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Jessica J. Nicholas

Chapman University, nicho147@mail.chapman.edu

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Gun Control and Public Opinion

Jessica Nicholas

Department of Political Science, Chapman University; Orange, California

Introduction to Research

- This research uses data from the National Election Study's 2012 Time Series Study to explore how various factors such as party identification, gender, and age can impact one's views on whether the federal government should make guns less accessible.
- The issue of gun control has become increasingly relevant in recent years due to increased violent gun-related incidents.
- Gun laws are divided by state. Some states will issue only to residents, others will also issue to nonresidents. "May Issue" laws require an applicant to have a need for a permit, whereas "Shall Issue" laws only have a list of specifications.
- Legislation such as the Castle Doctrine, first passed in Florida in 2005, gives citizens the right to protect themselves in their homes using deadly force.
 - In some states, this right extends to one's car or workplace.
- Public opinion polling is a useful and viable way to interpret views.
- There are many cross-cultural beliefs surrounding the impact that factors including partisanship, gender, and age have on one's opinion of controversial issues, including gun control.

References

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Hypotheses

H 1: Respondents who identify as Democrats will be more strongly in favor of the Federal government making it more difficult to buy a gun than those who identify as Republicans.

H 2: Women are more likely than men to support making guns less accessible.

H 3: Respondents in higher age brackets are more likely to support keeping guns laws the same, whereas respondents in lower age brackets are more likely to support making guns more difficult to buy.

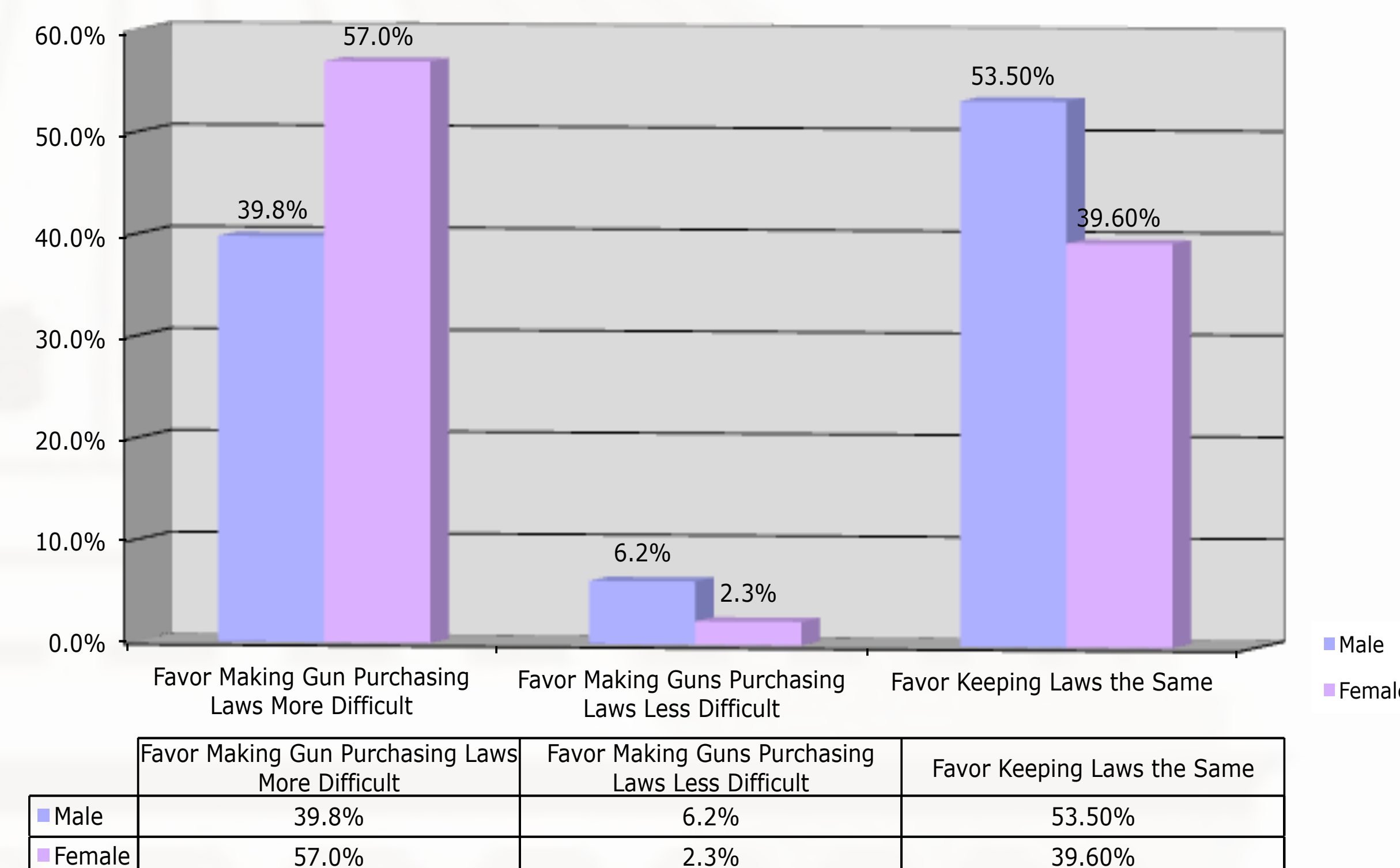
Data

H 1: Party Identification

Cross Tabulation Results:

- The Federal Government should make it more difficult to buy a gun
 - Democrat: 65.8%
 - Republican: 26.9%
 - Independent: 45.6%
- The Federal Government should make it less difficult to buy a gun
 - Democrat: 2.0%
 - Republican: 8.6%
 - Independent: 6.6%
- The Federal Government should keep laws regarding access to guns about the same
 - Democrat: 31.9%
 - Republican: 64.3%
 - Independent: 47.4%

H 2: Gender

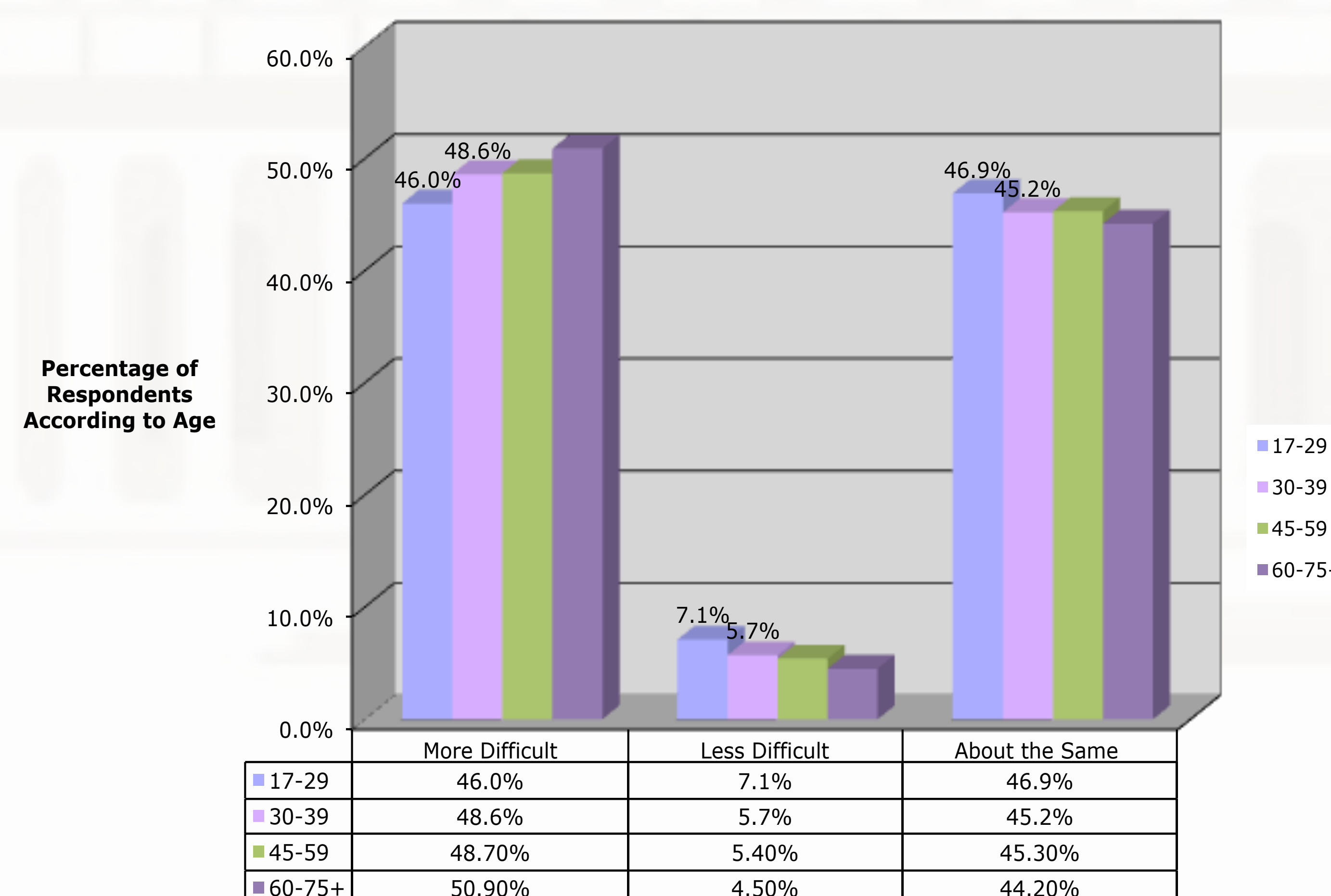


The total number of respondents was n= 5,914.

The total number of respondents was n= 5,914.

H 3: Age

Gun Law Opinions Based on Age Brackets



Age Interpretation

- Respondents were recoded into age brackets of 17-29 years old, 30-39 years old, 45- 59 years old, and 60 years and older.
- After recording, Cross Tabulations was used.

The total number of respondents was n= 5,854.

Findings

H 1: Party Identification

Results of the Cross Tabulation show that nearly two thirds of Democrats, 65.8%, support making access to buying guns more difficult. The majority of Republicans, 64.3%, support keeping laws the same. Independents are divided almost equally, with 45.6% supporting more difficult laws, and 47.4% supporting keeping laws the same. Few people of any partisanship support the Federal Government making it less difficult to buy guns.

H 2: Gender

Women were found to be 15.4% more likely to support making access to purchasing guns more difficult than to support making access easier or keeping laws about the same. Men were found to be 7.5% more likely to favor keeping laws the same.

H 3: Age

The majority of respondents within all age brackets were not supportive of making guns easier to buy. The first bracket, ages 17-29, was evenly divided between supporting more difficult laws and keeping laws the same. The second and third age brackets, ages 30-39 and 45-49, respectively, were both 3.4% more likely to be in favor of making laws more difficult. The fourth age bracket, ages 60 and older, was 6.7% more likely to favor the Federal Government making buying guns more difficult.

Conclusions

- Due to the increase in violent gun-related incidents, the issue of gun control becomes increasingly relevant.
- As laws such as the Castle Doctrine are passed, clear guidelines are needed for laws surrounding gun control.
- Research shows that across political parties, genders, and age brackets, few are in support of making access to purchasing guns easier.
- Though public opinion polling shows similar proportions of those who support more difficult laws versus those who support keeping laws the same, there is a higher proportion of those who support more difficult laws for purchasing guns.