

“Indicators of Gun Ownership: Findings from the 2018 General Social Survey”

This study looks at the predictors of having owning a gun. This includes owning a gun, having one in your house, or participating in hunting. This is an important study as the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia: Center for Violence Prevention state, “According to a 2019 study, gun injuries are the second-leading cause of death among U.S. children and teens and the leading cause of death of among high school students. 1.7 million children live with unlocked, loaded guns - 1 out of 3 homes with kids have guns.” The study of indicators of gun ownership has a focus on political affiliation and as well as dedication to religion and whether or not that determines or correlates with a person having and owning a gun in their home. This study also determines factors that influence their political affiliation and religious dedication including age, socioeconomic status, and personality. Secondly I focus on how a person's sex plays a role in whether or not they own a gun in addition to their political affiliation and dedication to religion. My hypothesis is that people who are more dedicated to religion and people who are more conservative are more likely to own a gun. I am also hypothesizing that women will more likely have the same affiliations as their husbands because of their socialization to adhere to their spouses’ beliefs. These beliefs or affiliations include political, religious, and opinions on guns. The information is found with the General Social Survey of 2018 data set. Preliminary findings show that there is a significant relationship between gender, political affiliation, religious beliefs, and gun ownership. Specifically, it shows that identifiers such as male, Christian, or conservative have higher rates of owning guns or have positive attitudes towards guns. This study shows how political affiliation, religion, race, and gender, or social network have a larger effect on gun ownership compared to predictors such as personality, which have shown to have little or nothing to do with gun ownership. Using the General Social Survey of 2018 indicators of gun ownership that allude to affiliations have shown more statistical significance with gun ownership than personality. Affiliation includes social groups, which often can be grouped in religion, race, gender, networks, or political affiliation. Groups that feel more comfortable with each other will often share similar values including the value of owning a gun. These networks or social groups also include predictors like whether or not the respondent spent time in the armed forces as well as whether or not the respondent owns a gun. Predictors that fall under personality include an individual's level of trust with other individuals as well as the level of safety an individual feels in their community. There are some indicators that were looked at during the research that does not fall into either of these categories. These indicators include satisfaction with life as well as suicide rates in a given area compared to the number of guns owned in a specific area. Basic findings show how few indicators that fall under the category of personality or feelings do not have as statically strong a relation as indicators that refer to demographic and social grouping.