

OVER THE BARREL OF A GUN?

Trust, gun ownership and the pro-gun lobby in New Zealand

Abstract

The Christchurch attack on 15 March 2019, when 51 Muslims were murdered by a right-wing extremist carrying half a dozen semi-automatic rifles and shotguns, brought the nation's relaxed gun laws to light. Prior attempts to pass gun safety legislation have been thwarted by groups purporting to represent New Zealand gun owners. However, the swift and decisive political actions in the immediate wake of the attack signalled greater political appetite for meaningful change. Using unique data collected immediately in the wake of the Christchurch attack, this study examines who gun owners are, New Zealanders' trust in gun owners and the pro-gun lobby, and whether trust differs by gun ownership and political ideology.

Keywords guns, firearms, gun lobby, public trust, gun owners

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The terror attack that killed 51 Muslim New Zealanders on 15 March 2019 was the worst act of violence on New Zealand soil in modern history. The attack was particularly destructive because of the use of semi-automatic firearms, modified to increase lethality, and access to large amounts of ammunition (Royal Commission, 2020a, p.40). In addition, there were systemic failures in the processes for granting a firearms licence (Royal Commission, 2020b, pp.275–81). Thus, in addition to the racism and right-wing extremism underpinning the attack (Battersby and Ball, 2019), a spotlight was shone on gaps in New Zealand's gun laws (Royal Commission 2020a, 2020b).

In the immediate aftermath, changes were made to tighten up gun laws. These changes were contested by pro-gun lobby groups, the most prominent of which is the Council of Licensed Firearms Owners (COLFO), established in 1996. One of its objectives is 'To be recognised as the collective organisation whose views and opinions on firearms legislation and related matters are considered representative,

authoritative [sic] and responsible' (Council of Licensed Firearms Owners, 2021a). COLFO claims several thousand members, representing individual gun owners and nationwide organisations with an interest in guns (the latter including the National Rifle Association of New Zealand, the Sporting Shooters Association of New Zealand, the New Zealand Antique and Historical Arms Association, the New Zealand Black Powder Shooters Federation, New Zealand Deerstalkers Association, Pistol New Zealand, New Zealand Service Rifle Association and the International Military Arms Society (Council of Licensed Firearms Owners, 2021b)).

In October 2018 there were just under a quarter of a million current firearms licences in New Zealand, including standard, dealer and visitor licences (Royal Commission 2020b, p.273), whose holders COLFO aims to represent.¹ In 1997 it was estimated that 20% of households had at least one gun (Thorp, 1997, p.38), with that estimate dropping to around 17% by 2005 (Van Dijk, van Kesteren and Smit, 2007). Gun ownership was estimated as higher than average among rural (37%) and higher-income households (24%), and particularly among those where the main income earner is a farm owner or manager (78%) (Thorp, 1997, pp.258–9). There are few recent studies shedding light on the number of firearm owners in New Zealand and who they are, suggesting a paucity of information about the public's – and gun owners' – view of the pro-gun lobby which purports to represent them.

Immediately after the Christchurch massacre, the libertarian ACT party positioned itself as a protector of gun owners' rights in the face of legislative changes to gun access. This stance, which included placing COLFO spokesperson Nicole McKee at third on the party's list, likely contributed to ACT's best ever election result in 2020.² Understanding the extent to which this alignment – between political ideology and gun ownership – exists in New Zealand and whether this influences people's perceptions of the trustworthiness of the government, generally, and of the gun owner community and pro-gun lobby specifically, is consequently of considerable public import.

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This article has four aims: first, to provide up-to-date information on the proportion of households which have guns and document any changes since the 1997 Thorp report; second, to identify the socio-demographic composition of gun owners and people living in gun-owning households in New Zealand; third, to examine whether individuals' gun ownership status is associated with differences in trust in (1) gun owners as a group and (2) the pro-gun lobby; and finally, to explore whether trust in the government, gun owners and the pro-gun lobby differs across ideological lines.

We address these aims using a unique data set collected in April 2019 in the wake of the 15 March attack. By doing so, this article provides an up-to-date portrait of gun ownership in New Zealand, and points to how differences in trust in the government and pro-gun lobby among gun owners, and the population generally, may shape future firearms-related legislation.

Methods

Data and sample

Data was collected as part of an annual New Zealand population-based survey conducted by the Institute for Governance and Policy Studies at Victoria University

of Wellington, focusing on various dimensions of trust (Chapple and Prickett, 2019), and typically conducted annually in February. Given increased interest in public trust immediately after the Christchurch terrorist attack, another survey was conducted in mid-April 2019. Because of heightened concern around gun ownership and the influence of the pro-gun lobby on the passage of new gun legislation (Manch, 2019; Russell and Cook, 2019), questions on gun ownership and gun owner trust were included on the April survey.

The survey was administered by Colmar Brunton, a market and social research firm, with study participants coming from a large and diverse existing online research panel comprising more than 100,000 active participants. A subset of this panel was contacted and screened by age, gender, household income, ethnicity and region to ensure a diverse sample. The final sample consisted of 1,000 New Zealand-based respondents aged 18 years and older.

Variables

Trust

The focal outcomes of interest were levels of trust. Interpersonal trust was an 11-point scale ranging from 0 = not at all to 10 = completely, with respondents asked, 'In general, how much do you trust most people?' For questions regarding trust in government, respondents were asked, 'How much trust do you have in the government to do what is right for New Zealand?', with the response scale ranging from 1 = very little/none to 4 = a great deal. For trust in institutional groups to do the right thing, such as the police, politicians, medical practitioners and the media, respondents were asked, 'How much trust do you have in the following groups to do the right thing?', with a scale ranging from 1 = I have no trust at all to 5 = I have complete trust. A further set of questions asked about trust in groups of people generally, including gun owners and the pro-gun lobby, with respondents asked, 'How much do you trust the following groups of people in New Zealand?', with the response scale the same as that asked of institutional groups, with 1 = I have no trust at all to 5 = I have complete trust.

Over the Barrel of a Gun? Trust, gun ownership and the pro-gun lobby in New Zealand

Table 1: Sample characteristics by gun ownership (n = 1,000)

	Total		By gun ownership		Percentage within group with guns in the household	Row %
	n	%	No guns	Guns in the household		
Gender						
Female	504	50.5	51.5	45.9		13.7
Male	493	49.2	48.2	54.1		16.7
Gender diverse	3	0.3	0.4	0.0		0.0
Age						
18–24 years	88	8.9	9.0	6.8		11.9
25–44 years	352	35.3	36.4	29.5		12.6
45–64 years	329	33.0	31.6	39.8*		18.3
65 years and older	227	22.8	23.1	24.0		15.6
Ethnicity (mutually inclusive)						
NZ European/Pākehā	812	81.1	79.7	92.4*		17.2
Māori	83	8.4	7.4	13.2*		24.2
Pasifika	47	4.7	5.2	1.3*		4.4
Asian	67	6.7	8.1	0.0		0.0
Other	42	4.2	4.2	2.7		10.3
Nativity						
Born in New Zealand	762	76.2	74.8	84.4*		16.8
Not born in New Zealand	238	23.8	25.2	15.6*		10.0
Annual household income						
\$30,000 or less	157	15.8	16.8	11.5		10.9
\$30,001–\$70,000	388	39.0	38.4	39.6		15.5
\$70,001–\$100,000	189	18.8	18.4	21.0		16.9
More than \$100,000	266	26.4	26.4	27.9		15.9
Educational attainment						
Secondary school or less	296	30.2	28.7	37.9*		19.1
Diploma	327	33.3	33.8	30.3		13.9
Undergraduate	203	20.6	21.4	16.5		12.2
Postgraduate degree	156	15.9	16.1	15.3		14.5
Home ownership						
Owens home	687	69.3	67.6	79.0*		17.3
Rents home	304	30.7	32.4	21.0*		10.4
Region						
Auckland	317	31.5	34.5	14.9*		7.2
Wellington	111	11.0	12.1	6.1*		8.3
Canterbury	128	12.8	13.0	13.5		15.6
Waikato	95	9.5	8.4	15.6*		24.8
Tasman/Nelson/West coast	44	4.6	4.1	5.8		20.0
Eastern North Island	47	4.7	3.9	8.7*		28.8
Bay of Plenty	64	6.6	6.1	9.0		20.8
Northland	37	3.7	2.9	7.5*		31.6
Southland	76	7.7	7.1	10.2		20.3
Mid-North Island	79	8.0	7.8	8.9		16.9
Number of household members	1,000	2.7	2.6	2.6		..
		(1.4)	(1.4)	(1.2)		..
Political ideology						
Left	142	14.8	16.3	8.4*		8.5
Centre-left	179	18.6	19.0	16.9		13.8
Centre	273	28.4	28.0	29.6		16.0
Centre-right	233	24.3	22.9	31.7*		20.0
Right	135	14.0	13.8	13.4		14.8
% of sample		100.0	84.8	15.2		15.2
n	1,000	100.0	825	147		147

Unweighted *n*s, weighted percentages. Analyses by gun ownership exclude 28 respondents who refused to answer the question on firearm ownership. Small cell sizes within some groups should be interpreted with caution. * Chi2 and T-tests indicating means statistically different compared to those with no guns in the household at at least $p < .05$.

Gun ownership

Gun ownership was ascertained through a question that asked respondents whether they owned a gun. Respondents could answer: (1) yes; (2) no, but there is a gun in our house; (3) no, there are no guns in our house; or (4) prefer not to say.³ In line with prior research on gun ownership, we categorise gun owners as those who live in a home with a gun (although we note key differences in the socio-demographic characteristics of those who own the gun and those who live in a home with a gun but do not own a gun).

Political ideology

Respondents were asked on a 0–10 scale, where 0 = left, 5 = centre and 10 = right, how they would place their political views.⁴ From this scale, respondents were grouped into five categories: (1) left (0–2 on the scale); (2) centre-left (3–4 on the scale); (3) centre (5 on the scale); (4) centre-right (6–7 on the scale); and (5) right (8–10 on the scale).⁵

Covariates

In addition to gun ownership and questions on trust, respondents were asked for a wide array of socio-demographic information, including on gender, age, income, educational attainment, ethnicity, nativity, home ownership, household composition and geographic region

Analytical plan

Bivariate analyses were conducted to examine the first and second aims of the study to understand the rate and characteristics of gun owners and differences in trust between gun owners and those not living in homes with guns (research questions 1, 2 and 3). Ordinary least squares (OLS) multivariate analyses were employed to examine whether associations between gun ownership and political ideology and trust in gun ownership and the pro-gun lobby were significant, controlling for an array of socio-demographic characteristics that may be endogenous to both gun ownership and trust. Post hoc Wald tests were conducted to test for statistical differences between gun owners and those without guns by political ideology regarding their trust in gun owners and the pro-gun lobby.

All analyses were conducted in Stata (StataCorp, 2017). A survey weight was used to adjust the sample for gender, age, ethnicity, income and region, and infer population-level estimates. For the multivariate analyses, multiple imputation was used to impute on the small amount of item-level missingness in the independent variables (less than 1% of data used in the analyses). This included 28 cases where gun ownership was not ascertained and 41 cases where political ideology could not be ascertained.⁶

Findings

Gun owners in New Zealand

Compared to the 20% of households found to own a gun in 1997 (Thorp, 1997), we found a smaller proportion – 15.2% of the sample – reported either owning a gun or living in a home that contained a gun (Table 1). This finding suggests that gun ownership has been becoming less normative over the last generation. Just over half (51%) of those who reported having a firearm in the household indicated that they were the gun owner. This translates to approximately 7.7% of respondents reporting being firearm owners. Extrapolated out and age-adjusted to the population of New Zealanders aged 18 years or older, this equates to approximately 289,000 firearm owners, a number larger than the approximately 244,425 firearm licence holders (McIlraith, 2019).⁷ Some of this discrepancy is likely due to firearm owners whose licences have lapsed and those who were not licensed in

the first place. Among those who reported living in homes with guns, men were much more likely to be owners, with men stating they were the owner of the firearm in 88% of gun-owning households.⁸

Compared to those who did not live in a household with a gun, those living with guns were more likely to be aged 45–64 (40% of gun owners vs 32% of those without guns), to identify as New Zealand European (92% vs 80%) or Māori (13% vs 7%), to have been born in New Zealand (84% vs 75%), and to own a home (rather than rent; 79% vs 68%). Gun owners were more likely to have ended their education at secondary school (38% vs 29%). Gun owners were less likely than those without guns in the home to be aged 25–44 (30% vs 36%), to identify as Pasifika (1% vs 5%) or Asian (no respondents who own a firearm reported being Asian, vs 8% of the sample without guns), and less likely to be found in regions with large urban centres such as Auckland (15% vs 36%), Wellington (6% vs 12%) or Waikato (8% vs 16%).

In terms of political ideology (categorised into five groups representing ‘left’, ‘centre-left’, ‘centre’, ‘centre-right’ and ‘right’), gun owners were more likely to report being ‘centre-right’ (32% vs 23%) and less likely to report being ‘left’ (8% vs 16%). Interestingly, there was not a statistical difference in the proportion of gun owners versus non-gun owners who reported being ‘centre-left’ (19% vs 17%), ‘centre’ (30% vs 28%) and ‘right’ (13% vs 14%).

Figure 1: Gun ownership by political ideology (n = 962)

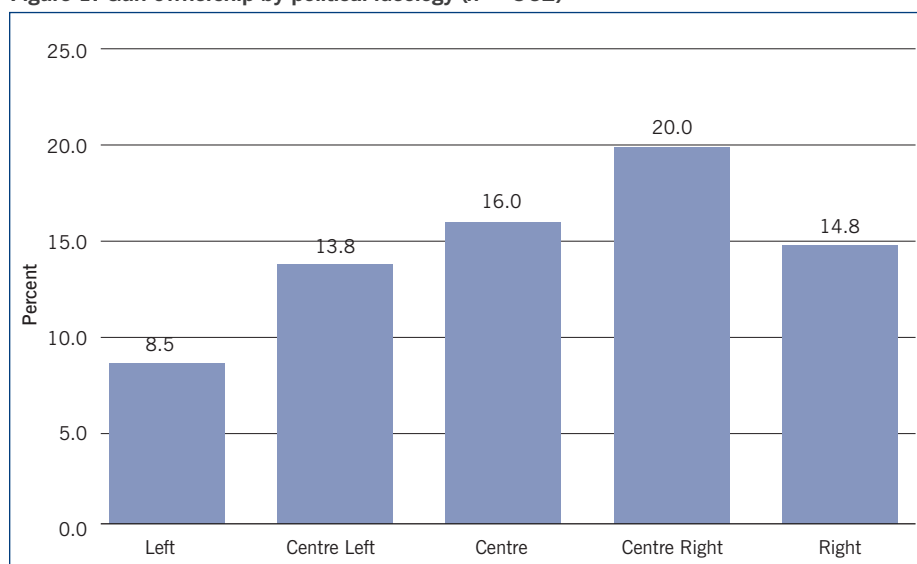


Table 2: Trust by gun ownership (n = 1,000)

	Total			No guns			Guns in household		
	Trust rank	M	(std dev.)	Trust rank	m	(std dev.)	Trust rank	m	(std dev.)
General trust in people (0–10 scale)		6.33	(1.74)		6.34	(1.74)		6.40	(1.66)
Trust government to do what is right (1–4 scale)		2.71	(0.77)		2.75	(0.75)		2.57*	(0.84)
Trust in groups of people (1–5 scale)									
Gun owners		2.80	(0.97)		2.65	(0.92)		3.51*	(0.92)
Pro-gun lobbyists		2.28	(1.01)		2.16	(0.95)		2.82*	(1.08)
Trust to do the right thing (1–5 scale)									
Medical practitioners	1	3.78	(0.85)	1=	3.78	(0.86)	1	3.89	(0.78)
Police	2	3.76	(0.91)	1=	3.78	(0.90)	2	3.78	(0.95)
Judges/courts	3	3.48	(0.95)	3	3.50	(0.94)	4	3.43	(0.95)
Schools and colleges	4	3.39	(0.79)	4	3.41	(0.79)	5	3.39	(0.78)
Universities	5	3.35	(0.84)	5	3.37	(0.81)	6	3.31	(0.90)
Small businesses	6	3.31	(0.75)	6	3.29	(0.74)	3	3.46*	(0.73)
Charities	7	3.19	(0.86)	7	3.20	(0.85)	7	3.16	(0.91)
Churches	8	2.80	(1.09)	8	2.82	(1.07)	8	2.72	(1.18)
Local government	9	2.74	(0.93)	9	2.77	(0.93)	9	2.66	(0.92)
Corporations/large businesses	10	2.67	(0.88)	10	2.68	(0.86)	10	2.62	(0.93)
Government ministers	11	2.62	(0.94)	11	2.65	(0.93)	12	2.52	(0.96)
Members of Parliament	12	2.59	(0.87)	12	2.61	(0.86)	11	2.53	(0.95)
TV/print media	13	2.51	(0.86)	13	2.54	(0.84)	13	2.39	(0.93)
Bloggers/online commentators	14	2.06	(0.86)	14	2.06	(0.83)	14	2.01	(1.01)
N / %		1,000	100.0		825	82.4		147	14.7

Unweighted ns, weighted percentages. * T-tests indicating means statistically different compared to those with no guns in the household at at least $p < .05$.

Putting this another way, Figure 1 displays the proportion of respondents within each political ideology group who reported being gun owners, highlighting the higher rates of firearm ownership among the centre-right. Twenty per cent of respondents who identified as centre-right reported they had a firearm in their household, but there were lower and similar rates of firearm ownership among those who identified as centre-left (14%), centre (16%) and right (15%). Those who reported being left on the political spectrum had the lowest rates of firearm ownership (9%).

Trust in gun owners and the gun lobby

Overall, there was no statistical difference in interpersonal trust between gun owners and those who did not own guns (Table 2). Moreover, there was little difference between those who owned guns and those who did not in terms of their level of trust in different institutional groups to do the right thing, and their relative ranking of those groups.

Where some trust differences did emerge between gun owners and non-gun owners, however, was (1) their trust in the government to do the right thing, and (2) trust in gun owners and the pro-gun lobby.

In terms of trust in the government, gun owners, on average, gave a modestly lower score of 2.57 on a 1–4 scale compared to non-gun owners at 2.75 – a statistically significant but small effect size (23% of a standard deviation).

In regard to trust in gun owners, unsurprisingly, gun owners had high trust in gun owners as a group, on average scoring themselves 3.51 (out of 5), which would relatively rank gun owners as the third most trustworthy group, similar to judges but lower than medical practitioners and the police. Those who did not own guns, however, gave gun owners a low trust score of 2.65, ranking them in the lower third of institutions, similar to politicians and corporations. Overall, the difference in trust score was 88% of a standard deviation – a much larger effect size than any differences in trust in government.

However, *neither* of these two communities had high levels of trust in the gun lobby. Individual gun owners rated trust in the pro-gun lobbyists at 2.82, 0.69 points lower than trust in themselves as an ownership group – a large difference for a group which aims to represent them. Trust in pro-gun lobbyists by individual gun owners was only marginally higher than trust in politicians and local

government. Among non-gun-owning households, trust in pro-gun lobbyists (2.16) was rated in line with the least trustworthy group, bloggers and online commentators.

Gun ownership and trust in the government, gun owners and the pro-gun lobby across the political ideological spectrum

Finally, we examined whether trust in the government, gun owners and the pro-gun lobby differed by gun ownership across the political ideological spectrum, controlling for other sociodemographic characteristics. The findings from these multivariate regressions are presented in Table 3.

In terms of trust in government, gun owners were modestly less trusting than non-gun owners ($B = -0.15$; $p < .05$). Unsurprisingly, political ideology was more strongly associated with trust in the government than gun ownership, with those identifying from centre ($B = -0.40$; $p < .001$) through right ($B = -0.82$; $p < .001$) less trusting of the government than those who considered themselves centre-left or left (model 1a). Interestingly, trust in government did not appear to statistically differ across the political spectrum by whether the respondent was also a gun owner (model 2a).

Table 3: OLS regressions predicting trust (n = 997)

	Trust the govt to do the right thing		Trust in gun owners		Trust in the pro-gun lobby	
	(1a)	(2a)	(1b)	(2b)	(1c)	(2c)
Gun ownership (ref: no guns in household)						
Guns in household	-0.15*	-0.11	0.70***	0.32	0.57***	0.18
	(0.07)	(0.22)	(0.08)	(0.27)	(0.09)	(0.29)
Political ideology (ref: left)						
Centre-left	-0.04	-0.05	0.03	0.01	0.30**	0.27*
	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Centre	-0.40***	-0.37***	0.10	0.06	0.43***	0.41***
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.11)
Centre-right	-0.47***	-0.49***	0.29**	0.26*	0.65***	0.60***
	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.11)
Right	-0.82***	-0.81***	0.30**	0.24*	0.72***	0.63***
	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Gun ownership x political ideology						
Gun ownership x centre-left		0.08		0.30		0.39
		(0.27)		(0.33)		(0.36)
Gun ownership x centre		-0.22		0.47		0.28
		(0.25)		(0.31)		(0.33)
Gun ownership x centre-right		0.07		0.37		0.46
		(0.25)		(0.30)		(0.33)
Gun ownership x right		-0.09		0.55		0.73+
		(0.28)		(0.35)		(0.39)
Constant	3.13***	3.13***	2.26***	2.28***	2.34***	2.37***
	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.22)	(0.22)
N	997	997	997	997	997	997
R-squared	0.18	0.18	0.23	0.23	0.16	0.16

Standard errors in parentheses: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, + $p < 0.10$.
 Models control for gender, age, educational attainment, annual household income, ethnicity, home ownership, nativity and geographic region.
 Three respondents who identified as gender diverse dropped from analysis because of collinearity issues.

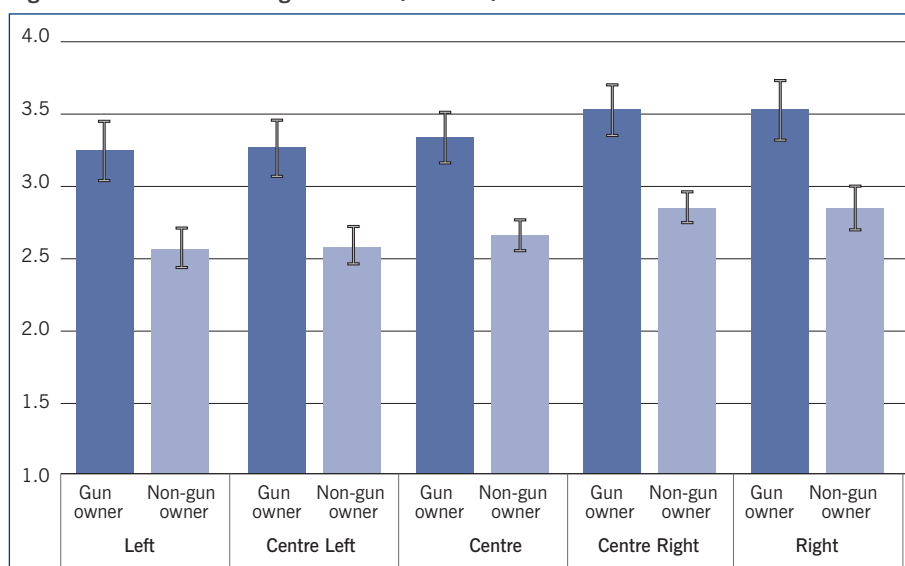
In line with the bivariate findings, gun owners were considerably more trusting of other gun owners ($B = 0.70$; $p < 0.001$; model 1b) and the pro-gun lobby ($B = 0.57$; $p < 0.001$; model 1c) than were non-gun owners. Political ideology was also associated with trust in gun owners as a group and the pro-gun lobby, albeit to a lesser extent in regard to gun owners (model 1b) and more so when examining the pro-gun lobby (model 1c). For example, those who identified as centre-right or right reported higher levels of trust in gun owners than did those who identified as centre or left of centre. There was no statistical difference in trust in gun owners among those identifying as centre versus left of centre.

Turning to trust in the pro-gun lobby, a different pattern emerges. Political ideology appears more strongly correlated to trust in the pro-gun lobby compared to trust in gun

owners generally, and the effect size of gun ownership on trust in the pro-gun lobby is slightly smaller than for trust in gun owners.

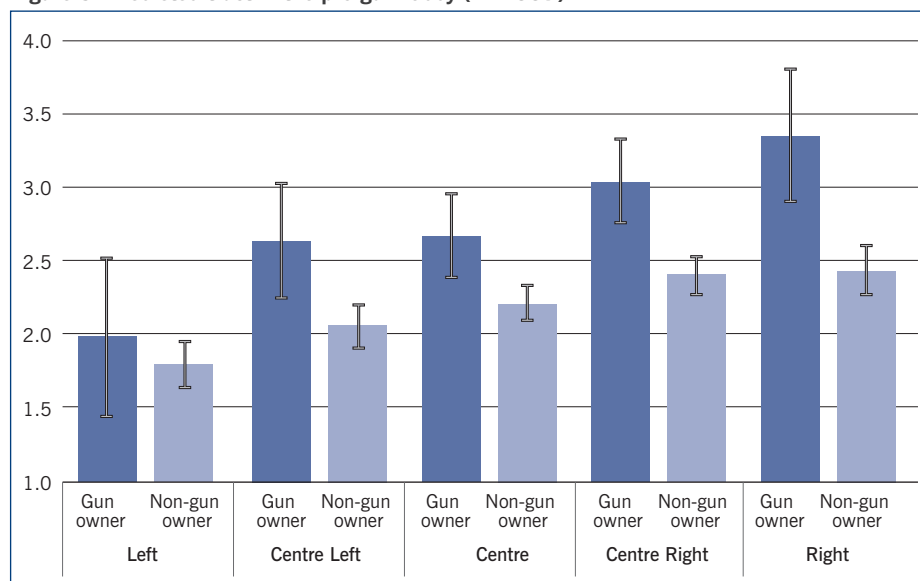
For example, there appears to be a clear political spectrum gradient in trust in the pro-gun lobby, whereas for trust in gun

Figure 2: Predicted trust in gun owners (n = 997)



Note: Predicted margins estimated from model 1b, Table 3, controlling for: gender, age, educational attainment, household income, ethnicity, home ownership, nativity, and geographic region. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 3: Predicted trust in the pro-gun lobby (n = 997)



Note: Predicted margins estimated from model 2c, Table 3, controlling for: gender, age, educational attainment, household income, ethnicity, home ownership, nativity and geographic region. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

owners, differences only appeared to emerge between those centre/left of centre and those on the centre right/right.

There was little evidence that trust in collective gun owners differed by individual gun ownership along the political spectrum. The models do suggest, however, that gun ownership may be differently associated with trust in the pro-gun lobby by political ideology. Figures 2 and 3 present the predicted trust estimates from the models 1b and 2c from Table 3. Whereas there was a trust gap between gun owners and non-gun owners in trust in gun owners generally, and those on the political right had slightly higher levels of trust in gun owners than those on the political left, that gap remained fairly consistent across the political spectrum. This pattern, however, was different for trust in the pro-gun lobby. There was no statistical difference between gun owners and non-gun owners on the left in their trust in the pro-gun lobby, and while there was more trust in the pro-gun lobby to the right of the political spectrum, the gap in trust for the pro-gun lobby between gun owners and those without guns also widened and was largest among those on the political right.

Discussion

Four important findings emerged from this study. First, the proportion of

households owning guns has fallen in the last generation, with estimates from our study suggesting that approximately 15% of the population live in gun-owning households, compared to around 20% two decades ago (Thorp, 1997) and 17% in 2005 (van Dijk, van Kesteren and Smith, 2007). Gun-owning households, always a minority, are becoming a smaller one. Despite our estimate being in line with the downward trend from estimates in 1997 and 2005, this comparison should be interpreted with caution, given differences in the sampling methods.

Second, individual gun owners trusted gun owners as a collective and the pro-gun lobby more so than those who did not own guns – even after controlling for other factors that differed among those who did and did not own guns. Although both gun owners and non-gun owners trusted the pro-gun lobby much less than they trusted gun owners as a collective, non-gun owners placed the pro-gun lobby among the least trustworthy groups, rating them similar to bloggers and online commentators.

Third, these gaps in trust in gun owners as a group and the pro-gun lobby between individual gun owners and non-gun owners were wider than the gaps in trust in the government to do the right thing. Political ideology was more strongly associated with trust in the government

than gun ownership, with those whose political ideology was more closely aligned with the Labour government, unsurprisingly, reporting higher levels of trust in them. This trust, however, did not differ across the political ideology spectrum by gun ownership, indicating some broad support for the government’s actions immediately after the Christchurch attack, and a lack of evidence that gun owners are strongly tied to anti-government rhetoric.

Fourth and finally, however, there was some evidence to suggest that the confluence of political ideology and gun ownership may shape how gun owners perceive the trustworthiness of the pro-gun lobby purporting to represent them. Gun owners at the left-wing liberal end of the ideological spectrum reported much lower levels of trust in the pro-gun lobby than gun owners on the right-wing end. This gap in pro-gun lobby trust among gun owners on the left versus the right was more than twice as wide as among those on the left versus the right who did not own guns.

Taken together, along with the finding that New Zealanders have moderate levels of trust in gun owners generally, but low levels of trust in the pro-gun lobby, our results suggest that it is a small group of gun owners who identify on the right who likely share the interests of the pro-gun lobby.

- 1 Some of these licences will not own a gun (about 9% according to a 1,000-person sample survey by AGB McNair reported by Thorp, 1997, p.37), or will not currently live in New Zealand. Some may be dead and not removed from the register.
- 2 McKee is now a list member of Parliament.
- 3 The small number (n = 28) who refused to say whether there was a firearm in the home were imputed for the multivariate analyses.
- 4 Respondents were prompted to state where they aligned on the political spectrum with: ‘Most political parties in New Zealand lean to the “left” or the “right” with their policies. Parties to the left are liberal and believe governments should support the less fortunate people in society. Parties to the right are more conservative and believe in individual responsibility. Some parties position themselves in the centre. How would you place your political views using the scale below?’
- 5 The small number reporting ‘don’t know’ (4.1% of the sample) were imputed for the multivariate analyses.
- 6 There was no substantive difference in the findings whether listwise deletion or multiple imputation was used.
- 7 Authors’ calculations available upon request.
- 8 Results dichotomising respondents in firearm-owning households into those who owned the firearm versus those who did not are not presented, although available from the lead author upon request. Few socio-demographic differences existed between the two groups, apart from the difference by gender.

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