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POLICING AND FIREARMS: EXPLORING DATA COLLECTION PRACTICES
AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS GUN CONTROL

By
Adam V Moltisanti

A Thesis

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at
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Advisor

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ABSTRACT

Adam V Moltisanti
Policing and Firearms: Exploring Data Collection Practices
and Attitudes Toward Gun Control
2008/09
Dr. Tony Smith
Department of Criminal Justice

The purpose of this exploratory investigation was to measure what, if any, differences exist between law enforcement and non law enforcement personnel in their opinions towards gun control, as well as investigate the types of information that are recorded in police reports. Using a test population of police officers (n = 90) and students (n = 131), a self administered, anonymous survey was used to test the hypotheses that police officers are a) more likely to support gun control policies, b) more likely to view gun control policies as increasing community and police safety, c) more likely to view gun control policies as decreasing gun violence, and d) less likely to interpret the Second Amendment to mean an Individuals' right to bear arms. Using both bivariate and multivariate analysis, three of five hypotheses were confirmed when variables such as age, gender, and firearm ownership were controlled for. The findings concerning police reports show that important detailed information that is unavailable in national databases is contained within police reports. The implications of this research are discussed in detail.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I dedicate this thesis:

To Dr. Smith, for guidance.

To my parents, for support.

To Sara, for unwavering strength.

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CHAPTER I

Statement of Problem

The United States has consistently experienced significantly higher rates of gun violence than other developed nations. For example, in 2005, over 30,000 people in America died because of firearms. To put this figure into perspective, consider the Korean War (1950-1953): almost as many Americans were killed during the Korean War -- 33,651 casualties -- as were killed in 2005 alone. To provide another viewpoint by which to judge the scale of interpersonal firearm violence in America, consider the following statistics: In 2004, there were 11,344 people in the United States who were murdered with a firearm. In that same year, the number of firearm-related homicides recorded in Canada was 184 and well under 100 in Australia (56), New Zealand (5), Sweden (37), and the United Kingdom (73) (Bradycampaign, 2008).

In response to firearm violence in America, a number of measures have been taken at all levels of government. Currently, federal legislation has sought to combat firearm-related violence by mandating criminal and mental health background checks, banning the sale of assault style firearms, and limiting the amount of firearms that can be purchased by an individual in a single year. On the other hand, some states have enacted controversial laws that counteract the "less-guns-less-crime" approach to policymaking, permitting citizens to carry (concealed and/or unconcealed) firearms in public places for self-defense purposes. As one of the two aims of this current study, the researcher will set out to examine the level of support various gun policies receive from the public as well as

a law enforcement population. In particular, the study intends to gauge the difference, if any, between these two populations in their perception of the efficacy of gun control policies, support for certain gun control measures, and their interpretation of the Second Amendment.

Although police officer opinion on gun control has been largely neglected by researchers, there is no shortage of data of public opinion on gun control, gun violence, and the Second Amendment. The most recent body of evidence is characterized below:

- A slight majority of Americans support gun control policies. In 2007, 55% favored gun control policies.
- Americans are divided on whether gun control laws regulating handgun sales should be made stricter. In 2008, 49% of Americans believed that gun control laws regulating handgun sales should be made stricter, compared to 41% of Americans who believed they should be relaxed.
- There has been an increase in support for individual rights to bear arms in recent years. In 1993, only 34% supported an individual's right to bear arms while in 2007 this figure rose to 42% (Sourcebook, 2008).

The second focus of this study will be aimed at examining the type of information collected by police departments for crimes that involve firearms with particular attention paid to the *specificity of information* that is recorded in police reports. This exploratory investigation responds to the frustrations that many gun researchers encounter when conducting scientific investigation of gun crimes. For example, national databases such as the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) and the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) employ rather broad coding categories of firearms used in the commission of crime, coding for only rifles or handguns. Specific information on firearm caliber, usage of body armor, gun modifications, ammunition used or modified, as well as gun

models and manufacturer have not been systematically compiled by any entity. This type of information could be invaluable to law enforcement and legislators in shaping situational response tactics and gun control policies. As such, the study will examine the types and frequency of information gathered in police reports, across many different agencies, to determine whether local police reports can be used as a data source for future firearms research.

Significance of Study

There are two major areas of investigation in this study. The first area, police opinion on gun control policies will hereinafter be labeled *Objective I*. The second area, police record keeping practices for gun crimes will hereinafter be labeled *Objective II*. The significance for each objective is discussed in detail below.

Objective I

What are the current attitudes held by police officers concerning existing gun control policies?

Quite possibly, police officers are the most impacted by gun control policies in the sense that they are responsible for enforcing gun laws and their personal safety is at stake. If gun control measures work as intended, one could argue that violence in the community as well as violence perpetrated against the police would decrease. Since law enforcement “experience” the law firsthand, their particular opinions about existing gun control laws should matter. They can offer experientially based testimonials about the strengths and weaknesses of a particular law. In other words, input from the law enforcement community could prove to be valuable in the evaluation existing gun control

policies. In turn, lawmakers could digest this intelligence and re-shape current gun control policies to address issues and concerns raised by the law enforcement community.

In addition, the police wield much discretion in the enforcement of laws. The review of the literature discusses evidence that suggests police officer opinion on an issue will ultimately shape their response to an incident of that nature. The literature discussed suggests a direct correlation between officer opinion and officer actions in the area of domestic violence and incidents involving mentally ill perpetrators. These findings imply that until either specialized training was given, the officers acted on their own discretion, which was shaped by their attitudes and opinions.

What are the current attitudes held by the general public concerning existing gun control policies?

Gauging the opinions of the general public will make it possible to determine whether law enforcement possess significantly different opinions about gun control issues. If there are any differences measured, future research can build upon this study in order to investigate what factors, unique to the law enforcement profession, influences their attitudes and opinions. If law enforcement training or experience alters opinion, policy makers may lean on the law enforcement community when creating gun control laws to increase the effectiveness of such policies.

Objective II

What types of information do law enforcement agencies record for firearm-related crimes?

Currently, information that is recorded in national databases, such as NIBRS and the UCR is very broad, measuring only whether an incident involved handguns and/or

rifles. There is very little *specific* information available concerning (a) gun caliber, manufacturer or model; (b) ammunition type or use of body armor; and (c) modifications made to ammunitions or firearms. Knowing whether or not this type of information is recorded in investigative reports, but not filtered into national databases, will allow researchers to access another source of data or prompt the UCR and NIBRS programs to consider collecting this data if it is commonly collected already. In addition, detailed information about firearm-related crime could be infinitely useful for both law enforcement personnel and policy makers. If there is a relationship found between a particular type of crime and a specific type of firearm, for example, law enforcement can then alter their response protocol to prepare for certain types of weaponry. For instance, if a robust relationship emerges linking the use of body armor in the commission of a bank robbery, this information would help law enforcement personnel alter their response protocol so that they are better prepared (e.g., using equipment that is capable of neutralizing body armor).

Specific information such as this could also be useful for lawmakers as well. Knowledge of an empirical connection between particular crimes and certain firearms can result in gun control policies specifically targeting a type of firearm. For example, if there is an association between the use of high caliber handguns and homicide, the sale of high caliber handguns could be restricted or closely monitored. Additionally, lawmakers can use information such as the modification of a gun or ammunition to alter sentencing regulations. Knowledge that offenders have a tendency to modify ammunition to increase the likelihood of a lethal outcome could result in penalty enhancement statutes for

instance. In turn, harsher sentencing for offenders using altered ammunition, modified firearms, or supplemental equipment such as bulletproof armor *may* have deterrent value.

Is there a variation in recording practices across different police departments?

The study entertains the possibility that specific details about firearm-related crimes recorded by local law enforcement agencies can (should) be transmitted to public databases, such as the NIBRS and UCR programs. However, if wide variation in recording practices exists between departments than it is necessary to consider devising uniform data collection procedures. In the same vein, it is important to examine not only variations in recording practices between departments but also variations in recording practices *within* departments as well. This investigation will consider whether law enforcement agencies should institute department level policies to ensure that their officers consistently record pertinent information on gun crimes such as presence of weapon, type of weapon, caliber of weapon, type of ammunition, modification to gun, and use of supplemental equipment.

Predictions

Objective I

There are five hypotheses that will be tested and are based on the assumption that police officers are inherently more likely to support gun control policies and favor an interpretation of the Second Amendment to mean the right for militias to bear arms as opposed to an individuals' right. The hypotheses that will be tested are listed below.

Hypothesis 1: Police officers are more likely to support gun control policies as compared to the general population.

Hypothesis 2: Police officers are more likely to view gun control policies as increasing community safety as compared to the general population.

Hypothesis 3: Police officers are more likely to view gun control policies as increasing police officer safety as compared to the general population.

Hypothesis 4: Police officers are more likely to view gun control policies as reducing gun violence as compared to the general population.

Hypothesis 5: Police officers are less likely to interpret the Second Amendment to mean an *individuals'* right to bear arms as compared to the general population.

Objective II

Since an exploratory approach is employed to undertake *Objective II*, no particular hypothesis will be tested. Instead, the thesis will report descriptive statistics to determine the prevalence and frequency of specific firearm-related data recorded in police reports.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

The firearms literature focuses on several distinct areas of scientific investigation. However, examination of police opinions on gun control issues and the specificity of record keeping practices, as it pertains to firearms, of law enforcement agencies have been neglected. A review of the parallel literature, therefore, will serve as a logical substitute. For Objective I, the literature examining police opinions and responses to two types of incidences, those involving the mentally ill and domestic violence, will be covered. Objective II will summarize the firearms literature, organized by four themes -- efficacy of gun laws, juvenile gun offenders, adult gun offenders, and other research on gun violence (e.g., criminogenic effects of gun availability).

Objective I

There is certainly no shortage of empirical research on policing. Although a wide gamut is addressed, a conspicuous amount of effort is dedicated to understanding police discretion with use of force receiving much attention (*see*, for example, Adler, 2007; Hawkins, 1970; Kates, 2000; Rousey, 1984; White, 2006). With respect to opinion research, the bulk of this work focuses on public opinion of law enforcement (Berg, 2003; Bledsoe, 1997; Howell, 2004; McIntyre, 1967; Tuch, 2004) with few studies specifically examining officer attitudes (Belknap, 1995; Borum, 2000; Link, 1998; Miller, 2004; Moorehouse, 2006; Ruiz, 1993; Sinden, 1999). An exhaustive review of

this literature fails to detect any study that specifically investigates law enforcement opinion on gun control. Therefore, a review of parallel research literature -- studies that examine the impact officer attitudes toward certain groups of victims and perpetrators have on their performance -- will be discussed below.

Miller (2004) examined police officer attitudes towards domestic violence policies and its impact on how domestic violence situations are handled as well as the impact officer attitudes have on victim perception of the police. The study reported that officers with positive attitudes were more successful in diffusing domestic violence incidences. Moreover, victims were more likely to seek help through the criminal justice system when their case was handled by officers with positive attitudes towards domestic violence policies. These results are supported by previous studies that find officers holding positive opinions about domestic violence policies were more successful in diffusing domestic violence incidences and reducing the amount of incidents with repeat domestic violence perpetrators (Belknap, 1995; Sinden, 1999).

Another parallel area of research focuses on officer opinions of the mentally ill. These studies examined how perceptions of the dangerousness of the mentally ill influenced how officers responded to incidences that involved this population. The findings suggest that officers who perceived the mentally ill as being more dangerous than the general population had higher frequencies of violent encounters (Borum, 2000; Link, 1998; Ruiz, 1993). The study suggests that these violent encounters were due, in part, to a lack of training that equipped officers with an understanding of mental illness as well as the techniques for handling mentally ill persons exhibiting signs of aggression without resorting to violence.

In summary, studies that examine officer attitudes about certain policies find that attitudes do translate into actions taken in the field. Officer opinion does seem to influence how they respond to the mentally ill and domestic violence cases. In the same vein, knowing how officers perceive gun control policies can possibly increase our understanding of how (and if) gun control policies are enforced and, ultimately, whether the efficacy of such policies is due to the policy itself or some other external factor such as officer opinion.

Objective II

Unfortunately, research examining police records as a potential source of gun crime data has not been conducted. However, there is a wealth of studies on firearms that will familiarize the reader with the extant research literature providing a substantive backdrop for this thesis. This body of research is divided into four major areas: evaluation of gun control policies, juvenile firearm usage patterns, characteristics of adult gun users, and analysis of firearm prevalence and violence.

Efficacy of Gun Laws

Sherman (2001) conducted the most comprehensive review of the gun law evaluation literature to date. The study finds that specific policies, such as gun buy-back programs, are ineffective while other policies, such as the Brady Laws, are effective in reducing gun violence. Regarding the latter, criminal history and mental health background checks conducted on potential firearm purchasers and firearm vendors appeared to be effective in reducing firearm-related crimes. Additionally, the study reported that stop and frisk gun patrol programs conducted by local law enforcement are

another useful gun crime reducing tool. Still, there is much work to be done, as the author suggests, in identifying policies that show (lack of) promise in reducing gun violence (e.g., explore the efficacy of general gun bans such as the Assault Weapon Ban of 1994).

There have been several studies conducted to date examining Right to Carry (RTC) laws. RTC laws refer to any law that restricts access to permits allowing citizens to carry a firearm in public, concealed or in plain sight. Arguably, the efficacy of RTC laws hinges upon the idea that potentially armed “targets” deter would-be criminals. Naturally, armed citizens would “resist” and potentially harm the offender, something that would-be criminals would like to avoid at all cost.

Based on the extant literature, there is little evidence to suggest that RTC laws reduce crime rates. Examining UCR data from 1990-2000, La Valle (2007, p. 460) predicted that “. . . RTC laws should exert stronger, more significant and more reliable effects on homicide rates and gun-homicide rates as compared to other index crimes such as rape or robbery.” The author found no significant association between RTC laws and violent crime and, in addition, reported that there was no “inherent danger” to those who legally carried a gun. This “inherent danger” refers to the idea that those who carry firearms are predisposed to being the victim of a gun crime. The study found that there was no difference in victimization rates between those who carried firearms and those who do not. However, Kleck (2001) argues that gun ownership is a spurious variable because of the “inherent danger” of weapon ownership. The author argues that those who are more likely to be gun owners *are more prone* to being the victim of a violent crime regardless of whether or not they purchase a firearm. In contradiction to La Valle’s

(2007) findings, this study concluded that there was a slight association between gun ownership and the likelihood of being the victim of a violent crime. This suggests that being a gun owner either raises the likelihood of being a victim of violent crime, or perhaps those who purchase firearms are *already predisposed* violent crime victimization.

Several other studies mirrored La Valle's (2007) study. For example, Kovandzic (2005) studied UCR data for 189 cities with populations of 100,000 or more between 1980-2000, failing to show a negative correlation between the implementation of RTC laws and violent crime rates. Employing another data source, the National Self Defense Survey, Duwe (2002) pooled cross-sectional data from several states (1976-1999) and found no significant relationship between RTC laws and general violent crime rates. The investigator, however, did report a weak negative correlation between RTC laws and mass public shootings, as there was a tendency for RTC states to have *fewer* victims in mass public shootings.

The final RTC study in this review, conducted by Legault (2005), critically examined the evidence used to support the "more guns, less crime" hypothesis in previous studies. The study suggested that serious flaws in the analysis of two datasets, from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the UCR program, produced false conclusions. Previous studies, using these datasets, find that a significant negative relationship between firearm prevalence and violent crime. However, because of data anomalies and entry errors, the validity of these previous findings is questionable.

Beyond RTC laws and the prevalence of gun ownership studies, several law enforcement practices have been evaluated to determine their impact on gun crime.

Blackman (2000) examined the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) practice of firearm tracing. Briefly, firearm tracing investigates the history of a particular firearm to determine how it was purchased, who purchased the gun, if the gun traded to another owner, and whether or not the firearm played a role in a violent crime. The author concluded that this practice was a poor measure of the impact gun availability has on crime. At issue is the tracing method that does not provide sufficient information to allow criminologists to evaluate the impact of gun availability on crime. This argument is shared by Serpas (2005), who finds that supply side investigation strategies, such as firearm tracing, are irrelevant to gun control policies. Examining this type of research, the author found that very few firearms used in the commission of a crime were purchased legally, and those firearms purchased and traded illegally are nearly impossible to trace. However, the author found that supply side legislation, such as limiting the number of purchasable handguns by an individual per month, had a weak negative correlation with crime.

Finally, there has been research done on a program referred to as “Project Safe Neighborhoods.” This is an intervention that calls for the sharing of information between law enforcement agencies and local communities, cooperation between all levels of law enforcement when investigating gun crimes, and penalty enhancements for those who commit crimes using guns. The research reports that this intervention significantly reduced “total gun crime, all violent crime with a gun, robberies with a gun, and all assaults with a gun. However, there was no significant effect on homicides or sex crimes (O’Shea, 2007, p. 298).” This evidence suggests that this program is effective in reducing certain types of gun crimes, and is therefore a promising intervention.

In summary, the research in this area has found that certain policies and programs, such as Brady Laws and Project Safe Neighborhoods are effective at reducing certain types of gun crimes. Research also shows that gun buy-back and tracing programs are ineffective crime reduction tools and that RTC laws do not decrease crime but may decrease the number of victims claimed in public shooting incidents. In addition, some have argued that these studies in this area should consider the possibility that gun ownership is a potentially spurious variable in the sense that gun owners have a predisposition towards violent criminal victimization. In the final analysis, there is a strong sense that much of the previous research has significant methodological and analytical flaws leading researchers to call for “better research” to overcome these limitations in order to improve our understanding.

Research on Juvenile Gun Usage

Research in this area covers a wide range of topics – from juvenile opinion on firearms, prevalence of juvenile gun usage, weapon choice of juveniles, and the situational and psychological characteristics of juvenile gun offenders.

In the wake of several high profile school shooting incidents, a number of studies were dedicated to examining the presence of weapons in our nation’s school system. Collecting self-reported data from schools in North Carolina, Benedict (2004) reported that one in ten students have seen their peers carrying firearms in school and roughly 3% admitted to carrying firearms on school grounds. Crosby (1999) found as much as twenty percent of students had carried some sort of weapon (e.g., handgun, blunt weapon, knife, etc.) on school property as well. In the same vein, several studies have been conducted to determine weapon choice of school shooters. Decker (2005, p. 48) argued that a widely

accepted misconception that juveniles use assault weapons to commit crimes exists and is perpetuated by the media, special interest groups, the government, and juveniles themselves. In his analysis of twenty-three jurisdictions where types of weapons recovered from juvenile gun offenders was analyzed, only a very small percentage of juvenile gun offenses involved an assault weapon. Specifically, the study found that:

[A]pproximately 2% of all firearms recovered from juveniles might be classified as [assault weapons]. The national data of large urban areas collected by the ATF from 1996 to 2000 revealed that juveniles typically use relatively unsophisticated firearms in crimes, especially if contrasted against adult firearm use. Like their adult counterparts, juveniles rarely use AW [assault weapons] in crimes (Decker, 2005, p. 58).

Decker's (2005) study suggests that juveniles do not have the necessary knowledge needed to operate assault weapons, which are more complicated and difficult to use when compared to other firearm types. This evidence is contrary to the public perception that assault weapons are widely used by juveniles.

Mays (2003) also examined the types of guns that were recovered from juvenile gun offenders, using data from St. Louis. The author shares the idea that the media plays a role in perpetuating the stereotype that juveniles use assault weapons at a high frequency. The study concluded that the usage of assault weapons by juveniles is a relatively rare and that the majority of guns used by juveniles are long guns, primarily shotguns that have modified lengths making them shorter (known more commonly as "sawed off" long guns). The author believes that there are specific criteria that greatly influences a juveniles' choice in firearm, namely, firearm cost and firearm availability.

Theoretically, firearms that are larger in caliber, firearms that fire more rapidly and use more lethal rounds are more specialized, making them more expensive and less available to juveniles. In agreement with Decker's (2005) argument, this author shares the idea that assault weapons, being inherently more complicated than most other firearms, would be too complicated for a juvenile to use, as they do not have the knowledge or ability to operate such a weapon.

Heide (2007) also examined the type of firearms used by juvenile offenders, but focused more on the motivation behind weapon choice. Her study collected data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Secondary Homicide Report (SHR), from 1976-1999, examining the types of firearms offenders used in parricide cases. In this type of homicide, weapon use was contingent upon the gender of the victim. Male victims were more likely to be killed with a firearm than female victims, and female victims killed by firearms were more likely to have been killed with a handgun rather than higher caliber firearms. The author attributes this gender difference to the "physical strength hypothesis," which argues that the perceived physical strength of the victim drives the weapon choice of the perpetrator. For example, if a perpetrator perceives that his victim is physically strong, the perpetrator is more likely to choose a firearm, and that firearm is more likely to be of a higher caliber. This argument is intended to account for why patricide cases are more likely to involve firearms and why, on average, powerful ammunition is used to carry out the homicide.

In terms of individual decision-making factors and situational characteristics that lead to juvenile gun usage, several studies have been devoted to this end. Black (2007) collected data from the Longitudinal Studies of Child Abuse and Neglect (LONGSCAN),

a study that interviewed a cohort of youths in order to explore the relationship between childhood mistreatment and the carrying of weapons. The study concluded that there is a significant link between a history of abuse and carrying weapons. In particular, a strong positive relationship between physical abuse, and a moderately strong relationship between sexual abuse, and gun carrying was reported. Ultimately, previous abuse produced a perceived need to carry a weapon for self-defense purposes.

In a related study, Goldberg (2007) looked at male adolescents between the ages of 15 and 18 who were incarcerated in a high-risk offenders unit. This group was analyzed because:

[G]iven their placement in the high-risk unit, they were more likely to (a) be violent than the average juvenile delinquent; (b) be among the small number of repeat offenders who account for the majority of crimes committed by juvenile delinquents and (c) know that, if they committed another act of violence, they were likely to be tried as adults, ensuring they were not naïve about potentially severe negative consequences. Finally, these juveniles were from the population at greatest risk for a firearm-related violent death [and had a high potential to commit gun offenses as well as recidivate] (p. 847).

The study concluded that the attitude of the offender was the biggest predictor in whether or not a juvenile offender would chose to use a gun. Interestingly, those who did choose to shoot envisioned no future beyond the age of 20, and had a very fatalistic and pessimistic worldview. Conversely, those who chose not to shoot held more of an optimistic outlook on life.

In summary, this area of research focuses on choice of weapons that juveniles tend to employ. It appears that the primary impetus for this research has been to dispel a common misconception that juveniles have access to and use assault weapons at a high frequency. The data has shown that only a small percentage of juveniles use assault weapons to commit crimes and their choice of firearm is driven by cost and availability. The misconception of juveniles using assault weapons has been a social construction, perpetuated by the media, law enforcement agencies, politicians, and juveniles themselves. In terms of the individual characteristics of juvenile firearm users and the situational characteristics they face when committing a crime, a history of maltreatment and a fatalistic worldview appear to be strong predictors of gun usage.

Research on Gun Owner Characteristics

The third major area focuses on the personal characteristics of those who, legally or illegally, own and use guns. A cross-sectional cohort study conducted in Switzerland examined the characteristics of gun owners to determine whether these were predictive of violence. The study found that the majority of gun owners are law abiding, but a small group did not conform their behavior. This subgroup was more likely to exhibit psychiatric symptoms and responsible for a disproportionate number of violent incidents for the entire cohort. Based on this finding, Haas (2002) called for further research to determine what type of interventions could be employed to reduce gun violence by targeting this subgroup.

Phillips (2007) conducted a similar study by examining whether gun ownership was correlated with the propensity to use a firearm by interviewing one hundred men who were imprisoned for aggravated assault or homicide that stemmed from an interpersonal

conflict with another man. The author concluded that even though an individual may have had violent tendencies, there was no strong correlation between this proclivity and the use of a firearm in a given situation. In other words, gun ownership is not the sole factor in the decision to use a firearm. Once other factors are controlled for, the presence of the gun has little to no relationship with the decision to use it in an interpersonal conflict.

In the last study to be examined, Martinez (2005) sought to examine whether ethnic differences in the usage of a firearm in a crime existed as well as the lethality of violent event. Using data pulled from Miami, which is a very racially and ethnically diverse city, the role of guns in violent confrontations was examined. The study found that for Latino and Black offenders, firearm usage is positively correlated with the lethality of an incident, but there was no relationship between the *use of a gun* in a violent incident and offender race/ethnicity. The study also reported that incidents involving members of the same ethnic or racial group were more likely to be lethal compared with incidents involving interethnic and interracial parties.

In summary, this area of research is very similar to the juvenile firearm literature. However, there is a dearth of literature investigating the types of firearms adults use in the commission of a crime. This gap in our knowledge needs to be addressed in future research and the importance of conducting this line of investigation is discussed elsewhere. In terms of the particular characteristics that might influence the decision to use a firearm, research fails to find any relationship between race/ethnicity and the prevalence of using a firearm exists; however, incidences involving a firearm are more likely to have lethal outcomes if the victim and offender are of the same racial/ethnic

group. Finally, there is an association between mental illness and the illegal use of firearms.

Other Research on Firearms

Several studies have been conducted that are difficult to classify. One such line of inquiry is the perceived impact of gun availability on crime. In a study conducted in 2000, a survey was mailed to a sample of Americans and Japanese citizens. The instrument was designed to measure the willingness to use a weapon in a given situation. Kates (2000) found a robust correlation between the ownership of a firearm and the willingness to use it suggesting the presence of a weapon may lead gun owners to believe that it is effective in deterring crime. This finding also suggests that an individual is more likely to use an available weapon in a given situation, such as self-protection and interpersonal conflict as opposed to resolving the conflict without violence.

Many studies focus on the methodologies employed in the gun-crime literature. In particular, Kleck (2004) argues that previous studies concerning gun ownership and crime rates employ flawed methodologies, primarily the failure to measure gun ownership in a conceptually adequate manner. The author argues that the previous measures for gun ownership were “uninterpretable,” unable to be reproduced, and invalid (Kleck, 2004, p. 2). Additionally, he also cautions future researchers to control for gun ownership among criminals in order to adequately measure if gun ownership among the law abiding decreases crime. In other words, gun ownership among the law abiding may have a deterrent effect, whereas firearm ownership among criminals would predictably

increase crime. This is based on the assumption that criminals own firearms with the intention of using them to commit crimes.

Finally, in terms of analyzing the relationship between firearm usage and drug offending, Gainey (2008) set out to examine this popular stereotype. The study found that firearms were rarely used in the vast majority of drug offense cases, which are primarily drug use offenses. In the final analysis, the study finds that drug users are not likely to use firearms in the commission of a crime. This is important inasmuch that drug users constitute the majority of arrests, prosecutions, convictions, and sentences in drug crime statistics. Furthermore, Gainey (2008) suggests that gun control policies should target certain offenses, but the data concerning offenses in association with firearm type is virtually non-existent. It is this line of inquiry that this study will address.

In summary, research in the area of gun violence always calls for further research with an emphasis placed on using “better measures.” One area that has been neglected in this body of research is the specific aspects of gun crimes. At this juncture, there is no research attempting to measure weapon characteristics such as caliber, gun manufacturer and model, use of gun and ammunition modifiers, and supplemental equipment. There is a lack of specific knowledge about gun characteristics used in the commission of certain offenses. Locating this information could allow for more targeted legislation as well as modified response tactics used by law enforcement. The police can benefit from this information if relationships are found between specific gun characteristics and the commission of certain crimes. Certainly, adjustments can be made to how they respond to crimes in progress (e.g., using equipment that is best able to neutralize an offender’s

weapon) or even during the course of an investigation. The utility of such intelligence is valuable.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

An anonymous, self-report survey was administered to a convenience sample of both law enforcement and non-law enforcement subjects in two states - - New Jersey and Massachusetts. The law enforcement subgroup consisted of participants conveniently drawn from four different police departments: Rowan University Police Department (NJ), Glassboro Police Department (NJ), Washington Township Police Department (NJ), and the Westfield Police Department (MA.) A comparison group of the general public was drawn non-randomly from the Rowan University undergraduate student population. To examine *Objective I*, both samples were asked a series of questions evaluating opinion of gun control policies and measuring their interpretation of the Second Amendment. To investigate *Objective II*, the law enforcement sample was asked additional questions about the type and frequency of data collected when they investigated crimes that involve firearms.

Objective I

The independent variable in this study is law enforcement status with age, gender, and firearm ownership employed as control variables. The dependent variables consist of five additive scales that gauge opinions about various gun issues (see below).

Independent Variable

Law enforcement status is measured as a dichotomous variable where 0=No, 1=Yes.

Control Variables

Age is a continuous level indicator measured in years while gender (0=female, 1=male) and firearm ownership (Do you own a firearm? 0=No, 1=Yes) are coded as binary variables.

Dependent Variables

General Support. This is an eight item additive scale where respondents were asked to rate a series statements using a 10 point semantic differential scale with values ranging from 1=Strongly Agree to 10=Strongly Disagree. Scores for this scale ranged from 8 to 80 with high scores representing opposition to gun control policies. The eight items that constitute this scale are listed below:

- *I believe that ordinary citizens SHOULD NOT be allowed to own a handgun.*
- *I believe that ordinary citizens SHOUL NOT be allowed to own a long gun (rifle or shotgun).*
- *I believe that ordinary citizens SHOULD NOT be allowed to own an assault rifle (M16, AK47, etc.).*
- *I believe that someone purchasing a firearm SHOULD NOT be subject to criminal background checks.*
- *I believe that someone purchasing a firearm SHOULD NOT be subject to mental health background checks.*
- *I believe that there SHOULD NOT be a restriction on the amount of handguns a person is able to purchase in a month.*

- *I believe that an ordinary citizen SHOULD NOT be allowed to carry a gun in public.*
- *I believe that law enforcement agencies SHOULD track the purchases of ammunition.*

Community Safety. This is an eleven item additive scale where respondents were asked to rate the perceived impact of the following gun control policies on community safety using a 10 point semantic differential scale with values ranging from 1=Increases Community Safety to 10=Reduces Community Safety. Scores ranged from 11 to 110 with high scores representing opposition to the idea that gun control policies increase community safety. The eleven items are listed below:

- Please indicate the effect you believe each of these gun control policies have on community safety: 1= Increases Community Safety, 10 = Reduces Community Safety
 - *Handgun ban*
 - *Assault weapons ban (M16, AK 47, etc.)*
 - *Complete firearm ban (rifles, shotguns, handguns, and assault rifles.)*
 - *Restricting of gun sales (1 handgun per month)*
 - *Restricting of ammunition sales (limiting the type and purchasable amount)*
 - *Tracking ammunition sales (tracking who purchases ammunition and the amounts purchased.)*

- *Criminal background checks for firearm purchases*
- *Mental health background checks for firearm purchases*
- *Limiting access to carry permits (permits allowing for someone to visibly carry a gun in public)*
- *Limiting access to concealed carry permits (permits allowing for someone to carry a hidden gun in public)*
- *Limiting access to handgun permits (permits allowing for an individual to own a handgun which is kept in their home.)*

Police Safety. This is an eleven item additive scale where respondents were asked to rate the perceived impact of the following gun control policies on police safety using a 10 point semantic differential scale with values ranging from 1=Increases Police Safety to 10=Reduces Police Safety. Scores ranged from 11 to 110 with high scores representing opposition to the idea that gun controls increase police officer safety. The eleven items are listed below:

- Please indicate the effect you believe each of these gun control policies have on police safety: 1= Increases Police Safety, 10 = Reduces Police Safety
 - *Handgun ban*
 - *Assault weapons ban (M16, AK 47, etc.)*
 - *Complete firearm ban (rifles, shotguns, handguns, and assault rifles.)*
 - *Restricting of gun sales (1 handgun per month)*

- *Restricting of ammunition sales (limiting the type and purchasable amount)*
- *Tracking ammunition sales (tracking who purchases ammunition and the amounts purchased.)*
- *Criminal background checks for firearm purchases*
- *Mental health background checks for firearm purchases*
- *Limiting access to carry permits (permits allowing for someone to visibly carry a gun in public)*
- *Limiting access to concealed carry permits (permits allowing for someone to carry a hidden gun in public)*
- *Limiting access to handgun permits (permits allowing for an individual to own a handgun which is kept in their home.)*

Gun Violence. This is an eleven item additive scale where respondents were asked to rate the perceived impact of the following gun control policies on gun violence using a 10 point semantic differential scale with values ranging from 1=Decreases Gun Violence to 10=Increases Gun Violence. Scores ranged from 11 to 110 with high scores representing opposition to the idea that gun control policies effectively reduce gun violence. The eleven items are listed below:

- Please indicate the effect you believe each of these gun control policies have on Gun Violence: 1= Reduces Gun Violence, 10 = Increases Gun Violence
 - *Handgun ban*

- *Assault weapons ban (M16, AK 47, etc.)*
- *Complete firearm ban (rifles, shotguns, handguns, and assault rifles.)*
- *Restricting of gun sales (1 handgun per month)*
- *Restricting of ammunition sales (limiting the type and purchasable amount)*
- *Tracking ammunition sales (tracking who purchases ammunition and the amounts purchased.)*
- *Criminal background checks for firearm purchases*
- *Mental health background checks for firearm purchases*
- *Limiting access to carry permits (permits allowing for someone to visibly carry a gun in public)*
- *Limiting access to concealed carry permits (permits allowing for someone to carry a hidden gun in public)*
- *Limiting access to handgun permits (permits allowing for an individual to own a handgun which is kept in their home.)*

Second Amendment Interpretation. This is a five item additive scale where respondents were asked to indicate how strongly they agree or disagree with a series of statements interpreting the Second Amendment using a 10 point semantic differential scale with values ranging from 1=Strongly Agree to 10=Strongly Disagree. Scores ranged from 5 to 50 with high scores representing opposition to the idea that the Second

Amendment guarantee's an individuals' right to bear arms. The five items are listed below.

- *The Supreme Court was CORRECT in the recent ruling on the Washington D.C. gun ban, interpreting the Second Amendment to mean that INDIVIDUALS HAVE THE RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS.*
- *The Second Amendment guarantees every individual U.S. citizen the right to own a firearm.*
- *The Second Amendment guarantees every individual U.S. citizen the right to own a handgun.*
- *The Second Amendment DOES NOT apply only to the rights of U.S. citizens to form and serve in a militia.*
- *Although the Second Amendment was written before firearm technology advanced to where it is currently, it is still applicable today.*

Objective II

As there is no hypothesis being tested for this research objective, a simple descriptive analysis has been conducted. A series of questions were asked that measure the type and frequency of firearm specific data recorded by officers in their reports. This was measured using a ten-point semantic differential that ranges from 1= Never to 10 = Always. The six items measured are listed below.

- Please indicate how often you believe the following information is RECORDED in police reports: 1= Never, 10= Always
 - *Presence of a weapon*

- *Type of weapon when present*
- *Caliber of gun when present*
- *Type of ammunition used when gun is present*
- *Use of a modified gun (a gun that has been changed by the addition of a stock, addition of weight for balance, change in firing rate, etc.)*
- *Use of supplemental equipment by an offender (bullet proof vest, silencer, scope, extended magazine, etc.)*

CHAPTER IV

Findings

Objective I

Univariate Analysis

Table 1 below provides descriptive statistics for the variables used in this study. The sample consisted of more students (59%) than law enforcement officers (41%), tended to be male (72%), with an average age of 28.94 years. In terms of firearms ownership, 43% of the sample owned some type of firearm (e.g., handgun, shotgun, et cetera).

As for the sample's general opinion about gun control policies, there was moderate support for gun control policies based on the *General Support Scale* statistics ($\bar{x} = 31.5$, $SD = 14.15$). For the *Gun Violence* and *Community Safety Scales*, participants expressed moderate to strong support for the idea that gun control policies reduced gun violence and increased community safety, with mean scores of 43.82 ($SD = 16.97$) and 40.04 ($SD = 17.87$) respectively. The entire sample also tended to agree that gun control policies increased police safety ($\bar{x} = 36.91$, $SD = 17.66$). Given the moderate to strong support for gun control and the perceived benefits of gun control policies (e.g., increased community safety, et cetera), we expected that the sample would generally oppose the interpretation that the Second Amendment guarantees an individuals' right to bear arms. However, this is not the case ($\bar{x} = 23.41$, $SD = 9.99$). This finding implies that although the sample generally supported gun control policies and believed that these measures

would reduce violence in society, they continue to support an individual's right to own firearms.

Table 1. Variable List

Variable	Description	n	Mean	SD
<i>Independent Variable</i>				
LE Status	Law enforcement officer (0=No, 1=Yes)	221	.41	.49
<i>Dependent Variables</i>				
General Support	An 8-item scale measuring support for gun control policies (high scores represent opposition)	219	31.50	14.15
Community Safety	An 11-item scale measuring the perceived impact of gun control policies on community safety (high scores represent perceived decrease in safety)	215	40.04	17.87
Police Safety	An 11-item scale measuring the perceived impact of gun control policies on police safety (high scores represent perceived decrease in officer safety)	215	36.91	17.66
Gun Violence	An 11-item scale measuring the perceived impact of gun control policies on gun violence (high scores represent perceived increase in violence)	213	43.82	16.97
Second Amendment Interpretation	A 5-item scale measuring an individual's interpretation of the Second Amendment (high scores represent opposition to the individuals' right to bear arms interpretation)	210	23.41	9.99
<i>Control Variables</i>				
Male	(0 = Female, 1 = Male)	207	.72	.45
Age	Age measured in years	208	28.94	10.53
Gun Owner	Do you own a firearm? (0 = No, 1 = Yes)	216	.43	.496

Bivariate Analysis

Table 3 below displays the correlation coefficients between the dependent variables and all of the controls as well as the independent variable. In terms of differences between the general public and law enforcement populations, we find that officers were *less likely* to support gun control in general ($r = .193, p < .01$) or support the idea that gun control increases community safety ($r = .135, p < .05$) although the strength of these associations are weak. As for the interpretation of the Second Amendment, officers were significantly more likely to support the idea that the Amendment guarantees an individual's right to bear arms more so than the general public ($r = -.292, p < .01$). Finally, the analysis shows no significant differences between the two groups in terms of their opinions about the impact of gun control policies on police safety ($r = -.064, p > .05$) or on gun violence ($r = .05, p > .05$).

As for the correlations between age and the dependent variables, we see that as age increases a weak to moderate, but statistically significant: (1) *opposition* to supporting gun control policies increases ($r = .209, p < .01$); (2) *opposition* to support of the idea that gun control policies reduce community safety increases ($r = .145, p < .05$); (3) *opposition* to support of the idea that gun control policies reduce gun violence ($r = .140, p < .05$). In other words, younger respondents were more likely to support gun control measures and believe that gun control policies increases community safety and reduces gun violence. Consistent with the law enforcement correlations with the dependent variables, we find that age is negatively correlated with the *Second Amendment Interpretation Scale* ($r = -.312, p < .01$). This shows older respondents were more likely to interpret the Second Amendment as an individuals' right to bear arms. The

fact that we find nearly mirror correlations between law enforcement opinions about gun control measures with the age analyses should come as no surprise since the law enforcement subsample is statistically significantly older than the student sample (*figure not shown in table*; $r = .833, p < .01$).

As for the differences based on gender, the correlations suggest that males oppose, in general, gun control policies ($r = .312, p < .01$). No other significant gender differences were observed. As for the associations between firearm ownership and the dependent variables, we find that those who own firearms have a moderately strong opposition to gun control policies ($r = .626, p < .01$), oppose the idea that gun control policies increases the safety of communities ($r = .233, p < .01$) or reduces gun violence in society ($r = .153, p < .05$). In addition, gun owners are more likely to interpret the Second Amendment to mean an individual's right to bear arms ($r = -.284, p < .01$).

Table 2. Bivariate Correlations

	LE Status	Age	Male	Gun Owner
<i>General Support</i>	.193**	.209**	.312**	.626**
<i>Community Safety</i>	.135*	.145*	.094	.233**
<i>Police Safety</i>	-.064	-.001	-.077	.053
<i>Second Amendment</i>	-.292**	-.312**	-.217	-.284**
<i>Gun Violence</i>	.051	.140*	.021	.153*

* $p < .05$ (2-tailed); ** $p < .01$ (2-tailed)

Additional Bivariate Analyses

Further analysis (statistics not included) shows that firearm ownership and gender were positively related and statistically significantly related ($r = .382, p < .001$). This implies that firearm owners tended to be male. This analysis also showed that the gun control scales (e.g., general support, community safety, police safety, and gun violence) were, as expected, positively related and statistically significantly related to one another. However, each of these scales was negatively, and statistically significantly, related to the *Second Amendment Interpretation Scale*. These findings are interesting insofar as they suggest that although an individual may support gun control policies, they may still support an individual's right to bear arms. This is a counter-intuitive finding, as one would assume that higher support for gun control policies would result in an interpretation of the Second Amendment to mean a collective right (Militia clause interpretation), not a private citizen's right to own firearms. Although contrary to what one may expect, a possible interpretation for these findings could suggest that those who support an individual right to bear arms would support gun control measures that seek to limit the ability of certain individuals – such as *criminals* and the *mentally ill* -- to procure firearms.

Finally, additional bivariate analysis was conducted comparing firearm ownership by law enforcement status. Eighty three percent of the law enforcement officers owned a firearm while 13% of the student sample indicated that they owned a firearm. In terms of the type of firearms owned, law enforcement officers were more likely to own handguns (79%), followed by shotguns (40%), then rifles (40%) while students were more likely to own rifles (11%), shotguns (10%), and handguns (6%).

Multivariate Analysis

Table 3. OLS Regression on General Support Scale (n = 192)

	b	SE	β
LE Officer	-5.925	3.875	-.212*
Age	.263	.157	.200
Male	7.558	2.307	.246***
Gun Owner	5.730	2.663	.206*
Intercept	18.287***	3.840	
R^2	.116***		

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 3 above displays a regression model for the *General Support Scale*. The model is statistically significant but explains only 11.6% of the variation in the dependent variable ($R^2 = .116$, $p < .001$). Controlling for all other variables, we find that law enforcement status is a significant, but weak to moderate, predictor of the outcome variable. In other words, law enforcement officers are more likely to support gun control measures as compared to the general public ($\beta = -.212$, $p < .05$). These findings show support for Hypothesis 1. The analysis also shows, controlling for other variables in the model, that gender and firearm ownership were significant predictors of the outcome variable. Males and those who own firearms are not supportive of gun control measures

nor do they believe that gun control reduces violence or officer safety. Finally, the model shows that age of respondent is not significant predictor of the outcome variable.

Table 4. Regression on Community Safety Scale (n = 188)

	b	SE	β
LE Officer	-9.096	5.254	-.252
Age	.328	.213	.195
Male	1.602	3.197	.039
Gun Owner	9.913	3.580	.276**
Intercept	29.028***	2.857	
R^2	.068**		

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 4 above displays a regression model for the *Community Safety Scale*. The model is statistically significant but explains 6.8% of the variation in the dependent variable ($R^2 = .068$, $p < .01$). Controlling for all other variables, we find that law enforcement status is not a significant predictor of the outcome variable. Although the analysis shows the regression coefficient is in the expected direction, showing law enforcement officers are more likely to perceive gun control measures as increasing community safety as compared to the general public ($\beta = -.252$, $p > .05$), this relationship is not statistically significant. These findings fail to support Hypothesis 2. Additionally, the model shows that firearm ownership was a significant predictor of the dependent

variable controlling for other variables in the model ($\beta = .276, p < .01$). This suggests that those who own firearms do not believe that gun control policies would increase community safety. Finally, age and gender were not significant predictors of the outcome variable.

Table 5. Regression on Police Safety Scale (n = 188)

	b	SE	β
LE Officer	-13.834	5.207	-.389**
Age	.409	.211	.246
Male	-3.691	3.110	-.093
Gun Owner	7.516	3.551	.212*
Intercept	30.513***	5.209	
R^2	.051*		

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 5 above displays a regression model for the *Police Safety Scale*. The model is statistically significant but explains only 5.1% of the variation in the dependent variable ($R^2 = .051, p < .05$). Controlling for all other variables, we find that law enforcement status is a significant, but weak to moderate, predictor of the dependent variable. This can be interpreted to mean that law enforcement officers are more likely to perceive gun control measures as increasing the safety of police officers on the job ($\beta = -.389, p < .01$), supporting Hypothesis 3. The analysis also shows, controlling for other

variables in the model, that firearm ownership was a significant predictor of the outcome variable suggesting that gun owners do not believe that gun control laws will reduce the potential for harm that officers confront on the job. Finally, the model shows that age and gender of respondent is not significant predictors of the outcome variable.

Table 6. Regression on Gun Violence Scale (n = 186)

	b	SE	β
LE Officer	-10.777	4.930	-.323*
Age	.470	.201	.296*
Male	-.010	2.924	.000
Gun Owner	7.275	3.423	.219*
Intercept	31.179***	4.933	
R^2	.057*		

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 6 above displays a regression model for the *Gun Violence Scale*. The model is statistically significant but explains only 5.7% of the variation of this dependent variable ($R^2 = .057$, $p < .05$). Controlling for all other variables, we find that law enforcement status is a significant, but weak to moderate, predictor of the outcome variable. Police officers are more likely to perceive gun control measures as decreasing gun violence in society as compared to the general public ($\beta = -.323$, $p < .05$), supporting Hypothesis 4. The analysis also shows, controlling for other variables in the model, that

age and firearm ownership were significant predictors of the outcome variable. Older respondents and gun owners oppose the perception that gun controls would reduce the amount of gun violence experienced by society. Finally, gender was not a significant predictor of this dependent variable controlling for other variables in the model.

Table 7. Regression on Second Amendment Interpretation Scale (n = 185)

	b	SE	β
LE Officer	1.264	2.883	.063
Age	-.262	.115	-.279*
Male	-1.845	1.758	-.081
Gun Owner	-2.646	1.994	-.132
Intercept	32.805***	2.857	
R^2	.126***		

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 7 above displays a regression model for the *Second Amendment Interpretation Scale*. The model is statistically significant and explains 12.6% of the variation in the dependent variable ($R^2 = .126, p < .001$). Controlling for all other variables, we find that law enforcement status is not a statistically significant predictor of the outcome variable. Although the regression coefficient is in the expected direction, the analysis does not support Hypothesis 5 ($\beta = .063, p > .05$). The only significant predictor of the dependent variable in the model was age ($\beta = -.279, p < .05$). As age increased,

respondents are more likely to interpret the Second Amendment as an individual right to bear arms. Finally, the other control variables in the model, firearm ownership and gender, were not significant predictors of the dependent variable.

Objective II

Descriptive Statistics

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics Police Report Recordings

Please indicate how often you believe the following information is recorded in police reports (1=Never, 10=Always):	n	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Presence of a weapon	88	1	10	8.32	2.489
Type of weapon when present	84	2	10	8.56	2.246
Caliber of gun when present	84	2	10	8.25	2.374
Type of ammunition used	84	1	10	7.57	2.663
Use of a modified gun	85	1	10	7.49	3.057
Use of supplemental equipment	85	1	10	8.08	2.957

Table 8 above displays descriptive statistics for the six items measuring police record keeping practices (1=Never, 10=Always). The mean score for presence of weapon was 8.32, type of weapon was 8.56, caliber of gun was 8.25, type of ammunition used was 7.57, use of a modified gun was 7.49, and 8.08 for the use of supplemental equipment. These findings suggest that each of these items were almost always recorded in police reports that involved a firearm.

Respondents in the law enforcement population were also asked follow up questions allowing them to add any additional comments or information they wished to

share with the researcher. An overwhelming majority of the comments provided pointed out the six characteristics of a gun-related crime -- presence of weapon, type of weapon, caliber of weapon, type of ammunition, modification to gun, and use of supplemental equipment – were *required* to be reported per department policy. Only a single respondent indicated that certain information, such as the model, type, and caliber of firearm should be reported to the UCR program.

Additional analysis was conducted (statistics not included) in order to investigate difference in reporting practices by department. An ANOVA was run for each of the six items measured by department, and interestingly, no statistically significant differences were recorded. This is particularly striking for two reasons: A) the analysis was conducted between two different states, New Jersey and Massachusetts, and B) each state has a different “gun culture” and very different types of gun laws. One might expect a difference in reporting practices, albeit subtle, between states due to different guidelines, but the evidence suggests similar practices across both departments and states.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions

Objective I

Bivariate results. The study finds many differences between law enforcement and the public. Bivariate analyses revealed that police officers were *less likely* to support gun control policies or view those policies as increasing community safety or reducing gun violence in society and *more likely* to support individuals' right to bear arms. However, police officers were *more likely* to perceive gun control policies as increasing police officer safety. This last result is interesting because officers believe that gun control policies increase police officer safety *but not* community safety. The counter intuitive finding is puzzling since these concepts, police and community safety, seem similar at face value. This does not imply that officers did not believe gun control policies make communities any safer. The findings simply suggest that officers were no different from the public in terms of their support of the idea that gun control policies make the community safer. Both segments of the population shared nearly identical sentiments on this dimension.

The bivariate analyses also showed that males, older respondents, and gun owners were *more likely* to oppose gun control policies. Older respondents and gun owners were *more likely* to oppose the idea that gun control policies increase community safety and reduce gun violence in society as well as *more likely* to interpret the Second Amendment as an individual right to bear arms. The findings for males and gun owners shadow the

findings for police officers. Gun owners may feel that they are directly impacted by gun control policies as these policies can impede their ability to own and carry firearms. Therefore, gun owners may inherently oppose gun control policies and discount the justification for implementing these type of regulations in the first place -- increase community and officer safety by reducing gun violence. Finally, the significant relationship between gun ownership and gender may account for why males tended to oppose gun control policies. Males, by far, were simply more likely to own firearms than females. This interpretation receives strong support in the multivariate tests, where gender is rendered statistically insignificant once firearm ownership is controlled.

The most interesting finding yielded by the bivariate analyses is the negative correlation between the *Second Amendment Interpretation Scale* and all other gun control opinion scales. This suggests that individuals may support gun control policies, yet may still support an individuals' right to bear arms. Many would expect that those who have strongly support gun control policies would be less likely to support an individuals' right to bear arm. A possible interpretation of this finding is that those who strongly support an individuals' right to bear arms would not be opposed to sensible gun control measures such as limiting the ability of criminals or the mentally ill to procure firearms.

Multivariate results. When controlling for several variables in the regression models, some of the previous bivariate results were reversed. For instance, police officers were found to be *more likely* to support gun control measures and view gun control measures as increasing police safety and decreasing gun violence as compared to the general population. These predicted relationships were significant, providing support for Hypotheses 1, 3, and 4 respectively. Although there is evidence that police officers are

more likely to view gun control measures as increasing community safety and are likely to oppose the interpretation of the Second Amendment as individuals' rights, these relationships were not statistically significant and therefore do not support Hypotheses 2 or 5.

Objective II

High scores on the six measures show that law enforcement officers are almost always recording detailed information about firearms involved in a crime. There is evidence to suggest that the type of ammunition used by an offender as well as the use of a modified gun by an offender is not recorded as often as the other four items, but is still recorded at a rather high rate. The overwhelming majority of police officers surveyed also indicated that the six characteristics of a gun-related crime -- presence of weapon, type of weapon, caliber of weapon, type of ammunition, modification to gun, and use of supplemental equipment -- was *required* by their respective departments to be recorded in police reports. This suggests that police reports are indeed a potentially rich data source for research in the area of gun crimes that is not otherwise recorded in national databases such as the UCR and NIBRS programs.

Limitations and Recommendations

This pilot study has many known limitations. First, a convenience sample was drawn to construct the two comparison groups. Inferences to these populations -- law enforcement and the public -- should not be made because of the non-random sampling technique employed. Future research, utilizing probability sampling designs, is encouraged to allow for generalizations to be made to the populations of interest. In

addition, future research should consider possible state, regional, and departmental differences that was not investigated in this study. For example, in terms of reporting practices, wide variations between departments can obstruct any effort to nationalize firearm data collection efforts. This study shows that small departments, from two different states, record specific firearm data in their crime reports. However, it is uncertain if this is normative for departments throughout the United States. In the context of law enforcement opinions, it would be interesting to examine the opinions of law enforcement in states where gun control laws are much more permissive or in regions where strong gun cultures may exist. Certainly there is no shortage of variables, which might shape opinions about gun control policies, to be tested in future investigations.

Another known limitation of this study is the response rate. Only 25% of the eligible law enforcement population elected to participate in this study. The response rate for the civilian population, while slightly higher (34%) than the law enforcement population, is still low enough to warrant caution about this study's findings. An additional limitation, related to the selection of participants, centers upon the use of undergraduate criminal justice majors to represent the civilian population. It is conceivable that criminal justice students are not representative of the general public because of their interest in the discipline. Additionally, it is also fair to say that this student population may have been exposed to social scientific evaluations of the efficacy of gun control laws and that their responses are linked to what "they know or have learned" about the issue.

Lastly, the survey instrument contains a limitation in the design of the firearm ownership measure ("*Do you own a firearm?*"). This question might have been

misinterpreted by officers who thought the question asked about private ownership of firearms only and did not include firearms issued by their employer. This limitation may very well confound our results and future research should consider posing the firearm ownership question in a manner that allows differentiation between firearms issued by a department (not privately owned) and privately owned firearms.

Additional Recommendations for Future Research

Objective I

Future research should address two important questions generated from the findings of this study. First, this study finds significant differences in opinions between law enforcement and the public but does not explore many plausible factors that may influence attitudes beyond age, gender, gun ownership, and law enforcement status. Subsequent research should consider other important factors that may shape opinions such as level of education or experiences with criminal victimization, especially violent victimization involving a firearm. Secondly, future research should investigate whether officer opinion on gun control influences the manner they respond to gun crimes. This brings us back to the literature on police discretion and opinion. If it is found that police officer opinion effects officer action, additional training and safeguards may be employed to ensure that officers are following the correct procedures.

Answers to some of these questions can aid policy makers in drafting gun control policies. Differences of opinions do exist between the law enforcement community and general population. If law enforcement opinions are shaped by their professional experiences (experiences that may give police officers a unique understanding of what aspects of gun control policies work or do not work), we recommend that policy makers

consider law enforcement a valuable source of intelligence when drafting legislation to stem gun violence in America.

Objective II

The findings about record keeping practices open new possibilities for researchers interested in investigating gun crimes. Specific information such as gun caliber, gun manufacturer, gun model, use of modified guns, and ammunition type are indeed recorded in police reports, possibly allowing the identification of trends or patterns in gun-related crimes. Future research must do two things in order to solidify our understanding of gun violence in America. We strongly recommend that future research consider whether other important types of firearm characteristics, not examined in this study, are recorded routinely in police reports and explore other possible data sources as well for the presence of detailed firearm qualities and characteristics such as coroner reports, ballistics reports, prosecution notes, et cetera.

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APPENDIX A

Participation Letter

January 21, 2009

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Adam Moltisanti, and I am a criminal justice graduate student at Rowan University. I am writing this letter with the hope of gaining the participation of your department in my study. The research has been designed to investigate two areas: (1) To determine whether differences in attitudes towards gun control exist between law enforcement and the general population, and (2) To examine the types of information gathered by different departments in the investigation of gun related crimes.

By conducting this study, I hope to explore whether or not there is a significant difference in opinion towards gun control as police officers are a wealth of information concerning the efficacy, design and implementation of the laws they ultimately are charged with enforcing. In addition, knowing the types of information that is recorded in police reports concerning gun related crimes could allow researchers to tap into a new resource of gun data, which has historically been undefined.

The study will employ a survey that has been designed to ensure the anonymity of each participant. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete, and the delivery, distribution and collection process has been designed so that only the researcher will ever see the finished surveys. Once all data has been compiled from the surveys, they will be destroyed. Participation in this study will be completely voluntary and will not cost your respective agency anything. Upon completion of the study, the results will be shared with your department. Thank you very much for your time, and I hope to have gained the participation of your department.

Sincerely,

Adam Moltisanti
Masters Degree Candidate
Criminal Justice
Rowan University

APPENDIX B

Permission Form

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to confirm that my department, _____, will be participating in the Gun Control and Gun Crime Police Investigation Practices study conducted by Adam Moltisanti, a graduate student at Rowan University. I have been made fully aware of what the study entails and understand that my department can withdraw from the study at any time. Additionally, I also understand that employees who voluntarily choose to participate in this study will remain anonymous and that all data collected will be viewed only by the researcher.

Please sign here

Date

Your Title: _____

APPENDIX C

Instructions for Permission Form

- 1- Please open the permission form I have included in this email. It is a MS Word application, so you will be able to manipulate the pre-typed paragraph.
- 2- Please indicate the department name in the underlined open spot left in the pre-typed paragraph.
- 3- Please sign, date and indicate your title at the bottom of the form.
- 4- If possible, please have the department head or chief sign, date and indicate title.
- 5- Please print this form on a piece of official letterhead from your department.
- 6- Please call or email Adam Moltisanti (information below) with a time, place and contact name where this form can be picked up.

Thank you very much for your participation. If you have any questions please contact Adam Moltisanti at 718-354-6806 or email me at . Feel free to keep the cover letter for your records and reference for information for this study. The results of this study will be shared with your department upon completion of the study.

Example-

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to confirm that my department, **Fictional Police Department**, will be participating in the Gun Control and Gun Crime Police Investigation Practices study conducted by Adam Moltisanti, a graduate student at Rowan University. I have been made fully aware of what the study entails and understand that my department can withdraw from the study at any time. Additionally, I also understand that employees who voluntarily choose to participate in this study will remain anonymous and that all data collected will be viewed only by the researcher.

John Doe **1-24-2009**

Please sign here Date

Your Title: **Chief of Fictional Police Department**

APPENDIX D

Instructions for Police Contact

- Open packet and distribute one SURVEY, one set of INSTRUCTIONS and one SELF ADDRESSED RETURN ENVELOPE to each officer in your department.**
- Review the set of instructions included with the survey with the officers in your department before asking them to begin filling out the survey.**
- Instruct each officer that AT NO TIME should they place any information about themselves including name or badge number on any part of the survey or return envelope.**
- Instruct each officer to answer honestly, as the information they give will be confidential.**
- Instruct each officer to place the completed survey in the self-addressed return envelope, seal it and return the envelope to the contact.**
- Please mail the completed surveys as they are returned.**

APPENDIX E

Instructions for School Contact

-Open packet and distribute one SURVEY, one set of INSTRUCTIONS and one SELF ADDRESSED RETURN ENVELOPE to each student in your class.

-Review the set of instructions included with the survey with the students before asking them to begin filling out the survey.

-Instruct each student that AT NO TIME should they place any information about themselves, especially their name, on any part of the survey or return envelope.

-Instruct each student to answer honestly, as the information they give will be confidential.

-Instruct each student to return the completed survey to you, and please place the completed surveys back into the original packet.

-Please return the packet to the researcher who contacted you.

APPENDIX F

Survey Instructions

Please read each question carefully and answer to the best of your abilities.

If the question asks for you to circle a response, please make sure you clearly circle only the response you wish to give.

If the question asks you to write in your response, please write in a clear, legible fashion in the space provided.

At no time are you to write your name or any other information not asked for on either the survey or the return envelope. This will ensure the confidentiality of your responses.

APPENDIX G

Survey Cover Letter- Students

Dear Participant,

I am asking individuals over the age of 18 to voluntarily participate in a study about guns in our society. Your participation in this study will aid our understanding of attitudes and opinions about firearms. Although your answers will be kept completely confidential, you may skip any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. Furthermore, you may withdraw from the study at any point if you do not wish to continue.

You will be asked a variety of questions, some of which may be sensitive. Due to questions concerning past victimization, a series of safeguards have been taken. First, we ask that you do not sign any part of the survey, and the surveys will be mixed together with surveys administered in other classes so we can minimize the ability to link an identity to any survey. Furthermore, only the researcher will have access to the completed surveys, which are to be shredded once the data is entered into a software program.

We anticipate that this survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete if you choose to participate. I thank you in advance for your consideration. If you have any questions about the research, please contact Adam Moltisanti at the phone number/email address listed below.

Adam Moltisanti
Rowan University
201 Mullica Hill Road
Glassboro, NJ 08028
(718) 354-6806

APPENDIX H

Survey For Law Enforcement Personnel

Age _____ (years)

Sex (Circle): 0 Female 1 Male

Please read carefully and answer accordingly:

1- Do you own a firearm? (Please circle one) 1 Yes 0 No
If no, skip to question # 12.

2- Do you own a handgun? (Please circle one) 1 Yes 0 No
If no, skip to question # 4.

3- The primary reason I own a HANDGUN is: (Please circle **only one**)

Work Self Defense Recreation

4- Do you own a rifle? (Please circle one) 1 Yes 0 No
If no, skip to question # 6.

5- The primary reason I own a RIFLE is: (Please circle **only one**)

Work Self Defense Recreation

6- Do you own a shotgun? (Please circle one) 1 Yes 0 No
If no, skip to question # 8.

7- The primary reason I own a SHOTGUN is: (Please circle **only one**)

Work Self Defense Recreation

8- Do you own an assault rifle? (Please **circle one**) 1 Yes 0 No
If no, skip to question # 10.

9- The primary reason I own a ASSAULT RIFLE is: (Please circle only one)

Work Self Defense Recreation

10- Do you own a black powder gun? (Please circle one) 1 Yes 0 No
If no, skip to question # 12.

11- The primary reason I own a BLACK POWDER GUN is: (Please circle ***only one***)

Work

Self Defense

Recreation

Please read each statement carefully and put a check for how strongly you agree:

1- Strongly Agree, 10- Strongly Disagree

12. I believe that ordinary citizens SHOULD NOT be allowed to own a handgun.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

13. I believe that ordinary citizens SHOULD NOT be allowed to own a long gun (rifle or shotgun).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

14. I believe that ordinary citizens SHOULD NOT be allowed to own an assault rifle (M16, AK47, etc.).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

15. I believe that someone purchasing a firearm SHOULD be subject to criminal background checks.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

16. I believe that someone purchasing a firearm SHOULD be subject to mental health background checks.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

17. I believe that there SHOULD be a restriction on the amount of handguns a person is able to purchase in a month.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

27- Mental health background checks for firearm purchases

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Reduces Gun Violence Increases Gun Violence

28- Limiting access to carry permits (permits allowing for someone to visibly carry a gun in public)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Reduces Gun Violence Increases Gun Violence

29- Limiting access to concealed carry permits (permits allowing for someone to carry a hidden gun in public)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Reduces Gun Violence Increases Gun Violence

30- Limiting access to handgun permits (permits allowing for an individual to own a handgun which is kept in their home.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Reduces Gun Violence Increases Gun Violence

Please indicate the effect you believe each of these gun control policies have on community safety: 1= Increases Community Safety, 10 = Reduces Community Safety

31- Handgun ban

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Community Safety Decreases Community Safety

32- Assault weapons ban (M16, AK 47, etc.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Community Safety Decreases Community Safety

33- Complete firearm ban (rifles, shotguns, handguns, and assault rifles.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Community Safety Decreases Community Safety

34- Restricting of gun sales (1 handgun per month)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Community Safety Decreases Community Safety

35- Restricting of ammunition sales (limiting the type and purchasable amount)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Community Safety Decreases Community Safety

36- Tracking ammunition sales (tracking who purchases ammunition and the amounts purchased.)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Community Safety Decreases Community Safety

37- Criminal background checks for firearm purchases
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Community Safety Decreases Community Safety

38- Mental health background checks for firearm purchases
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Community Safety Decreases Community Safety

39- Limiting access to carry permits (permits allowing for someone to visibly carry a gun in public)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Community Safety Decreases Community Safety

40- Limiting access to concealed carry permits (permits allowing for someone to carry a hidden gun in public)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Community Safety Decreases Community Safety

41- Limiting access to handgun permits (permits allowing for an individual to own a handgun which is kept in their home.)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Community Safety Decreases Community Safety

Please indicate the effect you believe each of these gun control policies have on *police safety*: 1= Increases Police Safety, 10 = Decreases Police Safety

42- Handgun ban
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Police Safety Decreases Police Safety

43- Assault weapons ban (M16, AK 47, etc.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Increases Police Safety							Decreases Police Safety		

44- Complete firearm ban (rifles, shotguns, handguns, and assault rifles.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Increases Police Safety							Decreases Police Safety		

45- Restricting of gun sales (1 handgun per month)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Increases Police Safety							Decreases Police Safety		

46- Restricting of ammunition sales (limiting the type and purchasable amount)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Increases Police Safety							Decreases Police Safety		

47- Tracking ammunition sales (tracking who purchases ammunition and the amounts purchased.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Increases Police Safety							Decreases Police Safety		

48- Criminal background checks for firearm purchases

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Increases Police Safety							Decreases Police Safety		

49- Mental health background checks for firearm purchases

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Increases Police Safety							Decreases Police Safety		

50- Limiting access to carry permits (permits allowing for someone to visibly carry a gun in public)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Increases Police Safety							Decreases Police Safety		

51- Limiting access to concealed carry permits (permits allowing for someone to carry a hidden gun in public)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Increases Police Safety							Decreases Police Safety		

52- Limiting access to handgun permits (permits allowing for an individual to own a handgun which is kept in their home.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Increases Police Safety							Decreases Police Safety		

Please read each of the following statements carefully and put a check for how strongly you agree: 1= Strongly Agree, 10 = Strongly Disagree

53- The Supreme Court was CORRECT in the recent ruling on the Washington D.C. gun ban, interpreting the Second Amendment to mean that INDIVIDUALS HAVE THE RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Agree								Strongly Disagree	

54- The Second Amendment guarantees every individual U.S. citizen the right to own a firearm.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Agree								Strongly Disagree	

55- The Second Amendment guarantees every individual U.S. citizen the right to own a handgun.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Agree								Strongly Disagree	

56- The Second Amendment DOES NOT apply only to the rights of U.S. citizens to form and serve in a militia.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Agree								Strongly Disagree	

57- Although the Second Amendment was written before firearm technology advanced to where it is currently, it is still applicable today.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Agree								Strongly Disagree	

Please indicate how often you believe the following information is RECORDED in police reports: 1= Never, 10= Always

58 A- Presence of a weapon

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Never								Always	

58 B- Please explain your reasoning below:

59 A- Type of weapon when present

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never Always

59 B- Please explain your reasoning below:

60 A- Caliber of gun when present

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never Always

60 B- Please explain your reasoning below:

61 A- Type of ammunition used when gun is present

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never Always

61 B- Please explain your reasoning below:

62 A- Use of a modified gun (a gun that has been changed by the addition of a stock, addition of weight for balance, change in firing rate, etc.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never Always

62 B- Please explain your reasoning below:

63 A- Use of supplemental equipment by an offender (bullet proof vest, silencer, scope, extended magazine, etc.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never Always

63 B- Please explain your reasoning below:

Please read each of the following carefully and answer accordingly:

1= Strongly Agree, 10 = Strongly Disagree

64- Police reports should include information regarding the specific type of firearm (handgun, rifle, shotgun, assault rifle) used in the commission of a gun related crime.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

65- Police reports should include information regarding the caliber of firearm used in the commission of a gun related crime.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

66- Police reports should include information regarding the specific type of ammunition used in the commission of a gun related crime.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

67- Police reports should include information regarding the use of a modified firearm (a gun that has been changed by the addition of a stock, addition of weight for balance, change in firing rate, etc.) in the commission of a gun related crime.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

68- Police reports should include information regarding the use of supplemental equipment by an offender (bullet proof vest, silencer, scope, extended magazine, etc.) in the commission of a gun related crime.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

69- Please indicate any further information, if any, you feel police reports should include concerning gun related crimes:

****END OF SURVEY. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION****

APPENDIX I

Survey For Student Sample

Age _____ (years)

Sex (Circle): 0 Female 1 Male

Have you or a loved one been the victim of a violent crime? (Please circle one)

1 Yes 2 No

Have you or a loved one been the victim of a gun violence? (Please circle one)

1 Yes 2 No

Do you have a loved one who works as a law enforcement officer? (Please circle one)

1 Yes 2 No

Do you have aspirations to work in law enforcement? (Please circle one)

1 Yes 2 No

Please read carefully and answer accordingly:

1- Do you own a firearm? (Please circle one) 1 Yes 0 No

If no, skip to question # 12.

2- Do you own a handgun? (Please circle one) 1 Yes 0 No

If no, skip to question # 4.

3- The primary reason I own a HANDGUN is: (Please circle *only one*)

Work Self Defense Recreation

4- Do you own a rifle? (Please circle one) 1 Yes 0 No

If no, skip to question # 6.

5- The primary reason I own a RIFLE is: (Please circle *only one*)

Work Self Defense Recreation

6- Do you own a shotgun? (Please circle one) 1 Yes 0 No

If no, skip to question # 8.

16. I believe that someone purchasing a firearm SHOULD be subject to mental health background checks.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

17. I believe that there SHOULD be a restriction on the amount of handguns a person is able to purchase in a month.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

18. I believe that an ordinary citizen SHOULD NOT be allowed to carry a gun in public.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

19. I believe that law enforcement agencies SHOULD track the purchases of ammunition.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

Please indicate the IMPACT you believe each of these gun control policies have on gun violence: 1= Reduces Gun Violence, 10 = Increases Gun Violence

20- Handgun ban

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Reduces Gun Violence Increases Gun Violence

21- Assault weapons ban (M16, AK 47, etc.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Reduces Gun Violence Increases Gun Violence

22- Complete firearm ban (rifles, shotguns, handguns, and assault rifles.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Reduces Gun Violence Increases Gun Violence

23- Restricting of gun sales (1 handgun per month)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Reduces Gun Violence Increases Gun Violence

24- Restricting of ammunition sales (limiting the type and purchasable amount)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Reduces Gun Violence Increases Gun Violence

25- Tracking ammunition sales (tracking who purchases ammunition and the amounts purchased.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Reduces Gun Violence Increases Gun Violence

26- Criminal background checks for firearm purchases

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Reduces Gun Violence Increases Gun Violence

27- Mental health background checks for firearm purchases

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Reduces Gun Violence Increases Gun Violence

28- Limiting access to carry permits (permits allowing for someone to visibly carry a gun in public)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Reduces Gun Violence Increases Gun Violence

29- Limiting access to concealed carry permits (permits allowing for someone to carry a hidden gun in public)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Reduces Gun Violence Increases Gun Violence

30- Limiting access to handgun permits (permits allowing for an individual to own a handgun which is kept in their home.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Reduces Gun Violence Increases Gun Violence

Please indicate the effect you believe each of these gun control policies have on community safety: 1= Increases Community Safety, 10 = Reduces Community Safety

31- Handgun ban

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Community Safety Decreases Community Safety

32- Assault weapons ban (M16, AK 47, etc.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Increases Community Safety							Decreases Community Safety		

33- Complete firearm ban (rifles, shotguns, handguns, and assault rifles.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Increases Community Safety							Decreases Community Safety		

34- Restricting of gun sales (1 handgun per month)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Increases Community Safety							Decreases Community Safety		

35- Restricting of ammunition sales (limiting the type and purchasable amount)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Increases Community Safety							Decreases Community Safety		

36- Tracking ammunition sales (tracking who purchases ammunition and the amounts purchased.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Increases Community Safety							Decreases Community Safety		

37- Criminal background checks for firearm purchases

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Increases Community Safety							Decreases Community Safety		

38- Mental health background checks for firearm purchases

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Increases Community Safety							Decreases Community Safety		

39- Limiting access to carry permits (permits allowing for someone to visibly carry a gun in public)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Increases Community Safety							Decreases Community Safety		

40- Limiting access to concealed carry permits (permits allowing for someone to carry a hidden gun in public)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Increases Community Safety							Decreases Community Safety		

41- Limiting access to handgun permits (permits allowing for an individual to own a handgun which is kept in their home.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Community Safety Decreases Community Safety

Please indicate the effect you believe each of these gun control policies have on *police safety*: 1= Increases Police Safety, 10 = Decreases Police Safety

42- Handgun ban

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Police Safety Decreases Police Safety

43- Assault weapons ban (M16, AK 47, etc.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Police Safety Decreases Police Safety

44- Complete firearm ban (rifles, shotguns, handguns, and assault rifles.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Police Safety Decreases Police Safety

45- Restricting of gun sales (1 handgun per month)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Police Safety Decreases Police Safety

46- Restricting of ammunition sales (limiting the type and purchasable amount)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Police Safety Decreases Police Safety

47- Tracking ammunition sales (tracking who purchases ammunition and the amounts purchased.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Police Safety Decreases Police Safety

48- Criminal background checks for firearm purchases

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Police Safety Decreases Police Safety

49- Mental health background checks for firearm purchases

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Police Safety Decreases Police Safety

50- Limiting access to carry permits (permits allowing for someone to visibly carry a gun in public)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Police Safety Decreases Police Safety

51- Limiting access to concealed carry permits (permits allowing for someone to carry a hidden gun in public)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Police Safety Decreases Police Safety

52- Limiting access to handgun permits (permits allowing for an individual to own a handgun which is kept in their home.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Increases Police Safety Decreases Police Safety

Please read each of the following statements carefully and put a check for how strongly you agree: 1= Strongly Agree, 10 = Strongly Disagree

53- The Supreme Court was CORRECT in the recent ruling on the Washington D.C. gun ban, interpreting the Second Amendment to mean that INDIVIDUALS HAVE THE RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

54- The Second Amendment guarantees every individual U.S. citizen the right to own a firearm.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

55- The Second Amendment guarantees every individual U.S. citizen the right to own a handgun.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

56- The Second Amendment DOES NOT only apply to the rights of U.S. citizens to form and serve in a militia.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

57- Although the Second Amendment was written before firearm technology advanced to where it is currently, it is still applicable today..

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

Please indicate how often you believe the following information is RECORDED in police reports: 1= Never, 10= Always

58 A- Presence of a weapon

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never Always

58 B- Please explain your reasoning below:

59 A- Type of weapon when present

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never Always

59 B- Please explain your reasoning below:

60 A- Caliber of gun when present

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never Always

60 B- Please explain your reasoning below:

61 A- Type of ammunition used when gun is present

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never Always

61 B- Please explain your reasoning below:

62 A- Use of a modified gun (a gun that has been changed by the addition of a stock, addition of weight for balance, change in firing rate, etc.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never Always

62 B- Please explain your reasoning below:

63 A- Use of supplemental equipment by an offender (bullet proof vest, silencer, scope, extended magazine, etc.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Never Always

68- Police reports should include information regarding the use of supplemental equipment by an offender (bullet proof vest, silencer, scope, extended magazine, etc.) in the commission of a gun related crime.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

69- Please indicate any further information, if any, you feel police reports should include concerning gun related crimes:

****END OF SURVEY. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION****