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Analyzing Gun Control: Nature or Nurture?

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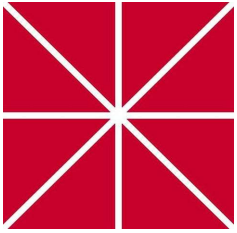
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Analyzing Gun Control: Nature or Nurture?

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Introduction

A Review of the Literature

This present study will delve into possible factors that influence why or why not one might want stronger government restriction on firearms.

- Literature suggests that party identification and education have an impact on gun control views.
- Data indicates that gender has no correlation on gun control regulation views.

The question is why data shows no correlation between such fear and gender when literature says otherwise.

- Do stereotypes automatically allow us to assume that women are in favor of stronger gun regulations?

One can also question why there are mixed responses on whether or not education is a factor.

- Why is education not a factor regarding such fear if these are policies that only the educated can properly understand?
- Why does literature indicate education does not matter while the data clearly states that those who are more educated are less fearful of strong gun regulations?

While party identification clearly has an effect on one's views, there are mixed responses as to whether or not gender and education also play a role.

National Rifle Association

The National Rifle Association is the leading gun rights organization at 147 years old. It is a highly effective lobbying organization that campaigns against any legislation regarding the strengthening of firearm regulations.

- They are viewed as a far right organization that donates large sums of money to Conservative political candidates.
- While bribery is illegal, it is well known that the NRA does not make significant contributions without expecting those politicians they support, to vote against gun regulations in the future.

Even though the National Rifle Association has a negative connotation to those who prefer stricter regulations, it leads many to wonder how they are so powerful in Washington. Many Conservative politicians do not just receive money from the NRA, but receive large sums. Senator Marco Rubio, when asked if he would refuse campaign donations from them, publicly said he would not (Kessler, 2018). Where does this power come from?

Maybe it is the NRA's ability to help candidates maintain office or maybe it is their ability to get their supporters out to vote for the candidates they back.

Hypothesis & Methods

H1: Those who identify as Liberal are more likely to support stronger government regulations on firearms and ammunition.

H2: Females are more likely to support stronger government regulations on firearms compared to their male counterparts.

H3: Those who receive higher education are more likely to support stronger regulations on firearms.

The first hypothesis is backed up by the survey data; those who identify as Republican are more likely to fear stronger firearm regulations compared to Democrats. This hypothesis was developed through typical stereotypes and literature that suggests such a fact. According to the data, there is a direct correlation between party identification and fear of strengthened regulations.

Based on the data analyzed for the second hypothesis, gender has no effect on fear of strengthened regulations. There is a fairly even split between males and females who do not fear regulation, which indicates that gender is not a strong factor. While data suggests that gender does not play a role, literature states otherwise.

Finally, the third hypothesis is supported by the data generated. It shows that those with a high school education or less, are significantly more afraid of stronger regulations at 51%, compared to those with a Bachelor's Degree or higher at 19.2%. For those who are "afraid" or "slightly afraid," those with a high school education or less are a lot more afraid than those with higher forms of education. On the other hand, in the "not afraid" column, those with a Bachelor's Degree or higher are significantly less afraid of stronger regulations at 43.2%. What is interesting is that those with some college education or less, are almost equal under the "not afraid" section at 28.1% and 28.7%.

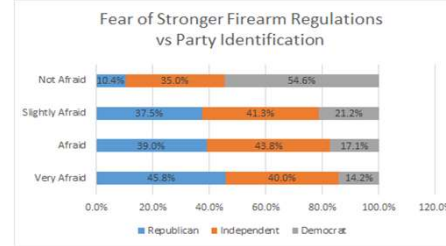
To analyze the data, you first had to recode the following independent variables: party identification and education. One those factors were recoded, crosstabs analysis were run to view how the different independent variables may or may not cause a variation of fears of strengthening government restriction on firearms.

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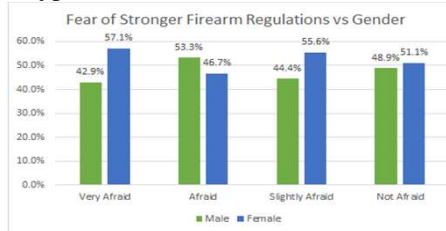
Results

Hypothesis 1:



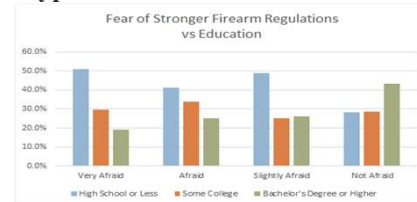
Hypothesis 1's cross tabulation depicts exactly what the general public assumes: Republicans are afraid of stronger regulations while Democrats are not afraid of such regulations.

Hypothesis 2:



Hypothesis 2 was disproved with the data above. The graph above indicates that gender has no effect on fear of strengthening firearm regulations. Interestingly enough, there are a higher percentage of females who are "very afraid" of strengthening regulations, compared to their male counterparts.

Hypothesis 3:



Hypothesis 3 is supported by the data. Those with a Bachelor's Degree or higher are not afraid of stronger regulations. On the other hand, those with a high school education or less are significantly more afraid of such regulations.

Conclusion

Hypothesis 1:

- The crosstabulation results support the hypothesis on all ranges. Republicans are consistently more afraid of stronger firearm regulations compared to Democrats on all ranges of "afraid."
- Republicans were the least likely to be "not afraid" of stronger regulations compared to both Independents and Democrats.

Hypothesis 2:

- The crosstabulation results do not support the second hypothesis. There is no trend in the graph that shows a difference in fear levels based on gender.
- What is interesting is under the "very afraid" category, women are 14.2% more afraid than men of stronger regulations. Under "slightly afraid," women are still 11.2% more afraid than men.

Hypothesis 3:

- Hypothesis 3's findings suggest that education does have an impact towards fear levels towards strengthening firearm regulations.
- Survey data shows that those with a high school education or less are a lot more fearful of than those with some college education or higher. Additionally, those with a Bachelor's Degree or higher are a lot less afraid of stronger regulations than those with some college education or less.

Ultimately, various studies and reports indicate that party identification is a defining factor in the measurements of fear towards stronger firearm regulations. Chapman's Survey of American Fears further backs that claim.

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