

# THE LINK BETWEEN EASY ACCESS TO A GUN AS A YOUTH AND HANDGUN OWNERSHIP AS AN ADULT

## Research Questions

- Does easy access to a gun as a youth predict gun ownership in young adulthood?
- Does political party affiliation moderate the association between easy access as a youth and gun ownership as a young adult?

## Significance

- In 1999, the primary reason people reported owning a gun was for hunting (49%), followed by for protection (26%). By 2013, however, these reversed to protection becoming the new primary reason (48%) with hunting secondary (32%) (Shapira, H., & Simon, S. J., 2018).
- Republicans (31%) are more likely to own a gun than Democrats (16%) (Pew 2013).
- Gun ownership is learned through a socialization process (Shapira, H., & Simon, S. J., 2018).

## Background

- Gun control started with Supreme Court case *Abramski v. United States*, when the Gun Control Act of 1968 was introduced. It prevented certain classes from purchasing guns and made it easier for law enforcement to trace guns used in crimes. (Gun Control Act of 1968).
- Historically guns were utilized primarily for hunting however there has been a shift more recently to gun ownership being more about protection and Americanism.

## Hypotheses

- Gun access as an adolescent will increase gun ownership as an adult.
- Republicans are more likely to own a gun as an adult than democrats.

## Data

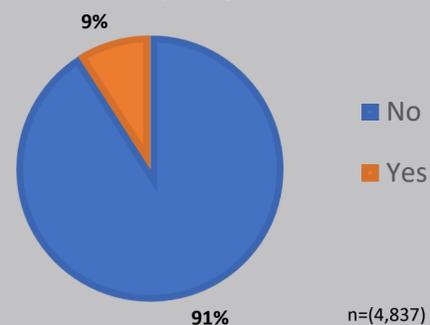
The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health.

- Wave 1 (1994-95) Adolescents in grade 7-12
- Wave 3 (2001-02) Ages 18-26

## Dependent Measure

### Gun Ownership as a Young Adult

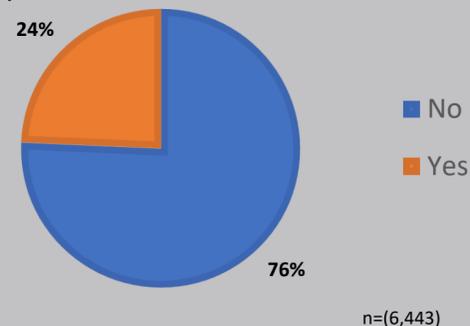
Do you own a handgun? Don't count a gun you must have for your job.



## Independent Measure

### Gun Access as an Adolescent

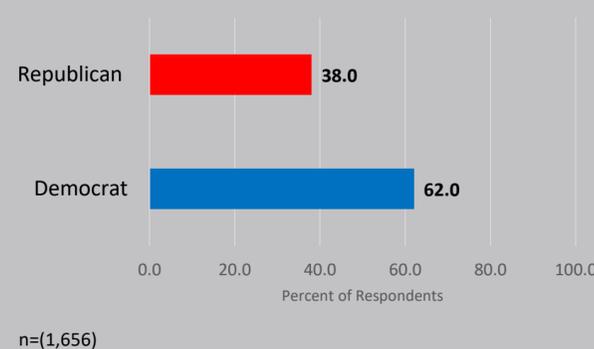
Is a gun easily available to you in your home?



## Moderator Variable

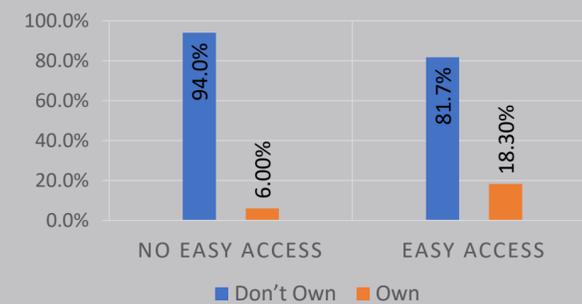
### Political Party Affiliation

With which political party do you identify?



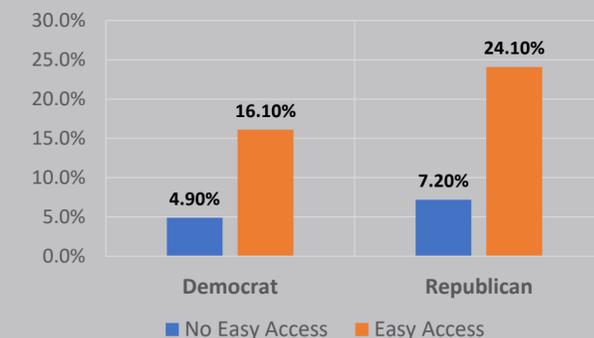
## Results

### Gun Ownership as an Adult by Easy Access to Gun as Youth



Note: chi-square test significant at  $p < .001$ .

### Percent Owning a Gun by Easy Access and Political Affiliation



Note: chi-square test significant at  $p < 0.001$  for both groups.

## Summary and Limitations

- Handgun ownership as an adult is positively associated with easy access to gun as a youth.
- Limitations:
- Misses people who may have dropped out of school or the study.
  - Age, most states require a person to be 21 years old to purchase a handgun. Wave 3 looks at people age 18 – 26.

## Future Research

- Look at all political parties, including those who are independents or non-affiliated.
- Consider wider age range, and gender differences, to get a fuller picture of gun ownership.
- Use research to create better gun policies in the United States.

## References

- Gramlich, J. (2018, December 27). 7 facts about guns in the U.S. Retrieved October 21, 2019, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/12/27/facts-about-guns-in-united-states/>
- Gun Control Act of 1968 — Material Misrepresentation — *Abramski v. United States*. (2014). *Harvard Law Review*, 128(1), 391–400.
- Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. 2013. Why own a gun? Protection is now top reason. March 12, 2013. <http://www.people-press.org/2013/03/12/why-own-a-gun-protection-is-now-top-reason>.
- Shapira, H., & Simon, S. J. (2018). Learning to Need a Gun. *Qualitative Sociology*, 41(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-018-9374-2>