Eradicating Gun Culture to Reduce Firearm Violence?

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This research was funded by:
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Evidence for Action Program (grant #73337)
PROBLEM:

- U.S. FIREARM HOMICIDE RATES 25 TIMES HIGHER THAN IN OTHER HIGH INCOME COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD
- HEATED DEBATE
- LEGISLATIVE IMPASSE
CONDITIONS NECESSARY TO LAW ENACTMENT:

Law enactment

Legislators’ action

Public support
Knowing what policy works
Feasibility
CONDITIONS NECESSARY TO LAW ENACTMENT:

- Law enactment
- Legislators’ action
- Public support
- Knowing what policy works
- Feasibility
Myth #1

FIREARMS POLICY IS ONE OF THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES OF OUR TIME, POSSIBLY THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE.
Public Support for Universal Background Checks

Source: Quinnipiac College poll, July 2014
Public Support for Universal Background Checks

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Source: Quinnipiac College poll, July 2014
Public Support for Universal Background Checks

Source: Everytown for Gun Safety, 2013
Earth revolves around sun
Background checks

Source: Gallup
82% OF GUN OWNERS SUPPORT TESTING REQUIREMENTS FOR CONCEALED CARRY PERMIT HOLDERS

75% OF GUN OWNERS SUPPORT RED FLAG LAWS
If the public supports these policies, why the legislative impasse?
REASONS FOR THE CURRENT LEGISLATIVE IMPASSE

- Gap between actual and perceived public opinion
- Federal voting system
- Interest groups involvement
WHY IS THERE SUCH A GAP BETWEEN ACTUAL AND PERCEIVED PUBLIC OPINION ON THIS ISSUE?
Myth #2

There is a gun culture in the United States, and it explains the high level of firearm violence.
CULTURE: “SHARED BELIEFS, VALUES, GOALS, AND SYMBOLS THAT ARE USUALLY DRIVEN BY COMPLEX HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL INFLUENCES” (LEGAULT AND LIZOTTE)

GUN CULTURE: SHARED BELIEFS, VALUES, GOALS, AND SYMBOLS RELATED TO GUNS
America As A Gun Culture

Richard Hofstadter

October 1970 | Volume 21, Issue 5

Senator Joseph Tydings of Maryland, appealing in the summer of 1968 for an effective gun-control law, lamented: "It is just tragic that in all of Western civilization the United States is the one country with an insane gun policy." In one respect this was an understatement. Western or otherwise, the United States is the only modern industrial urban nation that persists in maintaining a gun culture. It is the only industrial nation in which the possession of rifles, shotguns, and handguns is lawfully prevalent among large numbers of its population. It is the only such nation that has been impelled in recent years to agonize at length about its own disposition toward violence and to set up a commission to examine it, the only nation so attached to the supposed "right" to bear arms that its laws abet assassins, professional gangsters, and the disaffected. It is perhaps not too strong a statement to say that the appeal of the modern political system is the appeal to the gun.
Bill targets school riflery teams, citing ‘gun culture’

By MARY ESCH  May 10, 2018
The Roots of America’s Gun Culture

How 18th-century British arms sales, the slave trade, and the Revolutionary War contributed to the mess we have today
Stanford Doctors: It's Time To Ban All Semi-Automatic Firearms
IS GUN CULTURE CAUSING FIREARM VIOLENCE?
ACTUAL MEASURES OF STATE GUN CULTURE THAT WE USED:

- Per capita NRA membership
- Per capita gun ownership,
- Hunting license rates,
- Per capita number of federally licensed firearm dealers
- Per capita handgun sales
- Per capita long gun sales
- Number of gun shows,
- Number of target shooters,
- Number of advertisements for tactical gun accessories,
- Readership of hunting, shooting, and self-defense-oriented magazines,
- Per capita concealed carry permit holders,
- Military enlistments,
- Readership of military magazines,
- Machine gun ownership,
- Total amount of NRA grant support
- Percentage of NRA readers who choose America’s 1st freedom
- Percentage of NRA readers who choose American hunter
FINDING #1:
THERE IS NOT ONE GUN CULTURE, THERE ARE SEVERAL GUN SUBCULTURES

GUN CULTURE 1.0
LEISURE GUN CULTURE
(hunting, target shooting, collecting)

GUN CULTURE 2.0
(D. YAMANE)
SELF-DEFENSE
(handguns, stand-your-ground laws)

GUN CULTURE 3.0
SYMBOLIC & POLITICAL CULTURE
(guns are a symbol of freedom, power or masculinity)
GUN SUBCULTURES OVER TIME

-2.5 -2.0 -1.5 -1.0 -0.5 0.0 0.5 1.0 1.5 2.0

Firearm advertising switched from leisure to self-defense (David Yamane, 2019)

Firearm advertising “moved from narrative—a description of how guns worked—to lyric—a description of how they made you feel” (Pamela Haag, 2016)
FINDING #2:
GUN CULTURE 1.0 IS NOT ASSOCIATED WITH HOMICIDE RATES

Target shooting, hunting and collecting are not associated with homicides.

Hunting sometimes even has a protective effect.
S.66 - Assault Weapons Ban of 2019
116th Congress (2019-2020) | Get alerts

BILL

Sponsor: Sen. Feinstein, Dianne (CA) (Introduced 01/09/2019)
Committees: Senate - Judiciary
Latest Action: Senate - 01/09/2019 Read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. (All Actions)
Tracker: Introduced → Passed Senate → Passed House → To President → Became Law

Summary: S.66 — 116th Congress (2019-2020)
A summary is in progress.
FINDING:
ASSAULT WEAPON BANS DO NOT LOWER HOMICIDE RATES
WHAT IS AN ASSAULT WEAPON?

Semi-automatic rifles able to accept detachable magazines and two or more of the following:
WHAT IS AN ASSAULT WEAPON?

Semi-automatic rifles able to accept detachable magazines and two or more of the following:
- Folding or telescoping stock
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Semi-automatic rifles able to accept detachable magazines and two or more of the following:
- Folding or telescoping stock
- Pistol grip
- Bayonet mount
- Flash hider or threaded barrel designed to accommodate one
- Grenade launcher
WHY IS THERE SUCH A GAP BETWEEN ACTUAL AND PERCEIVED PUBLIC OPINION ON THIS ISSUE?
BLAME ON GUN CULTURE

GUN OWNERS FEELING ALIENATED

SILENT MAJORITY

VOCAL MINORITY
THE VOCAL MINORITY

Matthew Lacombe, 2019:

- CREATION OR PROMOTION OF A GUN OWNER SOCIAL IDENTITY
- INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF THIS IDENTITY BY THE NRA
THE NRA INSTRUMENTALIZES THIS FEELING OF ALIENATION
FINDING #3:

GUN CULTURE 2.0 AND 3.0 ARE ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER HOMICIDES

- Two way-street
- Violence escalation
- Structural violence
CONDITIONS NECESSARY TO LAW ENACTMENT:

- Law enactment
- Legislators’ action
  - Public support
  - Knowing what policy works
  - Feasibility
Lesson #1 from our research

The single most effective policy to prevent firearm violence would be to simply prohibit firearm possession by people with a demonstrated history of violent behavior.
How do we know this?

• DATA ON 14 CATEGORIES OF LAWS IN 50 STATES, 1991-2016
• OUTCOME: HOMICIDE RATES, STRATIFIED BY FIREARM VS. NON-FIREARM
• CONTROL FACTORS: VIOLENT CRIME, PROPERTY CRIME, POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT, HOUSEHOLD GUN OWNERSHIP, SOCIAL CAPITAL
• DIFFERENCE IN DIFFERENCES ANALYSIS WITH STATE AND YEAR FIXED EFFECTS, WITH OR WITHOUT LAGGED DEPENDENT VARIABLE
• LINEAR MODEL WITH LOGGED HOMICIDE RATES AS OUTCOME
• COUNT MODEL WITH HOMICIDE RATES AS OUTCOME
• COUNT MODEL WITH HOMICIDE COUNTS AS OUTCOME
• FALSIFICATION TEST: IS EFFECT SPECIFIC TO FIREARM HOMICIDE?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of state law</th>
<th>Difference in homicide rate with law</th>
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<td><strong>SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS</strong></td>
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### Effect of State Firearm Laws on Homicide Rates

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<th>Does it regulate WHO can access a gun?</th>
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Myth #3

MASS SHOOTINGS ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF FIREARM VIOLENCE IN THE U.S.
FIREARM VIOLENCE BREAKDOWN:

- 0.1% Mass Shootings
- 25% By a Stranger
- 61% By a Relative or Acquaintance
- 14% By an Intimate Partner
REASONS FOR THE CURRENT LEGISLATIVE IMPASSE

- Interest groups involvement
- Gap between actual and perceived public opinion
- Federal voting system
“The question, then, is how to narrow the criteria [for gun ownership] in a way that will both protect society and respect those whose rights would be affected by unfairly including them... .”
“We support efforts to prevent those who are a danger to themselves or others from getting access to firearms.”
“This individual was nuts and neither I, nor the millions of people that I represent as a part of this organization, that I'm here speaking for, none of us support people who are crazy, who are a danger to themselves, who are a danger to others, getting their hands on a firearm.”
“We need to stop dangerous people before they act. So Congress should provide funding for states to adopt risk protection orders. This could help prevent violent behavior before it turns into a tragedy. These laws allow a court to intervene and temporarily remove firearms when a person threatens violence to themselves or others. ... We can take action and prevent violence and protect the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding Americans at the same time. And we hope you’ll join us in getting it done.”
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David A. Keene
“The NRA supports efforts to prevent those who are a danger to themselves or others from getting access to firearms.”

NRA-ILA
March 13, 2018
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Dana Loesch, NRA spokesperson
February 21, 2018
“We need to stop dangerous people before they act. So Congress should provide funding for states to adopt risk protection orders. This could help prevent violent behavior before it turns into a tragedy. These laws allow a court to intervene and temporarily remove firearms when a person threatens violence to themselves or others. ... We can take action and prevent violence and protect the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding Americans at the same time. That’s what the five million men and women of the NRA are committed to do. And we hope you’ll join us in getting it done.”

Chris Cox, Executive Director, NRA Institute for Legislative Action
March 14, 2018 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7sNiklO506A)
The National Rifle Association allocated 96 percent of its total 2016 election spending — at least $50.3M — to the presidential race and six Senate contests. Here’s how the gamble paid off.
The most common form of gun culture is not responsible for firearm violence.

Most gun owners are feeling alienated and are not engaging in the public debate although they support gun policies.

The policies that are effective in reducing firearm violence are the ones regulating who can access firearms.

The biggest predictor of firearm violence is a history of violence.

The NRA is first and foremost an interest group with financial interests.