kill themselves. For example: Scott Pennington, wanted to kill 2 persons to become eligible for death penalty,¹⁵¹ and Anthony Barbaro, the shooter who committed suicide inside his cell few

¹⁴⁸ Michael Kennedy, "America's students: Armed and Dangerous," *Los Angeles Times*, (October 10, 1991), http://articles.latimes.com/1991-10-10/news/mn-455_1_school-violence. (Accessed September 28, 2018).

¹⁴⁹ Brian Ross and Richard Esposito, "First Gun Bought March 13; No Spur of the Moment Crime," *ABC News*, (April 2007) <https://abcnews.go.com/search?searchtext=No%20Spur%20of%20the%20Moment%20Crime&r=old.blog>. (Accessed August 27, 2018)

¹⁵⁰ Lisa Rickman, "Demonic Plan was Months in Making," *Rocky Mountain News*, (June 2000), <http://denver.rockymountainnews.com/shooting/0516bguy2.shtml>. (Accessed September 28, 2018).

¹⁵¹ Kenneth Hart, "20 years later: East Carter School Shooting," *the Daily Independent*, (Jan 13, 2013), http://www.dailyindependent.com/news/local_news/years-later-east-carter-school-shooting/article_d98213db-dedb-5edc-9bf9-efa47c2e7d7b.html (Accessed September 28, 2018).

months after the shooting, left a suicide note where he explained his murderous act in the following words: “I guess I just wanted to kill the person I hate most – myself...I just didn't have the courage. I wanted to die, but I couldn't do it, so I had to get someone to do it for me.”¹⁵²

Further more, many shooters felt marginalized, isolated and even hated by all the people ; therefore, they needed to get revenge, through a killing spree which they compared to a social revolution. Roger Needham, for instance, felt as if he had a mission to accomplish. In his diary entitled “My Struggle”, from Hitler’s “Mein Kampf”, Roger wrote: “...luckily I had a burst of courage and never again will I think about abonding Mein Fuhrer (leader) and Nazism.”¹⁵³ Seung Hui Cho, the perpetrator of Virginia Tech massacre 2007, also confessed: “thanks to you, I die like Jesus Christ, to inspire generations of the weak and defenseless people.” He added, “like Moses I split the sea and lead my people.”¹⁵⁴

Yet, feeling as a castaway was not the only characteristic that was found. Some of the shooters could not accept their academic failure, like Gang Lu, Kristopher Hans, Fawaz Abdin, Thomas Kakonis, Robert Cantor and Leo E. Kelly. Others could no more bear their classmates’ regular acts of bullying and teasing, like Roger Needham, Evan Hampton, James Alan Kearbey and Nathan Ferris. Still for certain, trivial disputes and lovers’ quarrels were reported to be enough to transform the students into cold-hearted killers.

Last but not least, probably one of the most important finding that needs a special and a careful attention, is the fact that all the shooters had an easy access to guns. None of them had to

¹⁵² Ford Fessenden, “They Threaten, Seethe and Unhinge, then kill in Quantity,” *The New York Times*, (April 9, 2000), <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/04/09/us/they-threaten-seethe-and-unhinge-then-kill-in-quantity.html> (Accessed September 28, 2018).

¹⁵³ “Roger Needham must answer,” *The Evening Independent*, (June 5, 1978) <https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=7lhQAAAAIBAJ&pg=6396.810282>. (Accessed September 28, 2018).

¹⁵⁴ Peter Langman, *Why Kids Kill: Inside the Minds of School Shooters*, op.cit., 94-95.

annul his attack because he was unable to get the gun. They decided first, got the gun second, and finalized their attacks effortlessly. Wayne Loo, the school shooter who killed a classmate and a teacher in 1992, explained in his own words, how easy access to guns facilitated the task for him. He declared: “the fact that I was able to buy a rifle in 15 minutes, that’s absurd. I was 18 I could not have rented a car to drive home from school. Yet, I could purchase a rifle. Obviously a waiting period would be great. Personally, I only had five days left of school before winter break ... If I had a two-week waiting period for the gun, I wouldn't have done it.”¹⁵⁵ This declaration, from a school shooter, highlights the actual danger underlying the easy access to guns, and how it simplifies the realization of a school shooting. Yet, availability of guns in the U.S., is protected by the Second Amendment, and this what makes the situation even more complex. (for more details see chap. 3)

II.7. Conclusion

To conclude, in this chapter it has been explained why the phenomenon of school shootings is generally depicted as being both old and American. “Old”, because the first instances of school shootings are not new, but go back to the 1920s, and “American”, because of the high number of these deadly acts in this particular country, that largely exceeds that of any other nation. However, it has also been argued that the intensity of the problem was not stable, but it changed and took new dimensions during specific periods of time.

Besides, based on the analytic study of the numerous cases of school shootings, an important number of conclusions have been identified. First, it has been observed that there exist no exact profile of a school shooter, and the stereotypical profile of a school shooter, who might be

¹⁵⁵ Kristin Miller, “Transcript: February 22, 2013,” *Need to Know*, PBS (February 22, 2013) <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/need-to-know/transcripts-full-episode/transcript-february-22-2013/16418/>. (Accessed September 17, 2018).

delinquent, academically weak, violent and Black, was rejected by the presence of numerous friendly, bright, and White school attackers. Second, it has also been remarked that no state was totally immune from this type of violence, it can happen anytime and anywhere. Third, some motives were found to be more responsible than others, and this will be at the core of the following chapter, which will explain all the various factors that directly or indirectly pushed those attackers to finalize their deadly attacks.

III. CHAPTER III: Direct and Indirect Risk Factors for School Shootings

III.1. Introduction

Globally, the reasons of human violence have usually been depicted as being complex, multiple and interrelated. Thinkers, historians, and psychologists have explored the issue for many years, but definitive answers remain still elusive. Thus, understanding violence is difficult enough, and trying to comprehend the reasons behind it after it has occurred is even more of a challenge.

In the previous chapter, it has been stated that there were some commonly shared reasons that were responsible for nearly all the studied cases of school shootings, that is why we shall call them “direct risk factors”. Other important but less commonly shared risk factors were also pinpointed in a number of cases, but they are going to be labelled “indirect risk factors”, because it has been observed that these reasons were secondary, and they represent a real danger only in the presence of the principal ones. This chapter is going to shed light on both the direct and the indirect causes, in order to fully understand all the factors that can result in a school shooting.

III.2. Direct Risk Factors

Among the important motives that have been found to be directly linked to all the studied school shootings were: availability of guns, bullying and psychological problems. Yet, the first direct risk factor that represents an ultimate danger, and that needs to be closely scrutinized is the accessibility to guns.

III.2.1 Availability of Guns

Indeed, an easy access to guns has been identified as the predominate reason for all the analyzed school shootings. All the shooters obtained a gun with no difficulty, and none of them was reported to have postponed the attack because he was unable to get a gun. As it has already

been stated, available data showed that at least 29 shooters brought the gun directly from their own homes or their relatives' homes, about 22 attackers purchased it legally, and circa 10 stole it or got it illegally via a friend or a stranger.

Thus, ideally, the problem of school attacks in the U.S could be solved and even exterminated only by the prohibition of guns' possession by all the citizens. However, this remains a utopian solution, because the Americans got the right to possess and bear arms guaranteed by the Second Amendment. In other words, the right to own a gun in the U.S is protected by the constitution, hence; it has got a constitutional immunity against any infringement. The Second Amendment states: "a well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."¹

Historically, the exact interpretation of this amendment remained ambiguous. For some, the Second Amendment applied solely to territorial armies or more specifically to militia, yet for others, this amendment guaranteed both the soldiers and the citizens' right to bear and keep arms.² This issue, however, was officially regulated in June 26, 2008, when the Supreme Court had to address one of America's most important constitutional debates: does the right to possess firearms apply to individuals?

On that day, the Supreme Court ruled between the District of Columbia and Dick Heller, a police officer who wanted to keep a handgun at home for self-defense.³ The District of Columbia, rejected his application on grounds of the Firearms Regulation Act 1975, which banned private

¹ *Amendment I - the Bill of Rights*. 1789. America's Founding Documents - National Archives. <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights>. (Accessed October 28, 2018).

² Jack Walter Peltason, *About America: The Constitution of the United States of America with Explanatory Notes*, (US Department of State, 2004,) 70

³ *District of Columbia V. Heller*. 2008. 554 U.S. 570 (2008) <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/554/07-290/index.pdf>. (Accessed October 28, 2018).

ownership of firearms, and even ordered those who owned them before 1975, to keep them unloaded, or bound by a trigger lock.⁴ Heller did not give up his battle, and continued to defend his lawsuit until it reached the Supreme Court in 2008. His case, which is known as *The District of Columbia vs Heller*, became a landmark case, since it was during his trial that the Supreme Court fully and unambiguously defined the real meaning of this amendment. The Court ruled and declared that the Second Amendment does secure an individual's right to keep and bear arms, “for traditionally lawful purposes, such as self-defense within the home.”⁵

This declaration, however, stunned and disappointed many. For instance, *The New York Times* on June 27, 2008, condemned the court's majority as “cold-blooded killers”, and described its ruling as being both wrong and dangerous. They wrote:

The Supreme Court on Thursday all but ensured that even more Americans will die senselessly with it's wrong headed and dangerous ruling striking down key parts of the District of Columbia's gun-control law... this is a decision that will cost innocent lives, cause immeasurable pain and suffering and turn America into a dangerous country. It will also diminish our standing in the world, sending yet another message that U.S values gun right over human life....the harm they (guns) do is constantly on heart breaking display. Thirty-three dead last year in the shootings at Virginia Tech, six killed this year at Northern Illinois University.⁶

Not only that, after the Heller's decision came down, the president Barack Obama avowed that the Second Amendment does secure an individual's right to keep a firearm, yet he specified that this right can be restricted when necessary. He declared: “I have always believed that the Second Amendment protects the right of individuals to bear arms, but I also identify with the need

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Brian Doherty, *Gun Control on Trial: Inside the Supreme Court Battle over the Second Amendment*, (Cato Institute, 2008,) xvi.

⁶ "Lock and Load," *The New York Times*, June 27, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/27/opinion/27fri1.html>. (Accessed October 28, 2018).

for crime ravaged communities to save their children from the violence that plagues our streets through common sense, and effective safety measures.”⁷

Moreover, the fact that there are so many American organizations that call and work for stricter gun control measures, testifies even more that Americans know and are deeply convinced that availability of guns poses a serious problem in this country. Some examples of the gun control advocates we can name: Everytown for Gun Safety, Stop Handgun Violence, Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, National Gun Victims Action Council, Million Mom March and Brady Campaign. All these organizations believe profoundly that easy access to guns contribute a lot in the high rate of youth mortality in the U.S. For them, even if the Second Amendment applies to individuals, stricter gun control measures are necessary and should even be a priority in order to save lives, and decrease the risks of deadly incidents.

The Brady Campaign for instance, which was founded in 1974, compares gun violence to a pathology in the following terms: “gun violence is a disease, and guns and bullets are the pathogens.”⁸ This statement sheds light on two important points; on the one hand, it depicts the seriousness of the problem, since it compares gun violence to a disease, and on the other hand, it offers an immediate remedy which is simply the destruction of the cause which is the guns.

The same organization explains also on its website, how criminals can get a gun easily and quickly, via three important ways. The first way is called straw purchase, in which a criminal uses another person to buy a gun on his behalf, and this way is responsible for 60% of gun crimes.⁹ The second way is the private sale, in which the purchase is done anonymously via internet or in gun shows with no paperwork nor any background checks. And the third way the criminals use to obtain

⁷Massimo Calabresi, "Obama's Supreme Move to the Center," *Time*, June 26, 2007, <http://www.time.com/time/politics/article/0,8599,1818334,00.html>. (Accessed October 28, 2018).

⁸ The Brady Campaign 3-Point Plan." Brady, Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, <http://www.bradycampaign.org/about-brady>. (Accessed November 23, 2018)

⁹ Ibid

a gun is simply by stealing it. That is why, the Brady Campaign priority is to make sure that guns are kept out of the hands of criminals through expanding effective background checks to all kinds of purchases.¹⁰

Indeed, after the Heller's ruling, the Brady president, Paul Helmke, declared that, he was pleased by the Court's redefinition of the Second Amendment, in the sense that it reaffirmed that guns can be owned, but for a legitimate purpose. Nonetheless, he added that this decision is not going to prevent them, as an organization, from passing and defending "common-sense gun laws" for the sake of the public safety.¹¹

However, the anti-gun control lobbyists, notably the National Rifle Association (NRA), perceive any kind of control over the right to possess and bear arms, as violating the Second Amendment. For them, the right to bear arms is not only a constitutional right but "a birth right confirmed by the Constitution."¹² Thus, there should be no restrictions at all, since any constraint would be perceived as being both unconstitutional and even tyrannical.

Indeed, after the Supreme Court's verdict, the former NRA leader Wayne Lapiere, described the decision as "a constitutional victory"¹³. Yet, even though the Supreme Court ruled on their behalf, the NRA chief lobbyist Chris Cox, announced that they should continue to defend the Second Amendment' practical usage, in order to make sure that the decision "was not words on a piece of paper."¹⁴

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Brian Montopoli, "Supreme Court Gun Rights Decision: A Win or a Setback?" CBS NEWS. June 28, 2010. https://web.archive.org/web/20100701020933/http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544_162-20009049-503544.html. (Accessed November 23, 2018)

¹²Friel, Howard. "How the Nra Rewrote the Constitution." Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting. September 1, 1996. <https://fair.org/extra/how-the-nra-rewrote-the-constitution/>. (Accessed November 23, 2018)

¹³ Brian Montopoli, op.cit.

¹⁴ Ibid

As we can see, gun control debate remains a battle between the public safety and personal freedom. Overall, it is regarded as a delicate balance, since for some, it is a “natural right” and there should be no restrictions at all, yet for others, this right should be regulated because no right is absolute, especially if there is a compelling interest.

In addition to availability of guns, another widely used explanation to school violence, in general, and school attacks, in particular, is school bullying.

III.2.2 School Bullying

Dan Olweus, an influential Norwegian research professor in psychology, explained the term as follows: “bullying is broadly defined as intentional and repeated acts of threatening, or demeaning nature that occur through direct verbal (e.g, threatening, name calling), direct physical (e.g, hitting, kicking), and indirect (e.g, spreading rumors) means and that typically occur in situations in which there is a power or status difference.”¹⁵

This term might also be used interchangeably with the term harassment, though this latter has got a differing definition. Legally speaking, harassment is defined as “a prohibited conduct ...that is motivated by characteristics of the targeted victim”. In other words, this type of misconduct is considered as an unlawful act of discrimination, because it violates the federal civil rights laws that protect against all types of segregations (race, colour, sex, national origins and disability).¹⁶ Indeed, laws prohibiting acts of harassments did exist long before the emergence of the word bullying, yet after the proliferation of school bullying, this difference in meaning created a challenge, since it made it difficult for school officials to distinguish acts of harassments from acts of bullying. Nonetheless, in an attempt to avoid similar connotations, many states tend to use

¹⁵ Catherine Bradshaw, et al, "Teachers' and Education Support Professionals' Perspectives on Bullying and Prevention: Findings from a National Education Association Study," *School Psych Rev* 42, no. 3 (2013), 1.

¹⁶ Victoria Stuart-Cassel, Ariana Bell, and J Fred Springer, *Analysis of State Bullying Laws and Policies*, (US Department of Education, 2011,) 17.

both words synonymously in framing their legislations.¹⁷

In fact, tragedies resulting from school bullying in the U.S are frequent occurrences. According to the National Education Association (NEA), “bullying affects nearly 30% of school aged youth on a monthly basis.”¹⁸ Besides, a significant portion of students skip classes regularly, because they dread physical harm from their peers at school. The National Voices for Equality, Education and Enlightenment (NVEEEE), an American organization that works to prevent bullying, violence and suicide, reported that about “160,000 children miss school everyday due to fear of attack or intimidation by other students.”¹⁹

Overall, bullying in U.S schools is perceived as a serious problem that usually results in serious consequences. Glenn Stutzky, a school violence specialist at Michigan State University, warned that bullying is directly related with lethal school violence. He declared: “bullying is probably the most frequently occurring form of violence in American schools today, and it's really the engine that's driving the majority of violence. It's a huge problem...We have allowed a culture of abuse to thrive unchecked in our nation's schools, and we are paying for it with the bodies of our children.”²⁰

Further more, the U.S Department of Education (DOE), alerted too that school bullying has become a serious social, health and education issue that necessitates urgent and effective anti-bullying programs.²¹ As a result, after the Columbine High massacre 1999, anti-bullying programs started to be adopted by states’ legislatures, and Georgia was the first state that mandated its schools

¹⁷ Ibid, 18.

¹⁸ Ibid, vii.

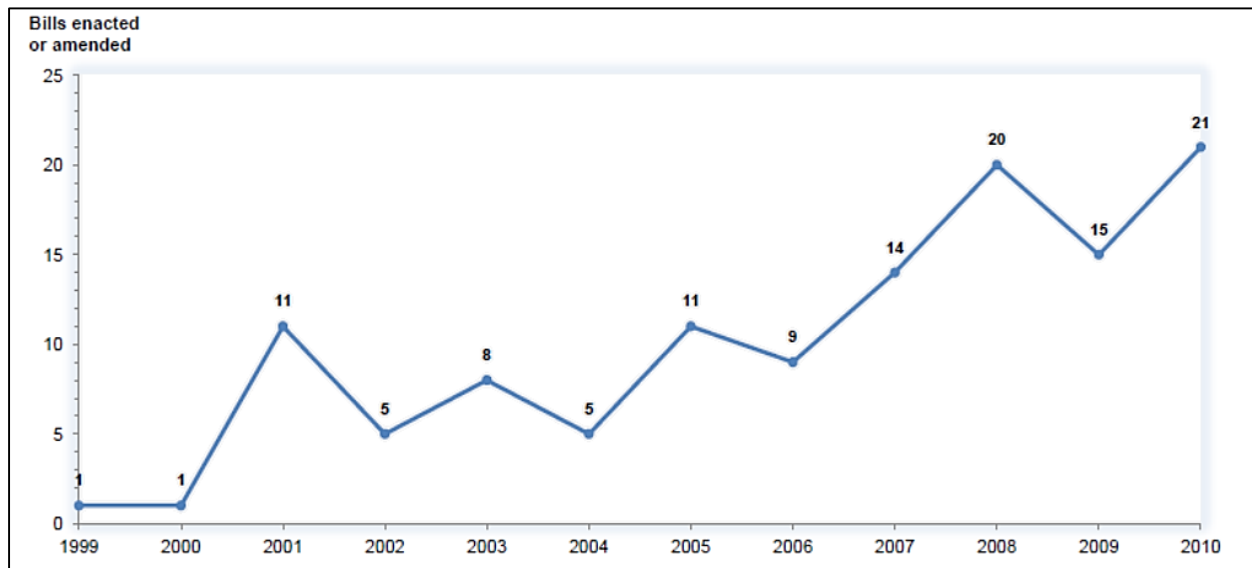
¹⁹“Statistics: Bullying Statistics.” National Voices for Equality, Education and Enlightenment (NVEEEE). <https://www.nveee.org/statistics/>. (Accessed November 23, 2018)

²⁰Anne Garrett, *Bullying in American Schools: Causes, Preventions, Interventions*, (McFarland, 2003,) 61.

²¹ *Victoria Stuart-Cassel*, op.cit., IX.

to use character education programs to combat bullying at schools.²² From 1999 to 2010, 120 laws have been passed, gradually but increasingly, by the majority of the states in order to address bullying, either by introducing new bills, or revising their own education or criminal codes (see figure 9). This clear increase in the adoption of anti-bullying bills was due to an emergence of research concerning the effectiveness of similar strategies to combat school violence.²³

Figure 9: Number of State Bullying Laws Enacted By Year: 1999–2010



Source: U Stuart-Cassel, Victoria, J F. Springer, and Ariana Bell. “Analysis of State Bullying Laws and Policies.” U.S Department of Education, Office of Planning, 2011. P, 17.

This is not all, some severe acts of bullying have even become considered as criminal acts, which have to be handled in a criminal court. Consequently, school officials became obliged to report acts of bullying because some of them may violate criminal codes, especially when they threaten students’ civil rights law. Some states go even further, like the state of Missouri, which directs its schools to sanction a school official who “fails to comply with law enforcement reporting requirements,” and the state of North Carolina, which passed a law that criminalized cyberbullying

²² Ibid, 15.

²³ Ibid, 17

for youths under 18.²⁴

As a matter of fact, among the important findings that were pinpointed in the previous chapter, was the fact that many school shootings were reported to be motivated by school bullying. Available data showed that at least 21 school shooters related to the feelings of hatred and resentment, and some of them experienced frequent and/or serious acts of bullying at school leading them to plan for a revenge. However, it is worth highlighting that, even though some of the shooters endured real and confirmed acts of bullying at school, others only felt a social rejection, which could be abstract or not that serious, from a logical point of view, to commit a murder.

Perhaps the appropriate examples of the school attackers who really experienced frequent acts of school bullying are: Nathan Ferris, Asa Coon and Scott Pennington. Nathan Ferris, the perpetrator of the Townville Elementary School shooting 1987, was regularly bullied from a young age for his physical appearance, because he was overweight.²⁵ When Nathan could no more handle the constant bullying he received at school, he brought a gun to school and waited to be picked on before he shot and killed the bully. Nathan then turned the gun on himself and committed suicide.²⁶

Same thing with Asa Coon, the student who perpetrated the Success Tech Academy shooting in 2007, and ended by taking his own life, was also reported to be the target of bullying due to his gothic appearance.²⁷ And Scott Pennington, the student who opened fire at his High School in 1993, was harassed too from a young age due to his “thick glasses, odd haircuts and his stuttering,”²⁸

Other perpetrators, however, seemed more to justify their shootings by stating that they could no more bear their peers’ rejection and continuous harassment. We can take for instance, Michael

²⁴ Ibid, 20

²⁵ Crews, Gordon A. *Critical Examinations of School Violence and Disturbance in K-12 Education*, op.cit., 8.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Chris Maag Urbina and Ian, "Student, 14, Shoots 4 and Kills Himself in Cleveland School," *The New York Times*, October 11, 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/11/us/11cleveland.html?_r=1&hp&oref=slogin. (Accessed October 28, 2018).

²⁸ Peter Langman, "School Shooters: Nine Brief Sketches," *Schoolshooters.info*. February 12, 2016. https://schoolshooters.info/sites/default/files/nine_brief_sketches_1.1.pdf. (Accessed November 23, 2018)

Carneal, the perpetrator of the Heath High School shooting 1997 in Kentucky, who justified his murder by stating that he was on the receiving end of harassment. He wrote: “I knew I would go to prison, but in my mind I was leaving everything behind. I perceived my life as miserable. Nobody loved me and nobody cared.”²⁹ Same feeling of isolation and rejection was expressed by Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, the two attackers of the Columbine High School massacre 1999. In the suicide note that Eric left, he expressed his inner feelings in the following words: “your children who have ridiculed me, who have chosen not to accept me, who have treated me like I am not worth their time are dead.”³⁰ His partner Dylan described too his life as being miserable due to his feeling of loneliness, he wrote: “Oooh god I want to die sooo bad...such a sad desolate lonely unsalvageable I feel I am not fair, NOT FAIR!!!Let's sum up my life the most miserable existence in the history of time.”³¹ In another entry Dylan added: “nobody accepting me even though I want to be accepted, me doing badly and being intimidated in any and all sports, me looking weird and acting shy — BIG problem.”³²

According to Peter Langman, many school shooters, including those who really experienced or even those who related to feelings of loneliness, were not innocent victims. He explained: “some triggered their own harassment by behaving in provocative or antagonistic ways. They were arrogant, obnoxious, or insulting. When other kids told them to “knock it off” or threw insults back at them, they ended up feeling like victims.”³³

Indeed, Langman illustrated with Michael Carneal, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, whose annoying and provocative behaviors resulted in their peers’ mistreatment. Eric and Dylan for

²⁹Allan L Beane, *Protect Your Child from Bullying: Expert Advice to Help You Recognize, Prevent, and Stop Bullying before Your Child Gets Hurt*, (John Wiley & Sons, 2008,) 195.

³⁰Nicole Veash, "Your Children Who Ridiculed Me Are Dead. It Was Your Doing," *The Guardian*, (April 24, 1999), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/1999/apr/25/usgunviolence.usa4>. (Accessed October 28, 2018).

³¹Langman, Peter. "Dylan Klebold's Journal and Other Writings." Schoolshooters.info. October 03, 2014. https://schoolshooters.info/sites/default/files/klebold_journal_1.1_3.pdf. (Accessed November 23, 2018), 5.

³² Peter Langman "Rampage School Shooters: A Typology," *Aggression and Violent behavior* 14, no. 1 (2009):6

³³ Peter Langman, *Why Kids Kill: Inside the Minds of School Shooters*, op.cit., 13.

instance, shouted “Heil Hitler!” in their bowling classes, which obviously alienated their peers, and they both “had bad tempers, with Eric frequently erupting with anger, punching walls, and picking fights, and Dylan cursing at teachers, throwing things across the classroom, and slamming the door as he stormed out.”³⁴ Thus, the hunger for attention that they were looking for, using all the means, alienated their peers and caused their own social misfortune.

As we can see, acts of school bullying might be real, concrete, regular and severe, but they can also be unreal, abstract or simply not that serious. Nonetheless, regardless of the degree, one can deduce that any kind of bullying might result in lethal school violence, especially if it is associated with other risk factors. That is why, school officials cannot handle the problem alone, there should be a cooperative work between the parents, who must accompany and teach their children how to deal with everyday’s life conflicts, and educators who should take any unwarranted act of bullying seriously and immediately. Additionally, some students appeared to have suffered from difficult family lives or some psychological problems, and bullying at school seemed to have awakened or triggered a hidden agony. Indeed, the following risk factor that was found to be directly linked with school shootings is psychological problems.

III.2.3 Psychological Problems

Generally speaking, reports show that more than “60% of perpetrators of mass shootings in the United States since 1970, displayed symptoms including acute paranoia, delusions, and depression before committing their crimes.”³⁵ In addressing school shootings, our analysis found that at least 25 out of 71 shooters suffered from mental illnesses, and 20 shooters ended the shooting

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Jonathan M Metzl and Kenneth T MacLeish, "Mental Illness, Mass Shootings, and the Politics of American Firearms," *American journal of public health* 105, no. 2 (2015): 240.

by taking their own lives. Yet, it is worth highlighting that, not all the attackers who ended the shooting by a suicide, were reported to have suffered from psychological problems, and not all the shooters who wanted to take their own lives the day of the attack, ended really by committing a suicide. In some cases, the shooters didn't go through their initial plan, i.e., they did not commit suicide the day of the attack, but either they did it later on, like Anthony Barbaro who hanged himself while he was in prison, or they did it indirectly, like Scott Pennington, who went on a school attack, in order to become "eligible for death penalty".³⁶ Still in some cases, the shooters were transferred into a mental facility, because they were judged insane, or incompetent to stand a trial, like Thomas Kakonis, the student who was responsible for the Ferris State College Shooting 1980,³⁷ and John Christian, the student who shot and killed his English teacher in 1978.³⁸

Indeed, psychologist Peter Langman, in his influential book *Why Kids Kill: Inside the Minds of School Shooters*(2009), analyzed the psychological profile of different shooters, and he affirmed that those students were mentally ill. Langman divided them into different groups, and he concluded that some of the attackers were psychopathic, others were psychotic, and still for some they were schizophrenics.

According to Langman, Eric Harris, one of the Columbine's High massacre 1999, and Andrew Golden, one of the perpetrators of the Westside Middle school massacre 1984, were both psychopaths.³⁹ This categorization was explained by the fact that both of them were narcissistic,

³⁶ Jerry Buckley, "The Tragedy in Room 108: An Angry Teen Killed His Teacher and Forever Changed a Kentucky Town," *US News*, October 31, 1993.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/1993/10/31/the-tragedy-in-room-108>. (Accessed November 23, 2018)

³⁷ "Student Kills Professor in Class." *The Harvard Crimson*. April 5, 1980.

<https://www.thecrimson.com/article/1980/4/5/student-kills-professor-in-class-pbig/>. (Accessed November 23, 2018)

³⁸ Levy, Claudia. "George Christian, 75, Dies." *The Washington Post*, November 29, 2002,

https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2002/11/29/george-christian-75-dies/e97a7b13-48a4-4295-a5e3-2a7689826c01/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.bc20cc736df3. (Accessed October 28, 2018).

³⁹ Peter Langman, *Why Kids Kill: Inside the Minds of School Shooters*, op.cit., 21.

sadistic, they lacked empathy and morality, and they had problems with anger managements.⁴⁰ Langman explained that, all these characteristics are important personality traits of a psychopath.

Langman illustrated also with Dylan Klebold, the second perpetrator of the Columbine High massacre, who was also found to be mentally ill. Yet, Dylan was categorized as a psychotic shooter, due to his hallucinations and delusions, which made him “out of touch with reality.”⁴¹

The third categorization of the shooters included Michael Carneal, Andrew Wurst, Kip Kinkel, and Seung Hui Co, who have all been found to be schizophrenics. According to Langman, schizophrenia resembles to psychotic disorder, but schizophrenics suffer more from hallucinations and delusions, in the sense that, they are more intense and significant.⁴²

Indeed, the fact that many school shooters developed homicidal and / or suicidal thinking, and as many of them had been taking antidepressant drugs during or before the shooting, made parents speculating about the real effect of such medications. They wondered: were those medications, supposedly prescribed to help our children, making them more aggressive?

Dr Peter Breggin, an American psychiatrist and a critic of biological psychiatry, warned that antidepressants might have an opposite effect, that is to say, instead of healing children, they are destroying them. He explained that kids who were taking antidepressants, supposedly for their depression, were becoming more violent and more suicidal.⁴³ Breggin added that, these drugs have a number of disturbing side effects whether for those who were taking them, or withdrawing from them. He wrote: “in my book *The Anti Depressant Fact I* [Dr Peter Breggin] warned that stopping

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Ibid, 50.

⁴² Ibid, 73.

⁴³ Peter Breggin, "Psychiatric Drugs Are More Dangerous Than You Ever Imagined," (4 nov. 2014)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=luKsQaj0hzs&fbclid=IwAR2443ZT7ZVDYy0ZLRxobP4c9Wv3v5vBY6nfMhVcMqI7wUJvzbS7j90w6j8>. (Accessed November 23, 2018)

antidepressants can be as dangerous as starting them, since they can cause very disturbing and painful withdrawal reactions.”⁴⁴

Same warning was expressed by Mike Adams, a natural health researcher, who even went further. For Adams, the primary reason for school shootings is not the availability of guns, but the psychiatric medications. He stated: “if you take away the guns, you will not solve this problem. Violence can be carried out with knives or arson, or explosives...”⁴⁵ Mike Adams argued that adolescents’ minds are being poisoned by drugs, prescribed to them by psychiatrists who collaborate with drug companies to profit from their pain. For him, there should be a prohibition of these “toxic chemicals” instead of banning guns, which he believes, are just pretexts used by the media to avoid implementing the pharmaceutical industry in these school shootings.⁴⁶

Actually, many school shooters that were studied in the second chapter were taking or withdrawing from antidepressant medications. Kip Kinkel, for instance, the school shooter who murdered his parents and engaged in a killing spree at Thurston High School in Oregon 1998, was put on Prozac for depression, and was withdrawing from it few months before the killing.⁴⁷ Eric Harris, one of the Columbine’s attackers 1999, was taking Luvox (antidepressant) at the time of the attack. Jeffrey Weise, the perpetrator of the Red Lake Massacre in Minnesota 2005, was too prescribed Prozac,⁴⁸ and Steven Kazmierczak, the perpetrator of the Northern Illinois Shooting 2008, was taking Xanax (anti-anxiety), Ambien (sleep aid), and Prozac too(antidepressant).⁴⁹

⁴⁴Bob Unruh, "Virginia Tech Massacre: Are Meds to Blame for Cho's Rampage?" (April 23, 2007) <https://www.wnd.com/2007/04/41218/>. (Accessed November 23, 2018)

⁴⁵Mike Adams, "Psychiatric Drug Use of German Shooter Confirmed: Kretschmer Withdrawing from Depression Treatment," (March 12, 2009). <https://www.naturalnews.com/025835.html>. (Accessed November 23, 2018)

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Peter Langman, *Why Kids Kill: Inside the Minds of School Shooter*, op.cit., 6.

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Abbie Boudreau, Zamost, Scott, "Girlfriend: Shooter Was Taking Cocktail of 3 Drugs," CNN.com. February 20, 2008. <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/CRIME/02/20/shooter.girlfriend/index.html>. (Accessed November 23, 2018)

Indeed, in 2004 Food and Drug Administration (FDA) gave directions to add warnings to all antidepressant medications to alert the public about the increased risk of suicidal thinking or suicidal attempts by children taking antidepressants. In June 2005, FDA directed that the warning should include young adults up through age 25.⁵⁰

As a conclusion, one may deduce that mental illnesses along with antidepressant drugs, do play a significant role in explaining some cases of school shootings. Yet, though the effect is not always fatal, because not all students who have psychological problems become automatically murderers, this category of students necessitates a special care due to its vulnerability, and the danger they can present towards themselves, their family and their classmates. Thus, those students, with psychological instabilities, have to be permanently and closely supervised, by their parents first, and their educators second.

To sum up, the above stated risk factors, which are: access to guns, bullying and psychological problems, have all been found to be directly linked to nearly all the analyzed cases of school shootings. However, it has also been observed that these factors were not the only reasons behind all the school attacks. Other important causes have also been identified, and seemed to play an important role in motivating some cases. These secondary risk factors are worth discussing too, and they are going to be labelled “indirect risk factors”.

III.3. Indirect Risk Factors

In some cases, watching a violent film few weeks before the attack, or being raised in an instable familial atmosphere appeared to have influenced the attacker to some extent. These causes

⁵⁰Levin Madeline, et al, "Do Antidepressants Increase Suicide Attempts? Do They Have Other Risks?" *National Center for Health Research*. <http://www.center4research.org/antidepressants-increase-suicide-attempts-risks/?fbclid=IwAR3Cfw9V8nX8B5xs3ZPGkSuDdl0qmdpnWHHlM2cYsf9abTm2Cg3x5XyJ4Is>. (Accessed November 23, 2018).

were not shared by all the shooters, but they seemed to have their share in motivating some attackers. Additionally, the American violent culture and the moral decline were too blamed for the propagation of this particular type of lethal school violence.

III.3.1 Violent Media

Violent media has usually been cited as an important reason for school attacks. Actually, after the Columbine High School massacre in 1999, many political leaders and media experts pointed an accusing finger at violent entertainment as the primary reason for the massacre. President Clinton, at once, called the entrainment industry executives to a meeting in the white house. Representative Henry Hyde,⁵¹ suggested a “Children's Defense Act, banning the sale, loan and the exhibit of violent material to minors.”⁵² Senate Ernest Hollings,⁵³ presented a draft law banning the diffusion of any “violent video programing when children are reasonably likely to comprise a substantial portion of the audience.”⁵⁴

Not only that, for some researchers, violent entertainment drove the Columbine’s attackers to execute their murderous plan. Professor Henry Jenkins for instance, an American media scholar, blamed violent media, especially rock music and violent video games, as having pushed the Columbine’s shooters to commit their lethal attack. He explained that, teenagers directly adopt and imitate the attitudes and behaviors they see in media, therefore; their personality is shaped accordingly.⁵⁵ He declared:

The very nature of our relationship to media is undergoing one of its most radical

⁵¹A Republican member of the United States House of Representatives from 1975 to 2007, representing the 6th District of Illinois.

⁵² Marjorie Heins and Joanne Cantor, *Violence and the Media: An Exploration of Cause, Effect and the First Amendment*, (First Amendment Center, 2001,) 1.

⁵³A Democratic United States Senator from South Carolina (1966 to 2005.)

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ Ibid.

shifts in the history of civilization. It's comparable to the Gutenberg revolution or to the rise of modern mass media in the late 19th century. Young people are on the cutting edge of these changes, because they are the ones who have adopted the new technologies first. They relate to this technology more intensely. These are young people whose sense of the world has been shaped by new media.⁵⁶

In fact, a number of the studied school shooters were fond of certain violent movies and violent video games. For example, the Columbine's attackers Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold were found to be influenced by a movie called "Natural Born Killers," because they used the abbreviation 'NBK' in their journals as a cipher for the attack on the Columbine High.⁵⁷ Jeffrey Weise, the attacker of the Red Lake massacre 2005, is believed to be influenced by a violent movie, inspired from the Columbine's attack, called "Elephant"⁵⁸. Cho Hui Seung, the perpetrator of the Virginia Tech University massacre 2007, was reported too to be affected by a violent Korean movie, called "Old Boy", because in the parcel of materials he sent to NBC News, one photo shows Cho holding a hammer in a posture similar to the film's antagonist.⁵⁹ Michael Carneal, the student who was responsible for of The Heath High School shooting 1997 in Kentucky, is also believed to be influenced by a movie entitled "the Basketball Diary", in which the protagonist fantasized about killing his classmates.⁶⁰

Additionally, some school shooters were found to play regularly violent video games, particularly, a video game known as "Doom", which appeared to have affected their way of reasoning. In one entry, Eric Harris, one of the Columbine attackers, described the effects he got

⁵⁶ Ibid, 22.

⁵⁷ Peter Langman, "Influences on the Ideology of Eric Harris," Schoolshooters.info. (August 2, 2014.) 1 https://schoolshooters.info/sites/default/files/harris_influences_ideology_1.2.pdf. (Accessed November 23, 2018)

⁵⁸ David Hancock, "Red Lake Shooting Conspiracy," CBS News, (March 30, 2005.) <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/red-lake-shooting-conspiracy/>. (Accessed November 23, 2018).

⁵⁹ Jacke Coyle, "Vt Killer's Hammer Pose Resembles Movie," Boston.com, (April 19, 2007.) http://archive.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2007/04/19/vt_killers_hammer_pose_resembles_movie/. (Accessed August 29, 2018)

⁶⁰ "Media Companies Are Sued in Kentucky Shooting," *The New York Times*, April 13, 1999 <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/04/13/us/media-companies-are-sued-in-kentucky-shooting.html>. (Accessed October 28, 2018).

from playing that game in the following words: “Doom is so burned into my head my thoughts usually have something to do with the game ... What I can’t do in real life, I try to do in Doom.”⁶¹ And in relating the video game to the attack, Eric added: “I have a goal to destroy as much as possible so I must not be sidetracked by my feelings of sympathy, mercy, or any of that, so I will force myself to believe that everyone is just another monster from Doom ... so it’s either me or them. I have to turn off my feelings.”⁶² Moreover, Evan Ramsey, the attacker of the Bethel High School Shooting 1997, confessed to the ABC News, in an interview at the Arizona prison, that he really lost touch with reality the day of the attack due to the effect of the video games. According to his confession, Ramsey could no more differentiate the virtual world from the real world to the point that he went on a killing spree and not even recognizing that he was killing real people. Ramsey explained: “I honestly believed that if you shoot somebody that they would get back up...I didn't realize that you shoot somebody, they die.”⁶³

But if it has been argued and even proven that violent media poses a real danger, then why aren't there stricter laws banning similar violent entertainment?

In fact, as it is the case with availability of guns, there exists a delicate balance too between censorship laws and free speech guaranteed by the First Amendment. In other words, free speech is highly valued in the United States, it is protected by the U.S constitution, hence; the unconstitutionality of pre-censorship creates a legal obstacle against censorship laws as a response to violent media. As the Supreme Court put it more than half a century ago, the First Amendment does not apply “only to the exposition of ideas, the line between the informing and the entertaining

⁶¹ Peter Langman, *Why Kids Kill : Inside the Minds of School Shooter*, op.cit 151.

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ Jim Avila, Reynolds Holding, Teri Whitcraft, and Beth Tribolet, "School Shooter : ‘ I Did Not Realize ‘ They Would Die," ABC News, June 11, 200. <http://abcnews.go.com/TheLaw/story?id=5040342&page=1>. (Accessed August 29, 2018).

is too elusive for the protection of that basic right.”⁶⁴

Indeed, the first Supreme Court case that addressed the issue of violent entertainment goes back to 1948, when the Supreme Court invalidated a law, passed by the state of New York, which banned pictures or stories of “deeds of bloodsheds, lust or crime.” In this landmark case known as *Winters V. New York*, the Court declared that terms like “bloodshed and lust”, are too vague, and vague laws, they said, were dangerous in the area of free speech and press.⁶⁵

Surprisingly, some psychologists have a completely differing point of view concerning the real effects of violent media. For them, violent entertainment is not that dangerous, on the contrary; it has got a therapeutic function. Lawrence Kurdek, a developmental psychologist and a leader in the study of child and adult relationships, defended violent entertainment in the following words: “heavy metal music, with its angry and aggressive sound, is especially useful to adolescents in purging anger.”⁶⁶

Same opinion was shared by Joanne Cantor, an internationally recognized expert on children and mass media, who declared that violent media was not the predominant cause of violence. Yet, Cantor specified that violent entertainment can be dangerous, “for already troubled kids”.⁶⁷ That is to say, violent media is not directly linked with violence, but it can aggravate a situation, if the child was naturally aggressive.

To conclude, violent media does have its share in motivating some school shootings, since several attackers were found to be addicted, consciously or unconsciously, to this type of media.

⁶⁴ "Winters V. New York, 333 U.S. 507, 510 (1948)." Justia US Supreme Court, (1948). <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/333/507/>. (Accessed November 23, 2018).

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶Marjorie Heins, et al, op, cit., 8.

⁶⁷Ibid, 19.

Yet, while some experts support this view, because they really believe in the direct correlation that links violent media with violent behavior, through imitation or desensitization, others think that this correlation is not always true, since violent entertainment may help children in evacuating their hidden anxiety and hostility, that is to say, it is not destructive but beneficial because it provides the viewers with an escapist enjoyment.

Another popular explanation to school attacks is said to be linked with family problems or with familial instability.

III.3.2 Familial Instability

Familial instability encompasses different family problems, it includes principally: divorce, domestic or sexual abuse, frequent relocations, fragile family relationships, and lack of involvement in children's lives.⁶⁸ This factor has been cited in many occasions as an important risk factor in explaining some school attacks, since many shooters came from broken family lives.

Indeed, The Final Report of the Congressional Bipartisan Working Group on Youth Violence, which was formed by the speaker of the U.S House of Representatives J. Dennis Hastert, is a good example of the opinion which says that it all starts indoors. The report concluded that youth violence cannot be explained solely by a single factor, however; family problems do play an important role in encouraging some youths to behave violently. It stated: “although there is no single cause for youth violence, the most common factor is family dysfunction.”⁶⁹

Penny Nichols, a seventh grade teacher at Westside School, where Mitchell Johnson and Andrew Golden committed their school shooting in 1998, was convinced too that families are the

⁶⁸Katherine S Newman, op.cit.,61.

⁶⁹Ibid, 61.

main source for lethal youth violence. He confessed: “my interpretation is if they put so much emphasis on what goes on at school, how they are bullied and how teachers may not do this and may not do that, or maybe teachers need to do more of this-you know, it's screaming at everybody: “Home life, home life, home life!”⁷⁰

As a matter of fact, a number of the analyzed school shooters suffered from varying degrees of family problems. Perhaps the suitable example of a school shooter who suffered from an extreme difficult life was Jeffrey Weise, the perpetrator of the Red Lake massacre 2005. Jeffrey grew up in an instable and a totally broken domestic atmosphere. His family history is perhaps the most traumatic than that of any other school shooter. When Jeffrey was four-years old, his mother, Joanna Weise, was arrested for driving while drunk. Few months later, she was jailed again for assault, thus; Jeffrey was placed in a foster home.⁷¹

Not only that, when Jeffrey was nine-years old, his father Daryl Lussier, Jr., engaged in a daylong confrontation with police which ended by him taking his own life. Two years later, his mother suffered from a significant brain damage as a result of a car accident, and that required her to live at a rehabilitation facility. In between these shocking events, Jeffrey's mother remarried a man who was said to be alcoholic, but when the mother became dysfunctional, the stepfamily took in Jeffrey' siblings, and left Jeffrey alone. Thus, at a very young age, Jeffrey endured a series of traumatic events that seemed to have fueled the child with feelings of solitude and agony.⁷²

This was only half of the story, even when Jeffrey lived with his mother, this later did not provide him with love and affection. In his diary, Jeffrey confessed: “my mom used to abuse me a

⁷⁰Ibid, 62.

⁷¹Peter Langman, *Why Kids Kill : Inside the Minds of School Shooter*, op.cit, 118.

⁷²Ibid .

lot when I was little. She would hit me with anything she could get her hands on, she used to drink excessively, too. She would tell me I was a mistake. And she would say so many things that it's hard to deal with them or think of them without crying.”⁷³ Jeffrey expressed his feelings also on a website called *Live Journal*, on January 27th, 2005, when he wrote: “always expecting change when I know nothing ever changes. I have seen mothers choose their man over their own flesh and blood, I have seen others choose alcohol over friendship...I sacrifice no more for others, part of me has...died.”⁷⁴

From both writings, and from Jeffrey’s family background, one may deduce that the child’s suffering was so profound. He was an abused child with an alcoholic mother, he lived in a constant instability, and he lost his parents and his siblings at a young age. Hence, Jeffrey developed suicidal and homicidal thoughts very early too. In one entry Jeffrey wrote: “most people have never dealt with people who have faced the kind of pain that makes you physically sick at times, makes you so depressed you can't function, makes you so sad and overwhelmed with grief that eating bullet or sticking your head in a noose seems welcoming.”⁷⁵

The case of Mitchell Johnson, who committed the Westside Middle School massacre 1998 along with Andrew Golden, also presents a clear picture of family problems as a significant factor. His parents divorced, and his disturbed relationship with his father was a source of his enormous anxiety. Mitchell was reported also to have suffered from sexual abuse at the hands of a neighborhood youth in Minnesota, and various people suggested that the shooting was “a displacement of the anger and frustration he felt.”⁷⁶

⁷³Ibid, 119.

⁷⁴Jeffrey Weise, "Thoughts of a Dreamer," *Live Journal*. Jan. 27th, 2005. https://schoolshooters.info/sites/default/files/weise_thoughts_of_a_dreamer.pdf. (Accessed November 23, 2018).

⁷⁵Peter Langman, *Why Kids Kill : Inside the Minds of School Shooter*, op.cit 119.

⁷⁶Katherine S Newman, op.cit., , 62-63.

Nonetheless, the Heath case, for instance, is a clear illustration of the complex nature that links family problems with school shootings. The Carneal family was the opposite of the stereotypical abusive, uncaring family. Michael Carneal, a fourteen-year old who attacked his high school in 1997, came from a good family, and the state's prosecutor found no explanation to Michael's rampage, given his family background. He wondered: "Michael comes from a very good family, Father's a lawyer here. Mother's a very good person...Most kids that come from homes where they have two loving parents, raised them properly, and present them with all the opportunities they can are less likely to commit crime than those who come from broken homes with little supervision."⁷⁷ Thus, problems behind shut doors may contribute to school shootings, but the effect between family problems and school attacks is not always automatic. In other words, many children who suffer from difficult family lives do not become necessarily murderers, and not all school attackers were raised in instable, fragile family atmospheres.

To sum up, one may say that school attackers came from a variety of family backgrounds. While some of them did endure difficult family lives, others had an idealistic family with absolutely nothing to blame. Consequently, family instability has its part in explaining some school attacks, but the influence is not always deterministic nor fatal.

Another important communal factor that is widely stated as a logical explanation to the high rate of gun youth violence in the U.S. is what is known as the American gun culture, or more particularly, the American Southern violent culture.

III.3.3 The American Violent Culture vs. the Culture of Fear

In the second chapter, it has been observed that among the important findings of our analysis was the fact that school shootings may strike any state, since different states experienced at least

⁷⁷Ibid

one attack in a period of thirty years. However, it has also been observed that California, which is a Southern state, surpassed all the remaining states with six school shootings in the same period. Additionally, other southern states like, Florida, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Colorado, knew more than one school attack, hence; an important question may be raised: was a southern culture of violence responsible for this crisis? (Return to figure 8).

Indeed, according to some thinkers, like the social psychologist Richard Nisbett, and psychologist Dov Cohen, the violent history of the South left an important impact on the characters of modern southern men, therefore; southerners are more likely to behave and react violently.⁷⁸ This conclusion was in fact delivered on the basis of an experiment that was done by the above stated psychologists, who observed that southern students were more likely to react aggressively, due to the highly valued concept of ‘honor in this region. According to this view, violence is naturally endorsed in the South, for self-defense and social control, due to its peculiar historical experience vis-à-vis the use of force and power. As Kathernine Newman explained it in her book: *Rampage: The Social Roots of School Shooting*“(2004), “the South has evolved a distinctive culture that legitimates violence as a way of solving disputes or of guarding and gaining some status.” She added also that this legitimation goes back to the infamous period of slavery in the region, when masters used to maltreat their former slaves, and used very harsh and inhuman means to control them.⁷⁹

However, if the southern violent culture was blamed for the proliferation of this type of youth violence, then how can we explain the shootings that happened in states like: Pennsylvania, Washington, New York, Oregon, and Massachusetts?

⁷⁸ Ibid, 67-68.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 67.

Actually, the “American southern culture hypothesis” was challenged by many thinkers and in many occasions. In a documentary film entitled “Bowling for Columbine,” Michael Moore, a well-known American author and a filmmaker, declared that the suggestion that the U.S violent history is the cause for the high rate of gun violence in the country, is negated by the violent histories of Germany, France and U.K. For him, a “culture of fear”, rather than a southern violent culture, leads Americans to arm themselves, and behave violently.⁸⁰

Moore’s opinion was also shared by sociologist, Barry Glassner, who also believes that it is ‘a culture of fear’ which is posing a real problem. However, Glassner went even further. According to him, people have become more and more manipulated by different organizations, notably by the media and the government, who create some social panics, on purpose, for their own benefit. Glassner explained the benefits of spreading propagated information in his book *The Culture of Fear: Why Americans are Afraid of the Wrong Things* (1999), in the following terms: “fear-driven legislation is good for politicians looking to arouse voters, for advocacy groups looking to attract donations, for ratings-hungry media, and for social scientists, attorneys, and other professionals who choose to cash in on them.”⁸¹ Hence, according to Glassner, spreading publically cases of extreme types of violence like cases of school shootings, is quite beneficial and very lucrative.

As a matter of fact, some researchers believe that school shootings are rare events, but because of the magnified coverage of these tragic events, people live in a constant fear, and they are left with an impression that American schools are dangerous places. Mari Margaret McLean, the author of “It’s a Blackboard Jungle Out There?” (1995) explained that, the images presented by the media and the entertainment industry have contributed to the exaggeration of violence in

⁸⁰ Michael Moore, "Bowling for Columbine," USA, 2002 (documentary).

⁸¹ Barry Glassner, *The Culture of Fear: Why Americans Are Afraid of the Wrong Things: Crime, Drugs, Minorities, Teen Moms, Killer Kids, Muta*, (Basic books, 1999.) xiii.

American schools, she stated:

Television News, in intense competition for the public's attention, does not generally concern itself with the difference between real violence and the perceived threat of it. The measure of a "good story" nowadays seems to be the extent to which it can shock and disturb us, and stories of violence in unexpected places such as schools are calculated to carry maximum shock value.⁸²

Margaret McLean added that this "climate of fear" created by the media, is useful not only for making money, but also in making teachers, school officials and parents more obedient. She explained: "when an institution is seen as a violent place, those both outside and inside the institution will react to everything that happens there within that frame of reference. Containing potential violence demands strict discipline, unquestioning obedience to authority, and mindless conformity."⁸³

However, if the problem of school violence is somehow exaggerated, what about the number of deaths resulting from the multiple school attacks? Besides, even if school shootings were rare, there should be a strong political and social response to "exterminate" the problem, because no single death should be accepted, especially in sensitive places like schools.

To sum up, the southern violent culture may be cited as a logical explanation to justify some school attacks that occurred in southern states, but this explanation is not always valid; especially if we want to understand the school shootings that happened in other geographical areas. Besides, the fact that the media does play its role in creating a sort of a social instability may also be true, but incidents of school attacks and the number of dead victims resulting from this type of violence, remain quiet real and factual.

⁸² Mari Margaret McLean, "One Person's Opinion: It's a "Blackboard Jungle" Out There: The Impact of Media and Film on the Public's Perceptions of Violence in Schools," *The English Journal* Vol. 84, No. 5 (Sep., 1995,) 19. DOI: 10.2307/820003

⁸³ Ibid.

Finally, there is another factor that may explain, to some extent; why the problem of school violence is regarded as a contemporary problem. This factor has been stated in many occasions, especially by parents and educators, as contributing to many negative outcomes including: low academic performance, weak attendance, lack of self-discipline, and general lack of respect for the school staff. This factor is the loss of values among modern students.

III.3.4 Moral Decline

Generally speaking, the term “morality” has been defined as “a person’s or society’s view of what is perceived to be the highest good.”⁸⁴ More specifically, morality is regarded as “the system of rules that regulate the social interactions and social relationships of individuals within societies and is based on concepts of welfare, trust, justice and rights.”⁸⁵ Therefore, these set of social norms, constitute the foundation of any civilized society, since they guide individuals, and show them how to live together.

Historically, apart from the parents who are the first moral teachers, schools’ instructors did play a crucial role in educating the children both intellectually and morally. This moral education was in fact at the core of the educational curriculum, because its goal was not purely academic, but essentially educative.⁸⁶

Indeed, the first educational institutions that were established in the New World, focused, primarily, on moral education, which was principally based on religious teachings. Moreover, as the founding fathers like: Thomas Jefferson, John Adams and Benjamin Franklin, wanted to build

⁸⁴ Sandeep Kaur, "Moral Values in Education," *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 20, no. 3 (2015): 21.

⁸⁵ Smetana, Judith G. "Parenting and the Development of Social Knowledge Reconceptualized: A Social Domain Analysis." In *Parenting Children's Internalization of Values: A Handbook of Contemporary Theory*, edited by Leon Kuczynski and Joan E. Grusec. 162-92. New York: J. Wiley, 1997.

⁸⁶ "Moral Education," Encyclopedia.com, (2002). <https://www.encyclopedia.com/education/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/moral-education>. (Accessed November 23, 2018).

a coherent nation, they insisted on the necessity to implement a “moral compact among the people”, in order to regulate all the social ties.⁸⁷

By the nineteenth century, Abraham Lincoln emphasized too on the same principles when he declared: "I desire to see a time when education, and by its means, morality, sobriety, enterprise and industry, shall become much more general than at present" (2002).⁸⁸ This means that, Lincoln’s wish was to generalize education, but by the word education he meant both the academic side and the moral side.

During that era, all the teachers, regardless of their specialty, were trained with the prospect that they would all work to achieve a common goal, which was to ameliorate “the moral mission of their schools.”⁸⁹ This purpose was supported by the McGuffey’s textbooks, which were a series of well-known reading books used by most American schools during the nineteenth century, and which were reported to have focused on the teachings of basic moral principles like, honesty, respect, kindness and diligence.⁹⁰

By the twentieth century, new ways of thinking started emerging and, thus; influencing and changing the facets of the so-called traditional societies. This was due to the birth of new ideas brought by many revolutionists in different domains like: Karl Marx, Charles Darwin and Sigmund Freud, and whose new reflections challenged the existing spiritual and religious beliefs.⁹¹ That new trend affected also the school settings, since some educators started avoiding teaching morals, due to a growing call for a “value free schooling”.⁹²

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ William Damon, "Good, Bad, or None of the Above? The Time-Honored Mandate to Teach Character," *Education Next* 04, no. 02 (Spring 2005): 22.

⁹¹ "Moral Education," op.cit.

⁹² Ibid.

By the 1980's, the concept of "moral education" was replaced by the concept of "character education", because it was said that the former one had more a religious connotation, hence; in order to avoid any confusion, teaching morals became optional, secular and more philosophical.⁹³

Nonetheless, the unprecedented wave of violence seen in America's schools during the 1990's, which coincided with a perceived decline in moral education, made some researchers speculating whether this modern problem could be directly linked to the loss of values among the youths. Moreover, as different statistics conducted by various organizations like the CDC, delivered alarming numbers about the sharp increase of various types of students' misconducts inside the school settings during the 1990's,⁹⁴ school officials, parents and teachers started calling for an urgent re-integration of character education in schools.

As a matter of fact, many studies, like the survey which was led by the American Association of School Administrators in the late of the 1990's, found that 74% of the organization's adherents believed that their schools; immediately, needed a "stronger sense of values and ethics"⁹⁵. Even the students themselves agreed on the fact that something should be done, in order to make the rules respected. Other results in a national study, indicated that circa 84% of all parents approved that "there was a very strong need for morals and ethics to be taught in the school setting."⁹⁶

Similar results were strengthened by several declarations delivered by many experts like Professor William Damon, one of the leading researchers in the field of human development, who

⁹³ Wolfgang Althof and Marvin W Berkowitz, "Moral Education and Character Education: Their Relationship and Roles in Citizenship Education," *Journal of moral education* 35, no. 4 (2006): 496.

⁹⁴Lauree Beth Stedje, *Nuts and Bolts of Character Education: A Literature Review*, (Character First, 2010,) 4. <http://strata.vaesite.com/data/uploads/files/CharacterEducationReport.pdf>. (Accessed November 02, 2018).

⁹⁵Joseph Garland Whitley, "Reversing the Perceived Moral Decline in American Schools: A Critical Literature Review of America's Attempt at Character Education," Master, The College of William and Mary, 10.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

wrote that the absence of an explicit character education in schools, drove the latter to a wrong path. Damon explained also that starting from the 1990's, American schools began witnessing a sharp increase in the proliferation of immoral deeds among the students, especially in suburban and urban cities.⁹⁷ Besides, the emerging immoral portrait of American schools started taking a new dimension after the notorious Columbine High massacre in 1999. Consequently, Damon insisted on the need to re-implement a clear and a specific character education in American schools, in order to provide the students with a set of values expressed in a moral language that clearly differentiates right from wrong.⁹⁸

Damon believes also that one key question that all teachers have to focus on while teaching character education is to ask their students simple moral questions like: "How would it make you feel if someone did that to you?"⁹⁹ Damon illustrated with different religious verses derived from different religions like: Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism, in order to support this kind of teachings, and to show that the basic moral values do exist in all the religious texts.

Other influential researchers in the field of character education like Thomas Lickona, insisted on the necessity to teach moral values in schools. Lickona declared "even when a supportive moral culture does not exist outside of the school," explicitly, in the home, it is the responsibility of the school to create a moral atmosphere within its own classrooms.¹⁰⁰

And last but not least, Kay Hymowitz, an American author, wrote that Americans have come to the consensus that it is time to get rid of moral relativism and recognize that there are certain values that are universally accepted, such as honesty, respect, decency.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Ibid, 22

⁹⁸ Ibid, 26.

⁹⁹ William Damon, op.cit., 23.

¹⁰⁰ Joseph Garland Whitley, op.cit., 10.

¹⁰¹ Kay S Hymowitz, "The Return of Character Education?". *Public Interest* (2003):105.

<https://www.nationalaffairs.com/storage/app/uploads/public/58e/1a5/01c/58e1a501c8758946017761.pdf>. (Accessed November 02, 2018).

By the end of the 1990's, this call for an urgent renewal of moral education started taking shape, since different American schools started implementing; though with different degrees, character education programs within their educational curricula.¹⁰² Many years later, long-term studies, like the Missouri survey (2002 -2006), concluded that this re-integration of character education in many schools led to a number of promising results, notably; in the increase of their students' academic achievements, and in the decrease of their students' disciplinary referrals.¹⁰³

III.4. Conclusion

To conclude, one may deduce that the problem of school shootings is the result of different factors, which vary considerably in their degree of implication. While some of them like: access to guns, bullying and psychological problems, were found to have directly triggered the shooting, others like: family problems, the American violent culture and violent media, were found to have indirectly caused the attack. Still in some cases, the direct and the indirect reasons did overlap with each other, i.e., some school attackers had an easy access to guns, were bullied at school, suffered from psychological problems, were fond of violent media, and had problems within their families.

Nonetheless, this overlap remains exceptional, and the direct reasons seemed to pose a real and an imminent danger even if they were present alone.

In the following and final chapter, the emphasis will be put on the various responses that have been applied to fight school attacks. It will evaluate all the proposed and applied measures, and look for some possible alternatives.

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ Lauree Beth Stedje, *op.cit.*, 5.

**IV. CHAPTER IV: The Legal and the Safety Measures toward Gun
Violence and School Gun Violence**

IV.1. Introduction

The U.S government and U.S schools did establish a myriad of security measures as a response to gun related crimes, including the various school attacks that frightened the American nation. Legislators enacted a set of laws in an attempt to preserve and maintain the public safety, and many educational institutions started reinforcing their security by installing cameras, metal detectors and other similar security devices. But to what extent were those measures effective in deterring future attacks?

This chapter, is going to evaluate and discuss the various legal and non-legal procedures that have been developed and tested to restrain armed violence. It will, first of all, start by shedding light on the various federal bills that were passed to control gun violence, and school gun violence, then it will trace their historical background, assess their effectiveness and try to look for some substitute outlets.

IV.2. Historical Background of Gun Control Federal Statutes

Gun related crimes, in general, have a long history in the United States; hence, the American federal gun policy passed its first attempts to regulate guns' ownership during the 1920's. As early as 1927, the Mailing Firearms Act, known also as the Miller Act or the Non-Mailable Firearms Act, was passed by the federal government banning the transfer of handguns through the American postal service.¹ Since then, congress started enacting a series of acts; gradually, in order to control handgun possession and reduce gun homicides. In 1934, and in an attempt to control gangster gun violence, and reduce public shootings which propagated significantly during that period, Congress

¹ 18 U.S.C. 1715 - Firearms as nonmailable; regulations, *the U.S. Government Publishing Office*, <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/USCODE-2011-title18/USCODE-2011-title18-partI-chap83-sec1715> (Accessed November 02, 2018).

passed the National Firearms Act (NFA) imposing the taxation and the registration of “gangster type” weapons.² The objective of this statute was to facilitate the seizure of illegal gun owners, especially gangsters, who are unlikely to pay heavy taxes or register their weapons.

In 1938, the NFA was strengthened by the Federal Firearms Act (FFA) which is considered as an important federal gun control legislation. The FFA criminalized the sale of firearms to ineligible persons such as: fugitives and previously convicted criminals, regulated interstate gun commerce, outlawed trading in stolen and damaged firearms, required gun dealers to obtain a federal firearm license, and mandated them to register all their transactions.³

Many years later, the FFA was reinforced and replaced by the Gun Control Act (GCA) of 1968, which is considered as a basic and the first “real” gun control law in the U.S. history. This act was proposed by the beginning of the 1960’s, when the American society was undergoing an overall social instability. Yet, Congress ratified the law as an urgent response to several bloody shootings that marked the nation during that period. The University of Texas massacre in 1966, when Joseph Whitman killed 13 people and wounded 22 others in and around the University, the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy in April 1968 and June 1968, as well to the numerous violent race riots that propagated all around the country.⁴ The GCA aimed at regulating more the industry and the possession of firearms. It outlawed the transfer of firearms between the states except for licensed persons; banned the importation of cheap handguns known as “the Saturday Night Specials”; extended the list of the ineligible persons who were not

² 26 U.S.C. 5861 - Prohibited acts, *the U.S. Government Publishing Office*, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2011-title26/html/USCODE-2011-title26-subtitleE-chap53-subchapC-sec5861.htm> (Accessed November 02, 2018).

³ Public Laws-CH 850-JUNE 30, 1938, an Act to regulate commerce in firearms. <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/75th-congress/session-3/c75s3ch850.pdf> (Accessed November 02, 2018).

⁴ Dale Armstrong, *Firearms Trafficking - A Guide for Criminal Investigators*, (PGO, 2018,) 7.

authorized to possess firearms, by prohibiting handgun sale (except rifles and shotguns), to minors (under 21), and to the mentally ill persons; expanded the recordkeeping requirements for gun dealers, and insisted on the necessity to grant gun dealers, manufacturers and importers a federal license before engaging in firearms' business.⁵

By the 1980's, the focus shifted from 'all citizens' to 'specific individuals'. Politicians, particularly pro-gun advocates, claimed that there was no need to add more gun controls, therefore; they started passing more tailored statutes. In 1984, the Armed Career Criminal Act known also as the Comprehensive Crime Control Act, was passed, imposing harsher penalties, (a minimum 15 year term), but only on persons who engage in more than two gun related crimes.⁶ Two years later, and after a long fight, gun rights advocates succeeded in limiting the GCA, and Congress passed the Firearms Owners' Protection Act of 1986 (FOPA), which revised and amended the GCA.⁷ Among the major provisions that were highlighted in the FOPA were: the simplification of interstate sale and transport of certain guns, legalization of shipping ammunition through the mail, and the elimination of the recordkeeping list of ammunition traders.⁸

During the same year, a more or less similar federal law was approved, known as the Law Enforcement Officers Act, and which was designated to protect the law enforcement officers. The act banned the trade of armor piercing ammunition, i.e., bullets made of hard metals that can trespass the police body armors.⁹ A more or less similar tailored law was passed in 1988, known

⁵Gun Control Act of 1968 Pub Law 90 618 82 Stat 1213.

https://archive.org/stream/GunControlActOf1968PubLaw9061882StatPg1213/Gun_Control_Act_of_1968_Pub_Law_90-618_82_Stat_Pg_1213_djvu.txt (Accessed November 08, 2018).

⁶ 18 U.S.C. 924 (e) – Penalties

<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/USCODE-2011-title18/USCODE-2011-title18-partI-chap44-sec924> (Accessed November 08, 2018).

⁷ 18 U.S.C. 924 (c) – Penalties

<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/USCODE-2011-title18/USCODE-2011-title18-partI-chap44-sec924> (Accessed November 08, 2018).

⁸ Ibid

⁹ 100 Stat. 920 - Law Enforcement Officers Protection Act of 1985

as the Undetectable Firearms Act, banning the sale and the possession of guns that cannot be detected by metal detectors.¹⁰

However similar acts, were enacted to serve very specific purposes. Therefore, in 1993 the all previously mentioned acts were reinforced by the Handgun Violence Prevention Act, popularly known as the Brady Act. This Act was named for the White House press secretary James Brady, who became permanently disabled after an attempted assassination of President Ronald Reagan in 1981.¹¹ The law was adopted in 1993, imposing a five-day waiting period in order to conduct a federal background check, known as the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), on a prospective firearms purchaser before completing the sale.¹² Few months later, the Brady Act was strengthened by the Assault Ban Weapons Act in 1994, prohibiting the manufacture, sale and possession of assault weapons, more precisely weapons with large capacity magazines.¹³

As we can see, the federal combat against armed crimes was very long and very challenging. It started as early as 1927, evolved progressively but faced numerous obstacles. But what kind of obstacles did it face? And how far the gun control laws prove effective?

IV.3. Assessing the Federal Firearms Laws

Many people wonder why the United States cannot just implement policies that work in European countries, Japan and elsewhere to curb the problem of gun violence. According to James B. Jacobs, the author of *Can Gun Control Work?* (2002), the simplest answer to this enquiry is that

<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/STATUTE-100/STATUTE-100-Pg920> (Accessed November 08, 2018).

¹⁰ 18 U.S.C. 924 (p) – Penalties <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/USCODE-2011-title18/USCODE-2011-title18-partI-chap44-sec924> (Accessed November 08, 2018).

¹¹ “Brady Law: United States Law,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Brady-Law> (Accessed November 08, 2018).

¹² Brady Handgun Control of 1993 H. R. 1025 <https://www.congress.gov/103/bills/hr1025/BILLS-103hr1025enr.pdf> (Accessed November 08, 2018).

¹³ H.R.4296 - Public Safety and Recreational Firearms Use Protection Act, 103rd Congress (1993-1994) <https://www.congress.gov/bill/103rd-congress/house-bill/4296/text> (Accessed November 08, 2018).

“none of those countries has had to implement a strict regulatory or prohibitory regime at a time when almost half of its households own guns and in a society with a powerful tradition of private firearms ownership and a thriving contemporary gun culture.”¹⁴

That is to say, guns’ regulation in the U.S is considered as a very challenging problem, because millions of Americans do possess firearms, and millions of Americans participate regularly in hunting and shooting sports. Gun regulation is said to be even tougher than drug regulation, because gun usage is and has always been historically, traditionally and legally protected and accepted.¹⁵

Nonetheless, as gun crimes thrive remarkably in U.S society, the problem became seen as an urgent public health problem. The national government did pass laws because it detected “a compelling interest”. That is to say, no doubt that the U.S constitution protects local states’ independence, but if there is a convincing necessity to preserve the public order, the federal government can intervene. As we have already seen in the previous point, the national government reacted to the thriving problem of armed violence, and it passed a series of gun control laws. But were those gun control measures enough and effective?

Indeed, many researchers concluded that keeping ‘potential criminals’ disarmed is a good idea, but regulating the primary market alone is not. Hence, gun control laws can be a double-edged sword, since they can help in keeping gun related crime under a strict control, but as they tend to increase the price of guns to teens and convicted criminals, they encourage the usage of the black market, which hides even greater dangers.¹⁶ Besides, stricter gun control measures were reported

¹⁴ James B. Jacobs, *Can Gun Control Work?* (Oxford University Press, 2002) viii.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, ix.

¹⁶ Philip J Cook and Jens Ludwig, *op.cit*, 119.

to pose a real problem to law-abiding citizens who seek guns for a lawful usage.¹⁷

Additionally, it is quite important also to highlight the fact that gun control legislation is not solely a federal issue. The power of the national government is limited by the constitution, therefore; local states do play a crucial role and have a great share in regulating gun violence. Not only that, local states do possess the right to overturn a national law, if they think that it is violating the Tenth Amendment which protects states' sovereignty from any infringements. Perhaps the suitable example that can be given in this regard, is the famous *Printz v. United States* landmark case which limited the federal gun control law of 1993.¹⁸

In *Printz v United States* (1997), the Supreme Court judged the compulsory side of the NICS mandated by the Brady Law of 1993 to be unconstitutional.¹⁹ This decision was explained by the fact that, requiring local states to check the legitimacy of each potential buyer as violating the Tenth Amendment. This latter states: "the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."²⁰ That is to say, the federal government cannot intervene in all the local states' affairs, its power is restricted and; thereby, local states have the right to reverse a federal law if it is suspected of surpassing a certain constitutional limit.

Moreover, gun control legislation differs also from one state to another. While some states hold restrictive acts like New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts, where it is required for potential purchasers of a gun to acquire a license, others have more permissive laws like Arkansas,

¹⁷ Philip J Cook and Jens Ludwig, op.cit, 122.

¹⁸ *Printz v. United States*, 521 U.S. 898 (1997) <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/521/898/case.pdf> (Accessed November 08, 2018).

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ "Bill of Rights Transcript," *Archives.gov*. Retrieved May 15, 2010. <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs> (Accessed November 08, 2018).

Utah and Georgia, where it is allowed for citizens to buy a firearm without being obliged to acquire a permit.²¹

Not only that, gun regulation acts change as well within the same state. In some states, municipalities can choose to adhere to the state firearms' legislation or not. We can take for example the state of Illinois that permits "a gun licensing system", yet many of its municipalities like: Evanston, Oak Park, Winnetka, Highland Park, and Morton Grove, possess more restrictive laws, banning the sale, purchase and the ownership of private handguns.²² Another example that can be given in this context is, the state of Arizona which used to allow the carrying of unhidden guns before 1994, but its municipality Tombstone did not authorize its citizens to bear unconcealed firearms.²³

Consequently, the previously mentioned federal gun control statutes were not the only existing ones. A number of laws have been enacted at the states' and even municipalities' levels. For instance, the District of Columbia passed a law known as the Firearms Regulation Act in 1975, prohibiting, the production, the sale and the possession of all guns by all the citizens.²⁴ The exceptions were granted only to law enforcement officers, and to private owners who registered their guns before 1976.²⁵ Concerning the effectiveness of this law, the criminologist Colin Loftin, deduced that the ban proved effective, because it decreased gun related homicides and suicides in Washington D.C by 25%.²⁶

Nonetheless, many provisions that were brought by the Firearms Regulation Act of 1975,

²¹ Ibid

²² James B Jacobs, *op.cit.*, 32.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Firearms Control Regulations Act of 1975. 1975. Council act no. 1-142 : H. Con. Res. 694, August 25, 1976 <https://archive.org/details/firearmscontrol00colugoog/page/n2>. (Accessed November 10, 2018).

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Philip J Cook and Jens Ludwig, *op.cit.*, 123.

notably the provision that prohibited citizens from keeping a loaded gun at home, were struck down by the famous *District of Columbia v. Heller* landmark case in 2008, when the Supreme Court affirmed the citizens' right to possess arms "for lawful purposes" granted and protected by the Second Amendment.²⁷ (go back to chapter three, Availability of Guns.)

As we can see, gun control laws constitute a very challenging debate in the U.S. The federal government cannot intervene alone, nor can it oblige the states to adhere to its laws. Local states' sovereignty has got a constitutional immunity, hence; they can reverse a national law if it violates this legal protection, enact the laws that they see adequate, and even grant their municipalities the freedom not to follow their own legislation.

But another important inquiry remains still unanswered. If all the above stated federal actions were intended to regulate armed crimes and public shootings in general, what have been done at the national level to control the problem of school shootings in particular? Was there any tailored legislation that was solely designed to curb this national and urgent problem? In order to answer these questions, let us dig more into the federal gun control statutes.

IV.4. School Gun Control Laws

Following the Columbine High School massacre in April 1999, there has been a strong vocation for more gun-control measures to prevent similar lethal incidents in such sensitive places. Numerous well-known violence prevention organizations, such as the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence and the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, called for stricter gun control procedures to reduce youth crime and maintain school safety.²⁸ They advocated almost everything that can help

²⁷ District of Columbia V. Heller (2008), op.cit.

²⁸ LaRosa, Benedict D, "Can Gun Control Reduce Crime?" October 1, 2002, <https://www.fff.org/explore-freedom/article/gun-control-reduce-crime-part-1/>. (Accessed January 30, 2019).

in keeping guns away from schools. They asked for: the importance to keep school zones gun-free, insisted on the waiting periods and the background checks before finalizing any purchase, demanded for an “owner-only locks firearms”, and asked even for “the disarming of everyone” except law enforcement officials.²⁹

The same vocations have been triggered after the infamous Virginia Tech massacre in 2007, when gun control advocates contended, once again, that firearms were too reachable. Besides, many wondered how Cho, a mentally ill person, was able to buy two semi-automatic weapons in spite of the ban within the state’s jurisdiction that normally prohibited such purchase.³⁰

Indeed, Seung Hui Cho, the perpetrator of the Virginia Tech shootings, was found by a Virginia court in 2005 to be “a danger to himself”,³¹ therefore; under the federal and the state laws, Cho was an eligible gun buyer. Besides, the state of Virginia did require its dealers to verify the profile of any potential buyer within the NICS and other databases.³² That is to say, the purchaser must successfully pass this background check, in order to make sure of its legitimacy. Yet, because of some loopholes between the federal and the state laws, Virginia did not register Cho's mental deficiency to the NICS.³³ As a result, Cho’ background check was successful, and the transaction was “legally” finalized.

According to Professor Richard J. Bonnie, the director of the University of Virginia Institute on Law, Psychiatry and Public Policy, similar gaps do exist and are even widely spread. He

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰“As the Shock of Virginia Tech Fades,” *The New York times*, October 17, 2007, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/17/opinion/17wed4.html>. (Accessed January 30, 2019).

³¹ Ibid

³² Gregg LeeCarter, *Guns in American Society: An Encyclopedia of History, Politics, Culture, and the Law*, (ABC-CLIO, 2012.). 431,432.

³³ Michael Luo, “U.S Rules Made Killer Ineligible to Purchase Gun,” *New York Times*, April 2007. <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/21/us/21guns.html>. (Accessed February 2nd, 2019).

declared, “I’m sure that the misfit exists in states across the country and the underreporting exists.”³⁴ However, few days after the massacre, Timothy Kaine, the Governor of Virginia, reacted urgently, and delivered an executive instruction to avoid future reporting problems.³⁵ Few months later, the Virginia Code was revised and reinforced, and the federal government responded too, by enacting a statute to strengthen state reporting to the NICS.³⁶

Nonetheless, these responses to school attacks were not the first nor the only ones. States and national’s reactions to school shootings begun as early as 1990, when Congress ratified a law purely devoted to protect schools from gun violence. This federal act was known as the Gun Free School Zone Act (1990), which was part of the Crime Control Act (CCA) 1990, and which included various acts that were designated to control juvenile crime as a whole.³⁷

IV.4.1 The Gun Free School Zone Act 1990 (GFSZA)

In an attempt to combat school gun violence, and assure a safe learning environment for all the students, the federal government approved the Gun Free School Zone Act in 1990, considering “any individual knowingly to possess a firearm at a place that the individual knows, or has reasonable cause to believe, is a school zone,” as a criminal offender.³⁸ The act made it unlawful to discharge or possess a firearm by any person (stranger or student) in the school building or the surrounding areas.³⁹ Anyone who deliberately violated that act, he would be accused with a felony.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Governor Tomothy M. Kaine, “Mass Shootings at Virginia Tech, April 16 2007: Report of the Review Panel,” *Virginia Report Tech Panel*, August 2007, 73.

<https://schoolshooters.info/sites/default/files/FullReport.pdf> (Accessed January 30, 2019).

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ S.3266 - Crime Control Act of 1990. 1990. Public Law 101-647 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/101st-congress/senate-bill/3266>. (Accessed January 30, 2019).

³⁸ S.2070 - Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990. 1990. 101st Congress (1989-1990) <https://www.congress.gov/bill/101st-congress/senate-bill/2070/text>. (Accessed January 30, 2019).

³⁹ Habib Ozdemir and Ramazan Yalcinkaya, "Zero Tolerance in Implementation of Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1995 in the USA," *International Police Executive Symposium* May 2011, 4.

If the violator was a student, then he would be excluded from school, and would be conveyed to the police. In the meantime, the GFSZA permitted local states to study, students' sanctions for a firearm possession "on a case-by-case basis."⁴⁰

On the surface, that federal act seemed quite promising, however; in 1992 the Supreme Court, judged the act as an unconstitutional exercise of power under the commerce clause. That verdict was pronounced in the *United States v. Lopez* (1995) landmark case, when the Court, ruled that Congress surpassed its legal authority by legislating the Gun- Free School Zones Act of 1990, affecting the regulation of interstate commerce.⁴¹

On March 10, 1992, a student at Edison High School in San Antonio, Texas named Alfonso Lopez, brought a hidden firearm into his school. Consequently, under the federal and the state's law, Lopez was charged with the violation of the GFSZA.⁴² Lopez was found guilty by the state's district court, and was sentenced "to six months imprisonment and two years of supervised release".⁴³ Upon the appeal, Lopez stated that, the unconcealed gun that he carried, was given to him by someone, to deliver it to another person for a commercial intent. Therefore, Lopez argued that his accusation was illegal.⁴⁴ The Court of Appeals agreed with Lopez and canceled the District Court charge, on grounds that Congress went beyond its authority by enacting that act. In 1994, the Supreme Court affirmed the Court of Appeals decision, and declared that the act was an unconstitutional exercise of power under the Commerce Clause (Article 1, Section8).⁴⁵

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/19048715/zero-tolerance-in-implementation-of-gun-free-school-dcaf>. (Accessed January 30, 2019).

⁴⁰ Ibid, 6.

⁴¹ *United States v. Lopez*. 1995. 514 U.S. 549 (1995) <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/514/549/>. (Accessed January 30, 2019).

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ *United States of America, Plaintiff-Appellee, V. Alfonso Lopez, Jr., Defendant-Appellant*. 1993. US Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit - 2 F.3d 1342 (5th Cir. 1993) <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/F3/2/1342/616263/>. (Accessed January 30, 2019).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Habib Ozdemir, op.cit., 7.

The Supreme Court explained that, the federal government can regulate foreign and interstate commerce under the Commerce Clause,⁴⁶ but its power is not absolute. Therefore, the prohibition of firearms' possession in a school zone was illegal, because such a ban has been a traditional concern of the states.⁴⁷ It added also that, the statute was not an exercise of any of the three broad powers granted to it by the Commerce Clause. The U.S Constitution in Article 1, Section 8, grants Congress the right to use the channels and the instrumentalities of interstate commerce, and the right to regulate interstate commerce activities.⁴⁸ However, none of these powers were respected in the legislation of the GFSZA.

In response, the Court proposed amendments to the law, which were adopted by Congress in September 1996. The reenacted Gun-Free School Zones Act, was nearly the same as the former one.⁴⁹ As the previous act, the new legislation stated that: "It shall be unlawful for any individual knowingly to possess a firearm...at a place that the individual knows, or has reasonable cause to believe, is a school zone."⁵⁰ Nonetheless, it modified the offence from holding a handgun in a school sector to holding a handgun "that has moved in or that otherwise affects interstate or foreign commerce" in a school zone.⁵¹ The added part intended to make the law fall within the Commerce Clause provisions, and thereby; constitutional.⁵²

Moreover, in the revised act, the federal government required states to: enact zero tolerance

⁴⁶ The Constitution of the United States: A Transcription (Article I. Section 8). America's Founding Documents - National Archives. <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript#toc-section-8->. (Accessed January 30, 2019).

⁴⁷ Seth J Safra, "Amended Gun-Free School Zones Act: Doubt as to Its Constitutionality Remains," *The Duke Law Journal* 50, 2000: 637. <https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://en.wikipedia.org/&httpsredir=1&article=1097&context=dlj> (Accessed January 30, 2019).

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Habib Ozdemir, op.cit.,7-8.

⁵⁰ 18 U.S. Code § 922. Unlawful Acts 2011. United States Code, 2006 Edition, Supplement 5, Title 18 – Crime and Criminal Procedure <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/USCODE-2011-title18/USCODE-2011-title18-partI-chap44-sec922>. (Accessed January 30, 2019).

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid 638.

legislation by expelling students, automatically, for a period of one year for a possession of firearms. It obliged them too to write a yearly report that clearly shows the number of the excluded students. Further more, to ensure that the schools will respect those new regulations, the national government threatened the states to stop financing them if they do not adhere to these requirements.⁵³ But what did the zero tolerance policy really imply? And did it lead to concrete effective results?

IV.4.2 The Zero Tolerance Policy

The zero tolerance policy was one of the executive proposals brought by the revised GFSZA in 1996, applying stricter punishments for the carrying of guns, drugs or dangerous weapons by students on the school property.⁵⁴ The zero tolerance policy presumes that, in order to prevent students from disruption, and in an attempt to create a safe learning atmosphere, it is required to seriously punish troublemaking students who challenge the schools' instructions and bring firearms and unforbidden items to schools.⁵⁵ Therefore, severe pre-determined compulsory retributions would be applied to any violation of school's rules, without taking into consideration the gravity of the act, the circumstances, or the degree of culpability.⁵⁶

The seemingly tough policy was in fact a necessary and urgent response to the growing problem of violence that crept into American schools during the 1990's.⁵⁷ Nearly all the states adopted this policy, and the federal government encouraged them in doing so, by helping them

⁵³ Habib Ozdemir, op.cit.,8.

⁵⁴ Sean McCollum, "Zero Tolerance: Safer Schools or Unfair Rules?" *Literary Cavalcade* 57, no. 1 (September 2004,) 20-21.

⁵⁵ American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, "Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools? An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations," *The American Psychologist* 63, no. 9 (2008): 852.

⁵⁶ Russ Skiba and Peterson Reece, "The Dark Side of Zero Tolerance: Can Punishment Lead to Safe Schools?" *The Phi Delta Kappan* 80, no. 5 (1999): 372-82.

⁵⁷ Denise M, Bonilla, op.cit.,157.

financially in order to install the various security devices that might facilitate its actual application.⁵⁸

On the surface, the zero tolerance opposes the standard that says that the punishment must suit the crime, and that the seriousness of the law-breaking offence, and the context in which it occurred should be taken into account while defining the punishment.⁵⁹ In other words, under this policy, a student who unintentionally brings a knife into his school, will be treated the same way as someone who intentionally brings a gun to his educational institution. Yet, many saw the so-called “tough policy”, an adequate if not the only remaining solution that might curb lethal school violence. As a High school principal argued: “we have to be that firm on something that dangerous.”⁶⁰

Indeed, according to some reports, the GFSZA, including the zero tolerance policy, were quite effective in deterring lethal violence in schools (see figure 10). According to the National School Safety Center (NSSC), zero tolerance to guns in school zones, led to concrete and successful outcomes. As it is shown in the figure below, thanks to the act, the number of expelled students decreased considerably from 1996 with 4787 expulsions, to 2143 dismissals in 2003. The NSSC added that, the GFSZA was also effective in reducing the number of deadly acts, from 56 violent deaths in 1992 to barely 5 deadly incidents by 2002-03 school year.⁶¹ The same conclusion was highlighted by the National Center for Education Statistics, which concluded that, the number of expulsions caused by the possession of various prohibited weapons reduced remarkably after the implementation of the zero tolerance policy.⁶²

⁵⁸ Habib Ozdemir, *op.cit.*, 8-9

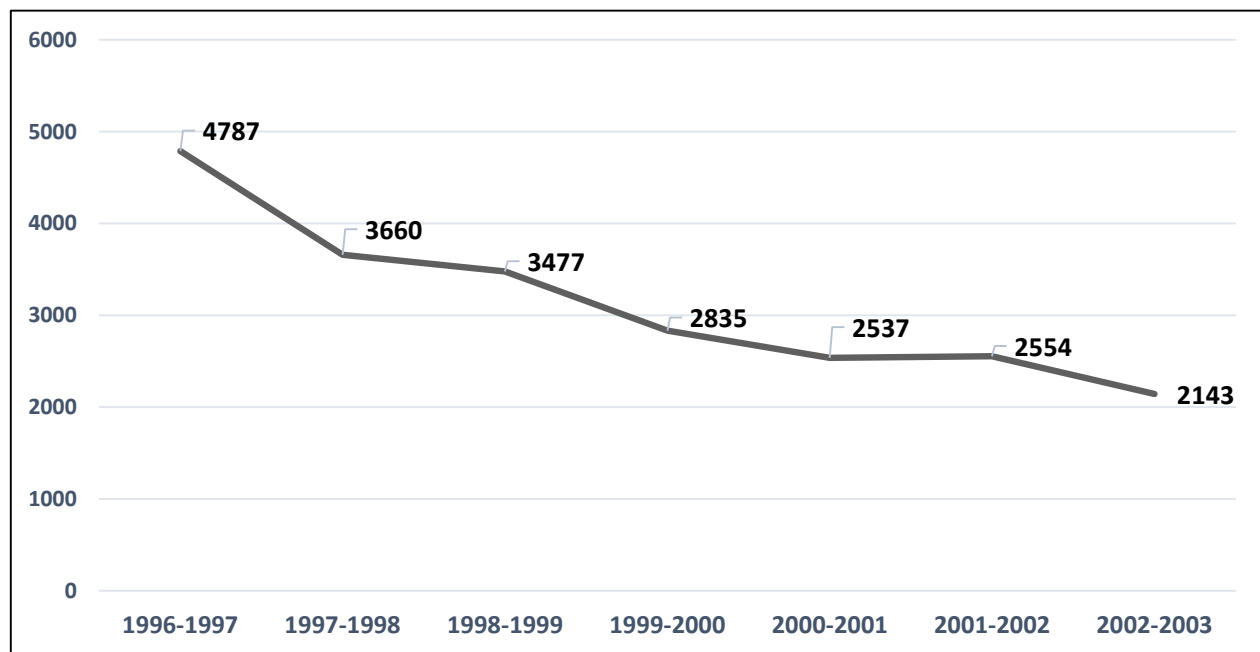
⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁶⁰ Sean Mc Cullum, *op.cit.*, 20.

⁶¹ Sean Mc Collum, *op.cit.*, 21.

⁶² *Ibid.*

Figure 10: There was a steady decline in the number of expelled students according to the gun-free school zones act of 1995 (modified)



Source: Habib Ozdemir and Ramazan Yalcinkaya, "Zero Tolerance in Implementation of Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1995 in the USA," *International Police Executive Symposium*, May 2011: 4.
<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/19048715/zero-tolerance-in-implementation-of-gun-free-school-dcaf.10>.

Furthermore, according to a press referendum that was conducted by the Associated Press in 2001, more than 80 % of Americans affirmed their support to similar tough programs in order to preserve school safety.⁶³ Nonetheless, many denounced the “black side” of the zero tolerance policy, which resulted in numerous unfair suspensions. Examples may include: the 10-year-old Florida girl, who was suspended for the carrying of a fruit knife in her lunchbox.⁶⁴ The two students who were also expelled in New Jersey, after having made a paper gun;⁶⁵ and the autistic child who was charged with a third degree felony in Florida, after having hit his teacher.⁶⁶ Similar cases and many

⁶³ Ozdemir Habib, op.cit.,11.

⁶⁴ American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force (2008), op, cit., 852.

⁶⁵ Skiba, Russell J. "Zero Tolerance, Zero Evidence: An Analysis of School Disciplinary Practice. Policy Research Report." Indiana Education Policy Center, August 2000 <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED469537.pdf>. 22. (Accessed January 30, 2019).

⁶⁶ Civil Rights Project, "Opportunities Suspended: The Devastating Consequences of Zero Tolerance and School Discipline Policies: Report from a National Summit on Zero Tolerance," Harvard University Cambridge, MA, 2000. 9.

others, did disturb students, their parents, and the whole community due to their unfair appearance, but are often justified as “necessary sacrifices” to create a “deterrent effect”.⁶⁷

Ironically, some have argued that the zero tolerance policy is not that effective in preventing future suspensions. According to, Tary Tobin, a Research Associate at the University of Oregon, George Sugai, a Professor in Special Education in the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut, and Geoff Colvin, a professor in Special Education at the University of Oregon, students’ expulsion does not always lead to the desired effects, but can have an opposing result. The researchers explained that, for some students, dismissals encouraged students to restart again, assuming that: “suspension functions as a reinforcer rather than as a punisher,” that is why more than 40% of school expulsions were caused by the same students.⁶⁸

Furthermore, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) concluded that there was no direct correlation between the implementation of the zero tolerance policy and the actual decrease of school violence. The NCES explained that, the schools that did not have a zero tolerance policy, were safer and less likely to report deadly incidents than those that did use that policy.⁶⁹

Indeed, about two decades after the policy’ implementation, the gun-control efforts were coming under increased criticism especially after the Supreme Court’s ruling that declared that the Second Amendment does protect an individual right to possess and bear arms. This declaration was pronounced in the historic case *the District of Columbia v. Heller* (June 26, 2008), when the Court confirmed that the Second Amendment protects citizens’ right to have a loaded handgun for self-

⁶⁷American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, op.cit., 852.

⁶⁸Michael J Furlong, *Appraisal and Prediction of School Violence: Methods, Issues, and Contents* (Nova Science Publishers, 2004) 126.

⁶⁹Denise M, Bonilla, op, cit.,159-160.

defense (return to chapter three). Hence, after two years of the Court's verdict, some states like Louisiana and Wisconsin, started substituting the seemingly restrictive gun control laws with more permissive ones.⁷⁰

Additionally, the *Heller*'s ruling was not the only case where the Second Amendment right was questioned. In June 28, 2010, that right was reexamined in the well-known *McDonald v. City of Chicago* landmark case.⁷¹ In this latter, the Court reaffirmed private ownership of handguns, and ruled that the Second Amendment right is not solely protected from federal infringement, but also from states' interference. In other words, the Supreme Court cleared up the ambiguity left by the *District of Columbia v. Heller*, which did not clarify the scope of gun rights in regard to the states. Thus, its verdict limited the possibility of local states, and their municipalities as well, to tighter control over citizens' gun ownership,⁷² making further gun control laws almost impossible in the foreseeable future.

Nonetheless, as any individual right, the right to possess arms is not an absolute right, but can be limited by law if necessary. As Justice Antonin Scalia's *Heller* decision famously clarified:

The Second Amendment right is not unlimited. It is not a right to keep and carry any weapon whatsoever in any manner whatsoever and for whatever purpose: For example, concealed weapons prohibitions have been upheld under the Amendment or state analogues. The Court's opinion should not be taken to cast doubt on longstanding prohibitions on the possession of firearms by felons and the mentally ill, or laws forbidding the carrying of firearms in sensitive places such as schools and government buildings, or laws imposing conditions and qualifications on the commercial sale of arms.⁷³

⁷⁰ Amy Hetzner, "Where Angels Tread: Gun-Free School Zone Laws and an Individual Right to Bear Arms," *Marquette Law Review*. 95.1, 2011, 361.

⁷¹ *McDonald V. Chicago*. 2010. 561 U.S. 742 (2010) <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/561/742/>. (Accessed January 30, 2019).

⁷² *Ibid*.

⁷³ "*District of Columbia v Heller*, 554 U.S. 570 (2008)," *op.cit*.

In fact, this permission that exclude “the carrying of firearms in sensitive places such as schools and government buildings,” reminds us of the time, place, and manner restrictions under the First Amendment, which require courts to apply an interest-balancing approach. The First Amendment states: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”⁷⁴

This Amendment has always been at the core of the U.S Constitution, defending vigorously and clearly individual liberties from any violation. Nevertheless, if one of these constitutional rights exceeds certain limits, the citizen is no more protected, and therefore; can be charged with a felony. In other words, an individual is not free to publish obscene images, under the freedom of press, enhance terrorist or criminal acts, under freedom of assembly, defame another citizen, under the freedom of speech, nor use a firearm unlawfully, under the right to bear arms. Individual rights do have a constitutional immunity, but can also be subject to law.

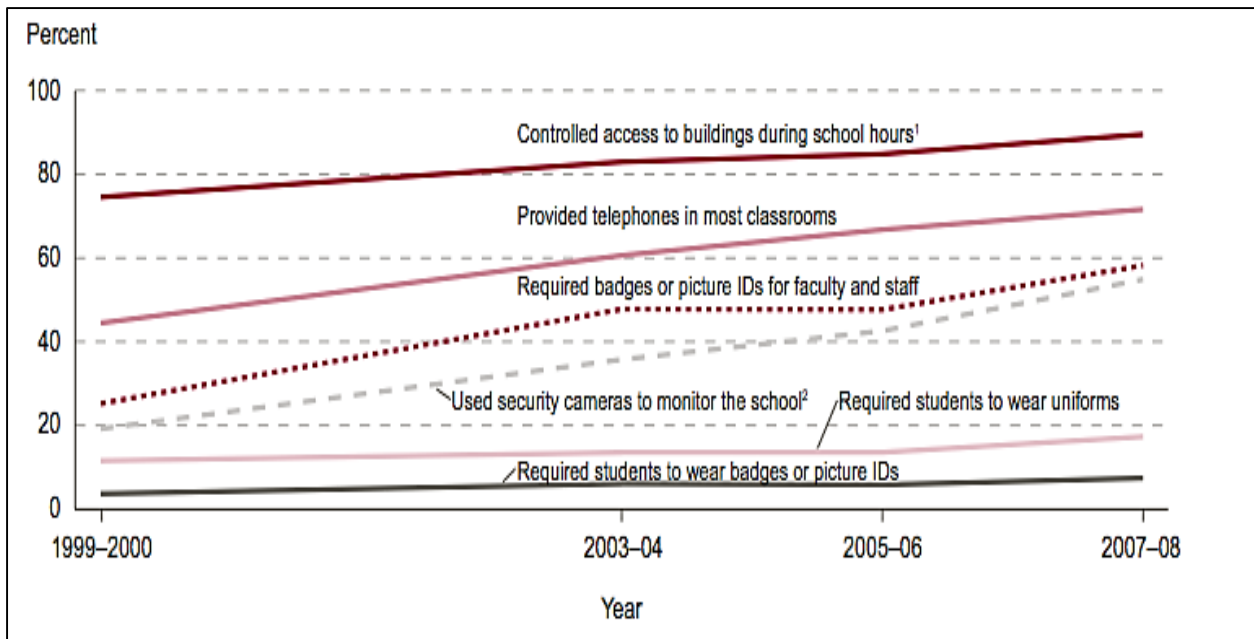
The GFSZA and the zero tolerance policy were not the only responses taken by American schools to reinforce their internal safety. According to NCES, various security measures in different public schools were implemented especially in terms of: controlling access to the school setting which raised from 75 to 90 percent, the use of security cameras to supervise the school hallways which elevated to 55 percent, and the prohibition of telephones in most classrooms which grew to 72 percent.⁷⁵ (See figure 11)

⁷⁴ Amendment I - the Bill of Rights. 1789, *America's Founding Documents* - National Archives. <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights>. (Accessed January 30, 2019).

⁷⁵ Rachel Dinkes, Kemp Jana and Baum Katrina, "Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2009," *National Center for Education Statistics, Bureau of Justice Statistics*, 2010, 68. <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/iscs09.pdf>. (Accessed February 15, 2019).

This was not, all, the NCES reported also that in the 2007-2008 school year, “58% of public high schools conducted random searches using drug-sniffing police dogs, 77% used surveillance cameras, and 11% used metal detectors to screen students, while 69% of a nationally representative sample of students aged 12-18 reported that their schools included a security guard or police officer assigned to the school.”⁷⁶

Figure 11: Percentage of Public Schools that Used Selected Safety and Security Measures: Various School Years, 1999–2000 through 2007–08.



Source: Rachel Dinkes, Kemp Jana and Baum Katrina, "Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2009," *National Center for Education Statistics*, 2010, 70. <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/iscs09.pdf>. 70.

The combat against lethal school violence did not stop there. Most states and local jurisdictions across the country have enacted sweeping changes in their juvenile justice systems in order to fight the problem of youth gun violence in general. Many of these reforms in law and policy included laws that authorized the sending of juveniles to criminal courts. But were these radical reforms responsive and more effective?

⁷⁶ Aaron Kupchik and Geoff K Ward, "Reproducing Social Inequality through School Security: Effects of Race and Class on School Security Measures," Paper presented at the American Sociological Association's 106th Annual Meeting, 2011, 3.

IV.5. Trying Juveniles in Criminal Courts

As lethal youth violence increased remarkably during the 1990s, and as “the degree of viciousness” exhibited by this new generation of young predators increased too, state and federal policymakers wondered if the nation’s juvenile justice system was ineffective and probably too lenient to deter juveniles from committing criminal offences.⁷⁷ As a result, legislators saw the need to remodel and change the traditional juvenile justice system to address criminality effectively. The result was, imposing “more severe sentences for more severe law violations, independently of social and developmental concerns.”⁷⁸

From 1992 to 1995, 41 states approved acts that facilitated the prosecution of juveniles in criminal courts.⁷⁹ By the year 2000, all the states including the District of Columbia had passed at least one law allowing the suing of youths as adults in a criminal court.⁸⁰ The minimum age to try a child as an adult became fixed at fourteen year old in the majority of the states, and even less in others. Oregon for instance, lowered its minimum age from fourteen to twelve, Wisconsin to ten, New York put it at seven, and Tennessee eliminated the concept of “a minimum age” for trying youths as adults for some felonies.⁸¹

This decision of trying youths as adults was justified as a necessary and an “instrumental method of controlling crime.” As, many linked the increase of youth crime with the inconsistency of the juvenile justice system, which encouraged youths, indirectly, to commit crimes through its lenient rulings, then punishing young offenders as adults was the only rational to control

⁷⁷ Jeffrey Butts, et al, op.cit., 7.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Richard Redding, "Juvenile Transfer Laws: An Effective Deterrent to Delinquency?" *U.S. Department of Justice*, June 2010, 2. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/220595.pdf>. (Accessed February 15, 2019).

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Franklin E Zimring, op, cit., 8-9.

criminality. Moreover, it has also been argued that if someone is “old enough to do the crime”, then he is “old enough to do the time.”⁸² That is, generally speaking, children are incapable of committing deadly crimes, because lethal violence has always been a feature associated with adulthood. Consequently, judges have to focus on the cruelty of the act rather than the age of the offender, since the victim is as dead as if shot by an adult.

This transformation in juvenile justice system targeted also the school shooters, whose murderous attacks took the lives of many teachers, school officials and students. As Senator Orrin G. Hatch declared after the Jonesboro, Arkansas shooting that occurred on March 24, 1998, "If we don't pass a juvenile crime bill, the country's going to see more and more of these things [school shootings]”.⁸³

As a matter of fact, some school shooters, that were discussed in the second chapter, were tried as adults in criminal courts. Examples may include: Evan Ramsey, Luke Woodham, and Kip Kinkel. Here is a brief summary of their convictions as well as their rulings.

Evan Ramsey, the 16 year old and the former Alaskan high school student, who shot and killed his school principal and another student in 1997 in Bethel, Alaska., was judged as an adult, and was sentenced to 210 years in a maximum-security prison.⁸⁴ Even though Ramsey appealed his condemnation, the Alaska Court of Appeal reduced his sentence only to 198 years. Ramsey will be eligible for a conditional release, after having served 66 years in prison. “This was a carefully planned shooting, and once again the public should rest easy that this dangerous criminal will be kept behind bars for the rest of his life.” Said the Bethel District Attorney Gregg Olson.⁸⁵

⁸² Ibid, 9.

⁸³ Elizabeth Donohue, Vincent Schiraldi, and Jason Ziedenberg, "School House Hype: School Shootings and the Real Risks Kids Face in America. Policy Report," *Justice Policy Institute*, January 1998, 8.

⁸⁴ David Lester, *Mass Murder: The Scourge of the 21st Century*, (Nova Publishers, 2004), 63.

⁸⁵ “Bethel High School Shooter Resentenced after Appeal: Evan Ramsey’s Term of Incarceration Reduced to 198 Years,” *Department of Law - State of Alaska*, June 21, 2004. http://www.law.state.ak.us/pdf/press/ramsey_resentencing_062104.pdf. (Accessed February 15, 2019).

Luke Woodham, a 16 year old student, who killed his mother, two students and injured many others at Pearl High School in Mississippi 1997, was tried too as an adult. Woodham was sentenced to perpetuity, for his murder convictions.⁸⁶ After the verdict was pronounced, Woodham was allowed to speak to the court, he said: "I am sorry for the people I killed and hurt. The reason you see no tears anymore is because I've been forgiven by God." Though Woodham's defense plead that the boy was insane at the time of the crime, the court rejected their claim, and condemned him with a life sentence. Woodham will be eligible for parole in 2046, when he will be 65 years old.⁸⁷

Last but not least, Kip Kinkel, a 15 old student who murdered his parents and embarked in a school shooting at Thurston High School in Springfield, Oregon, killing two students and wounding 22 others, was tried in a criminal court as well.⁸⁸ At first, Kip requested an insanity defense, but the judges refused it, and sentenced him to 112 years in prison without possibility of parole.⁸⁹

Nonetheless, while many young offenders were automatically sent to adult courts for trial, that method started to be highly criticized and was even overturned.⁹⁰ In fact, several states started realizing, what the Supreme Court had already recognized, that trying youths as adults was unnatural, because their intellect and emotions are not fully developed before adulthood.⁹¹ This realization that minors do not think like adults, and that treating them as such is unfair and cruel, was supported by three landmark Supreme Court rulings.

⁸⁶ "Teen Guilty in Mississippi School Shooting Rampage," *CNN.com*, June 12, 1998.
<http://edition.cnn.com/US/9806/12/school.shooting.verdict/>. (Accessed February 02, 2019)

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ "Teen Jailed after Oregon High School Shooting Spree," May 21, 1998.
<http://edition.cnn.com/US/9805/21/school.shooting.pm.2/>. (Accessed February 02, 2019).

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ "America Corrects a Mistake: Trying Minors as Adults," *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 7, 2011.
<https://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/the-monitors-view/2011/0307/America-corrects-a-mistake-trying-minors-as-adults>. (Accessed February 02, 2019).

⁹¹ Ibid.

The first landmark case that protected juveniles from harsh penalties, goes back to 1988 with the *Thompson V Oklahoma* case. In this latter, the Supreme Court declared that a 15-year-old offender could not be executed because doing so would constitute a "cruel and unusual punishment" under the Eighth and Fourteen Amendments.⁹²

This ruling was supported by another landmark case known as *Roper v. Simmons* in 2005, in which the U.S Supreme Court held that, the execution of offenders who were under the age of eighteen when their crimes were committed, as being unconstitutional under the Eighth and Fourteen Amendments.⁹³ The Court explained that juveniles cannot be judged as adults because they are immature, irresponsible, and vulnerable. It wrote:

Juveniles' susceptibility to immature and irresponsible behavior means "their irresponsible conduct is not as morally reprehensible as that of an adult. Their own vulnerability and comparative lack of control over their immediate surroundings mean juveniles have a greater claim than adults to be forgiven for failing to escape negative influences in their whole environment. The reality that juveniles still struggle to define their identity means it is less supportable to conclude that even a heinous crime committed by a juvenile is evidence of irretrievably depraved character."⁹⁴

Hence, these differences not only emphasize the fact that juveniles will engage in thoughtless impulsive behaviors, but they also give reasonable justifications that further explain why juveniles, contrary to adult, may be less guilty.⁹⁵

Five year later, the Supreme Court recognized, once again, the natural differences that distinguish juveniles from adults. In this case, *Graham v Florida* (2010), the Court banned life without parole for those under 18 for certain felonies.⁹⁶ The Court declared that, the Eight Amendment, guarantees the proportionality of the punishment to the offense, and called life

⁹² *Thompson V. Oklahoma*. 487 U.S. 815 (1988). <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/487/815/>. (Accessed February 15, 2019).

⁹³ *Roper V. Simmons*. 543 U.S. 551 (2005) <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/543/551/>. (Accessed February 15, 2019).

⁹⁴ *Ibid*

⁹⁵ L.K., Gaines, and R.L.R. Miller, *Criminal Justice in Action*, (Cengage Learning, 2009,) 369.

⁹⁶ *Graham V. Florida*. 560 U.S. 48 (2010) <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/560/48/> (Accessed February 15, 2019).

without parole an "especially harsh punishment" for a juvenile. The Court added that, states must give juvenile defendants "some meaningful opportunity to obtain release based on demonstrated maturity and rehabilitation."⁹⁷

As we can see, the Supreme Court, in those three landmark cases, has drawn a distinguishing line between minors and adults emphasizing the scientific evidence, which states "part of the brain that deals with decision making and risks and consequences is not fully developed in a youth".⁹⁸ Thus, trying minors as adults was held cruel, because of this natural difference that separate them, and also unconstitutional, because of the Eighth Amendment which protects citizens from "cruel and unusual punishments." ⁹⁹

But if trying youths as adults was deemed to be "a mistake", and further gun control laws were deemed to be a challenging solution, what else can be done to preserve school safety?

IV.6. Alternative Solutions

According to Russ Skiba, a Professor in Counseling and Educational Psychology at Indiana, setting limits is certainly a necessary rule for parents to control their children, for teachers to avoid chaos, and for governors to maintain the public order. Yet, setting boundaries through the use of excessive force is "the hallmark of authoritarianism," inadequate with the right functioning of a democratic nation. Skiba declared: "if we rely solely, or even primarily, on zero tolerance strategies to preserve the safety of our schools, we are accepting a model of schooling that implicitly teaches students that the preservation of order demands the suspension of individual rights and liberties."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ Daniel R Weinberger, Brita Elvevåg, and Jay N Giedd, "The Adolescent Brain: A Work in Progress," *National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy*, June 2005, 4.

<http://www.kvccdocs.com/KVCC/2018-Summer/PSY215/lessons/L-19/adol-brain.pdf>. (Accessed February 15, 2019).

⁹⁹ Amendment Viii - the Bill of Rights, 1789. *America's Founding Documents* - National Archives.

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights>. (Accessed February 15, 2019).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 162.

Skiba further argued in another article entitled, *“The Dark Side of Zero Tolerance: Can Punishment Lead to Safe Schools?”* (1999), that school violence does not necessarily require severe and extreme measures. On the contrary, tough responses’ proved ineffective, because they emphasize more on the result, that is the punishment, and forget to target the origins of the problem. For him, in order to eradicate violence in schools, policy makers should substitute the old-fashioned short-term methods with alternative solutions that privilege long-term consequences. He explained:

If we are to break the cycle of violence in American society, we must begin to look beyond a program of stiffer consequences. We must begin with long-term planning aimed at fostering nonviolent school communities ... conflict resolution and school wide behavior management can help establish a climate free of violence. Conflict resolution has been shown to have a moderate effect on the level of student aggression in schools, but more important, it teaches students to consider and use alternatives to violence in solving conflicts.¹⁰¹

Consequently, according to researchers like Skiba and others from the same mindset, school violence should not be solved with harsh punitive methods, instead; there should be an emphasis on long-term approaches, like problem solving methods, which aim at dealing with the problem from its roots. These methods try to make students aware of their responsibility, and help them think, perceive and react differently. That is, they aim at providing students with alternative solutions that favor non-violent behaviors, in order to raise new peaceful generations.

Among other alternative solutions that were tested and suggested the Threat Assessment Program, which was launched by the U.S Department of Education and the U.S Secret Service in June 1999. The program was initiated as a response to the attack at Columbine High in April 1999, and tried to answer people’s speculations: wasn’t possible to know that these attacks were being planned? And how can we prevent future attacks?

¹⁰¹ Russ Skiba and Reece Peterson, op.cit., 9.

In fact, The Threat Assessment Program was an analysis of 37 school shootings that occurred in the United States from 1974 to 2000.¹⁰² The study examined “the attackers’ pre-incident thinking and behavior,” in order to look for some hidden information that might help in dissolving future plots. That is to say, it analyzed the attackers’ behaviors before the exhibition of their plans (what they did, what they said, and how they behaved,) in an attempt to detect some indexes that might help in “identifying, evaluating and reducing the risk” of school shootings.¹⁰³

The study identified ten findings, but emphasized principally on the fact that: nearly all the attacks were not spontaneous but deliberately planned ahead, and many of the shooters’ friends admitted that they knew about a coming attack. Accordingly, the study concluded that future attacks may be preventable mainly through, encouraging students to report immediately any perceived threat to school officials, and by responding at once after having assured the presence of a real menace.¹⁰⁴

The actual implementation of this program necessitated some facilities, that is why several states took legislative procedures in order to enable the easy transmission of student information between school officials and law enforcement officers.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, as this program depended principally on threat reporting, it was criticized mainly for two major reasons. First, because there was no way to guarantee that all threats would be reported, and second because it was nearly impossible to reliably differentiate transitory from serious threats.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Bryan Vossekuil, *The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in the United States*, (Washington, D.C: United States Secret Service) 2004, 3.

¹⁰³ *Ibid* 41.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 23-25.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 42.

¹⁰⁶ Dewey G Cornell, "Student Threat Assessment," *In Handbook of School Violence*, Routledge, 2013, 152.

Not only that, many other researchers developed other alternative programs that tried to address school violence differently. These programs are known as the blueprints for school violence prevention.

IV.6.1 Blueprints for Violence Prevention

Also known as Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, were at first a number of research projects that were developed by the Center for the Study of the Prevention of Violence (CSPV) at the University of Colorado, to be implemented only in the State of Colorado. Yet, after having reached proved scientific results in reducing youth violence, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) supported the project financially, in order to enlarge its application to all the remaining states.

The Blueprints include 11 model programs that have shown “a sustained effect” in reducing school violence and youth delinquency in general.¹⁰⁷ These prevention and intervention programs were divided into three main categories: universal programs, which address youth population as a whole, selected programs, which deal with average badly behaved children, and indicated programs, which target violent children in particular.¹⁰⁸ We can take as examples: the Multisystemic Therapy (an indicated program) and Olweus Bullying Program (universal program).

IV.6.1.1. The Multisystemic Therapy (MST)

The Multisystemic Therapy takes into consideration the whole community in which growth occurs, in order to pinpoint the various factors that may lead to serious anti-social behaviors.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Sharon Mihalic, Katherine Irwin, Delbert Elliott, Abigail Fagan, and Diane Hansen, "Blueprints for Violence Prevention," *Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence*, University of Colorado, July 2004, 1. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/204274.pdf>. (Accessed February 15, 2019).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 13.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 27.

The program believes that, as youths live in “a complex network of interconnected systems,” the intervention may take place at home, in schools, or in the neighborhoods.¹¹⁰

MST intervention at home, emphasizes on the parents by strengthening their parental skills, and by eliminating all the familial obstacles like family abuse and lack of communication, that may contribute or worsen the existing problem. The MST intervention outside the home, focuses on extra familial ties like: relatives, classmates, friends and neighbors, in order to determine the real causes, and develop “natural support systems.” This collaboration between the parents and the intervener or the therapist, makes the family the first and the most important agent in fixing and accomplishing clear and determined objectives.¹¹¹

The MST effectiveness was proven and supported by different clinical experiments. The reported results have shown clear long-term diminutions of: drug related detentions, violent crimes, rearrests, and a substantial reduction in juvenile criminality as a whole. The MST became renowned internationally thanks to its promising results, and was used in various countries like: Canada, England, Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, and Sweden.¹¹²

Another widely known blueprint program that has been implemented in different countries is the Olweus Bullying Program.

IV.6.1.2. Olweus Bullying Program

In 1983, three Norwegian students committed suicide because they were severely bullied at school. The Norwegian Ministry of Education summoned Professor Dan Olweus to carry a research

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

project on this particular problem. The result was Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, a program solely designed to prevent bullying in primary, secondary and high schools.¹¹³

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program has been implemented at first in Norway, but also in different other countries like Germany, U.S, and England, especially after having reached favorable results. The most all-inclusive assessment of the program was conducted in Norway in 2000, where it has been shown that the program succeeded in reducing acts of bullying by 52%, and acts of being bullied by 42% (both sexes combined).¹¹⁴

The program focuses primarily on the school staff and considers them as the most important part in implementing the program and in achieving concrete results.¹¹⁵ The intervention goes through three main steps. First, there should be an evaluation of the prevalence and nature of bullying at the school level through the Olweus Bullying Victim Questionnaire. Second, the school administration has to reinforce and redefine its rules inside each classroom by organizing regular meetings with all the students. And third, with the collaboration of the parents, the school officials have to focus on the concerned individuals, and make sure that the bully is under control, and that the bullied has received enough support.¹¹⁶

IV.7. Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter showed how the American authorities struggled for many years in order to make an end to the prevailing problem of youth gun violence. Their efforts were numerous

¹¹³ Ibid, 149- 152.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 150.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 149.

¹¹⁶ Dan, Olweus, *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*, (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1993,) 65.

and very challenging. Some of them proved effective, but were overturned on ground of their unconstitutionality. Others were characterized as being ineffective and even cruel; and still some responses showed promising results but as their actual implementation necessitates a long and a rigorous follow up, they seemed not to satisfy the urgent callings. Therefore, the problem has never been totally solved, and will probably never be definitively resolved due to the uniqueness of the whole American political system.

Conclusion

Violence has always been perceived as an important and a serious public health problem in the United States and in many parts of the world. It is an universal problem that has always been part of the human experience. Nonetheless, some types of violence were found to be more concentrated in certain geographical areas, and have even undergone sharp increases during specific periods. In this dissertation, we have taken the example of school gun violence in the United States, and we focused on the period between 1970 and 2010.

In the first chapter, we have seen how juvenile violence as a whole, and juvenile armed violence in particular, were significant problems in the United States as opposed to many developed and undeveloped countries. The explanation that was given by many researchers was that guns were too accessible in this country. Even the unprecedented peak of youth violence during the 1990s were justified by “guns”, since starting from the mid of the 1980s, firearms became youths’ favorite homicide instruments.

Indeed, in the same chapter we have seen how availability of guns in this nation seemed to be at the core of the entire juvenile problem. Private ownership of guns by American citizens was found to be the highest than that of any other country across the globe. However, guns were not the only reason to blame, other biological, psychological and environmental causes were also found to have their share in placing some youths at risk for experiencing violence. Consequently, the problem of youth violence was depicted as a nested and a variable problem, which necessitates multifaceted responses.

In the second chapter, the emphasis shifted from youth armed violence to school gun violence. Likewise, the phenomenon of school shootings was found to be “an American genre of

violence,” and even the instances of some international school attacks were blamed on those that took place on the American soil. One of the major explanations that was offered to justify that peculiarity was, once again, the easy access to guns.

Indeed this observation was confirmed by the analytic study of 71 cases of school shootings that was conducted in the same chapter, and which resulted in other conclusions that can be summarized as follows:

- The majority of the perpetrators of this type of school violence were high school male students, therefore; the emphasis and the responses should target more this particular sex and age range.
- Available data showed that all the perpetrators were capable of obtaining the gun effortlessly meaning that, the easy access to guns and the phenomenon of school shootings “go hand in hand”. In other words, the problem would have never existed if there were no available guns.
- And mostly all the attacks were reported to be motivated by three main reasons which were: bullying, psychological problems and falling grades. This may entail that a collaborative work should be done between the government, the school and the parents in order to address the problem effectively.

In the third chapter, we have discussed the different causes that might result directly or indirectly in a school shooting. The commonly shared motives, which were access to guns, psychological problems and bullying, were categorized as being direct causal factors; and the less commonly shared factors like family problems, violent media and moral decline, were classified as secondary or indirect causal factors.

Moreover, we have seen how armed violence as a whole has always been regarded as a complex and a very challenging problem particularly in the U.S. The complexity of the topic was said to reside mainly in the variability of the risk factors as mentioned above, and the challenge was explained by the distinctiveness of this nation vis-à-vis its glorification of the individual liberties. In this chapter, we have seen how private handgun ownership in the U.S, has got a legal protection against any interference. That is why, each time the federal government passed laws to tighter control over citizens' gun possession, the Supreme Court, "the U.S Constitution watchdog", struck down those regulations on ground of their unconstitutionality. These overturns were justified by the Second Amendment, which secures and guarantees private handgun ownership from any violation.

Nonetheless, individual liberties, including the right to bear a firearm, are not absolute rights. They are subject to law, and the government can regulate any right if a compelling interest was detected. Indeed, the Federal Government responded on many occasions, and passed numerous laws to protect citizens' safety.

In chapter four, we have seen how numerous federal laws were struck down or revised, because they were ruled "an unconstitutional exercise of power". Thus, the legal regulation of gun ownership in the U.S, was a long and a very challenging battle. Legislation was not the only measure that was taken, other judicial and long-term violence prevention programs have been exclusively designed and developed to control youth violence as a whole. Yet, no solution proved totally effective, and the problem has never been totally solved.

In my opinion, the battle to eradicate gun violence and school shootings in the U.S will probably remain a "utopian dream" for a long time. My explanation is that, since none of all the legal and non-legal solutions that have been proposed and applied, succeeded in eliminating the

problem once for all, then no solution targeted the problem appropriately. The problem of school shootings or gun violence, as its naming indicates it, is an exclusively gun related problem. That is, the central key element is “the gun”. Even if the student has been bullied, obtained a falling grade or suffered from a psychological instability, the murderous act will never be executed if there are no available firearms. Hence, the problem will never cease to exist, unless strong and radical political changes will be brought, and target the principal cause that “triggered” the entire problem from all the beginning.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Mandela's Introduction about Violence

The twentieth century will be remembered as a century marked by violence. It burdens us with its legacy of mass destruction, of violence inflicted on a scale never seen and never possible before in human history. But this legacy – the result of new technology in the service of ideologies of hate – is not the only one we carry, nor that we must face up to.

Less visible, but even more widespread, is the legacy of day-to-day, individual suffering. It is the pain of children who are abused by people who should protect them, women injured or humiliated by violent partners, elderly persons maltreated by their caregivers, youths who are bullied by other youths, and people of all ages who inflict violence on themselves. This suffering – and there are many more examples that I could give – is a legacy that reproduces itself, as new generations learn from the violence of generations past, as victims learn from victimizers, and as the social conditions that nurture violence are allowed to continue. No country, no city, no community is immune. But neither are we powerless against it. Violence thrives in the absence of democracy, respect for human rights and good governance. We often talk about how a “culture of violence” can take root. This is indeed true – as a South African who has lived through apartheid and is living through its aftermath, I have seen and experienced it. It is also true that patterns of violence are more pervasive and widespread in societies where the authorities endorse the use of violence through their own actions. In many societies, violence is so dominant that it thwarts hopes of economic and social development. We cannot let that continue.

Many who live with violence day in and day out assume that it is an intrinsic part of the human condition. But this is not so. Violence can be prevented. Violent cultures can be turned around. In my own country and around the world, we have shining examples of how violence has been countered. Governments, communities and individuals can make a difference...

We owe our children – the most vulnerable citizens in any society – a life free from violence and fear. In order to ensure this, we must be tireless in our efforts not only to attain peace, justice and prosperity for countries, but also for communities and members of the same family. We must address the roots of violence. Only then will we transform the past century's legacy from a crushing burden into a cautionary lesson.

Source: Etienne G. Krug et al. eds, *World Report on Violence and Health*. (Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002.), 1.

Appendix 2: Civilian Gun Ownership

Figure 1 Who owns the world's firearms?

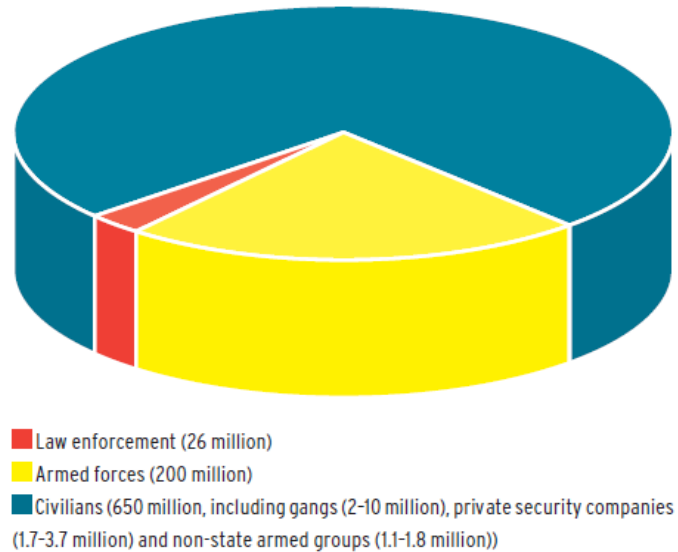


Table 1: Civilian gun ownership for 40 countries, in descending order of averaged civilian firearms

Country	Rank	Civilian firearms per 100 residents	Estimated civilian firearms (rounded)
USA	1	89	270,000,000
Yemen	2	55	11,500,000
Switzerland	3	46	3,400,000
Finland	4	45	2,400,000
Cyprus	6	36	275,000
Saudi Arabia	7	35	6,000,000
Iraq	8	34	9,750,000
Uruguay	9	32	1,100,000
Canada	13	31	9,950,000
Austria	14	30	2,500,000
Iceland	15	30	90,000
Germany	15	30	25,000,000
Kuwait	18	25	630,000
New Zealand	22	23	925,000
Greece	23	23	2,500,000
UAE	24	22	1,000,000
Croatia	26	22	950,000

Lebanon	28	21	750,000
Qatar	31	19	520,000
Peru	33	19	750,000
Thailand	39	16	10,000,000
Mexico	42	15	15,500,000
Jordan	58	12	630,000
Pakistan	57	12	18,000,000
Estonia	65	9	123,000
Russia	68	9	12,750,000
Jamaica	74	8	215,000
Brazil	75	8	14,840,000
England & Wales	88	6	3,400,000
Colombia	91	6	2,700,000
El Salvador	92	6	400,000
Morocco	101	5	1,500,000
China	102	5	40,000,000
India	110	4	46,000,000
Senegal	125	2	230,000
Tanzania	137	1	550,000
Papua New Guinea	145	1	71,000
Korea, South	149	1	510,000
Haiti	164	1	190,000
Ghana	174	0.4	80,000

Source: Small Arms Survey, "Estimating Civilian Owned Firearms." Geneva, Switzerland. p, 1- 2. 2011.

Appendix 3: WHO Regions

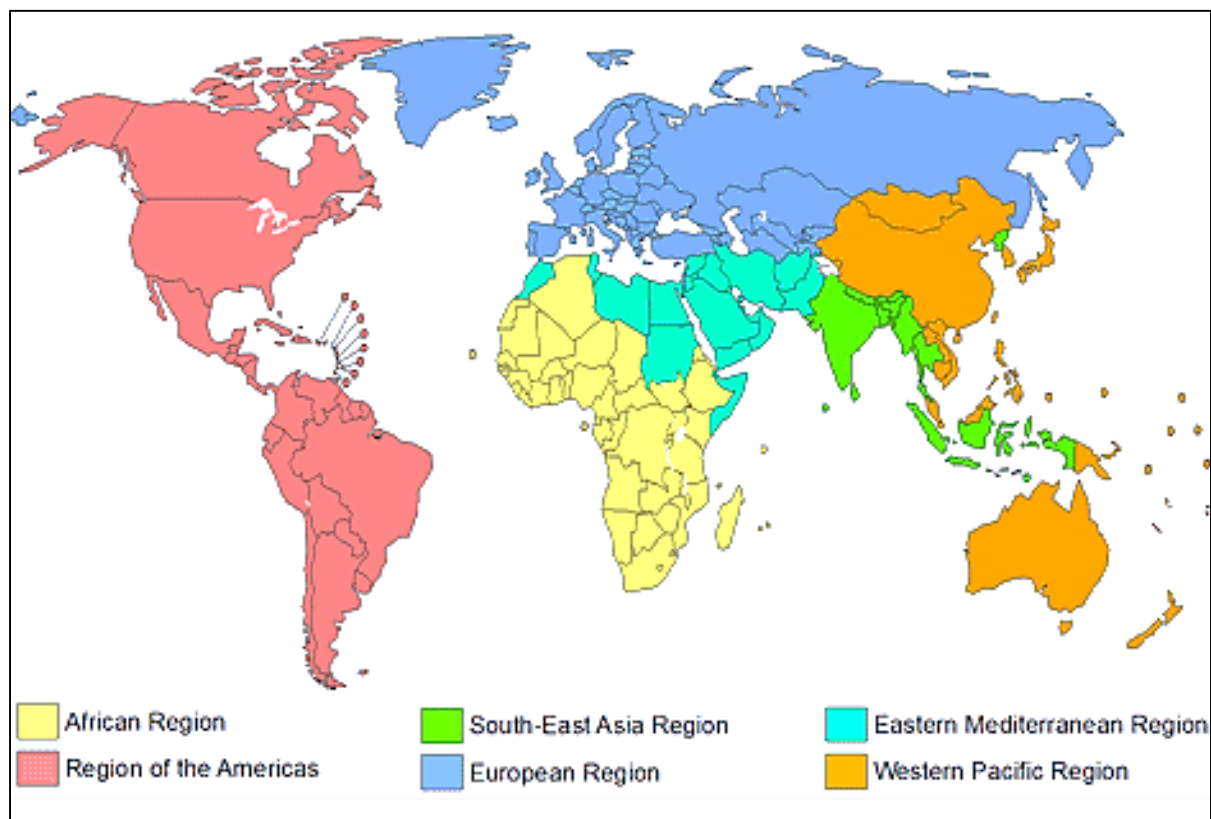


Figure 1 : WHO regions map.

Source: https://www.who.int/about/regions/en/WHO_Regions.gif

Appendix 4: School Shootings that Occurred in the United States from 1970 to 1990.

Shooter (s)	Sex	Location (the city + the type of the institution)	Level of Education	Year	Month	Age	Ethnicity	Number of victims	Suicide	Motive	Source of guns	Targeted (T) or Random (R) Shooting?	Descriptions Bright/ weak/ lonely/ friendly
1)Robert Cantor	M	Pennsylvania	University	1970	Feb.	33	Caucasian	1 injured teacher + 1 dead teacher +himself	Yes	Distressed over his doctoral thesis	His own.	T	Bright+ Quiet
2)Steven Guy	M	Illinois	Elementary school	1974	Jan.	14	N.A	1 dead principal+ 1 injured	No	Expelled from school	His father's	T	N.A
3)Anthony Barbaro	M	New York	High School	1974	Dec	17	White	3 dead+ 11 injured	Yes in jail	No apparent motive "I just wanted to kill the person I hated most... myself" A.B	N.A	R	Bright + Quiet
4)James Briggs	M	Oklahoma	High School	1975	Sep.	15	N.A	1 pupil dead + 5 injured	No	Racial disturbance dispute	N. A	T	N.A
5)Ricardo Lopez	M	Texas	High School	1977	Apr.	17	N.A	1 dead principal	No	No apparent motive	N.A	R	Good Lonely
6)Roger Needham	M	Michigan	High School	1978	Feb.	15	N.A	1 dead schoolmate + 1 injured	No	Being taunted	His father	T	Bright Loner Fascinated by Nazi
7)John Daniel Christian	M	Texas	High School	1978	May	13	White	1 dead teacher	No	schizophrenic	His father	R	Very Bright

8)Robin Robinson	M	Alabama	High School	1978	Oct.	13	N.A	1 dead principal	No	Was paddled by the principal	Brought it from his home.	T	N.A
9)Evan Hampton	M	Arkansas	High School	1980	Jan.	16	White	1 dead student	No	Being bullied	Brought it from his home.	T	(typical student) No prior disciplinary problems
10)Thomas Kakonis	M	Michigan	University	1980	Mar.	20	N.A	1 dead teacher	No	Failed an exam	Probably his own	T	N.A
11)Rudy Farmer	M	Alabama	High School	1980	Oct.	17	N.A	1 injured + killed himself	Yes	Unknown	N.A	R	N.A
12)Leo E. Kelly	M	Michigan	University	1981	Apr.	22	Black	2 dead students	No	Falling grades	Probably his own	R	N.A
13)Jason Price Rocha	M	Colorado	High School	1982	Apr.	14	N.A	1 dead student	No	N.A	His grandfather	R	N.A
14)James Hartzog	M	Mississippi	High School	1982	Nov.	18	N.A	1 dead student + himself	Yes	Lovers' quarrels	N.A	T	Dropped out school
15)Patrick Lizotte	M	Nevada	High School	1982	Mar.	17	White	1 dead teacher + 2 injured	No	Being bullied + angered at the teacher	His father	T	Very lonely "aloof"
16)David F. Lawler	M	Missouri	Secondary	1983	Jan.	14	White	1 dead student + himself	Yes	Dispute over a pen	His family	T	Bright
17)Todd Dunahoo	M	Iowa	High School	1984	May	17	N.A	1 dead student + himself	Yes	Lovers' quarrels	His own	T	Friendly
18)James Alan Kearbey	M	Kansas	High School	1985	Jan.	14	White	1 principal killed + 3 wounded	No	Bullied	His father	T	Loner Got angry easily

19)Heather Smith	F	Washington	High School	1985	Nov.	14	White	2 dead students + herself	Yes	Lovers' quarrels	Her family	T	Bright
20)Floyd Warmsley	M	Connecticut	High School	1985	Dec.	13	Black	1 killed janitor + 1injured	No	Being suspended	His father	T	Troublesome student
21)Ritchie Overman	M	Missouri	High School	1986	Apr.	16	N.A	1 dead	No	Dispute	His friend	T	Good
22)Kristopher Hans	M	Montana	High School	1986	Dec.	14	White	1 dead + 3 injured	No	Falling grades	N.A	T	N.A
23)Fawaz Abdin	M	California	University	1987	Feb.	25	Arab (from Jordan)	1 dead teacher	Yes	Falling grades	Probably his own	T	Graduate student (moody introverted)
24)Nathan Faris	M	Missouri	High School	1987	Mar.	12	N.A	1 dead classmate	Yes	Being bullied	His father	T	Bright
25)Jason Harless and Jason McCoy	M	Florida	High School	1988	Feb.	15 / 15	Both White	1 dead + 2 injured	No	1 being suspended	Stole them from their neighbors	R	Typical normal students
26)Nicholas Elliot	M	Virginia	Secondary Private school	1988	Dec.	16	Black	1 killed + 1 injured	No	Being bullied or racial dispute	Bought it illegally	R	Shy, depressed, with below average intelligence

N.A: Not Available.

Appendix 5: School Shootings that Occurred in the United States from 1990 to 1999.

Shooter	Sex	Location	Level of Education	Year	Month	Age	Ethnicity	Number of victims	Suicide	Motives	Source of guns	Targeted or random shooting?	Description
27)Lakeeta Cadoree	F	Texas	High School	1991	Sep.	15	N.A	1 dead student	No	He had called her names	Borrowed from a friend	T	Bright
28)Gang Lu	M	Iowa	University	1991	Nov.	28	Asian	4 deaths + 1 injured	Yes	Didn't get an academic award for his PhD	His own	T	Very good
29)Khalil Sumptter	M	New York	High school	1992	Feb.	15	N.A	2 deaths	No	Dispute	His friend	T	N.A
30)Eric Houston	M	California	High School	1992	May	20	White	4 deaths + 10 injured	No	Failed in the teacher's class	His own	T	N.A
31)Wayne Lo	M	Massachusetts	University	1992	Nov.	18	Asian	2 deaths + 4 injured	No	Psychological problems	His own	R	Average, racist
32)Scott Pennington	M	Kentucky	High School	1993	Jan.	17	White	1 dead 1 injured	No	Psychological problems (wanted to kill 2 to become eligible for death penalty)	His father	R	Bright
33)Robert Heard	M	California	High School	1993	Feb.	15	N.A	1 dead	No	Thought the victim was involved in the death of his cousin	Bought it from a stranger	T	Above average, troublesome
34)Leonard D.McDowell	M	Wisconsin	High School	1993	Dec.	21	White	1 dead	No	Psychological problems	His own	R	Troublesome student

35) Jason Smith	M	Pennsylvania	High School	1993	May	15	N.A	1 dead	No	Bullied	His father in law	T	quiet
36) Floyd Eugene Brown	M	South Carolina	High School	1994	Jan.	18	N.A	1 dead	No	Dispute, self defense	Probably his own	T	N.A
37) Darrell Cloud	M	Washington	Secondary	1994	Jan.	24	White	1 dead	No	Sexual abuse	His own	T	Good student
38) Jason Osmanson	M	Montana	Elementary	1994	Apr.	10	N.A	1 dead	No	Bullied because his parents had AIDS	N.A	T (but missed his target)	N.A
39) Keith A. Ledeger	M	Ohio	Secondary	1994	Nov.	37	White	1 dead +2 injured	No	Mentally ill (was drinking at the moment of the shooting)	His own	R	N.A
40) Keith E. Johnson	M	Florida	Secondary	1995	Sep.	14	White	1 dead	No	Disputes+ probably Bullied	Stole it from his neighbors	T	“mad at the world”
41) Toby Sincino	M	South Carolina	High School	1995	Oct.	16	Black	2 dead + 1 injured	Yes	Bullied and suspended	Stole it	R	Troublesome, out of control
42) Jamie Rouse	M	Tennessee	High School	1995	Nov.	17	White	2 dead + 1 injured	No	Poor grades + schizophrenic	Probably his own	R	Troublesome, fascinated by violence (music, films...)
43) Barry Loukaitis	M	Washington	Secondary	1996	Feb.	14	Caucasian	3 deaths + 1 injured	No	Depression, bullied + family problems	His father	T (one teacher)	Pathetic, easily influenced
44) Frederick Martin Davidson	M	California	University	1996	Aug.	36	White	3 dead teachers	No	Psychological problems	His own	T	Felt he was being exploited

45)Evan Ramsey	M	Alaska	High School	1997	Feb.	16	White	2 deaths + 2 injured	No	Bullied + family abuse+ psychological problems	Foster mother's son	T	Not very smart
46)Luke Woodham	M	Mississippi	High School	1997	Oct.	16	White	3 dead+ 7 injured+ his mother	No	Lover's quarrels + involved in Satanism	His own	T	Obsessive
47)Michael Carneal	M	Kentucky	High School	1997	Dec.	14	White	3 dead+ 5 injured	No	Bullied (called him gay) + psychological problems	His father	R	Bright, Funny
48)Andrew Golden and Mitchell Johnson	M	Arkansas	Secondary	1998	Mar.	11 /1 4	Both White	5 dead+ 10 injured	No	Andrew(prior history of violence) Mitchell (sexual abuse + girl rejection+ bullying)	Stolen from Andrew's grand father	R	Bullies, Andrew more troublesome
49)Andrew Jerome Wurst	M	Pennsylvania	Secondary	1998	Apr.	14	White	1 dead teacher+ 2 injured	No	Psychological problems+ being rejected by girls	His father	R	Said odd things like I am God, Statan...
50)Jacob Lee Davis	M	Tennessee	High School	1998	May	18		1 dead student	No	Dispute over a girl	Brought it from his home	T	Bright, Top 20
51)Kip Kinkel	M	Oregon	High School	1998	May	15	White	His parents + 2dead students	No	Expelled, Schizophrenic	His home	R	Immature, dyslexic, strange
52)Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold	M	Colorado	High School	1999	Apr.	18 / 17	Both White	13 deaths + 24 injured	Yes	Bullying, psychological problems	Their friend	R	Eric was a good student/ Dylan disrespectful

Appendix 6: School Shootings that Occurred in the United States from 2000 to 2010.

Shooter	Sex	Location	Level of Education	Year	Month	Age	Ethnicity	Number of victims	Suicide	Motive	Source of guns	Targeted or Random shooting?	Description
53)Dedrick Owens	M	Michigan	Elementary	2000	February	6	Black	1 dead student	No	Dispute+ violent parents	His uncle	T	Violent
54)Nathaniel Brazill	M	Florida	Secondary	2000	May	13	Black	1 dead teacher	No	Being suspended, traumatized	His grand father	T	Honor student, likeable
55)James Easton Kelly	M	Arkansas	University	2000	August	36	Black	1 dead (faculty advisor)	Yes	Dismissed from his PhD	His own	T	Promising student
56)Charles Andrew Williams	M	California	High School	2001	March	15	White	2 deaths + 13 injured	No	Family problems+ bullied + was suicidal	His father	R	Lost, hopeless
57)Peter Odighizuwa	M	Virginia	Private University	2002	January	42	Black , Nigerian	3 deaths+ 3 injured	No	Was dismissed + falling grades	His own	T	Prone to outbursts
58)Robert Stewart Flores	M	Arizona	University	2002	October	40	White	3 deaths	Yes	Falling grades	His own	R	Strange, pleasant
59)James Sheets	M	Pennsylvania	High School	2003	April	14	White	1 principal killed	Yes	Depression	His step father	R	Average, nice with no problems

60)John Jason Mc Laughlin	M	Minnesota	High School	2003	September	15	White	2 deaths	No	Bullied, psychological problems	His father	T	Quiet
61)Jeffrey Weise	M	Minnesota	High School	2005	March	16	Native American	7 deaths + 5 injured	Yes	Bullied + family problems + depression	His grandfather	R	Gentle, Goth
62)Kenneth Bartley	M	Tennessee	High School	2005	November	15	White	1 dead+ 2 injured	No	N.A	His father	R	N.A
63)Eric Hainstock	M	Wisconsin	High School	2006	September	15	Caucasian	1 dead	No	Bullied + family problems+	His father	R	Normal, but troublesome
64)Douglas S. Chanthabouly	M	Washington	High School	2007	January	18	Asian	1 dead	No	Dispute, Psychotic	Probably his own	T	N.A
65)Asa Coon	M	Ohio	High School	2007	October	14	Caucasian	4 injured+ killed himself	Yes	Suspended +psychological problems+ bullied	N.A	R	Gothic, frustrated
66)Seung Hui Cho	M	Virginia	University	2007	April	23	Korean	32 deaths + 17 injured	Yes	Depression	His own	R	Loner, very quiet, weird
67)Latina Williams	F	Louisiana	University	2008	February	23	Black	2 deaths	Yes	Paranoid	Her own	R	Funny
68)Brandon McInerney	M	California	High School	2008	February	14	White	1 death	No	Teased + dispute 5 (hate crime)	His relatives	T	Popular, athletic, respectful
69)Steven Kazmierczak	M	Illinois	University	2008	February	27	Caucasian	5 killed + 17 injured	Yes	Mental illness	Probably his own	R	Normal with very good academic record,

70)Jamar Siler	M	Tennessee	High School	2008	August	15	Black	1 death	No	Dispute, instable family life, fetal alcohol syndrome	N.A	T	Bully
71)Teah Wimberly	F	Florida	High School	2008	November	15	Black	1 death	No	Dispute, difficult family life	N.A	T	Troubled

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