

May 5, 2016

### Public Opinions towards Gun Control vs. Gun Ownership

Society today is witnessing a major increase in violent crimes involving guns. From mass shootings to gang violence, almost all of the major crimes in America today involve guns. Recently, there has also, been an increase in video recordings of police shootings, some of which have been unjustified killings. These issues today have sparked a major topic of debate among citizens on whether the U.S. should have stricter gun control laws or support more gun ownership. An argument for more gun control is that it will help keep guns out of the hands of mentally unstable and violent people; a counter argument is that gun control will be taking guns out of the hands of law abiding citizen's hands, who will then be put in even more danger than before. This study aims to find out what groups of people are more in favor of gun ownership or gun control and what issues in current society influence these opinions.

What we expect to find is that certain issues like immigration and police relations in minority communities will have an effect on the individual's opinion regarding gun rights or gun control. Furthermore, we expect that a person's ethnicity will have a direct relation on their view of gun use in society. Finally, we believe that the public's opinion on whether gun ownership protects or puts others safety at risk, will influence their opinion on gun rights vs. gun control. Out of these four variables we hypothesize that first, a person's view on immigration will influence their views on gun rights and gun control. The people who are more in favor of harsher laws on immigration will typically be more in favor of gun rights because they see immigration as a threat to their safety. While people who are in favor of more laidback immigration law will be more in favor of gun control because they do not see immigration as a threat to their safety. Second, we looked at the outlook of future police relations in minority communities and whether it was getting better or worse and compared these views to gun ownership vs. gun control. What we expect to find is that people who have a negative outlook on the future of police and minority relations will want to protect their rights to gun ownership because they feel like they are in danger, so they need to own a gun. People who have a positive outlook on the future of police and

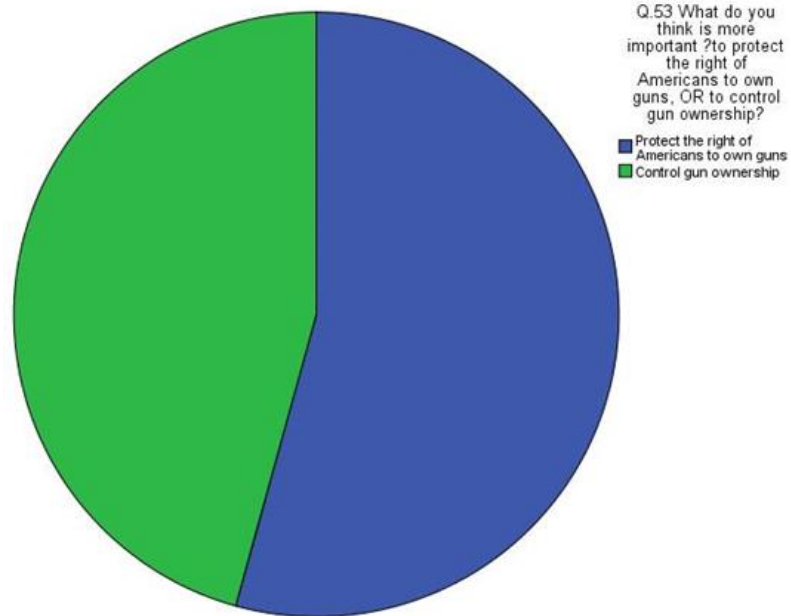
minority relations will be in favor of more gun control laws because they view the police are efficiently doing their jobs so they do not need as many guns available to society. Third, in regards to a person's ethnicity, whites will be more in favor of gun rights because they feel the need to protect themselves against criminals, while other ethnicities will be more in favor of gun control because they want to lower the crime rate and see guns a major contributor to crime. Finally, a person's view on the role of a gun as a use of protection will typically be in favor of gun rights, while people who view gun ownership as endangering to public safety will be in favor of gun control.

The dataset that we are using is "Growing Public Support for Gun Rights". The number of people in the survey is 1,507; 3-7 December 2014 was the year when it was gathered. Primarily male and females adults were sampled. Our dependent variable is gun ownership versus gun control opinions. The question utilized in surveying the participants read, "What do you think is more important to protect the rights of Americans to own guns or to control gun ownership?" We had several independent variables regarding this subject. "The first independent variable is "What comes closer to your view about how to handle undocumented immigrants who are now living in the U.S.?" The possible answers were 1. They should not be allowed to stay in the country legally, 2. There should be a way for them to stay in the country legally if certain requirements are met. The second independent variable "Over the course of the next year, do you think relations between local police forces and minorities in communities around the country will get better, get worse, or stay about the same?" the possible answers were 1. Get better, 2. Get Worse, 3. Stay about the same. The third independent variable is "Race/ Ethnicity". The possible answers were 1. White, non-Hispanic, 2. Black, non- Hispanic, 3. Hispanic, 4. Other. Our fourth independent variable was what do you think that gun ownership does more to? The question that was phrased to participants was "Do you think gun ownership in this country does more to 1. Protect people from becoming victims or crimes or 2. Put people's safety at risk or 3. Don't know or refused to answer.

Our dependent variable is gun ownership versus gun control opinions and the data set for this variable is nominal. The results for this question are almost evenly split with 52.8% of the respondents wanting to protect gun ownership rights and 44.5% of respondents wanting to control ownership. Our Mode for this variable is 1 which is “Protect the right of Americans to own guns”. Our N for this variable is 1466 people who answered this question.

**Q.53 What do you think is more important ?to protect the right of Americans to own guns, OR to control gun ownership?**

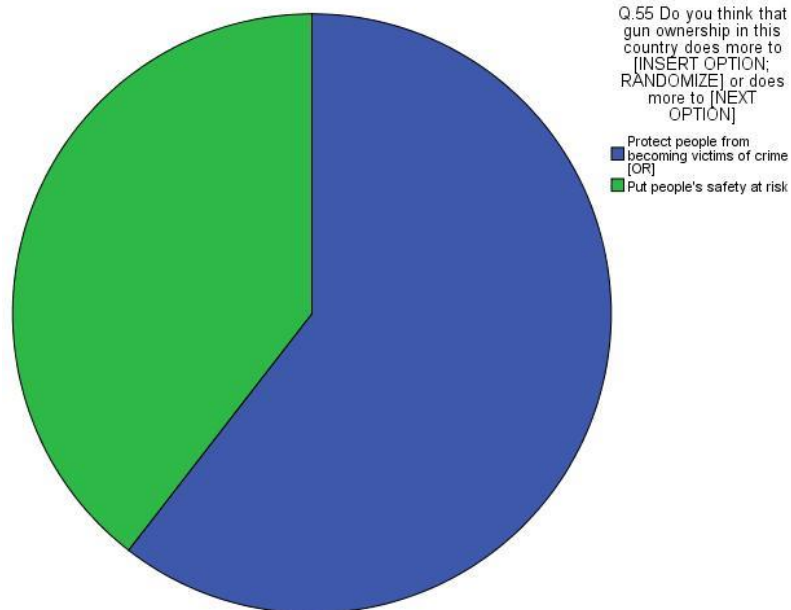
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Protect the right of Americans to own guns	796	52.8	54.3	54.3
	Control gun ownership	670	44.5	45.7	100.0
	Total	1466	97.3	100.0	
Missing	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	41	2.7		
Total		1507	100.0		



Our first independent variable is opinions on gun ownership either protects people or puts them as risk and the data set for this variable is nominal. The result from our independent variable shows that people think gun ownership protects people from being coming victims of crime (57.7%) whereas (37.7%) of people see that gun ownership puts people's safety at risk. Our mode for this variable is 1 which is "Protect people from becoming victims of crime". Our N for this variable 1438 people who responded to this question.

**Q.55 Do you think that gun ownership in this country does more to [INSERT OPTION; RANDOMIZE] or does more to [NEXT OPTION]**

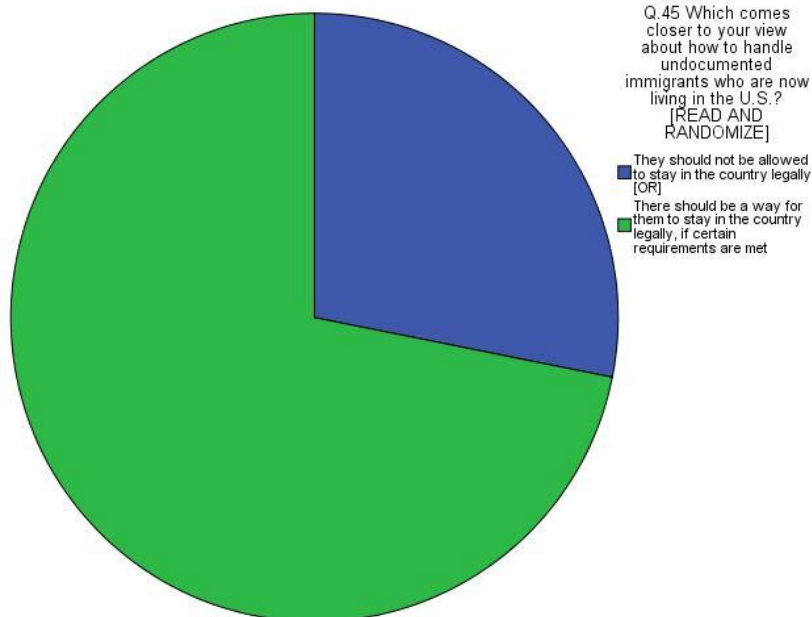
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Protect people from becoming victims of crime [OR]	870	57.7	60.5	60.5
	Put people's safety at risk	568	37.7	39.5	100.0
	Total	1438	95.4	100.0	
Missing	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	69	4.6		
Total		1507	100.0		



Our second independent variable is views regarding how to handle undocumented immigrants who are living in the United States and the data set for this variable is nominal. The results from our independent shows that people who are in favor of gun ownership thinks that immigrants should not be allowed to stay in the country (27.3%) where people who are in favor of gun control feel that there should be a way for immigrants to stay in this country (69.8%). Our mode for this variable is 2 and that is “There should be a way for them to stay in the country legally, if certain requirements are met”. Our N for this variable is 1464 that answered this question.

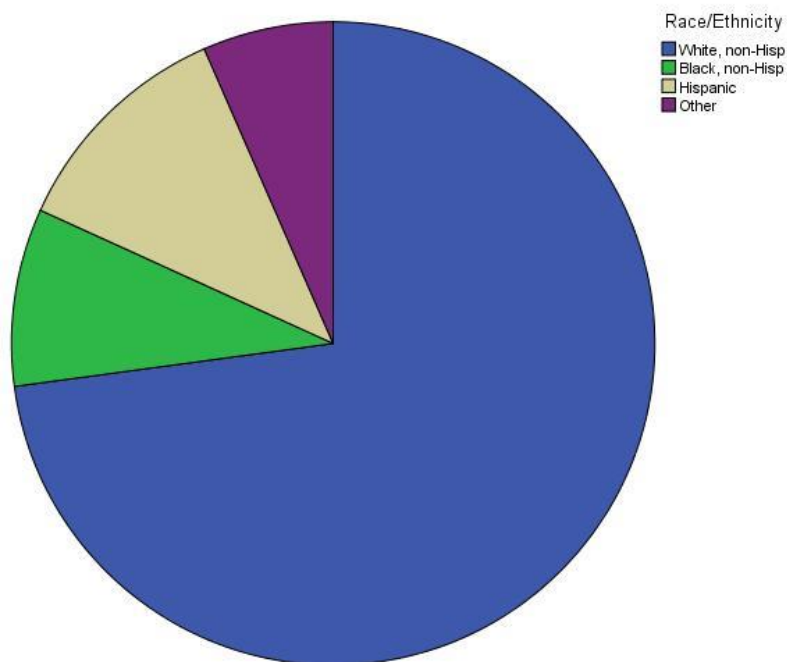
**Q.45 Which comes closer to your view about how to handle undocumented immigrants who are now living in the U.S.? [READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	They should not be allowed to stay in the country legally [OR]	412	27.3	28.1	28.1
	There should be a way for them to stay in the country legally, if certain requirements are met	1052	69.8	71.9	100.0
	Total	1464	97.1	100.0	
Missing	[VOL. DO NOT READ] Don't know/Refused	43	2.9		
Total		1507	100.0		



Our third independent variable is differences between race and ethnicity regarding the opinions of gun rights against gun control and the data set for this variable is ordinal. The results from our independent demonstrates that whites are the majority who responded (71.5 %), Hispanics where the second most likely to responses (11.4%), Blacks are the third most likely to answer (8.8%), and other ethnicities that responded to this question was the smallest who responded (6.4%). Our Mode for this variable is 1 which is “Whites, Non-Hispanics”. Our N for this variable is 1478 who answered the question.

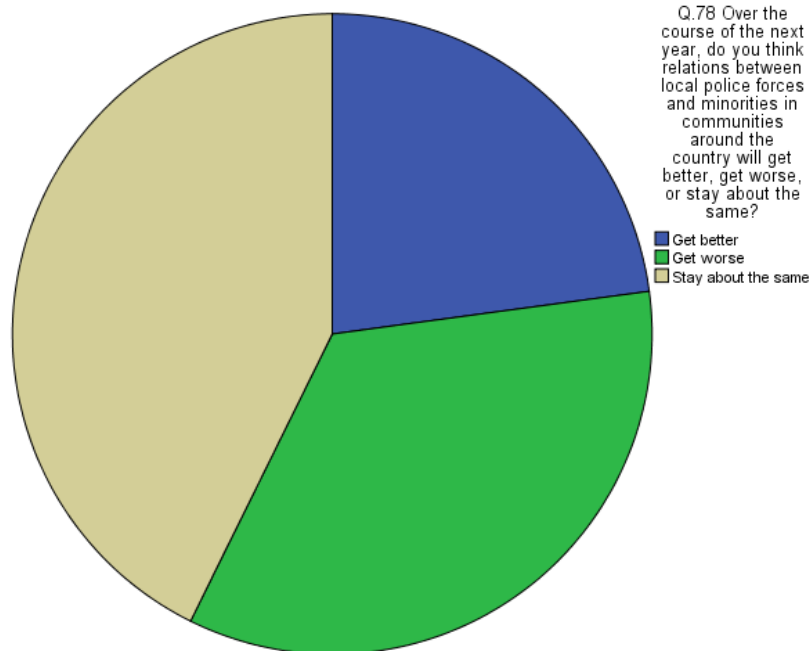
		Race/Ethnicity			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	White, non-Hisp	1077	71.5	72.9	72.9
	Black, non-Hisp	132	8.8	8.9	81.8
	Hispanic	172	11.4	11.6	93.4
	Other	97	6.4	6.6	100.0
	Total	1478	98.1	100.0	
Missing	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	29	1.9		
Total		1507	100.0		



Our forth Independent variable is opinions regarding police to minority relationships and if they are going to get better or get worse or stay about the same over the next year. The results from our independent variable demonstrates that people think police to minority relations are going to stay about the same in a year (42.7%), people think that police to minority communities will get worse within the next year (33.8%), and people think minority to police relations are going to get better(22.4%). Our mode for this variable is 3 “That police to minority relations are going to stay about the same in the next year. The N for this variable is 1478 who responded to the questions.

**Q.78 Over the course of the next year, do you think relations between local police forces and minorities in communities around the country will get better, get worse, or stay about the same?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Get better	338	22.4	22.9	22.9
	Get worse	509	33.8	34.4	57.3
	Stay about the same	631	41.9	42.7	100.0
	Total	1478	98.1	100.0	
Missing	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	29	1.9		
Total		1507	100.0		



Comparing Whites and Hispanics views regarding gun ownership versus gun control. We only used Hispanics as minorities because their population had more responses than the other minority group. What the comparison shows is that Whites are more in favor of protecting gun ownership (60.1%) while only 27.7% of Hispanics are in favor of gun ownership rights and Hispanics are in favor of controlling gun ownership (72.3%) whereas 39.9% of whites are in favor of gun control. What this relationship shows is that minority groups specifically Hispanics are going to be in favor or controlling gun ownership while white non-Hispanics are typically more in favor or protecting gun ownership rights. Our chi-square value was 72.55 with a degree of freedom of 3. With a significant score of .000, this shows that there is a significant difference between ethnicities and opinions regarding ownership over gun control.

**Q.53 What do you think is more important ?to protect the right of Americans to own guns, OR to control gun ownership? \* Race/Ethnicity**  
**Crosstabulation**

			Race/Ethnicity				Total
			White, non-Hisp	Black, non-Hisp	Hispanic	Other	
Q.53 What do you think is more important ?to protect the right of Americans to own guns, OR to control gun ownership?	Protect the right of Americans to own guns	Count	633	49	46	51	779
		% within Race/Ethnicity	60.1%	39.5%	27.7%	53.1%	54.1%
	Control gun ownership	Count	420	75	120	45	660
		% within Race/Ethnicity	39.9%	60.5%	72.3%	46.9%	45.9%
Total	Count		1053	124	166	96	1439
	% within Race/Ethnicity		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



Comparing gun ownership to gun control and how they feel about the police and minority relationships demonstrates that there is a split decision. Americans who are in favor for protecting the right to own guns feel that police and minority relationships would get worse (59.2%). While Americans who are in favor of gun control feel as if police and minority relationships would get better (58.7%). Our chi-square value was 29.355 with a degree of freedom of 3, with a significance level if .000. This demonstrates that a person's view on gun control vs. gun ownership has a direct relationship n how they view police relations in minority communities.

**Q.53 What do you think is more important ?to protect the right of Americans to own guns, OR to control gun ownership? \* Q.78 Over the course of the next year, do you think relations between local police forces and minorities in communities around the country will get better, get worse, or stay about the same? Crosstabulation**

			Q.78 Over the course of the next year, do you think relations between local police forces and minorities in communities around the country will get better, get worse, or stay about the same?			Total
			Get better	Get worse	Stay about the same	
Q.53 What do you think is more important ?to protect the right of Americans to own guns, OR to control gun ownership?	Protect the right of Americans to own guns	Count	136	294	350	780
		% within Q.78 Over the course of the next year, do you think relations between local police forces and minorities in communities around the country will get better, get worse, or stay about the same?	41.3%	59.2%	57.0%	54.2%
	Control gun ownership	Count	193	203	264	660
		% within Q.78 Over the course of the next year, do you think relations between local police forces and minorities in communities around the country will get better, get worse, or stay about the same?	58.7%	40.8%	43.0%	45.8%
Total			329	497	614	1440
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

When comparing views of gun ownership vs. gun control to whether owning a gun puts people's safety at risk or it protects them from being a victim of a crime the results show two results. First, people who are in favor protecting Americans rights to own guns believe that owning a gun will protect them from becoming a victim of a crime. Second, people who are in favor of gun control laws believe that owning a gun puts people's safety at risk instead of protecting them. Our chi-square value is 594.061 with a degree of freedom of 1 and a significance level of .000. This shows that there is a significant difference between people who believe owing guns will protect them (80.2%) and people who think gun ownership will put people's safety at risk (86.1%).

**Q.53 What do you think is more important ?to protect the right of Americans to own guns, OR to control gun ownership? \* Q.55 Do you think that gun ownership in this country does more to [INSERT OPTION; RANDOMIZE] or does more to [NEXT OPTION]**  
Crosstabulation

			Q.55 Do you think that gun ownership in this country does more to [INSERT OPTION; RANDOMIZE] or does more to [NEXT OPTION]		Total
			Protect people from becoming victims of crime [OR]	Put people's safety at risk	
Q.53 What do you think is more important ?to protect the right of Americans to own guns, OR to control gun ownership?	Protect the right of Americans to own guns	Count % within Q.55 Do you think that gun ownership in this country does more to [INSERT OPTION; RANDOMIZE] or does more to [NEXT OPTION]	687 80.2%	77 13.9%	764 54.2%
	Control gun ownership	Count % within Q.55 Do you think that gun ownership in this country does more to [INSERT OPTION; RANDOMIZE] or does more to [NEXT OPTION]	170 19.8%	476 86.1%	646 45.8%
Total		Count % within Q.55 Do you think that gun ownership in this country does more to [INSERT OPTION; RANDOMIZE] or does more to [NEXT OPTION]	857 100.0%	553 100.0%	1410 100.0%

When comparing views of gun control vs. gun ownership to immigration laws the data shows is that people who believe in gun ownership tend to believe in more harsh immigration laws for undocumented immigrants. The data also shows that the opposite belief is in place for people who believe in gun control because people who tend to believe in controlling gun ownership also believe that undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay in the country if they meet certain requirements. For this comparison the chi-square 125.965 with a degree of freedom of 1 and a significance level of .000. This shows that there is a direct relation between a person's views of gun ownership vs. gun control because people who believe in gun ownership also believe in stricter immigration laws for undocumented immigrants. There is also a direct relationship between controlling gun ownership and more lenient immigration laws for undocumented immigrants. The chi-square is so high because there is a significant difference between these two groups.

**Q.53 What do you think is more important ?to protect the right of Americans to own guns, OR to control gun ownership? \* Q.45 Which comes closer to your view about how to handle undocumented immigrants who are now living in the U.S.? [READ AND RANDOMIZE] Crosstabulation**

			Q.45 Which comes closer to your view about how to handle undocumented immigrants who are now living in the U.S.? [READ AND RANDOMIZE]		Total
			They should not be allowed to stay in the country legally [OR]	There should be a way for them to stay in the country legally, if certain requirements are met	
Q.53 What do you think is more important ?to protect the right of Americans to own guns, OR to control gun ownership?	Protect the right of Americans to own guns	Count % within Q.45 Which comes closer to your view about how to handle undocumented immigrants who are now living in the U.S.? [READ AND RANDOMIZE]	313 77.3%	456 44.4%	769 53.7%
	Control gun ownership	Count % within Q.45 Which comes closer to your view about how to handle undocumented immigrants who are now living in the U.S.? [READ AND RANDOMIZE]	92 22.7%	570 55.6%	662 46.3%
Total		Count % within Q.45 Which comes closer to your view about how to handle undocumented immigrants who are now living in the U.S.? [READ AND RANDOMIZE]	405 100.0%	1026 100.0%	1431 100.0%

In conclusion, when testing the variables through the tests we found that the stated hypotheses held up to our predictions. First, we compared a person's ethnicity to their opinion of protecting the rights to own guns and controlling gun ownership. What we found was that there is a significant difference between whites and Hispanics. Whites are more in favor of protecting their rights to own guns while Hispanics are more in favor of gun control laws which confirmed our hypothesis. Second, we looked at people's opinions on the future of police and minority relations. What we found was that people who had a more negative outlook on the future of police and minority relations were more in favor of protecting their rights to own guns and people who had a positive outlook on the future were in favor of controlling gun ownership. This confirmed our initial hypothesis that people with a negative outlook would be more in favor of protecting their rights to own guns because they did not have the police to protect them and people with a more positive outlook would be in favor of gun control laws because they viewed the police as an effective force against crime. Third, we analyzed people's view of whether a gun protects people from being the victim of a crime or it puts people's safety at risk. What we found was people who thought guns protected people from becoming the victim of a crime were typically more in favor of gun ownership while people who thought that guns put their safety at risk were more in favor of controlling gun ownership, which confirmed our hypothesis. Finally, we looked at people's views on illegal immigration and if they should be allowed in the country or not and if this opinion is dependent on the public's opinion on protecting the rights to own guns or controlling gun ownership. What we found was that people who think the undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay in the U.S. are more in favor of gun control, while people who think that illegal immigrants should not be allowed to stay in the U.S. are also more in favor of gun ownership. This confirmed our hypothesis because we believed that people who were harsh on immigration would be in favor of gun ownership because they viewed illegal immigrants as a threat to their safety and people who were in favor of more relaxed immigration laws would be in favor of controlling gun ownership because they did not see immigration as a threat to their safety. We found that there to be very little discrepancies in the study however our only problem was that not every participant answered every question. We fixed this issue by exempting people who did not

answer the question or did not know from the graphs and comparisons in order to make our information more accurate.